

yourvoice



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Trevor Dickenson and Ruby Hartshorn speaking at the recent SDN General Meeting. Full report, pages 5, 6 and 7.

Puttin' on the style...

A fashionable fund-raiser will be held on behalf of SDN on 21 July when Allcare Care Agency stages a fashion show and sale, plus cheese and wine evening, at Westbury Village Hall.

This will be a rare opportunity to purchase end-of-line and surplus stock from top High Street stores. There will also be a make-up demonstration by an expert from Boots.

Funds raised will buy equipment to provide printed copies of the online newsletter to those with no IT facilities and also enable us to create website video. Tickets are £6 and are available from Allcare (weekdays 01743 792980), Anne Speake (07773 466730) or SDN member Ruby Hartshorn (01743 340832). - See page 7

A word from your elusive Patron...

Greetings to all, I feel like we are developing a pen-pal relationship, which is better than none at all but far from the close, active relationship I wish I had with you all and with the progress of the Network.

When I took on the role of Patron I had big plans, great ideas of the ways in which I could provide support to the really vital work you are all doing in expanding the Disability Network.

And then rheumatoid arthritis got in the way... Since I last spoke to you all I've been fighting a seemingly non-stop

battle with my condition with constant hospital admissions and countless operations, as Geoff can vouch as one of my most faithful and regular hospital visitors.

And isn't that a great illustration of battle we're all fighting, every day? Not just fighting to get by like the man in the street but doing so around disabilities which are, at best, inconvenient and at worst, life-limiting.

That's why Shropshire Disability Network is so important and why I look forward to recover- **Continued page 2**

Disabled could work for less pay, says MP

A Tory MP has suggested that people with disabilities should work for less than the minimum wage to increase their chances of getting jobs.

Philip Davies told the Commons: "If an employer is looking at two candidates, one who has got disabilities and one who hasn't, and they have got to pay them both the same rate, I invite you to guess which one the employer is more likely to take on."

"Given that some of those people with a learning disability clearly, by definition, cannot be as productive in their work as somebody who has not got a disability of that nature, then it was inevitable that, given the employer was going to have to pay them both the same, they were going to take on the person who was going to be more productive, less of a risk."

"My view is that for some people the national minimum wage may be more of a hindrance than a help."

Tories
disown
Commons
speech

"If those people who consider it is being a hindrance to them, and in my view that's some of the most vulnerable people in society, if they feel that for a short period of time, taking a lower rate of pay to help them get on their first rung of the jobs ladder, if they judge that that is a good thing, I don't see why we should be standing in their way."

Davies has a history of making controversial statements out of sync with his party high command. A Conservative Party spokesman said: "These comments do not reflect the views of the Conservative party and do not reflect government policy."

In the debate, Davies was challenged over his remarks by fellow Tory MP Edward Leigh, who told him: "Why actually should a disabled person work for less than £5.93 an hour. It is not a lot of money, is it?"

But Davies said criticism of his remarks was "left-wing hysteria".

[From The Guardian, 17.06.11, edited]

A word from your elusive Patron... *continued*

ing from my recent medical lull enough to be of some use to you all very soon. And I'm happy to report that I am, finally, recovering...

For the last 2 years I, along with the doctors, believed I had what's called a Multiple Joint Infection. I have multiple artificial joints and many of them were thought to be harbouring infection cells so surgeons have resorted to removing several of them, along with much other metal-work like pins and plates I've had fitted to repair bones, over the years. I've also been on a near constant regime of IV antibiotics throughout this time in a vain bid to control the 'infection'. But it seemed nothing worked. Until we realised that it wasn't infection at all, but rejection instead!

I've always been strongly allergic to some metals and unaware of the damage they were doing, surgeons have spent the last 10 years filling me full of the very thing my body can't tolerate.

The penny finally dropped for me when my poor, beleaguered body started ejecting surgical pins and staples from the top of my foot. They just started popping out through the skin and I realised it was my body saying, yuk! I don't want this, thanks!

As soon as surgeons started removing their toxic payload, I started to recover and I'm delighted and relieved to report that my surgical wounds are now all healed and happy, my IV 'central line' used to pump huge amounts of antibiotics dubbed 'medical domestos' into me for the last year or so was finally removed yesterday and I have been officially sent home and signed off from serious medical supervision for the next 4 weeks.

So getting there, at last.

I may have come out the other side of this battle with no elbows, wobbly feet, a serious needle phobia and one less index finger but I'm counting my lucky stars I came out the other side at all – what's a few less body-parts, between friends?!

So please forgive my long absence but know that I'm working my way back to you, slowly but surely and looking forward, very much, to making up for lost time when I get there. Once again, wish I was there but sending, through Geoff, my very best to all those who have managed to attend the meeting.

Emma Suddaby xx

Patron of the Shropshire Disability Network

What's that Grommit? A film about



Aardman director Darren Robbie, a lead animator on the film "Chicken Run", has produced a short animated film for the MS Society. It powerfully depicts the reality of living with multiple sclerosis.

The charity hopes that the 35 second film, launched during MS Week in May, will have a "viral effect" and help raise awareness and funds. The film encourages people to visit the MS Society's website (mapms.org.uk) where visitors can record their own films and join the new research tool MS Register.

Robbie, who has directed almost 50 commercials for a wide variety of companies, made the film for free for the MS Society in memory of his sister who died as a result of complications relating to MS a couple of years ago. Such a film would normally cost tens of thousands of pounds to produce.

The film uses a busy workplace as a metaphor for the human brain to educate people about how the condition affects human motor function. Instead of workers we see different body parts losing their jobs and being fired, to represent the way body functions can unexpectedly be lost or impaired through MS.

[From UK Fundraising: www.fundraising.co.uk/news/2011/05/24/aardman-director-produces-campaign-film-ms-week]

Hate crimes against disabled 'are being ignored by police'

The Police are ignoring hate crimes against people with disabilities, according to a report from Mencap. It claims disabled people are being left to suffer violence, harassment and abuse because police efforts to tackle disability hate crime are failing.

The report, "Don't Stand By," says many police forces do not understand the crimes and do not have strategies in place to tackle them. The study was carried out with the help of 14 police forces across England.

It cites examples where low-level harassment was ignored by police and escalated into sustained abuse with fatal consequences. These include the deaths of Fiona Pilkington and her disabled daughter Francessa Hardwick in 2007, and David Askew in 2010.

Di Lofthouse, 41, who has suffered hate crime because of her learning disability, says the police treated her as a nuisance. "I was suicidal. We had a letter put through our letterbox saying people like us should be put down at birth. We had our windows put through and it got to the

point where I could not sleep at night. I used to sleep in the day when they were not around. I found it very difficult to report the crimes when they happened because no-one seemed to want to listen."

There are 1.5 million people with a learning disability in the UK. It is thought as many as nine out of 10 people are verbally harassed or exposed to violence due to their disability. Mark Goldring, Mencap's chief executive, said it is a huge problem which is under-reported and under-recognised. "Low-level harassment is devastating for individuals when it is continued over a period of time," he said.

Mencap wants police forces to build on best practice and work more closely with social services in order to tackle the problem.

A Home Office spokesman said police are now recording hate crime data centrally. "This will help the police to target resources more effectively and better protect victims." [From Sky News 20.06.11, edited]

Blue Eyed Soul dances back!

Blue Eyed Soul dance group, which recently lost its Arts Council grant, has teamed up with Transit-Trix dance group to form Envision, bringing together disabled and able-bodied young dancers aged 12-18 from different backgrounds and of different abilities.

The Telford-based dance group is learning street dance and contemporary creative dance moves in preparation for a performance in Telford Town Park as part of the Telford Culture Fest on 23 July at 12.30. Remaining practice sessions are on 3, 10 and 17 July, from 1.30-3pm, at Hadley Learning Community Dance Studio. Sessions cost £3 for disabled participants and £4.50 for able-bodied. To book, contact Moya at the Blue Eyed Soul office on 01743 210830 or email admin@besdance.com. Website: www.blueeyedsouldance.com

Geoff Forgie welcomed everyone to the 12th General Meeting, marking three years in existence for Shropshire Disability Network. He had some encouraging news from our Patron, Emma Suddaby. The doctors have discovered she has an allergy to her many metal joint replacements, and this has been the apparent cause of the countless infections she has endured over many years. They are gradually replacing these metal units and as a result healing is taking place. Emma sends her best wishes as always.

Moving AGM

At this time last year we held our second AGM. As the closeness to our year-end, which is the end of May, put too much pressure on our Treasurer and Accountants, we have moved the AGM from now on to September. As we will be re-electing officers as usual, anyone interested in joining our Steering Group is invited to contact Geoff or Secretary Dave Hewetson. Geoff announced that, largely due to reasons of health, he will not be standing for re-election as Chair, however would stay on the Steering Group.

Wavelength

Ann Johnson, head of our Employment sub-group, has, together with the group launched a new company called Wavelength to take forward the work of the sub-group. Wavelength is a new, innovative, not-for-profit social marketing company. Their aim is to link-up support organisations within Shropshire to collectively help increase and improve employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Watch this space, the waves are getting bigger!

Ruby Hartshorn has been doing a brilliant job as our publicity officer, and has SDN appearing in the press or on radio at least once a week. Trevor Dickenson has been doing a great job updating events on our website, and has taken on the role of Marketing Officer.

To assist us with the enormous amount of work, we are planning to seek funding for a part-time SDN Co-ordinator, together with office space for the co-ordinator and two volunteers.

Publicity

Ruby gave an update on publicity and related fund-raising efforts. We are getting weekly mentions in the Shropshire Star at the moment, as well as other press and radio coverage - this all helps to get our name across to people. Ruby has a list of media contacts, but is always keen to have more. If anyone knows of people she can contact about our events, please tell her - she would rather be told twice than not at all. Likewise, please tell her if you can offer to put information out - it all helps if we all work together. You can contact Ruby at rbyhartshorn@yahoo.co.uk or on 01743 340832

Headline points

- ❑ Alison Teece, from Shropshire Fire & Rescue Service, gave a talk on "Fire Safety in the Home"
- ❑ The Hardest Hit Campaign against cuts in services for people with disabilities. Please support this!
Complete our two-minute survey at www.shropshire-disability.net
Make a diary entry to attend our Hardest Hit Debate on 10 October 9.30-3.30 in Shirehall Council Chamber
- ❑ Our AGM will be on 8 September, 10.30-1.00, at Mereside Centre Shrewsbury. Please make a diary note.
- ❑ Geoff Forgie, founder of SDN, will be standing down as chairman at the AGM. Nominations are open for the post. Ideally the new Chair will be an experienced Chair or Trustee of a charity connected with disability, or a director from the business community with a strong interest in disability. Anyone interested should contact Dave Hewetson or Geoff.

Fund-raising

Recent events included:

19 March Street Collection in Darwin Centre, Shrewsbury, raised £302.64

10 April: Walk and Roll raised £740.05. Feedback seems to be saying "let's make it bigger, greater and better next year". We had fun. You can also have fun by joining us and helping to make Shropshire Disability Network a household name in Shropshire.

30 April Street Collection in Telford Centre, raised £121.09 While primarily these are fund-raisers, we are also making people aware of SDN. We really need more helpers for our next collection, in Shrewsbury Darwin Centre on 17 September. Please contact Dave Hewetson or Trevor Dickenson if you can spare even an hour. It will be much appreciated.

Dave: davidhewetson@talktalk.net or 01743 - 247019

Trevor: trevor.dickenson@talktalk.net or 01952 - 261146

Marketing

Trevor Dickenson, our Marketing Officer, invited members to get in touch with any ideas or suggestions about how we can promote the Disability Network in our community as the place in Shropshire for disability information, and the voice representing people with disability in Shropshire. You can contact Trevor at trevor.dickenson@talktalk.net or on 01952 - 261146

Treasurer's Report

Tom Memery said the current bank balance is £5,750, of which £1,585 is uncommitted. We have had two grants, one of £720 for Outreach projects, and one of £2,500 to provide a sign-posting service via our website.

Next Meeting

The next General Meeting will be our AGM on Thursday 8 September 2011 at the Mereside Community Centre, Sutton Farm, Shrewsbury.

Coming soon...

A fashion show plus cheese and wine at Westbury Village Hall on 21 July. Organised by Allcare Shropshire, which is donating all proceeds to SDN. Ladies fashions will be available at 50% or less of High Street prices. It will be a great evening. Full details in this newsletter.

Disability Challenge

Harry Boyes, recently retired from the RAF, was introduced to the meeting. Harry has agreed to manage our Disability Challenge where teams of 10 to 12 people from organisations such as the army, air force, rugby clubs, the police, fire service, etc, carry a person in a wheelchair approximately 6k over a challenging course on the Long Mynd. The tentative date is June next year.

Simple tips to save your life!

Guest Speaker Alison Teece, from Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service, spoke about "Fire Safety in the Home". She gave some startling statistics:

Causes of fire

57% cooking, 18% electrical, 8% smoking materials, 6% heaters, 4% candles, 7% other

Fires by room of origin

65% kitchen, 10% bedroom, 9% Living Room, 4% store room, 2% bathroom, 2% hallway, 8% other

The main display banner Alison used said "Stand by your pan" which is addressing the main source of fires in Shropshire.

Kitchen safety messages

Don't leave cooking unattended
Don't let grease or fat build up in pans
Don't be careless (e.g. plastic kettles or empty pots on a hotplate)

If a kitchen pan fire starts

Don't move it

Turn heat off

Get out and stay out

Close all doors behind you

This surprised people at the meeting, whose instinct would have been to tackle the fire with a wet blanket. Alison restated that Fire Service advice is not to touch it. One member asked if insurance companies would take a dim view if you hadn't tried to stop the fire. Alison said insurance companies would accept you had followed Fire Service advice; they might be keener to know that you had working smoke alarms fitted.

Electrical Safety

Plugs and Wiring
Don't pull on the flex
Don't let adaptors and chargers overheat by leaving them on for long periods
Don't overload multi plugs and extension leads.
Make sure you have the correct wiring and fuses. Warning signs are
Hot plugs and sockets (sometimes stained brown)
Fuses keep blowing
flickering lights

High Risk Items

Washing machines, tumble driers, dishwashers, electric blankets and microwaves.

The commonest source of electrical fires is tumble driers, often because the filter hasn't been cleaned regularly and fluff has built up. Only one or two fires are caused by electric blankets in a year.

Cigarette Safety

Never leave unattended
Never smoke in bed

SDN General Meeting - 2



Alison giving her presentation and, below, answering a question with the help of a signer.



Take extra care under the influence
Keep away from children
Fires and Heaters
Use a guard on all fires
No items on the guard
Don't sit too close
Don't place close to furnishings

Candles

Secure in a candle holder
Never leave unattended
Keep away from flammable materials
Not advisable to use during a power cut

Bedtime Checks

 (Slogan is "Turn off before you turn in")

Turn off all unnecessary electrical appliances
Don't leave cigarettes burning
Put a guard around any open fires
Switch off heaters
Close the doors
Keep door and window keys to hand

Smoke alarms

Smoke alarms should be fitted in all homes. Of the four fatalities this year in Shropshire to date, two were due to lack of smoke alarms. When you're asleep, your sense of smell doesn't operate, so smoke will not wake you. Smoke alarms should be fitted,

one per floor, on the exit routes, for example on each landing. They should be fitted high up, ideally on ceilings. Free fittings are available for people over 75, and for people with disabilities. Test alarms weekly and change batteries annually.

Fire Escape Plan

Main way out should be the front door
Know the alternatives
Keep free of obstructions
Security windows
Take account of disabled exit needs
Arrange a meeting place
Practise it *now*, don't wait until it's too late!

In the event of a fire

Try not to panic
Close the door on the fire
Close all doors as you leave
Get everyone out
Don't delay
Call the Fire Service
Never go back in

If you're Trapped inside

Try to stay calm
Close the door
Block bottom of door with clothes, etc
Keep low
Open the window and shout "FIRE"

Further Information

You can get a "Fire Safety in the Home" booklet free from the Community Fire Safety Team On 01743 260260. To book a home safety visit, call 01743 260298.

Cuts and the Hardest Hit

SDN General Meeting - 3

any emails or letters you send giving your story.

Geoff Forgie, Ruby Hartshorn and Trevor Dickenson all spoke at the General Meeting on the issue of how Government cuts are particularly hitting the most vulnerable people in society, and this is a summary of what they said.

The Hardest Hit Campaign kicked off with a large march in London on 11 May. The Campaign is designed to draw attention to the effect of the cuts on people with disability, and to bring people together in protest. We want to ensure that people with disability don't lose out, and are treated justly in these times of cuts. SDN is aiming to co-ordinate support for the Hardest Hit Campaign in Shropshire.

Firstly, we would like all our members and supporters to visit our website - www.shropshire-disability.net - and complete our simple survey, which will take no more than two minutes, and can be accessed from our Home Page. Please do this today.

The survey does not ask for personal identification. We need to know what is happening in your individual lives, and how cuts are affecting you, (as a disabled person / family member and / or carer), or people you know. We will not disclose personal details as we abide by the Data Protection Act.

You can also contact your MP, but please copy SDN on

We would like as many as possible to attend the **Hardest Hit Debate in the Shirehall Council Chamber, Shrewsbury, on Monday 10 October 9.30 – 3.30.**

This will be hosted by Shropshire Disability Network, and facilitated by Val Lewis. Please make a date in your diary now.

Ruby Hartshorn gave examples of people's concerns:

- 1) A couple, one of whom was receiving care at home, while the spouse was in a care home. Social Care had told the person at home that they couldn't afford to continue paying for the spouse in the Care Home, and that they would have to seek an alternative, cheaper, care home. The person at home was worried sick, didn't know who to turn to, and told all to the Carer. Now SDN needs to know about this: it may be there has been a misunderstanding, or maybe SDN can point them in the right direction.
- 2) There are stories of GP practices altering people's medication for a cheaper alternative
- 3) Some people are suffering from stress that their care may be cut at their review. SDN needs to know about this kind of story.

Trevor Dickenson gave a brief summary of a report on "Disabled people and the Cuts" given at the TUC Disability Conference 2011. (Full report in this newsletter)

What the Hardest Hit Campaign says:

People with a disability or a long-term health condition and their families are being hit hard by cuts to benefits and services. The total cuts will mean an estimated £9 billion loss to families' incomes over the next four years, on top of cuts to many local care and support services.

Other news on the cuts - pages 8 and 9

HEALTH INFORMATION WEEK

Shropshire part in West Midlands campaign

A campaign to raise awareness about health information available to everyone in the West Midlands is running this month. As part of it, displays about where to find the best information on a range of health issues will be set up across Shropshire during the week-long information campaign.

NHS staff, voluntary staff, local authorities and others are working together to create imaginative displays in their local areas. It is hoped that partnership working across all organisations will benefit staff and public by raising awareness of the resources that are available to them. Health Information Week is to be held from 4-10 July and aims to improve access to quality local information and promote healthier communities.

All events held during 4-July will be reported on the EQUIP section of the NHS local website at <http://nhslocal.nhs.uk/workforce/equip-information/health-information-week>. For more information contact Sarah Greening, NHS West Midlands, 0121 695 2227 or email sarah.greening@westmidlands.nhs.uk

- ☐ Throughout Health Information Week a special display will be on show in the Shrewsbury Health Library, Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, Mytton Oak Road, Shrewsbury SY3 8XQ
- ☐ For details about everything that is happening in Shropshire and elsewhere in the West Midlands visit <http://nhslocal.nhs.uk/workforce/equip-information/health-information-week>



LADIES (fund raising) FASHION SHOW

Allcare Shropshire Ltd are fundraising

In aid of Shropshire Disability Network, tickets from Allcare office or contact Anne Speake 07773 466730

We are holding an exciting fund-raising fashion show and clothes sale, to include cheese & wine, raffle, and make-up demonstration.

This is a rare opportunity to buy end-of-line and surplus stock from all your favourite High Street stores

At half store price or less

AT: WESTBURY VILLAGE HALL, WESTBURY, SY5 9QU

DATE: THURSDAY 21 JULY

TIME: 7.30 START

TICKETS: £6



The Government's plans to make savings at the expense of the disabled include:

❑ Cutting 20% from the budget for Disability Living Allowance (DLA). Disability Alliance estimates that over 700,000 disabled people could see their benefits reduced or removed.

DLA helps disabled people with the extra costs of disability and without it more disabled people will be pushed into poverty. The cuts could have a knock-on impact on Carers' Allowance, leaving thousands of families even worse off.

❑ Taking mobility payments away from disabled people in residential care and children going to residential schools. Cutting these payments would trap many in their own homes.

❑ Cutting off payments of contributory Employment and Support Allowance after a year to people struggling to get back into work due to disability or serious illness

The Hardest Hit Campaign brings together disabled people, carers and groups that represent them. It wants to send a message to the Government: stop these cuts.

As a supporter of the Hardest Hit Campaign in Shropshire, SDN urges you to spare two minutes to complete our survey at www.shropshire-disability.net. This is a simple and anonymous way to take part in the campaign.

Unpaid carers save nation £119bn a year

New estimates, calculated by charity Carers UK and Leeds University, show the care provided by friends and family members to ill, frail or disabled relatives is now worth £119 billion every year. That's £2.3 billion per week and £326 million per day.

The figure has risen by over a third since the 2007 estimate and the carers contribution now far outstrips the total cost of the NHS (£98.8 billion). There are around 6.4 million people providing care for ill or disabled loved ones that would otherwise cost the state £18 an hour, meaning that each carer saves on average £18,473 a year.

Given this massive contribution, Carers UK argues that society must do more to support growing numbers of carers. Chief Executive Imelda Redmond CBE said: "Our society and public services could not function without the massive contribution made by over six million carers. This contribution is something we can be proud of as a country, and demonstrates how strong our families and communities are.

"With an ageing population, caring is becoming a fact of life for every family. Yet, whilst families are meeting this challenge, many are struggling with little or no help, or facing cuts to the care services and benefits they rely on. Unless we urgently rethink how our society supports carers, we will see increasing numbers pushed to breaking point – forced out of work and into poverty, ill-health and isolation.

Carers UK is part of the Hardest Hit campaign www.hardesthit.org.uk

Mapping the misery

The Guardian is running a "Cuts watch" map, which identifies what is being cut and where. Here's the link: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/cutswatch>

And speaking of maps ...

Voluntary Sector Cuts is a new collaborative project which maps intelligence about voluntary groups experiencing reductions in public sector funding. If you're involved in a voluntary or community group which has been told its statutory funding will be reduced, you can be part of this work by sharing your story.

Just fill in the simple form you will find at <http://voluntarysectorcuts.org.uk/> Share your experiences and the impact the cuts will have on the people who use your services. Your contribution will be crucial to building a wider picture of the scale of the challenge ahead in your community, your region, or nationally.

Cuts that you share here will be made available publicly in a google spreadsheet (http://spreadsheets.google.com/ccc?key=0AhPQWam6YvCc-dEYxanZmUk5CYW5xb2pCRWIJcHp1Z3c&hl=en_GB#gid=0) [From Shropshire Infrastructure Partnership Newsletter 31 May 2011]

The new Equality Act 2010 came into force this year, replacing most of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. The DDA and the new Equality Act say that 'reasonable adjustment' must be made but if the person has not been given the job, the 'reasonable adjustments' do not have to be put in place. Delegates spoke of reservations and concerns about the new legislation. The small business lobby is pushing for some of the rules which now include them, to be watered down. A person who has been discriminated against can take the employer to an Employment Tribunal (ET) but has first of all to stump up £250 before taking the case to the ET.

Conference slams the cuts faced by disabled

The subject of disability and the cuts was high on the agenda at the annual TUC Disability Conference. This item is a summarised version of a report by David Lawrence. SDN Steering Group member Trevor Dickenson can provide the full text.

to no chance of being re-employed.

The rundown of supported workplaces is accelerating. Delegates told the conference that Remploy factories are closing down despite their profitability and ability to stand alone without any taxpayer subsidy.

Equality and Human Rights Commission: Staff and budget have been cut by 60% which limits its ability to discharge its statutory duty. The Public Bodies Bill (PPB) will threaten its independence by giving ministers the power to modify the EHRC's function without parliamentary scrutiny. The helpline

Cuts to Disability Living Allowance: Recipients of DLA rely on it to pay for basics. Any cut would reduce the living standards of disabled people. The Government has appointed ATOS Healthcare to cut down the DLA bill. Delegates told harrowing stories of people who had been denied DLA on flimsy evidence - and of someone who committed suicide on receipt of a letter from ATOS.

A presentation by the Black Triangle Society told of the black triangle patch which had to be worn by disabled people in Nazi Germany (same principle as the yellow Star of David worn by Jews). The group is campaigning against the constant media message that all disabled people are "scroungers and freeloaders, a burden on society". Blaming the economic crisis on the disabled by constantly saying how high the welfare bill is, or how much services cost - so that they are closed down to save money - is at odds with the "fairness" agenda the Government talks about.

Unemployed Disabled People:

- Overall Unemployment – 8.5%
- 18 – 25 years old – 20%
- Disabled - 50%

Statistically, a disabled person over 55 years old has next

is already closed, which puts disabled people seeking advice at a disadvantage. The PPB is an undemocratic and vindictive piece of legislation.

Bullying and Harassment: 47% of disabled people are victims of bullying in the workplace. The conference called for more training for TU reps to recognise workplace bullying. Increased time off by disabled people is used by managers to reduce their workforce in times of recession. The threat of redundancy can set off invisible disabilities such as stress and depression in susceptible people.

Mental illness is a hidden disability which can reduce a competent worker to a shadow of his/her former self. The conference learned that 1 in 4 people each year suffer some form of mental breakdown. The cuts in mental health services from an already low point, is going to affect a lot of people.

People are afraid to register illnesses and disabilities due to bullying management using the illness to sack the worker. HIV sufferers are particularly susceptible to harassment.

Shropshire Disability Network's campaign to co-ordinate the reactions of people with disabilities to Government cuts has attracted the interest of Shropshire's media. This article appeared in the Shropshire Star on 24 May

Disabled urged to voice cuts concerns

A group which provides a voice for disabled people across Shropshire is launching a campaign to find out how the vulnerable are being made to suffer as a result of Government cuts. Shropshire Disability Network is appealing to disabled people to contribute to a survey as part of its Hardest Hit campaign which highlights the cuts being made to some of the most vulnerable people in society.

Officials say the total cuts will mean an estimated £9 billion loss to family incomes over the next four years,

on top of cuts to local care and support services. The SDN says the Government's plans include cutting 20% from the budget for Disability Living Allowance; taking mobility payments away from disabled people in residential care and children going to residential schools, and cutting off payments of contributory Employment and Support Allowance after a year to people struggling to get back into work due to disability or serious illness.

A statement from SDN says: "Shropshire Disability Network would like to co-ordinate countywide support over Shropshire for the campaign." It asks people to complete the survey at www.shropshire-disability.net, adding: "We ask for no personal details just your post-code. It takes two minutes to complete." The campaign can also be e-mailed at info@shropshiredisability.net

Omega Launches Motor Neurone Disease Appeal

Motor Neurone Disease (MND) is a rare condition, and usually fatal. Every year it affects around 25 people and their families across Shropshire and Montgomery.

Omega is urgently seeking donations, fund-raising partners, and sponsorship from successful businesses to help MND sufferers.

Dr Teresa Griffin, the Omega chairwoman, who first encouraged the charity to begin working with families affected by MND, recently attended a royal wedding garden party organised by Mrs Heather Waters to kick-start the charity's community fund-raising campaign.

Dr Griffin said many people, including several unpaid care-givers attending Omega support groups, had already offered to get involved.

The charity aims to loan Apple iPad tablet computers, supplied with synthesized speech generating software,

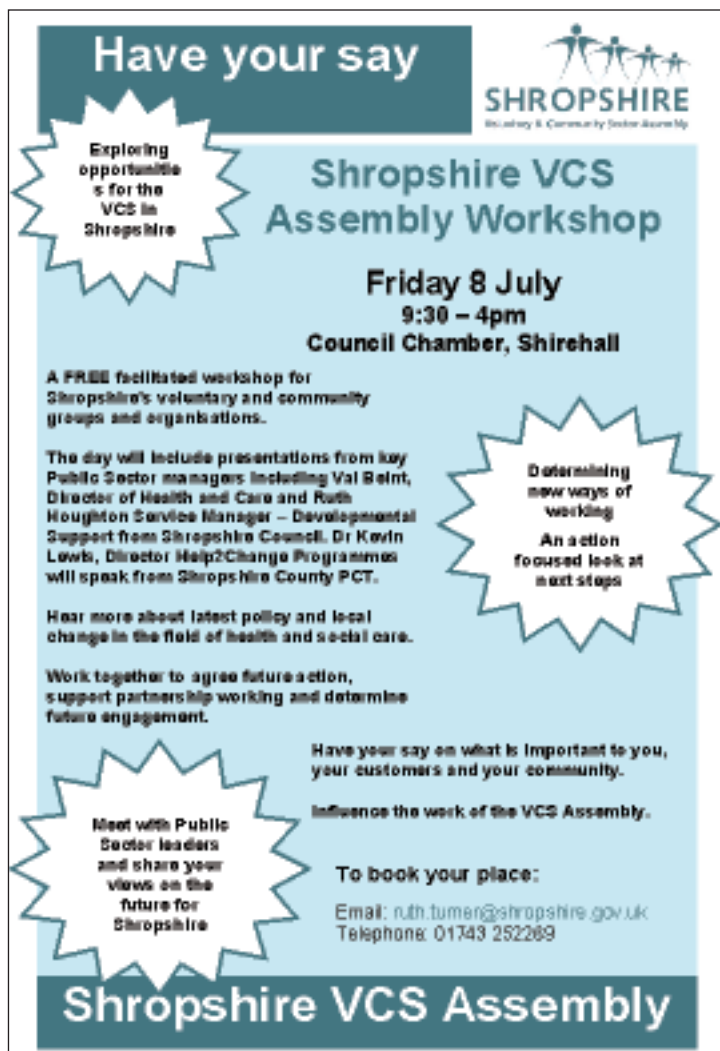
to at least 10 patients over the next few months. The computers are a powerful and very cost-effective communication tool. They enable patients who are no longer able to speak to communicate with their families and clinicians. It costs about £600 for each iPad supplied. Omega hopes to expand the project later this year.

The charity works closely with specialist nurse Helen Harris, who has a growing waiting list of patients. Omega would welcome financial support to help maximise the impact of this important initiative.

To get involved please contact Tom Memery, Omega development director, or send your donation to Omega, the National Association for End of Life Care, London House, Town Walls, Shrewsbury, SY1 1TG.

Call 0845 259 3163 (local rate), email carers@omega.uk.net, web www.omega.uk.net
Please remember to specify that you would like to support the Omega MND project.

On page 18 we tell the story of James Shaw, in his own words, about life as an MSD sufferer



Have your say

SHROPSHIRE
Business & Community Sector Assembly

Exploring opportunities for the VCS in Shropshire

Shropshire VCS Assembly Workshop

Friday 8 July
9:30 – 4pm
Council Chamber, Shirehall

A FREE facilitated workshop for Shropshire's voluntary and community groups and organisations.

The day will include presentations from key Public Sector managers including Val Beint, Director of Health and Care and Ruth Houghton Service Manager – Developmental Support from Shropshire Council. Dr Kevin Lewis, Director Help2Change Programmes will speak from Shropshire County PCT.

Determining new ways of working
An action focused look at next steps

Hear more about latest policy and local change in the field of health and social care.

Work together to agree future action, support partnership working and determine future engagement.

Meet with Public Sector leaders and share your views on the future for Shropshire

Have your say on what is important to you, your customers and your community.

Influence the work of the VCS Assembly.

To book your place:
Email: ruth.tumen@shropshire.gov.uk
Telephone: 01743 252269

Shropshire VCS Assembly

Can you prove that you are human?

by Peter Beresford, chair of national service user network Shaping Our Lives, and Professor of Social Policy at Brunel University

It seems that the only way that disabled people can prove they are human to this Government is to have a job. No matter that the job market currently discriminates and excludes. No matter that not everyone can contribute through paid work, even though they can contribute in other ways. No matter that jobs are being lost and unemployment is rising each day.

So, disabled people can expect to come under automatic attack because the discriminating world we live in too often just doesn't make it possible for them to pay their way and being on benefits is presented as something bad and wrong. [This is only a brief extract. For the full article go to Shaping Our Lives <http://www.communitycare.co.uk/blogs/service-user-voice/2011/01/disabled-people-and-service-users-will-be-heard-we-will-be-listened-to-ombh.html>]

Ludlow Castle set for invasion

Contact a Family is hosting an event at Ludlow Castle for families with disabled children. An exciting day out for all is certain, with attractions including castle tours, "Animal Man" and Living History displays. The date is 26 July, from 10.00- 3.00. Book asap as spaces are limited - ring Jan or Liz on 0121 4154624

A few weeks ago SDN got an email from St John's Catholic School for the Deaf in Leeds asking if we would like an article for YourVoice. The answer was, of course, 'Yes please' – and here it is. We hope this will lead to a long and mutually beneficial relationship with the college. If you want to find out about St John's the website is <http://www.stjohns.org.uk/>

When a child is deaf, it may be difficult for him or her to learn proper communication skills. This can affect the child's interactions with his environment as well as social interactions. In many cases, a hearing-impaired child may not have appropriate speech patterns, since he was not able to learn by using all of the auditory clues presented in one's speech.

Such problems can have a negative impact on one's educational progress as well as his interactions with others. This means that speech and language therapy can be an essential tool for deaf children, especially when done in an environment that encourages it, such as at a [school for deaf children](http://www.stjohns.org.uk/).

Speech and language therapy is meant to improve the communication skills of those suffering from speech and

Implications of speech and language therapy for deaf children

by Carlo Ruggiero

language disorders, including those related to deafness. Therapists typically work with a child using a combination of classroom, group and personal exercises. The therapist will have the child complete exercises that are meant to improve his ability to articulate words and interpret speech properly as well as make him more aware of his environment.

This specialized therapy is important for children suffering from many different problems such as autism, stuttering, deafness, language delay, voice disorders and many others. While therapists are concerned with both the speech and language processing of their patients, they will often focus on specific exercises based on a child's needs. This approach aids the development of necessary skills that are needed in daily life.

Deafness can hinder both the speech and language processing abilities of a child. As mentioned above, it can be difficult for a deaf child to learn all of the subtle verbal cues used in a language. This can make it difficult to speak properly. A common problem is that the child will only hear the middle syllables of a word, causing him to drop the beginning and ending of words when he speaks. As can be expected language interpretation is usually the core issue for the hearing-impaired. When one cannot hear well, it is important that he is able to notice and interpret visual clues along with any auditory signals he can perceive.

Attending a school that utilizes speech and language therapy is very beneficial for a deaf child. These schools can incorporate therapy into the curriculum, so that a child receives all of the help he needs without feeling isolated or having to attend separate courses outside school. Being in a class with others who experience similar difficulties can also be extremely beneficial to a child's self-esteem.

A school for deaf children will be well-equipped and ready to address any concerns parents may have about their child's progress. Institutions that regularly provide speech and language therapy will understand the need for a child to be taught from an early age. Younger, school-age, children will be better able to adapt and learn how to interact naturally with others, despite being hearing-impaired. A school with a good program and experienced therapists can be an important asset in determining a deaf child's progress and future quality of life.

A school for deaf children can provide life-changing speech and language therapy. A child who does not hear well is likely to have difficulties in daily interactions with family, friends and peers. Children should not have to experience these difficulties without the help and confidence provided by therapy. Speech and language therapy can provide the skills and experience a child needs to live a normal, healthy life.

InteGreat Theatre

Is proud to bring back...

Words, Signs & Vibes Youth Theatre

Come and join us... Open to all, no experience needed!

A drama group

for Deaf & hearing young people aged 13-18



Enjoy playing games?
Enjoy acting & meeting
new people?

Come along and try our drama
group, then maybe next
year we'll see you on
Britain's got Talent!



Fully qualified interpreters
are at every session

Every Saturday
(Term Time)

4pm - 6pm

Birmingham

Hippodrome

Hurst Street

Birmingham

B5 4TB

For more info contact 07515939606 or angela@integreattheatre.org.uk

www.integreattheatre.org.uk



Summer events for deaf children and adults in the West Midlands

A play scheme for deaf children aged 8-14 will be held in the summer holidays at the Deaf Cultural Centre in Ladywood Road, Birmingham, on the following dates: August 1-4 and 8-11. The cost is £20 per week. Full details on the poster below.

Birmingham & District Deaf Children's Society is holding an activity day on Saturday 16 July at South Aston Church Centre, Upper Sutton Street, Aston, Birmingham. contact Peter Bird, 108 Farren Rd, Northfield, Birmingham, B32 5HW, for details.

Other events coming up:

5 July: Gavin Bostock from "High Speed Two" talks about the proposed high-speed rail service between Birmingham and London; Norman Power Centre, Skipton Road, Birmingham, 1-3.00pm

12 July: Aston Hall tour at 2.00pm; cost £ 3.50 can be paid on the day

2 August: Ruth Beer talks about emergency 999 SMS texts; Norman Power Centre, Skipton road, Birmingham; 1-3.00pm

23 August: Birmingham Football Club tour at 2pm; cost £6.50 can be paid on the day



Birmingham Deaf Playscheme

sports
trips
drama
have fun

Are you 8 - 14 years old?

Mon 1 - Thurs 4 August
Mon 8 - Thurs 11 August, 2011

Contact Alison Leach for an information pack
Pre-booking is essential - deadline: Friday 1st July, 2011

Drop off 10am at the Deaf Cultural Centre,
pickup at 3pm.

make
new friends

Deaf Cultural Centre
Ladywood Road
Birmingham, B16 8SZ

Email: Alison.leach@bid.org.uk
tel: 0121 246 6300, freephone: 0121 246 6301, fax 0121 246 6125
mobile (MMS only): 07872403781.
BID Services, Deaf Cultural Centre, Ladywood Road, Birmingham, B16 8SZ.



Lady Gaga praised for learning sign language

The National Deaf Children's Society has praised singer Lady Gaga's intention to learn sign language to communicate with her deaf fans.

Lucy Read, head of children and youth participation at the National Deaf Children's Society, said: "We are delighted that Lady Gaga is making her music accessible to deaf young people by learning sign language."

"Many of her songs and messages tap into experiences that deaf young people share, such as bullying and feeling different to other children, but Lady Gaga channels these in a positive way."

"We know that the news will be very well received by deaf children and young people across the world."

Interested in learning sign language?
Take a look at the advertisement on the next page or visit NDCS's website
www.familysignlanguage.org.uk



How parents can find out more

There are over 45,000 deaf children in the UK. Four babies are born deaf every day and almost all deaf children (over 90 per cent) are born to hearing parents with no experience of deafness.

Parents with concerns about their child's hearing can contact the NDCS Freephone Helpline on 0808 800 8880 (voice and text) or email helpline@ndcs.org.uk

The Fonz is back for another spell as a top performer

Hands up all those who remember "The Fonz" from "Happy Days" way, way back in the 1970s? Not long ago actor Henry Winkler, aka The Fonz, appeared on BBC Radio 4 to chat with Midweek presenter Libby Purves about dyslexia - of which he is a serious sufferer.

Winkler said he hadn't read a novel until he reached his thirties due to "feeling intimidated by all those words inside the covers."

He is now the author of a 17 book series about Hank Zipzer, who he says is modelled on himself.

He said: "They're funny books that happen to be about a kid with learning challenges and it turns out that reluctant

readers read one, and then read five, because they identify."

He received an OBE earlier this year in recognition of his work on the My Way! campaign and he tells children: "Just because we learn differently, that does not mean that we are not incredibly smart human beings. That's something I need every child to understand."

Fast Show comedian Simon Day also appeared on the Libby Purves programme and talked about growing up with Attention Deficit Disorder and an addictive personality.

[From BBC disability blog 'Ouch': "The Fonz talks dyslexia on Radio 4"]

Giving - by text on your mobile!

The Vodafone Foundation has joined forces with Just Giving to kick start a new era of giving with the launch of "JustText-Giving" by Vodafone.

Charities and individuals can raise money using text messages with a service that is free to set up and run. Every penny donated goes to charity.



JustTextGiving by Vodafone enables charities to personalise their own unique 6-digit text code - called a VIC or Vodafone Individual Code - and receive donations of up to £10 by text message.

Registered charities and individual fundraisers can now set up their codes. Full details are available at www.justtextgiving.co.uk


[From Shropshire Infrastructure Partnership Newsletter 31 May 2011]

My Learning Pool

My Learning Pool is the online training resource for community and voluntary groups, small charities, social enterprises and all those individuals involved in civil society. It gives those who offer their time to their community access to cost effective training to grow their knowledge and therefore the impact they make. For more info see www.mylearningpool.com



Learn British Sign Language (BSL NVQ 3)



Do you want to:

- Develop your British Sign Language Skills
- Communicate with Deaf people?
- Explore new and exciting career opportunities?

Remark! Training's central Birmingham based BSL Level 3 course is designed for candidates who have completed their BSL Level 2 and are looking to develop signing skills and improve opportunities whether as a hobby or career.

A dedicated native BSL tutor will guide candidates through each of the **Language Development A Path to Building** phases. Candidates will have the opportunity to progress their signing abilities through a variety of different scenarios and contexts such as one-to-one conversations, group work, discussions, and role plays. Supporting each candidate through the course will be several focused one-to-one tutorials, designed to offer analysis, support and feedback.

The course will start on **Saturday 17th September** and **ending 13th September 2011**, and run for one weekend per month for seven months. The cost of the course is £1,800* (including assessment fees). Please contact Remark! Midlands to secure your place. *course costs can be paid in instalments

Candidates will need to attend an assessment day before being offered a place. Please contact us for further information.

If you require more information or have any questions please do not hesitate to contact us using the details below.

Remark! Midlands
43 Temple Row
Birmingham
B2 5LS

Call or Email us at
0121 230 1719
info@remarkuk.com
www.remarkuk.com

Barnardo's new service for disabled children

"Connect" is a new inclusion service run by Barnardo's in partnership with Shropshire Council – and it is looking for help. The service provides short-term support for children and young people with disabilities or additional needs to enable them to enjoy leisure and recreational activities.

Volunteers are needed who have some experience of supporting children and young people. They also need to have their own transport and be able to offer a regular (preferably weekly) commitment, mainly in the evenings or at weekends. The commitment would last until April 2012

To find out more please contact the project office for details of the next drop-in volunteering information session to be held at Barnardo's Shropshire Project, 1 Darwin Court, Oxon Business Park, Shrewsbury. Telephone 01743 248094 or email Shropshire.project@barnardos.org.uk. Attendance at a drop-in event does not commit you in any way.

That's not my name!

The learning disabled punk band, Heavy Load, released a single to mark Learning Disability Week. It's a cover of "That's Not My Name" by The Ting Tings. The lyrics have been modified (slightly!) to reflect the verbal abuse and name-calling that people with learning difficulties regularly face. Using their trademark challenging shoutyness, they belt out the chorus at top volume:

"They call me 'crip', they call me 'retard', they call me 'spaz', they call me 'special', that's not my name, that's not my name, that's not my name."

Want to help your community get online?

Apply for a BT Community Connections Award today...



“It's amazing. Once you're online nobody knows if you're deaf or hearing, it's a level playing field, especially when I'm challenging someone in China to an online chess game!”

Ridley 17, from Deaf Link in Scotland.

What is BT Community Connections?

BT Community Connections is an awards scheme which offers community groups the chance to get online and help people discover the wonders of the internet. If your group helps the community access the internet and improves people's ICT skills, you could be eligible to apply for a year's free broadband.

Who can apply?

The scheme supports a diverse range of community and charitable groups across the UK. Just log in to www.bt.com/communityconnections for more information and an application form.

www.bt.com/communityconnections



New service launched for adult social care info

A new service has been launched for people wanting to find out about adult social care in Shropshire. Now they are advised to phone a new number 0345-678-9044.

A team of specially trained advisers will answer these calls in Shropshire Council's Customer Service Centre and, as appropriate, will complete an assessment form with the customer over the phone.

The adviser will be able to establish if the customer may be eligible for social care support by asking specific questions including health, mobility and social issues. The benefits of this new process will include a quicker decision, greater accessibility (the Customer Service Centre opens extended working hours) and consistency of service for Shropshire.

Advisers are already taking applications for Blue Badges, concessionary travel, welfare benefits checks, etc, and they will be able to support customers by helping them access other services.

Part of the role of the advisers will be to "signpost" customers to external partners and organisations who may be able to offer support in other ways with advisers whenever feasible offering the customer information and other types of support if it appears than they will not qualify for social care support.

The team at Shropshire Council would welcome input from Voluntary Sector Assembly members, in particular any comments and suggestions about how the "Signposting" element could be further developed. Please contact Sarah Dodds at sarah.dodds@shropshire.gov.uk or telephone 01743 252740.

Charities on 'knife-edge' as surpluses drop 60%

The Charities Aid Foundation reports that charities' surpluses dropped by 60% between 2007 and 2009 during the recession, demonstrating that many charities are now operating "on a financial knife-edge with little room to breathe".

Analysis of charities' annual returns on CAF's recently launched website, Charity Trends, shows that registered charities in England and Wales had on average £24,507 of surplus in 2007, compared to £10,240 in 2009, which is the last year with complete data.

Overall these charities' total surplus dropped from £3.59 billion in 2007 to £1.45 billion in 2009. Adjusted for inflation, this total is even less than that recorded for 2002. CAF defines surplus as total income minus total expenditure.

Colin Walton, Head of Charities at the Charities Aid Foundation said: "Our analysis shows just how difficult the last few years have been for charities financially.

"The fall in surpluses makes things extremely difficult for charities as it means less to invest in their organisation and staff, less opportunities to expand their services and less to put aside into reserves.

"Charities have always had to work efficiently, but the situation over the last two to three years has meant more and more charities are working on a financial knife-edge."

www.charitytrends.org/InsightFull.aspx

[From UK Fundraising,

<http://www.fundraising.co.uk/news/2011/05/25/charity-surpluses-dropped-60-two-years-recession>]

Have you ever won Monopoly?



The poster for 'Monopoly The Musical' features a stylized illustration of Mr. Monopoly in a top hat and monocle, holding a cane. He is standing on a green Monopoly board. The background is a light green with stylized buildings. The text on the poster includes:

- InteGreat Theatre Performs
- MONOPOLY**
- The Musical*
- Friday 1st July 7.30pm
- Saturday 2nd July 2.30pm & 7.30pm
- The Patrick Centre Birmingham Hippodrome, Hurst Street, B5 4TB
- To book, call box office on 0844 338 5000 or online www.birminghamhippodrome.com
- For more info contact: 07333 26836 angela@integrateatre.org.uk www.integrateatre.org.uk
- InteGreat Theatre
- Birmingham Hippodrome

InteGreat Theatre (Formally Words, Signs & Vibes) is a community drama group for deaf and hearing people. They run an Adult group (18+) and a Youth Theatre (13-18years)

The adult group has created a play about the famous board game Monopoly, called - for obvious reasons - "The Boot, Iron, Dog & Top Hat" brought to life on stage right before your eyes, as the cast enter into a competition to win the game and not go bankrupt.

The stage will be covered by a massive floor cloth of the Monopoly board, and audience members will have the opportunity to walk on it after the performance, pacing out the streets they have played for in real life.

Performances are accessible to deaf and hearing audiences.

Performances are on: Friday 1 July at 7.30pm; Saturday 2 July at 2.30p and at 7.30pm

The venue is the Hippodrome Theatre (in The Patrick Centre), Hurst Street, Birmingham, B5 4TB

Tickets cost £10 and £8 (Concessions for students, under 16s and over 60s) To book tickets:

Online click the link

<http://www.birminghamhippodrometickets.com/tickets/search.aspx> (Go to venue and select 'Patrick Centre' then click 'Select Event' choose 'Monopoly The Musical' then 'Search')

Or call Box Office on 0844 338 5000

Monopoly, the game about trading property, there's only one winner in Monopoly! Not to be missed. Take a chance or go to jail..!

Cancer Research UK, the British Heart Foundation, Parkinson's UK and the Alzheimer's Society are accused of funding 'animal experiments' by Animal Aid

Animal Aid plans to place advertisements in national newspapers calling on the public to stop donating to four major medical research charities until they pledge to "end their funding of animal experiments".

The animal welfare organisation will ask the public to "withhold all financial support" from Cancer Research UK, the British Heart Foundation, Parkinson's UK and the Alzheimer's Society until they give such assurances.

The Victims of Charity report from Animal Aid alleges that "charity-funded" medical researchers have "deliberately damaged monkeys' brains with toxic chemicals, and slowly and systematically destroyed dogs' hearts".

It also claims that researchers have "tormented mice in water mazes", injected them with cancerous tissue, and used animals that had been subjected to special breeding programmes that left them "weakened, disease-prone and mentally deranged".

The report says the organisation's experts have assessed scientific reviews in specialist journals and concluded that animal-based research into cancer, dementia, heart disease and Parkinson's has been "a wasteful and futile quest."

The campaign will be backed by a series of national newspaper advertisements, as well as by campaign postcards that the public will be asked to fill in and send to the chief executives of the four organisations.

Andrew Tyler, director of Animal Aid, said: "The British public do not like the idea of animals enduring great suffering to no purpose – and Victims of Charity argues that this is precisely what is happening. Our high-profile campaign will put the charities under a great deal of pressure to rethink their research strategy."

A Cancer Research UK statement said research using

Public urged not to back four major charities

Animal rights group criticises research links



Logo of the Alzheimer's Society, one of four charities singled out by animal activists

animals was an "unavoidable part of our efforts to beat cancer. It's a legal requirement in this country that all new drugs (not just cancer drugs) are tested in animals before they're given to patients, to make sure that they're safe to use," it said. "In a perfect world, animal research wouldn't be necessary."

"But cancer kills over 400 people every day in the UK, and all our work is aimed at reducing this death toll."

Peter Hollins, chief executive of the British Heart Foundation, said many adults and children were only alive today thanks to "pioneering treatments" that wouldn't have succeeded without involving animals.

"It's not a decision taken lightly, but there is sometimes simply no alternative," he said.

"Funding applications go through a rigorous review and we always actively encourage the use of alternative research methods. If this type of research is absolutely necessary, we demand the highest standards of welfare and follow strict Home Office guidelines."

A Parkinson's UK statement said: "A small but vital part of our research involves the use of animals. This is rigorously controlled by UK legislation and closely monitored by Home Office inspectors."

It added that, as a member of the Association of Medical Research Charities, Parkinson's UK is committed to "reducing the number of animals used in experiments, replacing their use with alternative methods where possible and refining techniques to maximise welfare".

Jeremy Hughes, chief executive of the Alzheimer's Society, said funding research was an essential part of the charity's work. "The majority of our research programme does not involve animals, and where there is no alternative we use only maggots, fruit flies, mice and rats," he said.

"Our researchers are bound by animal welfare rules, which are the strictest in the world."

[from The Third Sector: www.thirdsector.co.uk/]

Theatre wants youngsters for summer show

Summer Spark! youth theatre project is looking for youngsters to join in a completely new piece of theatre. Run by professional drama practitioners, Summer Spark! caters for young people of all abilities and says they will discover acting, directing, and performing skills "you never knew you had." Week 1 (ages 8 - 13): 8th 12th August; Week 2 (ages 14 - 19): 15th 19th August. Performances at 6:30pm on Friday 12 and 19 August. The venue is The Bond, 180-182 Fazeley Street, Digbeth, Birmingham, and the cost is £70. Email: info@theatresparks.co.uk to learn more

DWP told to sharpen up the way it works

A new National Audit Office report finds that the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will have to make rapid progress in reorganising the way it operates if it is to meet its target of achieving sustainable running cost reductions of £2.7 billion while implementing substantial welfare reforms and a £17 billion reduction in benefits and pensions by 2014-15.

The Department has the largest annual expenditure of any central government department and so its cost reductions will be central to the Government's meeting its priority objective of reducing the budget deficit.

The report recognises that the DWP is only at the start of its new cost reduction challenge.

However, it says, without basing its running cost reduction plans more on robust information on the profile of its business costs and how that relates to the value of the services delivered, the Department is not in the position to make

rational choices about what it should stop doing, what it should change and what it should continue.

Recent cost reductions have been based largely on budget restrictions rather than on fundamental reform of working practices, the report continues.

Three months into the Spending Review and the Department does not yet have a detailed model of how it wants to run in the future.

Without such a model, senior managers are less likely to be able to prioritise the changes that are needed and to explain to staff what their role might be.

The existing plans specify the respective budgets available for 2011-12 but only the Jobcentre Plus plan specifies what structural changes are needed and the steps involved in achieving them up to 2014-15.

[From the Disability Alliance:
<http://www.disabilityalliance.org/naodwp2.htm>]

Community Council's wide range of help

Whether you need office space for your organisation, a venue for a seminar or a training session, or want to hire equipment for an outside event, the Community Council's Training and Resource Centre can offer a high-quality tailored solution to meet your needs.

A furnished, high specification office is available for use exclusively by voluntary and community organisations.

The training suite is a modern flexible, fully-equipped, light-filled and air-conditioned space, capable of accommodating up to 40 delegates, with modular furniture so the room can be set out to suit your event. A range of presentation aids are available to hire.

In addition to the training suite there is a meeting room suitable for up to 15 delegates plus two interview rooms suitable for up to four delegates. A range of equipment is available for loan.

Contact the CCS events manager on 01743 237871 for more information or see http://www.shropshire-rcc.org.uk/facilities_for_hire

[From Shropshire Infrastructure Partnership Newsletter 31 May 2011]

Why joining SDN is the best thing you'll do today!

Membership of Shropshire Disability Network is free and open to all disabled adults and parents of children with disabilities living or working in Shropshire – and to carers, family members, advocates, and disability organisations... pretty much everyone in fact.

By joining, you will not only enable us to represent your views to local and national government, and statutory bodies such as social services and the NHS, but you will be strengthening the voice of the disabled community in Shropshire.

Given the way things are going with Government cuts, that might be more important than you realise!

Benefits include the opportunity to meet new people, increase your support network, gain and share coping strategies, raise issues affecting you, and keep up-to-date with what's going on.

If you wish, you can become involved in sub-groups and join our campaigns to achieve improvements and make a difference.

You can also help us, and yourself, to reach our vision of respect and equal opportunity.

How to join

Simply download a membership form to print and complete and then post back to the address on the form.

Alternatively, email your details to membership@shropshire-disability.net.

Once your details have been processed, we will send you log-in details to access additional features on the website, such as writing comments and blogs.

Shropshire Disability Network values your feedback and welcomes any queries or suggestions you may have. You can email us at info@shropshire-disability.net

“ I’m 59 and was diagnosed with MND in March 2008. Then I was working hard at my job, and swimming four or five miles a week. When I used a computer, with two weak fingers in one hand, I thought it was a minor stroke, or cold weather. My doctor said it wasn’t, and advised me to see a neurologist.

Because of the slight symptoms, at our meeting when the neurologist told me that I had MND, I kept smiling, and thinking “I must be dreaming - wake up and go swimming, and then to work.” I was obviously in a state of shock. After a couple of days I faced up to reality and began planning to make the most of life.

With hindsight I’d probably had MND for at least two years before diagnosis, but I hadn’t thought the symptoms meant I was ill, e.g. needing help to fasten collar button on new shirt, slowing down at swimming a mile, and falling over on a few country walks. I thought I was just getting older.

Now I can’t walk, stand, lift my arms, eat, or speak. I’m totally dependent on others, but I still enjoy life. I have wonderful care and support from my wife Alison, family, friends, MNDA, and professionals; and it’s great to have MND patients and their families as friends, to share feelings and experience.

I also focus on three ideas:

- enjoy today, and don’t worry about tomorrow;
- don’t feel sorry for yourself, but for other people all over the world with problems such as: bad health, poverty, climate change, war, etc
- try to keep the sense of humour going (I learnt that at work!)

In 2010 we did lots of walks with an electric wheelchair, and went to theatres and cinemas. I went up Mount Snowdon on it, with Alison; in the train! My arms are too weak to drive it now, so I haven’t been outside for months.

I spend nearly all my time on the bed with my laptop, with which I keep in touch with family and friends, read books and newspapers, and play scrabble & other

MND takes us to the same final destination, but by different routes and speeds

Motor neurone Disease sufferer James Shaw talks about life and his illness and how he feels. This is a transcription of a recording played on BBC Radio Shropshire’s breakfast show some weeks ago. It was followed by an interview between presenter Eric Smith and specialist nurse Helen Harris, who knows that James is the rule rather than the exception when it comes to MND. She said she has a growing waiting list of patients.

James and Helen were helping to launch a project by the Omega charity, which is aiming to raise enough money to buy at least 10 Apple iPads for Shropshire MND sufferers. Helen explained how the computers are a Godsend for people who have lost almost all means to communicate [see page 10]

games. I can’t use a normal keyboard, but I control the cursor on the screen with head movements to use Grid 2 (onscreen keyboard and speaking machine), and I can just click on a mouse under my fingers.

I use a non-invasive ventilator to help me breathe. At first I only used it at night, with a facial mask, and slept much better. Now I use it all day, with a nasal mask when I’m awake, and feel brighter.

I also use a nebuliser; a Cough Assist Machine which pumps phlegm up to my mouth; and a suction machine which hoovers it out of my mouth. This is several times a day and helps me breathe. I drink red grape juice immediately before using the Cough Assist Machine, to loosen phlegm and bring it up more.

As eating became more difficult, I lost two and a half stone. Since I gave up eating altogether, I’ve put a lot of healthy weight back on! I had a PEG put in my stomach last year. I have nothing but Fortisips (high calorie drinks) and water through it three times a day, and eat nothing else. I measure my daily calories and follow my dietician’s advice.

MND takes us to the same final destination, but by different routes and speeds. We all seem to have different (but similar) symptoms at different times. Last year, I met a patient who could use his arms and legs better than me, but (unlike me then!) couldn’t talk. Advice from MNDA, carers, doctors, nurses and therapists, has been crucial, especially: “Get help too early, rather than too late” e.g. adapt home; ask for wheelchairs, and a hoist; and stop walking before I fall over and break a hip or damage my brain. If we don’t ask for it until the moment we need it, we’ll face disasters while we wait for it.

I’m so grateful for the love and support of Alison, and our three children (Fiona, Rosie, & William, who ran the Great North Run for MNDA in 2009), and their courage in facing up to the situation. ”
[James Shaw 12/05/2011]

Taking the strain on the train

Some disabled people have become so terrified of travelling that they are confined to their home, according to Alice Maynard, chair of leading disability charity Scope.

Alice, a wheelchair user, said commuters shout and swear at her and her personal assistant once or twice a week because they have to give up their seats.

She said: "I think it is increasing because of the pressures on people, the overcrowding on trains and the general economic climate. If I reminded myself about everything that has been said, I would shut myself inside."

She revealed that in one case, a commuting father with his daughter who appeared to be five years old, screamed at her: "Get the f*** out of here."

New data from Scope reveals that almost 50 per cent of

disabled people face discrimination on their way to and from work.

[<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2002437/Disabled-terrified-travel-public-transport-rising-abuse-commuters.html>]

Editorial comment in the network newsletter: "This article appeared in the Daily Mail, one of the tabloid newspapers whose hostile reporting on disability benefits has contributed to the apparent growing public animosity towards disabled people.

A particularly nasty example appears in the comment section on the Daily Mail website. Mr Mark B writes: "On trains and the tube I find disabled people a nuisance, they can't help being how they are but it does cause inconvenience on a crowded train or tube having someone in a wheelchair get on and causes delays to people with busy lives, they should get taxis or have carers buy their items or do online shopping and have everything delivered."

[Disability and Human Rights Network: <http://www.daa.org.uk/>]

News in brief

Investment return

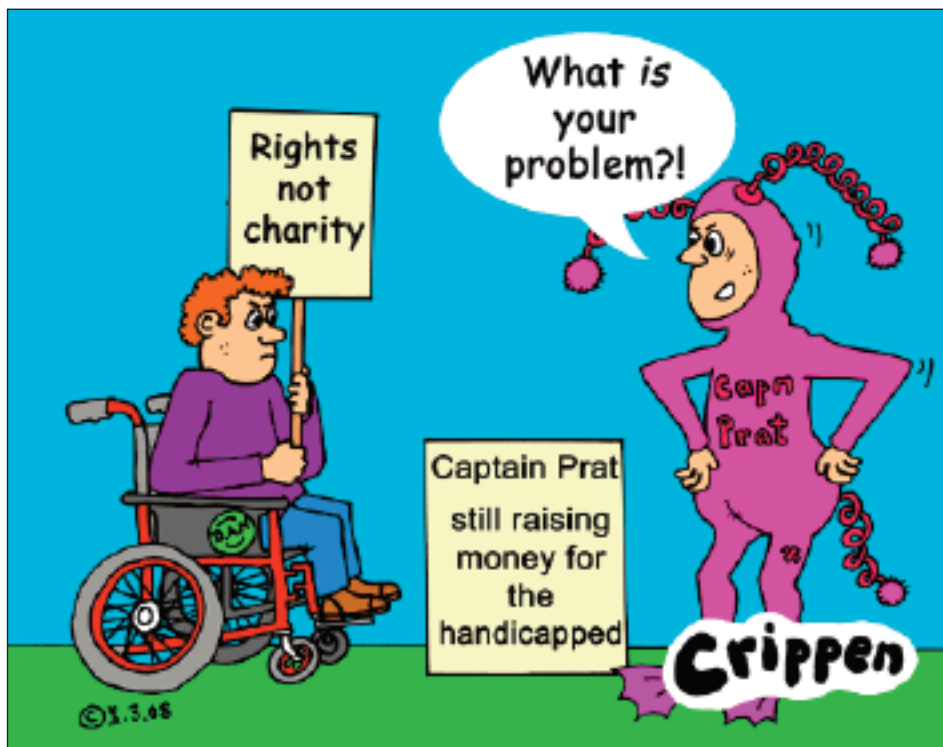
A Social Return on Investment (SROI) study has found that for every £1 invested in the charity Whizz-Kidz there are £10-£65 in wider benefits. The analysis considered the impact of Whizz-Kidz's wheelchair provision scheme on a child's family, their school, and the NHS. The study has been cited as an example of best practice by Health Secretary Andrew Lansley.

Social firms directory

A directory of products and services from social firms has been created on <http://www.justbuy.org.uk/> Social firms are social enterprises that predominantly employ staff who have a disability, sensory impairment, mental health problem or face some other serious disadvantage when it comes to getting a job. Just Buy aims to encourage business to business as well as direct to public sales. [VCS news]

Too many, too old, too costly!

The cost of caring for the elderly in the Western world could treble by 2050, according to a report by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The body represents the most industrialised nations.



It estimates that 10% of people in OECD countries will be more than 80 years old by 2050.

Community care success

Community-based care for people with complex learning disabilities and challenging behaviour saves money and vastly improves their quality of life compared with institutional care, according to Community Care. It says research following former residents of Orchard Hill hospital in Sutton, London, found their quality of life score rose from 106 to 207 over 18 months after moving to community-based settings.

Shropshire Disability Network seeks to provide a forum for all points of view on, and to provide information about, matters affecting people with disability, their families and carers. The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those held by SDN or anyone connected with it. If you have a problem with any of the content of this newsletter, please contact the editor on newsletter@shropshire-disability.net

What's going on ...

a page of events in and around Shropshire of interest to people with disabilities and their families

July 02: Midnight Walk in Shrewsbury, for Severn Hospice starting from Sundorne Sports Village

July 03: Hope House Hospice "It's A Knockout" based on the TV show of the 70s. Telford Town Park. Call 01691 671671 or visit the Hope House website www.hopehouse.org.uk

July 07: Diabetes Awareness, organised by the Preventative Services Team at the Community Council, to be held at Cleobury Mortimer from 10.00-2.00. Call 01743 342161 or 342162 for details. These events are aimed at helping people stay independent. They are free and transport can be arranged for you. A similar event will be held in Shifnal on July 26.

July 13: Two for carers - Pamper day from 9.30-12.30 at Haybridge Hall, Hadley. Booking essential, phone 01952 240209; a Carers' Walk, 10:30 start, meet outside Spar Shop, Shawbirch. Carers Contact <http://www.carerscontact.org.uk/diary.html>

July 15: The Community Council of Shropshire presents "The 3 Ws!" - Wound Up! Worried! At your Wits end! This is a positive half-day workshop on creative strategies to help carers manage the 3 Ws. It will be held in Shrewsbury on Friday 15 July from 10.00-1.00. The workshop will be repeated in Oswestry on Monday 19 September from 10.00-1.00. Book by calling Glenda on 01743 341995

July 16: Last Night of the Proms, presented by Ironbridge Gorge Brass Band in aid of Severn Hospice, from 7.30-10.00 at the Museum of Iron in Coalbrookdale. It will be hosted by Jim Hawkins of BBC Shropshire. Call 01743 231658, email tim.bennett@btconnect.com

July 20: ALD Carers Group, Castle View, Arthur Street, Oswestry, from 10.30-noon. Contact Jackie Taylor or Tanya Miles 01743 254080, or Julie Apted on 01743 851074

July 21: Allcare Care Agency Fund-raising event for Shropshire Disability Network. See full details in this newsletter.

July 23: The Boat House Charity Day with Bad Hair Day in aid of Scope. This is the pub's fifth annual charity day. The band will be performing from 5.00. Call 01743 231658 or email tim.bennett@btconnect.com

July 23: Cancer Research UK's 10km Race for Life will be held at Western Park, near Shifnal. Call 01952 852100

July 23: "Setting and Keeping Boundaries" is an Adfam event. If you support someone who is using drugs or alcohol to excess, Adfam workshops can help. This event in Shrewsbury is being hosted by the Community Council of Shropshire. It is free, lunch is included and help with transport can be arranged. For more information and/or to book a place call Glenda on 01743 341995.

July 26: Diabetes Awareness – see July 07 entry.

Stage-text for Theatre Severn mystery

Agatha Christie's "The Verdict" at Theatre Severn in Shrewsbury on July 9 will include stage-text captions for deaf and hard of hearing people. The curtain goes up at 2.30pm.

It has been arranged by Shrewsbury Hard of Hearing Club, which says: You must visit the theatre box office to register as a disabled person. Once registered, you and a companion are entitled to a discount and you can subsequently book by phone or website. You must take your brown hearing aid record book or the Hearing Impaired registration card issued by Community Services. Make sure your seat has a good view of the caption screen! Tickets are £11.00 for the hearing impaired person and one companion (full price is £22). "Please try to support this performance – a full house will encourage the theatre to put on more captioned shows for us," the club urges.

It's a wheely good guide!

"The Wheelchair User's Guide to Accessible Activities in and around Shropshire" is a great publication listing all the sports you can think of plus a few more, and a list of venues and clubs (with contact details).

You can access it though the SDN website or use this link - <http://www.disabledholidayinfo.org.uk/documents/activities2ndedition.pdf>

Family Allsorts in South Shropshire

There is a lot going on in South Shropshire for families with disabled children. Below is just a sample of what July has to offer. For the full calendar go to <http://www.bridgnorthbuddies.co.uk/> As well as the fun there are important dates in the diary as well, including:

Session with Autism West Midlands. Appointment-only sessions at various venues round the county to enable families of children of junior and secondary school age seeking autism advice. Shrewsbury - Monday 4 July (morning), Bridgnorth - Friday 15 July (morning), Oswestry - Wed 20 July (afternoon). Contact Hilary McGlynn to book an appointment. Tel 07971 261 334, Email mcglynn.h@shropshirelg.net

Local Parents Meeting. Monday 4 July from 10.00-12.00, at Old Park Primary School Centre, Telford. This is for parents who would like to find out more about how Special Educational Needs (SEN) works and provides an opportunity to meet other parents. Meetings are held on the first Monday of every month (term time only). For more information contact Alex Hiam on 01952 458018, Email: alex@pps-shropshireandtelford.org.uk

And here's a sample of some of the fun ...

Friday 01 July: 4.00-5.00pm - Fun & Games Session at London Road Sports Centre (SY2 6PR) in Shrewsbury - with M&G 'Moving and Grooving' Support Team, providing personal care, time out and support activities for young people aged between 8 and 19.

Saturday 02 July:

10.00-11.00am - Cycling Club, Shrewsbury Sports Village, Sundorne Road, Shrewsbury, SY1 4RQ. Adapted bikes and hoist available, siblings and parents/carers welcome. Please note that due to changing weather conditions the cycling maybe moved indoors or cancelled. For more info or to book call 01743 281550

Saturday Club, 11.00-12.30pm, Shrewsbury Sports Village (details above)

Sunday 03 July:

1.00-3.00pm, Pony Vaulting Taster Sessions, Perry Riding & Carriage Driving Centre, Perry Cottage, Yeaton, Baschurch, SY4 2HY. Sessions are run in 6 week blocks. For more information or to book contact Jane Barker on 01939 261147

Health & Fitness Sessions, 3.00-4.00pm, Shrewsbury Sports Village – gym-based sessions using the brand new gym facilities. For 14-19 year olds.

Go to go to <http://www.bridgnorthbuddies.co.uk/> for full details of what else is happening - there's plenty!

Alcohol and drugs workshop

"Coping with Conflict" – a workshop for families affected by drug and alcohol use - will be held in Shrewsbury on 8 July. It aims to enable those coping with drug and alcohol-related family conflict to both understand their conflicts and have new ideas about how they can cope better. It will outline the ways people deal with conflict, recognise how conflict is created, identify ways to influence conflict, and recognise the impact of anger and how to cope better with it. The venue will be the Community Council, Shrewsbury Business Park, SY2 6LG. For further details or to book your place call Glenda 01743 341995.