



**SABN**  
Support in Bereavement

# ST ALBANS AND DISTRICT BEREAVEMENT NETWORK

## NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2009

Helpline Telephone No: 01727 841841 • Email: [help@sabn.org.uk](mailto:help@sabn.org.uk) • Website: [www.sabn.org.uk](http://www.sabn.org.uk)

### The Chairman's Letter

Welcome to our Summer Newsletter. Our first three Newsletters were funded by the 'Awards for All' National Lottery fund. They have been so well received we have decided to continue to produce them twice a year.

Our financial situation has improved significantly and, as you will see from our Treasurers report, is in a more healthy state than it has been over the last few years. We are now receiving statutory funding from Herts CC's Children Schools and Families, and Child and

Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), to support our work with bereaved children. We are also receiving a grant from the West Herts Primary Care Trust which helps us to provide effective adult counselling support. Welcome as this funding is, it falls short of what we need to maintain our service at the level we strive to achieve and which our clients have come to expect. We are enormously grateful therefore for the support that we have received from the Childwick Trust and the Graham Rowlandson Foundation and from

local organisations, churches and individuals. We were particularly pleased to receive £10,000 from the Abbey fireworks.

Since our last Newsletter we have held the Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving which was a great success. We are very grateful for the support of our Patron, the Rt Rev Christopher Foster, Bishop of Hertford, and members of the Cathedral staff and volunteers; not only for their help during the planning but also for the active roles they took in the service. Especial thanks must go to our Vice-

Chairman, Rev Peter Hudson; without his enthusiasm and energy this event could not have taken place.

Towards the end of last year we launched our new leaflet explaining the importance of bequests for charitable organisations such as ours at a lunch which was attended by many local solicitors. We are very grateful to Thai Rack for providing this lunch free of charge. We hope that a greater awareness of the value of bequests will in the longer term benefit our organisation.

... /continued overleaf

### A Time To Remember

On a fresh and breezy afternoon in November 2008 a thousand people gathered at St Albans Cathedral to share in a service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving, arranged by SABN in collaboration with the Cathedral Ecumenical Chaplaincy.

The occasion commenced with a moment of prayer followed by a sacred silence as families released balloons that were immediately swept up by



the breeze, high above the West Doors of the Cathedral and on into the bright blue heavens. On entering the Cathedral the congregation received a warm welcome from SABN volunteers, The Rt. Reverend Christopher

Foster, Bishop of Hertford, Dr. Michael Elves, Chairman of SABN and The Reverend Canon Kevin Walton, Canon Chancellor,

representing the Cathedral Ecumenical Chaplaincy. We were pleased to welcome, Cllr. Bert Pawle, Mayor of St Albans and Cllr. Kim Langley, Deputy Mayor of Welwyn and Hatfield. The music was enhanced by the singing of the Abbey Girls Choir led by their Director, Tom Winpenny.

The service had been arranged for all age worship and was led by The Reverend Canon Stephen Lake, Sub Dean, who encouraged a hundred young people to write a memory of their loved ones on leaves placed on a 'Tree of Life'. An invitation was extended to light a candle in thanksgiving for the special person and over 600 were lit. A love offering of £1240 was received to help defray the expenses

incurred for the service and for publicity.

Many people have written offering their thanks for the occasion:

*"The service yesterday was a wonderful mixture of reflection, light heartedness and hope for the future. The lighting of the candles and collecting of leaves was especially poignant. Everyone we spoke to was welcoming and kind and it was a joy to have attended."*

Vivianne Hornsby and on behalf of Gill Shipsey and Karen Ellis

This year's Service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance will be held in the Cathedral on **Sunday 22nd November 2009** commencing at 2.30 p.m. with the Balloon Release in front of the West Doors.

### The Annual Book of Remembrance

With the Chapter's agreement, the Bereavement Network gave an open invitation for anyone to have the names of their deceased relatives inscribed in an Annual Book of Remembrance. The Book of Remembrance for 2009 has been beautifully bound with some 250 names inscribed. In Holy Week it was placed on the altar in

the Ramryge Chantry which also houses the 'Ramryge Angels', six perspex sculptures by Claudia Brown, depicting stages of grief and loss. Already some eighty families have visited the Chapel and recorded their appreciation

*"A beautiful place for the Remembrance Book - wonderful to be here to remember."* Stan Grabecki

SABN will compile the Annual Book of Remembrance for 2010 and place it in the Chapel by Easter 2010. The final date for entries in the Book will be 31st December 2009. If you are interested in attending this year's Service of Thanksgiving and Remembrance, or in having a name inscribed in the Book, look



out for our posters and leaflets, or phone SABN on 01727 841914.

## ... /Chairman's letter continued

We have said goodbye to Sue Campbell, a member of our Management Committee and Hon Secretary to the Trustees. We are grateful for the work she has done. Jim Miller has retired from the Management Committee and as a Trustee after serving the Network since it began. We thank him for all the guidance he has provided and in particular for running in the London Marathon for us last year, raising £3,000. He will continue as a volunteer Counsellor. Inevitably a number of our volunteers have

retired from the Network and we owe them our thanks and wish them well for the future. We have also welcomed new Volunteers and we look forward to working with them. Our dedicated band of volunteers are our lifeblood and without them SABN could not function. We are always looking for new volunteers and if you are able to offer us your time and energy we would be delighted to hear from you. We are seeking new Trustees to replace those who have retired in recent months. If you are

interested, please do contact our office.

Demand for our services is growing. We responded to nearly 150 requests for help and advice in the last six months. Both our counselling and home visiting services have expanded. We have restructured our Social Groups and introduced new 'Talking Groups', details of which you will find below. The success of SABN is due in no small way to the dedication of our volunteers. However I must also pay tribute to our dedicated staff,

Viv, Charis, Olivia and Chris, all of whom put in much more time and effort than we expect of them. They keep our organisation running.

I do hope that you will enjoy reading our Newsletter and we look forward to your continuing support. As always we invite and welcome your views about SABN and how our services can be improved.

**Dr Michael W Elves**

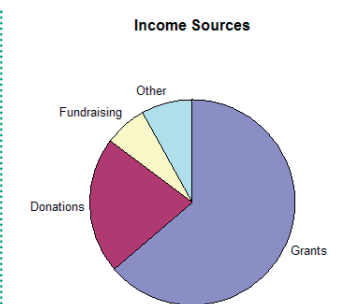
## OUR FINANCES – so far this year

They say that timing is vital. I have been very lucky to succeed Keith Burgess as SABN Treasurer at this point in time. He has done so much to establish and secure SABN's financial position over its first 5 years of operation that my job is made much easier.

The generous legacy received from the Estate of Molly Stone last summer has been used by the Trustees to provide an essential reserve to ensure that our services can be more consistently planned and funded in the future.

Nevertheless, we still need to raise almost £100,000 a year to support our existing core operations and additional activities cannot be considered unless specific funding is available. We have been fortunate this year in that the quality of the work of our staff and volunteers has been recognised through the award of significant grants from Herts County Council, West Herts PCT and district awarding bodies. These grants are supporting significant elements of both our children's and adult services.

The chart shows our sources of funding in the 7 months to 31st March 2009 and demonstrates the extent of our current dependence on grants. These grants, together with the generous donations from our supporters and our fundraising activities, have enabled us to fully fund our activities in the first 7 months of the year. However, as the credit crunch takes full effect, our ability to continue to successfully maintain our current level of grant funding must be in doubt and we will again need to



increase our community fundraising in order to maintain our services.

**David Wall**

Treasurer

SABN currently receive grant funding from the following:

### Children's Work

Herts CC, CSF 513 Prevention Fund (2 1/2 yr commissioning)

Herts CC, CSF, Targeted Services Fund

Herts CC, CAMHS Slippage Fund

Herts Community Foundation

CSF Learning & Development

Children's Workforce

Development Council

### Adult Work

West Herts PCT (3yr commissioning)

Childwick Trust

**We are extremely grateful to the following local organisations that have supported SABN with donations from September '08 to the present.**

German Lutheran Church

Graduate Women's Association

Homewood Road Church

Phillips Funeral Directors

Radlett Cork Lodge

Rotary Club of St Albans

Rotary Club, St Albans Priory

Soroptomists

St Albans (Aft) Townswomen's Guild

St Lawrence Mother's Union

St Mary's Women's Fellowship

St Stephen's Church PCC

The Cathedral & Abbey Church of St Albans

Trinity URC

Waitrose Community Project (St Albans & Harpenden)

Wilton Lodge

**In addition, we are grateful for many other donations from individuals, community groups and organisations (some of whom wish to remain anonymous) who value our work.**

## Bereavement Care in General Practice

A fax arrives from a hospital, the out-of-hours service records are downloaded from the previous evening's work, a phone call is received from a paramedic team called to attend a patient at home....news of a patient's death arrives in various ways. Sometimes the patient and their family are well known to me, the death is expected, and I can respond in a personal way with a phone call and an offer of a visit or surgery visit in the near future. Sometimes the patient is not familiar and the surgery does not have anyone else registered at the address. It is quite unusual nowadays to be asked to

certify a death during the daytime, so I rarely have immediate contact with bereaved relatives. Whatever the situation, the way I and my surgery respond can make a big difference to those close to the deceased person.

Our official role as doctors is to provide certification for registration of the death and burial or cremation. Following a bereavement, people vary widely in the care they need. For some, a brief acknowledgement at the next contact is all that they require, while others need regular and frequent support for some time. There may be anger about the medical care of

a loved one and I will need to try and find out the facts and help to interpret them as honestly as possible. Doctors do not like to fail, so it can be painful to admit that there may have been shortcomings in a patient's care. Allowing someone to express anger, and to apologise on behalf of my profession, can be very therapeutic for a bereaved person and allow them to move on.

It is not unusual to find that a bereavement some time in the past is the root cause of a current emotional upset or depressive illness. Sadly, some people develop quite complex bereavement

reactions, including alcohol dependency or other psychiatric illness needing specialist help. It is part of my role to identify when this has happened and to provide appropriate help, including referral to other services. For non-complex grief, I will, always tell patients about SABN and how to make contact. Above all, I hope that I will always reach out to patients as a fellow human being and give people space to be listened to.

**Dr Alison Davies, GP  
SABN Trustee and Member  
of Management Group**

## Work With Adults

Since our last publication, we have made some changes to our adult services. We have recruited new volunteers throughout the district to extend our home visiting service. Our **Counselling** services are now operating from 3 premises within St Albans and we have 18 professional counsellors. We have incorporated all our **Social Groups** in to one Group that meets twice monthly on a Thursday evening in St Albans.

The latest service that we have introduced to the Network is the **Talking Groups**. The Groups meet for 5 fortnightly sessions in St Albans and offer a place where it is safe to explore feelings and concerns around loss. Everything is confidential and the Group is facilitated by trained staff and volunteers. If you feel that you

would like to join a Talking or Social Group, please contact our Helpline.

We wish all our clients well. Remember, we are always here to help and support. We also wish to thank all our volunteers for their dedication and support for the Network. The following article has been written by a client who has given her permission to print:

*"Just over 3 years ago, I suffered an illness that left me unable to walk unaided and with terrible nerve pain. Six months after that my boyfriend left, then I realised that I would never be able to return to my job in London. I had worked in London for 20 years and did not know anyone in St Albans - pretty grim when you're housebound!*

*Various attempts were made to help me, including my statutory 6 sessions with an NHS counsellor and attending Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. It was a Friday morning when I was told that the last option was to be referred to a psychiatrist - the end of the world as far as I was concerned. On Friday afternoon SABN called. I'm not sure how they felt when I went to pieces on the phone, but amazingly SABN had a counsellor available. I can't put in to words how I felt when that lifeline was held out to me.*

*It would be wrong for me to say it was an easy journey or that things fell into place straight away, but my counsellor was there every week without fail. Her empathy was immediate; she didn't need to hold my hand to show me she understood*

*what I was going through, even though on many occasions my pain was such that I was unable to speak - all I could do was cry. She helped me understand and make sense of things that had pained me for years but which I'd locked away as too upsetting to face or deal with. She never crossed the boundaries of her role as my counsellor and I was able to tell her things I'd never told anyone before.*

*Before all this happened, my cup was always half empty. Now it's full. The dark times will always be there, but I know it's OK to cry and ask for help. Life is worth living. I honestly can't remember the last time I felt that. I'm leaving my counselling knowing that in my slot every week, someone else is now receiving the care that I once needed so desperately."*

## Our Volunteers

**HELLO** to: Jill Bareham, Jason Chambers, Hannah Gallant, Adrian Godden, Stephanie Griffin, Barbara Hearn, Margaret Pearce, Amanda Rogers, Iryna Yakloveva.

**GOODBYE & THANKYOU** to: Connie Bunker, Sue Campbell, Sandra Cooper, Chris Cowlard, Cynthia Douglass, Jolie Driscoll, Rev Brian Guinn, Elizabeth Kankam, Deirdre Rigby, Kieron Thayre.

**Viv Lawman, Network Co-ordinator**

### SABN VOLUNTEERS INVITED TO HOUSE OF COMMONS

In December 2008, Jan and I were invited to the House of Commons, to represent SABN, by the local MP, Anne Maine. The evening was a thank you and recognition for the work local volunteer organisations provide.

A tour of the House of Commons and Lords was conducted by the MP herself, and she gave lots of amusing and curious facts associated to both Houses. I was surprised by how small they are in real life. We both agreed that the evening was a truly memorable experience.

**John, SABN Volunteer Counsellor**

## Work with Children, Young People and Families

### BRINGING UP BEREAVED YOUNG CHILDREN

A recent Sunday Times article about JG Ballard, the well known writer, told the story of how he brought up three children after the sudden death of his wife. Few of his friends thought he would be able to manage but he felt that as long as the surviving parent was loving and remained close to the children, they would thrive. He turned out to be a capable and devoted father.

SABN has recently supported a number of fathers who are caring for very young children after the death of their mothers. Taking on the daily care of a young family can be very challenging especially for those Dads who have always worked full time. Establishing

routines, finding out about local support networks and learning to cope with the everyday ups and downs of a young family is hard and can feel very lonely. Perhaps one of the most difficult things is knowing how to respond to very young children who want to know when Mummy is coming back. Children under five often have little experience of death. They find it difficult to understand that death is universal and struggle, not only with the biological factors involved, but also the reasons why people die. They have to learn to differentiate between 'magic' causes, like someone wishing that a person would die, and the real causes of

death.

In his book, 'Grief in Young Children', Dr Atle Dyregrov provides some practical help for parents, teachers and professionals caught up in this difficult situation. He advises that very young children need an immediate sense that they will be taken care of, recommending physical closeness to help provide a sense of security. He also suggests that a parent or carer is honest about what has happened and stresses the importance of careful listening to the child's responses to ensure that they have understood. Meanwhile, he suggests that children should be given opportunities to express what

has happened in different ways allowing the child to talk, play or re-enact the events. Returning to normal routines is helpful for most children, including going back to nursery or school. Dyregrov describes how parents and carers can support their children over time and outlines ways in which common problems such as anger, sleeplessness, fear of separation, nightmares and restlessness can be gradually overcome.

If you are interested in more information about the care of children who have been bereaved please contact our Helpline.

**Charis Harbidge,**  
**SABN Children's Co-ordinator**

## FUNDRAISING

### Friends of SABN

Would you like to become a friend of SABN and help support us? Perhaps you would like to hold a coffee morning, organise a golf day or tennis tournament, run a quiz night. If you have a special birthday or anniversary, ask your friends and family to donate to SABN instead of giving you cards or gifts. How about asking your friends to sponsor you – it doesn't have to be energetic; you could be sponsored to lose weight, give up smoking ...! SABN can help with advice, forms, website info etc. These are ways in which two supporters have helped us recently:

#### FRIENDS OF SABN CELEBRATE GOLDEN WEDDING

Geoff and I have recently celebrated our Golden Wedding. Having reached such a high spot in our marriage, we planned to share it with our family and friends with a Luncheon Party. Knowing that friends would want to mark the occasion with a gift left us in a quandary. At our stage of life we are more inclined to think about getting rid of material items than adding to the many we have. Having been involved with bereavement care and knowing of the rapid growth in demand for the care and expertise of SABN, made the decision easy. We suggested to our guests that, if they wished, a donation to SABN would be appreciated and £200 was given towards the necessary and valued work of the charity. I am hoping that this may encourage other people with celebrations to consider making contributions to such a worthwhile cause.

Mary Kirk

#### RUNNING FOR SABN

Clive Borthwick, husband of Olivia our Administrator, has recently taken up running. He chose SABN to benefit from the sponsorship from his first 10 mile run. £330 was donated by Clive's friends and colleagues and SABN is extremely grateful to everyone who supported him.



#### GREAT NORTH RUN 20 September 09 Gateshead/Newcastle

SABN have been offered places by The National Association for Colitis and Crohn's Disease. If you would like to run and can raise a minimum of £350 in sponsorship to be shared between NACC and SABN, contact Chris Graham before 1 July '09.

### 100 Club

How would you like to have your cake and eat it by supporting SABN on a regular basis and having the chance of being in a cash prize draw every month? Each month 100 numbers will be entered into the draw and 4 numbers drawn with the chance of winning £100, £50, £25 or £10. Twice a year, there will be one prize of £500, two of £50 and one £25. You can have as many numbers as you want to increase your chances of winning. You have to be in it to win it!!! Tell your friends and family and contact us if you are interested.

### 10 Years Younger Came to Trinity!!!!

A good evening was had by all who came to the Pamper & Shopping Night in March. 19 student beauticians from Barnfield College and two beauty consultants from Boots, worked their magic doing mini-facials, make-up, manicures and holistic treatments. There was time to shop for hand made chocolates, home made cakes, designer flowers & plants, handbags, jewellery and more. Everyone who came along said how much they had enjoyed the evening and they're looking forward to next year's event. A big thank to you all, with your support, the Network raised nearly £1400!!!



### EVENTS FOR YOUR DIARY

#### Summer Party and Hog Roast 11th July, 7.00 p.m.

Chiswell Green United Reformed Church – Tickets £20 inc a drink and Summer Buffet.

Get your friends together and make up a table, or come on your own - we can guarantee a great evening.

Music 'Spread A Little Happiness' – songs from the 30's - 50's David Steed and Daphne Baker.

#### 2009 Annual Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving in St Albans Cathedral

Sunday, 22nd November 2009 at 3.00 p.m.

#### Christmas Floral Design Demonstration and Shopping

Friday, 4th December 09, 7.00 p.m. Trinity United Reformed Church

Come along to our Christmas event to include a floral demonstration from Ben & Barbara from BigDay flowers.

Shop for those last minute Christmas presents – Tickets £7 inc demonstration, mulled wine and mince pies.

If you are interested in any of the above, contact Chris Graham on 01727 841914, or email: [christinegraham@sabn.org.uk](mailto:christinegraham@sabn.org.uk).



Chris Graham

**STOP PRESS ... Watch out for our new website which is about to 'go live': [www.sabn.org.uk](http://www.sabn.org.uk). You can keep up to date with all our news and events as well as finding information on our support services and how to contact us.**

In accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, all information is securely held by SABN and will be treated confidentially and with respect. It will be held solely for the purpose of providing support for bereaved persons. The information will not be disclosed to external agents without the express permission of the individual concerned, other than to comply with statutory or other legal requirements. In order to ensure that information that we hold on you is accurate and up-to-date you should inform the SABN office of any changes. Information may be used for SABN's own promotional purposes which include our newsletter, information on our activities and fundraising. This may be done by telephone, email or post. If you do not wish your information to be used in this way, or you do not wish to be contacted by electronic means, please inform us.

### Jeffrey S King FGPT

Professional Toastmaster & Comper  
Master of Ceremonies  
– Event Organiser –

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If you would like to advertise in the next edition of our Newsletter which has a circulation of 1,500 copies in the St Albans and Harpenden district, then please get in touch with Chris Graham. We are doing some very special prices!!!