

Chairman's Report

This is the 34th AGM of the Friends.

On behalf of the Friends Committee I would like to thank our members and supporters for their hard work and support in what has been a year of ups and downs. However, we were pleased to be able to donate £60,000 at the end of this financial year. Of this total an amazing £24,000 came from the collecting tins located in offices, shops and pubs around the area. A special thank you to all those who maintain the tins. The £60,000 brings the grand total raised by the Friends to over £1,910,000.

During the past year we have lost three members of the Committee but have welcomed two new members. However, to assist our fund raising efforts it is important that we attract new members to the committee and new volunteers. This is proving more difficult as the demands on people's income and time is increasing.

At the end of last year we agreed to a small increase to the member's annual subscriptions and to end the life membership. The subscription had failed to keep up with the cost of producing and mailing out of the members newsletters. Membership of the charity is one way that people can support the Hospice without feeling they must commit to being committee members or taking a more active role in the work of the Friends. To increase the number of members will be an important activity for all committee members in the year ahead.

Over the past years we have been working more closely with the Hospice's Business Development Department and at the end of last year it was agreed that we would incorporate two of our Newsletters into the Hospice newsletter. We could not resist the offer of a full page in the Hospice's autumn and spring newsletters and the opportunity for the Friends to be seen by a much larger audience. Our inclusion also demonstrates to the outside world the close relationship between the Friends and the Hospice.

In addition to the sale of goods and the collecting tins, the bucket collections organised throughout the year by our Treasurer Pat Kirk continued to bring in a substantial income. Our thanks also to Sue Russell who organises the collections and sale of goods in the Buckingham area. So many people continue to support us

in various ways. Too many to thank individually, however the exceptions must include John Kembery who despite ill health set himself the target to raise £50,000 for the Friends and by the end of March 2015 had raised over £48,000. Our thanks also to Marian and Jan who act as quiz master at Friends quiz nights as well as running their own quiz nights to raise funds for the Friends. And to Lorraine, the landlady, and regulars at the Beehive in Deanshanger for their continued support

The October concert organised by the Newport Pagnell Singers was a sell out and plans are going ahead this year's Voices for Hospices concert to be held on 10 October.

In the autumn/winter we were more visible in the City Centre – raising over £500 by taking part in the Community Car Raffle. We had three successful sales of children's knitted goods and books and jigsaw at the Community Desk. We plan to continue both activities.

I must thank members of the committee for their hard work and support throughout the year. In particular Liz Sparham who has stood in for me on many occasions. Also my thanks to Carrie Ross who in addition to organising the helpers for outside events has organised our quiz nights and a very successful Indian Evening.

Our thanks to Paul Hinson and all the staff at the Hospice for their continued help and support.

Our thanks to Mr Winstanley for auditing the accounts and to Pat Kirk our hard working Treasurer who not only counts the money but is very active in raising it.

June 2015