

NEWS UPDATE

GDF Meeting ORRFC Saturday 21st August 2004

Apologies:

Alan Finney, Kate Fenwick, Diggory Seacombe, Sue Blakely, Brian Large, Audrey Pound, George Ridgeon, Sybil Bruce.

Attendees:

Tony Burton, Colin Parry, Ernest Upton, Rollo Alderwick, Paul Glyneebble, John U, Stephen Miller, Sue Fellows, Leonie Seabourne, Lyn Whitehouse, Lisa Stokes, Malcolm Dunn, Ken Shaw, Sue McClung (Chair), Mary Carroll, Martha Speyer

Introduction

Sue welcomed the group and explained how a bid to Comic Relief to fund the forum had been rejected and that all the costs were currently being borne by Gloucestershire Lifestyles who have no identified funds for this task.

Talkabout

Representatives Mary and Martha spoke of how the organisation functions and the services it offers. It is a charitable counselling service and was formed in 1996. It serves both carers and those experiencing a disability. By identifying the pressures for both carers and those acquiring a disability, how they react with others, they can come to terms with their situation and taking control of their lives once more. Talkabout has six volunteer counsellors and has the facilities to promote and encourage training of more volunteer counsellors. Most of the volunteers come from a professional background in that field. Referrals are made through a GP or can be self made and usually come into the answer-phone service, which is manned three days a week. From there the service is explained to the individual and an assessment is arranged. Moving on from this an appropriate counsellor is allocated and most referrals will have between 6-12 sessions but more can follow if required.

The charity charges up to £25 per session but this is geared to ability to pay and every effort is made to respond to that ability even to offering free counselling in extreme cases established through a voluntary means test. The base is in Clarence St. Cheltenham 01242 539490 but the service can be brought locally into doctors surgeries or meeting rooms throughout the county.

Talkabout also offers stress and pain management and in house training available to outside organisations. There is about an average three week lead up time for the service.

SWDEN

Ken Shaw spoke again of the South West Disability Equality Forum. The forum is getting a database formed for the benefit of the region for networking facilities and to draw groups together to promote good practice. When the regional body is established it is intended to be a united voice for the region to enable Government offices to consult on proposed legislation. All groups wishing to register can do so via Ken Shaw 01452-616135 Gloucestershire Disability Forum.

The National Lottery is currently consulting all groups in the country with regard how they would like to see Lottery money distributed within the Big Lottery Fund Programme 2005. Website: www.biglotteryfund.org.uk, enquiries to 08454 102030 or textphone 08456 021659. Make sure you have your say and promote disability funding. There are still time for applications within the Community Fund and the New Opportunities Fund programmes.

Disability Access Raising Events (DARE)

Leonie Seabourne spoke of her project that she has set up in the Forest of Dean since moving here from Slough. The concept is to take people from all walks of life and put them into an everyday environment that has the challenges of disability. By trying to get people to experience access issues in a wheelchair, or with a visual or hearing impairment for a short while creates a far greater awareness of the issues and providing very positive outcomes. This is not a stunt, it is purely for awareness and generating positive actions from the outcomes. After

each session there is a debrief and talk around what they found and what is legislated to be in place by October 04. The pilot scheme is in the Forest and has focussed around Colford and Lydney but has had encouraging results so far with change being implemented for the whole of the community. The scheme will develop with access audits available to all businesses at a realistic charge. Funding is an issue and it is hope to introduce a charging scheme for all aspects of the work which enables smaller organisations to be involved and still provides for the project activities. Some suggestions were put forward, which will be considered. Public liability insurance was an issue but that has been satisfactorily addressed. A form of accreditation is being considered to encourage more participation.

- A discussion followed when it was said that David Drew MP Stroud was looking to re-establish the Stroud Access Group for work in that area.
- Gloucestershire Lifestyles challenged Mark Cummings to travel with a wheelchair from the Radio Station to the Regent Arcade Cheltenham. Many good experiences came out of that but it also highlighted major flaws in the system.
- Comment made that all councils should have an effective disability representation and not just someone who knows the legislation and thinks he knows what 'they' want. An example being that the Local Strategic Partnership in Gloucester has no disability representation at all!

Notices:

- B&Q DIY retailers are offering courses in August and September for small local businesses on how to deliver services within the Disability Discrimination Act legislation effective from October. Look up their website for details.
- Churchdown Community Voluntary services provide a car service in the area. They also have an accessible community bus based at the Community Centre. This will serve not only Churchdown but also Innsworth and Brockworth.
- RADAR is staging a National Conference in the Barbican Centre London on October 27th about Equality in Human Rights. Contact Sue McClung for the possibility of sharing road transport to the event.
- The forum is still seeking a representative to sit on the Access & Inclusion group in Gloucester, anyone interested please contact Sue on 01452 530184
- Certain very useful publications from RADAR are available from the Forum at reduced prices. Contact Sue McClung for the list and prices.
- A Reminder about the excellent training available at a reasonable daily cost through FOLDA (Federation of Local Development Agencies) Held in various parts of the county Tel: 01452 332424 or e-mail www.gloucestercvs.org.uk/training
- Cheltenham Disability Forum is staging a conference on Transport and Access at St Mathews Church Clarence Street Cheltenham 2pm - 5pm. Contact Hilary 01242 576215 for more details.
- TRANSPORT TO NHS Services Inquiry is being held. The consultation with the public was up to 19th July however there are likely to be enquiry session to answer questions in Sept & October. If you have a view on this service and would like to ask a question contact Richard Thorn on 01452 425204 or e-mail him on West Gloucestershire PCT is holding its AGM in Huntley Village Hall on September 30th. Contact them for more details.
- George Ridgeon sent GDF information from the Disability Rights Commission. They issue a great deal of information on their website bulletin www.drc-gb.org e-mail address enquiry@drc-gb.org 08457 622633. They also have many excellent publications and videos and most of it is free. Be aware and take advantage.
- West Gloucestershire PCT are holding their AGM on Thursday 30th September 2004, 1:00pm till 6:00pm at Huntley Village Hall If you wish to attend, contact Gina Mann on 01452 389428 or e-mail her on gina.mann@wglospct.nhs.uk

- Cotswold District Council are preparing their Housing Strategy for 2005-2008 and are interested in any comments we would like to make. Responses are required by 9th September. Contact Nicky Day on 01285 623405 or e-mail her on nicky.day@cotswold.gov.uk.
- Have Your say for a new Taxi Bus Service for Stroud and NorthAvon
Rachel Shingler, Project Management Officer, Freeport NAT5975 Shire Hall Gloucester e-mail taxi-bus@gloucestershire.gov.uk
- National Mobility Road Show is a free entry show at Castle Donnington and is well worth a visit for transport issues. Dates to Follow.
- There has been a Best Value Review of Residential Care Carers and Users Questionnaire has been sent out and the results are expected later in the year
- There will be a Craft Fair at Christchurch Hall Cheltenham October 9th in aid of Cheltenham Parkinson's Group. Tables are £12. 11am to 3pm. Contact Rollo Alderwick on 01453 752894.
- Gloucester Dial-a-Ride has conducted a survey of its users and potential users. It showed a very high satisfaction rate from the existing users and also identified other times that people wanted the service. The demand for Saturday use is being met and alongside that specific trips are planned to places outside of Gloucester. It is proving very popular and even more flexibility will be introduced once a need is established and supported. Funding to extend these services will be sought when need is identified but it has to be supported. Meetings will be set up with potential users later in the year and it is hoped this will encourage growth and usage towards the service everyone wants.