

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK

WEST NORFOLK DISABILITY FORUM

**Notes of a Meeting of the West Norfolk Disability Forum held on
Tuesday 10 January 2012 at 2.30 pm in the Committee Suite,
King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn.**

PRESENT:

Representing the Borough Council:

Councillors David Harwood, Lori Allen, Tony Bubb, Michael Langwade,
Garry Sandell, Stephanie Smeaton, Michael Chenery of Horsbrugh
(Substitute for Councillor David Johnson)
Allison Bingham

Representing Disabled People:

Pat French, Genene Henshaw, Sylvia Pomeroy, Kathy Warner,
Carmel Berkey

Apologies for absence were received from:

Wendy Blades, Gill Darling, Christine Bond, Councillor David Johnson

		ACTION
	<p>The Chairman opened the meeting by wishing everyone present a Happy New Year.</p> <p>The Chairman also wished to thank the Panel for their kind note of best wishes following his recent operation. The Chairman stated that he was on the road to recovery and had returned to undertaking his full Councillor duties.</p>	
1.	<p><u>MINUTES</u></p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2011 were agreed as a correct record.</p>	
2.	<p><u>MATTERS ARISING AND NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Disabled Toilet – Gaywood Library:</u> At the last meeting, as part of her presentation, Linda Tree clarified that Gaywood Library did have a disabled toilet however Kathy Warner reported that she had recently been to Gaywood Library and asked to use the accessible toilet facilities. A member of the Library staff informed her that there was no accessible toilet 	

	<p>available. The Chair suggested that it could have been a new member of staff or that there could have been a problem with the accessible toilet on that particular day.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Decriminalisation of Car Parking</u>: Councillor M Chenery of Horsbrugh enquired how the Borough Council staff enforcing decriminalised parking could be identified. It was noted that the members of staff could be identified by their name badge however they did not wear an easily recognisable uniform or hat. <p>Sylvia Pomeroy asked if the revenue generated would pay the staff salaries that provide this service. The Chair asked the Secretary to request information on the payment of the salaries of these members of staff. He also asked the Secretary to obtain information about leniency rules for blue badge holders with regards to parking enforcement.</p>	<p>JM</p> <p>JM</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p><u>BUDGET AND FUTURE EVENTS</u></p> <p><u>(i) Opportunity Awards</u></p> <p>The 2012 Opportunity Awards would take place on Tuesday 24 April 2012 at 6.00 pm. The Corn Exchange had been booked for the awards. Deadline for award nominations was 31 March 2012.</p> <p>Allison Bingham asked if any members of the forum were interested in sitting on the working group to take arrangements for the event forward, they were to contact her. Volunteers were noted and the Working Group currently consisted of Allison Bingham, Pat French, Sylvia Pomeroy, Carmel Berkey, Councillors Harwood and Smeaton. Meetings of the working group would commence shortly. Consideration needed to be given soon on how and where to publicise this event.</p> <p>Allison Bingham reported that she had already briefed Graphics for a quick turnaround on publicity materials. The Chair emphasised the importance of early circulation of publicity material for this event.</p> <p>Allison Bingham asked if the Secretary could extend an invitation to the Mayor, Councillor Colin Sampson to attend the Opportunity Awards event.</p>	<p>All</p> <p>JM</p>

Following the recent attendance of Teresa Tucker from Norfolk PACT at the last meeting and the discussions surrounding mobility scooter safety, Allison Bingham had booked Norfolk PACT to provide Safe Scooter Training from 10.30 am – 3.30 pm on Tuesday 24 April, to precede the Opportunity Awards. Teresa Tucker would be responsible for all publicity for the Safe Scooter Training. A similar event was held in Wymondham before Christmas which was very successful. Allison Bingham would arrange for advertisements in West Norfolk Access Guide and on the Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk website.

AB

(i) Celebrate-Ability

The 2012 Celebrate-Ability event would take place on Monday 3 September 2012 in the Corn Exchange from 2 pm to 5 pm. Access to the Corn Exchange would be available from 12 noon to enable set-up.

Arrangements had been made for an area of Common Staithe car park to be cordoned off for utilisation as a demonstration area during the event.

The first meeting of the working group would be held in mid-April 2012.

Allison Bingham stated that she would book a Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk website advertisement for this event. The working group would need to consider where to further advertise this event; last year there were advertisements in Lynn News and on KLFM radio.

AB

Allison Bingham reported that approximately 28 organisations covering a diverse range of services were involved in last year's event, some of which were outside of West Norfolk boundaries, which was encouraging.

Allison Bingham asked if any members of the forum were interested in sitting on the working group to take arrangements for the event forward, they were to contact her. Volunteers were noted from the table and the Working Group currently consisted of Allison Bingham, Pat French and Councillor Smeaton.

All

	<p><u>(iii) Promoting the work of the Group</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allison Bingham confirmed that the Forum would be involved in Lynnsport's 'Live Life Better' events in March and June, just before the Olympics. The Forum's logo could appear on posters, advertisements and press releases. It was noted that the Disabled Rugby and Disabled Basketball teams would be using Lynnsport as their pre-Olympic training camp. <p>If members of the forum were aware of any other ways to promote the work of the West Norfolk Disability Forum, they were to contact Allison Bingham.</p> <p>The group was informed that the following ways to promote the work of the West Norfolk Disability Forum were being investigated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submitting articles for inclusion in Parish Magazines. Allison Bingham asked if any members of the forum were involved in any way with their Parish Magazines they were to contact her – so that each article could be tailored by a local member of the group. It was noted that parish magazines had varying deadlines for submissions. Promoting the work of the group on the front page of the online access guide. Allison Bingham asked for the group's suggestions on how to widen awareness of the Forum. Several suggestions were forthcoming: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doctors surgeries Village newsletters Learning Disability Group Queen Elizabeth Hospital - occupational therapists, physiotherapists, wheelchair clinic. Forward Futures Norfolk Voluntary Transport Service <p>Allison Bingham agreed to keep the Forum updated on progress.</p>	<p>All</p> <p>All</p> <p>AB</p>
4.	<p><u>UPDATE ON RNIB REACT SYSTEM</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allison Bingham stated that there was no further update available on the number of users. Allison Bingham had spoken with the Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk Communications Team 	

	<p>regarding inclusion of an article regarding the Forum, including promotion of the REACT system, in the West Norfolk Access Guide and Visit West Norfolk.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key fobs would be passed to the Lynn Museum next week, w/c 16 January 2012. • Allison Bingham would be contacting the Kult Theatre Group regarding new recordings which she hoped to be uploaded after Easter. • The box which was previously positioned at Hillington Square, was in the process of being relocated to College Street/South Quay area after the recordings have been done. 	AB
5.	<p><u>ONLINE ACCESS GUIDE</u></p> <p>Allison Bingham explained that work was being carried out to update the King's Lynn area on the online access guide.</p> <p>Allison Bingham asked members of the forum to send through any articles, or events that they would like promoted on the front page of the online access guide.</p> <p>Allison Bingham reported that, with the assistance of 8 colleagues within Corporate Scanning, the King's Lynn information on the website has been updated. The support had been invaluable, and would not incur any internal recharging costs. Allison Bingham asked members of the Forum to make her aware of any further changes to be made, on an ad hoc basis.</p> <p>In response to a question from the Chairman, Allison Bingham responded that the website usually received 600 - 700 hits/month. In the summer months, this figure typically peaks at over 1,000 hits; this figure typically troughs in the winter months.</p> <p>Carmel Berkey suggested that www.kingslynnonline.com was another very useful website.</p> <p>Councillor Bubb suggested having a laminated card produced which could be distributed to venues to put in their tourist information box for example in hotels. The Chairman stated that this was a good way of promoting tourism in the area. The Forum asked Allison Bingham to investigate this suggestion and possible sponsorship for these cards from local businesses.</p>	<p>All</p> <p>All</p> <p>AB</p>

6.	<p><u>SECRETARY'S CORRESPONDENCE</u></p> <p><u>Baker Lane Car Park – Accessible Toilet</u></p> <p>At the last meeting, Sylvia Pomeroy expressed concern about the state of some of the accessible public toilets in the Borough. She felt that the accessible toilet at Baker Lane Car Park was not properly cleaned and currently the accessible toilet did not have a sink.</p> <p>The Secretary had passed these concerns to the Executive Director, Leisure and Public Space and had received the following response:</p> <p>There was a problem with the tap which wouldn't turn off and it had to be replaced, but the plumber couldn't get one to fit the existing sink. The sink was replaced. So that the toilets were not shut down, the cleaners were letting disabled users use the baby changing area to wash their hands. The charge hand would be checking the toilets more frequently on a daily basis.</p>	
7.	<p><u>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</u></p> <p><u>(i) Blue Badge Scheme</u></p> <p>The Chair suggested, and the Forum agreed, that Norfolk County Council be invited to attend a future meeting to talk to the Forum about the new Blue Badge Scheme.</p> <p>Discussions then followed and it was noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would cost £10 for a Blue Badge which would be valid for 3 years. • Norfolk County Council had two full-time dedicated Occupational Therapists to deal with local assessments regarding Blue Badge applications which would hopefully speed up the processing of applications. • Advice was to make early application to allow ample time for processing of renewal of Blue Badges. • Application for new, and renewal, of Blue Badges could be made online although members of the Forum were unsure of how the verification process would be undertaken. • There was an appeals process for any new/renewal application that were refused. • Concern was expressed regarding the checking process of 	JM

Blue Badge renewals to ensure that the recipient was indeed still in need of a Blue Badge. In some instances, the debilitating conditions of the individual improve so much that they may no longer fulfil the criteria of a Blue Badge.

- The Forum expressed concern that the size of vehicles was ever increasing however the size of a car parking space remained the same, thus resulting in a reduced amount of space to open vehicle doors and restricted access. Councillor Bubb asked if it was possible to revise the sizing of the car park spaces in the Borough car parks. Allison Bingham responded in that there was only published guidance, no published legislation. Allison Bingham also stated that from April 2012, there would be a requirement to provide a lesser number of wider spaces than currently. Councillor Bubb stated that the Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk could set the standard on car park spacing and this could attract people into the town, knowing that they could get parked easily. This could also be advertised within the disabled communities to promote and encourage tourism to the area. Allison Bingham stated that Chris Bamfield was working with Norfolk County Council on a survey regarding parking and the Chairman asked the Secretary to forward on the Forum's discussions and comments for consideration.
- Carmel Berkey enquired if it was possible to request loading/unloading spaces – to be used by disabled/less abled people and/or their drivers.
- Carmel Berkey enquired if there was a telephone hotline to report parking problems to, in particular regarding disabled parking spaces. The Chairman responded that this was a good idea and perhaps could be raised at the meeting when Norfolk County Council representatives were present.

JM

The Secretary agreed to pass on the above concerns regarding car parking to the Leisure and public space department.

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(ii) Road Closure

Members to be aware that Hardwick Road would be closed on Sunday 15 January 2012 from 8.30 am to approximately 9 am so that the Campbell's Tower, on the Tesco's site, could be demolished.

(iii) Adapted Housing

Councillor Lori Allen, in her capacity as an Occupational Therapist based at Downham Market, stated that she experienced frustration regarding the installation, removal and reinstallation of adaptations within Freebridge Community Housing properties. Councillor Allen enquired if Freebridge had two separate waiting lists: one for adapted properties and another for unadapted properties. The Chairman confirmed that waiting lists and appropriate housing were managed as best as possible in this regard.

The Chairman asked the Secretary to arrange for a representative from Freebridge Community Housing and a representative from the Borough Council's Disabled Facilities Grants team to attend a future meeting of the Forum to provide information on the adaptations and grants process.

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(iv) Allocated Housing

Councillor Stephanie Smeaton raised concerns regarding the size of housing allocated and the number of inhabitants ie not appropriate to house an elderly person in a three bedroom house. An elderly individual could be offered alternative accommodation suitable to their needs eg bungalow/flat, split/shared housing. This would also have an impact on the associated amount of housing and council tax benefit involved.

(v) Park & Ride

Carmel Berkey enquired regarding a Park & Ride for King's Lynn. Allison Bingham stated that approximately 3 separate Park & Ride trials had been conducted over recent years but had proven unsuccessful.

(vi) Bus stop at South Lane, South Wootton

Pat French enquired if a response had been received from Norfolk County Council regarding the bus stop at South Lane, South Wootton. A response was received and reported back at the meeting held on 20 September 2011. The Chairman reported that Norfolk County Council was currently undertaking a survey on bus stops.

(vii) Recent Death of Janice Simons

Sylvia Pomeroy wished to report the recent passing of Janice Simons, aged 55, a former stalwart campaigning member of the Forum.

(viii) Temporary Closure of West Lynn Boardwalk

Allison Bingham reported that West Lynn Boardwalk would be closed for 5 weeks as work to replace the timber boarding would commence on 6 February. This work was delayed due to a delay in shipping of the materials.

(ix) Extended funding for West Norfolk Disability Information Service (WNDIS)

Sylvia Pomeroy confirmed that funding has been extended for WNDIS until September 2012.

(x) Food Waste in the Street

Genevieve Henshaw raised her concerns about the amount of food waste in the streets of King's Lynn. This was a particular problem for the owners of guide dogs. The Chairman reminded the Forum that he had written to the Lynn News to highlight this problem last year. It was noted that the Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk street cleansing team conducted street cleansing early on in the day however the waste food increased throughout the day. The Chairman stated that it would be difficult to street cleanse during the day because of the conflict of the machinery operating in areas where there was increasing numbers of people eg the pedestrianised area of King's Lynn.

The Chairman requested that the Secretary pass on the Forum's concerns to Chris Bamfield and ask him to remind the Street vendors of their health and safety duties regarding disposal of their rubbish and in areas immediately surrounding their businesses however it may be difficult to sanction repeat offenders.

Genevieve Henshaw reported that she is a qualified speaker for RNIB and had recently given some talks to schoolchildren to highlight this difficulty and to raise awareness of the value of the work undertaken by guide dogs.

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	<p><u>(xi) Rebecca Parker – Maternity Leave</u></p> <p>The Chairman and Forum wished to record their best wishes to Rebecca Parker on her forthcoming maternity leave and welcomed Jo May to her temporary Democratic Services Officer role as Becky's maternity cover.</p>	
8.	<p><u>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</u></p> <p>The next meeting of the West Norfolk Disability Forum was scheduled to take place on Wednesday 7 March 2012 at 2.30 pm in the Committee Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn.</p>	

The meeting closed at 4.09 pm.