



**Shropshire
Disability
Network**

Your Voice, Your Connections
www.shropshire-disability.net

**General Meeting
8th March 2012 11am
The Walker Room, Meeting Point
House, Telford
Minutes**

1. Welcome from the Chair

Sonia Roberts welcomed around 60 people to the meeting. This is a record, and is especially pleasing as it is our first visit to Telford for a General Meeting. She particularly welcomed our guest speakers Tina Jones from Listen Not Label, and Liz Holdsworth from Wace Morgan Solicitors.

2. Minutes of General Meeting 8th December 2011

Minutes of the Meeting on 8th December 2011 were adopted as a true record. Proposed by Carol George. Seconded by Donna Smith.

3. Matters Arising

There were none that are not covered later in the Agenda.

4. **Steering Group Reports**

Treasurer

Tom Memery reported a cash balance of £10,133. Volunteer hours reported equate to £27,000 per annum, but we know this is a considerable underestimate, as many hours are still unreported. Tom announced that he would be standing down as Treasurer at the end of April.

Sonia invited members to apply for Steering Group posts, as our resources are quite stretched at the moment.

Website & Newsletter

Sonia said these are essentially what we provide at SDN. They, along with our General Meetings, are our core business.

The trend at our Website is one of increased usage, and it is widely recognised as providing valuable support to the professional services in the County.

Val Lewis, our Webmaster, repeated our website address www.shropshire-disability.net and encouraged everyone to keep checking it out for news. Recently we wrote to all our local MP's for their views on the Welfare Reform Bill, and have been disappointed by some of the responses, which have been party political, and not personal. There is a poll on our website where members can vote on the quality of the MP's responses. Val emphasised that the Website is yours, i.e. belongs to the members. It should reflect what you the members want to see on there. And it's clear that, whenever we profile Shropshire news, for example with the Blue Badge campaign, the website traffic has gone through the roof. We'd like to involve more people in contributing to the site, and we invite members to contribute personal stories, possibly via interviews that we can arrange.

Fundraising & Publicity

Sonia said Ruby Hartshorn has been doing an excellent job in getting consistent press coverage for SDN.

She advertised a couple of upcoming fundraising events:

- 1) Sat 31st March – at AFC Telford's ground, we're selling raffle tickets for a giant Easter Egg donated by Magna
- 2) Sat 14th April – 7.30pm at Radbrook Community Hall, we're hosting an evening featuring entertainment by Three Men in a Bow Tie. Tickets priced £8.50, to include a ploughman's supper, can be obtained from
Café Connect, Radbrook

or
Ruby Hartshorn Tel: 01743 340832
Email: rbyhartshorn@yahoo.com

Signers get free entry, if needed for hearing impaired ticket holders.

5. Any Other Business

1. Sonia read out a message from Velma Finney, Access Officer from Shropshire Council, inviting any comments on the “New Riverside Development” in Shrewsbury. Although the consultation period is closed, the planning department will still accept comments if made without delay, through Velma. Her contact details are

Tel: 01743 253419
Email: velma.finney@shropshire.gov.uk

2. There were 3 display stands, and each exhibitor spoke briefly to the meeting.

Andrew Sceats – Pressuredown Therapies, is launching the iSmart electronic massager. Andrew has been a fully insured Holistic Therapist since 1987. One of our wheelchair-bound attendees, Debbie Butler, volunteered to have her neck and shoulders massaged in a brief demo. Pressuredown offers therapy courses
Website: <http://pressuredown.biz/>
Email: andrew@pressuredown.net

Joe Kwaterski – Adelphi Care Services, which offers a holistic approach to care for people with learning disabilities. Adelphi offers residential care, domiciliary services, supported living, and community / leisure support services. One of Adelphi’s aims is to get full Autism therapy accreditation
Website: www.adelphicare.com
Email: jk@adelphicare.com

Lindsey Williams - A4U, a User-led organisation set up 20 years ago. They have offices in Shrewsbury and in Meeting Point House in Telford. They provide Action, Advocacy and Advice. They can provide more specialised help with filling out DLA forms, Attendance Allowance forms, and help with Appeals work if an allowance isn’t granted. A4U has an 80% success rate in getting the allowance people are entitled to.
Website: www.a4u.org.uk
Email: lindsey.williams@a4u.org.uk

6. Guest Speaker – Tina Jones of Listen Not Label

Listen Not Label (LNL) is a User Led Organisation. What does that mean? With LNL it means exactly what it says. It's led by, and on behalf of, disabled people who use services provided by statutory bodies. Many disabled people have no choices. The services they need have been set up to suit GP's Physios, etc., etc. So LNL, commissioned by Telford & Wrekin Council, has a role in how services are designed and managed.

There are representatives on the LNL Management Board from many areas of disability. LNL also facilitates a Mental Health Forum, and plays an active role in that.

LNL covers only Telford & Wrekin, but has links into organisations elsewhere, e.g. with SDN. They have a voice in the decision making in Telford & Wrekin Council. All work is led by volunteers, who have had training on communications and in dealing with people with disability. LNL works in partnership with others, for example with A4U on advocacy, making sure they have good referral processes, and is taking advocacy forward with best practice, even within the current cuts.

LNL runs projects with the philosophy of giving peer support – we believe the person who is suffering is the expert – so volunteers support others who are working, for example, with mental health teams. Tina is overall Project Manager for LNL, and spends time on getting bid proposals in to funding bodies.

LNL is a local User-led organisation, but operates within National policy. The Transformation of Adult Social Care is the biggest change in Social Care since the Community Care Act (1990). And LNL organises events (e.g. with the Office of Disability issues) to give feedback on proposed policy

Question: Ian Warburton said he is a parent carer who is new to the area, and wondered if there were a chart that shows local organisations and how they link together

Response: Suggested using the SDN website www.shropshire-disability.net which signposts to organisations and describes their roles.

There is also the Adult and Social Care Access Team.
Email: access.team@telford.gov.uk
Telephone: 01952 381280

Parent Partnership

Website: www.parentpartnership-shropshireandtelford.org.uk/

Telford & Wrekin Council offer a signposting service at First Point at the Council Offices, and it's hoped a paper copy of First Point's signposting will be produced.

7. **Guest Speaker – Liz Holdsworth of Wace Morgan Solicitors**

“Lasting Power Of Attorney or Enduring Power of Attorney and how it affects choices in finance and health/social care needs”

This was the advertised title of the talk. Liz spoke to a presentation entitled **“Everything your Solicitor should have told you”**. The whole Liz' Powerpoint presentation is available via a link on the Homepage of our Website www.shropshire-disability.net

You will also find there links to electronic versions of a number of documents supplied by Liz at the meeting, namely

- Lasting Powers of Attorney
- The Benefits of making a Lasting Power of Attorney
- What is a Health and Welfare Lasting Power of Attorney
- Who Cares Who Pays? Funding of Long Term Care and Related Issues
- Who should fund long term nursing care? Should it be the NHS? A Guide to NHS Continuing Health Care Funding
- Is your relation about to enter a care home? Should you pay a third party top up?

Liz works as a consultant solicitor with Wace Morgan, and is the regional coordinator of Solicitors For Elderly (SFE). She recommends seeking out someone from SFE, who has the necessary training.

Who knows if they will not lose mental capacity? No-one. Liz counsels: Hope for the best, and prepare for the worst. Therefore you should entrust someone with a Finance and Property Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA). If you lose capacity, and have no LPA, one of your family members would have to apply to the Court of Protection, and that will cost serious money. Pre-2007, the LPA was known as Enduring Power of Attorney.

Something else to consider is Health and Welfare Power of Attorney, which is a legal document that can cover everything about how you are treated including end of life decisions. Without one, a medical or social care team, who may never have met you, will make these decisions. You could also consider an Advanced Decision, (sometimes called a “living will”, but nothing to do with a will) which states what you want to happen in certain circumstances, e.g. to suspend life sustaining treatment. However, this is not legally binding, and can be open to interpretation by doctors.

What happens if a couple have joint ownership of a property, and one partner dies? Everything passes to the partner. It's better to convert to Tenants in Common, where the deceased partner's share will pass to whoever has been nominated in a will.

Most people know they should make a will, but are not always sure why. If you die intestate, (without having made a will), your assets will pass to relatives in a way you might not expect! Family members may have to make a claim under the Inheritance provision for Family & Dependants Act. Under a will, the executor you have appointed will discharge your wishes, possibly with the guidance of an Advance Decision Statement, if you've made one.

One question which concerns many people is : who will pay for my care in the future? To empower yourself in this area, you should get to know how things will work. Your care could involve NHS, the Council, and your family. In fact, if you have a Primary Health need, the NHS is liable for your continuing care, whether you're in a hospital, in a care home, or in your own home. So make sure you are assessed for eligibility for this free continuing care.

There are other cases where care is free, namely

- Intermediate care (basically as an alternative to hospitalisation) for up to 6 weeks
- If you have been sectioned under Section 3 of the Mental Health Act, and continue to need care. So, if it is appropriate for someone you love, you shouldn't hesitate to apply for sectioning, so that the person can receive the free care he / she is entitled to
- The Veterans agency can pay towards the cost of a care home to someone receiving the higher rate of war pension

It's only if you don't have a Primary Care need, i.e. if your nursing needs are ancillary to your accommodation needs, that should you be subject to means testing. If you have over £23,250 in England or £22,500 in Wales, you'll have to pay for your care, but still there is help available. For example,

- You may be entitled to Attendance Allowance if you're over 65 and have a disability. This is a weekly paid benefit of £73.50 or £49.60, depending on your level of disability. Under 65, you may qualify for Disability Living Allowance
- If you're in a nursing home, the NHS funded nursing care contribution is £108.90 per week in England, and £120.55 per week in Wales.

If you have less than £23,250 in England or £22,500 in Wales, you can apply to your local Council for some help. To plug the gap between income and a care home cost, the Council is legally bound to pay the difference, known as the Third Party Top-up. If your husband or wife is asked to pay the Third Party Top-up, they should refuse. The Council **MUST** pay, if you are in the most suitable care home which is meeting **ALL** your needs and there is nowhere cheaper which could do the same – your needs can include social, psychological, religious, cultural and/ethnic needs, as well as medical or personal care needs.

If you are subject to a means test, will your house be part of that means test? Not necessarily. For example, if it is the family home, and your spouse or partner lives there, it won't be taken into account.

Things to remember about Assessments

Anyone who may be in need of community care services has the right to a free assessment by the Local Authority.

Any financial assessment of a cared-for person must not take into account the savings of the spouse or partner.

Always ask for the legal authority which the person is using to assess you or your loved ones

Always ask for the LA's policy. There should be a document available

Disability related expenditure should be taken into account

Never be rushed into anything!

8. Next Meeting

The next General Meeting will be

**Thursday 14th June 2012 1.30pm at Trinity Centre Meole Brace
Shrewsbury
Guest Speaker – Dave Hewetson “Rett Syndrome – An Amazing
Story”**

