Useful Contacts

Braintree Mencap
Chairman: Janet Brown (01376 324765)
Vice-Chairman - Barry Joyce (01376 326302)
Hon. Secretary - Mavourneen Moore (01376 321149)
Hon. Treasurer - Lynn Watson (01376 326302)
General Manager - Rachael Luckin (01376 326302)
Bazaar - Janet Brown (01376 324765)
Birthday cards - Jenny Walker (01376 326302)
Draw Promoter - Janet Brown (01376 324765)
Gateway Club – Rachael Luckin (01376 326302)
Hall bookings – Carol Felton (01376 326302)
Helpline – Carol Felton (01376 326302)
Leisure and Wellbeing Manager – Jessica Leonard (07599238944)
Link editorial – Rachael Luckin (01376 326302)
Link distribution – Carol Felton (01376 326302)
Membership – Carol Felton (01376 326302)
Mini-bus bookings – Mitchell Darkins (07973843510)
Mini-bus management – Call the Office to contact the team (01376 326302)
Office Manager - Carol Felton (01376 326302)
Publicity & Press Officers – Janet Brown & Rachael Luckin (01376 326302)
Play and Activity Respite Scheme – Tina Fitton (01376 326302)
Premises Managers—Simon Agra, Don Moore, Jenny Walker and Robert Watson

Others
Working Age Adult Community Team— 0300 003 1860
Independent Advocacy Service - 01255 429778
Community Learning Disability Nurses - 01376 308758

Play and Activity Respite Scheme Christmas Party
This is your magazine so, if you can write something about a Mencap event or have any news to share, please send it to the Editor.

Editor: Rachael Luckin
rachaelluckin@virginmedia.com
Tel: 01376 326302

Assistant Editor: Darren Bonner

Braintree District Mencap Society is entirely dependent on voluntary donations and funds raised locally. It does not receive funding from the Royal Mencap Society.

Braintree Mencap Helpline

Got a problem? Want to talk to someone? Then ring us. We may not know the answers to all your questions but we should know how to find them. If you don’t want to discuss the matter on the telephone, we will be pleased to meet you personally. Phone Carol Felton at our office (01376 326302) Messages are checked regularly and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

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Donations and Grants Received

We are very grateful to the following individuals and organisations for making donations to our funds:

Tesco Community Awards
Royal Mencap Sports Initiative
The Provide Foundation
The Rhiannon Trust
The Grey Court Trust
Matthew Wrightson Charitable Trust
The H and J Spack Charitable Trust
Essex Community Foundation
Greenfields Community Fund
Hilton in the Community Fund
Mr Acres
Daniel Robinson Funeral Services
L Harrington
S Walker
Mrs Coyle
Eileen Bass
Bocking Alliance Bowls Club, Ladies section.
Annual Health Checks for Adults with a Learning Disability.

Annual health checks should be available at your GP Surgery.

You can ask your support staff to help you.

You can ask your Community Nurse to support you.

You should have one once a year.

Annual Health checks take between 30 minutes to 1 hour

They are important as they may pick up on health problems that could be missed, such as deafness, high blood pressure, memory loss and more.

You should be contacted by your GP, if not call them for an appointment.

For more details speak to Tendring Mental Health Support on 01255 429 778 or ask Mark Alliston (Health Access Champion for Braintree) for a leaflet.

Braintree Active Sports Awards

On the 13th October Rachael Luckin, Lenny Boone and Melissa Courtauld were invited to Braintree District Council for the very first Braintree Active Sports Awards.

Both Lenny and Melissa had been nominated for the Disabled Sports Personality of the Year.

It was a great evening, and we were all proud to be part of such an event that brought together many different sports clubs from across the district.

We met Fiona Pennie, British Slalom Canoeist and Paralympian Richard Chiassaro.

We are pleased to report that the winner of the Disabled Sports Personality of the Year was Melissa Courtauld! Well done to both of you.

We were also pleased that our cricket volunteer, Ryan Vickery was acknowledged for all the help that he gives our members during the summer months, and has done for the past 4 years!  Rachael Luckin
Braintree Mencap’s Annual Bazaar took place on the 29th November

This year the takings at the Bazaar amounted to £2,337. What a grand total! This makes it our best year ever for our Annual Bazaar!

I would like to thank all the people who worked so hard to make this happen. On Friday evening there were lots of people setting up stalls and helping prepare for the Saturday opening. By 10.30am a queue had formed and were wanting to spend their money. All the stall holders were busy for most of the morning as people continued to pour into the hall. The generosity of the general public and our members is amazing. Two young ladies, Megan and Fay, emptied their piggy banks and donated the contents to Braintree Menap. Megan is Dawn Farmer’s niece and understands the importance of the work that we do. It is simple gestures like this that puts a smile on the faces of our members, volunteers and staff.

After the last draw ticket had been pulled out of the drum, the general public made their way home and all that was left to do was clear up. Lots of people stayed behind to help and the hall was usable again. Thanks to Robert and Doug for taking the left over bits and pieces to the tip.

A huge thank you to everyone who helped in any way to make this such a successful day. Janet Brown.

Events for your diary 2014/15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 16th December</td>
<td>Xmas with Elvis 7-10pm (Tickets only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 18th December</td>
<td>Gateway Christmas Party (Tickets only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 5th January</td>
<td>Adult Leisure Activities restart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 19th January</td>
<td>Local Action Group meeting 1pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Office Opening Times over the Xmas Holidays.

Braintree Mencap Office closes on Tuesday 23rd at 1pm.

It will re-open between 9 -1pm on the 29th,30th and 31st.

It will return to normal operations on Monday 5th January.

Braintree Mencap is on Facebook

Don’t forget to check the facebook page, it is full of recent news of activities and those coming up and also lots of lovely photos.

https://www.facebook.com/pages/Braintree-District-Mencap-Society/301613673194398
Our New Minibus

It was agreed that some of the legacy money we had received should go towards the cost of buying a new minibus for the Society. Also Mitchell and Lloyd had raised £5,000 from the GAG sponsored walk and other donations had been received. A working group consisting of Tony Bass, Lloyd Brown, Mitchell Darkins and Jim Konig met with Rachael Luckin, General Manager, to discuss what type of bus would be suitable for the use of the members with a learning disability. After much searching a suitable vehicle was found. It was delivered to Charles Leeks House after a few minor alterations and it was agreed that the Society should purchase it. The garage was made more user friendly so that it was easier for the drivers when parking. The replacement bus is now in use and enjoyed by our members. Very grateful thanks go to all the people who have contributed to making this purchase a reality.

Janet K. Brown

Christmas Tree Festival. St Mary’s Church, Bocking.

On the 6th December Carol and Steph Felton manned a stall in aid of Braintree Mencap at the Christmas Market held at St Mary’s Church. They raised £17.60 and met some lovely people who visited the market, and the church was beautifully decorated with Christmas trees.

Carol and Steph enjoyed a musical interlude by the children of Bocking Primary School, and we thank them for giving up their Saturday to raise awareness of our Society.

Bazaar Raffle Prize Winners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ticket No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Prize</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>07718</td>
<td>Bridget Smith, Panfield</td>
<td>£100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03392</td>
<td>Jo (Jenny’s carer), Braintree</td>
<td>Champagne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03045</td>
<td>Mrs Potter, Coggeshall</td>
<td>Hamper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07962</td>
<td>Calum, Braintree</td>
<td>Whisky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02298</td>
<td>Margaret Webb, Earls Colne</td>
<td>Plant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03120</td>
<td>M. Moore, Braintree</td>
<td>Chocolates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04660</td>
<td>Peter Alliston, S. Hedingham</td>
<td>Wine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05601</td>
<td>Ann Gill, Braintree</td>
<td>Fruit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02978</td>
<td>Joyce Rulton, Halstead</td>
<td>Toiletries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08621</td>
<td>Peter Brown, Braintree</td>
<td>Perfume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01310</td>
<td>J. Wells, Braintree</td>
<td>Cookery Book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03359</td>
<td>Ken and Jen</td>
<td>Socks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05419</td>
<td>Angie Bennett, High Easter</td>
<td>Chocolates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04014</td>
<td>Ann Newman, Broomfield</td>
<td>Baileys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02456</td>
<td>Kay Polley, Braintree</td>
<td>Toiletries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02094</td>
<td>L. Chapman, Halstead</td>
<td>Soft Toy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08923</td>
<td>Jan, High Easter</td>
<td>Money Box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01342</td>
<td>J. Vinter, Castle Hedingham</td>
<td>Christmas Mug</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05643</td>
<td>Haydon Gill, Braintree</td>
<td>Whisky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03191</td>
<td>Sheila Morgan, Finchingfield</td>
<td>Biscuits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08609</td>
<td>S. Twaites, Braintree</td>
<td>Organiser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05229</td>
<td>Mrs. Beattie, Finchingfield</td>
<td>Liquorice Allsorts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01117</td>
<td>D. Fletcher, Braintree</td>
<td>Cava</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05399</td>
<td>High Easter</td>
<td>Perfume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04021</td>
<td>A. Newman, Broomfield</td>
<td>Skin Spa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07543</td>
<td>P. Darkins, Halstead</td>
<td>Wine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01435</td>
<td>B. Evans, Braintree</td>
<td>Wine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06321</td>
<td>K. Shoat, Braintree</td>
<td>Wine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05051</td>
<td>Sandie, Broomfield</td>
<td>Chocolates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09595</td>
<td>Frances Muscutt, Braintree</td>
<td>Port</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03526</td>
<td>Nicola Smy, Kelvedon</td>
<td>Whisky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04097</td>
<td>J. Turner, c/o Belle</td>
<td>Biscuits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Play and Activity Respite Scheme

Tina Fitton

After a fun packed summer holiday the Playscheme has settled into the Autumn Term with a variety of activities for the children to enjoy and participate in. It is such a pleasure seeing the children grow and develop in their time at “Saturday Club”.

This term has also seen some changes to staffing. Joanne Connell, Team Leader for Group 3 is leaving us on the 13th December to embark on a new and exciting career teaching Early Years age children in Abu Dhabi after recently gaining her Degree with honours. Jo, as she likes to be called, has been with Braintree Mencap in excess of 11 years, starting her time with us when our Chair, Janet Brown was leader of the then respite service. Jo has grown and developed her own skills during that time and it has been a privilege to have her as part of the staff team and see her reach her goal to become a teacher. We wish her all the very best for her future.

Janet Smith, Team Leader for Group 1 and 4 has also moved to a new career which unfortunately ended her time with us in November. Happily we now have 3 new Team Leaders in place. Maxine will be Team Leader for Group 3 (13 – 19 year olds) and has been working with the children since April 2014 as a Play Worker, so has a good knowledge of their needs and Braintree Mencap.

Will Witham Centre Move?

Parent power, together with Local Action Group, may lead to changes.

A number of parent carers have raised concerns regarding the accommodation at the Witham Wellbeing and Activity Centre. The Centre is located in a former shop premises in Newland Street. The major concern was that there is just a single toilet for the use of clients and staff, male and female. This toilet is adapted for use by people with physical disabilities.

Other concerns which were raised include the fact that the front entrance to the property opens directly on to a narrow pavement on a busy road. Additionally rear access for vehicles conveying people in wheelchairs is difficult. The accommodation comprises, basically, only one large comfortable room with a small store room off, plus the toilet.

The carers concerned were invited to speak about their concerns at the Braintree District Local Action Group (LAG) and representatives of Essex Cares, who operate the Centre, were invited to attend. Group members were appalled at the perceived inadequacy of the premises and asked Essex Cares to investigate possible improvements. To their credit, the representatives of Essex Cares did just that and reported back to the November LAG meeting. It appears that no significant improvements are possible to the existing premises so a search for more suitable accommodation has been undertaken. The Essex Cares management came forward with a suggestion as to how the Centre could be moved elsewhere and they agreed to work with parents of the people who use the Centre to see if this would be suitable and practicable.

Whilst it is encouraging that Essex Cares has responded so quickly to the pressure from the families involved, it does seem strange that such patently unsuitable accommodation should have been used in the first place.

Meetings of the Local Action Group are open to everyone and, if you have issues about learning disability services in this area, please do get in touch with me. The next meeting will be held at the Roundwood Conference Centre on Monday, 19th January, starting at 1.00 p.m.

By Peter Brown
Gateway Club held its Annual General Meeting and we voted in our new Members Committee for 2014—15. Seventeen people stood for election but the eleven who received the most votes will make up our next Committee.

The new Committee members are Ryan Watkins, Mark Alliston, Michael Worster, Rob Sands, Nick Slemmings, Lennie Boone, Darren Bonner, James Gill, Nigel Gallifant, Kimberley Fleuty and David Brudenell.

Karen joined us in September 2013 as a Play Worker with our younger children (5 – 12 year olds) and is looking forward to leading the group. Both Maxine and Karen also work at The Edith Borthwick School as their day job!

Lindsey joined the staff team in August 2013 as a relief Team Leader and has now taken the role on as a regular member of staff leading Group 4 (13 – 19 year olds) and working alongside Maxine in Group 3. Lindsey comes with a wealth of knowledge and experience of learning disability as she was one of the first staff members to join PARC.

Our Christmas celebrations start on Saturday 6th December where the children will enjoy fun and games as well as a party. So, as one year comes to an end, planning has started for the New Year approaching. On behalf of all the staff, we wish our children and their families a very Happy Christmas and a Healthy New Year.

Would you like to raise money for Braintree Mencap by doing absolutely nothing? Christmas shopping on Amazon?

If you enter Amazon by clicking on the “a” on our website, you help us to raise money simply by doing your shopping! (Rest assured, we do not learn any details about you or your purchases, our charity simply receives a cheque!!)

Try it by visiting www.braintreemencap.org.uk

Football Report
Melissa Courtauld

In November we went to a tournament in Shrub End, Colchester. The players were Sarah Pettit, Esther Hawthorn, Katie Stoddard, Kate Humphrey, Julia Linford, Keith Barrett and me.

Unfortunately we lost all the matches.

Melissa was the Players Manager for the Ladies Healthy for Life team in the Fun League.

The weather was cloudy, but dry and it was the first match of the season.

I was pleased with my team, they did their best on the day!
Information about the Adult Leisure Classes
Jess Leonard

We have had a busy start to autumn and winter term. New for this term is Hockey Club which takes place on Tuesdays 6-7pm at the Phoenix Hockey Club in Bocking and is FREE of charge. We are providing transport from Charles Leeks House at 5.40pm and will return at 7.15pm, or alternatively you could meet us there. We have been learning ball skills and shooting. If you would like more information please contact me at the office. Hockey will start again on Tuesday 6th January.

Also new for autumn/winter term is Showstoppers - Dance Group, every Tuesday with the changed times of 12-1pm, held at Charles Leeks House. Cost per session is £5, Join Gen and practice dance styles from musicals, including Cats, Grease, Mamma Mia, We will rock you. Have fun, get fit and be ready for the next disco. We have been practising dances to songs from “Grease”, “Lion King” and “Whistle down the Wind” this term.

Paradise Park, Broxbourne
Sunday 12th October 2014
Lloyd Brown

A group of 14 went to Paradise wildlife Park, Broxbourne, Hertfordshire. Everyone enjoyed looking round at the various animals, in particular the large cats which we all had a brilliant view of. Some of the group bought some feed which they were able to feed some of the animals with. We had our picnic lunch overlooking the Tiger enclosure. Whilst there we watched a bird display and saw a few birds flying. Unfortunately during the display a hand reared Buzzard called Bailey went for a fly round and did not return whilst we were there. It appears that he has still not returned.
Gateway has been really fun this term. Two of my favourite bands paid us a visit. Retro Sparkle with Sue and SJ, and D’Ukes came to play for us. It was great to see them both again.

One of my favourite events was our own version of Strictly Come Dancing. My partner was Flavia Cacace, and it was a great laugh. The dolls were fab and the judges were out of this world. Craig said my dance was a “disastarrr darling!”

I enjoyed the Members Committee Entertainment evening, but I am looking forward to taking part next year, as I have been voted onto the Committee!

I always enjoy the Brass Band Concert every year. This year I met Elliot who is a Youth Worker at Young Persons’ Social Group. It was really great to see the young people come and enjoy our brass band concert.

On the 4th December Gateway enjoyed a Carol Service at the Baptist Church. I joined in the choir with Lin and Jeremy. I would like to thank Christchurch Music Group for playing for us again this year.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all Link readers.

A huge thank you to everyone who came to see our fabulous Mencap Panto, I’m sure you will all agree that our drama group worked so hard to perform such a fabulous show. The pantomime was a sell out so we are already on the case for a bigger venue for next year! If you fancy being in next year’s performance join us every Tuesday 2.30-4.30pm with Gen.

The Young Person Social Group have been hard at work making Christmas decorations, cards and gift tags for the Christmas bazaar as part of their social enterprise project. The youth group turned out in force at the Annual Bazaar to man their stall. A huge thank you to Tina for all her help and to everyone who supported our project. We raised £125, which we plan to spend on an evening out at Pizza Hut in January.

Classes will finish the week beginning 15th December and we will return on Monday 5th January. I look forward to seeing you all then. I hope you all have a magical Christmas and a Happy New Year.

For more information on the new year timetable please contact me on 01376 326302 or by email braintreemencap.youthgroup@virginmedia.com
Seasonal

We wish all staff and our friends a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Love from Ann, John and James

Merry Christmas

Wishing all our friends at Mencap a very Merry Christmas and a Happy, Prosperous New Year.

Jeanette, John and Ian Baines.

To all those people who support Braintree Mencap, Alan and Jill Taylor wish you a Happy Christmas and a Healthy New Year.

Love from Shirley and Darren

Greetings

Happy Xmas and a peaceful new year to all members, staff and volunteers. Thank you for your hard work and dedication to making life better for people with a learning disability and their families.

Janet Brown

Doug, Carol, Liz and Steph Felton would like to wish all the members of and our friends at Braintree Mencap a Very Merry Christmas and a prosperous and Happy New Year.

Best Wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

With love from Janet, Geoff and Steven Butler

To all my friends, colleagues, volunteers and everyone else! Wishing you all lots of fun and happiness for the festive season and beyond! Rachael