

The Wiltshire & Bath Independent Living Trust Ltd



**The Independent Living Centre
St George's Road
Semington, Wiltshire
BA14 6JQ**

01380 871007

Annual Report 2015/2016

**Email: welcome.ilc.semington@googlemail.com
Website: www.ilc.org.uk**

Reg No. 2535179 Charity No. 1000659



The Wiltshire & Bath Independent Living Trust Ltd

President: Dr A K Clarke F.R.C.P.

Patrons: Mr John Bush O.B.E
Lady Ruth Hawley
Dr Andrew Murrison M.P.

Board of Trustees: Mr Brian Wade*
Mrs Sandra Harding*
Mr Aubrey Winter* - resigned October 2015
Mrs Janet Bragg
Dr Jeremy Bradbrooke
Sir Alec Morris K.B.E. C.B.
Dr Nigel Harris
Mr Henry Lumley
Mrs Lisa Fife
Mrs Liz Jeggo
Mr John Hurn - appointed October 2015
Mr John Stewart - appointed October 2015

Company Secretary: Mrs Julie Hervin

*Members of the Management Committee



The Wiltshire & Bath Independent Living Trust Ltd

CONTENTS

Chairman's Report

Treasurer's Report

**Senior Occupational Therapist's
Report**

Benefits Advisor's Report

Chairman's Report 2015-16

We have had another successful year. But it has also been a very busy year for our Staff and the Management Committee. In addition, in June 2016 one of our two admin staff, Ann, decided she was ready to move on to new fields after completing twelve years with us. It took us three months to find someone skilled enough to replace her but I'm glad to say we now have Chantelle with us. Also, as you will hear later our Senior Occupational Therapist, Janey, has told us that she plans to retire at Christmas.

One major cause of pressure within the Centre has been that we had embarked on a major programme of improving all elements of our fire safety within the building and these projects all came to completion in the last two years. We have installed fire doors throughout the building, replaced the old fire escapes with brand new ones, improved the alarm system, installed new emergency evacuation lighting and improved access out of the building to places of safety. Obviously this has resulted in a very significant reduction in our cash reserves which we shall need to restore gradually in the coming years. In addition our tenants have spent time developing emergency evacuation plans for every member of their staff.

We were very pleased to welcome one new tenant during the year. Healthcare 2000 Clinic has taken over the suite of offices on the first floor and is relocating from Trowle House in Wingfield. We are pleased to welcome Dr. Michael Copland-Griffiths and his team and we hope they will settle in quickly with us.

We are continuing to work successfully with Medequip who are Wiltshire Council's selected contractors and our association with them has produced a number of improvements for us during the year.

In conclusion I would like to thank our staff for supporting the Trustees so well again this year especially given all the pressure and changes we have suffered. I would also like to acknowledge the tremendous effort that Sandra, our Treasurer, put in while we were without one of our admin officers. She really kept the Centre going.

Brian Wade,
Chairman

Treasurer's Report 2015-16

Copies of the accounts will be available for you to collect afterwards. They have been prepared by our Accountants, Munro Audit Limited, with their usual meticulous attention to detail. To comply with the Charity Commission and Companies House regulations, they are somewhat lengthy nowadays but you can get a good picture of what goes on here by looking at the final page.

The spending policy mentioned in my previous report has continued by updating the building in accordance with fire regulations. We have replaced all the fire exit doors throughout the building. Fitted Metal Georgian glass fire rated windows near all the fire escapes. During the last 2 years we have spent a total of £100,520 on improvements to the property.

We have had a satisfactory year and ended the year with an operational surplus of £12,873. Several invoices relating to the fire regulations work in the previous year were paid in this financial year.

I am happy to report we obtained funds from the Big Lottery Grant Fund of £9228.00. to enable us to provide an accessible toilet near the front door.

Medequip and ourselves continue to work well together and only have a few small problems to discuss at our quarterly meetings between members of the Management Committee and Senior Medequip Staff. We were pleased to see several of their senior staff attending our Open Day earlier in the year. The retail unit which is in the coffee lounge continues to be very successful.

As always we are grateful to all our staff for the support they give to the Trustees.

Sandra Harding,
Treasurer

Senior Occupational Therapist's Report 2015-16

The service is highly valued by all the communities we serve. We are increasingly busy and continue to offer a unique service.

Our aims are to provide impartial information and assessments to members of the public and to provide training opportunities for the Occupational Therapist, Physio Therapists and other allied Health Professional within the areas for which we receive funding. These are the whole of Wiltshire, Banes and North East Somerset.

Clients, Carers, relatives or health professionals can refer by telephone or email, if an assessment is not required information can be sent out by post or email. Appointments need to be pre booked with our Occupational Therapist or Trusted assessor. The assessments are for 1 hour, during which we aim to address as many difficulties of daily living and try as many items of equipment as possible. Our objective is to help people to remain independent and safe in their own homes. Our professional advice enables people to make informed decisions about which item of equipment or aid will best meet their needs. The majority of our clients have little idea of what is available and find an assessment and resulting advice invaluable.

Clients may have seen an Occupational Therapist in hospital or in their homes but have found themselves not eligible for the aids they would like and are still struggling to manage independently at home. Some have been to specialist equipment shops and have not felt confident about making a decision or have been unhappy with advice they received.

Being able to try out the equipment in an unpressurised environment with a health professional enables clients to make that informed choice. We know that an informed choice helps people to continue to live independently, safely and with a good quality of life. Being able to give clients time and therefore the opportunity for a comprehensive assessment addressing difficulties before they occur, reduces falls and the need for hospital admissions.

The ILC relies on the good will of retailers and manufacturers to provide us with the equipment we use for our assessments. This is crucial as it enables us to maintain our impartiality. We are also grateful to Medequip, Aster Living and many voluntary organisations for their invaluable support.

As well as providing assessments we also have a comprehensive resource of information including access to the DLF data base. Information when requested can be sent out to clients and fellow professionals. We also offer information on specialist holidays and we publish a Days out booklet containing information on local attractions and the facilities they offer e.g. wheelchair accessibility, and scooter or wheelchair hire.

The training and learning opportunities we provide for Occupational Therapists and other allied health professionals are well attended. They help OT's update their knowledge and skills and help them meet criteria for their Continual Professional Development. We have held study days on Dementia, Parkinson's Disease and M.S, as well as equipment evaluation days where therapist have the opportunity to compare a range of equipment to use with different patient groups these have included transfer aids, posture and pressure management, bariatric equipment, shower toilets, chair beds, complex hoisting, transfers and ramping.

The centre is also able to assist OT's in making decisions about adaptations or before ordering specialist equipment for their clients. The centre provides the opportunity to try the equipment with their clients before ordering enabling therapists to get it right first time saving time and the purchasing of expensive equipment which then is not helpful or suitable for the client.

The ILC has had a very positive year with a very successful open day in July. We have attended many outside events such as senior health and wellbeing events hosted by the council and health service and events organised by specific patient groups and voluntary organisations. These events are well received and not only help to raise awareness of the services but also offer insight into the range of aids available.

From the evidence obtained from our feedback forms, clients highly value their visit and find their assessment has helped them make important decisions. Many people find items which they had not known about that will make a huge difference to their independence and safety. The ILC makes a very positive impact on enabling clients to look after themselves in their own homes often without the intervention of carers or relatives.

We at the ILC look forward to many more years of providing this valuable service.

Janey Hillier,
Occupational Therapist

Benefits Advisor's Report (1st April 2015 – 31st March 2016)

This has been another very busy year for benefits advice and there is a high demand for the service from the public as well as statutory and voluntary organisations. At times we have had to temporarily close the referral list and signpost people to other sources of advice and support. In addition, since January 2016 I have reduced my working hours to 14 per week for personal reasons although I do occasionally do some overtime in order to catch up!

In order to try and see as many clients as possible, it was decided that I no longer offer home visits so that I could maximise the number of clients I can see. This has proved to be successful with the majority of clients still able to attend the Centre and I am able to keep up the numbers despite working less hours.

A large part of my work is helping clients to complete Personal Independence Payment claim forms. This is a benefit based on someone's disability and is not means tested or based on ability to work. The next largest category is Employment and Support Allowance which is a work-replacement benefit. I advise and support clients from the initial claim through the appeals process and representation at an appeal hearing. I have twenty years' experience of this type of work and have watched the benefits system change quite dramatically. I am glad I can help people through the complexity of benefits advice and representation. The work is very varied and I really enjoy meeting and helping many people.

Types of Claims –face to face

Personal Independence Payment – 83

Employment and Support Allowance – 34

Attendance Allowance – 13

Adult Disability Living Allowance – 8

Child Disability Living Allowance – 20]

Carers Allowance – 8

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction – 9

Benefit Checks – 5

Other (Pension Credit, Tax Credit, Discretionary Housing Payment, Blue Badge) – 8

Phone Advice – 61 clients

Appeals

This year has been fairly quiet for appeal hearings although I have attended a few. I am not sure of the reason for this as in previous years I have prepared submissions and attended hearings for many clients. It does mean that I have been able to see more clients as preparing for an appeal is quite time-consuming. I have attended a few hearings however, and I'm sure in the future the numbers will increase.

Value of Awards

So far I have helped clients to obtain £436,597.91 in this tax year. The amount is not the true total as there are clients who are still waiting for a decision on their claim.

This includes £43,000 where a client was found not to not liable to repay this amount of benefit overpayment following an appeal hearing. I felt this was a just decision.

Sheila Bluer,
Benefits Advisor