

GREATER MANCHESTER COALITION OF DISABLED PEOPLE

Brief notes of the Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People Steering Group Meeting held on Friday 3 August 1984 at 7.30 pm in the St Thomas Centre, Ardwick Green North, Manchester.

Present Ken Lumb (in the chair)
Bernard Leach
Paul Mittler
David Goddard
Neville Stronger
Anne Miller
Annette Taylor
Linda Carroll
Joan Willis
Saeed Ahmed

In Attendance Dorothy Whitaker
Valerie Suffolk

Apologies John Wells
Marjorie Cooper
Lorraine Gradwell
Sharon Hughes*
Kevin Hyett

*Sharon Hughes is now the chairman of the National Consumer Group of the Spastics Society.

She is unsure of the amount of work this commitment will involve. However, it seems inevitable that she will miss some of the steering group meetings, but wishes to continue her involvement as and when she can.

1. Minutes of the Last Meeting

Anne Miller pointed out that Group 3 AIMS point a) control by disabled people, is part of the constitution and therefore not an aim. With this amendment the minutes were accepted as a correct record.

2. Matters Arising from the Minutes (not on agenda)

- a) BERNARD LEACH/PAUL MITTLER. Paul contacted Adult Training Centre in Wythenshawe with a view to obtaining representative on steering group. Person he spoke to had obtained a job in London and would be leaving in October.

Bernard had contacted Helen Nightingale at one of the Community Mental Health Teams, North Manchester. She will investigate the possibility of a representative for the area of the mentally handicap. She could get someone to come along but they would need an advocate. She offered to come herself, but a representative was not the point of the approach. Approaching MENCAP had been considered, but this is an organisation primarily for parents of handicapped children and therefore not appropriate.

As regards ATC's generally, it was felt even the most radical would shun the coalition. Wythenshawe, which has a trainees committee, would receive any letter sent to them, via the manager of the centre, who would then decide formal.

David Goddard felt that in the area of mental handicap/mental health this was an inevitable obstacle because of the issue of control.

Dorothy Whitaker will provide Bernard Leach with the address and telephone number of Susan Kay who used to work for Derbyshire and now works for Outreach, in Manchester. It was felt she would be a useful contact as she is anxious to continue with consumer groups and Outreach is associated with the field of the mentally handicapped.

Anne Miller suggested Elfreda Rathbone Association may be another suitable contact.

- b) Linda Carroll has now established contact with Marian Lomas at the Centre for the Deaf in Manchester. Information papers have been forwarded to Marian who is very interested and keen to attend. However she is moving at the moment. Although profoundly deaf, Marian can lipread. Due to the difficult acoustics in the room we currently are meeting in, it was suggested the next venue should be the canteen.

Ken Lumb said he had written something on, "Deafness as a Disability", an information sheet, and offered to circulate this with the next minutes.

- c) Joan Willis offered to circulate information concerning schizophrenia.
- d) A tape of John Wells and Joan Wallis on Radio Manchester is now available. This was played at the end of the meeting.
- e) Photocopies of the press releases were circulated. An appeal was made for the return of the extract Anne Miller had brought to the last meeting from the Sale Messenger as this was missing.
- f) Notepaper is now available, complete with logo, for approval.
- g) Valerie Suffolk agreed to minute this meeting and was thanked accordingly.
- h) £200 from GM CVS now received.

There has been no reply as yet to the application to the Piccadilly Community Trust.

- i) The letter which was attached to previous minutes for consideration was discussed, after several suggestions it was decided the letter would remain unchanged, that Ken Lumb should sign it. This letter would then be circulated, with further explanation, to all those who had attended the initial conference day. It was hoped they would attempt to obtain donations from the associations they represented.
- j) Bernard Leach, Kevin Hyett and Paul Mittler attended the Salford Employment Conference Meeting as speakers and representatives of the coalition. The topic was Disabled People and Employment. Bernard has prepared a paper, which is to be photocopied and circulated before the next meeting. This document is intended as a discussion paper to encourage and develop thinking.

Bernard informed the meeting that Manchester City Council have set up a committee to look at disadvantaged groups. These include gay people, women, disabled people and ethnic minorities.

The night before the Policy committee met, a Manchester Disability Forum meeting took place at which the term "Disabled People" was discussed. The outcome produced seven proposals for the committee which were accepted, Miss Robinson, Chairman of Manchester Social Services committee commenting that these were in line with her thinking.

Dorothy Whitaker suggested copies of these proposals could be most useful when seeking out the intentions at some future date of the nine other authorities comprising Greater Manchester.

Bernard commented that whilst progress had been made as regards ethnic minorities; women, and that a gay switchboard had been funded, the committee had not moved in relation to disability. There was a possibility that 3 jobs, in this connection, would be available in the future and we will be notified when the jobs become available.

- k) Conference. Nottingham, 8th September, entitled Independent/Integrated Living. Dorothy has now booked community transport for the Oldham Rochdale area. There are difficulties obtaining a tail lift bus for the Manchester area.
- l) Paul Mittler and Bernard Leach have attended the SPICE (Special Provision in Continuing Education) meeting. This group is comprised of a group of tutors who work in the further education sector. They have an annual conference but this is the first occasion that there was consumer participation. Paul felt more planning was needed in future.

Bernard's view was more extreme. He felt the conference was appalling.

Frank Tranter who should have spoken was not present, "Gateway Clubs" were represented also, "Water for Life" a scheme involving 3rd world organisations.

Speakers tended towards an individual member of a family, often a parent, giving an account of their experience. It was felt to be embarrassing and upsetting.

Why couldn't the handicapped people themselves have spoken? What about the problems encountered? Coping made heroes.

Dorothy said that consumers present could be counted on one hand. Those present felt threatened, were made to feel their view was unique. Why should they be made to feel so estranged from the proceedings when the conference was about them? Frustration was also expressed at the lack of appreciation of cause and effect. The use of facilities related to transport.

It was felt that criticisms of the conference should be put in writing to the organisers, after consultation between consumers present, and representatives of the steering group who had also been present.

It was felt that this was a responsibility and that a strategy should be adopted for such meetings.

- m) Radar Exhibition. There were complaints about the venue due to access. Gimson stairlift was in use, and is being promoted to sell to Local Authorities who don't wish to put lifts /ramps in buildings. Anne Miller had tried the lift out. There were complications due to width of stairs and the lift judders and shakes. One such lift was installed at Manchester Town Hall, without consultation. There have been complaints from the Access Group. Ken suggested RADAR be contacted concerning this lift - Dorothy Whitaker/Anne Miller to compose letter.

3. Constitution

Presented by Anne Miller. Draft section of the Constitution on membership compiled by Kevin Hyett and Anne for consideration by the steering group circulated - see attached

Section 1. MEMBERSHIP accepted.

Section 2. MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS Section amended. To read as follows:

The annual subscription rates will be fixed by majority vote at a General Meeting. Subscriptions will be due on 1st January, and if not paid within three months, membership will be deemed to have lapsed. A new member joining on or after 1st October will have their membership carried forward to the following year.

With this amendment Section 2. accepted.

Section 3. Withdrawal of Membership accepted.

Thanks to Anne and Kevin for the draft.

It was pointed out that debate prior to voting was the crucial issue. An eloquent speaker would be able to sway votes.

David Goddard felt the draft was exactly what had been requested. It was simple, to the point and would prevent a block vote, carrying the conference decision.

4. FUNDING - Urban Aid Application

a) Worked on by Lorraine, Bernard, Neville and Dorothy.

Draft application now completed;- see attached.

Project title discussed, Ken suggested Resource Centre for Integrated Living.

The negotiations with D.O.E and GMC have commenced. GMC cannot say whether the County Council will prioritise the application. List of County Councillors has been obtained with a view to lobbying and providing them with information.

Politically it would seem wise to make contact with the Manchester Disabled Persons Unit as the Councillors are bound to link the application with that provision, or alternatively seek out their opinion.

A letter of endorsement from GM CVS would also lend credibility to the application.

The finance requested was queried as to whether it was a sufficient amount. The calculations are based on Derbyshire's estimates. It was suggested the capital estimate of £6,000 be increased to £10,000, by Ken Lumb and Neville Strourger.

It was also questioned as to whether the salaries were realistic estimates.

The application is to be an item for the next agenda.

b) AIMS

Previous Suggestions (see previous minutes 6.7.84) should be amended as follows:-

The Coalition aims to promote the full participation of disabled people in ensuring they have the necessary facilities and support to live independently; have control of their own lives and support all measures that seek to ensure that disabled people have the means to be fully integrated into society.

5. PRIORITY ISSUES

It was felt that people present at the initial conference, who are not on the steering group, may be feeling left out of the proceedings. Anne Miller felt the fact that the coalition

exists in an embryo form should be made more widely known also its origins and purpose for other organisations, newspapers and Councillors.

Proposals for an autumn conference discussed.

Ken Lumb proposed the paper Bernard Leach has prepared on employment would be a really suitable topic for a public meeting.

This was accepted in conjunction with Dorothy Whitaker's suggestion that this be combined with information about SIGS (Sheltered Industrial Groups). It is important to give information on this topic and to seek out the views of potential consumers.

It was proposed that these meetings take place two consecutive evenings, 11th and 12th September.

It was agreed a subcommittee of Kevin Hyett, Bernard Leach, Paul Mittler and Linda would set the programme.

7. Any Other Business

Tape of radio programme heard. To follow up Joan Willis suggestion of negotiating further air time after next public meeting.

8. Date, Time Next Meeting

Friday 31st August, 7.30 pm at the St Thomas Centre, Ardwick Green North, Manchester.