

Walthew House News

Issue 4

May 2010

Walthew House News is available in large print, Braille, on audio CD or tape, by email and as a British Sign Language DVD. The next issue will be available in September 2010.



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Walthew House Supports People in Stockport who are Blind, Visually Impaired, Deaf or Hard of Hearing, or who have Dual Sensory Loss. Registered Charity Number 215469.

Welcome... to Walthew House News. In this issue we have information about our new youth group and news about funding for refurbishing the Deaf Centre kitchen. Our cover photo shows Mary and her visitor Angela. Mary was one of the first deaf people to be matched with a volunteer visitor as part of our new visiting project. You can read more about the project on page seven of the newsletter.

News from Walthew House

Friends of Walthew House - Membership for 2010

It's that time of the year again! Membership of Friends of Walthew House is just £10 a year and this regular commitment is very much valued. Anyone can be a member; current members include service users, volunteers and other people who are keen to help fund the practical support the charity gives to people with a sensory loss in Stockport. Members have a vote at the Annual General Meeting and are encouraged to take an active part in the development of the charity. To renew your membership or join as a new member, please complete the form below and return with your cheque for £10. If you need help to complete the form, just let us know.

Many current members have already renewed their subscription. Many thanks – your support is much appreciated.

Membership of Walthew House 2010

- I would like to become a member/renew my membership of Friends of Walthew House. I enclose my donation of **£10**.
Please make cheques payable to Walthew House and return to 112 Shaw Heath, Stockport, SK2 6QS.
- I would like to make an additional donation to the charity. I enclose my donation of £.....
- Please tick here if you are a tax payer and would like to Gift Aid your donation. We will sort out the paperwork for you.

Name Address

Annual General Meeting 2010

This year's Annual General Meeting will take place on Tuesday 6th July. Refreshments will be served from 9.30am and the meeting will follow at 10am.

New trustees may be elected at the Annual General Meeting. The charity currently has 14 trustees, but its constitution permits up to 16 people drawn from the membership of the charity. Trustees and their nominees must be members of the charity. Membership of 'Friends of Walthew House' is currently £10 per year. The trustees, known as the Management Committee serve for four years, have responsibility for all the affairs of the organisation and must ensure that it is well-run, remains solvent and keeps to its objectives. A British Sign Language interpreter is available at all trustee meetings and written information is available in large print, Braille and on audio if needed. The trustees will make every effort to ensure that the communication and other needs of anyone wishing to become a trustee are accommodated.

If you are interested in becoming a trustee and would like more information about what the role entails please contact the Executive Manager Kay Kelly. If you wish to make a nomination for election to the Management Committee please complete the form below and return by Friday 25th June to the Secretary, Management Committee at Walthew House.

Trustees of Walthew House Nomination for Election

Name of nominee

Contact details of nominee (please tell us the best way for us to contact the nominee)

.....

Please ensure the person named is willing to be nominated. (You can nominate yourself, providing you have two people to sponsor you.)

Sponsor _____

Seconder _____

Youth Club

We have received a three year grant from the Sobell Foundation to start a new youth club for young people who are deaf or visually impaired. The grant is funding the salary of a part-time youth worker five hours a week to develop and run the club. The youth club will run on Friday evenings between 6pm and 7.30pm. It will be open to young people with a sensory loss, aged 5-14, who live in the Stockport area. If, once the club is up and running, there are spare places it may be possible to widen the criteria. At the time of writing we haven't agreed a date for the new club to start, as we will need to get references and Criminal Records Bureau checks for all new volunteers. In the meantime anyone interested either in joining the club or volunteering to help should contact Walthew House via the usual numbers or by emailing:

youthclub.walthewhouse@ntlbusiness.com

We are very grateful to the Sobell Foundation for their generous support and also to the Hedley Foundation which has given £2,000 towards equipment for the new club, to the ACT Foundation, which has pledged £1,000 and Stockport IMPACT which has given £500. The grants have helped pay for sports and games equipment, kitchen equipment so the group can have cookery sessions and craft equipment and materials.

We have appointed June Battye as youth club co-ordinator. June works with the Seashell Trust as a sign language tutor and has a wealth of experience as a youth worker. She has also served as a trustee of Walthew House since 2008. Charity Commission rules mean that June may not be able to take up paid work with the charity and also continue as a trustee so we are seeking clarification on this.

Refurbishment of the Deaf Centre

We have received a grant of £5,000 from the Garfield Weston Foundation towards the refurbishment the Deaf Centre kitchen. This is the second time the foundation has supported Walthew House; in 2008 they gave £10,000 towards the cost of the new lift. The Beatrice Laing Trust which gave a grant of £5,000 towards the new lift has also supported the kitchen project, this

time with a grant of £2,000. We have also received a pledge of £5,000 from the Percy Bilton Charity towards the Deaf Centre kitchen refurbishment. The charity contributed to our new fire alarm system in 2008. We are very grateful for the continued support of all these organisations.

We plan to replace the old metal framed kitchen windows, put in new units and flooring, retile the walls and redecorate. The work will start in the summer when Walthew House is quieter, so that activities need not be disrupted. Funds are unlikely to stretch far enough to pay for a dishwasher, new kitchen table, fridge and other smaller items of equipment, so we are continuing to look for extra funding to finish the kitchen completely.

Arrangements for Summer Opening

The usual classes and activities will finish for the summer on Friday 23rd July and open again on Monday 6th September. For the past couple of years we have held a very successful informal group on Mondays from 10.30am to 1.30pm as an opportunity for people to keep in touch over the summer. This will run again this year, starting on 26th July and finishing on 23rd August – as the last Monday in August is the Bank Holiday. The cost is £2 including tea and biscuits.

Deaf Centre activities usually continue through the summer, but this year may need to move downstairs while the kitchen is being refurbished.

Summer Party

This year's summer party is on Monday 7th June from 10.30am to 1pm. The cost is £3.00 including buffet and entertainment and tickets are available from the Walthew House office. There will be no other classes or activities that week.

Tandem Time

Last year Walthew House bought a second hand light weight touring tandem bicycle. Its first major trip out was the Manchester to Blackpool cycle ride raising much needed funds for the charity. We have a volunteer who is an experienced cyclist who is happy to take people who are blind or partially sighted out for rides at

weekends. It's a great way to get some fresh air and exercise and you can go out for as long or short a ride as you're comfortable with. Please contact the office if you're interested. The tandem is also available on loan to more experienced cyclists. Just let us know if you'd like to borrow it.

Open Day 2010

The Walthew House equipment and information open day is taking place on Wednesday 22nd September this year. This will be the fourth annual open day. Last year we had over 30 exhibitors taking part, including companies supplying equipment for people with a visual impairment or hearing loss and organisations providing information tailored to the needs of people with a sensory loss on local transport schemes, education and employment services, and as it was very relevant at the time, the digital switchover.

Visit to Starkey Laboratories

Hearing Aid users are being invited on a visit to Starkey Laboratories, a global hearing aid manufacturer with UK premises in Hazel Grove. Starkey Laboratories supply NHS audiology departments and retailers all around the country as well as manufacturing a wide range of products including earmoulds, hearing protection products and wireless technology for organisations around the world.

Roger Lewin, Managing Director of the company came in March to chat to hearing aid users at the Deaf Centre Thursday Day Centre group. He was interested to hear about people's firsthand experience of using hearing aids, as this is invaluable information when Starkey is creating new products. Afterwards he offered to arrange a visit for hearing aid users to see Starkey's work. There are relatively few manufacturing sites for hearing aids in the UK and so this is a rare opportunity to take a look at the manufacturing process and give your opinion on hearing aid design.

We haven't fixed a date yet, but anyone interested in the visit should let the Walthew House office have their name and contact details as soon as possible.

Visiting Service for Deaf People

The photo on this issue of Walthew House news shows Angela Boylin, one of the volunteers on the new visiting scheme, setting off to go shopping with Mary. Angela explains how the visit works: “I visit Mary every Tuesday morning arriving about 10am and I usually leave about 11.40am. Mary is usually ready when I arrive and we go onto Castle Street sometimes going to the bank before going to Sommerfield. After I have put her shopping away and made her a cup of tea we usually sit chatting for 20 minutes depending on time. I have recently learned to sign and visiting Mary enables me to practice those skills on a regular basis. I think Mary enjoys me visiting as it gives her someone different to talk to and because I take her shopping it enables her to buy her own food and get other bits she needs.”

Alison Parry is the part time Development Officer responsible for the new visiting service. She says, “I am so grateful to all the new volunteers who have come forward in the last year to help with the new visiting service. Together they have provided over 500 volunteering hours, supporting deaf people by providing company, trips to the shops or to appointments and practical support like helping with phone calls. The feedback we have had from service users is very good and new people are coming to us for support all the time.”

Anyone interested in receiving support or joining the project as a volunteer should contact Alison at Walthew House. She mainly works Mondays and Tuesdays.

Services for Older Deaf People

Funds from our project to develop services for older people who are deaf or hard of hearing have been used to install a loop system in the upstairs hall, which will be a great benefit to hearing aid users.

The project has also paid for a new range of equipment for people who are deaf or hard of hearing in our resource centre. The resource centre operates on a not for profit basis and stocks a wide range of equipment including vibrating watches and clocks, flashing door chimes, hearing aid maintenance kits, loop systems and amplified telephones. Volunteers are happy to

demonstrate how all the equipment works and place orders with the suppliers for any items not in stock.

One of the requests from older deaf people was for more information on Deaf issues to be available. We have subscribed to a range of monthly magazines which are now available for people to read in the Deaf Centre. These include publications from the RNID, the British Tinnitus Association, the British Deaf Association, Sense and Deafblind UK. We have also bought a new camcorder so that more information can be recorded as sign language DVDs. Jackie Parker, the Development Manager working on the older people's project, has also been liaising with other organisations to encourage them to improve the range and quality of information produced in sign language. For instance, she has advised one organisation which didn't understand that there are regional variations in sign language, that they need to use local interpreters when producing local information for Stockport people.

Social Group for the Hard of Hearing

Some people have expressed an interest in starting a new social group for people who are hard of hearing. Would anyone interested in coming along to join either as a member or as a volunteer please contact Jackie Parker at Walthew House.

Hearing Aid Batteries

Hearing aid batteries provided by the audiology department at Stepping Hill Hospital are now available free of charge from the resource centre.

Price Rises

Prices for classes and activities at Walthew House were increased in April. It is the first price increase in four years and reflects increases in cleaning, maintenance, heating and lighting and refreshment costs. Prices now are:

Craft: £3.00, Bridge: £3.00, Handbells: £1.00, Tuesday Social: £3.00, Steel Band: By arrangement with the volunteers, Dance: £1.50, Talking Heads: £2.50, Luncheon Club: £4.50, Computer Club: £1.50, Braille: £1.50.

Under the terms of the merger agreed last year, the Deaf Centre Thursday Day Centre and Friday Sports and Social Clubs don't contribute directly to the running costs of Walthew House, but do provide all their own refreshments.

What Do Guide Dogs Do?

Visitors to Walthew House are used to finding a guide dog sleeping in the resource centre or letting out the occasional yawn from under the table during long meetings. People are often intrigued to know more about the work guide dogs do. Sue Clare, a regular visitor to Walthew with her guide dog Nelson fills in some of the answers:

How does Nelson know where to go? How does he know if you want to go to the bank or the butchers for instance?

Guide dogs and their owners work as a team. I know where I want to go. Nelson's job is to get me there safely, avoiding obstacles. Guide dogs are taught a number of routes. So for instance when I set off for the local shops, Nelson will guide me round obstacles, like bins on the pavement or overhanging branches. He'll stop every time we come to a road. Then it's my job to listen for traffic and decide it's safe to cross. If I tell him to go forward to cross and it isn't safe, he'll stop. When we get to the shops he'll stop or hesitate at each of the shops we usually go in and I can decide which ones I want. He always stops at the bank though because he knows that one of the ladies who works there keeps a stock of dog biscuits!

What about catching buses? How does Nelson know it's the right bus?

He doesn't. Nelson's job is to get me to the bus stop. I have to rely on the bus driver stopping for me. Nelson will then guide me onto the bus and I have to ask the driver what number the bus is. Then I can count the stops so I know when to get off or ask the driver to let me know.

How many routes can a guide dog learn?

At first they just learn maybe three main routes. Then as they become more experienced they can learn more. Nelson has over 20 for instance. I can still use him even if he doesn't know the whole of the route. Once inside a building he will follow someone

who is taking me to a particular room, say at the hospital for instance. It means I needn't rely on taking a stranger's arm to be guided.

Can you send Nelson to find something you've lost?

No, guide dogs aren't trained to find things. They do have all the usual dog instincts of course though. When my children were babies for instance, my guide dog was very protective of them. He would lie by the pram if they were outside sleeping or growl if people he didn't know came up to them if we were out. Not all the behaviours are positive though. Once on a trip out Nelson grabbed a man's fish and chips as we were passing!

Legacy News

We have received a very substantial legacy from the estate of the late Marjorie Halton Hilton. Mrs Hilton's will left £12,500 to Walthew House and £25,000 to Stockport Centre for the Deaf. Although we are now one charity the Deaf Centre money has been ring-fenced to pay for the ongoing costs of the centre, including sign language interpreting, heating and cleaning.

Occasionally we are asked by people making or updating their wills to recommend a local solicitor. We can't recommend any particular legal practice but we do have contacts in the office for a number of local firms. B.J. McKenna and Co., is currently offering a discount to people who mention Walthew House when they use the company to make their will. There is of course no obligation to leave a legacy to Walthew House when taking up the offer. If anyone would like to take up the offer, we have discount cards available in the Walthew House office.

Other News

FLAG Project

The following article has been sent in by Janet Lee, Development Manager at FLAG:

"A new independent information and advice service is now available in Stockport, helping people find out about all the adult health and social care services in the borough. FLAG (For Local

Advice and Guidance) is part of a voluntary sector consortium; ensuring local residents have easy access to information and advice and about the full range of council, health and voluntary services. FLAG has information about everything, from where to find practical help in the home or emotional support in your area, to what's on locally in terms of activities and groups, through to debt and specialist advice. These services help individuals and families maintain healthy and active lives, as well as supporting people when times become difficult.

To use this free service, you can either call in or make an appointment, at FLAG's Town Centre base at 39 Chestergate, or meet with one of FLAG friendly advisor at the one of the many outreach sessions which will be held across Stockport. Details of these sessions will be posted on our website

www.stockportflag.org.uk , also look out for notices in local venues. Alternatively email info@stockportflag.org.uk or telephone the helpline number which is **0161 474 1042.**"

Shopmobility

The following article has been sent in by John Leatherbarrow: "Do you know that Shopmobility Stockport have trained sighted guides to help visually impaired people round the town centre? It costs just £15 to join for life and after that the service is free. If you cannot walk, they can push you in a wheelchair, either yours or theirs. You are responsible for your own transport (e.g. taxi or Ring and Ride) and at least 48 hours notice is needed. To register as a member you need 2 ID with your name and address (from the last 3 months) or one with your name and address and one photo ID.

The service may also be available in other parts of the borough subject to the availability of trained volunteers. If you have guiding skills and some time to spare, Shopmobility Stockport would very much like to hear from you. If you are not trained as a guide but would still like to help out occasionally, it may be possible to arrange training.

To contact Shopmobility Stockport telephone 0161 666 1100.

Thank You to All our Supporters... Mr D Allen, Mr & Mrs Bancroft, Mr F Barnshaw, Mr K Barrow, Ms J Battye, Mr I Bell, Mr S Billington, Mrs D Birch, Mrs M Boulton, Mr B Bowden, Mr J Brown, Mr C Bullough, Mrs A Caffrey, Mr & Mrs Clayton, Mr E Coles, Mrs A Connor, Mrs E Connor, L Cooper, Mr R Cornwell, Mrs M Course, Mrs P Cruse, Miss E Dewhurst, Mr T Danson, Mrs C Dennison, Mr B Edwards, Mr H Etchells, Mr B Fletcher, Mr K Frost, Mrs Mary Fryer, Mr J Fussey, Mr F Hall, Mrs F Hall, Mr T Hallworth, Mr J Hammond, B Handley, Mrs I Henshall, Mrs E Heywood, Ms J Heywood, Mr T Hibbert, Mrs B Hodgkinson, Mr K Hoffman, Mrs D Hooley, Mrs V Hoosen, Mr R Hopwood, Mrs M Hughes, Mrs V Howells, Mrs C Johnson, Mr D Kilcoyne, Mr V Knowles, Mrs J Kurovski, Mr & Mrs Lewis, Mrs M Lewis, Mrs J Lovery, Mr B Lloyd, Mrs K Mackay, Mrs E MacNeall, Mr C McCulloch, Mr A McKenzie, Mr McNamara, Miss D Offili, Mrs J Ogden, Mrs B Owen, M Plumb, Ms M Pickering, Mrs A Potts, Mr M Pritchard, Mrs E Pulling, Mr S Reid, Mrs A Riley, Ms V Richardson, Miss G Roberts, Mr H Roberts, Mrs G Robinson, Mr D Rogers, Mr J Simcock, Mr P Smith, Mr & Mrs E Taylor, Mr B Turley, Mr & Mrs J Turner, Mr S Turner, Mr R Upton, Mr S ward, Mr & Mrs H Wardle, Mr T Whitworth, Mrs M Williams, Miss E Williamson and M Williamson.

Thank you to the following local organisations: B J McKenna & Co., Booth Ainsworth, Cohens Chemist Heaton Mersey, Heaton Moor Golf Club, The Heatons Probus Club, Kennies, J H Neal, the North West Steel Band Association, Offerton Methodist Church, Parfett and Sons, Stockport Carnival Committee, Stockport College, Stockport CVS Impact and Stockport Spiritualist Church.

Thank to the following organisations: The Duchy of Lancaster Benevolent Fund, The Hedley Foundation, The Garfield Weston Foundation, The Beatrice Laing Trust, The Lee Bakirgian Family Trust, The Edward C Oldham Settlement, The Pennycress Trust, The Sobell Foundation and the Sir Jules Thorn Charitable Trust.

We are grateful for donations in memory of Clara Edwards, Jack Forrester, George Nixon and Marian Thomson.