

January 2010

Newsletter

3 Union Street, Bedford MK40 2SF; tel 01234-218880; fax 01234-215121



10th Anniversary

Celebrating ten years of service

Gail Shanahan, BASOP's Service Manager, briefly summarises the charity's history.

In the ten years that BASOP has been operating as an independent Advocacy Service we have been able to help hundreds of local older people. Our clients have all kinds of serious problems they need to resolve, and many of them are unwell, very elderly, alone, often distressed and unable to sort things out on their own. Our trained volunteer Advocates work alongside them and give practical and personal support for as long as it is needed, and in the majority of cases we have been able to get positive results for people and improve their quality of life. There are many reasons why we have achieved so much, but three key elements have been essential to our success:

- our fantastic team of volunteers – including the Advocates, general volunteers and Trustees, most of whom have been with us for years and give freely of their time, skills and experience all year round, providing the client work, administration, information and publicity, tireless fundraising and the general overseeing of the Service;
- our paid staff – who manage and support our clients and volunteers and are amazingly dedicated, hard working and flexible; and
- our funders – the many independent charitable organisations, trusts and individuals whose financial support has been invaluable, in addition to two local authorities and the health authorities of Bedfordshire and Luton, which deserve great credit for their consistent, unconditional support and recognition of the value of Advocacy.

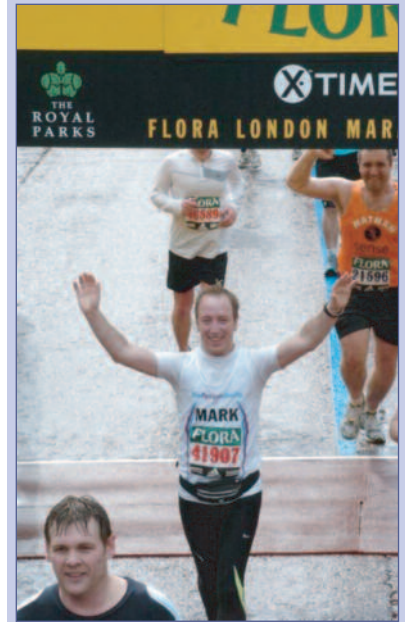
All in all it is a wonderful example of how a genuine partnership can operate for the good of local people.

It is a great pleasure and privilege to be a part of BASOP, to work with so many excellent people and to give important help to clients in their later years. I look forward to continuing this good work with colleagues and welcoming more people into our team in order to develop the Service and to continue to provide independent support for older people.

Some of the volunteer team at the Christmas tea.



A great land Mark



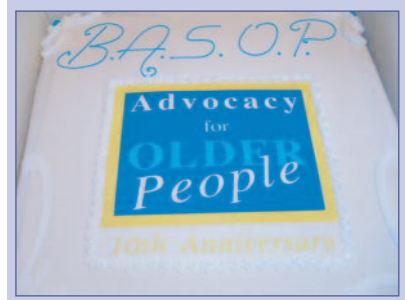
Congratulations to Mark Pedder for completing the London Marathon in April last year. Mark is the son of one of our committee members and his massive effort raised funds for BASOP and the Pasque Charity. Thank you Mark, and well done on a landmark sporting achievement.

The picture shows Mark crossing the finishing line.

Tenth birthday party

BASOP is currently in its tenth year and to mark the occasion an Anniversary Tea was held last April.

Please turn to page four for more pictures of the event.



Welcome to four new volunteers!

We would like to extend a warm welcome to our four newest volunteers. We hope that they will find volunteering with us a worthy and rewarding experience and that they will enjoy working with the BASOP team to try and provide older people with a better quality of life. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank all of our existing volunteers, advocates and office support workers for devoting their time and energy to helping older people in need.

We would also like to welcome our newest volunteer – John Quick – who has produced this newsletter for us. Thank you John and we look forward to continue working with you.

● BASOP holds two induction courses each year for new volunteers; the next is scheduled for February 2010. Please telephone 01234-218880 for more information.

Strategic involvement

Gail Shanahan describes BASOP's involvement with strategic groups.

As a local service, our work on the problems experienced by older people often involves linking into existing health and local authority services and systems. It is therefore essential for us to be aware of their priorities and of any government initiatives affecting older people. In addition, the two new Bedfordshire unitary authorities – Bedford Borough Council and Central Bedfordshire Council – are currently developing their own local plans.

Consequently a significant proportion of BASOP's workload requires involvement with a variety of strategic groups. These currently include Safeguarding Of Vulnerable Adults Boards for Bedfordshire and Luton, the National Dementia Strategy Implementation Group, Older People's Partnership Boards in Bedfordshire and Luton, Diversity Networks and COMPACT, which looks at improving inter-agency working relationships.

Our ten years of operation has meant we have built up an extensive network of contacts among local agencies and services in both the voluntary and statutory sector. We have developed valuable relationships with many individuals, all of whom are doing important work in their own field but who have also helped us immensely in assisting our clients and in developing the service. We thank them all and look forward to continued collaboration.

New web site under construction

BASOP is currently developing a new web site which will be officially launched soon (<http://basop.info>). The site can be accessed now but at the moment all that can be seen is our contact information.

For more information about the web site please contact us on 01234-218880.



The screenshot shows a website under construction. At the top left is a small icon of a person with a speech bubble and the text "Website is under construction". Below this is the logo for "BEDFORDSHIRE ADVOCACY SERVICE FOR OLDER PEOPLE". To the right is a blue box with the text "Advocacy for OLDER People". Below the logo is a "Contact us" link. Further down, the text reads "Our contact details are:" followed by the address "Bedfordshire Advocacy Service for Older People, 3 Union Street, Bedford, MK40 2SF". Below the address are the phone numbers "Tel: 01234 218880" and "Fax: 01234 215121". At the bottom, it says "You can also contact us by completing the [web form](#)". At the very bottom, in small text, it says "Company Limited by Guarantee, Company Registered in England & Wales 6855150, Charity Registration No. 1129184".

Training and Support Programme

BASOP's Training and Support Programme for 2009 covered a variety of key topics. These included talks from representatives of the Bedford Borough Council Benefit and Community Welfare Office, The Pension Service and the Court of Protection, as well as presentations on dementia and mental health, social service provision and the Bedfordshire Good Neighbour and Village Care Schemes. In addition, BASOP's Advocates spoke about their own casework.

Christmas Tea 2009

We would like to say thank you to everyone who attended our final training and support session on 9 December, and particularly to Justine Hunt from Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity for an interesting and informative talk on the Bedfordshire Good Neighbour and Village Care Schemes.

The Christmas Tea held afterwards was a great success and provided a festive end to our tenth birthday year. A special thanks goes to all those who brought along their yummy home baking.



Some of our committee members at the Christmas Tea.

Thanks to our funders

We are grateful to all our funders for their invaluable support, enabling us to help so many people in need.

These include NHS Bedfordshire, Bedfordshire local authorities, The Bedford Charity (The Harpur Trust), independent charitable trusts and all our individual donors and supporters.

We also thank Elizabeth Poll and Des Salmon of our fundraising group for all their hard work.

New Development Worker appointed

A message from Teresa Boyle, who joined BASOP on 3 November 2009.

I am delighted to be BASOP's new development worker. It is an exciting time to join a developing and proactive service such as BASOP, with many new policies and strategies concerning older people under development at local and national level.

I am really looking forward to promoting our service across the county; it appears that over the past ten years, Bedfordshire Advocacy Service for Older People has proven itself to be a very relevant and important provision for older people in the community. I worked for many years as a social worker in Ireland within a local authority's housing department, and more recently in marketing, gaining experience that I hope will assist BASOP to develop and expand in line with its future objectives and aspirations.

Thank you everyone for making me feel very welcome.

BASOP's 2009 client overview

Heather Andrew, BASOP's Client Services Manager, provides a brief summary of 2009.

Last year was very busy, with an increased number of clients in every setting, particularly in Bedfordshire. Many of our clients in the community find themselves in difficult circumstances and really appreciate the help we can give them in keeping track of things, co-ordinating with other agencies and making sure they get information, advice and access to the appropriate services. The number of cases involving some kind of risk or abuse has also grown and work on the Safeguarding Of Vulnerable Adults now has a much higher local priority. We continue our work with mental health service users in Bedfordshire and Luton hospitals and specialist units and we have received encouraging feedback both from the health professionals involved and the clients themselves. Patient concerns often involve anxiety over long-term-care plans, changes in living arrangements and discharge plans. The time available is often short and we sometimes need to get clarification and increased communication on behalf of clients.

We have been aided through this busy year by our Advocates who have continued to show their commitment, willingly giving extra help to ensure that clients receive the assistance they need quickly. Marjorie Bosman, our Client Support Worker who operates alongside me, has provided invaluable assistance, and I must thank June Davies, our Administrator, for her multi-tasking skills. I am genuinely appreciative of all our volunteers as well as the whole team for their professionalism, patience and dedication to the wellbeing of older people.

Client quotes

"I am so pleased with everything you did. I'm very happy you were able to help and I don't know what would have happened without you."

"I'm only too glad I've got help at last after a year of waiting. It was helpful to have you write that letter; it woke them up a bit. They came out, I'm having a seat fitted in the bath and they offered me lots of things I never knew existed. And someone is coming to talk to me about more benefits. So thank you very much, it's great." Mr F

"Your service is very good. You looked after us and the outcome was what we wanted. Now I feel I can relax, get on with living and not have to worry anymore about them trying to make my life difficult." A member of a group

My studentship at BASOP

Laide Granvaud, a local student, reports on her work experience at our organisation.

I am currently studying for a social work degree at the University of Bedfordshire and was placed with BASOP for my 100 days work experience. At the start it seemed more like 100 years but at the end I did not want to leave.

My time at BASOP as a student was interesting and exciting, and as a result I always looked forward to going to work. I was encouraged to take part in the training and development of volunteers, a very significant aspect of my education.

I would like to thank all the office staff for making me feel part of the team; it was an opportunity to learn from the Client Service Manager, for whom I have great respect.

I feel that I had one of the best learning experiences and was able to apply some of my acquired knowledge from my previous work. In addition I was given the opportunity to work with great people and diverse clients, and would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who supported me and contributed to my learning and development.

To all BASOP's volunteers, thank you for your hard work because you are BASOP's pillar; please keep up the good work. I feel that BASOP is supporting its clients and delivering what it says in its mission statement.

Long live BASOP!



Laide (on the left) enjoying our Christmas tea with Lyn Lines, one of our volunteers.

The Anniversary Tea

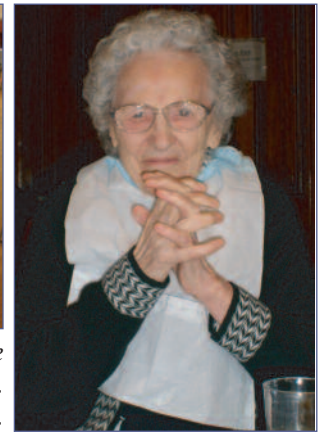
The Bedfordshire Advocacy Service for Older People was born on 1 April 1999, and in order to mark its tenth anniversary a special party was held on 30 April 2009 at the Bunyan Free Church in Bedford.

The event was attended by more than 60 people including current volunteers and staff, Trustees, BASOP members, service users and former volunteers.

We hope the following pictures will recreate a flavour of the day.



Above: team members Heather Andrew, Julie Sowerby, Marion Thurtle and Laide Granvaud.



Right: Christine, one of our long-standing clients.



Our guests at the event were entertained by two bands: a saxophone ensemble called Saxoforte (above); and The Nostalgics (below left). The cake was cut by Mrs Lane (below right), a member of our User Group, a consultative body within BASOP.



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