

Sports Forum www.sportsforum.org.uk

Newsletter - Winter 2007

Winter is with us once again, but despite the cold weather, the news is all very positive and encouraging! Since joining PHAB England all sorts of new possibilities are now opening up to us as we really start to feel the benefits of being a part of one of the best organisations for the disabled in the UK. We are very pleased to announce the addition of Martin Holdsworth their Chief Executive onto the Sports Forum Committee and we are sure that his positive and highly professional input will be a valuable asset to us all. And as we become more integrated the opportunities to partake in a wider range of sporting activities grows.

Our new website is now up and running thanks to the wonderful generosity of [Solidtech Services Ltd.](#), Bournemouth, and James Taylor in particular who tirelessly and uncomplainingly treats us uninitiated with good grace and respect. And through the medium of this newsletter we have no reservation in recommending their service on 0845 270 4207 to anybody with a computer who is experiencing problems or needs advice. As the site grows organically we hope that it too will bring us closer to other disabled organisations linked via the website, and for the benefit of us all.

Recently we have helped Bournemouth Borough Council to secure £50,000 Lottery Funding which has been used to create a wheelchair accessible footpath along the River Stour, two wheelchair accessible fishing platforms and new signage. We are currently waiting to hear the result of another bid for £300,000 from the Big Lottery Fund where we have worked hard again, with Bournemouth Borough Council to try to secure the construction of a new disabled cycle route from Throop to Hurn. And to add to that, we are just commencing negotiations with Swanage Town Council in order to explore the possibilities of gaining access to Swanage by the disabled from the sea.

On a more day to day note, our swimming, badminton, canoeing, fencing and tenpin bowling sessions are now about to be supplemented by yet other activities including the formation of a hand cycling group thanks to Terry Dennis our star fencer from the ESPADA group which meets on Tuesdays and Fridays. Information about this activity can be obtained from Terry on

01202 870347 . And in association with Sportability, we are hoping to introduce disabled gliding trips in the near future. Our other extremely popular activity, sailing aboard Knoticat has had its most successful year ever. The sailings were more subscribed to in 2007, than in any previous year in our history; and it has prompted us to begin the protracted and potentially arduous task of trying to raise enough funds to purchase a new boat, not only to extend our limited capabilities now, but to pass on to future generations of disabled.

The employment of our full time skipper/boat manager Steve Clegg has made an enormous difference to our levels of maintenance, the control of bookings and integral paperwork and the ability to be able to fill the boat more successfully, with growing numbers of new individuals and organisations all wanting to share in the delights of offshore sailing. And unlike any other organisation that we know, we have managed once again this year, thanks to the generosity of our wonderful benefactors, to welcome people aboard without having to charge for the service.

We are happy to report that under the watchful eye of all of our diligent skippers and crew, whom we thank from the bottom of our hearts, no accidents or injuries have occurred to mar any of our trips. We still haven't seen the reported Dolphins in Poole Bay yet, but the Seals near Round Island are a regular attraction. The fishing nowadays seems very thin on the ground, with less and less fish seeming to be there as the years pass. Could this be a global warming issue, or have we just fished the inshore waters to death? The wind on the other hand could nearly always be relied upon to be there unless the Norton family were aboard, when almost without exception the weather gods smiled and handed them a perfect day of sunshine, and no breeze!

All in all it has been a wonderful and highly successful summer, and I would now conclude by wishing everybody a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Mike Woods

Chairman