

WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND ACCESS GROUP

MINUTES for MEETING 111

Held at 2pm on Monday 12th November 2012 at
Acorns Centre, Grosvenor Road, Weymouth

1 Introduction of those present

Mike Kelly (President), John Lambert (Chairman), David Harris (Secretary), Steve Rook (Treasurer), David Dowle (Vice Chairman), John Hoult, Ray Herbert, Audrey McGrady, George Douglas, Syd Martin, Sue Bickle (WPBC), Christine Pearce, Graham Ryan, June Ryan, Ian White (Investigations Officer), Ray Bartlett, Terri Bartlett, Carol Chinn, Alan Christopher, Cllr David Harris, Margaret Somerville, Dawn Atkins (DCC).

2 Apologies

Kate Wheller, Carolyn Harris

3 Minutes of Previous meeting

These were accepted as a true record.

a. Boots in Portland - Nothing further had been done - Mike Kelly will send a further letter on behalf of the group bemoaning the lack of progress

b. Weymouth Café "A" Boards - still a problem in some places - opposite proposed new Post Office premises was a case in point - the whole footway was taken up with sitting out and A boards. Sue Bickle will follow up on groups behalf.

Mike further reported that W&PBC had acted against MOJO's in St Thomas Street removing their license for a sitting out area because of the degree of highway obstruction being caused.

IW referred to obstruction elsewhere in St. Thomas Street and at Sharkey's in Custom House Quay.

c. Chafeys Roundabout Mike Kelly reported that proposals were now in hand to have new crossing places along the segment of Weymouth Way from Chafeys Roundabout to the Abbotsbury Road.

Cllr Harris said there were to be four crossings, these were each to have a 3m wide refuge at the centreline of the road large enough for two scooters to pass each other when crossing.

d. ASDA lift mirror when last seen was still insufficiently high for good rear visibility. Ian White would revisit soon to re-check

4 Presidents Report

Olympics At our last meeting I asked if there was any feedback that the Group wish to pass to the Borough and County Councils. We were unable to pursue this as several members were out of action as indeed the Borough Council's Access Officer has been. However I don't think it is too late for a worthwhile discussion regarding useful experiences gained during the Olympics in Dorset, the Paralympic Games and the Cultural Olympiad. The meeting agreed that a follow-up meeting should be sought.

Cllr Harris informed us that there was to be an "Olympic Board Meeting" on December 7th. It therefore would be best to meet after that date so that the maximum information was available.

Weymouth Town Centre Post Office There has been a consultation on a proposal to move Weymouth Town Centre Post Office to smaller premises in St. Thomas Street. At a meeting held at the site last week we (Kate Wheller, Ian White, David Dowle and

Mike) were given assurances that the premises, although smaller than the present area would be developed so as to give a good service to people with disabilities. As the premises go much further back inside than the frontage suggests, it was considered that this claim was reasonable.

Weymouth and Portland Community Plan I have replied to this asking that the plan should emphasise the need for policies to aim to ensure that services and development are inclusive.

Chafeys Roundabout Following a public meeting DCC are considering measures to reduce traffic speed on this section of the A354 and to improve safety for those crossing the road. Other measures are associated including extending the cycle routes (which are useful for mobility scooters). This work was now in budgets, and should be completed by the end of 2013.

Rodwell Trail I have replied to a consultation on a proposed bench with associated artwork to ask that any signage is tactile, and also to point out that the associated leaflet proposed would be difficult to read by people with sight impairment.

Portland Academy, Southwell Park, Portland The planning application to set up most of this school in part of Southwell Business Park has been submitted to the Borough Council. With the exception of Underhill children up to 7 years of age children will relocate to the location at the old ARE premises on the west coast above Southwell. I have commented on behalf of the Group, stating that the Design and Access Statement is inadequate and that it does not consider how pupils, staff, or parents with disabilities would access this relatively remote site. The travel plan is poorly prepared and needs reconsideration.

Vaughan's Restaurant, Custom House Quay, Weymouth The planning application to extend the premises have been refused. I hope that the applicants will reflect on the comments made and devise better proposals which will include works to create an accessible toilet which meet the design requirements.

Bus services I have expressed concern, on behalf of the Group, about the intention of South West Coaches to stop running routes 205 and 207. This will leave areas of southern Weymouth, and also Wakeham and The Grove on Portland, without buses. I am advised that First Bus are wishing to sell their bus operations in Weymouth, Portland and Dorchester adding to service level threats.

Potential deregulation Government are considering a number of measures which would relax planning, building regulations, health and safety legislation. However, in my opinion, such changes are unlikely to do much, if anything, to invigorate the economy or to accelerate the development rate. These changes could roll back many of the gains we have achieved. Whilst individual Access Groups may achieve little by making representations I suggest that these concerns are brought to the attention of Access Dorset. I suggest that Weymouth and Portland Access Group should seek an urgent meeting with Richard Drax M.P. **Action: JL and MK to contact Richard Drax**

Portland Neighbourhood Plan Mike mentioned the proposed consultation and preparation of a Portland Neighbourhood Plan. This offers an opportunity to stress the benefits of good accessibility.

5 Chairmans Report

John highlighted the Park and Ride system where the charges were now £1.50 all day (winter time). The problem for people with disabilities was the limited provision for wheeled vehicles on the buses. Mobility Scooter or electric wheelchair users were not

able to use the service and were forced into town centre to park - with attendant high charges. IW reminded members that **on-street** parking was free for unlimited time for Blue Badge holders at all spaces where a parking charge (i.e. ticket machine) would otherwise be necessary.

6 Access Officers report

SB handed the floor to Dawn Atkins. Dawn was a Technical Officer within DCC and was responsible for Highways routine maintenance for the area of Weymouth and Portland. As such she now held the budget for Drop Kerbs in the area, and would be using the WPAG to provide a prioritised list of the works needed. She would then be able to use the budget to get the most urgent of these works done. Dawn emphasised that all future public drop kerb requirements will be routed through this system for prioritisation by WPAG. **Action: Ian White to provide Dawn with prioritised list**
Dawn asked members to use the following number to report all Highway Access and maintenance problems - they would be routed to the correct place and would not be "lost in the system" - **01305 251000** .

7 Investigations Officers report

Mobility Scooters on buses - Ian had had a further meeting with First Bus and there were now plans to allow customers to become part of a "passport" scheme with specific mobility scooters. In order to qualify for a passport, customers would need to have a scooter model which had been approved by the company. Next they would need to take a form of "competence test" to show that they had the ability to use their machine safely on board the buses. This test would be a practical one where they would be invited to a suitable location with a bus present and a typical raised kerb. After they had shown their ability to safely get on and off the bus they would be issued with the passport which would identify them and their vehicle.

Town Centre Safety - there had been recent incidents of illegal and dangerous use of mobility vehicles in town centres where other members of the public had been injured. All members were reminded that 4mph was the legal limit for electric vehicles in pedestrian areas.

Ian requested that the group produce more publicity leaflets so that we can extend the knowledge about the group. Sue Bickle said she would be able to distribute some of these to groups she was aware of through her work.

8 Treasurers Report

At present the group's bank account stood at £2684.35. We had received a cheque for £150 from 2012 Weymouth carnival. Members were reminded to claim expenses from the Treasurer using appropriate receipts.

Steve mentioned that the Table Tennis club he belonged to was working out how to help people with disabilities participate. They are looking at working with Access Dorset to start sessions for table tennis for the disabled.

9 AOB

Christine Pearce reported a landslip had closed the sloping path part of the Chapelhay Steps, making a long detour necessary for those dependent on wheeled access. Dawn Atkins informed us that DCC were "on the case" and work to restore the ramp would be undertaken soon.

Margaret Somerville expressed concerns about the use of the room at the Acorns Centre because of hearing difficulty. Sue Bickle agreed to arrange for a portable induction loop to be available in future.

Date of Next Meeting TUESDAY 19 February 2013 (AGM) 2.00pm Acorns Day Centre

Following meetings - 13 May 2013

12 August 2013
11 November 2013
10 February 2014

**WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND ACCESS GROUP
AGENDA FOR MEETING No. 112
TUESDAY 19th February 2013,(immediately following the AGM)
Acorns Centre, Grosvenor Road, Weymouth**

- 1. Introduction of those present (as AGM)**
- 2. Apologies (as AGM)**
- 3. Minutes of Previous meeting**
- 4. President`s Report**
- 5. Chairman`s Report**
- 6. Access Officers report**
- 7. Investigations Officers report**
- 8. Treasurer`s Report**
- 9. AOB**

Next Meetings (all start at 14.00)

Monday 13th May 2013.

Monday 12th August 2013

Monday 11th November 2013

**WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND ACCESS GROUP
AGENDA FOR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

To be held at 2pm on TUESDAY 19th February 2013

At Acorns Centre, Grosvenor Road, Weymouth

- 1. Introduction of those present**
- 2. Apologies**
- 3. Approval of Minutes of previous AGM**
- 4. President`s Report**
- 5. Chairman`s Report**
- 6. Treasurer`s Report**
- 7. Election of Officers for the Coming Year**