



AVPCSG Newsletter - Issue 6 : January 2014

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A New Year



First we would like to wish all our members and their families a very Happy New Year and all best wishes for a healthy 2014. Our group goes from strength to strength and we look forward to another year where we continue to share our experiences, help newly diagnosed patients and raise awareness in our local community. We would like to thank everyone for their continuing contribution to our support group.

Les Dingle

It is with great sadness we heard about the passing of Les on 31st December. Les was one of our stalwart early members and did much to promote the group when it started up. His funeral will be at 2.30 pm on 14th January at Amersham crematorium and afterwards at the Chinnor village centre at 4pm. Our group will be represented at his funeral.

Review of 2013

Essentially the past year has been one of consolidation and transition for our Group. Early on in the year we changed our name to better to reflect the spread of our membership and to focus on our aims for prostate cancer support in the wider Aylesbury area. With every good wish (and a financial grant!) we became independent of the Chiltern Support Group based in High Wycombe. We were then able to join the national Prostate Support Federation from whom we have also received financial assistance and input into development of our aims.



Our awareness week campaign required a move from Friars Square, Aylesbury to the shopping centre in Hale Leys. This attracted greater attention than previously and our volunteers were kept busy throughout the week with questions and requests for information. We shall be returning there in March.

Using our recent donations and grants, the committee decided to upgrade our presentation equipment with the purchase of a specially designed and branded gazebo, together with banners and table covers. This was first shown at our stand at the Thame & Oxford Show in July to great effect and made our presentation very professional and welcoming. Despite being one of the hottest days of the year we attracted a lot of attention. In 2014 the Show has moved back to its original date in September and we shall be there!

In October, we belatedly had our first meeting to which wives and partners were invited. Professor Hoskin from Mount

Vernon, an acknowledged expert on radiotherapy, spoke to a meeting of almost forty of us. His talk was well received and drew a host of questions afterwards. He has promised to return at our request.

For the first time, we ventured to the Whiteleaf Golf Club for our Christmas Lunch. Unfortunately we did not draw the support we had anticipated. However, it was an excellent event, much enjoyed by all attending and we hope the word will spread.

I sincerely thank Roger, our indefatigable secretary and the committee, Jeremy Buckman, Bruce Cameron, David Barrow and John Davis for their unflinching support throughout this transitional year.

We now have the right tools in place but need your input this year to take the message of prostate cancer awareness forward. I seek your earnest support at our events.

Brian.

Report on Federation Workshop

Brian, Roger and Bruce attended a Prostate Cancer Federation workshop held at the University of Birmingham in November. This was a packed day with many speakers, unfortunately with limited time for networking. Nevertheless it was most informative and enabled us to make some valuable contacts.

We learnt of some extensive PSA testing by one support group on the South coast that really helped to raise awareness of prostate cancer and identify high risk individuals who might not otherwise have been checked out.

Perhaps the highlight of the day was a very interesting talk from Mark Newbold, Chair of the Heart of England NHS Foundation Trust. He talked about how support groups can work more closely with local NHS trusts and Commissioning Groups. Here was someone who switched professions from medicine to management and spoke with real conviction and passion.

Prostate Cancer UK also had a session where they introduced a proposal for closer affiliation with support groups. This caused some confusion as this is exactly what the Federation is trying to do. It is clear more needs to be done at the top of the two organisations to speak with one voice.

We also learnt that the Federation will be hosting the European wide meeting of Prostate Cancer Organisations next year in London.

Overall an interesting day even though Bruce is still complaining Roger pinched his sausage at lunch!



Reminder for AGM

Don't forget the AGM is set for **Monday 27th January at 12 noon** at our normal venue of Thame Football Partnership. Let's hope we get a good turnout for this important meeting. It is your chance to give YOUR views on how YOUR support group is being run. As well as normal business we have a guest speaker, Robert Breakwell, from the Chiltern MS Centre. John Benson, one of our members helps out there with the diving bell and suggested it would be useful to explore how this might help prostate cancer patients.



Aylesbury Awareness Week

It's that time of the year again! We have been lucky enough to secure a prime pitch in Hale Leys Shopping Centre Aylesbury from **10th to 15th March**. This is our opportunity to raise awareness and we were very successful last year, thanks to many of you volunteering to help out. At the AGM we will be passing round a rota sheet for you to volunteer your time during the week. Please come to the AGM with your diaries!

Local Developments

Just a quick word on prostate cancer support locally. We have been approached a number of times recently asking if there is a support group in Milton Keynes. The short answer is no. However, Roger and I will be visiting Joe's opposite number in Milton Keynes Hospital to discuss how we might advise in setting up a new group covering MK, or at least share some of our experience. We will keep you posted, as indeed we will with further developments in our liaison with St Francis Hospice in Berkhamsted.

Travel Insurance



Good news if you are having trouble arranging travel insurance for that well-deserved holiday! The Prostate Cancer Support Federation has negotiated travel insurance for men with prostate cancer and pre-existing medical conditions. You can find details at www.justtravelinsurance.com. If you are interested and want to know more, give them a call on 0800 231 5532. JustTravelCover.com is open 9am -8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Saturday and 10am-4pm on Sundays. Please quote reference "Tackle". For each policy sold, a small donation is made to the Federation.

Best regards for now,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian".

Brian Cole

Chair, Aylesbury Vale PCSG

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roger".

Roger Wotton

Sec., Aylesbury Vale PCSG