

Ladybird Boat Trust

(Registered Charity Number 1153894)
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a message from

Air Marshal Sir John Baird KBE DL MBChB FRCPE FRCSE FFOM FRAeS DAvMed FAMS

December, 2013

Dear

THE "LADYBIRD" BOAT- A NEW FUTURE

Some seven years ago, as you might know, Lady Baird and I were privileged to lead a campaign to raise money for the purchase and fitting out of a large river boat, based at Hartford Marina Huntingdon, called the *Ladybird* which would operate under the auspices of St John Ambulance and which would provide free trips on the river for those, both young and old, who were disadvantaged in some way.

That campaign raised the magnificent sum of £135,000 which resulted in the construction of *Ladybird* which has since been providing, on average, one hundred trips on the Great Ouse each year between April and September. The *Ladybird* is crewed by some 25 volunteers (of which nine are Boatmasters qualified by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency), who have over this time put an enormous amount of their time and expertise into ensuring that the "Ladybird" has successfully fulfilled its original aims beyond our expectations. There are no paid staff of any sort.

St John Ambulance, nationally, has taken the policy decision to discontinue its support for this venture, and all the other *Waterwing* boats under its control, from the end of this year. However, I am delighted to say that, at the instigation of members of the crew, a new Charity called *The Ladybird Boat Trust* has been established with the aims of not just continuing the present service, but of enhancing it. My wife and I are Trustees of that Charity, as are Alan Worth (Chairman), Bob Miller (Treasurer), Ted Bocking (Secretary) and Tony Hinsley (Boat Manager).

Whilst St John Ambulance has generously agreed to donate the boat to *The Ladybird Boat Trust*, inevitably our new Charity will be faced with finding new funding for the immediate running costs from the moment of handover from St John Ambulance on 20th December this year. Whilst members of the crew have already offered some financial support, as have my wife and myself, the purpose of this letter is to invite you, as a member of the local community, to become a Patron of the *The Ladybird Boat Trust* to ensure its continued future. To this end a Standing Order form is enclosed with this letter.

As a Patron, the Trustees and crew would very much like to welcome you to a trip on the *Ladybird* which they hope to arrange in the New Year.

If you are able to help or support us in any other way, such as a one-off donation, organising a fund-raising event, nominating *Ladybird* as your firm's chosen charity, or remembering the *Ladybird* in your will, we would be most grateful to hear from you.

For further information please contact our Chairman, Alan Worth, at the above address or email, or telephone 01487 841005.