

## Plans Are Tabled To Realise Our Dream



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**New Year 2012 promises to be a red-letter moment for Swings & Smiles as we prepare to submit a planning application to realise our dream for our recreational centre for special needs families.** The application is currently being finalised for submission to West Berkshire planning committee following earlier consultation with Greenham Parish Council and other wide-ranging discussions.

The site is located adjacent to Greenham Common, off Bury's Bank Road and near the Control Tower. Throughout the last six months, a broad spectrum of professionals (Ecologists, Architects, Wardens, Planning Consultants) have been consulted to help formulate a design that could meet the needs of the charity, whilst also being considerate to the existing users of the Common, wildlife and landscaping.

Sian Cook, founder chairman of Swings & Smiles said:

'We have had a very successful four years raising awareness of the need for our facility, enlisting support from all sections of the local community and building up a solid funding base with which to proceed to the development stage of our work. As well as raising awareness and much-needed funds we have spent considerable time and energy identifying potential sites for development. There are over 2,000 families in West Berkshire with children who have special needs, 20,000 in the wider community, and taking an 80-mile round trip to gain the benefit of family play is just too much. We are extremely excited about this proposal and are very optimistic that this will indeed be the location where we can fulfil our dream.'

To date, the charity has raised more than £330,000 towards a recreational centre in which young people with special needs and their families can play in a safe, secure environment.

## Marathon Man

Our great friend and supporter, **Dean Oliver**, 'graduated' this year from his past exploits with the Reading Half Marathon by taking part in the London Marathon. 50 year-old Dean managed the course in just over five and a half hours. In this milestone year, Dean and Amanda also celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary. He was our first representative in the race and, despite saying that for part of the time he was 'running on empty,' he vows to do it at least one more time.

**We are really grateful to Dean and his wife Amanda for all they do for us.**



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## Golden Thank You!

**Sandra and George Goodman** who celebrated their Golden Wedding by asking their family and friends to donate to Swings & Smiles rather than giving presents. A brilliant £446 was raised.



## Adam's Legacy Lives On

The year started well for Swings & Smiles when Sian Cook received a cheque for £440 from **Annie Boutle** whose family raised the money from Santa's Grotto at their Christmas tree farm, Santa Fir. Annie is the best friend of Sara, sister of Adam Clayton whose memory continues to benefit us nearly three years after his untimely death.





## Sun Shines On Our Golfers

**Sandford Springs** was the venue for our second annual Golf Day – with the weather luckily as sunny as in 2010! Reigning champions Reading FC could not quite hold on to their title, being pipped at the post by ‘The Mechanics.’

Keen golfer and Swings & Smiles patron Graeme Murty hosted a reception after the event which, along with a raffle and generous donations, raised more than £2,000.



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## Three Towers Challenge For West Berks Cyclists

Five cyclists from **West Berkshire Council** have been supporting Swings & Smiles by taking part in a 210 mile sponsored bike ride to Paris. Their route took them from Newbury's Clock Tower, via Portsmouth's Spinnaker Tower all the way to the Eiffel Tower.

The intrepid five are Graham Jones – Council Leader, David Appleton – Head of Cultural Services, Paul Hendry – Countryside Manager, Duncan Coe – Archaeological Officer and Phil Mitchell from Trading Standards. Our grateful thanks goes to them all and to their colleagues, friends and families who have sponsored their exploits.



## Eco-friendly Help For Charity

A unique promotion by the **Bayer UK** Newbury office has not only benefitted the environment but also raised considerable funds for local charities. A five-month challenge between departments aimed to raise awareness of Bayer's Climate Programme and to reduce the company's carbon footprint. The departments taking part gained and lost points over the period according to their contribution to eco-friendly initiatives. The initiatives included: number of lights left on, number of windows left open, screen monitors left on, heaters and aircon left on, printers and copiers left on, savings in papers use, walking or cycling to work and using tele-conferences instead of travelling to meetings.

Happily for us the chosen charity of the winning department was Swings & Smiles and we were lucky enough to be rewarded with a cheque for £1,000.



## Charity Leg Wax

**Tom Brannagan**, one of our loyal volunteers, hit on an unusual way of raising funds for Swings & Smiles – having his legs waxed. Family and friends gathered at The Hare and Hounds at Speen where Tom works and each contributed a fiver for being allowed to pull a wax strip from his legs – raising a total of £330. Two friends even contributed £20 each for the privilege of pulling wax strips off Tom's eyebrows!



Further generosity came from **The Hare and Hounds** when owners Jonathan and Jean ran a promotion for Swings & Smiles with £1 donated for every dessert ordered during March. More than £500 was raised.

## Film Screening Raises Funds

A budding young film director has found a novel way of helping Swings & Smiles. **Tom Metcalf** spent most of 2010 producing, directing and editing a film entitled 'Split Paths' and then raised funds for us at the film's screening at the Corn Exchange. £324 was donated – well done Tom and good luck for the future!



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## Katy Beats The Weather

Undaunted by atrocious weather, **Katy Hawthorne** organised a very successful coffee morning at Newbury Town Hall in July. With the support of Joyce Lewis, Civic Manager, and many other helpers, more than £200 was raised. Star buys were delicious cakes made by the chefs at Hilton Newbury Centre and North.

## Tables Turned On Royals Physio

**Luke Antony**, first team physiotherapist at Reading FC limbered up for the Reading Half Marathon by 'allowing' players to vigorously massage his legs, thus getting their own back for years of 'torture'. Royals manager, Brian McDermott generously put up the £200 entry fee for Luke.



## Valentine's Bonanza

£1,600 raised for charity was the amazing result of a Valentine's Disco organised by **Scott and Emma Huntley** and **Jan and Jon Rosier** at Acland Hall, Cold Ash. Three local charities shared the funds, including Swings & Smiles.

## Pasta Party For Half Marathon Runners

Once again this year, the **Reading Half Marathon** provided a focal point for Spring fund-raising. Twenty six runners entered on behalf of Swings & Smiles and between them raised a staggering £10,000. Not only did we benefit from the generous sponsorship of our runners, some 40,000 onlookers are estimated to have seen them in our smartly logoeed running vests.



The evening before the race, thanks to Sue Roberts, a pasta party was held for our runners at Reading's top Italian restaurant, **Pepe Sale**. Proprietors Tony and Sam Sale laid on a veritable pasta feast, at no cost to us or our runners. A great start to an outstanding weekend!



## Quite A Quiz

**Hilton Newbury Centre** was the venue for a great Summer Quiz Night to raise money for Swings & Smiles. A magnificent buffet, a raffle of star prizes and a quiz with 15 teams, each of up to eight players, ensured a great success. Katy Hawthorne won the star raffle prize of a bike and Sandra Goodman's team, albeit of only five members, won the quiz. An outstanding effort which raised more than £1,200.



## White Stuff The Right Stuff

Our charity partner, **White Stuff** in Reading hosted a charity auction at **Cote Brasserie**. Thanks to White Stuff, its staff and friends the evening was a great success. Our great friend Jack Sulman was MC for the night and patron Graeme Murty auctioned some of the lots. A staggering £3,700 was raised – all in addition to the £10,000 already raised for us by White Stuff!



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## Hot Off The Press!

**House of Fraser Reading** have just announced that we are their charity of choice for the next 12 months – fantastic news!

## Let's Party!

Thanks to **Liquid's Charitable Foundation, ECHO**, which has very generously given a grant of £500 for specialist bikes and hoists which will mean so much in our new centre.



## Professionals At Lunch

The spectacular lunch time event, hosted by RBS, Pitmans Solicitors, and BDO of Reading, took place on the 9th December at the Reading Town Hall. There were 250 representatives from a variety of Corporates such as Barclays, Haslams, HSBC, KPMG, Deloitte, Leumi and Santander to name only a few, who had booked back in July 2010 to secure themselves a place! Julie Whittington had the pleasure of informing the attendees about Swings & Smiles. All went well!!! Great food, wine and company was shared throughout the afternoon and to top off a great afternoon, the **Reading Professionals** raised £4,200 for Swings & Smiles - a tremendous result. Thank You!!



## Thanks For Your Help!

Many organisations and businesses have generously helped Swings & Smiles in recent months and we are so grateful to all of them. This year, they include:

**The Carpenters Arms in Burghclere** for raising £350 from quiz evenings.

**West Horsley Dairy** for their charity Quiz Night which raised £800.

The participants in the **Woolton Hill Fun Run** who contributed a total of £330 to Swings & Smiles.

The teachers from **Kennet School** whose efforts in The Three Peaks Challenge resulted in over £1,000 for us. Our Patron, Graeme Murty, was able to thank them personally when he attended the school's Sports Personality Evening.

**Downe House School**, whose all-day busking session raised over £100.

Our friends at **EPC** raised more than £100 at a Jam Sale – another excellent idea!

More than £100 was collected at **Debenhams** when their new store opened in the Parkway Centre.

**Such support is invaluable to us and to those who will benefit from our recreational facility.**

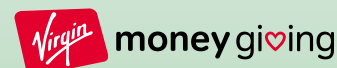
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