

Wilberforce Matters

Summer 2009



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Chief Executive's Comment

New Strategy

Trustees have agreed the publication of a revised Strategy for the organisation for the coming years, which recognises the change in recent years from a purely service providing organisation, to one which seeks to influence the development of services for people with visual impairments on both a local and national level, through membership of a number of working groups. The Trust's reputation continues to grow around the country as news of our service developments, and successful partnership working approach spreads.

The strategy also sees accommodation and support services for people with visual impairments and additional disabilities as central to existing and future business plans, whilst recognising that we have an important role to play in facilitating and if necessary funding the development of other services for people with visual impairments.

Further information on the strategy and the Trust's business objectives can be found on the website.

Investor in People Review

The end of March saw the third (three yearly) review of our recognition as an Investor in People. We have now held this recognition since 2000, and were delighted to retain recognition once again. A number of developmental targets have been set to ensure continuing development of our people management and support processes. These targets include work on training, clarifying expectations of managers, communication and business planning processes.

New Developments

Trustees have approved works to our offices at Huntington, to replace the roof and to convert one of the store rooms at the back of the offices into an activities room to allow expansion of the range of daytime activities, which can be provided for the local community. Both of these pieces of work will be subject to planning applications and if approved by the council work should begin before the end of the summer. There will inevitably be a period of disruption to the offices, whilst the work is ongoing and we will report further on that and the potential benefits in due course.

Faith Seward OBE

We were saddened to hear of the recent death of Faith Seward OBE. Faith had been a trustee of the Wilberforce Trust for 10 years, helping us through some of our more difficult times. She joined the board having retired from her career as a Head Teacher. Despite her own disability, she proved a spirited member of the board, supporting our work and also that of a number of other local voluntary organisations. She will be greatly missed.



Some of the Trust's runners in the BUPA Great Manchester Run 2009

Accommodation and Support Services

York Services

Firstly we would like to welcome Helen El-Gmati who has recently joined the Trust as Manager at West View Close. Helen has previously worked for Real Life Options.

Some people may already be aware that in 2008 the Trust commissioned the Thomas Pocklington Trust to conduct a lighting survey in our York services. Particular attention was given to assessing the levels of task and general lighting required for people with visual impairments. Significant upgrades are planned for this financial year across the York services. Those services, which have already been upgraded report that the lighting is now much improved and has been of benefit to the tenants.

Tadcaster Services

As of the 1st April 2009, funding for our Tadcaster services transferred from City of York Council to North Yorkshire County Council. Care management has been provided by North Yorkshire since early 2006. As far as the tenants are concerned this change has very little impact on the services they receive.

Training

The Trust is now able to offer support staff an accredited course in Visual Impairment. This training will be facilitated by the Open College Network and delivered at the Trust by Margaret Daley, Manager Rehabilitation services and Alison Bowes (formerly from Guide Dogs, but now working for North Yorkshire County Council). The training is due to be delivered in July and then at regular interval thereafter. It is hoped to offer the training to external organisations as well as our own staff in the longer term.

Another three managers are also due to begin their A1 National Vocational Qualification assessors qualification in June. This will enable them to work alongside Support workers to gain their NVQ awards. Discussions are also taking place with Askham Bryan College with reference to management NVQ awards for Managers.

Recruitment

For some time the Trust has recognised that it needed to review its recruitment processes to ensure that we comply with changes in legislation surrounding recruitment and to encourage tenant involvement in the recruitment process. Historically interviews have been coordinated by managers and offers of employment have been largely decided upon by the interview panel. Recently some tenants have been involved by asking questions during the applicant's interview; other tenants have been involved in meeting the applicants informally either before or after the interview. This also enables managers to gauge the applicants' ability to relate to the tenants rather than just relying on the interview alone. Feedback from tenants, who have been involved in recruiting new staff has been very positive; clearly they have enjoyed being part of this.

Volunteer News Update

We are delighted to welcome nine new volunteers and sincerely hope they will enjoy their volunteering with the Trust.

Congratulations go to a further two volunteers who have completed ten years of volunteering. We are extremely grateful for all they have given to the Trust throughout those years, especially their friendship.

Our sincere thanks and best wishes go to those student volunteers who are leaving us and moving on. We are extremely grateful to them for all their enthusiastic involvement and we wish them well in their future careers. We would also like to wish our student volunteers good luck with their exams.

A group of volunteers recently attended a First Aid Session and further courses are planned to cover differing aspects of emergency aid. Another group attended a session which was very much targeted towards those volunteers who help with catering at our fundraising events. Amidst an enjoyable and fun evening a great deal was learnt that proved extremely valuable at our St Crux Fundraising Day.

Rehabilitation News

The Rehabilitation team is looking forward to welcoming an extra pair of hands on board in the coming weeks as Martin Heppell completes his training as a rehabilitation officer and returns to the Trust as the first male worker on the team.

Chrissie remains in the East Riding for much of her working week as their recent recruitment campaign was unsuccessful again. They are now exploring all other options to fill the post and the Trust will continue to provide their rehabilitation service on a contractual basis until they can find a solution. Unfortunately these demands have left little time for Chrissie to engage in much rehabilitation around our own services recently – but hopefully the expansion of our own team will allow some flexibility on this in the future.

Jane Drake continues to work all her contracted hours at the Sherburn office for North Yorkshire County Council but joins the team at Wilberforce House every 6 weeks or so for a team meeting.

The Low Vision Clinic is now operating on funding generously given by our Trustees. This is an interim measure whilst we try to seek mainstream funding elsewhere. Feedback from our patients has been glowing and we have achieved some very satisfying results for individual patients. York has been fortunate to have the opportunity to develop this quality resource, which is not readily available elsewhere in the country. It is in recognition of the value of the clinic that the Trust has felt able to support the service in this way.

The Bridge to Vision scheme is also well underway now and is busy promoting eye health checks for people with a learning disability. After a slow start Karen now has a considerable waiting list as her work becomes more established. She is now able to offer follow up visits to her patients to check that recommendations made in her vision reports are of practical help to individuals and the family or carers in making functional improvements to their lives.

Meanwhile, the IT classes are seeing new learners join as successful achievers move on either to other mainstream learning schemes or enjoy their new skills at home or in the work environment.

This is a really exciting time to be working in rehabilitation services at the Trust as more ideas take shape on other development options.

Thanks to

- Local businesses and organisations and individuals who supported our Spring Fayre
- To the family of the late Rita Twiss for donations in her memory. We express our sincere sympathy to her family and grateful thanks to them for their generous support of the Trust.
- John Wright Electricals for sponsoring our runners in the BUPA Great Manchester Run.
- To all our entrants in the BUPA Great Manchester Run for giving so generously of their time and energies to take part and by doing so raise money for the Trust.
- AVIVA for the decorating and gardening they did at Newlands Drive as part of a 'Team Challenge'.
- Tangerine Confectionary for their continuing support through collecting boxes.
- Miss Harbot
- To everyone who supported our very successful St Crux Fundraising Day
- The Rotary Club of York Ainsty for their continuing support of the gardens at three of our York services.

To everyone who supported the Trust through donations of time, skill or by donations the Trust extends its very sincere thanks.

Rewarding, recognising and recruiting Volunteers.

National Volunteers' Week (June 1 – 7th) first began in 1984 to raise awareness of the importance of volunteers within our society, and celebrate their achievements. With more than 22 million people said to be volunteering by donating their time and effort in one way or another every year throughout the UK, this week has been and is being used to recognise their valued contribution to society as well as encouraging others to consider getting involved. There have been many changes in volunteering styles and policies throughout those 25 years, but the basis of all the volunteering has been individuals giving time and support to so many different organisations and people.

We have celebrated NVW for the last ten years with the aim of recognising the tremendous contribution that our volunteers make to the life of those who live within the care of the Trust.

A very sincere thank you goes to each and every one of them for everyone gives their own unique 'special something' to those they visit or through the activities they undertake on behalf of the Trust. Thanks to them for their commitment, friendship and support – it is very much valued and also very much enjoyed.

The first edition is out!

The tenants are really enthusiastic about having their own magazine and it is full of lots of interesting information. For instance did you know a good way to clean burnt pans, or a recipe for a Chocolate Bubble Bath (the non-edible variety!)? Well the new magazine can give you the answers. So if you would like a copy of this new publication, then please contact Barbara at the office.

Don't forget you can donate to the Trust through our dedicated donation service:

www.justgiving/wilberforcetrust/donate

Live Music Now

A group of tenants enjoyed a marvellous evening of Brazilian Music with Live Music Now Yorkshire and Lincolnshire. Live Music Now is a registered charity encouraging access to high quality musical experiences for groups who may otherwise find it difficult. We listened to both vocal and instrumental performances, we joined in and we danced – a great evening was had by all!

Thanks to the musicians, to The Norman Collinson Charitable Trust, The W.L. Pratt Charitable Trust and City of York Council for funding the evening and to Live Music Now for yet again providing us with a truly memorable musical experience.



Gordon and Tony demonstrate one of

Forthcoming Events

- Sun. 13 July Tombola stall at York Dragon-Boat Race.
- Thurs 23 July Tadcaster Charity Market Stall — Offers of baking or preserves would be very much appreciated.
- Thurs 27 Aug York Hospital Charity Stall
- Tues 15 Sept Complete Clothing Fashion Evening 7-00pm

Don't forget our monthly 100 Club Draw

If you would like to know more about any of the above, or would like to be involved in fundraising for the Trust please contact Barbara - 01904 760037

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