

## From 100 Voices to Brandon Voices

Throughout September and October, Brandon Trust hosted new Brandon Voices events in all the areas it provides support.

Brandon Voices has evolved from the previous 100 Voices events [www.brandontrust.org/get-involved/our-events/100-voices/](http://www.brandontrust.org/get-involved/our-events/100-voices/), which were launched in 2011 and specifically designed for, and led by, the people we support.



These new events, organised by the four area Members' Boards, were again a chance for people to get together and talk about how they feel about the support they get from Brandon, and how they might want to receive support in the future.

The boards are made up of people with learning disabilities and autism and they were in charge of organising their day, choosing the theme, and setting an agenda.

Then, on 19 November, the boards all came together for a final conference with management, support workers, and trustees, so they could report their findings for the charity's management team and trustees to use to shape the future direction of Brandon Trust.

The day began with each area giving a presentation, outlining what happened at their event, what they talked about, and what they found out. Attendees also heard about the results of the recent organisation-wide satisfaction survey, and that over 90% of people were 'very or quite happy' with their support.

Key policy areas were identified and everyone had a chance to vote on what they wanted Brandon to focus on. The issues discussed included: better opportunities for socialising, making sure that people with higher support needs are still heard, and using more technology, such as Skype and email, to connect with friends and family.

The board members, management, support workers, and trustees all spent the afternoon discussing together how Brandon could start working on these areas.

## Celebrating a new job with Brandon Trust's help

This is Matthew, who we support in Dursley, Gloucestershire.

His hard work searching for paid employment has been successful because he's now proudly landed a new job as a care home kitchen assistant.

He said: "Finding the right job was a lot harder than I thought, but I kept trying. Eventually, I got offered the right job for me. I love my job and I love my life."



Our team supported Matthew with creating a CV, which he gave out to town employers. He also joined Brandon Trust's weekly job club, run in conjunction with Gloucestershire County Council Forwards Team, to gain extra work skills. He did voluntary roles for experience and attended interviews, taking on board feedback.

Brandon Trust's social inclusion project leader Samantha Mullaney said: "He has settled in amazingly to his new job. I'm delighted his hard work and determination has paid off. Well done Matthew."

Matthew's new manager Sian Sparrow added: "Henlow Court is part of The Orders of St John Care Trust, a charity and not-for-profit organisation.

"We are a 40-bed care home. Matt joined the catering team here, as kitchen assistant, on 1 September. His enthusiasm to do the best he can was evident immediately.

"His relationships with our residents and his colleagues is fantastic, at all times he is polite, respectful, and good fun; qualities everyone appreciates.

"Within just a few weeks of becoming part of our 'family' here at Henlow, Matt's colleagues decided to award him the Star of the Month accolade, in appreciation of how quickly he has settled in and the difference his hard work and cheerful, dedicated nature has made to our residents' lives.

"Matt was delighted with this, almost as delighted as we were in being able to offer it to someone who has never worked in an elderly care setting before but who has a natural ability to make a difference."

Matthew added: "Sian makes me feel welcome, valued, confident, and included in the staff team, something that has never happened to me before.

"I look forward to going to work as it makes me very happy to help others and to be part of a team... the best team ever! I want to say a big thank you to Sian and Sam for helping me."

## Driving success for Ross

Despite being told he would never drive, Ross, who we support in Oxfordshire, has just bought his own car after passing his driving theory and test first time last December.

Ross 24, who has a mild learning disability and lives in Brandon Trust supported living accommodation in Bicester, now uses his own transport to visit his mum and other family in the county as he builds independence.

Brandon Trust team leader Shelley Down said: "This is something he really wanted to do, despite being told by a GP at 17 he would never be able to drive.



"He's been saving for a car, so after much searching and discussion he went out with staff member Andrew and bought his car."

He's quite rightly proud of his achievements and was happy to share a picture of his new pride and joy on the driveway.

Shelley added: "It's the cleanest car in Bicester because he looks after it very well. Staff are always willing to help and go out with him to build his confidence.

"Ross goes out regularly and enjoys driving everywhere, especially over to see his mum in Wantage."

## Join Team Brandon at the Bath Half

Come and join Team Brandon in the 2017 Vitality Bath Half Marathon on 12 March.

This event is sold out every single year, but our charity has secured Silver Bond Charity Places. It's £25 to secure your place (inclusive of VAT at source) and we ask that you pledge to raise £150 for Brandon Trust.

It's a fast and flat two-lap course, straddling both sides of the River Avon, so you're in with a chance to set your personal best time!

The marathon starts and finishes at the same point in Great Pulteney Street and runs through the heart of historic Bath. There will also be a Battle of the Bands competition, so plenty of entertainment as you run!

For more information, or to book your place today, contact: Emily Vinnicombe on 0117 906 2922 or [Emily.vinnicombe@brandontrust.org](mailto:Emily.vinnicombe@brandontrust.org) or Clair Armstrong on 0117 906 2918 or [clair.armstrong@brandontrust.org](mailto:clair.armstrong@brandontrust.org)

## Shop number three opens for Brandon

Brandon Trust has just opened its third shop in Bristol with the mantra: "If you think you know charity shops, think again."

Situated at 144 Whiteladies Road (BS8 2RS), store number three is following in the footsteps of the other two, in Gloucester Road and Cotham Hill, by offering everything from designer items, current trends, and beautiful vintage pieces, to gorgeous handcrafted goods from the various Brandon social enterprises such as pottery, tiles, and wood crafts. It has a bigger children's section too.



Shop manager Lou Minchin said: "We're offering a high-quality charity shopping experience.

"The reaction has been brilliant in the first week. We've been busy with donations, shoppers, and lots of people offering to volunteer."

It's been a year-and-a-half since the first shop opened on Cotham Hill and the charity's presence on Bristol's high streets has steadily grown.

Lou added: "Having a third shop in Bristol gives us a solid alliance and a chance to shout about the great work of Brandon Trust. I'm very proud of the team involved. I want to build our reputation and see the shops flourishing.

"Shop three has more space and gives us a chance to focus more on the products from our social enterprises.

"There's a strong link between all three with the team members working across all the shops."

The Whiteladies shop is finding its feet and is in constant need of donations over the door, no matter how small, and would be particularly grateful for clothing at present. Contact the shop direct on 0117 973 7727.

All three Brandon shops are open to shoppers daily from 9.30am-5.30pm.

To feedback on this issue of Family and Friends, contact [tim.gray@brandontrust.org](mailto:tim.gray@brandontrust.org) or 0117 952 8210  
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