



# Your Voice



## Shropshire Disability Network

“The place for disability information in Shropshire”  
Shropshire Disability Network – Charity No 1148256 – Jan-Feb 2020

---

### Shropshire Disability Network Members’ Meeting

Join us for SDN’s first Members’ Meeting of 2020 on Thursday 12th March. The meeting will take place from 10.30am till 1pm at Shropshire Fire & Rescue Service HQ, St Michael’s Street, Shrewsbury, SY1 2HJ. This is an opportunity to meet other members, discuss the running of SDN and its future, and learn from our two excellent guest speakers. Becky Warwick from Shropshire Fire & Rescue will provide the latest information on fire safety support for adults and children locally, and Simon Peleszok from TSB Bank will update us on staying safe from fraudsters. VISS will provide interpretation into British Sign Language.



We can report that SDN welcomed 63 new members to the charity in 2019. SDN also retained its status of Disability Confident Committed till October 2021 in the government’s Disability Confident scheme for employers. Although run entirely by volunteers, SDN was credited with promoting the scheme to other organisations and providing consultation to a fellow charity on where work placements may be found for people with certain disabilities or long-term needs who have interests in specialist fields.



## Opportunity for members | Shropshire Disability Network

### Wildlife session

University Centre Shrewsbury,  
Guildhall, Frankwell Quay,  
Shrewsbury, SY3 8HQ  
2pm-4pm Thursday 5th March

Join the Beautiful Burial Ground Project to find out about our native small mammals which make their homes in churchyards and cemeteries.



Local expert Sam Devine-Turner will lead this interactive, indoor session. It is free to take part, but you must book your place by contacting Georgina Sharp at the charity Caring for God's Acre, which runs the Beautiful Burial Ground Project. The University Centre is accessible for wheelchairs. George will be happy to discuss any access needs, for example, provision of a British Sign Language interpreter or help to get to the venue. Contact George by telephoning 01588 673 041 or emailing [george@cfga.org.uk](mailto:george@cfga.org.uk).

---

### Centre provides mobility scooter

Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre in Craven Arms provides a mobility scooter free of charge for its visitors to use to enjoy the Centre and its riverside Onny Meadows.

The scooter can be found at reception. Simply ask a member of staff for the key. It is available on a first-come, first-served basis.



The Centre hopes that this means that all of its visitors get the opportunity to visit outdoor spots such as Kingfisher Corner and Dragonfly Hotspot. It should make getting around the Centre itself even easier too.

The meadows' all-ability access paths are suitable for wheelchairs and pushchairs, so everyone can enjoy being in the outdoors. To find out more, tel 01588 676 060 or email [info@shropshirehillsdiscoverycentre.co.uk](mailto:info@shropshirehillsdiscoverycentre.co.uk).

## Fibro-Family Support Group

Fibro-Family is a Shropshire fibromyalgia and chronic pain support group who meet in Telford on the first Tuesday of each month at the Ramada Hotel, Telford. We sometimes have guest speakers who come to us to speak on a wide range of topics, mainly health related but other subjects are considered. Mostly we chat over a coffee and occasionally will pick a subject of discussion, for example, what alternatives we use for pain relief such as acupuncture etc.

We also have arranged group meals and outings. One such trip last September was to the British Ironwork Centre near Oswestry. We like to choose places that are accessible to all, as we have varying levels of mobility including wheelchair users such as myself, and the ironworks is very accessible.



We booked with the Centre as a group, which gave us access to a dedicated point of contact on the day, and also meant that we could book a discounted lunch. We arrived separately and met in the coffee shop. Once we had all arrived and had a coffee, our contact at the Centre came and introduced herself and explained the Centre and asked when we wanted lunch and reserved us a table.

As the weather was not kind to us that day, we spent a couple of hours in the showroom/shop, which has a wealth of fascinating objects, artwork and sculptures. After a delicious lunch with excellent service we decided that, as the weather was bad, we would have to skip going round the outside sculpture park and come back again when the weather was better in the spring. We took one last look round the showroom and made several purchases. We will definitely be arranging another trip there in 2020.



Carole Lawrence, Member of Fibro-Family and SDN



## Why Accessible Nature Matters

The natural world is under severe threat – from the chopping down of trees in the Amazon, to sea ice shrinking in the Arctic, to the fields on your doorstep being carved up for houses or a retail park. Not only are we losing nature, but we are also losing a part of ourselves. It is now widely acknowledged that a connection to nature can improve a person's health and wellbeing.

A study in 2019 found that 83% of people found that their mental health was significantly better when they were surrounded by nature. Pastimes such as bird watching and walks in the woodland can largely be taken for granted by those who do not have a disability. But what about those who do have a physical or learning disability and their rights to access nature? The figures show that:

- *1 in 3 young people with a learning disability spend less than one hour outside their home on a typical Saturday (Mencap, 2016).*
- *A third of disabled people experience difficulties related to their impairment in accessing public areas and leisure (Papworth Trust, 2018).*
- *Research by Copestake et al. (2014). Disabled people reported that places and spaces they wished to visit were often inaccessible to them, with some of the barriers identified as:*
  - inaccessible buildings;
  - lack of reliable information about accessibility;
  - staff with limited knowledge and awareness of accessibility;
  - lack of clean and adequate disabled toilet and changing facilities.

In 2016 I established a campaign called 'All for Nature and Nature for All', which aims to make nature reserves and wildlife activities accessible to all regardless of ability. Over the past four or five years I have been addressing this issue with several wildlife charities in Shropshire.

I am not shocked by these statistics on access to green places, as I still feel there is a great amount of work to be done in this area. Towards this, for example, the charity Caring for God's Acre has been offering individuals at Shropshire Disability Network a chance to experience and get close to wildlife in churchyards and cemeteries. This is through its 'Beautiful Burial Ground Project', and this initiative has given people who may not otherwise experience nature a chance to be surrounded by it.

There are several other projects around the county, such as 'Feeding the Birds', which is run by Shropshire Wildlife Trust. This enables people who might struggle to get out of the house as a result of illness or mobility to have a bird table or feeders placed in their garden and to meet up with a volunteer and watch and identify the different birds which enter the garden.

In November of last year, Caring for God's Acre, SDN and myself attended an event run by the Diocese of Lichfield, which is part of the Church of England, about the importance of accessible churchyards. The organiser of this event, The Revd Dr David Primrose, is the Diocesan Enabler of Transforming Church and Communities. He runs an award scheme for churchyards that are wildlife friendly and he is aiming to create another award for how accessible a churchyard is. The meeting achieved a great deal, and Caring for God's Acre is planning to add an information section about 'access' to its churchyard pack, which it gives to volunteers and church wardens.

As a disabled person, I feel what this charity is offering is great, but I also see the wider picture. For example, I feel it is vital that we in SDN continue to talk about access to green places even when initiatives like the 'Beautiful Burial Ground Project' cease to be. In June of this year I am keen to work with SDN to develop an 'All for Nature and Nature for All' Shropshire forum, which could meet every three months to discuss accessible nature and have guest speakers from wildlife charities to talk about plans for nature reserves and projects. This is with the hope that our input will help them to consider accessibility as a main factor when designing nature reserves and initiatives to get people involved with nature.

I am currently in the process of putting together a website for my campaign, and in June, July and August I am interested in interviewing other disabled people about their experience of nature, through blogs and films.



Ellie Forrester, Member of SDN

## **Shropshire Libraries explain their helpful role in health and wellbeing...**

At Shropshire Libraries, we are keen to take a key role in supporting the health and wellbeing of our communities. We pride ourselves on being a welcoming and safe space. Our friendly staff are on hand to help you to the best of our abilities and we offer lots of services.

We are certainly more than just books, though of course we have plenty. You can come in to browse our selections and, if your local branch does not have what you are looking for, we can order in from one of our other libraries. The ordering service is free of charge for carers and anyone living with a long-term health condition or disability. We also have larger print editions and audiobooks.

Our e-library is available online 24/7 and you can access e-books, e-audio, e-magazines and e-newspapers for free with your library card and PIN on your home device. This is perfect for those struggling to get out and about. You can browse the selections via this page on Shropshire Council's website: <https://shropshire.gov.uk/libraries/find-a-book/e-library/> .

Shropshire Libraries have several Reading Well collections. These contain books that provide information and advice to help people to understand and manage selected conditions and common symptoms. The books also tell personal stories and suggest practical support for family, friends and carers. The collections cover common mental health conditions, dementia and long-term conditions.

For young carers, the Reading Well Shelf Help for young people is a great resource. It provides a booklist of 35 titles, all selected to provide young people aged 13 to 18 years with advice, information and support to help them to understand their mental health and wellbeing. The booklist includes memoirs, graphic novels and fiction.

Our libraries have computers that are for use by members and can be used for up to two hours free of charge. Scanners are also available as well as printing and photocopying for a small charge. Several branches are fortunate to have one-to-one IT volunteers available at certain times in the week, and Shrewsbury Library also has a Basic Skills volunteer who can help with literacy and numeracy skills.

We are constantly putting on a variety of events. We welcome you to check out the events posters displayed in our libraries.

All our events can be viewed on this page of Shropshire Council's website: <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/libraries/library-events/> .

At Shrewsbury Library, we have been setting up a new group for those living with long-term health conditions. We have a different activity each month and time for an informal coffee and chat afterwards. So far, we have had a mindfulness session and a calligraphy workshop. Look out for us on Shropshire Disability Network's website: <https://shropshiredisability.net/> .

Further services at our libraries include Hearing Aid Support Clinics run by NHS-trained volunteers at Oswestry, Shrewsbury and Whitchurch. Oswestry Library offers a Carers' Support Group and Ludlow Library has a Dementia Support Drop-in. Whitchurch Library has a regular visit from a community banker to answer your banking enquiries.

For more general events, several libraries offer Books Aloud sessions (reading sessions for adults), 'craft and chatter' or knitting sessions and scrabble clubs. Oswestry and Shrewsbury have Learning at Lunchtime programmes – regular talks and workshops on a variety of topics – for a small charge. We also offer regular rhyme times and story times across the county, as well as other events over the school holidays. These are suitable for anyone with a young family who would benefit from free or low-cost events to which they can take their children.



At Shropshire Libraries, we are always happy to meet visitors, both old and new, and we really hope that some of our services can be of benefit to you. For more information about anything that we have to offer, please check out the library pages on Shropshire Council's website: <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/libraries/> .

You can also pop into your local branch or give them a call. For example, for Ludlow call 01743 250 510, for Oswestry call 01743 250 351, for Shrewsbury call 01743 255 308 or for Whitchurch call 01948 662 238.

## Free Computer Drop-In Sessions

Telford & The Wrekin Senior Citizens Forum can help you at its four, weekly computer drop-in sessions. The sessions are run by volunteers.

- Learn how to get more from your device, whether it is a laptop, tablet or smartphone.
- Stay connected by getting to grips with email, video calling, social media.
- Learn how to navigate the internet safely.
- Manage photos, type letters, and more.



Go along to get advice, solve a problem, learn something new or just gain more confidence and chat to others. There's no need to book, just turn up.

**Hartshorne Court**, Burton Street, Dawley, TF4 2BY, Wed, 10am-12noon  
**Oliver Court**, Ladycroft, Wellington, TF1 3BU, Wed, 2pm-4pm  
**The Hub on the Hill**, Southgate, Sutton Hill, TF7 4HG, Mon, 2pm-4pm  
**Butter Cross Court**, Stafford St, Newport, TF10 7UD, Wed 11am-1pm

Call or text Senior Citizens Forum on 07932 828 333 or 07552 975 676.

## Loudwater Community Arts Re-opens

Loudwater re-opened its doors in Ludlow in January, after experiencing flooding in June. Thanks to much hard work, there is a fantastic, newly refurbished studio for everyone to enjoy.

Loudwater is an open access arts and crafts studio for the whole community. It is set up with dedicated creative zones, including ceramics, and offers a range of creative opportunities such as workshops and family sessions.



The studio is accessible and has disabled parking bays directly outside its entrance. It offers many different activities for disabled adults, including opportunities to develop life skills in a fun and inclusive way.

Address: 16-16A Burway Trading Estate, Bromfield Road, Ludlow, SY8 1EN. Telephone: 01584 877 272. Email: [loudwater@visionhomes.org.uk](mailto:loudwater@visionhomes.org.uk) .



## Tea with a Pony

The Cavalier Centre in Farley near Much Wenlock is inviting people living with dementia or other disabilities to visit its site for a new experience.



This experience involves spending around 20 minutes watching a weekday, group riding session from the comfort of the viewing gallery, while enjoying a cup of tea or coffee and a slice of cake. The visitors may then spend some time meeting and stroking one of the ponies, before walking through the stables, taking in the sights, sounds and smells of the yard. The experience finishes with a gentle stroll around the picturesque grounds, taking in the views of the surrounding hills and countryside.

The Centre can accommodate four individuals and their carers per session. For more information or to book, please contact the Centre by telephoning 01952 983 200 or emailing [info@cavaliercentre.org.uk](mailto:info@cavaliercentre.org.uk).

## All-inclusive, All-ability Football

The New Saints Football Club Foundation is introducing inclusive, all-ability football sessions at the Park Hall Stadium in Whittington near Oswestry. Starting from 24<sup>th</sup> January 2020, the sessions will run from 6pm to 7pm every Friday. The cost is £3 per player per session.



This is for players over 16 years of age. Participants will have the chance to improve their mental and physical wellbeing, while representing The New Saints Football Club in friendlies and tournaments. The Club and Foundation support: disability, mental health, social inclusion, confidence building, learning difficulties.

For more information, please telephone Tom Rowlands on 01691 889 791 or email [tom.rowlands@tnsfcfoundation.org.uk](mailto:tom.rowlands@tnsfcfoundation.org.uk).

## SaTH Community Engagement Meetings

The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust (SaTH) is committed to working with its communities to make sure it delivers the best healthcare for people living in Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and Mid Wales.

The Community Engagement team organises People's Academies, giving people an insight into the NHS and how it works locally, and Community Working Together meetings in Shrewsbury and Telford. SaTH invites local people to come along to these quarterly meetings to find out what is happening at their hospital and to talk to the team about anything they think it needs to know.



If you would like the team to attend your meeting or community event, please telephone 01743 491 473 or email [sath.engagement@nhs.net](mailto:sath.engagement@nhs.net).

### Community Engagement Meetings

These meetings are open to everyone living in the areas served by SaTH. The aim of the meetings is for SaTH to engage with the local communities, provide updates on the various hospital services and answer any questions from the public. You can register for free, either through this Eventbrite web page, <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/the-shrewsbury-and-telford-hospital-nhs-trust-24564280682>, or by contacting the Community Engagement team by telephone or email.

The meetings run from 10am to 12noon and the dates and venues are:

17th March 2020 –The Glebe Centre, Glebe Street, Wellington, Telford, Shropshire, TF1 1JP

19th March 2020 – Shropshire Education and Conference Centre (SECC), Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, Mytton Oak Road, Shrewsbury, SY3 8XQ

18th June 2020 – The Glebe Centre, Telford

25th June 2020 – SECC, Royal Shrewsbury Hospital site

8th September 2020 – The Glebe Centre, Telford

17th September 2020 – SECC, Royal Shrewsbury Hospital site

8th December 2020 – The Glebe Centre, Telford

10th December 2020 – SECC, Royal Shrewsbury Hospital site

## How Is Home Care Working in Shropshire?

Home care (also known as domiciliary care) is often seen as the ‘front line’ of social care delivery and is critical to the longstanding intention to enable people to ‘age in place’ and to deliver care as close as possible to people’s homes. In 2015, more than 350,000 older people in England were estimated to use home care services and a further 76,300 younger people with learning disabilities, physical disabilities or mental health problems were also estimated to be using publicly funded home care.

Healthwatch Shropshire is asking those receiving home care in Shropshire to tell them about their experiences.



Lynn Cawley, Chief Officer of Healthwatch Shropshire, said: “Provision of home care comes with its challenges particularly in rural areas. We would like to know about the service users’ experiences across Shropshire. We hope to build a picture of how care at home works in Shropshire, identifying good practice and if there is anything that could be improved.”

Complete the survey online:

<https://www.healthwatchshropshire.co.uk/home-care-questionnaire> .

Or contact Healthwatch Shropshire directly by telephoning 01743 237 884 or emailing [enquiries@healthwatchshropshire.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchshropshire.co.uk) .

## Healthwatch Telford & Wrekin Public Meeting

Where: The Hub, 139 High Street, Newport, Shropshire, TF10 7BH

When: 6pm-8pm Monday 16th March 2020

Everyone who is keen to share their views on health and social care services in the Telford & Wrekin area is welcome.



Two guest speakers will deliver presentations on the Telford and Wrekin Safeguarding Partnership and Wellbeing Independence Partnership. The following organisations will have information tables: Healthwatch Telford & Wrekin, Citizens Advice Telford & the Wrekin, Wellbeing Independence Partnership, Salute, Live Well Telford, Community Learning & Employment – Education and Skills, Primary Care Wellbeing Services.

If you are interested in attending, please register by telephoning 01952 739 540 or emailing [admin@healthwatchtelfordandwrekin.co.uk](mailto:admin@healthwatchtelfordandwrekin.co.uk) .

**At Shropshire Disability Network we appreciate  
our supporters who advertise on our website**



has recently renewed its advert online.

The company can be contacted by telephoning 0800 294 5915, emailing [enquiries@lblaw.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@lblaw.co.uk) or visiting the website <https://www.lblaw.co.uk/>.

## **Festive Fundraising**

SDN would like to thank the Manager and Community Champions Sandra and Margaret at Sainsbury's Telford for allowing us to carry out a bag pack and bucket collection at their store on 9<sup>th</sup> December. We raised a valuable £223.43. This is though just over half the sum that we raised in the previous December, as we lacked enough volunteers. We thank Abby, Colin, Gillian, Harry, Ruby and Sam for giving their time to raise these funds in support of SDN and Safe Places Shropshire. On this day, we also dismantled our display at the Shrewsbury Charity Christmas Card Shop. Our volunteers Jill, Maralyn, Phil, Philip, Ruby and Suzanne covered 11 shifts at the pop-up shop. We were happy to contribute to the overall success of the shop and to raise awareness of SDN and Safe Places during the six weeks of its opening. This festive season, we sold £241.65 worth of our cards (including £138.70 at the Charity Christmas Card Shop).



**Shropshire  
Disability  
Network**

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.

Facebook  
Twitter  
Website

/ShropshireDisabilityNetwork and /SafePlacesShropshire  
@ShropDisNetwork and @SafePlaceShrops  
<https://shropshire-disability.net/>

**SDN Disclaimer:** Shropshire Disability Network (SDN) seeks to be “the voice” for disability information in Shropshire by using two prime tools – this newsletter and our website, <https://shropshire-disability.net/>. Views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those held by SDN or anyone connected with it. SDN does not endorse commercial products or services, any mention is for information only. If you have a problem with the content, please contact us via [newsletter@shropshire-disability.net](mailto:newsletter@shropshire-disability.net).