

WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND ACCESS GROUP

MINUTES OF MEETING No. 133

Held at 2pm on Monday 12th June 2017

At Weymouth Fire & Safety Centre, Radipole Lane, Weymouth

1. Welcome and Introduction

Carole Chinn(Chairman), Marguerite Brown (Vice Chairman), David Harris (Secretary), Steve Rook (Treasurer), Mike Kelly (President), Carolyn Harris, Sue Ward-Rice (WPBC), Sylvia O'Conner, Pauline Haime, Graham & June Ryan, Cllr Paul Kimber (WPBC), Sheila Dyer, Dawn Atkin (DCC Highways), Cllr Katharine Garcia (DCC), Alaric Little (DCC Highways), Christine Pearce, Cllr David Harris (DCC), Bob Irwin (Investigations Officer),

2. Apologies

Gill Penwell, Ian White (Investigations Officer), Christine James, Jean Spain

3. Minutes of Previous meeting

Proposed for acceptance and approved by show of hands.

4. President`s Report

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). A discussion ensued about the need for the Coop cashpoint m/c in Tophill to be lowered to make it safer for wheelchair users to operate.

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. Cllr Harris informed the meeting that the present bus service from Southill (cost £1.50) was presently underused. His concern was that this situation did not demonstrate a strong demand for such a service.

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.

Message from Councillor Christine James

Councillor James is unfortunately unable to attend today's meeting. She would like to do a survey of some footpaths / pavements in the Town Centre with some members of the Group. She also wanted to know what the Group thinks of the practice of advert flyers being put under the windscreen wipers of parked vehicles. She has had many complaints about this, some of them from drivers with disabilities.

5. Chairman`s Report.

April

VIP Event – SafeWise -

I was invited to attend as the Group have promoted the 'Wheels in Motion' event at the Safety Centre. This was the first VIP Event and focused on the work undertaken by the team in educating nearly 11,000 children at the SafeWise centres in

Weymouth & Bournemouth with the aim of preventing accidents in the home, on the road and at play. The many guests included HM Lord Lieutenant of Dorset, Dorset Police & Crime Commissioner, MP for South Dorset, High Sheriff of Dorset, Councillors, Mayors, Trustees and guests.

Patient Participation Group – Royal Crescent Surgery -

I attended this event as an individual and left information on the Group and how we can help with access issues.

May

Seniors Group – Martyn Underhill, Police & Crime Commissioner -

After his talk I spoke to him and he was keen to hear about the work of the Group and how we are helping regarding access in the area.

Council – Temporary toilets at the Pavilion -

As many of you are aware we have been having ongoing discussions with the Council regarding the siting and access of the permanent, temporary toilets.

Defining barrier positions:

To spray paint a dotted line to clearly defined barrier positions and maintain access / turning widths, however the barrier has been moved and there is no turning width and this needs reinstating immediately

Step into Gents:

To provide a step to reduce the height from ground level into the Gents temporary toilet facility (still awaiting response from contractor/s)

Grab Handles alongside Ladies and Gents access doorways:

To be installed by Council contractor – not yet completed

Drop curb (End of forecourt) –

Inner area to be fenced off as not fit for use, this barrier has recently been removed and needs reinstating immediately

Toilet Directional Sign:

Sign to be erected on ornate lamp column (Harbour side) adjacent to pedestrian crossing to direct persons via access gap from the railway line area towards the temporary toilet facilities

Laminated toilet directional sign:

A3 laminated “Toilets” with arrow pointing up and erected on gate post

Disabled Facility:

Laminated A4 sign “When disabled light flashing and alarm sounding please report to Pavilion Theatre Staff” (Pavilion Manager in agreement to arrangements), this has been removed and needs reinstating immediately

Disabled facility Key:

Spare Key to be relocated from Beach Office to Pavilion to enable the above

Fit door Restrictor to both the Ladies and Gents doors, at present the ladies toilet door opens 180 degrees which can therefore restrict access within the barrier access and can cause problems for the visually impaired

The Council have taken on board our input and so far have worked with us to come to an amicable solution, however various items are still outstanding and need to be actioned immediately. The Council are now aware of the Group and have stated they will refer to us in the future.

Council – Toilets at Pier Bandstand/Brunswick Terrace

There was a problem with the Disabled toilet, the emergency pull cord had been cut and wasn't long enough in an emergency. This has now been replaced with a new full length cord.

Disabled Motoring AGM at Haynes Motor Museum –

I attended this as an individual and one of the topics was filling up with fuel. There are any number of companies that supply gadgets for you to contact the staff to help refuel and some of these are: MyHailo, 01732 223 900, www.contacta.co.uk; assist-Mi.com; fuelservice.org; ServiceCall, 0800 167 0927.

Also you can now pay with chip and pin if the garage has a wireless terminal but YOU MUST stay in the car. You can still use chip and signature cards or cash.

6. Treasurer`s Report.

The annual insurance (£190), some expenses and the room hire fee (c£16) paid since the last report. We had received a further years sponsorship of £200 from Weymouth Mobility which is mainly used to support the web site..

We had still not heard anything from the Carnival committee. .

7. Access Officers Report

Previous points have covered all the topics she had in mind.

Christine Pearce commented that there had been some changes in the Chapelhay area: New pathways had been laid, but there continued to be vehicles obstructing dropped kerbs.

8. Highway Officers Report.

Dropped Kerb Budget

The budget for dropped kerb work for the coming year was £2000 for an area from Weymouth to Lyme Regis. Dawn had requested an increase as she felt that was not an appropriate amount for the work which would be needed.

New member of highways team

Highways Team Member Aleric Little would be covering the areas of Portland and Upwey and would be attending some WPAG meetings in future.

Traffic in Town Centre

Bollards were planned for areas in St Mary's St and the work was now expected to be completed in July. MK was working with Christine James to identify the best routes through the town for wheelchair users. It was hoped that the Regeneration budget might help these activities in some way.

Dropped Kerb at rear of Alexandra Gardens

Highways recognised this as a problem area and were planning to mitigate it by raising the opposite kerb to "remove the temptation". The underlying problem was

that existing street furniture (BT cabinet) left insufficient space to safely make the necessary ramp.

9. Investigations Officers Report - No report in absence of Ian White

10. Any Other Business

Seating along the backwater area.

All seats along the pathway near the Ghurka restaurant had now been removed. This left a long walk without relief (Westham Bridge to Swannery CP) for people with limited walking ability.

Disabled Parking Charges

The hope was expressed that a better deal might be given for parking in the Borough for disabled people. A new Car Parks Manager had been appointed.

Free Deckchairs for OAPs

Removal of this concession was regarded as a negative step - one of the few benefits for those with walking difficulties was being taken away.

GP Practice change consultation

Cllr Harris reported that there was a consultation imminent about possible changes to the GP Practices in the area. This would not necessarily impact on the number/location of surgeries, but was aimed at the "businesses" which ran those different surgeries.

Meeting closed at 15.47

Next Meetings (all start at 14.00):

Future meetings at 2pm at The Fire & Safety Centre:	
Monday 14 August 2017	Monday 12 February 2018
Monday 9 October 2017	
Monday 11 December 2017	

Help Line Phone numbers:

DCC highway emergencies: 01305 221020

WPBC Help Desk: 01305 838000

Post Meeting info: RADAR keys are available from TIC's in Dorchester and Bridport or else any locksmith in Weymouth.