

WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND ACCESS GROUP

Minutes of meeting No. 104 held on 8th August 2011
at The Acorns, Grosvenor Road, Weymouth

1. PRESENT

Mike Kelly (President), John Lambert (Chairman), David Harris (Secretary), , Carolyn Harris, Julia Willoughby, Gillian Penwell, Graham Ryan, June Ryan, Ian White, Lindy Treasurer, Daniel Kemp, David Dowle (vice Chairman), .

2 APOLOGIES

Anne Kenwood (Cllr), Steve Rook (Treasurer), Gordon Lake, Cllr David Harris, Sue & Peter Glynn, Peter Bennett.

3 REPORT OF PRESIDENT

Childrens' playgrounds

County Councillor David Harris and others are looking at playground provision including the aim to achieve greater inclusion with access improvements where possible. I wish to report on how the Access Group might assist with this objective.

Portland Carers' Association

Angel Pharmacies have applied for a new pharmacy in Easton, Portland. I gave evidence together with PCA, Councillor Margaret Leicester and Portland Community Partnership at a hearing to consider the application. I supported the application on behalf of the Group because of the poor accessibility of Boots Pharmacies at Easton Square and Fortuneswell. Mike Kelly would report further to DH/JL as the situation develops.

Planning applications

I remain concerned that few Design and Access Statements produced by applicants give little attention to disabled access considerations.

Both the "Weymouth Eye" and the Rodwell Trail bridge proposals have been revised and are the subject of new planning applications. I would like to report on these and the proposals for a visitor attraction on Portland, known as the MEMO Project.

Local Transport Plan

At the last meeting we discussed, with the delivery of the Weymouth Transport Package that representations would again be made to First Group and South West Coaches about local bus services. I have contacted them but await a response. In the meantime I should be interested in any further comments from the Group. Has anybody studied the new Park and Ride scheme? Dave & Carolyn had had a brief walk around the site of the new car park. There was a RADAR accessible toilet and a couple of disabled spaces reasonably close to the building/bus stop

4 REPORT OF CHAIRMAN

John had received a press release from Amy Maslin, Communication Officer WPBC, requesting information on obstructions for wheelchair users etc within the Borough. Amy asked me to write a short piece on the function of WPAG, which was as follows:

"Weymouth & Portland Access Group welcomes this initiative by the Borough Council with whom we've always had a good relationship. The more people who can contact the Council on finding any access difficulties for disabled people - be they physically disabled or people with sight or hearing impairments - is welcomed by all. Remember, it is a legal requirement for all service providers to make reasonable adjustments to their premises and services to make them accessible".

"Weymouth & Portland Access Group is a group of disabled people, along with some non-disabled people who are co-opted as members because of their interest in access matters, who meet on a bimonthly basis at the Acorns Day Centre in Weymouth to discuss disabled access issues that have arisen throughout the Borough".

"At the moment we are short of active members (this is a hint for any disabled people who read this and feel like doing a little to improve access to contact me and join the Group!), so it's good news that the Borough - with whom we work on a regular basis - is taking this initiative and asking all local residents and, I hope visitors, for their comments on any difficulties they might have encountered within the Borough that prevent people with disabilities from enjoying ALL the facilities within the Borough".

Brewers Quay Car Park

There had been reports of difficulty with the machines now in use there - no time allowance for disabled people. Cameras take photos of vehicles going in and going out. Vehicles detected overstaying via the photos are sent "fines" by post.

Active Mobility shop moved.

The Weymouth shop had now re-located to Southill and was in the premises formerly occupied by Damers blinds, they also of course now have showrooms in Poundbury.

Sheila and George Dyer giving up group activities

After more than twenty years of working for and with the Access Group, Sheila and George had decided that the time had come to withdraw from active participation. DH will prepare a letter of acknowledgement and thanks.

WPAG Web Site

Mark Goldsby has maintained the web site for free as a favour to family members Sheila and George. With their standing down he will now need to charge a fee. Alternatively he would be happy for someone else to take this on. John believed that as Brotherwood Automobility are sponsoring the website and the sponsorship money of £100 should go to Mark for his services. The meeting agreed.

5. REPORT OF TREASURER

Steve had provided a financial report showing that the organisation had funds of £2832. This is the healthiest situation for many years.

6. PRESS OFFICER/ PUBLICITY OFFICER REPORT

Mike Kelly had spoken to Laura Kitching - an Echo reporter - at the meeting at the Prince Regent hotel when the "Weymouth Eye" plans were on display. She expressed an interest in the Access Group - it may be a good approach to keep in touch with her.

7. COMPLAINTS/INVESTIGATIONS OFFICER REPORT

Ian White was planning to talk with people he found in the town to inform them of the Groups interest and activities. In particular he intended to ask them to become involved by reporting any defects or problems in dropped kerbs that they found while they were in the town. He will co-ordinate with WPBC to ensure common points of contact were included in the leaflets etc.

8. SUMMARY OF SITUATION

Now that Ian White had taken up the role of Complaints Officer, all main committee posts were filled and Chairman John said that his own health had somewhat improved. These factors, taken together with the sound financial situation meant that we were in a position to continue again on a normal basis.

9. AOB

- Julia Willoughby said that a list of dropped kerb requests would be maintained by the council in the future and the list would need to be prioritised. It was hoped that the Access Group would be able to help in the prioritisation process.
- WPBC were developing a "Core Strategy" which will be used to guide strategy for the future period. She will keep the Group informed as the strategy evolves.
- Graham and June Ryan had received a confusing letter about June's (blind persons) Bus Pass. The sense of it was that whilst June could travel from early in the day, Graham, her carer, would not be allowed to travel until later in the day. Graham will send DH a copy - DH to then take appropriate action on the group's behalf.
- Gill Penwell was alert to the ongoing development and changes to public toilets in the borough. She will "keep an eye" on the developing situation for the Access Group.

The meeting closed at 3.55pm.

NEXT MEETING was arranged for 14.00 on Monday 14th of November at The Acorns.

WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND ACCESS GROUP
AGENDA FOR MEETING No. 105

To be held at 2pm on Monday 14th November 2011
At Acorns Centre, Grosvenor Road, Weymouth

- 1 Introduction of those present**
- 2 Apologies**
- 3 President`s Report**
- 4 Chairman`s Report**
- 5 Treasurer`s Report**
- 6 Complaints Officers Report**
- 7**
- 8 AOB**
- 9 Time and date of next Meeting and AGM**