

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

I was delighted to be elected as Chairman of BACO(Bucks Association for the Care of Offenders) at the AGM in 2017. There is a great deal to learn. I would like to thank Ted Vine, Diane Long, Mary Cronin and Roz Rossington for their warm welcome, patience and tutoring. The Prison Governors and staff have been very helpful; it is heartening to know how much goodwill there is for BACO in the County.

My predecessor as Chair, the sadly missed Gill Vine, worked tirelessly for the charity alongside her husband Ted for twenty five years. She very much wanted BACO to continue and knew we needed to inject new blood into both the Membership and the Executive Committee. I am delighted that in October 2017 we welcomed three new volunteers to the Executive Committee.

Caroline Donald as Membership Secretary

Fiona Paine as Fundraiser

Joe Barclay as Committee Member (without portfolio) & they join;

Ted Vine – Prison Support Service Co-ordinator

Mary Cronin – Treasurer

Roz Rossington – Grants Administrator

Diane Long wanted to step down from her work on the committee as Membership Secretary and Minute Taker. On behalf of everyone involved I would like to thank her for all she has done since she joined BACO in 2010. Diane is on holiday and unable to come to the AGM but she has written an interesting potted history of her career which is included in this report.

There are no salaried staff and we have no office. Our expenses are kept to a minimum and a very small proportion of member's annual subscription goes towards our prison support staff travel expenses and administration costs.

I would like to thank Andrew Richardson BA FCA and his colleagues for once again auditing our accounts without charge, it is much appreciated.

Thank you to Peter Costello CEO of Heart of Bucks and his staff who permit us to use their postal address for publication on the website as BACO's official address.

To Isobel Michael thank you for your advice on fundraising and the new regulations on GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation). Members, if you haven't completed your forms please do so and return to Caroline Donald; we won't be able to contact you in the future unless you give us your permission to do so.

A huge thank you to all those members who have given so generously in addition to their annual subscription.

Thank you to the Rothschild Foundation, The Charles Hayward Foundation, McAndrew Trust, The Arts Society, Church of Latimer, Heart of Bucks Grants and all the Members both well established and new.

I thought it might be helpful to all those new to BACO to give some explanation of how we operate
Further information may be found on our website which is due for an update in 2018
www.baco.org.uk

What do we do?

Bucks Association for the Care of Offenders (BACO) aims *to help rehabilitate and reduce reoffending in Buckinghamshire*. We achieve this by giving support to serving prisoners, those released on licence or those serving community sentences. Requests for grants are varied and the average grant awarded is £50. We consider a wide range of requests from providing essential household items to an ex-offender moving into rented accommodation, to help towards the costs of training courses, replacing birth certificates or driving licences, clothing, books, educational materials. Our Grant Administrator has listed all grants made in 2017 and this is available at the AGM or by request.

How do we do this?

There are two systems, external and within the Prisons.

External: Our Grants Administrator receives requests from Probation Officers or the Youth Offending Team on behalf of their clients to ask for help with a wide variety of things.

If the Grants Administrator deems a request is not standard she will refer to the Chairman. Here are two examples of a non-standard request:

1. An ex-offender recently released from prison and had been homeless for 14 years prior to being inside. He has finally found accommodation at the Old Tea Warehouse in Wycombe. Once living in a more stable environment he became involved in art activities which was a big part of his life before becoming homeless. He now teaches ex-offenders on a voluntary basis and wants to buy some display cases to show his work to his students and to keep it neat. His only income is ESA (Employment Support Allowance) and his rent is covered by Housing Benefit. He would like 4 x A6 books which will cost £30. A grant was awarded.
2. An ex-offender is working with TVCRC (Thames Valley Community Rehabilitation Company) in Wycombe. He gets ESA and Housing Benefit but has been spending all his money recently visiting his father in hospital in intensive care recovering from a major stroke. In the meantime his gas cooker has broken and cannot be repaired. He has identified a second hand one via Central Aid (Wycombe based charity that recycles furniture and appliances) for £100. A grant was awarded.

Within Prisons:

We currently operate a Prison Support Volunteer service in two out of our four prisons. Prisoners put in an application to ask for a grant from BACO and see the Volunteer on a face to face once a month on an appointments basis with a prisoner orderly helping to facilitate.

We would like to hear from anyone who might be interested in training as a Prison Support Volunteer. Please contact any member of the Executive Committee.

Which prisons do we serve?

Aylesbury Young Offenders Institute (HMAYOI): for young people aged 18-24. It holds the longest sentenced young male adults in the English prison system. 50% of these young men will go on to serve long sentences in other prisons.

Capacity is 444 .

Laura Sapwell is the Governor.

We have a new volunteer for the Prison Support Service who is in the process of being security vetted on behalf of the MOJ (Ministry of Justice) our training co-ordinator will start the training as soon as security clearance is issued.

HMP WoodHill: is currently a Category A & core local establishment prison serving both Crown and Magisterial courts in the Thames Valley region and Northamptonshire.

Capacity is 819 .

Nicola Marfleet is the Governor.

Woodhill is undergoing some restructuring and is destined to become a Category B prison and lose its local remand status. Until this reorganisation has happened we are not actively recruiting a BACO prison support volunteer. I would hope to have more information about our plans for reinstating a BACO presence at the 2019 AGM.

HMP Grendon: a Category B/C prison of Therapeutic Communities. It promotes positive relationships, personal responsibility and social participation. Members of BACO are regularly invited to attend 'Socials' on the various wings. These 'social events' give members the opportunity to gain an understanding of how the prison works from having direct contact with the prisoners.

Capacity is 238.

Jamie Bennett is the Governor

The men at Grendon have great affection and appreciation for Ted Vine, the Prison Support Volunteer and Co-ordinator and all that he does. With the Governor and staff's support Ted is a regular visitor most Thursdays on the wings liaising with the prisoners and with the prisoner representatives (Rep's). He assesses and processes applications for BACO grants alongside supporting the community with purchasing items needed for the fish tanks. He runs a watch repair service and assists the budgie and cockatiel project all of which which encourage responsibility of ownership, good housekeeping and fish and bird husbandry.

HMP Springhill: a category D open prison working closely with Thames Valley Probation and CRC.

Prison capacity is 335

Jamie Bennett is the Governor.

Ted is currently training Fiona Paine and Milly Soames to become Prison Support Service Volunteers in Springhill with a view to having them both fully trained by the end of 2018.

Thank you to all the Prison Governors and their staff for making it possible for us to have a presence in the prisons. The voluntary sector is reliant on the support and goodwill of the Governors and prison staff. There are ongoing challenges with staff shortages and staff retention without the help and support of the prison staff BACO Prison Support Staff Volunteers could not operate.

We are grateful to Jamie Bennett for allowing BACO to meet in the Springhill Boardroom . Thank you to Grendon and Springhill Business Hub, Grendon and Springhill Libraries, HMAYOI Library, all the HMPPS probation staff, CRC's, Youth Offending Services who work so closely with us.

What are our hopes?

To raise awareness of BACO.

To recruit new Members.

To raise funds to allow us to continue our work.

To recruit more volunteers.

In all that we do, we aim to contribute towards breaking the cycle of reoffending primarily by offering financial assistance to those leaving our Buckinghamshire prisons and those ex-offenders living in Bucks and to help rehabilitation within our Prisons.

How do we gauge our success?

This is very hard for a small organisation like ours to do. There are national statistics for measuring reoffending rates but at present there are no statistics that reflect re-offending within Buckinghamshire. We rely on feed- back from our prisoners once they are released into the community and how they manage whilst on probation. We rely on those serving prisoners to tell us how individual grants have made a difference to them whilst serving their sentence. We receive feed- back from Probation and CRC staff. Nearly all the prison population of 85,556 (MOJ stats Dec 2017) will be released at some time back into the community we believe that our grants

- Help prevent re-offending,
- Help restore self-esteem & self-worth,
- Help an ex-offender back into employment,
- Help support an offender's family stay together at a moment of crisis.

Some facts:

Reoffending is estimated to cost the economy £13 billion pounds annually, to the victim of those crimes it is incalculable.

Nearly everyone currently in prison will be released at some point into the community.

The average annual overall cost of keeping a prisoner in prison is £38,042.

In a recent survey of prisoners 97% said they wanted to stop re-offending. When asked what would help them they listed in order of priority;

Something to do (work), somewhere to live and someone who cares about them.

Gill Vine Memorial Fund

Gill Vine died in May 2017. Members, prisoners, friends and family all contributed to the Gill Vine Memorial Fund which has been donated in support of a variety of projects:

Equipment for the Grendon Band

Toys for the Residents children's play area on Family visiting days

Equipment for @Prison Bars', a recording project

Equipment & materials for a fund-raising card making project

Equipment for the Grendon Promotion Project which the staff use in promoting the therapeutic work undertaken at Grendon to other prisons.

Two beautiful Amalancier trees with dedication plaques have been planted near the Conference Centre in the grounds of Grendon and an unveiling ceremony took place on August 15th 2017 which was well attended by family and friends and Grendon residents.