



Wandsworth Access Association



of People with Disabilities

# Annual Report

June 2007 – 2008

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**Reports From:-**

**M E - Chair**

**A B - Treasurer**

**J E - Information Officer**

**B P - Campaign Officer**

# **M E: - Chair's Annual Report**

**June 2007 - 2008**

The year has not gone as smoothly, as I thought, as at the start of my term of office started off with the uncertainty of the venue where members meeting were going to take place, let alone management needing a place to meet as well, despite these first setbacks I managed to sort it,

It has been a busy year with meetings to arrange, as well as plenty to attend at, the year has had its successes as well as failings.

The work programme has been worked through to the best of the management's ability.

## **Education**

Equality Statements both in Secondary and Primary were overviewed and scrutinised although not all the statements from all the primary schools have not passed through to us, (this is beyond our control.)

D.D.A:- Access Audits of School Buildings:- As part of our work as the Access Association we have been over viewing plans through the planning dept, for new buildings put forward for being built within the grounds of existing schools; and where invited to overview facilities for their suitability for disability

## **Health**

The Access Association work with Hospitals, Health Centres, etc; St George's Hospital invited the association to overview and scrutinise accessibility for disability within the hospital; the association have recently liaised and advised for better signage, road markings and disabled parking within the hospital; there are other ongoing projects the association are currently working on with the hospital. Working with St. Georges Hospital in connection with the D.D.A:- Accessible Environments, has been very successful and encouraging.

The LINK:- The New Forum (the new host being Wandsworth Care Alliance) There has not been any work as yet done with the LINK as

the Council took their time in choosing the host for this, WAA has joined as a member to the forum, and the host (WCA) has already had their first meeting, due to attending at another meeting I was not able to attend it.

### **Housing**

This has been problematic for the Association in the first instance, for this year, as members of the housing team were not very helpful, unlike in previous years.

Although the slight set back the association decided to approach this from a different aspect this year, hence asking our members if they are encountering any difficulties on their estates, and coming forward to address this with the housing team.

We invited housing to our meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> November where some of the members addressed concerns with their estates, at the meeting names and addresses were exchanged for investigation of the problems raised, this only the first stage, as we are waiting for the outcome of the problems raised by our members.

There have been some Estates Walkabouts, although there are still some estates that have not been done yet, as their time schedule has not arrived yet.

The clubrooms are being looked into to make them more accessible for disability.

### **Leisure & Amenities**

The Restaurant within Battersea Park is a private concern within the park, and is not a council responsibility.

The restaurant is still disabled unfriendly, despite the many concerns raised to the proprietor and for several years has been ignored, therefore the association deemed it necessary to bring this issue to the public's attention, by having an article placed within the local newspaper highlighting the issue: However the proprietor has promised to meet the requirements under the D.D.A within the future.

The Paths within the park in some places have become uneven and retaining water on the surface in wet weather, therefore after our

last visit for the Access and Design Awards, we contacted leisure, and amenities to inform them of the problem accruing with the path, therefore the association have recommended for it to be resurfaced. It was brought to the associations attention by two Occupational Therapists from the Atheledene Centre who assist young adults with physiotherapy using Tooting Leisure Centres training pool, they were encountering difficulties, with getting patients in and out of the pool, without breaching the manhandling rules; and therefore asked the association to approach leisure and amenities to request for a hoist to be installed within Tooting leisure centre training pool area, the outcome of this is Tooting Leisure Centre now has a hoist for the children to use.

The association have recently been invited to be involved on a new Sports group: - Wandsworth Sport and Physical Activity Network Advisory Group.

### **Planning**

Access and Design Awards:-Members of the Management Committee went on the assessments of locations for the Access and Design Awards over two days, and submitted reports and conclusions of the locations visited. several buildings were giving awards for their accessibility and design, while their were others that failed due to their inaccessibility for toilets, St. John's Therapy Centre was one of the buildings that failed due to inaccessible toilets.

Planning Sub Committee:-Members of the Management have been very busy over looking plans that have come through to the planning department, due to change of use, or having a new shop front or affordable housing being built, comments were submitted, and access statements were checked.

Accessible Environments:-The Chair has recently been ask to overview plans for a proposed new platform lift for the Town Hall entrance, and therefore has given his suggestions for the proposed lift, and has enlighten council of other concerns with the toilets within the Town Hall.

### **Social Services**

O.T Access Team, WAA have received complaints about poor service via, the telephone; the access association are looking into these complaints.

## **Technical Services**

**Public Highways:-**Pavements, have been reported when a problem has been noticed. Street Clutter has been reported when foliage has infringed over into the pavement and fridges & sofa's etc, has caused a danger to the blind. Mobile phone Masts have been closely monitored to insure that masts are not closely placed near primary schools or placed to closely together. Roads are also reported when potholes are noticed.

**Mobility Forum:-**The association are involved with the mobility forum for issues with Public Transport, Concessionary fares: Taxi card, Disability bus pass, Dial-a-ride and Wandsworth Community Transport. The campaign for a alight here announcement at Tooting Broadway Tube Station is still currently ongoing.

Mrs Price along with Wandsworth Community Transport and other groups in the community are overseeing an update to the Manifesto done in 2005

**Thames Water:-**The association brought to the attention of the water board the high barriers which they were using were not suitable for the public highway under health and safety, also they were infringing on the 1,000 meter gap for wheelchair users. The local press submitted a story in the local paper.

**School Safety Strategies:-**The association has recently brought to the attention of technical services of an accident hotspot in Burntwood Lane.

## **Miscellaneous**

**Disability Go:-**The association are involved with them as part of the Sub-Committee for Wandsworth.

## **A B: - Treasurers Annual Report June 2007 - 2008**

### Treasurer's Report 2007/8

The Association's finances are healthy, (see enclosed financial statement) but I forecast that if the rent, insurance, transport, & palantypist services are increased the Association will probably survive for a minimum of 2 years if the Council cap our grant of £5,000 and no additional funding is found.

### Conferences Attended 2007/8

#### Accessible Transport - is there a light at the end of the Tunnel.

I assisted with the transport surgery at the conference.

### Action for Ability Conference

Information workshops and a BBC Style Question Time for disabled people of working age in Wandsworth.

### Disability Capital Conference

An accessible conference run by SWT trains which covered disability Awareness training, Travel centre closures, and the lack of information available to disabled people on the company's website.

### UN Convention - making disability a reality 2008

Workshops included: Inclusive education, and Independent living review.

### Workshops

Notes from workshops are not ready to report on.

## **J E: - Information Officer Annual Report June 2007 - 2008**

### **Website**

The website is an asset to the association as a way to advertise what we do as an association which provides useful links to other organisations and information with interesting articles to read.

The website has had several hits as last year March - December 2007 there were 1647 unique visits to the website this year from January – May 2008 there has been so far 1721 unique visits to the website. Already there has been an increase of 84 unique visits than last year.

The email has also been a useful resource as this has made it easier for information to be sent and to be also received.

For a while there was an uncertain time for the association, if it was going to be able retain the website, this problem arose due to we were funded for the first year of the website by the Wandsworth Voluntary Sector Development Agency [2007] who paid the website company, by credit card on site, therefore when it came up for renewal the association had a problem as the association does not hold any bank cards.

After a few telephone calls and emails the problem was resolved as the website company agreed that they would allow us to send a cheque for payment of the website.

The website company are setting up in the near future in a direct debit payment system which would solve the problem arising next year.

### **Technical Services** (Overview Traffic Orders)

Part of the officer duties are to overview traffic orders for extension of parking bays, yellow lines and orders, under the provision, sections and schedules of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 As amended by the Local Government 1985 and the Traffic Management Act 2004.

The first notification that was brought to the attention of the traffic orders department was a form that was sent to overview.

I brought to their attention the wording on the papers was not clear, and could confuse those who have difficulties with reading.

Part of the document read:-

The applicant has to purchase parking permits for visitors; this was not clear who the applicant was and who had to purchase the permits the resident or the visitor.

Therefore it was suggested that the word should be altered to make it clearer, the word was changed to the resident has to purchase permits for their visitors.

### **Planning Sub Committee**

This committee is an essential part to the accessibility environment for the disabled people in Wandsworth, as a member of the sub-committee we oversee plans for new builds and refurbishment of shops and change of use of premises to make sure that regulations have been adhered especially those in relation to disability which insures the disabled have an accessible environment.

### **Acting Secretary**

As nobody was elected for the post as secretary, it became necessary to do the role of a secretary in the interest and necessity for the association, as there were jobs that needed to be done and therefore somebody had to take the initiative to carry out these tasks this was also supported by the Chair who also required the services of a personal secretary to support his role as chair being his wife made things more convenient for him.

It has been a busy time insuring documents went to the council on time for the printing and mailing for each members meeting and sending the email to the organisation that does the text-to-tape service for our blind members.

Typing up new forms for the equal opportunities monitoring and the nomination forms for election of the management team and M's (Chair's) report has kept me busy recently.

## **B P: - Campaign Officer**

### **Annual Report June 2007 - 2008**

**Putney Vale Estate, Wandsworth SW15** (Accessibility Issues)  
March 2005. Wandsworth Access Association and officers of the Housing dept did a walk-about on the above estate, as a result many improvements were made, and however the following still need some attention.

- Drop down kerbs
- Cars block access despite the presence of white lines, Action suggested: - (by officers) to be remarked in yellow paint and hatched to identify no parking area. Etc.

#### **Newlands Hall (Community Centre)**

Responsibility for these premises was to be transferred to the Housing Department in Nov. 2005, and checks were to be made to determine feasibility of improved access. To date, there has been no progress; it still does not comply with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

#### **Stag House (Putney Vale Youth Centre)**

Plans are underway to comply with the above act.

A platform lift is to be installed to enable wheelchair users access to the large hall (at present when an event is taking place they have to remain upstairs) also the Fire Escape Exits are to be improved, and Councillor Madden agreed that the gradient of the ramp is unacceptable and changes will be made. He has my will get in touch when all builders estimates are tendered.

Other ongoing projects are:-

- Queen Mary Hospital Roehampton
- Cornerstone Hall Roehampton
- Wandsworth Transport Manifesto Review etc.

But these are not ready to report on.

## **Wheelchair Outings (Organised by:- Wandsworth Access Association with a grant from Age Concern)**

### **Beyond Boundaries Live - Sandown Park, Esher Surrey**

This was a new national consumer show, which provided opportunities for disabled visitors to get involved in a host of new activities.

### **Capital Age Festival on the South Bank**

The cultural diversity of London's older people was celebrated at the fifth pan-London Capital Age Festival in August. Across several stages there were big bands and small ensembles, dance demonstrations, workshops, exhibitions, craft stalls and plenty of advice and information available.

### **Thrive; Battersea Garden Project**

Thrive is the national charity whose aim is to enable positive change in the lives of disabled and disadvantaged people through the use of gardening and horticulture. Thrive's therapists work with 30 disabled clients each week. We were pleased to support this project by purchasing plants and materials. We had a wonderful day out planting up hanging baskets or containers with herbs and ornamental plants for the garden.

### **Hampton Court Palace**

One of our new members had just received his wheelchair and had not yet taken his road test, therefore enjoyed the freedom of being able to practice in safe surroundings outside of his sheltered accommodation. Another new member (who had never been out in her wheelchair before because she had nobody to help her,) was most grateful to Age Concern's 'Out & About Service Co-ordinator' for finding her someone. She has now attends WAA meetings as transport is provided and the Wandsworth Community Transport drivers are always helpful to push her from the bus to the hall. She enjoys being able to get out and mix with other people again.

## Bluewater Shopping Mall, Kent

January 2008.

This was to be our last trip out, suggestions were asked for, and the majority wished for a visit to a large shopping mall, whilst the sales were in progress. It is easier to shop in a mall which has accessible shops, restaurants, and toilet facilities under one roof. W.C.T. provided us with a very helpful "shopper" she was tireless in finding the right sizes colours etc for one of our members who had not had such a happy experience for a very long time.

People have benefited in different ways, some have been inspired by their visit to the Thrive garden to continue their interest in horticulture.

Beyond Boundaries Exhibition enabled some to purchase mobility aids.

A craft stall at the Capital Age Festival reminded one member that she still had her jewellery tools etc from long ago and resolved to resume her hobby.

### What of the future?

We do not have any plans at present, but we intend to keep in touch with everybody and those who cannot get out on their own and we think would benefit, we shall suggest they join the Wandsworth Care Alliance Interest Group for people with a physical disability, chronic ill health, or sensory impairment. It is a friendly and informal meeting and transport is provided.

After this report was submitted Wandsworth Care Alliance Interest Group for people with a physical disability, chronic ill health, or sensory impairment, will shortly cease to be an existing group, due to Wandsworth Care Alliance has lost their funds for this particular group, and therefore are suggesting to their former members to join with one of the other link groups or to join Wandsworth Access Association of People with Disabilities.

Chairman (W.A.A)