

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL AND WELCOME TO THIS BUMPER ADDITION WHICH INCLUDES NEWS OF A SPECIAL CARERS TREAT ALONG WITH ANNOUNCING OUR 2014 ANNUAL SPECIAL. OUR 2014 CALENDAR WILL BE PUBLISHED LATER THIS MONTH BUT THIS WILL BE VIA OUR BRAND NEW WEBSITE.

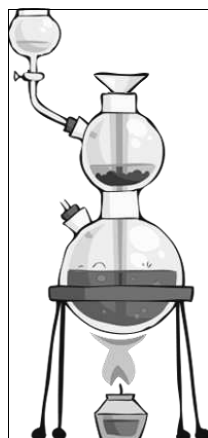
FEBRUARY HALF TERM

Wednesday 19th February Family Swimming at St James Street Pool, 12.30-1.30pm just 50p per person.

Tuesday 18th February 2-4pm -

Science Boffins. Something completely different for ESCAPE but we know all your youngsters will have a 'blast'. This session will be packed with amazing special effects that thrill and inform through eye-popping experiments with lots of laughter and fun thrown in. A perfect indoor activity for our cold February days.

Taking place at The Comeytrowe Centre, Galmington in Taunton.



Just £3 per child, with adults free, booking is required so please do on the enclosed reply form by 4th February

To learn more about this session take a look at www.scienceboffins.co.uk to see what fun we will have.

Irwin Mitchell Solicitor's Q & A session

On 26th February 2014 we are looking forward to inviting all our Escape members to an informative and invaluable meeting with Polly Sweeney and Fiona McGhie, Public Law Solicitor's with Irwin Mitchell Solicitor's.

They will be on hand to answer your questions, on many issues, such as:

- Education law
- DLA
- Cuts to services: your Rights
- Community Care Law

Taking place at Halcon Church Hall, off Roman Road, Taunton from 10am

To give us an idea of numbers coming it would be helpful if you could let us know your intention to come.

Tea & coffee will be available

SWIMMING

ST JAMES STREET, LARGE POOL

Only 50p per person.

HOLIDAY SWIMS: Wednesday 19th February 12.30pm-1.30pm.

AFTER SCHOOL SWIMS: Resume on Wednesday 8th January and continue every Wednesday during term time, all from 4.00pm-5.00pm.

FAMILY SWIM: Last Sunday of every month with dates coming up being 26th Jan, 23rd Feb & 30th March. 2.00-3.00pm

We have been given a very exciting new opportunity thanks to the generosity of the Taunton Football Club.

On Saturday 15th March, we have been invited to take our Collection Buckets to the match between Taunton and Cinderford Town with Kick Off at 3pm.



This is a fantastic opportunity for us to raise our profile within the local community, raise a few pennies, and give you FREE access to a local Football Match



Please indicate on the reply form if you would like to volunteer for this event, if you are only able to make it for a short while, that's fine, just let us know.

Communal Christmas Card

My last mention of Christmas, I promise!!

Thank you so much to the following families who donated towards our Communal Christmas Card, £121 in total was donated, so thank you to:-

Sharon and Dan Perryman
Helen, Dave, Chloe & Thomas Newman
Sharon, Paul, Jordan & Ben Hooper
Marie, Bob & Ebran Anderson
David, Virginia & Louise Harvey
Jan, Steve, Robert and Russell Windows
Geraldine, Gary & Lisa Parker
Bev And Raphy Anderson
Marilyn & Joy Gibson
Tracey, Dave, Laura, Scott & Georgia Thistleton
Angela, Keith, Dan & Louise Farrow

NEW YEAR NEW TREAT.....FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY.....

As you all know we have been trying hard to deliver something exciting for our Carer's.

The Cardiff trip in November is always eagerly anticipated and well attended by those able to slip away on a Friday morning for a two night break. We understand that for some of our carer's this just isn't an option but you would still love to be able to escape for some good quality 'Me' time. With this in mind we would like to invite you all to join us for a weekend in Birmingham. Birmingham is a bustling city that has so much to offer with it's great shopping complexes, The Jewellery Quarter, The Symphony Hall, exhibition centres, museums, nightclubs and so much more.



Staying at the stunning, 4* Radisson Blu Hotel on Saturday 17th May.

You will find the Radisson Blu Hotel ideally located in a 39-storey glass skyscraper near the business district, convention centre and shopping complexes. The designer guest rooms feature floor-to-ceiling windows, a flat-panel television, Free high-speed, wireless Internet access and other desirable amenities. The hotel offers Birmingham guests an award-winning Italian restaurant, two bars and an 18th-floor health centre overlooking the city. Spa treatments can be booked individually in the tranquil and relaxing day spa and fitness centre.

Twin and Double rooms available at a subsidised rate of just **£55 per person to include Bed and Breakfast** and coach travel. Single occupancy rates available on request.

In order to make the most of the weekend we will be leaving Wellington at 8am Taunton at 8.30am and Bridgwater at 9.00am. We will leave Birmingham at 4pm on the Sunday afternoon, returning home at approximately 6.30pm.

Carer's breaks aren't just for Mum and Dad either, why not ask your Brother, Sister, your own Mum or Dad or even your Bestie to join you instead. As long as there are just two people per member family we really don't mind who you choose to spend your weekend with!

£10 per person deposit required by 26th February

For those of you who look forward to our November Cardiff trip, don't worry we hope to plan this trip as normal in addition to this trip to Birmingham.

- ♦ Feel the need to get fit?
- ♦ Want to give something back to ESCAPE?
- ♦ How about taking part in Taunton's Family Fun Run?

SUNDAY 6th April 2014
Taunton Family Fun Run & Half Marathon

Many of you are old timers who are now seasoned fun runners having completed it every year for the past 9 years, but many of you are new to ESCAPE and have never experienced the thrill and sense of achievement that this event gives you.



The Fun Run offers two routes, of differing lengths 2.1km & 1.4km. Therefore regardless of your fitness level there is something for everyone. It would be fantastic to see lots of you out in our tee-shirts creating a splash of excitement .

Many employers offer Matched Funding, how about talking to your employer to see if they do too. Talk to us if you are not sure how to go about this.

Of course in addition to the Fun Run, there is always the Half Marathon if any of you fancy the challenge.

Encourage everyone, Friends, Family, Work Colleagues, Neighbours. In fact how about talking to your bosses about all of your workforce taking part. We are very aware that it is increasingly difficult to ask people for sponsorship, which is why it is so important to encourage different people to take part.



As usual you will be issued with an ESCAPE running vest for half marathoners or teeshirt for fun runners, but to help us keep the costs down if you already have one that doesn't need replacing please let us know.

An integral part of our charity work is fundraising, without fundraising we cannot continue to offer the same level of activities that we have done in the past.



This event is historically our biggest fundraiser of the year and it is also a fabulous showcase for our charity and the children and families that we support so we would love to see lots of you there taking part.

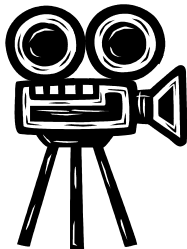
Entry Forms are enclosed and once completed you will be issued with your sponsorship form.

THANK YOU

Movie Magic evenings

Our calendar has been full the past couple of months so we have given these evenings a miss, but we hope to re-instate them in the next few weeks, we are keeping our eyes on the cinemas listings for a movie that we think you will all like.

If you have something you want to see, let us know and we will see what we can do.



Keep an eye on your emails as this is how we will let you know.

ESCAPE Tee-Shirts

Along with the launch of our new website, you will have noticed that we have added a new 'ESCAPE' colour. As a result we would like to issue you all with new Tee-Shirts, but this obviously costs money. Do any of you know of any persons or businesses that may be interested in sponsoring the purchase of them. Let us know if you do and we can follow it through.

Calling all Escape Parents/Carers!

Were you aware that Somerset County Council had recently run a Consultation, on the future of its Learning Disability Services?

In reality, any person over the age of 18, with a Learning Disability diagnosis, is at risk of losing the services currently available to them, direct from Somerset County Council.

'Friends of Future 4' is a group that has been set up by a number of concerned parents/carers. Their aim is to give a platform for themselves and other parents/carers to discuss and campaign for the future of these services and to be included in the decision making process.

They have been talking to Somerset County Council about the Consultation, which ran for a very short period and was not widely known about.

As a Committee Member for Escape and the parent of a Daughter, who may need to access these services in the future, I felt it was important to get involved with the 'Friends of Future 4' group. This way, by having a finger on the pulse, I can be involved in helping to shape the future services for our children.

It is not too late to find out more or get involved too!

For more information go to: www.somerset.gov.uk/LDinfo

Please feel free to contact me:

Vicky Pearson 07578378742 (call or text. Please leave a message, so I can get back to you)

Escape members can also still raise their concerns about the future of its Learning Disability Services, direct to Somerset County Council.

Or.....

You could lobby your local Councillor directly. The more people that do this, the better!

To find out who is your local Councillor, go to: www.somerset.gov.uk

New Website & Registration

As majority of you are by now aware, we have a brand spanking new website, thanks to the team at Noisy Little Monkey. The biggest change affecting you all is our 'Members Only' Section. This will hold detailed info about all of our events, so that when you have questions, such as what time does the coach leave, you can refer to this page for the answer.

Registration to this area is very straight forward, but we have heard that many of you have had issues, so a step by step process is as follows:-

Visit www.escapesupportgroup.com/whats-on/

Click Register

Enter Your chosen user name

Enter your email address

Click Register



You will then receive an email with a password, BUT this email will go into your JUNK OR SPAM folder

You cannot use the password until Cathy has authorised you as a user, once this authorisation has taken place you will receive another email, but this will also go into your JUNK OR SPAM folder. Please also bear in mind, Cathy doesn't have 24hr access to her emails so authorisation will not happen immediately.

I am also told, that some of you are experiencing problems when entering your password, to alleviate this problem, try copy/pasting the password direct from the email, rather than entering the digits individually.

If after doing all of these steps you are still having problems, email or call Cathy with your choice of password, Cathy will then change your password via her Admin panel and this should solve your problems.

Your Input is needed

Blog Writers

You will see that our 'Blog' is a large feature of our website, and to keep things interesting it would be really good to have your input too. Would any of you like to become Blog writers, perhaps you know of something that you think our members will find interesting, perhaps you have visited somewhere that was particularly good or bad and want others to know. Pretty much anything as long as you think it would be of interest to the rest of ESCAPE, obviously everything is authorised by ESCAPE staff before publishing, but do let us know if you would like to help.

Members Stories

Perhaps one of the most valuable pieces on our website is our Members Stories, potential new members and possible funders, gain so much insight into your personal experience of ESCAPE and what we have done for you as a family. But we need MORE member stories, do you feel we have helped you and your family, could you put this into words?

If you would like to help in either of these areas, please give Cathy a call. THANK YOU

ANNUAL SPECIAL 2014

SUN 26TH, MON 27TH, TUES 28TH & 29TH OCTOBER

Yes that's right, 3 nights/4 days, and we are off to **BLACKPOOL**. Blackpool is a destination that has been requested on numerous occasions over the years and we are making many of your wishes come true.

There would be no point in going all that way if it wasn't to see the world famous Blackpool Illuminations. The October half term is the only suitable holiday period but will be chilly, so be prepared,



We are offering this trip to you in a slightly different format this year. Some activities are included in our package, others can be booked and paid for in addition, that way we hope that you get what you want at a price you are happy with. So please read all of this information carefully and do call us if you have any questions.

I will start by telling you our planned itinerary, and then will go into more detail about the activities overleaf.

Sunday 26th - Leave Taunton/Bridgwater for a 6 hour journey with a couple hour stop enroute, in the Birmingham area (not 100% sure where this will be but unless we come up with somewhere more suitable it will probably be Cannock Chase, as last year) Arrive Blackpool approximately 5pm. **All included in price**

Monday 27th - Morning - Blackpool Tower Eye, Afternoon - Blackpool Tower Circus, Evening - Coach tour of Illuminations. **All included in price.**

Tuesday 28th - This is where it gets complicated. During the day you have a choice of activities and if chosen these are at an additional cost to you. However the prices quoted are group rates, and Carers are free, so still represent great value for money. We felt this was a fairer way, as not everyone will want to do everything and therefore may end up paying for activities they don't want to do. The additional costs are detailed on the reply form. Your choices on this day are:-

- Blackpool Pleasure Beach or
- One or Two attractions chosen from Blackpool Dungeons, Sea Life Centre, Madame Tussauds or
- Get away from Blackpool completely and our coach will take you to Fleetwood Market and Designer Outlet, approx. 10 miles away

Our evening activity on Tuesday is **included in our price** and is what we in the office are most excited about.....We have EXCLUSIVE use of the Sandcastle Indoor Waterpark!!! From 7-9pm

Wednesday 29th - is our final day and so is being left open for you to have some free time, wander the town, stroll along the promenade, or simply explore. Coaches will leave at 2pm, giving you time for some lunch before the journey home. Other than the usual service station stops, we will head straight home.

Exact timings will be published nearer the time, but if you have any further questions then do please give us a call.

| Age Group | Total | Male | Female | Male | Female |
|-----------|-------|------|--------|------|--------|
| 18-24 | 15% | 15% | 15% | 15% | 15% |
| 25-34 | 25% | 25% | 25% | 25% | 25% |
| 35-44 | 20% | 20% | 20% | 20% | 20% |
| 45-54 | 20% | 20% | 20% | 20% | 20% |
| 55-64 | 15% | 15% | 15% | 15% | 15% |
| 65-74 | 10% | 10% | 10% | 10% | 10% |
| 75+ | 5% | 5% | 5% | 5% | 5% |

Cannock Chase - a fabulous Forestry Commission area, where there are many accessible walks, adventure play areas and a Cafe. If you fancy being more adventurous then at an additional cost, but not included in our package, you can hire mountain bikes or have a go on the Go-Ape Assault Course. If between now and October we find a free indoor activity in the right location, we may change this destination.

Blackpool Tower Eye & 4D Cinema- Before embarking on your ascent to The Blackpool Tower Eye, encounter the new 4D Blackpool. Amazing sights, smells and special effects surround you as you follow one little boy's adventure at the seaside. Then, ready for your flight, you embark on your journey to the top of The Blackpool Tower as



- you step into the lift. Once you've reached your destination, the doors open, and you
- are met with floor to ceiling, uninterrupted views across Blackpool and beyond.


- **Blackpool Tower Circus** - A fantastic Circus show lasting for 1 hr 45 mins, with comedians, acrobats, and general tom foolery.

Illuminations - Our coaches will take us along the Golden Mile and beyond to view the spectacular site of the Illuminations

- **Madame Tussauds/Sea Life Centre/Dungeons** - These attractions are exactly what you would expect. Smaller versions of their London equivalent and we would estimate that they would take approx. 1-2 hours to walk around, all fully accessible to wheelchairs.

Fleetwood Market and Designer Outlet. - Exactly what it says on the tin! You may prefer to escape from the hustle and bustle of Blackpool. This is approximately 10 miles from Blackpool and our coaches will take you there for around 4 hours of browsing/shopping.

Blackpool Pleasure Beach & Nickelodeon Land - Rides galore with something for everyone, be it the Pepsi Max Big One for our thrill seekers or the Bikini Bottom Bus tour for our littlies. The Pleasure Beach does allow fast access but there are limited rides available for our non ambulant wheelchair users. You will see we have quoted 2 prices for entrance, the first being £16 per person, this gives you unlimited access to all rides. The second being £6, this is park entrance only but Ride tokens can be purchased on the day for your selected choice of rides (this can work out expensive, if doing a lot of rides, but cheaper if only doing one or two). This price has been offered as we know that some of you are the nominated 'bag person' and stand and watch the rest of your family on the rides. So for example a family of 4 could be 1 carer free (Full access), 2 paying £16 to access all rides, and 1 paying £6 to access the park only.



- **Sandcastle Waterpark** - A superb, indoor waterpark with numerous slides and general water fun. We have exclusive use, and there will be several pool staff members in the water to help our less able youngsters. Fully accessible changing rooms can be used for those needing extra help. Wheeled chairs are available to get our non ambulant youngsters into the water, and the pool ambassadors will be on hand to help in any-way they can. This Waterpark has won numerous awards in accessibility. This is most definitely an activity not to be missed.

Blackpool in general - Blackpool is a typical seaside resort, wonderful in the sunshine, perhaps not quite so in the wind and rain. All attractions are located along the Golden Mile (promenade) but this is still a fair distance from one end to another. There is a regular, fully accessible Tram service that runs along the Sea front that isn't expensive to use, e.g. current prices for a family of 5 is £9 for unlimited journeys in any one day.

For further information check out:-

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/cannockforest>

<http://www.theblackpooltower.com/>

<http://www.visitsealife.com/blackpool/>

<http://www.blackpoolpleasurebeach.com/home>

<http://www.sandcastle-waterpark.co.uk/>

Coach travel - Obviously the coaches that are hired will depend entirely on who book to come, but if they are required we will hire a Wheelchair accessible vehicle and a coach with 3 point seat belts. Coaches will pick up from Wellington, Taunton and Bridgewater

Overnight Accommodation - We are booked to stay at The Travelodge, South Shore. This is centrally located and is about a 5 minute walk from the promenade and 10 minutes from the town centre.

The hotel has accessible bedrooms sleeping 2 or 3, and their standard rooms sleep 4 in a double bed and a double sofa bed. Your family will be allocated the most cost effective combination to suit your family numbers. However if you are a family of 4 or less and our room allocation is not suitable you can request an extra room which will be charged at the full cost (Subject to availability), I should also point out that at least one adult has to occupy each room.

Breakfast is included.

This break will cost only £90 per person, with under 2's costing £30 each.

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| £90 includes | All Coach Travel |
| | Entrance to Cannock Chase |
| | Accommodation at the Travelodge |
| | Breakfast on all 3 mornings |
| | Illuminations Coach tour |
| | Blackpool Tower Eye & 4 D cinema |
| | Blackpool Tower Circus |
| | Entrance to The Sandbanks Waterpark |

Not included but can be booked at an additional cost and all are optional

| | |
|--|---|
| | Dungeons @ £9 each with Carers Free |
| | Sea Life Centre @ £9 each with Carers Free |
| | Madame Tussauds @ £9 each with Carers Free |
| | Blackpool Pleasure Beach @ £16 or £6 each with Carers Free. |
| | Fleetwood Market @ £2 |
| | Extra Bedroom in The Travelodge £180 total |

Booking is required and you can do so on the enclosed reply form. At this stage a deposit of £10 per person will confirm your booking with a closing date of 26th February. The remaining amount can be paid in two instalments with the payment dates being

JANUARY 2014 REPLY FORM

Family name _____ Tel No. _____
Address _____ Email _____

Tuesday 14th February - Science Boffins—Reply by 4th February

No. Children at £3 each _____

No. adults free _____

Irwin Mitchell Q & A Session 26th February

No. _____ coming

Collecting - Taunton Football Club - Saturday 15th March

No. Volunteer helpers _____

Carers to Birmingham—Saturday 17th May—closing date 26th Feb

No. attending ____ @ £55 each

£10 per person deposit required with booking.

Please state names:- _____

Please tick your rooming requirements

Single ____ Double ____ Twin ____ Sharing with _____

Pick up point Wellington/Taunton/Bridgwater

ANNUAL SPECIAL - BLACKPOOL 26TH - 29TH OCTOBER - CLOSING DATE 26TH FEB

Who's Coming? - please specify all names and ages of children

| Adults age 16+ @ £90 each | Children age 3-15 @ £90 each | Children age 0-2 @ £30 each |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Coach Travel *Please delete as applicable

Pick Up Point req. Wellington/Taunton/Bridgwater*

Wheelchair position req.

Yes/No*

3 point Seat Belt req.

Yes/No*

Travelodge

I am happy for rooms to be allocated in the most cost effective way for the number in my family Yes/No*

I would like to reserve an additional room and I understand that this will cost an additional £180. Yes/No*

Tuesday's Optional Extras

Please include all members of the family, we will allocate the carer ticket but bear in mind when working out your costs, carers and age 2 & under are free. If your request is complicated, either write us a note or give us a call. If nothing is completed we will assume that you are choosing to do your own thing on this day.

Once we receive your booking, we will work out the total amount payable and send you notification of your bookings to make sure we have understood your requirements correctly

| Activity | Cost pp | No. Req. (Inc Carers) |
|---------------------------|---------|-----------------------|
| Dungeons | £9 | |
| Sea Life Centre | £9 | |
| Madamme Tussauds | £9 | |
| OR | | |
| Pleasure beach Rides Inc. | £16 | |
| Pleasure beach Rides Exc. | £6 | |
| OR | | |
| Fleetwood Market | £2 | |

**Taunton Marathon/Half Marathon/Fun Run
Sunday 6th April**

Name _____ **D.O.B.** _____

Address _____

Tel. No _____

Please delete as appropriate* ***Half Marathon / *Full Marathon**
(Min. age 17) (Min. age 18)

Est. Finish time ____ Hours ____ Mins

***Fun Run** - Run / Walk / Walking with Aids / Wheelchair Self Propelled / Wheelchair Manual
(Min . age 5)

I do/do not* require a new running vest or tee shirt

I confirm that I will not compete unless I am fit to do so. I take part in the event at my own risk and will not hold the organisers responsible for any injury, loss, damage, action, claim costs or expenses that might arise as a result of my participation.

Signed _____ Date _____

**Taunton Marathon/Half Marathon/Fun Run
Sunday 6th April**

Name _____ **D.O.B.** _____

Address _____

Tel. No _____

Please delete as appropriate* ***Half Marathon / *Full Marathon**
(Min. age 17) (Min. age 18)

Est. Finish time ____ Hours ____ Mins

***Fun Run** - Run / Walk / Walking with Aids / Wheelchair Self Propelled / Wheelchair Manual
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Signed _____ Date _____

**Taunton Marathon/Half Marathon/Fun Run
Sunday 6th April**

Name _____ **D.O.B.** _____

Address _____

Tel. No _____

Please delete as appropriate* ***Half Marathon / *Full Marathon**
(Min. age 17) (Min. age 18)

Est. Finish time ____ Hours ____ Mins

***Fun Run** - Run / Walk / Walking with Aids / Wheelchair Self Propelled / Wheelchair Manual
(Min . age 5)

I do/do not* require a new running vest or tee shirt

I confirm that I will not compete unless I am fit to do so. I take part in the event at my own risk and will not hold the organisers responsible for any injury, loss, damage, action, claim costs or expenses that might arise as a result of my participation.

Signed _____ Date _____

Feel free to copy this if you require more entry forms. THANK YOU

