

# **Disability Cambridgeshire**

**Annual Report 2011 - 2012**



Prepared for the Annual General Meeting  
30<sup>th</sup> October 2012

Please contact Disability Cambridgeshire if you know of  
anyone who needs this information in another format or  
language

## Who's who at Disability Cambridgeshire 2011 – 2012

**President:** Lord Fairhaven KStJ, JP, DL

Honorary Life Vice President: Mrs Ruth Palmer

### **Management Committee:**

All members of the Management Committee are trustees of the Disability Cambridgeshire charity:

**Chairman** Mark Taylor

**Treasurer:** Martin Smart

**Other Trustees:** Eric Bishop, Chris Lakin, Judith Margolis, Judith Pal, Ian Raine, Alison Walker

### **Staff:**

**Chief Executive and Company Secretary, Casework**

**Manager:** Peter Wetherell

**Forum Manager:** Gerri Bird

**Book keeper:** Nigel Bell

**Administrator:** Sally Cleghorn

**Project Assistant:** David Challis

### **External consultants/contractors**

**Website designer/ web editor:** Neil Laister

<http://analytic-art.net/>

**IT Systems Support** Cambition Ltd

**Chartered Accountant:** Geoff Mann

### **Volunteers:**

Hilary Bayles, Eric Bishop, David Challis, James Nugent

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## **Welcome to Disability Cambridgeshire's Annual Report for 2011- 2012**

### **Disability Cambridgeshire is the pan disability service for Cambridgeshire.\***

Our vision is of a society where all disabled people, older people and carers have equal opportunities in every aspect of their lives

Disability Cambridgeshire seeks to make this vision a reality in Cambridgeshire by:

- providing free, confidential and impartial information and advice on every aspect of disability and access to anyone who lives or works in Cambridgeshire \*
- assisting with disability and age related benefits claims
- leading training sessions on Disability Discrimination Act compliance and Disability Equality
- providing access surveys for existing and planned premises and services
- championing the interests of disabled and older people in the government, healthcare, private and voluntary sectors at local, regional and national level

\* People living in Huntingdonshire D C and Peterborough unitary authority areas are served by Disability Huntingdonshire and Peterborough DIAL respectively

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## Reports from the Management Committee and Staff

### Chairman's Report:

An annual report is meant to give a synopsis of a financial year of an organisation and in one way I could make this annual report look very positive. In 2011-12 Disability Cambridgeshire supported many people, campaigned on issues, helped published disability support information, worked with other organisations and with a very small staff and budget.

Sadly, I do need to explain other things. On the afternoon before Christmas, Disability Cambridgeshire was informed that we could no longer guarantee that our funding from Cambridgeshire County Council would continue past the 31st March 2012. The New Year then brought a period of uncertainty as to how long our funding would carry on and the need to tender for a new contract. The March deadline was pushed back to October, but in the summer we learned that we had not been successful in getting the contract from Social Services that we had maintained since 1993.

1993 seems a long time ago, but some things have not changed that much. Invalidity Benefit was £56.10, ILF funding was subject to a reorganisation, the American with Disabilities Act had just been passed and Nicholas Scott, the minister for the disabled was facing great criticism in how the DDA was being drafted. Disabled people were campaigning by setting up groups like the Direct Action Network, Tanni Grey was awarded an MBE for her paralympic medals, although the games had little general coverage and Cambridge's most famous disabled resident was Stephen Hawking.

Since then Disability Cambridgeshire (formerly Directions Plus) has given thousands of disabled people and carers advice. We have gained hundreds of thousands of pounds of entitled benefits for people, we have righted hundreds of rulings that showed injustice, we have filled in thousands of official documents, have employed tens of disabled people and produced millions of words of information for disabled people and carers. These services have

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been used by social workers, doctors, nurses, OTs, physiotherapists, access consultants, community workers, information services and so many other professionals.

We have also worked closely with many partners. Disability Huntingdonshire, the Cambridgeshire User Led Organisation, the Cambridge Forum of Disabled People, Peterborough DIAL, Cambridge Dial-A-Ride, Lifecraft, Cambridge Pathways Project, Cambridgeshire Deaf Association and so many more.

I cannot say how impressed I have been with our staff over the two decades, but I'd like to highlight two. To hear Linda Saunders, a Children's Support worker, help a young mother and go through the heartless benefit form was amazing. The mother had to state all the hours of care required by her child, when she herself was only just accepting that her beloved child was going to struggle all their life because of the way society deals with disability. How Linda showed compassion, without pity and through the mother's emotional account Linda then recorded the information that the benefits agency needed. To me this summed up everything best in Disability Cambridgeshire.

I must also mention Peter Wetherell, who I didn't instantly bond with when I first met him and with whom I've spent afternoons where afterwards we could not speak to each other (though that comes from attending Chelsea v Everton football games together and supporting opposite teams). Yet when Peter advises benefit claimants on their rights and he contacts the various benefits agencies and knows ten times more about the benefits criteria than the officials, then I know why I'm so proud of Disability Cambridgeshire. Peter will turn a desperate situation of chaos into one where the person can live a normal life; through his calm, clear and fully known advice.

I am so bitter and angry that we were not awarded the contract by Social Services even though we have great staff. I'm upset because in 19 years I do not remember having any complaints sent to Social Services about our provision or quality of information. Also, I do not think that Social Services appreciated that our service is delivered by disabled people and carers and how much we understand disabled people and carers.

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The new providers of the advice line will be the Papworth Trust. This organization does carry out good work, in fact I am one of its tenants. Yet I do not believe they will offer the empathy Disability Cambridgeshire does. I feel the advice line will be just part of what they do, whereas for us the advice line and being a DIAL is what we do.

However we are not finishing. We will carry on working until next March. We will have a 'skeleton' paid staff and will need support from our volunteers and trustees. We will not be able to offer immediate advice, but do hope to maintain our tribunal work. We will campaign loudly for disability rights. In this position we will seek further funding, try to work with like minded organisations and give the direction that we are asking from you our members and trustee. I really hope that Disability Cambridgeshire will become a very important supporter of disability rights in Cambridgeshire.

**Mark Taylor**

### **Acting Chief Executive's Report:**

#### **When the going gets tough**

Our three year core contract to provide a disability advice and information service, commissioned by Cambridgeshire County Council Adult Social Services, ended in April. Shortly before the end date we were asked to continue the service for a further six months whilst a tendering exercise was devised. We naturally agreed to this request, notwithstanding the fact that we had sustained a 3% cut in our core budget imposed at the commencement of the 2011/2012 financial year and which was carried forward into the current financial year. Also notwithstanding the fact that an augmentation contract of £29,000, negotiated in January 2011 for the Children's Disability Service to facilitate participation in the Pinpoint meetings with related benefits work, did not come into payment until nearly a year later, having in the meantime been underwritten out of our reserves to support the Huntingdonshire part of the contract by paying for their worker who would have otherwise faced redundancy.

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A further squeeze on our finances arose from two debts arising from an advertising space on our website and the balance of money due in respect of the Cambridge City home visiting work originally to be financed out of Local Strategic Partnership suspended by the Government upon coming into office in May 2010. The written off debts amount to £9,300.

The outcome of the tendering process will be the subject of a separate report together with a projection of our financial situation moving towards April 2013.

It was a difficult year for our clients, particularly those claiming ESA for the first time or migrating from Incapacity Benefit to ESA. The ESA50 form is the prelude to a much tougher Limited Work Capability Assessment and a protracted appeals process mitigated only by the fact that the assessment rate of ESA continues in payment pending the outcome of the appeal. At least the humiliation of having to 'sign on' for JSA or claiming hardship payments with a 20% reduction to the 'applicable amount' whilst awaiting the appeal hearing is no longer mandatory.

We continued to support our existing clients with renewal claims to Disability Living Allowance and helped as many new claimants as possible. We worked in co-operation with Disability Huntingdonshire to cover part of the South Cambs District. Between the two organizations we have achieved over the life of the contract collective and aggregated benefit awards well in excess of £1,000,000 for the people of Cambridgeshire.

Service was maintained at the Addenbrooke's Hospital Advice Centre throughout the year with unfailing support from our volunteer and Management Committee member, Eric Bishop.

The Opportunities for Volunteering project came to an end in April leaving us stronger in volunteer capacity because of the enthusiasm and energy of Cheryn Rook with support from Sally. Cheryn designed excellent training sessions and spread our volunteer presence into Fenland, as well as consolidating our office and Addenbrooke's based services. Two volunteers left to take paid employment as a consequence of their training with us.

We continued to develop a close working relationship with the Cambridgeshire User Led Organization and invited them to share

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office space with us in the Arts Centre at Pendrill Court. Gerri Bird and Judith Margolis served as Board members. We have opened discussions with the ULO about commissioning a client survey to help us shape services from April 2013 to take into account our financial prospects, absence of secure office premises and the tender document approved by the Management Committee, with its innovative ideas about Community Hub based services.

The Resources Directory is the jewel in the Disability Cambridgeshire crown and is now, owing to Neil Laister's re-designed web pages, easier to access and update. David Challis has tirelessly maintained the data base to ensure that it is accurate and relevant to the needs of disabled people in Cambridgeshire.

In the voluntary sector we expect to face challenges and this year has been no exception. The cut of 3% in an already modest budget of £60,000 was only contained because the Management Committee had sensibly held funds in reserve against such an eventuality. We have kept our liabilities to the minimum, consistent with the need to retain paid staff, contract for the provision of telephony, I.T. and insurances whilst holding reserves to meet costs associated with winding up, should the need arise.

Finally, although not strictly relevant to the reporting year I must note the passing of Alf Morris in August. He was a groundbreaking politician of a type not seen today. His Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act of 1970 was a world first in terms of the rights that it gave to disabled people and he went on to become the first Minister for Disabled People in 1974. He was greatly respected and admired in the Department of Health and Social Security to which I was recruited in October 1971. He created the climate that would eventually establish consensus across all political parties for improvements in welfare benefits for disabled people, including Attendance Allowance and Mobility Allowance, culminating in the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992 – legislation that provided *inter alia* for Disability Living Allowance. He was a quietly tough and determined man and a model for our times.

**Peter Wetherell**

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## **Forum Manager: Gerri Bird**

Hi everyone - here we are again another year has passed and I have been very busy working all over the County and beyond. I'm still enjoying the work.

The Crown Prosecutions Service (CPS) Panel scrutinises cases to do with Hate Crimes e.g. racist and religious crime, homophobic and transphobic, age and disability related hate crimes. This work is very important; and I felt that I could give the panel my expertise as I know that many disabled people that I have met have come across discrimination and harassment. I feel that I have the experience to raise awareness of hate crime amongst disabled people with a greater level of knowledge and insight into the criminal justice system. I am also a member of the Cambridgeshire Independent Advisory Network (CIAN) which is working with the Police and their Equality, Diversity & Human Rights unit at Cambridgeshire Constabulary Headquarters.

I am still involved in the forums; this work is ongoing to help disabled people to speak up for themselves and to campaign on issues to do with discrimination and access. In this year I have helped disabled residents in the City as the council was going to charge City tenants a service charge on some of their adaptations

The successful campaign to save the Lion Yard toilets gathered 11,000 signatures. It was widely reported in the press and on TV. I'm pleased to inform you all that we stopped the Cambridge City Council from closing the Lion Yard Toilets and we then found out that they were going to close Fisher's Square walkway but we again went to the council meetings and it was agreed that a working party would be set up, from this working party we managed to stop that closure too. The walk way will be redeveloped but it will remain open.

I have done many Access Surveys this year as well as Disability Equality Training. Work with the South Cambridgeshire Plan vetting group is going very well. We meet fortnightly to look at plans to make sure new builds ensure that disabled provisions are being met.

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I've been going to many meetings to name just a few, Cambridgeshire User Led Organisation (ULO) as a Trustee, CPS, CIAN, Cambridge City Council Home Aid and many more. I would like to thank everyone for their support of Disability Cambridgeshire and of course Sally for all the great work she has done, and also all our staff and volunteers.



Last winter Disability Cambridgeshire worked with Cambridge City Council to bring out the 2012- 2014 edition of the City Guide to Services for Older and Disabled People. Here Mayor Dr Ian Nimmo-Smith joins the Friends With Disabilities social group to launch this handy City Guide.



## **Case Worker, Michael O'Fee**

In these two short years at Disability Cambridgeshire, I have learnt very quickly that each case is unique and can be brought to us at any stage in their gestation. I could be asked a simple question about what services are available or be called upon to help with a benefits application. On one occasion, a client asked for representation less than a week before a tribunal hearing. Knowing how difficult such hearings can be for a client, I agreed to take the case. I had two days to read the papers and make a submission; I didn't meet the client until the day of the hearing.

Keeping track of all my cases would be almost impossible without the AIMS database. This helps ensure that deadlines are met, clients kept informed and duplication of effort avoided. When the telephone rings, there is no way of knowing the nature of the enquiry; even if they know the person dealing with their case, we cannot guarantee that person will be available. A short entry on the computer can save a lot of confusion later on. I've often spoken to clients who are certain they have never used our services before, only to discover their name on the database. With so many agencies involved in people's lives, it isn't surprising they lose track of who's who.

Even with electronic record keeping, the computer and laser printer conspire to create more paperwork than ever. We and our clients are flooded with documents, all of which have to be sifted for the fragments of relevant information that allow us to do our work. With our eyes switching between computer screens and client files, it is vital that we never lose sight of the people who place their trust in us, whether we've dealt with them for many months or a handful of days.

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## Events through the year 2011-2012



Fran Williamson came along to open our new premises at Pendrill Court, shared with Disability Huntingdonshire and Cambridgeshire User Led Organisation



November Disability History Month. The Mayor of Cambridge visits our stand



Farewell to Cheryn Rook as the successful Opportunities For Volunteering project comes to an end.



Ruth Palmer and Judith Margolis compare notes



## Disability Cambridgeshire details

Disability Cambridgeshire (formerly Directions Plus) is a charity and a company limited by guarantee.

Registered Charity Number: 1091855

Company Number: 0437345

Registered company office address:

Pendrill Court  
Papworth Everard, Cambridgeshire CB23 3UY

Our objectives

as stated in the Disability Cambridgeshire's Memorandum of Association:

- to relieve disabled people and relieve the poverty of disabled people living or working in the City of Cambridge and the districts of South Cambridgeshire, East Cambridgeshire and Fenland.
  - to relieve carers of disabled people and relieve the poverty of the carers of disabled people living or working in the the City of Cambridge and the districts of South Cambridgeshire, East Cambridgeshire and Fenland.
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**Accounts for the year ending  
31 March 2012**



DISABILITY CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
(Formerly DIRECTIONS PLUS)

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2012

BALANCE SHEET

	Notes	2012 £	2011 £
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Debtors	6	17,765	12,166
Cash at bank and in hand		43,000	51,643
		-----	-----
		---	---
		60,765	63,809
<b>CREDITORS: amounts falling due within one year</b>			
	7	22,766	15,685
		-----	-----
		---	---
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<b>37,999</b>	<b>48,124</b>
		-----	-----
		---	---
<b>RESERVES</b>			
Unrestricted funds		37,999	48,124
Restricted funds	8	0	0
		-----	-----
		---	---
<b>ACCUMULATED RESERVES</b>		<b>37,999</b>	<b>48,124</b>
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For the year ended 31 March 2012 the charity was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 Companies Act 2006 and no notice has been deposited under section 476. The management committee acknowledge their responsibility for ensuring that the charity keeps accounting records which comply with section 386 of the Act and preparing accounts which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity as at the year end and of its deficit for the year in accordance with the requirements of sections 393 and 394 and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006, so far as applicable to the charity.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Companies Act 2006 applicable to charities subject to the small companies regime and were approved by the management committee on 2012 and signed on their behalf.

Mark Taylor  
Vice-Chairman

DISABILITY CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
(Formerly DIRECTIONS PLUS)

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2012

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL  
ACTIVITIES

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	2012 Restricted Funds £	Total Funds £	2011 Total Funds £
<b>INCOMING RESOURCES</b>					
Incoming resources from generated funds:					
Investment income	2	39	0	39	25
Incoming resources from charitable activities:					
Donations		134	0	134	127
Grants	3	75,700	1,600	77,300	61,600
Other income		4,036	0	4,036	2,145
Reimbursements		-776	0	-776	16,261
		-----	-----	-----	-----
<b>TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>79,133</b>	<b>1,600</b>	<b>80,733</b>	<b>80,158</b>
		-----	-----	-----	-----
<b>RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>					
Charitable activities		88,701	1,600	90,301	86,540
Governance costs		557	0	557	717
		-----	-----	-----	-----
<b>TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>89,258</b>	<b>1,600</b>	<b>90,858</b>	<b>87,257</b>
		-----	-----	-----	-----
		-10,125	0	-10,125	-7,099
<b>TRANSFERS</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
		-----	-----	-----	-----
<b>NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS FOR THE YEAR</b>		<b>-10,125</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-10,125</b>	<b>-7,099</b>
<b>RESERVES BROUGHT FORWARD</b>		<b>48,124</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>48,124</b>	<b>55,223</b>
		-----	-----	-----	-----
<b>RESERVES CARRIED FORWARD</b>		<b>37,999</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>37,999</b>	<b>48,124</b>
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STATEMENT OF TOTAL RECOGNISED GAINS AND LOSSES

There were no recognised gains or losses for 2012 or 2011 other than those included in the Statement of Financial Activities.



Contact us

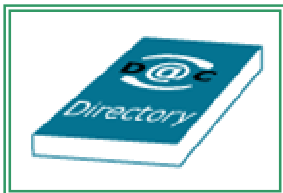
**Disability Cambridgeshire Advice Line:**



**01480 839 192**

**E mail:** [info@disability-cambridgeshire.org.uk](mailto:info@disability-cambridgeshire.org.uk)

**Website:** **Disability Cambridgeshire website includes the Resources Directory of organisations and services**



[www.disability-cambridgeshire.org.uk](http://www.disability-cambridgeshire.org.uk)

Please contact Disability Cambridgeshire if you know anyone who needs this information in another format or language.

