

BOLTON ADULT ASPERGER SUPPORT

Minutes of the meeting held on October 29th 2014

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chairman welcomed members and one guest speaker, Louise McDade from the Bolton CVS and informed the meeting that Mr Mark Fraser from Bolton Council who had intended visiting to provide an update on the Autism Strategy had deferred his attendance to the November meeting.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 29th October 2014

The minutes of the meeting were agreed as a correct record.

3. Matters arising

There were no matters arising

4. Presentation by Louise McDade

Louise thanked the group for the opportunity to address the group and said that her reason for visiting was to enable her to determine in what way the group felt the Bolton CVS might be of help both now and in the future regarding developmental needs and ongoing sustainability. Her current role in the CVS was that of Health Together Care Co-ordinator.

Louise asked if there were any major issues facing the group that were thought to be 'holding the group back'. The Chairman outlined the greatly appreciated assistance received from the CVS so far that included seed-corn funding, assistance with technical aspects of the website development, training opportunities and assistance in seeking charitable status, of which, the latter was still ongoing.

The Chairman did however, raise the question of increasing the appeal of the group's meetings and asked if this issue was known to be a challenge for other fledgling groups. The Chairman referred to the potential scope for improving group membership since official figures of those affected by Asperger's and other Autism related conditions was, in Bolton, in the 1000's.

Louise indicated that in her experience many groups, have experienced difficulties in attracting new members to business type meeting which in many occasions of necessity had to have some kind of structure to them.

There followed a wide ranging and lively discussion with group members on how best to attract more members, comparing and contrasting different approaches to this issue as tried by different organisations. Actions suggested included the following:

- Speak to other groups to see how they have approached/resolved this issue
- Examine the need for a self-help directory
- Examine how we present ourselves
- Widen understanding of what we stand for
- Arrange work-shop events.
- Invite other groups to attend meetings

- Revisit objectives
- Provide more links from/to our website
- Organise an 'Ant's Junction' type reception
- Take the message to 'others'
- More informal 'coffee and cake' events

Louise agreed to reflect on the above discussion and contact the Chairman in due course with her conclusions. In the meantime, the Chairman thanked Louise for her visit and for the suggestions that the discussion had generated.

5. Chairman's report

- (i) Website – The Chairman reported that the website was now completed and available at www.boltonaspergersupport.co.uk. He also asked for any comments about the site that might help to improve it.
- (ii) Health, Care and Wellbeing Forum. Chairman attended this meeting and papers can be forwarded to anyone wishing to receive them.
- (iii) NAAS – the Chairman drew attention to the National Autism Society's Autumn Special edition Newsletter. This can be accessed via our own website and following the link to the Greater Manchester Autism Consortium website.
- (iv) The Chairman reported on the group's successful attendance at the Bolton CVS AGM held at the Macron Stadium on October 5th.
- (v) Finally, the Chairman reported details of a trip to Grassington's annual Dickensian Fair to take place on December 6th. Full details on our website.

6. Date/s of next meetings

Date's of the next meetings as follows:

Wednesday 26th November from 2pm - 4-30pm at Thicketford House. Drop-in Saturday 29th December from 2-4pm at Commerce House, Bridgeman Place