



# Your Voice



**Shropshire  
Disability  
Network**

“The place for disability information in Shropshire”

Shropshire Disability Network – Charity No 1148256 – Mar-Apr 2019

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## 50 years of bridging the communication gap

Shropshire Disability Network (SDN) members enjoyed a talk by Liz Downes of The Sequal Trust in December. Find out more about this national charity based in Ellesmere...



The Sequal Trust fundraises to provide communication aids for disabled people of all ages with speech, movement or severe learning difficulties throughout the UK. People's disabilities include autism, cerebral palsy, Down's syndrome, muscular dystrophy, motor neurone disease, and those resulting from a stroke, cancer or road traffic accidents, to name but a few.

The equipment is provided on a lifelong loan basis, with Sequal remaining responsible for all necessary repairs and upgrades for the life of each particular device. Membership of The Sequal Trust means lifelong support.

2019 marks Sequal's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Since 1969, The Trust has worked to promote independence and self-help for individuals living with many types of disability. The equipment it provides is by no means limited either – from iPads with specialised software up to eye-operated systems with wheelchair mounts, and every device in between which is an aid to either speech or extreme movement problems. With the use of these aids it is possible to stimulate learning and reduce the sense of isolation so often experienced by those who are unable to “speak” for themselves.



Sequal Member Jake

Comedian Lee Ridley, aka “Lost Voice Guy”, is one of Sequal's Patrons. Lee would not have been able to gain fame without his communication aid. Who knows how many others have as much to offer, given the chance?

## Chair's message

### Anniversary badges

Anyone wishing to buy a badge at a cost of £1, please call or text 07780 852 229 and we will post one to you. Buying and wearing a badge helps to promote our charity.

### Special announcement

SDN welcomes Jess and Paul as patrons.

### Awareness day

Could you volunteer at SDN's awareness raising stand at Princess Royal Hospital (PRH), Telford, TF1 6TF, between 10am and 4pm on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> April?



Dear Members,

Can we say that spring has sprung? Certainly it has at Shropshire Disability Network (SDN).

We are in the latter part of the year that started with our 10<sup>th</sup> birthday, and what a year it has been. We have increased our membership and produced SDN table cloths that can be used at events as well as our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary badges.

Those of you who joined us at our meeting in Shrewsbury on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> March will have witnessed a very special announcement – that of the appointment of patrons for SDN.

In 2014 we lost our patron, Emma, who passed away due to her condition. Until now, the time was not right to appoint someone in her place. However, to celebrate our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we are proud to present two patrons: Jess Noel-Hiles, an active campaigner in the People's Parliament and published author, and Paul Bryce, a freelance broadcast journalist and regular presenter on RNIB Connect Radio.

Jess and Paul are both highly respected in the area of disability. We anticipate that they will raise our public profile in their roles as patrons, and you will hear from them in future editions of Your Voice. As Chairperson, I am delighted that they have both accepted this honour.

SDN achieves so much. We appreciate all who are able to give time at different meetings, PRH awareness days, bucket collections or table top sales, or who contribute articles to or distribute this newsletter, not forgetting those who work on our website, enabling us to be the place for disability information in Shropshire and beyond. Thank you!

Best wishes,

***Ruby (Chair)***

## **Fundraising opportunity**

Shropshire Disability Network (SDN) has been given the opportunity to carry out a bucket collection at The Midcounties Co-operative Food supermarket, Bank Farm Road, Radbrook, Shrewsbury, SY3 6DU. Please get in touch by calling or texting 07780 852 229 or emailing [admin@shropshire-disability.net](mailto:admin@shropshire-disability.net), if you can join in this activity for an hour or more between 10am and 6pm on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> April. If you are shopping in the store during this time, do come and say hello!



## **See and Hear Shropshire Exhibition**

10am to 4pm, Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2019.  
Shrewsbury Sports Village, Sundorne Road,  
Harlescott, SY1 4RQ. Free entrance and free  
shuttle bus from Shrewsbury Train Station.

Julian Jackson of Vision Bridge, who completed his Big Blind Walk from Land's End to John O'Groats last year, will open this year's exhibition. Come along to find out more about the equipment and support on offer for people with sight and/or hearing loss.

Shropshire Disability Network (SDN) will run taster sessions in boccia bowls to encourage newcomers to this inclusive sport. The tournament in boccia will move to be held every other year. Shropshire Rural Communities Charity will host all-ability cycling. Seminars will take place on deafblindness, mindfulness and tinnitus, hate crime and disability, and more. Shropshire NHS Audiology will run a hearing aid maintenance clinic.



## **Remembering friends – correction**

Layla McKee was an active member of Shropshire Disability Network (SDN) for four years, regularly attending members' meetings. For health reasons, she is sadly no longer able to do this, and SDN misses her. Layla was also an active member of her local Sight Loss Opportunity Group. SDN apologises unreservedly for the information in the January-February edition of Your Voice which suggested that Layla had passed away and for the upset that this has caused to people who know Layla. SDN received this information in good faith and has put in place a policy to help to prevent any future miscommunications. Copies of the January-February edition displayed online and in public places have been recalled and corrected as far as possible. Please accept our sincere apologies.

**Project officials provide an update to Shropshire Disability Network (SDN) members on Shrewsbury Big Town Plan...**

# **SHREWSBURY**



# **BIG TOWN PLAN**

Over the past 18 months substantial work has been done to prepare this Plan for Shrewsbury.

It is a vision of how we would like to see the town develop and grow over the next 10 to 20 years, and it identifies areas of key opportunity across the town. By having a Plan, we can be pro-active about what we want to happen and not sit back and wait for things to happen that we may have no control over.

LDA Design was involved in creating the document alongside Shrewsbury Business Improvement District (BID), Shrewsbury Town Council and Shropshire Council as well as a large number of stakeholders from businesses, charities and other organisations. It is a new collaborative approach in the way that Shrewsbury and its key partners are working together to plan, prioritise and deliver.

This work has got the Plan to the point where the 10 goals for the town have been set and the vision and the frameworks identified, such as, making movement better, the Big Network and Balancing Growth. These essentially set the direction and guide us when we look to create more details for each of the projects that we want to complete over time that will make the town better. This is the next stage of the process for the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan.

The use of the computer generated images (CGIs) in the Plan was there to show ultimately how different an area could look, if everything in the vision and frameworks could be delivered.

The concerns raised by SDN on areas shown on the CGIs, such as, the location of dropped kerbs and disabled car parking and how the park and ride will operate, will be addressed at the next stages of creating the delivery plans, and they will be consulted on in due course to ensure they are compliant and work for the users of Shrewsbury. These more detailed plans will involve the owners of the buildings and land in the town, as well as identifying where the money and investment will come from to allow the changes to happen.

The latest work involves the Partnership making an application to the Government-led Future High Street Fund which has allocated £675million to co-fund capital projects that bring transformational change and innovative proposals around transport, housing delivery and our public services.

Be assured ongoing updates and communication is a key part of the Plan, and the Partnership is working to use an empty unit in the Charles Darwin Shopping Centre that can act as a “show room” for the Plan, promoting the key messages, and that can be opened up from time to time for the public to access.

Once the unit is opened, the Partners would like to arrange a date for SDN members to drop in and find out more about the Plan and allow us to answer any questions that you may have.

Your Chair, Ruby Hartshorn, has very kindly offered to continue to collate your comments on the Plan and feed them in to us. So please send them by telephone or text message to 07780 852 229, by email to [admin@shropshire-disability.net](mailto:admin@shropshire-disability.net), or by post to SDN, C/o 26 Aldwick Drive, Radbrook Green, Shrewsbury, SY3 6BN.

The Partnership has also provided SDN with 10 large printed copies of the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan for its members to read, and the website for the Plan is [www.shrewsburybigtownplan.org](http://www.shrewsburybigtownplan.org).

## **Keeping safe**

Shropshire Disability Network (SDN) reported on the first joint conference of Shropshire’s Adults’ and Children’s Safeguarding Boards in the Christmas edition of Your Voice. SDN will publish a series of articles on related matters in this newsletter over the coming months. The first of these articles follows...



## **Reporting incidents to the police**

West Mercia Police advise not to report crimes or other incidents via Twitter or other forms of social media. Please phone 101 or in an emergency phone 999. Additional information is often required by officers for the police to act upon any information given.

Please view the advice below on which number you should ring.

999 is for reporting emergency situations only; this is a helpful reminder:

P - Phone 999 only if  
O - Offenders are nearby  
L - Life is at risk  
I - Injury is caused or threatened  
C - Crime or disorder is in progress  
E - Emergency situations



### **What is 101?**

101 is now the number to call when you want to get through to your local police when it is less urgent than 999. It is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Calls to 101 from landlines and mobile networks cost 15 pence per call, no matter what time of day you call or how long you are on the phone.

### **When should I use 101?**

If you have had a minor traffic collision.  
If your property has been damaged.  
If your car has been stolen.  
If you suspect drug dealing.  
If you have been burgled and there are no offenders on scene.  
If you have witnessed a crime.  
If you have information about criminals in your local area.  
If you have seen a missing person.  
If you need crime prevention advice.  
If you want to speak to a local police officer / your local Safer Neighbourhood Team.  
If you want to speak to the police about any other incident that doesn't require an immediate response.  
If you want to make them aware of any policing issues in your local area.

## What happens when you call 101?

When you call 101, you will be greeted by an automated system that will automatically identify your location and offer you the option of being connected to your local police force.

If you would like a different force, you will be given the option to speak to an operator to select your chosen area. Your call will be answered by police contact handlers in the control room of that local police force.

If you are anywhere in the UK, you can still dial 101 and you will be given the option of speaking to police contact handlers in West Mercia. If your selection is not correct, you will be given the option to speak to an operator.

## What if I have a hearing impairment or speech difficulty?

The **emergencySMS** service lets deaf, hard of hearing and speech-impaired people in the UK send an SMS text message to the UK 999 service, where it will be passed to the police, ambulance, fire rescue, or coastguard.

Simply by sending an SMS message to 999, you can call for help and the emergency services will be able to reply to you.

You will need to **register** your mobile phone, before using the emergencySMS service. To register using SMS text messages you must:

- Send the word “register” in an SMS message to 999.
- You will then receive SMS messages about the service.
- When you have read these SMS messages, reply by sending “yes” in an SMS message to 999.
- You will receive an SMS message telling you that your mobile phone is registered or if there is a problem with your registration.
- You can check your mobile phone registration by sending the word “register” in a SMS message to 999.
- You will receive an SMS message telling you if your mobile phone is registered or if there is a problem with your registration.

## Unable to register?

If you try to register and do not receive an SMS message from the emergencySMS service, please check with your mobile communications provider to make sure they support the emergencySMS service.

## Inclusive parkruns in Shropshire

“Parkruns” are 5 kilometre runs which happen in public parks around the UK and the world weekly. It is free of charge, easy and safe to take part. Parkrun is not a race and participants can run, walk or do a mix of both.

The organisers want to welcome everybody. Three parkruns in Shropshire are especially inviting people with a learning disability to join in and get a taste for this sporting and social activity on these Saturdays this summer:

Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2019, 9am  
Shrewsbury parkrun, Quarry Park,  
Shrewsbury, SY1 1RN  
[www.parkrun.org.uk/shrewsbury](http://www.parkrun.org.uk/shrewsbury)

Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2019, 9am  
Telford parkrun, Town Park,  
Hinkshay Road, Telford, TF4 3NZ  
[www.parkrun.org.uk/telford](http://www.parkrun.org.uk/telford)



Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2019, 9am  
Oswestry parkrun, Henley Wood, off Cabin Lane, Oswestry, SY11  
[www.parkrun.org.uk/henleywood](http://www.parkrun.org.uk/henleywood)

The regular community parkrun will be taking place on these days. The organisers are promoting an inclusive activity and are hoping for a larger participation by people with a learning disability or autism on these days:

- as a runner;
- as a walker;
- as a volunteer (volunteers must register in advance);
- as a spectator and/or;
- just for a chat and tea or coffee after the run.



Participants in parkrun can register and print out a barcode in advance via the website [www.parkrun.org.uk](http://www.parkrun.org.uk), if they want to find out the time they take to finish the run. Participants should bring along the barcode on the day.

You can find out more about the special parkruns this summer on this web page, published by the charity Bethphage: [www.bethphage.co.uk/parkrun](http://www.bethphage.co.uk/parkrun). If you would like support to take part in one of these parkruns, please email [running@35007.co.uk](mailto:running@35007.co.uk) or call Bethphage on 01743 272 880. For example, you may want to visit the park or you may want to get together with others to train beforehand, or you may want a buddy to run with you on the day.

Beechtree Community Centre is a charity operating a “Health and Wellbeing” Centre on the Community Hospital site in Whitchurch.

The Centre’s activities are aimed towards:

- older people who are disadvantaged through isolation, poor physical or mental health, diabetes, chronic pulmonary and heart disease, mobility issues, or bereavement;
- unemployed people with additional challenges, including learning difficulties, poor literacy, mental health issues, homelessness, disabilities, or rural isolation;
- young people aged 8–16 years.



The Centre runs regular health and wellbeing activities for these groups:

- IT classes for older people – to maintain social contact, find out about health information, or enjoy a new hobby;
- arts and crafts therapeutic sessions – for positive mental health;
- extend “chair-based” exercise – helping to keep those who are not so good on their feet active and flexible;
- walking for health scheme – short support walks for those who are unable to keep pace with mainstream walking groups;
- healthy cooking/eating sessions – to improve nutrition through information and practical classes;
- community garden – to offer horticultural therapy to those who have felt isolated or faced mental health issues or low self-esteem;
- support for unemployed people with multiple disadvantages – building digital skills and literacy skills, CV writing, making job applications, interview techniques, boosting confidence;
- young people’s after-school club, three nights per week, with opportunities to learn about cooking healthy food and exercising, and to improve social skills and engage in community-wide activities.

To learn more, contact Wendy on 01948 258 220 or [wendy@btcc.org.uk](mailto:wendy@btcc.org.uk).

## Citizens Advice Shropshire changes opening hours

Citizens Advice Shropshire (CAS) is making changes to its opening hours, because of feedback from members of the public, who said that they would like better access to CAS's phone service and timed appointments.



Drop-in sessions will run from 10am to 12.30pm, starting from Monday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2019. Pre-booked appointments only will take place from 1.30pm.

### New opening hours:

Main offices & Telephone service	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>Adviceline</b>	<b>03444 99 11 00</b> from 10am to 4pm Monday to Friday Text relay <b>03444 111 445</b>				
<b>Ludlow</b> Ludlow Youth Centre, Lower Galdeford, SY8 1RT	<b>Drop in:</b> 10am–12.30pm  <b>Booked appointments</b> from 1.30pm		<b>Drop in:</b> 10am–12.30pm  <b>Booked appointments</b> from 1.30pm	<b>Drop in:</b> 10am–12.30pm  <b>Booked appointments</b> from 1.30pm	
<b>Oswestry</b> 34 Arthur Street, SY11 1JN		<b>Drop in:</b> 10am–12.30pm  <b>Booked appointments</b> from 1.30pm	<b>Drop in:</b> 10am–12.30pm  <b>Booked appointments</b> from 1.30pm		<b>Drop in:</b> 10am–12.30pm  <b>Booked appointments</b> from 1.30pm
<b>Shrewsbury</b> Fletcher House, 15 College Hill, SY1 1LY	<b>Drop in:</b> 10am–12.30pm  <b>Booked appointments</b> from 1.30pm	<b>Drop in:</b> 10am–12.30pm  <b>Booked appointments</b> from 1.30pm		<b>Drop in:</b> 10am–12.30pm  <b>Booked appointments</b> from 1.30pm	<b>Drop in:</b> 10am–12.30pm  <b>Booked appointments</b> from 1.30pm

Visit CAS's website, [www.cabshropshire.org.uk](http://www.cabshropshire.org.uk), for all opening times and locations, including outreach.  
Email [contact@shcab.cabnet.org.uk](mailto:contact@shcab.cabnet.org.uk) for general enquiries.



## **Pension Credit for mixed age couples**

The UK government announced in January 2019 that “mixed age couples” – where one partner is of working age and the other is above State Pension age – will no longer be entitled to put in a new claim for Pension Credit from 15<sup>th</sup> May 2019. Pension Credit is an income-related benefit.

Age UK and Citizens Advice are deeply concerned about this change.

Heather Osborne, CEO of Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin, stated:

“Many older people are already missing out on benefits they are entitled to. We strongly encourage all people in a mixed age couple, who know they are eligible for Pension Credit and Housing Benefit, to apply before the deadline on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2019.

“If you are in a mixed age couple but are not sure of your entitlement, we would advise you to organise a welfare benefits check, to assess your eligibility for Pension Credit, Council Tax Support or Housing Benefit, without delay. We cannot urge people strongly enough to come and talk to us, either at Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin or Citizens Advice Shropshire.”

Currently, couples can choose to move from working age benefits to pension age benefits when the older partner reaches State Pension age. From 15<sup>th</sup> May 2019, however, this will no longer be the case for new claimants, and the mixed age couple will receive Universal Credit until the younger partner reaches pension age.

Working age benefits are lower than pensioner benefits. In addition, many mixed aged couples have a care relationship and it is quite common for a younger partner to give up work to care for their older spouse, who may be disabled or have dementia. Such couples could be much worse off.

Age UK is warning that, although in theory this change will not impact on existing claimants – only on new ones, if a mixed age couple temporarily loses their eligibility for Pension Credit, then from 15<sup>th</sup> May they will be unable to regain it. This could happen simply because the pensioner partner travels abroad to see relatives for just over four weeks.

If you are in a mixed age couple and are unsure of the impact of this change, please telephone either Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin on 01743 233 123 or Citizens Advice Shropshire on 0344 499 11 00.

## Taxi licensing and protecting passengers

The UK government is seeking views on proposed statutory guidance to taxi and private hire vehicle licensing authorities on how to use their licensing powers to protect children and vulnerable adults. This consultation closes on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2019.



Visit this government web page about the consultation, <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-licensing-protecting-users>. Here you can download and read:

- Consultation on Statutory Guidance for Licensing Authorities;
- Draft Statutory Guidance for Licensing Authorities;
- Impact Assessment.

Respond online: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/taxis-licence/>.

You can also download and complete a response form. Email this to [SG-Consultation2019@dft.gov.uk](mailto:SG-Consultation2019@dft.gov.uk) or post this to Department for Transport, Buses and Taxis Division (Statutory Guidance Consultation), Great Minster House, 33 Horseferry Road, London, SW1P 4DR.

For help from Shropshire Disability Network to respond, email [secretary@shropshire-disability.net](mailto:secretary@shropshire-disability.net) or call/text us – we can call you back.



To submit items to Your Voice, email [newsletter@shropshire-disability.net](mailto:newsletter@shropshire-disability.net) or write to SDN, C/o 26 Aldwick Drive, Radbrook Green, Shrewsbury, SY3 6BN. Telephone or text SDN on 07780 852 229.



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