

**WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND ACCESS GROUP
MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
MINUTES OF MEETING No. 126**

**Held at 2pm on Monday 11th April 2016
At Acorns Centre, Grosvenor Road, Weymouth**

1. Welcome and Introduction

Carole Chinn (Chairman), David Harris (Secretary), Steve Rook (Treasurer), Marguerite Brown, Carolyn Harris, Dawn Atkin (DCC Highways), Susan Ward-Rice (WPBC), David Dowle, Christine Pearce, Mike Kelly (President), Ian White, Bob Irwin, Carole Lord, Mary Jordan-Winter (POPP), Gill Penwell, Graham & June Ryan.

2. Apologies None

3. Approval of Minutes of AGM held on 8th June 2015

No changes requested.

4. President`s Report

Inadequate maintenance and management of access facilities

As you may recall I contacted Weymouth and Portland Chamber of Commerce, Weymouth BID and Weymouth and Portland Tourism Partnership to say that the Group would like to discuss the problems which can arise even where facilities for disabled people are claimed to exist, and also to explain why this Group is convinced that access improvements can benefit businesses.

The response has been disappointing to say the least with the Chamber sending an acknowledgement but not acting further, whilst the other 2 groups have not replied at all. I would like to discuss how we should act now. Following a survey of public opinion about A-Boards in Dorchester last week by Dorchester BID I would wish to suggest that a similar survey should be carried out in Weymouth.

Access Audits

With my retirement and the end of my Professional Indemnity Insurance, and with the advice of Steve Rook, I think this is a suitable time for the Group to recognise that we will no longer provide "Access Audits" though, I assume, that we can continue to advise and encourage access improvements whilst advising businesses that they may need suitable professional advice.

Portland and Chickerell Town Councils

Portland Town Council is to vacate their offices in Fortuneswell, which are owned by the Borough Council. The Council is considering moving to office premises in Easton Street though the building is not, at present, wheelchair accessible. For public meetings they use accessible locations around the Island but I believe their office also needs to be accessible. Susan may be able to provide an update.

Chickerell is for most purposes regarded as being outside our area as it is not in the Borough, but many houses in Lanehouse and around Cobham Drive are in Chickerell Parish although they have Weymouth addresses. It has been brought to the notice of the Group that Willowbed Hall, a modern public building which also provides the premises for

Chickerell Town Council, does not have a functioning Induction Loop or similar help for people with hearing impairment. I consider that the Group should make representations to Chickerell Town Council.

Public transport

An experiment by DCC means that an accessible bus service now serves various areas of Portland that do not have a bus service, providing a link with First Group route 1 from Weymouth to Southwell. I hope this proves successful and might encourage creation of a route in Weymouth which could provide a service to areas like Southill, and the area south of the Harbour, which have little, if any, bus service.

5. Chairman`s Report

April Disability Month at Weymouth College

We have been contacted to see if we would be interested in having a stall in the canteen to provide information on our Group. I've contacted them and said we would give a response after our meeting.

Wheels in motion

A very successful event was held at the beginning of March at the Community Safety Centre. There were approximately 19 attendees and we have the use of the new Safe Wise road safety centre where everyone could try on scooters in a safe environment. Hopefully there will be another course next year.

Official opening of Safe Wise

Ian and I were invited to attend the official opening as we have been involved in running the wheels in motion event at the road safety centre. I was surprised and honoured to be presented to HRH Princess Anne and informed her of the work the group does. She officially unveiled the stone and signed the visitors book.

Handrail at Greenhill Gardens

I had a meeting with Trevor Collins, the Chair of Friends of Greenhill Gardens, regarding this handrail. They had a meeting on April 6th and it transpires that the steps are outside of the Boundary of Greenhill Gardens and the Seascape Cafe. According to Trevor they are in dangerous condition and have not wintered well with lots of potholes. He thinks it will be highways at DCC who will need to deal with the poor state of the steps and the handrail. Note: during the meeting discussion raised the possibility that the Borough may own this path. Dawn Atkin would find out.

Disabled Access to Sea Chef

I have visited the Sea Chef Fish & Chip Restaurant on King Street, and they do have a wheelchair accessible toilet for customers only; however it is a bit narrow accessing the door.

6. Treasurer`s Report

Steve reported that we had £1979.61 in the bank. He also confirmed that we had received a payment of £200 from Weymouth Mobility which we will be using to support the website.

7. Access Officer's Report

Sue Ward-Rice reported that the council offices on Commercial Road actually were opening today. The North Quay offices for the council are now closed. The lift access and in Commercial Road have now been improved but the committee room doors remain manually operated and therefore somewhat awkward to use. There

was no outside canopy due to planning issues.

It was still possible that money could be found for the printing of the Group's Access Leaflet for traders.

Ian White reported that the pavement from Westham Bridge car park had been repaired/improved. It was now much safer for wheeled vehicles. He offered thanks to Dawn Atkin and the DCC team for job well done.

8. Highway Officer's Report

Dawn Atkin reported that the filling in of the railway tracks in Commercial Road was still contentious. It was necessary for Railtrack to inspect the condition of the existing track and certify its condition before any further action was taken.

Hopefully inspection would be soon so that work could proceed.

Work had been completed on the crossing of Portland Road near the IPACA Academy in Weston.

Dawn also reported that in the last financial year the total amount paid out by DCC Highways Department in damage claims was £107.

9. Investigation Officer's Report

Ian had been looking at the car parking and payment requirements in council car parks in our local area and found that many have different rules and there was no commonality. He described the situation as a minefield. It appears that this situation is now common across the country and car park users with disabilities were advised to take great care to look at and understand the payment rules so that they don't get caught out.

Returning to an earlier topic he also reported that it was extremely difficult for anyone using a mobility vehicle with a ramp at the back to find spaces in the whole of the town which allowed safe unloading and reloading of chair or mobility scooter from the back of such a car.

Ian also agreed that he would follow up the previous promised visit to the oasis cafe to check the access to the supposedly disabled toilet

10. New Meeting Venue

It was decided to arrange our next meeting at the new Fire & Safety Centre to assess its suitability for our future meetings. Members agreed that they would be prepared to pay a small charge (c. £1) to attend meetings if a new venue was more expensive. A meeting date in w/c 13th June would be arranged by Carole Chinn / Steve Rook.

11. Any Other Business

a) Gill Penwell reported that the laser lights on the seafront has been found to affect people with epilepsy because the laser lights are on flashing although very rapidly.

b) David Dowle reported that parking on pavements and blocking dropped kerbs was becoming more problematic.

c) Gill Penwell reported that there will be changes at the walk in clinic at the hospital at the end of June and July a new contract was being let and a new company taking the service over.

d) On 26th April there was going to be a talk about the Portland Spy Ring. This is hosted by the over 55s Forum and will be at the Angling Club at 2pm.

e) 4th May was the date for the next CRUSE/ Wayfinders meeting.

Meeting closed at 15.45

Next Meetings (all start at 14.00): NB We will be holding June meeting at New Fire Station

W/C Monday 13th June 2016 (exact date TBC)	Monday 12th December 2016
Monday 8th August 2016	Monday 13th February 2017
Monday 10th October 2016	