

Education and Awareness offered by Heart Rhythm Charity in life-saving Defibrillators

6th June 2011, Hook Norton: A education and awareness event to teach people how to use life-saving defibrillators will be held on Monday 6th June in the Oxfordshire village of Hook Norton.

It follows the launch of a public automated external defibrillator (AED) outside the Sun pub in the village after a fundraising campaign by a family in the village who had lost a loved one to sudden cardiac arrest.

Family member, Ian Street said, "We're delighted to be involved with this and want to make as many people as possible aware of how to use an AED – you just don't know when that knowledge could save a life."

Sudden Cardiac Arrest kills 100,000 people in England every year; more than AIDS, breast and lung cancer combined. In the event that someone's heart stops beating you have a maximum of eight minutes to "Restart the Heart" before the attack becomes fatal. Many of us who live in rural communities are easily more than eight minutes from emergency services help and an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) combined with Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) can increase the chances of surviving a sudden cardiac arrest by 50%.

The automated external defibrillator (AED) was facilitated by Shipston-based national heart rhythm charity, Arrhythmia Alliance, to be used in Hook Norton which falls outside the eight-minute travelling distance of an emergency ambulance.

The equipment, which is to be sited on the wall outside the Sun pub in Hook Norton, is intended to provide life-saving help to Sudden Cardiac Arrest victims.

At a launch event at the Pub recently, villagers were shown how to use the AED and perform CPR by South Central Ambulance Service NHS Trust (SCAS) Community First Responder (CFR) volunteers and front line members of South Central Ambulance Service. Because of the popularity of the session, it has been necessary to arrange additional sessions to accommodate the number of people interested in learning how to use the equipment and those who have put their names forward to start a Community First Responder programme.

Richard Tracey of the South Central Ambulance Service said, " I was overwhelmed by the number of people who came to listen to us at the AED launch It struck me what a caring and supportive community Hook Norton is. We are looking forward to working with them and developing their CFR Team."

Fundraising is well under way for a second AED, driven this time by the efforts of James Clarke, the Managing Director of the Hook Norton Brewery Company.

James said, "We have a responsibility to one another as neighbours to promote a safe environment and raise awareness of basic first aid in an emergency situation. Any rural or remote community located more than the eight minutes from emergency help should invest in this life-saving equipment."

James will be representing Arrhythmia Alliance when he runs a half marathon next month to kickstart the fundraising.

The heart rhythm charity is supporting groups to introduce AEDs to public places as a way of combating sudden cardiac arrest, the UK's number one killer.

Trudie Lobban, founder of Arrhythmia Alliance, "AEDs are vital in preventing loss of life from sudden cardiac arrest."

The training and awareness event will be held on Monday 6th June from 3.00pm at the Leisure Centre in Hook Norton, please look out for notices.

Any group interested in having a defibrillator installed with the help of The Heart Rhythm Charity, should contact Jo Hassall at jhassall@heartrhythmcharity.org.uk.

Ends

1. For more information, contact Jo Hassall at jhassall@heartrhythmcharity.org.uk
2. The A-A website is at www.heartrhythmcharity.org.uk
3. Heart Rhythm Week is being held from 6-12th June 2011. See www.knowyourpulse.org for more details