

**WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND ACCESS GROUP**  
**MINUTES OF MEETING No 138**  
**Monday 9th April 2018**  
**At Weymouth Fire & Safety Centre, Radipole Lane, Weymouth**

**1. Welcome and Introduction of new Treasurer**

As part of the introduction, the meeting was introduced to Richard Marshall. Richard is living in the area and has become Treasurer of the Talking Newspaper. He has provided references and these have been confirmed. He met with Carole Chinn and Dave Harris during March to get a briefing on the group and has agreed to take up the role of our Treasurer subject to the approval of the meeting. That question was put to the meeting and universal approval was given by a show of hands. Richard is therefore elected to position of Treasurer of Weymouth and Portland Access Group.

**2. Introduction**

Carole Chinn (Chairman), Marguerite Brown (Vice Chairman), David Harris (Secretary), Mike Kelly (President), Ian White (Investigations Officer), Bob Irwin (Investigations Officer), Gill Penwell, Jean Spain, Carolyn Harris, Cllr Christine James, Sylvia O'Conner, Richard Marshall.

**3. Apologies**

Graham and June Ryan, Sheila Dyer, Pauline Haime

**4. President's Report**

**Equalities Officer**

With Susan Ward-Rice leaving her post with Weymouth & Portland, West Dorset and North Dorset Councils, information is awaited concerning a successor for this important job.

**Weymouth Peninsula Redevelopment; Consultation by W&PBC**

Some comments were received to my e-mail which was circulated. Perhaps not surprisingly the responses differ. I hope that those concerned have commented directly to the Council. However I thought the Access Group should make a few general comments that can be agreed upon; that any detailed scheme should pay regard to the interests of people with disabilities, including the provision of suitable disabled car parking, taxi drop-off points, consideration to extending the Park and Ride bus service to The Peninsula, provision of public toilets including accessible W.Cs and Changing Places, and the provision of outdoor seating in addition to any provided by cafes and bars. The detailed designs should, as far as possible, address the need to provide shelter in this exposed location.

**D Day Centre, Castletown, Portland**

Planning permission has been granted for a small extension. You will recall that we did not object, but encouraged the owners to improve accessibility when

there is an opportunity to do so. The Planning Officer's report referred to the "Public Sector Equalities Duty" under The Equalities Act, 2010, and this is encouraging as disabled access was not mentioned in the previous report. Some statement of their aims or intent would still be much appreciated from the operators.

### **St. Laurence Church, Upwey**

Planning permission was granted in 2015 for a rear extension to the church to provide an accessible W.C. Permission has again been applied for as the work has not commenced and the consent has expired. The Access Group supported the 2015 application and I propose that we do so again with the hope that the work can proceed as soon as possible.

### **Google Maps**

I understand that a campaign on Change.org has convinced Google that their maps should include information about wheelchair accessible routes. How it is proposed to define what constitutes "an accessible route", gather the data and information necessary, and roll this out beyond the largest city and town centres, I do not know, but this sounds like positive progress.

## **5. Chairman's Report**

### **Data Protection Regulation Training & Information Session**

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is due to come into force on 25th May 2018 and both Dave Harris and I attended this session to see how it would affect the Group and the personal information we hold, ie contact details. It was very intensive and 'mind blowing' but luckily only a small part will affect the Group. I am still awaiting the majority of the information to be sent.

### **Richard Marshall : Treasurer**

Again both Dave and I met with Richard and we are delighted that he will join us as Treasurer.

### **Claudia Moore : Weymouth BID**

Both Mike Kelly and I had a meeting with Claudia Moore of Weymouth BID. The meeting was very useful and we were joined by Councillor Christine James. We informed Claudia of the Group's campaigns and services and she asked for some brief bullet points listing our concerns and objectives and these were appended to Mike's Report. His letter containing these points is attached as a separate document with these minutes.

### **Steve Hyde : Regional Assistant Campaigns Officer (SW) RNIB**

I have re-contacted Steve regarding a query with Southern Gas Networks. He is still waiting to hear from them and will contact us when he receives a response.

## **6. Vice Chairman's Report**

Marguerite had attended a networking meeting on the 27th of March which consisted of a mix between councillors, council staff and voluntary organisations. Topics discussed were :

**A DCC counter-loneliness initiative.**

Marguerite showed a coaster which could be used to indicate if an individual was open to conversation or not when sat at table. Coffee meetings were being established in various locations to try to engage people who would otherwise be alone to come along and meet others.

**Weymouth Museum**

A presentation was given on the proposed extension being planned for the museum. There was insufficient detail given to be clear on what provision for access were being included.

**Friendship Group**

A group was being set up at the library to allow people to meet for the purpose of socialising and reducing isolation.

**“Accessible” Toilets**

Some toilets advertised as accessible are still not suitable for an unaccompanied disabled person to use. Marguerite has been banned from a cafe in Weymouth for bringing this to public notice on Facebook after many attempts to get it improved privately failed to work.

Carole reported becoming trapped in St Aldhelms church hall toilet – a “new” building - because the door swung inwards to allow access, but was designed NOT to open outwards (because it would block a fire escape). Help had to be sought from the duty staff who could release the door mechanism to allow the door to be opened under supervision.

**7. Access Officer’s Report – No report**

**8. Highways Officer’s Report – No report**

**9. Investigation Officer’s Report**

Ian had been reviewing the information about the proposed Harbour Area Development. The majority of it was concerned with in-town access – i.e. did footways and cycleways provide proper access routes around this smallish area. He was concerned that there was insufficient consideration as to how people were going to get to and from this area.

Ian also stated his concern that the speed limit on Preston Beach Road is 50mph despite the need for pedestrians to cross from Lodmoor to the sea wall, and the serious accident record. Another topic of concern remains the 50 mph speed limit around Chafeys roundabout – this continues to be a source of concern to those who have to use the pedestrian crossing at the roundabout every day.

**10. Joint Event**

We have a stall booked in the town centre on 17<sup>th</sup> May. This will be a stall jointly with the local RNIB group. The focus is about Access around the Town Centre and the RNIB will have some of the glasses which restrict sight to mimic certain eye conditions.

a) Leaflets We will need to provide suitable leaflets to explain what we do.

- b) Distribution We would also need some to distribute to local shops on the day to advertise our presence.
- c) Manning gazebo etc We need volunteers to man the stall during the day – the overall time will be 10am to 3pm.

## 11. Any Other Business

### Drop Kerbs along Esplanade

Christine James had been contacted by a member of the public who uses the Esplanade on-street parking to get his wheelchair dependent wife out of the car and onto the Esplanade. The flower beds prevent fully opening of doors on the kerb side, therefore unloading and loading of the disabled passenger must be done in live traffic. The absence of drop kerbs along this section makes the situation worse by “forcing” the wheelchair to travel along in live traffic to find a ramp to get off the road safely. Christine would discuss with Alaric Little of Highways to find out what if anything might be done to improve this situation.

### Fundraising

Carole had made a request at the last meeting for members to consider what they could do to help the Group, Jean Spain put herself forward to assist but her offer had not been minuted.

Jean was asked if she would be prepared to to seek funds from local organisations. This is a role she has performed before for other organisations and she would be pleased to try and do it for the Group. Jean’s offer was accepted. She will start by talking to local shops and businesses.

## 12.Presentation by Ed Warr, Town Centre Manager

Ed introduced himself to the group and described his role as being a focus for the towns eyes and ears to try and make sure that all the things which used to be spotted and reported by council staff when they used the town e.g.for lunch breaks, could now be actioned in another way. He was in contact with the BID team and the Chamber of Commerce and was particularly concerned with making sure that the town and its night time economy were preserved, protected and where possible enhanced to the benefit of all.

Ed had agreed to a suggestion that a dropped kerb should be provided opposite that existing in the southern section of St Thomas Street near Tesco's. Ian expressed concern about this as pedestrians would be likely to be safer crossing the pedestrian part of St Thomas Street near "Nautico", and that rather than construct a 2nd dropped crossing in the southern part of the road it would be better to remove the existing one. It was agreed that it would be appropriate to get confirmation from DCC Highways about safety before taking action here.

Next Meetings (All start at 2pm)	
at The Fire & Safety Centre:	
Monday 11th June 2018	Monday 11th February 2019

<b>Monday 13th August, 2018</b>	
<b>Monday 8th October 2018</b>	
<b>Monday 10th December 2018</b>	

**Help Line Phone numbers: DCC highway emergencies: 01305 221020**  
**WPBC Help Desk: 01305 838000**