

KINGSTON MENCAP Newsletter

Understanding learning disability



Trustee Committee 2010/2011

Chair: Gill Wood **Vice Chair:** Roger Wooderson **Secretary:** Sue Baker **Treasurer:** Mary McDonald
 Claire Alexander; Fiona Burkeman; Heather Notermans; John Phillips; Learning Disable Rep: Kim Bright

Dates for Your Diary



AGM
6th April

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Dear Members, Friends and Supporters

It has been a hectic time since Christmas with lots of meetings and discussions looking at the proposed Government cuts and the Big Society and how we will all be affected with various consultations!

Just before Christmas, we heard about the Government proposal to stop the mobility component of the **DLA** for people living in a residential home and DLA reform (see page 10)

Then RBK's proposal to increase **care charging** from 50% to 100% and a 3 month consultation paper which was neither accessible or clear about who would be affected!

Then it was the **Taxi Card** under threat - to stop 2 swipes of the taxi card and each swipe to increase from £1-50 to £2.50.

Following various letters of complaint from us and other users the council back tracked and have now found the necessary funding for the taxi card until the end of March. We are still unsure what changes will be made but it looks as if there is to be reduced funding and a cap on who will be issued a card. We are now waiting to hear how this will effect current users and will keep you all informed.

Today I hear there is going to be new tests for those needing a Blue Badge with more stringent checks.

All we seem to hear about lately is the Big Society?

Is this all it seems, an opportunity for everyone to get involved to help the social recovery of the country, or another way to cover up the spending cuts?

Kingston Mencap's **Annual General Meeting** (AGM) date has just been set for Wednesday 6th April at Dysart School, so do make a note in your diary now and maybe consider becoming a Trustee.

Thanks to all the very prompt members who have sent in their annual subscription or paid by direct debit. We are very grateful for all the extra donations which we rely on to help fund all the clubs and projects we run so thank you one and all.

Sadly there is still a lot of members who still have not renewed their membership in 2011, so please if you haven't already paid please look at paying today!

All the clubs and projects we run are for members and to comply with our insurance we must ensure all club users are also members of Kingston Mencap.

Gill Wood

If this is the first time you have seen the newsletter and/or would like to receive your own copy please do let me know so I can send you details on how to join - just £5 per year

We want to reach as many people as possible by email, to save time and money and to make sure news gets to you quicker and easier but we can also send by post.

If you no longer want to receive news please let me know so I can take your name and address off the circulation list. Email: gillcwood@blueyonder.co.uk or telephone 0208540 1399

CHRISTMAS FAYRE

It seems like ages ago now but the Christmas Fayre held on November 27th was a huge success - I don't know how we would have managed at St James!

This was the first year we booked the Causeway and now it seems will be the last!

We had so many shoppers we were nearly bursting at the seams, apologies if you never managed to find a seat for tea, but hope you came away with a bargain or two!

We made a profit of £1632.05 on the stalls & £1028.59 on the raffle which is fantastic.

If you want a copy of Raffle prize winners or a list of what each stall took please let me know?

I can't thank enough all the generous members and friends who donate goods, all the shoppers who spend their hard earned cash and of course all the magnificent VOLUNTEERS who man the stalls, help the evening before and stay behind to help clear up!

I have organised the Fayre for more years that I care to remember and every year things get harder. My family are always so very supportive, but we are all getting older, so have decided this will be our last Christmas Fayre in this format!

I have suggested to Committee that next year we hold a Christmas Social Event with music and entertainment with lunch and 2 or 3 stalls and a Christmas Raffle.

I feel this will be easier to organise and hopefully members will still support and even come forward to help and make suggestions or even take the lead!

PLEASE RING ME IF YOU ARE INTERESTED 0208540 1399

This was a great fundraiser and enjoyable event - well done everyone

Gill Wood



COUNTRY & WESTERN New Year party on 22nd January

We held a New year party at Dysart School with a Country and Western theme on Saturday 22nd January for almost 68 members and friends.

Iris Todd did another grand job and organised a Pizza supper with her own scrummy potatoes and salad.

The Ridgeway Band come all the way from Oxford for the evening and provided a good array of songs and even a little bit of pop at the end!

All the raffle prizes were donated and we managed to make £68.00 to offset costs

Many thanks to Iris and Tony and the volunteers who help made this an enjoyable evening



We are limited to numbers at this venue so if you missed out this time, as all the tickets sold out early, and what to join in with the next C & W that Iris will be organising for Dysart School let me know and I will pass on your request.

DROP IN - update

The Saturday Drop In, held at Searchlight Community Centre on Kingston Road, is still going strong. It is held every Saturday from 12 – 3pm and led by either Michelle or Zerrin, our 2 lovely leaders who take it in turns each Saturday.

There are now regularly up to 30 members attending along with carers and supporters and it can be quite a busy place to be on a Saturday afternoon. I don't go there so often these days but when I do I am always struck by the really informal and positive atmosphere. We have such a wide range of people attending from those who need one to one support and enjoy the music and sensory activities on offer, to those who seem to be able to single-handedly run the refreshments bar.

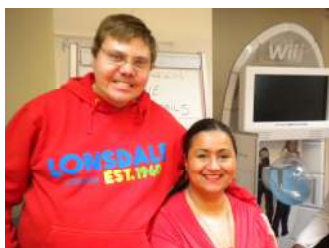
Everyone seems to find their place whether it is getting stuck in to the latest art project that Michelle or Zerrin have come up with, doing the washing up or simply watching what everyone else is doing.

I'm also struck by how it seems to appeal to both the young and excitable as well as the older and somewhat quieter members - just generally seems to be something that works for different people!

Most drop-in days are free for people to come and we sell snacks and drinks but about 3 times a year we aim to put on some kind of lunch and some extra entertainment.

One of these events was held on Saturday 12th February with a Valentine theme - wearing something red and we prepared red foods! We make a charge of £5 at these events to cover cost of food/activities

Thanks to Michelle, Zerrin, Beth, Heather and Gill for their support at the Valentine event



If you would like more information about the Drop-in please call me : Jill Kemp 07752 63 63 57

CARERS GROUP

We went out for Christmas dinner to the Glasshouse Restaurant on the 1st December. The January meeting was full of discussion about the changes proposed for DLA, Taxi cards, Care charging and generally about cuts and how we will be affected!

If any carer would like to join the group it meets up on the first Wednesday of the month at Home Farm Trust (HFT) Springfield Place, New Malden at 7.30pm

This is your opportunity to share experiences, information and skills or just to chat about a worry or concern

Dates for 2011: 2nd February; 2nd March; No meeting in April - 6th April is the AGM date
4th May; 1st June; 6th July; 3rd August; 7th September; 5th October
2nd November; 7th December to be confirmed



Carers Week in 2011 is 13-19th June will be all about The True Face of Carers

How hard is life as a carer? Or how easy? How much help do carers actually receive from statutory agencies and government, local and national? Or should that be how little? How do carers think society sees them? What is the reality of caring in the UK in 2011? What are the biggest surprises that you and I encounter when we become carers? What can really make a difference to carers lives? Is it money?

Or something else? Is caring a perpetual struggle with no thanks and no recognition?

Or a richly-rewarding experience that brings out the best in the human spirit?

All this and more will be revealed during 13-19 June 2011 Carers will be centre-stage during the biggest awareness week in the UK.

SEEKERS CLUB update

Since September 2010 Seekers Club has undergone a few changes and continues to thrive as Mencap Kingston's largest and most well attended club.

We currently have 57 members 4 of whom are new to the club and we see our weekly attendance average at around 43 members.

We have a dedicated and consistent volume of volunteers, this has ensured the club meets the correct support ratios needed and reinforces just how popular it has become. We are thrilled to have Kingston Grammar School students volunteer with us on a weekly basis, injecting youth and energy and lots of one to one engagement.

Our ethos has remained strong and can be seen in the dynamics of the club. We want to empower, encourage and interact with members, to reinforce social skills and ability, raise self esteem and have happy thriving environment.

All of which is evident in our consistent numbers.

We encourage independence and value views and opinions of our members. Our kitchen now adopts an open door policy so members are active in running and serving drinks, we have also just elected a members committee who will report back issues and ideas from all members.

Our committee was voted for by an election and is 5 members strong!



CONGRATULATIONS TO:

Kirstie McDonald' Caroline Hanna;

Helen Lay; Una McCormack; John Diamond

Seekers also recognize and encourage cultural awareness to reflect the diversity of our community. We have celebrated Chinese New Year with lantern making and burns night with a taste of Scotland!

We are aware of the financial constraints in these difficult belt tightening times, so we are dedicated to increase our fundraising ability. We have our first fundraising fashion show at the end of February where all proceeds will go toward an exciting day trip!

Our dedication to providing transport for members with mobility/safety constraints has proven to be the only viable way to attend the club and without the huge support of our volunteer driver/escorts this would not be possible.

It is with pride and gratitude that I would like to thank all members and volunteers for making Seekers club the wonderful and exuberant club that it is!



The Lads!



Bring & Buy night



Guys from St Ann's

Zerrin 07523 969 855 or email zed333@hotmail.co.uk

FUTURE FRIENDS

I quite like January, mainly because it means that Christmas is almost 12 months away.

It isn't that Christmas is so bad it's just that it always ends up being such hard work for everyone.

You see, one of my enthusiastic volunteers had this mad idea last autumn that Future Friends could put on a small Christmas Production for friends and family.

It was a very popular idea as it turned out, greatly enjoyed by the majority of our members and at least some of our volunteers.

As these ideas tend to, it developed a bit over the weeks and we ended up on the Corner House stage in front of possibly 100 people (I wish someone had counted them – it seemed like a lot to me).

“Christmas at the Café” was an imaginative piece of musical theatre based in Ian Beale's Café on Christmas Eve. Characters included Romeo and Juliet, James Bond and his brother Jon Bond, the 4 wise men, Ian Beale, Alfie and Kat Moon, Simon Cowell, Cheryl Cole and of course, Father Christmas himself.

Many thanks to everyone that helped in the production and on the night and also to all those who came and gave such positive reviews afterwards as well as buying lots of raffle tickets. We raised over £250 on the evening.

Now there is a new agenda out for the next 3 months and we will be doing our usual mixture of activities from Karaoke to swimming. Most weeks the cost is £3

Please give me a call if you would like more information.

We are open to new members

Call Jill Kemp on 07752 636357 or email jillkempsupport@hotmail.com

HOLIDAY HOUSE

The Christchurch holiday house bookings diary is filling up fast but we do have some dates available between March and May at reduced winter rates £400 week or £200 weekend or mid week. We also have full cost weeks available in June and July.

We have **not increased** rates in 2011

1 week £440 including bedding, gas/electric, cleaning

Weekend or midweek break £275 incl bedding, gas/electric, cleaning

The house is approximately 20 minutes walk to Mudeford Quay and similar to Christchurch town centre. Easy access to Bournemouth by car or bus. There are local shops and Sainsbury 5 minutes by car.

The house sleeps up to 8 people with 2 double bedrooms, 1 twin room and 2 single rooms with 3 bathrooms. One of the single rooms is on the ground floor which includes a wet room for those unable to climb stairs.

If you are interested and want to make a booking or see a brochure please let me know

Gill 0208540 1399 gillcwood@blueyonder.co.uk



XPRESSION Kingston Mencap Youth Project

Happy New Year from Xpression!



This time of year is often one for new beginnings, and now that we're all well rested, we're ready to get stuck back in! Last year was a great year, rounded off nicely with our rather spectacular end of year party. This year, everyone had a part to play in its success, members set up a committee to decide what music should be played, what food should be on offer, and the party games that we would have on the go.

As special guests we had the Kingston Magistrates Boaters Club, who are generously continuing to support Xpression into our sixth year, who received an Award for their outstanding generosity to Xpression. Without their help over the years, it is unclear if we would have been able to keep the club open.



The Spring Term is shaping up to be a very good one for Xpression, for the first time since the club opened, we've highlighted all the activities on the programme that were suggested by the members, so everyone can see where the ideas for the programme have been coming from. In addition to this, we have new activities this year, including an ongoing animation workshop, where people can design and build characters out of plasticine, make backdrops and storyboard and animate their own short films. We may see some budding Nick Parks coming from this one... If we do, remember, you saw it here first.

We've also got new ideas like "The Apprentice Night" where members can compete to be the next big thing in [small] business. These are coupled with old firm favourites like Blind Date, pancake making, bowling, Cycling, football, and many more.

On the 17th March 2011, we are also embarking on the challenge of the "Tessa Oram Cup". Where Xpression members will be competing against the members of the Wimbledon based Youth Group "The Squad" in an Olympics themed competition to win back the coveted trophy. If you are an Xpression member and are interested in entering, please speak to me at the club, I will be sending out letters very soon about this.

We will be looking to make communication clearer with members and families in the future, so we are setting up a Facebook page, to keep everyone informed of future fundraisers and events that we will be doing, and you can currently follow us on twitter: @Xpressionclub

We will soon be wanting to update our records for all current members, so we can be in contact more efficiently about all things club related, so keep an eye out for letters coming back from the club regarding updating our records.

Here's to another great year! See you at Xpression!

Dave Cafferty Xpression Club Leader

Xpression is a club for young people aged 12-19 years and is held on a Tuesday evening at the Queen Mary Hall, Cambridge Road, Kingston from 6.30 - 8pm. If you are interested in joining Xpression please call the leader Dave Cafferty to arrange a visit: 07749 275 425

TRANSITION PACK - "My Future"

The Royal Borough of Kingston launched their new Transition Information Pack, entitled "My Future" on the 9th December.

The pack was designed in consultation with young people with disabilities and parents within the borough. "My Future" is aimed at all young people with a range of disabilities aged 13+ and their parents/carers.

The pack includes:

- An introduction to transition: what transition is, what to expect and what needs to be considered.
- A work book for young people to use to help think about and plan their future
- Information leaflets: Leaving School - what next?

Housing

Staying healthy

Transport

Money matters

Sport and Leisure

Advocacy and Support



You can get a copy of the pack by:

- Collecting a hard copy from Moor Lane Centre (until stocks run out)
- Downloading from the Kingston Council website

http://www.kingston.gov.uk/community_service_transition

For more information contact: Wendy Jenkins 020547 6566

Transition Information FAYRE

Last year the Royal Borough of Kingston had a very successful Transition Information Fayre, so we thought we will do it again.....

If you are between the ages of 13 and 25, want information about colleges, working, sports and leisure, housing, money & benefits, health care, developing independence and staying safe, social care support and other things..... then come along to the Fayre

WHEN: 23rd March 2011

WHERE: Kingsmeadow Stadium
Jack Goodchild Way
422a Kingston Road,
New Malden KT1 3PB

TIME: 2pm to 6pm



CHILDREN



CHESSINGTON SUPPORT GROUP FOR PARENTS & CARERS OF

Meet parents and professionals to:

- Share ideas, skills and knowledge
- Share Information
- Problem solve together

Meetings dates: 8th February; 22nd March; 10th May; 21st June

Meet at Moor Lane Children's Centre on a Tuesday between 1-2.30pm

To find out more contact: **Suzi Holley** suzi.holley@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

Ann Mcpherson ann.mcpherson@rbk.kingston.gov.uk



NEW SAFEGUARDING STANDARDS

New Safeguarding Standards from the Safe Network to be launched on Monday 21st February 2011. The Safe Network is a partnership between Children England and NSPCC. It is funded by the Department for Education and launched in June 2009 and it provides advice and guidance for the voluntary and community sector on child protection and safer recruitment. The standards are designed for voluntary and community groups working with children and young people. Their aim is to help organisations work safely and in compliance with safeguarding legislation.

HEATHROW SPECIAL NEEDS FARM

Many people with varying degrees of disability find great benefits from the close association with farm animals and horticulture. Here at the Heathrow Special Needs Farm, people working in our gardens and with the animals, grow in confidence and develop to their full potential. **As well as the therapeutic benefits that come from caring for the animals and plants, our aims are to educate, develop skills, provide work experience and, most importantly, to foster a sense of personal achievement and enjoyment.**

We welcome groups or individuals for visits or we can tailor bespoke programs that can be followed on a regular and long term basis. Many of our groups have been coming to the Farm for a number of years, and it is always our visitors choice as to the activity that they undertake. This may include anything from petting the small animals, to washing our pigs, grooming the donkeys or horse riding.

For those visitors who may not enjoy being in such close contact with the farm animals they may alternatively enjoy a gentle session in the poly-tunnel, weeding, planting, harvesting or sowing. And for our more active users, digging in the gardens or poo-picking the fields may be something they choose to participate in.

No matter what a persons ability there is always an activity that can be participated in and enjoyed at the Farm. These activities may be used to support current personal development. We also welcome the elderly and work placement schemes.

We do not charge for any of the services that we offer at the farm (except horse riding), we are funded entirely by charitable donations and are grateful for all donations. So please give as much as you can afford.

If you are interested in visiting the farm, or require any further information please contact: Lisa (Farm Manager) on 01753 680330 Bath Road, Longford, UB7 0EF



YORDA ADVENTURES update

We are so excited about 2011 and all the projects and activities we have lined up!

2010 has been our best year yet: the most play projects we've ever run; taking a total of 37 children away on adventure holidays; the welcome return of Saturday Swim; after school club at full capacity; play schemes every half term and some weekend play schemes!

We've been delighted with the opportunities we've been able to offer this year, which has mostly been down to the Aiming High funding we've received. Its due to run out in March 2011 but hopefully Kingston Council will honour the new Early Intervention Grant that replaces Aiming High in April to continue helping us to help you.

Laura Smyth (General Manager) 07939 844978

Dates for your diaries:

We will be running INSET day Childcare for working parents of Dysart School on 17th and 18th February. Please get in touch for more information. We will be running 5 days of Play Scheme in February half term, which we will be advertising in January. If you have any questions about the projects we run or would like some information about how a young person you know can join in the fun, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Charlotte Amison Project Manager 07545 974734



Yorda Adventures CIC, 47 Windmill Lane, Surbiton, KT6 5JT

Editor's Note:

Yorda will be celebrating its 5th Birthday in March - Happy birthday & Congratulations to all

SWAPS Fun Sessions

Here are the dates for the Sunday Fun Sessions at Warren Park for 2011 - from 3-5pm

9 January; 6 February; 6th March; 3 April; 8 May; 12 June; 10 July; 4 September;
2 October; 6 November

4 December is the day of the Christmas Party

The new Swaps website is now live: <http://www.swapskingston.org.uk/>

Family Fund

Family Fund application process shortened

At this time of year, with winter bills and just getting over Christmas, it can be a financial strain for some families - and then the washing machine goes bang! The Family Fund helps families with severely disabled or seriously ill children and young people aged 17 and under by awarding grants for things that make life easier and more enjoyable for the disabled child, young person and their family, such as washing machines, driving lessons, computers and holidays. They have recently made their application process much quicker so if you need financial help take a look at their [website](#) today to find out more about how they can help.

NEWS FROM ROYAL MENCAP.....

Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

The DLA mobility component helps meet some of the extra costs disabled people can face getting around. Without assistance for extra costs, such as electric wheelchairs, mobility aids and taxis where there is no accessible public transport, people face being trapped at home. The government is proposing to replace Disability Living Allowance (DLA) with a Personal Independence Payment "to improve the support for disabled people and better enable them to lead full, active and independent lives".

However on 20th October the Government announced part of this change means children and people with learning difficulties living in residential care homes will lose the mobility component of DLA and this change will affect 58,000 disabled people.

Currently the DLA mobility component is routinely used to fund a minibus or other adapted vehicles for the use of residents at a care home. It allows residents (with staff support) to go out into the community for clubs, sports, other entertainment, and for more personal purposes such as visits to family, friends. Access to doctors and healthcare can be facilitated through such vehicles.

We believe that the government has made a mistake and misunderstood how people use this important benefit. Without this vital lifeline, people in care will lose their independence, be unable to take part in activities that they enjoy and be cut off from their friends and family.

Mencap and a group of other charities have highlighted the issue in a report to ministers, and have set up an online petition.

See the joint charities report and sign the online petition via the link

www.mencap.org.uk/page.asp?id=20515

Download the consultation paper at:

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/consultations/2010/dla-reform.shtml>

CHANGING PLACES CAMPAIGN

The Changing Places campaigns to change lives through Changing Places toilets.

Standard disabled toilets do not meet the needs of thousands of people, including 40,000 people with profound and multiple learning disabilities.

Changing Places toilets have enough space and the right equipment, including a height adjustable changing bench and a hoist.

Without Changing Places toilets, families have to change the person they care for on a cramped/dirty toilet floor or limit the outings to a few hours, or not go out at all!

The government is currently reviewing building regulations, and the Changing Places Consortium is calling for it to make Changing Places toilets compulsory in new large public buildings.

Already, over 1,000 Mencap supporters have emailed communities minister Andrew Stunell MP in support of the campaign. The government wanted evidence from families of how Changing Places toilets change lives, and the consortium ran [a survey](#) to collect this.

There are only 200 Changing Places toilets around the UK and you can see a map of all the existing public ones on the website: <http://www.changing-places.org>

The only ones we have in Kingston that comes up to standard are at the Causeway/Crescent in New Malden. Although there is quite a good one that almost comes up to standard at the Bentalls Centre but you will need a special Radar key.

The keys can be purchased from KCIL for £3 including p & p Tel: 0208546 9603



Valuing People Now - 10 years old

The 10th Learning Disability event took place in December to launch the Valuing People Now Summary Report.

Minister for Carer Services, Paul Burstow, outlined the progress that had been made the past 18 months. More people are having annual health checks, increased number of people are moving away from residential campuses and there has been some success in people finding jobs through Getting a Life and Jobs First but there was more to be done!

There needs to be more choice and control and an increase in the number of people using Individual Budgets to deliver better outcomes for individuals.

To find out more go to: www.valuingpeoplenow.dh.gov.uk to see a full version of the report

Partnership between Mencap and the Co-op

INSPIRE ME is the new project with the Co-operative which will raise money for a new Mencap project,. Inspire Me will change the lives of young people with a learning disability aged 16-25 and their families and communities across England, Wales and Northern Ireland and Scotland. The programme will launch in April and will improve the skills and opportunities for 20,000 young people through 'steps to success' workshops in schools, colleges, local groups and community clubs.

The project aims to promote awareness and understanding and create opportunities

For more information telephone 0845 123 3000

Learning Disability Week 20-26th June 2011

During this year's Learning Disability Week, which will take place from 20th -26th June, Mencap will launch a three year campaign against hate crime 'Stand by me'

Stand by me will challenge the police, the criminal justice system and the courts to end hate crime against people with a learning disability within a generation. The first year of the campaign will aim to persuade the police to take action.

David Congdon explains" we want the police to take attacks against disabled people as seriously as racist incidents.

To find out more or to share an experience contact; Brenda Shalvey 0207696 5568

Fighting the cuts - BIG CUTS EVENTS

Over the next few months Mencap will be holding events across England on the government's planned spending cuts and how to deal with them.

Two of Kingston Mencap trustee's attended one of the first events at Channel 4 on 1st February. We heard that learning disability services are facing the biggest threat to services we have seen in a long time. Everyone needs to come together and fight to keep the services we have all worked so long and hard for.

Luke Clements, a professor and leading community care lawyer, attended and gave advice on people's legal rights and what you can challenge and how.

The next event is being held in Ashted on 8th March so if you want to book a place contact 01905 740 500 or go to www.mencap.org.uk/bigcutsevent

HOME FARM TRUST (HFT)

The Christmas Fair on the 25th November was a great success. People we support helped with preparations and the running of stalls including a tombola, raffle, cakes and hand jewellery hand made by the Thursday jewellery group. DJ Greg provided Christmas music and Colin Cushing and John Diamond organised refreshments. A total of £533.20 was raised and a lovely evening was had by all.



On the 14th December the Tuesday cookery group organised the annual Christmas dinner for the resource centre. John Harrison, Graeme Green, Steve Close, John Diamond Malcolm Gubby and Colin Cushing catered for 50 people. A meal of roast turkey with all the trimmings was enjoyed by all. This was followed by a Christmas disco. Everyone was very happy to be using the new downstairs space to dance!



The new extended downstairs space was completed at the end of November. It has already proven to be a huge benefit to all the people we support. There is now much more room at lunchtimes especially for wheelchair users. The Rah Rah theatre company came to perform a pantomime on the 30th November and the extra space allowed many more to watch and to get up and join in. Liz Hetherington was definitely the star of the show!

SENSORY STORIES: Starting in March on Wednesday mornings - ring to reserve a place

SUNDAY LUNCH CLUB: Next date 6th March at 'Kings Tun' 12.30 - 3.30pm

COUNTRY DANCING EVENING: 11th March 6.30 to 9pm £5 includes chilli supper

FIT CLUB: Every Wednesday 1.30 - 3pm £5 includes a drink

For more information or to book a place contact:
Melissa Hulbert 0208942 9769 or email melissa.hulbert@hft.org.uk



SUCCESS for Kingston Day Services

On the 15th September 2010 our arts and crafts group together with their tutor Naomi Williams participated in the Arts and Crafts exhibition held at Kingsmeadow. Congratulations to Sally Piercy; Ron Martin; Neil Chapman who all received awards and were presented with certificates by the Mayor. The Arts and Craft group will be attending a lunchtime 50's and 60's party at Devon Way on the 3rd November for all participants in the exhibition.

Our recycling group and their tutor Tina Portankoorva attended 'The big Green Day' held at the Guildhall complex and had an enjoyable and informative session, coming away with brochures and many new ideas and tips for enhancing our recycling and energy saving in the workplace and environment. Well done to Kurt Martin for helping to make our service a more environmentally friendly place.

Kingston day services are currently involved in circles of support working with internal and external agencies to enhance and support service users lifestyles. We are also working in conjunction with both Nescot college students studying BTEC Diploma in Health and Social Care and 'Kingston 33' Princes Trust students and will mentoring students on work experience placements.

The 'www.kingstonld.info' website is currently being updated and soon you will be able to access the Kingston Day services timetable of day activities.

In the meantime if you require a copy of the timetable please contact Yvonne 0208 547 6650

Jean Brooks

Editor's Note: Many apologies to Jean for omitting this update from the last newsletter

AWAY DAY for trustees

At the end of January six of Kingston Mencap Trustees spent Saturday at the Holiday Inn in Chessington. We met up to discuss all the things we never get a chance to talk about in committee, how we work, governance, trustee liability and our work with volunteers amongst many other things!

Sanje Kane of Kingston Voluntary Action was the facilitator.

I can honestly say we all learnt something new about each other and also about the roles and responsibilities of being a trustee and how we work.

We took part in various quizzes and participated in discussions around all areas of governance. I think we all came away with a positive attitude and agree we want to work together to make sure we support and ensure a better life for people with a learning disability living here in Kingston.

We want to work more closer with the Learning Disability Parliament and members with a learning disability to ensure their voices all heard and to involve members in things that affect them directly.



In the afternoon session Mark Goldring chief executive of Royal Mencap came along to give an update on how he sees Mencap working within the 'Big Society' and also Mark talked about Mencap's 20:20 Vision and where and how we can get involved.

It was a really positive day and something we will repeat.

DISABILITY RELATED EXPENSES

When completing a financial assessment form there are a number of disability related expenses (DRE) i.e. costs that you can ask the local authority to deduct from your income when it is working out your charge.

We have collated this list from examples suggested by members of the Carers Group and is not a complete list but just shows the type of expense you may be able to include.

If you would like to receive a list please let me know

Contact Gill 0208540 1399 or email gillcwood@blueyonder.co.uk

CARERS & PENSIONS HANDBOOK

Carers UK have produced a new handbook which give details about the changes to pensions brought in last year and the new Carer's Credit, which could make a big difference to lots of carers whose entitlement to the state pension has previously been at risk.

The Handbook is a guide on how the State Pension system works for carers, many of whom have given up work to care and risk ending up with a reduced State Pension in retirement. It is really important that carers are encouraged to claim all their entitlements, get a pension forecast and start preparing for retirement.

If you would like to receive a copy contact:

Steven McIntosh at Carers UK 0207378 4937 Email steve.mcintosh@caresuk.org

Learning Disability PARLIAMENT

The Kingston Parliament is a group of 15 people who **Speak Up** for everyone with a learning disability in Kingston.

The Parliament is having an election

Election 2011



The current Parliament members have worked hard to achieve real change across the services in the borough.

NOW we are looking for new members to take on the challenge and continue the good work. Parliament facilitators will visit individuals, homes and services to talk about joining the Parliament.

As with the election in 2008 we will ask potential candidates to interview for the position and if successful, to create a campaign before the vote.

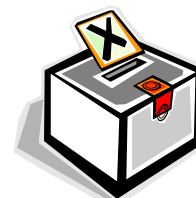
It is an exciting opportunity so please do get involved

In February we will send you a voting slip with photos of people that want to join the Parliament and why and you will be asked to choose 5 people that you think will do a good job

The election will take place in April 2011

Contact: ldparliament@hotmail.com

Marie, Fen, Jackie Roz at the Parliament office: 0208547 6645



PARTNERSHIP BOARD

The Partnership Board is chaired by Simon Pearce (Head of Adult Care) and Philip Hitchen (MP). It is an open meeting so everyone is welcome to attend and this is a good way to hear about what's happening in learning disability services and a chance for you to have a say.

Minutes of the Partnership Board are on the website www.kingstonld.info - click on Partnership Board & Parliament.

If you have wanted to attend in the past but something stops you please do let us know and I will pass on any comments to the Parliament.

The next Partnership Board meeting is on Monday 14th March from 10am -1pm

at the Kingsmeadow Stadium, Kingston Road, New Malden.

There will be a sandwich lunch available after the meeting

If possible please let Carly know you are coming 208547 4703 for catering purposes

BOOGIE NIGHTS

The Boogie Night are held at:

Kingsmeadow, Jack Goodchild Way, Kingston Road, Kingston KT1 3PB :

DATES FOR 2011: 25th February; 15th April; 24th June

TIME: 7.30pm COST: £5 on the door (carers go free)

For more information contact Melissa Hulbert Tel: 07947 423 083



SPOTLIGHT : Learning Disability Service

By now most people will have received the letter from Simon Pearce and the information update from Glen Mills with regard to the proposed changes to day services.



The council has been running a program called One Council and one of the projects affects day services for people with learning disabilities.

The Council say:

- The Causeway building at Cocks Crescent is not fit for purpose, is too big now that less people use it, and it also needs a lot of work doing to it
- More work activities like Stud Farm; Victoria Park and Canbury coffee shop should be developed
- There should be a new fully accessible Drop-In centre in the community
- All people who use day services should have an Individual Budget (IB)
- HFT and other providers should continue to provide day opportunities
- Transport to and from day services will be affected

On 1st March a Report will go to a meeting of the full council and if the report is agreed there will be a 3 month consultation starting on 7th March

The consultation will include some ideas about how day services may change and there will be lots of meetings arranged to discuss everyone's views.

These will be open meetings and will give everyone the opportunity to have their say and to ask questions.

The consultation will end on Friday 3rd June.

The council will then look at all the information provided by people with learning disabilities, families and carers, support providers, The Parliament and from us - Kingston Mencap.

Final plans will be published in July and put into action during the summer.

Seekers Club members and their families and carers will be directly involved and they will all be given the opportunity to voice their concerns.

NB. We have been looking for new premises for many months, as we never knew if Seekers club would have to move because of damage to the building following the roof leak and recent flooding.

We will keep members informed whilst looking for a new venue but are still hopeful that new Drop-In planned for the community will be big enough!

We may have to use a temporary venue but I am confident Seekers will continue for many years to come. Members may worry but I am sure will adapt to the changes and Zerrin Izli, Seekers club leader, will keep everyone informed.

Gill Wood

MEMBERS BIRTHDAY.....

Happy Birthday to all in January:

Katy Rowland; Edward Maule; Karl Gibbins; Jamie Duncan; Lee Hope; Adam Burkeman; Sophie Harrison; Sally Piercy; Richard Broome; Emile Bezodis

Happy Birthday to all in February:

Peter Privett; Michael Bassett; Georgie Wooderson; Robert Johnson; Benjamin Barratt; Denise Watkins; Claire Smith; Angus Hall; Glen O'Donovan; Andrew Brownrigg; John Rispin; Roger Varoujian; Sam Fordery; Saddick Muyingo; Natasha Hopper; Warren Day; Sarah Page; Eona Fraser; Mitchell Gray; Helen Lay; Rodney Asling

Happy Birthday to all in March:

Bruce Read; Laurie Robson; Vanessa Poon; Phillip Hitchen; Natalie Francis; Una McCormack; Cherelle Govier; Gillian Hacker; Julia Kelly; Claire Sheridan; Louise Monks; Richard Laslett; Lee Chung; Nicola Ford; Nicky Watkins; Roger Taylor; Michael Birch

NB. Sorry if we have missed your birthday or got the wrong date - do tell us so we can put things right

Members News

COLLECTION BOXES

We have a number of Kingston Mencap donation boxes in various shops, off licences and public houses around the borough. We regularly empty boxes after being filled up by generous donations from customers and staff and are looking for new sites. We would be really interested to hear from members about other outlets.. Please let us know if you can suggest a local shop, or can ask if they would hold a can, on our behalf.



Thanks to everyone who still send in old mobile phones and used stamps. Keep them all coming! We especially want foreign stamps Thanks to all who save for us!



Sally Piercy celebrated her 50th birthday in January with a birthday party at Maple Lodge for family and friends

Congratulations Sally for reaching the big 50



From Peter and Mary Hannan

In an article a few months ago a reference was made about the possibility of carers being able to claim a discount on council tax. We contacted our local authority here in Scotland and today received a letter confirming they are giving us a 25% discount backdated for the 3 years we have lived here in Ayr. Many thanks to Kingston Mencap From Laura, Mary and Peter

Laura Hannan was a Kingston resident and is still a members since moving with her family

Congratulations



Andrew Brownrigg, one of 4 hard working volunteers, who received an award for his contribution in the admin dept of Richmond Aid.

Welcome to New Members

Simmons family
Liam O'Donohue
Marc&Bernadette Long
Elizabeth Herrington
Paul Brewster
Angus Hall
Vangie Helmsley

If you have any comments or suggestions or any news you wish to share with other members please let me know.

We are always interested to hear from members, friends and supporters.

Contact: Gill Wood
0208540 1399

17 Oakway, London SW20 9JE
gillcwood@blueyonder.co.uk

Disclaimer:- as far as possible we make sure that articles and information are correct, but do point out that the information and views expressed by individuals or other organisations do not necessarily represent those held by Kingston Mencap. The Editor cannot accept responsibility for any goods or services mentioned in or enclosed in the newsletter.