

WEST BERKSHIRE DISABILITY ALLIANCE (WBDA) NEWSLETTER

Sept 2006, Edition 7

Website: www.wbda.org

Charity No. 1108112



AGM

WBDA recently held its AGM at the United Reform Church Hall, in Newbury. Over 40 people attended including the Mayors of both Newbury & Thatcham, WBDA Members & Supporters, representatives from other disability groups, charities & the voluntary sector, Officers from West Berkshire Council and members of the public. The AGM saw the inaugural presentation of WBDA's 'Member of the Year' award which was presented by Newbury Mayor Gillian Durrant to Mr Roy Smith (see picture), who has tirelessly organised and taken part in fund raising activities which have raised over £7,000 for Guide Dogs for the Blind and REACT a talking sign system for local sight impaired people.

Chairman Mick Hutchins, in his report said that WBDA's membership has grown by 40% since its last AGM and expanded on all the work carried out by WBDA in the previous year. At the meeting it was also announced that Lady Howard de Walden had agreed to become the charities president.

Hydrotherapy

A European Social Fund Grant for just under £10,000 has been awarded to West Berkshire Neurological Alliance (WBNA) for a feasibility study to look into the issues of unmet demand, location, design, utility services, planning, running costs and management regarding hydrotherapy in West Berkshire which brings the likelihood of a hydrotherapy pool in our area a step closer. A pool in the right location will attract the maximum uptake and is likely to lead to around 1000 local people a year taking the benefits of therapy, resulting in a positive impact on their quality of life. For further information contact: John Holt on 01635 33582

A New Type of Service

A new Outreach service is about to be launched in West Berkshire. This will act as the gateway for information and access to local services that help people to keep themselves healthy and improve their quality of life. The service is open to anyone over 18 who may need access to help with benefits, housing, healthy living, learning, home safety and maintenance as well as many other services. The service will begin operating from September 2006 and will use the Clive bus on Mondays, but will grow over time as information and demand increases.

For more information about the service, contact Alison Love or Jenny Pheby at West Berkshire Council on 01635 42400.

WBDA Open Meeting

The next WBDA open meeting on 04/09/06 will focus on accessibility issues surrounding the rail network and West Berkshire Councils responsibilities under the public duty section of the Disability Discrimination Act which comes into force in December 2006. The events key note speaker will be Polly Robertson, Mobility & Inclusion Manager, First Group. Doors open 18.30hrs for tea & coffee, WBDA members and anyone with an interest in the issues surrounding disability are welcome to attend.

Congratulations x 2

Must go to West Berkshire Council, for granting licences to taxi drivers Pat Flynn and Paul Winter, who are both dependent on insulin to control their diabetes. This is another step forward in recognising that people with long term conditions are the real experts regards managing their condition and should be trusted to do so. Secondly, for making Val Witton's post of **Access Officer** full time.

Wanted: your views!

You are invited to respond to the Council's consultation, to develop their Disability Equality Scheme. The aim is to better understand the barriers disabled people face, and what actions the Council should take to improve equality of opportunity. Contact Jo Richardson Tel: 01635 519441 or www.westberks.gov.uk/consultation and go to 'consultation finder'.

A-Frame advertising boards

WBDA will be pressing for shops and other businesses to stop putting such items outside their premises as they are becoming an increasing hazard for sight impaired people.

Newbury Shopmobility is now open on Mondays 9.30hrs – 16.00hrs. Tel: 01635 523854

Secret service!

It seems there is a not very well advertised Park and Ride low rider bus running every 15 mins from the Madjeski stadium to the Royal Berks Hospital & back again – cost £1 including the parking charge! This service runs practically empty all day long is probably one of the cheapest ways of getting to/from the RBH.

For more info Tel: 0118 322 8152 or visit: <http://www.rbbh.nhs.uk/park-ride>

WBDA Diary - 2006

Monday, 4th Sept 2006

WBDA Open Meeting
18.45 hrs – 20.45hrs
United Reform Church
Room, Newbury

Monday, 4th Dec 2006

WBDA Open Meeting
14.00hrs – 16.00hrs
United Reform Church
Room, Newbury

Disability Forum Cancelled

Please note that the Disability Forum scheduled for Monday, October 2nd 2006 has been cancelled.

WBDA Contact Details:

Tel: 01635 49701

E-mail: info@wbda.org

Disability Information:

For all the info you need on benefits and much more try www.diwb.org

This newsletter has a distribution list of 1200+. If you or your organisation would like to sponsor an edition of this newsletter, please contact Mick Hutchins at the WBDA.