

**Herefordshire
Disability
United**



**Network
News**

October 2013



**Preview of
Hereford
Community
Farm**

**The move
from Barton
Hill Farm
*page 10***



Access to communication and information are imperative in the real world, and the majority of us cannot comprehend living in a bubble where this is not possible. We are bombarded with sayings like “more details on our website”, because to the majority of people this is the natural progression whether via i-phone, laptop, computer or i-pad.

But, although there has been an increase in the number of households where e-communication is possible there is still a large void. From 2005 to 2010 the number rose from 40% to 58% where disabled households have internet access, but this is against 60% to 84% where disability is not an issue.

We then need to consider that for many disabled people technology is out of reach either for financial or physical reasons. Dexterity is an issue too as items are reduced in size, and buttons so tiny to touch that they are rendered useless. Ok speech recognition is a wonderful asset, when one can speak into the computer and it types, but if speech is slurred due to disability this is another barrier.

I hope “government” will be tolerant when it comes to using technology. Fear is a common barrier. If there is someone at hand to explain and correct as mistakes are made this would help (as learning to read when a child) then perhaps more would find the process accessible, but with the cuts support is just there for basics....existence!

We welcome articles from individuals and organisations to promote their stories or interests too. Please contact the Editor..... details on the back page.

Cover girl story



Linka (aged 40) is a very old horse and clearly demonstrates that age is no barrier to enjoying life. She is now nearly blind and relies heavily on her companion Lucy to help her find her way around in new situations, so they are very dependent on each other.

A couple of years ago when Lucy was very poorly (a legacy from her previous life where she ended up as an RSPCA prosecution case), she was in so much pain that she was unable to move at times and Linka always stayed with her so they have a very special bond.

[Julie Milsom, Hereford Community Farm](#)

Clasp a new digital tool

Clasp, (a new digital tool to help people with autism) has been developed. It is designed to connect with their social network, when they feel stressed.

Designers say there are about 500,000 people with autism in the UK, and a third of adults with the condition experiencing social and mental health problems due to lack of support.

The hand held tool allows users to squeeze it when they feel stressed. It will trigger a mobile phone alert, or connect to their social network to receive support from those who best understand.

Details from the website:
www.slideshare.net/catalystas



About

Herefordshire Disability United

Herefordshire Disability United is an organisation that has developed to voice the concerns of disabled people and to provide a platform where disability issues can be raised and policies developed.

Herefordshire Disability United (HDU) is an organisation run by people with disabilities for people with disabilities. It was started in January 2011 and its objectives are:

To promote the interests, welfare and social inclusion of disabled people living in Herefordshire by facilitating the following:

- Fostering understanding among policy-makers and practitioners of the needs and aspirations of disabled people.
- Taking part in consultations to make aware issues that affect persons with disabilities
- Raising awareness and debate on disability issues, stimulating the engagement of disabled people within that debate.
- Providing a platform where matters of concern to disabled people can be raised and policies developed.
- Making representations to public sector organisations, voluntary sector organisations, local and central government and local and national business to improve their policies and practices.
- Exchanging information with organisations providing services for disabled people, co-operating with but independent of such organisations.
- Providing information and sources of advice to disabled people.
- Combating discrimination on the grounds of disability by promoting equality of opportunity and a positive image of disabled people.
- Being a democratic, non sectarian, non party political organisation.

HDU Contents

Features

- Cover girl story —page 2
- Autism local consultation —pages 4/5
- Insight into sight loss —pages 7/9
- Hereford Community Farm —pages 10/13

Information

- Clasp digital tool —page 2
- Wheelchair exercise DVD —page 6
- The Handsteady mug —page 9
- Yes I can club —page 14
- Medical Detection dogs —page 15

HDU News

Autism seminar—page 16

Useful Contacts - page 16

Next event - pages 3/ 16

Next meeting
27th November
Hinton Community Centre
10.30-2.30
Seminar on Autism
Book the date in your diary
National Autistic Society
speaker expected
Details to follow

Editorial or advertising queries: Contact the editor on 07817 473813 or email info@hdu.org.uk

Contact: Herefordshire Disability United welcomes any feedback on Network News, or any of the services it provides.

Disclaimer: The views expressed in Network News are not necessarily those of Herefordshire Disability United.

Autism....the state of care and support

It would appear from research that fewer than half of councils in England have a diagnostic pathway for adults with autism! There recently has been an autism strategy consultation in Herefordshire, a little slow off the ground since back in 2009 the Autism Act came into being and something should have been implemented then.

On 3rd March 2010 the first ever strategy for improving the lives of adults with autism in England was published, which set out key actions and recommendations for central government, local authorities, NHS and job centres.

These are five key areas on which to concentrate:

- increasing awareness and understanding of autism
- developing a clear and consistent pathway for diagnosis
- improving access to the services and support people need to live independently within the community
- employment
- ♦ enabling local partners to develop relevant services to meet identified needs and priorities

A review of implementation was planned by government during 2013, and that has recently taken place, with the national consultation complete by 6th September.

At the last Herefordshire Disability United open meeting on 10th July we informed the audience of a local Hereford consultation which had just started. We understood the four areas intending to be addressed would be:

1. Training of staff who provide services to adults with autism
2. Identification and diagnosis of autism in adults, leading to assessment of needs for relevant services
3. Planning in relation to the provision of services to people with autism as they move from being children to adults transitions
4. Local planning and leadership in relation to the provision of services for adults with autism

A team was set up within Hereford Council to undertake the task, by conducting a series of consultations with health professionals and people with autism to find out more about their experiences of living and dealing with autism. The information gathered would provide a better understanding of both adults and children with autism.

Recently I attended one such event when the Strategy Team (who are collecting the data) were in attendance, with around a dozen people who have concerns on the lack of provision. They were asked to state their thoughts and suggestions on what is needed in the county.

Autism Consultation underway



The thing which was most startling from the outset of the meeting was the acknowledgement that the team had little understanding of the conditions/ spectrum, and this was by their own admission. So how could any discussions or suggestions put forward be genuinely captured. One needs to know what is/ isn't relevant.

People present at the meeting expressed concern that the process does not really move seriously whilst children are in education. Little forward planning is on offer until it is too late.

Of course the SENCOs (special education needs co-ordinators) in school often have their hands tied as funding isn't available to provide adequate support or alternative education. So when transition takes place to adult life/college there is a void of opportunities or training.

I have done my own research to see how other authorities have implemented the Autism Strategy as outlined in the 2010 directive. It seems reasonable to compare other rural counties as opposed to cities where population is greater, and no doubt instances of autism more prevalent. Initially I discovered that many have formed an Autism Board/Partnership often teaming up with Learning Difficulties. These Boards are usually Council led, and multi agency operated.

In South Gloucester the Autism Board meets quarterly and its 15 members are which meet quarterly, and consist of social workers, service users, carers, and NHS staff. They are now looking for a team member from Healthwatch to join them. The board reports directly to the Health and Well Being Board as its line of action. Seeking to expand to cover a need, they are also looking for someone within the criminal justice system, but not the police. Their council website is to accommodate their needs by having a signposting service where there are direct links for autism support/ groups/ and activities.

Worcester is now in the process of setting up an Autism Board, but under a different guise. The Health and Well Being Board is currently creating such a group, but feels the name has to be something else, to make it more user friendly. Whilst they are in their infancy, they have ideas which they are pursuing at this point.

So Hereford Council could do what I did, and shop around for ideas. I had no difficulty in acquiring the details, in fact their leaders were really happy to share details. From what I have gathered so far from the Hereford consultation meetings, it appears that "the community" are being asked to pick up the pieces and provide clubs/ activities/ support without little or no monetary support from the powers that be.

So much for Person Centred Planning!

Wheelchair exercise DVD



I have been sent information about a DVD put together by the Haringey Wheelchair User Group, entitled "Stay fit where you sit". In fact the picture above depicts its cover and is taken from their website.

It features three different members of the group with differing mobility issues and illustrates what can be done to aid cardio vascular function. One members is a young teenager who is keen to maintain some fitness and shape for physical acceptance. The instructions are given by a trainee Physiotherapist who has developed the exercises specifically for wheelchair users.

The DVD cover shows one user holding a theraband, a strong light-weight stretchy piece of material which allows exercises to be undertaken on the same principal as using dumb bells, but without the weight or bulkiness of metal.

As we are all aware that for maintenance of able limbs we need to do regular exercise, and being in a wheelchair does not necessarily exclude one from this regime. In fact it is known that endorphins are release during exercise which create a better feeling of well-being.

The DVD can be purchase from Haringey Wheelchair User Group for £5 +£1.25 p&p. If you are interested contact: grahamday16@yahoo.co.uk

Their website is: <http://www.haringey-wheelchair-user-group.org.uk/>

An “insight into sight loss”



Life for me as someone who needs to rely on an Assistance Dog can be interesting to say the least, and I have developed ways of coping to accommodate public ignorance about sight loss.

The following three sets of circumstances are good indicators of communication, or lack of it in current society.

I live in Weston Under Penyard, near Ross on Wye and during the summer months often take Pickles (my guide dog) for long walks around the country lanes. Not only does it provide us both with regular exercise it also gives me the independence which sight loss has taken away.

I listen carefully for vehicles knowing that close to home is someone who loves fast cars, Richard Hammond, (from the BBC Top Gear programme).

So wandering along and enjoying my freedom one morning I heard a car slow down alongside me and a voice call out, “Excuse me have you seen a black Labrador?”

My immediate reaction was, “Are you having a laugh?”, pointing to the dark glasses and guide dog by my side.

“Oh sorry” came the reply from the male voice, and I immediately retorted, “I might not be able to see but I’ve still got my sense of humour and I’m still alive.”

I was speaking to Richard Hammond! Richard sat in his vehicle talking to me, admitting that his was only a domestic animal, not an important dog with responsibility. He was concerned that his wife was worried about the disappearance of their two year Labrador, and was out trying to locate it.

I know “the hamster” has a reputation for being aloof, but on this occasion I was delighted to have met him.

In early August my husband decided to book a surprise weekend away at Celtic Manor for our wedding anniversary, and I was really looking forward to a change of scene in salubrious surroundings. I have still a small amount of vision and I am trying to savour new experiences and store them in my memory whilst able to do so. On arrival we were met by Diane, the Concierge who behaved impeccably towards my disability. The hotel were aware of my needs on booking, and I was pleased to be greeted in the best possible manner. Diane explained the layout of the hotel, and then the room despite Pickles and of course my husband accompanying me. I hoped this was going to be a good weekend.

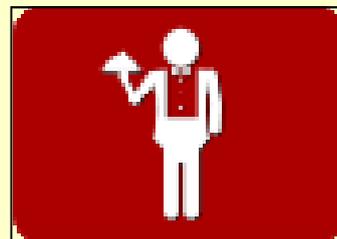
PTO



Problem?.....not with me but society!

Friday evening we went down to dinner (with Pickles), and were met with the first of many problems. The waiter who greeted us had no idea of how to accept me, and although we obviously had a table booked the sight of a guide dog meant all sense went out of the window.

We were asked to wait outside of the dining room, and this immediately made me feel isolated and shunned. For ten minutes we waited before being shown to a table for two, not much use to us when Pickles usually lies under the table by my feet. However as we were only two people to be fed, we were expected to sit at a table for two and no consideration was given for our circumstances.



On Saturday morning after breakfast we thought we might take full use of the spa facilities, and as I enjoy swimming this was to be the first port of call. I was about to change in our hotel room, with "Do not disturb" on the door, when the door opened and two hotel staff walked in. This wouldn't be considerate for any couple in a hotel room, and immediately I felt undermined and uncomfortable.



It had been my intention to leave Pickles safely in the hotel room whilst my husband guided me down to the swimming pool for some gentle exercise and then a relaxing session in the sauna. With no certainty that Pickles would be safe on his own after the unwelcomed intrusion by staff, I had to concede that swimming was off the menu. After all I couldn't take him poolside, could I?

On entering the dining room for breakfast on our last morning, we were asked to sit at a different table, being that other guests had already seated themselves at our designated table. Not a problem! But the family of four next to us were keen to engage with Pickles and came over to pet him and make a fuss. Of course this isn't usually encouraged, but the children hadn't realised that dogs were not really permitted, and I tried my best to settle him. Two hotel managers seated close by then decided to take me to task complaining I should control my animal! Not acceptable in my view. There was very little tolerance towards me and my disability.

Our special weekend had not been as we had hoped. The total lack of consideration towards disability proves one thing to us.

Celtic Manor had discriminated against us. This is probably their way of discouraging disabled customers. Certainly we won't go back, but I am making sure that the message gets through to the public in general to discouraged non-disabled citizens to avoid this establishment too.

So its three



black marks to



Celtic Manor.



Well done to the Prince of Wales pub in Ross

My final establishment I want to tell you about is somewhere where disability is absolutely accepted, and staff are wonderful. It's the Prince of Wales Inn at Ross on Wye, a recently refurbished establishment under the "Number Works Pub Company". Basically there are meal deals for £2, £4, £6 and £8. I can only provide information since using the venue this summer when it reopening after refurbishment. Steve and Ellie the managers are really welcoming, and all the staff can't do enough and nothing is too much trouble even when busy.

On my first visit I was "shown" around, to understand the layout, including the toilet. I like to be independent if possible, and this was sufficient to feel comfortable. It has proved to be a popular pub and I accept it can get busy, but as I still have some concept of light and dark I can make out some shapes of other customers close by.

However when it comes to the Carvery I do need help, especially with the hotplates, and staff will always be on hand as it is difficult to serve myself. I get the choice I want as they take me along the counter and explain what is available, before escorting me back to dine.



So its "Cheers to the Prince of Wales" for making me feel comfortable.

(written on behalf of Becky Bettington, but with her wit and humour)

Have you heard of this new product? A mug with a rotating handle!

✓ Stays Upright



✓ Tilts Easily



✓ Keeps Steady



The Handsteady drinking cup is a different type of vessel. Although from the photo you can't see it, there is a lid on it with a hole through which to drink.

As the handle can rotate when you lift the cup, this means the fluid is able to be drunk easily often without the need for a straw. If you have restricted movement or strength there is less strain on the wrist or hand as you can tilt it to your lips, and don't need to put your head back either.

Picture taken from their website

The mug is basically colour matched to bone china, but is stain resistant and shatter-proof. Its just as well as it costs £39.99. I cannot endorse the product, but am just bringing you the information. You might like to investigate further.

For further details try their website: www.handsteady.com

Hereford Community Farm



Hereford Community farm is a wonderful new venture just established within walking distance of the city of Hereford.

It is based at Warham Court Farm, on land leased by Julie Milsom and John Trimble, the couple who successfully ran Barton Hill Assisted Animal Therapy Centre, Kentchurch from 2007.

In fact it is a relocation of their business where a diversity of people with disabilities find

sanctuary and enjoyment in the natural environment.

The Community Farm is located on a working mixed farm where the farmer is keen to welcome and work alongside this new partnership. It has an idyllic location. The site can be viewed on the 1830 Tithe map, showing coppiced woods, and in the sound of Belmont Abbey, whose bells chime out to break the tranquil silence of the countryside. There are uninterrupted views of an unchanged landscape, with river meadows, orchards, and un-worked grasslands where the birds have not been disturbed.



Central to the project's core is the key objective of "access for all" and

Hereford Community farm prides itself on its inclusive approach, welcoming people from all backgrounds and with a range of skills, needs and abilities. People's differences are embraced and their input valued, with the emphasis in activities not in the "end result" but in sensory involvement and the experiential learning process.

The transformation from one location to another during this summer has needed careful planning, patience and a vision of what will be achievable. Along with the hard work and endless hours, the tranquil environment for it's clients has been maintained.

Location...Warham Court, Hereford, HR4 7PF



Change for many is difficult to accept, but it would appear that this is a change for the better.

Whilst viewing the farm on 30th August, I witnessed the arrival of the pigs and sheep, another managed operation. Whilst one pig was immediately out of the trailer the other needed to be coaxed out with food by Julie into their new field. Then halters were put onto the two sheep so

they could be walked to their temporary accommodation. A quiet spell was needed before they too could enjoy being along side their old friends the horses who were anxiously awaiting their arrival.

Barry, in this photo is one of the clients on supported employment at the farm, who is able to lead an active life fulfilling his potential in a purposeful and meaningful role. He is seen accompanied by Julie Milsom as they walk the sheep to their new home having just arrived in a trailer at the farm.

The logistics of moving animals from one farm to another has provided a few headaches. After all their housing needs to be dismantled and reassembled, at the same time as the animals are transported.



One of the horses was born at Barton Hill and had never being in a trailer. Another mare who is 40 years old (and featured on the front cover), has adapted well to her new surroundings.

Since 2007 the number of clients has increased and the change in location has not deterred them from continuing to seek enjoyment and therapy with the animals. This includes clients from Wales who feel it is beneficial to continue their regular sessions.

PTO

The Classroom awaiting refurbishment

Much is planned on the new site. A demountable classroom awaits in the adjoining field; the ground levelling will continue once harvesting is complete. The classroom has been moved from Black Marston School and donated to the cause by the owner of the business who transports such items.



The picture only shows half of the classroom, which has all the necessary attributes internally to make it a self contained unit.

Hopefully the weather held long enough to get it sited, and the roof in situ before the rain set in.

Below, the familiar childlike murals will be transformed with a fresh coat of paint and suitable furniture, to enable the self contained premises to be hired out for

meetings. It will have all the necessary facilities including a kitchen, accessible toilet and shower, to accommodate up to 65 people.

At present, the small animals such as guinea pigs, are homed within a barn, as a temporary measure. Clients are well catered for with tables and chairs, and kitchen facilities too. The clients enjoy handling the animals, and as part of their therapy and self expression, care for the animals too. Everything is the right height so they can clean the cages, feed the animals as well as handle them.



The Centre offers a flexible person centred approach tailored to meet each individual's needs and requirements. Attendance varies from half an hour once a week, to four days a week.

Future developments on site will see the old dairy building come down and rebuilt as a Tea Room and Farm Shop. Once complete this will provide on-going work/ training/ employment for clients, as well as expand the opportunity to other areas. Already clients and volunteers have been working the fields and growing vegetables.

Future developments on the farm



Some regulars are keen to undertake the rigour of gardening despite the size of the job. The quietness of their surroundings allows them to enjoy the task in hand.

The apple trees grown in containers are awaiting planting as an avenue alongside a wheelchair accessible pathway soon to be implemented.

There will be paddocks too which again will have access to those in wheelchairs.

In another area willows have been planted to enable the green woodworking project to continue. This has been very successful in the past with items on sale made by the clients. One such person has found deep enjoyment and success in this field when Alzheimers took hold. This has enabled personal achievement and more positive outlook despite the onset of such a debilitating condition.

The apple orchards will continue to be grazed by farm livestock, but that is the owner's role. However by giving over 50% of the orchard to the community farm, fruit will be harvested and other possibilities developed.

Events are planned already to encourage visitors to see for themselves what a great venture this is.

On **Saturday 19th October** there will be the opportunity to visit and try first hand using the Pole Lathe or carving a spoon when the Big Skill and Green Woodworkers will be present. This is linked to the Hereford Energy week.



For all details contact Julie Milsom by email: herefordcommunityfarm@gmail.com
Or ring: 07971 423817

More information: www.facebook.com/HerefordCommunityFarm

Yes I Can Club.....one year on



For the past 12 months the group set up last September to provide voluntary support and activities for those with communication difficulties after a stroke has held monthly meetings.

This photo shows one of the first sessions, where we got to know each other, but since then numbers have grown and the format changed to suit attendees. Right from the start we knew we had to accommodate the needs of the individuals, which of course is on a continuous change.

Working with the local Stroke Club each session has seen a programme of activities and always with a welcoming cuppa.

So far we have covered:

- ◆ Getting to know you..... a meet and greet opener to understand limitations
- ◆ Bring and tell.....a memory object of choice to try and speak about
- ◆ Give us a clue.....as in the old TV game show
- ◆ Seated exercise.....a structured session with qualified therapist
- ◆ Gardening with a disability.....Shelagh Wynn, Herefordshire Growing Point
- ◆ Christmas singing.....utilising carol sheets and CDs for old familiar tunes
- ◆ Hide and feel.....a bag holding objects to feel and describe without sight
- ◆ Draw on the board.....an aid to topics/ memories familiar to us
- ◆ Speech therapy.....with qualified therapist

The one thing noticeable and commented upon by regular visitors is the improvement made by everyone. We cannot take credit for it though, as it comes with determination and other sessions found within the Stroke Club, as well as commitment by each individual and their families. However having such a diverse mixture within the group has been beneficial for those recently coping with their disability. Encouraged after being told “my husband couldn’t communicate for a long time, but now he has some speech and is still getting better even after a couple of years”. This type of encouragement with visual proof does much to enhance self esteem and hope.

Our first meeting on 20th September was a reunion and holiday theme after a break for the summer. We now meet at St John’s Methodist Church hall, St Owen’s Street, Hereford. HR1 2PR, on the 3rd Friday of each month, from 2.30– 4.00pm. Programme soon to be on the HDU website, or ring 07817 473813.

I would like to thank Cllr Nick Nenadich for allowing us a free room during our first year at HUFC. With on-going construction in that area we have moved for this year.

Medical Detection Dogs



The latest use for “man’s best friend” is as medical dogs for a number of conditions, and it seems they use their enhanced sense of smell to detect changes in odours emitted by their handler.

This lovely conditioned animal was under training when I encounter her in Shrewsbury earlier this year. She was being trained to aid someone with diabetes. It seems that when blood sugars are low (hypoglycaemia) a different scent is given off to when blood sugar is in the normal range.

Hypoglycaemia is frightening and distressing with symptoms such as confusion, seizure or coma which can be life threatening. The dog will react according to an individual’s needs and therefore specific training is tailor made to suit. Dogs are taught to bark, jump, lick or paw to alert their owner before an attack comes on. They can also be taught to ring an alarm, or bring urgent medical supplies such as glucose to their owner.

Currently being researched are sniffer dogs used to detect cancer in the early stages. The type of cancer and odours given off are detected in different ways. For example, a breath sample for lung cancer, and possibly prostate cancer from a urine sample.

Medical Detection Dogs is a charity which is slowly expanding the range of conditions which dogs may have the potential to detect. Strangely enough if you check out their website they are asking for donations of male and female urine samples to be used in the training of their dogs!

If you wish to participate and find out more then contact the Bio Detection Manager: rob.harris@medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk

In fact if you are a lover of man’s best friend there are many items, which members of the public can donate towards the expansion of the charity. Young dogs and puppies need playthings and soft toys and there is always a request for them. Contact: lydia.swanson@medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk or telephone 01296 655888.

If you are generally interested the work and the mass of requests/ events on the website then here is the website address:

<http://medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk/news.html>

Useful Contacts

NHS Herefordshire Patient Advice and Liaison Service

Franklin House
4 Commercial Road
Hereford
HR1 2BB
Office Tel No: 01432 260263
Mobile Tel No: 07971 315709
Email: enquiries@herefordpct.nhs.uk

Equality and Human Rights Commis- sion

Freepost RRLG-GHUX-CTRX, Arndale
House,
Arndale Centre, Manchester, M4 3AQ
Tel: 0800 800 0082 Website:
www.equalityhumanrights.com

RADAR, now at Disability Rights UK

12 City Forum, 250 City Road, London,
EC1V 8AF
Tel: 020 7250 3222 Minicom: 020 7250
4119
Email: enquiries@disabilityrightsuk.org

NHS Direct Tel: 111 (free service)

Wye Valley NHS Trust

The County Hospital
Union Walk
Hereford
HR1 2ER
Tel: 01432 355444

Wye Valley NHS Trust Community Health

Vaughan Building
Ruckhall Lane
Belmont
Hereford
HR2 9RP
Tel: 01432 344 344

Herefordshire Council and NHS Here- fordshire

Social Services Adult Duty Desk
Office hours 9am - 5pm
Office Tel No: 01432 260000
Email:
[LocalityAccess-
Point@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:LocalityAccess-Point@herefordshire.gov.uk)

Next meeting on 27th November

Autism Seminar

At Hinton Community Centre, Hereford

Details to follow

www.herefordshiredisabilityunited.org.uk

Network News is produced by Herefordshire Disability United,
c/o 39 Lea Villa Residential Park, Lea, nr Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire, HR9 7GP.
Tel: 07817 473813
Email: info@hdu.org.uk
Website: www.herefordshiredisabilityunited.org.uk