



# NAtterS

Hart and Rushmoor Branch newsletter

[www.nasHandR.org](http://www.nasHandR.org)

Inside this issue:

Diary dates	2
Activities for children	3
Our previous activities	4
News for parents/carers	5
NAS & local contacts	6
Local info & activities	7
Parent Voice news	8
Yellow cards & concessions!	9
Useful things to know	10

Issue 24

May/June 2011

Although there are plenty of activities to be organised, I feel that we really do need to update our database and mailing list to ensure that the branch are only sending out information to those who want it. Please will you complete the membership form attached to this newsletter or go to the branch website [www.nasHandR.org](http://www.nasHandR.org) and download the form and return to me at my address below or at a branch activity. Thank you!

*Nikki Smith.*

### Train Walk 2011!!

If you have enjoyed any of our activities, please, please, please help us to raise some money through our only fundraising event of the year! We desperately need to have enough funds in the bank account to be able to keep running events for our children with their additional needs. The easiest way is to get as much sponsorship money as possible and join us for our annual train walk at Frimley Lodge Park on Sunday 5th June at 2pm, or donate online at [www.justgiving.com/nasHandR](http://www.justgiving.com/nasHandR)

**We're looking for companies to sponsor the day in return for some advertising.** Contact Karen if you know of anyone who might help.



### Committee contact details

Branch Officer:

Nikki Smith  
 118 Fernhill Road, Farnborough,  
 GU14 9DR. [Nikki@nasHandR.org](mailto:Nikki@nasHandR.org)  
 01252 694934 / 07825280274  
**My mobile number has now changed!**  
 (Please note: I am a parent of 3 boys on the spectrum and I do this in my spare time.)

Treasurer

Denise Rooney  
[d.rooney746@btinternet.com](mailto:d.rooney746@btinternet.com)

Newsletter editor:

Karen Smith 01252 647418  
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Dawn Wilson (e-mail support only)  
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Event co-ordinators:

Gaye McGowan and Janette Cutler  
[events@nasHandR.org](mailto:events@nasHandR.org)

Facebook group

[www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) (search for NAS Hart Rushmoor in "groups" and you'll find us!)

Other committee members:

Colin Smith (at Gaming Zone)  
 Cara & Alan Taylor  
 Karen Booth



\*\* This newsletter is printed in colour thanks to the generosity of the Fleet Lions. \*\*

## Dates for your diary...

### May

Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> 10am - 4pm:  
Family fun at Challengers

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Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> 5 - 7pm:  
Special needs fun session  
@ Fizzy Kids.

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Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> 10am  
Outing to Legoland,  
meeting at the entrance  
(now fully booked!)

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Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> 10am - 1:  
NAS Gaming Zone

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Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> 10am:  
Coffee & chat @  
Costa in Aldershot

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Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> 10am - 1:  
Gaming Zone, Hook

-----  
Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> 10am - 1:  
NAS Gaming Zone



### June

Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> 11am:  
Meet-up @ The Look Out,  
Bracknell - bring a picnic!

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Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> 2pm:  
Branch train walk!

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Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> 5 - 7pm:  
Special needs fun session  
@ Fizzy Kids.

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Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> 10am - 1:  
Gaming Zone, Farnborough

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Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> 10am - 1:  
Gaming Zone, Hook

-----  
Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> 10am - 1:  
NAS Gaming Zone

### July

Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> 5 - 7pm:  
Special needs fun session  
@ Fizzy Kids.

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Friday 8<sup>th</sup> 10am:  
Coffee & chat @  
Costa in Fleet

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Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> 10am - 1:  
NAS Gaming Zone

-----  
Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> 10am  
Gaming Zone, Hook

-----  
Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> 10am - 1:  
NAS Gaming Zone

-----  
Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> 10am:  
TVAP outing

### Our 4th anniversary!

The branch was launched on 17th March 2007 at the Harlington Centre in Fleet. We now have 350 members and although most are in Hart & Rushmoor there are also a few in Surrey, Alton and Basingstoke! We are having a family fun day at Disability Challengers in Farnham on Bank Holiday Monday 2nd May, 10am - 4pm. The photos will be in the next issue.

### New Branch Treasurer



At the end of May, Denise Rooney, our current treasurer will be standing **down, having done a great job for the past 2 and a half years. It's time that** she puts her health first. Luckily Gaye McGowan, who is already a committee member, has agreed to take on the task and we are all incredibly grateful to her as we cannot run without a treasurer!

### Community Hero Award...

Thank you so much to all of you who took the time to vote for me; your support is truly appreciated, as were all of your comments on Facebook and in the e-mails! I was invited to attend, with a guest (Gaye, one of the two who dared to nominate me) the award ceremony at the Aviator Hotel on Saturday 9th April. I was a runner-up and was presented with a cheque for £75 for the Branch and a voucher for a Hoseasons holiday - now if I could find the time for a break, it would be brilliant!



## Activities for children & young people

### Two NAS Gaming Zone sessions



#### Farnborough:

10am - 1pm on alternate Saturdays  
at Mayfield Community Centre,  
Totland Close, Farnborough, GU14 8TX.  
These are free as the venue costs us nothing.

#### Hook:

10am - 1pm, one Sunday each month  
at The Base, Ravenscoft, RG27 9NN.  
£1 per child towards the cost of the venue.

The games are suited to those 6yrs+ but there are several younger children who come along and play too. There are games consoles, handheld games and PCs. There is always plenty of tea, coffee, juice and biscuits (though donations of additional biscuits are always welcome!)

Please will all parents ensure they supervise their children throughout the session.

### Fizzy Kids special needs sessions

The first Tuesday of every month, from 5 - 7pm. The sessions are for all children with any kind of special need & their siblings. Usual height and age restrictions do not apply! The price is £3.50 per child. Food & drinks are available to buy. Parents must supervise their children closely at this event.



Please support these sessions or they will stop running.

We try to keep the costs to families as low as possible, but if cost or transport is an issue just get in touch with us and we will try to help!

Donations are always gratefully received - even a pack of biscuits helps keep our costs down.

Please remember that you are responsible for your children at all of our activities and you must supervise them at all times!

### Meet-up at The Look Out

**We'll be meeting up by the play areas next to the Look Out at 11am on Thursday 2nd June.**

**Remember your diagnosis letter if you're going into the Look Out. Bring a picnic - see you there!**

### Train Walk 2011

We will be at Frimley Lodge Park on Sunday 5th June for an active walk through the trim trail, ride on the miniature railway, then back to the starting point to go on the bouncy castle, have a drink, cake and get a goodie bag for helping us to raise funds.

**There's a sponsor form being sent out with this newsletter and it will be available** from our branch website, but if online donations are easier, simply go to [www.justgiving.com/nasHandR](http://www.justgiving.com/nasHandR)



### Thames Valley Adventure Playground outing

**As this annual outing has always been popular, we've organised it again this year! We have 35 children's places booked for children with a diagnosis and their siblings.**

Places will only cost £6 per child (as the branch is subsidising the cost.) The playground is open 10am - 3.30pm. Come and join us for a fun play day but remember to bring plenty of drinks, a picnic and swimming stuff/clothes to get wet in (as the water play area is always popular!) Contact Nikki to book your places.



## NAS activities!

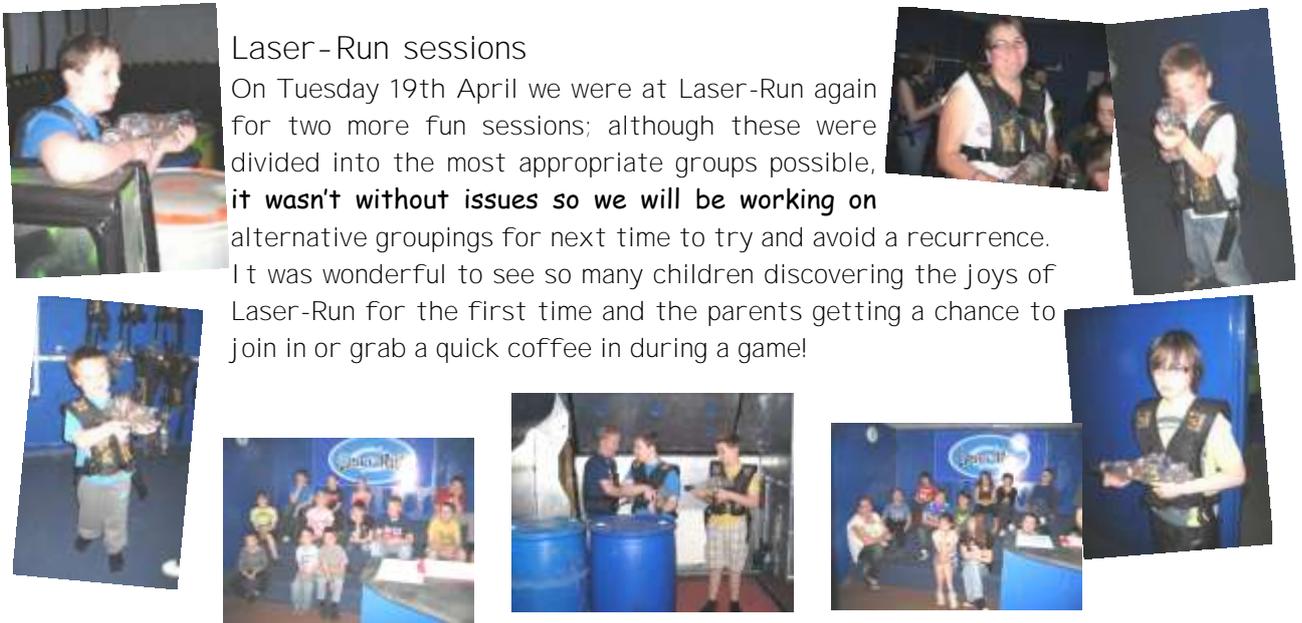
### Donutting fun

On Tuesday 12th and Wednesday 13th April we had great fun in the sun (even though it was much cooler in the wind!) over two sessions we had 35 children enjoying themselves and several parents joining in and screaming much louder than any of the children did!



### Laser-Run sessions

On Tuesday 19th April we were at Laser-Run again for two more fun sessions; although these were divided into the most appropriate groups possible, **it wasn't without issues so we will be working on alternative groupings for next time to try and avoid a recurrence.** It was wonderful to see so many children discovering the joys of Laser-Run for the first time and the parents getting a chance to join in or grab a quick coffee in during a game!



### Final Aiming High funding

Thanks to an Inspiring You grant from Hampshire County Council, we now have 2 well-stocked suitcases with weighted blankets and lap pads, a calming projector, a vast selection of fidget toys, UV toys for use in our tent covered in blackout material, vibrating ladybirds, air cushions, BodySox, a portable bubble tube and an assortment of pencils and pens that might make writing a little easier for those with fine motor skill issues!

Due to a last minute Inspiring You grant from HCC the branch now has a new **influx of equipment for our gaming zone sessions: we now own 2 new 3DS's, 2 Toshiba laptops with bags and internet dongles, 2 android tablets and over 25 more games for the various consoles we already have!** A huge thanks to the team at Hampshire who made this happen.

The branch also funded the purchase of a Kinect for the Xbox360 which has proved to be popular with those of all ages and abilities!



## News for parents & carers

### Facebook group

The branch Facebook group is a good place to find other parents in similar situations, as well as get any info we have as soon as we have it! Feel free to introduce yourself, ask a question or simply read the other posts. Just go to [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) and search for **NAS Hart Rushmoor** in the "groups" section.



### Branch resource library

The book list will soon be available on the branch website again. Let us know if there is something in particular you are looking for, we may have it or be able to purchase it.



### SOS!SEN @ The Games Shop

The excellent volunteers from SOS! SEN will be upstairs in the Games Shop in Aldershot on the first Tuesday of every month, 10.15am - 12.15pm. Go to [www.sossen.org.uk](http://www.sossen.org.uk) for more info. If you **can't get there, call their helpline on 020 8538 3731** for educational advice.

\*\*\* A team from one of our families is raising much needed funds for SOS! SEN by taking part in the Wessex Big Wheel 12 mile bike ride in September. If you want to support the family, go to [www.justgiving.com/Clem-Feeney](http://www.justgiving.com/Clem-Feeney) \*\*\*

### Welcome to Holland, written by Emily Perl Kingsley (c1987)

I am often asked to describe the experience of raising a child with a disability - to try to help people who have not shared that unique experience to understand it, to imagine how it would feel.



It's like this.....When you're going to have a baby, it's like planning a fabulous vacation trip - to Italy. You buy a bunch of guide books and make your wonderful plans. The Coliseum. The Michelangelo David. The gondolas in Venice. You may learn some handy phrases in Italian. It's all very exciting.

After months of eager anticipation, the day finally arrives. You pack your bags and off you go. Several hours later, the plane lands. The stewardess comes in and says, "Welcome to Holland." "Holland!?" you say. "What do you mean Holland?? I signed up for Italy! I'm supposed to be in Italy. All my life I've dreamed of going to Italy."

But there's been a change in the flight plan. They've landed in Holland and there you must stay. The important thing is that they haven't taken you to a horrible, disgusting, filthy place, full of pestilence, famine and disease. It's just a different place. So you must go out and buy new guide books. And you must learn a whole new language. And you will meet a whole new group of people you would never have met.

It's just a different place. It's slower-paced than Italy, less flashy than Italy. But after you've been there for a while and you catch your breath, you look around.... and you begin to notice that Holland has windmills....and Holland has tulips. Holland even has Rembrandts.

But everyone you know is busy coming and going from Italy... and they're all bragging about what a wonderful time they had there. And for the rest of your life, you will say "Yes, that's where I was supposed to go. That's what I had planned."

And the pain of that will never, ever, ever, ever go away... because the loss of that dream is a very very significant loss.

But... if you spend your life mourning the fact that you didn't get to Italy, you may never be free to enjoy the very special, the very lovely things... about Holland.



## News from Head Office

### Protest in London against the cuts!

On 11th May, disabled people, their family members and supporters will take part in the Hardest Hit protest to show how cuts are affecting their lives.

**Hardest Hit is being supported by a coalition of disabled people's organisations, including The National Autistic Society**, which aims to highlight the devastating impact that service and benefit cuts will have on the lives of people with disabilities and long-term conditions, and their families.

The NAS want people with autism to join other disabled people in urging decision-makers to stop cutting the support they rely on to live independent and fulfilling lives.

You can get involved in the protest either online, or by coming to London.

For more information, go to [www.autism.org.uk/hardesthit](http://www.autism.org.uk/hardesthit) - where you can also find out about how to protest online if you cannot attend the march.

### Surrey Branch Conference 2011

This year the focus for the conference is Getting Support Right for people with Autistic Spectrum Disorders - How schools and adult services can meet individual needs. How parents can help. On Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2011 at the University of Surrey, Guildford, 10am - 4.30pm.

Speakers include Professor Rita Jordan, Dr Wendy Lawson, Simon Laker and Tom Moore.

Parents/carers/people with autistic disorders: £30, Professionals (including care workers) : £60  
Half-day tickets £17.50 / £35 exc. lunch (these are suggested minimum donations)

For more info, see the attached flyer or go to [www.muqsy.org/2011conference](http://www.muqsy.org/2011conference)



Open Monday to Friday, 10am - 4pm,  
e-mail [autismhelpline@nas.org.uk](mailto:autismhelpline@nas.org.uk)  
or go to [www.autism.org.uk](http://www.autism.org.uk)

For Community Care issues call  
the helpline or e-mail your enquiry to  
[communitycare@nas.org.uk](mailto:communitycare@nas.org.uk)



### Autism Services Directory

[www.autism.org.uk/autismdirectory](http://www.autism.org.uk/autismdirectory)

The NAS Parent to Parent line  
0800 9 520 520 is a free and confidential  
telephone support service offered by volunteer  
parents of an adult or child with an ASD.

Advice on **educational** issues for parents whose  
children have autism or Asperger syndrome  
0845 070 4002

### Other local branches & support

NAS Surrey Branch: [www.muqsy.org](http://www.muqsy.org) or call Sara on 01483 822630.

NAS South Hampshire Branch: [www.shantsnas.org.uk](http://www.shantsnas.org.uk)

NAS Alton Branch: contact Gail on 07824 372034, email [alton@nas.org.uk](mailto:alton@nas.org.uk) or [www.nasalton.com](http://www.nasalton.com)

BAGS (Basingstoke Autism Group): [bagsinstoke@live.co.uk](mailto:bagsinstoke@live.co.uk) or via Jan at Speakeasy Advocacy on 01256 332795.

Contact a Family: Free helpline 0808 808 3555 open 9.30am - 5pm, Monday to Friday.

AFASIC helpline (a speech & language charity): 08453 555577

Parent Voice: [www.parentvoice.info](http://www.parentvoice.info) or phone 01256 472767.

### Merlin's Magic Wand



As some of you will know, we have been lucky enough to receive 50 tickets from Merlin's Magic Wand this year for an outing to Legoland. Did you know that you can apply as a family for tickets? Take a look at [www.merlinsmagicwand.org.uk](http://www.merlinsmagicwand.org.uk) for more info. You can only have one MMW outing per year, so if you are coming with us, you can't apply again yet but remember it for 2012!

### Kidz South exhibition

This year the Kidz South exhibition is all set for Thursday 9th June, 9.30am - 4.30pm at the Rivermead Leisure Complex, Richfield Avenue, Reading, RG1 8EQ.

**Entry is free and it's a great opportunity for parents, carers and professionals to see what's out there for disabled children.**

Go to [www.kidzupnorth.co.uk/kidzsouth.php](http://www.kidzupnorth.co.uk/kidzsouth.php) or call 0161 214 5962/5959 for more info.

### Lions Funfest 2011



On Sunday 26th June, 11.30am - 4pm at Calthorpe Park School, Hitches Lane, Fleet, GU51 5JA (next to Hart leisure centre, which is where the event will take place if it rains!) A day of music and fun for people of all ages and abilities; with bouncy castles, giant slides, steam trains, climbing wall and more! The BBQ is £1 per item. Participants can also have free access to the swimming pool during public sessions. See the booking form is attached, but for more info call 01252 26341 or go to [www.fleetlions.org.uk/community/funfest.html](http://www.fleetlions.org.uk/community/funfest.html)

### Playdays special needs night

**On the 3rd Friday of every month it's special needs night at Playdays. 6pm - 8pm in Basingstoke (RG24 8NF.)**  
**Entry is £3 for under 4's and £3.50** for those over 4 years or go for the Meal Deal - a hot kids meal for an extra £3! For more info call Playdays on 01256 346173. They need people to attend to keep running, so use it or lose it!

### Parkside News!

Annual fun day: on Sunday 19th June at Aldershot Park, 11.30am - 3.30pm. There will be a bbq, stalls and great fun for the family! As always, they desperately need more items to be donated; unwanted gifts, bottles, sweets, good quality second hand items.

Café in the park launch: Enjoy a family day out at Aldershot Park on Saturday 7th May, 10am - 4pm. One free tea or coffee per customer!

Farnborough Activities Base (FAB): a new project providing leisure activities on Wednesday mornings at the Youthie building, with the purpose of offering a combination of activities and social opportunities. Call Parkside on 01252 313103 for more info on all of these activities.



### Family Fund The criteria has changed!

You can apply if you are caring for a disabled (see their website for their definition) child or young person aged 17 and under and can send evidence of entitlement to, one the following: Child Tax Credit, Working Tax Credit, Income based Job Seekers Allowance, Income Support, Incapacity Benefit, Employment Support Allowance, Housing Benefit and Pension Credit. Families must still meet all their other eligibility criteria in order to be eligible. For more info, go to [www.familyfund.org.uk](http://www.familyfund.org.uk) or call 0845 130 4542.



### Medic Alert bracelet

Medic Alert have launched the "AK autism wristband" for those with autism to wear to alert others to their needs should the get lost or injured.

The bands cost £24.95, plus the first year's membership fee of £25. For more information go to, [www.medicalert.org.uk](http://www.medicalert.org.uk) or call 0800 581420.

## Parent Voice news...



### Information line is discontinued

The Parent Voice out of hours information line will be discontinued as of Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> April. They had received very few calls and are no longer able to justify the cost of the additional line. If you call the Basingstoke Hub on 01256 472767 and leave your name, number and the best time to call you they will try to return your call at a convenient time.

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### Feedback forms

Thank you everyone who got in touch after reading the previous newsletter regarding the Parent Voice outing to Paultons Park. Parent Voice would rather hear from families directly, so **if you haven't already done so, please do get in touch with them: call Carol Dixon on 01329 823140 or [carol.dixon@barnardos.org.uk](mailto:carol.dixon@barnardos.org.uk)**

Attached to this issue is the Parent Voice feedback form: please take the time to complete it and send it back to them or give it to Nikki when you next see her and she will ensure they reach Parent Voice. The budget being allocated to Parent Voice this year is £250,000 and in **order to ensure they spend it wisely we need to let them know what has worked. If you haven't used their services please do write this on the form - it is still useful feedback!**

### Parent Voice Forum

The Forum are still meeting regularly and desperately need more parents to come and take part. If you live in Hampshire and have a child or young person with a disability of any sort then the issues discussed will be relevant to you and your input is needed.

Meetings are usually held during the day in Winchester. For more info contact the Forum secretary, Sally Dace, on 07771 459148 or [sallydace@roseroad.org.uk](mailto:sallydace@roseroad.org.uk)

### SEN and Disability Green Paper Consultation

Friday 13th May 2011, 11am-2pm at Winchester Guildhall

The government are currently consulting with the public on the green paper for SEN and Disability. *"Support and aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability"* makes wide-ranging proposals to respond to the frustrations of children and young people, their families and the professionals who work with them.

The Hampshire Parent Voice Forum are hosting a short consultation with Steve Crocker, **Deputy Director of Children's Services to address the key points of the paper and collate the views of all parents to send from the local authority collectively.**

This meeting will be specifically about the Green paper and therefore you will need to read the green paper beforehand, which can be found online at

[www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/CM%208027](http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/CM%208027) (call 02380 721206 if you require a copy posted to you.) They understand that the paper is quite long; however it is requested that you read thoroughly any aspects on which you would like to feedback. Spaces will be limited, so please book your place by calling 02380 721206 or [Lucyfripp@roseroad.org.uk](mailto:Lucyfripp@roseroad.org.uk) If you cannot attend but still want to have your say, please contact Lucy.

# Concessions...

Remember to take your yellow card/diagnosis letter wherever you go!

Some places will automatically recognise the yellow card and give you a concession, others may not **have seen one before. A diagnosis letter will always prove your child's difficulties and should gain you entry as a carer.**

Nikki is trying to compile a list of places where the yellow card is recognised or that accept a diagnosis letter as proof of entitlement to a concession - please get in touch if you have a success to share and we can pass it on to others.

Birdworld, Farnham: concession rate for a disabled guest is £12.95 + £5 for their carer.  
[www.birdworld.co.uk](http://www.birdworld.co.uk) 01420 22992

Coral Reef swimming, Bracknell: disabled concession is £4.50 + a free carer.  
[www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/coralreef](http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/coralreef) 01344 862525

The Look Out Discovery Centre, Bracknell: visitor with disability £4.40 + free carer.  
[www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/lookout](http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/lookout) 01344 354400

Basingstoke Aquadrome & Tadley swimming pool: free for child with disability and 1 carer.  
[www.basingstokeleisure.com](http://www.basingstokeleisure.com) 01256 472343

Hart Leisure Centre, Fleet: Free entry to general swimming, casual gym sessions and racquet sports for those with a disability and 1 carer.  
[www.hart.gov.uk/disableda5-3.pdf](http://www.hart.gov.uk/disableda5-3.pdf) 01252 629974

Farnborough & Aldershot swimming: £1.20 for a disabled child + free carer  
 Farnborough - 01252 370411 Aldershot - 01252 323482  
**(Aldershot Lido prices weren't available at the time of printing - it's due to open on 28th May.)**

Intec Centre, Winchester: £6 for a disabled child + free entry for 1 carer.  
[www.intech-uk.com](http://www.intech-uk.com) 01962 863791

Wellington Country Park: £5.20 for a disabled child (£6 those over 15yrs) + a free carer.  
[www.wellington-country-park.co.uk](http://www.wellington-country-park.co.uk) 0118 9326444

Bowling: Farnborough: £3 for those with a disability + £3 for carer (01252 554046)  
 Basingstoke: £2.25 for those with a disability + £2.25 for carer (01256 811405)

Theme parks will usually they allow a carer in free with a disabled guest.

Cinema card:

The Cinema Exhibitors Card entitles the card holder to have a free carer accompanying them. To apply for the card you will need submit proof to show that you are in receipt of Disability Living Allowance or Attendance Allowance. You will also need to supply a passport-sized photo with your application to appear on the card. A processing fee of £5.50 is chargeable per card and needs to be sent along with the completed application. For more details or to download an application form, go to [www.ceacard.co.uk](http://www.ceacard.co.uk) or call 0845 123 1292.



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**We're on the web!**

[www.nasHandR.org](http://www.nasHandR.org)

Make sure you let us know if you move or change your e-mail address.

**If you don't, we can't** get this newsletter to you!

## Useful things & websites!

### Shoe laces!

**If shoe laces are a problem but velcro isn't an option, try self-tying shoe laces!** They are simply coiled elastic shoe laces that you lace up as normal and then do not require tying. The cheapest place they can be found is on Ebay in various colours.



### Transfer of Concessionary fares

The responsibility for the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme for older people and people with disabilities has moved from District Councils to County Councils as of 1st April 2011. For those, who meet the **criteria for a disabled person's pass (those over five years old with a disability)** there are a number of enhancements to the national scheme. These include free bus travel all day (before 9:30am until close of service) every day, with the option of a companion pass, where they are unable to travel alone owing to their disability. There will also have the option, as an alternative to the pass, to have vouchers to the value of £32 per annum for taxis.



For more info, go to [www3.hants.gov.uk/concessionary-travel](http://www3.hants.gov.uk/concessionary-travel)

## Disability Challengers!

**A few parents have recently commented that they've thought Challengers is only for those with physical disabilities. This isn't the case;** if your child has additional needs and cannot cope in mainstream schemes then they may get along better at Challengers play or youth centre.



Take a look at [www.disability-challengers.org](http://www.disability-challengers.org) and contact them on 01483 579 390 for more info or to book a first visit to go and have a look around **and let your child see what's there. The cost is £14 per child, per session** and for those on Income Support it is half price.

Alternatively, go along to one of their family fun sessions, 10am- 3pm on **Sunday's and pay £4 per child and discover what's there as a family.**

This is the newsletter of the Hart & Rushmoor Branch of The National Autistic Society. Views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of The National Autistic Society, and reference to specific services or approaches to autism does not imply endorsement.

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