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## Chair's Remarks

Well the clocks have gone forward and judging by the daffodils after what seems like a very long Winter Spring is finally here.

SILC is busier than ever with more referrals coming in than ever before with 298 received since the start of January. It's great to know that more and more people in Surrey are using Direct Payments as a way of managing and arranging their care and support arrangements, nearly 3,000 compared with 650 this time in 2007.

This level of activity is one of the reasons I am so glad to welcome Lynda Collins as our new Independent Living Adviser. Lynda maybe familiar to some of you from when she worked for Surrey Disabled People's

Partnership as an advocate and she introduces herself on page 6 of this very newsletter. The rest of the year is looking really busy including our new Direct Payment Workshops. The first one is at the Mandalay Hotel in Guildford on the 19th of April with more to follow at different locations later in the year. Our three day training courses for Personal Assistants (PAs) who are already employed and our new five day courses for prospective PAs are both getting positive feedback from attendees and dates for these can be found in the Winter edition of Liberty Link, on our website

**[www.surreyilc.org.uk](http://www.surreyilc.org.uk) or by contacting the SILC office.**

We are currently putting the finishing touches to our activity finder website and carrying out extensive consultation about our care finder website with service providers, people who use services and carers. We hope to have a major launch and publicity campaign for both these sites in June along with an improved version of PA Finder:

Richard, our Operations Manager, has been asked to extend his involvement in the development and roll out of Self Directed Support and Personalisation in Surrey as part of Surrey County Council's Transformation Team and I am particularly pleased to see this aspect of the Council's commitment to co-production with User Led Organisations continue.

On the subject of the Surrey County Council I would like to thank Councillor Michael Gosling the Council's cabinet member for Adult Social Care for agreeing to go under our spotlight this month.



As a Councillor myself in the past I know how much work it involves and it's nice to hear how positive Michael feels about the work he is doing. SILC continues to be actively involved in the development

and operation of User Led Hubs in Surrey. Lorna, one of our ILA's is based at the Epsom Hub on Tuesdays and Abi, another of our ILA's will be based one day a week at the Redhill Hub when it opens in May. We are also providing a lot of the admin and behind the scenes support to both the Hubs including lease holding, health and safety and financial management to ensure both the Hubs go from strength to strength.

On a closing note I just want to plug our AGM which will be held at the Leatherhead Leisure Centre on Tuesday July the 26th. So please put the date in your diary and if you have any topics you would particularly like us to address in the afternoon session just email Richard at [richard@surreyilc.org.uk](mailto:richard@surreyilc.org.uk) or call the SILC office.

**Best Spring Wishes  
Neville Hinks – Chair of SILC.**

# Blue Badge Reforms Announced

**The Department for Transport has announced reforms to the Blue Badge scheme describing the changes as “major reforms to crack down on drivers who abuse the disabled parking system.”**

## **Key changes include:**

- Providing local authorities with an on-the-spot power to recover badges that have been cancelled and misused;
- Shared administration between authorities – including an online application facility – resulting in faster renewals, reduced abuse and operational efficiency savings of up to £20 million a year;
- Wider use of independent mobility assessments to determine eligibility, including where previously the assessment was carried out by a GP, and support for this by giving local authorities control of National Health Service spend on Blue Badge assessments;



- The replacement of handwritten badges with standard electronic ones which are harder to alter and forge;
- Extending the scheme to more disabled children under three years of age and severely disabled Armed Forces personnel and veterans; and removing residency requirements for disabled service personnel and their families who are posted overseas on UK bases.

Some proposals will come into effect from April 2011 but others will take much longer to implement.

## Parking Victory For Mobilise

Norwich is now the second Council who have faced action under the Equality Act 2010 concerning discriminatory parking charges. Last year Lincoln Council also were forced to change their policy after they too were brought to task.

The Council had been claiming that its policy was fair because disabled people could afford to pay just like anyone else but they didn't take into account that some disabled people take longer to get around and do their shopping so it wasn't fair.

Therefore Norwich City Council backed down and changed its policy allowing Blue Badge holders to get an hours free parking for every hour they pay.

It is now possible for disabled people to fight Councils who still refuse to be reasonable and Mobilise (on 01508 489 449) are happy to support other disabled people where Councils are charging them the same to park as non-disabled people.



# Accessible Property Register Launches Personalised Property Alerts

Disabled and older people looking for wheelchair accessible accommodation can opt to receive e-mail alerts when wheelchair accessible property becomes available.

Specialist website, Accessible Property Register

[www.accessible-property.org.uk](http://www.accessible-property.org.uk)

has launched the new feature allowing website users to opt for automated e-mail alerts whenever new property adverts are posted.

Site users can set up their own individual alert and select from a number of criteria including area (including postal areas), property type, buy or rent, price/maximum weekly rent and the combination of access features required.

Once a new advert for a property that matches selected criteria is posted on the APR website, an automated e-mail alert (including a link to the advert on the APR website) is sent within one hour.



Anyone wishing to set up a property alert can do so free of charge by registering on the **Accessible Property Register website at [www.accessibleproperty.org.uk](http://www.accessibleproperty.org.uk) and following the links.**

## Dominic Webb and the Tetraexchange

Sixteen years ago following a fall, Dominic found himself in hospital on a ventilator paralysed in all four limbs (tetraplegia). Dominic then moved to Stanmore spinal unit where he stayed for over a year and then to a nursing home where he lived for five years. For the last five years he has lived in his own home supported by a team of seven care workers.

He currently works as a trainer training support workers who will often go to his house so they can gain hands on experience of spinal cord injuries and ventilators and has currently trained over 200 people! Dominic also works for RAISE as a trainer on mental health issues.

Dominic soon discovered that online there were lots of paraplegic related websites which talked about activities which were available including travelling to Russia or hang gliding overseas but he wanted more awareness about people who have no use of all four limbs (tetraplegic) and found very little information. He was interested to know what equipment people use, vehicles, wheelchairs, experience of care packages and Direct Payments as well as experiences tetraplegics had been through and plans they had for the future.

Therefore he obtained a grant from Millennium awards – Unlimited awards – for £2,500 to set up a website.



His hope for the website is to try and get people to establish a community of ventilator users throughout the UK and to highlight activities which are available e.g. scuba diving and skiing and he believes the forum will be essential for people to communicate.

**To find out more about Dominic and TIE, or to make any comments regarding the website, please visit [www.tetraexchange.com](http://www.tetraexchange.com).**

# SPOTLIGHT ON

## Michael Gosling, Surrey County Council's Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care



### **How long have you been a County Councillor and Cabinet member?**

I have been a County Councillor now for six years. In my second year I became the Chairman of the Corporate Management Select Committee which scrutinises the business side of Surrey County Council. Following that I spent one year as the Executive Member for Resources which included budget monitoring, Audit, Procurement and other such matters.

Following the County Election in 2009 I became the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, a role that I have found extremely interesting and one where I find I can do more directly for the residents of Surrey.

In recent months I have also shared responsibility for the integration of the health responsibilities that are coming to Surrey County Council and the setting up of the Health & Well-Being Board and the transfer of public health.

### **What is involved in being a County Councillor and Cabinet member?**

There are really three sides to my role - being a County Councillor at a local level means answering questions on all matters for which the County is responsible including roads, street lights, libraries, at times the list seems endless.

As a Cabinet Member I am involved in all matters that need to come before Cabinet for approval and they can cover everything from the Minerals Plan to the Budget to Education - and then there are my own responsibilities in Adult Social Care for trying to make sure I understand all the issues involved so that my responsibilities, policy and direction are clear and lead to good outcomes.

### **Can you give me a brief outline of your wider career experiences?**

Just before I was elected I retired from the business in which I had been a partner in the production of packaging bakery products and filling machinery for the ice cream industry worldwide. As a Sales Director I was responsible for the Group's representation around the world. In a normal year we sold in 75 countries, many of which I visited annually.

### **What is your vision for the future?**

Although the CQC inspections in the current form have now been abandoned, I would like to feel that with the senior officers and all of the staff within the Directorate we are being perceived as an excellent provider of Social Care. We do this with efficiency and an all embracing support of our users and our carers. It is too easy just to see the figures and forget these represent individuals whose lives we can make better and more comfortable.

### **When you are not working, what do you like to do in your leisure time?**

I have never understood the concept of leisure time. I suppose I am known as a workaholic. When I do put the papers down it is normally to support my two younger sons who both play a lot of rugby or catch up with the two older boys and my granddaughters.

### **If you had one wish what would you wish for?**

Can I have two wishes? One to carry on what I am doing - it is one of the most enjoyable roles I have had - and the second is to find more time to travel with my wife and family.

# Not Giving Up

I have been asked to write a few words to encourage others not to give up the fight when it seems almost impossible to win any ground. My Mother is disabled with Rheumatoid Arthritis and despite her difficulties has always been a very determined woman. Unfortunately, with her disabilities and advancing years, she needed more support than we were able to give her by ourselves and she became resident in a Nursing Home. This is rarely an option of choice but sometimes we have to make difficult decisions in life and this was one of ours. Nowhere will ever feel the same as living in one's own home but it

should always be the ambition of everyone to achieve the best and most appropriate care for every individual.

Unfortunately, we found ourselves in a position where this was not the case and as my Mother's advocate it was my responsibility to try to get things changed to alleviate her suffering. However, this is not always easy, managing life on a day to day basis and being emotionally involved is very wearing. I had reached a stage where I felt I was being paid lip service by all the agencies involved in her care.

I knew I had to persevere but I felt I was being a trouble maker

which upset me as I seemed to be making demands of people who were very busy. It was at this time Richard from SILC gave me some words of encouragement which renewed my energy to continue regardless of how bad it made me feel and to keep my focus always on what was best for my Mother. I am very grateful to Richard for those words of encouragement because in January I began to see what I perceived to be wrong with my Mother's care being changed, what I had been saying was finally being acknowledged and acted upon. We still have battles to fight but we have a right to be heard.

**Carol Easton**

## EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGNING

As disabled people, there are many injustices that affect our everyday lives and make the struggle to live independently more difficult. Some people are extremely good at speaking up and complaining about the things that adversely impact on their ability to have choice and control about what they want to do and how they want to live. But others do not have the confidence to make a big noise or write a strongly worded letter, for fear of losing what they have - or for some other reason.

At SILC, the Trustees were discussing this very subject at a meeting to review our recently publicised Strategy Document, where we were measuring agreed targets and talking about outside impacts that might affect them in these times of financial constraint.

We concluded that although we are known as a service provider and not as a campaigning organisation, there is much that SILC members can do as individuals.

- We can keep each other up to date about consultations that might affect us in our local area.
- Many SILC members belong to other organisations in Surrey and can share experiences.
- By attending local Partnership Board meetings, issues can be brought to the attention of the Chair or Coordinator, Yasmin Broome, who will take up our concerns with the appropriate person or department.

- We prefer to publish positive experiences in Liberty Link but we will publish stories about people's difficulties, especially how they resolved a particular problem by negotiation or compromise.

There are many ways to campaign and very often much more is achieved by research, knowing your rights, keeping calm and just not giving up.

Sending rude letters or shouting down the phone etc. usually only results in people getting angry and unresponsive. So to make people listen and make things happen.....

**CAMPAIGN EFFECTIVELY**

**Brenda Griffiths**  
– Vice Chair of SILC

# Staff Profile



**Lynda Collins**

*Independent Living Adviser*

I have been working with disabled people since 1998, during this time I qualified as a social worker working for Social services within the Deaf and hard of hearing team. For the past six years I had worked as a professional advocate supporting disabled people to speak up for themselves whilst encouraging people to be independent in the community. I was made redundant in October 2010 following funding issues and was pleased to be offered the post as a Independent Living Adviser within SILC in February 2011.

In 1998 I discovered that I'm Dyslexic. Despite having a difficult school education it was still a surprise, but also a relief because I began to understand why I found learning difficult. From then on I was determined to learn using a style that suited me from brick laying to cake decorating.

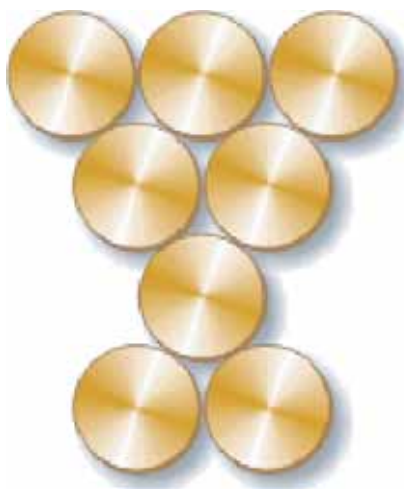
In my spare time I enjoy being part of a motorsport racing team. We are a team of five, racing an old Peugeot 205. My husband and a friend hold racing driver licenses, so they do all the racing. My job is to check the tyre pressure during pit stops and on the odd occasion push the car when the engine cuts out. We also own a 1973 VW bay window camper van. Last year I spent most of the summer taking an old VW camper engine apart in order to get a better understanding of how it all works.

## Carers' Week

13th to 19th June 2011

Putting carers centre stage, this national awareness week celebrates the thousands of people who give their time and energy to look after loved ones and those in need, with little recognition or rewards. To find out more about events taking place across Surrey and the UK visit: [www.carersweek.org](http://www.carersweek.org)

## PUZZLE



Make the depicted cup with eight coins of the same size as shown in the illustration.

The object is to move only two of them in a new position to get the cup standing upside-down.

You're allowed to move the coins as you wish but at the end the cup has to have exactly the same shape only rotated at 180 degrees from its start position.

*Answers on page 8*

# DisabledGo – Breaking down barriers and improving choice!

**www.DisabledGo.com** is an award-winning website run by disability organisation DisabledGo. In operation since 2000 DisabledGo is an established and trusted service, providing disabled people with the information needed to make informed choices about accessing their community.

**www.DisabledGo.com** is **free** to use and covers a huge range of venues across the UK and Ireland, including cinemas, hotels, hospitals, colleges, sports grounds, restaurants, dentists and tourist attractions - the list goes on and on.

The service has been developed in constant consultation with disabled people. DisabledGo is unique in sending a surveyor to visit every single venue featured on the website to collect detailed information about access. For example, you can find out whether venues have adapted toilets or parking close by but also specific details such as the height of tables, dimensions of toilets or the positioning of fixtures and fittings. Surveyors use the same standards to assess each venue meaning users can rely on the information.

To find out more about your local disabled access guide go to **www.disabledgo.com** or contact **Rachel Felton at DisabledGo (rachel.felton@disabledgo.com 01438 842710)**



## HELPING YOU MANAGE

Hillary runs SILC's PA training and also acts as our consultant adviser specialising in PA employment matters. In this feature she will be answering your questions on different aspects of employing and working with Personal Assistants.

**A new PA has started with me and tells me that I should have a 'risk assessment' for staff to follow.**

**Do I have to do this?**

It is good practice and also a legal requirement that as an employer you ensure that your PA works safely and that your home is a safe environment in which to work. You should complete a 'Risk Assessment' of your home – as this is the PA's workplace. If part of your PA's job description is to assist you to move, there should also be an up to date Moving and Handling Risk Assessment in place. SILC have a FAST FACTS Sheet on Health and Safety and are able to offer assistance with Risk Assessments and Moving and Handling assessments.

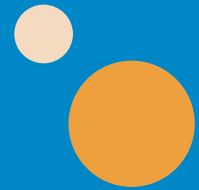
**If you have any questions that you would like to see answered in our newsletter then contact Kate at the SILC office or email: [kate@surreyilc.org.uk](mailto:kate@surreyilc.org.uk).**

**If you have any worries about your PA or anything else to do with your Direct Payment don't hesitate to call SILC on 01483 458 111 or email [admin@surreyilc.org.uk](mailto:admin@surreyilc.org.uk)**

# LIVE LIFE YOUR WAY

## Launch of Surrey Information Point

[www.surreyinformationpoint.org.uk](http://www.surreyinformationpoint.org.uk)



A high profile awareness campaign is currently underway to promote the Surrey Information Point website and online directory of information, care and support services and activities to the public.

Surrey Information Point has been developed in partnership between Surrey County Council, Social Information on Disability (SID) and NHS Surrey and has been

guided by an Information Steering Group made up of many partner organisations.

SILC fully supports this initiative as a way of ensuring disabled people can have easy access to the best information and advice about their care and support in order to really have greater choice and control over their lives.

Our own websites

[www.surreyilc.org.uk](http://www.surreyilc.org.uk) and [www.pafinder.org.uk](http://www.pafinder.org.uk) can be accessed via the site as will our two additional sites

[www.activityfinder.org.uk](http://www.activityfinder.org.uk) and

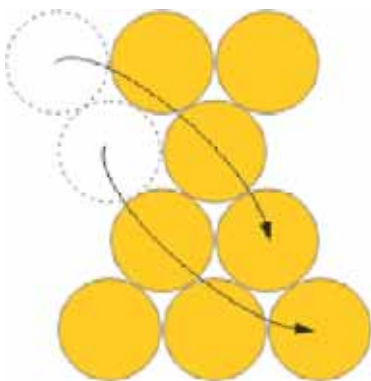
[www.surreycarefinder.org.uk](http://www.surreycarefinder.org.uk) when they are launched in June.

## AGM

We are planning to hold our AGM on Tuesday 26th July at the Leatherhead Leisure Centre from 11am to 3pm.

We are awaiting confirmation of the venue's availability and will confirm the details as soon as possible.

## PUZZLE ANSWER



## Changes to Surrey County Council's Free Bus Pass Scheme

Due new Government legislation your local District or Borough Council is no longer able to issue free bus passes so from the 1st of April selected Surrey libraries will be the only place you can apply for a concessionary pass. The concessionary bus pass enabled disabled people to travel free at any time and pensioners to travel free from 9.30 in the morning to 11 at night.

### To get your free bus pass:

Check if you qualify for a free bus pass and what documents you need to bring with you either look online at [www.surreycc.gov.uk/freebuspass](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/freebuspass) by **text service 07527 182861** or call **03456 000 009**

### Selected Surrey Libraries (in alphabetical order).

Addlestone, Banstead, Camberley, Caterham Hill, Caterham Valley, Cranleigh, Dorking, Egham, Epsom, Esher, Ewell (Bourne Hall), Farnham, Godalming, Guildford, Haslemere, Horley, Leatherhead, Oxted, Redhill, Staines, Sunbury, Walton, Woking.

### Concessionary Travel Club - [www.concessionarytravel.com](http://www.concessionarytravel.com)

This free to use web based service provides easy to use information about destinations and routes that can be accessed via your concessionary travel pass along with information about various events and activities.