

GLOUCESTERSHIRE
DISABILITY
FORUM

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NEWS UPDATE

GDF meeting
Saturday 7th May 2005
Old Richian's Sports & Social Club

Attendance: Ros Champion & PA, Sharon King, Ernest Upton, Stephen Miller, Lyn Whitehouse, Tony Burton, Colin Parry, Ken Shaw, Sue McClung, Audrey Pound, Robert Lewis, Gerald Tween, Allison W. John U Anne - Marie Cuffe.

Apologies: Rolo Alderwick, George Ridgeon,

Speaker: Mark Barsby-Finch GLS Warehouse Project The premises are in the High Street, Tredworth, Gloucester and open from 9-30 / 4-00 Monday to Friday. It is staffed by volunteers from the community and members of (GLS). This offers a great deal opportunity for GLS members to be valued and gain confidence in a retail environment.

The project offers a lot for the local community in other ways apart from volunteering. It has become a social point and offers goods at realistic prices for the locals. In tune with the ideals of recycling, the project takes in a wide variety of goods and welcomes any donations. There are restrictions on goods like electrical and gas appliances which prevent them being sold on for safety reasons. All stock is carefully checked to make sure it is suitable for resale and clothing is laundered if required. Lately they have published lists of some goods to be distributed via e-mail to get the message further out to members. If you would like to know more about collections, donations, volunteering or buying something contact Mark through the GLS Administrative Office within Hatherley Road Day Centre, Gloucester Tel: 01452-414772 warehouseproject@gloslifestyles.co.uk

Speaker: David Bennett **How to get your organisations message across**

Has spent 13yrs with the Cheltenham Hospital Cobalt Unit Fundraising Dept.; David is well qualified to pass on tips for smaller groups to promote their events.

The recent election is a classic example of how a great deal of publicity can be duplicated and distributed and become history and waste in a couple of days.

Organisations should bear the following pointers when publicising events

Be aware of cost limitations

Be realistic

Be aware of public perception and attitudes towards your organisation

Note responsibilities under Charity Law

"Gloucestershire Lifestyles (GLS) prepares and issues notes of the Gloucestershire Disability Forum (GDF) with due care, but cannot accept responsibilities for any reporting errors. Views reported are those of the presenters and do not necessarily reflect those of either GLS or GDF."

Sell the event

Leaflet should contain essential information and do not assume that people will be aware of detail you fail to mention.

Produce a low cost leaflet with computer generated graphics to gain maximum impact

Insert key information clearly and with clarity

Mention that the event is fully accessible if possible

Delegate distribution of the leaflets and target effectively

Get copy to all sections of the media to maximise on the possibility of mentions or free editorial. Follow up with a call to reinforce the message.

Advertising can be expensive, seek a sponsor

Include the Charity and registered number as part of Charity Law.

Try to open the event with a celebrity

This now becomes a news story and can generate editorial cover in its own right

Prepare a Press release for distribution to all possible outlets including photo desk.

Put contact details at the end of the press release and basic event details as a header.

Be aware of limited reader attention span and create imaginative headlines and early inclusion of key facts, place, date, time etc.

Follow up with a personal call and always try to build up a relationship with local media people.

TV opportunities are difficult and require plenty of visual opportunities. Only skeleton staff works on weekends so perhaps pre-empt this and plan a situation in advance.

Sometimes photos taken at the event can be used in publicity around the success of the event afterwards

When using publicity sited on the highways remember to seek approval and remove promptly after the event.

To promote future relationships with the media it is advisable to thank those that have supported you.

Remember there are many pitfalls and challenges in promoting any event and a great deal of competition. Use your imagination to be top of the pile.

Speakers: Natalie Wadley & David Dalby National Star Centre Ullenwood Active Employment

The Star Centre at Ullenwood offers specialist residential education with care and support for 16-25 yr. olds with a physical disability or subject to a brain injury. They also have 15 day students and the college has bases in three locations. On offer are both vocational and pre-vocational courses, therapists, sports facilities as well as support for personal development and both key and basic skills. There are also a range of ACET courses, which are part time, available.

Many students that study in Cheltenham at the centre wish to remain in the area and it was recognised that they needed more skills to integrate into the community and possibly

take on a working opportunity. Active Employment, a programme funded through European money and in conjunction with the Learning Skills Council, offers 16-24 yr. old Star Centre students and those of a BME background the opportunity to develop and possibly go into employment although that is not the primary objective. Currently twelve students are on the course and they will be looking to gaining accredited qualifications validated by OCR during their 18 week course. There is personal support on offer and work placement opportunities where the college link up with a variety employment providers in the area. Transport issues are covered during the course that takes away at least one major barrier to progress. Other benefits gained by participation include confidence, awareness and career research and the participants can find modern apprenticeships and volunteering work to follow into the path of employment.

The Star Centre is best placed to deliver this programme because of its specialist support work and the resources available as well as external links and contacts with the overall local community. Referrals can come from an individual or anyone associated with the individual but there must be a commitment by the student to work in a placement and a desire to make the most of this opportunity.

The next course runs in September 05.

During the questions that followed it was said that the funding of the project established the age restrictions as well as the BME inclusion but did not include learning disabilities where that is the primary disability. Courses are geared so that they will not affect benefits and it was established that not all participants were seeking a full time employment place.

There was a suggestion that the GDF should lobby for the benefit system to be geared to help individuals into work rather than the current situation where it is a positive barrier. This was agreed.

A further suggestion to offer Princes Trust opportunities for development to students was also accepted.

GLS has an Access database and it was hoped that the students may well be encouraged to be active in keeping that supported.

Information on ACET courses at the college can be gained from Marie Snell at the college.

Information Exchange:

- GLS has received an indication from Barnwood House Trust that funds could be made available for the Forum that for the past two years has been solely funded through the generosity of GLS.
- The AGM for Gloucestershire Lifestyles will be at Nature in Art Twigworth on May 26th at 11am.

- Stroud Valley Project now has accessible premises at 8 Threadneedle Street in Stroud and hopes that this will now encourage more people with a disability to volunteer with them.
- **South West Disability Forum** Ken Shaw explained that while progress had been made it was slow due to the lack of funds as the project was running on the goodwill of member groups while waiting for the South West Equality Network to be established as a funding stream. There will be an AGM in October and it is hoped to have identified clear funding. The group are anxious to recruit more people in the sector with skills and the ability to work for the good of setting up the Disability Network. This is vital to fit within the plans the government have for funding and legislation within the sector.
- **The Raven Centre** in Hare Lane Gloucester wished the Forum to be aware that it offered facilities and mid day meals at its venue throughout week.
- **Stroud District Council now has its Local Plan** available for consultation. Copy is available from various sources including, its web site, Council Offices and libraries.
- **The RETHINK** events programme is now available for April - July.
- **County Access Forum Rights of Way** Nothing to report
- **County Assembly** attached to the Newsletter is a short report on the current situation regarding the COMPACT
- **Gloucestershire First** A presentation is being made to the September meeting on economic contribution of the voluntary sector. This is a sector of employment and support for the community that up till now the G F committee have chosen to ignore from there plans and calculations.
- **The Physical Disability Implementation Team Sue McClung** reported that the recent survey results have been published and an event about the housing needs highlighted by the report is to be arranged. Nothing on transport but that may follow?
- **Disability Driving Association DDA** are anxious that people are made aware and hope to reduce driving costs and take up issues relevant to driving. Contact them at The Disabled Drivers Association, Ashwellthorpe, NORWICH NR16 1EX Tel: 0870 770 3333 Website: www.DDA.org.uk
- **West Gloucestershire Health Trust** Health Improvement Plans for the trust have been posted on their website
- **Government Office for South West** Recently hosted some excellent Equality training throughout the region worthy of trying to access.
- **SCOPE** Indications are that the Charity is abandoning its support and educational role and becoming purely a lobbying organisation. The Forum regretted this as so much good work had been done for the benefit of its members and it felt that funds raised for the organisation were being spent in areas that were not clear when the appeal for money was made and donations offered.
- **FOLDA** A training programme for the year has been published and offers some valuable training opportunities, some of which are free.

- **Citizens Advocacy Trust for Gloucestershire** is staging its AGM in the Churchdown Community Centre at 7-30pm Tuesday 7th June 2005.
- **Shopmobility** Tony Burton expressed concern that he was not able to easily access the services during trips his group made and also showed concern over their location in some towns. He was directed to their website and it was explained that siting was often down to the funder and pre booking helps with planning a trip requiring scooters. While covered by a national body the centres around the country do operate independently and have different criteria in some places.
- **Mental Health Bill** There was general concern that the Mental Health Bill at its 2nd Committee stage in Parliament was inadequate and was floored. It was hoped that the Government would give a prompt positive response to the suggestions for change now the election has been decided.
- Concern was expressed that the spend in Gloucestershire on Mental Health Adults Accommodation is much lower here than in most other counties with the suggestion that cuts in the Supporting People programme would involve even more cuts. It was stated that Physical & Sensory Disability had not been recognised in its own right and was also subject to similar under-funding and that the Forum should continue to monitor this fact.
- Gloucester Dial a Ride have just produced a Consultation Report on their service. The consultation took place over a 12 month period and copies of the Report can be obtained from: Malcolm Dunn, Development Worker Gloucester Dial-a-Ride
Tel:01452 418122

Next Forum Meeting is Saturday 20th August followed by Saturday 12th November
Meeting closed