

# **RUGBY DISABILITY FORUM**

**Chair: David Foster – Tel: 01788 544991**

**Secretary: John Burrell – Tel 01788 533796**

## **THE COMPACT – A REPORT**

**When one looks at The Compact in 2010, one appears to see nothing except the negative aspects of government working with the third sector. To try and adjust the balance I will try and explain how a very small disability group in a small Midlands town is trying to make a difference.**

**Rugby Disability Forum was formed in 2004 by cooperation between the disabled ex-chief executive of Rugby Borough Council and of the Access Officer of Rugby Borough Council. They realised that with the DDA coming on-line for access for disabled people in November 2004 there was a need for disabled people to have a voice.**

**In the January of that year it was agreed that the group should be chaired by a disabled person and that the Access Officer from Rugby Borough Council would temporarily take on the role of Secretary for the group.**

**That cooperation of Rugby Borough Council has continued to this day, with the Access Officer still in position of secretary and his managers supporting this role. The Secretary takes the minutes, produces and distributes them in both e-mail and postal, and the same with agendas.**

**This in itself is good cooperation but is nothing to what has blossomed over the last five years.**

**As an exercise in joined up government Rugby Borough Council now support the Forum financially and Warwickshire County Council has taken on the role as printer for the group.**

**Rugby Disability Forum are now invited to sit with the Borough Council and to some extent with the County Council in all areas that affect disability. These include the LAA, Planning, Environment, Car parking, Parks and Recreation, Taxis etc. In fact there are no areas where Rugby Disability Forum are not welcome to comment.**

**When the Borough Council decided to redesign Caldecot Park, (park in the centre of Rugby) Rugby Disability Forum were invited to walk the patch with officers of the Borough Council to discuss any needs for the disabled community. In all fields the needs of disabled people were taken into consideration to the extent that all seats had arms and that half of the benches had hard standings next to them so that a wheelchair user could park there with their friends. Disabled toilets have been installed in the park and although the door on the disabled toilet is very heavy this is being looked at and when funds permit an opening door system will be installed.**

**The Borough Council are putting in a One-Stop Shop in their front of house. When this was being planned, and I emphasise planned, Rugby Disability Forum were invited to look at the drawings and give their recommendations for disabled people. Just before the work started, an Equality Impact Assessment was drawn up to which Rugby Disability Forum were invited.**

**This week we spoke with the IT Manager to see if we could have a disability page on the Council's web site. The attitude was "can do" and this is now being looked at in a positive vein.**

**From the lowest clerk to the Chief Executive of Rugby Borough Council there is an attitude of 'can do – will do' with regard to disability. We have access to all levels to help this attitude bring fruition.**

**We are also working with the County Council at setting up Disability Forums around the County and although we cannot claim to work with every section of the County Council those that we do work with are very fruitful.**

**We are a little third sector organisation but we can work with government, we do work with government and we get results.**

**David Foster,  
Chair,  
Rugby Disability Forum.**