

# WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND ACCESS GROUP

**Minutes of Meeting 98 immediately following the AGM held on Monday 8th February 2010 at The Acorns, Grosvenor Road, Weymouth**

1. PRESENT

Mike Kelly (President), John Lambert (Chairman), David Harris (Secretary), Steve Rook (Treasurer), Carolyn Harris, George Dyer, Sheila Dyer, Anne Kenwood (Cllr), Julia Willoughby (WPBC), Graham Ryan, June Ryan, Sheila Jackson.

2. APOLOGIES

Ian White, Terri & Ray Bartlett, David Dowle.

3. MINUTES OF MEETING 97 HELD ON 9<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2009

Outstanding actions from previous meetings:

Nothe Gardens A large sign to be placed at the entrance to the gardens showing, e.g. where are the slopes and how steep they are. Suggestions were made that "linking" paths might be created around the Newtons Cove area so that it was possible for wheeled mobility vehicles to get between lower and upper level paths. **JW States these signs are not yet in place – a re-organisation of highways and footpaths responsibilities (and therefore staff) between WPBC & DCC meant there would be some further delay.**

BT Payphones DD reported that the open fronted kiosk is still opposite W H Smith in St Mary Street but anyone in a wheelchair or scooter would be hard pressed to use it as there are two benches in front of it which are back to back and close together. **JW Will pursue this matter (in stasis as above).**

Taxi Licensing

The Borough Council has recently consulted on taxi licensing but MK did not know what action will be taken. He thinks that pressure should be maintained to improve taxi accessibility and driver awareness. A recent High Court judgement that required Liverpool City Council to lift its refusal to accept Peugeot E7 taxis. JW stated that the issue in other authorities came about because they had policies which required the use of London Black Cabs. The Peugeot E7 was considered by many disabled people to be a more flexible/suitable design. **JW states there is no such policy in WPBC. The council were now considering whether minimum quotas for disabled friendly vehicles should be required of licensed operators.**

All previous actions having been reviewed, the meeting was satisfied that the minutes of the previous meeting represented a proper record of the business of that meeting.

4. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Newtons Cove footbridge

Following the successful replacement of the old bridge I hope that associated measures, which have been previously discussed, can progress to further improve access in and around the Nothe Gardens.

Newstead Road foot and cycle bridge

The project for a new bridge to link both parts of the Rodwell Trail progresses and it is anticipated that the bridge will be built next year. One aspect of the new design was that as the new bridge would be a lighter and smaller structure it would be possible to lower the height of the track bed by some two meters from the level of the previous

bridge while still maintaining proper road clearances. This would need some down-ramping on both sides of the new bridge from the present level of the trail. Lowering the track would also mean access ramps could be shortened. Obviously safety would need to be carefully considered with a mix of cycle and pedestrian use at this point.

#### Weymouth and Portland Partnership

Julia Willoughby, Ian White and I are members of the W&PP Accessibility and Transport Theme Group. There several other groups and I think it would be helpful if the Access Group could also be represented on some of these to raise issues in the interests of people with disabilities.

#### Caravan Parks

Following an article in ACCESS, The Inclusive Design Journal (I have a copy to pass round) about a holiday centre in Cyprus I contacted the owners of the main caravan holiday and camping sites in and close to the Borough. Having written to 6 sites I have been assured by 3 of them (all in the same ownership) that they are committed to improving access and that redevelopment and modernisation proposals together with staff training will continue the process (with benefits in site marketing, bookings, and guest feedback). I would also propose to contact the PGL Adventure Centre at Osmington to ask their policies relating to use of their programme and facilities by people with disabilities (though their site is beyond the Borough boundary).

### 5. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The group should have a focus for the coming year. JL suggested that a review of the accessibility of restaurants in the borough be undertaken. Spacing, Type of seating and Facilities available were three obvious subjects.

JW said there were similar initiatives in the surrounding authorities, it might be appropriate to use this initiative as a "pathfinder" to set standards. JW would provide a list of premises from the Council to use as a starting point.

The BBC had aired a programme highlighting the unfairness of supermarkets who are charging disabled people penalty fees for staying over the 90 minute or two hour periods. The basic point is that it takes longer than that for some disabled people to do a shop – why should they be penalised? Apparently the four largest supermarkets have said they will reconsider this. Current advice is to go to Customer Services and give them your registration number. (also see item 8)

### 6. SECRETARY'S REPORT

Nothing to report.

### 7. TREASURER'S REPORT

As reported in AGM minutes

### 8. INVESTIGATIONS OFFICER'S REPORT

**Use of "New Money" to further town centre facility?** From 4<sup>th</sup> December last the Government was offering monies to Councils, with the remit that they should spruce up town centres by making good use of vacant properties. So, what better use than to use such a property for a café cum shopmobility type premises, as we have already suggested to the Working Group set up by the Policy Development Committee?

After discussion it was agreed that a project of this type needed a full-time project leader to put together a proposal to seek funding. No immediate prospect of this – so idea to be kept in mind..

**Disabled Parking Bays in Council Car Parks** SD has received an email from Derek Whittaker, Parking Manager of WPBC. You will recall that she and George accompanied Derek on a tour of 6 car parks in the borough, advising on positioning of these extra wide bays, as well as achieving more bays than listed!

Derek asks if members have any thoughts or observations on these spaces. Are there enough, too little or too many in a particular car park? SD mentioned to him that we

found there were not enough bays in Harbour car park, opposite Debenhams. Are there any other observations from members?

Derek now wants us to inspect, with him, car parks such as Cosens Quay, Commercial Road; Masonic off Victoria Square, Portland; Radipole Park Drive by the tennis courts and Southill by the shopping precinct. We are prepared to do this unless another member would like the job? He says if members can think of any other Council owned property where disabled parking bays might be appropriate, to let us know?

**Charging in Council Car Parks** Have members heard about Supermarkets falling foul of the DDA, in respect of charging everyone who parks for more than the specified time (normally 2 hours)? They, like the Council, take no notice of people using blue badges. Yet, argue disability groups, 2 hours is not long in a supermarket shopping complex, as *people with disabilities take longer to do their shopping*. Are we SURE that our Council is not falling foul of the DDA? Surely, the principle is exactly the same. What do members think? Feedback to Sheila Dyer or Dave Harris please.

**Public Conveniences** – SD read through the minutes of both the Working Group set up to consider the future of public toilets in the borough, and the Management Committee's thoughts on same. The main points seem to be:

- a) They are looking to close Littlemoor, Southill, Southwell, Church Ope Cove and Wyke Regis
- b) Only toilets to be kept open are those where access is needed on a regular and frequent basis
- c) They would welcome new blocks at the new park & ride near Manor Roundabout and at an expanded rail station, but they would look to third parties to finance them
- d) They are favourably considering letting the public use the disabled friendly toilet in the Council Offices
- e) The toilets should comply with the requirements of the DDA.

## 9. ACCESS OFFICER'S REPORT

**Beach access.** Wooden decking style beach walkways being planned from two main ramps – should make easier access to beach for groups including disabled people.

**TIC Relocation.** Consideration was being given to a possible move of TIC function to a remodelled Pavilion ground floor. This would allow a sharing of under-utilised Pavilion facilities and free up existing TIC to generate some rental.

**Maiden St. Toilets refurbishment.** These toilets were to be refurbished – did the group have views as to whether it would be appropriate to have RADAR locks fitted? The consensus was: it was desirable, but only if a keyholder could be very close by.

## 10. PUBLICITY OFFICER'S REPORT

Nothing to report.

## 11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- a) MK reports that Calvin Stone has reopened the Easton sub-post office in Reforne. It is in an old building with stepped access but he has recently installed handrails.
- b) MK had received an offer from Calvin who collects various articles which include a vintage barrel-organ. He asked if the Access Group would like to have an event for fund raising and would like to borrow the organ. I said we haven't run fund raising events previously. There might be a possibility of the barrel organ being used at an event such as the Pennsylvania Castle gardens open day in May (which raises money for Portland Rotary) with the request that a contribution be paid to the Access Group.
- c) JW had been promoted to Community Development Manager in WPBC. The new role would include Community Engagement as well as Community Development, so she expected to remain involved with the group.

- d) GR reported there had been able bodied members of the public using the disabled toilets in the Pavilion causing disabled persons to have to wait. JW agreed to follow this up with Pavilion management.

**Dates of Future Meetings during 2010**

(Quarterly Meetings all Start at 2pm) 17 May (Note amended date); 9 August; 8 November

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**WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND ACCESS GROUP**

***AGENDA FOR MEETING No. 99***

To be held on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2010,  
Acorns Centre, Grosvenor Road, Weymouth,

1. Introduction of those present
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of Meeting 98 held on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2010, and matters arising
4. President's Report
5. Chairman's Report
6. Secretary's Report
7. Treasurer's Report
8. Investigations Officer's Report
9. Access Officer's Report
10. Publicity Officer's Report
11. Any Other Business

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