



THANK YOU



This will be the last time I write the welcome for Coalition News as I'm leaving the organisation. Before I go, I would like to send you all the most enormous thank you for all your involvement and encouragement over the last 4 years.

I have learnt a huge amount in this post and from each and every one of you and it has been a privilege to work with and for you all.

Despite the pandemic raging its way across the world over the last few years, Coalition members have been able to come together (even when we were far apart) to champion the rights of the Disabled community and to make sure we are a part of policy, strategy and service design and delivery. I am really proud of some of the things we have achieved together and the way members have supported each other.

I have a whole load of memories of working with you all to take with me, many are not suitable for Coalition News so I'll keep those to myself, but I'll think of them, and you, often. I hope to remain a member of The Coalition and so I hope that our paths may cross again.

Please see the below announcement from Jonathan Fisher, regarding our new CEO who will be in touch with you all shortly, I'm sure.

In the meantime, due to the disproportionate impact that the cost of living crisis is having on the disabled community, we have focused Coalition news this quarter on support available. Do please see the section on the Household Support Fund in particular and do not hesitate to get in touch if you would like to apply.

Please can I also encourage you to participate in our cost of living survey, so that we are able to ensure that your voice is heard by all those working to plan responses and support to the crisis.

Wishing you all the very best, Clare



WELCOME



We are pleased to announce that we have appointed Nikki Roberts as our new CEO, who some of you will know as she currently is the Comms Lead at The Coalition.

Nikki brings relevant experience through her previous interim CEO post with the Twins Trust as well as the experience she gained in establishing and running a peer-support based Community Interest Company (CIC) (BRAAIN).

Nikki shares the values of The Coalition, in particular around the value of lived experience and peer-support.

Nikki has worked closely with many members over the last year and looks forward to continuing this work and making new plans with the Board, members and staff over the coming months.

A huge welcome to Nikki!

Jonathan Fisher, Chair Surrey Coalition of Disabled People

A TRIBUTE TO ROGER BLISHEN



A tribute to Roger Blishen

We are deeply saddened to let you know that Coalition member Roger Blishen died on Tuesday 8th November.

Roger was a Board Director and member of the organisation for many years. Roger was also Chair and now Vice Chair for the South West DENS (Disability Empowerment Network Surrey) group and represented the Coalition on Surrey Safeguarding Adults Board.

Roger was a supportive and familiar face to many members. Roger was always willing to help whether this was to carry things, offer round tea/biscuits or to offer assistance to manual wheelchair users going uphill! I'm sure members will also remember Roger's generosity and thoughtfulness. I don't think either Roger or his wife Ann ever forgot someone's birthday and he kept one member supplied with Jaffa cakes for years!

Roger was also a local councillor representing Farnham Bourne ward on Waverley Borough and Farnham Town Councils. Roger was passionate about ensuring that Farnham was the most inclusive place it could be.

"WE WILL MISS ROGER TERRIBLY; HE HAD SUCH A BIG PERSONALITY AND PRESENCE"



Roger embraced the challenges of the last few years and the Covid-19 lockdowns with a spirit of adventure and threw himself into utilising new technology to enable him to continue to contribute to all the boards and networks he was a part of.

As restrictions eased, Roger could often be found at events helping to run the Coalition stall and we always looked forward to seeing which jaunty tie he would pick for the occasion. Roger also loved a Costa and would often treat us to a coffee when we were out and about. Roger's favourite was a large cappuccino which has a cup that is so big it requires two handles!

As well as helping those in Surrey Roger also helped those from further afield and was recently involved in assisting in sending ambulances loaded with medical and other essential supplies to Ukraine.

We will miss Roger terribly; he had such a big personality and presence. We are thinking of his family at this time, and particularly of his wife Ann Blishen, his children and grandchildren.

If you would like to submit a tribute to Roger, please use the link below or contact the office and we can do this on your behalf:

<https://surreycoalition.org.uk/book-of-remembrance/>