



Disabled Christians Fellowship

Information on starting a branch

Disabled Christians Fellowship
PO Box 353
Epsom
KT18 5WS





An introduction to a Disabled Christians Fellowship Branch.

Disabled Christians Fellowship has since 1959, given many people an opportunity for fellowship through the formation of a local branch. With a team of helpers, both able bodied and disabled, a regular gathering is held in various types of accessible venues all over the UK.

The purpose of local branches is three fold.

1. Fulfilling a service left undone by the local church.
2. Seeking to exercise a caring ministry as a local body of committed Christians to all who may have a disability, both Christians and non Christians
3. As an outreach to the local community, and to those who do not know Jesus as Saviour.

Each branch is run by a group of committed Christians, and meets at regular intervals. Transport is provided to and from the venue when needed, and during the time together refreshments are served. This forms a relaxing friendly atmosphere for members to share and get to know each other better. An evangelistic outreach to non-Christians who are disabled is encouraged, as well as involvement within the local churches. The branch does not have to be attached to a Church, however a good relationship with nearby churches is encouraged.

Each branch will consist of both Christians and non-Christians, giving the opportunity to spread the Gospel amongst fellow disabled members. Branches are encouraged to visit other Churches to share the vision of Disabled Christians Fellowship, thus giving the branch an evangelistic outreach.

We are always pleased to provide a speaker and Jenny Edwards or another team member would love will visit your branch at any time of the year. Please use this opportunity to keep in touch with Headquarters

All branches are in regular contact with the main office, and visits are encouraged from speakers both within Disabled Christians Fellowship and from other local churches and societies. Each meeting contains good spiritual content and is backed by prayer. Each branch is self-supporting, and should also be sensitive to the needs of the main office from time to time.

The local branch is a vital part of the ministry of Disabled Christians Fellowship, and will become a very important part of the life of a member.

Starting a Branch

We need to look at four important aspects in starting your branch. These are:

- Forming a Committee
- Finance.
- Structure of meetings.
- Transport and general matters

Committee

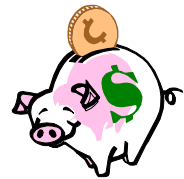
This needs to be between four and about eight people - more means the committee will be difficult to get together and unwieldy to operate. The key is to get interested, committed Christians with a variety of skills and abilities.

You will need people for the following roles

- Treasurer
- Chairperson
- Transport co-ordinator
- Booking secretary/ group secretary.

Treasurer

This need not be a qualified person, but someone to keep accounts up to date, sign cheques, and produce a balance at end of the year. You will need a bank account, this can be at any bank, each cheque requiring two signatories.



The keeping of accounts is mainly for your own protection, as proof that monies are used correctly. As a charity the accounts have to be seen to be available for any interested party to examine at any time.

Chairperson.

This needs to be someone who can lead and has a voice that can be heard. Someone people will respect, and who is capable of making decisions. The job of leading the meeting may be shared if you have more than one obvious leader amongst your committee. The leading of the meeting does not have to be solely a committee members duty.

Transport Officer

This needs to be a person with access to a phone, who will arrange the transport for your meetings. It is not an easy job and needs to be a person with patience and understanding. Transport is often the most frustrating area, if cars can be used; do so, but it may be necessary to ring Red Cross, St John Ambulance, Dial-A-Ride or other organisations to see if hiring one of their buses is an option. This will depend on the number of people in wheelchairs who require a lift, and also on funds available to pay for it. Volunteers from local churches prepared to use their own vehicles may be used to transport members.

Secretary.

We will need a contact for the Vital Link magazines and other literature to be sent. Letters to invite speakers need to be written, and good contact with the office at Epsom kept. Regular updates as to the activities of the branch are welcomed for inclusion in the Vital Link magazine. This person, may also need to organise the annual outing. We will require a telephone contact for the branch; the secretary is fine for that.

Finance.

You will need a bank account for withdrawing cheques. For your own records, a careful balance sheet of all monies need to be recorded . Transport will have to be paid for depending on who you use for this. Contributions towards administration will need to be in agreement with the committee, these will be very gratefully received by those in Epsom.

Most meetings have a collection; you will be given a box to use for this within your introductory bundle, Disabled Christians Fellowship boxes are also available for personal giving, but it is up to you how you fund your branch. We as a charity are not able to charge for membership. A contribution of £25 annually towards your insurance cover is due in March every year.

Gifts from time to time towards the Vital Link and other expenses are very happily received. We will NOT give receipts unless requested, however your letter of acknowledgement will have a reference number on it and should be treated as your receipt.

Branch meetings.

- Find a suitable venue with good access and toilet facilities
- Organise drivers who can pick up members for you.
- Have a ratio of at least 1 to 4 able bodied helpers, or people who are able to help rather than require assistance themselves.
- Identify format of meeting. You may have a speaker, or a soloist. You will need hymn books, and maybe a microphone also. A loop system is ideal if you have access to one.
- If the hall you use is attached to a church, it may be a good idea to ask if you can use their OHP projector or their hymn books.
- Arrange for a team of `tea ladies`, so that the afternoon can end with a time of fellowship around a cup of tea and sandwiches and cake; do more in this line if you wish.
- Spiritual content is **VERY** important, leaders **MUST** be committed Christians.
- It is necessary for every committee member to sign the Basis of Faith Document every 3 years.
- CRB clearance is now also a requirement for those on the committee. Please ask the office for forms for this



General points.

- The committee or support group needs to meet regularly, no less than quarterly, this is a requirement by the Charity Commission.
- Prayer is the backbone of the work: pray regularly.
- Nobody with a disability is turned away, unless person becomes disruptive or upsets other members. This is left to your discretion, but the circumstances need to be reported to Jenny Edwards in Epsom, in case of any repercussions.
- Bases of faith forms need to be signed by each committee member. This is not essential, but will make sure that the commitment of the committee members is a true and living one.
- You will receive details of holidays, conferences, rallies etc: from time to time. We would encourage you to take part if you are able, or at least to be represented at these gatherings.
- Please make sure that you keep Epsom informed with changes and any problems you may have. We can pray about them, and be of support and encouragement as well as help in these situations.
- We would encourage as many members of the branch to receive the prayer letter sent from Epsom every week. This makes a direct contact with the rest of the work of Disabled Christians Fellowship

Please keep us up to date with any changes to venue, times or committee members.

Your Vital Links will be sent in bulk to the Secretary unless we are informed otherwise. If a questionnaire is sent to you, possibly every year, please make every effort to fill it in and return it to Epsom.

We will be praying for you, especially as you start this new venture. If there is anything or anyone specific to pray for, please let us know as soon as you can.

You will find other literature in your welcome bundle; these are to help you, so please read them and keep them for reference. If you would like to receive our quarterly prayer letter, then please get in touch with us.

REMEMBER WE ARE HERE TO HELP AND ENCOURAGE YOU

The office is open daily, between 8.30am and 4.00pm with an answerphone at all other times.

Useful phone numbers:

Through the Roof general 01372 749955 - email info@throughtheroof.org
Jenny Edwards (direct) 01372 737046 - email jenny@throughtheroof.org
Julia Williams (direct) 01372 737042 - email julia@throughtheroof.org
Fax 01372 737040

Address: Disabled Christians Fellowship P O Box 353, Epsom KT18 5WS