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Issue 25

July/August 2011

There's now a brand new NAS branch in Basingstoke! Samantha Clarke is the Branch Officer and is eager to get an active support group going. More details of the branch are on page 6. Thank you to everyone who has sent me their branch membership form. To those of you who haven't returned one, please don't panic, nobody will be deleted from the mailing list!

Nikki Smith.

Train Walk 2011!!

We are still collecting the sponsor money from all of our fantastic supporters. Once it's all in, we think there should be over £2,600!! We are absolutely amazed by the number of families who have helped to raise this amount, especially those of you who hadn't even met us all until the day of the Train Walk!

The funds will be put to very good use; we have so many activities and events planned and we are looking at finding a new venue to use as our base for coffee mornings and holiday play sessions.... More info as soon as we have it finalised!



Committee contact details

Branch Officer:

Nikki Smith
118 Fernhill Road, Farnborough,
GU14 9DR. Nikki@nasHandR.org
01252 694934 / 07825 280274

My mobile number has changed!

(Please note: I am a parent of 3 boys on the spectrum and I do this in my spare time.)

Treasurer

Gaye McGowan
events@nasHandR.org

Newsletter editor:

Karen Smith 01252 647418
karen.m.smith@tesco.net

Education advice:

Dawn Wilson (e-mail support only)
Dawn.wilson@tavistock.hants.sch.uk

Event co-ordinators:

Gaye McGowan and Janette Cutler
events@nasHandR.org

Facebook group

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...

July

Tuesday 5th 5 - 7pm:
Special needs fun session
@ Fizzy Kids

Friday 8th 10am:
Coffee & chat @
Costa in Fleet

Saturday 9th 10am - 1:
NAS Gaming Zone

Sunday 10th 10am:
Fun day @ Manydown Farm
in Basingstoke

Sunday 17th 10am:
Gaming Zone, Hook

Saturday 23rd 10am - 1:
NAS Gaming Zone

Sunday 24th 10am:
second trip to Legoland
(for those who couldn't get
to the one in May!)

Saturday 30th 10am:
TVAP outing

More Inspiring You activities!

Nikki is delighted to let you all know that the application for more Inspiring You funding she submitted to Hampshire County Council was accepted and therefore the first activity is Manydown Farm on 10th July and the list for the Summer holidays activities are on page 9. You'll need to complete an "About my family" form at the first event you attend but you won't then have to do so again.

August

Tuesday 2nd
10am / 11.15am:
Donutting in Aldershot

5 - 7pm:
Special needs fun session
@ Fizzy Kids

Thursday 4th:
To Be Confirmed: go-karting

Saturday 6th 10am - 1:
Gaming Zone, Farnborough

Sunday 7th 11am:
Outing to Bocketts Farm

Thursday 11th 11am:
Odeon ASD friendly
screening in Basingstoke and
Bracknell, see below.

Wednesday 17th 10.30am:
Meet-up @ Alice Holt outside
the cafe - bring a picnic!

Saturday 20th 10am - 1:
NAS Gaming Zone

Tuesday 23rd 11am:
Meet-up @ Wellington
Country Park - bring a picnic!

Thursday 25th 11am/12pm:
Laser-Run, Farnborough

Monday 29th 10am - 4pm:
Family fun day with both
the play and youth centres @
Disability Challengers!

September

Saturday 3rd 10am - 1:
Gaming Zone, Farnborough

Tuesday 6th 5 - 7pm:
Special needs fun session
@ Fizzy Kids

Saturday 10th
London Zoo trip -
As soon as we know if we have free
tickets, we will send out the details.

Saturday 17th 10am - 1:
Gaming Zone, Farnborough

Sunday 25th 10am - 1:
TBC: Gaming Zone, Hook

Odeon details

On Thursday 11th August, Dimensions have teamed up with Odeon to run an ASD friendly cinema screening at 37 of their cinemas. The film will be Mr Popper's Penguin (rated PG). Our nearest ones are in Basingstoke and Bracknell. For more info, go to www.dimensions-uk.org/autismfilms

Tickets are available to purchase in the cinema or online from 2nd August.

Branch PayPal account

We can now accept payments for all of our activities online via PayPal! If you want to pay fees this way, simply let Nikki know when you book your places and she will give you the details.



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!

Challengers party!!

This time we have gone really mad and have hired BOTH of the centres at Farnham for the day! On 29th August, Bank Holiday Monday, we will have access to all the fantastic fun in the play centre, as well as the youth centre. There will be a bouncy castle and if the weather is nice, a barbeque too! The gaming zone equipment will be in the youth centre, the arts and crafts will be in the play centre. We hope to have a face painter and balloon modelling.



If you need anything other than the usual burgers or sausages cooked on the bbq, why not bring it with you and our bbq chief will cook it!

Please contact Nikki to book your places and to let us know any food requirements - there will be a charge of £1 per bbq item, simply to help cover the costs.

New Branch Treasurer

Gaye McGowan, who has been on our branch committee for ages now, but she is officially our Treasurer and jumped straight into the role by dealing with all of the sponsor money from the Train Walk. Thank you Gaye!



NAS activities!

On the 2nd May we celebrated the 4th anniversary of the NAS H&R Branch with a party at Disability Changers playcentre in Farnham. Luckily the weather was dry (although a little windy for those of us who picnicked outside!) and we were able to play on the outdoor equipment as well as having fun indoors too! Mr Giant came along to keep us entertained and his giant inflatable bunny suit certainly got everybody's attention! The cake and cupcakes were brilliant and enjoyed by all who tried them. A huge thank you Cara for her fantastic masterpiece! The book library was popular and everyone enjoyed looking at all the photos on the display boards to see if they were in any of them.



Thank you to all of the families who came along to help us mark the occasion - here's looking forward to another year of fun.



Cara's cakes - 07515 684885 or find The Little Apple Tree Cake Company on Facebook, where you can see more photos.
Mr Giant - www.MrGiant.co.uk or call 01420 472525.
Mel the face painter - www.RaspberryDesign.com or call 01252 626699.

Train walk 2011

The weather may not have been completely on our side, but the afternoon was still a wonderful success! We began by the cafe and at 2pm everybody followed Sir Topham Hat once around the field, then through the trim trail - completing the obstacles as they went - next was the ride on the fantastic Frimley Lodge Miniature Railway and finally everyone headed back to the beginning to use up some energy on the bouncy castles. We handed out medals, goodie bags with fiddle toys in them, drinks, Thomas cakes and helium balloons to everyone who wanted them.



Almost all of the money has been collected now and so far the grand total is a spectacular £2655.82. We intend to put this to good use and run more activities for the children and the parents/carers too.



We have to say a tremendous thank you to Gaye and Janette who organised the event and dragged their families along to help set up on the day. Huge thanks and appreciation to our sponsors and supporters; you made the day a wonderful success and great fun!



Here's looking forward to another fun walk in 2012!!



01252 8425547
www.hartleyservices.co.uk



01252 726500
www.bump-n-jump.co.uk



News for parents & carers

Facebook group

The branch Facebook group has now been updated to the new look group style and has become an incredibly popular place for parents to "meet" and exchange ideas. The events list has changed, so you will now be invited to all events in order for details to reach everybody - apologies in advance if some are not relevant to you.

Feel free to introduce yourself, ask a question or simply read the other posts. Just go to www.facebook.com and search for NAS Hart Rushmoor in the "groups" section.



Branch resource library

There are a few more titles in the resource library - including the set of Stories for Social Communication books from www.ASDvisualaids.com as several parents were looking into buying them. Please let us know if there is something in particular you want to read, we may have it or be able to purchase it.



Celebrating Holland - I'm Home, by Cathy Anthony

I have been in Holland for over a decade now and it has become home. I have had time to catch my breath, to settle and adjust, to accept something different than I'd planned. I reflect back on when I first landed in Holland. I remember clearly my shock, my fear, my anger, and the pain and uncertainty. In those first few years I tried to get back to Italy, my planned destination, but Holland was where I was to stay. Today, I can say how far I've come on this unexpected journey. I have learned so much more, but this too has been a journey of time.

I worked hard; I bought new guidebooks; I learned a new language, and I slowly found my way around this new land. I have met others whose plans changed, like mine, and who could share my experience. We supported one another and some have become very special friends.

Some of these fellow travellers had been in Holland longer than I and were seasoned guides, assisting me along the way. Many encouraged me; many taught me to open my eyes to the wonder and gifts to behold in this new land. I discovered a community of caring - Holland wasn't so bad!

I think that Holland is used to wayward travellers like me and grew to become a land of hospitality, reaching out to welcome, assist and support newcomers. Over the years, I have wondered what life would have been like if I had landed in Italy as planned. Would life have been easier? Would it have been as rewarding? Would I have learned some of the important lessons I hold today?

Sure, this journey has been more challenging and, at times, I would (and still do) stomp my feet and cry out in frustration and protest. Yes, Holland is slower paced than Italy and less flashy than Italy, but this too has been an unexpected gift. I have learned to slow down in ways too, and look closer at things with a new appreciation for the remarkable beauty of Holland with its tulips, windmills and Rembrandts. I have come to love Holland and call it Home.

I have become a world traveller and discovered that it doesn't matter where you land; what is more important is what you make of your journey and how you see and enjoy the very special, the very lovely things that Holland, or any land, has to offer. Yes, over a decade ago I landed in a place I hadn't planned yet I'm thankful, for this destination has been richer than I ever could have imagined!"



News from Head Office

Great Expectations campaign is launched

The NAS launched the Great Expectations campaign to make sure that the Government's proposals for reform of the SEN system in England take account of the needs of children with autism and their families. Children expect an education which sets them up for life. Parents expect a system which works with, not against, them. The NAS expect the Government to listen and to act. For more info, go to www.autism.org.uk/greatexpectations.

Legal Aid protected for SEN

Following campaigning by the NAS alongside a range of other organisations who are part of the Special Education Consortium, the Government has reversed its decision to remove legal aid for SEN cases.

New NAS Basingstoke Branch

We are delighted to let everyone know that there is now officially an NAS branch in Basingstoke again! The Branch Officer is Samantha Clark and she's very eager to get the group up and running with regular activities and events. Their first coffee & chat session will be at Buttercups Children's Centre on Thursday 21st July, 12.30 - 2.30pm. Get in touch with them for more info on nasbasingstoke@gmail.com or 07435751193. They also have a Facebook group, just search for "NAS Basingstoke".



New!

NAS helplines

The **Autism Helpline** - 0808 800 4104
Open Monday to Friday, 10am - 4pm,
e-mail autismhelpline@nas.org.uk
or go to www.autism.org.uk

www.autism.org.uk/autismdirectory

A comprehensive directory of services and support for those affected by autism.

The NAS **Parent to Parent line**
0808 800 4106 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, call 0808 800 4102

Please note: the Education Rights Service, Autism Helpline and Parent-to-Parent Service numbers have changed.
The ones printed here are correct! Calls to these numbers are now free from landlines and mobiles.

Other local branches & support

NAS Surrey Branch: www.mugsy.org or call Emma (the new Branch Officer) on 07423 435413.

NAS South Hampshire Branch: www.shantsnas.org.uk

NAS Alton Branch: call 07824 372034 (you may need to leave a message) or www.nasalton.com

NAS Basingstoke Branch: contact Sam on 07435 751193 or nasbasingstoke@gmail.com

BAGS (Basingstoke Autism Group): bagsinstoke@live.co.uk or via Speakeasy 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 or phone 02380 721206.

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 (except August), 10.15am - 12.15pm - the next one is on 6th September. Go to www.sossen.org.uk for more info. If you can't get there, call their helpline on 020 8538 3731 for educational advice.

Please note: SOS!SEN shuts down from the 1st August to 2nd September, therefore make sure you have got all of the help and advice you need from them before the end of July!

Fun House special needs sessions

Fun House is open for business again and therefore their special needs sessions are running again, on the second Saturday of every month, 4 - 6pm. The next one is on 13th August.



Entry is £3.50 per child and food and drinks are available to buy.

Kids Rushmoor playscheme

This years playscheme will be held at Farnborough Grange Junior School, Wren Way, Farnborough. From the 1st - 19th August, 9.30am - 3.30pm and the cost is £12.50 per day.

For more information or to book places, please contact Clare Turner on 07748909792 or clare.turner@kids.org.uk



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

Their annual fun day last month raised a fantastic profit of £2574.24! Well Done to everyone who worked so hard for it!

The **Café in the Park** needs willing volunteers to help support those working there - do you have some spare time?

Call Parkside on 01252 313103 for more info about what's involved.



Disability Challengers

Have you booked your sessions at Challengers? Not just for the Summer but for Saturday's and after school clubs right up to December too! If you haven't. Get in touch with them quickly as there may still be places available - call the booking line on 01483 230 939.

Don't forget the Challengers fun swim sessions at Guildford Spectrum - the last Saturday of every month, 6-7.30pm. No need to book, just turn up and pay the suggested donation of £2 per swimmer.



PAG activities

PAG's MADD (Music, Art, Dance and Drama) club is still running for those aged 5 - 18 years. Contact Ann on info@pagforspecialplay.co.uk or 01252 837 112.



Autism Participation - Have Your Say!

There is still time to have your say about the Hampshire Autism Participation Strategy. Simply go to www.hants.gov.uk/as-autism-strategy-hampshire.htm and complete the online survey where you get to tell Hampshire how you rate services such as education, CAMHS, early diagnosis and you can even rate how useful your local NAS Branch has been!

The closing date has been extended until Friday 15th July 2011, so make your thoughts known! If you aren't online, please call 01962 847946 for a paper copy.



Parent Voice news...

Lucy Fripp at Rose Road is now responsible for sending out the Parent Voice weekly update so that all parents and professionals receive the same information at the same time. If you have seen the new look update, I'm sure you'll be as pleased as I am that there is now info relevant to the North East of Hampshire.



The Basingstoke Parent Voice office is now closed and the participation worker is home based. To contact Parent Voice please telephone 02380 721206 or email lucyfripp@roseroad.org.uk

Nikki is no longer involved with Parent Voice or the Parent Voice Forum, so if you have any issues with them, please use the details above to contact them directly.

If you are travelling abroad this Summer....

...you may be interested in the NAS Autism alert card that is available in several different languages, simply to let others know about the issues your child has. www.autism.org.uk/languages or call the NAS Helpline on 0808 800 4014.

...and your child has allergies, diabetes, epilepsy or anything else that requires them to carry prescribed medicines or need to explain why they cannot eat particular foods, then YellowCross maybe of use to you. They make a range of medical bags, containers, personal ID and translation cards specifically designed to carry prescribed medication that is easily identifiable and cards detailing allergies in several languages.

Go to www.yellowcross.co.uk or call 01252 820321 (they are based in Farnham).

Clarks shoes shop appointments

A large number of Clarks stores are offering fitting appointments - so you can see a trained fitter at a time that suits you. Simply call their Customer Care team on 08444 995544 to book a time that's convenient for you.

The list of stores is available at www.clarks.co.uk/back-to-school/stores



My child and me magazine

This is a new magazine aimed at parents of young children with additional needs. It will produce bi-monthly and hopes to provide parents with information, practical advice and sources of support. The first issue is available to view for free on their website at www.mychildmagazine.com A subscription will cost £14.95 per year for 6 issues.



Equine Assisted Learning

Equine assisted learning happens out of doors with horses and ponies and is proving to be beneficial for children and young people, especially those with special needs. All the learning happens on the ground with the horses, there is no riding involved. There are Summer Holiday sessions available for those 11 - 19 years old with ADHD, Aspergers, Autism, Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties. Wheelchair users welcome. Only 4 places available each day, so book early. Fee of £25 (this is a reduced cost as it's supported by HCC Inspiring You funding!). To find out more go to www.equineassistedqualifications.com or call 01747 828150 to find out details of your nearest centre. The options are Micheldever Station, Lyminster, Fordingbridge or Rowlands Castle.



Leisure centre cards...

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.

To obtain a yellow card: call Hampshire on 0845 603 5630. You will have to talk to a social worker or support worker who will ask you questions about your child and their issues.

Free swimming in Rushmoor

For those 16 years and under, at Farnborough leisure centre and Aldershot indoor pools from 28th July - 2nd September. Under 8's must be accompanied by a full paying adult and be supervised by a parent/guardian (18+) throughout their use of the pool facilities. Excludes Aldershot Lido and Splashtime at both pools. Ask at your local pool for a registration form.

Hart 365 card

Hart District Council will allow disabled users free use of Hart District Council's leisure facilities. This includes general swimming during the public swimming periods, casual gym sessions, gym induction and racquet sports, during normal opening hours.

To qualify you will need to show proof of receiving middle or higher rate DLA or a personal letter from your GP. The 365 card will also allow a free carer in too. For more info go to www.hart.gov.uk/disableda5-3.pdf or ask for details at any Hart leisure centre.

Swimming at Basingstoke Aquadrome

If you take your DLA letter or yellow card along to the Aquadrome, they will complete a membership form with you and provide you with a swipe card that allows a disabled swimmer and one carer (who is over 18yrs) in for free for a year. Once you have your card, you won't need to provide the proof of disability documents again, just simply swipe your card and in you go!

East Hants leisure card

For those of you in East Hampshire, you can apply for this local leisure card (with your yellow card, council tax bill and a photo) which allows your child + a carer to go swimming for free. For more information ask at your local leisure centre.

Family days out

For a list of outings and attractions that have been recommended by families to the NAS, go to www.autism.org.uk/19392.

Although not special needs specific, www.dayoutwiththekids.co.uk does provide you with many ideas of places to look into visiting!



118 Fernhill Road,
Farnborough,
Hampshire,
GU14 9DR

01252 694934

07825 280 274

info@nasHandR.org

We're on the web!

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!

Some useful hints and tips that our members have posted on our Branch Facebook Group:

"Did you know that you may be able to get a 10kg '**medical baggage allowance**' when you fly abroad? We are using it to take gluten free food and some soya milk when we go abroad later this year as we don't know availability of such things in our resort. Definitely worth asking your travel agent about." Julia.

Dark dens:

A one metre cubed, lightweight structure with a double nylon skin that blocks out the light, creating a perfect spot for UV illumination and chill time. Priced at £52.79 including VAT and delivery from www.specialneedstoys.com/uk

Katie says: "It's really sturdy and comes with a bag to be able to take it on holiday etc too. Couldn't be without ours."

Emma found an alternative, the cosy cave, from the same website as the dark den. The cosy cave springs out of its bag to create a quick space for UV fun with plenty of room inside. It costs £52.74 including VAT and delivery.

Issues with a child still bed wetting at night...

...the general consensus was to talk to your GP or paediatrician about things to try to help. It's also worth taking a look at www.eric.org.uk (the Education and Resources for Improving childhood Continence website.)

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. The National Autistic Society is a charity (No.269425) and a company limited by guarantee (No.1205298) registered in England, registered address 393 City Road London EC1V 1NG.

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Summer 2011 activities for those in Hart & Rushmoor



Please just contact Nikki - nikki@nasHandR.org or 01252 694934 to book your places.

There are limited places at these events,
therefore they are only for members who live in the Hart & Rushmoor areas.
(If there are additional spaces, we will open the activity up to other areas.)

Donutting in Aldershot



Alpine Snowsports, Gallwey Road, Aldershot, GU11 2DD.

Tuesday 2nd August - 10am or 11.15am

Minimum age 4 years old, long sleeves, trousers and gloves must be worn. Helmets for those under 16 are available at the centre or bring your own.

£6 per person donutting

Go-karting



We are really hoping to have go-karts - possibly the battery and petrol powered ones! Unfortunately the details aren't finalised in time for the newsletter, but we will put the details on the website and Facebook as soon as we have them.

If you are interested, just get in touch!

Bocketts Farm, Leatherhead



Bocketts Farm Park, Young Street, Fetcham, Surrey, KT22 9BS.

Sunday 7th August - 11am until it shuts!

We've got 2 barns booked for storing picnics and chill time for those who need a break from the excitement. Bring a picnic with you or purchase food from the tea rooms.

£4 per person regardless of age, but one carer per disabled child can go in free.

Laser-Run in Farnborough



Armstrong Way, The Fairway, Farnborough, GU14 0LP.

Thursday 25th August - 11am or 12pm

The children will be grouped by ages, as best as is possible in the two sessions.

£5 per child

Family fun day @ Challengers



St James Avenue, Farnham, Surrey, GU9 9QF.

Bank Holiday Monday 29th August 10am - 4pm

We hope to have a bouncy castle, a barbeque, face painter, the gaming zone stuff, arts & crafts and more!

£3 per child



London Zoo

This is still not officially confirmed, but I'm making a list of those interested in tickets!

Saturday 10th September - 8.15am (leaving at 8.30am and returning by 6pm)

The meeting point will be in Aldershot. Tickets will hopefully cost £5 per person.