

WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND ACCESS GROUP

MINUTES FOR MEETING No. 120

Held on Monday 13th April 2015

at Acorns Centre, Grosvenor Road, Weymouth

1 Introduction of those present

David Dowle (Vice Chairman), David Harris (Secretary), Steve Rook (Treasurer), Mike Kelly (President), Sheila Dyer, Carolyn Harris, June Ryan, Graham Ryan, Ian White, Carole Chinn, Carol Lord, Sue Ward-Rice (WPBC), Dawn Atkin (DCC), Dave Allen (DFR) , Christine Pearce, Gordon Lake.

2 Apologies

Sue Glynn, Dave Thompson (Access Dorset), Gill Penwell, Alan Christopher, Ian Newport

3 John Lambert MBE

It was with great sadness that we had heard of the death of our Chairman, John Lambert. John had died peacefully at his home on 27th March.

The meeting held a two minute silence in memory of John.

Sheila Dyer then spoke about John's long involvement as a founder member of the Access Group and of his willingness to give his time and effort to great effect on our behalf.

David Dowle recalled the first meeting when discussing the setting up of the group when John had unhesitatingly agreed to both join and be a leading member. He had worked hard for the group since that day.

4 Speakers:

Dave Allen - Dorset Fire & Rescue. Dave gave us an overview of the changing nature of the national fire service since it began in 1939. There have been changes to the basic remit which is now "Fire and Rescue". Also there is much more focus now on prevention. Dorset in particular is ahead of the field in this and the Community Safety Centre here in Weymouth is an important part of this effort, providing many of the tools needed to get the community to understand how to be safer. The Wheels In Motion event is a part of this and does help people to avoid getting into difficulties. There is also a programme of Fire Safety visits to people at home - this again reduces risks by helping people to be more safety conscious and installs alarms for free.

In the medium term there is work going on to reduce costs by merging the Dorset and Wiltshire Services.

5 Presidents Report

John Lambert

The recent death of our very long serving Chairman, John Lambert, is a sad blow to our Group. John was one of the founders of the Access Group in the 1980s. Whatever difficulties we face in maintaining the Group and continuing to press and secure much needed improvements for disabled people and others in accessing buildings, services and the environment generally, I know that John would wish and expect us to continue these efforts.

Weymouth Town Centre Masterplan

I made representations on the recent consultation exercise supporting the proposals to improve accessibility within the Town Centre included creation of additional space for pedestrians and environmental improvements with measures to reduce traffic dominance (and the air pollution associated with it). I stressed the need for removal of much of the clutter of street furniture and signage (with the exception of seating of which more is needed) and that car parking areas close to the town centre should recognise that provision of disabled parking should be treated as a priority with additional time provided to users of such spaces at no additional cost. In association with this I reminded Weymouth BID of the commercial benefits which are likely to flow to retail and leisure businesses which carry out access improvements.

Weymouth & Portland Borough Council changes

Planning permission has been granted for the use of the Mulberry Centre in Commercial Road as Council Offices following the closure of the Council Offices at North Quay. We shall see how the offices operate but have concerns about certain issues including the lack of easy access from disabled parking spaces.

Recent and proposed developments

I am pleased to report that further access improvements have been carried out or are currently proposed at the Chesil Beach Centre, to the Old Town Hall in High West Street, Radipole Lake RSPB reserve, extension of St. Laurence Church, Upwey, including provision of an accessible W.C., and to provide a lift at The Royal Manor Theatre, Fortuneswell. A new housing development at Lorton Lane, Broadwey includes the provision of houses to Lifetime Homes designs and it is understood that this is also proposed in the case of the recently approved housing at Curtis Fields, Westham.

7 Access Officers Report

The Wheels In Motion event in February had taken place and about 16 persons had taken part. The council were keen to have another such event. Mulberry Centre plans were still being formulated - Feedback from WPAG was being taken into account and some hearing issues also. Railway Track infill in Commercial Road was being looked into as it was recognised as a hazard on crossing to and from the Mulberry Centre .

6 AOB (Urgent matters only)

a) Re-arrangement of AGM to 8th June (next planned meeting date) was agreed by the meeting to be sensible in the circumstances.

b) Carole Chinn reported Cafe in St Marys Street encroaching into Pedestrian area

c) Routes around Alexandra Gardens - Pilgrims Way, St Albans St: Drop kerbs had been completed across end of St Albans St. Dawn Atkin reported they were unable to find suitable way to safely provide a drop by Pilgrims Way due to awkwardness of parking spaces arrangement and lack of space. They would look at ways of preventing those on wheels from getting "trapped".

d) FirstBus and scooters - the permit system previously offered had not yet come to fruition. The company were hoping to re-instate the voice-based information system after it had been upgraded.

Next Meetings (all start at 14.00):

Monday 8th June 2015 (AGM first)	Monday 8th February 2016
Monday 10th August 2015	
Monday 12th October 2015	
Monday 14th December 2015	