

# **WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND ACCESS GROUP**

## **MINUTES OF MEETING No. 135**

**Held at 2pm on Monday 9th October 2017**

**At Weymouth Fire & Safety Centre, Radipole Lane, Weymouth**

### **1. Welcome and Introduction**

In opening the meeting, the Chairman reminded those present that "cross talking" within a meeting was not appropriate. Secondly she reminded attendees of the need to maintain silence while reports were being given.

The Agenda Item for Stuart Allen from DCC was withdrawn due to absence - a report will be forwarded at a later time.

**Present:** Carole Chinn (Chairman), David Harris (Secretary), Mike Kelly (President), Cllr David Harris (DCC), Dawn Atkin (DCC Highways), Cllr Katharine Garcia (DCC), Alaric Little (DCC Highways), Carolyn Harris, Sue Ward-Rice (WPBC), Jean Spain, Sylvia O'Conner, David Dowle, Gill Penwell, Christine Pearce, Bob Irwin (Investigations Officer), Ian White (Investigations Officer), Cllr Christine James (WPBC)

### **2. Apologies**

Marguerite Brown (Vice Chairman), Graham & June Ryan, Sheila Dyer, Pauline Haime

### **3. Minutes of Previous meeting**

Proposed for acceptance and approved by show of hands.

**4/5. Highways Officer's Report** Dawn Atkin gave an update on the following:

**Attendance at future meetings:** Alaric Little would in future be reporting to the group on progress.

**Portland Tesco dropped kerb:** Some delays had been because of the need to provide sensible access around some existing obstructions. The work to provide a satisfactory dropped kerb arrangement around the area of the Tesco entrance had now been completed.

**Drop kerb behind Alexandra Gardens:** Dawn and Alaric were due to attend a meeting with other interested parties to find a way of improving the situation at this junction.

Ian White mentioned two still unsatisfactory areas: the Park District (Chelmsford St) and travelling to Southill to/from town was still hazardous on foot.

Cllr David Harris reported that parking restriction changes in Williams Avenue Dorchester (beside the DCH) had been made because of road safety issues. "No Loading" was now in place which made it illegal for Blue Badge holders to park there.

**6. Access Officer's Report** Sue Ward-Rice reported that another walkabout of Weymouth was being planned. A group called People First Dorset was in the process of preparing an Access Guide for Dorchester & Weymouth. There was interest in a meeting with WPAG at some point.

No further progress had been seen on the handrail for the footway beside Greenhill Gardens

Jean Spain told us that in another role she had been in contact with Edward Warr the new Town Centre Manager. She reported he seemed an engaging person who was prepared to take on board ideas within the area of his domain.

**7. Taxi Company representative sent apologies.** Cllr Christine James mentioned that she had been told there were six adapted taxis in the Weyline group. Altogether there may be nine in the area. Not easy to find out.

Cllr David Harris said that the P&D Contracts company which has been doing some services to Southill since the bus service stopped also have adapted vehicles. He will try to find more out.

## **8. Any Other Business**

**Christine Pearce** reported difficulties in using toilets in two of Weymouth's hotels. As the facilities were not in the public domain, she was advised to take matters up directly with the hotels in question.

The situation with the Chapelhay Skips continues - it was suggested that a walkabout with the Synergy Housing officer was the appropriate way to follow this up.

**Mike Kelly** raised an issue about handrails around the lower part of the steps/footways beside Holy Trinity Church (Chapelhay Steps). There are safety issues regarding the inadequacy of handrails to the lower sections of the steep footway alongside Holy Trinity Church. This footway provides an alternative to using Chapelhay Steps. Additional and suitable railings would be most helpful. There was also concern about the potential hazard of having an opening in the railings fronting North Quay co-inciding with the foot of the lower section of the Chapelhay Steps ramp. A lockable chain had previously been fitted at this point and this was only opened when Holy Trinity Church required easy access from North Quay, for example for funerals. It is understood that the latter problem has been resolved.

The Presidents Report has been provided and will be circulated with the minutes.

Lanehouse Methodist Church Ramp - although one had been provided, like many first attempts it was not really suitable for the location.

The RSPB has received a substantial grant to make their reserve at Arne, near Wareham, and other reserves in that area more accessible. Apparently none of these funds will be made available for Radipole Lake or Lodmoor but it is acknowledged that considerable efforts have already been made to make them more accessible.

**Jean Spain** asked if it was possible/practical to have names on the table in front of each person as an aide memoire. As we never know in advance all who will be attending, this was felt not to be practical.

Jean had seen emails about NHS guidelines for GP Surgeries - "How Practices can Help".

**Bob Irwin** explained "Acute Hospital at Home" which is a service which aims to allow otherwise hospitalised patients to live at home and receive the same level of service that they would in an hospital bed.

Gill Penwell - Next Seniors Forum meeting at the Angling Club was on 24th October. The NHS Local Chairman will be talking about NHS changes.

## **Annex 1. President's Report (provided for minutes)**

### **Parks and Gardens "Friends Groups"**

The subject follows from the previous minutes. The Chairman and I met with the Chairman and Treasurer of the Friends of Radipole Park and Gardens together with Yvonne Lester from W&PBC, and toured the area hearing about and discussing their proposals.

Following this Marguerite, Dave, Carolyn and I attended a Community Event organised by

Julie Hursthouse, Sue Ward-Rice and Tara Williams of W&PBC which brought together "Friends" of the various parks and gardens in the Borough, Weymouth Civic Society, the Weymouth Transition Town Group, the Weyforward Group and W&PAG. I attach the letter I sent on behalf of W&PAG to the Friends of Radipole Park and Gardens to support their Lottery Bid.

### **Town Centre Pedestrianisation**

I have heard of suggestions that further Town Centre pedestrianisation is under consideration. This could be very good news, improving amenities, the quality of the environment, safety and air quality, but any pedestrianisation needs to be thoughtfully designed and requires proper enforcement. Ready access needs to be provided to suitable locations for people using taxis and buses, and with well located parking for disabled car users. Any scheme should be properly enforced. The present "self-regulated" controls are not adequate. The Access Group asks for full consultations at an early stage if the idea is to move forward. W&PBC are to appoint a Weymouth Town Centre Manager.

### **Town Centre Car Parking**

It is also understood that there are further ideas under consideration and the Access Group would wish to be assured that it will be fully consulted.

### **Air Pollution**

A Government consultation paper has been issued in response to EU rules. It only relates to Nitrogen Dioxide levels whereas there are other pollutants in urban areas, and contains few proposals. Many people with disabilities are particularly affected by high pollution levels. Even coastal areas can be affected and the report makes mention of high pollution levels in parts of Bournemouth. No doubt areas in the Borough also suffer with Boot Hill, King Street and parts of Portland Road, Chickerell Road, Lanehouse Rocks Road and Fortuneswell being affected at certain times of the day. I would like to take the subject up with the Environmental Services team on the Borough Council.

### **Castletown D Day Centre**

This new Visitor Centre is now open. It is quite small and only partially accessible for people using wheelchairs. The Centre is run on a not for profit basis and I accept that its finance is limited at present. Their wish is to improve accessibility if the Centre proves successful but I am concerned that there is no indication in the report to the Planning Committee that the limited accessibility was considered so I am taking up this point with the Planning Officers.

### **Lloyds Bank, Easton**

I wrote to Lloyds Bank expressing concern that their Portland Branch (the only remaining bank on Portland) is set for closure. I have received no reply. It would appear that Lloyds will not reverse their decision but this adds to the need for the Easton Post Office to be made easily accessible (currently it has an entrance step).

### **Bus service cuts**

With the end of grant assistance from DCC I understand that Damory services 207, 211 and the Weymouth – Dorchester part of route X12 will cease running in July, together with the Portland and Southill Community bus services. This could add to social exclusion but I believe that County Councillor David Harris and Borough Councillor Paul Kimber may be able to discuss some ideas for some measures which may help.

## **Weymouth BID Proposal for TIC**

There has been a suggestion that the BID office in Bond Street might be used as a Tourist Information Centre. The premises are unsuitable because of a step at the entrance. I would also remind the Group that Weymouth BID did not respond to our request to meet them last year. Nor did the Chamber of Commerce or the Tourism Partnership.

### **Annex 2. Chairman`s Report.** (also provided for minutes)

Mike and I were invited to speak to Weymouth Civic Society at St Nicholas Church on Buxton Road; we were also informed it was wheelchair accessible. After negotiating the steep slope I then found it was impossible to get over the threshold into the Church in my wheelchair. I had to get out of my chair – which was then bounced over the threshold – and then get back in. This was not a good start to our talk about access! However they found the talk interesting, had many questions for us and are now aware of some of the problems different members of the community have regarding access.

I am also trying to arrange a meeting with the new Town Centre Manager, Edward Warr.

Meeting closed at 15.35

<b>Next Meetings (All start at 2pm)</b>	
<b>at The Fire &amp; Safety Centre:</b>	
<b>Monday 11 December 2017</b>	<b>Monday 10th December 2018</b>
<b>Monday 12 February 2018</b>	<b>Monday 11th February 2019</b>
<b>Monday 11th June 2018</b>	
<b>Monday 13th August, 2018</b>	
<b>Monday 8th October 2018</b>	

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