THE NEWSLETTER FOR CARDIAC FRIENDS

www.cardiacfriends.co.uk

October 2026 Chairman's Report

Before putting pen to paper for this newsletter submission, I thought I would take a small trip down memory lane and re-read my previous inputs, which on reflection have proven to be quite illuminating.

I made my first introduction early in 2019, when I thanked Jackie Quinn for her sterling efforts at holding the reins as chair for some 5 or 6 years. I introduced myself through a short, potted history of my careers in the Royal Air Force, and subsequently as a school site manager, but most of the rest of that submission was focused on trying to find a possible replacement for Heather Cotton as secretary from amongst our members.

My, how things have changed!!

Your secretary is now my wife Ruth, who is sat opposite me in our craft room/office beavering away at the latest minutes of our recent committee meeting, and Jackie, having left the committee after her spell as chair, has now returned, volunteering as a general member to continue her commitment to this wonderfully friendly organisation.

There have been some interesting changes during the seven-year period of my stewardship. Almost immediately after settling into my role, the world went into the covid-19 pandemic, which killed all of our activities for over a year, saw the sad loss of some of our members and restricted our interactions to 2-metre spaced meetings. A bad, bad time!

Some of our members have not returned to their former activities as a direct consequence of the pandemic constraints, and are unlikely to do so in the future, but we, as an organisation, have moved on as much as possible nevertheless, and although we have recently experienced the end of the swimming group, due to falling numbers, we have gained through the medium of Sunday coffee mornings, games afternoons, the restoration of the Friday pétanque sessions, and the successful revitalisation of the Tuesday quiz evenings at the Churchill Retired Living venue in Hitchin. Other activities remain stable so all-in-all, Cardiac Friends thrives and continues to offer its members a little something extra in their lives.

The next big challenge is to ensure the continued success of the Sunday London walks. These have always been a success story, but as elsewhere in activities both within Cardiac Friends, and in the wider community, the ageing of our membership presents a challenge, manifested in the reduction of those attending. The London Walks Team is exploring means to reduce this impact, and to put mitigating measures in place ready for 2027, which will be our 14th year.

On the personal front, many continue to ask on the progress of our garden, so I will sign off by mentioning our latest project. The blistering hot Summer this year, as well as being for the most part enjoyable, has unfortunately engineered the demise of many of our plants, particularly so in our ericaceous raised bed, which to be fair, was over 20 years old, and whose log-roll borders were showing advanced signs of rot. Nothing lasts!!

The situation was remedied by completely stripping down the raised bed, consigning the dead plants to the council garden waste bin, and totally rebuilding the bed with decking boards, which should be sufficiently long-lived to see me out! Many of our specimen plants were relocated into their new home and are becoming established. Pictures are attached.





Barry Brown e: mail:
cardiacfriends.chair@outlook.com

Secretary's Report.

We have had several people become members since the last newsletter, they are:
Gill Allen, Kelvin and Rita Andrews, Peter Cooper, Dawn Mallord and
Alisan Morris. Welcome to Cardiac Friends and we hope you enjoy your time with us.

The Christmas festivities will take place on Saturday 28thNovember; **IN THE AFTERNOON**. The committee discussed the 2026 party at their recent committee meeting, and we were aware of dwindling numbers over the last couple of years. With a dislike of night time driving, coupled with the location of the venue, driving there in daylight, we hope that this change will improve the attendance. Full information is attached to this newsletter.

Ruth Brown

Holiday

We have 37 Members who have now paid the deposit to go on our Group holiday to Warners Sinah Warren in Hayling Island on 19th April 2027 for 4 nights/5 days.

I will send out a further email reminder in late November to remind those going on the holiday of the balance amount payable which will be due at the latest on 11th January 2027.

If there are any additional Members who would still like to join us on this holiday (or would like further details of the holiday) please let me know ASAP.

Adam Kuzminski

Finances

The current outlook is that the Group will be facing some financial bumps over the next few months. However, Cardiac Friends current available balance is a healthy £5,000 which will be more than enough to cover foreseeable requirements.

Adam Kuzminski (Treasurer)

Membership

At the end of last year Cardiac Friends had a membership total of 142. The current balance stands at **131** which include 6 members who have joined in the last 6 months.

Adam Kuzminski (Membership Secretary)

Monday Morning Walkers

This group is a small happy bunch of walkers who enjoy a local walk every other Monday commencing at 10.30am. We keep local Langford, Hitchin, and Stevenage and enjoy much nattering over a coffee after our walk. Why not come along and enjoy this group you will be most welcome. The walks for the remainder of this year will be Monday 9th and 23rd November and the 7th December. **You will be most welcome to join our happy bunch of walkers so please contact:**

Maggi Bullen.



Quiz Night – Tuesday's Cardiac Friends Quiz Nights are held approximately every 6 weeks or so... the next one is booked on **Tuesday 1st December starting @ 7pm prompt** at Churchill Retirement Living, Dovehouse Lodge, Wratten Road West, Hitchin, SG5 2EJ. We ask for £1.00 p.p. towards the owners' tea bar, as they kindly provide us with tea/coffee and we also enjoy Jackie's cakes.

Ian Sanders

Wednesday Morning Walks

The group continues, due to the splendid support given by the leaders Mike Morley, Peter and Jacquie Dawes and Christine Druce.
I still bother them by suggesting venues for lunch and routes, but they do the hard work.
We are still attracting between 15 and 20 members most times, this comprises those who do the walks, those who do a 'short walk' with Colin Miles and those who just come to lunch so that we can catch up with their news.
We have attracted new members courtesy of Peter Dawes who seems to have an endless supply of 'friends'. So welcome to Peter Cooper (Snoops!) not sure why! and Gill Allen. Gill has joined the group but has yet to attend a walk; I have received apologies from her and look forward to meeting her 'E-V-E-N-T-U-A-L-L-Y' as Manuel would say.
I have sent out details of our Festive Christmas Lunch which is as usual at 'The Rising Sun' Hall's Green on Wednesday 2nd December. Today I resent the mail as I understand several members did not receive it first time round. As I have said in my mail I just need to know if you will be joining us. Unfortunately Barry and Ruth are unable to be with us this year.

Fred Maryon

Exercise Group – Thursday Afternoons

The exercise Group is still well attended in spite us losing two very long term members, Heather and Fred Cotton. They have at last



moved up to Lancashire after a long delay in the selling of their house. We all wish them a very happy life in their new home. We have welcomed back Julia after a long absence due to her heart bypass surgery. She definitely has much more colour in her cheeks now and Beth, Barry and Ruth's daughter, who was not well for a while. We also are missing Marion, who unfortunately has had a very nasty accident. We do hope that in the future she will join us again.
We could always do with more members. It is a very friendly group. There is no doubt that it will be beneficial for you physically and mentally. **It is held on Thursdays from 12.30 to 1.30. You will be made very welcome.**

Jackie Quinn

Petanque - Friday Afternoons



2026 has been a successful season for this outdoor activity, and has averaged between 8 and 12 players per session. We are very lucky to have 3 pistes to play on so we can arrange the teams to suit our numbers. If we have only enough to play 2 versus 2, we play with 3 boules each, but with higher numbers, we play 3 versus 3 and then play with only 2 boules each. Furthermore, we have the benefit of the 3rd piste if we have an unexpectedly high attendance.

We have played 2 sessions per month this year during the summer, unless the weather - either too hot or too wet - has conspired against us, and this has been rare. The season has finished for us for this year. We will resume the Games Afternoons, starting on Friday 13th November at the Broadway Hotel, Letchworth Garden City, from 2.00 – 4.00 p.m.

Barry Brown

Line Dancing – Saturday Mornings.

We continue to enjoy our twice monthly sessions at Willian Village Hall, usually on the first and third Saturdays in the month, from 10.00 – 12.00. The cost is £8 pay as you go.

We have lots of laughter between concentrating on the dances. It is so good for the body and the brain as well as enjoying a very pleasant break for tea/coffee, cake and a chat. Mary, our teacher, continues to lead us in old favourites as well as introducing new dances.

Our newest member loves it, saying "I haven't laughed so much for a long time!" On a Saturday morning it really is a happy place to be!

If you or anyone you know, would like to join us – men as well as ladies, and you can be sure of a warm welcome.

Shirley Williams

London Walks - Sundays









The four items that contribute to our Sunday London walks being such a resounding success!

Firstly, top left is Kim Dewdney, our extremely experienced London Blue Badge Guide, who has been with us since the very beginning of our London walks programme, soon entering its 27th year. She recognizes our requirements; is mindful of our ageing years and tailors the walks (more of a slow amble really) to suit.

Next at top right is our transportation in the form of Taylors Travel coaches, based just outside Hitchin. They pick us up at 3 stops namely Hitchin, Letchworth and Stevenage and drive us in great comfort to our nominated coffee and toilet stop location, where as often as not, Kim meets us and leads us off on our walk.

Bottom left is our lunch venue – The Wetherspoons pub ‘Sir John Oldcastle,’ opposite Farringdon rail interchange where we partake of a pre-ordered meal, and last but by no means least at bottom right, the VOX headset equipment, which allows Kim to talk to all of us and be heard in even the most crowded and noisy locations.

We arrange 6 walks in the capital between April and October on a monthly basis. We meet with Kim early in the year and discuss the 6 walks and their dates, which are then sent out to members with the spring newsletter.

Bookings are arranged for each walk and your choice of food/drink from a discounted menu, recorded against the date selected. Many of our walkers book for all 6 walks in one go!

Payment is done by cheque to the organisers, although we are considering a move into the 21st century by allowing BACS payment as well. The way this will operate is still under discussion, but will be made clear when the booking paperwork is distributed.

This year we have done walks to the old university quarter, explored the London of the Romans, and visited the late Queen Elizabeth's memorial garden in Regents Park. We have done an alternative walk through Chelsea when our planned walk in the East India docks had to be re-arranged due to a no-notice marathon event, we visited Kenwood House and grounds, and finished the season with a look at the new developments in Vauxhall, including the recently moved American embassy. All fascinating and educational walks.

Have a 'surf' of the Cardiac Friends website where you will see many of the photos that have been taken on our many walks, and if you are ever looking for something to do on a Sunday, consider joining us for a fascinating and friendly day out with friends.
Contact details are shown below.

Barry the elder and Gaynor Tinsdale
Barry the younger and Ruth Brown
The London Walks Team: cardiacfriendswalks@outlook.com

Coffee Mornings – Sundays

These regular monthly meetings remain as popular as ever offering as they do, a means of getting together for some company and a chat with other Cardiac Friends, over a cup of tea/coffee and a cake, or even breakfast.



Perhaps more importantly, they offer a means of socialising even if you are less mobile. All you need is the ability to get yourself there, and are willing to engage in a little chat and/or listen.

They have always been well-attended right from the start.
We always meet on a Sunday morning from 10.00 a.m. until midday, though there is no reason whatever why you should not stay longer if you so wish, for lunch perhaps. Generally we meet twice every month, although this reduces to single visits during the summer months when the Sunday London walks are programmed (April to October).
We use locations such as garden centres or amenable cafes, and rotate our attendance at these throughout the year. This year we have visited some new venues as well as also re-visiting some old favourites.

The next booked coffee mornings are:
1 Nov at Shuttleworth Collection, Old Warden Aerodrome
15 Nov at M&S, Roaring Meg Retail Park, Stevenage
13 Dec TBA
10 Jan at No.12 Coffee Shop, Leys Avenue, Letchworth Garden City
7 Feb at Vanstone Park Garden Centre. On the back road from Hitchin to Welwyn.

Ruth Brown

Finally:

From Pete Howard (Cardiac Friends website editor)

My daughter, Jill, is a keen runner and has entered for the London Landmarks Half Marathon in April 2027. **She will be raising money for Guide Dogs.**

Her words:

'In April 2027, I will be running the London Landmarks Half Marathon for Guide Dogs - as a devoted dog lover, this is a very special charity.

Guide Dogs help people with sight loss live the life they choose.

They are a charity, almost entirely funded by donations, and they are the world's largest assistance dog organisation. As world leaders in puppy socialisation and dog training, they're the only organisation to breed and train guide dogs in the UK. They are also the largest employer of specialists dedicated to helping children and young people overcome the challenges of sight loss.

Thanks to their dedicated staff, volunteers and supporters they've trained more than 38,000 guide dogs. That's more than one new guide dog every day since their first partnerships were created in 1931'.

PLEASE CLICK BELOW TO DONATE:

https://www.justgiving.com/page/jill-budge-2?utm_medium=FR&utm_source=CL

N.B. Peter Howard is the Webmaster, any photos or articles which you think may be interesting to other members please send to Pete @peterbhoward@ntlworld.com.

