



BORDERS **A**SPERGER & **A**UTISM **G**ROUP **S**UPPORT

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Chairman's report 2014

Special mention is given to everyone who has continued to support and donate to us throughout the past twelve months – the support, guidance, advice and encouragement has been a very valuable necessity to us all.

▶ Thank you to **Duncan and Hazel** for their continued input and important role on our committee, without their help and practical support our achievements would not be met!
▶ Also thank you to **Craig** and all the staff at the **Golden Lion** for offering us the use of the Keg, free of charge, to host our Monthly get-togethers, their welcome has been exceptional.
Staff and Committee of the Focus Centre in Galashiels for free use of their rooms to host our free legal appointments for carers – also thanks to **Morison's Solicitors** and **Emma Horne** for being so informative, available and willing to advice for free. **Rob Nicholson & the Bridge** for their continued support, guidance and encouragement – we especially wish Rob a very happy and enjoyable retirement – though we have been assured he will keep in touch and keep us up-to-date with his new CD albums etc. **Alan Ainslie & Berwick Computer Services** for keeping our website information up to date and accurate – and for all the proof reading!!! **Kevin Wyse & In-house Design** for the excellent service and design of the many documents he does for us...not once has he failed our requests. **Neil Dickson** for his valued guidance and auditing expertise in keeping our accounts in accordance with the numerous rules and regulations we are bound to. To the **Southern Reporter, Border Telegraph, Border Events, Gala/Hawick/Peebles Life** magazines and **TD1 Radio** who have given us maximum publicity and promotion for everything we have done.

▶ **Training** = very successful training seminars had taken place throughout the year. Dean Beadle & Lynne Moxon delivered a very insightful and eye-opening seminar in Dumfries – Sexuality proved to be the topic to get everyone talking! Lynne Moxon also delivered a short presentation at one of our Employment seminars as well as a separate workshop around Personal hygiene – we certainly haven't been afraid to delve into the unspoken world of autism! We were very fortunate to receive the second years' funding to continue with our Employment and Autism programme, and we kicked off the 2014 show hosting our first ever big conference – over 70 people booked to attend this all day event in St Boswells which proved to be a very successful day – so much so we immediately arranged to repeat it later in the year across in Dumfries – due to be held in September. We also have 3 other workshops arranged for the summer months covering autism and...Families, sexual health and sexual issues. Excellent talks and the feedback from all delegates was, once again, highly commendable and encouraging.

▶ **Scottish Government** – had awarded us £7,500 for year 2 of the **Employment Project**...our promise to continue to inform business owners, employers, employees,

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supporting agencies and all others that the skills an autistic person has in abundance can benefit the working environment immensely.

The Review

A donation via fundraisers has rolled in thanks to the hard work and commitment of Andy Monk, the Blind Tiger in Bury, Dan Regan and Peebles Toddlers. All have given their time, energy and coins to support the work we do and the people we support.

The various shops and pubs who have continued to display our collecting cans and encourage their staff and customers to donate their loose change has been another great boost to our income – which has allowed us to maintain the caravan and keep the cost of the holidays/breaks to a minimum. Some expenses we cannot avoid due to Haven's legislation, but thanks to the generosity of our supporters we are able to cover those costs and not pass it onto the families.

The Year Ahead

Seminars and Roadshows – concentration is on raising awareness of Autism and the many aspects of an individual's life which autism plays a significant part in causing anxiety! Stella Macdonald has agreed to be our guest speaker for the next three workshops coming up in July, August and October, as well as being part of our Employment Roadshow which includes James MacFarlane, Gregor Scott, Russell Edie and Rob Nicholson...all work together to highlight the benefits autistic people bring to our lives.

▶ Thank you to the owners and staff of the **Golden Lion in Galashiels** who have made us all feel so welcome and comfortable to host our meetings and appointments –to the **Autism Interest Group** and **Borders Autism Strategy Group** who continue to invite us to participate in their regular meetings to share what is happening in the Borders and what needs to be happening to benefit the many people who live with autism in our communities.

▶ **Thank you** to our **members** who continue to be a very important reason for BAAGS to continue in existence, and to the people who continue to phone, email and come to our meetings to ask for advice, encouragement and guidance – you are why BAAGS exists.

▶ Thank you to Hazel and Duncan for staying on the committee for and continuing for another year.