

OUR ANNUAL MEETING – 18 MARCH 2010

St Albans and District Bereavement Network celebrated 7 years of support to bereaved adults, children and families in our community at their Annual Meeting last night. The High Sheriff of Hertfordshire, Mrs Janie Wentworth-Stanley, who has taken an active



interest in the work of the Network, handed out awards to 40 volunteers and staff who had worked for the Network for over 5 years, as counsellors, home visitors, helpline workers, trustees and staff. Awards were given to Dr Mary Groves Rowe and Colin Rowe who were founders of the Network and are now Patrons. The High Sheriff praised the work that the Network does and thanked the volunteers saying that without them 'the Network would be nothing'.



The Network was also pleased to welcome the The Right Worshipful the Mayor of the City and District of St Albans, Cllr Chris Oxley, and the Town Mayor of Harpenden, Cllr Rosemary Farmer. Cllr Oxley, told the meeting of the impact that his conversations with people who had been bereaved had had on him when he attended the Remembrance Service organised by the Network at St Albans Abbey in November. 'I think you are a fabulous organisation – get yourselves known. Let

the world know what you do'. Cllr Rosemary Farmer, Mayor of Harpenden, welcomed the new support group in Harpenden which would be an enormous benefit to the residents. She spoke of the gratitude in her own family for support received from the Network and the great esteem in which the service is held in the community.



Nearly 70 volunteers, funders, donors and friends attended the event in the delightful surroundings of the Vineyard Church in St Albans.

They were welcomed by the Chairman, Dr Michael Elves, who reported a very busy year for the Network. Whilst it had been a successful year financially thanks to commissioning from Herts CC and the PCT, grants from bodies including the Graham Rowlandson Trust and Childwick Trust, donations large and small from community organisations and individuals and a variety of fundraising events, the Treasurer, David Wall expressed concern that we were moving into a difficult funding environment. The uncertain political and financial situation indicated that funding to local commissioning bodies may be cut and the Network will become increasingly sources of dependant on alternative funding.



Viv Lawman,
Charis
Coordinator,

with adults and children. Charis spoke of the impact that recent suicides and accidental deaths of young people had had in local schools and in the community. Social networking sites and mobiles mean that these tragedies ripple through schools affecting large numbers of young people. 'We need to champion children's needs in difficult circumstances, providing children with a safe space. We do make a difference'. The audience were also privileged to hear testimonies from our adult clients read by Viv Lawman and to listen to a client who movingly related her experience of bereavement and the support that she had received from the Network. An SABN counsellor and children's visitor spoke of how volunteers travel a little way along the painful pathways of the bereaved. She was impressed with 'what they give back to us and what we learn from them. We can make a difference'.

Network Coordinator, and
Harbidge, Child
spoke about their work