

## **Report of the Regional Meeting in Basingstoke on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> January, 2012**

**Present:** Representatives from Basingstoke LIFE, Salisbury LIFE, Southampton LIFE, Winchester LIFE, Waterlooville LIFE and Weymouth and District LIFE.

- Visit to the new Basingstoke Shop, open since November, 2011. £4,400 raised in the first month. They do not have a paid manager nor do they pay a rent as the shop waiting for a permanent tenant. The rent would be approximately £39,000 p.a. which is out of their reach. This leaves them somewhat vulnerable though Chantal feels that they have probably a year's grace. They are prepared to 'up sticks and move' should the landlord take back the premises but have not a firm contingency plan. HQ does not lend money to open a shop; the money has to be raised locally. There is no local Care Service based on it, so in effect it is a fund-raising venture, though with LIFE on the high street as a second justification.
- Committees of the various groups range from 4 to 7; the latter being Weymouth.
- The Care Services in the region are mainly dependant on National Helpline referrals as they are all without Care Centres (Southampton has closed). So the pattern is the same throughout the region.
- The groups still do LIFE Sundays and all are allowed a collection, except Weymouth. So their aims are for membership and also to fund-raise.
- The main work that all the groups are engaged in is fund-raising. (Basingstoke LIFE in the Fleet area had a very successful Alexandra Rose Day). Without costs of local Care centres the accounts were all similarly high. All are aware that LIFE needs this input in difficult times and that all money raised belonged to LIFE ultimately. However, the question was being asked "What are we providing **locally** to justify some of the money raised?"

### **Local schemes in placed and new initiatives discussed:**

1. Offering a local reduced Pregnancy Care Service still, including support for needy families.
  2. Advertising National Services to be accessed by local community.
  3. Supporting residents of LIFE Houses in some way; regionally the Fleet and Bournemouth houses. (Basingstoke, Salisbury, Winchester and Weymouth).
  4. Offering Pregnancy Loss Services (Weymouth and Waterlooville).
  5. Organising a Prayer link with local faith community; (Advent Services for Nascent Human Life at Weymouth and Basingstoke).
  6. After discussion, there was a recommendation for local groups to organise a LIFE Skills Programme within the local communities based on that offered to residents in LIFE Houses. Chantal will ask HQ if this is considered viable. There are similar Sure Start programmes, so it will depend on the needs of a local community and on the skills available to the local LIFE Group. The idea could link into the Big Society concept.
- Groups were aware that what could be achieved depended on their groups energy levels as well as limited available time.
  - Jane Ingram is still employed part-time by LIFE to serve the region. She had seen 1,600 students in a year. HQ employs only 9 education officers nationally. Jane had no response from Weymouth Schools. Thomas Hardy School, Dorchester, was suggested.