

ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
AGENDA

Thursday 8th January 2009
at 2.30pm in the Committee Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street,
King's Lynn, Norfolk

PLEASE NOTE START TIME

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. MINUTES

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 11th November 2009 (attached at Appendix 1).

3. CO-OPTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

There is currently one vacancy on the Committee for a Member who is disabled or a representative of a voluntary organisation concerned with people with disabilities.

Any co-opted members would remain on the Committee until the next Annual General Meeting in 2009 when the positions will be up for re-election.

4. MATTERS ARISING AND NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

5. FREEBRIDGE COMMUNITY HOUSING UPDATE

To receive a verbal update from Sylvia Pomeroy on current issues.

6. NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT BOARD

To receive a verbal update from the appointed representative, Sylvia Pomeroy of correspondence received and actions taken.

7. ONLINE ACCESS GUIDE

To receive an update on the creation of the online access guide.

8. ANNUAL DISABILITIES FORUM – CELEBRATE-ABILITY

To receive feedback from the Annual Disabilities Forum.

9. (a) SECRETARY'S CORRESPONDENCE

(b) DISABILITY ISSUES CORRESPONDENCE

(c) FUTURE PLANS AND ACTIVITIES

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note that the next meeting of the Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities will take place on Monday 16th March 2009 at 2.30pm (please note start time) in the Committee Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn.

APPENDIX 1

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK

ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Minutes of a Meeting of the Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities held on Tuesday 11th November 2008 at 2.30pm in the Committee Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn

PRESENT:

Representing the Borough Council:

Councillors D Harwood (Chair), A Clery-Fox, G Daniell, J Legg (Substitute for G Sandell), J Murphy, S Smeaton

Representing People with Disabilities: W Blades, P French, T Gilder, K Warner, S Smith, T Smith

Professional Advisors: A Bingham, H Howell, J Toye

By Invitation: D Bullock (NCC), Paul Cator (NCC), M Chisholm (Borough Council)

Apologies for absence were received from: R Cotton, J Frary, L Naylor, M Paflin and Councillor G Sandell.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

RESOLVED: That Councillor David Harwood be appointed as Chair of the Committee for the next two years.

2. MINUTES

The minutes from the meetings held on 11th June 2008 and 9th September 2008 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to the following amendment:

9th September 2008 – Item 3(i) Borough Post Office Closures

That the minutes be amended to read: Negotiations between the Council and Castle **Rising** and Downham Market,

London Road Offices were still underway to determine possible solutions.

3. MATTERS ARISING AND NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

(i) Post Office Closures

The Chair informed the Committee that Methwold Post Office, should re-open at another venue on 22nd November 2008 following efforts of local Community Groups in conjunction with the Borough Council. He indicated that the Council had been working in other villages to help retain the last shop in the village by installing a Council Information Point within the shop where the Post office counters had been lost.

(ii) Bus Passes

At the previous meeting Mr Smith had indicated that he had encountered difficulties using his companion pass as he had not been issued the correct pass.

He informed the Committee that this issue had now been resolved, and although he had not yet had the chance to use the pass, he had been assured that it was correct.

(iii) Disabled Toilet Facilities in Heacham

At the last meeting the Committee was informed by Mr and Mrs Smith that they had used the Public Toilets on Station Road (near the bowling green) in Heacham. They were both disappointed with the lack of disabled facilities at the toilets and their concerns were passed to the relevant Officers by the Secretary.

The Secretary had spoken with The Head of Leisure and Public Space who had informed that in order to provide accessible facilities, major restructuring work would have to be carried out.

Allison Bingham informed the Committee that she had recently discussed this issue with the owners of the Bowling

Green who owned the land adjacent regarding a possible extension of the facilities and agreed to keep the Committee updated on progress.

4. CO-OPTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Committee was informed that there were two vacancies on the Committee for members who were disabled or representatives of voluntary organisations concerned with people with disabilities.

Any co-opted members would remain on the Committee until the next Annual General Meeting in 2009 when the positions would be up for re-election.

Wendy Blades informed the Committee that she was interested in becoming a member of the Committee.

RESOLVED: That Wendy Blades be co-opted onto the Committee.

The Chair requested that if any Committee members were aware of people who fitted the criteria above and were interested in becoming a member of the Committee to let him know.

5. CAR PARKING ISSUES

(i) Baker Lane – Car Parking Consultation

Martin Chisholm, Business Development Manager at the Borough Council informed the Committee that as part of the Council's rolling programme of maintenance it was necessary to carry out resurfacing work to Baker Lane Car Park.

He explained that rather than just resurface the Car Park, work would be carried out to improve the car park by landscaping and adding greenery and he circulated a plan of proposed improvements, which the Committee were asked to comment on.

He advised the Committee that 4 disabled bays would be provided on the car park but there was space for an additional disabled bay to be added next to the ticket machine to bring the total to 5. The Committee requested that the extra disabled bay be installed.

Councillor Mrs A Clery-Fox explained that problems with cars parking on the road surrounding the car park, sometimes made access to the car park difficult. Martin Chisholm informed the Committee that he was aware of this ongoing problem but the Council did not have the authority to police this.

In response to a query regarding the positions of the disabled bays, Martin Chisholm explained that the disabled bays had been positioned centrally so that they equally served the public toilets, shopping centre and residential area.

The Committee asked Martin Chisholm to ensure that dropped kerbs were installed where necessary so that disabled users of the car park could access the surrounding amenities.

The Chair thanked Martin Chisholm for consulting the Committee on this issue and asked that the above comments be taken into account.

RESOLVED: That the Committee endorse the design of Baker Lane Car Park, and request that an additional disabled bay be installed next to the ticket machine.

(ii) Parking Issues at King's Lynn Library

Councillor Mrs A Clery-Fox informed the Committee that she had received a letter from a blue badge holder who had found it difficult to find disabled parking spaces in close proximity to King's Lynn Library.

Martin Chisholm informed the Committee that the closest Council owned car park to the Library was the St James Multi Storey Car Park.

Dave Bullock, Norfolk County Council Highways, was present at the meeting and informed the Committee that there was on-street parking bays at St James Street which were restricted to 30 minute stays. Presently there was not a dedicated disabled bay on this street and he explained that to change the traffic regulation orders to include this would take eighteen months. He agreed to pass on the Committee's concerns to the relevant Officer at Norfolk County Council, but suggested the Committee also write to the Library highlighting the current issues.

Wendy Blades, sympathised with the issues raised by the blue badge holder, and suggested that as an alternative they could try Gaywood Library, which she felt had adequate close proximity disabled parking bays.

Councillor Mrs Smeaton informed the Committee that she was aware of a piece of Council owned land near the Tower Gardens and asked if this could be considered to provide disabled parking facilities. The Secretary agreed to investigate this.

RESOLVED: (i) That the Secretary write to the King's Lynn Library and Norfolk County Council to highlight the above issues.

(ii) That the Secretary investigate ownership of land near the Tower Gardens.

6. DISABLED CROSSING FACILITIES IN KING'S LYNN, HUNSTANTON AND DOWNHAM MARKET

Dave Bullock and Paul Cator from Norfolk County Council Highways Department attended for this item.

It was explained that Norfolk County Council had been awarded funding to improve and install non-mechanical disabled crossing points in the following areas:

King's Lynn - £10,000

Downham Market - £5,000

Hunstanton - £5,000

The Committee was informed that each crossing point could cost in the region of £800-£900, but the cost would be reduced if the works could fit in with other scheduled works to be carried out.

The Committee suggested that facilities be installed in the following areas:

- Fairstead – to improve access to Centre Point from surrounding areas.
- King's Lynn - Tennyson Road crossing to the Walks.
- Hunstanton – that consideration be given to the future regeneration programme in Hunstanton
- Downham Market – Priory Road to Railway Road next to the Sheltered Housing complex.
- King's Lynn – Improvements to crossing facilities near the swimming pool.
- Downham Market – Ryston Close to London Road
- Hunstanton – Across the A149

Dave Bullock informed the Committee that other organisations and the relevant Town Councils would be consulted on this.

The Chair thanked the officers for their attendance and hoped that they would take the suggestions from the Committee into consideration.

7. FREEBRIDGE COMMUNITY HOUSING UPDATE

Sylvia Pomeroy was absent from the meeting so this item was deferred until the next meeting.

The Chair informed the Committee that he had recently attended the Freebridge Community Housing Annual General Meeting and he reported that everything seemed to be in order.

8. NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT BOARD UPDATE

As above, this item was deferred until the next meeting.

The Chair informed the Committee that he was aware that Sylvia Pomeroy had recently been unwell and agreed to contact her.

9. ANNUAL DISABILITIES FORUM – CELEBRATE-ABILITY

The Secretary informed the Committee that arrangements for the event were progressing well. She listed the organisations that had confirmed their attendance and would have a stand at the event:

- West Norfolk Mobility
- West Norfolk Mental Health Advocacy Service
- LIST
- WINDIS
- Pals
- Care and Repair
- Out and About
- West Norfolk Disabled Bikers Association
- Job Centre Plus
- West Norfolk Deaf Association
- West Norfolk Alzheimer's Association
- Disabled Horse Riding Association
- Phobbies
- Mobility 2000
- Community Information Points project
- Lennard Cheshire
- Norfolk Autistic Association
- Lynnsport
- Norfolk County Council Social Services

She reminded the Committee that the event would take place on Wednesday 19th November 2008 from 2pm to 5pm in the Corn Exchange, King's Lynn. The event would be opened by the Mayor and refreshments would be available.

An advert for the event had been published in the Lynn News and the Eastern Daily Press and a significant amount of leaflets and posters had been distributed.

Mr Smith raised concerns over the fact he had not received any information, other than the minutes from the last meeting

on this event. The Secretary agreed that next year she would send round information on the event, separate to the minutes.

10. **ONLINE ACCESS GUIDE**

Allison Bingham informed the Committee that work on the creation of the online access guide was progressing. She sought the Committee's views on a domain name for the website and suggested the following:

- www.west-norfolk-accessibility.com
- www.west-norfolk-access-guide.com
- www.westnorfolk-goodaccess-guide.com
- www.accessibilityguide-westnorfolk.com
- www.westnorfolkaccess-info.com

The Committee's favoured option for a domain name was:

www.westnorfolkaccessguide.com

Allison Bingham notified the Committee that she would progress this option in liaison with ICT.

She updated the Committee on progress with the creation of the guide:

- Data for Hunstanton was complete and now being tidied up
- Downham Market data was 75% complete
- King's Lynn data was 30% complete

Photos of venues were still to be uploaded and it was hoped that the test site would be available in January for testing by the Council Information Centre and Tourist Information Centre and the live site would be launched in the summer.

Further information and screen shots would be made available at the Celebrate-ability event on 19th November.

11. **SECRETARY'S/CHAIR'S CORRESPONDENCE**

(i) Accessible customer booth at the Railway Station

At the previous meeting, concerns had been raised regarding the accessible customer booth at the Railway Station. The booth was often closed and redirected customers to the automatic ticket machine, which did not accept disabled rail cards.

The Secretary had written to the operator highlighting these issues and a response had been received explaining that the accessible counter at the Railway Station in King's Lynn was a test model. Following feedback from the consultation, modifications would be made to resolve issues with the booth. The letter also stated that the automatic ticket machine now accepted disabled rail cards.

Councillor Mrs J Murphy informed the Secretary that if issues continued she could contact Fenland Users Association.

(ii) RNIB Correspondence

The Secretary reminded the Committee that she had sent a letter to the relevant minister registering the Committee's support of the motion to increase disability levels for blind people. She had received a response which she agreed to circulate to Committee Members. She had also received a response from the Local MP who supported this motion.

(iii) Access to the Arts Centre

The Secretary had received an update letter from the Leader of the Council regarding access to the Arts Centre. The letter made reference to the Cabinet recommendations following consideration of the Heritage Buildings Review, which stated the following:

- 1) That with regard to the recommendations for the King's Lynn Arts Centre (including the Guildhall of St George), that more detailed work is carried out on developing a detailed business case, taking into account capital cost estimates, the potential to increase income, forecasts of operating costs, phasing,

negotiations with other organisations using the site, and the potential to attract outside funding.

2) That consideration is given to urgent maintenance and access issues at the Arts Centre which are complementary to the recommendations for the longer term use and development of the complex and that these are the subject of a separate report to Cabinet.

She agreed to keep the Committee updated on progress.

(iv) Correspondence regarding the Walks

The Chair informed the Committee that he had received a letter from Committee Members Mr and Mrs Smith regarding a lack of disabled facilities in the Walks.

The Chair explained that he had spoken to the Head of Leisure and Public Space and the Portfolio Holder for Sports, Arts and Open Spaces and agreed to formally pass on the concerns detailed in the letter.

12. FUTURE PLANS AND ACTIVITIES

The Secretary informed the Committee that she had recently held discussions with the Chair and the Clerk to the Committee regarding future activities of the Committee.

It was suggested that the Committee may like to visit attractions as a group to investigate how accessible they were and pass on any suggestions on how they could be improved.

The Committee felt that this was a good idea and suggested visits to the following attractions:

- Houghton Hall
- Oxbrugh Hall
- Butterfly Park
- Holkham Hall
- Sandringham House/Woods

Councillor Mrs J Murphy agreed that this would be a very good idea and suggested that this could be broadened into a wider Borough project. She suggested that disabled people could record difficulties they may have encountered and they could be exhibited or published on the internet.

Tess Gilder who worked at Park House Hotel, informed the Committee that the Hotel often took guests out on day trips to attractions in the area. She felt that the suggested Committee visits were a good idea and recommendations following visits could feed into other forums and groups when necessary.

The Chair asked that if the Committee had any other suggestions on places to visit, that they should contact him and advised the Committee that he would work with the Secretary to progress this further.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(i) Involvement with the Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities

Jonathan Toye explained to the Committee that he would no longer be attending these meeting as he had decided to form a West Norfolk Access Group. He advised that Officers and Councillors would be welcome to come along to these meetings.

He explained that he had decided to set up this group following frustrations that this Committee had been unable to take issues forward.

(ii) Park House Hotel – Award

Tess Gilder informed the Committee that Park House had recently been awarded the East of England Tourism Access Award and were now being considered for the national award.

The Committee congratulated Park House on this achievement.

(iii) St James Swimming Pool

Mr and Mrs Smith informed the Committee that the refurbished Swimming Pool had now been re-opened and reported that the venue was accessible and well designed.

There were two accessible showers in the changing rooms. The only problem to report was regarding drainage in the disabled facilities. As the cubicle was used for showering and changing, Mrs Smith explained that the floor was still wet when she was trying to get changed, meaning that some of her clothes got wet.

Allison Bingham agreed to pass on these concerns to the relevant Officers.

(iv) Opportunity Awards 2009

Allison Bingham reminded the Committee that next year would be the 20th Anniversary of the Opportunity awards. She asked Committee Members to start giving thought to award categories or nominations.

(v) Access on Buses

Mr Smith informed the Committee that he was aware that new double deckers had been introduced on the Norwich to Peterborough Bus route and he hoped that these buses were accessible.

Wendy Blades explained to the Committee that she had noticed that sometimes when wheelchairs or pushchairs were taken on buses, they were sometimes not stable, as there was no anchor point or seatbelt to attach the chairs to.

The Secretary agreed to write to the necessary operators highlighting these concerns.

(vi) Obstructions on the Highway

Wendy Blades informed the Committee that she was aware of an incident where a member of the public had tripped over

an obstruction on the Highway in the Vancouver Quarter of King's Lynn.

The Secretary agreed to write to the Town Centres Manager to highlight this issue and see if anything could be done to remove obstructions which may be dangerous for people with a disability or visual impairment from the Highway.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities would take place on Thursday 8th January 2009 at 2.30pm in the Committee, Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn.

The meeting closed at 4.20pm