



## **Hastings & Rother Disability Forum**

# **March Newsletter**

Hello everybody-we hope 2009 has got off to a good start. This is the first edition of a regular newsletter that will be sent out every 2 months by the Forum. In this issue: The new committee, East Sussex County Council wants your views on services for disabled people, 1066 Housing Association, dropped kerbs, our website and your views.

### **A New Committee**

At the Annual General Meeting of the Disability Forum a new committee was elected. We would like to thank the previous committee for all their hard work and dedication to supporting disabled people in Hastings and Rother. Special thanks go to Theresa Hodge who chaired the Forum so brilliantly and gave so much of her time and effort.

At the first meeting the following committee posts were agreed:

Chair- Charles Ellis

Vice-Chair- Dave Rogers

Treasurer- Paul Borthwick

Secretary- Rosemary Iddenden

The committee will meet monthly.

### **Channel 4 Wants You If You're Getting Married This Spring**

Channel 4 are making a unique observational documentary about weddings and married life in the UK for the prestigious Cutting Edge series and we are looking for a huge cross section of couples to get in touch! Contact Ang on 07505 902 510 / 020 7749 3112

## **East Sussex County Council Wants Your Views On Living With A Disability**

Living with disability - what are the facts?

LIFE can be hard, especially when you are disadvantaged by ill health or disability.

That's why people in Hastings and 1066 Country are being asked to speak out.

East Sussex County Council staff want to hear the experiences of people living with a long-term health condition, physical disability or sensory impairment - and what type of support would make a real difference to their lives.

These comments will then be used to plan a range of health and social care services in East Sussex.

A person living with Multiple Sclerosis, for example, might think the council's approach to care is inflexible and doesn't respond quickly enough during a relapse.

An adult who is registered blind may not want 'care', but support to find a job.

A wife whose husband has had a stroke, might need to balance childcare with caring, but finds this difficult with the current set up of services on offer.

If you have an opinion on how things could be improved visit [www.eastsussex.gov.uk/yourcouncil/consultation/current](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/yourcouncil/consultation/current) and click on Improving Life Chances.

Alternatively call 01273 482533 for more information.

All comments must reach the council by Friday May 22.

### **HRDF Website**

We urgently need to update our website. The problem we have is that web design is really expensive and we can't afford to spend a lot of money in this area. Can anybody help us develop a high-class website? If so please get in touch either by e-mail or the address shown in the Contact section of the newsletter. We would be really grateful for some help in this area.

## 1066 Housing Association

Many readers will be tenants of 1066 Housing Association and living in 'Sheltered' accommodation, and will know that 1066HA are implementing many changes.

The first is the merging of 1066HA with eight other Housing Associations and now that the share holders have voted for the merger to go ahead, 1066HA will cease to exist come April 09.

Another change is that there will be no more sheltered housing for the elderly, vulnerable or disabled; they will now be called Housing for Older People. But the Community Housing Officers will disappear, and not everyone who is living in what are now called Sheltered Housing will have a care package. It will all go over to what they call 'floating support'. So someone at 94 may need some care, but the rest of the people who live on the same floor of that building will not get any care from the floating support provided by C.A.S.A.

One of the other things that will change is the Handy-person service. This service is going over to a response service. So if your toilet seat breaks, or your curtain rail falls down you ring up and report it, and once you have been out, bought a replacement toilet seat and spoken to them again, they will send someone round within the next seven working days. I don't know how little old Mary who is 94, blind, with no relatives is supposed to cope? The floating support she may receive will certainly not be allowed to go and buy it for her.

I cannot believe the powers that be within Amicus Horizon Group, the new name for 1066HA, think that this is going to be an improvement on having a handy-person visit a sheltered housing scheme once a week to work through the list of jobs. It will be good for the landlord, but I fear a complete disaster for the elderly, vulnerable and disabled people who will live in the new Housing for Older People.

Dave Rogers Chairman of the Neighbourhood Board of 1066 Housing Association

## **Dropped Kerbs**

Congratulations to East Sussex County Council for listening to representations from The Forum & The Access Group in lowering kerbs on routes to St. Leonards & the Town Centre.

Although the requests have taken time to be met it does show that we are listened to and change does take place.

We will be asking for the dropped kerbs in front of Morrisons to be looked at again as in some places they do not really match the standards that the others in Queens Road, Bohemia Road, and London Road St. Leonards do.

Along with those of us with wheelchairs or scooters it must be a great advantage for parents with prams and pushchairs too

## **The Newsletter**

We would welcome your views about this newsletter—if you have any comments please send them to us by the links below. Also if you have any items of news or information that you would like us to publish in the newsletter, again please get in touch.

We intend to produce a newsletter every 2 months but in order to do so we need items of news and interest. Please get in touch!

In the next issue we will say something about the priorities that the Hastings and Rother Disability Forum want to look at over the forthcoming year. We will be really keen to get your feedback about these so please look out for the next issue which will be with you in March.

## **Contact Us**

Postal address: HRDF, PO Box 269, Hastings, TN34 9BS

Via e mail: [enquiries@hrdf.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@hrdf.org.uk)

**The views or articles in this newsletter are not necessarily those of HRDF or ESDA.**

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