

Spring 2006

Newsletter



Hello Members and Friends,

We are approaching the time for our A.G.M. and what a year it has been, full of highs and lows!

There has been some real low points, Noreen, our only paid worker, was on long term sick for 15 months, and at one point I was not sure the service would continue. The high points? I received news that the Big Lottery bid I put in was successful (thanks to some help from friends)! **Most of all we owe a huge vote of thanks to our fantastic volunteers**, who kept the service going with very little support, as I was in the back office most of the time covering for Noreen, (as well as I could!) and I would like to welcome Noreen back as she returned to work just before Christmas.

We would like to encourage **all of you** to attend the A.G.M. as this is about **your** service. We also need to recruit new Members to join the Management Committee. If you are interested all we ask from you is a willingness to help Shopmobility Manchester, and a commitment to work on the Members behalf. If you have knowledge of accountancy, fundraising, computer skills, minute taking, disability issues, or at least be keen to learn and be involved wholeheartedly. You will need to attend at least one meeting a month and where required undertake some Committee tasks. Oh and did I mention, as well as being very worthwhile, it can be great fun!

A **great big thank you** to all who have given donations to Shopmobility this year, we are **so** grateful as we continue to strive to keep the service free to all. So those of you that can give a donation no matter how small (or how large) please, please, do!

As mentioned, we have received 3 years funding from the Big Lottery for our Volunteer Development Project. We have also received a grant for 2 new scooters and a powered/attendant wheelchair from Community Chest. Audrey our treasurer obtained a grant for computers, fax machine and other office equipment from Community Foundation. More recently Noreen has received a grant from the Community Chest towards the Newsletter and Open Day. We give our sincere thanks to those who have supported us. See you at the Annual General Meeting!

Kind Regards, Maura Jordon, your Chairperson

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Annual General Meeting and Open Day

It's that time of year again, "GREAT" I hear you say! "Buffet" I hear you say! "Raffle" I hear you say!

Shopmobility Manchester will be holding their 9th Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Monday 15th May, 2pm, at our premises in the Arndale Centre. Even though we normally provide a speaker and buffet, we are going all out this year!

We will be providing information stalls from Manchester Advice, Expert Patient Care, Disabled Living and others. We will also have someone providing holistic "taster" therapies, and our Guest Speaker will be Dennis "the Chemist" Gore.

There will be a raffle, don't forget your first ticket is free! Michael le Vell, who plays Kevin Webster from Coronation Street, will also be there to launch our Lottery Project, by handing over a cheque to our Treasurer, Audrey Sutton.

For those staying to take part in the AGM there will be our usual delicious buffet, and don't forget it will give you a chance to meet our new member of staff, Volunteers and Management Committee. So don't forget to return your reply slip!

Thanks to...

Everyone at Sage UK, whose employee Niki Jordon organised a dress down day and quiz. This proved to be a successful event, as not only did Niki raise awareness of our service with young work colleagues, she raised over £200.00 for Shopmobility Manchester. Well done!

Big Lottery Fund

Maura Jordon, our Chairperson was successful in applying for 3 years funding from the Big Lottery. This is a substantial grant, which will amount to £178,310, over a period of 3 years.

The grant is to develop our volunteer capacity and training by employing a Volunteer Co-ordinator to supervise the volunteers. The grant will pay for the following:-

- ★ The recruitment of a Volunteer Co-ordinator.
- ★ A Volunteer Co-ordinator for 3 years.
- ★ A portion of our Volunteer Expenses.
- ★ A portion of our general day-to-day running costs.
- ★ A work space/furniture for new employee and any related items.
- ★ At least two new computers and any peripherals.
- ★ The creation of a general information point in our shop, to better display leaflets. (Please note this is not an advice service.)
- ★ The Newsletter produced twice a year for over 3 years.
- ★ Training of volunteers.
- ★ A new Website and training on how to update this.

The project will be launched at our AGM.

Volunteer Escort Services

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 in.

Ask for one of our Volunteers to meet you with equipment when you book your scooter or wheelchair.

Volunteer Profile

This is a new feature of our Newsletter, where a volunteer will provide you with a little bit of information about themselves, as a way of introduction to our members and acknowledging their hard work. This edition will start off with Keith Moret.....



Keith or KP to his family and close friends. Has lived in Manchester since 1990 where he went to University. He has worked as a Volunteer on many different projects with the highlights being the Commonwealth Games in 2002. Keith has played tennis at Junior Wimbledon and climbed the highest active Volcano, "Cotopaxi". Keith now volunteers with Manchester Event Volunteers, Private Respite Care and of course Shopmobility. Keith provides a dog sitting/walking service and has a wealth of experience in retail, interior design, and has also trained as a Chef.

Keith's partner works in Geneva for the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. His Father is from France and his Mother is Scottish. He has a brother, sister, 4 nieces, 2 nephews and is soon to be a great uncle! Perish the thought!

He loves to work hard but also knows how to relax! In his spare time he tends to his allotment, takes part in a local conservation project, enjoys food and fine wine, plays golf, and raises money for local charities. He plays tenor sax to completely unwind and even played a solo at the Kneller Hall, the British Army School of Music. Keith is an avid collector of 78 records; so don't throw them away you can send them to a good home! His pet hates are rude people, spitting and popular TV..... Phew!

So what do Volunteers do at Shopmobility Manchester?

Volunteers - our valuable resource, provide their time, commitment and hard work for free. They are the people that you normally meet when you use our service and they help with the following:-

- ★ Taking bookings and general phone calls.
- ★ Reception duties.
- ★ Registering new members and processing membership details.
- ★ Putting together information and membership packs.
- ★ Taking equipment to the bus, train, taxi and tram stops or car park. Come rain, come shine!
- ★ Escort our visually impaired members.
- ★ Helping with getting our newsletter out, by sticking on 8,000 labels and packing over 4,000 envelopes!
- ★ Training new members on how to use equipment.
- ★ Dealing with difficult situations, such as scooters not being returned on time or missing in action!

The list is endless!

Sometimes our customers do not realise all the hard work that our volunteers do and if it wasn't for them our service may not be available.

New Volunteer Co-ordinator

With funding from the Big Lottery, Shopmobility Manchester has recruited a new member of staff, who will be required to recruit, train and manage the volunteers.

His name is Adrien Wright, and he has had over 7 years experience with working with Volunteers. His employment will commence around the beginning of May and you will be able to meet him at the AGM.

Transport News from

Free public transport for older and disabled people in Greater Manchester.

More than half a million older and disabled people will be able to travel for free on buses, trains and trams after 9.30am from 1st April 06.

Disabled people and those aged 60 and over who already hold a travel permit to travel at a reduced rate on public transport in Greater Manchester will be able to use their existing permit to travel for free.

It is estimated that up to 80,000 people who will be eligible for free travel do not already have a permit. They can apply for one at GMPTE Travelshops or local council offices. They will need to take a photo, proof of age (e.g. pension book or birth certificate) and proof of address (e.g. rent book or utility bill).

Some disabled people are currently entitled to free travel on public transport in Greater Manchester at all times of the day. They will continue to be eligible for this entitlement.

Over 85% of the 3,000 Ring and Ride users who were consulted agreed that the concessionary fare for the service should remain at 50p. This will be subject to review later this year.

For further information about the free travel scheme you can call Traveline on, 0870 608 2 608. Textphone users should ring 0870 241 2216.

New Transport Interchange at Shudehill

A new multi-million pound covered Interchange opened to the public on 29th January. Located close to the Printworks and the Arndale Centre, more than a thousand buses will pass through daily coming mainly from the north and west of Greater Manchester. There is also a tram stop and the free Metroshuttle Bus stops here every 10 minutes. There are cafes, shops, a Travelshop and accessible toilets. For further information call Traveline on 0870 608 2 608.

New Premises for Shopmobility!

If you have been to the Arndale Centre recently you may have noticed that the refurbishment work on the new development has progressed. So much so, that we will be moving premises as part of the final phase of the work in September/October 06. Sorry, we do not have a date as yet. The unit will be located within the Arndale Centre, close by the Car Park exit and Arndale Service entrance on Shudehill

Prudential who own the Arndale Centre, has kindly donated these new premises to Shopmobility Manchester, which also includes a full fit out of our unit. We are very excited about the move, as not only will we have improved facilities the unit will be at ground level and more accessible for our members.

Arndale Centre/High Street Car Park

We would like to apologise for all the problems with various contractual works being carried out in the car park.

The disabled bays on level 5 are not available at the moment as the area has been resurfaced and needs re-marking.

There are disabled bays on level 7 available, though one section of this isn't marked correctly. It isn't clear when this will be completed and it may depend on our move to new premises in September. We are working to improve this.

After 17th May the lifts to the lower mall (next to our shop) will be closed for refurbishment of the mall/lift area. If you cannot access the escalator to the lower mall outside our shop, or the lifts in BHS, please let us know so that we can meet you with equipment on the upper mall.

Latest We hear that there will be a Job's Fair for Disabled People at Manchester Town Hall on Thursday 18th May 06, 11.00am – 4.30pm.

Shopmobility Manchester is open
Monday-Saturday 9.30am – 5.30pm.
Sundays and Bank Holidays 12pm – 6pm.
Telephone : 0161 839 4060