



**Minutes / Cofnodion**  
**Cross Party Autism Group / Grŵp Trawsbleidiol Awtistiaeth**  
**Medi 11 September 2015**  
**Prifysgol Glyndŵr University**

**1 WELCOME / CROESO**

CPAG Chair Mark Isherwood AM, welcomed everyone to the 2015 North Wales meeting.

The meeting was also attended by CPAG Officer Aled Roberts AM. Mark passed on apologies from other AMs unable to attend and welcomed the Assembly's translation team. Mark also updated the group on the ongoing work in the National Assembly, including January's Private Members debate on an Autism Act. Mark welcomed the various organisations who were presenting to the group today.

**2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING/ COFNODION A MATERION YN CODI**

There were no matters arising and the minutes were agreed to be an accurate account of the previous meeting.

**3 AUTISM WISHES.**

Autism Wishes' Mandy Neal and Jo Perera summarised the work of the charity and played a video that highlights their success to date. There was a question from the group relating to the age ranges for the play scheme Autism Wishes provide. The group is primarily aimed at younger people but all are welcome.

**4 ANGIE ATHERTON**

Angie spoke about her personal experiences and played a video detailing her and her son's story. Angie shared how, after identifying gaps in services, she set up her own support service helping people with autism and their families. She also wanted to highlight the work of the Autism Flintshire Group. A group member who had received support from Angie said that the help received has been invaluable.

**5 "YOURSPACE" WALES**

Tamara Hall spoke of the work that "Your Space" do to support people with autism in North Wales, including their various social and activity clubs

**6 CREATASMILE**

Sharon Bateman spoke about how Creatasmile was founded and the work it does across the region. Sharon also mentioned a new funding grant from the Postcode Lottery and how this will allow them to expand their work.

**7 NATIONAL AUTISTIC SOCIETY WREXHAM BRANCH**

Kerry Roberts and Kelly McLeod-Andrews spoke about the work the branch has done in the last year, including the fundraising success of the Healthy High Street Scheme and their election hustings events. There was a question raised about the university support that the NAS provide in North Wales. Meleri Thomas of NAS Cymru agreed to discuss the provision available after the presentation.

**8 JO TAYLOR OF FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

Jo, along with her colleague Trevor Brand discussed the approach taken by the Authority in supporting people with autism. They shared recent case studies of how individuals have been supported. Jo also discussed how positive outcomes have been achieved through the community monitoring support service, and that although

funding for this is due to end, the North Wales region hopes to pilot a new service to follow on from this work. Jo also made the Group aware of the ASD Info Wales website and the employment resources available. There were queries from the group asking for clarity on the support available. Jo said that there is no generic service but tailored support to help achieve specified outcomes. The Wirral Autism Society Chief Executive clarified the relationship they have with Flintshire Local Authority. Another group member said that after referral to Jo, her son has made great progress.

## **9 GWYNEDD AND ANGLESEY AUTISM AND ASPERGERS SUPPORT GROUP**

Alwyn Rowlands spoke about the range of work his organisation does including working with students in Bangor Uni to provide the Sbectrwm club. Alwyn also noted the significance of the CPAG meeting in North Wales, one of the few that travel outside of Cardiff and paid tribute to the AMs who have supported it. Alwyn suggested that the momentum that was brought by the Welsh Government's autism strategy is slowing, citing the example of the loss of David Oliver to the area. Alwyn finished by saying that there are not sufficient services to complement a rise in diagnosis rates, especially for those who don't have a co-occurring mental health condition or learning disability. He reinforced the importance of those support groups and organisations who had presented to the CPAG today.

## **10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Elin Walker Jones asked how the group could help support Mark Isherwood and NAS Cymru's call for an Autism Act. Mark said that all parties are currently drafting their manifestos and the group should use the opportunity to make their views clear to their own AMs. He mentioned that those who supported his call for an Act in his Private Members debate are on record [ <http://www.assembly.wales/en/bus-home/pages/rop.aspx?meetingid=3102&assembly=4&c=Record%20of%20Proceedings&startDt=18/01/2015&endDt=24/01/2015&keyword=autism> ].

Meleri Thomas of NAS Cymru reminded the group of a free concert to be held at St. Asaph Cathedral for parents and carers of people with autism. The concert will feature pianist Noriko Ogawa; and starts at 1030 on 29 September.

A member of the group shared details of another organisation offering speech and language therapy groups.

Date and location of the next CPAG meeting: 18 November 2015 at the National Assembly for Wales from 12:15pm-13:15pm.