



## Hello Fellow Members.

In this the 23rd Issue of our Newsletter we have;

- an article about the money raised by selling Christmas Cards and Crafts,
- some wonderful Fundraising News,
- a report on the Welfare Reform Talk on 30th January,
- a report and photo's from the recent Christmas Meal,
- another "Meet The Committee",
- a report and photo's from the recent Eat n Bowl event,
- a look at the forthcoming AGM on the 10th of April,
- a "Calendar of Events" for 2014,
- some "Dates for your Diary",
- and a bit about the money raised by selling Valentine Heart Badges.

## Christmas Cards / Craft Items.

A big thank you to Laura Peggs, our Chairperson, and other FLAG members



who have raised £14.50 for FLAG from the sale of the Christmas Cards and Craft items they had made. Well done.

## Funding News. The Harpur Trust.

I'm sure you have all heard of the *Harpur Trust* and how it runs several private schools in Bedford, namely, Bedford School, Bedford Modern School and Bedford Girls School. The Harpur Trust is also known as *The Bedford Charity* and its stated aim is to help and support people who live in and around Bedford, and to help them improve their lives.

Last year FLAG applied to the Trust for financial assistance from their "Isolation" themed programme. We have received a letter from them saying that they would fund FLAG the full £4545 that we applied for. This is absolutely wonderful news and we are grateful that the Trust could see what a worthy charity we are for them to fund us in this way.

The £4545 funding will cover Dylan, our Event Administrators, Salary for the next 2 years and 2 year's Room Hire at Priory Methodist Church on our usual Thursday afternoon's. I'm sure you would agree that Dylan does a great job making sure our events run smoothly and our weekly and monthly get-togethers are a great way for members to come and socialise with their friends at FLAG. Thank you *Harpur Trust*.



HARPUR  
TRUST

## Funding News. Tesco Charity Trust.

The *Tesco Charity Trust Community Awards Scheme* has awarded FLAG £1000 towards Coach Hire costs for two of this years outings. This means that we can greatly reduce the cost of the trips for our members.

Thank you Tesco,  
*Every Little Helps.*



## Welfare Reform Talk.

The Welfare Reform talk on 30th January 2014 was given by Dean Crofts from the Bedford Citizens Advice Bureau and was supported by Bedford Borough Council and POhWER, an advocacy service.

It was given especially for members of FLAG and although we did an extensive advertising campaign beforehand we were slightly disappointed with only around fifteen members turning up.

The talk, however, was not disappointing, it went extremely well with Dean being very informative and knowledgeable. Those FLAG members who attended asked many relevant questions, which Dean was able to answer for them. With all the questions asked and answered Dean just about managed to squeeze the talk into the allotted time. Hopefully a lot of FLAG members minds were put at rest.

A big thank you to Dean from Bedford CAB, Bedford Borough Council and POhWER for organising the talk.

The Bedford CAB and POhWER are there to help you if needed and are free and completely confidential. If you need help to fill in benefit forms or need help with any other matter contact them and they will be able to help you.

### 1. Incapacity Benefit to Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

- ESA – A benefit for those with limited capability to work due to ill health or disability
- ESA introduced in Oct 2008
- All Incapacity benefit claimants being re-assessed
- Started October 2010
- Finishes March 2014

### 2. Personal Independence Payments (PIP)

- PIP will replace Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
- PIP will be to help with costs arising from ill health or disability which is due to last more than 12 months
- 08 April 2013 – Pilot Scheme
- June 2013 – Bedford
- Oct 2013 – Some existing DLA claimants will be invited to claim PIP
- Oct 2015 – All remaining DLA claimants will be invited to claim PIP
- Age Range 16-64
- No Automatic Entitlement
- Most will be invited for medical assessments

### 3. Disability Living Allowance Vs Personal Independence Payments (PIP)

DLA	PIP
- 2 Components	- 2 Components
- Care Component	- Basic Living Component
- Mobility Component	- Mobility Component
- 3 Rates for Care	- 2 Rates for both
- Lower, Middle and Higher Rate	- Enhanced and Standard Rates
- 2 Rates for Mobility	- Face to face Medical Assessment
- Lower and Higher Rates	- Condition has to last at least 9 months
- No Face to Face Medical Assessment	
- Condition has to last at least 6 months	



Dean explains the new Welfare Reforms.

### Bedford Citizen's Advice Bureau.

7a St Pauls Square,  
Bedford,  
MK40 1SQ.

Tel—0844 245 1290.

Website—[www.bedfordcab.org.uk](http://www.bedfordcab.org.uk).



### POhWER

Suite 4, 21-23 Mill Street,  
Bedford,  
MK40 3EU.

Tel—0300 456 2362.

Website—[pohwer@pohwer.net](mailto:pohwer@pohwer.net).





## Christmas Meal Toby Carvery - 12th Dec 2013.



### A Feast to Celebrate!

Way back in distant memory, December 12th 2013, FLAG members descended on The Toby Carvery on Goldington Road, for our annual Christmas Meal.

The Meal was very well attended with a record forty members and volunteers at the event. Although there should have been two more but they got their days mixed up.



**Flavia & Gordon**



**Mark & Brendan**



**Holly, Lisa & Jan.**



**Jean & Lynn.**



**Lance & Tracey.**





**Ros & Laura.**

The evening was expertly organised and managed by Dylan who did a sterling job especially with such a large group.

Both food and company were excellent as was the service provided by the Toby Carvery staff.

After the meal Dylan wore a stunning pair of gold baubles as earrings which give him a rather striking resemblance to the Buddha. Unfortunately, rubbing his tummy brought me no luck.



**Matthew, Gordon & Mark.**



**Josie & Gareth.**



**Andrew & Angela.**



**Tim & Simon.**



**Carole & Dylan.**



**Kerry.**



**Jill, Karina & Lynda.**





**Fiona.**



**Frank.**



**Mark.**



**Elizabeth.**



**Matthew & Mark.**



**Dylan & Mervyn.**



**Angela & Jeff.**



**Laura, Nick, Tracey, Debbie, Josie & Gareth.**



The evening ended with the Toby staff being presented with Chocolates and Flowers for all their hard work.

I received a lot of positive feedback, which is always welcome and I thank everyone who came and made the Christmas Meal such an enjoyable and successful event.

Laura Peggs.



**The Waitresses who were a great help on the night.**



## Meet the Committee.

In this series, we are interviewing every FLAG Committee Member so you can get to know a little more about them. This time we are moving on to Laura Peggs, our Chairperson, who was interviewed by Ros Graham.

### How long have you been involved in FLAG?

I have been Chair for one year and am standing for a second term. I first got into FLAG four years ago via Ros Graham at Lifestyle Choices and have been a dedicated member ever since.

### What attracted you to FLAG?

The chance for more social opportunities in a non-judgmental, friendly, and caring group.



**What have you brought to the Chair's role?**

Experience from other Committees, and also life experience.

Laura at a recent Tea/Coffee Afternoon.

### Is there a separation for you between your disability experience and your non-disability experience?

No, they have always contributed to being 'me'. Becoming disabled at a young age made me incorporate more into my life.

### What is going on in your life outside FLAG?

My animals are a major component of my life. I keep Rats, Siamese Fighting Fish, and Toads!

### What is their charm?

Rats are intelligent, affectionate and funny. I feel as if I'm their pet human really. The fish are small and beautiful. My dad was fascinated with the Siamese Fighters because of their survival behaviour in the wild. They are imperial invaders and move themselves over water AND land to oust any opposition and take over! The toads are just cute.

### So you like these qualities in humans then?

I appreciate humour, loyalty, and tenacity in people, yes.

### What else are you involved in?

Bio Medical research. My discipline is Neuro-Science and I have just started to get involved in Brain Tumour UK. I am now studying for a degree in cellular molecular biology at Anglia Ruskin University in Cambridge.

My current research is into mucosal vaccines, an alternative to injections that you breathe in. For women at risk of cervical cancer we are now developing a vaginal pessary which will save lives and money, especially for those in the developing world.

### That's fascinating. So you're a Scientist - what Arts do you enjoy?

I enjoy crafting and I'm very passionate about history. I've just taken up baking too!

### You've sold crafts to make money for FLAG. What were they?

Cards, beaded snowflakes, felt decorations, beaded jewellery. Watch out for the forthcoming cake pops!

### Lets get back to FLAG. Tell us how does the Committee, and FLAG Event Administrator Dylan organise the many events?

The Committee works incredibly hard and I am lucky to have their strengths backing up my role. Dylan has been a great asset and works hard to ensure the happiness of the members and success of the events. Committee meetings are once every six weeks and dates for events are set very early to allow for the massive amount of event coordination and planning that is involved - we always have a high take up! Transport is a military operation in itself!

### Any frustrations?

Sometimes our members don't see the extent of the preparations and the huge subsidy FLAG offers. And prompt responses are essential - we do need deadlines!

### Final question - have you enjoyed your role as Chair?

Immensely. I hope to continue because I have lots of ideas and suggestions going forward. FLAG is financially healthy and its membership is strong but we cannot become complacent!

### Thank you Laura.

And a big thank you to Ros for carrying out Laura's interrogation, sorry, interview.

## Ten Pin Bowling.

**Eat n Bowl, St Neots - 13th Feb 2014**

This was FLAG's groups second visit to the *Eat n Bowl* in St Neots. We found a different coach firm, Chambers, so gave them a try. Apart from the time it takes to get us all strapped in, which is always the case, the coach was great and the driver, Phil, was excellent.

The 32 FLAG members arrived at the venue, got a drink, split into five groups and played the first game. My wheelchair packed up working for a while which is my excuse for finishing last on the first game. It may also have been that certain of my opponents had some very lucky shots.



**Simon & John**



**Karina & Jill**



**Mark**



**Andrew**



**Kevin & Lyndsey**



**Gordon**



**Kerry**



**Mark**



**Simon & Gareth**





**Brendan**



**Fiona & Gareth**



**Diane & Tracey**



**Simon & Brendan**

After working up an appetite we sat down to a basket meal. My Cheeseburger and Chips were really tasty. It was time for the second game, came third, but no strikes.

I think everyone had a good time. Running a bit late we bundled onto the coach and headed back to base. A big thank you to all our volunteers who were as always a great support.  
Tracey Brightman



**Jeff**



**Christine**



**Dylan & Michael**



**Freda**



**Amy & Holly**



**Kerry**



**Matthew & Mark**



## AGM 2013/14. Pizza Supper / Sing-a-Long.

FLAG's Annual General Meeting is on the 10th April 2014 at Priory Methodist Church. The Committee will report on how well FLAG did last year and the events coming up over the next year.

This is your chance to say how you would like FLAG to be run. We rely on contributions from the membership to decide our future events. If you have an item you would like to be put on the Agenda for discussion please let us know before the AGM.



## Become a Committee Member.

FLAG is run by a Committee with the help of its Event Administrator, Dylan. At the AGM each job on the Committee comes up for re-election. The list below shows the 10 jobs that are available and those members listed so far.

If you would like to become a Committee member and help to run FLAG please let us know and you'll be put on the list for possible election at the AGM. Training may be given if you are elected.

Job on Committee	Names so far.
1. Chairperson.	Laura Peggs.
2. Vice-Chair.	Jeff Noble.
3. Secretary.	Lisa Thomas.
4. Treasurer.	Tracey Brightman.
5. Fundraiser.	
6. Newsletter Editor.	
7. Committee Support.	Ros Graham.
8. Joint Member Liaison.	Brendan Gaunt.
9. Joint Member Liaison.	Gordon Cooke.
10. Volunteer Co-ordinator.	Tracey Brimmell.

## Calendar of Proposed Events.

**10th April 2014.**  
AGM / Pizza Supper.

**May / June 2014.**  
Day Trip - Yet to be decided.

**July / August 2014**  
Quiz / Meal.

**September 2014.**  
Trip to a London Museum.

**October / November 2014.**  
Karaoke / Meal.

**December 2014**  
Christmas Meal.

The above is only a proposed list of events. Some events may be changed at a future date.

## Friends and Carers.

The Committee has noticed that some of you have been bringing a friend or carer to an event. They are non-members and so far have been enjoying the paying the same subsidised price for an event as a member does.

The Committee has discussed the issue and decided the following:

**Members Carers**—Members who bring a carer along to support them at an event do so because otherwise they would not be able to attend. In this case we will still allow the carer to come along at the subsidised rate.

**Members Friends**—We see members friends as non-members and so don't feel that we can use any of FLAG's funds to subsidise their participation. Therefore we will charge members friends the full price for an event. In this case it may be cheaper for the friend to become a member of FLAG which we would welcome. Also if an event is over subscribed we will give preference to members rather than non-members.



## Dates for Your Diary.

### FLAG Thursday Afternoon's.

Events are held from 2.00pm to 4.00pm at Priory Methodist Church, Newnham Avenue, unless otherwise stated.

6th Mar	Drop-In.
13th Mar	Drop-In.
20th Mar	Tea / Coffee / Cake Social Afternoon.
27th Mar	Drop-In.
3rd Apr	Drop-In.
10th Apr	AGM / Buffet (Evening)
17th Apr	Tea / Coffee / Cake Social Afternoon.
24th Apr	Drop-In.
1st May	Drop-In.
8th May	Drop-In.
15th May	Tea / Coffee / Cake Social Afternoon.
22nd May	Drop-In.
29th May	Committee Meeting
5th Jun	Drop-In.
12th Jun	Drop-In.
19th Jun	Tea / Coffee / Cake Social Afternoon.
26th Jun	Drop-In.
3rd Jul	Committee Meeting
10th Jul	Drop-In.
17th Jul	Tea / Coffee / Cake Social Afternoon.
24th Jul	Drop-In.
31st Jul	Drop-In.

## Valentine Heart Badges.

Laura Peggs raised another £30 for FLAG by selling Valentine Heart Badges at the Eat n Bowl event, 13th Feb 2014. Look out for more of Laura's crafts coming up in the future.

## FLAG Events.

Just a reminder to our members that our volunteers are there to support us at events but are not able to provide any personal care. If you need personal care during an event you are welcome to bring a carer along.

## Next Issue.

If any member has something they would like to write about or would like us to write about for the next issue please let us know.


**FLAG Bedford**  
 Committee Members  
 Administrator



**Laura Peggs**  
Chairperson



**Jeff Noble**  
Vice Chair



**Lisa Thomas**  
Secretary



**Tracey Brightman**  
Treasurer



**Nick Cochran**  
Newsletter Editor



**Tim Branson**  
Fundraiser



**Ros Graham**  
Committee Support



**Dylan Bowers**  
Administrator

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