

**CITY SYNERGY
FIRST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
THURSDAY 29 JANUARY 2004
CHAIR'S REPORT**

During the early period of Leisure Link, the then Co-ordinator for Brighton & Hove, Christina Mendez, started to organise sports and social activities for younger blind and vision impaired people. Paul Gillett and myself were involved in helping Christina at that time.

In Autumn 2002, Leisure Link faced a financial crisis when Lottery Funding was dramatically reduced. Christina was leaving her post and her successor Katy Russell did not come into post until early 2003. During the interval, it became clear that there was a need for the group to have a new identity, separate from Leisure Link, run by and for vision impaired people, and with its own independent funding and bank account. A group consisting of blind and vision impaired people supported by sighted volunteers came together to agree the name of City Synergy and to plan a programme of events. Our Inaugural Meeting was held in January 2003, at which the Steering Group including Chair, Secretary and Treasurer, was approved. A draft Constitution had been prepared by Paul Gillett and an amended version will be proposed for approval at this evening's AGM.

Our activities during 2003 included goalball, sponsored ten-pin-bowling, two cycling events, walks (to Devil's Dyke along the old railway track, through Friston Forest, and from the Golden Gallion to Cuckmere Haven) and numerous social events including theatre visits, meals out, a barbecue on the beach, and pub evenings. Our year started with the Snow White pantomime at the Theatre Royal, and ended with Christmas lunch in Donatello's. Without £2,500 funding from the Scarman Trust and £1,000 from the Blatchington Court Trust Fund, many of these events could not have taken place. On behalf of City Synergy, I would like to thank both organisations immensely.

2004 will start with another pantomime, Aladdin, which twenty-one people will attend. Goalball is being played twice a month, and on 17 January a competition will be held in Southampton involving a Junior and a Senior Team. Good luck! Many events are in the pipeline for January, February and March - details will follow.

Our thanks go out to everybody who has been involved with City Synergy during 2003. This includes those serving as officers and members of the Steering Group; all those who have participated in our events; and the sighted volunteers who have supported our activities. Lastly I should like to thank Katy Russell of Leisure Link who arranged archery, rifle shooting and swimming at St Dunstan's for us, and who has given City Synergy her unfailing support.

The Committee is always interested to hear your ideas about possible activities: all your suggestions will be considered.

Thank you, everyone, for a magnificent first year!

Mick Etheridge
January 2004

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