

# WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND ACCESS GROUP MINUTES FOR MEETING 110

Held at 2pm on Monday 13 August 2012 at  
Acorns Centre, Grosvenor Road, Weymouth

## 1. Introduction of those present

Mile Kelly (President), John Lambert (Chairman), Steve Rook (Treasurer), Pete Bennett, Sue Bickle. Gill Penwell, Ian White, Margaret Somerville, Cllr. Kate Weller

## 2. Apologies

David Harris, Carolyn Harris, Ray Bartlett, Terri Bartlett, Cllr. David Harris

## 3. Paralympics

Ian White was congratulated on being appointed a Flame Ambassador for the Paralympics

## 4. Minutes of Previous Meeting

These were accepted as a true record.

**Updates:** Pharmacies – nothing further

**Toilets** – these are for the severely disabled who need assistance and the signage should make that clear. The ramp still needed attention. (K Weller and S Bickle to follow up)

**Café** – the letter from DH to Cllr Goodman and his reply via phone were read out. WPBC are responsible for the sitting out areas and concerns need to be fed into the Council review (per KW). DCC are developing a policy on A boards and SB will ensure that we get sight of the policy so we can comment on it.

**Improving Access routes** – Chafeys roundabout: DCC are aware looking into the situation (alterations were made for the Olympics to make it one lane)

**ASDA lift Mirror** – IW will check it out

## 5. President's Report

### Olympics

With our family down to stay I have thoroughly enjoyed the Olympic Games and the Cultural Olympiad, and for the most part, its impacts locally. I have felt proud that people from all over the world have been visiting, or at least have seen on television, Weymouth and Portland, and that those visiting seem to have had such a good welcome and enjoyed the experience.

That welcome and spirit of inclusiveness appeared, from what I could make out, to embrace people with disabilities or elderly people, and people with children.

I think the events demonstrated that whilst the area has access constraints Weymouth Town Centre and the Osprey Quay area of Portland have a standard of accessibility that few areas in the south west can match. Even the difficult subject of making the beach as accessible as possible appeared to have been addressed well.

I thought the disabled performers from Breathe were inspirational at the opening ceremony on Weymouth Beach.

However I would like to hear others' experiences as we will all have witnessed different things. If there is feedback that the Group wish to pass to the Borough and County Councils I trust that this would be welcomed.

We now look forward to the Paralympic Games. Britain in 1948 created these games and it is a matter of pride that they have expanded to their current scale and status.

I believe that the Olympics (at least here in Dorset) have created a legacy in providing thousands of people, particularly young people, with the chance to try out sports new to them, particularly sailing, windsurfing and kayaking. I trust that the Paralympics will also inspire. It is important that any legacy is available to the many people with disabilities who would like to participate in sport.

The National Sailing Academy with its outstanding level of accessibility, and to a lesser degree Osprey Leisure Centre and other local facilities, can provide many disabled people with easier access to sports.

Congratulations again to Ian White. Ian will be the Flame Ambassador to bring the Olympic Torch to the opening of the Paralympic Games in Weymouth and Portland. What an ambassador for the area!

### **Other topics**

This report has been different because the summer of 2012 has been so unusual for Weymouth and Portland. I shall return to the familiar subjects of access to public buildings and services, shops, pubs and restaurants, surgeries and pharmacies, public conveniences, public transport, road safety, A Boards etc. at future meetings.

In the meantime there are 2 subjects I would like to refer to;

I have been approached to comment on a planning application to extend Vaughan's Restaurant at Custom House Quay. The works include proposals to create an accessible toilet. However on studying the plans I am of the opinion that these well-intentioned works do not meet the design requirements. This is a recurring problem and I would encourage the Council's planning officers to check with their Building Control colleagues in all cases where proposals to create such facilities in existing buildings are supposed to meet the requirements. There is the problem of what may constitute "reasonable measures" but it seems to me that all too often proposals for alterations are supported by the claim that they will improve access though the reality is that they have not been designed with enough objectivity.

Comments have again been made about the poor design and condition of some of the paved areas of Weymouth Town Centre's shopping streets. Of particular concern is the busy cross roads of St. Thomas Street and St. Alban Street. Also the paving in St. Mary Street near its junction with St. Edmund Street, and the paving in front of Wetherspoons, has been badly damaged by vehicles. When repairs take place it is requested that careful attention should be given to how accessibility can be improved by creating more space for pedestrian movement,

reassessment of the need for and design of railings, reconsideration of the need for kerbs and the creation of colour contrasts where hazards exist for partially sighted people.

It is sad to hear of the death of Lord Morris of Manchester. He was appointed as the first Minister for Disabled People in the late 1960s and was responsible for setting down the early legislation which predated the Disability Discrimination Act and the Equalities Act. All the more poignant as parliament has also lost Jack Ashley who, as an MP, was such a strong campaigner for people with disabilities.

#### **6. Chairman's Report**

**Old Ship** – they have stated that they will rebuild the porch at the end of the season

#### **7. Treasurer's Report**

The Group had £2534.35 in the bank as at 31 July – the payments since the last meeting being £89 for the Chairman's expenses for almost a year and £14 for the hire of the meeting room.

It was suggested that SR contacts Fernhill Centre to see how much they would charge

Members of the group were assisting on the Weymouth Carnival stall on Wednesday 15 August

#### **8. Access Officer's Report**

Sue Bickle explained that she had been off sick and unfortunately her apologies for last meeting had not been sent. She said that previously she had been the Quality & Community Officer at West Dorset DC and she was happy for DH to change our website to reflect that she was now our contact. She stated that the inter-active web-site on access was now active and over 900 businesses had been contacted to show their own access particulars.

The web address is "inclusiveweymouth.com"

#### **9. Investigations Officer's Report**

**Buses** – There have been some occasions reported recently when a wheelchair user has been in their rightful place when someone with a pram has been allowed to place it in front of the user. IW will speak to First national.

**Leaflet** – this is still being developed and will make use of advice from SB about colours and fonts that are more beneficial to those who are partially sighted

#### **10. AOB**

Gill Penwell made reference to the "Safe travel card" for those who were unsteady on their feet which could be shown to the bus driver to ensure the driver waited until the passenger was seated. (IW and KW would see Mark Williams from Southern National)

GP also provided copies of the Weymouth Areas Seniors Forum Newsletter and "caring Matters" for spring/summer.

June Ryan stated that SW Coaches did not have bells at the back of their buses so it was difficult to get the driver to stop and this had resulted in a passenger falling in the bus. (KW will make enquiries)

Ian White provided a leaflet on the Paralympic Sailing Events in Weymouth & Portland 27 August to 9 September.