

Brampton and District 50+ Forum

Report of the meeting held on Tuesday 23rd October 2012 in Brampton Community Centre.

14 members were present for lunch and 18 members attended the meeting.

The Chair, Jean Taylor, welcomed everyone to the meeting at which Georgina Lamb regional officer for The Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution – Supporting Farming Families gave an interesting talk about the work of the RABI and her role in raising awareness and fundraising.

She showed a DVD which illustrated the varied problems the organisation was able to help with .

The RABI was founded 152 years ago by John Joseph Metchie a farmer in SW England who saw a need. It has grown to employ 35 staff based in Oxford and in 2011 administered £2 million across the UK, helping 2000 families – of that £49,000 to 40 families in Cumbria.

Beneficiaries range in age 5 -101 and are people or their dependants who have had an involvement in farming for 10 or more years. It takes great courage to ask for help but bad harvests, accidents, TB, family illness are common problems and farmers have a high risk of suicide.

Welfare officers assess the situation and are able to help with benefit allowance claims producing an extra £300,000 of entitlement for families last year.

The main beneficiaries are retired farmers usually tenants. Help can take many forms e.g.

- Payment for a relief milker during a family crisis
- Top-up fees for care home fees
- A hamper at Christmas
- Phone advice
- Mobility scooter
- Holiday for a disabled person or terminally ill daughter
- Washing machine
- Electricity bill payment
- Quarterly grant
- Birthday flowers for all long term grant beneficiaries
- Bankruptcy fees
- Funeral costs

RABI is keen to look after working farmers and keep them working helping with gateway grants which may enable a farmer to take HGV test, or gain a useful skill – tree felling to supplement farm income, or pay towards house modifications, electricity and water supply, even a pair of shoes.

The service is confidential. Income sources are fundraising £1 million a year, legacies and an investment portfolio.

Locally RABI works with Farm Crisis network based at Redhills, Penrith

website : www.rabi.org.uk

The Chairman Jean thanked Georgina for an enlightening talk; many of those present had not heard of the charity before.

Ann gave a short update, encouraging flu vaccine take-up and advising of the free health checks being offered to those between 40 & 74 in a 5 year programme, an attempt to diagnose and reduce deaths from the major conditions in Cumbria heart disease, stroke, diabetes and kidney disease.

The afternoon finished with tea & biscuits .