



**Annual Report**  
**January – December 2019**  
**Presented at the**  
**Annual General Meeting**  
**16<sup>th</sup> September 2020**

As Chair of the Bucks Association for the Care of Offenders (BACO) I am delighted to present my third Annual Report for 2019. Our Members are the back bone of the organisation and without their support and generosity we would not be able to help the men serving sentences in the four prisons in Buckinghamshire nor the ex-offenders released on temporary licence (ROTL) and living in the county to change their lives and become contributing and respected members of society.

We recruited 13 new Members this year and we look forward to welcoming them remotely or in person at future BACO Events.

**Board of Trustees**

My sincere thanks to the Trustees who give their time and expertise diligently and generously.

Joe Barclay	Governance
Mary Cronin	Treasurer
Caroline Donald	Membership Secretary
Ruth Farwell	Education and Training Lead and Prisoner Support Volunteer (PSV) HMP Grendon
Fiona Paine	Fund Raising & Prisoner Support Volunteer (PSV) HMP Springhill
Roz Rossington	Grants Administrator and lead Probation and Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC)
Camilla Soames	Chair and Prisoner Support Volunteer (PSV) HMYOI, Aylesbury & HMP Woodhill

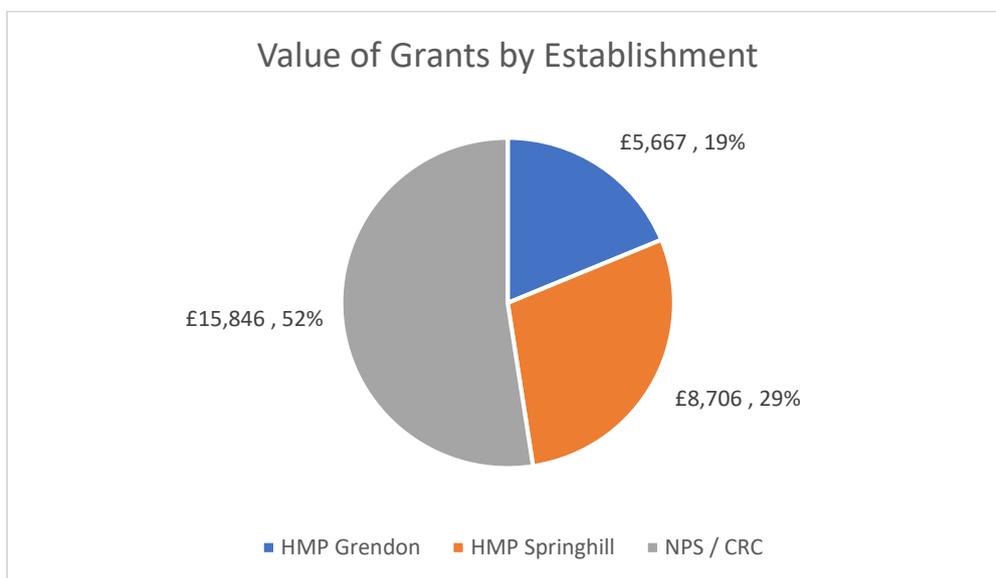
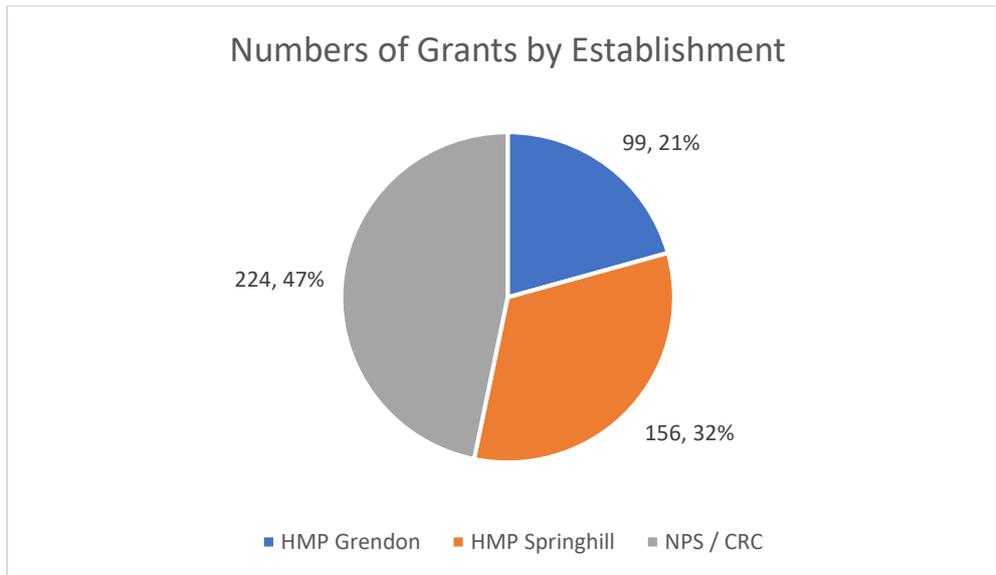
**Governance**

Following Charity Commission best practice recommendations Joe Barclay reviewed our constitution and with invaluable pro bono guidance from Danielle Austin of Geoffrey Leaver Solicitors a vote was passed at the AGM on 08.05.20 to proceed with dissolving Old BACO and transfer all its assets to a newly incorporated charitable company limited by guarantee. On 14.10.19 at an Extraordinary Meeting Members unanimously passed a motion to transfer

all assets from old BACO to new BACO. There is no change in the charity's name nor in its objects and aims but it has a new Registered Charity Number: 1186375 and a new bank account. Lloyds Bank: sort code 30-90-89: A/C 53874068. The final step of this transition is listed under Agenda Item 7 and hopefully will be passed at the AGM. As of January 2020 new BACO has been operating under its new Articles of Association. We are indebted to the professional advice given by Geoffrey Leaver throughout this process.

### Grants

2019 BACO made 481 grants totalling £30,219.00 an average of £62.00 per grant



*NPS / CRC refers to National Probation Service and Community Rehabilitation Company*

## **Our work**

### **Education and training – Ruth Farwell**

2019 saw the Committee agreeing to enhance its proactive approach to education and training initiatives in prisons. While continuing making small grants to individuals, these initiatives are designed to reach further and support more prison residents. A key component of the strategy is working in partnership with other organisations to avoid duplication and increase value derived from the funds invested.

Three initiatives were the focus in 2019-20:

- 1 Tasters of the Cell Workout programme
- 2 Collaboration with Prison Education Trust
- 3 Big Ideas seminar series, HMP Grendon

The Cell Workout programme has been developed by LJ Flanders, a former prisoner, author of the successful book of the same name and one of the Ministry of Justice's New Futures Network Fitness Ambassadors. The full Cell Workout programme promotes the value of physical fitness and of adopting a mindset to embrace physical training while in prison. With funding from BACO, Cell Workout tasters have been held in HMYOI Aylesbury on 28 November 2019 and HMP Woodhill on 24 February 2020 with positive evaluations from the staff and prison residents involved. The taster can lead to a two week workshop for 12-15 prisoners and is potentially a springboard to training mentors in the prison to provide on-going support which can provide a way into employment in a gym or as a personal trainer. Following the success of the taster, funding for the delivery of the workshop at HMYOI Aylesbury is being considered in conjunction with senior staff there.

Collaboration with the Prison Education Trust (PET) is being explored with its Chief Executive, Rod Clark, who attended the Committee meeting in January 2020. Pending other ideas coming into fruition, BACO has donated £5,000 to PET to fund specifically applications from young men at HMYOI Aylesbury. This is mutually beneficial as PET has insufficient funds to fulfil all of the applications from Aylesbury which meet its criteria and BACO was wishing to increase its profile at Aylesbury with more education and training initiatives.

BACO has agreed to sponsor the monthly Big Ideas series of high profile speakers at HMP Grendon. A similar series has successfully operated at HMP Whitemoor in conjunction with Learning Together at the University of Cambridge, which provides opportunities for people at university and people currently in prison to learn with each other within the prison environment. Big Ideas at Grendon is being organised by BACO with support from colleagues at the University of Cambridge and mentors from each wing at Grendon to suggest speakers and arrange the venue which would rotate among the wings. The idea is to stimulate debate and develop interest in new ideas and the power of education to bring about positive change to lives. Regrettably, the tragic events at the Fishmongers' Hall in November 2019 affecting Learning Together and then the impact of Covid-19 has meant that the start of this initiative, scheduled for May 2020, has been delayed. It is intended that it will resume when practically possible.

## **In Prisons**

Buckinghamshire has four prisons. Our presence in the prisons is dependent on the trusted working relationship between BACO Prisoner Support Volunteers (PSV) and the prison staff. This is precious and we are privileged to be allowed to draw keys and access the prisons.

BACO is known and respected in HMP Grendon and HMP Springhill thanks to years of hard work and relationship building by previous BACO Chair and Volunteers. In 2019 we have made inroads in re-establishing our work in HMYOI, Aylesbury and HMP Woodhill. Governors and staff in both establishments have welcomed us and we have access to attend meetings with staff from Reducing Reoffending and Education and Librarians. In 2019 we had presentations to both staff and men lined up in both Aylesbury and Woodhill and have been temporarily thwarted by CV-19 and the fulfilment of an MOJ regulation in the sharing of information.

To evaluate our work we rely heavily on testimonials from both men and staff. Many can be found on the home page of our website [www.baco.org.uk](http://www.baco.org.uk). In conversation with the men they are often surprised to learn that much of our funding comes from our members who have faith that they can change their lives for the better.

BACO has recruited a new prisoner support volunteer (PSV) for HMP Woodhill and we are grateful to Fiona Paine for her fulfilment of this role in HMP Springhill and to Ruth Farwell as PSV for HMP Grendon. I am currently the PSV for HMYOI, Aylesbury and HMP Woodhill.

We are grateful to all prison staff who make it possible for BACO to work in their establishments.

## **HMP Grendon**

### **Prisoner Support Volunteer – Ruth Farwell**

During the period January – December 2019, 99 small grants were awarded to Grendon residents. A revised application system was put in place during October 2019 and this caused a slight hiatus while the existing applications were processed and the new scheme bedded in. The new system came into full operation by the start of 2020 but then slowed again once the Covid-19 arrangements in prisons came into place. Fortunately the new system lent itself to remote implementation and the rate of receipt of applications is again increasing.

Most of the grants have been awarded for essential clothing or electronic equipment such as radios and DVD players. The latter are important in the ability of the men to manage their own time and well-being, even more so during the changed arrangements under Covid-19, and are in some cases necessary for the continuation of their studies.

With the benefit of a grant from the Wyvern Arts Society, BACO has been able to continue its contribution to art therapy projects at Grendon including the Artist in Residence Scheme, which is funded by the Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Charitable Trust and managed through the Ikon Gallery in Birmingham. The Wyvern Arts Society grant will enable the purchase of printing making equipment to be used in conjunction with the residency. BACO was also

able to assist with the purchase of sketch books and small canvases for all the Grendon wings during the Covid-19 period. On the 29 January 2020 there was an exhibition of art and craft work produced by the men with some stunning and thought provoking creative works displayed. BACO members were able to attend and meet those men whose work was part of the show.

For the seventh year BACO supported the Six Book Reading Challenge in Grendon in conjunction with the Reading Agency and organised by Grendon Librarian Debbie Lovell. Prizes funded by BACO were awarded to all the men who completed the challenge at an award ceremony on 11 December 2019, including a talk by published author Louise Candlish, and supplemented by smaller events on some of the wings in early March 2020. A BACO trophy was presented to the wing with the highest number of completers. All the events were attended by BACO members.

## **HMP Springhill**

### **Prisoner Support Volunteer - Fiona Paine**

Applications to BACO for grants from residents in HMP Springhill have been steadily increasing from about 5 a month when I took over 18 months ago to an average of 15 a month in 2019.

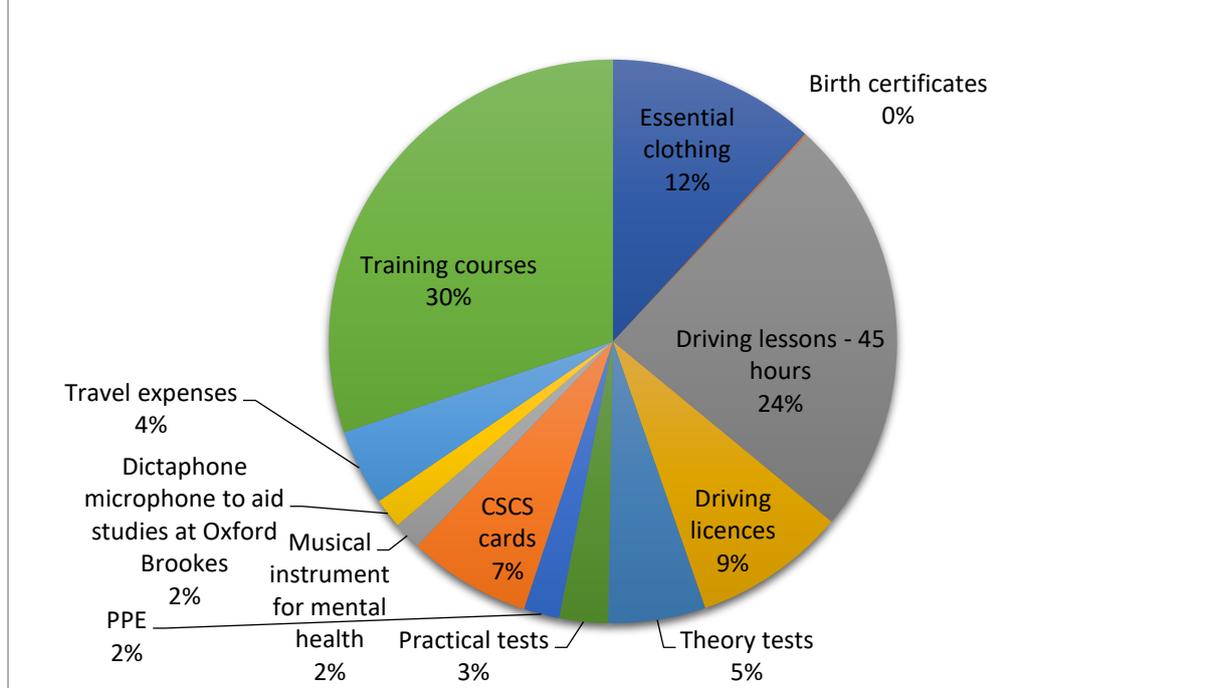
HMP Springhill is a category D resettlement prison where men are sent as they reach the end of their sentence or they are deemed low risk. Approx 3 months after arrival and a period of community and voluntary work, men are assessed in order to allow them out on day release for paid work in the community or to go on training courses.

Training can be sought for qualifications to work with a variety of companies such as Network Rail, HGV lorry companies and many different building site skills such as basic Health and Safety (CSCS card) to digger, dumper and telescopic handler driving courses, gas and electric fitters' courses and correspondence courses. BACO receives many requests for help towards the cost of these training courses which are often very expensive. Men are encouraged to apply to other charities in addition to BACO in order to raise the funds – this can be a very slow process and sadly, some men are released before they can actually take the course.

BACO also receives many requests for help with driving licences and theory and practical tests. It is imperative that upon release, residents are driving legally. Some residents are able to have a car at the prison enabling them to go further afield to work by day. BACO does not help with the cost of cars or insurance, despite frequent requests.

BACO began to help with basic PPE (personal protective equipment) as it seems that, as the men are employed through agencies, they can be disadvantaged if they do not have their own kit. We continue to supply applicants with essential clothing.

## BACO awarded £8,724 to residents in HMP Springhill between 1 January - 31 December 2019.



### HMYOI, Aylesbury

#### Prisoner Support Volunteer – Camilla Soames

A new Manager of Reducing Re-offending, Hannah Young has been very encouraging of BACO's presence in HMYOIA. The prison was put into special measures in March 2019 and the number of young men was reduced so that necessary changes could be made to make it a safer place for staff and young men. We were invited to present our work to the staff and prisoners but this has been postponed due to lockdown under CV-19 restrictions.

Governor Laura Sapwell has moved to HMP Bullingdon and the acting Governor is Andy Routley. Having passed security checks and permitted to draw keys, I attended meetings to set up the process to receive applications for grants from the young men. What we lack is awareness within the establishment and this is something I will be working to promote once we are allowed back in when the lockdown measures due to CV-19 have been eased.

In December Ruth Farwell, Peter Lloyd and I attended a talk in the library given by Michael Maisie, author and ex-offender, an event organised by The National Literacy Trust.

## **HMP Woodhill**

### **Prisoner Support Volunteer – Camilla Soames**

HMP Woodhill has been in the process of changing its status from a Category A local core prison to a Category B training prison. This has been a long and exacting process. BACO has been welcomed by Governor Nicola Marfleet and Head of Reducing Re-offending Olivia Ker. I had been invited to attend monthly meetings of the 'Quality Improvement Group' and implementing the process to get applications to BACO established was progressing well albeit slowly. The combination of lock down due to CV-19 and a formality in securing an MOJ 'agreement of information sharing' between BACO and the prison has halted our delivery.

The good news is we have found an excellent new volunteer to start at HMP Woodhill once he has been security cleared and our agreement is in place and the Governor invites us back in.

## **In the Community**

### **National Probation Service (NPS) Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRC) - Roz Rossington**

52% of grants made in 2019 were to those released into Buckinghamshire, including Milton Keynes and who are working with either the National Probation Service or Thames Valley Community Rehabilitation Company. The grant requests are assessed and processed by Roz Rossington.

This year Roz has met with the probation team in Milton Keynes, together with representatives of two not for profit organisations (IXION and Aspire) who help with prisoner support and education programmes. This has really helped in understanding some of the key challenges all the organisations face and how our grants, however small, can help.

One of our biggest areas for grant giving is for basic clothing and shoes. Often ex-offenders leave prison with only the clothes they are wearing either because they have lost their accommodation whilst serving their sentence, or because they have lost/gained weight. We help them to get at least one change of clothes, a new pair of trainers or warm clothing during the winter. Being able to keep clean and presentable makes a huge difference to confidence and willingness to engage with the various agencies supporting them to get their lives outside the prison in order.

For a redacted list of all grants made in 2019, please ask Roz [grants@baco.org.uk](mailto:grants@baco.org.uk).

## **Partnerships**

As a small organisation we are keen to work in partnership with other charities working in the Sector. The National Criminal Justice Arts Alliance (NCJAA) based in London represents artists and arts organisations working in criminal justice settings across the UK. The NCJAA promotes effective creative practice, develops research and policy for access to arts and culture as a springboard to positive behaviour change. The Rothschild Foundation has funded a NCJAA project to develop understanding and collaboration and explore new

models for arts programming in Buckinghamshire prisons. BACO was invited to join the practice development group and be a part of the conversation and we have met twice; the work is ongoing.

In December Mavis and Mable the BACO mascots (Mediterranean donkeys) were for the second year invited to meet the families of men acting in and attending the Kestrel Theatre Pantomime production in collaboration with the Irene Taylor Trust December 2019 at HMP Springhill. Thirteen men wrote, directed and performed 'Rio's Extraordinary Christmas'. The donkeys greeted the families as they arrived at the visitors centre and then led the parade to the performance space.

## **Fundraising**

We owe Fiona Paine our thanks for helping to secure the following funds from the trusts and foundations listed below. Thank you to Trustee Ruth Farwell who whilst High Sheriff of Buckinghamshire 2018/2019 nominated BACO to Anthony Stansfeld, Thames Valley Police Crime Commissioner as a recipient of monies to help with advancing BACO's work with educational projects.

£25,000	Ex High Sheriff Professor Ruth Farwell from TVP Crime Commissioner
£ 3,000	Anson Trust
£ 1,000	K E Priddeaux-Brune
£ 1,000	Eyre Family Foundation
£ 1,000	Hayward Foundation
£ 500	Carrington Charitable Foundation
£ 500	Aldo Trust

Thank you to all Members who have made generous donations above their annual subscriptions of £20.00 per annum.

Thank you to Henry Allmand CE of Heart of Bucks (HOB) and to his staff who continue to support BACO by allowing us to use the HOB offices as our poste restante and donate time, effort and postage.

## Events

In June 2019 we held a joint fund-raising event with Buckingham Association of Citizen Advice Bureau (BACAB). It took place in the walled garden at Eythrope on a balmy summers evening. We are very grateful to Peter & Léonie Thorogood who conceived the idea and donated the delicious champagne. Canapés were made and served by members of Waddesdon Manor Catering team, one of whom had been a previous beneficiary of a BACO grant whilst serving at HMP Springhill, and the BACAB committee. Thank you to Head Gardener Susie Hanson, Lord Rothschild and the Rothschild Foundation for allowing us to make such good use of the beautiful gardens.

Thank you to Working Title Films for making a private screening of Mary Queen of Scots in aid of BACO possible. It took place on a bitterly cold snow-covered evening in January in the Bernard Hall, Cuddington. Thank you to Chris Long the projectionist, to the Cuddington Cinema Club team, and Jay of Cuddington Stores for opening the bar and thank you to all those supporters who were unable to get there because of the snow and didn't ask for a refund!

## Meanwhile

The BACO AGM is normally scheduled to take place in May, this year 2020 we postponed the AGM until September and will be holding it in line with Government guidelines around CV-19. Our Trustees and Prisoner Support Volunteers have not been able to visit any of our prisons. We have kept in touch with prison staff and have helped by making three one off grants to support the men where a twenty-three hour a day lock up regime has been implemented. From what we glean the staff have done an excellent job in preventing the virus from spreading through the prisons. At time of writing this our Prisoner Support Volunteers are waiting for the invitation to resume their visits to their respective establishments following all Government and local prison guidelines. For further information on how the pandemic has affected the criminal justice system and looking ahead open the link to a report from the Criminal Justice Alliance that BACO is a member of <http://criminaljusticealliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Routes-to-Recovery-briefing.pdf>

The last HMP Grendon social attended by Members was on March 12<sup>th</sup> 2020. We hope that they will be able to resume in the future.

2021 sees BACO celebrating its fiftieth birthday. We have plans afoot!

Thank you for taking the time to read this and if you know of anyone who would like to support our work by becoming a Member and or making a donation please direct them to our website [www.baco.org.uk](http://www.baco.org.uk) or email me [info@baco.org.uk](mailto:info@baco.org.uk).

Camilla Soames

