

Weymouth & Portland Access Group

"Making Weymouth & Portland Accessible to All"

Parks and Open Spaces in Weymouth and Portland

May 2017

Since 1989, Weymouth & Portland Access Group has worked to encourage improvements in accessibility to goods, services, and to the environment generally, for people with disabilities, for elderly people, and for those caring for young children. We also campaign to safeguard existing services. We find that our efforts also help the public in general whether they are local residents or visitors.

Often people with disabilities are denied access to, and enjoyment of, facilities by poor design or insufficient thought rather than their disability itself precluding them from enjoying an activity. Sometimes it is the environment itself which is disabling!

I know that Parks, Gardens and Open Spaces are highly valued by the vast majority of people. In an urban area they are probably as well loved as our outstanding countryside and coastlines. They are valued by people of all ages, and by residents and visitors alike.

They help us with providing recreation, fitness, mental wellbeing, provide a vital escape from traffic pollution, speed and noise, an appreciation of nature, and can provide comfort for the lonely and isolated.

Weymouth and Portland may lack any large park but the range of parks, gardens, beaches, nature reserves, and off road paths and cycleways, provides a rich and diverse treasure which we must protect for future generations.

Severe Government funding cuts have prevented the Borough Company from continuing its level of input and the Friends' Groups are congratulated for their determination to ensure the continued maintenance and the upgrading of these assets to ensure their continued enjoyment by residents and visitors.

We encourage measures that will provide easier access to the countryside for people with disabilities but many people, and particularly many people with disabilities, have difficulty reaching or are unable to visit rural areas which means that easy access to good urban parks and open spaces is of particular value to them.

Opportunities may exist to provide playground equipment suited for children with disabilities or fitness equipment which may help adults with special needs. Parks and open spaces often provide sports facilities and there may be potential to ensure that such facilities are made accessible to as many people as possible.

Weymouth and Portland Access Group has already had good contact with the Friends of Radipole Park and Gardens and looks forward to further association with them and with the other Friends Groups across Weymouth and Portland.

Michael Kelly, President, Weymouth and Portland Access Group
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