

## MEDIA RELEASE **MEDIA RELEASE** MEDIA RELEASE MEDIA RELEASE

1 October 2007

### **ANOTHER YEAR OF SAFeR STEYNING**

The first Annual General Meeting of SAFeR Steyning, the Steyning Area First Responders Scheme, took place last Saturday morning at Springwells Hotel, Steyning. Around thirty people attended, including guest of honour Sally Gunnell OBE, Jackie Campbell, chair of Steyning Parish Council, Dr Eric Noren from Steyning Health Centre, other local supporters, SAFeR trustees and Responders.

Nick Herbert, MP for Arundel and South Downs, sent a message of support, acknowledging that "SAFeR Responders provide a vital lifeline for those who fall ill in the area".

SAFeR Responders are local volunteers who provide an essential immediate service to support the South East Coast Ambulance Service (SECamb). Ambulances are not always in close proximity to answer emergency calls in rural areas like Steyning, Bramber and Upper Beeding, and because Responders are already living or working in the community, they can get to the location vital minutes earlier. It is in this timeslot that lives can sometimes be saved – and patients' chances of recovery can be significantly increased.

Responders are fully trained by the SECamb in the use of defibrillators. SAFeR receives no government funding, relying on donations, sponsorship and grant funding to purchase equipment and kit. Over the last three months, SAFeR Responders have been called out to 197 calls in the local area.

Martin Leigh-Pollitt, chair of SAFeR Steyning, gave an update on the year's activities and introduced Sally Gunnell, who outlined her support for the scheme. Sally knows local people who have benefited from SAFeR Responders attending emergency calls and she offered to support and help in any way you can.

An unexpected surprise was the presentation of a cheque for £1000 from Bob Patching from Steyning's Bald Headed Club. Bob announced a pledge of money from the club's 2008 fundraising efforts, which met with a huge round of applause from those present.

As part of the AGM, Martin Leigh-Pollitt also launched the new SAFeR website [www.safersteyning.org.uk](http://www.safersteyning.org.uk) which is sponsored by local estate agents, Osborn Humphreys, and is aimed at giving member of the public more information about the scheme and contact details of those involved.



Stuart Osborn, principal of Osborn Humphreys, had been keen to support the scheme. He said: "We're always at the forefront of support for the communities in which we live and work, but were particularly keen to get on board with SAFeR Steyning as the voluntary work they do is so vital to saving lives here. Everyone involved in the scheme gives up their time for nothing – so sponsoring their website and helping to publicise their work simply seemed the right thing to do".

Martin responded with appreciation for support from the local business community and added that following a recent publicity drive, more people had come forward to join in as Responders. This was great news but underlined the continuing need to raise more funds.

The morning was rounded off with votes of thanks for all the scheme's supporters, the Responders who provide a vital service, the efforts of the scheme's trustees and Springwells Hotel who sponsored the AGM.

## **ENDS**

Media fact sheet attached. For more information, contact Jill Woolf, Chimera Communications, on 01903 812275 or 07791 764983.

The next SAFeR Steyning fundraising event will be a Race Night at the Steyning Centre, Fletchers Croft, Steyning, on Saturday 17 November. More information available on [www.safersteyning.org.uk](http://www.safersteyning.org.uk)

