



# DIAMOND JUBILEE

Annual Review: Produced by the Watford Observer

## Welcome to the world of Watford Mencap

Welcome to the Annual Review of Watford Mencap's work.

Watford Mencap is a local charity covering South West Hertfordshire, from Potters Bar to Rickmansworth. We currently support 500 people with a learning disability and their families. However, we estimate that there are more than 6,000 people

with a learning disability in the area. This number is increasing, as more babies survive and people live longer.

We depend on the generosity of the local community and local volunteers.

Many people believe that when they donate to national Mencap, some money trickles down to

their local Mencap. In fact, Watford Mencap is completely self-funding and relies on local fundraising.

We should like to thank our volunteer, Sarah Kitt, for editing this supplement. I hope you will enjoy reading it and will become involved in whatever way you can. Thank you.

**Don Eungblut**  
Chair, Watford Mencap



**HAPPY DAYS:** The Queen of Hearts made quite an impression at a regular Mencap Afterschool Club. Picture by Richard Owen

## Learning disability and discrimination

You might think in a civilised society everyone would be welcome and have a part to play. Unfortunately, you would not always be right.

If you have a learning disability, it is for life. You find it difficult to learn, understand or relate to other people. You are likely to have health problems. There is an 80 per cent chance you will be bullied, probably on a regular basis.

You have less than a one in five chance of finding and keeping a job. If you do have a job, your benefits may be

cut and it may be hard to keep working.

About 2.4 per cent of adults in Hertfordshire have a learning disability. This will rise by 14 per cent in 10 years.

Sixty years ago people with a learning disability had no right to an education. They would either stay at home with parents, or would be put in a long-stay institution like Leavesden or Harperbury.

Now, Watford Mencap and other local agencies are enabling people with a learning disability to live independently with support and achieve their potential.

### Did you know?

More than 6,000 people in SW Herts suffer from a learning disability.

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## Introducing the Watford Mencap Children's Centre



Have you ever wondered what goes on in the building that looks like a bus near the Dome roundabout?

Watford Mencap Children's Centre provides activities and a social life for children and young people with learning disabilities from 4-19. It also gives their parents a

break.

Stuart, 11, said: "I like friends, playing with the house and the castle but best of all the ball pool."

Mum Carol Alletto said: "Thank you so much for the care you have shown M. You have been a godsend."



Neil Palmer (pictured in the red T-shirt) has become a play worker.

### Fun turns into a job

When Neil Palmer reached the age of 20 he was too old to continue attending the Hand in Hand youth group for teenagers so, rather than lose touch, he stayed on as a volunteer.

Things turned out so well that, after a few months, Neil successfully applied to work as a play worker at Watford Mencap Children's Centre, which runs the youth group.

Neil said: "All the kids are absolutely great! They always put a smile on my face. They're always doing something new."

### Teens get a say in youth club planning

Watford Mencap Children's Centre runs the Hand in Hand youth club for young people aged 13-19 on Friday evenings.

Evenings can just be a chance to socialise and 'chill', or activities like a disco, pizza and games nights. There is also sports of all kinds such as football, badminton, tumbling and basketball.

Youth club member Nicole explained that members have their own committee which helps to run the club.

"It means we can learn how to run a meeting and do stuff for everyone in the club," said youth clubber Joe.

The young people discuss the kinds of activities they think everyone would like to do. They also learn how to evaluate what

has been done before. "The rugby was good," said Andrew, "but we need to be more organised next time."

Part of their work includes collecting ideas from the other young people. "I had a list and I ticked off what people said they liked," said Daniel.

Watford Mencap would like to thank Watford Grammar School for Boys for hosting the club, and their Site Manager Dave Carley, who always 'goes the extra mile' to help the team.

Hand in Hand Youth Club is running 60 laps for Watford Mencap's 60th birthday. Want to get involved or do something similar?

Email fundraising@watfordmencap.org.uk

**Did you know?**  
8 out of 10 children with a learning disability are bullied

### TIMELINE

- 1946 – Judy Fryd forms The National Association of Parents of Backward Children (which would later be known as Royal Mencap)
- 1951 – The Watford branch of the association is formed

- 1953 – Queen Elizabeth II is crowned
- 1955 – Name change to The National Society of Mentally Handicapped Children
- 1956 – Watford Mencap develops its first service, The Stepping Stones Club, for children aged 10 and above



The service can provide information on all matters.

**Did you know?**

Learning disability is not mental illness or dyslexia

## Free services is there to help

Watford Mencap's specialist Advice & Advocacy Service offers free confidential help for people with a learning disability and their family.

This invaluable service can help people with a wide variety of issues from filling in forms, applying for benefits, finding funding for things, writing letters or speaking to people on their behalf.

Learning and Leisure Manager Ruth Murray recalls a woman who was referred to the Advice & Advocacy Service in 2006.

Ruth explains: "I visited this lady who lived with her sister and who also had support from a brother who lived nearby. We were able to claim Disability Living Allowance for her, and we left information about our serv-

ice for future reference.

"In March 2009 this lady called me, as her brother had died suddenly. She felt she needed support to cope with her grief. I arranged a referral to the loss and bereavement service for grief counselling. I also referred her to our Community Support service for a support worker once a fortnight, so she could get out and about. Since the loss of her brother, she didn't have much of a social life."

"This lady recently told me she had moved on from individual counselling to group sessions. She has now been able to move forward with her life."

Call Ruth or Julie on 01923 713620 or email [advice@watfordmencap.org.uk](mailto:advice@watfordmencap.org.uk)

## Helping you get the right help for your child

Getting a diagnosis for a child can be hard. If a condition is easy to diagnose, parents may be told that their child has a specific condition before, or shortly after, birth.

However for others there is no clear route to a diagnosis. Parents may start to notice things about their child, and compare them with other children. For others, their health visitor or GP may pick something up.

A paediatrician will be able to assess a child. The right diagnosis can lead to information, therapy, technology and services that can improve the quality of life for a child and family.

However it is thought that up to 40 per cent of children with special needs do not have a specific diagnosis, but are given the term 'global developmental delay'. This can make life very difficult.

Parents continually have to prove that their child's needs are genuine.

"I support Mencap and I know they do good work. I have always received help when I have phoned and it has really put my mind at rest. Sometimes problems seem so huge when you try to deal with them alone."

Serina Coles, mother of a child with a learning disability.

## Targeting mental health in schools

Watford Mencap's Advice & Advocacy Service became part of the Targeting Mental Health in Schools (TaMHS) Pilot Project in Watford in 2009.

This was a new project funded by the Department for Children, Schools and Families to transform the way that mental health support was delivered to children aged five to 13, to improve their mental wellbeing and tackle problems more quickly.

### TIMELINE

- 1959 - Mental Health Act means fewer people with a learning disability being admitted to long stay hospitals
- 1960 - The Beatles are formed
- 1963 - Further name change to The National Society for Mentally Handicapped

- Children and Adults ● President Kennedy assassinated
- 1966 - Mencap starts Gateway clubs, offering sports and leisure opportunities for people with a learning disability
- England football team win the World Cup

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# Watford Observer Proud to support Mencap and wishes to congratulate them on their Diamond Jubilee

The Watford Observer regularly covers a wide variety of fundraising and charity events both in print and online. From local people raising money to registered charities hosting large events we are proud to support our local charities, raising awareness of special events and recognising the efforts of people involved.

Buy your copy every Friday, or log on to [www.watfordobserver.co.uk](http://www.watfordobserver.co.uk) to keep up to date.

## Holding a fundraising event?

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\*omniture Aug 10



Richard Kirk is learning to drive  
Picture by Richard Owen

## Richard's in the driving seat

Watford Mencap's residential homes help young people with a learning disability to make the transition into independent living. Richard Kirk has been living at Berrywood Residential Home in Rickmansworth for the past two years and, with support from volunteer Richard Owen, he is now learning to drive.

Richard has already taken a few driving lessons and is looking forward to booking his test once he has passed the theory exam.

Like everyone else, Richard will have to answer 50 questions as well as a hazard perception test.

Kate Marsh, who works at Berrywood,

said: "I recently went out in the car with Richard and his driving has been going very well.

I was impressed with how confident he is. He really concentrates."

Richard has a full time job with CeX in Watford. CeX buy, sell and exchange a range of technology and entertainment products including mobile phones and video games.

Richard also explained that he is a massive Watford FC fan and goes to the majority of home games with his dad.

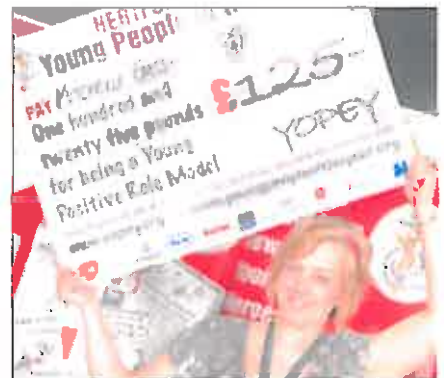
Watford Mencap would like to wish Richard the best of luck in passing his driving test!

## Mencap volunteer is 'Young Person of the Year'

Mitchelle Gass, a volunteer at Watford Mencap Children's Centre, took joint third prize at the Hertfordshire Young People of the Year Awards 2010. She was awarded £125, with £50 being given to Watford Mencap.

Mitchelle (pictured with her cheque) was nominated by Children's Centre manager, Ro Linton, as a thanks and recognition for all the hard work she does for Watford Mencap.

Young People of the Year or YOPEY recognises the efforts made by young people around the country and aims to change the negative attitude which can be associated with them.



www.yopey.c

■ Watford Mencap supporter, Chris Mellor, is doing a sponsored walk across Scotland. Feel inspired or want to get involved? Contact Lauren 01923 713622

■ Do you like running to raise money? Come join us on in Cassiobury Park on 2nd May for the Watford 10k run. Contact Lauren 01923 713622



### TIMELINE

1969 – The society becomes commonly known as Mencap ● The first man on the moon

1970 – Parents dissatisfied with long stay institutions club together to purchase Hill-side, the first Watford Mencap residence. ●

Watford Football Club reaches the semi final of the FA cup for the first time ● Education (Handicapped Children) Act 1970 passed, giving all children with a learning disability the right to an education for the first time

## Giving something back

'Giving something back' is an integral part of the culture at Sigma Pharmaceuticals, a wholesale business in Watford run by MD Bharat Shah.

Mr Shah and his 400-strong staff give back to the community by organising the Great Watford Walk (formerly known as the Big Herts Walk), raising funds for Watford Mencap and two other local charities.

The walk first took place in 2006 and walkers raise up to £30,000 each year.

Sigma staff and their families organise the administration of the walk, help to publicise the event, fundraise among their customers and suppliers and take part on the day, as marshals or walkers.

■ To raise money for Watford Mencap email fundraising@watfordmencap.org.uk



Bharat Shah. Picture by Sally Ashle-Cound

## Introducing some of Mencap's great partners in the community

Watford Mencap has some great partnerships in the local community. Watford Round Table has supported Watford Mencap since the 1960's even fundraising for the first premises, Table Hall in Pinner Road, and now organise the Watford 10k run.

Rev Dan Bond, from Aldenham School, organised a fun day for Watford Mencap members. He said: "It was a fantastic day; we look forward to doing it again next term."

Kim Bleasdale, a member of the Visual Merchandising team at John Lewis, helped revamp Watford Mencap's Bushey Shop.

Merchant Taylors' School invites Watford Mencap members to their fun day every year. Student Mark Nathan said:

"This year's fun day was a wonderful occasion, and I would like to thank Dominic Howell, Mrs Teskey, the kind helpers of Watford Mencap and our guests for coming along and making it such a fun 'Fun Day'!"

Sandy Lodge Golf Club has chosen Watford Mencap as charity of the year and hopes to fund two new vehicles.

The Esporta Riverside Club, Northwood invites Watford Mencap's volunteers to enjoy the club each year. Michael Prasse, General Manager, said: "We value the wonderful work

carried out by Watford Mencap. Without its 140 volunteers, Watford Mencap could not do as much to support people with a learning disability. We are delighted to offer them this opportunity to relax and enjoy themselves."

Camelot UK Lotteries Limited was Gold sponsor of the 2010 Watford 10k. Anne Patberg, Head of Sustainability, said: "Our employees had a great time at the event and raised over £2800 for Watford Mencap."

Kaylee Chapman from VocaLink delivered presents donated by employees to the Children's Centre. She said 'I thoroughly enjoyed the visit'. VocaLink teams have also helped out at Watford Mencap's homes.

Watford Mayor Dorothy Thornhill said: "I support Watford Mencap because they really are a special charity dealing with very special people. They are professional, compassionate and truly committed to making life better for all their clients and their families."

And the town's MP Richard Harrington added: "I am very proud to be a supporter of Watford Mencap. Mencap has been an important part of my life since I was 7 years old as my father was a keen volunteer and Chairman of our local branch."

Watford Mencap would like to say a big thank you to all its partners.

### Did you know?

Most learning disabilities develop before or during birth or because of a serious illness in early childhood.

### TIMELINE

- 1973 – Elton John becomes president of Watford Football Club
- 1976 – First Watford Mencap summer play scheme for children
- 1978 – Rickmansworth Gateway Club started by play scheme volunteers

- 1981 – Watford Football club in the first division for the first time ever
- 1986 – Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother becomes the patron of Mencap
- 1989 – Shepherd Centre day centre, Rickmansworth, opens

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**What a difference  
60 years can make**

In 1951 when Watford Mencap was founded, people with a learning disability had no option but to move into long stay hospitals if their families were unable to care for them. In 1970, the parents and members of Watford Mencap clubbed together to purchase a property because they wanted something more than a long stay institution for their loved ones.

The result was Hillside Residential Home in Oxhey, now home to 8 residents. The Friends of Hillside have continued to support the home by raising money to purchase a people carrier.

Residents are encouraged to live as independently as possible in Watford Mencap's homes. Watford Mencap wants those using its services to make their own choices and decisions, with as little or as much support as they need.

**Meet Hillside resident Cliff**

Cliff is living the life he wants, thanks to the support he receives as a resident at Hillside.

He travels by bus to a day centre four days a week and attends Watford Mencap's



Cliff with his carer Aya.

Leisure Together group. Cliff is also a regular at the Sea Lions Swimming Club in Watford and goes on holiday with fellow residents of Hillside.

Another important person in Cliff's life is Ayo, his key worker. Cliff explains that Ayo and other Watford Mencap staff support him to cook his own meals, go shopping and to do other things he enjoys.

Cliff, who has lived at Hillside for 14 years, enjoys going to Watford Football Club matches and playing football. In future, Cliff would like to travel to Africa to go on safari. He would also like to raise money for children in Africa. He is currently aiming to save enough money to get a computer in his room, as he would like to look up travelling and 60s music on the internet.

**A groundbreaking move**

Around 100 people in Hertsmere, Three Rivers and Watford belong to Watford Mencap's Leisure Together. As well as enjoying outings with their friends, members learn new skills which help them to develop.

Leisure Together member Robert explains: "The Leisure Together team have been wonderful. They really care about their members, ensuring that they are safe and enjoying themselves."

Volunteer Lyn Prodger comments: "I have been volunteering regularly with Watford Mencap for four years now and have loved every minute. Volunteers get excellent training and are really valued."



Paul Bignell, a carer, added: "My daughter, Stephanie, regularly attends the Fitness Club on a Monday evening and finds the sessions really enjoyable and very varied. She plays football, badminton and many other activities."

Stephanie has also attended an Arts and Crafts day, seen a show at the Palace Theatre and watched Watford FC play.

**Did you know?**

Fewer than 1 in 5 people with a learning disability work, yet over 65% would like to work

■ Do you like 'Mamma Mia'? Come along to Watersmeet on November 3, 2011. Dress up in your favourite 70s outfit and be a 'Dancing Queen' for the night. Contact Lauren 01923 713622

■ Are you celebrating a 60th anniversary or birthday in 2011? Why not celebrate it with Watford Mencap? For more details Email fundraising@watfordmencap.org.uk

**TIMELINE**

- 1991 – Watford Mencap residential home Berrywood opens
- 1992 – Watford Mencap residential home Thorpedale opens ● The Harlequin shopping centre opens in Watford
- 1995 – The Disability Discrimination Act is

- passed Watford Mencap residential home Homeoaks, for people with profound and multiple disabilities, opens
- Leavesden long stay hospital closes
- 2001 – The government publishes its 'Valuing People' white paper.

## Excellence for Community Support Service

WATFORD Mencap's Community Support Service has received a three star excellent rating from the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

The service provides support to 60 people with a learning disability in Watford, Three Rivers and Hertsmere and is flexible and tailored to meet individual needs. Support is provided in a variety of ways and may vary from

one visit a week to daily visits, depending on a person's needs. You can be referred by your social worker or buy the service privately.

Some examples of support Watford Mencap provide include help with budgeting, healthy living, shopping, education, leisure and much more.

Julia Bradshaw, Regulatory Inspector from the Care

Quality Commission, said: "The staff members appear enthusiastic in their approach to people living within this service. The manager has created a very effective service which supports people being able to live and remain within their local community."

To find out more about the service contact Angela on 01923 713636.

## Barry celebrates 27 years of service

LIFE has taken an exciting turn for Barry Bullen who will soon be moving into a flat in Oxhey.

Barry, who has a learning disability, has lived at Berrywood Residential Home in Rickmansworth for the past three years and is looking forward to a semi-independent lifestyle in a flat he will be sharing.

He said: "I will miss the people from Berrywood but I am excited and a little bit nervous about moving into my own flat. I will be nearer to my sister and I will be able to walk to work."

Barry has also enjoyed success in his job. Our photograph shows Barry with his long-service certificate after notching up 27 years working at Watford General Hospital. The award, plus two cut glass champagne glasses, was presented by West Hertfordshire NHS Trust. Working with the porters, Barry's role includes collecting patient case notes from the wards and medical secretaries.

Barry is also working hard to try and lose weight and has lost an impressive three



Barry Bullen moving home.

Picture by Richard Owen

stone since October. He is a big fan of bingo, enjoys attending Watford Mencap's monthly Leisure Together pool evenings and is a regular swimmer.

Watford Mencap would like to wish Barry the best of luck for when he moves to his new flat.

## Living life the way you want

Sylvia Hatch has a learning disability and is a co-opted member of Watford Mencap's Council of Management.

She is also a talented artist. Recently, Sylvia has learned to sell her paintings on Ebay with support from Watford Mencap's Claire Roberts, funded by the European Social Fund.



Sylvia learned to sell her pictures on Ebay.

### Did you know?

1 in 2 families with a disabled child live in poverty

### TIMELINE

2003 – Last flight of Concorde

2006 – American express World Golf Championships take place at The Grove, Chandlers Cross

2009 – Watford Mencap moves to new premises in the Old Town Hall at 105 High

Street, Rickmansworth

2010 – Watford Mencap creates a fully-accessible resource centre at 105 High Street, Rickmansworth

2011 – Watford Mencap celebrates its Diamond Jubilee

### ADVERTISING FEATURE

## Glen Windows & Doors Ltd is the first installer in Hertfordshire to be awarded the prestigious Ombudsman Scheme Membership

WATFORD double glazing and conservatory installer Glen Windows & Doors Ltd has achieved the high standards required to gain accreditation into The Double Glazing & Conservatory Ombudsman Scheme (DGCOS).



DGCOS has been launched with the backing of the people's consumer champion, Nick Ross, to protect consumers against cowboy operators. The former BBC Crimewatch and Watchdog presenter is the ambassador of the Ombudsman scheme, which provides comprehensive protection for homeowners installing windows, doors, conservatories, orangerys and associated products by its members.

Glen Hayman, managing director of Glen Windows & Doors Ltd, said: "We are delighted to have been accepted as a member of DGCOS, which offers consumers access to high quality, vetted installers. DGCOS puts the consumer first. There are lots of trade associations in the building and home improvement sectors, but DGCOS is a scheme you can rely on."

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Nick Ross says: "Consumer agencies champion Ombudsman schemes because they give customers real protection. DGCOS is based on similar schemes which have been made successful in other industries. Restoring confidence is important for consumers and all good contractors, and DGCOS can quickly rebuild trust."

"With DGCOS, consumers get accredited installers, independently backed guarantees (even if the firm refuses to help you or goes out of business), free access to industry inspectors, free professional mediation and - if you're still unsatisfied - a highly regarded Ombudsman who can settle your dispute with the power of the law behind him (again, all free of charge to consumers)."

DGCOS founder, Tony Pickup, who also founded The Quality Assurance Association in 1996, a highly respected trade association attracting over 1250 contractors from all aspects of home improvement and construction, said: "It's long been a major issue in the UK installation sector that trade bodies which promise to help don't have any teeth and are not much real help when homeowners need it."

Mr Pickup added: "We are delighted that Nick Ross has agreed to be our ambassador. Nick is a hugely respected journalist with the highest standards, and he has satisfied himself that DGCOS is exactly what the sector needs to protect homeowners and restore consumer confidence."



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## LOCAL PUB HAS CHARITY ON THE MENU

### THE ROSE & CROWN

The Rose & Crown in Kings Langley combines an inspiring range of classic pub food in an authentic local atmosphere, making it a firm favourite in the area.

While the mouth-watering menu speaks for itself, the pub bar specialises in a unique selection of premium ales and English beers, as well as a corking selection of wines and soft drinks, meaning there is something for everyone to enjoy while relaxing in the sumptuous new interior.

The team from the Rose & Crown has also now pledged their support for MENCAP in light of their Diamond Jubilee this year.

Landlady Lisa Simons said "We are absolutely delighted to have MENCAP as our chosen charity and will be doing everything we can to support the cause."



For more details about the  
Rose & Crown, please visit  
[www.roseandcrownkingslangley.co.uk](http://www.roseandcrownkingslangley.co.uk)

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