



Special United

The voice of young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their siblings

Special United Chicken and Chip Supper on 31st January 2019 at the Avenue School

Twenty one young people and ten parent carers took part in the event. Young people enjoyed chicken and chips and each received £10 Amazon Vouchers for their contribution to the discussion on sport and leisure activities in Reading. We also welcomed Lisa Harry, the new administrator for Special United.



Dan Rook from Reading Football Community Trust came with Kingsley! We were all excited to see Kingsley and there were lots of questions about him and lots of photos! Dan has very kindly offered free tickets to a football match – one adult per child to attend – to be arranged through Special United.

Dan spoke told us about what activities the community trust offer, including Inclusive Under 16s Football and Inclusive Sports, both for 5 – 16 years, Inclusive Adult football for over 16s and an Inclusive Club Programme. Football was very popular in the group and there were lots of questions about how to join.



Dan Cabbage from Reading Sport and Leisure told us about activities in the 3 Reading Borough Council owned sports centres: Rivermead, South Reading Leisure Centre and the Meadway. The gyms can be used from 13 years of age and you don't need to have a membership. Passport to Leisure disability discounts can be used. (It would be up to the PFL team to negotiate a discount with other businesses.) The centres offer a variety of activities inc curling.

The Meadway has trampolines with a bookable hoist

Palmer Park has cycling where you can bring your own or borrow an adapted trike. The track is used for fun runs for everyone, inc wheelchair users, and they are setting up a sensory walk.

www.readingfamiliesforum.co.uk

Registered Charity No. 1166585



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Our young people would also like:

1. Special needs swimming groups and activities where queuing and competitiveness isn't necessary. Tag rugby, fencing, football, basketball, swimming and snorkelling would all be popular (there is snorkelling equipment at the Meadway which hasn't been used recently).
2. Fun aqua parks would be good but there are no plans for the new Reading pools to have slides etc.
3. Climbing would be popular – there is a private climbing centre in Whitley. The Dolphin Centre does accessible climbing and archery but these are short courses and are booked up months in advance.
4. A changing place is a priority for us at the new Reading pools and at one or more leisure centres.
5. More activities for 11 to 16 and 16 – 25 are needed that children with special needs can access. Dan Rook kindly offered to look at this with Reading Sports and Leisure.
6. To maintain the wheelchair accessible play equipment at Palmer Park – a wheelchair swing would be great! The ground needs to be even to push a wheelchair over – no bark, gravel or sand, please!
7. Fairs – such as Carter's Steam Fair need to be accessible – eg with ramps up to rides.
8. For activities to be put on the Local Offer for families to see what is available.

Gill Seagrove talked to the group about the Local Offer. There is lots of information about activities for children with special needs on the Local Offer including the Berkshire Banshees, a wheelchair rugby club; Sailability; and SEN sessions at Red Kangaroo. The Local Offer send out regular DISC newsletters with all the latest information and give Max Cards to families of children 0 – 18 with special needs, which give discounts to many local attractions.

To find out more, go to

<http://servicesguide.reading.gov.uk/kb5/reading/directory/localoffer.page?familychannel=3> and search under special needs activities or telephone: 0118 937 3777 OPTION 2

Next Session

- Kate Egginton, Associate Director of Nursing – Children and Young People at the Royal Berks Hospital would like to meet Special United to discuss the Children and Young People Strategy and how young people want to be communicated with. We agreed an evening on Tuesday, 16th Feb 5 – 7 at the Avenue School with a Dominoes takeaway!
- There is also a disco being held at the Avenue School on 15th Feb – all welcome. Booking essential.

Ramona Bridgman

2nd February

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