

FORWARD MIDLOTHIAN DISABLED



Help for disabled at the touch of a button

THIS month sees the 15th anniversary of the birth of the world wide web. And what better time for **Forward Midlothian Disabled** (Forward Mid) to be launching its own website?

The push is on to strengthen the membership of this dynamic pressure group, whose mission is to bring about concrete improvements in disabled people's quality of life. Its aim is to reach out to the many isolated people in Midlothian who live with disabilities and tell them, 'you are not alone'

Heavy doors, lack of ramps or lifts; restricted access to services, benefit information, education and jobs. These are just a few of the issues discussed by the group, which then seeks to tackle the problems head on.

Eric Johnstone (42) of Community Care Forum who chairs the group's monthly meetings said: "Our aim is to promote the rights of disabled people in Midlothian. There are very many isolated individuals out there. A lot of people have some form of disability but don't come within any network of support. "Sometimes there are psychological problems to be dealt with. People can lose ambition, their focus on life and become depressed." However, he points out that it is often not the individual's disability that is the problem so much as the unsympathetic environment and the attitudes of others; difficulties which can be solved by educating people to a greater awareness.:

"There is still a lot of room for the website to develop and grow. We are currently trying to strengthen our membership, which is growing steadily and we welcome anyone wanting to be Involved with disabled rights".

Group member and former motor mechanic, Gary Sowersby (53) who launched the Forward MID web site said: "If you have a complaint, you can make that complaint on your own and be ignored. But if a group makes the complaint you are much more likely to get something done."

The group is planning visits to various locations to give their expert advice on the improvements needed to bring true equality to Midlothian's disabled.



Visit us on the world wide web at www.forwardmid.org.uk



Would like to like to thank all those that responded to the survey on the NHS primary care in Midlothian. The next stage is a visit to a doctors surgery and this will take place in September, Eric Johnstone will contact all that said they would participate and offer them a chance to sit down with Catherine Evens on the 6th of September at 2p.m. Until 3p.m. at the MVA office to work out a schedule and be part of the physically disabled team that will give advice on what is good and what is bad. Anyone that would still like to take part please contact Eric Johnstone on 0131-663-9471 before the 6th of September and give him your details. Anyone who wishes to find out what has been written in the report can write to Catherine Evens, Dalkeith Medical centre, 24-26 Saint Andrew Street, Dalkeith EH22 1AP and ask her for to send you a copy.

Free Cinema Admission

The cinema exhibitors Association has introduced a national card which entitles the holder to one free ticket for a person accompanying them to the cinema. The card will be valid for three years and a processing fee of £5 pounds will apply. To apply for the card you will need to be in receipt of disability living allowance, be registered blind or be a holder of a disabled rail card.

To apply for this card please write to, The Card Network, The Technology Centre, Rossmore Business Park, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire. CH65 3EN or phone 0845-123-1295 alternatively you can visit them on the web at www.ceacard.co.uk/ and download an application form and post it back to them at the above address if you have any further enquires please contact them by e-mail: info@ceacard.co.uk.

If you have already got a card please tell us how useful it is to you.

Thanks to Jeff Adamson for this feature

Profile of a Member



Name: Mary Dempster

Age: Sweet Sixteen (Again and Again)

I was born in Dalquhandy Coalburn and attended Lesmahagow Higher Grade School and left at age 15 with no qualifications whatsoever. I returned to education as a mature student age 40 and graduated from Moray House College Edinburgh in 1991 as a fully fledged Community Education Worker. In 1999 I went to study, Scottish History, Scottish Language, Art and Architecture etc., at Newbattle Abbey College.. The best educational experience I ever had.

My husband Peter and I came to live in Mayfield Dalkeith in 1969. We have 2 sons an 5 grandchildren which ensures that the expertise I gained over 25 years as a youth worker is still practised by me!

Supported by the local area co-ordination I have begun to become involved in my local community once again. I have been looking at ways of encouraging people with disabilities “to get out there” and meet up with other folks and enjoy themselves.

Forward Mid has given me a voice within a group of people who are working together to help raise awareness of some of the difficulties faced by disabled people, e.g. trying to get a parking space in one of Tesco’s designated disabled bays.

Computing made easy

When you need to look for something on the World Wide Web we need to use a search engine there are quite a few search engines on the web my favorite is www.google.co.uk and if it is something you wish only from a specified country you can tell this to google, and you can even read it in another language, another thing you can do with google is get free downloads of things like google earth, this will give you a birdseye view of place anywhere in the world or a fly through option allows you to look down on the earth and watch it fly past, other things google does is news and images it also has chat rooms but you will need to register to use them. Other search engines are www.ask.co.uk is ask Jeeves, www.msn.co.uk. There are also specialised web site like alta vista this designed as a medical search engine.

When you use a search engine and for instance type in the word land rover you will receive all the sites that have both words in and this could be over 45million sites to narrow it down type it like this “**land rover**” and straight away you are down to a few hundred thousand but narrow it down even further and say “**land rover discovery**” **midlothian** and it will come down to a few hundred with the most important at the beginning.

Don't give up you may need to experiment with typing many different keywords into a search engine and trawl through many webpages before you find the answer your looking for. If you find a site that you think might be of interest to Forward MID then please E-mail Iain at dulce.tait@tiscali.co.uk

Tesco

Do you have any questions about your local Tesco, there are two in Midlothian, Hardengreen and Penicuik, we are being offered a chance to talk the head man at tesco **Sir Terry Leahy**, he is taking questions about anything to do with Tesco via an E-mail to News@which.co.uk. The questions are being taken from the 1st September and the answers will be posted on the Which web site on www.which.co.uk lets take all our questions about the faults with Tesco and there local management to the Boss

Dates for your diary
Forward MID future

Meetings

We welcome new members!

All meetings are from

2pm until 4pm

Anyone wishing to attend but does not have transport please contact Eric Johnstone on 0131-663 9741

Thursday September 14th
The
Open Door
Penicuik

Thursday October 12th
The
Open Door
Penicuik

Thursday November 9th
The
Open Door
Penicuik

DECEMBER 2006

Guess What it's that time of year **Christmas**. I Think back and where has the year gone,, it seems only yesterday we all sat round the table at the Scotch Bonnet in Dalkeith and celebrated Christmas 2005, but that's all behind us now and we have achieved so much, so we will have to look to the future and think where and when we hold the final meeting of Forward MID 2006, any suggestions please bring to the last three meetings so we can book somewhere as from now on it will get really busy .

Newbattle Abbey College

Margaret Teal from Newbattle Abbey College has invited members of Forward MID to attend a work shop in Newbattle Abbey College on , to address the issues with the consultation that are stated in the statutory code of practice for THE DUTY TO PROMOTE DISABILITY EQUALITY.

This sounds a bit daunting but all it means is that disabled people should be consulted on their needs to attend and access the buildings and participate in all that is offered. By doing this Newbattle Abbey College is leading the way in there wish to include all disabled people.



A Day at the Races, part 1

Ever wanted to go to the Horse Races but we're unsure what to expect, what to do or how accessible the racecourse might be? Well here's all you need to know plus a guaranteed way to back the winners.

I hadn't been to Musselburgh Race Course for many years and now being a wheelchair user I wasn't sure how accessible the place would be for me. I phoned the racecourse and was assured that after a recent revamp the course was fully accessible (with the exception of one of the seven bars/restaurants). With this assurance my wife, Elizabeth, and I set off one Wednesday afternoon to make our fortunes, as well as to check how accessible the course really was.

We arrived at the course well before the first race was due to start with the idea of getting the lay of the land as well as having lunch. A car park in the racecourse complex reserved for officials etc is also open to blue badge holders free of charge. Very handy as parking anywhere near the course is almost impossible. Also handy is an entrance to the racecourse proper next to the car park. The admission charge is normally £15 (weekends £20) but there is a half price concession for disabled people and their Personal Assistant/Carer. Remember to collect your free Race Card which gives details of the day's racing.

By Jeff Adamson



Current issues for Forward MID

- Open day planning for next HELPP event.
- Physical disability strategy group scrutiny panel .
- building a taxi list that can accommodate different types of wheelchair
- Midlothian council Equalities forum.
- U.K. advisory network.
- Woodland project Gorebridge with James Kinck land resource manager
- Carers scrutiny panel
- Community planning

Alternative Publications

The editions of the Forward MID newsletters are available in large print or alternative publications For alternative publication please E-mail to eric.johnstone@mvacva.org.uk or call Eric Johnstone on 0131-663-9471 or write to him at MVA 4-6 White Hart Street, Dalkeith EH22 1AE with your request.