

Open Door

Autumn 2010

Issue 33



SDEF
Scottish Disability
Equality Forum

The Scottish Disability Equality Forum Newsletter

Yvonne Wemyss speaking
at the AP Conference



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A Charter for Social Landlords

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Convenor's Welcome



Welcome to Edition 33 of your Open Door newsletter. I hope that you will enjoy the usual eclectic mix of policy updates, submissions from members and articles on matters both serious and diverting.

It was good to see so many of you at our recent Access Conference in Perth. It always seems that, just as important as the various speeches and presentations, is the opportunity to mingle and share perspectives. I hope that many of you will also join us at our Annual General Meeting which is scheduled for Thursday October 21, 2010, also in Perth.

This is a difficult time for public finance and, of course, the voluntary sector is not going to be immune. On one hand, we are all braced for cuts in the Government's budget: on the other we are cheered by the thought that the 'Big Society' lays great emphasis on helping the voluntary sector develop. We also believe firmly that the record of disability groups in providing constructive, cost-effective, first-hand information and services is second to none. SDEF will continue to use every opportunity to bang the drum for our members and prove to all the value of our Forum. Please help us in this whenever you can.

I should like to thank all our contributors and urge everyone to feel free to send in articles and to use our Blogspot. More details on this are available within. In this edition you can read a range of articles dealing with subjects as diverse as legislative change, calls for evidence and lighter-hearted items.

If you are going to join us at the AGM, please also bear in mind that we always have a session on members' priorities for the coming year. As a user-led body, we pride ourselves on reflecting your concerns and making sure they reach a wide audience. Let's make sure the policy makers know the importance of listening to users of the services they provide.

With very best wishes

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "G Mungall". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Gordon Mungall

Guide to UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled Persons

A new guide to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) has been published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) to make disabled people aware of their rights and how to use them. It will help individuals challenge injustices and improve services for themselves and others and will help organisations understand their responsibilities.



The Convention, which was signed by the UK government last year, covers health, education, employment, personal security, independent living and access to information and justice, and describes what the government has agreed to do by next July to make disabled people's rights real.

Mike Smith, Chair of the Commission's Disability Committee, said: 'The UK signed up to this treaty just over a year ago and we will continue to work with the government to make sure that it is implemented fully. It requires government to take action to remove barriers and give disabled people real freedom, dignity and equality. Our role is to ensure Britain makes rapid progress towards making the Convention rights a reality for disabled people. You and your organisation can get involved in telling people about these rights. The more people who know what the Convention says, the more likely it is that disabled people will be treated fairly.'

Further information on this and many related subjects are available on the EHRC website: www.equalityhumanrights.com/

The guide itself can be seen by going to: www.equalityhumanrights.com/human-rights/ and following the links.

Detailed information regarding the Convention, ratification and signatories can be found on the United Nations website www.un.org/disabilities.



Scottish Government wants your views on Social Landlords

The Scottish Government is trying to improve social housing (housing provided by local authorities and housing associations). To do this it is developing a 'Social Housing Charter'. The Charter will set down exactly what all social landlords are expected to do and achieve on behalf of their tenants. The Charter will also be used to assess landlord performance and hold landlords to account.



The Scottish Government wants your help and advice in developing the Charter and has organised a series of events across Scotland so that it can hear your views. These events will be a good opportunity to remind the Scottish Government about the housing needs of people with disabilities and how important it is that these needs are highlighted in the Charter.

If you'd like to go to one of the events then e-mail housingcharter@scotland.gsi.gov.uk with your name, contact details and which event you would like to attend.

- Wednesday October 6, 2010
Reid Kerr College, Paisley
- Thursday October 14, 2010
Committee Rooms, 14 City Square, Dundee
- Thursday October 21, 2010
Training HQ, Wishaw
- Wednesday October 27, 2010
Town House, Haddington
- Saturday November 6, 2010
City Chambers, Edinburgh, Edinburgh City Council

We'd be really interested to know how these go. If you manage to make it to one of the events then we'd be grateful if you could let us know your thoughts. Just e-mail Hanna McCulloch at hanna.mcculloch@sdef.org.uk or call 01786 446 456

Equality Act 2010: Right to Adapt Common Parts in Scotland

The Scottish Government will soon be launching a consultation about regulations on the right to adapt common parts of property to meet the needs of disabled people.

The regulations should make it easier for disabled people to have changes made to common areas within residential buildings - such as the stairs and hallways of blocks of flats. Adaptations might include having grab rails or ramps fitted within the property.



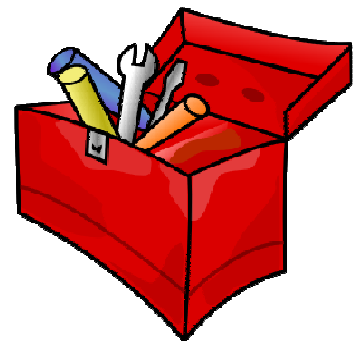
The regulations are being introduced as a result of the Equality Act 2010. The Act contains similar powers for England and Wales and the Scottish Government wants to make regulations to ensure that equivalent rights are available for disabled people in Scotland, allowing for the differences in the law of property ownership.

The consultation should cover:

- Practical issues around seeking and giving consent
- Responsibility for organising and funding work
- Resolution of disagreement
- Registration of adaptations in the property registers
- Anything else needed to ensure that the regulations meet the policy objective of removing a barrier to the use of common parts.

At the moment it is possible to apply to local authorities for a grant to cover 80% of the cost of certain adaptations within a person's home. The Scottish Government suggests that similar grants should be available for work needed to adapt common parts of properties.

The consultation paper will be up on the SDEF website in the next few weeks. If anyone would like to feed into this, please contact Liz by e-mailing liz.rowlett@sdef.org.uk or calling 01786 446 456.



Equality Duty: Detailed Proposals – Consultation on a Public Sector Equality Duty

The Scottish Government has opened its consultation on the draft Regulations which will place specific duties on Scottish public authorities to promote equality. It runs until November and can be found on the Scottish Government website

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/09/13094828/12>

The emphasis of the new specific duties is on equality outcomes rather than on process. It will reach across all of the equalities communities and will replace the existing requirements to publish race, disability and gender schemes and action plans. The Government hopes that, as a result, public authorities will be able to ensure that equality is at the centre of everything that they do. The Government is also trying to align the duties with the National Performance Framework.

The consultation document invited respondents to address 39 questions on a range of topics including:

- delivering on mainstreaming;
- outlining equality plans/setting equality objectives;
- reporting on progress;
- demonstrating impact;
- involvement and consultation;
- leadership from Scottish Ministers.

As many of our members have a wealth of experience regarding participation in equality schemes and impact assessments, I hope that they will find time to share this knowledge. I would be interested to hear what people have to say regarding the proposals for impact assessments, particularly as they are one of the strongest tools we have to identify and remove inequality.

SDEF will be submitting a response, so comments should be forwarded to Liz or Hanna. If anyone is interested in joining a small group to discuss the proposals, or would like a visit, please let us know.

News and Policy

Diplomat sues Foreign Office for Discrimination

Jane Cordell, a senior diplomat at the Foreign Office, who is deaf, is suing the Foreign Office (FCO) for discrimination. Mrs Cordell has gained the support of the Equality and Human Rights Commission for her case. She has had a successful career at the FCO which was cut short when the Foreign Office revoked her posting to Kazakstan on the grounds that the cost of providing lip speakers was too expensive.



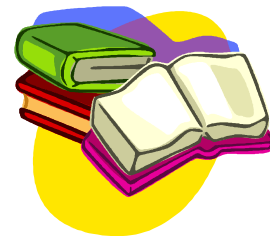
**Equality and
Human Rights
Commission**

Mrs Cordell says that the FCO has overestimated the costs of providing support and her career is being restricted as a result of her disability. She notes that the FCO budget covers school fees for the children of other staff, among other things.

Access Panels

Tweeddale Access Panel

Over the next few weeks and months pupils from Peebles High School, supported by members of Tweeddale Access Panel, will be carrying out an access survey of the shops and businesses in Peebles. The results will provide an invaluable guide not only for disabled people in Peebles but also for all visitors to the town. It will be available on line. This will enable the guide to be updated on a regular basis. It will also be published in a guide book format. It is hoped that all businesses in the town will lend their support to this project.



The guide will make no recommendations regarding any access issues. It will be a 'say what you see' guide. This will allow people to judge for themselves if a business is accessible for their individual needs. After the guide for Peebles is completed, it will be available to view on line. This will allow for editing and comments before it goes to print. It will then go on to cover all the Tweeddale area. The guide is being produced thanks to the financial support of Scottish Borders Council and the invaluable guidance of the Scottish Disability Equality Forum.

Access Panels

Building Standards



Early in 2009 SDEF became a member of the British Standards Institute and, shortly after receiving our membership certificate and welcome pack, we asked if there was any way that access panels would be able to purchase the BS 8300 – 2009 at the membership price instead of the usual price.

After some negotiation, the BSI agreed that for one year, from April 2009 until April 2010, they would allow access panels to buy the then new BS 8300 – 2009 at £120.00 instead of the usual cost of £240.00. This agreement has now ceased, but quite a number of panels took up the offer and we are grateful to the BSI for their support in giving us this special consideration.

This year the Building Standards Division (BSD) of the Scottish Government re-issued the Scottish Building Standards. As with the previous 2007 standards, we asked if we could get a hard copy and a CD of the new issue of the standards. The BSD responded and was kind enough to again send SDEF a hard copy and a CD of the new standards free of charge.



Consequently, all panels have now received a CD of the Scottish Building Standards and I hope that they are finding them useful. So, on behalf of SDEF and, I am sure all the panels, I would like to express a big 'thank you' to both the British Standards Institute and the Building Standards Division of the Scottish Government for the opportunity to work in partnership for the benefit of disabled people in our communities.

We all also know that there are parts of the standards that are simply not conducive to the needs of many disabled people and we now have an opportunity to have an input to the next re-write of the BS 8300. To contribute, just click on <http://drafts.bsigroup.com> and make any comments about any parts of the BS 8300 standard that are not up to par, as far as accessibility is concerned.

Keith Robertson
Access Development Officer



Access Panel Conference

This year's conference was held at the Perth Concert Hall on Wednesday September 8, 2010. In all, more than fifty delegates attended to hear a wide range of presentations and to quiz the guest speakers.



We were fortunate to have Yvonne Wemyss open the conference with a very interesting talk on the national programme to support disability equality and independent living. Yvonne is a Liaison Officer, working between the Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA). She was therefore in a strong position to advise Panel representatives on the best ways to make their influence felt and how to move the equality agenda forward. Her talk was useful, down to earth and well received by delegates.

The second speaker during the morning session was Robert Thomson, the National Director of Care and Repair Scotland. He described the work and approach of his organisation and outlined the opportunities people had to access the resources available to improve homes. As this was again a matter of great practical significance to participants, it provoked much lively questioning in a joint question and answer session before the lunch break.

The afternoon session was given a great start by Louise MacLennan of the NHS National Service Scotland. Her role is in involving people in health care and promoting equality and diversity. This theme struck a chord with delegates, both as individuals and as representatives of Access Panels. The opportunities to make a difference in local provision were thoroughly explored.

Finally, Richard Llewellyn of the Halcrow Group gave a very illuminating and well evidenced talk on Transport Scotland's Good Practice Guide for Roads. Even more arresting were the many examples of well-intentioned but completely hopeless design, which Richard offered to illustrate his presentation. Some of the howlers were very familiar to road users everywhere, while others were completely eye popping. Happily Access Panels are already working with Transport Scotland to audit trunk roads around the country and there was further encouragement to others to become involved.



Delegates made use of the registration, lunch and closing periods to mingle and share ideas. We hope everyone had a really good and constructive time. Our thanks go to our three Access Directors, Gordon Mungall, Maurin MacDonald and Maggie Killin for their excellent chairing of the various sessions.

Life with the Penguins

Mrs Penguin (aka the intrepid Moira Douglas) has now been in the Falklands for nearly six months, keeping the world safe for Chanel perfume, high heels, Twiglets and Butterkist Popcorn. All the while she has been sending regular bulletins through www.lifewiththepenguins.blogspot.com. Here are some of her latest musings.



“Slightly worrying are the dreams I have here. I am going to blame it on the air rather than my personality. I dreamt last night that I had murdered two people and was worried that someone was going to find the bodies. What is concerning is that I did not seem to be sorry about what I had done but I was annoyed with myself that I had been careless and left the bodies where they were. I really have to stop eating tinned fish.

“A very wise person emailed me after reading my blog. She was concerned that Pilchards were only for cats. I admit that a tin of Whiskas does look very similar. The same person has a thing about G strings and how they should be called "horse pants". Just as an experiment put the name to the test. I did it this morning. Once in your G string look in the mirror at your bottom and bend over. You will look exactly like the back of a horse.....

“Tonight it is windy but the sky is clear. I have not talked before about the stars and moon. Two nights ago there was the most amazing full moon I have ever seen and I am quite a Moon watcher. It was so big and clear. The stars look as if handfuls of glitter have been sprinkled on black paper. I have never seen so many stars. It would be lovely to just stand for ages and stare and wonder about the meaning and the creation of the universe, but then it is so cold you can only really look for about a minute and then it is time to go inside for a warm up gin and tonic. Also the toilets flush the other way around.....”



Visit from Bruce Crawford MSP

On Friday September 10, 2010 we were fortunate to have a visit at our offices from local constituency MSP, Bruce Crawford. This was an opportunity for us to share views and, in particular, to update Mr Crawford on many of the practical difficulties facing people with disabilities in Scotland.



Bruce is also the Minister for Parliamentary Business at Holyrood and said he was wearing both his hats. We were therefore able to give him a good run down of different issues from around Scotland.

We began by updating him on a variety of housing problems, SDEF being on a number of bodies including: the Ministerial Sounding Board for the Housing Scotland Bill; Care and Repair Scotland and; the Equalities Sub-Group for the Scottish Fuel Poverty Forum. Both parties agreed that much could be done to improve housing to make it more suitable for people with disabilities. Whilst there was some progress regarding new builds, older housing stock still needed much attention. It was also noted that many of the necessary adaptations were relatively simple to implement. Mr Crawford said he would ask questions of his colleagues.



Another area explored was the progress of the Wheelchair and Seating Service Project Board. In particular, we were anxious to get over that the opportunities it presented for change should not be lost and that 'more of the same' in wheelchair provision would not be an acceptable outcome. Mr Crawford stated that he considered wheelchair services as being of primary importance in contributing to independent living.

We also explored how disabled people could be properly represented in all kinds of planning. Naturally, we couldn't let the opportunity pass to re-iterate the immense contribution of access panels and other local groups and to stress the fantastic, cost-effective resource they represent to all kinds of statutory body. It was good to meet with Mr Crawford, who took a sincere interest in all our comments and promised to raise a variety of matters with ministerial colleagues. We feel confident that, whatever the financial outlook, the needs of all citizens affected by disability will not be overlooked.



SDEF News

Annual General Meeting

This year we shall again be holding our Annual General Meeting at the Perth Concert Hall, Mill Street, Perth. Members should have already received invitations and we look forward to extending a warm welcome to delegates on the day – Thursday October 21, 2010. In addition to the usual formal business, we have been fortunate in securing two guest speakers to give keynote addresses.



Mike Foulis AGM 2009

Mr Ross Finnie MSP will be known to many as a prominent politician and former Scottish Minister for the Environment and Rural Development. Councillor Douglas Yates is Convenor for Social Work and Health at East Renfrewshire Council and is also the Spokesman on Health and Wellbeing for the Confederation of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA). We look forward to two lively and informative talks.

As ever, we shall be inviting delegates to give us their views on the issues that matter most to them. We always look forward to these sessions and make sure that the concerns of our members are properly relayed and represented.

SDEF News

Blogging for Equality

Have you been keeping an eye out on the SDEF Blog? The word blog comes from a blend of the words 'web' and 'log'. They are usually maintained by individuals and organisations to provide regular updates and discussions around current events. As part of the **Network Development Project**, SDEF set up a blog on our website last year. In my time with SDEF there have been regular updates on such diverse subjects as the rights and wrongs of a television advert featuring members of the England Blind Football Team, new developments in stem cell research and evidence that the economic downturn is hitting families with disabled members the hardest.



A good blog should set the scene to allow you to feed in your views and open discussion. There are no right and wrong answers just an opportunity to share thoughts, so why not check out our blog topics and give it a go? To find our blog just go to the SDEF website (www.sdef.org.uk) and you'll find it on the top right of our Homepage. For those of you in the know, you'll find a link to our Facebook page there too! So why not have a look next time you're online and happy blogging!

Elma Mitchell MBE Award

As members will know, Elma Mitchell MBE was the first Convenor of SDEF. Indeed, she was a founding member, having worked tirelessly in the years preceding our formal establishment to turn aspiration into reality. She believed passionately in the full social inclusion of all citizens and in particular in encouraging young people to take their place in the life of the community.

To honour her life and contribution, SDEF decided in 2007 to inaugurate an award in her name, this being dedicated in the following two years to a writing competition for young people up to the age of eighteen. The prize of £500 and a commemorative cup were awarded each year for the best essay on the subject of disability. We should like to commend all the entrants whose submissions were to an excellent standard: in fact we were so impressed we also made smaller awards to runners up.

This year, however, the Board has considered a change might be due. In place of a literary award, SDEF would like to invite members to inform us of the achievements of a young disabled person known to them.

We should like to invite entries, in any format, showing how the disabled person nominated has made an exceptional contribution to any field. This may be in: any of the arts; sport; community life; charitable fund raising; or any other subject you can think of. The young nominee doesn't have to be heroic or academic: all we want to know is why you think that s/he has achieved something special. Once again, the nominee must be no older than eighteen.



SDEF has appointed a judging panel comprising: Bill Gray MBE, who served with Elma on the Dunfermline Access Panel; Agnes Stewart, our Company Secretary and friend of Elma and; Gordon Mungall, the current Convenor of our organisation. Please submit your nominations no later than December 31, 2010 using the contact details on the back page. As stated you may use the format of your own choice.

SDEF will make a cash award of £500 to the winning nominee and invite him or her to receive a commemorative salver at our next national event. We will also carry the news and details of the nomination, no matter how submitted, in our Open Door magazine. To remind you of Elma's example we note the following comments from Agnes Stewart:

“The late Miss Elma Mitchell MBE was a remarkable lady who achieved much in her own life and in the lives of those who knew her. Disabled from an early age, this did not stop her from achieving. As a founder member of the Scottish Disability Equality Forum and its first Convenor, we want to honour her name. It was said of Elma that doors did not close to her, they only opened and it is to this end that we want to establish an award to encourage her main objects in life.”

This entry from Connor Lettis was highly commended last year by the judging panel for the Elma Mitchell MBE writing award.

The Asperger’s Alphabet

Asperger’s can be dull, Asperger’s can be glum

But don’t be sad, I’m here to help, because you’re my little chum

Can’t you see I’m here to stay and I’ll always show you a better way.

Don’t cry my little pal, over your O.C.D...think of it as a fly and spray it with DDT!

Everyone is nasty to you, or it may seem, but just ignore it all and it’ll be a dream.

Forget about your Tourettes, just go with the flow – and soon you’ll never even know.

Go and tell your mum, or maybe even me, it’ll all be sorted soon, just you wait and see.

Happiness is on its way, and I know it’ll come – and soon all your worries will be gone.

It’ll be a tough journey, but soon folks will understand and your future will be in the palm of your hand.

Just remember what I’ve said and you’ll sleep calmly in your bed.

Kill away all your fears and you’ll have many happy years.

Love yourself the way you are and don’t treat yourself like a shabby car.



My friend it is not the end, for some problems may yet stay, but if you fight it you can stuff them all away.

Now, just use your breathing skill and your stress level will be nil.

Open your mind, spill out your thoughts and simply just untie the knots.

Practice all your strategies and if all else fails, just ask Jeeves!!

Quiet moments rarely come, but when they do, you'll get a pleasant feeling in your tum.

Rewind back to days gone past and solve all your problems to the last.

Seething anger will fill your thoughts, but you must remember what you've been taught.

Together we can see it through, that all your problems will leave you.

Underneath your troubled mind, lies a person sweet and kind.

Very happy you should be, because you look onto the peaceful sea.

Why don't you share a happy thought and all your troubles will be nought.



X-rays will show broken bones, even the sticks and stones, but not the names that hurt you.

You will sometimes need to grin and bear, but I your pal will always be there.

Zealous are you, and jubilant too, but be prepared to start anew.

Connor Lettis - Aged 12

News from Other Groups

Access City Award

For those of you interested in access, the European Commission has set up the annual Access City Award to highlight cities that are taking the most effective and innovative action to improve their accessibility for disabled people.



The award aims to showcase successful initiatives for accessibility used throughout Europe and raise awareness of the different approaches. If you think that your local area has good access, or has used an interesting approach to access, contact your Local Authority soon as the deadline for application is September 23, 2010. For more information and to view the criteria for entering the Access City Award go to <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=916&langId=en> We look forward to receiving your survey responses and reading your blog posts!

Katie Turner

National Campaigns Officer, Leonard Cheshire Disability

Telephone number: 0203 242 0410

News from Other Groups

The Community Facilitators' Network

**Work with groups in communities in Glasgow?
Interested in subsidised training to enable you to
work more effectively with some of the most challenging dynamics in
groups?**



The Kinharvie Institute of Facilitation is now recruiting people working with communities in Glasgow to join the Community Facilitators' Network (CFN). The Network is for those who have some experience of facilitation but who recognise that with greater skills and awareness and a wider range of tools they could better serve the groups in communities with which they work.

The CFN will meet monthly from late September 2010 to May 2011. During this time members will receive training in facilitation skills and tools from Kinharvie's certified facilitators. Those involved will also learn how to work with conflict in a group, facilitate difficult conversations, encourage greater participation in groups and develop processes which are more likely to lead to greater follow-through in the implementation phase.

For more information about the Network contact Martin Pearson, the Network Facilitator, 0141 3371070 or email martin@kinharvie.org.uk.

News from Other Groups

A National Concern: Safe Scoot

There are around 330,000 users in the UK for whom scooters provide a lifeline to the outside world, giving them their freedom and independence. With models ranging from the 4mph class 2 up to the 8mph class 3, these machines can be difficult to manoeuvre and so accidents do happen.



Norfolk Constabulary has recently joined forces with leading mobility retailer, Halfords in order to roll out its landmark Safe Scoot campaign nationwide.

Following enquiries from police forces, councils, carer and mobility organisations nationwide, Norfolk Constabulary launched Safe Scoot at the Royal Norfolk Show 2010. Safe Scoot is a best practice guide to running awareness courses, complete with a short film starring Benidorm actress Sheila Reid.

As a result of Norfolk Constabulary's successful pilot scheme of awareness courses in Great Yarmouth, Superintendent Jim Smerdon and Crime Prevention Officer Penny Carpenter are now advising the Government's Transport Committee on how best to address the issue.

Anne Campbell, Norfolk Constabulary spokesperson said: "We developed the idea of creating mobility scooter awareness information packs complete with DVDs after receiving complaints from shoppers about mobility scooter users driving too fast and bumping into market stalls."

"At mobility scooter awareness courses users are taught basic manoeuvres such as starting off, reversing and negotiating shopping aisles and are made aware of speed limits. While the film provides essential information for responsible scooter users to help them, and others, stay safe."

Trainers Guide

The Safe Scoot Trainer's Guide and DVD is essential information for organisations that may wish to run mobility scooter safety awareness events nationwide. The pack contains the full length DVD, Trainer's Guide and promotional materials.

The training materials are available to purchase or license for use online.

For further information please contact the Social Marketing team on **01953 425556** or socialmarketing@norfolk.pnn.police.uk

News from Other Groups

Surf Dog Ricochet

Have you heard of the amazing surfing golden retriever Ricochet? Possibly the coolest dog on the beaches of California, Ricochet has become a global celebrity attracting over two and a half million hits on You Tube and countless articles in journals around the world.



Ricochet has proved that success can follow setbacks because, having failed in her first career as a guide dog (she used to chase after birds), she has found two new and inspiring roles.

First, her fame has led her to become a fundraiser for charitable causes and secondly, she is actually able to assist disabled children to surf. Her owner Judy Fridono discovered that Ricochet has extraordinarily good balance: when she is on a surf board she helps stabilise it for young disabled children and is also a reassuring presence. The children love her and gain in confidence.

If you want to see more of Ricochet just follow the links:

<http://www.surfdogricochet.com/PressReleases.htm> and

<http://www.surfdogricochet.com/Media.htm> and see her and some of the children she has helped at Del Mar beach, California. There is also a video of her training from a pup to be a 'service dog' (or guide dog), which you can find on You Tube by entering 'Surf Dog Ricochet' on your search engine.

News from Other Groups

Urgent Campaign Action



Over the next few weeks, we have a once in a generation opportunity to secure important new rights for disabled bus and coach passengers, but **we have to act now!**

Read more about the campaign and send an email to your MP at

<http://bit.ly/do5WAN>

Help us fight for better rights on buses!

A law is being debated at the European level. It would ensure a right to accessible travel information and make disability awareness training mandatory for all bus drivers and terminal staff, here in the UK and abroad. Unfortunately, some governments, including the UK government, do not support the proposed improvements.

News from Other Groups

Earlier this year, RNIB campaign supporters emailed Gordon Brown telling him not to weaken the proposed European law. Final negotiations are due to start this September, so please act now by sending a personalised email to your MP in three easy steps. It will only take a few minutes and could make all the difference at this final stage of the campaign.

The campaign webpage gives further information about how to get involved:
<http://bit.ly/do5WAN>

Thank you

Carine
European Campaigns Officer, RNIB.

News from Other Groups

A Road Sign from Africa



This was sent in by one of our colleagues...

Events

Housing Expo Inverness

Recently SDEF carried information on the Housing Expo at Balvonie Braes near Inverness. This concluded on August 31, 2010 and was a showcase for new housing designs, the keynote being environmental friendliness.



The site was particularly beautifully located, being on a slope at Milton of Leys, looking over to the Black Isle and the mountains of Ross & Cromarty. The designs were all quite different, but also strangely familiar, being different takes on modern family accommodation. Some were flats, others were terraced and others detached.



There was a pronounced continental flavour, with German consultants having been called in for development work and much of the work having been carried out by craftsmen from around Europe. There was a strong Scandinavian slant, the concept for many houses beginning in Finland, while many of the kitchens and furnishings would have been familiar to fans of a Swedish firm known for its 'flat packs'. There was also a small communal sauna in one of the courtyards.

Traditional materials predominated, with granite cobbles from the old city of Inverness being recycled and much use of larch and other locally grown timber. There was also an exhibition of different wood burning stoves and much information on fuel efficiency. Outside each property was data on construction methods and estimates of annual heating costs, these tending to vary between around £70 and £250 per year.

Naturally, the different designs wouldn't be to everyone's taste, some being completely made of timber, others having metal facings and one terrace being coated with rubber. From our perspective, we have to report that not all were particularly accessible, most having interior stairs, relatively narrow door openings to the loos and some homes being approached by gravel paths. In fact, the expo event could have made a better attempt at accessibility, the disabled car park being on a pot-holed, gravel covered incline.



Events

The designs shown were innovative and thought-provoking. The event received generous backing from the Scottish Government and many of the ideas highlighted will be re-used in a new 100 home development at Merkinch, Inverness, with a further £1.5 million pounds of public funds being ploughed in. The homes at the Expo itself were for sale and it is expected these will soon be snapped up by people seeking to live in a sustainable, eco-friendly community.

Events

'Moving On' Conference

Psychological and emotional support for disabled people and people with long term conditions in Scotland

Your Call and the Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living (LCiL) are very proud to be hosting the first 'Moving On' Conference on October 28, 2010, 10am – 4pm, in the John McIntyre Centre, The University of Edinburgh. This conference will provide a unique opportunity for people from a variety of different professional backgrounds, including the NHS, public sector and voluntary organisations, as well as members of the public, to come together in a dynamic forum to discuss psychological and emotional support for disabled people and people with long term conditions in Scotland.



They will be welcoming speakers such as Rufus May, Clinical Psychologist, NHS Bradford Centre for Citizenship and Community Mental Health; Connie Johnson, Lecturer in Counselling & Psychotherapy, University of Edinburgh; Pauline Peat, Your Call Counsellor; Susan Douglas-Scott, founding Board member and formerly Chief Executive of Long-Term Conditions Alliance Scotland (LTCAS) and David Reilly, Scottish Government's National Clinical Lead for Integrative Care. Their talks will offer a challenging mix of current thinking along with concrete examples of best practice, focusing on counselling and other forms of psychological support. There will also be a number of Showcase Projects in the afternoon including representatives from The Pink Ladies, The Thistle Foundation Lifestyle Management Programme, The Edinburgh Crisis Centre and The Living Better Project

Tickets are £35 per person, plus 20 free places for unwaged attendees. For any further information please contact Claire@lothiancil.org.uk or telephone 0131 475 2670.

Events

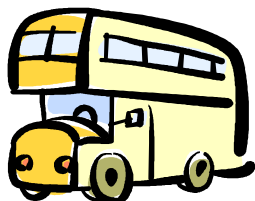
Transport Scotland - Access for All Conference Video Diaries

Maggie Killin, Gordon Mungall and Dennis Wilson were invited to take part in a video diary for Transport Scotland, which was first shown at the Access for All conference held in June. The video diary highlights issues which affect many disabled people in their daily journeys. The video follows Maggie, Gordon and Dennis using various methods of transport to the Thistle Hotel in Glasgow.



Maggie's journey starts from a car park. As a wheelchair user she highlights the difficulty getting from her car to the hotel. We see Maggie pushing herself through the streets of Glasgow showing problems and issues which affects her journey, such as controlled and uncontrolled crossing points, the lack of dropped kerbs in certain parts of her journey and the path surfaces, which were either well maintained or sometimes not.

Gordon's journey shows him exiting the train station. We then follow him as he walks through the streets to the conference venue. We see Gordon using a stepped ramp highlighting the difficulties of using this as a disabled person. Gordon also highlights good maintained footpaths and badly maintained crossing points throughout the video. Gordon said that where surfaces are uneven or broken it makes getting about very difficult.



We see Dennis coming to the conference by bus in his video diary and highlight some issues that may affect people with visual impairments. Dennis said that using public transport with a visual impairment brings with it challenges, but increasingly technology is being implemented which can assist. The video highlights new technology which can improve the travel experience for blind people such as voice instruction at bus stops and bus stations.

These video diaries were made to highlight the difficulty disabled people may face in a day to day journey. At the conference the video went down really well and hopefully the video will be used in the future as a good awareness training tool.

Gordon Mungall

For information: Since writing this article was originally written the video is now available on YouTube in three parts. The link to the first part is:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ewBi66-elsQ&feature=related>

Guest feature – Mrs Maggie Killin

Edinburgh through the Tunnel and back again

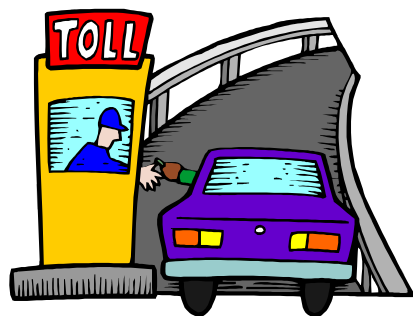
This is a brief account of how things look from the perspective of a disabled traveller going to the continent. Our holiday this year was to Saumur, France in the Loire Valley.

Tom, my husband, and I left Edinburgh at 6am in early August. As we are both wheelchair users we prefer to travel through the Channel Tunnel as it is far easier than flying or taking a ferry. The drive down through England went really smoothly until we reached the M25, where we sat for **4 hours** waiting for a lorry which had caught fire to be removed from the Queen Elizabeth Bridge at the Dartford Crossing.



We arrived at the Tunnel only an hour late, so just as well we left home at the crack of dawn! One of the advantages of the Tunnel is they allow a 'window' either side of the departure time, as it takes away some of the pressure when trying to arrive on time (well that's how I see the way it works, so please don't quote me!). On the French side we stayed at an Ibis Hotel for one night and coming back up the road we stayed at a Days Inn at Cambridge Services. Neither was perfect with regards to accessibility but we managed.

The whole Channel Tunnel experience is a good one. At the check-in you can either key in your booking reference yourself, or an assistant will do it for you. When we checked in we were told just to go straight to the train. Again, this procedure is simple. We drove through Passport Control and Customs and followed the lane marked with a disabled logo. This lane ensures we park at the front of the train should there be an emergency evacuation, not an exciting thought when going on holiday! It's a weird sensation sitting in the car with all your personal bits around you, letting someone else do the driving and the entire journey takes just under 30 minutes.



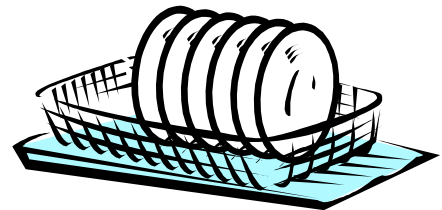
Once off the train, the road signs are easy to follow and we chose to use the main toll roads. In the past, toll roads were not too problematic, but now most are automated. I was on the passenger side of our car which of course is the driver's side on the Continent. I had prepared myself for action and sat on a tower of bits and pieces in readiness to collect a ticket from the machine as we entered the toll, and thanks to Tom's expert driving not a wing mirror was lost.

Guest feature – Mrs Maggie Killin

However, exiting the toll road was not so easy as the machine required cash (or a debit card) and there was no way I could reach to push the notes into the required slot. Eventually we managed to reach the 'help' button but trying to get across to the voice who answered, that we were 'disabled' in French was another story. Not only were we frustrated with this new so called improvement but we were also aware that a long queue was forming behind us, oops!

However, on the return journey back up through France, I was so relieved to spot there was a booth with an attendant, thank goodness. The booths at Calais did have sides for British cars and some with attendants. It also begs the thought as to whether disabled people were consulted prior to installing this modern technology.....!

Nevertheless, our holiday in between the tolls was wonderful. We were revisiting this lovely site <http://www.loire-gites.com/> for the fourth time having seen an advertisement in Mobilise magazine. The site is owned by two ex-pats who cannot do enough for their guests. We had the small gite called Chardonneret and we managed, though I did have difficulty reaching the kitchen sink, which was a wonderful excuse not to do the dishes for two weeks! My advice to other disabled people is to check out for yourself with Stu any information you might need such as bed height etc. He is only too happy to help.



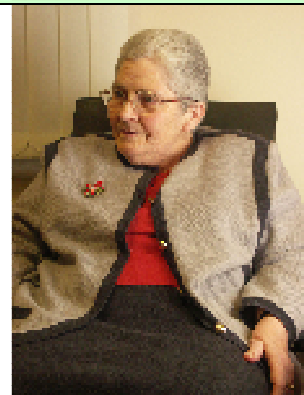
Au revoir!
Maggie Killin



Guest feature – A Day in the Life of...

Mrs Agnes Stewart

A day in the life of Agnes Stewart, a Founder Member and Director of The Scottish Disability Equality Forum (SDEF), is just the same as most days, a commitment to helping to make the world a better place for people with a disability. This is a follow-on of my life's work. I first qualified as a Paediatric Nurse, followed by being a wife and then mother, then returning to general nursing for 25 years till I retired at age 60.



Having lived with mobility problems it was a natural progression to take up volunteering with Aberdeen Action on Disability (AAD), a fairly new organisation dealing with Physical and Sensory Disabilities within Aberdeen City and of which I am currently Chairperson. This has given me a very enjoyable retirement, helping me to cope with my own disabilities, through helping others.

I'll take the liberty of taking you through a typical week in September:-

Sunday – Attend network at the annual International Fun Day in the local Park, organised by the Aberdeen Lions Club.

Monday – Attend regular DDA (Disability Discrimination Act) Review Group Meeting at NHS Grampian where our latest project has been to roll out a training programme for senior staff, by people with a disability raising awareness of our actual needs. Two seminars, to date, have been very well received.

Tuesday – A walk through part of the City Centre from the main thoroughfare to the new Shopping Mall at the Bus/Train Station to highlight the difficulties being experienced by our visually-impaired colleagues, with the introduction of “shared surfaces”. This is being undertaken by the Disability Advisory Group.

Wednesday – Visit Aberdeen Airport to undertake the second half of an assessment of the facilities for disabled people at the Airport. A day had been spent previously with senior members of staff, on an in-depth walk through the facilities on the Terminal side. Our visit on this occasion will deal only with “Air-side”.

Thursday – The weekly Access Panel Meeting which has taken place for the past 18 years and the volume of work varies from week to week. For football fans – we recently studied the plans for the proposed replacement for Pittodrie. Since the Access Panel meets in the office of AAD, it gives an opportunity to catch up, in the afternoon, with my work as Chairperson.

Guest feature – A Day in the Life of...

In the evening, I will attend the Civic Forum LEAD Group on which I represent the Disability Advisory Group. The Civic Forum is comprised of representatives from Community Councils and Communities of Interest e.g. Disability.

Friday – Free this week! Catch up day for reports, consultations.

Saturday – Saturdays don't escape as there are occasional seminars held at the weekend to enable Monday to Friday workers to attend, this has been the case the past two Saturdays.

The Disability Equality Scheme added extra demands on our time being involved with NHS, Police, Fire and the Aberdeen City Council but meetings are well spaced so the timetable is manageable. Most of the work I do can be directly fed into the work of SDEF and I strongly believe that there is great value in being part of the national picture.



I am a firm believer in Diversional Therapy and getting involved has helped me cope with my own physical problems which have been progressive over many years. Because of my physical problems I am not, nor can ever be, computer literate, so much of my communication is done by telephone and I have to thank my husband for the unstinting help he gives me in producing articles such as this.

Agnes Stewart

Guest features – Let us hear your experiences!



Do you have anything you'd like to share with SDEF members? Perhaps you or someone you know does a lot to champion equalities. Or perhaps you have experiences or thoughts you'd like to share with other disabled users. Maybe you just want to get something off your chest! If so just let us know by e-mail, phone or fax and you could see your views in print. Ideally submissions should be between 200 and 700 words in length and you can send photos too – although it's not essential.

Call 01786 446 456, e-mail accessdevadmin@sdef.org.uk or write to Scottish Disability Equality Forum, 12 Enterprise House, Springkerse Business Park, Stirling, FK7 7UF



Scottish Disability Equality Forum



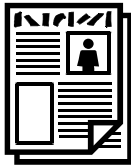
We are building a **network** of members to work together to remove the barriers to full social inclusion of people affected by disability. Contact us today and make a difference!

www.sdef.org.uk

info@sdef.org.uk

01786 446456

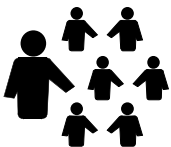
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Consulted on developments in law and policy.



Given opportunities to **network** with like-minded people and organisations.



Helping to **Influence** public bodies, including the Scottish Parliament and Government

Annual Membership of SDEF costs just £1 for individuals and £5 for organisations.

If you would like to join, please contact maeve.bain@sdef.org.uk or complete one of the application forms on the following pages

www.sdef.org.uk

Open Door Issue 33
Page 28 of 32

**Application for Individual Membership of
Scottish Disability Equality Forum**



Name of Applicant: _____
(Block capitals please)

Address: _____

Post Code: _____

Tel: _____

Email: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please indicate which format you would like the newsletter:

Paper Large Print Email: Tape: CD ROM:

Any other format, please specify.....

Your application will be tabled at the next SDEF Board Meeting
Please return your application to:

SDEF, 12 Enterprise House, Springkerse Business Park, Stirling, FK7 7UF

Information provided will be retained within our system in accordance with the
Data Protection Act 1998

Alternative formats available – call 01786 446456

Scottish Disability Equality Forum
12 Enterprise House, Springkerse Business Park, Stirling, FK7 7UF
Tel: 01786 446456 Fax: 01786 450902 Email: general@sdef.org.uk
www.sdef.org.uk

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Open Door Issue 33
Page 29 of 32





Application for Organisational Membership

Name of Organisation:.....

Contact Name:.....

Address:.....

.....

..... Post Code.....

Tel:..... Fax:.....

Email:..... Website.....

Full members organisations are bodies based in Scotland in which a majority of the Governing Committee or Board are people with a disability, or organisations which are working towards such a majority

Associate member organisations are bodies based in Scotland which do NOT have such a majority, but which support the objects of SDEF.

My organisation wishes to become a full member of SDEF

My organisation wishes to become an associate member of SDEF

For Full Membership Applications

I certify that the above organisation has a majority of people with disabilities on its Governing Committee, or is working towards such a majority. At the date of signing there were people with disabilities on the Governing Committee out of a total ofGoverning Committee Members .

Signature Date.....

For Associate Membership Applications

I certify that the above organisation supports the objects of SDEF

Signature Date.....

Your application will be tabled at the next SDEF Board Meeting

Please enclose a copy of your Constitution and return to:

SDEF, 12 Enterprise House, Springkerse Business Park, Stirling, FK7 7UF

Information provided will be retained within our system in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998

Alternative formats available – please call 01786 446456

Scottish Disability Equality Forum
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Company No SC243392

Patron: Alex Fergusson MSP

**Open Door is available in alternative
formats on request**

**Any comments made in any
contributed articles do not
necessarily reflect the policy or the
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