

AGM Edition 2007 Newsletter



Notice of Annual General Meeting

Shopmobility Manchester will be holding its tenth Annual General Meeting at our premises based in the Arndale on August 9th 2007. Enclosed with this newsletter is your invitation, please complete and return in the freepost envelope provided by 6th August so we can ensure that we are able to cater fully for all those who want to attend.

The meeting is open to all members of Shopmobility Manchester and this is your opportunity to have your say about the service and to forward ideas and suggestions to the Trustees. Doors will open at 11:30am in plenty of time for the Annual General Meeting, which will commence at 12:00 midday. Following the meeting there will be a range of stalls and holistic therapists for you to visit and enjoy. A buffet lunch and refreshments will be provided on the day.

Election of Trustees

Shopmobility Manchester is run by a group of trustees who meet once a month. At this meeting the Trustees agree the ongoing development and management of the services we offer to our 4,400 members and visitors.

Shopmobility Manchester is looking for members like you; to stand as Trustees at the AGM on August 9th. This is your opportunity to help Shopmobility to continue to serve our members and to provide a quality service across the city centre of Manchester.

Trustees Standing Down

Since our last AGM three Trustees have resigned, these include, Maura Jordon, Mike Miller and Susan Carson. We would like to thank them for all their hard work and support for Shopmobility over the years and wish them all well in their future endeavours.

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Helping us to keep up-to-date

Each year we send out two newsletters to our membership, which currently stands at just under 4500. Each newsletter contains information that we feel may be of use to you. For instance, the last newsletter detailed Shopmobility's change of address within the Arndale and included a map of how to find our new premises.

Despite this, several customers reported that they had not received a newsletter. On further investigation we found that the majority of those people had changed address and we were unaware.

From time-to-time we all have changes in our lives and personal circumstances. Some are cause for celebration, others, not so. To help us ensure the contact details we have for you are up-to-date we need your help.

The Data Protection Act governs Shopmobility Manchester and how it manages information regarding its membership. This act also states we have a responsibility to ensure that the information we hold is 'accurate and current'. We rely on you to help us achieve this.

Please take this opportunity to complete the information request form enclosed with this newsletter, before returning it back to Shopmobility in the Freepost envelope provided. Not only will this help us to keep you up to date with everything that is happening, it will also help us to reduce mail being sent to incorrect addresses and more importantly help us to ensure that the money we spend on print and postage is put to best use. Thank you again for your help.

Easter Buggies

Thank you to all our customers who purchased raffle tickets in support of Easter Buggies.

Hotel Chocolat kindly donated Easter Chocolates and along with some additional eggs made quite a hefty prize. The £53 raised helped purchase 2 additional buggies for parents to use Around the Arndale.

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

There have been several volunteer recruitment events over recent months which have included, a Stall at Manchester Metropolitan University during volunteers week, a stand at the Manchester Chinese Community Centre during New Year celebrations, a stand at the City Library which aimed to recruit volunteer guides for Shopmobility's Visual Impairment Service and in June, a series of open days with Mencap, which invited people with Learning Disabilities to experience volunteering.



Volunteer Sylvia training to use the information point

Over the last 12 months shopmobility has recruited 21 new volunteers and worked with a variety of agencies to achieve this including, MANCAT - Manchester College of Art and Technology, Action 4 Employment, Breakthrough UK, Mencap, Retired Magazine, BBC Manchester Radio – Interaction, Wythenshawe and ALL FM.

Over the last 12 months 311 new members have joined Shopmobility Manchester. Volunteers have provided over 1,000 meet and greets and members have made over 3,480 visits to the city.

Your Local Link Service

Local Link is a flexible public transport service that you can use when you need it 7 days a week. Serving most local areas of Manchester, you can use it to travel anywhere in your locality between 6:30 am and 10pm daily (some times vary)

The local link is ideal for travelling to and from work, to the shops, medical appointments, to connections with other public transport or just around your local area. To find out about more about the service in your area telephone: 0871 608 2216. Or visit GMPTE www.gmpte.com

Donations – Thank you to all our customers who have donated over £1,200 in the last 7 months. This money has been put towards the cost of repairs and maintenance to equipment.

Late-Night Opening.

To help you to make the most of what's on offer across the city, Shopmobility Manchester is open till 7:00pm every Thursday. So call 0161 839 4060 and book now!

A Reminder That We've Moved...

Getting to our new shop couldn't be easier; by car, park in the Arndale Car park on levels 3 & 5 then take lifts J & K to the ground floor where Shopmobility can be found on the right of the main corridor.

By bus and tram, from the Shudehill Interchange enter the Arndale from the Withy Grove entrance, Next to the service entrance

On foot from the Arndale's Winter Gardens, walk up the side of Sports Direct and we're on the right at the end of the blue corridor.



Meet and Greet Service

This is just a reminder to all of our members about our Volunteer Escort Services.

If you find it is becoming more difficult for you to get to our shop, maybe the distance from the bus, tram, taxi, and car is becoming too much of a challenge?

Please do not, let that stop you from coming into the city.

When you next call please ask for one of our Volunteers to meet you with your scooter or wheelchair.

Hot Topic

Congestion Charging is definitely the hottest debate in Greater Manchester at the moment. We've all heard varying rumours about costs, routes and charge times.

It is proposed that the Greater Manchester charging scheme will target the most congested routes at their busiest times only. There will be no charges at weekends, evenings and between 9:30am and 4:00pm weekdays.

Many orbital and short journeys will not pass a charging point and would therefore be exempt. A discount scheme for certain groups and vehicle types is in development. Essential service vehicles and cabs will not be charged.

To travel into Manchester during the peak morning period, vehicles will be charged £2 to cross at or near the M60 outer ring-road and £1 to cross the intermediate ring (yet to be determined) To travel out of Manchester during the peak evening period, vehicles would be charged £1 to cross the Intermediate Ring and £1 to cross at or near the M60 Outer Ring. The maximum payable in any one 24-hour period is £5.

It is anticipated that the scheme will raise around £3 billion for investment in local transport that would include:

- 30KM of new Metrolink lines
- New BRT (Bus Rapid Transit) priority lanes, more buses and some high quality express services
- Longer, better and cleaner trains as well as platform and station improvements
- New transport interchanges for the regional centres
- New Park and Ride at rail and Metrolink sites
- A new fares and ticketing system and improved passenger information

It is hoped that there will be a speaker from GMPTA to talk to our members about the Congestion Charge at the AGM. As the finer detail of the scheme has yet to be fully agreed why not come along and take this opportunity to add your point of view to this ongoing debate.

Useful Information

Manchester Advice

Manchester City Council's advice service offers guidance and information on benefits and tax credits, debt, housing, consumer rights, council services and basic immigration issues. They produce an information pack for pensioners containing advice on money, consumer rights and more. **Tel: 0161 234 5600** for more information.

Tax Help for Older People

Over-60's with a household income of around £15,000 or less can get 5 free independent tax advice. Call TOP on **0845 601 3321**

TAEN – Third Age and Employment Network

TAEN's aim is to help create an effective job market that works for people in the middle and later life. Call their information line for details of services for jobseekers. Call **0207 843 1590**

Community Alarm Service

These alarms are worn around the wrist or neck and give instant access to help. When you press the button, the Community Alarm Control Room can hear what is happening in your home and will react as appropriate.

To arrange for an assessment to see whether you are eligible for an alarm call Manchester City Council on **0161 255 8250**

Age Concern and Help the Aged provide similar alarm schemes at a cost.

Doorstep Crime

Greater Manchester police have been cracking down on bogus callers – Men, women or children who trick or confuse you so that they can gain entry to your home. Keep your door on a chain, always ask for ID, and phone the organisation they say they work for to check they're genuine. You don't have to let them in if you don't want to. If you have any suspicions about a caller, report them to them to the police on **0161 872 5050**. In an emergency or if the person is still in the area, call **999**

Nominated Neighbour Scheme

This scheme has been set up by the Greater Manchester Police and Manchester City Council to reduce doorstep crime. You choose a 'nominated neighbour' whom you trust to help you deal with people who knock on your door. To find out how to use the scheme, call your local police station on 0161 872 6633 and ask for the Crime Reduction Unit

Energywatch

The gas and electricity consumer watchdog gives advice on cutting energy costs and dealing with energy suppliers. Call **0845 906 0708**

Warm Front

If you own your home or rent from a private landlord and receive certain benefits, you may be eligible for a Warm Front grant to help pay for insulation and heating Call **0800 316 6011**

Home Improvement Agencies

Manchester Care and Repair and Anchor Staying Put are two not-for-profit agencies that help older people with repairs and improvements to their homes. They help organise repair work and run a free 'Handy Help' scheme that does small repairs for people on low incomes. Their Manchester Independent Living Scheme offers short-term help to older people who want to stay independent. Free safety assessments and equipment can be provided. They may be able to help you get financial assistance for essential home improvements. Call Manchester Care & Repair **0161 872 5500** or Anchor (South Manchester) **0161 872 7622**



JUNE'S POSTBAG

Hello again, following an accident and a stay in hospital I'm now back at home and on the road to recovery. It's been quite a few months now since I've been able to travel and it's really bought home to me just how hard it must be for a lot of people out there who don't feel well enough to get out and about.

I've really missed everyone at Shopmobility and my time at home has really made me realise just what a fantastic service they offer.

I can't wait until I'm able to travel again so I can get over to see them, share a cup of tea and a chat with the volunteers and customers, before going out around the city centre to try out a few of the new shops. And what's even better is that one of the volunteers will be with me and on-hand to help.

So if you feel like a trip into Manchester but it's all just a little too much to get across town, carry the shopping, etc, why don't you give Shopmobility a call, and don't worry if it's too far from your bus to them, remember they'll bring your equipment to you, anywhere in town.

Cheerio for now - June Latham