

**BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK**

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

**Notes of a Meeting of the Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities held on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2009 at 6.00pm at Park House Hotel, Sandringham.**

**PRESENT:**

**Representing the Borough Council:**

Councillors D Harwood (Chair), M Langwade, J Legg,  
Mrs J Murphy, G Sandell

**Representing People with Disabilities:**

W Blades, R Carroll, G Henshaw, S Lowe, S Smith, T Smith.

**By invitation:**

Chris Maule-Oatway, Ray Harding

**Apologies for absence were received from:** Councillor Mrs A Clery-Fox, G Daniell, S Smeaton.  
P French, T Gilder K Warner.

**1. MINUTES**

The minutes from the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2009 and the Special meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2009 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to the following amendments.

**16<sup>th</sup> March 2009**

Item 11 (ii) – Dropped kerbs at drop off point to rear of Boots, King's Lynn.

Ruth Carroll informed the Committee that there was a dropped kerb to the rear of Boots, but felt it was dangerous and she had been aware of occasions where people had fallen out of their wheelchairs when trying to navigate the dropped kerb.

The Secretary agreed to pass on the above comments to Norfolk County Council Highways Department.

7<sup>th</sup> April 2009

Councillor Sandell was listed on the minutes as present. This was to be amended to show that Councillor Sandell had given his apologies for the meeting.

Item 1 (v) – Sustainable Development.

Councillor J Murphy clarified that work on the British Standard Code of Good Practice for design in flood risk areas was soon to commence, not soon to be published as stated in the minutes.

## **2. NORFOLK AND NORWICH ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND**

The Committee received a presentation from Chris Maule-Oatway on the work of the association, in particular, reference to West Norfolk Services.

Chris Maule-Oatway was an Equipment and Information Adviser for the Association and was based in Norwich. He introduced his support worker, Ann Bunting, who was present at the meeting.

Chris Maule-Oatway informed the Committee that the Association was originally established in 1805 and had undergone many changes since originally set up.

Presently, the Association provided a residential home in Norwich and sheltered accommodation across the County. The association also ran various activities and groups for people with visual impairments.

He explained that the Association employed 11 care workers and approximately 340 volunteers. He estimated that there were approximately 20,000 people in Norfolk with visual impairments but only 7,000 people were currently registered blind or partially sighted, 620 of those people lived in the district of West Norfolk.

Chris Maule-Oatway explained that the Association had equipment centres in Norwich and King's Lynn, which had stocks of assistive equipment including writing frames and computers with speech and magnifying software.

The Committee were informed that in 2008, 794 people had visited the King's Lynn Centre, and so far for 2009, 243 people had visited.

The Association also had a mobile equipment centre, in the form of a trailer and landrover, which travelled all over Norfolk. The mobile centre was also used in schools.

Chris Maule-Oatway explained that various activities were held in the equipment centres, including:

- IT classes – leading to recognised qualifications
- Craft classes
- Braille classes
- Discussion groups

The equipment centres also had facilities in place to conduct low vision assessments, which assessed what equipment may be helpful to people who were losing their sight.

The Association provided two Community Workers specifically for the West Norfolk area who assisted with various activities, such as:

- Cycling
- Rambling
- Walking

There were approximately 40 volunteers of the Association that worked in the West Norfolk district. These volunteers assisted with the activities and classes run by the association and with the following:

- Befrienders
- Drivers
- Telephone friends
- Assisting at Social clubs

Three of the Association's volunteers had won Civic Awards for Voluntary Services.

Chris Maule-Oatway informed the Committee that the Association were currently raising funds to replace their minibus. The existing

minibus, which had been purchased following fundraising efforts by KLFM, was now in need of replacement.

Trevor and Susan Smith informed the Committee that they were members of the fundraising committee for the minibus, and were planning future fundraising events.

Sue Lowe informed the Committee that Age Concern was currently running a programme of health walks and arrangements for transport to make use of the free swimming facilities. Sue Lowe agreed to liaise with Chris Maule-Oatway to ascertain if this was something that both associations could work on together.

In response to a question, Chris Maule-Oatway confirmed that the Association produced a quarterly newsletter.

The Chair informed the Committee that he was a representative on the Supporting Champions Board, which worked to help vulnerable people with Housing issues. He asked Chris Maule-Oatway to identify the main issue in helping people with visual impairments live independently.

Chris Maule-Oatway felt that a decent caring service was the main issue and the provision of assistive technology.

Councillor Langwade asked how long it took to learn how to read braille. Chris Maule-Oatway explained that it depended on the sense of touch and how dextrous the person was.

The Chair thanked Chris Maule-Oatway for his informative presentation.

### **3. ROYAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND – REACT SYSTEM**

The Committee was reminded that at its last meeting information regarding the possible future use of the system had been provided.

The system would hopefully be introduced throughout King's Lynn to expand over the heritage trail, the shopping centre and provide information in real time for events at the Corn Exchange or when the next bus was due. An inception meeting was in the process of being arranged between representatives of the

Borough Council, the National Institution for the Blind, and the supplier to develop and take the project forward.

The Chief Executive informed the Committee that the Council's Management Team had authorised implementation of the system along the Pilgrimage Trail. Budget was available and would be funded from the DDA Stage 2 budget. The budget would cover the provision and installation of 8 boxes and 50 key fobs.

The Committee was informed that if this system was to be introduced, it would be the first system in use in East Anglia and the first system in the Country to be used on a pilgrimage trail. The Committee agreed that this would be quite an achievement and requested that the system be publicised and celebrated appropriately.

The Chair informed the Committee that he had been invited to visit the system provider's centre in Peterborough to see how it operated, as many of the staff employed at the centre had visual impairments.

The Chair informed the Committee that he would update the Committee on further progress at the next meeting.

#### **4. FUTURE OF THE COMMITTEE**

The Chief Executive of the Borough Council explained to the Committee that this group had historically reported to the Borough Council.

Since establishment of the Committee, many changes had been made to Local Government, including the formation of Local Strategic Partnerships.

He explained that the West Norfolk Partnership, which was the Borough Council's Local Strategic Partnership was formed to set and deliver the community strategy.

The Chief Executive explained that a wide variety of organisations were involved in the West Norfolk Partnership, including:

- Borough Council
- Norfolk County Council

- NHS
- Queen Elizabeth Hospital
- College of West Anglia
- RAF Marham
- Job Centre plus
- Police
- WNVCA

A copy of the structure of the West Norfolk Partnership is attached at Appendix 1.

The Chief Executive explained that it may be sensible, and beneficial for this Committee to report in future to the West Norfolk Partnership, rather than the Borough Council.

It was anticipated that the Advisory Committee would report to the Healthier Communities and Older Persons Thematic Partnership. The Committee were informed that the way this Committee was administered would not change, but the minutes from the Committee's meeting would be fed back to the Healthier Communities and Older Persons Thematic Partnership so that issues could be raised as necessary.

The Chair explained that he felt that this would be a beneficial move for the Committee as a wider range of organisations would be made aware of the work of the Committee and more joint working could be undertaken.

The Committee agreed in principal that they would have no objections to move within the West Norfolk Partnership structure, and report directly to the Healthier Communities and Older Persons Partnership.

The Chief Executive thanked the Committee for their support and agreed to feed back to the West Norfolk Partnership.

The Committee would be kept updated on progress.

Geneve Henshaw, informed the Committee that she was registered blind and often had problems with glass shop fronts, as the glare and glass meant it was often difficult to determine if a door was open or closed, or where in fact the door was. Geneve Henshaw hoped that if the Committee fed into the West Norfolk Partnership structure that this issue could be investigated.

The Chief Executive informed Genevieve Henshaw that she may like to contact Alistair Cox, the Town Centres Manager at the Borough Council, who could raise this issue directly with retailers.

## **5. FEEDBACK FROM VISIT TO SANDRINGHAM HOUSE AND GARDENS**

The Committee were reminded that previously they had agreed to plan visits to tourist attractions throughout the Borough to look at accessible facilities and raise issues of concern.

The first visit had taken place prior to this meeting, and was a tour of Sandringham House and Gardens.

The Committee members who had attended the visit had completed a checklist and made comments, which would be included in a report, to be produced by Allison Bingham, which would be used on the online access guide, and sent to Sandringham House and Gardens.

The Chair informed the Committee that generally the facilities at Sandringham House and Gardens were good, but the Committee had picked up on a few issues as below, which would be included in their report:

- No space for wheelchairs at seating in visitors centre.
- Land train had only one wheelchair space and one space for a folded up wheelchair.
- Some shingled areas hard to navigate.
- Internal lighting levels low in Sandringham House.
- Little colour contrast between barriers and floor.
- Some fire exits blocked or roped off.
- Wooden floors sometimes produced glare.
- Lack of seating in the House.
- No definition between floor and walls in the House.
- No colour contrasts in the WC in the house.
- No obvious alternative formats of brochure.

Susan Smith informed the Committee that she had picked up on another issue, regarding the lack of information to inform visitors that they were about to cross a main road. Allison Bingham had agreed to investigate this issue, to ascertain if it was required to be DDA compliant.

The Chair informed the Committee that the Secretary would now work to organise another visit to a tourist attraction in the Borough. He asked the Committee to be considerate of budget constraints and other events that the Committee had planned throughout the rest of the year, such as the Annual General Meeting and the Opportunity Awards.

The Secretary agreed to write, on behalf of the Committee, a letter of thanks for the complimentary tickets for the tour of the house and gardens.

**6. FREEBRIDGE COMMUNITY HOUSING UPDATE**

This item was deferred until the next meeting, as Sylvia Pomeroy was absent from the meeting.

**7. NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT BOARD**

The Committee were reminded that there was a vacancy on the above board for a representative from the Committee with a disability or representing an organisation concerned with people with disabilities.

The Secretary informed the Committee that, at the last Neighbourhood Management Board, Councillor Daniell explained that, as he was a member of both groups, he could undertake this role on the board in the interim.

Sue Lowe from Age Concern informed the Committee that she was a member of the Neighbourhood Management Board and could also feedback issues in the meantime.

**8. ONLINE ACCESS GUIDE**

The Secretary informed the Committee that the online access was ready for launch. Final adjustments, including the removal of retail premises that were no longer operating, and final testing, were now being carried out.

Susan Smith, who had originally tested the system, asked if she would be able to re-test the system, following her proposed amendments to the system.



The Secretary confirmed that she should contact Allison Bingham at the Borough Council, with a view to retesting the system, week commencing 25<sup>th</sup> May 2009.

The Online Access guide was to be publicly launched on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> July 2009 at 6.00pm, to link in with the Committee's Annual General Meeting.

The Secretary informed the Committee that details of the launch would be sent to members nearer the time.

## **9. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The Secretary confirmed that she had contacted Jonathan Langham, who led on Assistive Technology at Norfolk County Council. Jonathan Langham had confirmed that he would be happy to be the guest speaker at the Annual General Meeting.

The Secretary confirmed that the Annual General Meeting would take place on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> July 2009, at 7.00pm, in the Committee Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn, Norfolk. The meeting would be preceded by the launch of the Online Access guide.

## **10. OPPORTUNITY AWARDS**

The Secretary informed the Committee that she had met with the Chair of the Committee and the Civic's Team to start preparations for this year's awards ceremony.

The Sandringham Suite at Lynnsport had been provisionally booked on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2009 at 7.00pm for the ceremony.

The Secretary was in the process of preparing publicity material, which would be made available at the end of May. She asked the Committee for ideas for nomination categories for the awards. So far the following categories had been proposed:

- Young Carers
- Voluntary Organisations
- Service Providers
- Employers
- Disabled Achievement in Sport
- Volunteering and Helping Others

- Charity Work

The Committee were informed that individuals and organisations could be nominated, and each person could make as many nominations as they saw fit.

Members of the Committee were asked to contact the Secretary as soon as possible on 01553 616632 or by emailing [rebecca.malkin@west-norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:rebecca.malkin@west-norfolk.gov.uk), if they had any ideas for additional nomination categories.

Members of the Committee suggested the following additional categories:

- Helpful businesses
- Disabilities in the workplace

The Secretary agreed to keep the Committee informed on progress.

## **11. SECRETARY'S CORRESPONDENCE**

### **(i) Toilets at St James Swimming Pool**

The Committee were reminded that Susan Smith had previously raised concerns regarding the changing facilities at St James Pool. The accessible cubicle was used for showering and changing, hence the floor was still wet when trying to get changed after showering. This meant that when someone was getting changed after showering their clothes would get wet.

The Secretary had contacted St James Pool who had sent a response saying that this was a wet area, so some surface water would still be in the changing room, but they did provide hooks for clothing to be hung on. The toilet should not be wet unless it had been cleaned, as this was a different room to the changing/showering cubicle.

Susan Smith asked if St James Pool could install some sort of flooring that would keep the floor in the accessible toilet dry, so that clothes would not get wet when changing.

The Secretary agreed to investigate.

(ii) Hoist at St James Pool

The Committee were reminded that previously Susan Smith had raised an issue regarding the hoist at St James Pool. A new hoist had been installed, which was difficult to use as the seat on the hoist was not as stable as that used previously.

The Secretary confirmed that she had contacted St James Pool who had confirmed that a new hoist seat had been purchased and installed.

(iii) Accessible changing facilities at the Corn Exchange

The Committee were reminded that at the last meeting Susan Smith informed the Committee that she had recently been involved in a production at the Corn Exchange. She explained that she had used a dressing room on the first floor, but when trying to use the accessible toilets on the first floor, they were out of order, meaning she had to go back down in the lift to use the ground floor toilets.

The Secretary had contacted the Manager of the Corn Exchange who explained that the first floor accessible toilet had now been repaired. However, the situation at the Corn Exchange is that only the ground floor was deemed accessible for wheelchair users or people who could not use the stairs, as there was no refuge area available above ground floor level. Users with mobility difficulties were therefore required to use the ground floor facilities. He had explained that Susan Smith should have been advised to use the ground floor facilities and the General Manager of the Corn Exchange had indicated that he would be reviewing the procedures in place for briefing incoming companies.

**12. FUTURE PLANS AND ACTIVITIES**

The Chair reminded the Committee, as discussed earlier in the meeting, that another visit, to advise on accessible facilities, would be arranged later in the year.

**13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**(i) Disabled Facilities at Borough Swimming Pools

Ruth Carroll asked what accessible facilities were provided at the Borough's swimming pools.

The Secretary agreed to investigate this issue and provide details in the minutes, as follows:

### **St James Pool, King's Lynn**

2 x Pool hoists (one with four sizes of slings)  
2 x Shower chairs  
1 x Patient bed  
1 x Electric Hoist  
1 x Disabled Changing/Shower Room  
1 x Disabled toilet.

All equipment tested and inspected as per regulations.

### **Downham Market**

Single level facility – all ground level  
Pool hoist entry to the Swimming Pool  
6 x disabled car parking spaces for customer use  
Host a Disabled Swimming Club – Otters Swimming Club  
1 x disabled changing area (wet side)  
2 x disabled toilets (1 wet side and 1 dry side)  
13 x other changing cubicles.

## **14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities would be the Annual General Meeting, which would take place on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> July 2009 at 7.00pm. The Annual General Meeting would be preceded by the launch of the Online Access Guide at 6.00pm.

**The meeting closed at 8.15pm**

WEST NORFOLK PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURE

