



Newsletter

Welcome to the July/August issue of Surrey News

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At our AGM in Woking on 5th July Sara Truman was elected as volunteer Chair of the Branch. Our speaker was the brilliant John Williams the stand-up comic and author of the book and blog 'My Son's Not Rainman'.

After six very enjoyable - and busy - years as chair, I would like to thank all the amazing committee members, volunteers, helpers and supporters - past and present - who I have had the great privilege to work with. In particular, I wanted say a couple of personal 'thank yous':

Sara Truman – has resumed the role of Chair (her last term was 12 years!). She is a cornerstone of the branch and the most knowledgeable and patient person I know in the field of autism.

John Muggleton – who despite having 'retired' from the committee still moderates our increasingly active online forum and sends out this newsletter.

Stella Drake – Stella has been bringing tea and coffee and making hot drinks for us all for over 20 years at coffee mornings and branch meetings. She has also been an invaluable source of advice on the best UK campsites!

I am staying on the committee and will still produce the newsletter and manage the website and our Twitter feed (which I hope to be able to do more pro-actively!)

You will find a summary of the report presented at our AGM on the back page.

With thanks,

Emma

Emma Whitfield

Volunteer

NAS Surrey Branch

General Email: info@nassurreybranch.org

Web site: www.nassurreybranch.org

Twitter: @NASSurreyBranch

Donations: www.justgiving.com/nassurreybranch

NAS Surrey Branch Contacts

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racheldpearson@gmail.com

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Parents of Adults' Group

Hilary Dyce 01276 66032
hilarydyce@yahoo.co.uk

Postal library Service

Susan Salters
nassblibrary@gmail.com

POSTAL ADDRESS

Please note, no NAS staff or volunteers work at this address

NAS Surrey Branch
c/o Walton Charities,
2 Quintet,
Churchfield Road,
Walton on Thames,
Surrey KT12 2TZ

Other Useful Contacts

Unless clearly stated, organisations are not endorsed by NAS Surrey Branch or the NAS.

NAS web site: www.autism.org.uk

NAS Helpline: Tel: 0808 800 4104 (10am – 4pm), or email autismhelpline@nas.org.uk

NAS Parent-to-Parent line 0808 800 4106

NAS national membership: 020 7903 3563
Email membership@nas.org.uk

Education Support

NAS Education Rights: 0808 800 4102

SSIASS Parent Support: 01737 737300

<http://www.surreyparentpartnership.org.uk/>

SOS!SEN charity to support statementing,

Tel: 020 8538 3731, Web: www.sossen.org.uk

Family Support & Representation

NAS Family Support worker Surrey

Amy Sinclair amy.sinclair@nas.org.uk

Tel: 01483 521 744

Portage – support for children with additional needs under 3.5 years 0300 200 1004

Family Voice Surrey parent representation

www.familyvoicesurrey.org

Local parent programmes

Early Bird for parents of under 5s

Cygnets for parents of children aged 5 – 19.

Contact Vicky Jones, email:

courses@sendteachingschool.co.uk

Tel: 20 8330 3009 ex 237

Redhill CAMHS group for parents of children with ASDs, tel: 01737-287002

Activities for children and young people

NAS Resource Centre, Godalming Tel:

01483 521743

SEResourceCentres@nas.org.uk

interAKtive, Epsom-based charity for children with ASDs and other communication difficulties 07876 762178,

www.interaktive.org.uk

Adult Services

Surrey Adult social svcs: 0300 200 1005

NAS Surrey Service Tel: 01483 861600,

email: surrey.service@nas.org.uk

Employment Support

Employability for people with disabilities including ASDs Tel: 01483-806806, email:

employability@surreychoices.com

Benefits advice

Carers Support <https://www.carers.org/>

NAS Tips page – via www.autism.org.uk

Cerebra DLA guide: 0800 328 1159

DLA Workshop for Parents in Guildford

We are hosting a one-day workshop about Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for children by Cerebra, the charity that supports children with neurological conditions on 19th Sept in Guildford. The workshop, run by trainer David Williams, aims to give parent and carers the skills to be able to complete a DLA claim form themselves. The workshop will help parents get the most out of Cerebra's DLA Guide, which can be downloaded for free here: <http://w3.cerebra.org.uk/help-and-information/guides-for-parents/dla-guide/>. You can also request a printed copy of the DLA guide by calling 0800 328 1159 or emailing info@cerebra.org.uk

It will help with common problem areas in DLA forms, bust some of the myths about claiming and help you assess whether you are getting the correct rate of DLA for your child if you already claim it. If you are not on the right level, it explains how to go about challenging this. David will also briefly touch on related benefits.

BOOKING ESSENTIAL – please contact volunteer Sarah Mead by email at sarah_mead@hotmail.co.uk to request a booking form. We are asking for a suggested donation of £10 per person, part of which will be donated to Cerebra who are not charging us for the course. Please let us know if you have trouble paying.

New Address for NAS Surrey Service

The NAS Surrey Service, which includes the NAS Family Support workers and the team which runs the NAS after-school, social skills, Lego therapy & youth clubs, have moved to new offices.

NAS Surrey Service
Birch House,
No 6 Godalming Business Centre
Woolsack Way
Godalming GU7 1XW

Other contact details remain the same: Tel: 01483 521743, email SEResourceCentres@nas.org.uk. You can find out about activities via their Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/NasSurreyResourceCentre/>.

Adult services also operate from this address and the phone no. is still 01483 424894.

IPEA SEND Law Foundation Training for Parents

The charity IPSEA (Independent Parental Special Education Advice) is running a training session in London on 6th October for parents and carers of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). It will provide parents, carers and family members of children and young people with all types of special educational needs and/or disability (SEND) with an introduction to the law relating to the education and training of children and young people with SEND. You do not need any previous knowledge of SEND Law, but must be the parent, carer or family member of a child with SEND. The course runs from 9.30am – 2.30pm and costs £65.

For more information or to book go to the IPSEA website:
<http://www.ipsea.org.uk/training/parent-carer-foundation-training>

Recording of Q&A with Surrey County Council

In June, Surrey County Council hosted a webinar to enable parents to put questions on SEND issues to the county council. The webinar was hosted by Cllr Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children, Cllr Mary Lewis Cabinet Member for Education and Liz Mills Assistant Director for Schools and Learning. You can watch a recording via the link here <https://www.surreysendlo.co.uk/kb5/surrey/localoffer/site.page?id=9i6hGiEqUv0>

The Council will be running webinars on a regular basis, focusing on a different topic each time.

Fun in the School Holidays for Children with SEND

Fun in the School Holidays (FISH) is a holiday scheme in Guildford for children and young people aged 10 - 19 with special needs and disabilities. You can register your child via the website at <https://www.guildford.gov.uk/fish> or by calling 01483 444 769.

The charity is sponsoring a free week of fun activities and day-trips for some **military family children** (10 to 16 years) between 31st July and 18th August. A1:1 support or a buddy will be provided for children with additional needs who require this support. To register your interest, contact Debbie Goldsmith Tel: 01483 798604 or Email: ATCP-HQ-UWO-CEDO@mod.uk

Autism Pre and Post-diagnostic Information

Surrey Family Information Service has put together useful information packs for families whose child may be or is being assessed for a diagnosis of autism or who has recently received a diagnosis. The information was compiled with Family Voice Surrey and with input from parents from NAS Surrey Branch.

Autism Pre-Diagnosis Pack

<https://www.surreysendlo.co.uk/kb5/surrey/localoffer/advice.page?id=XtieTLWYgfY>

Autism Post Diagnosis Pack

<https://www.surreysendlo.co.uk/kb5/surrey/localoffer/advice.page?id=97b5IRP0J0k>

(If links don't work, try pasting the address into your browser.)

SEND Information Sources

The **Surrey SEND 'Local Offer'** is a web portal where you can search for a wide variety of information about services for children with special needs. You can search by keywords (e.g. autism) or location. If you haven't visited the site for a while, it has been greatly improved recently. <https://www.surreysendlo.co.uk/kb5/surrey/localoffer/home.page>

Surrey has also just started publishing a **SEND newsletter**. You can read the first (June) edition here <http://dmtrk.net/16HE-4ZGFW-02PRVUDP1D/cr.aspx> and sign up to receive future issues here <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/special-educational-needs-and-disability-send/send-news>

Supported Internships for Young People aged 16-25 with EHCPs

Surrey offers Supported Internships for young people aged 16 to 25 years with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) to help them into paid employment. The internships provide a structured programme of learning in the workplace to help acquire the skills, qualifications and experience necessary for the jobs market.

The internship normally lasts for up to a year and includes at least six months of unpaid work experience. Although similar to a traineeship or apprenticeship, this type of programme is tailored to those who would require a higher level of support, such as a job coach.

More information is available on the *Your Next Move* website -

<http://www.careersadviceinsurrey.co.uk/options/send-options>.

There is also information on the Department for Education's Preparing for Adulthood site: <http://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/what-we-do/supported-internships/advice-from-dfe> which includes examples of young people who have completed a supported internship.

If you or the young person you care for has had a supported internship, please share your experiences with other parents via our online forum. You can join up here:

<http://www.nassurreybranch.org/moderated-email-forum.html>

Family Voice Surrey Post-16 Information Day

Family Voice Surrey is planning an information day in the autumn for parents of children who are planning what their young people will do post-16. Please see the Family Voice Surrey website for details or contact Sue at Family Voice Sue.L@familyvoicesurrey.org

Positive Autism Support & Training PDA Course

The independent consultancy PAST is running a one-day workshop on parenting children who present with Pathological Demand Avoidance. Weds 19th July, Dorking from 10.00am - 3.30pm. Cost: £65.00. To book please contact Leanne at PAST: leanne4past@gmail.com

'Curly Hair Project' Talks

The Curly Hair project is a social enterprise which puts on talks for parents and people on the spectrum. Forthcoming talks include:

Friday 14th July 09.30, Little Bookham - Autistic Meltdowns and Shutdowns

Friday 14th July 19.00, Surbiton - ASD and Socialising

Saturday 16th September 09.30, Leatherhead - ASD and Anxiety

Saturday 16th September 13.00, Leatherhead - Autistic Meltdowns and Shutdowns

For prices and booking information go to <https://thegirlwiththecurlyhair.co.uk>

Dad's ASD Awareness Course

Special Help 4 Special Needs is running a workshop on autism awareness for fathers of children and young people with ASDs in Croydon. The five-session course aims to provide information relating to the impact of ASD/Asperger's Syndrome in order to develop greater understanding about support and approaches needed.

The group will be run on Saturday mornings from 11.00am- 1.00pm on the following dates:

- 7th October
- 14th October
- 21st October
- 28th October
- 4th November

The sessions incorporate various methods, including talks and some practical based activities. Cost: £65 for the course, including refreshments and handouts.

Keeping Safe Course for Teenagers and Young Adults with SEN

Mark Brown is also running a 5-week course in Croydon for teenagers and young adults with special needs focusing on all areas of keeping safe. The course will run from 2.00pm - 4.00pm during October and November. Topics covered include: public and private messaging, banter, consent, talking to authority and relationships.

Cost: £60 for course, including refreshments and handouts. Contact Mark Brown at Special Help 4 Special Needs either by email sh4sn@sky.com or phone 01883 621124.

Relaxed Performance of High School Musical in Redhill

The YESOS youth theatre group is putting on an autism-friendly relaxed performance of High School Musical on Friday 4th August at 2.00pm at The Harlequin Theatre in Redhill. It will be a full two-act production, not a reduced length performance, and the ticket price is £12, with free places for essential carers. Find out more at www.yesos.co.uk

NAS SURREY BRANCH CALENDAR

NAS Surrey Branch local meetings are a great way to meet up with other families to share information and seek support. Please always contact the relevant volunteer before going along to make sure nothing has changed. Most meetings run during term-time only.

If you can't see a meeting in your area, why not host one yourself? To find out more, contact us at info@nassurreybranch.org

Guildford – **NEW VENUE Meetings are moving to Guildford town centre. Contact Sara Truman for details at nas@mugsy.org 01483 822630**

- Fri 7th July 10.00 am – 12 noon
- Mon 18th Sept 10.00am – 12noon

**Woking – Wyevale Garden Centre, Egley Road, Mayford, Woking GU22 0NH
Contact Sarah Norris sarah4ian@ntlworld.com 07543 920917**

- Wed 12th July 10.00 am – 12 noon
- Date TBC September

Hinchley Wood – Contact Juliette Sturge juliettsturge@gmail.com

- Date TBC, Hinchley Wood Primary School.

Weybridge – Contact Fi Phippen f.phippen@talktalk.net

- 9.30 – 11.30am Fri 29th Sept, Café Rouge, Queens Road, Weybridge

Frensham – The Holly Bush, Frensham, GU10 3BJ. Contact Christine Malik christinemalik@btinternet.com or Bonnie Noyce jbnoyce@yahoo.com

- Mon 17th July, 9.15 – 11.30am
- Mon 18 Sept, 9.15 – 11.30am
- Mon 16th Oct, 9.15 – 11.30am

Godalming **NEW MEETING A new meeting hosted by the mum of a 4 year-old.
Contact Cindy Barry cindybarry75@gmail.com, Tel: 07961 279518**

- Tues 26th September 9.30 – 11.30am

Redhill - Contact Helen Ruffhead 01737 212043 h.ruffhead@ntlworld.com

- Thurs 28th Sept 10.00am – 12noon

Milford – NAS Cullum Centre, Rodborough School. Contact Sue Briggs sue.briggs@hotmail.co.uk. Please get in touch for details of night entrance.

- Weds 5th July from 7.30pm. *This will be a relaxed meeting with no speaker where parents can share their experiences with one another. Although she works at Rodborough, Sue runs this meeting as a volunteer and is looking for help from a parent volunteer. Please contact her if you can help out.*

Parents of Girls Group - Contact Rachel Pearson racheldpearson@gmail.com

An active group that meets in Woking and Guildford approximately once a month during term-time.

- Weds 19th July 8.00 – 10.00pm, Woking. Talk by Educational Psychologist Denise Thornton for parents of girls. Contact Rachel for details.

Dads' Group – Contact Martin Trenaman trenamans@talktalk.net

The Dads' group meets socially 3-4 times a year. Dates for next term are to be confirmed. Contact Martin Trenaman for details, or to join the email group.

CALENDAR / Cont'd

Parents of Adults Groups

A chance to meet parents and carers who have an adult offspring on the spectrum for an informal meal or drink and to seek support. Meetings run throughout the year.

- **Thurs 6th July, 7.30 pm Farnham.** Contact Sara Truman 01483 822630
nas@mugsy.org
- **Weds 2nd August, Camberley** – contact: Hilary Dyce 01276 66032
hilarydyce@yahoo.co.uk
- **Thurs 7th Sept, Guildford** – contact: Sara Truman (as above)

Spouses and Partners Group, Guildford. Contact Sara Truman 01483 822630. email nas@mugsy.org. An evening meeting for the partners of people on the spectrum (no diagnosis necessary). Meetings run all year.

- Wednesday 26th July
- Weds 30th August
- Weds 27th Sept
- Weds 25th Oct

NAS SURREY BRANCH EVENTS

NAS Surrey Branch AGM, 7.30 for 8.00pm Weds 5th July, Brooklands Room, DoubleTree Hilton, Victoria Way, Woking GU21 8EW. The evening will include a talk by stand-up comedian John Williams who writes the 'My Son's not Rainman' blog and book. Suggested donation £10 (you are welcome to attend if you cannot pay). Please email info@nassurreybranch.org with 'AGM' in the subject line if you are planning on coming along.

NAS Surrey Branch and interAKtive skating event 5.00 – 6.00pm, Saturday 8th July at Guildford Spectrum ice rink. FEW PLACES LEFT – MUST BE BOOKED IN ADVANCE
Go to <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/nas-interaktive-family-ice-skating-july2017-tickets-34191180742> to check availability and book your place. We take over the whole ice rink for an hour and turn off loud music and flashing lights to make it more accessible for children and adults with ASD. You can come straight into the ice rink via a back door, so you don't have to go through the main foyer.

Parents of Girls Group evening talk 19th July, Woking. The parents of girls group has organised a talk by Educational Psychologist Denise Thornton for girls with autism spectrum conditions. If you are planning on going along, please contact Rachel Pearson racheldpearson@gmail.com for details.

Disability Living Allowance workshop for parents in Guildford, 10am – 2.00pm, Tuesday 19th September – see page 3 for details.

Bowling event – Save the Date

We are once again partnering with the parent-led special needs charity Sparklers to run a bowling event in Frimley for families that include someone with an ASD or other learning, communication and developmental difficulties.

Date: Sunday 29th October

Time: 2.00 – 3.00pm

Venue: Pine Ridge Bowling at Pine Ridge Golf Club, Frimley

Bookings will be available via Eventbrite shortly - please keep an eye on our online forum or have a look at the September/October newsletter for details. For information about Sparklers go to <https://www.facebook.com/sparklerscharity.org.uk/>

Surrey and Borders/CAMHS information day

Surrey & Borders Partnership NHS Trust provides mental health and learning disability services. They are holding an information day on Weds 13th September in Leatherhead to let people know about developments over the last year and learn more about the services they provide.

Workshops will include an update on the Mindsight Surrey CAMHS service, mini workshops based on Recovery College topics and a presentation about learning disability services. Lunch and refreshments provided. To find out more email engage@sabp.nhs.uk or call 01372 216158.

Survey on Surrey CAMHS

If you have sought help from Mindsight Surrey CAMHS (children and adolescent mental health service) for your child in the last year, please contribute to a new survey being run by Family Voice Surrey <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/SurreyCAMHS2017>

Family Voice would like to hear your experience of the service since it launched in April 2016. This includes the referral process (so even if your child was refused a referral or did not receive an assessment). The survey asks questions about every stage so, depending on where your child is on their journey, the survey could take between 10 and 30 minutes to complete.

If you would like a hard copy of this survey posted to you, please email contact@familyvoicesurrey.org or call 01372 705708.

All-Party Parliamentary Group on Autism Education Enquiry

Are you happy with your child's school and how it helps young people on the autism spectrum? The NAS is working with the All Party Parliamentary Group on Autism (APPGA) to find out how well the SEND system is working for children and young people on the autism spectrum. They want to hear your experiences to find out what needs to change.

The survey for PARENTS of children and young people up to age 25 is here: <http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/AutismEducationParents/>

The survey for children and young people themselves (up to age 25) is here: <http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/AutismEducationYoungPeople/> The surveys close on 10th July.

National Autistic Society's 'Autism Hour' for Businesses 2nd October

As part of the 'Too Much Information' campaign, the NAS is asking shops and businesses to organise a National Autistic Society Autism Hour during Monday 2nd October.

Businesses can take part by taking simple steps for 60 minutes that lead to a more autism-friendly world such as:

- Turning down music and other noise
- Dimming the lights
- Sharing information about autism with employees
- Sharing information about our Too Much Information campaign
- Sign up your business by going to <http://www.autism.org.uk/get-involved/tmi/autism-hour.aspx>

We would love to see businesses and shops in Surrey get involved in the project. If you work for or run a business in Surrey, please let us know if you will be taking part by emailing us at info@nassurreybranch.org and we will be happy to share information about how you are making life easier for people with autism.

Sparklers Charity Events

Sparklers is a parent-run charity for families of children with special needs and runs various event in the Deepcut and Camberley areas.

- **Free Summer Holidays playgroups** - Wednesdays and Fridays for up to 13 years developmental age and siblings. Garrison Community Centre, Newfoundland road, Deepcut and Frimley Baptist Church, Frimley.
- **Virginia Water Walk and picnic** on Saturday 15th July, 1.30 to 3pm.
- **Breakfast Morning** – Deepcut. 30th October, 10am to 11.30am.

For details, call 07854 571041, email: sparklers.charity@yahoo.com or go to <https://www.facebook.com/sparklerscharity.org.uk/>

Autism Diagnosis to Continue in SW London

You may have seen the media coverage in late May about health services in SW London proposing that they should stop diagnosing children with autism.

On 2nd June, the NAS published a statement saying that, following discussions with CCGs, this is now not going ahead.

The press statement said, "The National Autistic Society, along with many other local charities and National Autistic Society branches who contacted us, were very concerned about this proposal. Our Chief Executive, Mark Lever, wrote to NHS decision makers in the area (the Clinical Commissioning Groups, or CCGs) to tell them our concerns and to ask them to reconsider their proposal.

We have now spoken to the CCGs. We told them just how concerned parents and autistic people in the area (and across the country) were and how important getting an autism diagnosis is.

The CCGs have reiterated that they have agreed ongoing arrangements for the diagnostic service that currently exists, for 12 more months to make sure that waiting times do not grow further.

During those 12 months, they want to look at how the service should be redesigned. Importantly, they told us that services would be available for children from across the autism spectrum – so no child will be denied access to the care they need. This is very welcome news.

They also said that they will talk to local autism groups, autistic people and their families, alongside The National Autistic Society, about what the future diagnostic service should look like. They will be able to say more about this process in the next few months. Our charity will keep you up-to-date with what is happening, so that if you live in the area you can get involved.

We are very pleased that the proposals that had been discussed are not going ahead. We hope that by working with our charity, local groups, families and autistic people the new service will work for children and young people on the autism spectrum in South West London".

You can read the statement in full at:

<http://www.autism.org.uk/get-involved/media-centre/news/2017-06-02-sw1.aspx>

If anyone hears or experiences any issues with services saying that there are reducing or changing diagnostic services in Surrey, please let the NAS Surrey Branch or NAS head office know.

New Independent School for Children with ASDs to Open in Horley

A new independent special school for pupils age 6 – 16 with ASD is due to open near Horley in September. It will be called Redehall School and is being run by a company called the Aurora Group.

As with almost all independent special schools, children attending the school would need to be funded by the local authority, and funding is only agreed if there are no local authority schools which can meet the child's needs. For more details go to: <http://www.the-aurora-group.com/redehall>

Dimensions Relaxed Cinema Screenings

The charity Dimensions works with cinemas to put on autism-friendly 'relaxed' screenings at cinemas – for more details of locations, go to <https://www.dimensions-uk.org/families/autism-friendly-environments/autism-friendly-screenings/>

- **Cineworld** host an autism friendly cinema screening on the first Sunday of every month at 11am.
- **Showcase** host an autism friendly cinema screening on the second Sunday of the month at 10am. Their next autism friendly film screening is Despicable Me 3 on Sunday 9th July.
- **ODEON** host an autism friendly cinema screening every month at 10:15am. At a select number of cinemas, ODEON are trialling screenings for older audiences. Their next autism friendly film screening is Despicable Me 3 on Sunday 23rd July. ODEON's next autism friendly films for older audiences at nine cinemas is Spiderman: Homecoming on Monday 24th July at 6pm. They are also are putting on some extra autism-friendly cinema screenings during the school holidays:
 - Cars 3 on Monday 31st July at 10:15am, at participating cinemas
 - Captain Underpants on Monday 7th August at 10:15am, at participating cinemas
 - The Nut Job 2: Nutty by Nature on Monday 14th August at 10:15am, at participating cinemas
 - Despicable Me 3 on Monday 21st August at 10:15am, at participating cinemas
- **Vue** host an autism friendly cinema screening on the last Sunday of every month at 10:15am, from £1.99. Their next autism friendly film screening is Smurfs: The Lost Village on Sunday 30th July.

Information for Adults

Challengers Info Event for Disabled Young Adults and their Families

Lisa Woodruff Truscott from the Surrey Transition Team will speak about housing and benefits and what to expect from Surrey County Council. The event is on 14th July, 7.00 – 9.00 p.m. at Challengers Farnham Playcentre, St James Avenue, Farnham, GU9 9QF. Email information@disability-challengers.org for details.

'The Bus Stop' for adults with profound disabilities

The Bus Stop is a service in Redhill which runs 60-minute interactive group sessions for adults with profound learning disabilities and complex needs such as autism. It offers a chance for people to "find their feet" out of their safe home environment and have the opportunity to become more aware of other people and develop relationships and friendships with people they wouldn't normally meet. The cost is £16 per person per session.

The Bus Stop is part of Us In A Bus, an independent not for profit organisation which provides services for people who are 'difficult to reach'. For more details email info@usinabus.org.uk or call Steve Parker on 01737 764774.

Information for Adults Cont'd

Surrey Autism and Learning Disability Board websites

The websites for the Surrey Autism Partnership Board and the Surrey Learning Disability Partnership Board have both been given a new look recently.

The two Boards are where professionals, people with autism or learning disabilities (LDs) and parents/carers come together to develop better information, support and services for people with autism or LDs. The websites have a range of information, from factsheets on autism, details of the Adult Diagnostic Service, the Surrey LD and Autism Strategy, Transition, Safeguarding (keeping people safe from abuse or harm), health information, links to related groups such as the Surrey Positive Behaviour Support Network and much more. See:

<http://www.surreypb.org.uk/index.html>

Workshop for People Interested in Leading an LD Choir

LinkAble charity is supporting a singing workshop led by members of the professional a cappella group Apollo 5 and the High Notes adult choir for those with learning disabilities. This FREE singing workshop is open to anyone who is interested in becoming a volunteer or leader of a choir of adults with learning disabilities. If you would like to attend and take part in learning new warm-ups and songs appropriate for this type of choir please contact:

Alison Wrigley BEM: alison.wrigley@linkable.org.uk

Time: Tuesday 4th July from 7.00 - 8.30 pm

Address: High Cross Church, Knoll Road, Camberley, Surrey, GU15 3SY

About the NAS Surrey Branch

The Surrey Branch of the NAS is a volunteer-run parent-to-parent support group for families in Surrey affected by Autism Spectrum Disorders. It's FREE to join (although a small donation is appreciated) and we have around 1,500 members. The branch holds regular meetings and organises social events, local coffee mornings and special interest groups, and represents parents in meetings with health, education and social services. We host an active Yahoo! online forum, and produce this newsletter every two months. To join, go to www.nassurreybranch.org or email emma@mugsy.org for a membership form.

If you are a member of the NAS at national level, you can nominate us as your branch by emailing supportercare@nas.org.uk which means we receive a percentage of your annual subscription.

*We're part of **The National Autistic Society**, a national charity founded by parents in 1962 which runs a wide range of services such as schools, clubs and adult centres. It has over 20,000 members, 100 branches and works in partnership with more than 50 local autism societies. The NAS exists to champion the rights and interests of all people with autistic spectrum disorders and to ensure that they and their families receive quality services appropriate to their needs. **National Autistic Society, 393 City Rd, London EC1V 1NG www.autism.org.uk. The National Autistic Society is a registered charity, number 269425. Company limited by guarantee number 1205298.***

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Extract from National Autistic Society Surrey Branch Chair's Annual Report to members – 5th July 2017

At our AGM on 5th July Sara Truman was voted in as Chair of the Branch and Haywood Drake was re-elected as Treasurer. Sara thanked Emma Whitfield for her time as chair.

Over 1500 people in and around Surrey receive our newsletter and over 900 people belong to our moderated online forum.

Local Support Groups

- **Local support group meetings** – Sadly we have had to close several local support groups this year due to volunteers no longer being able to run them and have stopped our Weybridge pub meetings due to lack of interest. Chertsey, Cranleigh and Haslemere meetings have all stopped. Huge thanks go to past hosts and to the dedicated team still running meetings: Sara Truman in Guildford; Christine Malik and Bonnie Noyce in Frensham, Juliette Sturge in Hinchley Wood; Sue Briggs in Milford; Helen Ruffhead in Redhill; Fi Phippen in Weybridge and Sarah Norris in Woking.
- **The Parents of Girls group** continues to meet in Woking and Guildford and to host social activities for girls and their parents. Thanks go to Rachel Pearson for all her work.
- **The Parents of adults groups** meet regularly in Camberley, Farnham, Guildford, Haslemere, Reigate and Weybridge. Thanks to Hilary Dyce and Sara Truman for organising.
- **The Dads' group** continues to meet about once a quarter in members' homes or local pubs and runs a dedicated email forum. Thanks to Martin Trenaman for keeping this going.
- **Spouses and Partners group** – Sara Truman set up this popular group which now meets every month in Guildford.

Events

- **Indoor Climbing** – this is always a popular event
- **Christmas Party** – This was well-attended in 2016. Thanks again to Santa, Matthew Searle, volunteers and Michelle Jackson and her team at Woking Leisure Centre.
- **Ice skating** in Guildford, held jointly with interAKtive, had over 130 attendees.
- **Bowling** – we held a very successful joint event with Sparklers Charity at Pine Ridge Bowl in Frimley in February and are repeating this in the autumn.

Thanks go in particular to Sarah Mead who manages bookings.

Branch Committee

Sadly, two long-standing committee members, Sarah Mason and Eileen Bruce, resigned this year for personal reasons – we are very grateful for what they have done over the years. Huge thanks too go to the rest of the committee who have worked hard to fill the gaps:

- Emma Whitfield Chair
- Haywood Drake Treasurer / W Surrey Librarian
- Sara Truman Deputy Chair / Adult Issues
- Sarah Mead Event bookings
- Rachel Pearson Parents of girls / employment issues
- Emma Searle Events and residential education
- Jill Goulding Events calendar, meeting secretary

Our thanks go to other key volunteers including:

- Nancy Rowell for continuing as membership secretary
- Stella Drake for providing teas and coffees at Guildford and Woking
- Susan Salters for running the branch library.

Thanks also go to Helena Bateman and Alessia Mitchell at NAS head office.

To read the report and accounts in full, please go to www.nassurreybranch.org