



Welcome to the SPRING edition of your newsletter.

AGM

11 April 2013

A copy of the minutes of the AGM follows for those of you who were unable to attend.

MINUTES FROM THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

HELD ON THE 11TH APRIL, 2013
PRIORY METHODIST CHURCH,
NEWNHAM AVENUE, BEDFORD

PRESENT:

Tracey Brimmell – Chairperson
Tracey Brightman – Treasurer
Brendan Gaunt - Vice-Chairman
Freda Dunlop – Administrator & Clerk to the Committee
Nick Cochran – Fundraiser
Lisa Thomas – Secretary
Tim Branson – Assistant Fundraiser
Ros Hunnisett-Graham – Committee support

The AGM was attended by 21 members of FLAG.

Apologies

Apologies were received from Louise Bredon

1. HOUSEKEEPING

Last years AGM minutes were read out by Freda Dunlop, this was confirmed as correct by a member and seconded by another member.

2. WELCOME & CHAIRMANS REPORT

The chairman's report was read out by Tracey Brimmell.

She reported that FLAG Bedford had another successful year and that FLAG has settled into its new home at Priory Methodist Church. It was reported overall membership being slightly down on the previous year, but the events were well supported by the members.

The coffee/tea afternoons have proved to be popular.

In the last year FLAG members have attended the following events; Shuttleworth Collection, London Zoo, Quiz Night, Christmas Meal and a Theatre Trip to see Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor dream coat.

Tracey then thanked the committee members for the hard work they have all done over the last year and she also thanked the volunteers for all their help at the various events.

3. TREASURERS REPORT

The treasurer's report was read out by Tracey Brightman

It was reported that due to changes which FLAG had gone through over the last year the reserve was down to £4,300.

During the last year FLAG had higher than expected income, and lower than expected spending, as a result our reserves have risen by £1,700 to £6,000

Income for the year was £7,900 compared to £4,400 the previous year. We received funding grants from the Bruce Wake charitable trust, the Co-op, Waitrose, Wilkinson's & the Bedford & Luton Community Foundation. We also raised funds by selling craft items and selling items on ebay.

FLAG's cost for the year was £6,200 compared to £5,600 the previous year.

Savings were made in many areas, almost £500 was saved by using two minibuses for the Shuttleworth event instead of using a coach.

The total cost of last year's events was £3,900, the cost to the members was £2,400 with FLAG paying the remaining £1,500. The events were subsidised by FLAG by 39%, the target being 40%

4. EVENTS REPORT

This was read out by Freda Dunlop

Ros offered to do a garden party on 2 occasions at her house but unfortunately the weather was against us and the event had to be cancelled, On 21st August a trip to Shuttleworth was arranged and attended by 25 members and volunteers



On 19th September a trip to London Zoo was arranged and enjoyed by 24 members and volunteers

On 25th October there was a quiz night at Priory, 35 members and volunteers attended, there was a talk from Colin McCartney from REMAP, and we had a fish/chip supper & a raffle before the quiz

On 12th December we had a Christmas meal at the Harvester restaurant which was attended by 36 people

On 19th February, 2013 we organised a trip to the Derngate theatre in Northampton to see Joseph and his Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat, it was attended by 25 people

5. ELECTION OF OFFICES

The following positions are to stay the same –

Vice chairman – Brendan Gaunt

Treasurer – Tracey Brightman

Secretary – Lisa Thomas

Ros Graham – Support to members

The following roles are to be elected

Chairperson – Tracey Brimmell wished to retire. Jeff Noble or Laura Peggs to take over.

Fundraiser – Nick Cochran to retire from this role. Tim Branson to take over

Administrator – Freda Dunlop wished to retire. Dylan Bowers to take over

Newsletter Editor – Jo Branson has retired. Nick Cochran to take over.

6. FUTURE EVENTS

The following activities have been planned for the coming year

A trip to the NEC in Birmingham to view the Naidex exhibition on 1st May, 2013

A boat trip along the river Thames is planned for the 18th July, 2013

A bingo evening at the White horse is planned for 26th September, 2013

Halloween themed karaoke evening planned for 31st October, 2013

A Christmas meal is planned for December, date and venue to be confirmed

Ten pin bowling evening planned for February, 2014, date to be confirmed

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There wasn't any other business

A message from our new Administrator

Some of you know me already, for those of you who don't, my name is Dylan. I am 42 years young and I work with the armed forces and emergency services, teaching specialist first aid training. I am making plans to become a first responder with the ambulance service leading to me becoming a paramedic.

I joined FLAG Bedford as a volunteer almost a year ago. Since I joined, I have made some new friends and have thoroughly enjoyed my time at FLAG. As most of you are aware I will be taking over the role of administrator from Freda in June I so I have some pretty big shoes to fill and will do my best to keep the standards of administration as high as they have been in the past.



I will be your point of contact via the FLAG phone 07815 196357. If you need to contact me please note the flag phone will only be available during office hours only. Also remember FLAG is our action group, which can only remain going with your support and feedback. Please feel free to suggest any ideas you have for future activities.

Dylan

Theatre Trip – 19 February 2013

The last time I saw "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" live was in the late 1970's at the Theatre Royal, Norwich. On the 19th February 2013 I went with other FLAG members to see the latest production of the show at the Royal & Derngate, Northampton. We boarded the coach at base, Priory Methodist Church. We didn't have our usual driver, Steve, but his replacement was also called Steve, so no having to remember a new name.

It was a fairly short journey and Steve parked the coach just up the road from the entrance to the Theatre. We walked, hobbled, wheeled and shuffled down a slight hill and into the busy auditorium. We mingled around getting drinks, sweets and a programme for the show. Karina managed to buy a singing and dancing camel. Four of us, including myself, had seats up in the circle so we made our way up in a very spacious lift. As I sat waiting I could see the rest of the FLAG gang taking their seats down in the stalls. We were supposed to have been given disabled seating, which turned out to be down a step, and so somewhat defeated the object.

The touring production of Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat retells the Biblical story of Joseph, his eleven brothers

and the coat of many colours. It is directed by Bill Kenwright, with original lyrics and composition by Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice.

In this production Joseph is played by British actor and singer Keith Jack. He was the runner-up on the BBC reality talent show "Any Dream Will Do" which offered the chance to be the next West End Joseph for the hit musical. He lost out to Lee Mead in the final on 9 June 2007.

The house lights are dimmed, the music plays, the curtain is raised and Joseph's story begins. In the first act we are treated to songs like, "Any Dream Will Do," "Joseph's Coat," "Joseph's Dreams," "Poor, Poor Joseph," "One More Angel in Heaven," "Close Every Door," and "Go, Go, Go Joseph". During the interval I have an obligatory tub of ice cream. Act two begins as I check that I have my half eaten bag of wine gums to hand. The show continues with songs like, "A Pharaoh Story," "Poor, Poor Pharaoh," "Song of the King," "Joseph All the Time," and "Jacob in Egypt". The show concludes as Joseph dons his amazing coloured coat once more as we all sing along to the Finale: "Any Dream Will Do". What a great show, I loved every minute.

We make our way back to the coach and as Steve drives us back to base I still have the songs playing on a loop in my head.

Tracey Brightman.

Naidex Exhibition – 1 May 2013

When the Committee canvassed FLAG members last year the NAIDEX exhibition at the NEC Birmingham was one of the most popular choices for a day out. However on the 1st May just 18 of us attended the event.

As usual we had a Motts Coach with its brilliant driver, Steve. We arrived at the NEC and were dropped off at the entrance to the exhibition.

Naidex is the UK's largest disability, rehabilitation and homecare event with over 300 exhibitors featuring the latest products

and services to aid independent living. It gives you the opportunity to keep up to date with the most exciting developments in the disability, rehabilitation and homecare industry.

The hall was packed with exhibitors showing products from Mobility and Transport, Bathing and Showering, Daily Living Aids, Children's Equipment, Access Equipment, Furniture, Communication and Telecare, Adaptation, Sports, Rehab and Leisure, Charity and Advice.

Visitors were able to try out equipment like wheelchairs, stair lifts, sensory equipment, hoists and much, much more. You could also get advice about care, accessible holidays and security equipment.

I was very interested in an automatic door opening system until I asked about the price, £2K+ which is when I decided that maybe I didn't need it after all. I ended up buying 2 non slip Dycem coasters for £8.

The one thing that I came away thinking was that the equipment and expertise needed for disabled people to overcome their disability is out there, but as with most things, the cost is a limiting factor.

We arrived back in Bedford just after 5.30. This was Freda's last event as FLAG's Administrator. Tracey Brimmell called for three cheers to thank her for all her hard work. Freda will carry on as a volunteer so we will still see her at future events.



Above: Gareth with Stig and our two new members (I wish!!!)



Above: two of our founder member, Jeff and Gareth. These two guys know how to enjoy themselves and rarely miss the opportunity to participate in FLAG outings and events.

Red Radio Communications

We would like to thank John from Red Radio Communications for lending us Two Radio Equipment to trial at the Naidex Exhibition, to see whether they improved the event experience for volunteer members and members alike.

Meet the Committee

In this series, we endeavour to interview every FLAG Committee Member so you can get to know a little more about them.

We are moving on to our Vice Chairman, Brendan Gaunt. He was interviewed by our founder, Ros Graham.



Above: Brendan and his friend Laura outside the BBC Television Centre. They were participants of a FLAG outing held in November 2006.

Ros> How did you get involved in FLAG?

Brendan> I went to the Inaugural Meeting in 2006 and felt that I wanted to be part of it and help out. I've been Vice-Chair of the Committee ever since. I've enjoyed my role, but because of the move to St Neots it has been quite difficult working out buses etc.

Ros> How do you think FLAG has survived recent changes?

Brendan > I was worried when we had strong reactions to the changes but I'm a lot happier now we're independent and running it from Priory.

Ros> What do you think are the most important issues for disabled people today?

Brendan> What you can do depends on what you can get and today rising costs set against benefit changes really don't help us .

Ros> How do you get about?

Brendan> I use all the bus services and try and speak to people about timetables and routes. Some drivers are helpful and some aren't. When a driver isn't helpful it makes my day difficult.

One driver called Ann and I get on very well - we go back 4 years! We shared a famous incident with a Polish lorry driving on the wrong side of the road! You would have laughed your head off!

Ros > What are the most important things in your life?

Brendan > I need to get away to Spain at least once a year. Also, trying to keep myself going is important.

Helping my friends is important to me.

Ros > Do you think Charities are well supported?

Brendan > I've been a Volunteer at the Oxfam shop as well as a supporter of FLAG for quite a while. Charities are not necessarily helped by the Government. Gift Aid is a good idea. And I've seen a lot of people helping out over the years at various charity shops where I've worked and they come from all over. Without volunteers charities wouldn't exist!

Ros > What are your hopes for the future?

Brendan > I would like to get back into my own flat in Bedford with my own Care Team. Bedford is my home town and I'm always here!

St Paul's Church Donation

A big thank you to Laura Peggs for approaching her local church for a donation towards our events and get togethers

The members and Parochial Church Council of St Paul's Church Bedford, has made a donation of £200 towards the work of FLAG.

Tracey's hospital help

I have become a member of Bedford Hospital's Patient Council. We are looking into disabled access at the hospital.

If any FLAG member has had problems with access at the hospital please let me know and I will pass them on to the Patient Council.

Hopefully we can get the problems sorted.

Tracey Brightman

Next Outing

You won't want to miss out on our Thames cruise to be held on the 18 July 2013. For just £25 you get luxury coach travel to the London Embankment in addition to your boarding pass. The boat provides an accessible, relaxing way to see the great historic London landmarks, such as the Houses of Parliament, Tower of London and much more.



You will receive an application form in a month or so; no need to do anything at the moment.

Summer Dates for your Diary



Coffee/Tea & Cake 23 May 2013

Coffee/Tea & Cake 20 June 2013

Thames cruise 18 July 2013

Coffee/Tea & Cake 12 Sept 2013

Coffee/Tea & Cake afternoons are held in our room at Priory Methodist Church between 2pm and 4pm. There is a £1 charge to cover costs.

Please remember that you can drop by on any Thursday, between 2pm and 4pm, for a drink and a chat. We are always pleased to see you. But please note that we are closed throughout August.

STOP PRESS

Whilst we are sad to see Tracey Brimmell stepping down from the role of Chairperson we are delighted to welcome her replacement, Laura Peggs.