



**Kingston Society for Children and  
Adults with Learning Disabilities**

## **KINGSTON MENCAP**

**Affiliated to the  
Royal Mencap Society**

**The voice of learning disability**

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

**2010**

# **KINGSTON MENCAP Committee 2010**

## **CHAIR**

Gill Wood

## **VICE CHAIRMAN**

Roger Wooderson

## **HON. SECRETARY**

Susan Baker

## **HON. TREASURER**

Mary McDonald

## **GENERAL COMMITTEE**

Claire Alexander

Fiona Burkeman

Heather Notermans

John Phillips

## **LEARNING DISABILITY REP**

Kim Bright

## **SEEKERS Leaders**

June Bright & Shirley Temple up to July 2010

Zerrin Izli as of September 2010

## **XPRESSION Leader**

Dave Cafferty

## **FUTURE FRIENDS Co-ordinator**

Jill Kemp

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**Registered with Charity Commission Charity No 210583**

# **Kingston Mencap** established in 1952

In the beginning a group of parents met up in an old church hall, with no outdoor play space. Their main aim was to put pressure on the local authority to make proper provision for their children with learning disabilities and to provide adequate services.

Kingston Mencap has come a long way since those early days, and we continue to ensure our voice is heard and endeavour to promote a world where people are valued equally, listened to and included.

Kingston Mencap is different from many other affiliated groups in that we are a voluntary group run by a Trustee Committee. It is only in recent years that we have funded paid co-ordinators. We continue to work closely with the learning disability team in Kingston which enables us to run and jointly fund projects.

## **Our Aim**

- To provide information and support
- To develop and support services which enable both children and adults to live full lives
- To support carers of children/adults with a learning disability
- To help shape local services and ensure people with learning disabilities are listened to and not forgotten
- To provide leisure club and social opportunities

## **Our Values**

- People with learning disabilities must be valued equally, listened to and included
- To have the same opportunities in life like everyone else
- To have choice and control and to achieve the things they want out of life
- To be treated with dignity and respect

# **KINGSTON MENCAP**

## **NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The Annual General Meeting of the Society will be held at  
Dysart School, 190 Ewell Road, Surbiton, KT6 6HL  
Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2011 at 7.30pm

### **AGENDA**

1. Welcome
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of the AGM held on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2010 and Matters Arising
4. Annual Report and Chair's Remarks
5. To receive and adopt balance sheet and accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2010
  - a) Comments by the Acting Treasurer
  - b) Confirmation and appointment of Honorary Auditor
6. Election of Officers, Trustee Committee and Representative
  - a) Chair, Vice Chairman, Hon. Secretary, Hon. Treasurer
  - b) General Committee
  - c) Representative with a learning disability
7. Any other business (as notified prior to the meeting)

**The AGM meeting will be followed by our Guest Speakers**

**“Buffet and Drinks”**

**“Photographs”**

**“Information”**

## **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2010 at Dysart School**

Kim Bright co-chaired and welcomed everybody to this very important annual meeting for Kingston Mencap. There followed general housekeeping, pointing out fire exits and requesting mobile phones to be put on silent or switched off.

**Apologies:** Kenny Gibson, Theo Harris (KCIL), Bethan Clarke, Kate Tebb, Jane Din, Dave Cafferty and Alan Gerbi for lateness (Xpression club night)

### **Minutes & Matters Arising**

The 2009 Annual Report containing the minutes from last year's AGM had been previously circulated to all members and there were 7 matters arising:

- a) Clarification on milestone criteria for colleges - changes to LSC funding result in colleges tightening criteria, proof of educational progress to secure funding. The likely impact is that those with higher disability needs not being able to access residential provision. **Glen Mills updated**
- b) Latest on Orchard Hill providing Day College in Kingston - Kingston officers have met twice with the principal at Orchard Hill, third meeting planned shortly. The college is to identify a building and have requested RBK pay the lease. RBK Council and College aim to provide local opportunity to save funds. **Glen Mills updated**
- c) Available Transition information - The Transition Fayre 10<sup>th</sup> March 100+ parents/professionals attended, with request for future annual event. Approximately 35 stalls giving information on education, supported employment and living opportunities, leisure and social activities (including holidays). Information pertaining to adult social services specifically from the community learning disability team, psychology and challenging needs. Aspergers service and sensory impairment teams were provided. Useful networking opportunity  
Transition pack for young people due to be completed early June. **Rachel Lundy updated**
- d) 2009 parents concerned the needs of children were not being met by Warren Park - The integrated service is working closely with Warren Park to ensure that there is a robust service planning framework in place going forward. This will need to be flexible to enable the changing needs of children & young people in Kingston to be planned and catered for within a wide range of settings.  
Warren Park has presented two possible areas for development in 2010/11 - that is to enhance both nursing and psychology provision. The interim integrated service manager is working with WP and commissioning colleagues to consider these proposals further and in particular to develop nursing support which has been identified as a key priority.  
Further progress updates can be provided as the negotiations progress. **Rachel Lundy updated**
- e) The Kingston Parents Web Forum is live with positive feedback. It enables parents to talk with one another and supports the timely distribution of information alerts and updates to families. Work is underway to develop the children & young people's website lead by the participation officer and consultation and engagement with the young people themselves. The functionality of the site is being reviewed to enable posting of information and to consider more interactive social networking. It is anticipated the site will be live by the summer. **Rachel Lundy updated**
- f) Charlotte was covering temporary 'Information Officer' post but has left recently with Jodi now covering this agency role. **Glen Mills updated**
- g) GP Champion is Ruth Wey at the Grove

### **The Minutes were agreed to be an accurate record of last year's meeting**

**Proposed:** Pat Cox **Seconded:** Sue Peck

### **Chairman's Report**

Gill reported that 2009 had been a very busy year for our small depleted committee having to manage without a treasurer and latterly without the support of our secretary Cherie. Cherie had to stand down through illness and her input is greatly missed. It was unanimously agreed by committee to make Cherie an Honorary Member in appreciation for all the hard work and commitment she has shown to Kingston Mencap over many years. Kim presented Cherie with theatre gift vouchers and flowers as a token of our appreciation.

Gill talked about Seekers club which is nearly 40 years young and has seen many changes. Over 50 people attend on a Monday evening to enjoy a varied programme.

June and Shirley have been helping out for almost 30 years and have been leaders for the past 13, despite only agreeing to hold the fort for 6 months. They have both decided to stand down at the end of the summer term to hand over to a younger leader.

Kim thanked both June and Shirley on behalf of the members for their hard work and commitment.

Drop-In is held every Saturday at Searchlights and jointly funded up until Easter with the Kingston Learning Disabled Team. Funding until Xmas is dependent upon the venue. Gill thanked Jill Kemp for her hard work and commitment in coordinating this new venture.

Kingston Mencap will be 60 years old in 2012 and committee would welcome ideas and suggestions to how we should celebrate the momentous birthday.

Gill thanked all the Trustee Committee for their continued support and spoke of the good club leaders and band of wonderfully enthusiastic volunteers we are fortunate to have.

It is down to their dedication and great support that we are able to run the clubs and cannot thank all the club leaders and volunteers who turn up faithfully each week.

Gill spoke of the recent horrific story of 10 years of hate crime against the learning disabled man David in Manchester that we never want to see happen in Kingston.

It was a sad note to end on

### **It was agreed unanimously to adopt the Annual Report**

**Proposed:** Fiona Burkeman **Seconded:** Ilze Hopper

### **Treasurers Report**

Gill reported that the accounts had been tabled, as were all the separate club accounts

The treasurer would normally be invited to say a few words but unfortunately we did not have one.

We were not required to have a full audit but the accounts were fully inspected by Louise Healy.

We received less income in subscriptions and donations this past year and little bank interest.

Flag Day collection was down on previous years, possibly due to the tough financial climate.

We made fewer donations but spent more on our own clubs and projects to benefit members.

No questions were put to committee

### **Receive and Adopt Balance Sheets and Accounts for Kingston Mencap, Seekers Club, Xpressions and Future Friends 19+ Club**

**Proposed en bloc:** Cherie Furniaux **Seconded:** Roger Wooderson

### **Appointment of Honorary Auditor Louise Healy**

It was agreed the chair would send a letter of thanks

**Proposed:** Gill Wood **Seconded:** Sue Peck

### **Election of Trustee Officer & Committee and Rep for learning disability**

The following people had agreed to stand as trustees

#### Election of Officers:

Chair Gill Wood

Vice Chair Roger Wooderson

Secretary Sue Baker

Treasurer Mary McDonald

#### Election of Committee Trustees:

Claire Alexander

Fiona Burkeman

Heather Noterman

John Philips

Rep for learning disability:

Kim Bright

**Proposed en bloc:** Eric Owston **Seconded:** Eva Diamond

### **Any Other Business**

Gill welcomed Caroline Jones who takes over from Claire Webley as local development officer

Victoria Cafe project workers were all thanked for preparing the refreshments

Wills and Trust event 7<sup>th</sup> April 7.30pm at the Carers group -venue HFT speaker David Sheridan

Jazz Night 8<sup>th</sup> May details on Mencap Stall - venue Dysart School

John Philips available to receive 2010 subscriptions overdue

Glen Mills spoke of RBK running a second Wills and Trust lunch seminar with David Sheridan.

Date and venue will be in Pinboard and on website when known.

### **Official Business ended at 7.55 pm**

Kim Bright introduced Simon Pearce

#### **Simon Pearce**

Simon thanked Kingston Mencap for inviting him along to give an update on local services.

A recent development is that the learning disability team will all now be based under one roof at Session House in Surbiton and will be joined shortly by the community care and health team from New Malden, which provides lots more space and a better size office for the Parliament.

There is a strong Brokerage team and they have helped people make changes this past year.

Changes will be taking place in day services and Jackie Batten is looking at learning and work based activities out of the Causeway.

There are challenges financially for RBK, as learning disability is an area of growth and under a lot of pressure, with work taking place towards a personalised approach and individual budgets.

RBK is hoping to commit funding to enable access to further education/residential colleges.

There are no new plans at this time for Crescent & Causeway but it is expected after the May elections a strategy will look at both venues as they are under used.

It is not known if the coming election will have an impact on national policy which has been changing the past 4-5 years; housing, jobs, leisure and health. Simon is optimistic that all parties agree the fundamentals set out should be unchanged in this economic climate and will be a journey for all who to support people with learning disabilities.

The Chair introduced Mark Goldring – Mencap Chief Executive

#### **Mark Goldring**

Mark thanked the chair and Kingston Mencap for inviting him this evening

Mark lives locally and will sign up as a KM member this evening

Mark spoke of Royal Mencap and what is happening across the country. He praised KM for the fantastic job they do with little to spend but with positive achievement, for all the clubs etc.

He was very please to hear that people with LD are central to KM, volunteers and supporters.

KM celebrating 60<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2012 will have seen things change and improve.

Royal Mencap continue to lobby the government and opposition. Learning disabled people are living longer which impacts financially on the government. Struggling to get the political parties to listen on paying for social care is really difficult.

We must keep learning disability high on the agenda!

The reality of employment for LD, although the younger generation is given more opportunities, their expectations are higher.

Hate crime – more recently and cases several years ago. Lobbying and challenge, as Police admit not taking past occurrences more seriously. Start with schools to stamp out harassment and bullying. Social services, police and courts need to work together. Start with the young people and make sure the vast mass see Hate Crime as unacceptable.

Health is on the national agenda following the Mencap report 'Death by Indifference' and we will continue with the campaign with the courts and ombudsman service.

There is £1.3 million in the NHS to understand disability and Royal Mencap will be working with Trusts, NHS and nurses to make sure things improve.

Mark joined National Mencap as Chief Executive a year ago with a staff of 6000 delivering to 600 local Mencap groups.

Kingston Mencap is providing great leisure activities, and maybe Royal Mencap could help in some way! Wales joined up to provide services across different groups which have seen an improvement of day and leisure services and proves that working together is more effective.

The Chair Introduced Parliament members

**MP's: Philip Hitchen, Santosh Beharry and John Diamond**

Philip introduced himself as secretary, Santosh as co-chair and John as rep of service users

The Parliament has worked very hard and achieved lots and spoke about the following:

- A health group has been set up and to make sure the annual health check is in place and people know about and a hospital passport is being developed. MP's have looked at the Groves medical centre website - the GP champion.
- Keeping Safe big day in March 2009 – psychology are running training sessions for keeping safe in the community. The fire brigade will come to your home to do safety checks. Safer Neighborhood Team's have attended parliament meetings.
- Work big day in June 2009 – People want a paid job, a sub group has been set up to look at work and barriers stopping people from getting a job. It is felt that both RBK and NHS need to lead the way in employing disabled people.
- The Parliament were invited to the International Day of Disabled people and to the strategic team meeting led by Bruce McDonald, the Chief Executive of RBK
- Stuart is leading on Staying up late campaign
- Santosh and Philip are leading on 'where to live and with whom'
- Alice from Advocacy Partners has been working with parliament and they have been invited to talk across London
- John leads on First Route – a bus is made available for people to gain confidence and experience on travelling by bus and meets 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of every month
- Advocacy Speak up big day – well attended. Drama workshop got good feedback
- Next big day topic is on people with more complex needs – learning disabled providers will be invited
- Katy is going to visit schools to talk about looking for a job

**There followed a general question and answer session:**

#### **Question Alison Eustace**

What is available and what is the situation with regard to Further education provision?

**Answer:** Glen replied colleges have criteria. Education ability is counted in milestones. Colleges receive funding for milestone level 1 ability (lowest). The Learning Skills Council have said they will only pay if it can be proved that the people are learning educationally as the education attainment rises the criteria is tightened. Those with complex needs are not able to go to colleges used in the past and are therefore not given the same opportunities as others, but this is a national picture. Orchard Hill is still offering places on level 1 but there is a long waiting list.

#### **Question:**

Will social care be expected to pick up the most profoundly disabled people as things are not happening uniformly everyone is unclear?

**Answer:** The aim is to get people in to local colleges and discourage costly residential placements but at the moment life development cannot be offered locally.

Royal Mencap are challenging as local authorities will only fund really extreme cases for residential placement. Learning Skills Council has not been consulted but funding is being transferred to unknown body in the near future.

**Question Fiona Burkeman**

I am disappointed there are no plans for the Causeway what can you tell us?

**Answer:** Simon replied this was going to be an issue for the newly elected council after May elections. A recent report states that to get the building back to a reasonable standard would be in the region of £ ½ - 1 million.

It is hoped that other groups would be encouraged to use the building on a more long term basis

**Question Steven**

Is the Causeway closing?

**Answer:** Simon replied no plans to close Causeway

**Question Kim Bright**

Is my job still safe at the coffee bar?

**Answer:** Simon replied for the time being it is ok and they will be working to offer people more choice of things to do, including Kim

**Question Helena Watson**

Two questions on BIG CHANGES a) Individual Budgets b) Supported living. Are there enough staff to manage such a big process and would you agree nationally things have not been set up well?

**Answer:** Mark Goldring spoke first followed by Glen Mills

Mark: Individual budget have been rolled out by 150 local authorities differently but there is a body set up called "In control" and many local authorities have adopted this model. Speed of roll out will depend on which party wins the local elections. Some residential homes are using I B's but not many. Although money can be saved this will not be dramatic or quick and each department will bear a cost and there are complications. For I B's to succeed each local authority needs to have strong advocacy and brokerage services. Carers need support and there needs to be investment in support services. Royal Mencap have worked with consumers in the past and provide a Helpline which they would like to see rolled out across the country **0808 808 1111**

Glen: He reiterated Marks comments and added RBK need a bigger team. Support and services need to be involved at the very early stages. RBK started the process 4 years ago with a choice of where to live. It is recognised that there is a need for both care homes and supported living.

With the different choices now available of where to live there is a need to look at the huge differences between tenancy rights which give security and residents who have no rights!

People tell us they want settled accommodation not a short term lease.

Glen would love to have more staff and although RBK do have a 'in house brokerage team' there are other organisations providing brokerage services within Kingston.

In Kingston most people want support and help on an individual basis. Young people want to move in with their friends and want different services from those offered historically and RBK's priority this year is to co-ordinate with other organisations to bring about the changes people want

The Government's target for 80% of people to have an Individual Budget is a massive task!

**Question**

Is there a website to find information?

**Answer:** Gill replied

The Mencap website [www.mencap.org.uk](http://www.mencap.org.uk) and Kingston Learning Disability [www.kingstonld.info](http://www.kingstonld.info)

It is hoped our own Kingston Mencap website would be up and running but we are struggling to get support of a webmaster to input and update

Colin Cushing informed us that a CD on supported living could be obtained from Session House.

**Question Gill Wood**

It has become apparent that the recent information Kenny Gibson had given recently at the health seminar with regard to a "home medical review assessment" by a pharmacist was incorrect. The pharmacist needs written permission from the local PCT and would then need a CRB check before being able to enter a vulnerable person's home.

**Question Fiona Burkeman**

What is the accessibility of health checks for people?

**Answer:** Information to be obtained from Kenny Gibson for both questions

Gill and Kim thanked all the speakers and everyone for coming and invited all to enjoy the buffet and drinks.

Meeting closed at 9.40pm

## **CHAIR'S REPORT 2010**

It amazes me each year how quickly the time comes around to prepare and write the annual report and this year is no exception!

I am pleased to present this report on behalf of Kingston Mencap Trustees

Kingston Mencap's small board of trustees have worked tirelessly this year to understand and cope with all the changes and cuts taking place, both locally and nationally.

The Coalition government is intent on making changes to reform the welfare system, which is good news if it improves support, services and saves money, but I am concerned that our members with a learning disability will suffer if services are cut too thinly. Benefits are crucial to many people, some people will never be able or get the opportunity to work and the proposed plans to make the system simpler and more efficient could mean people with a learning disability miss out!

We remain vigilant that no one will be at risk but remain safe and well supported.

### **VOLUNTEERS**

Each year I am astounded at the number of people coming forward to volunteer and in a year of recession we have seen a huge increase in the number of people contacting us. It has been a tough year for many people facing redundancy, taking early retirement and young people leaving college just not being able to find a job, that we had many offers. Some volunteers regularly attend clubs and projects for many years and some just come for a short period, maybe a gap year, but all contribute to our success and give their time and skills freely to support our members.

This year we have been extremely fortunate to have had the support of a group of pupils and teachers from Kingston Grammar School. The pupils have been terrific in bringing youth and enthusiasm to Seekers and have been instrumental in encouraging and inspiring members to join in with the various activities on offer each week.

As ever I take this opportunity to thank all our volunteers for all their hard work, commitment and enthusiasm.

### **MEMBERS & MEMBERSHIP**

Membership is open to all and we encourage everyone to get involved, to share ideas and to make suggestions. We have continued to attract new members, individuals with a learning disability, families and sometimes just friends or staff who work in the learning disability field. We are very grateful to the numerous members who now pay their subscription by standing order and the generous donations. We want to continue our increase in membership numbers each year so we have a greater and louder voice to influence and change services.

### **NEWSLETTER & WEBSITE**

There always seems to be so much information to cram into each edition and always make sure we include all the relevant issues that could or will affect members.

The newsletter email list has grown this year and is paramount in saving time and funds, so we are very grateful to all the members who supplied an email address this past year.

The newsletter is central to how we share information and we try to cover all aspects of information and latest news and always send out by post to those members who do not have access to email or the internet.

This year we increased the circulation list to those with a learning disability by placing copies both at Session House and other places around the borough.

We now have a new website address, although still very much under construction, as we still need to add lots of information. This is very time consuming but something our volunteer webmaster is working on! Go to: [www.kingstonmencap.co.uk](http://www.kingstonmencap.co.uk)

## **REPRESENTATION**

The trustees attend regular meetings on behalf of members to increase the voice of children and adults with a learning disability, their families and carers. We have always attended meetings with the local council and attend where we can at national level. We have maintained links with both Dysart and St Philips schools and the new Moor Lane centre for disabled children, particularly the transition team.

This year we have spent a great deal of time reading and discussing consultation papers and responding to all the various issues that have been raised.

This year we attended the 'Go Kingston' event held at the Hawker centre and manned a stall with Parliament members, as part of the countdown events to London 2012

## **SOCIAL EVENTS**

We have continued to provide social opportunities in response to member's requests. There are many more varied opportunities on offer and now we always check that we did not clash with other events being held locally - which is wonderful news - to know our members have a choice!

The regular favourites continued to attract large numbers and I know the live band events are a particularly favourite. The afternoon at the Thames Ditton railway is always popular especially with our younger members and a visit to Companion Cycling in Bushey Park is always welcome. This year a midweek day out was organised for a small party to visit the London Eye with a boat trip down the Thames, which proved very worthwhile and one we hope to repeat in 2011. Teams representing the clubs and Kingston Mencap enjoyed the annual visit to the Charrington Bowl for the bowling competition, which attracts much interest from young to senior members and we were inundated with requests to take part.

## **CLUBS**

All the clubs have continued to grow in 2010 and offer a good variety of activities both on site and at various community venues.

In September we appointed a new Seekers leader following the retirement of the two leaders. Members and families enjoyed a summer bar-b-q party to say thank you and to welcome in the new leader. Seekers have also enjoyed day trips out which are always eagerly awaited.

Future Friends continued to meet on alternative Thursdays with some members taking part in a sponsored swim and also raised funds for a weekend trip to the Queen Elizabeth activity centre near Southampton.

Xpression would still like to find a bigger venue, with the Searchlight youth club high on the list, but in the meantime have continued to enjoy a good programme of events and trips out to community activities. A members committee continue to have plenty of input and although there was no trip away this year, one is planned for 2011.

We received extra funding from the magistrates and volunteers sponsored events.

## **DROP-IN**

The number of people attending the Drop-in each Saturday has continued to grow and some weeks there are over 30 people attending. We have always tried to get volunteer support for the co-ordinators that run the session on alternative weeks but this has proved quite difficult, so towards the end of the year we advertised for more volunteer support.

The people who attend are varied in age and ability but all seem to get on well and each individual seems to get something different out of the project.

The co-ordinators come up with various activities each week and the fundraising lunch events attract many - sometimes as many as 50-60 people come along to join in.

### **CARERS GROUP**

Once a month the carers group have continued to meet with a varied attendance.

The faithful few who come along each month are joined by other individuals, especially when there is a speaker or a particular topic being discussed.

In April we invited a local solicitor along to talk 'About Making a Will' and what first appeared so complicated was made easy to understand. The carers group is valued and we have continued to fund both the venue and facilitator in 2010.

Our facilitator donated her fee to the carers group again this year and the group decided to go out for a Christmas meal in December instead of the normal group meeting.

### **HOLIDAY HOUSE**

There was an increase in the number of people visiting Christchurch in 2010, although we did let out to a few others, the majority of visitors were members.

Going by the comments books everyone enjoyed their visits and feedback has been very positive, with some already re-booking for 2011

It has always been our intention to keep the house until or if another project became more worthy and was always considered a safe place to make sure our funds were secure.

As it has turned out, with the low interest rates on offer, a very good move!

### **FUNDERS & FUNDRAISING**

We have received small donations for many years from various groups and we are most grateful for their continued support and this year managed to get a small amount of funding for the Drop-In shortfall from a local charity and one of our regular volunteers took part in a 10k sponsored run

The Trustees are all volunteers and although we do not have an office we still have running costs and expenses and these small donations add up and provide for the extras and help towards the costs as we do not receive any outside grant.

Our main fundraising activities as follows:

#### **Flag Awareness Day**

Our gallant band of volunteer members were out on the streets on the 23<sup>rd</sup> October, led by our wonderful organiser, to not only raise funds, but to raise awareness of learning disability and managed to raise an amazing £1455.69

#### **Christmas Fayre & Social**

This year we held at the Causeway for the first time and now it seems the last time!

We had an enormous amount of goods to sell and a huge amount of shoppers but everyone packed in to enjoy the lunch and buy some great bargains on the stalls and we managed to make a profit of £1632.05

#### **Christmas Raffle**

This year we went back to running our own raffle and our organiser ran out of tickets on the day, so very important that next year members return unsold ones early on.

The raffle prizes are all donated and we manage every year to get a good selection and this year raised a staggering £1028.59 thanks to all our members and friends.

## **DONATIONS we made...**

This year we have concentrated on spending funds on our own activities and projects but we did make small donations to help with buying state of the art television sets for 2 local homes.

We continued the funding of Stud Farm and the trustees will be reviewing funding beyond 2010 early in the year. The project has moved forward significantly with the new work based activity manager in post and we are hopeful this project and others at Victoria Café and Canbury Gardens will develop and give even more people the opportunity to attend and gain experience and training.

## **CAMPAIGNING IN 2010**

At the end of 2010 we heard about the proposal to stop the mobility component of DLA (Disability Living Allowance) for those living in a residential home. This is part of the government reform for DLA and the new 'Personal Independence Payment' to improve the support for disabled people and enable them to lead full, active and independent lives. We joined with others to sign the petition and to lobby MP's and are now awaiting the full report.

In December we first heard about the proposed changes to care charging, there followed many uncertainties, as to whether people with a learning disability would be affected. The consultation paper was inaccessible and also not sent out to individuals until mid way through the 3 month period, so after representation an easy read copy was produced but no examples as promised.

As we reached the end of the year the Learning Disability Parliament had still not been consulted, one of our members, so enraged, contacted the relevant authority and a one month extension was granted.

## **ROYAL MENCAP**

There has been so much on the agenda, dealing with cuts and much campaigning, it has been a busy year and we have kept in good contact and supported Royal Mencap where we could.

The main focus this year was on health and housing and other important issues were expected to be addressed at a later date.

Learning Disability week focused on 'Getting It Right' to improve rights of people with a learning disability to equal healthcare with a view to asking all primary care trusts and hospitals to sign up to the charter.

One of our members and Parliament representatives manned a stall at the local hospital to reach out to staff and to raise awareness.

## **ROYAL BOROUGH OF KINGSTON UPON THAMES**

We have continued to work closely with the Learning disability team and the Parliament and have representatives who attend the Action Group which makes decisions and reports to the Partnership Board.

There were quarterly open meetings of the Partnership Board and the Health Group was very pro-active in raising awareness of health action plans, annual health checks and hospital passports although the Employment Group was rather disappointed with the lack of interest and response from other agencies.

The Parliament worked hard all through the year holding an Advocacy big day, supporting the First Route transport partnership and Keeping Safe big day.

## **THE FUTURE**

It is a worrying time for everyone, with the review taking place of community care for adult social care and the day service review as part of the 'one council' project, it is a time of uncertainty for all boroughs, including Kingston.

We must all work together to become 'one strong voice' so we can influence and make sure we are not only consulted but listened to and taken notice of.

Everything we do is about making a difference for people with a learning disability, to increase awareness and enable people to not only have a voice but be treated fairly and equally like everyone else.

**Gill Wood**  
**Chair**

## Seekers Club annual report September 2010-Dec 2010

As the new Seekers club leader from Sept 2010 I was very keen to familiarise myself with the weekly routine and members, in order to initiate small welcome changes.

Seekers club has been running for nearly 50 yrs prior to my involvement and it began as a welcoming haven and social club for members. The commitment and popularity of the volunteers and previous leaders ensured the club thrived and maintained a loyal membership which spanned over all the adult age group and is reflected in the ages of the members we have today. 2010 saw the club membership rise to 68 members, from diverse backgrounds and abilities and ranging between the ages of 25 to late 60s!

Weekly the average attendance is 40 members with a dedicated and thriving bank of volunteers who attend weekly at an average of 15 per week.

We aim to keep our volunteer to member ratio at around 1 to 3 and this ensures we can monitor and encourage engagement and entertainment to all without overlooking anyone.

September saw the first changes in the club by introducing an open kitchen policy which encouraged member's to take a lead in running the snacks bar and preparing drinks. It was a member's suggestion that this idea grew from and we now welcome members to take on more responsibility and roles within the club.

We have had a huge sort out of our storage cupboard and purchased new games/equipment and music to revitalise the entertainment we offer.

Quarterly volunteers meeting ensured that feedback was reaching me and the committee and outings/trips and a members committee has been arranged and planned.

We continue to organise monthly calendars and have kept the hugely popular birthday disco and theme evening, which celebrates all members and volunteers birthdays that month and is marked with a disco and cake and cards. This is on the calendar every month and has been immensely entertaining when we dressed up for Halloween and as pop idols in October and November!

Photographs are taken each week to mark our events and allow the members to look over and reminisce on the festivities.

In the New Year it is planned to keep a mood board displaying or pictures to highlight the most popular events and run them again.

Budget permitting I endeavor to arrange an evening of entertainment each month by hiring/inviting guest entertainers. In September we had the fantastic African dance troop "Abundance" and the quality and engagement of such a sensory show was fantastic, well worth another visit! Seekers club also had its very first stand-up comedy show in November and it was one of the funniest and memorable evenings we have had! In December we had a live jazz singer who encouraged members to be her vocalists. She was very well received and the evening was danced away by all.

Christmas was a very exciting time for the club as we put on a pantomime with the help of a drama teacher and our dedicated Kingston grammar school students who now subsequently volunteer on a weekly basis! Christmas as marked with the show, a disco and present giving with parents and carers invited for mince pies and mulled wine. Everyone looked festive and the buzz was electric as the hall looked beautiful and the members were on top form!

We plan to concentrate on more fundraising events in 2011, to ensure the club continues to thrive and to have consistent trips and essentials needed to maintain our group.

Seekers club is Kingston Mencap's biggest club and it is a pleasure to represent such a wonderful group of people. We are more likened to a community than a club, as we care about each other and embrace and encourage all that adds value and happiness to a person's life whatever their background or ability. We are dedicated to making our club accessible, safe and fun as well as affordable, we are excellent value for money considering the time and cost involved in transporting members to and from club. I look forward to 2011 and welcoming new members and continuing to grow and enjoy our existing ones!

Zerrin Izli

Club Leader



This Report is Split into several Subsections as follows;

1. Members and Volunteers
2. Club House
3. Finances
4. Activities
5. Events
6. Transport
7. Leadership

### **1. Members and Volunteers**

Xpression's membership started to dwindle ever so slightly in the last year, with Xpression regulars moving on to attend residential colleges and others moving on to pastures new. We have had on average around 17-18 members per evening coming throughout the year. There has been growing interest and around 3-4 new members planning to start attending the club in the New Year.

This year we set up Xpression's management committee, made up of a team of 12 volunteers, with the express intention of helping to run some of the operational aspects of the club, from behind the scenes. The new management committee is made up by: Adele Maitland, Alan Gerbi, Emma Grinter, Hannah Collins, Harry Patient, Heenal Mistry, James Christian, Ruth Hearn, Joanne Cull, Lewis Austin, and Mary McDonald.

The management committee so far has been able to find new routes into fundraising, develop recruitment strategies for members and volunteers, help create a programme of activities in record time, develop good practice with volunteer training, and devise new format risk assessments.

### **2 Club House**

We continue to use Queen Mary Hall, and despite some issues with our equipment very occasionally being used without permission by other groups, we are generally happy with the property, but are becoming increasingly open minded to fresh ideas for new venues.

We are currently trying to engage in talks with the borough about extending the club opening hours and running the club from 7pm until 9pm, which would give us more opportunity to do different outdoor activities, as well as do what we already do, but with much less time pressure.

### **3. Finances**

Despite my concerns last year that Xpression's funding would be in jeopardy, the current state of finances is actually quite healthy, and with the continued support of Kingston Mencap, the possible support of The Kingston Magistrates Boaters Club (watch this space) and the ongoing efforts of the Management committee to find new ways of raising funds, the future of the club is looking fairly certain, despite the difficult political times we are venturing deeper into.

### **4. Activities**

Xpression continued its tradition of creating a programme of activities that cater for being representative of the member's feedback on the types of activities they want to experience

and new unchartered territories – activities that the member's may not have experienced before.

This year, we have started highlighting which of the activities on the programme have been members' suggestions so there is a clear feedback for them to show how their suggestions are being used.

This year saw the introduction of many more member led activities, where willing members are able to run activities themselves with the assistance of volunteers, these activities have included dance and drama workshops and they have been extraordinarily popular!

## **5. Events**

With concerns about finances and the added pressure of trying to juggle an MA, I was unable to organise the member weekend away in September/November as we would normally have it, but instead we are proposing to have it possibly around June/July this year, availability of volunteers permitting.

In addition to this, in 2011, we are planning on having our first volunteer residential training weekend away in May 2011, which will mean intensive training in Safeguarding, Makaton, and other subjects over the course of two days. This is the first time we have been able to achieve this, and we look forward to being able to do the same in the following years.

## **6. Transport**

Diane Marlow continues to provide regular, unquestioning, relentless service to Xpression. Our relationship with RAKAT has also continued to be fruitful, and we have again not been let down all year by their service to us.

Many of the new members who have started in the last year, have had to access the minibus service to ensure that they can make it to the club, and we are now nearing capacity for bringing members to and from the club. It is clearly a valued service...

## **7. Leadership**

2010 was my second year as leader of Xpression and I feel that I have got much more into the swing of things. I must offer my sincerest to everyone mentioned above who has been helping out with the management committee, as 2010 was predominately a balancing act of juggling so many different responsibilities that I simply could not have done it without their help!

2011 will I'm sure, have it's own set of challenges, juggling work and Xpression, but hopefully, with the ground work done up to now, we can build on that and make 2011 a very fun year indeed for all members and volunteers!

I would like also to extend a big thank you to the ongoing support from Kingston Mencap, who have always been around whenever we've needed a bit of guidance. Finally, I would like to thank all the members, Parents and Carers, who bring so much energy and fun to our clapped out old hall, you make the place a wonderful venue to be in!

'Til the next time...

David Cafferty

Xpression Leader



## **Report for January to December 2010**

### **Introduction**

The club was formed in October 2007 to provide leisure activities for young adults with learning disabilities in Kingston borough between 19 and 35 years old.

Future Friends runs fortnightly throughout the year without holiday breaks. Every 3 months a new agenda is given out with details of the activities planned. The agenda is written in an accessible format so that the members can choose the activities they want to come to.

### **Membership**

At the end of 2010 Future Friends has 24 members.

Attendance varies between 12 and 18 members on each club night.

### **Activities**

There is usually only one activity planned each club night with a mix of physical activity (swimming, bowling, climbing) and artistic activities (art, dance, drama). In the last year, we have continued with the activities that people enjoy and tried some new things such as Djembe drumming, a treasure hunt and portrait painting.

In addition to the regular club nights, we had a weekend trip this September to an activity centre in Hampshire. 14 members, 6 volunteers and 2 support staff came on the trip and took part in climbing, archery, challenge course, zip wire, canoeing and driving a motor boat. The weekend was very successful.

For Christmas 2010 we gave a rehearsed performance of our own, very original Christmas play performed at The Corner House Theatre in Surbiton and attended by almost 100 people.

### **Volunteers**

Future Friends currently has 6 volunteers and is also attended by 4 students from Kingston Grammar School with their teacher. When more support is needed we are able to ask support workers who bring some of the members to stay and help for the evening.

## **Finances**

Future Friends was promised 3 years funding by both Kingston Mencap (£3000 per year) and RBK (£1000 per year). Those 3 years are now ended but we do not have the funds in the bank to continue to run without continued assistance. Members are usually charged £3.00 per evening in subs but this is higher for the more expensive activities such as climbing, meals out, theatre trips. Members paid £40 each for the weekend trip in 2008 and 2009 but we will be unable to provide a weekend away this year without charging a significantly higher amount.

Future Friends have fundraised over £1000 this year through a sponsored swim and a raffle at the Christmas play. We have received approximately £150 in donations.

## **The Future**

Future Friends is really popular with its members and is still growing. We will continue to aim to provide a good range of activities that are interesting and challenging and fun to our members. It is not known at this point if there will be a trip away this year due to the expense involved and our reduced funds this year.

Report compiled by Jill Kemp, Club Co-ordinator.