



# Re-action

Hastings & Rother Disability Forum  
Newsletter Spring 2005—issue 4

## ACCESS FOR ALL

**The Access Group** is a sub-group of the Hastings & Rother Disability Forum. The group looks at specific issues around access. The Group meets once a month at Hastings Town Hall and is attended by both Forum members and Council Officers (including Rother District Council and Hastings Borough Council Access Officers).

We look at the **access issues** involved in new projects and developments. We invite specific people to attend the meetings to discuss a project under discussion and have also had site visits to see how our ideas are used in practise.

Recently we have been involved with the proposed cycle lane on Bexhill promenade; the redevelopment of St Leonard's Gardens and the development of a second Access Trail at Fairlight Country Park. We now have such a good working relationship with both councils that we are usually consulted on all issues that will affect disabled people.

This means that we are usually quite a busy sub-group that has a direct involvement with making sure access is included in all agendas.

Another task that we are involved in is looking at planning applications within both Hastings and Rother to make sure that the plans are accessible and meet minimal requirements set out in planning regulations. John (Vice-Chair of HRDF) is vigilant for any planning applications with public access implications and frequently objects on behalf of HRDF.

If you are interested in looking at planning applications to see if the plans are accessible to you they are available on [www.hastings.gov.uk](http://www.hastings.gov.uk) or [www.rother.gov.uk](http://www.rother.gov.uk) - open 'planning' and look for 'new applications'. When you find an application that you wish to comment on, we are advised that this information is best presented as an 'objection'.

**If you wish to know more about the Access Group, ring the HRDF office on 01424 201201.**



### Alexandra Park Band Concerts Bandstand—Summer 2005 Sunday 3—5pm

19/06/05  
26/06/05  
10/07/05  
17/07/05  
24/07/05

31/07/05  
07/08/05  
14/08/05  
21/08/05  
XX/08/05!





## **OPEN DAY, Magnet Centre 25th June 2005, 11am**

You are cordially invited to the Magnet Centre, where the HRDF will show you some of its work. We have invited H.A.T.S (The new community transport service that has taken over from Dial-a-Ride) and VOSdP (Voluntary Services Supporting Disabled People) which is a group which meets to share information and resources and is comprised of those organisations that work for or with disabled people. HRDF has been working with Hastings Borough Council to make the Country Park accessible for all as well as working within the Local Strategic Partnership and the Community Network to ensure that the Forum is represented in these areas.

Do come along and see what your Forum has been achieving. Booking your free place in advance will help us plan the event even better. Tel: 01424 201201

### **Meeting of Voluntary Organisations Supporting Disabled People (VOSdP) 29th March 2005**

This meeting was not well attended and it seems that since the Station Plaza plans failed during the planning process the VOSdP has lost it's way. We looked at the original terms of reference and are looking for more groups to join us and share their expertise.

Darren Fuller spoke at the meeting about the Sensory Impairment Team at Social Services being disbanded and how there is little information about this around.

Rosemary Iddenden informed the meeting about the effects of the NICE committee report on prescription drugs for people with Alzheimer's disease. The drugs cost £2.50 a day and NICE have decided that this is too high a cost. There was a large demonstration in London on 15.3.05.

I would like VOSdP to be a channel for information for disabled people. All the organisations could promote the VOSdP in their own newsletters and hopefully the membership of the VOSdP will expand.

Dave Rogers (Chair VOSdP)

### **The Community Fruit & Veg Project**

The Community Fruit & Veg Project holds regular stalls selling fresh, local, affordable fruit and vegetables at the following venues:

- Mondays 11am—1pm, Four Courts Community Centre, Sydney Close, St Leonards.
- Tuesdays 10am—12 pm, Broomgrove Community Centre, Chiltern Drive, Hastings.
- Tuesdays 1pm—3pm Halton Community Flat, 12, Halton Place, Hastings.
- Wednesdays 10am—12pm, Southwater Area Community Centre, Stainsby Street, St Leonards.

All our stalls are run by volunteers and we always need more help to run this and other aspects of the project. Volunteers qualify for a discount on fruit and vegetables



## Patient & Public Involvement in Health

Local community health services are provided via the Hastings & St Leonards Primary Care Trust (PCT). The Government have asked the public to work with the PCT to monitor and comment on the services that are available and how they are delivered.

This is done in a formal way via the Patient & Public Involvement in Health Forum (PPI). More information about membership of this Forum can be obtained from Paul Golding, PPI Forum Support Worker who is based at Hastings Voluntary Action. Ultimately, it is the Department of Health who appoint PPI members and much of the work undertaken is formal monitoring of statutory health services such as GP practices, dental surgeries, chiropody etc.

Although the work sounds quite formal and PPI discuss important and sometimes sensitive subjects, they are a friendly bunch who represent the local community. They meet regularly to discuss health related issues and to develop and implement a workplan. As part of this work, they discuss national, regional and local groups in health policy and how changes may affect service users. They consult with the wider community so that they can feed back comments, concerns and suggestions to the service providers.

If you have an interest in health issues and can spare an hour or two each month, you could become a member of the PPI. Contact Paul Golding on 01424 203681 for more details or visit one of the Forum's meetings in public, which are advertised in the local press.

### Hastings Small Change Community Project



Would you like to reduce your waste, cut your household bills and meet like-minded local people?

Small Change is a fun, sociable and informative project which involves individuals making small changes in their everyday lives in order to reduce bills, cut waste and improve their local area.

Participants from 6—8 local households get together as Small Change Teams and after an initial set-up meeting, meet once a month for a period of 4 months. During the meetings, you will share ideas and discuss ways in which you can take practical steps to decrease the amount of rubbish you throw away and reduce your use of electricity, gas and water. You will be given lots of practical

tips and advice and to start you off, you'll receive a free pack containing an energy efficient light bulb, a water saving device and special discounts on compost bins amongst other things!

Anyone can be part of a Small Change Team—friends, neighbours, colleagues, members of the same club or community group.

Small Change is a project of the environmental charity Global Action Plan.

If you would like more information about joining or starting a Small Change Team, please contact Martha Rose, (Community Project Officer) 01424 781 481

[martha.rose@globalactionplan.org.uk](mailto:martha.rose@globalactionplan.org.uk)

### A fond farewell

The Hastings & Rother Disability Forum would like to take this opportunity to thank Dave Rogers for all his hard work as chair of the HRDF. Dave recently resigned from the HRDF. We thank him and wish him all the best for the future.

## Disability Means Business

is a European-funded project involving a partnership of organizations across East and West Sussex. Over the next two years, the project will be approaching hundreds of businesses throughout this area to raise awareness of their obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act and to encourage them to improve their practices in recruitment, employment and retention of disabled people. One of the key methods for promoting disability friendly practices and culture within business is the development of a "toolkit" with which employers can assess their current practices.

### We need your help:

The "Toolkit" for employers will help them focus on barriers to employment. Disabled people are the experts in this area and the toolkit will be based on the real experiences of disabled people. Therefore, the first step is a survey of disabled people's experience and views. We are also looking for people who would take part in Focus Groups on this same subject.

Please contact us if you are interested. All expenses will be paid.

If you are interested in helping us, please either: fill out the questionnaire on ESDA's website [www.esda.org.uk](http://www.esda.org.uk) or



contact Theresa at ESDA on: 0800 092 4688 or by e-mail: [theresa@esda.org.uk](mailto:theresa@esda.org.uk)

**New online Yahoo Group** available to help members keep in touch with the HRDF between newsletters. If you are interested in joining and having a look, please email Lizzie on:

[lizziehawke@hotmail.com](mailto:lizziehawke@hotmail.com) She will send you an invitation to join the group.

### From the Hastings Observer 22.4.05 'A Board ban anger...'

HRDF was involved with having 'A' boards banned from the pavement from last month. Many elderly and disabled residents have complained about these boards, which have been obstructing the pavement around the town. Small businesses are up in arms about the ban because many small businesses rely on boards for a free form of advertising. Shops which own their own forecourt are exempt from the ban but the Council has powers of enforcement

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belonging to the council or Highways Department. This should make the pavements a safer place to be.

## Contact Details for the Hastings & Rother Disability Forum:

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