

Annual Report 2016/17 from Councillor Mel Guilding Co Champion for the Disabled

I have had a busy year which has involved my regular attendance at the Macular Society's meetings which are held monthly on the last Tuesday, at Carnforth Railway station and also they now hold a "drop in" session at Galloway's Brew Me Sunshine café in Morecambe on the 2nd Tuesday of the month. Last September I was asked to give a talk on my role as Co- Champion and what facilities Lancaster City Council has for people with Macular Degeneration and other sight loss issues.

I was invited to attend the official opening of Galloway's new centre in October and the Bradbury Unit that is within the building. The Brew Me Sunshine Café is also there and easily found in the old Visitor offices on Victoria Street in Morecambe, it is right next to the Post Office and is well worth a visit. They also have rooms that can be hired out and some of the staff are qualified sight loss assessors.

I regularly attend the Dementia group that is held at St. John's Hospice on the first Friday of the month there are many service providers there and it is really helpful for me as a City Council Member and Co-Champion for the Disabled to be there to be able to "signpost" to various agencies and also for me to be able to help people when they have worries as to who to turn to.

I find that my role as Co-Champion is wide and varied and this involves me attending meetings especially some on a regular basis. I also attend the Older Persons Campaign Group and have found it interesting when we have speakers. From one of these speakers I have had a follow up conversation with Tracey Handley from the N.H.S. and I am now attending N.H.S. group talks as Co-Champion for the Disabled. I attended the Morecambe Bay Hospitals Trust A.G.M. and found not only what they were discussing of interest but the entertainment that was put on in the afternoon was really good. All had those who entertained had mental health issues.

I have attended a carers group run by Ncompass which is held on at Bay View Garden Centre.

I sponsor Guide Dog puppies and with this we have petitioned for audio systems on all bus services. The new 555 service buses between Lancaster and Keswick now use this and hopefully Stagecoach in Lancaster will roll the system on all routes when new buses are commissioned as Co-Champion I am working with Stagecoach to make this happen. With regards to buses, I am a member of Lancaster Bus Users Group; there is now a new route operating between Lancaster bus station via Williamson's Park and Hornsey Pottery to Lancaster Farms and return. I have used this service as it now means that I can access the Neuro Drop In Centre which is held at Lancaster Farms Y.O.I. something I was unable to do before. Also the number 49 Warton to Lancaster service via Carnforth and Halton is to be re-routed so that it includes the Highfield Estate; which means that a number of elderly and disabled people who live in that area will be able access the doctors and shops in Carnforth and also visit the hospital in Lancaster something that they haven't been able to do

for over 12 months due to a previous service having been cut. I have been on the steering group regularly communicating with Stagecoach for this service; or at least some service to be reinstated. The number 49 service via Highfield Estate will start on May 2nd 2017.

I have met up with Tony Hayes, from the Veterans Association, this group re home homeless veterans, many who are mentally or physically disabled. Tony is hoping to get a “hub” in this area as much of his work is with veterans from North Lancashire and South Cumbria area which also extends into the south of Scotland. We are in the negotiation stages of collating a meeting with service providers. He is currently based in the east Lancashire area.

I represented the City Council as a Ward Councillor and as Co-Champion for the Disabled at the Remembrance Sunday Service and also the Commonwealth Day Service that was held in Carnforth over the past year.