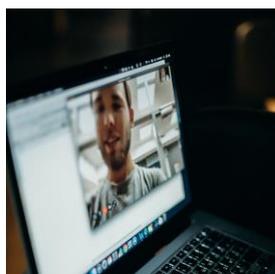


Dear BACO Members, Supporters & Friends,

We have had so little opportunity to see each other this year that the Committee thought a newsletter might be a good idea. We all hope this finds you well with hope in your hearts.

2020 has been hard for everyone. We can only imagine how much harder it has been for those serving a sentence during this time or upon release after a long sentence and trying to find work. BACO volunteers have had no access to prisons since lockdown in March when a twenty-three hour cell confinement regime was introduced by the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) to keep prisoners and staff as safe as possible. All work placements in the establishments and all face to face education, gym attendance, religious group practices and family visits stopped. BACO, along with other rehabilitative charities, has had to come up with alternative ways of delivering its services. We believe that prisoners have been commendably compliant to the new regime due to fear of how rapidly the corona virus could spread within a prison and because of concern for their families. The constricted regime has meant far less prisoner on prisoner violence and towards staff but the long-term effect on mental health has yet to be assessed. For those coming to the end of their sentences the drastic effects the pandemic has had on the economy and the increased competition for finding employment has heightened anxieties.



One new initiative which has been rolled out far quicker than is customary for the MOJ is the introduction of zoom video calls between families and prisoners. Known as purple visits they operate in all four of Buckinghamshire's establishments. An increase in the number of in-cell telephones has also helped to reduce isolation; keeping families together plays a crucial part in reducing re-offending.

As the year has gone on, HMYOI Aylesbury, HMP Springhill, HMP Grendon & HMP Woodhill were all progressing through the official tiers of operation in accordance to the MOJ CV-19 Guidelines with increasing access for the men to gyms, work shop, education and a relaxation in the twenty three hour lock up regime. Then the second national lockdown happened and everything shut down again.

Throughout the year BACO has kept in touch with Governors and staff and has responded to applications from the men in Springhill & Grendon but frustratingly are yet to establish fully the protocol for receipt of remote applications from the prisoners in Aylesbury & Woodhill. We have also increased our work in the community in collaboration with the Youth Offending Service and are seeing an increased demand from men released on temporary licence (ROTL) via applications from HMP Probation and Community Rehabilitation Companies.

BACO committee members are often invited to attend the Christmas Carol services in our prisons. This year, sadly, they will not be inviting visitors, so the BACO mascots, Mable & Mavis (miniature donkeys) will not get their annual trip to Springhill to entertain the children who come to the **Kestrel Theatre Company** and **Irene Taylor Trust** pantomime written and performed by the men.



We would like to welcome Mark Allen as new Governor of HMYOI Aylesbury. Mark took over from Laura Sapwell who is now Governor of HMP Bullingdon. Our very best wishes to Governor Nicola Marfleet at HMP Woodhill and Governor Becky Hayward at HMP Grendon/Springhill and to all their members of staff who have been so much in our thoughts throughout this year.

Nobody knows what 2021 will hold, but for BACO it will be a special year in any event as we celebrate fifty years of operating as the Bucks Association for the Care of Offenders. But on the assumption that normal life does begin to resume for prisoners as well as for all the rest of us, the services we provide to offenders will probably be more vital and needed than at any time in our history: we hope that we will be able to rely on your continued support.

Membership



Could you kindly remember to renew your membership, it runs January 2021 – December 2021.

The annual membership is £20. So many of you generously donate in addition to your membership fee and you can do this using the JustGiving page <https://www.justgiving.com/baco> we are extremely grateful for any donation you feel able to give and we are able to benefit from gift aid from your donation.

For those who prefer setting up a standing order please note our new banking details:
Bucks Association for the Care of Offenders (BACO)
Sort Code: 30-90-89
Account: 53874068

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact Caroline Donald membership@baco.org.uk .

If you haven't already done so please register on the members page of the website www.baco.org.uk. This will give you access to our secure members page and when we are invited back to social events in prisons you will need to register your interest and apply for a place there.

As of July 2019 the prison population in the UK stood at around 92,500. The average cost of keeping a person in prison is around £45,000. Our aim is to try and help turn those lives around whilst a sentence is being served and to give a little support to those adjusting to life after release to prevent reoffending.

Here are a few examples of grants BACO has been able to make thanks to your generosity and support.

£10 purchases a replacement bus pass

£15 purchases a UK identity card

£36 purchases a CSCS card (a requirement for working on a building site)

£65 purchases a replacement Driving Licence

£150 deposit secures a room at Milton Keynes YMCA

£200 purchases a Chrome Notebook for remote learning (brick laying course)

You've got to be in it to win it!

Don't forget you can support BACO and at the same time be in with a chance to win big with the Buckinghamshire Lottery! Created in 2020 by Buckinghamshire Council, Buckinghamshire Lottery empowers local good causes to raise money in a fun and effective way, and enables people to support the causes they care most about. A ticket costs £1 per week with 60p going directly to BACO if you select us as your preferred charity. Prizes of up to £25,000 can be won and can be kept or donated to your preferred charity.



<https://www.buckinghamshirelottery.co.uk/support/baco>

Hot News!!

Thank you to the High Sheriff of Buckinghamshire, Andrew Farncombe, who nominated BACO to receive a grant of £6,250 from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) for the Thames Valley.

Wishing you all a happy and healthy time whether in or out of a bubble!

Milly Soames and the Committee Joe Barclay, Fiona Paine, Caroline Donald, Mary Cronin, Roz Rossington, Ruth Farwell, Caroline Serjeant



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Registered Charity No : 1186375