

FISH Volunteer Centre



Newsletter Issue No. 2 Winter 2014

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**Registered Charity
No. 286318**

From the Chairman

I was very pleased by the response to our first newsletter in the spring of this year, it seems to have been well received and a number of people have signed up to make regular donations which helps enormously with the day to day running of the organisation.

So what is it that we do and who can we help?

We cover the same footprint as The Sonning Common Health Centre which includes all of Sonning Common, Rotherfield Peppard, Kidmore End, Gallowstree Common, Binfield Heath and Shiplake Cross. We Support and Transport those in need in our Community in several ways.

Taking people to important appointments such as doctors, dentists, hospitals, clinics etc. in volunteers' own cars is a major part of our work and takes a considerable amount of co-ordinating by the amazing office staff. We expect to carry out around 800 trips this year. Without this important service many of our clients would struggle to get to these destinations. Then there is our minibus, but that's a story for another day.

Recently our charity has been encouraging people to donate their unwanted jewellery and any gold or silver items. This has significantly increased the income as we have been able to convert it into cash to help with running costs. Good quality bric a brac and antique items also sell well and FISH would welcome these too. Just drop your donations into the office from 9.30 to 11.30 a.m. on any weekday or phone 0118 972 3986 and a volunteer will be pleased to collect.

The recently started Tuesday coffee mornings at our new premises are also another way to spend time relaxing amongst friendly faces.

We are aware that some folk are housebound and not able to access these services so we can call in for a chat and possibly do the occasional errand. None of this would be possible without our magnificent volunteers who give up their time doing a variety of tasks including car & bus driving, staffing the busy phone lines in the office, matching requests for individual journeys with availability of car drivers, booking people on bus trips as well dealing with all the people who visit the office for a multitude of different reasons.

So what next in 2015? Watch this space!

Best wishes to all for Christmas and the New Year.

Fred Nickson, Chairman



Support and Transport for the Community

Client Profile: Francis Andrews

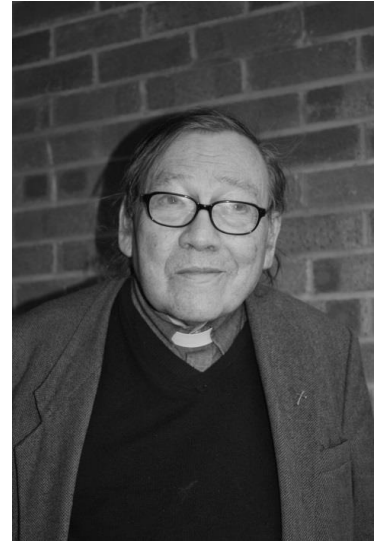
On many occasions working for FISH you come across very interesting people. Francis at 83 years of age is one such person having himself retired as a car driver for FISH. As a professional doctor he has enjoyed many local connections, after leaving his early life in Cheltenham. He qualified in 1954 from the University of London Middlesex hospital and soon found himself an interest in Rheumatology.

Moving to Tokers Green in 1966 with his wife brought him close to the Battle Hospital working as a consultant physician. His family started to grow and Francis is the proud father of 6 children and 15 grandchildren. Sadly his wife Mary died 9 years ago.

During his career he took up a post as Research Fellow at Stoke Mandeville hospital where he was proud to work for 6 years under Professor Alan Hill. Francis had patients at the Peppard Hospital looking after Rheumatic diseases having moved to Sonning Common in 1978.

He retired from the medical profession in December 1991.

Hobbies play an important part in his life with reading, railway modelling and as he says the 'great enjoyment of grandchildren'. As an ordained Deacon in 1994 for St. Michael RC church in Sonning Common he really enjoys a full life – even meeting Pope Benedict in Rome in 2001.



Volunteer Profile: Geoff Ward

We are lucky to have so many loyal volunteers giving their time to FISH and over the next few issues of our newsletter we will be introducing some of them to you.

Our new treasurer Geoff Ward has been with FISH for 6 years as a car driver and has recently taken over from our previous Treasurer Sheila Maughan.



Geoff lived in Bromley, Kent where as a professional accountant he joined BT in the role of a Project Manager in the IT field. Commuting to Brighton lasted some 6 months before being transferred to Reading and setting up home in Sonning Common some 30 years ago.

Geoff and his wife Liz have two married daughters one living in Nottingham and one in Ankara, Turkey where they also have two granddaughters – as Geoff says 'good for holidays'.

Liz is a nurse working at the Sue Ryder hospice in Nettlebed. Geoff considers himself very much a backroom person interested in figures but over the years has certainly given his time to the village being Treasurer for the School Associations of Sonning Common

Primary School and Chiltern Edge School and latterly Geoff was Treasurer of the Village Hall Management Committee for five years.

Geoff has an interest in playing bridge but is passionate about giving back to the community where he has spent so much of his life hence his involvement with FISH and being able to meet some really great people.

Clive Mills, Vice Chairman

Leisure Trips in the Minibus

Leisure trips began in 2008 mainly to increase the charities income and build a reserve fund for any new bus purchase. During the last six years the FISH minibus has visited many places and with the new bus with its air conditioning, separate heating, comfortable seating and a smooth ride we go further afield than previously.

It is usually day outings with some afternoon only visits. Recent months has seen the bus go to the Mary Rose in Portsmouth, Bletchley Park, Strathfield Saye, Lords Cricket Ground, the British Museum, the Shuttleworth Collection as well as several National Trust properties.



With all these outings we endeavour to give passengers the freedom to do what they want once there so they are not too organised. We also try and keep the fares reasonable and at many venues we can get group booking rates. Lastly we are always open to new suggestions for places to visit and these can be sent to me at the FISH Office but MOST OF ALL come along and join us for a good day out.

Trips planned for December include Bath Christmas Market, London Christmas Lights and The Eden Centre at High Wycombe, and proposed for 2015 are the Imperial War Museum, Milton Keynes Shopping Centre, Kew Gardens, the Watermill Theatre and many more.

Sheila Maughan, Leisure Trip Organiser

Tea for two and many more.....

One of the events we run on a regular basis is the TEA PARTY, which we have in the village hall. We decided that as well as delicious cakes and tea, all made by are volunteers, we would have some entertainment. This has proved very popular. Often it is of a musical variety, everything from choirs to trios, to the Ukulele Band and it's all free of charge, including the refreshments.



We have also had informative demonstrations from the Physiotherapist at Sonning Common Health Centre and even a food tasting from Wiltshire Farm Foods. We are always looking for new ideas for the tea parties. I believe that in January we have a Bingo Sessions planned.

I cannot praise the volunteers highly enough. Their willingness to get involved and help out with whatever we are doing is remarkable. For some it is the occasional car journey for others it is part of their everyday life. However much time anyone has to give, it is very much appreciated,

the more people we have the less everyone has to do.

So if there is anyone out there who would like to join us, for whatever time you have we will be very thankful for your help. I can honestly say that when I joined FISH I had no idea how much I would enjoy it and how many lovely people would welcome and encourage me.

The Tea Party dates for 2015 are all on Monday afternoons and they are 5th January, 2nd March, 11th May, 13th July, 14th September and 9th November.

Mary Norris, Office Manager

Charity Sale Success

On Saturday 8th November, despite rain later in the morning, the FISH Annual Charity Sale was a great success.

Many volunteers gave up their Saturday morning to help and as usual the local people in the village popped in for a look around and buy from a great variety of stalls. Many visited the kitchen where they could buy tea, coffee or even indulge in a great bacon roll.

The stalls started outside the hall with Greenshoots selling fresh produce and plants whilst inside both the main hall and annex were filled to overflowing.



Fred Nickson our chairman cut an impressive figure whilst auctioning the many items that had been kindly donated by local businesses. Clearly Fred was very much in his own comfort zone with all the kit. The raffle was successful again through the great support of donations from local people.

As we go to print the Charity sale has contributed over £1,000 to our funds.

A huge thank you from FISH for all the kind and generous donations and help that made the occasion a great success.

Clive Mills, Vice Chairman

A Really Big Thank You

After our last newsletter where we enclosed forms enabling you to donate and help FISH we have had a good response. To date we are able to collect just over £2000 each year but we have a long way to go to meet our initial target of £5000 in donations each year.

The Government's Gift Aid scheme means that charities such as FISH can reclaim tax on all gifts and donations. It will increase any further donations you make to the FISH Volunteer Centre by a significant amount at no extra cost to yourself.

Gift Aid has been around since 1990 and in 2000 the minimum donation limit was removed.

We really hope you will be able to contribute, however large or small your donation and with your help we can continue and expand the services available from FISH.

Please complete the two forms (Gift Aid and Standing Order Instruction) overleaf and then detach the whole page and send it to The FISH Volunteer Centre, Springhill, Kennylands Road, Sonning Common, RG4 9JT - or post it through our letterbox.

Geoff Ward, Treasurer



**WHERE THERE'S A WILL THERE'S A LEGACY
WHERE THERE'S A LEGACY THERE'S A CHARITY
WHERE THERE'S A CHARITY THERE'S
THE FISH VOLUNTEER CENTRE
Please remember FISH in your Will**

Gift Aid declaration – for past present & future donations

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Name of charity: **FISH VOLUNTEER CENTRE**

I want the FISH Volunteer Centre to treat all donations I have made for the four years prior to this year and all donations I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise, as Gift Aid donations

I confirm that I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6th April to 5th April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give on or after 6th April 2008.

Donor's details

Title: _____ First name: _____ Surname: _____

Full Home Address: _____ Postcode: _____

Date: _____ Signature: _____

Please notify the FISH Volunteer Centre if you:

- Want to cancel this declaration
- Change your name or home address
- No longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains
- Have not been a tax payer for the four years prior to this year

If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.



New Standing Order Instruction

Please complete your bank name and sections 1 and 3 of this form in **BLOCK CAPITALS** and in black ink and leave section 2 blank.

To: _____ Bank / Building Society

Please set up the following Standing Order and debit my/our account accordingly

1. Account details

Account name Account number

Account holding branch Sort Code

2. Payee details

Name of person or organisation you are paying

Payment reference (if known) – this will appear on the bank statement of the person or organisation you wish to pay

Sort Code - the bank code of the person or organisation you are paying

Account number - the account of the person or the organisation you wish to pay

3. About the payment

How often are the payments to be made (please tick one box) Weekly Two weekly Four weekly Monthly
Quarterly Half yearly Yearly

Amount details
Date and amount of first payment (please allow 3 working days for receipt) £

Date and amount of ongoing payments (If different from the first payment) £

Choose one of the following two options

1. Date and amount of final payment £

2. Until further notice (please tick) (payments will be made until you cancel this instruction)

4. Confirmation

Customer signature(s): _____ Date: _____

_____ Date: _____

Grateful Thanks from Eugenie Micotti

I first discovered FISH when my husband was unexpectedly taken into hospital with heart failure. I have renal failure so have to go into the Royal Berkshire Hospital 3 days a week for haemodialysis. Without transport for the first two weeks I was obliged to take taxis.

Meeting a friend on a bus one day returning from Caversham, she suggested that I see if FISH could help me. I was confident that they would not be willing to undertake such a constant commitment but rang the FISH number and explained my situation. I was delighted to find, not only were they willing but most helpful and arranged for a driver to take me into the Hospital the following Tuesday and Thursday and suggested that I ring them next week also. The relief that I felt knowing there was someone out there who was able to help me was overwhelming - That was over 2 years ago and they have never failed me since.

I have come to know many of the volunteers and when I lost my husband shortly afterwards, not only have they continued to provide the help that I need but having a familiar and friendly face greet me on those days has helped me to keep my spirits up. The ladies in the office are always friendly and helpful and have introduced me to the various outings that FISH also organise which I have enjoyed going on.

Because haemodialysis is a 4 hour procedure, I only ask them to drop me off and my daughter picks me up at the end of her working day. However if they take you for a clinic appointment or similar they will either wait with you and bring you home again, or if it is a long appointment take you to where you need to be than come back for you and take you home. They do ask for a donation towards the cost of recompensing the drivers for the cost of petrol etc. but that is at the discretion of the patient.

The amount of work needed to organise and carry through this service must be considerable and unrelenting. I feel we are so lucky to have such a service in our village and that they deserve all the support we can give them. For my part I am immensely grateful to all the people I have met over the past few years, who have made a difficult way of life so much easier and are such a great comfort.

When you consider that they offer this service to other elderly and sick people in the village, unable to get to a hospital, Dentist or Doctors appointment, it is incredible that they can manage all this through volunteer help only.

Car Drivers Urgently Required

Can **YOU** spare an hour or two?

Taking local people to Hospital, Doctors and Clinics

Please do get in touch if you can help

Phone the FISH Volunteer Centre 0118 972 3986

or Email: office@fishvolunteercentre.co.uk

for more information