

# express

The Service User Involvement Magazine

Introductory Issue Autumn 2006



## Inside this issue

The Summer Event

Feedback on your ideas

The Consultancy -  
*what does it mean for  
Service User Involvement?*



# Welcome!

Welcome to the introductory issue of the new Service User Involvement magazine which will be published every three months. It's called 'express' because as well as the latest BHT news you will find lots of contributions from Service Users - we would like to encourage you all to express yourselves and to contribute in the way that suits you best.

You might want to comment on what you think could be improved about the service you receive or let us know what we are doing that you would like to see more of. You could paint a picture, write a short story or even a poem - we will include any contributions that represent the views and

experiences of you, the people that use our services.

We will also be bringing you the latest news on initiatives within the various projects in BHT - from gardening projects through to work and learning. Your opinions and ideas are valuable to us as they help us to improve the service that

we provide for you.

If you have any contributions for the magazine or ideas about BHT services or your projects as a whole then you can either talk to your service user rep, staff rep or your keyworker. Alternatively you could also write to us or send an email to either of the addresses below :



By Post - all contributions

**Service User Involvement Project Officer**  
Olympus House, 80-81 Marine Parade, BN2 1AJ



By e-mail -

Suggestions about BHT Magazine contributions [feedback@bht.org.uk](mailto:feedback@bht.org.uk)  
[involvement.newsletter@bht.org.uk](mailto:involvement.newsletter@bht.org.uk)

● A big thanks to **Jean Hopkins** for providing the front cover picture of the service user's summer event.



## Summer Event Success

by Charlie Jarman-Gower

The event was held in the Friends Meeting House, a beautiful Victorian building set in the lanes.

Set away from the hustle and bustle of the town the location nevertheless provided on-street access. It was a beautiful day with the wind blowing majestically through the trees. Office staff sat on the grass chatting and enjoying the sun whilst birds greedily looked for scraps amongst the floral offerings.

At 2pm the doors opened to welcome in all, and the event's themes were many and varied.

The people from **Time Banks** had quite a lot to say. Initially they advised that when starting a time bank that it's important to keep it small at first and to get professional help. It's all about sharing skills, making sure that all of the volunteers get involved in

the day to day running of the scheme and training volunteers so they can help people to share their skills. There were many other things to consider including developing networks, administering time credits, developing assets, respecting people, social and safety awareness and fund raising. At the time they had 180 members on their books, and the one fundamental issue that came out was that of trust.

The **Resource Directory** group was at the time very new but had a few ideas for accessibility like putting it on a web site and on a CD Rom. An alphabetical index system, colour referencing, helpful information, large print and links with yellow pages were all good ideas.

Paul Bolton then held a **Planning Future Social Events** group and there was a huge range of ideas



Brighton Housing Trust

# Your feedback from the event

We received many varied and useful comments at the Summer Event and would like to provide you with some feedback on what we are doing to address these:

### Creating a Service User Directory

**Kylee Brennan** and **Rachel Burrows** are working on this along with **Kevin Mackie**, a service user based at Floating Support PRS as part of the Marketing Consultancy. They would also like to produce this on a CD Rom and include it on the Service User Website. We will also do our best to integrate all of your comments into the design of the directory. There will be more updates on progress in the next issue of this magazine.

### Recycling and the environment

This is THE big issue at the last forum. Part of the consultancy's role will be to identify what various projects are doing well with recycling and to also address where things are a bit inconsistent. We would like ask if anybody would like to **write an article** or **contribute your ideas** for this for the next magazine. You could then help us to develop a recycling policy which would then be applied right across BHT. We will also include advice on how to save energy and do your bit to help the environment in the next issue of this magazine.

### Technology

A lot of comments centred on the benefits of using the internet and understanding **digital technology**. We would like to ensure that every person that uses services within BHT is supported with accessing an internet connection. We are also going to be building a user-friendly **website** where you can get lots of information on how to access support outside BHT. We would like to put a copy of the **service user directory** on the website as well as this **service user magazine**. Links to resources will give you the help, support and information to enable you to make informed choices about the services you receive.

### The Magazine

Most of the ideas for the magazine you are reading came from your feedback. Being able to **express opinions** in a greater variety of ways is the idea behind this magazine - so contribute and help to make the magazine grow into something you can be proud of!

### Debating groups

We would like you to help us to develop these in the future. A new **service user website** being built next year will include a **user forum**. You will be able to sign up for this and debate hot topics as well as developing ideas to help us to improve services.

ranging from having a debate group, the possibility of holding more small scale events, a BHT inter sports day, discos, website access, communication, better publicity of forthcoming events, getting other agencies involved, and a BHT inquiries line to name but a few.

The **What is important to you?** group spoke about rent, green issues, grants, current events, debating, linking, a recycle shop.

People in the **Newsletter** group spoke about having more light-hearted articles, reviews, events, cheap things to do, offers, crossword puzzles, and articles about and from

service users. Linking different projects across BHT was a recurring issue at the forum and it was felt that the newsletter could go some way towards achieving this. The meeting drew to an end with Jerry Ham giving away prizes from the raffle, and then people chatted away until it packed up.

I found the event as a whole very useful and hopefully as these events

develop they'll become more structured with more people turning up and providing a wider range of ideas and input. The food was brilliant and everybody was really friendly - a worthwhile day out and well recommended!

● **From left to right:** Charlie Jarman Gower; the friends meeting house; the attendees; there was a lot of interest in the various stalls on show.



Service User Involvement





Learning Links attendees using the facilities at Olympus House.

# Bringing in the experts - the BHT Consultancy

A new BHT consultancy unit is being set up at Olympus House. The big difference is that it is going to be entirely made up of service users!

Those involved will bring their experience of services to the attention of managers and policy makers as well as providing education and training to staff. Some service users will also be involved in the production of this magazine. This

all goes towards improving the services that we provide for you. The **Consultants** (in other words 'advice givers') will also be joined by one **Service User Representative** from each project within BHT. Below is a summary of the various roles :

## The Service User Representatives

The fourteen Service User Reps will each represent their project within BHT. Their roles will be to **represent the views of service users** within their projects as well as assisting in creating

ways in which all of you can be heard and become involved. Playing an influential role within BHT they will be able to tell managers how services are working in practice so that your views

can be translated into policy. They will also be involved in organising the user forums and social events at the project level as well as putting together **satisfaction surveys**.

## The Specialist Consultants

There will be three consultants, each representing a different part of BHT - one advising on **mental health**, one from **substance misuse** and the other from **homelessness**. Their roles

will be to advise our funders and policy makers on how they can better cater to your needs when they provide their services. Based at the Phase One project, **Jay Burnett** is the

homelessness consultant. He says: *'This is a way forward through action and the consultancy idea is an opportunity for real change - both for myself and for the system'*

## The Researchers

There are **two** service user researchers whose role is to take part in **research projects** with Universities and the Council. In fact the two researchers are just about to start some work on

developing a rough sleeper's strategy for the council. This means that service users can play an influential part on a national level by contributing their views to those that make the rules.

**Anthony Smith**, one of the researchers based at Portland Road says: *'I'll get a great sense of personal satisfaction knowing I'll be giving something back.'*

## The Quality Assessor

The new Quality Assessor consultant will be involved in telling inspectors how they can improve the way in which they **inspect projects** and will also be involved in health and safety.

## The Training Consultant

With a background in training **Leon Standing** will be the new training consultant. The training role will consist of contributing to staff inductions and providing training

courses for staff in service user involvement. Leon says: *'I'm looking forward to being able to pass on my training skills for the benefit of BHT'*

## The Marketing Team

Interested in marketing and graphic design? Maybe photography or magazine editing? These are all **transferable skills** and as an important part of the consultancy we are producing this magazine. If you would like to get involved in this then let us know, either through your keyworker, staff rep, emailing me at [involvement.newsletter@bht.org.uk](mailto:involvement.newsletter@bht.org.uk) or by post to the address below. **Anybody can get involved** at this level by contributing articles, poems, stories, cartoons, artwork, recipes and lifestyle tips - all of which were your ideas for the magazine from the last forum. As the magazine develops you could be involved in magazine production and other marketing aspects for BHT as a whole.

Well, that's it for this **introductory issue**. Issue One will be coming out in **December** and will be a much bigger magazine - packed full of your contributions of course! Don't forget the addresses below:



Your ideas by Post - all contributions

Service User Involvement Project Officer  
Olympus House, 80-81 Marine Parade, BN2 1AJ



Your ideas by e-mail

Suggestions about BHT -  
Magazine contributions -

[feedback@bht.org.uk](mailto:feedback@bht.org.uk)  
[involvement.newsletter@bht.org.uk](mailto:involvement.newsletter@bht.org.uk)

