

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 Thursday 9th January 2009 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, M Langwade, J Legg, J Murphy, G Sandell, S Smeaton

Representing People with Disabilities: J Frary, P French, S Pomeroy, K Warner, S Smith, T Smith

Professional Advisors: A Bingham

Others present: A Chu, P Lusher

Apologies for absence were received from: Councillor G Daniell and K Warner.

1. MINUTES

The minutes from the meeting held on 11th November 2008 were agreed as a correct record. The meeting was inquorate so would therefore be signed by the Chair at the next meeting.

2. IMPROVING NEIGHBOURHOODS BOARD

The Chair welcomed Andy Chu and Paul Lusher, who had recently been appointed as Neighbourhood Support Trainees by the West Norfolk Partnership, to the meeting. Paul Lusher explained that 5 Neighbourhood Support Trainees had been appointed to cover the following areas:

- South Lynn
- North Lynn
- Gaywood
- Fairstead
- Friars and Town Centres.

It was the role of these trainees to empower residents and make sure they had access to and were aware of supporting service agencies.

The 5 Trainees had initially been appointed on eighteen month contracts but it was hoped that if further funding was obtained the contracts could be lengthened.

The Trainees were also in the process of establishing Neighbourhood Partnerships in each of the five areas which would hopefully encourage local residents to become involved in local community groups.

The Chair thanked Andy Chu and Paul Lusher for coming along to the meeting and hoped that they would consult the Committee on any future plans or activities that might affect people with disabilities.

3. CO-OPTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Chair reminded the Committee that it currently had one vacancy for a Member who was disabled or a representative of a voluntary organisation concerned with people with disabilities.

The Committee were asked to inform the Chair or the Secretary of any potential Committee Members.

4. FREEBRIDGE COMMUNITY HOUSING UPDATE

Sylvia Pomeroy provided the group with an update on activities at Freebridge Community Housing. She informed the group that Freebridge Community Housing was currently undergoing an Audit and Inspection which would highlight any issues. Auditors had also been attending focus groups.

She reported that Housing Adaptations were continually increasing.

5. NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT BOARD

Sylvia Pomeroy informed the Committee that unfortunately she was unable to attend these meetings and had therefore resigned from the Board.

Sylvia Pomeroy was a representative of people with disabilities on this board and it was agreed that it would be beneficial for a representative from this Committee to replace her.

The Secretary agreed to contact the Neighbourhood Management Board with regards to nominating a replacement.

6. ONLINE ACCESS GUIDE

Allison Bingham informed the Committee that the online access guide was still on target to go live at the beginning of April 2009. All data for the guide had been received and was currently being inputted into the site.

She informed the Committee that at its next meeting in March 2009 she would hopefully be in a position to present mock up pages so that Committee members could view the draft guide.

Allison Bingham explained that the online guide would comprise of the following pages:

- Front page – where news issues and advertisements could feature
- Search page
- Help page
- Business information pages
- Useful links/contact information

Allison Bingham asked that if any members had suggestions on contacts/links which could be published on the site to contact her. Judith Frary requested that a link to Norfolk County Council Adult Social Services be published. Allison Bingham also confirmed that the site would be linked to the Borough Council's website.

The website address for the guide was confirmed as follows:

Westnorfolkaccessguide.com
Westnorfolkaccessguide.co.uk
Westnorfolkaccessguide.org

The timetable for creation of the guide was also confirmed as follows:

- Data inputted into the site and formatted within the next week.
- Testing on the site to take place mid-February.
- Site to be tested by the Council Information Centre so that any glitches could be identified during March
- Site to go live – 1st April 2009.

Allison Bingham hoped that eventually the site could incorporate rural areas. She was currently liaising with the Communications department of the Council to discuss the launch and promotion of the site.

In response to a question, Allison Bingham explained that members of the public who had accessed a service could comment on how accessible the service was. These comments would then be fed back to the service and where appropriate published on the website.

Councillor Mrs Janet Murphy agreed to pass on contact details for Disability Norfolk who could possibly assist with the testing of the site.

The Chair thanked Allison Bingham for the update and looked forward to seeing the draft site displayed at the next meeting.

7. ANNUAL DISABILITIES FORUM – CELEBRATE-ABILITY

The Chair asked the Committee for feedback from the recent Celebrate-ability event held at the Corn Exchange. He explained that due to other commitments and an illness he was regrettably unable to attend the event.

Generally the Committee commented that the event went well and those who attended enjoyed the event. The following feedback was received which would be taken into account when organising next year's event:

- Lack of attendance from the media. The Committee requested that Anglia News, Look North and local/regional newspapers be contacted in advance of next year's event.
- Wider publicity of the event.
- Provision of parking spaces for people attending the event, or use of Community Transport providing a park and ride.
- Consideration of use of other venues.

- Change of time of the event. The Committee agreed that holding the event between 10am and 2pm may increase turnout.
- Date of the event. It was suggested that the time of year may have prevented some people coming into town.
- Holding the event during half term/school holidays to encourage school children to attend/be involved with the event.
- Decoration of the venue, i.e banners.
- Microphone used for speakers.
- Linking the event in with the Opportunity Awards.

The Chair and Secretary agreed to take the above comments into consideration when organising next year's event.

8. **SECRETARY'S CORRESPONDENCE**

The Secretary had received a letter from Norfolk and Norwich Association for the blind who had indicated that they would be interested in attending a future meeting of the Committee to brief them on the work of the association.

The Secretary agreed to invite them to the meeting in March.

8. **FUTURE PLANS AND ACTIVITIES**

The Chair reminded the Committee that at its last meeting consideration had been given to visiting attractions as a group to investigate how accessible they were and then pass on suggestions on how they could be improved.

The following additional attractions were suggested by the Committee for possible visits:

- Sandringham House/Woods
- Welney Washes
- Titchwell
- Pensthorpe
- Princess Theatre, Hunstanton
- Sherringham Theatre
- Stow Bardolph Park Farm

The Chair and Secretary agreed to take this forward and keep the group updated on progress. The Chair suggested that a checklist could be completed by the group when visiting attractions.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(i) Planning Applications Working Group

Allison Bingham reminded the Committee that this working group met as necessary to comment on public access planning applications. She asked that if any members of the Committee were interested in sitting on this Committee to inform her.

Pat French and Councillor Stephanie Smeaton volunteered to join this group.

(ii) Signage Contract

Allison Bingham informed the Committee that she was currently progressing a signage contract for Council buildings. She explained that to ensure that the signage was appropriate for all users she would like feedback from Members of this group on the proposed signage.

Trevor Smith, Susan Smith and Councillor Stephanie Smeaton volunteered to assist Allison Bingham with signage issues.

(iii) Nando's Restaurant

Concerns were raised by members of the Committee regarding access to the above restaurant in the Town Centre. There was currently no wheelchair access at the main entrance of the building.

Allison Bingham informed the Committee that it was likely that the building was listed therefore permission would not have been granted to modify the building.

(iv) Obstructions on the Highways

Trevor Smith informed the Committee that he felt the number of obstructions on the street within the Town Centre was increasing.

The Chair explained that the Council was currently in the process of agreeing a street furniture policy which would mean that licences would have to be granted for street furniture on Council owned premises. He agreed to keep the Committee updated on progress.

(v) The Walks

The Committee were informed that bollards were to be constructed in the Walks to prevent vehicular access. Access would be maintained for Maintenance and Emergency vehicles.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities would take place on Monday 16th March 2009 at 2.30pm in the Committee Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn.

The meeting closed at 3.35pm