

## Royston Community Breakfast

### Notes from the Community Breakfast 10.02.2023 - recorded by Ray Munden

#### **Speaker: Dr John Hedges. Health Aid Royston.**

Health Aid Royston is the successor to Friends of Royston Hospital with a broader remit to help with health care for the community rather than just focussing on the hospital. It was the Friends that were in part responsible for attracting Dr Hedges to Royston in 1968. The Friends helped the hospital provide, amongst much more: a day room; overnight accommodation for patients' relatives to stay; double glazing to replace cold metal framed single glazing; baby resuscitation facilities; refurbishing nurses' rooms. The hospital had facilities to help patients resume normal life more quickly to reduce bed blocking in major hospitals. Despite the hospital's huge local value the Friends had to fight off many attempts by NHS bureaucracy to close it down.

Helping the hospital became more challenging as the Cambridge Healthcare commission merged with its Peterborough equivalent as the two commissions had very different priorities. The Cambridge area, with a relatively long-living population, had the problems of old age (cataracts, dementia) whereas Peterborough with a shorter average life expectancy had different priorities.

The Friends built up a substantial financial fund intended for hospital improvements but the Care Commission ruled that the Friends could no longer spend money on improvements for the hospital (minute taker's comment: madness rules!!) and so now being in danger of the Charities Commission rules that charities should not amass money but should spend it, the Friends became HealthAid Royston with a broader remit in order to be able to spend the money wisely.

This change allowed direct help towards those people who fell through gaps in the NHS system. Examples of such help were: providing a bicycle for someone suffering severe mental problems; connecting families with similar devastating illnesses (such as muscular dystrophy), providing mutual support and advice; help with early diagnosis of learning problems, which can vastly improve progress. Health related grants are made on the recommendation of health care workers, such as GPs, schools and Homestart, for items such as specialist mobility equipment.

Anybody may be eligible for aid and applications can be made via the web site.

<http://www.roystonhealthaid.org/> where donations or offers of help can also be made.

#### **Notes from attendees.**

- Sarah Hillman: *U3A (Royston); Current Affairs Group*. The U3A membership is building up after the COVID related reduction. There are now chat groups where people can raise a topic for discussion, the next will be on 20<sup>th</sup> Feb, 3.00 for a 3.15 start at Banyers House.
- Chris Lee: Repair Cafe; Royston Choral Society; Princes Trust. The next Repair Cafe is on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> Feb and is already fully booked. There will be a concert, Haydn's 'The Creation', on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> March in St John's Church at 7.30.
- Karin Weston; *Rotary Club of Royston*. Unfortunately the quiz had to be cancelled due to insufficient entries. The club is making a substantial donation for the Turkey/Syria earthquake appeal. Collections will also be made at Tesco on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> February. The club is also collecting candles, both used (to be melted down and recast) and unused, to send to the Ukraine, transport has been arranged. Candles need to be with

the club before Feb 18<sup>th</sup>. Kids Out, a special day for needy children will be arranged again this year. Last year Ukrainian children and Make Lunch children were included. Early warning was given of the Kite festival, August 6<sup>th</sup>, charity stalls are welcome.

- David Allard: *Royston Ramblers; History Society*. Ramblers continue to meet most Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, details on the website. The History Society has a full programme and there is a coach outing to Windsor Castle to see the changing of the guard on June 3<sup>rd</sup>. Details on the website.
- Ray Munden: *Friends of Therfield Heath; Royston Wildlife Group; Meridian Men's Keep Fit*. The RWG talk on February 28<sup>th</sup>, the last of the season, will be by Ray and Joan Munden and will describe some of the wildlife to be seen in India, including some close encounters with Tigers – and being trumped by Trump! The FOTH quiz raised £568. Regular FOTH monthly litter picks take place on the Heath, second Sunday every month from 10.00am. Litter pickers are provided and a free cup of coffee is available afterwards in the Heath café for each participant.
- Fiona Hughes: *Green Heat Coop*. There will be an open house to look at and debate Heat Pumps on Feb 25<sup>th</sup>, details from Fiona. On March 25<sup>th</sup> there will be a North Herts Healthy Hub meeting at Market Hill Rooms to help people take charge of their energy bills.
- Tony Garrick: *U3A (Melbourn and District); Royston Methodist Church*. As with Royston, this U3A branch is also increasing numbers, now meeting at Eternit Sports and Social Club for a speaker meeting 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday each month (other than December). The Feb 15<sup>th</sup> meeting will be with Suzie Harrison talking about the history of the Cambridge American Cemetery. The Methodist Church have rooms available to let, already having many organisations using them such as a Yoga class, Hertfordshire Mind and HomeStart. First Friends is held on Friday mornings, 9.00am start, and is for parents to bring pre-school children to develop friendships with other parents and children. Lots of toys and activities are available for the children and the parents can relax.
- Louise Bradley: *Make Lunch*. Half term is a very busy period for Make Lunch. Last year >650 meals were provided.
- Reg Hounsell: *Model Railway Club*. There will be an exhibition of Model Railways at Bassingbourn Village College on 1<sup>st</sup> April from 10.30am to 4.00pm with 20 model layouts (probably more). Entry £5, free for children under 16. The U3A keep fit class is going well.