

Dear Friends

Welcome to this month's newsletter. As always, we have details of our activities over the next month or so plus other information that may be of interest. We hope you may be able to get involved in our autism and mental health consultation which launches in the next few days. We also have news of a visit to Harry Potter at half term and advanced information of some Christmas relaxed theatre performances.

Finally, we are looking for one or two volunteers who can help us out at some of our activities – just a small commitment.

Support Group Meeting

Our next support group meeting is on **Monday 17 October** at Bishopstoke Evangelical Church at 7.30pm.

We welcome our guest, **Kathryn Cornish**, from Autism Hampshire's Community Access team. Kathryn will be facilitating a discussion on Autism and Mental Health. This is part of our consultation to investigate ways in which mental health issues are addressed in the autistic community, identify any barriers that exist and find a positive way forward. The consultation is in partnership with Hampshire Autism Voice (HAV – the parent/carer/people-with-autism group of the Hampshire Autism Partnership Board) and funded by a grant from Healthwatch Hampshire.

There will be plenty of time at our meeting to have a chat and to browse our Resource Library, comprising over 350 books, videos and DVDs on many aspects of autism and Asperger syndrome.

If you have any books due back or overdue, please don't forget to bring them along.

Family Youth Club

Our next Youth Club takes place on **Saturday 5 November** at Chandlers Ford Methodist Church from 3.30pm to 5.30pm. Children accompanied by their families are welcome.

Our usual facilities will be available and our volunteer play facilitators will be present to help the children and young people enjoy the activities we have on offer.

PLEASE NOTE: Parents must be responsible for their children during the duration of the youth club and must remain in the same room as their child at all times – thank you.

£1.50 per child. Entry is via the children's garden at the rear of the church, next to the car park.

Full details, including a map, can be found at www.shantsnas.org.uk/Home/Family%20Youth%20Club

LEGO club



Our next club is also on **Saturday 5 November** at Chandlers Ford Methodist Church.

This is for children with autism from ages 8 to 13. The club is currently full but for more information and to express interest in your child joining the waiting list, complete the form at www.shantsnas.org.uk/home/lego

PLEASE NOTE: We have been advised that, unfortunately, this type of therapy is not successful with children who have an ADHD or PDA diagnosis.

Our Southampton social groups

Both our Children's social group and Adults' social group continue to meet at St Patrick's Church, Portsmouth Road, Woolston, Southampton, SO19 9BD. All dates through to Christmas can be found on our website. For more details, email aspsq.shants@gmail.com or contact Sue (023 8043 2612) or Tracey (07532 282301).

Tony Attwood conference



Bookings for our Tony Attwood conference, on **Friday 19 May 2017** at Winchester Guildhall, continue to pour in with over 250 tickets now sold – and still over 6 months to go! Therefore, if you hope to attend, please do not delay in booking your places before we sell out! We are particularly keen to promote the event to professionals who we feel would greatly benefit from attending, therefore, please also pass on information to any professionals you think may be interested in coming along.

Prices have been kept as low as possible and include refreshments and buffet lunch. We have special prices for parents/carers, people with autism, Teaching Assistants, accredited Hampshire Autism Ambassadors and other professionals. For full details of this exciting event and to book, please visit our website at www.shantsnas.org.uk/News/TonyA

We do hope you are able to make it to this event. Tony last visited us in 2011 (which was a sell-out) and we are delighted to be able to welcome him to the UK again in 2017. His programme will cover many aspects of autism across all age groups.





17,000 people have signed up to the National Autistic Society's *Too Much Information* map to learn more about autism. Public polling has already shown a 16% increase (equivalent to 10 million people) in awareness of the difficulties autistic people face in public places. And they're not stopping there...

The NAS asked autistic people and their families what they wanted them to campaign on – employment came out as a key priority. So look out, because very soon – on 27 October – they will be launching the next phase of their award-winning campaign. This will be all about autism and the workplace. They'll need your support to help them influence the Government and employers to make sure more autistic people get the jobs they deserve.

They are excited to launch this new phase of the campaign with another powerful film. Follow them on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/NationalAutisticSociety/>) or Twitter (<https://twitter.com/Autism>), or check out www.autism.org.uk/get-involved/tmi.aspx for more news about the campaign.

Consultation on mental health and autism

As announced last month, our branch, in partnership with HAV, has been awarded a grant from Healthwatch Hampshire to investigate ways in which mental health issues are addressed in the autistic community, identify any barriers that exist and find a positive way forward. Even though mental illness can be more common for people with autism than in the general population, the mental health of people on the spectrum is often overlooked. Anxiety disorders are very common amongst people with autism.

- Roughly 40% have symptoms of at least one anxiety disorder at any time, compared with up to 15% in the general population.
- Understandably, this can lead to sadness or depression – one reason why a mixture of anxiety and depression is common.
- Mental health is a current priority issue for the Hampshire Autism Partnership Board.

An online consultation will be launched in the next few days (we will circulate the link as soon as it goes live) and two focus groups will be held, facilitated by Kathryn Cornish from Autism Hampshire. The first of these is at our **Support Group meeting next Monday evening** (as mentioned above) and the second will be at **Brunch Club in Café Dome, Brighton Hill Parade, off Sullivan Road, Basingstoke, RG22 4EH on Friday 21 October** from 10:30am to 12:30pm (www.thecafeproject.co.uk). Parents and carers are welcome to attend either group – refreshments can be purchased at both meetings. There will also be some 1-to-1 and group interviews with adults with autism. In December we are running a focus group of relevant professionals to feed into the consultation. We also plan to produce a short film about the main findings of the consultation.

Help requested

As you will know, our branch is run entirely by volunteers and it is only because of the great team we have that we are able to achieve anything. We are looking for some help in two of our activities - both are just a small commitment:

Family Youth Club: We operate a rota of volunteers who assist with this monthly club. We are looking for a couple of parents/supporters who could spare one Saturday afternoon every couple of months from 3.00 until 5.30pm to help with manning the door, serving refreshments, generally keeping an eye on proceedings and/or setting up/packing away equipment.

Support Group: We operate our resource library at these monthly meetings on the 3rd Monday evening of the month. Our committee member who currently runs this will not be able to attend for a while and so we are looking for someone who can help set up/pack away the library and book in/out library items. The volunteer would need to attend from 7.00 to 9.30pm. We just need someone organised and good at recording accurate information.

If either of these voluntary opportunities appeals to you, we would love to hear from you – many thanks.

The Making of Harry Potter

Basingstoke Autism Support Hub (BASH) has kindly opened this trip to our members. If you are happy to make your way to Basingstoke to pick up the coach or travel directly to the studio, the details are as follows:

Coach trip to Warner Bros Studio tours in London on **Wednesday 26 October**. Coach pick up at Everest Community Academy, Oxford Way, Basingstoke, RG24 9UP. The coach leaves at 11.00am (for the tour which begins at 1:30pm).

Tickets for the tour £17 each, Carers free, Age 4 and under free. Coach seats £2.50 each. Tickets without coach seats are available – details are on the link below. To book tickets visit <http://autismsupporhub.com/october-half-term> or email bookings@autismsupporhub.com.

Free Autism Awareness event

Autism Hampshire Serendipity Social Groups' Free Autism Awareness event on **Thursday 10 November** takes place from 9.30am to 12.30pm at Ovation restaurant in the Mayflower Theatre, Southampton. Many of the speakers have autism and will be talking about their experiences of the education system, work, late diagnosis, female perspective, health and care system and much more. There will also be information on local services and free refreshments on the day. To book or to find out more please contact Jamie Pratt on 02380 766 162 or email Jamie.pratt@autismhampshire.org.uk. Spaces are very limited so early booking is essential.

Autism Ambassadors

In May 2015, the Hampshire Autism Partnership Board (HAPB) and its partners (including our branch) launched the Hampshire, Portsmouth and Isle of Wight Autism Ambassador Scheme. Over 80 volunteer Ambassadors (including some members of our branch) have already been appointed to:

- act as a change agent, promoting Think Autism in their organisations and daily lives.
- identify reasonable adjustments that can be made within an environment.
- signpost individuals to additional information on autism, professionals and resources.

Raising understanding of autism will help people on the autistic spectrum to live as independently as possible in their local communities, access services they require in their lives, receive good customer care and increase opportunities for employment. It is important that this support starts early to give children and young people the best chance of developing coping strategies as they progress into adulthood, facing an often confusing and overbearing world.

Later this month, one representative from each of 75 schools in Hampshire is being trained as an Autism Ambassador. This is to ensure their schools have an awareness and understanding of autism and investigate any reasonable adjustments necessary to make them more accessible to people with autism (whether they be students, staff, parents or visitors). It is hoped that further schools will join this scheme so that, one day, every school in Hampshire has an Autism Ambassador and is autism-friendly.

Over the next few months, further Autism Ambassadors are being trained in Hampshire Constabulary and we have had enquiries from Southampton General Hospital, Hampshire's West Clinical Commissioning Group (who are interested in having Ambassadors in GP surgeries) and a number of other local organisations and individuals. If you are interested to find out more about volunteering as an Autism Ambassador, whether you work in a large or small business, or a community group, please visit www.ascambassador.org.uk for more information and, to express an interest in becoming an Ambassador, contact admin@ascambassador.org.uk.

High-functioning Autism and Asperger's Social Group, Milford on Sea

If you are an adult and have high-functioning autism or Asperger's and want to meet new people, go along to the Milford on Sea Club, 67 High Street, Milford on Sea, SO41 0QG for the Milford on Sea social group. They next meet on **Friday 21 October**. Just pop in any time between 1.00 and 3.00pm. If you have any questions about the group please contact Jamie on 02380 633951 or email Jamie.pratt@autismhampshire.org.uk or phone/text Jack on 07437 794497.

Autism Hampshire is also looking for a Social Group Facilitator volunteer. If you have high-functioning autism or Asperger's or are autism aware, living in Milford on Sea or the surrounding area and are interested in helping to run a social group, contact Jamie as above. They can provide support from the project team, training and expenses.

Autism Hampshire's Serendipity Social Group Project now has a Facebook page, to keep you up to date with social group dates and activities: <https://www.facebook.com/Serendipity-Social-Groups-Project-1708225532774212>

Christmas pantomimes and shows

The Night Before Christmas – Relaxed Performance

The Haymarket, Wote Street, Basingstoke, RG21 7NE is staging a relaxed performance on **Saturday 3 December** at 4:00pm. They are delighted to present this specially adapted performance of The Night Before Christmas, for those on the autistic spectrum and with other disabilities. Suitable for ages 2 and over.

Tickets: £9 (includes £2 booking fee). Please contact the box office to book tickets for this performance on 01256 844244. Email: box.office@anvilarts.org.uk, Web: www.anvilarts.org.uk/your-visit/how-to-book

Robin Hood – Multi-sensory Pantomime

Great fun for all the family at Shepherds Down School, Shepherds Lane, Compton, Winchester, SO21 2AJ, on **Saturday 17 December**. Performances at 11.15am or 2.00pm. Head2Head Theatre's traditional pantomime tale that is accessible to all (reception to adult). It features reduced dialogue, loads of sensory experiences, amusing sound effects and songs, role play and interaction opportunities, a strong sense of sequence using rhyme, rhythm and repetition, brightly coloured sets with puppets, props and costumes that will stimulate and encourage participation, some signing and voice output communication aids, advance pack to familiarise participants (widgit storyline, songs and characters). For participants with visual and auditory impairments, please contact the theatre company to arrange seat reservations.

Tickets are £5 each. To book a place, please contact: 01372 278021 or 07519 747290. Email: h2hoffice@gmail.com. For further details visit www.head2headtheatre.co.uk/sensory-pantomime

Sleeping Beauty – Relaxed Pantomime Performance

The Anvil, Basingstoke is staging a relaxed performance on **Wednesday 21 December** at 2:00pm. Starring Sue Holderness (Only Fools and Horses), Katrina Bryan (CBeebies) and Sarah-Jane Buckley (Hollyoaks), they are delighted to present this specially adapted performance of their pantomime Sleeping Beauty, for those on the autistic spectrum and with other disabilities.

Tickets: £10 (includes £2 booking fee). Contact the box office to book tickets for this performance on 01256 844244 or visit www.anvilarts.org.uk/whats-on/sleeping-beauty-relaxed-performance

Peter Pan – Relaxed Pantomime Performance

Chichester Festival Theatre is staging a relaxed performance on **30 December** at 2.00pm.

Join Peter Pan and the Darling children on a swashbuckling adventure to the magical world of Neverland. With music, puppets, beautiful set design and costumes, this show is the perfect festive treat for groups and families. The performance welcomes individuals, groups and families with children on the autistic spectrum, sensory and communication disorders, a learning disability, or anyone who would benefit from a more relaxed theatre environment.

Tickets: £12. Contact: Chichester Festival Theatre, Oaklands Park, Chichester, PO19 6AP, Tel: 01243 781312, Email: Box.office@cft.org.uk, Web: <https://www.cft.org.uk/whats-on/event/peter-pan>

Robin Hood – Relaxed Pantomime Performance

The Mayflower Theatre, Southampton is staging a relaxed performance on **3 January** at 1.30pm. A sensational cast led by soap royalty Shane Richie and Jessie Wallace in the South Coast's biggest family pantomime! The show is specifically designed to welcome people who will benefit from a more relaxed performance environment, including people on the autism spectrum, with sensory and communication difficulties, or a learning disability. There is a relaxed attitude to noise and movement and some small changes may be made to the light and sound effects.

Tickets: £9. Contact: Box Office 02380 711811 or visit https://www.mayflower.org.uk/Whats_On/Panto2016

First Steps to Autism Information – local guides

Autism Hampshire have produced a set of useful local guides for Southampton, Hampshire, Isle of Wight and Portsmouth to help people when they first want to know more about autism and the local support services available.

These are available from the Hampshire Local Autism Directory. Visit <https://www.autismhampshire.org.uk/local-autism-directory/directory/#stepbystepguides> to download these.

Exam Concessions and Support

Some pupils may be eligible for Access Arrangements to enable pupils with Special Educational Needs to access national tests or examinations. Parent Voice has prepared an article that explains what concessions and access arrangements are sometimes available, how to request these if you feel your child would benefit from them, as well as useful tips and resources. Please visit http://www.parentvoice.info/en/Exam_Concessions_and_Support_-

Sensory Processing and Shopping

About five per cent of the population is estimated to suffer from some form of sensory processing disorder. Considering that everyone needs to shop at some point, there are tremendous numbers of people out and about on a daily basis who are struggling to cope with sensory overload. Parent Voice has come across a helpful article with some hints and tips to help a loved one with sensory processing disorder enjoy shopping. To read the article visit <https://www.retailmenot.com/blog/sensory-overload-while-shopping.html>

Reminders:

Gambado, Eastleigh – exclusive admission times for SEN guests

Gambado hold SEN indoor soft-play sessions for young children with all types of disabilities and special educational needs at Unit L10, Swan Leisure Centre, Eastleigh, SO50 5SF from 9.00 to 10.00am. Upcoming dates are **Sundays 16 October, 20 November and 18 December**. Standard child ticket (includes 1 adult) £5 and additional adult £1. For more information or to book, visit www.gambado.com/events/eastleigh/sen-sessions or call 023 8001 8336.

Visiting the Hampshire Countryside and Exploring the New Forest by Bus booklets

We still have a few of these booklets left which will be available to our next support group meeting. These are designed for families and teachers of children with autism and can also be downloaded free from <http://autismandnature.org.uk/>

Avon Tyrrell Inspiring You Events 2016-17

Avon Tyrrell has released its Inspiring You programme for 2016-17. These are held at Avon Tyrrell UK Youth Outdoor Activity Centre, Bransgore, BH23 8EE. There will be a wide variety of activities available. The dates can be found at <https://www.avontyrrell.org.uk/IYou.html>. In addition to the Inspiring You weekends, they also offer additional support to enable young people to attend Funday sessions throughout the year, which are a great way to develop independence and confidence, while experiencing some of the activities Avon Tyrrell has to offer.

Save the Date! Special Needs Information Day 2017, Yateley

Support4SEND and Parent Voice's next Special Needs Information Day will be held on **Saturday 25 March 2017**, 10.00am to 3.00pm, at Yateley School, School Lane, Yateley, GU46 6NW. These popular free events give families and practitioners opportunities to gather information about local support and services. The event is free to visitors (refreshments and food are available to buy). There is ample free parking on site and disabled access. Several workshops and talks will be on offer, alongside the exhibition, and further details about these will be published in the coming months. They also hope to offer activities for children and young people. Our branch will be there with our stand. If you would like to know more about the event, email enquiries.support4send@hants.gov.uk.

Dimensions autism-friendly cinema screenings

Dimensions work with ODEON, Cineworld, Vue and Showcase to host Autism Friendly Screenings at over 250 cinemas nationwide. See what autism-friendly cinema screenings are coming to a cinema near you at <https://www.dimensions-uk.org/families/autism-friendly-environments/autism-friendly-screenings/>

Hampshire Local Autism Directory

The Local Autism Directory (LAD) is funded by Southampton, Hampshire, Isle of Wight and Portsmouth (SHIP), 8 CCGs and Adult Services, Hampshire County Council. Information within it covers children and adults.

Visit the LAD at <http://www.autismhampshire.org.uk/local-autism-directory/directory/>

Hampshire Specialist Parenting Support Services (HSPSS)

The Hampshire Specialist Parenting Support Service (HSPSS) has been commissioned by the Children and Maternity Collaborative of the five Hampshire CCGs. The service provides parenting programmes across Hampshire both in a group setting and individually in family homes for parents/carers who have children aged 5-17 that are:

- diagnosed with an autistic spectrum condition (ASC)
- diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- displaying troubling or challenging behaviours associated with mild-moderate conduct disorder
- teenagers displaying anti-social behaviour including child to parent violence.

Please either email hampshire.parenting@barnardos.org.uk or call 01489 799178 to find out more.

Friends of In Touch

Friends of In Touch, a registered charity in Eastleigh, supports children and young people with autistic spectrum conditions. The aim is to enable anxious or socially-vulnerable children and young people to feel more engaged with mainstream education and social activity by helping them develop self-confidence, self-esteem and coping skills. Lots of fun activities include cooking, arts and crafts, bushcraft, games, construction toys for the Junior group and cookery, pamper evenings, film nights, quizzes, bowling, book club, sports, meals out and BBQs for the Senior group.

There are currently vacancies in their Junior (9 to 13) and Senior (13 to 21) Youth Groups. They meet at Y-Zone Youth Centre, Fair Oak on Tuesdays during term time (Juniors 4.30 to 6.00pm and Seniors 6.30 to 8.30pm). Holiday groups are also planned. For more details visit www.friendsofintouch.org.uk. Anyone interested should contact info@friendsofintouch.org.uk or call 07474 539539 prior to attending the groups.

The Monday Night Project

The Monday Night Project is a weekly social group for young people with additional needs aged 10 to 14 years, based at The Box Youth Centre, Hedge End, every Monday, 5.30pm to 8.00pm. It will help young people with autistic spectrum difficulties/SEN or confidence issues. Young people take part in cookery, arts and crafts, table tennis, films, games, trips, music, recreation and fun activities! Membership is by referral only. This may be through parent/carer, school, self/young person or partner agency. For more information or a referral form please contact Youth Team Manager Donna Love on 01489 789638 (Mob: 07534 563424) or email donna.love@hedgeend-tc.gov.uk.

My World, National Autistic Society

The NAS is offering a FREE autism classroom resource pack and fortnightly resource emails for teachers who sign up to *My World*. Please pass this information on to all teachers you know. For a video with more information, please visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fv66Q-MUxqc and sign up at www.autism.org.uk/myworld

Our Resource Library



Our library is available to members at our support group meetings and a small selection is available at our family youth club. Members can join the library for a one-off donation of £5. We now have around 350 books, videos, DVDs and games. Up to 3 items may be borrowed for a maximum loan of 2 months. We do ask that items are returned promptly to enable others to borrow them.

Calling all coffee drinkers!

Do you, your friends or colleagues use Tassimo coffee machines? If so, you can help us raise funds.

Tassimo wants to save TDISCs and outer foil wrap packaging from going to landfill. For the total weight of the TDISCs and outer foil packaging we collect, we get TerraCycle points which are converted into cash for us. **To date we have raised well over £1700.**

Please bring along your TDISCs and outer foil wrap packaging (they do not have to be cleaned) to any of our meetings/activities. Even better, get all your friends involved too.

Also, if you have a link with a local supermarket or place where a collection bin could be situated, please let us know.



Help us boost our fundraising

A great way to raise money for us for free – shopping online through *easyfundraising*.

Whenever you buy anything online (presents, groceries, clothes, books, train tickets, hotel rooms, etc.) you can raise a free donation for our Branch. Over 2,700 retailers have registered with the site, including Amazon, John Lewis, eBay and Tesco who donate a percentage of what you spend to us to say thank you for shopping with them.

1. Sign up – go to www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/shantsnas and click on the button to sign up.
2. Shop – from the *easyfundraising* website, search for the retailer you'd like to shop with and click through to the retailer to make your purchase. This tells the retailer you came from *easyfundraising*. The price is exactly the same as if you'd visited the retailer directly.
3. Get a donation – after you've made your purchase, the retailer will give you a cash reward that *easyfundraising* turn into a donation for our Branch

Please be assured that using the *easyfundraising* website will not cost you a penny. There are no catches or hidden charges and we benefit from any donations you make once registered.

Thank you for your support.

What do you buy online?

Whatever you buy online, you can raise free donations for us by simply buying through **easyfundraising**

www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/shantsnas

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amazon.co.uk John Lewis M&S Iceland ASDA M.S. Sainsbury's

As always, for full details of all our meetings, other dates, news items and information, please visit our [website](http://www.shantsnas.org.uk).

Regards

David & Rachel Carter

The National Autistic Society, South Hampshire Branch
Email: shants@nas.org.uk | Website: www.shantsnas.org.uk
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You will have received this news update because we have your contact details on our list. Should you no longer wish to receive information, please let us know and we will remove you from the list. Thank you.