

WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND ACCESS GROUP
MINUTES OF MEETING No 141
Monday 8th October 2018
At Weymouth Fire & Safety Centre, Radipole Lane, Weymouth

1. Welcome and Introduction

Present:

Mike Kelly (President), David Harris (Secretary), Richard Marshall (Treasurer), Kathleen Boston - Mammah (W&P, WDCC, NDC), Cllr David Harris (DCC), Cllr Paul Kimber (WPBC), Sheila Dyer, Jean Spain, Fiona Thomas (Community Development, Dorset Councils Partnership), Carolyn Harris, Francine Hall.

2. Apologies

Carole Chinn,, Gill Penwell, Marguerite Brown (Vice Chairman), Ian White

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes were accepted as a true record of the August meeting.

Matters Arising: Jean Spain requested sight of a copy of the Constitution. SD would provide.

NOTE at this point the meeting was told that Cllr Paul Kimber had put himself forward to be our next Chairman. It was proposed that Paul take over as Chair of the meeting and that towards the end of the meeting we would have a vote to accept him as our Chairman. The meeting approved this approach by a show of hands.

NB After the meeting, we have found out that the detail of our Constitution does not allow us to adopt a new Chairman in this way. We will be working on a satisfactory resolution, and hope to have one in place at our next meeting in December.

4. President's Report

Future of the Access Group

Following Carole's resignation I hope that a new Chairman will be appointed without delay. This is a difficult time for the Group but our efforts will be likely to be of greater importance than ever with local authorities under more financial pressure as well as undergoing reorganisation, and the continuing pressure upon the Health and Care sectors.

Weymouth Senior Forum

The Access Group was strongly represented at last month's meeting of The Senior Forum when Matt Prosser, the recently appointed Chief Executive of Dorset Unitary Council, was the Guest Speaker.

Dorset Voluntary Sector

Dorset Community Action has released the results of a survey of the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector concerning the reorganisation of local government. More than 60% of groups said they are concerned about the future of

local authority funding and over 50% are concerned that access to officer support will get more difficult. More than 60% of organisations in the Sector are expecting that the need for their work will increase. It is estimated that, if costed on the basis of the National Minimum Wage, the value of work by the VCSE sector would be more than £6.184 million.

Proposed Weymouth Seafront Lighting Scheme

An Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared and the Planning Application has been submitted, following a demonstration of how the lights could perform. The EQIA is detailed. I believe that our concerns have been largely addressed. Individuals may have comments or concerns beyond access considerations and these should be addressed to Weymouth and Portland Borough Council Planning Section but I would ask that as a Group we confine our comments to matters relevant to the interests of people with disabilities.

Accessible Housing

A Government Green Paper has been released on the design of Social Housing. There is a stated commitment to the provision of good quality affordable homes but it is disappointing that there is no reference to accessibility despite evidence that the lack of sufficient accessible homes is part of the housing crisis. I trust that support for the provision of more adaptable and accessible homes will remain a policy within the West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan and that the Group will continue to support the local authority in that respect.

Proposed Event at Weymouth Central Library on 25 October

Much work has gone into preparation for this event. I thank those on the Sub - Committee, and George Dyer for his sterling work printing posters & flyers, cards the notelets to hand to the public, and reprinting several documents we already had (suitably updated). Thanks also to Mark for updating the web-site.

Eden Portland

Most of you will be aware of the proposals for a major Visitor Attraction in Bowers Quarry and Jordans Mine near to St George's Church at Reforne, Portland. Events have been held to consult with the public. I am pleased to advise that those leading the Project, and their designers and consultants, intend to ensure that the development is carried out to a high standard in terms of accessibility

Lyme Regis Town Council Tourist Information Centre

I am not suggesting we should make a move to expand our territory. I just want to mention that Lyme Regis Town Council is setting a good example in trying to help with some access issues (despite the obvious challenges the Town has in that respect). The web-site refers to the availability of 3 beach wheelchairs one of which can take people into the water. I would like us to make early contact with Weymouth Town Council when it is formed, and also to renew our contact with Portland and Chickerell Town Councils, both of which will have much increased responsibilities following re-organisation in Spring 2019.

5. Chairman's Report - N/A

6. Treasurers Report

Richard produced a Financial Report for the meeting. The basic facts are we have some £1400 in the bank, our current annual expenditure is between £500 and £600. In the current year we have received sponsorship of £200 and a donation of £330. Thus we need to continue to seek funding in order to ensure the Group's continued survival.

7. Access Officer's Report - N/A - vacancy

The meeting accepted the position which had been given in the President's report above with regard to the Seafront Lighting scheme - matters relating to accessibility/ disabilities had been properly covered in the EQIA.

8. Highways Officer's Report - N/A - none present

9. Investigation Officer's Report- N/A - none present

10. Awareness Event at Weymouth Library

Sheila Dyer reported that the following items had now been updated and produced and were ready for use on the day: Leaflets/ Publicity poster/ Gifts/Business Cards Brochures. We had managed some distribution of leaflets around the town. Volunteers were still needed to fill the rota on the day. Distribution of leaflets by other would also help - leaflets were handed out.

11. Any Other Business

a) Awareness Events -

It was suggested that we should consider running awareness days in places such as Westhaven where people with disabilities might find our information helpful.

b) Access Issues Training. It was stated that the new Council will be providing co-ordinated training of staff about access issues.

c) Valuation of Volunteer work. A recent valuation had estimated the value volunteer work within Dorset amounted to £6.18 million per year

d) Lighting Scheme Meeting. A council Meeting will take place on 11th October at Mulberry House where the lighting scheme will be discussed.

e) People First Dorset. Had been contacted and were amenable to cooperating with WPAG where possible.

f) New Government Green Paper. No mention of accessibility (Lifetime Homes) or of adaptable & changeable housing or level access. Need to contact MP to get this approach overturned. Allocation of housing does not take sufficient account of disabilities.

g) Eden Portland Project. It was understood that two Access Consultants were employed by the project.

h) WPBC Budget Paul Kimber said there was a small amount of money still available for local projects within WPBC. The handrail beside Greenhill Gardens was suggested as a possible candidate. DH agreed to send a brief email describing the need to Cllr Kimber.

- i) **Street Lighting** Concerns had been raised because of the switching off of all street lights in the small hours. The area between between Town Bridge and Chapelhay was of particular concern - it was felt to be a security risk as there were some very dark spaces. Cllr Kimber stated that he understood that any changes to the night time scheme would need to have the support of the Police.
- j) **Access to Doctor Surgeries** Bus service withdrawal was going to cause great difficulty in accessing Doctors Surgeries in the Chickerell area. The CCG was to write to patients in the next few weeks.
- k) **Access Group Meetings** Francine Hall expressed dissatisfaction as a working person with the timing of the Access Groups meetings. As they were all held within normal working hours it was not possible for those who were in work to attend. Could the group consider making meetings more accessible from a timing point of view?

The vote to elect Paul Kimber was taken at this point and was unanimous in favour of him becoming Chairman.

As noted earlier, our Constitution needs amending to allow the clearly illustrated wishes of the membership to be satisfied. This will form part of Decembers meeting.

Next Meetings (All start at 2pm)	
at The Fire & Safety Centre:	
Monday 11th February 2019	Monday October 14th 2019
Monday April 8th 2019	Monday December 9th 2019
Monday June 10th 2019	Monday February 10th 2020
Monday August 12th 2019	

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