

## **Notes from DBU Forum April 30<sup>th</sup> 2012**

**Facilitated by Gill Jackson**

**22 members attended.**

**Charlie Forman from the LBH 2012 Unit. Nadia from the Candoco Dance Company and Katherine Love, former DBU support worker, were welcomed to the meeting.**

**Charlie Forman** spoke about what members can get involved in and how the Olympics will affect daily life. He pointed out that the Olympic park will be the biggest area in London which is fully accessible and that electric vehicles will be available for people with mobility impairments.

Next month 4m more tickets will be released and 1.5m for the paralympics. Information will be available on the 2012 website. The priority in allocation will however be for people who have already applied unsuccessfully. Hackney is pressing for tickets giving admission to the Park only at a cost of £10-£20. Details will be available in Hackney Today. 'Non-event' ticket holders are to be admitted to events as and when space becomes available (possibly by text alert. Negotiations are still underway. Some tickets have already been awarded to New Age Games participants from Hackney's own allocation of 500 tickets for 'people who have done something special.'

It will be easier and cheaper to obtain tickets for the Paralympics. A credit card is needed for an internet booking. Charlie will check if it will be possible to make paper applications (earlier tranches were available through Lloyds Bank). The Unit is still working on other ways of getting people in. The Park will be closed for a year after the Games for landscaping.

The Olympic Torch will arrive in Hackney on 21<sup>st</sup> July and will be welcomed by a parade through the Borough culminating in Clissold Park. A Samba School Group will be attending from Rio de Janeiro to support the parade with classes in advance, which are being organised by the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (LOCOG).

Charlie was asked if cycling in the parks – and especially Clissold Park – will be suspended. He accepted that this was not a good idea and undertook to look into it and come back to us. He was

also asked about parking arrangements for disabled people and stewards able to give assistance.

The Paralympic Torch will also be coming to Hackney on 29<sup>th</sup> August. Arrangements will be advertised in Hackney Today.

Charlie undertook to consult DBU on arrangements for spectators, such as viewing platforms on the route and in Clissold Park and designated stewarded areas for disabled people.

He was asked about the appropriateness of ATOS as a sponsor of the Games, which raises strong feelings amongst disabled people, given their role in administering the hated work fitness tests and whether LBH would facilitate peaceful protest. Charlie clarified that ATOS is not a sponsor of the torch tour, for which SAMSUNG, Coca Cola and Lloyds are sponsors. On access to the Games in general, he made clear that individual access needs will have to be spelt out in advance, such as preferred angle of view. Carers can for example can be admitted to some events.

There will be some road closures on 21<sup>st</sup> July, for the procession along the A10/Kingsland Rd and the Lea interchange of the A12. Public transport and cabs will continue running in the period when some roads will be closed 25<sup>th</sup> July – 9<sup>th</sup> September (with two weeks in the middle when they will be lifted). Extra parking controls where there are not normally controlled parking zones will also be imposed to ensure residents can park in their own streets.

Charlie was asked about the involvement of the military and in particular recent reports of ground-to-air missiles being based in the area. Charlie said that more soldiers would be on duty than police, but these were matters which the Unit was likely to be just told – no official notification had been given on the missiles matter for example.

**Nadia from Candoco Dance Co** explained the ethos of her group, which feels that dance should be accessible to all. In their classes for young people, work in schools and other activities they aim to demonstrate that dance can be enjoyed regardless of physicality. In 2012, CANDOCO will have been performing in Sadler's wells for 20 years. The group is very concerned to make training in dance more accessible and is working with the London Conservatoire to support disabled people to begin a career in dance. CANDOCO took part in the Olympic handover ceremonies in Beijing, representing the UK.

The company is also working with Unlimited, a festival showcasing the work of disabled artists on the South Bank on 6<sup>th</sup> September, where performances by deaf and disabled artists will be premiered. The South Bank is regrettably not very accessible. The Company is working to increase wheelchair sites in the theatres there. All its performances will be fully accessible, with sign language interpretation and audio descriptions. The UK is a leader in working with deaf and disabled artists, exploring areas such as dancing with crutches. The Council of Elders (55+) at Sadlers Wells is open to new members.

More information can be gathered from [www.candoco.co.uk](http://www.candoco.co.uk), including videos and photos. The group does not do any work on therapeutic dance, but organises workshops and would be willing to lay them on locally, with the proviso that costs have to be covered. Part of their philosophy on access is that two dance instructors always take part. Nadia promised a response on arrangements for teacher training.

**Katherine Love** introduced her daughter Alice and explained that she is now working with the Federation of Disabled People in Brighton, where she now lives and runs the 'get Involved' group, which carries out consultation work, welfare benefits advice on DLA and PiP, work with deaf people, research into how many sign language users there are in the area and accessibility of the city infrastructure in the Brighton area. She has facilitated dialogue with the local authority through quarterly events allowing 1:1 contact with council officers. This worked well and is succeeding in effecting changes.

**Andrea Rawlings** reported on the recent human rights training session, organised through Age UK East London, which three DBU members attended. Key parts of the Human Rights Act were discussed and their applicability explored. Input from Age UK volunteers was useful. David asked for expressions of interest in a new cycle of training in this area to be organised with the British institute of Human Rights, probably starting in the Autumn. Several members expressed interest.

**Carol Davis** reported that The May Forum will be on May 31<sup>st</sup>, with four local transport providers; the June Forum will be on 28<sup>th</sup> June and focus on housing. Both will be held in St Matthias Church Hall.

**David Holland** asked for any final comments or input to the DBU transport report; on a forthcoming audit of accessibility of culture and leisure facilities in Hackney by 'mystery shoppers' and appealed for volunteers to take part in the exercise and a forthcoming questionnaire on priorities in adult social care.

**Gill Jackson** drew attention to the recently published Council commitment statement on adult social care and appealed to members to read it, since it is likely to have effects upon them. It will be e-mailed to those members who use IT and featured in the newsletter, with an offer to supply hard copies on request.