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## Happy New Year!

January sees us settled in the Old Town Hall in Rickmansworth. You can find us opposite Iceland and next door to Hob the hairdressers, right in the heart of the High Street.



Thanks to the superb efforts of our staff and volunteers we were able to move at very short notice, with a great rental deal. As well as a new head office, we will also have a resource and activity area for local people, once our building work is complete.

Our fantastic cover shot for this edition comes from Sally and Abigail, our volunteer photographers who set up a photo studio at the recent Hertsmere Leisure Together glamour disco. To find out more about the disco please see page 5.

Finally, as 16 February approaches, how about asking your family, friends or work colleagues to enter a team in the annual Rickmansworth Pancake race? All proceeds from the race go to Watford Mencap; details are on the back page.

Best wishes,

*Jane Pattinson*

Jane Pattinson, Director

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## Raising Your Game

Watford Mencap is working with national Mencap on Raising Your Game, a 5-year project. It will support young people to take part in decisions which affect their lives. 2 workers, one with a learning disability, will be based with Watford Mencap.

Young people will list the ways Mencap services and staff should listen to and involve them. These will be called Participation Standards.

The project will support young people with a learning disability to make positive choices and help to prevent them getting into anti-social behaviour or crime.

### Key points

Watford Mencap is working with national Mencap on the 5-year Raising Your Game project. It will support young people to take part in decisions affecting their lives.

### Watford Mencap Training

Watford Mencap's Training Coordinators have successfully arranged over 70 formal training events in the last year, resulting in over 500 certificates.

More mandatory training begins in the spring. New training will include NVQ4's for Deputy Residential Managers, management skills and Equality and Diversity.

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## CHAS celebrates 10th birthday

By Phil Hancock

The College Holiday Activity Scheme celebrates its 10th anniversary this year.

Young people with a learning disability enjoy fun activities during college holidays.

Organiser David Trill remembers when he set up the scheme: "I came up with a whole load of ideas, then went round local colleges to speak to the students. I let the young people choose their favourite activities, so they never did something they didn't want to."

Activities have included trips to the seaside, Brighton, Duxford and Windsor, horse riding, trampolining, a canal boat adventure, Quasar and the cinema. One year Dave took 8 intrepid young people up in a classic bi-plane.

Adrian O'Brien, 29, says: "I have a great time, I love it!" Kat Thompson, 22, one of Dave's regular helpers, added: "Everyone gets on well, everyone knows each other and we try and mix up the groups."

Happy Birthday CHAS!



Photo: Sally Ashley-Cound

### Emma Danks and Gary Lee help CHAS celebrate its 10th anniversary

### Key points

The College Holiday Activity Scheme is 10 years old. The scheme gives young people with learning disabilities fun activities during the holidays.

## Watford Mencap moves home



### Rose Kreloff helps make Watford Mencap's new premises clean and tidy

Watford Mencap has moved to new premises at The Old Town Hall in Rickmansworth High Street. The move will help us because:

- Watford Mencap's head office will have a secure lease, so we can plan for the future
- We will put in a fully accessible Changing Places toilet which means that everyone will be able to use the building
- We will develop the downstairs area for uses such as drop-in advice sessions, yoga, computer access and meetings
- We should like to use the building during evenings and weekends too
- We are in the centre of Rickmansworth by the bus stop, 10 minutes' walk from the station

### Key point

Watford Mencap's new office is at The Old Town Hall in Rickmansworth High Street.

# Diversity and Watford Mencap

In Watford Mencap's business plan for this year we have decided to look at diversity in the organisation.

Members of our new Diversity Group represent management, frontline workers (including the Staff Forum) and volunteers.

- All staff will attend ½ day diversity and equality training courses in the next 12 months, with evening sessions for volunteers
- We will make sure people at all Watford Mencap projects know about religious festivals
- We will continue to campaign on the need for Changing Places toilets for people with multiple disabilities – the nearest to Watford are currently in Acton or Central London
- We will update our forms and use the new Charitylog database system to record information
- The Senior Management Team will talk about diversity at every meeting
- Over the next 6 months we will collect information from all areas of our work, ask for help from community groups, and look at what we need to do better



## Key points

Diversity is high on the agenda for Watford Mencap.

All staff will attend diversity and equality training courses.

Information about religious festivals will be more available.

The Senior Management Team will talk about diversity at every meeting.

Information about diversity will be gathered from all areas of our work.

Contact us with your views on diversity and equality.

**If you would like to help with Diversity and Equality please contact Jane Pattinson on 01923 713620 or email [director@watfordmencap.org.uk](mailto:director@watfordmencap.org.uk)**

## Sally Yapp

We are sad to report the death of Sally Yapp and send our condolences to her mother, Mrs Jones. Sally was much loved by those who knew her. Gill Williamson, Headteacher of Breakspere School, says: "She found a special place in all our hearts. She always had that ready smile. She was so jolly, up for life and happy to give anything and everything a go."



**Sally (left) tells a story to Lisa Christie and Joanne Burgess**

# Strut your Stuff disco with Leisure Together Hertsmere

Torrential rain, gale force winds and even the X-Factor didn't stop Leisure Together members strutting their stuff in Bushey on Saturday 14 November. Everyone came dressed to thrill and posed for glamour shots with our volunteer photographers Sally Ashley-Cound and Abigail Keyes. Then there was non-stop dancing to the vibrant beat of John Knight's disco.

New Hertsmere member, Gaby Russell, said "I really enjoyed the dancing."

Here are the best photos of Gaby Russell and Dean Scott as they arrived.

Colin Ixer's photo is on our front cover.



Photos:  
Sally Ashley-Cound

## Volunteers' Evening

Each person who volunteers to help Watford Mencap has a different reason for doing so.

Guest speaker Trish O'Hara explored the various reasons why people volunteer when she attended our latest Volunteers' Evening at the Watford Charity Centre. She explained that volunteers can gain a great deal of satisfaction from seeing others develop and learn new skills.

Trish, who trains people who work in the learning disabilities sector, added that volunteering also gives you great work experience which looks impressive on your CV, and it can help you to make friends and become more involved in the community.

All volunteers and those interested in volunteering are welcome to attend our next Volunteers' Evening which will be held soon. Watch out for details!

## In memory of Elizabeth Lydon

Elizabeth Lydon, mother of the late Kevin Lydon who lived in Homeoaks, remembered Watford Mencap and Homeoaks in her will.

Thanks to her kind and thoughtful bequest, Watford Mencap was able to move into The Old Town Hall in Rickmansworth in November. We plan to install a fully accessible Changing Places toilet, and to develop a resource centre for people with a learning disability. Leaving money in your will to Watford Mencap can make a real difference to the lives of local people with a learning disability. For more information contact Veronica Chamberlain on 01923 713637 or email [development@watfordmencap.org.uk](mailto:development@watfordmencap.org.uk)

# African Drumming at AGM

It was the biggest ever Watford Mencap Annual General Meeting with over 180 people attending.

Chairman Don Eungblut said thank you to Christel Perahia for her work, and spoke in memory of Pam Handley, the previous Chief Executive of Watford Mencap who had died in the summer. She had done a great deal for local groups. Russ Teague said thank you to Alf Loose who was standing down as Vice-Chair and had worked very hard over many years for Watford Mencap.

Watford Borough Council Chairman Cllr Keith Crout congratulated Watford Mencap and commented that the organisation promotes such good quality of life for people with learning disabilities. Members of Leisure Together Watford and Three Rivers told us about their IT classes, fitness and football.

There were questions from members about finding paid work, transport training and other topics, and people said thank you to Watford Mencap.

For the first time, all Watford Mencap's projects had produced displays about their work and the people involved. We also raised money at the charity shop stalls and by buying Christmas cards. Don and Pat Last kindly donated an ipod Shuffle for the raffle.

Veronica Chamberlain told us that in 2011 Watford Mencap will be 60 years old, so it will be our Diamond Jubilee year. She asked everyone to think of good ways to raise money to celebrate our 60 years.



**Members voted on the decisions of the meeting**



**Residents and staff from Thorpedale listened to the questions**



**Susan Tavener, Jacqueline Chaplin and Janet Head examined the papers**

**Thanks to SKM Studios for all photos**

**Key point**

180 people came to Watford Mencap's AGM



**Leisure Together Hertsmere, with their teacher Butshilo Nleya from World Shapers, entertained us with African drumming**

## The Big Herts Walk



Photo: Sally Ashley-Cound

### **Pupils from Stanborough School**

The Big Herts Walk took place on Sunday 27 September in Cassiobury Park and over 300 walkers, pushchairs and wheelchairs (and a few dogs) took up the 10k challenge on a glorious late summer's day. It is anticipated that £26,000 will be raised, to be split between Watford Mencap, Watford New Hope Trust and the Peace Hospice. Participants received

a goody bag, a sandwich lunch, medal and certificate, and on their return walkers were able to enjoy the sun whilst listening to a steel band. Stanborough School won the prize for the school raising the most sponsorship and proudly received a trophy. After completing the 10k walk, Eva Papaioannou, a pupil at Stanborough School said, "I feel successful, happy and very tired." Thanks go to Claire Ward MP for supporting the event and Bharat Shah and Sigma Pharmaceuticals for organising the walk.

## Watford 10k

The Watford 10k raised £20,000 this year; a fantastic amount which meant that Watford Mencap received £10,000 for the Children's Centre. Thanks to Watford Round Table for making this event happen and thanks to all those who took part. The 2010 Watford 10k takes place on Bank Holiday May 3 in Cassiobury Park, so please come and join us at this significant, annual event!

## Magical Party at the Rising Sun

Over 150 people enjoyed the annual Christmas tea party at the Rising Sun in Croxley. James Tetlow stunned guests with his close-up magic, the raffles and games raised over £200 and Father Christmas's sack of presents was much-appreciated. Special visitors were Cllr Richard Laval, Chairman of Three Rivers District Council, Cllrs Tony and Sylvia Poole representing the Chairman of Watford Council, and Cllr Chris Lloyd with his wife Yvonne.

Many thanks to the Rising Sun Brewers Fayre for their kind hospitality and the hard work of their staff, to John Lewis Watford and Build-a-Bear who donated vouchers, to John Whatling, Linda and everyone else who helped.



Photo: Sally Ashley-Cound

**Watford Self-Advocacy Group members Eileen Meadlarkin (left) and Marian Payne enjoyed the party**

THANK-YOU.

**Julie Addison** - £60 collection from a Brownie reunion

**Anonymous** - £400 for renting holiday home

**Anonymous** - £70

**A Cardy** - £1,000 London Marathon sponsorship for Hillside

**Chorleywood Golf Club Ladies** - £190

**Don Eungblut** - £500

**Garston Fire Station** - £100 sponsored car wash

**Barry Hayes** - £200 at golf day

**Herts County Council Locality Budgets for Charitylog database** (Cllrs Brandon, Button, Giles-Medhurst, Quilty and Watkin) - £1,389

**Herts County Council Children's Targeted Services Fund** - £15,000

**Herts County Council Children's Workforce Development for Makaton** - £880

**Herts County Council Targeted Mental Health Services in Schools** - £10,000

**Mrs S Hughes** - £157 coffee morning

**Don and Pat Last** - £50 AGM prize

**Leisure Together Hertsmere** sponsored walk - £512

**Alf and Clare Loose** - £200 donations from Golden Wedding celebrations

**Stuart and Cherry Marshall** - £11,315 sponsored tandem ride

**Merchant Taylors' School** - £88 collection

**Tim Owen and Veronica Chamberlain** - £750 donations from Silver Wedding celebrations

**PCT Carers Grant for Leisure Together** - £20,000

**Radlett Ladies' Bridge League** - £150

**St Peter's Church** - £300

**Three Rivers Youth Council** - £100 for weighted blanket for Children's Centre

**PCT Three Rivers Health Inequalities** - £1,500 for Leisure Together

**VocaLink** - £540 Sports and Social Club Charity Quiz Night

**Watford Round Table** - £10,000 for Watford 10K

**Watford School of Music** - £330 for music at Children's Centre

**Maurice West** - £100

**PriceWaterhouse Coopers** - £250

### **Celebrity Golf Day Sponsors:**

Warren Clarke, St James's Place Wealth Management, Gracechurch Sports Management Ltd, Bicester Golf and Country Club, Golfbreaks, Top Golf, Nigel Bishop, Penny Lee Dickson, Mary Sinclair, Your Golf Travel, JS International, Together Communications, Deliver Events, Capital FM's Help A London Child and, of course, all who took part

### **Big Herts Walk Sponsors:**

Sigma Pharmaceuticals, Mothercare, Clydesdale Bank, Telecom Resource, Total, The Harlequin and, of course all who took part.

### **Donations In Kind:**

**Sally Ashley-Cound** - photographer

**Mr Beech** - reclining and massage chair

**John Lewis Watford** - donation of gifts for Christmas Tea Party and £25 gift voucher

**Abigail Keyes** - photographer

**Sarah Kitt** - editor of In Touch

**Maxell** - office furniture and various other goods

**Merchant Taylors' School** - hosting Leisure Together Fun Day and tickets to 'Oliver!'

**Mrs Phillipa Morris** - £435 in lieu of floral tributes in memory of her father George Twelftree

**The Rising Sun** - Christmas Tea Party venue and refreshments

**SKM Photographic Studio** for photos at the AGM

### **Three Rivers District Council**

**VocaLink for the work at Hillside** - re-decoration of 3 rooms and a garden makeover

**Waitrose Rickmansworth** for use of their training room

**Watford Football Club** - multi sports sessions at Watford Grammar School for Boys

**Watford Grammar School for Boys**

**Watford Grammar School for Girls**

**John Whatling and James Tetlow** for their support at the Christmas Tea Party

A big thanks also to everyone who donated along with their membership, and all who took part in the Leisure Together Hertsmere walk on 24 October.

## Fun and Fundraising at Merchant Taylors'

Leisure Together and Saturday Club members had a great time when Merchant Taylors' School hosted its annual Watford Mencap Fun Day. Activities at the Northwood boys' school included creating mosaics, cake decorating, football, relay races and even sailing. Lower 6th pupil Mark Nathan said: "A particular highlight was seeing my politics teacher, Mr Howell, running down the sports hall in a woman's scarf and hat carrying a shopping bag in the supermarket relay race!" He added: "It was a wonderful occasion for all of us and I would like to thank Dominic Howell, Mrs Teskey and the kind helpers of Watford Mencap for taking the time to organise it and to our guests for coming along and getting involved and making it such a fun 'Fun Day'." Annette Timms said: "I liked the canoeing, and the powerboat best of all!"

The boys in the Charity Drive at Merchant Taylors' School raise funds for 3 good causes each year. This year they have chosen Watford Mencap as their local charity. Fundraising is well under way. Watford Mencap's Fundraising Officer Lesley Blee spoke at a school assembly

so that pupils understood about learning disability and Watford Mencap.



**Visitors enjoy a trip in a rescue boat at the Merchant Taylors' School Fun Day**

### Key points

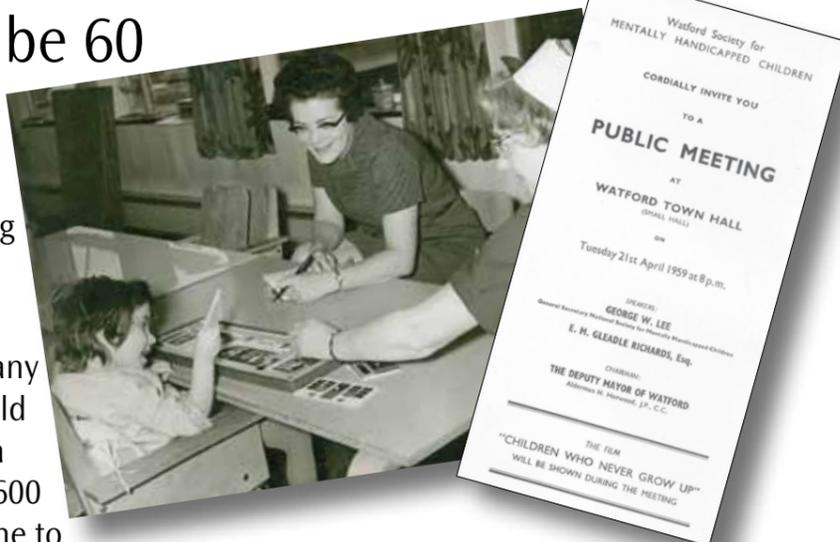
Pupils and teachers at Merchant Taylors' School in Northwood hosted the annual Watford Mencap Fun Day.

Merchant Taylors' boys are fundraising for Watford Mencap this year as part of their Charity Drive.

## Watford Mencap will be 60

Watford Mencap was founded in 1951. So 2011 will be our Diamond Jubilee! This marks 60 years of service and campaigning for people with a learning disability in South West Herts.

Do you remember the early days of Watford Mencap? We would welcome any stories or photos. Would you like to hold a 1950's party in 2011 or an event on a diamond theme? Can you raise £60, £600 or £6,000 over the year? Now is the time to get planning, and we can support you. Watford Mencap's supporters are planning a Ball in January 2011.



For details contact Veronica Chamberlain on 01923 713637 or email her on [development@watfordmencap.org.uk](mailto:development@watfordmencap.org.uk)

## Learning Disability Local Forums

Learning Disability Local Forums have been re-established across Hertfordshire.

The aim of these of these forums is to provide families, carers and individuals with a learning disability the opportunity to discuss with appropriate professionals any issues they may have and to spread good practice.

Any issues that cannot be resolved at a local level can be raised with the Learning Disability Partnership Board.

Forum contact details are:

### The Stevenage & North Herts Voluntary Forum/Action Group

Next meeting: 2pm on 28th January, in Letchworth  
Co-ordinators: North Herts People First, Alex Morris and Marie Claire  
Contact: [admin@northhertspeoplefirst.com](mailto:admin@northhertspeoplefirst.com)  
01438 759009  
07799 353534

### Watford & Three Rivers Local Forum

Next meeting: 9.30am for 10am start, Thursday 4th February, Holywell Community Centre, off Tolpits Lane, Watford  
Co-ordinator: Watford Mencap, Kathryn White  
Contact: [kwhite@watfordmencap.org.uk](mailto:kwhite@watfordmencap.org.uk)  
01923 713620

### St Albans Local Forum

Co-ordinator: St Albans Mencap, Martyn MacPhee  
Contact: [macpheedmartyn@aol.com](mailto:macpheedmartyn@aol.com)  
01279 653894

### Hertsmere Local Forum

Co-ordinator: Elstree, Borehamwood & Radlett Mencap  
Contact: [Info@hertsmereforum.org](mailto:Info@hertsmereforum.org)  
[www.hertsmereforum.org](http://www.hertsmereforum.org)  
01923 888 730 (weekdays 11am to 2pm)

### The East Herts Locality Forum

Co-ordinator: East Herts & Wel/Hat Community Learning Disability Team  
Contact: [daryl.knight@hertsc.gov.uk](mailto:daryl.knight@hertsc.gov.uk)  
01438 843111

### Welwyn & Hatfield Locality Forum

Co-ordinator: East Herts & Wel/Hat Community Learning Disability Team  
Contact: [daryl.knight@hertsc.gov.uk](mailto:daryl.knight@hertsc.gov.uk)  
01438 843111

### Dacorum Local Forum

Next meeting: 10am for 10.30am, Friday 19th March, Social Centre for the Blind, Alston Road, Boxmoor, Hemel Hempstead.  
Co-ordinator: Hemel Hempstead Campaigners, Toni Vyse  
Contact: [tonivyse@btinternet.com](mailto:tonivyse@btinternet.com)  
01923 267787  
07956 307710

### Sea Lion Swimming Club

Sea Lion Swimming Club is open to anyone with a permanent or temporary disability and family members can join in too. Sessions are held every Saturday from 5 to 6pm at Watford Leisure Centre CENTRAL in Hempstead Road, Watford. Volunteer helpers provide assistance and support to all members, and the club has a comprehensive range of specialised equipment, including a hoist. For more information please visit [www.sealionswimmingclub.org.uk](http://www.sealionswimmingclub.org.uk) or telephone 0845 6216600 (local call rate).

### Targeted Mental Health in Schools

Hertfordshire County Council has asked Watford Mencap's Advice and Advocacy Service to offer more support to children in Watford's schools who have a learning disability or difficulty. Families finding life difficult can receive confidential advice on matters such as housing, respite, finding the right support for their child and claiming benefits. For more information contact Ruth Murray on 01923 713620.



Ask  
Ruth

Ruth Murray, Watford Mencap's Advice and Advocacy Manager, answers your queries.

## Dear Watford Mencap

**My son has been turned down for Disability Living Allowance. I am appealing against this decision. I have sent all the necessary paperwork, but am worried about the appeal tribunal.**

An appeals tribunal can be daunting, but it is really worth going. People who appeal in person have a much higher success rate than those who use the paper appeals service.

A friend or someone from an advice agency can support you, and you can take your paperwork to refer to. The panel is normally 3 people: a legal representative, a disability representative and a doctor. A clerk will take notes. The panel knows that people are unfamiliar with this process, so do not worry.

Each panel member will ask you questions and you can state your case. They will then either give you their decision or you may need to leave the room while they consider it. Sometimes they may post you their decision the following day. I wish you every success with your appeal.

Contact Ruth Murray on 01923 713620 or [advice@watfordmencap.org.uk](mailto:advice@watfordmencap.org.uk)

## Talent Corner



Talented Hillside resident Monica Hutton has been doing woodwork at Waterside Day Centre for many years. She exhibited her carved rabbit at Watford Mencap's AGM in October.

"I made it for my house. I like rabbits. I miss Marmite [the Hillside cat, who died] so I made a rabbit."

Monica was recently featured in the Watford Observer looking after Hillside's latest new resident, Pablo the rabbit.

### Pancake Race

Shrove Tuesday is on Tuesday 16 February and, once again, The Coach and Horses has kindly agreed to sponsor the Pancake Race in Rickmansworth High Street. Last year we had a record number of entrants and great fun was had by all. If you would like to enter a team then please contact Lesley Blee on 01923 713622 for more details!

### Herts travellink

If you need transport to get to an appointment with your doctor, clinic or hospital, contact NHS Herts travellink for help. East and North Herts: 01438 737252. West Herts: 01438 737505. Web address: [www.hertsdirect.org/travellink](http://www.hertsdirect.org/travellink)

## What do you think?

If you have some news which you would like to include in In Touch, please contact our Editor Sarah Kitt on 07747 805123 or email her at [sarah.kitt@ntlworld.com](mailto:sarah.kitt@ntlworld.com)