



Hastings & Rother Disability Forum Update

December 2007

Introduction

Welcome to the December edition of our latest newsletter. Due to struggling resources amongst committee members, at present we are unable to produce a full newsletter. However, we want to make sure our disabled members and local organisations are kept up-to-date with what we're doing and to bring things to you in a timely manner, so have decided, for the time being, to produce a smaller update every couple of months. We hope this finds you all well, and wish everyone a happy Christmas and an exciting new year.

Theresa Hodge (Chair)

Reference Groups of Disabled People

Paul Borthwick writes ...

As you may know, Hastings Borough Council are in the process of setting up a reference group of disabled people. Disabled people in and around Hastings have been invited to become involved in working with the Council to help improve the services that they provide to disabled people. This is a good way of getting involved and having your say, and rather than simply complaining that something doesn't work, you can actually work with the Council to ensure that improvements are made so it does work in the future.

If you are interested in finding out more about this opportunity, please contact Theresa Hodge on 01424 205414 or research@eaconsultancy.co.uk.

Rother District Council are also looking at setting up a similar reference group in the not too distant future. HRDF will keep

you informed of any developments, so keep an eye out for further information about this opportunity coming to you in the post.

Sound Help

Graham Hodge writes ...

As you may be aware, our arts festival in celebration of International Day of Disabled People in 2006 was funded by a grant from Awards for All. The funding also enabled us to organise two open meetings in 2007, and to buy a sound system and induction loop amplifier. WE have used the equipment at a number of events and we feel that so far it has been a successful project and has made quite a difference to people being able to hear at our open meetings.

Setting up the PA and loop system for an event takes about 2 hours single handed - sometimes more depending on the venue. so I am looking for someone to help me out with this and perhaps take over when I am not available. You would need to be fairly fit as the kit is heavy - the speakers alone weigh 12Kg a-piece!

The kit is more or less fool-proof and basic training could be provided but this would suit someone who perhaps has had experience with a band or maybe who is a Hi Fi enthusiast and has some knowledge of electronics and this sort of thing.

If you are interested and would like to know a bit more, please get in touch with me via the forum telephone number or email me at graham@hrdf.org.uk.

Refuse and Recycling

Paul Borthwick writes ...

In September we held an open meeting to look at issues for disabled people around the new refuse and recycling arrangements in Rother. Unfortunately nobody from Rother District Council attended the meeting, but we took the opportunity to hear from those members who had attended so that we could feed back the relevant issues to Rother District Council.

Since then we have been in contact with Rother District Council to look at the large number of issues raised at the meeting, and members of the committee will be meeting with staff from the Council on 20 December to try and address those issues. We will feed back to you in the new year on any progress made.

Having heard from disabled residents of Rother about the issues affecting them, we have highlighted those issues to relevant staff at Hastings Borough Council as we feel that many of the same issues may be coming up for residents of Hastings with the introduction of the new twin bin scheme over the past few months.

If you live in Hastings and are having problems with the collection of your refuse and recycling, we would be interested in hearing from you.

Christmas and New Year Collections

Theresa Hodge writes ...

I've been passed details of the alternative collection arrangements for refuse and recycling collections over the Christmas and New Year period, and feel this is a good opportunity to pass this information on to our members.

Rother

Normal Collection Day	Revised Collection Day
Monday 24 Dec	Earlier Date Saturday 22 Dec
Tuesday 25 Dec	Earlier Date Monday 24 Dec
Wednesday 26 Dec	Later Date Thursday 27 Dec
Thursday 27 Dec	Later Date Friday 28 Dec
Friday 28 Dec	Later Date Saturday 29 Dec
Monday 31 Dec	Same Date Monday 31 Dec
Tuesday 1 Jan	Later Date Wednesday 2 Jan
Wednesday 2 Jan	Later Date Thursday 3 Jan
Thursday 3 Jan	Later Date Friday 4 Jan
Friday 4 Jan	Later Date Saturday 5 Jan

Hastings

Normal Collection Day	Revised Collection Day
Monday 24 Dec	Same Date Monday 24 Dec
Tuesday 25 Dec	Later Date Thursday 27 Dec
Wednesday 26 Dec	Later Date Friday 28 Dec
Thursday 27 Dec	Later Date Saturday 29 Dec
Friday 28 Dec	Later Date Sunday 30 Dec
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Tuesday 1 Jan	Later Date Wednesday 2 Jan
Wednesday 2 Jan	Later Date Thursday 3 Jan
Thursday 3 Jan	Later Date Friday 4 Jan
Friday 4 Jan	Later Date Saturday 5 Jan

Important information for all Bexhill Library Users

Mick Bacon from Hastings Central Library writes ...

During the next few months Bexhill Library will be undergoing significant building and refurbishment works in order to improve the facilities it offers.

The work will commence in late January 2008 and will continue until April 2008. Improvements include:

- A new lift and improved access for all.
- New carpeting, shelving, seating, tables, lighting and redecoration in the Ground Floor Library.
- A new entrance from Western Road.

The Ground Floor library will be closed for the full period of these works. Most of the existing services will continue to be provided during the course of the work, although these will be on a smaller scale. Please note:

- The services will be available from the First Floor.
- Access to the First Floor will be by stairs only.
- The lift will not be available during the works period.
- A help desk will be provided in the existing entrance lobby at Ground Floor level.

Staff will be happy to provide you with more information on services including the following:

- What the temporary arrangement may mean to you as an individual.
- What will be available on the First Floor.
- Adjustments to the People's Network services.
- Help Desk facilities in the Ground Floor entrance lobby.
- Service options for those who may not be able to access the First Floor via the stairs.
- No access to the First Floor or space at Ground Floor level for leaving pushchairs, buggies, shopping trolleys etc.
- The suspension of public parking at the rear of the library during the works period.
- Bexhill Rhymetime arrangements at Edgerton Park and details of Rhymetimes to be held in other libraries.
- Increased borrowing levels and loan periods.
- Using your Library Ticket at other libraries.
- A list of the nearest libraries with opening hours.
- A list of the nearest Mobile Library Stops.

There will be some disruption to the environment during the building works, but these will be kept to a minimum as far as possible. Staff at the Library apologise for any inconvenience caused and thank you for your cooperation.

New Access Guide for Hastings & St Leonards

Paul Borthwick, Chair of the Access Group, writes ...

Over the last couple of months we have been working with Hastings Borough Council on a new edition of the access guide "Hastings & St Leonards Made Easy". The previous guide was produced over five years ago and had become somewhat out-of-date. We have looked at a number of different sites, and it's interesting to note that most sites around Hastings have not changed in the past five years. The new guide will be printed in the first half of next year, and we hope it will be better and more informative than its predecessor.

During the course of our visits to sites to be included in the guide, we are making a list of improvements that need to be made in order to make the sites more accessible. Hastings Borough Council are taking that information on board and using it to include in their planned work for the coming months. In this way, we can help the Council to improve access to their facilities and actually make a difference.

Planning for 2008

Theresa Hodge writes ...

On Monday, 17 December, the HRDF committee members are taking an opportunity to review how we work together as a committee and to look at what our plans are for 2008. We want to find better ways of keeping in touch with our members, and finding out what the issues are that affect you, so that we can truly say that we are tackling the issues that you want us to. We hold regular Access Group meetings, which any disabled person can attend, and from time to time hold open meetings on "hot topics" concerning disabled people. Some committee members also attend meetings of key local decision-making partnerships so that we can keep in touch with what's going on in

the area and raise any issues that we believe will impact on disabled people.

We want to feed back to you as members in a timely way about what is going on and to get your views on what is happening, but are aware that we don't always do this as successfully as we'd like. We're aware that attending open meetings isn't suitable for everyone, so want to find other ways of working. So please, please get in touch and let us know how we can work better to keep you informed and take forward the issues that affect you as disabled people living and working in Hastings and Rother.

Fuel Poverty in Hastings & Rother

Hastings and Rother Citizens Advice Bureau is working in partnership with EDF Energy Trust to try and alleviate fuel poverty in Hastings and Rother.

EDF Energy Trust is an Independent Charitable Trust funded by donations from EDF Energy, including the energy suppliers formerly known as London Energy, Seaboard Energy and SWEB Energy.

The Trust aims to contribute to the relief of poverty amongst those who are unable to meet or pay charges for the supply of energy to properties they live in and to try and prevent poverty through educating the public in relation to debt awareness and prevention. The Trust has provided funding to the Citizen's Advice Bureau to ensure that EDF Energy customers who have any types of debt, including energy debts, credit debts or priority debts, can access the service and receive appropriate assistance with their problems.

This could be by making an application to the Trust to clear all energy debts, receiving relevant budgeting advice, raising bankruptcy fees or negotiating with creditors and offering sustainable repayments.

If you are an EDF customer and require more details, please phone Dina at the

Citizen's Advice Bureau, and she will make an appointment for you to complete an application form if relevant. You can also contact Dina if you are an organisation and feel that your staff could benefit from a presentation and advice on completing the EDF Energy Trust forms. Dina's telephone number is 01424 721386.

Tell Us - Equality 2025

Theresa Hodge writes ...

On 12 November I attended the first public meeting for disabled people held by Equality 2025. The aim of the event was to find out what issues disabled people thought the Government should be aware of.

Equality 2025 has been established to help support the Government's pledge of achieving equality for all disabled people by the year 2025. It was set up in December 2006 by the Government, in response to a report called "Improving Life Chances of Disabled people" and is a network of disabled people which advise the Government on issues affecting the lives of disabled people across the UK, and is a new way of bringing the views and experiences of disabled people to the Government to help design policies and services for disabled people.

As well as an introduction to the work of Equality 2025, the event enabled people to discuss in groups a number of hot topics. These were: the development of Centres for Independent Living, the United Nations Convention on Disability Rights, hate crime, and young people and their rights to full citizenship. The day ended with a question and answer panel session.

Equality 2025 will be organising regional events during 2008, so as soon as we find out about any events going on in our region, we will let you know.

Next Copy Deadline

Material to be included in the next newsletter should reach us by 1 February 2008.

Contact Details

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