

## Southend's "Music Man Project" reaches MPs and The Prime Minister!

*David Stanley reflects on a remarkable start as a music service provider for people with learning disabilities*

On 4<sup>th</sup> March Leigh Town Councillor David Stanley joined David Amess MP, James Duddridge MP, Mayor Sally Carr and a select group of local organisations for "Southend Day" at the House of Commons, an event to promote the very best of Southend to Parliamentarians. He was there to extol the benefits of one of the town's most unique selling points: Southend Mencap's "The Music Man Project".

The event crowned a remarkable start to the new venture founded by David, who left his post as Deputy Head Teacher at the Eastwood Academy last July to start up the fulltime service for children and adults with a learning disability, on behalf of local charity Southend Mencap. Within just 6 months David has established a Special School Music Hub at Kingsdown School, daily adult music classes across the town, consultancy and teacher training, and a range of free online teaching and learning resources. This is in addition to the continuation of the original Saturday morning Music School started over 12 years ago.

David champions the rights of all people to receive effective music teaching, a cause particularly important for those with a learning disability who will continue to need access to quality education and enjoyment throughout their lives in order to aid their personal, social and spiritual development.

The invitation to Westminster came just a few weeks after David had received a letter of commendation and support from The Prime Minister, who watched a documentary about the Southend Mencap Music School by film maker Paul Carpenter (letter attached).

*David comments, "I was extremely grateful to David Amess for inviting The Music Man Project to Westminster because such a prestigious event helps organisations like Southend Mencap spread the message that this important part of society deserve the very best when it comes to education, learning resources and musical opportunities. The Prime Minister's letter was a terrific boost for everyone associated with The Music Man Project. I am delighted with our progress so far and the overwhelmingly positive response we have received from everyone. However the most satisfaction comes from seeing the impact my music is having on the students every day, and this is what really drives me to campaign on their behalf."*

The expansion of The Music Man Project in Southend and beyond is at the heart of David's ambitions. He explains, *"I want to help establish other music groups, develop other music teachers and improve the quality of teaching by non-specialists in other special Schools. We are already helping set up other groups in Essex and I have visited several Schools and Colleges with a view to improving their practice. I believe this will be the true indicator of success in the long term."*

David has written a handbook to help other individuals and organisations interested in delivering music to people with a learning disability. This is available to download free of charge at [www.themusicmanproject.com](http://www.themusicmanproject.com). Paul Carpenter's documentary is also available online.

The Music Man Project runs adult music classes at Belfairs Methodist Church on Mondays, St John Fisher Church Hall on Tuesdays, Benfleet Methodist Church on Thursdays and St Laurence Church Hall on Fridays. Sessions run from 10am to 3.30pm during School terms. For further information please call Marc McOwens on 01702 341250 or visit [www.themusicmanproject.com](http://www.themusicmanproject.com).



10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

THE PRIME MINISTER

25 January 2013

Dear Mr. Stanley,

Thank you very much for sending me a copy of your DVD *The Music Man* showing the remarkable achievements of the Southend Mencap Music School.

I watched the documentary with great pleasure and was particularly moved by the testimony given by the students. They were eloquent about their love of music and about how much the school meant to them.

It is clear that the success of the School is due to your leadership and inspirational teaching, as well as the enthusiastic and expert support you receive from the helpers. I would like to commend you all for your hard work, which shows such tremendous results.

I was interested to read of The Music Man Project and wish you every success in your efforts to extend the success of the Southend Mencap Music School across South East Essex. I hope that the example of Southend will encourage duplication of the model elsewhere in the country.

Yours sincerely,  
David

Mr David Stanley