



# Hastings & Rother Disability Forum Update

April 2006

## Introduction

Welcome to the second edition of HRDF Update, which gives me the chance as Chair to pass on news and information that just can't wait until our next newsletter. Read on ...

## Annual General Meeting

On Friday, 24 March we held our AGM. Previous AGMs had been held around October / November, but we decided to move it to spring, with the hope that a warmer time of year might attract more people. As well as electing the committee and conducting all the other usual business of an AGM, we adopted a number of suggested changes to our constitution, which was last updated in 1996. Committee officers for the following year are: myself (Theresa) as Chair, Kevin Towner and Neil Milton as joint Vice Chair, Paul Borthwick as Treasurer, and Lizzie Hawke as Secretary. Other committee members are: Graham Hodge, Mary Monk, John Yeadon, Ian Butler, James Kemp and Neil Simmons. Hazel Simmons has stood down from the committee, and we would like to thank her for all her hard work during her long-standing involvement with HRDF's committee.

## Obituary

### Linda Mooncie

You may have read recently in ESDA's Aware magazine that an old friend and active member of HRDF passed away recently. Linda Mooncie was a driving force behind the Forum for several years. As well as being instrumental in the creation of the first "Access for All" trail at Hastings Country Park, she was passionate about the arts and was involved in staging an arts workshop at the De La Warr Pavillion lead by Alison Lapper, the artist whose statue now sits in Trafalgar Square.

Linda will be sadly missed, and we are currently speaking with Linda's family, with a view to dedicating the recently opened second Accessible Trail at the Country Park to her memory.

## Cycling in Hastings Town Centre

As I'm sure you are aware, cycling is currently not allowed in the town centre of Hastings, but Hastings Urban Bikes (HUB) has raised a petition, asking Hastings Borough Council to consider allowing cyclists to use town centre areas to give them safer access to the shopping area and the station, meaning that they could avoid busy roads such as Albert Road and Harold

Place. It would also allow a National Cycle Network route to be signed through the town centre, which would link with the seafront. They would like this to be trialled for a 14-month period.

A recent study carried out by the Department of Transport suggested that in general cyclists tend to slow down and take more care in pedestrian areas, and that pedestrians were not concerned for their safety when cyclists were around. However, we (the HRDF committee) believe that this is often not the case. There are many issues for disabled people – many do not hear or see cyclists coming towards them until the last minute and are unable to move out of the way quickly enough.

Hastings Borough Council would like to know your views. Should cycling in Hastings town centre be trialled, or would you like the current ban to stay?

Please take part in this debate and contact Hastings Borough Council with your views. We have until 22 April to feed in our comments. You can either send them to: Highways Manager, Century House, 100 Menzies Road, St Leonards-on-Sea, East Sussex TN38 9BB, or e-mail [cycling@hastings.gov.uk](mailto:cycling@hastings.gov.uk)

## **Free Bus Passes for Disabled People and Those Over 60**

From 1 April this year anybody who is disabled or over 60 has been able to apply for a free bus pass. The criteria for applying is the same as for the concessionary bus passes previously available. The new bus pass allows travel throughout East Sussex. The pass also allows travel into Kent, as long as the return journey is made on the same day. As with the Concessionary Bus Pass, free travel is allowed after 9.00am during weekdays and at any time during weekends.

Entitlement to apply for a bus pass is defined by a rather out-dated definition set out in the Transport Act 2001. It also appears that there is a requirement for applicants to prove they are disabled, but we are currently unclear as to what kind of proof this has to be. Applications must also be made to the Council that covers the area in which they live – i.e. if you live in Hastings, you must visit the Hastings Borough Council office, and if you live in Rother, you must visit the Rother District Council office.

If you have any difficulties around applying for a free bus pass, then you should either discuss this with your local Councillor, or contact Don Benn at East Sussex County Council.

## **Contact Details**

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