

GLOUCESTERSHIRE
DISABILITY
FORUM

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NEWS UPDATE

GDF meeting Saturday 13th November 04 ORRFC Sport & Social Club Gloucester

Attendance: Jean Hanks, Gerald Tween, Ros Champion & PA, Sharon King, Ernest Upton, Stephen Miller, Lyn Whitehouse, George Ridgeon, Rolo Alderwick, Paul Glyneeble, Colin Parry, Ken Shaw, Sue McClung.

Apologies: Tony Burton, Alan Finney, Kate Fenwick, Diggory Seacombe, Audrey Pound & Malcolm Dunn. Speaker David Bennett was unable to attend and will be invited to a future meeting.

Speaker: Tony Metcalfe - Stroud Valley Project

Project has been going for 15 years and started life as an advisory group around old buildings in the area. This was later extended after five years to include countryside advice on various environmental issues.

Currently funded through Stroud District Council, Lottery, environmental groups, and sympathetic trusts. Support in kind comes from the Stroud & Swindon BS. The project has gone through difficult times but now employs two full time and two part time workers.

Efforts are being made to create partnerships with groups to extend the project and make it more inclusive and address access issues around disability. Links with schools and local groups is also a priority.

Work involves restoration and recovery of 'lost areas' of environmental interest working with and supporting groups while they establish themselves. Colin Parry has had some input from Lifestyles on a couple of projects.

Work is mainly in the Stroud area but is extending into the Severn Vale and working with the parishes and local authorities there. New areas are opening up with far greater access to all positive environmental benefits

The project is always looking to engage with volunteers and any skills are welcomed. 01453 753358 www.stroudvalleysproject.org

"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."

Speaker: Sandra Mutton - Gloucestershire Astn. for Disability (GAD)

The Association is based in Stroud and delivers the wishes of both Miss Enid Stewart and Mrs. Kathleen Powell who left legacies to support people with a physical or sensory disability in Gloucestershire.

After a countywide mapping exercise across the county it was established there was a need for direct funding for the welfare and support within the county. Funding grants are geared towards the individual rather than groups and can range from £100 - £1000. They can exceed that in exceptional circumstances and all are subject to a simple application to the trustees. Grants are paid against invoice and not direct to recipient. All grants are considered by a group of six trustees that meet quarterly around February, May, August and November. Many aspects of support are covered but the Trust is anxious not to take over any purchase that may be the statutory responsibility of other agencies. Computers, equipment and holidays all fall within the remit and they will also help with initiatives to support the improvements of support for groups of people.

Grants Hotline 01453 885857 e-mail gadgrant@pobox204.fsnet.co.uk

A brief discussion took place about the Mark Cummings (Radio Gloucestershire) Challenge. Gloucestershire Lifestyles had shadowed him on their challenge to visit Cheltenham from Gloucester via public transport using a wheelchair. There were many positives that came out of this and have been followed up. Jean Hanks spoke of her challenge to him around the charges on Toll bridges around the country, as these were not always free to Blue Badge holders as is the popular preconception.

- **South West Disability Network: Rep Ken Shaw**

Ken Shaw reported that the Network was to hold an away day session with its management group to establish the way forward. South West Equality Network was now up and running with an appointed group of management and a worker for this group was being advertised shortly.

- **Glos Local Access Forum Public Rights of Way: Rep Sue McClung**

The last meeting was held at Keynes Country Park in Cirencester followed by a tour of places locally that had been made more Disabled Accessible as a result of consultations with a local disabled group in South Cerney.

The park itself is quite Accessible and makes an ideal place for a BBQ or Picnic. It has a Blue Flag beach.

I have been asked to meet up with the staff from the centre again to look at some disability issues and I will draw in local disabled people and groups. It will be over the next two years that the Access issue will be high on the agenda and hopefully we will be able to influence the decisions.

- **County Assembly for Voluntary & Community Sector: Rep Sue McClung**

There are some developments in the structure of FOLDA to separate out the service delivery from the Infrastructure development.

- Concerns were raised about the proposed reduction in funding to Volunteer Bureaux
- Discussion around the structure of the Healthy Living role within the Gloucestershire Strategic Partnership

I attended the Assembly on 4th November at South Gate House and reported back about the **Gloucestershire First** meeting I attend as a rep of the Voluntary Sector. There were a couple of points arose which are of interest to people with a disability and Disability Groups

- When mapping the employees skills needs to courses held for school leavers and others Roger Crouch Learning Skills Council, who said that the needs of Care (Adult & Social) were well met!! - not my experience - where did he get his information? He also said it would not be possible to make all FE sites meet the DDA
- **Physical Disabilities Local Implementation Team run by the West Glos PCT: Rep Sue McClung** I attended the first meeting but received no agenda or date for the second that was held on 22nd October. Their first task is to find out how many people with physical disabilities there are in the county from various sources. The next meeting is on 18th January. Mins are available for anyone interested.
- **Disability Alliance** have produced a Benefits & Tax Credits Check List (June2004) it is available on their website:www.disabilityalliance.org or Tel: 020 7247 8776
- **Community Planning & Funding Pack** is available from East Cornwall CVS through their website www.community-projects-trust.org.uk
- **FOLDA New training time table** now available from FOLDA (Federation of Local Development Agencies) Held in various parts of the county Tel: 01452-332424 or e-mail www.gloucestercvcs.org.uk/training
- A needs assessment for a **Shopmobility in Stroud**. Contact Christine Bassett Tel: 01453 759005 if you are interested
- **Mental Capacity Bill 2004** if it stands as it is will have quite significant impact on people with a disability. SCOPE are supporting a campaign against this.
- SCOPE are also launching a **GET EQUAL** campaign if you are interested contact them on their website: www.scope.org.uk
- Creating Excellence - all about regeneration in the South West Website: www.creatingexcellence.info
- **Mobility Roadshow 2005** Rolo Alderwick spoke of the to be held at Donnington Park, Derby Thurs. 7th - Sat 9th July 10-00am 5-00pm. The general opinion was that this was well worth attending but needs two days to explore, as there is so much to be seen. Details 0870 770 3222 www.justmobility.co.uk/roadshow e-mail choice@gnet.gov.uk.
- **Cuts of 20% in Supporting People budget** Ernest Upton spoke of the concerns around the County Council's proposed cuts to the Supporting People budget which may well see funding for the existing contract with Partnership Trust for supported housing greatly reduced. This would represent a huge problem for those in

supported housing.

- **Database of people with Mental Health problems.** It was point out that Doctor's surgeries may well be setting up a database of all people that suffer from mental health issues or depression. His concern was that this may well be done without the consent of the individual and be seen as a stigma that may well affect attitudes towards the individual concerned.
- **Who picks up someone who has fallen?** An ambulance was refused for someone who had fallen out of a wheelchair. The individual was a sizeable gent and claimed he was not hurt but could not get back into his chair without trained assistance. It does raise the issue of how far Health & Safety restrictions with regard to lifting and handling individuals is going, to the detriment of the patient.
- **Access groups** George Ridgeon raised concerns over the demise of local Access groups and hoped that something could be done to raise their profile and see the work being done to highlight access issues. Sue Mc spoke of a previous Lifestyles conference that had met resistance from the building trade but suggested GLS may consider a further Access Conference in 2005, which could be part funded by GAD. This could promote the formation of local groups on this issue. Some do exist and do a good job.
- **Bollards and street furniture in Cheltenham Centre** G R also raised this issue. Despite numerous letters the Access manager had spoken of no previous complaints and saw no reason to follow the example of Gloucester City Council in providing markings to assist people who were visually impaired. Gerald Tween offered to have some input with this matter.
- **Closure of part of the High Street in Cheltenham** The issue of was brought up and will be referred to the local access group to discuss possible action.
- **Blue Badge parking in Brunswick Road Gloucester** Gerald Tween advised the group that it will be stopped by the library and museum as this constituted a danger but the parking outside GLOSCAT would remain.

The meeting closed at 12-30. *Next meeting Saturday 12th February 10.am.*

The dates for Gloucestershire Disability Forum meetings for 2005 were agreed as February 12th, April 7th, August 20th, November 12th all Saturdays *please note these dates in your diary.*