

FROM THE CHAIR

Currently the prison population remains approximately the same as last year, a peak in March of 85,400 down to 84,857 in December 2016. The four prisons in Buckinghamshire can accommodate 1836 prisoners. BACO is pleased to have been able to help 399 serving prisoners and 85 people on Probation, male and female, during the last year. We have made 484 awards during the year, totalling £16,727, an average of £34.56. They included grants to improve employment prospects. Some of these are costly. The Springhill prisoners who received the Personal Track Safety grants of around £150, had to raise a total of £1,040 for this training which will enable them to work on the railway. Education needs have been met and it has been particularly pleasing to see men gain a degree while in prison. A variety of personal needs have been funded and many individuals have been able to buy items to furnish their new accommodation in the community on release. We again supported the Six Book Challenge and made awards to the 190 prisoners who completed the Challenge.

We cannot prove that these grants have helped to prevent re-offending, but we believe that they do. We are convinced they aided rehabilitation, know that they saved the state a large amount of time and money, and, more importantly, reduced the number of victims of crime.

Having spent a considerable amount of our resources during the year, we hope that the major funders who have so generously supported us in recent years will continue to do so, but should these fail, then other avenues need to be explored. An Executive Committee member has been researching charitable trusts to find possible funding for BACO. We have always struggled to secure regular funding for BACO as so few Trusts are willing to give us money to give away to serving prisoners or people on probation. If BACO had projects then the situation would be considerably easier.

We would like to thank the MacAndrew Trust for their ongoing support. We have received funding for two years, 2015 and 2016, from the Eranda Foundation, looking ahead to 2017 we applied for further funding by the deadline date of 23th April 2017. We received a grant of £10,000 in two tranches of £5,000, one in 2016 and one in 2017, from the Rothschild Foundation, Waddesdon Small Grants.

I spoke last year about the need to recruit new volunteers to take on some of the lead roles of the charity, and unfortunately, I need to reiterate what I said. In spite of various attempts at advertising in Parish magazines, Bucks Community Impact, and U3A, and emailing the membership yet again, we have had little success, apart from Support Service volunteers. We are very pleased about those, but the problem of the lead roles remains.

We welcome two new Support Service volunteers, Keith Brown to take on HMP Springhill and Liz Denton to take on HMYOI Aylesbury. Ted Vine will continue to cover the Support Service in HMP Grendon. Diane Long would like to retire as Committee Secretary and Membership Secretary and is reluctantly standing again for election for 2017 / 2018 only. I am retiring as Chair at the 2017 AGM, this is covered in my personal report.

BACO thanks the Grendon & Springhill Governor for allowing us to use the Boardroom for our Committee meetings, to staff in Grendon Residences, Grendon and Springhill Finance, Grendon Library, other Springhill staff, and Education and Finance for their support and co-operation in helping the Prisoner Support Service run smoothly, and to AYOI Library. Thanks go to the BACO Orderlies in Springhill and the BACO Wing Representatives in Grendon for their support.

BACO's thanks go to Prison OMU staff for their support at our meetings, and throughout the year.

My personal thanks go particularly to our Trustees; our Treasurer, Mary Cronin, for her patience and efficiency; our Grants Administrator, Roz Rossington, for her tenacity dealing with the CJSM secure email system; our Secretary, Diane Long, for managing to translate the discussions at our meetings into sensible Minutes; Crawford Robinson, for his work on completing complicated applications to a variety of Trusts, and to Ted Vine for his often tested patience in dealing with some aspects of the Support Service.

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