



Help • Information • Advice

A.G.M Report

12<sup>th</sup> May 2011

Apologies

Ellie Harnott.

Sue Lear

Present

Mike O'Neill                      Deirdre Edgar                      Linda Curran DL

Nichola Brown                      Nigel Moody                      Roy Emmerson

Roger Jenkinson                      Dr Christine Maddern                      Sara McKay

Sue Price                      Gillian James

Current Chair Mike O'Neill opened the AGM thanking those who attended and giving a special thank you to Sue Lear, Janet Seymour Kirk, Neill Cheyne & Valerie Burrows who have stepped down. He thanked them for their contribution to Independus and wished them well in their new lives/roles.

The previous minutes were read out and passed as a true record.

Proposed by D. Edgar                      Seconded by L. Curran

Mike then went on to the Chair report.



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### Chair Report

Welcome to you all and how every nice to see so many people today.

We start with a Thank you & Goodbye to our dear friends Valerie Burrows & Sue Lear who have left for pastures new & other responsibilities, I would like to thank them both for the unique contributions to Independus helping us to establish and develop.

This year we have secured funding from Awards 4 All & NYCIL allowing us to take Independus forward for the benefit of the people in Richmondshire & Hambleton. It also means we get to keep Gillian a little longer.

Grateful thanks to Linda who has worked tirelessly throughout the year on securing grant aid to keep the organisation afloat, we accept that short term focussed funding is now accepted within the voluntary sector so Linda has to make sure we keep up with imaginative projects that benefit our members.

The management group effectively guided by Helen from Plug and Tap, Thirsk has transformed our literature to reflect Independus's work in a clear and concise manner, given us a fresh logo and promotional material so we look very professional. Thank you Helen.

Helen and her team are now working with us to produce an e-newsletter to keep our membership informed of what is happening both here at Independus but also other organisations that may have an event to promote.

The social networking continues though please note the day has altered to a Friday at the request of our members. We need more people to come along and help organise other events / social activities which can be publicised in the e-newsletter.

A writers group is being initiated by George Jowett, a published writer from Richmond. All are welcome to come along and the first meeting will be at the RCVS, Flints Terrace, Richmond on the 20<sup>th</sup> May at 12.30pm.

Independus has held two successful open forums, one on lack of suitable accommodation within Richmondshire for people with disabilities and the other on the assessment process for Direct payments.

Both were well attended and from this our campaigning group has held meetings to evidence the need for support, advice and practical help required by people when dealing with the statutory agencies and the effect the cuts have had on services.

We continue to work closely with other partner organisations to evidence changes required to continue to support people within North Yorkshire.

We are also increasingly supporting members and trustees who have seen their services cut when reviewed and we are seeing a marked increase from others who are facing similar issues from other support agencies. Independus is unique as we use both personal & professional experience to help support others.

This coming year we are focusing on increasing our membership and re-focusing on the Hambleton area, as well as continuing to offer outreach clinics and appointments.

Finally many thanks to Gillian for her hard work and commitment at an insecure time in the financing of social care.

On the subject of encouraging someone with a Learning disability Mike asked if William Green could be approached and offered Advocacy support to participate as a Trustee, he also mooted the question of asking Simon Cross from Northdale if they would like to become involved as associate members. It was agreed to look at these ideas at the next trustee meeting.

The social events were now on a Friday to allow more people to attend with the new writer's group meeting on the last Friday of the month over lunchtime. Mike expressed the hope other local writers would join. Christine offered her services as a proof reader and to give a talk as she is a published author in History.

Mike also expressed his wish for Independus to grow in the Hambleton area, Nichola has some friends who are interested but are very shy about attending events/socials ect.

Linda highlighted the forthcoming open debates which would be held in Richmond and Northallerton where everyone would be welcome to debate issues of the day. Willy Maddren had been asked to facilitate these as he has previous experience. They will be advertised in the local press.

Ellie is looking to have a nature day at Fox covert reserve within the Garrison, working with the Army to make it accessible for everyone. She is looking at a June date.

Mike went on to say he thought the two open forums had been well organised and attended; the follow ups should be less informal where people could get more one to one advice. He said our strength was by having Trustees who could support people through their own personal experiences.

Linda gave a NYCIL update, she explained the background of NYCIL and how we believed the concept of having a user led group in each district would work together to allow all disabled people within North Yorkshire have equal access to services had not happened and that Independus had retired due to the serious governance issues . The investigation had been completed but due to holidays the report had not been given. Nigel asked how long we were expected to wait; Linda thought we would have it by mid June. Deirdre expressed concern that NYCIL was not a user led organisation and that the agenda for it was being set by NYCC. She also expressed concern over the conflict of interest within the board of NYCIL.

Gillian gave her report.

## **Development workers Annual Report**

**12<sup>th</sup> May 2011 A.G.M**



What a year this has been, Independus has grown, evolved and matured into a professional charity serving our clients to the best of our ability.

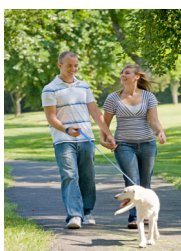
We started off the year working hard to fulfil our obligations with NYCIL and Adult & Community services. Eleven associate members signed up to our vision of providing excellent networking partnerships right across the county so all disabled people within North Yorkshire could expect good & consistent service

Unfortunately it was not a vision shared with the other directors of NYCIL and after airing concerns over serious governance issues which would have left our then chair in personal jeopardy the Trustees decided to withdraw our support for NYCIL.

This has left us able to better concentrate on what the community within Richmondshire & Hambleton need.



Having secured funding from the Big Lotto Awards 4 All and with grant's given by Catterick Community Partnership, Richmond Town Council and The Co-operative Bank we have been able not only to secure my position but also to facilitate two open forums with the third today, to be able to re-brand our image and to look at more integrated social opportunities for our members.



Roy, Nichola & Roger continue to represent our interests within the Yorkshire Dales National Park and we are looking to host a sensory day or easy guided walk later in the year. Roy is also representing Independus at Richmondshire Town Council's access group looking to open up the final part of the Drummer Boy Trod making that a circular accessible walk and the Richmond Swale Valley Community Initiative who are looking to purchase two trampers if they secure funding.

# **IndependUs**

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This spring has seen the management group working with Plug and Tap, a media and marketing group based in Thirsk. Independus has been given a fresh and vibrant look and our literature re-written to reflect who we are & what we do.

We have eye catching promotional material & displays so any events we attend we can advertise ourselves properly and of course the giveaway pens & business cards our trustees and members can carry.

Our website has also had a makeover, it has already attracted some favourable comments including how good the new logo is and about the reports of recent Open forums being available to allow both attendees and those unable to attend to see what the outcomes were. Interest has already been shown in follow up meetings especially about Direct Payments.

Helen from Plug and Tap has been so positive in bringing out the best of Independus, and kindly offering free office space should any client wish to see us in the Ripon area. We are so grateful for her assistance.



But it doesn't end there! Plug and Tap also facilitate an easy to use e-newsletter which we can link to our website and e-mail to all our members.

We are inviting all local groups the chance to submit their news and stories as well as articles from our members so everyone has the chance to see what is going on in our districts.



So if you have anything you want to say, a date to remember or a newsworthy item please pass on to our office.



Trustees at Independus are always looking at leisure activities that can be enjoyed by all. Our weekly socials continue to flourish and we welcome guest speakers like writer George Jowett to inspire us on to greater things.

Other activities include camping for the brave ( foolhardy) or intrepid explorers, an evening at the Races and in the autumn we are resurrecting the Debating evenings to not only encourage people to take part in a lively evening but to also raise some much needed funds.



Independus has facilitated two well attended open forums; the first in March was in direct response to the lack of a housing forum within Richmondshire. Guest speakers included Mark Robson from Richmondshire District Council, Housing Dept. Trevor Morris, Riverside Housing Association and Andi McLaughlin from Broadacres Housing Association.

Independus is to work alongside Mark Robson to evidence the need for adaptable housing within Richmondshire by presenting case studies and to help shape the future development of housing stock.

The second and largest open forum was on the assessment process of Direct Payments from North Yorkshire County Council Adult & Community services.

This involved working with our associate members in identifying how we were going to evidence peoples experiences, coming up questions to ask during a

work shop and again having guest speakers who included Emilia Cook, service development manager (self directed care), Ann Davison, Direct payment support manager and two associates from Self Direct, York & York People First who gave an inspirational insight into the problems they encountered & overcame. Our associate members assisted at the planning meetings and throughout the day by facilitating the workshop tables and supporting people to participate.

Follow up meetings are planned in conjunction with Independus's campaigning working party



During this event our associate members had information stalls which proved very popular especially the freebees which could be taken away in the free 'bags for life' donated by the Northallerton branch of Sainsbury's.



Independus has also been busy forging links with other organisations within our area putting our expertise in disability issues to the service of others. We are now members of the Gypsy & Traveller wider Forum, the Race & Equality Foundation in York and the Hambleton & Richmondshire Police I.A.G.

Independus is also now included in the Office for Disability Issues website as a provider of support to disabled people accessing support services and/or professionals who want to know more about choice and control.

We have also forged stronger links with our associate members and other organisations who came along to our open forums, liked what they saw and are now recommending us to their clients.

2011 is a year to build, grow and deliver more open forums, social opportunities

Gillian James

Nichola asked if we could organise an open forum on education as she felt this was a big issue within disabilities and that many people were still denied the right to a proper integrated education.

### Accounts

Linda had just collected the full accounts from the accountants, a summary was attached to the AGM reports but everyone was invited to see the main accounts at their leisure.

We are a little healthier than last year but funding was still precarious. She will be keeping a sharp eye on expenditure; all new invoices will have an approved voucher number so the right funding pot is used.

Linda is currently writing a bid per week and trying to re-shape criteria to fit our services provided. We are also looking at partnership working to help deliver services.

Accounts accepted    Proposed by Deirdre Edgar    Seconded by Roger Jenkinson

Mike thanked Linda for all her hard work and to Mary Foster for looking after our day to day accounts so well.

### Election of Independent Examiners

Needham Chipchase Manners & Co

Trinity Chambers

30B Market Place

Richmond

North Yorkshire

Proposed by Deirdre Edgar    Seconded By Sara McKay

Passed by the trustees.

### Trustees

Mike O'Neill

Deirdre Edgar

Linda Curran DL

Roger Jenkinson

Sara McKay

Ellie Harnott

Sue Price

Nichola Brown

Roy Emmerson

Nigel Moody

All duly elected by members in a block motion

Proposed by Dr Maddren    Seconded by Gillian James

Dr Christine Maddren and William Green expressed wish to join the board but would need specialist support to allow them to do so. Linda to look at funding to pay for that support.

#### Elected Officers

Chair    Susan Price    with support from Mike O'Neill

Proposed Deirdre Edgar    Seconded Linda Curran

Secretary    Sara McKay    with support from Deirdre Edgar

Proposed Nichola Brown    Seconded Mike O'Neill

Treasurer    Linda Curran DL

Proposed Roger Jenkinson    Seconded Mike O'Neill

Roger Jenkinson withdrew his own nomination as deputy chair after discussion with the trustees.

### Any other business

Christine asked if Independus would be interested in raising its profile by organising an art event within the area. It would involve approaching local artists in producing one off pieces which could be touched, tasted or smelt by members of the public who had a sensory impairment.

She also thought an award for outstanding contribution to the disabled people of Hambleton & Richmondshire could become an annual event.

These excellent proposals will be discussed at the next trustee meeting.

The AGM was closed by Development worker Gillian James