

The Wiltshire & Bath Independent Living Trust Ltd



**The Independent Living Centre
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Annual Report 2016/2017

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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.
Ms Michelle Donelan M.P. – appointed 03/17

Board of Trustees: Mr Brian Wade*
Mrs Sandra Harding*
Mr John Stewart* – resigned 03/17
Dr Jeremy Bradbrooke
Mrs Janet Bragg
Dr Nigel Harris
Mr Henry Lumley
Sir Alec Morris K.B.E. C.B.
Mrs Lisa Fife
Mrs Liz Jeggo
Mr John Hurn
Mr Chris Hubbard – appointed 06/16

Company Secretary: Mrs Julie Hervin

*Members of the Management Committee



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Chairman's Report 2016-17

In many ways this will be a sad AGM for me as it will mark my retirement from the Management Committee after 25 years.

I served as the Hon. Treasurer for many years and then as Chair for the last few. Looking back it is hard to remember how basic the Centre was at the beginning and how our finances were on a knife-edge most years. Some years I had to persuade our bank to give us a loan to keep us going until our next funding from the Council in April and another year some of the Trustees gave us interest free loans to keep us going.

I am so grateful to the various Trustees who have served over these years for their advice and support. Perhaps I may especially mention the late Jeannette Greer who was our Hon. Chief Executive for many years and only retired when in her mid-eighties and Aubrey Winter who was a source of wise advice over many years. I am also grateful to Dr. Tony Clarke who has been our President for even more than 25 years. He has been a valued support and has always stepped forward to help us when we have hit one or other of the various crises we have had confront.

I must also acknowledge the support I have enjoyed from all the paid staff I have worked with. I think our present team are a wonderful dedicated bunch of people. And Sandra who joined us a Trustee and has taken over the role of Treasurer so well and who, along with a few of our other Trustees, is now taking the Centre forward for the future. I am glad that we now enjoy a balanced budget, have reasonable reserves and have managed to improve the building so much over the years.

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. In the near future we shall have to tender for a new contract. This will cause a considerable workload for our Trustees. Now, as a matter of fact, we do have a few vacancies on our Board of Trustees so, if you feel you might like to join us, do please have a word with one of us after the meeting.

So, all in all, I am very happy to stand down now knowing that the Centre is in safe hands for the future. I'm pleased to say I shall still be staying on as a member of the Board of Trustees.

Brian Wade
Chair

Hon Treasurer's Report 2016- 2017

Copies of the accounts will be available for you to collect afterwards. They have been prepared by our Accountants, Munro Audit Limited. 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 as mentioned in the previous two reports where we spent just over £100,000 on updating the building in accordance with fire regulations has reduced this year and our spending totalled £23926. This covered emergency lighting and smoke detectors throughout the building. An Inspection and Testing of the Electrical Installation was carried out, also an Asbestos Management & Refurbishment Survey Report.

We have had a satisfactory year making a surplus of £7853 slightly lower than the previous year.

The Medequip Contract was extended by Wiltshire Council at the beginning of 2017 for a further 2 years. We work well together and still meet with their senior staff on a quarterly basis. The retail unit continues to be successful and is run by ILC and Medequip Staff.

At the end of this financial year we lost our contract with Somerset CCG as they have decided to have small units throughout the County.

The suite of empty offices has now been leased by Healthcare 2000 Clinic and we are pleased to welcome Michael Copland Griffiths and his staff to the Independent Living Centre. Unfortunately Carer Support Wiltshire has given up a small room and notice on a large room so we are now looking for new tenants.

Regretfully two of our staff Ann and Janey left for pastures new but we have had the pleasure of welcoming Chris & Chantelle to our team and I would like to thank them and all the staff for the help they give the Trustees.

On a personal level I would like to express my gratitude to Brian for the help he has given me since I joined the Board of Trustees and succeeded him as Hon Treasurer 4 years ago. I am sure all the staff and trustees join with me in wishing him a very happy retirement.

Sandra Harding
Hon. Treasurer

Occupational Therapist's Annual Report 2016/2017

The Independent Living Centre continues to be a valuable resource for residents and professionals in Wiltshire, Bath and North East Somerset.

The ILC enables people to achieve independence through assessment of individual need. Anyone can refer or self-refer to the centre. We see clients with a wide range of medical conditions and often those with complex or multiple needs. We have a wide range of equipment including: manual handling aids, shower toilets, kitchen aids, profiling beds, riser recliners, assistive technology, mobility aids including wheelchairs and scooters, stair lifts, toilet and bathing equipment and examples of level access showers.

Service overview

In the current climate there is more pressure on hospitals and care services as a larger percentage of people are living longer and wish to stay living in their own homes. Equipment for independent living may seem initially straightforward; look up the problem, find the solution. However, with a growing amount of companies retailing products online and conflicting advice the process can be highly confusing. The ILC excels in bridging this gap and continues to be a unique centre for holistic assessment of independent living needs. We have a friendly team responding to a wide range of enquiries on a daily basis. The wide range of equipment and our ability to offer dedicated professional time in appointments helps to ensure that clients have a positive, unpressurised experience from start to finish.

Professional Learning Experiences

The ILC organises and provides professional learning opportunities through Equipment Forums and Study days. Over the past year we have held study sessions: Dementia, MS, Parkinson's and Bariatric care. We have held equipment training on: Slings, posture and pressure management, shower toilets, chairbeds and transfers. There were 2 Forums held on Ramping as the topic was very popular. There is always a high level of interest and attendance; we are also pleased to have received positive feedback from these events.

Areas of growth

An area of growth over the last year has been the number of telephone enquiries from both professionals and clients. The number of complex enquiries has also risen. Although it is preferable for clients to be seen face to face for assessment, sometimes this is not always possible for the client who may be unwell or unable to travel. With access to the online DLF database and time spent by the OT and OTA to support problem solving individual

enquiries we have been able to keep on top of providing a comprehensive response within a good time frame.

Another area of growth has been the Assistive Technology Room. More items have been added for demonstration to support clients with acquired memory difficulties and dementia. Safety in the home for loved ones is often top of the list of priorities but little maybe known about what might be able to help. Items such as: GPS trackers, chair and bed sensors, property exit alarms, easy to use phones, signage, day clocks with easy display time and date, medication dispensers and a range of personal alarms. An aim for the coming year is to keep awareness raising and promoting this area in assessments.

Raising our profile

The ILC has worked solidly towards awareness raising with a lot of hard work done by the ILC staff and trustees to keep raising awareness of the ILC services. Over the last year, the ILC had a presence at a wide range of events and talks covering BANES and Wiltshire. Inter-agency connections are very valuable and enable us to increase our awareness of the range of local groups and services that might be crucial support links for our clients.

Positive relationships

The ILC is thankful to Medequip, Aster Living, local retailers, charities and other services for their continued support. With these good relationships we have been able to update our stock demonstration items to keep in touch with the current equipment market and keep our literature and resources up to date and comprehensive for information sharing.

The Armed Forces Event in Trowbridge allowed a good presence for the ILC with Medequip to support referrals to the centre and support the local community.

Client Feedback

From the evidence obtained in our feedback forms, clients report how the ILC has supported with important decisions and provided them with the opportunity to try out equipment in a friendly, professional setting. Some have commented on how surprised they were to see such a wide range of equipment and what a difference they feel it will make to their life.

Christine Bott
Occupational Therapist

Benefits Advisor Report

(1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017)

There is a high demand for benefits advice because the system is complicated, people are struggling to understand what they are entitled to and many need assistance to complete the forms which are not straightforward. Unfortunately, there is limited help available and advice and support is mainly provided by charitable organisations. The Independent Living Centre continues to offer a free benefits advice service which includes advising people what benefits they are entitled to, helping them to complete claim forms and advising how to challenge decisions. We can also provide representation at Tribunal hearings.

Every year the system seems to get more complicated. Universal Credit was initially introduced in April 2013 and is being applied throughout the country in stages. It was intended by the Government to simplify the benefits system by combining six means tested benefits under one Universal Credit. In my view it has introduced a further layer of complexity because there are still many non-means tested benefits which remain outside Universal Credit so the name is misleading. Claimants are still required to make claims to different agencies within the Dept for Work and Pensions and even many of the current means tested benefits remain available to certain claimants.

In my report last year, I said that it had been a quiet year for appeals. That has changed dramatically this year. There has been a noticeable increase in the amount of request for help to appeal against a decision – mainly Personal Independence Payment and to a lesser extent for Employment and Support Allowance. I believe the reason for the increase is that people believe the reasons given for refusing PIP are unfair. This has proved to be the case in the majority of appeals that I have helped clients with because the success rate is high.

Writing submission for appeals takes up a lot of time because there is a lot of paperwork to read through and analyse and I want to give people the best chance of success. In several tribunal hearings, the Judge has pointed out that my submission was helpful with their decision making! Writing a submission can take three hours or more. When I attend a hearing with a vulnerable client it takes half a day, including the journey to the venue. This means I have less time to take on new clients. However, we have hired Desna who works one day a week and she is able to help manage the many requests for phone advice and form filling that we get on a weekly basis.

Appeals

I have helped clients with 47 appeals. Of these 28 were successful, 5 were not successful, one is with the Upper Tribunal, one was withdrawn by the client, one transferred to another agency and 11 are still waiting to be heard.

Value of Awards

So far this year £364,172 has been awarded to the clients I have advised. This is not the full amount because there are several outstanding appeals. Also I am not always able to contact clients to find out the outcome of their claim.

Sheila Bluer
Benefits Advisor