

Hello and welcome to the December edition of the Redstone.fm newsletter. As we approach the festive season, the team at Redstone.fm have been working very hard over the past months to increase the chances of being awarded a full-time licence in 2008.

In this newsletter are details of Redstone.fm's next temporary broadcast and a special member's evening in January 2008.

In the last issue of the newsletter we asked for help with editing the member's newsletter. Due to the necessity to keep our members up-to-date with the progress of the application and the work of the organisation, Steve Burge has taken on the role of editor. If you have any stories or issues that you would like to contribute to the newsletter then please email them to stevenburge@btinternet.com or call 07792 989708.

On behalf of all the management at Redstone.fm and Reigate and Banstead Community Radio Ltd, I hope you had a peaceful Christmas and wish you a prosperous 2008.

Steve Burge - Editor

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Licence Application News

Des Shepherd writes:

Well there is no news yet from Ofcom concerning the advertisement of the licenses. As you may know, Ofcom have been advertising the second round of community radio licenses on a regional area. We fall into the East/SE England area and is the last to be advertised. The closing date for the penultimate area is mid January and we are expecting Ofcom to advise their timetable for advertising our area after they know how many applications they receive in January. It is all to do with their work load – apparently. However we are working on the basis that the advertisement of the licence will come early in 2008 and are doing as much work now to avoid the last minute rush when it happens.

One piece of work that has been done is the audience research. This was paid for from the Awards for All grant and was conducted by Keith Gorton Services. They are an independent research company who have done a lot of research for licence applications in the past. Questions were asked about existing listening habits, the likelihood of tuning in to a new community radio service, and what kind of music and speech items people want (and don't want) to hear. 500 street surveys were completed.

We are organising a member's evening in January where the results of the research will be outlined followed by a discussion on the kind of programmes we should offer when we get the permanent licence.

This event will be an opportunity for members to have a real say in the programming policy we will adopt for the application to Ofcom. The audience research is important as it enables us to demonstrate to Ofcom the level of demand for a new community radio service. This event is open to members only (if you are not yet a member, it is not too late to apply! Details of membership are set out towards the end of the newsletter).

Interestingly, the local commercial radio station, Mercury FM was not the most listened to radio station in Redhill and Reigate. That honour went to . . . well you will have to come to the meeting to find out.

SBES Equipment Show 2007

Steve Burge writes,

Choosing the right equipment for any radio station is the key to being able to write, produce and present cutting edge radio and to that we are no exception!

I went along with Paul Swann to this year's broadcast equipment show at Birmingham's NEC on 24 November to try to find the right equipment for the job, that would be at the right price and be accessible for all of our visually impaired presenters. We are keen that any equipment we install is like for like that you would find in any professional radio studio.

One of the main things that came out of the day is that a lot of the main manufacturer's are completely unaware of what it is like to try and use radio technology as a visually impaired person, so the day served very much as an educational day for Steve and Paul as well. Although this part of the day proved to be a bit frustrating it was also very positive as it shows that there is room for us to develop working relationships within the radio industry that we can use to our advantage to make working in radio more accessible for visually impaired people.

Over the next few months, Paul and myself will be getting in contact with manufacturers to make sure that we have the most relevant information that will enable us to choose appropriate equipment that will allow everyone involved with Redstone.fm to fully participate in the delivery of community radio.

Note: *For over thirty years the Sound Broadcasting Equipment Show (SBES) has been meeting the needs of the UK's sound broadcasting industry. It is THE event where manufacturers and suppliers of products and services can meet users face-to-face.*

Redstone.fm News

As many of you will recall, the last time Redstone.fm broadcast was in May/June 2007. It seems an age ago now and we have been toying with the idea of a further temporary broadcast to coincide with our forthcoming licence application to Ofcom. We have decided that the next broadcast will take place late April/early May 2008. An application has been lodged with Ofcom and the exact dates will be confirmed nearer the time.

This broadcast will run for two weeks and the aim is to provide a showcase of how community radio can sound and benefit the local community. We also plan to try out a couple of new programme ideas which may come out of the members meeting in January.

Remember – if you want to work on Redstone.fm you must be a member of Reigate and Banstead Community Radio – details of membership are set out at the end of this newsletter.

Training Courses

One important part of applying for and running a permanent community radio station is the provision of training. Although we could pay lip service to this, we think it important to offer a full range of courses for those who want to learn more about radio presentation and production. We have had talks with East Surrey College who are keen to support us and a series of short courses and workshops are being planned for the New Year. Full details will be circulated in January.

Disabled Provision

A recent Skillset census showed that the number of disabled people working in the radio industry was 1.7% of the total workforce. (Skillset is the Sector Skills Council for the Audio Visual Industries). This figure is supported by the recent Ofcom report **Broadcasters' Returns on Equal Opportunities 2006**. Ofcom's conclusion in this report is:

The representation of disabled people needs the greatest shift. It is clear that much needs to be done to increase the employment of people with disabilities; particularly those with visible disabilities. The degree of under-representation is a serious issue that the industry needs to address urgently. The decrease in the number of disabled people reported to be working in the industry, since last year, albeit small is a significant indicator that more needs to be done.

Redstone.fm has grown out of the training courses at the RNIB Redhill College and the numbers of disabled people involved in the 2006 broadcast are on the record. By continuing to offer opportunities and training for disabled people, we are helping the industry as a whole to address the shortfall.

RNIB Redhill

It is worth mentioning that we are still unable to use the Soundscape facility at the former RNIB college in Redhill although in correspondence with the RNIB they advise us that they *“would not rule out the possibility of Redstone FM having access to the facilities in the future”*.

The RNIB are currently looking to employ a manager for the Soundscape Centre and one of their objectives is to *“ensure that Soundscape has a wider focus than the (current) clients involved in the community living service”*. They also tell us that they have *“every intention of maximising the use of the Soundscape resources . . . to ensure that all the facilities are as accessible as possible for blind and partially sighted people.”*

Time will tell as to how this will translate in practice but we firmly believe that as both the RNIB and ourselves have the interests of blind and partially sighted persons at heart, we should work together for both our mutual benefit.

Membership News

A slow but steady flow of new members have been signing up over the past couple of months, but we are in the process of putting together a membership drive to increase the number of members. We would like to encourage you to spread the word to any one who you feel would be interested in supporting this project, either by becoming a member or giving written support to the project. An information pack is available (as a pdf document) on the Redstone.fm web site so please feel free to print out, copy and distribute as you see fit.

This newsletter is an abridged version of the member’s newsletter. To ensure you receive the full version with full details of membership activities, you should consider applying for membership.

Not a member?

Reigate and Banstead Community Radio Ltd is a membership organisation. Its strength is its membership. Whether you are interested in having a go at broadcasting or just want to support our aims, please consider joining. Annual membership subscription is only £10.

Please visit <http://www.redstone.fm/membership.htm> where you can download a membership form.

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