

WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND ACCESS GROUP
MINUTES OF MEETING No 140
Monday 13th August 2018
At Weymouth Fire & Safety Centre, Radipole Lane, Weymouth

1. Welcome and Introduction

Present:

David Harris (Secretary), Richard Marshall (Treasurer), Ian White (Investigations Officer), Bob Irwin (Investigations Officer), Sylvia O'Conner, Gill Penwell, David Dowle, Graham Ryan, June Ryan, Sheila Dyer, Jean Spain, Fiona Thomas (Community Development, Dorset Councils Partnership), Carolyn Harris.

Apologies

Mike Kelly (President), Carole Chinn (Ex-Chairman), Marguerite Brown (Vice Chairman), Pauline Haimes

2. President's Report

Resignation of Carole Chinn as Chairman

Regrettably Carole has decided to resign. As you all know she has had a very difficult year with health problems. I know that everyone in the Group will wish her well. I thank her for her efforts to revive the Group and trust that Carole will continue to support our work when she is able to. The immediate challenge is to maintain the Group and develop a programme to strengthen it.

Future of the Access Group

I hope that a new Chairman will be appointed without delay. Carole's successor will have ideas of how the Group should move forward but I recommend that we should look again at the Constitution of the Group. I think that there are matters that may need revision, including our relationship with the local authorities with the Unitary Council and Weymouth Town Council being created, the powers and duties of Portland and Chickerell Town Councils being increased, and the end of Dorset County Council, Weymouth & Portland Borough Council, and West Dorset District Council. I hope that the Access Group will continue and strengthen but I think the Constitution needs to clarify what happens in the event that the Access Group should cease to exist. Most importantly there is the question of what would happen to our funds. I think this is a matter for discussion at another meeting but I would suggest that in such circumstances any surplus funds should be given to a local charity or organisation which is working for better access for people with disabilities, such as M.V.Freedom, or South West Dorset Talking Newspapers

Weymouth and Portland Borough Council contacts

We have met Kathleen Boston-Mammah (Kathy), the recently appointed Community Team Lead Officer for W&PBC, West Dorset, and North Dorset. Councillor Jon Orrell has taken over as the Social Inclusion Briefholder from Councillor Christine James though she has assured the Group of her continuing support. Jon Orrell is a local G.P. I am sure that he will prove to be a very useful advisor and link to the Council for the Group and I hope that his contact with us will extend beyond the few months that remain for the Borough Council

Possible Annual Award for Access Improvements

Carole and I met Claudia Moore of Weymouth BID and we had a very useful discussion. One idea Claudia Moore put forward, which she thought should encourage businesses to make access improvements or train management and staff in access awareness, was for an Award Scheme to recognise such efforts. This idea needs careful consideration as supposed access improvements can sometimes be disadvantageous to others but the idea is an interesting one which I suggest we return to when the Group has settled again following Carole's decision to stand down as Chairman.

Publicity

The Access Group leaflet which has served for many years is being updated. With events proposed including one at Weymouth Central Library the updated leaflet will be very useful. I am pursuing the possibility of sponsorship for the leaflets. We need to decide whether to get a number printed for distribution up to early 2019 referring to our links with DCC and W&PBC, and revise the leaflet template closer to local government re-organisation on 19 May 2019 (I have contacted Kathy regarding how she thinks this should be worded), or go with a leaflet that just mentions the local authorities in general terms.

Seafront lighting

Kathy has advised that an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) is probably going to be prepared and will advise when it is available. I assume we as a Group will wish to comment. People First Dorset also requested sight of the Assessment.

Local Plan Review and Portland Neighbourhood Plan

I previously responded on behalf of the Access Group requesting that the Portland Neighbourhood Plan should refer to the policy contained in the West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan which seeks the provision of more adaptable and accessible homes. The revised Portland Neighbourhood Plan still makes no mention of this and I have repeated the comment. We made a similar comment in respect of the Chickerell Neighbourhood Plan. The current Local Plan is also under review with drop-in exhibitions planned for 30 August in Portland, 12 September in Weymouth, and 14 September in Chickerell.

Train and bus services

Train Real Time Information has improved but there seems little improvement with that for local buses. I understand that some bus stops on First Route 1 through Wyke and Portland have had their Real Time Information upgraded to enable the use of Key Fobs for information, and that buses on that route are being refitted with audio information of where the bus has reached. More needs to be done to achieve the wider system that had been proposed before the 2012 Olympics. Long distance coaches remain poor with regard to accessibility. South Western Railway have announced that Assistance Cards will be available for people who find rail travel daunting. The use of Guards is vital if passengers need assistance, and these guards need to be very well trained in awareness.

The Marsh Playing Fields

Weymouth & Portland Borough Council is funding improvement works to The Marsh which will include a new Childrens' Playground in the area to the north of the Swimming Pool. The Playground will include equipment which has been designed to enable many children with disabilities to enjoy.

People First Dorset

People First Dorset remain committed to preparing an Accessibility Guide to Weymouth and Dorchester (and Portland?) but were not successful with their funding bids. They would still like to work together with us on the task. I have advised PFD that we are in a process of change but I have undertaken to get back to them when we are able to be more certain of our resources and the tasks we are working on.

Greenhill Gardens

Following from the minutes from our last meeting Kathy is making enquiries as to whether continuous handrails may be fitted to the steps adjoining the southern end of the Gardens.

Pedestrian road crossings

I am encouraged to see what appears to be an increase in the number of crossing points being created with dropped kerbs and tactile paving, or existing crossings improved, with recent works in Abbotsbury Road and elsewhere, and works planned in Weston Road, Portland.

3. Chairman's Report

Resignation

It is with regret that I tender my resignation as Chair of The Weymouth and Portland Access Group.

For the past few months my health has been poor, it isn't getting any better, and it's causing me a lot of ongoing problems.

I have thought long and hard about my decision to resign, and in all honesty I don't want to jeopardise my health further by struggling and pushing myself to carry out more duties for the Group.

I would like to thank Mike, Dave, Ian, Marguerite and Bob for your help and support over the last three years and I will miss the fun and frustration of trying to make a difference to the people and visitors of Weymouth and Portland.

4. Treasurers Report

Richard produced a Financial Report of the Group. A summary is printed below. Since our previous meeting the group had received a donation of £330 from Weymouth Rotary as part of the proceeds their Fayre in the Square event. Taking this payment into account, it now looks likely that as a result the group will have a deficit of £117 this year. Thus we should continue to seek funds and contributions where possible.

WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND ACCESS GROUP

FORECAST INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT for the year ended 31st December 2018

2017	Income	Forecast 2018	2017	Expenditure	Forecast 2018
£		£	£		£
			95.40	Hall Hire	135.06
0.00	Rotary Club donation	330.00		Postages & Stationery	221.00
200.00	Weymouth Mobility (Sponsor of website)	200.00	190.75	Insurance	191.90
			100.00	Web-Site - M Golsby	100.00
				Travel	
23	Tea etc. contribution	0.00	22.80	Taxi fares	0.00
185.95	Excess of expenditure over income	117.96	0	Excess of Income over expenditure	0.00
408.95		647.96	408.95		647.96

CASH ACCOUNT

2017		2018	2017	Represented by:	2018
1494.31	Bank balance b/f 1.1.18	1,308.16	1308.16	Bank balance 31.12.18	1,190.20
1.31	Cash in hand b/f 1.1.18	1.51	1.51	Cash in hand 31.12.18	1.51
		1,309.67			
223.00	Add income	530.00			
1718.62		1,839.67			
408.95	Less Expenditure	647.96			
1,309.67		1,191.71	1,309.67		1,191.71

Richard Marshall

Hon. Treasurer

5. Access Officer's Report – No report

6. Highways Officer's Report – No report

7. Investigation Officer's Report

Quiddles Café

I followed up the E-mail of the 28/06/2018 which was sent to Marguerite, Vice-Chair; I visited Quiddles at Chesil Cove with Bob Irwin. I have to say that it is not the easiest place to get to. Bob and I used our mobility scooters from Weymouth along the Rodwell Trail, which was OK until we got to the roundabout at the Sailing Academy, where the pavement became normal size with cyclists using it. We went further along the pavement which got narrower, also in some places the dropped kerbs were missing, and finally, when we had to turn right to go up to the Esplanade, we had to go up a very steep hill which was a little concerning.

We got to the café where I noticed that the access to the disabled toilet was along a pathway which crosses in front the entrance to the café, this is problematic due to fact that staff are in and out servicing customers on the Esplanade.

I will say that due to fact there are steps to get into the café, the staff were so helpful and came down to take our order. I did also notice that there were table and chairs on the pathway to each side of the café entrance, I am sure the customers have a great view point from the area.

Since my visit I have spoken to the owner, who was not available at the time, we have agreed to have a meeting to look into what can be done. I have also been informed that the café is a property owned by the Council.

The Esplanade

Both Carole and I went along the Esplanade where we noticed that the access to the beach hard standing area beginning, had a step as the ramp parts were not fitted; this we found out was due to fact that these parts were missing. We were also informed that new ones were on order, this was the second time we informed them of the issue. When we went along again we both noticed that the correct parts have now been fitted.

Further along the Esplanade between Greenhill and the way to Lodmoor Country Park, the surface is damaged and not very safe for parents with prams also some people with crutches and even on a mobility scooter.

Other Matters

I have to inform the group that due to an issue with my right shoulder I have just found out I need to have an operation which is likely to put me out of action; so I would be very happy if other members would step up to fill this position to keep on the good work the group is doing...

[In addition, since the meeting, Bob Irwin has said that for health reasons he now has to step down as Investigations Officer. He is happy to continue as a member of the group and will help Ian out in future if he can.]

8. Any Other Business

a) Correction to Previous Minutes - the following should replace the point "a) Website" item:

"a) Library Awareness Event

Sheila Dyer offered to set up a sub-group to organise the public event in the Library. This offer was accepted by the group and Sheila requested volunteers to help with the task.

Website. Sheila Dyer was prepared to review and update the web site and volunteered to do this. The meeting supported this course of action."

DH will amend previous minutes and get them re-published on the web site.

- b) **Awareness Draft Leaflet.** A draft leaflet intended to publicise the event was put forward for comment. Some comments were offered and further ideas about colours and background were discussed. After discussion of this and other needs for the stall a budget of £50 was agreed for printing and provision of hand-outs.
- c) **Stall in NatWest bank** There was potential for a further event to be held in NatWest Bank. Jean Spain had investigated the possibility and it seems fundraising would be allowed there provided the stall was continuously manned. No further planning would be done until details of the Library event were fixed. Jean would however give NatWest an idea of our likely timescale for being there. An item to discuss this further would be included on our next Agenda.
- d) **Seafront Lighting Scheme** Gill Penwell reported that a Council Vote decision had been made on lighting. There would be no fairy lights. It seems there was no further chance for public comments.

- e) **Next Forum Meeting** Gill reported the next meeting will be on 25th September when the speaker will be Mike Prosser
- f) **WarmFront** initiative - if income under £15K heating bills may be reduced - need to apply by 15th October.
- g) **Contact information** Jean Spain had been to a recent networking meeting and now had contact details for the following groups:
CSiders; Heat Melcombe Regis; Advocacy; Healthwatch; Domestic Abuse; Message in a Bottle; DWP Recycling.
Two more meetings were planned, both at St Aldhelms Church hall 10am-2pm: 25th September and 18th December.

Next Meetings (All start at 2pm)	
at The Fire & Safety Centre:	
Monday 8th October 2018	
Monday 10th December 2018	
Monday 11th February 2019	

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