

Enabling SOLIHULL PEOPLE to lead the fullest possible life whatever their personal health or physical difficulties

BEWARE OF ROGUE TRADERS



The simple message from Solihull Trading Standards is: Don't buy anything from a doorstep sales person. That was the main theme when I interviewed Richard Staveley, a Trading Standards officer at Solihull Council and Sue Walton, the council's Safeguarding Adults manager.

Richard advises everyone to have a door chain fitted and added "If someone knocks at the door, put the chain on and then answer the

door. If they are offering to sell you something just say NO."

This course of action is the best way of combating rogue traders. During our half hour chat Richard and Sue stressed that they did not want to frighten people, they just want to make people aware of these unsavoury individuals.

There are other tell tale signs of rogue trading. For instance the salesmen will often claim to be a council employee who has just finished a job, he will mention that has some turf or tarmac left over and ask if you would like to make use of it."

On a similar theme someone might say they have spotted a slate missing on your roof and offer to fix it. Richard, who has worked for Solihull council for three years, told me that bogus roofers have been a constant problem to trading standards.

These roofers often target vulnerable groups such as the elderly and disabled, as it would be impossible for them to climb a roof to check if the work has been carried out correctly. The targeting of the elderly and disabled is common to people posing as tree surgeons or gardeners. **(Continued on page 2)**

CONTENTS



PAGE 3

Developing assistive aids



PAGE 4

Shopmobility service



PAGE 8

Digital switchover



(Continued from page 1) One way of protecting yourself is to keep a list of contacts from your gas, water and electricity providers. Keep the list by your telephone. Then if you are unsure about certain callers you will be able to check out their true identity. As Sue who previously worked for Coventry City council added "If the person on the doorstep is legitimate they will not mind waiting while you make the call, if they are not legitimate they will go."

Although we associate rogue trading with door step selling these con men have added another string to their bow. In addition to illegal selling at the door, the scam has become another way of stealing money from law abiding citizens. A Scam is carried out on the telephone or the Internet. For instance the telephone call that says you have won the lottery. The catch is that the lottery is overseas and because of legal requirements we need to be sent an amount of money. This sort of scam may also come in the form of a letter received through the post.

People should be on their guard against the 'Phishing' scam. Phishing refers to scams

asking for your bank details. Fraudsters will send email or make phone calls offering tax rebates which can be obtained for the exchange of personal bank numbers. These fake email or phone calls should be ignored. As Richard comments "I only use one bank, but I've had emails from every one of the high street banks saying there has been a breach of our security, please could you send us your bank details". His advice is simple: "Never give out your bank details to anyone - your bank will have procedures for obtaining information, so it is best to find out what these procedures are."

Our conversation then turned to ways of fighting the confidence trickster. Solihull Council provides the Shipshape scheme. Shipshape is a list of reputable traders whose services have been checked over by Solihull Trading Standards. This is a far safer method than flicking through the Yellow Pages or Thomson's, as these directories are advertising publications which do not carry out checks.

For further information on Shipshape telephone the council on **0121 704 6000** or give Consumer Direct a call on **08454 04 05 06**

Steve Coulter

BIRMINGHAM AIRPORT WINS AWARD FOR DISABILITY ASSISTANCE



Birmingham Airport was recently named as the Gold Winner of the Meetings and Incentive Travel Access Excellence Award 2011. This means that the Airport has demonstrated exceptional customer service and ease of access to travel for passengers with disabilities or reduced mobility. The Airport also demonstrated their close working relationship with Enable-Solihull, who represent local disability groups.

A judge visited the Airport to look at their infrastructure and the services for disabled passengers, which are provided by a company called OCS. The Airport was then short-listed into the final 4, the other finalists being The Roman Baths and Pump Room, Wales Millennium Centre and Aberdeen Airport.

Representatives from Birmingham Airport were invited to an awards dinner and were not

aware that they had won prior to the award ceremony on the night.

In 2010 Birmingham Airport assisted 80,000 Passengers with Reduced Mobility:

50% of their customers require a wheelchair within the terminal building and between the aircraft and the terminal.

40% of their customers cannot walk up or down the stairs and require wheelchair assistance.

9% of their customers are completely immobile and can move only with the help of a wheelchair or any other means and require assistance at all times from arrival at the Airport to the aircraft seat and on return.

1% of their customers are partially sighted and/or have varying degrees of hearing impairment and are sometimes accompanied by an assistance dog.



DEVELOPING ASSISTIVE AIDS AND TECHNOLOGY



HDTI Researcher Nikki Holliday

How often these days do we hear the phrase, “Anything to make my life easier”? Well this certainly can be applied to the work carried out by Coventry University’s Health Design & Technology Institute

(HDTI). The Institute works alongside businesses in developing assistive technology and community healthcare projects. As Nikki Holliday, Research Assistant at HDTI, told me: “We help to develop products which enable a person with a disability to lead an independent life.” At present, a wide range of products are being tested. These include walk-in baths, accessible shower doors, easy-tie shoelaces, walking sticks and eating bowls. In addition to its work developing new assistive products for people with physical disabilities, HDTI supports the work of Dementia groups.

Once these products have been developed, the next stage is to see how useful they are. The best way to do this is by testing the products with the intended users. This is where HDTI really proves its worth. As Nikki explained:

“We work as a link between businesses and users in order to produce effective products.” The Institute will take a range of items out to disability organisations such as the Multiple Sclerosis Society, arthritis charities and Diabetes support groups.

It is important to stress that the Institute is an independent body which does not endorse particular products. “We see ourselves as the voice of the user” Nikki told me. With this in mind, HDTI would like to invite Enable-Solihull members to participate in their research. It is hoped that a series of focus groups will be set up. During these sessions you will have the chance to air your views on all the latest products. These meetings will be informal events with tea and biscuits provided. It is hoped that this relaxed atmosphere will encourage users to openly and critically evaluate a product, be it positively or negatively. Feedback is welcomed from all disabled people but the group would like to see increased involvement from the 18 to 35 age group. Often this group has additional demands from a product (for instance its appearance and how it fits in with modern fashions).

Steve Coulter

LETTER CORNER



I am writing in response to the article written by Steve Coulter in your newsletter on Social Activities for people with disabilities within the borough.

Although we only have a small membership we have members of all age groups and socialise through the sporting activities that we do. The club is run by people with disabilities for people with disabilities and is providing opportunities for people to partake in sports such as bowls, boccia, curling, pool, snooker, darts

and table games. Chutes are available for those who have difficulty holding things.

Solihull Rotary Club organises a competitive Sports Day for us every year when disabled people from around the East Midlands are invited to come along and it also gives you the opportunity to meet others and chat. The event this year is on Saturday 11th June. We also go around the West Midlands participating in other events.

We meet in Langley School Gymnasium, Kineton Green Road, Olton, B92 7ER on Saturday afternoons between 2.00pm and 4.00pm. If you require any further information call me on 0121 707 2579 or come along and see us.
Mrs Sandra Wild -
Organising Secretary

Please write to us at Enable-Solihull, St Andrew’s Church Centre, Pike Drive, Chelmsley Wood, Solihull, B37 7US or email us at info@enable-solihull.org.uk



A NEW SHOPMOBILITY SERVICE FOR CHELMSLEY WOOD

Chelmsley Wood now has its own Shopmobility service, based at the Connect Office. People with mobility problems can hire electric scooters, powerchairs and manual wheelchairs to get round the shops and businesses they want to visit.

Annual membership costs £10 and then it is £1 a day to use our equipment. Rates are also available for one-off hire to non-members. To book a scooter, powerchair or wheelchair you can just come to the Shopmobility desk next to the Connect Office entrance or give us a ring. The Shopmobility service is available Monday to Friday between 10.00 am and 4.00 pm. Ring us on **0121 704 6017** and talk to one of the staff, or leave a message.

Shopmobility staff will come out to you with the equipment if you are unable to get from the car or bus stop to the Connect Office.



The service has been funded with support from the Fair Share Trust (administered by the Birmingham Community Foundation) and Solihull Council.

THANKS TO SHIRLEY LIONS CLUB



With thanks to Shirley Lions Club for their financial support, we have been able to produce an extended newsletter. In their own words, Lions are “Ordinary people doing extraordinary things” and they manage to raise money for a wide range of good causes whilst having plenty of fun in the process. For the past few years they have supported the emergency contact “Message in a Bottle” which many of you have in your fridge. In all there are seven Lions Clubs meeting in the Borough of Solihull with many others just outside the area. If you would like to find out more about Shirley Lions, please phone **0845 833 9547** or visit www.shirleylions.co.uk

LOWBROOK STROKE CLUB

Lowbrook Stroke club has recently celebrated it's 21st birthday, being established in July 1989. We still have one original member Mr John Hoare. We would like to thank Solihull Community Foundation for all the funding they have given us over the years to keep us up and running. Also a big thank you to all the other organisations who have supported us, including Enable-Solihull and DIAL.

New members are always welcome.

We meet at Whitesmore Nursery
Chaplehouse Road
Chelmsley Wood

Every Tuesday from 10am-2pm Subs £2.00

Telephone **07963265453**

Jan Ryan



STEP INTO SOLIHULL

Would you like to take up some gentle exercise and meet new people? The Step into Solihull Project provides gentle exercise sessions for older adults.

Activities include Tai Chi, Extend, Dance, Wii, and walking. We currently have 10 walks throughout the borough, each lasting for approximately one hour, with some walks offering a shorter walk as well!

All walks are led by trained Volunteer Walk Leaders. We currently have walks in Castle Bromwich, Chelmsley Wood, Kingshurst, Central Solihull, Dorridge, Shirley and Elmdon Park.



A nice walk out in Kingshurst

If you would like some more information, or are part of an organisation who would be interested in some sessions, please contact Becky Glover, Step into Solihull Project Manager, on **0121 704 8075** or email reglover@solihull.gov.uk

A NIGHT AT THE RACES



Multiple Sclerosis Society Solihull branch Present A NIGHT AT THE RACES. Join them for a night of fun and entertainment. Cost - £5.00 per adult £2.00 for children under 10 years of age. A Ploughman's Supper is included in the price of the ticket. Contact the Fundraiser on **01564 823627** to purchase your tickets.

This takes place on Saturday 2 July. Entrance from 7.30pm. First race: 8.00 prompt start at The Shirley Centre, Stratford Road Shirley. Due to gaming laws no person under 18 years can place a bet.

New members are always welcome.

FUNDRAISING FOR ENABLE-SOLIHULL

Enable-Solihull is very privileged that Joanna Evans has volunteered to undertake two sponsored walks in aid of Enable-Solihull.

The first walk is along the Jurassic coast which she will be doing in July; this is a very challenging walk which includes many hills.

The second walk will not be until next year and will take place in Cambodia.

If you would like to sponsor Joanne, please contact Enable-Solihull on **0121 788 1544** or email info@enable-solihull.org.uk



VOLUNTEERING AT NAIDEX



I am a volunteer with Enable-Solihull and the following is my account of helping out on Enable-Solihull's stand at Naidex. Naidex is the UK's largest disability and homecare exhibition and takes place annually at the NEC.

This was the first time that Enable-Solihull had exhibited and our stand had kindly been funded by Birmingham Airport, whom we have been working with to improve the airport for disabled passengers.

Knowing the way traffic can build up on the M42, I allowed plenty of time to arrive for the Naidex Exhibition before the 10am start.

On arrival I found my colleagues were having problems with the touch screen device used for surveying the public. Martin finally decided to exchange it for the reserve unit, so panic over and all were ready for the off.

I had expected a busy start but things were quiet for the first 20 minutes, then more visitors began to arrive.

As small hand-held survey devices were available I volunteered to go on safari on my mobility scooter to interview visitors on the move. Early in the day most people were friendly and cooperative with answers to the survey about assistance received at airports by disabled travellers.

Later it was a little more difficult to attract and hold people's attention as by then they had been approached more often, but nonetheless I still managed to complete a few more interviews in the afternoon.

In general the opinion of most people who had made use of air travel with wheelchairs or scooters was 'satisfactory'. Many travellers seemed to think that services and conditions had gradually improved over the years. I was surprised to find that at least half of the people approached stated that they had not considered air travel as an option due to perceived difficulties with arrangements for transport and storage of disability vehicles, although many said they had few problems with coach or train travel for their journeys.

The afternoon shift on the second day was again spent roving around on the scooter. I was finding communication easier by this time, and found people happy to share travel experiences with me as well as their impressions of the exhibition as a whole. Approaching people as they were just finishing their tea-breaks was now the favourite play.

The final day's surveys were curtailed for me as I had to make a quick trip to the Equipment Store in Chelmsley Wood for an elderly neighbour who needed repairs to her walker just as I intended to leave home.

When I did arrive at the Show just before 3pm I found that it closed at 4pm, but did manage to do a quick circuit of the show and got a couple more surveys completed.

All told, a very enjoyable experience with pleasant company at the Enable-Solihull stand and a wide range of different interviews with the show visitors. I'd be happy to repeat this, or similar kinds, of survey at any time.

Ed O'Donnell



YOUR HEALTHCARE IN LOCAL HANDS

New local support has been found for Solihull Local Involvement Network (LINK). Solihull Council has awarded the 12 month contract for supporting the LINK to the Solihull Independent Living Consortium, (also known as SILC, for short). SILC is a recently formed partnership of local charities involved in providing health and social care services to Solihull people. SILC’s membership includes local not for profit organisations providing support for groups such as older people, carers, disabled people and people with learning disabilities.

Solihull LINK is a network of individuals and local voluntary groups, whose aim is to find out the views of local people on health and social care services, and to make recommendations to improve services. Recent Solihull LINK projects have included surveys on personal budgets for social care, GP out of hours services, and maternity services. Solihull LINK staff and volunteers are now working with the local NHS and Council to bring about service improvements.

Anne Hastings, Chief Executive Officer of Age UK Solihull, and a member of SILC commented: “This is a great opportunity for local organisations that have a working knowledge of the needs of the area to really engage with



the general public and help them make a difference to services”.

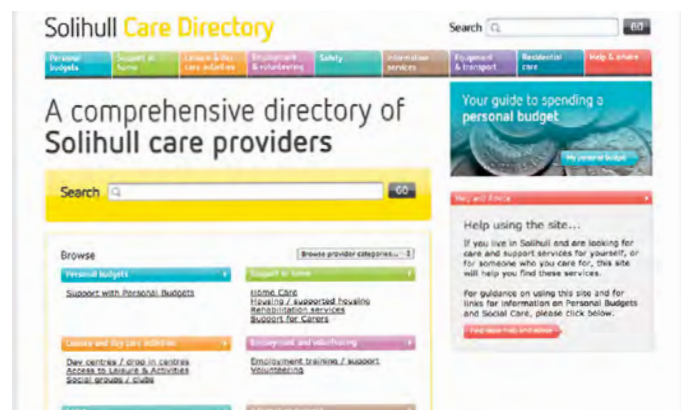
Solihull LINK would like to hear from more local people and voluntary groups. They are inviting you to sign up now to receive information on consultations and to express your views, or to become a Solihull LINK volunteer. There is also a vacancy on the Management Committee for a new voluntary sector group. If you would like to find out more, please contact Catherine Gulati on **0121 705 0550** or catherine@solihulllink.org.uk

The organisations that form SILC are; Enable-Solihull, Solihull Life Opportunities, Age UK Solihull, Solihull DIAL, Solihull Care Ltd, Solihull Carers Centre, Family Care Trust and SWICDA (Solihull Workforce in Care Development Association).

SOLIHULL CARE DIRECTORY

This new website will allow people who use social care services to browse, compare and buy the care and support services they need. It is mainly aimed at people who use Personal Budgets, but contains a wealth of information that will help many people looking for some form of support.

The website will also help staff from a range of support organisations to provide people with comprehensive information on services and on using Personal Budgets. The website was developed by Enable-Solihull in partnership with Solihull NHS Care Trust.



Solihull Care Directory

Please visit Solihull Care Directory at www.solihullcaredirectory.com



SWITCHOVER IS COMING AND HELP IS AT HAND

TV is switching to digital all over the UK and soon the traditional TV signal will be switched off in your area. If you don't have digital TV by the time of switchover, you will lose all your TV channels. Most people will find the switchover process easy, but for some the idea of switchover can seem a little daunting. There is no need to worry as help is at hand.

For older and disabled viewers who may find making the switch difficult, the Switchover Help Scheme is at hand to provide practical help and assistance to turn one TV set to digital.

Most people will be asked to pay £40 towards the standard option of help. This includes:

- Easy to use equipment to switch one TV
- An approved installer
- Aerial upgrade if needed
- 12 month aftercare service including a free helpline

The service is free for people who are eligible and who also receive pension credit income support, income-based job seeker's allowance or income-related employment and support allowance.

We can help you convert your TV to digital if you:

- Are aged 75 or over, or
- Have lived in a care home for six months or more, or

Get (or could get)

- Disability Living Allowance (DLA), or



- Attendance or Constant Attendance Allowance, or
- Mobility Supplement, or
- Are registered blind or partially sighted

If you are eligible, the Help Scheme will write to you directly and in plenty of time to ask if you want our help. All you need to do is respond to our letter by sending back a completed form or to make things even easier you can call the Help Scheme free to respond. The Switchover Help Scheme has helped hundreds of thousands of people make the switch to digital.

For further information on the Switchover Help Scheme visit helpscheme.co.uk or call **0800 40 85 900**. Digital UK has launched a public information campaign, providing information and advice on how to make the switch. You can find out more by visiting www.digitaluk.co.uk or by calling **08456 50 50 50**.

Enable-Solihull
St Andrew's Church Centre
Pike Drive
Chelmsley Wood
Solihull
B37 7US

Telephone:
0121 788 1544

Website:
www.enable-solihull.org.uk

Email:
info@enable-solihull.org.uk

Enable-Solihull would like to hear from you about any difficulties you have getting to or around places, such as shops, cafes and public buildings. For example you may experience difficulties entering buildings in a wheelchair or with heavy doors or uneven paths. We can take up these issues on your behalf and encourage businesses to improve their facilities. Please call us on **0121 788 1544** or email us at info@enable-solihull.org.uk to let us know how we can help you.

Registered Charity No:
1095566

Company No:
4465116