

WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND ACCESS GROUP

MINUTES OF MEETING No. 128

**Held at Weymouth Fire Station & Community Safety Centre
Radipole Lane, Weymouth DT4 0QF**

Held at 2pm on Monday 8th August 2016

1. Welcome and Introduction

Carole Chinn (Chairman), David Harris (Secretary), Steve Rook (Treasurer), Carolyn Harris, Margeurite Brown, Ian White, Bob Irwin, Susan Ward-Rice (WPBC), Sheila Dyer, Graham & June Ryan, David Dowle, Christine Pearce, Pauline Haime, Gill Penwell, Mary Jordan-Winter.

2. Apologies: Mike Kelly (President), Cllr David Harris, Sylvia Summers, Tanya Dancer, Cllr Christine James.

3. President's Report

Alan Christopher

I wish to mention a touching tribute to Alan, who died last year at the age of 47.

I noticed a pebble with an inscription, on the shoreline at Osprey Quay, near to Portland Castle. Alan joined the Group as a young man when John Lambert became Chairman. For some time he was our only Portland representative.

Local Government Re-organisation

It seems increasingly likely that the present arrangement of County, Borough and District Councils (Dorset County Council, W&PBC and WDDC) serving this and surrounding areas will be changed in favour of a Unitary Council(s). This may be welcome as I think we all get frustrated by what appears to be endless to-ing and fro-ing about which council is responsible for a particular area of work.

However with the decline of funding and services offered by DCC, W&PBC and WDDC, we have an anomaly in that Weymouth does not have a Town Council unlike Dorchester and Bridport and most of the County. I think that a Weymouth Town Council will need to be created to look after the town's interests.

Nothe Fort

Further improvements have been carried out including provision of an accessible W.C. Have any W&PAG members visited the Fort recently? Given the complexity of the building, and site, I think Weymouth Civic Society should be congratulated for their ongoing works to improve accessibility. There have also been recent works in the Nothe Gardens to resurface some paths and replace fences.

Inadequate maintenance and management of access facilities

There is still no satisfactory response from Weymouth and Portland Chamber of Commerce, Weymouth BID or Weymouth and Portland Tourism Partnership to my letters. I suggest, when our new publicity is ready, that we should press them to understand that we have an important role to play in helping the Borough to become a safer and more accessible place for residents and visitors.

Paths and Cycle Routes

Again this summer many routes are becoming overgrown. Maintenance is inadequate. A particular problem is with brambles overhanging paths.

Pharmacies

Following from our last meeting I have heard from Karen Moss, an Occupational Therapist who works with Access Dorset. Where patients have problems with prescribed drugs changing from time to time in packaging, size, shape, and appearance, she recommends taking up the matter with the pharmacies as they may be able to assist, and may collectively be able to press for measures to be taken on the subject. Unfortunately, as a background, there is growing concern nationally about the likely closure of many pharmacies.

Weymouth Central Library Lift

I am pleased to report this is now working.

Island Community Action

Now for some really good news - you may have heard that Island Community Action has been awarded a £356,000 grant by The Big Lottery Fund to continue its valuable work with isolated and older

people and that, as a result, ICA will be extending their work to help people in Wyke Regis as well as on Portland.

4. Chairman's Report

Dorchester Access Group

I attended Dorchester Access Group meeting together with Ian White. Susan has the details.

Community Lunch

At the beginning of July both Ian and I attended a community lunch; we met some interesting people and heard about different groups and projects in our area.

Radipole Nature Reserve

In the middle of July a few members of the group and Cllr Christine James had a tour of Radipole Nature Reserve which was led by Lindsay Death, Visitor Experience Officer. We found it interesting and informative and there are a few leaflets for your information.

Wessex Water Focus Group

Last week a few of us attended a focus group, held by Wessex Water at the safety centre. Wessex Water wants to work with us to look at why people don't use the temporary pedestrian walkways when they set them up for roadworks. This was extremely useful and they have gone away with a greater understanding vision and mobility issues.

5. Treasurer's Report

Only one payment this month £16.80.. Current Bank Balance £1739.20.

6. Access Officer's Report

Induction Loop

No further information had been received about the induction loop system not working in the Commercial Road premises - SWR to follow up.

Dorchester Access Group meeting

A wide range of topics had been raised during this meeting: in Brewery Square issues with the cobbled areas and bollards in awkward places; in Poundbury Queen Mother Square issues

around drop kerbs were being discussed; the much advertised improvements at Dorchester West station are now imminent.

7. Highways Officer's Report

No Report.

Two related items were mentioned:

- Refuse bins at Chapelhay - Christine Pearce reported that these bins were still not inside the enclosures provided and as a result were a hazard and a nuisance. DH to follow up with Dawn Atkin
- DH reported that the Dorchester Road pedestrian crossing near Hetherley Road had been upgraded. Pavements had been widened and new equipment installed. The crossing was now more "user friendly"

8. Investigation Officer's Report

RSPB Radipole and Lodmoor visits

The visit to the RSPB Radipole was very interesting with some issues which were highlighted but it was a good time. I was asked about the RSPB Lodmoor which me and Carole did go round following the paths, the down side was it was very bumpy which we both found not a visit we would do again.

Obstructions in Weymouth town centre

I have seen some issue about the town centre which was very hard to get around due to not only A boards but there was other trades which was making the area in St Mary Street hard to get around.

Wessex Water focus group

The group was well attended by me Carole, June and Graham at the Fire Station when Wessex Water wanted to show how they set up work areas and making the walk way round the works, we all put good issue to Wessex Water which they was very pleased to hear, I mention that outside of my home the cap which is used for them to read the meter was lose as I found when I got out of my car when I put my crutch down the cap moved. I was so surprised that on Thursday the cap was repaired as the rubber seal was broken.

Difficult areas for visitors to Weymouth

I have had some of our visitors informing me about some of the issues they have had while go round the area i.e. drop Kerbs, some of the pavements being uneven. They also some issues about informing people in wheelchairs and in scooter of areas which are not suited.

Oasis cafe

I have tried to go to Oasis Café but it has been very busy also the car park being very full so I have not been able to see if they have changed their ways about the disabled toilet. Carole was able to use the disabled toilet over the road from the café which is open by a radar key.

9. Any Other Business

a) Christine Pearce reported some skips in Chapelhay which had been protected with a fence around them but now they were simply on the roadside and were football targets for local kids and now somewhat dangerous. DH to follow up with Dawn Atkin..

b) Weymouth Park and ride new arrangements with number 2 bus service; People with disabilities were finding this new service harder to use due to the distance from parking spaces to the bus stop.

c) There had been some mention of a hospital minibus service. David Dowle would try and find out more about who runs the service.

d) A new Bus service is run by South-West Coaches from Southill to the town two times a day - there is an early morning service and a return service in the evening.

e) The meeting was told that Weymouth Volunteer Bureau did provide a low cost hospital transport service.

Meeting Closed at 15.40

Future meetings (At Fire & Safety Centre
Monday 10th October 2016
Monday 12th December 2016
Monday 13th February 2017

