

Runnymede Smoke Free Charter Website

Councillor Jim Broadhead's blog



Like the Mayor I also started young perhaps even before she did. You smoked because your friends smoked. There were Senior Service, Woodbines & Weights. Capstan Full Strength if you were lucky. Cigarettes were more sociable and offered round more. You smoked everywhere, Cinemas, clubs, pubs & restaurants. Even on buses & trains. You tried pipes, cigars, rolled your own, but invariably went back to the fags. Drugs in those days was very rarely heard of. More recently I noticed that more & more of my generation didn't smoke they kicked the habit, felt healthier.

I feel like a social leper when I go out with my chums to play snooker I am the only one who smokes. I have

always wanted to give up smoking 7-10 cigarettes a day. My wife is being really supportive and wants me to succeed.

Blog for March - July

06/03/06	<p>I gave up smoking on Monday night (6th March 2006) and so far it is going very well. Last week I attended the smoking cessation group at Crouch Oak Lane GP practice. This was very beneficial as we were told about the products on the market and then chose a way of giving up smoking which suited us personally. I opted to go for the nicotine patches and was also offered a 'wand like' cigarette to twizzle when I have a craving to hold a cigarette. I have also seen a hypnotherapist - I felt awake all the time during this session but don't know if it has had an affect yet.</p> <p>Most of the day smoking is going in and out of my mind and I am fighting the cravings by thinking of the fact that cravings only last 9 seconds – 9 minutes, so if you can distract yourself within that time it will help. I am off to the smoking cessation group tonight.</p>
16/03/06	<p>It's now a week since my last update to this diary. I have not been smoking for the last 10 days. I still get cravings for ciggies and could have committed murder quite easily. You tend to be very sharp with those people close to you. You know you've done it and afterwards wish you hadn't. My wife</p>

has been very supportive.

Last Thursday I went to the second meeting at the Smoking Cessation Group. Previous meeting we had been 13. Tonight we were 12. We were individually sort of breathalysed to see how much the toxins in our breath had reduced. For those who had not smoked the lower the reading. This week there should have no reading at all. After this test we were asked if we would like to dispose of any smoking paraphernalia.

Cigarettes lighters ashtrays were deposited in the centre of the group and the leader removed them. We were then all asked to describe how our various non smoking aids were working and how we felt. Some felt better than others but all promised to continue. We next paired off and I found I had a Non Smoking Buddy called Graham. Graham had been a 40 a day plus man. Buddies phone each other every day to see how your doing and give each other support. We put £5 each in an envelope and if the person you are buddying smokes you lose the £5. All monies collected go to a party on completion of the course.

Will let you know how we got on after the next meeting.

17/03/06

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18/3/06	<p>Lots of things to do today before the Six Nations Rugby. No time to miss the faggs till late evening. Felt a bit restless had to keep bobbing up & down going to the kitchen for drinks. Developed a bit of a cough.Nothing to hacking,Suppose the tar in the lungs has got to go somewhere before they clear.</p>
19/3/06	<p>Up at six this morning as had to go to Heathrow to take friends. Had a good cough. Notice sleep pattern has changed seem to be waking earlier more naturally. After trip ate a hearty breakfast. Kept busy in the garden. This seems to be the answer, keeping busy.No real urges that were not in conquerable. Buddy phoned seems to still be trying,said he would be going to the meeting Thursday.</p>
20/3/06	<p>Not a bad day. Only got tempted once or twice. Even had a night off, gave some cashew nuts a bashing then read that they are bad for the cholesterol. Can't win can you.</p>
21/03/06	<p>Today is Tuesday. Two whole weeks since the "last drag on a fag" Who would believe it. Urges much less. Spoke to my buddy and tried to encourage him to finally stop, but I feel I'm flogging a dead horse. Have developed a dry cough which has been keeping me awake. Sleep pattern is still disturbed.</p>
22/03/06	<p>Much the same as yesterday. Woke up at 4am read for an hour then went back to sleep. Kept busy. Left message for buddy to ring as I had meeting following night and would miss Group.</p>
23/03/06	<p>Cough still with us. Happened to be on my own most of the day. Found I had a couple of urges but nothing I couldn't handle. Had Council meeting in</p>

	<p>the evening till 10pm so couldn't fit in the the Non Smoking Group. Had to send my apologies. Fellow councillors most interested to see how things were progressing. Mayor claims to be doing OK as well. All in all a good day.</p>
27/03/06	<p>Survived the weekend. Friday night & Sunday were perhaps the worst times. Mixing with people smoking. Not only can you smell those that smoke you can actually taste the tar. You notice it also when you cough. Don't know whether to take an expectorant or a suppressant to get over the cough. The amount of junk that comes up makes your throat ache. Must discuss this at the Non Smoking Group on Thursday. No news from my buddy over the weekend.</p>
28/03/06	<p>Today we clock up completion of the third week not smoking. Seem to be a bit quick tempered this morning, more out of frustration than anything. Day can only get better. Before I went out this evening got through to my buddy. He has been to the doctors today and got a prescription for some patches. Confirmed that he would be going to Group on Thursday.</p>
29/03/06	<p>Today so far has been a good day. Seem to only get urges when I'm alone. What a good time to cheat. No one would know, I could have a sly one. Who would care? I'm sure others feel this way. You just have to be strong and resist.</p> <p>Phoned buddy this evening to see how he has got on with the patches. He said "funny I was just looking at the packet. I haven't tried one yet I was just thinking of waiting till I go to group tomorrow night." I said that it really was the wrong time of day to put one on especially if you've been smoking already today. We decided that he really need a power boost from the group to set him up. Looks good that he will be there Thursday night</p>
30/03/06	<p>Guess who didn't turn up to the Non smoking Group. Anyway reported back as to the conversations I had had with my buddy. Felt very let down, not to worry, everyone else felt as if they were really on top of the situation. We all were breathalysed again and were a bit disappointed to note that our readings were up. This could have been because we had been exposed to a number of things such as bonfires secondary smoking etc. told not to worry. Everyone looked fitter and had a clearer complexion. We all talked about how our week had been, about the cough we all seemed to have developed and perhaps ways we could overcome it.</p>

	<p>People commented on how the 'buddy buddy' situation had helped and that some had arranged that they would only contact, if the urges were too great to bear</p> <p>Next Thursday will be our last group meeting, when all those who had completed the course would be awarded a certificate. To celebrate, we decided that we would go to the local Chinese restaurant and spend some of the money we had all saved by not smoking. We all individually stood and repeated our vows not to smoke before our next meeting and went home.</p>
31/03/06	<p>Not a bad day, however was a bit mean & sharp about 5 ish, realised error of my ways before going out this evening. Spent a few hours in smoking environment. No problems except felt very hungry about 10.30ish.</p> <p>Had another beer.</p>
01/04/06	<p>Had a very good day, no real urges even when mixing with smokers.</p>
02/04/06	<p>Sunday morning left to my own devices. Usual cooked breakfast and coffee breaks. Found during quiet moments could have murdered a fag, went out and planted some potatoes instead.</p>
03/04/06 - 07/04/06	<p>This week has been rather stressful regarding employment as redundancy loomed its ugly head. However although there were many occasions I was tempted, resisted all attacks. Last couple of days coped extremely well.</p> <p>Last night was the last of the Nonsmoking Group meetings run by the NHS. Those Ten members out of the thirteen who originally started all those weeks ago, passed out with flying colours. We took our last breathalyser test and generally spoke about how we were coping. How the buddy system had worked and that strong friendships had been developed over the period of the course. We all received certificates and letters for our doctor's to say that we had all successfully completed the NHS course. Looking round the group you could see that everyone looked and felt better in themselves. We thanked Jennie Thorpe and her assistant for all the help and encouragement they had given over the past weeks. We would thoroughly encourage anyone contemplating giving up smoking to contact the local help line for when the next course begins.</p> <p>To celebrate we went as a group to the Beijing</p>

	<p>Chinese Restaurant all paid for by the money we had saved by not buying cigarettes. A great time was had by all and we agreed to meet at the end of the month.</p>
09/04/06	<p>Having finished the NHS Non Smoking Group you feel great. A bit lonely cause your on your own. However having told all your friends and acquaintances they keep you going. How's the no smoking? still off the weed, not even a puff etc. How great to keep saying you don't smoke, your a non smoker. Best thing you've ever done. Anyone contemplating giving up, go for it, its great once you get over the initial shock. I loved to smoke. All the ex-smokers I know still crave a fag on occasions. Even after twenty five years. Giving up on your own is a mugs game. Join a group. Enjoy giving up with others. You won't regret it. If I can do it, you can do it. Give the NHS a try.</p> <p>My next update will be in three months.</p>
13/07/06	<p>Well its just over three months since I last wrote regarding giving up smoking. We're still off the weed. I wouldn't say its been easy but everyday is a bonus. Having told so many people that I was giving up has helped tremendously by their being so supportive. Sometimes you have not even thought about it till they mentioned it. You just don't realise how much better you feel. How your taste buds change, you appreciate food better. Your sense of smell increases, yes you really can smell the roses.</p> <p>I wrote previously with regards to joining a NHS Group and how much they had helped in the early stages in enabling you to take the right course of action as to giving up. This I would thoroughly endorse to anyone thinking of joining. The groups are both laid back and informative, you also meet some very nice people. Recently I met one of the ladies that had been on the same course as myself. She also was still off the cigarettes and felt so much better. However she told me that one or two of the other ladies from our group she had met were back on it. Goes to show that you must want to give up, if you really want to succeed.</p> <p>Just think in two months I will have been off the fags for six months. How great it feels to say you don't smoke.</p>