

LANCASHIRE FRIEND

Registered charity No. 1053328

OPEN FORUM

21st November 2006 @ The Jarman Centre, Blackburn

Attending: Nick, Wendy, Les, Ian H, Lizzy, Fiona

Apologies: John, Ian P, Rachel, Pat, Paul K

1. Welcome from the Chairperson

Nick welcomed people to the meeting and outlined the agenda. He expressed his disappointment at the low attendance and gave reasons for having an Open Forum:

- Everyone gets a chance to have their say
- Last meeting of the year
- Assess and evaluate strengths and weaknesses of the group

Nick went on to express his commitment to the service and gave particular thanks to Les for coming along this evening.

We discussed four areas and focussed on two.

2. STARS – things we do well (sheet 1)

- Since summer 2005, there have been more and more people involved in the group.
- Website – the initial setup was excellent and it worked very well. Now the commitment is there and it is updated every two weeks. We're close to 3000 hits in 3 years. Good feedback on the website – user friendly and accessible.
- Communication – minutes are out on time and e-mails reach more people.
- Welcoming to people – friendlier now.
- Having a switchboard – sounds fantastic and very positive sounding for a small group. Freefone excellent.
- Hands on – quick to react if people need help.
- Non-judgemental. This was debated for some time.
- Befriending service – we do this extremely well. It must expand to include new members
- Networking – Nick has done lots of hard work on this.
- Flexible – hands on and tailored to the needs of services users.
- Advertising – big, bold and brassy

3. PROBLEM CHILDREN – things we need to work on for the future (sheet 3)

- Reliance on the same people – Wendy, Les or Nick with support from Fiona, Lizzy, John and Ian H. It is a nationwide problem for charities and the building itself is a problem as it denies access to members of the community.
- Counselling services – at the moment, Chi and Sharon, due to their own commitments, cannot provide a full service. However, Nick is in the process of getting more counsellors involved. It was suggested that he contact the psych units of the universities in the area or Dorothy Lyons at Blackburn College to offer students a chance to build their portfolio while helping us out.
- Member retention – this was felt to be due to three areas – training, venues and not stressing the membership structure.
- Fundraising – two bids currently in; one for computers and one for advertising leaflets for each of the services.
- Meetings – rotating chair – all agreed.

(Fiona had to leave at 9pm)

- Venues – looking for alternatives

4. Minutes of last meeting

Nick went through these and they were agreed. No matters arising.

5. Next week

Thursday 30th November 6.30pm Blackburn Cathedral

Friday 1st December Red Ribbon Gala Ball £7.50 Doors open at 9pm at UCLAN 53*

6. Date of next meeting

January 30th 2007 7.30pm Jarman Centre.

The meeting closed at 9.30pm