

Hastings & Rother Disability Forum

# Re-Action

## No Thanks You're Wheelchair Users!!

Did you know that Hastings Borough Council have a "policy" of not allowing more than one wheelchair-user into the Chamber at any one time? The Council Chamber is a large room upstairs in the Town Hall where the Council hold their meetings.

To be fair, the Council have told us that they can accommodate more than one wheelchair user provided that they are given prior notice but we feel this is unreasonable because most of the Council's meetings are "open" and anyone can just turn up.

HBC say that the reason for this "policy" is that in the event of a fire the lift would (obviously) be out of action and they would be unable to evacuate people because they wouldn't have enough staff available.

We at HRDF feel that HBC should either put more staff on during Council meetings or seriously consider holding meetings at an alternative venue with better



access. If you would like to support our campaign then we urge you to write to your local Councillor telling them that you are being discriminated against as well as being denied your right to participate in local democracy. Alternatively, if you want to go to a particular Council meeting that you read about in, say, the local paper – then just turn up and see what happens!!

## Filsham Wheelers Need You!!

Filsham Wheelers Wheelchair Basketball Club is looking for new players. They practice every Thursday at Filsham Valley School from 3 until 5 and on Saturday mornings at Hillcrest School from 10 until 12. If you fancy having a go, then ring John Smart on 07716 772714.

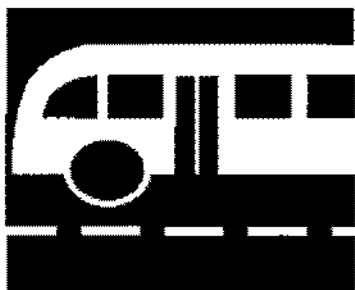


## Travelling Free

Hastings Dial-a-Ride recently petitioned Hastings Borough Council to ask them for a grant so that they could offer free travel to their members which they currently charge for. The reasoning behind this was that, since Disabled people who CAN use public transport (i.e. buses) can travel for free, then why shouldn't Dial-a-Ride's users have a right to free bus travel as well?

At the Council meeting where this was discussed, a vote was taken on whether HBC should be subsidized so that free bus travel for ALL Disabled people would be possible. That vote was tied and the Leader of the Council, Peter Pragnell, used his casting vote against the plan meaning that Dial-a-Ride's users will still have to pay to use the service.

HRDF believes that this is unfair!! If you agree with us, then please write a letter of support to Dial-a-Ride. Their address is: 62 -64 Parker Road, Hastings, TN34 3TT. Hopefully, with your support, HBC will eventually overturn this decision and ensure that ALL Disabled people can enjoy free travel.



## ESDA – 70 Years And Counting!

*By Kev Towner*

East Sussex Disability Association is 70 this year!! It's come a long way since it started in 1938 as East Sussex Care For The Cripples – yes, really!!

ESDA is now a leading Organisation Of Disabled People. This means that the majority of it's Board Members are Disabled People. I myself have been a Board Member for some years now and am currently Vice-Chair. In that time I've seen a lot of changes. Our current Chief Exec, Reg McLaughlin, is also a Disabled Person.

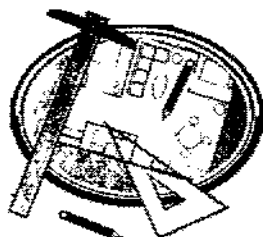
These are difficult times for voluntary organizations in general and for Organizations Of Disabled People in particular. Funding is very difficult to secure, especially on a long-term basis. However, ESDA will continue to campaign for the rights of Disabled People in East Sussex and will pursue every avenue to try to maintain the funding it needs to provide essential services to Disabled People.



## The Access Group

The Access Group has been busy working to make sure that the services Hastings and Rother council's provide as accessible. We continue to work with Hastings council on a new access guide for the town. We have worked with the De La Warr Pavilion to suggest access improvements. We have helped to develop the new look St Leonard's Gardens, and this work is ongoing. We are working with Hastings council to look at the fisheries in Alexandra Park; to improve access so that disabled people can take part in angling. We will be meeting with the Primary Care Trust to look at the plans for the new health surgery at Station Plaza in Hastings Town Centre. We continue to look at planning applications to make sure that buildings are accessible before they are built. We are hope to work with the local public houses to look at ways that these properties can improve their access. We continue to deal with our member's issues wherever possible.

If you have any issues we can help with or are interested in coming to an access group meeting please email the forum [enquiries@hrdf.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@hrdf.org.uk).



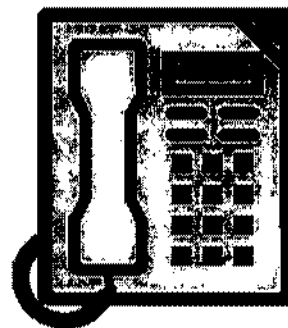
## Training Day

*by Paul Borthwick*

In December the HRDF committee of took part in a training day, this was very interesting and allowed us to set the agenda for the next year and beyond. This will allow us to priorities our workload better and allow us to improve the work we do.

One area we looked at was the history of the HRDF, which I found very interesting, as a reasonably new member of the committee. It seems that the HRDF has been in existence for over 20 years. If you have a story about the HRDF or remember something from the history of the HRDF. Maybe you where there at the start of the disability movement in Hastings and Rother. We would be very interested to hear from you. Maybe we could include you stories in the newsletter.

**Please note that due to financial restraints and lack of usage we will be discontinuing the telephone, so the number is no long available to contact us.**



# Free Training Opportunity

**for local people, leading to paid jobs in health improvement**

The PCT are developing a new service to tackle health inequalities. The 'Health Trainer Service' will recruit local people, and support and train them to provide a service in their local communities that supports individuals to lead healthier lifestyles. Once trained, they will work in community settings, supporting individuals who would like to change aspects of their health behaviour, such as; stopping smoking, eating a healthier diet, getting more active, reducing alcohol and improving mental wellbeing.

Local people interested in finding out more about these jobs and training opportunities need to attend one of the Open Days. Application packs, and support to complete them, will be available. We are recruiting initially for a free 5-day training course, which will provide a basic overview of 'Health Improvement' and the new job role. This will give people more of an understanding of the role, without commitment to a job that may lose them benefits. At the end of this course, they will have an opportunity to apply for one of the posts (to begin in Sept 08). Those not interested in pursuing it further will still have a Level 2 Certificate.

We will be offering part-time and flexible contracts (including term-time only contracts). We aim to employ a team of up to 14 part-time staff (minimum of 14 hours) to work across Hastings & Rother, with identified communities who experience health inequalities.

This is a fabulous opportunity for local people to develop skills and gain qualifications, while being paid.

## Training Days

Sidley Community Association  
Monday 28<sup>th</sup> April 12.30pm - 2.30pm

The Bridge - Ore  
Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> April 12.30pm – 2.30pm

Hollington Youth Centre  
Weds 30<sup>th</sup> April 12.30pm – 2.30pm

The Magnet – Christchurch  
St. Leonards  
Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 12.30pm – 2.30pm

Contact Hayley Martin 01424 457117

### HRDF – Contact details

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