



The Leveller 17

October 8th 2014

Giving local people and local issues a fair and equal voice

House Meeting – September 19th 2014

We had a good turn-out for this, discussing what had been happening during the Summer and what we hope to do later on this year.

I have come up with a new slogan: '**Supporting the five Cs**'. This is hopefully being publicised in the local press at the moment, in a press release that I have sent them. I hope that the new slogan will help to explain what the group is all about.

- **Campaigning** – about such issues as the closure and relocation of our Day Centres, bedroom tax and the stopping of some of the youth sessions.
- **Challenging** – getting people to think about issues which will affect them. Our perceptions of learning disabilities, or our thoughts on Hate Crime for example.
- **Communication** – providing a means by which people can contact one another.
- **Community** – giving everybody in the Oswestry area a fair and equal voice. This includes the Foodbank, Safe Places and Dementia Friends.
- **Caring** – about all of the above

Debt.

October 22nd. 7.30 at Eastern Oswestry Community Centre

Jackie Jeffrey, CEO of Citizens Advice Shropshire has kindly agreed to come over to talk about Debt. I think that this will be a wide ranging survey of the current situation: the scale of it in Shropshire, how people get into debt, how the CAB is campaigning against it and how people can try to recover from debt.

This meeting is being co-sponsored by Shropshire People's Assembly, as they wish to extend out of Shrewsbury. This is their first meeting outside Shrewsbury so please make them very welcome.

Equality Groups – The Oswestry Model.

October 30th. 7.30 at the United Reform Church, Shrewsbury.

This will be at The United Reform Church, Coleham Head, Shrewsbury, SY3 7BJ. This is just opposite Shrewsbury Abbey, with free parking there.

I have been invited by Shropshire People's Assembly to talk about how our group was set up from virtually nothing. The People's Assembly are hoping that this will be helpful to any other small groups wishing to set up. To quote the minutes of the Planning Group:

The planning group thinks it will be very helpful to others who want to set up a local group to have the opportunity to hear about the way it can be made to happen, how much work is involved, and etc.

I would appreciate any support that you feel that you can give.

Day Care in Oswestry.

Thursday December 4th at 7.30 in the Parish Rooms (by St Oswald's Church)

On Thursday December 4th, we have invited over Gavin Bayliss, Day Services Manager, accompanied by Ruth Houghton who is Head of Social Care, Efficiency and Improvements. They will be talking about what has happened to Day Care in Oswestry. I understand that Adults with Learning Disabilities have all now moved to Avalon and the use of Lorne Street as a Day Centre has now ceased. Any adults who are not at Avalon have been assessed and are more or less fending for themselves. There seems to have been nothing in the press about this...

Care of the elderly

I have a feeling that there is a lot more here to be researched. I have come across a number of elderly people who do not come under the general heading of those who need to use Day Centres. However they may need their shopping done, they may be lonely and need company or they may just want to see something different to their own four walls. I am keen to find out more about this in 2015.

Any comments?

Youth Clubs

Shropshire Council is aiming to save about £140,000 – equivalent to a 15 per cent budget cut – and about one-third of the county's youth workers will take redundancy from April 1 next year. From April the council will no longer directly deliver youth services, but instead commission them from other providers.

It would be very easy to jump up and down and organise an extra 'emergency meeting' about this.

However we have a lot going on at the moment and I feel it might be best to wait until the Spring when we might know exactly what is going on.

Number for the month – 707

The number of dementia cases in the UK among people in their 30s expected this year. Too often we associate it with our parent's generation – not our own or that of our children.

The future of the NHS locally.

Future Fit had a four hour session in Oswestry on the evening of our house meeting.

This is a press report

<http://www.shropshirestar.com/news/2014/09/26/options-outlined-for-future-of-ae-in-shropshire/>

Since then, there has been an announcement that the status quo cannot continue.

<http://www.shropshirestar.com/news/2014/10/02/shropshires-ae-no-option-but-to-change/>

We seem to have very little choice about what is happening,

It should be noted that if Labour win the next election, Andy Burnham is saying that Shropshire should have two A and E departments.

Future Fit

One has to question the way in which Future Fit is asking people for their views on the future of the NHS in Shropshire.

- They hold meetings with very little press coverage – so we don't know about them. When tackled on this, their spokesperson said that it "had press coverage in the Shropshire Star but it is at their discretion if they reproduce features in their more local publications e.g. the Oswestry Chronicle" And the Advertizer?
- Meetings are 4 hours long. Surely this puts off people from attending?
- Many are during the day. When a lot of interested people are working.
- They talk about a Road show in the future, but are uncertain how to advertise it. In fact they asked my advice on this one.
- A phone number was given for queries – no answer
- It was also suggested that people could find out by Twitter. Surely many of the people particularly in need of information do not have internet access, let alone know what Twitter is.
- I e-mailed all of these points to nhsfuturefit. To call the reply non-committal would be an understatement. It said nothing, except "The formal consultation period will commence after the general election 2015 and run for three months". A further e-mail, sent 2 weeks ago, has had no reply.....

I do hope that they are not calling this a consultancy, as, as far as I can see, very few people have been consulted.

And now it seems that the meeting in Oswestry didn't even count towards the first report....

<http://www.shropshirestar.com/news/2014/10/06/ludlow-and-oswestry-treated-as-second-best-over-shropshire-health-consultation/>

Inequality is getting even worse.

Just to really cheer you up.

<http://www.theguardian.com/society/2014/sep/15/how-super-rich-got-richer-10-shocking-facts-inequality>

Just a thought

"We cannot feed the hungry with statistics".

David Lloyd George, speaking in the House of Commons, 1904

And exactly how far have we come from then?

Penny Rice. 8 High Fawr Avenue, Oswestry, SY11 1TB. Tel: 01691 680382 Mob: 07726 328652

We are an autonomous group, affiliated to The Equality Trust