



**Hastings & Rother
Disability Forum**

Re-Action

Summer 2007

Contact Details

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HRDF's AGM took place on 8th June at St. Peter's Church Hall in Bexhill. The officers & committee were all re-elected with the exception of Lizzie Hawke our Secretary, who has had to stand down due to work commitments (we STILL need a new secretary – any offers?) Also, Nick Crump, who was co-opted earlier this year, has now joined us full-time. However, we would like more people on the committee from within our membership, so please give it some thought, as committee members can be co-opted at any time.

Our speaker was Reg McLaughlin, Chief Executive of East Sussex. He gave a talk about the work of ESDA and it's plans for the future, focusing on the role of HRDF & what the two organizations can do together.

Afterwards we had an excellent buffet, which gave us all a chance to catch up with old friends and talk about HRDF's achievements over the last year.

Thanks to those of you who turned up, and to those of you who didn't – you missed a fabulous event!! Maybe we'll see you next year.

**Cycling Trial in the Town Centre
Wednesday, 25 July 2007
6.00pm – 8.00pm
Marlborough House Café, Warrior
Square, St Leonards**

This Open Meeting will give disabled people a chance to find out exactly what the proposed cycling trial will mean, and will also give them the opportunity to put forward their concerns to Councillors and Council Officers about how the cycling trial will affect them as disabled people.



Refuse and Recycling Collections in Hastings and Rother

Rother District Council has recently introduced a kerbside recycling scheme, and Hastings Borough Council are due to introduce wheelie bins and make changes to their refuse and recycling collection schedules in September this year. HRDF plan to hold an open meeting at the beginning of September on this subject. This will enable disabled people to find out how the schemes in both areas will be operating and will also give them the opportunity to express their views on how the schemes will affect them. We'd be interested to hear from any disabled people in Rother who have experience of the new recycling scheme in operation and how the scheme affects you. If you'd be happy to tell us about your experiences, please contact us.

On behalf of Rother District Council, I'd also like to take this opportunity to respond to a concern recently raised by a few of our members. The concern was whether Dustmen going on to disabled people's premises to assist with refuse collection would be insured. I have been informed that Verdant, the Contractor, does insure all its staff on private premises, so disabled people should not be concerned about being sued if anything happens whilst a Dustman is collecting their rubbish from their property.

If you would like further information, please contact Rother Recycling on 01424 787580.

Information from Hastings Borough Council Twin Bins on their way

You've probably heard by now that Hastings Borough Council are due to make some major changes to the way that they treat our rubbish and recycling. As landfill sites, including our own at Pebsham, fill up, we are all under pressure to recycle more and throw less away into the ever-shrinking landfill voids. Government has set us tough recycling targets to meet and that is why we will soon be introducing Twin Bins to most of Hastings & St Leonards. We appreciate that there are probably lots of questions you would like answered and we will try our best to address them in this article.

Why two bins?

Your green bin will be for all your recycling (everything you currently put in your black boxes and blue or orange sacks) and your grey bin will be for all the household rubbish you can't recycle. You will not need to separate your paper from your tins, plastic and card; they can all go in together.

What if I need help moving my bins?

We offer an assisted collection policy for people who have an impairment which means they would struggle to move their bins. All you need to do is contact our Twin Bin team by telephone or email and they'll be happy to help you register. If you already have an assisted collection you will continue to receive help, but we may write to you and ask that you confirm you still need help.

Won't my grey bin be overflowing?

Our research shows that making recycling easier means that more people recycle more. This in turn helps greatly reduce the amount of rubbish you need to throw away. Our bins are slightly larger than most supplied, so you shouldn't have problems. If you have any difficulties, get in contact with our Twin Bin team for more advice.

When are you introducing the scheme?

Your wheeled bins will be delivered during September 2007 and the first collections will begin during October 2007. When you receive your bins they will be taped shut with instructions for use printed on the tape. To lay the ground for the scheme, we'll be changing your collection day in the week commencing 2 July 2007. At present, bin collections are scattered across the town meaning collection crews can't easily support each other. The change of collection day means the crews will be in the same areas at the same time so the service will be much more efficient.

Is everyone going to be on the scheme?

75% of the town's properties will be included in the scheme but an anticipated 25%, including parts of the Old Town and the centres of Hastings and St Leonards, are unsuitable for wheeled bins. We will investigate alternatives to increase recycling for properties who won't be on the Twin Bin scheme next year

Won't the grey bin attract odours and rats?

Our partners at the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs recently carried out a detailed report that strongly suggests this is not the case but the truth is that, as with any ordinary

dustbin, it largely depends upon how sensible you are with your waste. Double wrapping things that are likely to rot over a fortnight (e.g. chicken carcasses) should prevent any chance of odour escaping. Using the bins properly and keeping their lids closed will prevent them from attracting pests such as seagulls, so the bins will help us keep the town tidier. You can occasionally rinse out the bins with disinfectant and should also keep the bin lids closed at all times. Residents placing nappies in grey wheeled bins might consider emptying any solid waste into the toilet before doing so or contacting the Real Nappy Network for advice on environmentally friendly alternatives.

We hope that this answers some of your questions, but there are lots more on our website: www.hastings.gov.uk/recycle

If you want to ask our Twin Bin team any questions or ask about Assisted Collections, please email: twinbin@hastings.gov.uk or give them a call on 0845 274 1077.



**Rother District Council's
Housing Strategy
Document is now available
on-line in easy-read format
at: www.rother.gov.uk**

The Disability Equality Duty

By Theresa Hodge

In December 2006 new duties were introduced for public authorities (such as Councils, the Police, the Fire Service and the NHS) to ensure that disabled people are treated equally, rather than as a special add-on afterwards. The main aim of the Disability Equality Duty is to get public authorities to think and act proactively on disability equality issues from the start. This will help them to identify from the beginning, where and how unnecessary barriers are created which affect the equal participation of disabled users of their services as well as current and potential employees.

As part of the Disability Equality Duty, most public authorities had to have published a Disability Equality Scheme by 4 December 2006. The Scheme had to include a statement of how they had involved disabled people in developing their scheme and an action plan which set out the steps they would be taking to comply with the Disability Equality Duty.

Since the beginning of this year, members of the HRDF committee have been sitting on Hastings Borough Council's Disability Working Group and Rother District Council's Equalities Steering Group, both of which are constantly reviewing their Disability Equality Schemes and Action Plans. Key areas discussed are access to services, democracy, employment and training. We are promoting the involvement of a wider group of disabled people in the development of Disability Equality Schemes and in particular the setting up of reference groups, so that disabled people can inform the Councils about any barriers they experience in accessing their services.

We will keep you informed of any developments around the Disability Equality Schemes of public authorities in the Hastings and Rother area, but if you would like to know more specifically about the work we have been involved in with both Hastings Borough Council and Rother District Council, please contact us.



Access to the beach

The summer season is upon us and the weather is warm (sometimes). If you wish to go to the beach but are concerned that access will be an issue - then fear not!! Hastings council have laid down matting on the beach at the rear of Pelham car park, so that wheelchair users can gain access onto the beach. Also if you are feeling brave, HBC have beach wheelchairs available to hire, which will allow you to access the beach and go into the water if you wish. RDC are also looking at access to the beach at Bexhill and Camber - so watch this space!

DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING? LIVING IN HASTINGS?

The East Sussex Hearing Resource Centre holds a Communication Group in Hastings to aid Deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people and their families.

The meetings give an opportunity to meet other people and chat in an easy-to-communicate atmosphere. We explain communication tactics, display/demonstrate environmental aids and give advice, information and support.

The next meeting at Hastings will be on Friday 6th July 2007, 10.30am-12noon at Hastings Voluntary Action, 31a Priors Street.

Everybody is welcome so put a note in your diary.

For further information please contact:
Teresa Davis, East Sussex Hearing Resource Centre, 8 St Leonards Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN21 3UH.
Tel: 01323 722505 (voice, text, fax),
Email: teresa@eshrc.org.uk
www.eshrc.org.uk

HRDF Access Group – Call for New Members

By Theresa Hodge

As many of you know, the Access Group has met for some years now on the second Tuesday evening of each month at Hastings Town Hall. The aim of the group is to look at and respond to issues affecting disabled people's ability to access transport and the built environment.

Although some members of the Access Group are from the HRDF committee, I would like to remind you all that this does not have to be the case – access group meetings are open to any disabled people in the area.

We have now made arrangements to hold our monthly meetings alternately in Hastings and Rother. Meeting venues have been booked for the rest of 2007, and I would like to take this opportunity to let you know when they are and want to encourage any disabled people interested in access to transport and the built environment to come along. All Hastings meetings will take place in Hastings Town Hall, from 6.00 to 8.00 p.m, and all Rother meetings will take place in Bexhill Town Hall from 2.00 to 4.00 p.m. The dates for the Rest of 2007 are:-

- 10 July – Hastings
- 14 August – Rother
- 11 September - Hastings
- 9 October - Rother
- 13 November – Hastings
- 11 December – Rother

It's always useful to have an idea of numbers of people coming to meetings in advance, so if you would be interested in attending either the Hastings or Rother Access Group meetings, please contact us at the office Tel 01424 201201.

Call that Consultation?

The Department of Transport are undertaking consultation on the Blue Badge Scheme. They have, however, decided in their wisdom that they will not consult with the U.K.'s 2.5 million Blue Badge Holders. Instead they are consulting with a small group of disability organisations that say they represent disabled people's views. However - how many of these organisations have mentioned this consultation to you, their members and service users? Unfortunately the consultation period finished on the 19th June. However if you are interested in looking at the document it is online at www.dft.gov.uk/consultations/open/bluebadgescheme/ if you wish to tell the department of transport what you think, then email miranda.carter@dft.gsi.gov.uk or phone 020 7944 4461. You may want to ask disability organisations that you are involved with, why they have not mentioned this consultation to you.

Make sure you know of any changes in the rules around blue badge usage, so that you dont get caught out!!

Working together

Hastings and Rother Disability Forum have been working closely with Hastings Borough Council and Rother District Council to make sure that they both have good standards of service for disabled residents. We attend meetings with both HBC and RDC to look at the services that they provide, to see what improvements they can make. If you have an issue with a service you receive from either council, firstly contact the council to complain. If you are still not happy, then contact us and we will raise your issues with the council.

Police Information

Please find below some important information from Sussex Police, which launches an exciting new update to the Sussex Police website . You'll see on the homepage that you can now enter your postcode, which helps you to easily contact your local officer and is another element of successful neighbourhood policing.

In addition to photographs and contact details for every Police Community Support Officer and Neighbourhood Specialist Constable in Sussex, the pages also contain a monthly 'What's happening in your area? Community update', regular news flashes for the district, details of upcoming street briefings, up-to-date information about how local police are doing and details about your nearest police station.

Go to www.sussex.police.uk, type in your postcode and you'll now find the names and photographs of all your local neighbourhood officers.

Click on their pictures and you'll see their personal profiles and contact details. You can contact them either by sending an email or by leaving them a voicemail message, simply by phoning the 0845 60 70 999 number and using the individual extension number provided.

REMEMBER:

If it's an emergency, or to report a crime as it's happening, dial 999 and ask for the police - the same way as ever.

For other crimes and urgent matters, there's still the central 0845 60 70 999 number to call Sussex Police.