

# NewsLink

News, views and information from Peterborough Disability Forum

**June 2018**

## **Lack of toilets at Central Park frustrates disabled visitors. Your views welcome**



Peterborough Disability Forum has been working with Friends of Central Park (FoCP) to address complaints about the disabled toilets in Central Park. These toilets are closed when there are no staff on duty – which from 1st September till 30 April means after 4pm.

During the hot weather in April, when the park was packed with families enjoying its facilities, there were complaints that the toilets closed early - and in particular that disabled people could not use the disabled toilet at 4.15 pm as it has been double locked for a couple of years when the staff go home.

We have talked to Peterborough City Council about the reasons for the decision. The council is working with an ever decreasing budget so they do not have funds to be able to increase the hours that the park attendant works. The disabled toilet has suffered in the past from vandalism and anti-social behaviour, including drug use and rough sleeping which results in damage and cost, and means the toilets are not fit for use when needed.

We believe the Central Park disabled toilets should be available to legitimate users through the radar key whenever they are needed, and think the hours of closure are unacceptable in warm weather (the park can be full till 8 but the toilet closes in April at 4). However, we know the radar key scheme has been abused and many people with no legitimate need have a key, resulting in inappropriate use and damage to the disabled toilet. We also know the council cannot fund repeated repair, and that abuse of the toilet will itself disadvantage legitimate users of the disabled toilets.

We would welcome all views on priorities for Central Park users of the disabled toilet. Should we push for the end of double-locking, with access at all times for those with a radar key? Or do we reluctantly accept that the present policy of allowing use only when staff are on duty is the best of the worst options?

Please contact the secretary to give us your views. [\*\*jantony@waitrose.com\*\*](mailto:jantony@waitrose.com)

## Broadcaster and Disability Campaigner Julie Fernandez joins Disability Peterborough



"I'm really excited to be joining the Disability Peterborough team as Service Development Manager. My name is Julie Fernandez and I am a full time wheelchair user with Brittle Bones. For 26 years I have worked in the media industry as an actress, presenter and documentary maker predominantly for BBC Radio 4 making documentaries about the realities of life as a disabled person. I was also the actress who got left stranded in her wheelchair during the fire drill scene in The Office with Ricky Gervais.

During my years of working in the media industry I have also worked in disability equality and training with a wide range of companies and organisations and have worked on various national and international disability equality campaigns.

Over the years I also set up a charity based in NW London that offers a range of complementary therapies at a reduced rate to disabled people and their Carers and family as I found having massage, reflexology and other therapies really helpful during my life to help recover from the many surgeries and fractures.

In 2011 I opened a craft shop and teaching centre where I taught crochet, hand embroidery and sewing which I have a big passion for, I sold the business last year to concentrate on my media and disability equality career. I also work as a free-lance demonstrator on Hochanda, a local craft shopping channel where I teach a mix of crafts live on air. My biggest passion is working with disabled people and organisations to improve our lives, to help government departments like the DWP see us as entrepreneurial, "out the box thinkers", and much more able than they give us credit for.

We've got some exciting new ideas whizzing around the office which we are hoping to get your views on in the future, more than anything I'm looking forward to meeting every one of you and getting to know you and your thoughts on life and how to improve it together."

### How accessible is your festival?



Are you a wheelchair user or someone with mobility problems? Do you live with sight loss or impairment? Do you need easy read format information? Will you be going to a festival this summer? We want to hear from you about your experiences-good, bad or indifferent.

[bryan@inspirepeterborough.com](mailto:bryan@inspirepeterborough.com)

## Barry's monthly moan!

### Wheelchair services, my terrible experience



"As a wheelchair user for the last 18 years I am used to my chairs breaking down and/or in need of some TLC.

Recently my 6 year old wheelchair suffered damage to the seat sling and the backrest bracket.

The seat sling was reported damaged in June 2017 but almost a year later it's still not properly repaired, even though two (incorrect) replacements have been delivered for fitting. The backrest bracket cracked making the back support unstable and dangerous to use, but even this took a month to arrive!

It was then decided that it would be prudent to replace my chair with a new one. During the evaluation I realised how little the assessor knew about wheelchair assessments and even less about wheelchairs and component parts. I have since been referred to a specialist from the wheelchair manufacturer but still awaiting my new wheelchair.

The process for repairs and assessment has taken a totally unreasonable amount of time and I have had to make many phone calls and endure lots of pointless and expensive home visits.

I meet a number of other wheelchair users who have shared their appalling stories about wheelchair services contractors over the years and how they have been left stranded with an unworkable wheelchair. Its time Wheelchair Services provided the service they are paid for!"

### Disabled people 'trapped in homes' due to unsuitable housing



Some disabled people in the UK have become trapped in their homes because of a chronic shortage of suitable housing, a report has found. One disabled resident told the review they had to sleep in the dining room and could not access the toilet. The Equality and Human Rights Commission's (EHRC) review called for urgent action to make all new houses adaptable and accessible.

One resident said: "My landlord will not permit changes to the property so I'm unable to have grab rails which are needed and other aids... making me more dependent on carers and limiting my independence."

The review found just 5% of local authorities had a target in place for accessible homes. A government spokesman said: "We are working to make it quicker and easier for people to secure helpful adaptations when they need them, to improve access to buildings and their facilities, and are currently collecting data to help us to understand how we can streamline this process further."

## Peterborough Association for the Blind



PAB are delighted to announce that their coffee mornings will be held at our new venue 'New Westgate Church' indefinitely due to the popularity with members. The hall is directly next to the PAB office and so any queries or questions members have, they can speak directly to the office, or make payments for activities whilst attending the coffee morning.

Centre 68. 68b Westgate, Peterborough, PE1 1RG. 01733 344844  
OFFICE OPENING HOURS: TUES TO FRI – 9AM to 2PM

### Another “tip of the iceberg” scandal of the corporate “charities”

A chief executive at Age Concern is facing 'significant' jail time for pocketing more than £700,000 of the charity's cash during an eight-year fraud. John Briers, who at one time earned almost £6,000 per month, paid 60 of the charity's cheques into his own bank account.

He also awarded himself 11 unauthorised bonuses and 19 additional pension contribution. The 57-year-old was unanimously found guilty of three counts of fraud. Judge Tim Gittins remanded Briers in custody and told him to prepare for a significant prison sentence.

Briers pocketed £433,236 through fraudulent cheques which he claimed were for suppliers. He paid himself £104,560 in bonuses, including a special, duplicate monthly salary of £5,756, on one occasion, and he used £169,703 of the charity's cash to top-up his pension. Briers used fake invoices and fraudulent minutes of meetings in a bid to cover his tracks.

### Queensgate and Disability Forum team up to deliver awareness training for staff



Barry Plumb and Bryan Tyler from the Disability Forum joined forces with management and staff from Queensgate recently to help staff understand the difficulties many disabled people endure whilst out shopping. Barry said “it’s extremely important that retailers understand that disabled people need to shop as much as any other person. The

‘Purple Pound’ is worth £260 billion to the UK economy and we need to educate retailers and shopping centres to realise that disabled people will shop where it’s most accessible and where its staff are most understanding and helpful.”

## Inspire Peterborough gets much deserved recognition



Inspire Peterborough are delighted to be able to announce they have been nominated as The Silver Spoon Company Charity of the Year for the second year running. Nikki from the charity recently gave a presentation to Silver Spoon staff and they

agreed ways to fundraise including making Cat money boxes out of old Crusha bottles, making the sports week for staff more inclusive, sports quiz and bar tab at the annual Christmas celebration

### Rise4Disability

Don't forget your tickets for the region's biggest disability event which takes place on Thursday 12 July 2018 at the East of England Showground. PE2 6HE- For tickets:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/rise4disability-peterborough-2018-tickets-40841485984>

## Plight of care home residents exposed in damning report

The plight of disabled and elderly people has been laid bare in a damning report exposing that care home residents have been left without meals and unwashed for months on end.

The survey, carried out by the Care Support Alliance (CSA) with responses from 4,000 adults who have experience of adult social care in England, also found that one in four people needed hospital treated, while one in eight had been delayed leaving hospital because of not being able to get the care they need. Sixteen per cent of cared-for respondents had had their care packages reduced despite their needs having increased or remained the same, while four in 10 said they felt lonely or isolated.

One respondent said they had not been washed for more than two months and that their pyjamas had not been changed this year. "I haven't been washed for over two months. My bedroom floor has only been vacuumed once in three years," said the care home resident. "My sheets have not been changed in about six months, and my pyjamas haven't been changed this year. My care workers don't have time for cleaning, washing or changing me."

Mark Lever, CEO of the National Autistic Society said inadequate care was now a "common problem across the country", emphasising that it was "those who need care and their families who are paying a high price".

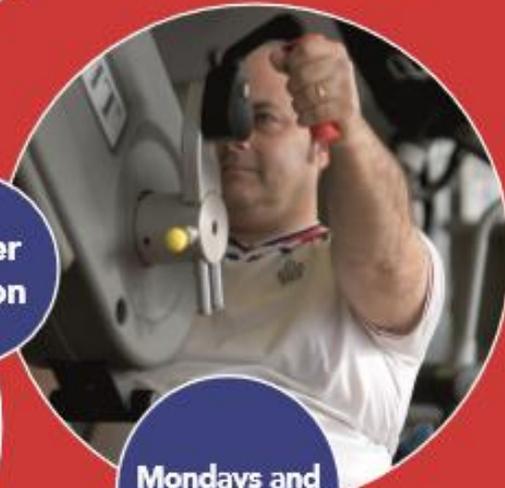
# Amilly Fitness

Inclusive health and wellbeing centre

inspire  
Peterborough  
enhancing lives

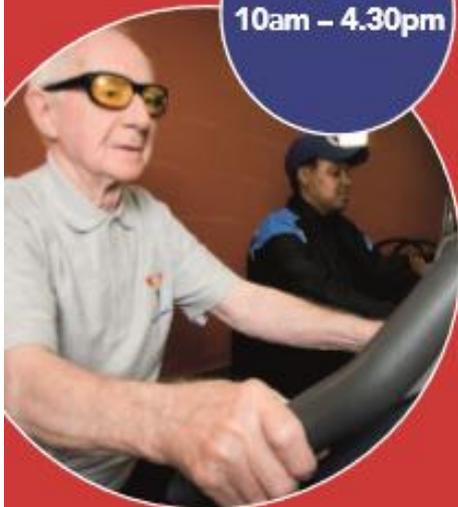


£2 per  
session



Mondays and  
Wednesdays

OPEN:  
10am – 4.30pm



Inspire Peterborough have teamed up with Oak Activities to run an inclusive fitness centre for adults with a long term health condition, special need, physical, mental, sensory or learning disability.

Chair based exercise classes and open gym sessions

Booking essential via  
[www.bookwhen.com/amilly-fitness](http://www.bookwhen.com/amilly-fitness)  
or for group bookings please call 01733 330 815

Amilly House, 88 South Street, Stanground PE2 8EZ

Contact Inspire Peterborough for more information

[www.inspirepeterborough.com](http://www.inspirepeterborough.com) | [/amilly-fitness](https://www.facebook.com/amilly-fitness)  
T: 01733 330 815 | E: [contact@inspirepeterborough.com](mailto:contact@inspirepeterborough.com)

Disability Peterborough Project/Registered Charity Number: 1089250



## **And finally.....Some useful numbers**

Age UK 01733 564185

Care and Repair 01733 863895

CareZone 01733 575083

Carers Trust Peterborough 01733 645234

City Care Clinic 01733 293800

Child Benefit 0845 302 1444

Department of Work and Pensions (new claims) 0800 055 6688

Disability Peterborough (DIAL) 01733 265551

Fire and Rescue Service 0800 917 9994

Headway Cambridgeshire 01223 576550

Housing Options 01733 864064

Inland Revenue – Tax Credits 0845 300 3900

Inspire Peterborough 01733 330815

Peterborough Association for the Blind 01733 344 844

Peterborough Community Assistance Scheme 0844 4994120

Peterborough Direct 01733 747474

Peterborough City Hospital 01733 678000

Peterborough Pensioners Association 01733 270528

Peterborough Police 101

Samaritans 08457 909090

Shopmobility 01733 313133

St Georges Hydrotherapy Pool 01733 453583

YMCA GYM 01733 313 085