



# Access Bedford

Annual Report 2015/16



## Chair's Report

I want to welcome you all to our first Access Bedford AGM, it is amazing just saying that as I never thought that we would come this far. Access Bedford have set up different social events to suit all ages within the Bedford D/deaf Community.

My proudest moment was watching the people from the D/deaf community talking and sharing their views to chief executives at our first D/deaf information day and at the Meet the Candidates event.

Even though I knew that there was a need for the D/deaf community I never thought it would become so popular so quickly and I had to learn different complex things for the community.

My biggest surprise was how supportive Bedford has been no matter who we spoke to they were willing to help with anything they could. Also how popular our Facebook page has become and people use it advertise their events.

I think Access Bedford have made a difference in people lives we have covered all ages there is something for all of them. They don't have to stay at home they can come and socialise and doing this has empowered them to have a better quality of life.

This has set me wondering where are the D/deaf people going to go for support now? Is this something we as Access Bedford can do in the future. Will this affect their mental health?

Access Bedford is hoping to work with East London Foundation Trust (ELFT) with regards to Mental Health issues and counselling for D/deaf people. For 2016/17 I want us to continue with our work and for more volunteers from Bedford to take on more responsibility to support their community.

# Access Bedford The Charity

Access Bedford's aim is to *work with the D/deaf and hard of hearing community to make Bedford more accessible*. Access Bedford is set up to promote social inclusion among members of the D/deaf and hard of hearing community living in Bedford and the surrounding area. We will do this by

- 1 – Raising public awareness of the issues affecting D/deaf people
- 2 – Campaigning for the promotion of British Sign Language to be on an equal footing to spoken and written English
- 3 – Providing recreational facilities and opportunities for D/deaf people

These are known as our Charity Objects.

We will empower, support and involve the D/deaf community to improve services locally.

The organisation started in April 2014 as a constituted group, moving to registered charity status in July 2015 as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).



Access Bedford has 3 trustees who operate as voting members of the CIO.

Suzie Sampson	Chair
Catherine Wright	Treasurer
Alison Crook	Secretary

Within the CIO constitution for Access Bedford, the three trustees can serve until the AGM in 2019. They meet as a committee every 4 – 6 weeks and make decisions on the work of the charity to help meet the charity objects. There are no paid staff employed by Access Bedford.

During 2015-2016 there has been one non-voting member who has supported the charity and their work by attending meetings and supporting events – Emma Sparrow. Non-voting members will be elected at each AGM.

Trustees and non-voting members are supported with access to induction and training. Meetings are in BSL with a voice over where needed.

## Priorities in 2015 - 2016

1. Sharing information with the D/deaf Community
  - Monthly newsletter
  - Social media & website
  - E-mail updates
  - Factsheets & interpreter cards
2. Running events with the D/deaf Community
  - Social events
  - Information events
  - Conferences
3. Improving services with and for the D/deaf Community
  - Deaf Awareness and Basic BSL training
  - Deafhelp emails, interpreter cards
  - Representation and advocacy at strategic forums

Access  
Bedford



## Secretary's Report

I had no idea that the learning curve I would experience by taking on the position of secretary within Access Bedford, would be so steep.

The barriers D/deaf people face have been a deep rooted part of my life always as a child of Deaf parents and then as a professional Sign Language Interpreter.

To have the opportunity to be part of such a passionate group of likeminded women really making a difference for the D/deaf community, has been life changing. Access Bedford is a great example of the positive things that can be achieved when knowledge and experience are shared.

Most proud moment - When the Young at Heart group asked where the next months newsletter was! It meant that the D/deaf community were reading it and finding it was useful! Something I learned through Access Bedford - People and services genuinely want to support us and the D/deaf Community, they just want to know how!

Something I was surprised about - Just how little Deaf awareness there is outside the D/deaf community and that Deaf awareness does not appear to be included in staff training or inductions across most services. The difference we have made - The GP interpreting process cards. A massive barrier broken down with one sheet of paper!

My hope for 2016/17 - That D/deaf and Hard of Hearing parents / carers will genuinely have full access to their child's education and have confidence in working with schools to achieve this, backed up now by the processes that are in place. Also working together with providers to ensure that support for mental health issues is local, timely and delivered in Sign Language where appropriate. It would be a good thing to get more of the D/deaf community involved in the research and activities required to make change happen.

# Access Bedford

## Our First Year

### MEET THE CANDIDATES

The only deaf hustings event of its kind, attended by 50 community members and 8 candidates, questions included topics such as education, Access to Work, Riverside North development, jobs, money and more. Two Access Bedford members went on to count votes at the Mayoral Election and a number of the candidates have stayed in contact.



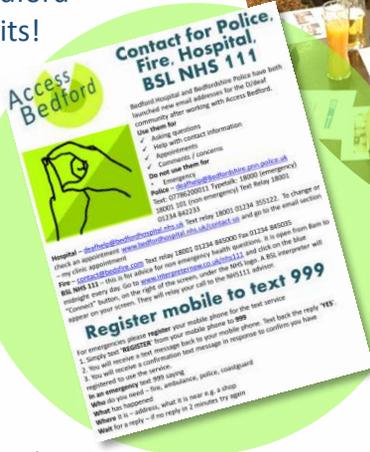
### YOUNG AT HEART

Young at Heart is an over 55s social club that meets at the Salvation Army Café at the Woolpack Hub in Bedford on the first Friday of every month from 12 – 2pm. Started with only 6 members we now have over 20 regularly attending coming from Bedford and beyond!



### MEET THE MAYOR

15 Access Bedford members went to see Mayor Dave Hodgson at his Parlour learning about the history of Bedford and getting to try out his outfits!



### DEAFHELP EMAIL

Deafhelp emails in place at Bedford Hospital thanks to joint work with Healthwatch Bedford Borough and Bedfordshire Police. Audiology has a pager system thanks to your feedback!

### QUIZ NIGHTS

Quiz Nights at The Bedford Golf Club are accessible to the D/deaf Community every other month thanks to volunteer time from Access Bedford with questions on a screen and BSL interpreter.

## Conference Conclusions

### The Education Conference

DEAF teachers' CONTRIBUTION  
SUPPORT talent ideas  
ACCESS CONFIDENCE  
LANGUAGE hear CULTURE  
COMMUNITY  
EDUCATION

Catherine W... , Access Bedford  
Treasurer

Councillor ... , Portfolio Holder  
for Edu... Bedford Borough Council



## EDUCATION CONFERENCE

Keynote speakers from DCAL, NDCS joined local representatives from Bedford Borough Council in discussing key education issues for deaf children and their families.

Attended by 60 plus professionals, parents and community members.

Due to the conference, the process for interpreter support for parents

has been confirmed with a new information sheet produced by Bedford Borough Council and Access Bedford

Bedford



## EMERGENCY SERVICES DAY

Held at Fire HQ Kempston in 2015 and Police HQ Kempston in 2016 over 35 people attended, learning about the control centre, registering their mobiles for 999 text messages and talking one to one with Fire and Police staff about emergency situations. Due to the event, 2 members have used the 999 text system and Pedius is actively used by a number of Access Bedford members.



## DEAF PARENTS INFORMATION CARD

Access Bedford with Bedford Borough Council's Sensory and Communication Support Team (Education) have developed a new information card in March 2015 for D/deaf parents and schools to support communication and access.

Following feedback and suggestions at the Access Bedford Deaf Education Conference, the card makes clear the responsibilities that both the School and D/deaf parents have with regard to accessing communication including who pays for a BSL interpreter if one is needed.



## DEAF SOCIALS

Deaf Socials take place every other month at the Kings Arm Pub in Bedford with up to 40 Access Bedford members attending to catch up, socialise and celebrate together.

# Access Bedford

## Our First Year

### SCIENCE LAB

In March 2016 over 100 people took part in the first BSL Science Choir signing the periodic table!

Thanks to our sign language advisor Emma Caswell for helping us. You can find out more at <https://accessbedford.wordpress.com/2016/03/12/bsl-science-choir/>



### SPRING WALK

Fundraising for Access Bedford with their Spring Walk, over 50 D/deaf community members came from all over to walk Harrold Country Park in March 2016. Thanks to the Deaf Spring Walk group for donating the proceeds to Access Bedford!



### SIGN CAFE

Meeting on the third Sunday of every month, the Sign Café gives BSL students, hearing parents and the D/deaf community a chance to meet up and practice their sign language.

### DEAF BALL

In Nov 2015 Over 85 people came with their best dresses and suits and enjoyed a delicious 3 course dinner, selfie corner, sweet bar, had their photo's taken by the official photographer and picked up their Winter Ball keyring as a memory of the event. More photos are at our facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/accessbedford>  
Lots of local companies and organisations donated to a raffle that made £155 for Access Bedford – a great start for 2016 as this will cover the costs of interpreter support at one of our events next year.





**Richard Fuller MP** has been supporting the D/deaf community before Access Bedford started with issues regarding Access to Work. Working with the committee, the first Deaf Day in November 2014 took place with D/deaf people meeting with chief executives and service providers which gave us our first outline of local issues.

We held a “meet the MP evening where Richard described the voting process and why it was important, leading to the first ever “meet the candidates” hustings devoted to the D/deaf community in England! Richard has continued to support us by bringing up questions in parliament that relate to the D/deaf community and also involving us in a meeting with the Skills Minister recently to discuss the barriers that D/deaf young people experience in gaining apprenticeships.

After the Deaf Day we struck up a great working relationship with **Bedfordshire Police**, particularly Jane Aspin who has been instrumental in providing information and support for both our “Emergency Services days”, ensuring that the D/deaf community are registered with the emergency services and understand how to get help. The most recent day was held at Police HQ in Kempston where firearms and working dogs were also showcased and a look at the new control room was organised. Suzie has taught Jane and 11 other PCSO’s / PC’s level one in British Sign Language. This along with the direct Deafhelp email address have changed the accessibility of our local Police force in Bedford Borough.



Since the original Deaf Day we have worked very closely with **Bedford Borough Council** and are now involved in the Equality and Diversity Network, Community Network and Access Group meetings. We have worked closely with Children’s Services to produce our “schools procedure for D/deaf parents” leaflet and to discuss provision in the Borough. Gayle Leeson and Education Portfolio Holder Cllr Henry Vann contributed to our “Education Conference” in September last year where we were able to share information on the complexities of English and Sign Language and how that affects the development of D/deaf children, with local education providers and others who work with the D/deaf community. The Mayor welcomed the D/deaf community to his parlour, to explain the history of the elected Mayoral post in Bedford. Two of our young people were involved in the Bedford Borough Youth Cabinet and provided the national BSL filmed version of the “Make your Mark” campaign. We also worked with Youth Resources to set up the Access Bedford Youth club which has gone on to merge with the open access club at Kempston Youth Centre, a great example of inclusion and engagement.

## Access Bedford *Our Partnerships*



We have a strong relationship with **Healthwatch Bedford Borough** who we are in touch regularly about the health issues that affect the D/deaf community. Emma Freda from Healthwatch Bedford Borough has become a real advocate of the D/deaf community in Bedford and passionately fights for their rights to equality. With Healthwatch we have set up the hospital Deafhelp email address, produced the GP interpreter cards, having established procedures through NHS England, with Emma ensuring that all providers understand their obligation to make their information accessible.



# Access Bedford

## Our Partnerships



Bedford Association  
of the Deaf

**The Bedford Golf Club** have been very supportive by opening up their regular quiz night to the D/deaf community. This has involved considerable work by Access Bedford to make the quiz accessible using TV screens, interpreters and printed material and is proving to be a very popular night out! The Golf Club have also taken up our offer of Deaf awareness and basic BSL training and all their staff make the effort to warmly welcome the D/deaf community at the many events we have held there.

**BPHA** responded to community feedback very quickly by arranging a one day Deaf awareness course for their front line staff, approving an Interpreter booking form that can be presented by the Deaf person to the service desk and also developing their “chat” option on the BPHA website, making it easier for D/deaf people to contact them.

**Beds Fire Rescue** supported us our first Emergency Services Day where they provided a look at the control room and allowed our D/deaf members to practice using the emergency text 999 services.

**Bedford Free School** have supported all our events, helped us to pay for interpreters for the Education conference and set up a basic sign language course for students.

Bedford cafes have been supportive with **Kiosk at the Park** keen to involve us in their signed story time, **The Woolpack Hub** providing a monthly room fro Young at Heart, **La Piazza** welcomed our Sign Café members in the Summer supporting students to practice and polish up their skills moving to **Coffee Republic** when the weather got to cold outside! **The Kings Arms** pub has also provided a great venue for our Deaf Socials every other month.



In arts and leisure, Rachael from **Rogan’s Books** has been very keen to include books with Deaf characters, held a Signed story time and will have a trial family sign language course happening in the shop very soon. **Bedford Film Festival** included “The Tribe” a powerful film in Ukrainian sign language and **Cineworld** have weekly subtitled screenings of new films. **Bed Pop** saw the first BSL Science Choir with a video rendition of the periodic table in BSL! The **University of Bedfordshire** also provided signed theatrical performances in their timetable of shows. Finally **Slimming World** has supported 7 members from Access Bedford to attend being deaf friendly. **Beds on Sunday** has continued to support our work with regular features in their paper.



## Treasurer's Report

I remember my first conversation with Suzie at the college about eight or nine years ago, that I would like to help or be involved with the D/deaf Community to improve their needs. I love to help people and to make sure they get the right equal service as hearing people get.

Access Bedford has change my life – I am meeting new people and learnt so much and help my confidence grow and grow.

What is most important is deaf education for deaf children who attend mainstream school. I have learnt so much including new healthy lifestyle skills thanks to communication access with Slimming World. As treasurer I have learnt new skills about fundraising, managing accounts and how to make Access Bedford a success now and in the future.

We have had lots of great support this year and would like to thank the people who have supported us with money, time, advice, printing, volunteering and more.

This year we have been financially supported by grants from Bedford Deaf Club (Bedford Association of the Deaf), Bedford Borough Council and The Harpur Trust. The Bedford Borough Strategic Partnership has supported with a grant for printing which we have used for newsletters and event materials, Bedford Free School,

Bedford Borough Council and Bedford Deaf Club supported by paying for interpreters at events and Bedford Girls School, The Woolpack Hub, Bedford College and the Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes Collaborative have provided free venues for events. Many people have kindly donated through fundraising and buying tickets for our big social events.

Access Bedford does not have a reserves policy in place at present. The annual income does not meet the threshold for external auditing.

## Access Bedford The Money

Access Bedford does not have any debts, guarantees or liabilities. An asset log detailing equipment is maintained by the trustees. Charity trustees have complied with their duty to have due regard to the guidance on public benefit published by the commission in exercising their powers or duties. Detailed accounts can be shared on request.

### Youth Club Account

Receipts (money in)	£3030
Payments (money out)	£2587
<b>Balance</b>	<b>£443</b>

*youth club*

### Access Bedford Account

Receipts (money in)	£7441
Payments (money out)	£4871
<b>Balance</b>	<b>£2570</b>

Access Bedford

THANK YOU  
Access Bedford

to our funders



**BEDFORD**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL



**BEDFORD**  
FREE SCHOOL  
SERVING BEDFORD & KEMPSTON

Bedford Association of the Deaf



## Our Volunteers

Access Bedford would like to say a massive THANK YOU to our army of volunteers who have helped out over the last year at events, projects, on social media, fundraising, promoting Access Bedford and more!

Without YOU everything in this report would not have been possible so THANK YOU...

Andrew, Carron, Donna, Emma, Gagan, Gemma, Gill, Jake, Jess, Joanne, Jono, Kirstie, Laura, Mathew, Michelle, Neil, Peter, Rachel, Richard, Sam, Valerie, Vanessa, Will and everyone who has helped no matter how big or small!

We would also like to thank all the interpreters who have supported Access Bedford over the year!

# PRIORITIES FOR 2016-2017

## Access Bedford and the D/deaf Community

1. Sharing information with the D/deaf Community
2. Running events with the D/deaf Community
3. Improving services with and for the D/deaf Community
4. Empowering the D/deaf community to create and lead projects
5. Supporting services at every level to be Deaf Aware

## Develop Access Bedford as a Charity

1. Increase non-voting members
2. Develop volunteer roles
3. Create a sustainable governance structure
4. Review policies

Access Bedford  
*Coming Next*

## DEAF HEALTH & WELLBEING CONFERENCE AUTUMN 2016

Looking at positive emotional health and wellbeing in the D/deaf community with speakers from local and national services.  
Working to improve awareness and understanding of communication and access needs for D/deaf community.

## WINTER BALL 2016



19<sup>th</sup> November 2016 at The Bedford Golf Club. Tickets £35 including 3 course dinner, photographer, candy bar. Tickets on sale from 7<sup>th</sup> May 2016 via [accessbedford@outlook.com](mailto:accessbedford@outlook.com)

## JOHN BUNYAN BOAT TRIP



20<sup>th</sup> August 2016 at Priory Marina. Tickets £7.50 each via [accessbedford@outlook.com](mailto:accessbedford@outlook.com)

## DEAF COMEDY NIGHT

**John Smith is coming to Bedford!**



"hysterically funny..."  
"I can't stop laughing..."

On Friday 29th April 2016  
Doors open: 6pm  
Show starts: 7.30pm

The Bedford Golf Club  
Carnoustie Drive  
Great Denham  
Bedford MK40 4FF

Price: £15

Food and drink available to buy

To book your tickets email  
[JSDeafBedford@gmail.com](mailto:JSDeafBedford@gmail.com) or  
text 07921376044

WARNING: No Interpreter!

29<sup>th</sup> April 2016 attended by 80 people who had a fantastic evening!

## BEDFORD SCREENING



**POWER IN OUR HANDS**

IN CINEMAS FEBRUARY 1

5<sup>th</sup> July 2016 more details soon!



*My ideas for the Committee*

My Access Bedford

*Events I would like this year*

*My notes from the AGM*

Send your comments and ideas to [accessbedford@outlook.com](mailto:accessbedford@outlook.com)





Making Bedford accessible to the Bedford D/deaf community

**ACCESS BEDFORD**

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