

On the 25th November 2006 the first meeting of the ATAXIA UK support group for the Derby and surrounding area took place at the Disability Direct building in Derby.

The organiser Marta Hancock along with Tina from Ataxia UK together with about a dozen or so ataxians attending introduced themselves and talked briefly about their particular ataxia with a view to get to know a little about each other.

Tina also explained the difference between a support group such as ours being informal but able to give help and advice to each other, and a branch which is more formal and governed by rules and a committee using Ataxia UK's charity number, and be able to raise funds as a branch for itself and ataxia UK.

Another item highlighted by Marta was a social services benefit called Direct Payments, which gives a disabled person the facility to control support they need for day to day living by paying the disabled person directly so they can pay for the services they need.

As a group we decided to get together again on the 17th December, at a location yet to be arranged to enjoy a social get together. Before ending our first meeting we agreed that a bimonthly meeting would be a good way to continue and even grow

STEVE BOYNTON.