

# AVP Newsletter August/Sept 2016

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## Announcements



At the official end date 31 people had booked to go to the **National Gathering at Woodbrooke** the last weekend in September. *If you would still like to go there can be no promises but email [avpcolin@gmail.com](mailto:avpcolin@gmail.com) NOW.*

**One of the slots at the Gathering will** pick up two comments from the Audit: "**Quaker background** makes us bad at recruiting people not like us and makes us slow to take hard decisions". Peter Horton and Margot Lunnon will be inviting comments.

## Who reads what?! Ops Committee reports

Maybe you've already read the full version of their Annual Report... But in case you haven't here are some edited highlights:

- *There was increasing recognition that the Trustees were not able to act as the executive dealing with day to day issues that were piling up since to the loss of the final members of staff in March 2014.*

- *We have met in person twice and by Skype twice. Only one of the meetings has cost anything.*

- **Database:** *To date we have about 70 volunteers registered throughout the country. <ED: If you know anyone who might like to get registered give Lance their email address!>*

- *Recently Lance set up a restricted part of the **website** just for volunteers and this is being loaded with documents and information.*

*Because of legislation surrounding data security we were obliged to move the website from a USA host to a European one which we did in June.*

- **Evaluation forms**, both from facilitators and from participants, are now getting keyed into Survey Monkey and Frances McCann is analysing them.

## AVP in Yorkshire

**Riley reports:** 5 volunteers ran the Leeds 10k for us on a particularly warm day. Between them they raised £N00....



As well as the Leeds 10k fundraising effort, we've also recently been awarded a £5K grant from the West Yorkshire PCC Safer Communities Fund for workshop costs and staff time, as well as around £2k from Leeds Area Meeting to support volunteer development and to subsidise workshop places for low income participants. I've attached a photo of Tricia with the giant cheque at the Safer Communities award evening.

## HMP Addiewell, in West Lothian

AVP Scotland continues to deliver 6 workshops a year in HMP Addiewell, in West Lothian. Now in its 5<sup>th</sup> year, our programme of workshops is fully embedded in the range of courses offered through the Programmes Department. In the past 12 months we have run four Level 1 and two Level 2 workshops. We regularly have 18 people signed up for each Level 1 workshop and there is a waiting list. We generally have between 12 to 14 of those signed up attend the workshops, with a completion rate of between 10 and 12. It has been our aspiration to run T4Fs for the past two years, but we have found that most of our participants are moved to the Open Prison at Castle Huntly or released on electronic tags. We suspect that this might be one reason that our courses are so popular!

We generally have a team of 4 facilitators for each workshop. Most of our facilitators now come from within Scotland, as the capacity of the facilitation team has been strengthened in

the past year. Another reason is that a number of facilitators from south of the border find it difficult to understand broad Glaswegian and Lanarkshire accents, as most of the men in this prison are drawn from these catchment areas. Having more local teams of facilitators has enabled us to reduce the travel and accommodation expenses of our teams, meaning that we can contribute more of our fees that the prison pay us to AVP Scotland funds to subsidise community workshops.

Nevertheless, we are grateful to all the facilitators from across Britain who have helped to facilitate workshops over the past five years who have helped us to be recognised in the prison as a reliable and effective partner, delivering high quality workshops. We will be meeting with the prison management on 10<sup>th</sup> October. If you are interested in the possibility of facilitating in our workshops, please contact Mark Bitel at [mark@evaluation.u-net.com](mailto:mark@evaluation.u-net.com).

### Scots volunteers get the chance of some Mindfulness training



They used some of their Voluntary Action Fund money to award themselves a day with a local practitioner. They described it as “thoughtful” and “grounding”.

### Facing Up to Conflict

This article results from a couple of conversations with Robert Ordman, the National Coordinator for Facing Up to Conflict (FUTC). FUTC is our distance learning pack for prisoners, and it introduces them to the main principles that we cover in the workshops. Since AVPB is currently able to offer workshops in principles that we cover in the workshops. Since AVPB is currently able to offer workshops in only around half a dozen prisons nationwide, that leaves an awful lot of prisons where FUTC is prisoners’ only access to AVP. We know from worrying experience that most prisoners spend a huge number of hours in their cells. FUTC offers them an opportunity to learn how to handle conflict more effectively, both inside and on their release. It enables many inmates to feel less helpless, and more hopeful — as AVP



does for all of us. One inmate recently told us: “I just wish the course was on offer at all prisons ... AVP has filled me with important knowledge and new skills. Thank you so, so much, you've changed me for the better.”



In terms of numbers enrolled, and changes in attitude, it has been a howling success - up to a point. Although there are two stages to the programme, with current resources, we can manage to offer only Stage 1 for now. There is no scope for expansion. Robert is barely promoting FUTC at all at present (other than to funders!), but is still getting around 15 applications every week. Awareness has been developed mainly through word-of-mouth between inmates, and also Offender Supervisors. More than 2,000 inmates have completed the course already. Stage 2 has been written, piloted, and tweaked, and is ready to be rolled out — as soon as the funding is in place. Robert estimates up to £20,000 is needed to launch Stage 2 properly, and run it for a year. Not a huge sum, perhaps, for someone who is thinking of downsizing.

**As well as news items, please don't forget the possibility of Letters to the Editor. AVPB needs your opinions as well as your news.**

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