

yourvoice

OCTOBER 2011

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This issue is coming out early to make sure as many people as possible know about the Hardest Hit debate at Shirehall on 10 October

BE THERE, BE HEARD!

Shropshire Disability Network has booked the Council Chamber at Shirehall on Monday 10 October to discuss anything and everything to do with disability. This is an event for everyone, whether an SDN member or not, where they can share views about current issues. That means people with disabilities, their families or carers.

Speak your mind so that SDN can help to shape and influence services for your benefit. The Council Chamber is all ours from 1.30 - 4.30pm. Be there!

People with disabilities are in the front line of spending cuts, with some of the media apparently doing their best to make them feel guilty for being disabled. Changes in the law are having a real impact on people with disabilities, their carers and families.

What can be done? Should anything be done? What do you think? **SEE PAGE 4**



Keeping his eye on the ball is Eddie, a member of a group that has formed after the closure of The Grange in Shrewsbury. Thanks to the Community Council of Shropshire, members can meet twice a week in attractive surroundings. ☐ The full story is on page 5.



**Shropshire
Disability
Network**

Your Voice, Your Connections

www.shropshire-disability.net

Why not join us and add your voice?

Just think how cool your car will look with one of these new SDN window stickers attached! And what a difference it will make to the performance!! Just give Trevor Dickenson a call on 01952 261146 and he'll send you one, or even several!



In view at the AGM



Members hear of eventful year



Above and top left: views of the crowded hall at Merside Centre in Shrewsbury, the venue for the AGM



Margaret Rhodes of Anchorage Care (left) and her colleague Alison had a stand at the AGM. Margaret spoke to the meeting about the work of the Anchorage Care Agency.

The guest speaker at the annual meeting was Lindsay Herd of the British Red Cross (above), who spoke about the importance of everyday first aid, and suggested many common sense ways of helping injury victims even in the absence of a first aid box

Above: Following the recent very successful fashion evening with cheese and wine organised for SDN by AllcareShropshire Limited, the AGM was the perfect opportunity to present the cheque for the proceeds.

From left to right are Wendy Beesley, Allcare Care Manager, and carer Samantha Beesley, handing over an amazing £712 to SDN patron Emma Suddaby, Ruby Hartshorn and Trevor Dickenson. Ruby said the evening had also been beneficial as an opportunity to explain the work of SDN and even recruit new members. She said SDN was very grateful for Allcare's continuing support.



Right: SDN's new chair, Sonia Roberts, and secretary Dave Hewetson listen to the officers' reports

Left: The best part of any meeting ...



SDN clears first hurdle in bid for bank grant

Shropshire Disability Network has been successful in the first stage of its application for a NatWest CommunityForce funding award of £6000.

In a letter to Ruby Hartshorn, who is leading the SDN case for funding, the CommunityForce Team says: "Congratulations, your project has been approved for CommunityForce 2011. The next step is to make your profile as exciting as possible by adding more details to your project."

You can read our successful initial application at <http://communityforce.natwest.com/project/5833>

Ruby says there is plenty of competition from other really worthwhile applications, but getting through the first stage is a big step in the right direction for SDN.

"The next step is to get people to support our application when public voting opens on 26 September," she says. "We really need everyone who reads this to vote for us on or soon after 26 September."

"We not only hope to win an award of £6,000 but also to benefit from the other aspects of the NatWest scheme - a platform to raise awareness of our work and access to the bank's time and expertise." The scheme also includes opportunities for people to volunteer to help local projects.

Please vote for us. Here's how to do it:

1. Enter this address into your web browser: www.natwestcommunityforce.com
Click on the top item, which will bring you to the home page of Natwest CommunityForce.
You will need to register with basic details (your email address, a password and answers to a few simple tick-box questions). Once you receive an email saying your registration has been accepted you can then place up to three votes, one of which we hope will be for Shropshire Disability Network.
2. How to find us to vote: Click on the 'Projects' tab. To the left of the map is a list. In 'Search' at the top of the list enter this postcode: SY3 6BN. Then click on Elderly & Disabled. This narrows your search down as much as possible and it is now easy to find our application. We are there! Cast your vote please. Your vote will be acknowledged so you'll know it's successful.
3. If you are unable to access the site to vote, contact CommunityForce helpline on 0800 2100 246. Customers with hearing and speech impairments can use Minicom number 0800 0155 545.
4. Each person can vote up to three times, in any area. You can only vote once for each cause and that includes our own.

iPad appeal passes halfway

The appeal to buy an iPad for every victim of Motor Neurone Disease in Shropshire is going well. Shrewsbury-based charity Omega, which is running the appeal, has been able to buy five so far.

"Thanks to all of you who have already donated money to the appeal, or agreed to help in other ways," said Tom Memery of Omega. "We supply each iPad with Proloquo2Go, software designed to synthesise speech for people with difficulty talking."

"We're now more than half way to our goal of supplying 10 iPads to MND sufferers. You can help us reach our target by visiting www.omega.uk.net, and clicking 'Donate'; you can also monitor our progress on the site."

Anyone who would like to help can contact Tom on 0845 259 3163 (local rate), or email thomas@omega.uk.net. [from Omega Network Bulletin September 2011]

❑ **Research breakthrough? See page 9**



The latest recruit to the fund-raising ranks is Leena Cowell (pictured, sort of), who works at the Meadows GP Surgery in Clun. She is

taking part in the gruelling 50 mile Long Mynd Hike on 1 and 2 October with all the money she raises being used to buy iPads. The Omega social fund-raising team is continuing to grow. The charity has recruited a number of talented fund-raising volunteers.

Benefits could be cut for the terminally ill

Thousands of terminally ill people have begun receiving letters warning them their benefits could be cut in April even though Parliament has yet to approve the move.

Under proposals being scrutinised in the Lords, Contributory Employment Support Allowance (CESA) will be time-limited to 12 months from April 2012.

The changes will be retrospective, so people on CESA for 12 months or more when the rule comes into force will have their benefit cut immediately.

Neil Coyle, of the Disability Alliance, said that while it is uncertain whether the rule will be passed, it is premature for the Department for Work and Pensions to warn recipients of the changes. The letters are now being sent at a cost

of £2.7m, including letters to people who unaffected by the change but who will experience considerable anxiety," he said.

"The Government has time to change plans before terminally ill people and their families have this avoidable and quite nasty cut imposed."

The Department of Work and Pensions admits it is conceivable the legislation may not be approved but says it is better to warn people early.

"It would be completely wrong not to alert people well in advance that there is a possibility that their benefit entitlement may change," a spokesman said.

Terminally ill people with less than six months to live will not be affected by the changes. [from BBC News]

Hardest Hit Debate

LAST OPPORTUNITY TO REGISTER YOUR INTEREST

When: Monday 10 October 1.30 – 4.30pm

Where: Council Chamber, Shirehall, Shrewsbury

People with disabilities are in the front line of spending cuts and changes in the law are having a real impact on the disabled, their families and their carers.

Now is your last chance to tell us what should be on the table for discussion on 10 October. If you want to speak personally about something, we would love to hear from you too! First of all, register your interest. Email us at info@shropshire-disability.net to reserve your place Or post to the address below as soon as possible.

Tell us whether you are just interested in attending, or if you have a particular issue you want us to discuss, or if you are willing to tell a short story about something that has affected you that you want to try and change so that others do not have to go through a similar experience.

PLEASE DON'T LET THIS OPPORTUNITY PASS YOU BY

email to: info@shropshire-disability.net or post to SDN, C/O 26 Aldwick Drive, Radbrook Green, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY3 6BN

Powerchair football hits county



A new powerchair disability football club has been set up in Shropshire. The news comes just over a month after it was revealed that £250,000 is being put into the game.

The sport, played in a gym, began in France in the 1970s and has spread across Europe and America.

In partnership with AFC Telford United, Shropshire Football Association, Telford College of Arts and Technology and Telford and Wrekin Council, the club will be taking on the colours of AFC Telford. Anyone registered disabled can take part and have the chance to join in regional and national leagues.

Chairman Neil Nash said: "This is a really exciting time for us and we hope to go from strength to strength as a result of our new partnership with Telford.

"We are on the lookout for new players and have built the club on a strong policy of inclusiveness which means that everyone, regardless of ability, age or gender is made to feel welcome."

Sessions are held every Friday from 6-8pm. The cost is £3. – CHRIS MOORCROFT



At right are the group members: Front row, from left, Chris, Scott, Chris, Anne, Andy, Nigel Back row, Eddie, Michelle, Kevin, Stan, Chris, Alli



Fish and chips for lunch in memory of Musketeer Neil Humphreys, who died recently, and who "really loved his chips." Then just time for a group picture before getting down to the serious business of Boccia.



After The Grange

Shropshire's disability community suffered a severe blow when The Grange centre in Shrewsbury closed a few months ago. As the closure approached, Shropshire Council enlisted the help of the Community Council of Shropshire's Preventative Services team to support the group in finding a way to continue to meet. After a lot of determination and hard work by the team a group of former Grange regulars are now meeting weekly in new surroundings.



The Grange Centre and (below) the Trinity Centre



Members of the "Musketeers and Maidens" gather twice a week at present at the Trinity Centre, which is adjacent to Holy Trinity Church in Meole Brace. Although there is less space than there was at The Grange, they have plenty of room for Boccia balls, quizzes, games, lunch and lots of cups of tea.

On the day these pictures were taken the members had decided to order and collect fish and chips for lunch in memory of a member, Neil Humphreys, who had recently died, and who "really loved his chips."

Alli Richardson, of the Preventative Services Team at the Community Council of Shropshire, said team manager Daphne Simmons was keen to support this group who still wished to meet, socialise and enjoy lots of activities together.

"This has been achieved by offering advice and guidance on how to set up as a new and independent group," she explained. "My role at present, along with Daphne, is to help facilitate and co-ordinate these meetings, whilst they adapt to being a new group."

"We currently meet at the Trinity Centre on Wednesdays from 10.30am to 3.30pm and on Fridays from 12.30pm to 3.30pm."

"They decided to call their new group The Musketeers and The Maidens, with the motto 'All For One.' On Wednesdays the group enjoys Extend exercise in the morning and an art session in the afternoon. On Fridays the group play Boccia balls, which is then normally followed by a quiz. But on both days there are numerous cups of tea, chatting and lots of laughter!"

Alli said Boccia balls is "really fantastic fun and anyone with or without a disability is able to join in and play. We are able to demonstrate and then supply the Boccia Ball sets at cost price to groups. The Musketeers would love to have another group locally to play against, so if anyone reading this is interested please contact the Preventative Services team at the Community Council of Shropshire on 01743 342161"

She said they were very grateful for all the help and support the Trinity Centre staff had given them.

Now here's a site to behold!

Website helps
disabled beat
forms and
bureaucracy

There are some nice people out there at a website called <http://www.benefitsandwork.co.uk/>. But don't take our word for it. The website is highly recommended by (and for) people with disabilities. Here are just a few of the comments we've seen:

- "These folks are a fabulous resource for disability benefits. There is a membership fee, but seems to be worth its weight in gold."
- "They give detailed information on how to fill in application forms and also how to prepare for a medical."
- "Share the news about it."
- "This site and everything it provides is close to being priceless. If I hadn't found this site by chance 18 months ago and made the decision to join ... I would never have been as successful with my claims as I have. B&W is quite literally a life saver - thank you so very much."
- "I just want to say a BIG THANK YOU to this site. I recently received the ESA50 form to complete. I was being transferred from Incapacity to ESA. Following the forums on the MS Society, I clearly saw the problems and difficulties everyone was facing. So I was dreading the form coming through the letterbox. In the meantime I decided to subscribe to this site and start swatting up in preparation. The form came and we sent it off within two weeks. I received a brown envelope in the post ... I felt sick when I was opening it. And to my surprise I've been put into the Support group, without a medical! I couldn't believe it! I very much doubt this would have happened if I hadn't subscribed to this site! Once again THANK YOU, the work you are doing is FANTASTIC!"

SDN isn't endorsing it, just pointing out that lots of other people are. So, why not take a closer look? If you haven't got a computer, ask a friend to go online and find the site, or go to your local library. Staff there will happily find it for you.

<http://www.benefitsandwork.co.uk/>

Benefits and Work Publishing Ltd, PO Box 4352, Warminster, Wilts BA12 2AF

Medicals - who gets called in?

Benefits at Work also have a few thoughts of their own they would like to share. This is from a recent newsletter they put out:

"We've had quite a few forum posts and emails from people who have made the move from IB to ESA without having a medical.

And the message that we're getting is that most people believe that it's sending in a very detailed IB50 questionnaire, with supporting evidence where available, that is making the difference between being called for a medical or not.

However, even this issue isn't all positive. We're also hearing from a lot of people who are being transferred from IB to ESA without a medical but are being placed in the work-related activity group (WRAG) when they believe they should be in the support group.

The lack of information about why they were placed in the WRAG is a cause of considerable anger, as is the suspicion that they are being put in the WRAG because for many this will mean their contribution-based ESA will end altogether in 2012 if the Welfare Reform Bill goes through unaltered.

They are now left with the dilemma of whether to appeal, and potentially risk the loss of their exiting award, or not.

"We've created a whole section of forum feedback on IB to ESA transfers at the end of this newsletter.

Contribution-based ESA cuts

... if you are currently receiving contribution-based ESA then you should soon be receiving a letter from the DWP warning you of plans to introduce a 12 month time limit on awards, beginning retrospectively from April 2012.

This change does not apply to claimants in the support group. The letters are being sent out over a period of a month from 19 September in spite of the fact that the Welfare Reform Bill, which brings in the new rules, is still being debated and is not yet law...

Call for evidence on support group appeals

... we'd very much like to hear from people who have appealed against a decision to place them in the work-related activity group of ESA because they believed they should be in the support group. We want to get some idea of how long the process is taking, whether you were sent another ESA50 to complete and, if you have already had a result, whether you were successful and also – if you're comfortable telling us – whether your claim was based on mental or physical health issues or both. Please drop us an email at info@benefitsandwork.co.uk or post in the forum if you think you can help."



Still out in the cold

Back in March, on the eve of the second reading of the Government's controversial Welfare Reform Bill, this stark image of disabled campaigner Kaliya Franklin aimed to convey how vulnerable some of the Bill's proposals will leave sick and disabled people. Six months later, with the Welfare Reform Bill having just had its second reading in the Lords, it is an appropriate time to revisit the image

The Left Out in the Cold Campaign is the work of Broken of Britain who decided to use this one thought provoking image to make their point. The sick and disabled are often left voiceless in society, and they hope that the use of a single picture might reflect this.

A press release accompanying the image quoted Franklin: "It's vital we all remember we are just an accident or illness away from becoming disabled. Many people think if they do become disabled that the state will look after them.

"But the fact is that even under current provisions, disability benefits are not enough for disabled people to live on. If the Welfare Reform Bill is passed, the situation will become unimaginably worse."

In January, Franklin released a video on YouTube that

explained how the able-bodied would be in for a major shock if they found themselves needing to apply for disability benefits. The video can be seen at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q7EXSpmrVMU>.

The Broken of Britain group has been campaigning since summer 2010 to raise awareness of the Government's wider anti-disability policies. The group has consistently drawn attention to disabled people being the target of unjust Government rhetoric and sham consultations, tabloid slander and political myths.

It says: "We are now the targets of deep and damaging cuts to disability services that are contained in and symbolised by the Welfare Reform Bill. The Bill disguises cuts and changes to a number of benefits, from housing benefit to Income Support that will punish disabled people."

Dirty Tricks

Meanwhile, the Government's Department of Dirty Tricks has been encouraging full and fair debate in the House of Lords by moving the debate from the main chamber into a small committee room where far fewer members could take part. This is in spite of many last minute protests by charities.

Hunt is on to reach the hidden carers

One of the biggest challenges confronting any organisation working with unpaid family care-givers is to identify them in the first place. Carers lead busy lives and do not always give themselves a neat label.

According to Shrewsbury-based Charity Omega, the National Association for End of Life Care, carers who are in employment are a particularly difficult group to reach.

Omega is asking for help to reach more care-givers who are working and find it difficult to attend meetings.

Whilst many carers have the right to request flexible working arrangements (see Directgov.uk) it knows that

some employees with caring responsibilities are sometimes reluctant to approach their employer.

"We have been able to intervene successfully in the past and would be willing to support carers who feel isolated," an Omega spokesman said.

"We are also looking into different ways of communicating with carers, to improve the flow of information to those in need."

For more information about Omega visit www.omega.uk.net or call Tom Memery on 0845 259 3163 (local rate), or email thomas@omega.uk.net.
[from Omega Network Bulletin September 2011]

How others do it...

Generally speaking, carers don't seem to get cared for enough - but just up the road from Shropshire, in Dudley, they do things differently. At least, that's judging by the latest edition of Dudley Carers Newsletter (newsletters@dudley.gov.uk)

Being a Dudley Carer is being part of a community, and they not only do a lot of work but also have a lot of fun.

For instance ... during October, Age UK Dudley and Dudley Council are co-ordinating a month of Full of Life celebrations for older people. Dudley Carers Network and the Dudley Carers' Writing Group are taking part by inviting carers to a 'show and tell' with older carers asked to bring an item from their childhood.

And the Council is holding a series of half-day training sessions for all

carers, paid and unpaid, to help prevent vulnerable people of any age from becoming victims of doorstep crime and scams.

Meanwhile, a programme called Carer Aware aims to raise awareness about carers, their role and rights as well as support available for them. It is for carers, council staff and anyone else interested.

Support for Carers

Carer contacts

The Telford area Carers' Support Group meets every third Wednesday of the month at 10.30am in Room 8 at Leegomery Community Centre. For more information call Lara 01952 240209 of the Telford and Wrekin Council for Voluntary Service (the umbrella body for the voluntary and community sector.)

Community Council of Shropshire

Carers' Support Service information and newsletter is available by phoning 01743 341995 or email carersupport@shropshire-rcc.org.uk

Care exercise

On 15 September, the Government launched Caring for our Future: shared ambitions for care and support – an engagement exercise with people who use care and support services, carers, local councils, care providers and the voluntary sector about the priorities for improving care and support.

The discussion will inform a Government White Paper on social care reform and a progress report on funding reform to be published in spring 2012. For further information, go to: www.caringforourfuture.dh.gov.uk
[From Health Information News September 2011]

Charities make £2m from waste recycling

Recycling may be more profitable than many charities realise. The Recycling Factory says that at least 30 million ink cartridges and 90 million mobile phones are dumped in the UK each year. The company, which remanufactures over 700,000 inkjet and toner cartridges each month at its site in Lincolnshire, has raised almost £2 million for its charity partners. The latest beneficiary of waste is the NSPCC, which reached its 2011 fundraising target of £75,000 ahead of schedule www.therecyclingfactory.com [from fundraising.co.uk/news]

Government cuts will force disabled further into poverty

Proposed Government cuts mean disabled people will not have enough money for everyday essentials like food and transport, according to new evidence revealed by the Papworth Trust.

In a statement the Trust, which is a leading disability support charity, points out that Disability Living Allowance (DLA) was introduced by the Conservatives in 1992 to help disabled people cope with the extra costs they face daily, such as paying for someone to help cook a hot meal if the person can't prepare it on their own.

But now the same party plans to replace DLA with a new benefit called Personal Independence Payment (PIP). It is reassessing everyone who receives DLA and simultaneously planning to reduce the total amount spent on this benefit by 20%.

Based on a sample of over 2,200 people from across Britain, a Papworth Trust survey shows that if payments were reduced or stopped under PIP, 86% of disabled people will have to cut back on essentials such as food or being able to get out and about.

Papworth Trust Chief Executive, Adrian Bagg, says: "Disabled people's daily costs are typically 25% higher than those of non-disabled people. For example, not all public

86% of disabled people will have to cut back on essentials such as food or being able to get out - survey

transport is accessible. This means that some people have to use accessible taxis to be able to leave their home, which cost significantly more than non-accessible taxis.

"We know that all parts of society are facing cuts. Our survey shows that for 5% of disabled people these cuts would have little or no effect, but given the Government is seeking a 20% reduction, this will mean real-terms cuts that further disadvantage many disabled people.

"The people who participated in this survey have many concerns about the proposed changes, but they are particularly anxious that the new PIP Assessment will be unfair. We urge the Government to learn the lessons of the Work Capability Assessment and ensure that if they make this change, the assessment will be fair and the implications clearly explained."

A summary of the survey results can be found at: [Papworth Trust DLA survey results - summary](#)

If you have any questions or comments about the survey, please contact Helen Sampson at Papworth Trust, on 07528 361511 or by email at Helen.Sampson@papworth.org.uk. The Papworth Trust website is www.papworth.org.uk/ [from SMEG newsletter Sept 2011]

Worldwide MND team finds 'rogue gene' in new studies

An international team, co-funded by the Motor Neurone Disease Association, has identified a gene that appears to cause nearly 40% of cases of the inherited form of MND. The discovery could lead to tests for families with a history of MND.

The investigators studied Finnish patients and a family from Wales who have lost relatives to early onset MND. Although this gene was first identified in these samples, further research has shown that it also occurs in inherited MND patients from North America, Germany and Italy and appears to account for the disease in 38% of patients.

Dr Brian Dickie, Director of Research Development, at the Motor Neurone Disease Association, said: "The discovery of this rogue gene has the potential to significantly advance our understanding of MND." If you are affected by MND and have questions about this news, contact MND Connect on 08457 626262.

Tireless servant of people with disability in Shropshire

Geoff Forgie was a well known and much loved champion of the right of people with disability in Shropshire to enjoy the best quality of life that was available to them. Since he arrived in 2003 with his family to live in Maesbrook, he worked tirelessly and heroically to improve other people's lives. Shrugging off the debilitating effects of his progressive MS, and latterly of cancer, he deployed his persuasive charm and endless invention, to achieve changes that would benefit thousands of people in Shropshire.

As a member, then chairman, of Oswestry Access Group, he earned the cooperation of shopkeepers throughout the town in improving wheelchair access. But he will be best remembered in Shropshire for his achievement in founding and developing Shropshire Disability Network (SDN). He discovered there were over 150 organisations in Shropshire alone with an interest in disability, each with its niche view of the facilities and activities that were available to people with disability.

He set out to establish a network which would link together all individuals in Shropshire with disability, and their family and carers, and which would provide a window to all the available activities and facilities which could improve their quality of life. With the help of volunteers who were inspired by Geoff's vision, he achieved this by 2010.

The SDN website www.shropshire-disability.net is now established as a reference site for full and up to the minute information on all areas of life that affect people with disability, and is much admired well beyond Shropshire boundaries, both by the public and local government.

After all the tributes last month to SDN founder Geoff Forgie, this brief biography gives a glimpse into the dynamic life that Geoff led



His secondary aim was to facilitate social interaction between people in the disability sector through meetings and social events. Quarterly SDN General meetings are now a well-established part of the Shropshire scene, and he had outlined a programme of social events that would build on the social support network part of his aim through 2012 and beyond.

Geoffrey David Forgie was born on 2nd July, 1940 in Brantford, Ontario, Canada. His father, Hugh Crichton Forgie, a Canadian professional badminton champion, toured Europe with another professional player, putting on a stage show. While performing in the 1938 Royal Command Performance at the London Palladium, he met Geoff's mother, Gwendoline Janet Holmes, an English girl, who was a Palladium dancer. They married and moved back to Canada.

When Geoff was six months old the family moved to Mount Vernon in New York, because there were more theatre opportunities there. As a young boy, Geoff was very disciplined in his work, and achieved outstanding academic grades, particularly in Latin, German and English. He was talented at many sports including running, squash, badminton, football, and ice-skating, but his standout sport was swimming. At the age of 18, he used to captivate audiences on the New Jersey beach with his powerful butterfly stroke.

From the private Hotchkiss College Preparatory School, in Lakeville, Connecticut, Geoff won a swimming scholarship in 1959 to Yale University, where he also played American football. After Yale, he joined his father and partner with their badminton on ice show on their tour of

continued next page

Europe with Holiday on Ice. Geoff would appear in blazer and slacks as the commentator on the two players, who would perform their badminton feats wearing cowboy outfits, clown suits, or whatever fitted in with the show that they were part of. He also ice skated professionally with the Ice Show. He settled in England, and obtained a Diploma in Management Studies from London Polytechnic, then entered ICL as a Graduate Trainee.

Geoff spent many successful years with ICL. He installed the first computer in Harrods, and worked in Sales, where his natural charm enabled him to be a sales achiever for many years, and a regular attendee at ICL's top achiever club – Atlas. He then set up his own business specialising in helping young people find and finance their first home. He returned to the computer industry in 1980, and resumed his successful career in sales. Geoff was a Member of the British Institute of Management.

First signs of MS

In 1987, Geoff started experiencing discomfort in his upper right leg. After eight months of tests, he was diagnosed with MS. This forced some adjustments to his working life. He took all his knowledge in Sales, and deployed that to good use in Marketing, where he organised a number of highly successful marketing events for ICL, which later became part of the Fujitsu Group. Outside of work, from the early days of his life with MS, Geoff determined to continue playing a positive role in the community. He became actively involved in charity work, and organised and took part in many fundraising events for MS research. He spearheaded a fundraising campaign, which raised over £1 million to establish a support centre for MS sufferers. He struggled to walk with the help of a tripod until the past five years, when he has taken himself around in a powered wheelchair.

His outlook has always been positive, and his zest for life unquenchable. His motto throughout his life with MS was ... "There is life after MS, and many other life changing conditions. Go for it step by step and live every second – you'll be amazed!" His close family would describe him as the consummate party animal. With his wife Sue and daughter Jessica he travelled abroad extensively, and wherever he went, he was usually the "last man sitting" (in his own words) in the bar each night, as he delighted in the company of new friends, who must have all felt better, as everyone did, for spending some time in his company.

Travelling brought its own challenges. Once, at the airport in Goa, after settling into their seats for a return flight to the UK, Geoff's wheelchair was spotted being loaded onto another plane. Geoff's wife Sue disembarked, and stood on the tarmac till the wheelchair was re-located to their plane! When, in 2009, his oncologist gave him 12 more months to live, Geoff thought about what he would like to do in the time left to him. And what he came up with was.... Have a big party! And so, in July 2010, family and friends came together from far and

wide in the grounds of Geoff's house in Maesbrook to celebrate with him. Many guests were unaware how seriously ill he was, and no-one could have guessed the truth from Geoff's glowing smile throughout the day. Geoff preferred to enjoy a good quality of life for as long as he was allowed.

In September 2002, when Geoff, with Sue and Jessica, attended a friend's wedding in Shrewsbury RC Cathedral, they fell in love with Shropshire, and with the house in Maesbrook which they bought in 2003. Ever since then he has been making his presence felt in positive ways. He set up a gentlemen's breakfast club where gents could come together once a month for breakfast and a chat at 7am before heading off to their work. This remains a popular event, attracting up to 25 local gents.

With the help of his dear friends and carers, Dylan and Julie, he was able to get around the locality quite a lot. One of his favourite trips was to Barmouth. He loved the scenery on the way there, and on the seafront. He would spend half an hour in the amusement arcade, and then have fish and chips, before heading home. Every Saturday, following a swim at the Orthopaedic Hospital in Gobowen, he would be dropped off at Wetherspoon's in Oswestry, and would enjoy himself in the town till 5pm when a taxi specially adapted for him would pick him up at the park gates and take him home. Sometimes, during swimming he would frighten people by ducking his head under the water. Others may have been worried, but Geoff always came up laughing! Wherever he went, people knew him, and chatted with him, and he brightened the day of everyone he met. He was always pleasant and courteous to people, and never complained about his own misfortunes.

Sundays were set aside

Geoff's greatest joy was sharing time with his family. His son from his first marriage, Dean, with wife Anita and their son Daniel, Geoff's beloved grandson, live in Melbourne, and Geoff treasured the time spent with them both here, and in Australia. Geoff met Sue in 1973, and they were married in 1975. Their daughter Jessica was born in 1988. In Shropshire they enjoyed a wonderful and loving life together, and had many friends in Maesbrook and the surrounding area.

They shared a love of good food and wine, and cooking, and often entertained. While they each were extremely busy individually, every Sunday was set aside for family time together, and they had shared just such a joyous day together when Geoff passed away, suddenly, late on Sunday 7th August.

Friends and families crowded into St Wddyn's Church, Lake Vrnwy, on 24th August to celebrate Geoff's remarkable life. Scores of personal tributes have expressed the gratitude felt by the people of Shropshire for the gift of his life here over the past eight years, and the debt we owe him for Shropshire Disability Network, which should be his lasting memorial.

Courses from the Ear Foundation

The Ear Foundation has several courses coming up between now and Christmas - and is offering "Buy One, get a second place for £10!" on some of them.

The Curriculum and Deaf Children

29 Nov – Teaching Phonics to Deaf Children in Mainstream Schools; 30 Nov – Supporting Narrative Skills; 1 Dec – Routes to Literacy; 2 Dec – Numeracy and Deaf Learners

Core Courses (second place charged at £10)

11 Oct – Working with Children with CI in the Early Years (Foundation Stage); 15 Oct – Working with Children with CI who are slow to progress; 19 Oct – Troubleshooting Cochlear Implants and FM Systems
Assessment & Resources Courses
18 Oct – NEAP – Nottingham Early Assessment Package; 5 Dec – TAIT Video Analysis

Special Issues Courses

3 Oct – Speech Acoustics: What is the Deaf Child Hear-

ing? 4 Oct – Assessment & Monitoring in the Primary Years with Sue Lewis; 16 Nov – Deaf Children and Autistic Spectrum Disorder; 21 Nov – Behaviour Management: Pre-school Deaf Children; 22 Nov - Behaviour Management: Deaf Teenagers with Dirk Flower; 5 Dec – Developing Thinking Skills in Key 2 and Beyond with Sue Lewis



Courses for LSAs (second place at £10)

20 Sep - Supporting Deaf Children in the Early Years for LSAs; Wed 2 Nov – Supporting Deaf Children at Secondary School for LSAs
BAHA Courses: 1 Oct – BAHA Information Day for Families and BAHA Users
Website: www.earfoundation.org.uk
The Ear Foundation, 83 Sherwin Road, Lenton, Nottingham, NG7 2FB 0115 942 1985

Jewellery date

Due to demand, deafPLUS has changed the date of the Birmingham Jewellery Quarter Museum tour. It is now on 5 October at 2pm. Contact olivier.jamin@deafplus.org
RNID is now called Action on Hearing Loss and has a new website -www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk

Deafblind training company offers range of courses

Deafblind Enablement has published a training brochure listing the many courses it offers. It also delivers commissioned courses and works in partnership with other organisations to deliver training.

Services co-ordinator Lynn Sargeant said people are regarded as deafblind if "their combined sight and hearing impairment causes difficulties with communication, access to information and mobility.

This includes people with a progres-

sive sight and hearing loss". Deafblindness can be found in all age groups, including children, but the incidence is greatest in older adults.

Deafblind Enablement was set up to enable people who live with sight and hearing loss to learn new skills, develop existing skills, gain access to their community and existing services with dignity, respect, control and choice.

Training is delivered by Deafblind

Enablement's own team or by freelance professionals with long experience working with and for deafblind people. Courses include Deafblind Awareness, Specialist Assessment, Deafblind Awareness Basic Introductory Session, Volunteer Deafblind Awareness, Deafblind Communicator-Guide Support Worker Course, and Visual Impairment Training

For further information call 01733 746538 or email: lynn@deafblind-enablement.co.uk

Arts and health- the creative link

Creative Ways to Wellbeing is a free seminar to discuss the evidence of the benefits of music and the arts on health and wellbeing.

The aim of this seminar is to share current research and open a dialogue between the health sector and arts organisations about evidence of impact. It will be held on Thursday 27 October, from 9.30-13.30 at BVSC, 138 Digbeth

High Street, Birmingham. The keynote speaker will be Professor Stephen Clift of the Sidney De Haan Research Centre.

To book, use this address - <http://fs22.formsite.com/ameliaburr/form2/index.html>. The closing date for bookings is 14 October. For further information contact Amelia Burr: 0121 7729964, email ameliaburr@sounditout.co.uk

About Face show

About Face, one of just a few professional theatre companies to employ only actors with learning disabilities, is coming to the Arena Theatre in Wolverhampton on 13 October with a show inspired by experiences in Blackpool. Tickets are £5 but companions, PAs and support workers are free. The recommended age for the show, which starts at 1.30, is 12+ To book or for more information call Arena on 01902 321321 or visit www.arenatheatre.info where you can book tickets online.

Diabetes 'driving big rise' in NHS drug bill

Number of victims
up by 20% in just
five years

Rising rates of diabetes mean it now accounts for nearly 10% of the annual NHS drugs bill in England, official figures show. Some £725m was spent on diabetes drugs in 2010-11.

The figure was 41% more than the £513m spent five years ago when diabetes accounted for 6.6% of the budget, the NHS Information Centre data showed. One in every 25 prescription items now dispensed is for diabetes.

This compares to an 11% rise in the overall cost of the drugs bill between the two periods.

Most of the rise is down to the treatment of type 2 diabetes, which is linked to obesity and unhealthy lifestyles.

Many people are on a combination of drugs to try to keep their blood sugar levels under control, and two out of three items now dispensed manage the body's own production of insulin.

The next most commonly issued drugs are injectable insulins, which are vital when the pancreas cannot produce enough of the hormone itself. Insulin works by keeping the level of sugar in the bloodstream within a normal range.

Bridget Turner, from Diabetes UK, said that while the figures seemed high, the use of such drugs helped to prevent even more serious problems developing.

"This report reinforces that diabetes is one of the biggest health challenges this country faces. The long-term costs of poor diabetes management, such as caring for someone who's had a heart attack or stroke, lost their sight or lower limb, far outweigh those of the drugs that help prevent such complications," she said.

The rise in spending on diabetes drugs comes after the number of people with the condition has jumped by nearly a fifth in the past five years to over 2.3m.
[from BBC News website]

Courses could build on success

Local partnerships

It is increasingly important for organisations and communities to work together to demonstrate the need for their projects and to show that there is support for them.

A course which aims to demonstrate how groups can start the process of working together, and which looks at some practical steps and tools that can be used, will run in Shrewsbury on 5 October at the Community Council of Shropshire. For details, contact the Community Council on 01743 237880.

[from Shropshire Infrastructure Partnership Newsletter 8 September]

Showing your value

It is becoming increasingly important for organisations to be able to demonstrate the value of what they deliver. To help them do this a two-day course is being held at the Community Council Training Suite on 18 October and 17 November.

It will aim to help you identify how you can monitor and evaluate what you do, and how you can review what your organisation does to ensure you are moving in the right direction.

Contact Lorraine Smart at the Community Council of Shropshire on 01743 237880 or lorraine.smart@shropshirercc.org.uk

Volunteer management

A course which provides an introduction into good practice in volunteer management is being held at the Community Council Training Suite on 31 October.

It will serve as a starting point for people who have an ongoing responsibility for supporting, supervising and co-ordinating the work of volunteers. Contact Lorraine Smart at the Community Council of Shropshire on 01743 237880 or email lorraine.smart@shropshirercc.org.uk

Costly savings

Data released a day after MPs voted in favour of the Health Bill shows the reforms will not deliver predicted savings and will cost the NHS more than £600m in redundancy pay. An "impact assessment" report shows Primary Care Trusts are expected to pay £634m in redundancy to 11,300 staff. Savings expected to result from the reforms are substantially lower than previously estimated. Annual savings from 2014/15 are expected to be £1.5bn a year instead of £1.7bn.

[from Salix Newsflash 16.09.11]

Tool to fight cuts

A new resource has been created to help disabled people and groups fight council spending cuts. Written by solicitors Steve Broach and Kate Whittaker it is a practical guide for campaigners – disabled people, families, carers and local groups – on how to use the law to your advantage. Visit <http://www.rdn-wm.org.uk/Downloads-and-Resources.aspx>

Motor insurers promise not to charge volunteer drivers extra

More than 50 car insurance providers have confirmed that they will not charge extra for volunteer drivers. The confirmation was given in an Association of British Insurers survey of its members, as a result of a meeting called by the Big Society deregulation taskforce in response to concerns raised by Volunteering England. An ABI spokesman said the commitment covers 54 insurance brands representing over 85 per cent of the motor insurance market. There is more information on the Civil Society magazine website: www.civilsociety.co.uk/governance/news/content/10286/ [from Shropshire Infrastructure Partnership Newsletter 8 September]

New VCS Assembly email

The VCS Assembly Co-ordinator is receiving so many emails that it has become difficult to deal with all enquires quickly. To solve the problem a new email address has been set up that others can monitor, with support drawn in from the Council's Partnership Team.

The new address is:
VCSAssembly@shropshire.gov.uk
Call 01743 252740 for support or if you have any unresolved queries.
[from VCSA newsletter]

Info to help you get away

It's not quite holiday weather, but holiday information is always useful. The following details have come in to YourVoice and we are passing them on, but this is not an endorsement. It is simply information you may find useful when planning a break.

Vitalise is a national charity that provides essential breaks with care for people affected by a range of different disabilities, including MS. It has centres in London, Southampton and Southport, with self-catering lodges in Cornwall.

The centres aim to provide a break in a holiday environment, rather than simply a break in a Care Home. The level of care will be ascertained prior to your stay by completing a Care Plan. A Medical Certificate from your GP will also be required.

Vitalise can be contacted on 0845 345 1970 during office hours or on its website www.vitalise.org.uk

Bond Holidays is a company that provides holidays in Blackpool and St Annes for people with disabilities and additional needs. See their website for details: www.bondhotel.co.uk/ They are able to arrange door to door transport by minibus, but this is quite expensive unless there is a group of you.

National Express already has a number of 'easy access' coaches which incorporate a wheelchair lift and says the whole fleet will be 'easy access' by 2012. See www.nationalexpress.com/coach/OurService/disabled.aspx

The Princess Royal Trust for Carers site (address www.carers.org/help-directory/taking-holiday) has lots of information on taking a holiday, with links to specialist companies.

Tourism for All and its "Open Britain" directory at

www.tourismforall.org.uk/TFA-Directory.html has a lot of info. You can buy the directory for £9.99 or read a lot on the site.

RADAR promotes the Open Britain directory but also has other information, including its own scheme www.radar-shop.org.uk/Detail.aspx?id=44

The **Rough Guide to Accessible Britain** includes days out for people with disabilities. Order from www.accessibleguide.co.uk or ring 080095 7070. The cost is £6.99 but free to blue badge holders.

Dial UK has factsheets on all aspects of choosing and taking a holiday www.dialuk.info/info_service/Information/holidays_for_disabled_people_user_guide.asp

The Government's public information website has links to many voluntary sector organisations which provide holidays and advice on holidays: www.direct.gov.uk/en/DI1/Directories/UsefulContactsBy-Category/DisabledPeopleContacts/OrganisationsAnd-Charities/DG_10014894

MS holiday grants

The MS Society's new Short Breaks and Activities fund enables people affected by MS to access the sort of break they choose, whatever that may be. The fund will consider grants for:

- ☐ Respite care, at home or at a care centre or similar
- ☐ Activities, short break or holiday for someone with MS and/or their carer/family
- ☐ Salary costs for a professional carer needed to help someone with MS, or their carer, have a break
- ☐ Travel, accommodation and disability equipment hire costs linked to having a break
- ☐ Some alternative or complementary therapies

For more information call 020 8438 0700.

[from Shrewsbury & District MS Society Newsletter Sept/Oct 2011]



About NHS Local

NHS Local is a range of digital services for the public in the West Midlands, intended to guide us to the help we need

Sometimes, it can be confusing to know where to find the information you need on local health services so the purpose of NHS local is to connect citizens (and NHS staff) to the best available online resources and information and, importantly, to each other.

It brings together local health news, information, services and support from across the NHS and from other trusted organisations and individuals.

NHS local provides access to information on health

Quick link to quality websites

EQUIP stands for Electronic Quality Information for the Public. It is an NHS gateway to quality health and social care information for the West Midlands public.

EQUIP links to websites that have been checked for the quality of their information, including links to information resources in almost a hundred languages. Also, there is a

directory of over 4000 national and local support groups and services which are checked regularly by the EQUIP team.

The website was developed with the involvement of medical staff and members of the public.

EQUIP has been a well-used website for over 10 years and in 2011

conditions to help people manage their health better and prevent future health problems. There is a selection of high quality videos, social media tools, games and applications to show the information in an interesting, informative and imaginative way.

You can share experiences, information, views and ideas to help you manage your health and if you work for the NHS it can help with planning and developing your career. And you also can gain access to networks and support groups for your local area.

was integrated into NHS Local where users can now access the EQUIP approved links, Support groups and services directory, the EQUIP Events calendar and the EQUIP information for staff. The same quality standards will be maintained to regularly review and update the information. Visit: <http://nhslocal.nhs.uk/info/about-us> [from NHS West Midlands]

Record numbers cancel direct debit charity giving

Direct debit specialists Rapidata Services plc report that the cancellation rate for direct debit regular donations to its charity clients in August was 4.58%, the highest figure for that month since it began tracking regular giving trends eight years ago.

The figure is worse than the 4.4% that was recorded in August 2008 as the recession bit.

Scott Gray, Managing Director at Rapidata, was alarmed by the finding. He said: "I am deeply concerned to see charity direct debit cancellations increasing again to recession levels and higher. I wouldn't be surprised to see the rate exceed 5% in September with the trend continuing. Charities need to know about this shift and they need to act."

This is the fourth consecutive month in which direct debit donation cancellations have increased. Gray had hoped that this was a temporary situation. However, he

concludes: "It is becoming clear that the trend has shifted once more with our figures reflecting the recent sharp economic downturn and threat of double-dip recession. Consumers are tightening their personal finances still further under uncertain economic conditions that are unlikely to improve very quickly."

Gray advised charities to take action to try to minimise cancellations. "Now is the time to be as proactive with donors as possible. If you are stalling a stewardship programme or have communications, appeals or campaigns on hold, it's time to act."

He invited charities that had experienced marked changes in regular donation cancellations over the past few months to contact Rapidata with their experiences.

The Rapidata Charity Direct Debit Tracking Report 2011 is available as a free download from: www.rapidataservices.com [from fundraising.co.uk/news]

Work 'is good for health'

Almost all (99%) GPs think that work is beneficial for health and that helping patients to stay in or return to work is an important part of the GPs role, according to a Department of Work and Pensions report about GPs' attitudes. Some 96% agreed that unemployment is generally detrimental to health. Most GPs said the "fit note" had had a positive impact for patients. [from Social Welfare Training Newsletter]

Free insolvency helpline

A free helpline which provides specialist support for voluntary and community organisations in financial crisis has been opened by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, in partnership with the Charity Finance Directors Group (CFDG) and insolvency experts MacIntyre Hudson and PricewaterhouseCoopers. For details visit: www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/free-insolvency-help-line [from VCS Newsletter]

Stallholders and market customers in Shrewsbury were taken by surprise when Blue Eyed Soul Dance Company's Contact Group popped in for an inclusive dance performance that started with cake boards on the balcony and encompassed interactions with books, wool, packing crates and some unsuspecting shoppers.

Said choreographer Miriam Keye: "The performers, as always, were incredible and did a fabulous job! It reminded me of the absolute joy and power behind community dance performed at super high quality in a public space."

Blue Eyed Soul is involved in much else as well. Envision Dance Group, with Blue Eyed Soul and Transit-Trix, starts a new project this autumn, bringing street dance and contemporary dance together. The group is keen to get a strong and committed team of dancers working together and welcomes new members.

Sessions will continue into January as the group is building a piece to be performed at Telford Dance Festival at The Place on Friday 10 February 2012. Meanwhile, a Dance Transformations Symposium will be

Blue Eyed Soul surprises market shoppers

held at the Institute for Creative Enterprise at Coventry University on 19 October. Dance Transformations is a two-year inclusive artist-led development programme in the West Midlands, for emerging dance artists to explore choreographic ideas.

It will discuss issues impacting on inclusive dance companies and individual dance artists with and without disabilities, with the aim to identify a committed group with ability to influence sector development. The question will be: "What does it mean to be an independent disabled dance artist with ambitions to create work in the current climate?"

To book go to: www.coventry.ac.uk/researchnet/ice/ To read more about Blue Eyed Soul and find links to website content, Flickr and YouTube go to: <http://blueeyedsouldance.blogspot>

■ The LIKE Youth Dance Envision group is meeting at Hadley Learning Community in Telford. It will be working towards a performance at Telford Dance Festival at The Place on 10 February 2012, so now is the time to join if you are aged 12-19!

For more information and to book go to: <http://www.blueeyedsouldance.com/calendar-of-events/>

News spots

'Rethink' call to bosses

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Disability Steering Group has called for employers to 'rethink their attitude towards disabled people'. Over seven million disabled people are being prevented from getting jobs or reaching their full potential by employers and recruiters imposing a 'glass ceiling' on them. The steering group, whose members are from high profile government departments and multi-billion pound companies, have called for other employers to rethink their attitude. To read more go to www.rdn-wm.org.uk/News/DWP-Disability-Steering-Group-recommendations.aspx [from West Midlands Regional Disability Network E-Bulletin - September 2011]

Referrals fall

GP hospital referrals for the first quarter of the year have fallen for the first time in six years, the latest NHS figures show. They show that GPs made 2.87 million hospital referrals in the first quarter of 2011/12, compared to three million in the same period of 2010/11. The new figures mark a 4% drop in referrals and represent the first time quarter on quarter referrals have fallen year on year since 2006/07. [from Salix Newsflash 02.09.2011]

Dementia funding

The Government says it will inject an additional £17m a year over five years to boost NHS research and fund new centres to focus on dementia. The additional money will pay for four new research units specialising in dementia and increase funding for biomedical research

centres (BRCs) – collaborations between NHS foundation trusts and universities in England. The new dementia units will launch next April, bringing the total number of units to 20. [from GP]

Free OU learning

The Open University has developed a new website, CharityWise, which hosts 10 specially tailored free learning units for charity managers and trustees such as "Managing to meet service users' needs" and "Building relationships with donors". The site also has trustee case studies and links to resources. There are many free courses targeted at different levels and with varying time commitments. Visit www.open.ac.uk/blogs/CharityWise/ [from Shropshire Infrastructure Partnership Newsletter 8 September]

NCVO merger

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations has merged with the Third Sector European Network (TSEN). The merger, which took place on 1 September, will integrate TSEN's work with NCVO's European and International Programme. TSEN provides information, support and training to help voluntary organisations access the European Social Fund and is a major source of expertise on European Union funding. Its two staff members will transfer across to NCVO, expanding the existing EU and International unit to enable a broader range of advice and support on European issues. Visit the NCVO website www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/news/civil-society/we-are-emerging-third-sector-european-network [from Shropshire Infrastructure Partnership Newsletter]

Almost exactly 15 years ago, the Community Care (direct payments) Act 1996 was passed into law. Celebrated as a victory for the rights of people with disabilities, the Act was the first to enshrine in law the principle that people who receive social care funding could receive the money directly, rather than having it administered by a council.

The intention was to give people more control over their lives, allowing them to tailor their care and support to fit their own needs and ambitions by giving them control over how their money was spent.

Fifteen years later, the big question is: have direct payments lived up to those expectations? The answer, perhaps predictably, is yes – and no. For those who do receive direct payments, there are thousands of remarkable stories of people seizing control of their own lives and being creative with the way they structure their support.

Unfortunately, direct payments have not been rolled out as rapidly or as evenly as they should have been, despite endorsements by social care experts and successive governments (including the current one).

Most progress has been made for people with physical disabilities, many of whom now receive such payments. For

Have direct payments lived up to the high hopes?

people with learning disabilities – and mental health needs – the numbers are far lower, and vary enormously from local authority to local authority.

One reason for the slow progress is a mistaken belief that many people with learning disabilities lack the skills to manage their own support. We know from experience that this is not true. If a person with a learning disability has access to good information, advocacy services or a supportive family, for example, they can benefit just as much from direct payments as people with physical disabilities.

Too many "personal budgets" are administered through local authorities, without choice, hardly in line with the original objectives. This is compounded by a postcode lottery, which means that while some local authorities are deeply behind the idea of giving people who need care more control, oth-

ers have been less eager. None of us wants to wait another 15 years before we can say that direct payments are finally achieving their full potential. We must all honour the original vision and ensure that they are truly giving control back to their recipients, with the potential to transform their lives.

Author Su Sayer is chief executive of United Response [from BBC website, edited]

Trusts willing to support disability work

Information has come our way about two trusts that give grants towards the work of disability charities and groups. If you would like to share details of a trust, just get in touch with YourVoice.

❑ The Allen Lane Foundation is a grant-making trust set up in 1966 by the late Sir Allen Lane, founder of Penguin Books, to support general charitable causes, making grants for up to three years, with a value of £500-£15,000.

Funding is focused on a number of specific beneficiary groups, including older people and people with mental health problems. Grants are made across the UK. For more information, visit the foundation's website <http://www.allenlane.org.uk>

[from Shropshire Infrastructure Partnership Newsletter]

❑ The Woodward Charitable Trust offers funding to UK registered charities through small grants of £100 to £5,000, large grants of over £5,000 and summer playscheme grants of £500 to £1,000.

Among the subjects that the Trust will consider are disability projects, including rehabilitation and training for people who are physically or learning disabled, as well as help to improve employment prospects.

Applications for Main Grants will be accepted between 1 September and 30 November. Go to:

www.woodwardcharitabletrust.org.uk/guidelines.html

[from Shropshire Partnership Funding Update 75]

'False economy' by local authorities hits over 2000 charities

More than 2000 charities and community groups are facing budget cuts as local authorities reduce their funding, with Birmingham City Council cutting funding to the largest number of charities, according to research published by False Economy.

These organisations provide vital services for disabled people trying to maintain independent lives.

As well as the misery and distress they cause, such cuts will increase pressure on the NHS and other statutory services: they are truly a false economy.

To read about the research and see the figures, go to <http://www.rdn-wm.org.uk/News/More-than-2,000-charities-and-community-groups-fac.aspx>

[FROM: West Midlands Regional Disability Network E-Bulletin - September 2011]

On a wing and a chair ...

Disabled Yorkshireman Dave Sykes has winged his way into the record books by flying a microlight all the way to Australia, with his dismantled wheelchair strapped to the side.

The amateur pilot, paralysed from the waist down after breaking his back in a motorbike accident 18 years ago, flew over 18 countries, crossing oceans, deserts, cities and jungle.

During his marathon flight he had to cope with dust storms over Saudi Arabia, was threatened with being shot down over Iran, and only just survived a huge storm above Burma.

"There was a big flash and the aircraft shuddered when a lightning strike beside me blew all the fuses out on the instruments. It got to the point where I wasn't scared any

more, it was just about trying to survive it all."

When Sydney's iconic Opera House and Harbour Bridge came into view, it was an emotional moment. "I could see the bridge in front of me - I thought, this is what I've planned for two years for. This is the actual final flight of it all.

"I just couldn't stop smiling. Flying over the bridge, looking at all the people doing the bridge walk waving at me, that was something else that was."

Mr Sykes trip began after his friends bet him that he could not fly all the way to Sydney.

Mr Sykes flew home in a conventional passenger plane, with his faithful microlight being stripped down and sent back by sea.

[edited, from Sky News 01.09.11]

Cinema Card can mean free tickets

The Cinema Exhibitors' Association Card is a national card that can be used to verify that the holder is entitled to one free ticket for a person accompanying them to the cinema.

Printed application forms are available from cinemas across the UK supporting this card. You can download an application form to print out and fill in.

To apply for the card you will need to submit proof to show that you receive Disability Living Allowance or Attendance Allowance, or that you are registered blind. You will also need to supply a passport-sized photo with your application to appear on the card.

There is a processing fee of £5.50, to be sent with the completed application.

The card is valid for one year from the date of issue

For further information visit www.ceacard.co.uk or contact the CEA Card help desk - 0845 123 1292, Minicom - 0845 123 1297, email info@ceacard.co.uk

[from Shrewsbury & District MS Society Newsletter Sept/Oct 2011]

New materials for learning disabilities

Prodigy has launched a new set of materials on a range of health topics that are particularly relevant to the health of people with learning disabilities. The leaflets, which were written with easy words and pictures, make them suitable to give to patients with learning disabilities or indeed anyone who struggles with written information. The information has come from the easyhealth web site, which has a wide range of resources for people with learning disabilities, many produced by NHS Trusts and voluntary organisations.

DLA mobility comments sought

The Government is looking at removing the mobility component of the Disability Living Allowance, soon to become Personal Independence Payment, from people living in residential care. The Low Review into Personal Mobility in State-Funded Residential Care has published a call for evidence and would like to hear from individuals, service providers and local authorities. Have your say at the Low Review website. The deadline is 10 October.

(http://lowreview.org.uk/?dm_i=5MH,JJ47,4CF1Y6,1L78L,1) [CPAG newsletter]

Big demand for online health services

A survey of 1,700 patients shows an overwhelming demand for online health services such as booking GP appointments and ordering repeat medication. The survey of visitors to health information website www.patient.co.uk showed that 85% or more would like to be able to order repeat prescriptions and book GP appointments online, use a tool to check symptoms and identify medicines side-effects. A similar percentage of GPs felt that these services should be available for patients. [From Health Information News September 2011]

Eye health leaflets

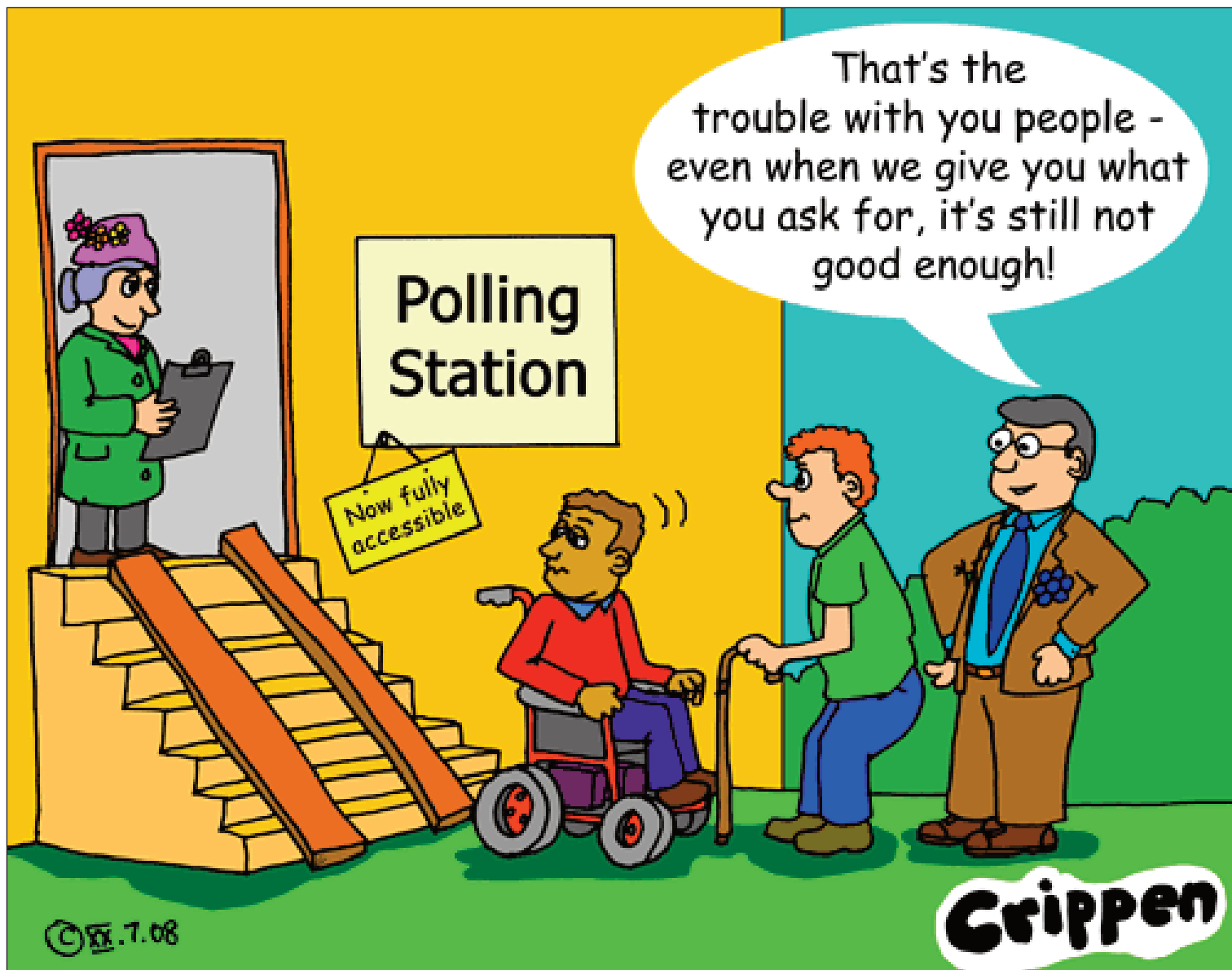
The Royal College of Optometrists is piloting new patient information leaflets. All four of the initial leaflets, available to download, have been approved by the Plain English Campaign. www.college-optometrists.org/en/knowledge-centre/publication/patient-leaflets/download.cfm

Volunteering Team is there to help

The Shropshire Volunteering Team can help promote your volunteering opportunities.

Visit their website at <http://shropshirevcs.org.uk/site/volunteering/> for details of lots of useful resources and volunteering outreach services.

[from Shropshire Infrastructure Partnership Newsletter 8 September]



News spots

User-led boost

Maria Miller, the Minister for Disabled People, has launched a programme called "Encouraging Strong and Sustainable Disabled People's User-Led Organisations." It will see a £3 million investment over four years to promote the growth and improve the sustainability of user-led organisations. Go to: www.rdn-wm.org.uk/News/Strengthening-Disabled-People-s-User-Led-Organisat.aspx [West Midlands Regional Disability Network, 08/2011]

Equality Duty

To assist public authorities in the better performance of the Equality Duty, the Government has introduced regulations requiring public authorities to publish equality objectives at least every four years and information to demonstrate their compliance with the Equality Duty. These specific duties provide an opportunity for DPO's to ensure local authorities are doing all they can to promote equality. [West Midlands Regional Disability Network, 08/2011]

Software donations

Microsoft has expanded its software donations programme, widening the types of charities that can apply and allowing them to order more products. Charities will

also now be able to make requests whenever required rather than as one bulk order per year. Find out more via <http://www.ctxchange.org/> [Shropshire Infrastructure Partnership newsletter]

Doctors doubtful

Over a third of GPs think that Government changes to commissioning will leave patients worse off. A survey of GPs in England, found that 37% thought that the Government's revised plans for clinically-led commissioning would be worse for patients than the original proposals. Only 28% of GPs believed the plans would be better for patients and 28% believed it would make no difference. [from Salix Newsflash, 12 August 2011]

Diagnosis delays

NHS leaders have warned of increasing pressure on access to services as Department of Health figures show the number of patients waiting over 13 weeks for diagnostic tests has increased nine-fold. The NHS Confederation, which represents managers across the NHS, warned that the gains made to reduce waiting times were already being lost as finances were squeezed, and that NHS managers were concerned about a deterioration in standards. [from Salix Newsflash, 12 August 2011]

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Names and numbers that might help

This new feature will build up into a directory of all sorts of organisations to do with disability. Help us to make it better month-by-month by letting us know what's missing. Email the editor at newsletter@shropshire-disability.net or write to him: Peter Staples, 8 Gorse Lane, Bayston Hill, Shrewsbury, SY3 0JJ

Shropshire Council Disability Services
www.shropshire.gov.uk/disability.nsf

Telford & Wrekin Council Disability Forum
www.telford.gov.uk/info/200041/equality_and_diversity/925/disability_forum
.....
A4U Disability Advice Centre 0845 602 5561; email advice@a4u.org.uk

Blue Eyed Soul Dance Company
01743 210830; email: admin@blueeyedsouldance.com
www.blueeyedsouldance.com/

Carers Direct 0808 802 0202
www.nhs.uk/carersdirect/Pages/CarersDirectHome.aspx

Community Council of Shropshire
www.shropshire-rcc.org.uk/
4 The Creative Quarter, Shrewsbury Business Park, Shrewsbury, SY2 6LG
01743 360641 fax: 01743 342179

Disability Arts in Shropshire: 01743 272939/271676; www.dasharts.org/

Disability Directory – Information, aids and mobility services
www.ableize.com/Disabled-Groups-and-Clubs-by-County/Shropshire/

Disability Football Directory 01952 407198
<http://www.disabilityfootball.co.uk/Madeleysports.html>

Disability-friendly holiday accommodation
www.friendly-places.com/categories/disability-friendly/disability-friendly.asp?Location=Shropshire

Disability Resource Centre, Lancaster Road, Shrewsbury, SY1 3NJ
01743 450 912; email: robin.durham@shropshire-cc.gov.uk
www.the-svab.org.uk. RNIB: www.info.rnib.org.uk/exe/Agencies/Details.pl?480

Disabled and Wheelchair Athletics Directory
www.apparelyzed.com/disability-directory/adaptive-sports/disabled-athletics/

Headway Shropshire (brain injured and families)
Holsworth Park, Oxon Business Park, Shrewsbury, SY3 5HJ
01743 365271; www.headwayshropshire.org.uk/

Landau Limited - Supported employment services for people with disabilities,
5 Landau Court, Tan Bank, Wellington. TF1 1HE 01952 245 015, admin@landau.co.uk

Listen Not Label - User Led Organisation for disabled people and carers in
Telford and Wrekin (Tina Jones, Manager)
Liz Yates Centre, The Poplars, Lightmoor, Telford, TF4 3QN
01952 458021

Marches Community Enterprise 01584 878402 or 07891094901

ME Connect
Helpline - 0844 576 5326 - between 10.00-noon, 2.00-4.00 and 7.00-9.00;
email meconnect@meassociation.org.uk

Multiple Sclerosis Society - 7 Britten Court, Telford, TF1 1YU; 01952 250038

NHS Choices - www.nhs.uk/Pages/HomePage.aspx

Omega (National Association for End of Life Care) - www.omega.uk.net/

Parent & Carer Council Shropshire

www.paccshropshire.org.uk/parent-and-carer-groups
PACC provides an index of support groups for children with disabilities in Shropshire. The following groups are listed on the PACC site. Where possible we list direct contacts, but refer to the PACC site for full details)

Allsorts (South Shropshire, for behavioural conditions) 07813043841
www.paccshropshire.org.uk/parent-and-carer-groups/71-allsorts
Bridgnorth Buddies (Parent-led, Special Needs) 07968 544182 or 07790 780631; email Buddies20@yahoo.co.uk
www.paccshropshire.org.uk/parent-and-carer-groups/72-bridgnorth-buddies
Houghton School, Telford, drop-in for parents of pupils with more complex special needs) 01952 387551 or 01952 387552; www.paccshropshire.org.uk/parent-and-carer-groups/83-houghton-school-drop-in
Onevision (visual impairment) 01952 385269
[/www.paccshropshire.org.uk/parent-and-carer-groups/77-onevision](http://www.paccshropshire.org.uk/parent-and-carer-groups/77-onevision)
STACS (Aspergers, 16+) 01952 254594 or 01939 260273; email louise.griffiths@carerscontact.org.uk
www.paccshropshire.org.uk/parent-and-carer-groups/76-stacs
Autistic Supporters (if you suspect your child is autistic, or has recently been diagnosed) 01743 356298
www.shropshireautisticsupporters.co.uk/?q=node/2
Deaf Children's Society 01952 770019; email: nat4sdcs@aol.com
www.ndcs.org.uk
Down's Syndrome 01743 233802, 01948 880110 or 01588 640319
www.dsa-shropshire.org.uk
Dyslexia Association 01743 231205; www.thesda.org.uk
Wheelchair Users 01743 350460 or 01952 252243
SKiD (Shropshire Kids Insulin Dependent, associated with Diabetes UK) 01743 873724 or 01743 364366; email: home@morkot.go-plus.net
SPECTRUM (Autistic Support group) email: netgriffiths@fsmail.net
www.spectrum.t83.net/
Telford STAA (supports parents/carers of children with ASD, ADHD, and challenging behaviour) 01952 457439 or 01952 617758; email: julie@parentpartnership-shropshireandtelford.org.uk
Steps (help for parents/carers, lower limb abnormalities) 01743 355363
PODS (Parents Opening Doors - Telford, forum for views on services) 01952457439; email: julie@parentpartnership-shropshireandtelford.org.uk

Parent Partnership Service - www.parentpartnership-shropshireandtelford.org.uk/#/useful-links/4551168089
Primary Care Trust www.shropshire.nhs.uk/Get-Involved/

Scope (Cerebral Palsy) - www.scope.org.uk/services/shropshire

Shrewsbury Dial-a-Ride - Sundorne Trade Park, Featherbed Lane, SY1 4NS. Enquiries 01743 440350; Direct Line 01743 440744; Mobile 07891094901, linda@shrewsburydialaride.org.uk

Shropshire MIND - www.shropshiremind.org/
Observer House, Holywell St, Shrewsbury, SY2 6BL 01743 368647

Shropshire Peer Counselling and Advocacy Service
www.shropshirepcas.co.uk/default.htm

Shropshire Volunteering Team -Promote your volunteering opportunities.
<http://shropshirevcs.org.uk/site/volunteering/>

Telford & Wrekin LINK - Suite 1, Conwy House, St Georges Court, St Georges Road, Donnington, Telford, TF2 7BF
01952 614180

Voluntary & Community Sector Assembly www.shrop.net/shropvcsassembly

Voluntary Association for the Blind (linked to RNIB)

**Let X mark the spot for your organisation!
Send in your details and we'll add you to the directory.**