

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 Monday 1 July 2013 at 2.30pm in the Corn Exchange, King's Lynn.

PRESENT:

Representing the Borough Council:

Councillors A Lawrence (*left the meeting at 4.20 pm*), T Bubb, M Chenery of Horsbrugh, C Sampson, Mrs S Smeaton

Officers: A Bingham, H Howell, W Vincent

Representing Disabled People:

G Henshaw, P French (*left the meeting at 4.08 pm*), S Pomeroy,

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors L Allen, G Sandell and L Scott,
C Bond, K Warner

By Invitation: The Mayor of King's Lynn and West Norfolk Councillor
Mrs Elizabeth Watson

Helen Sismore – Guide Dogs Campaign

		ACTION
1.	<u>WELCOME</u> The Mayor of King's Lynn and West Norfolk, Councillor Mrs Elizabeth Watson, welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for her invitation. She thanked the Forum for the valuable work which they undertook throughout the Borough.	
2.	<u>ELECTION OF A CHAIRMAN</u> AGREED: That Councillor Mrs S Smeaton be elected as Chairman of the Forum for the period 2013/2014.	
3.	<u>ELECTION OF A VICE CHAIRMAN</u> AGREED: That Pat French be elected as Vice Chairman of the Forum for the period 2013/2014.	

4.	<p><u>MINUTES</u></p> <p>The Minutes from the West Norfolk Disability Forum meeting held on 19 July 2012 were agreed as a correct record.</p>	
5.	<p><u>MATTERS ARISING AND NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA</u></p> <p>There was none.</p>	
6.	<p><u>CONSULTATION – REDESIGN OF THE FRONT LOBBY OF KING’S COURT</u></p> <p>Honor Howell, Council Information Centre Manager at the Borough Council presented the Forum with the proposals for the redesign of the front lobby at the main Council Offices at King’s Court. A copy of the plans were displayed on the screen and hard copies circulated to those present.</p> <p>She sought the views of those present on the accessibility of the design proposals.</p> <p>The following comments were made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear signage was required to inform the public of the press button to activate the doors. • Colours used for signs was important. Advice and guidelines could be sought from the RNIB website. It was normal practice to use a white background with black writing. • A visually impaired person could not always tell if glass doors were shut and would require some form of etching, or a bright colour logo displayed on the glass. • It was suggested that the Borough Council logo be displayed on the glass doors. However, it was appreciated that there were strict rules regarding the use and colour of the Borough Council logo. • Importance of correct time delay for opening of doors to allow wheelchairs, guide dogs and those with pushchairs to enter and exit safely. • Consideration of an audible aid being placed near the doors to make those with disabilities aware of the doors. <p>The Council Information Centre Manager advised that the works would be carried out over a weekend in August/September 2013.</p>	

	<p>Councillor Bubb stated that when evening meetings were being held, intruders were able to enter the building. In response, the Council Information Centre Manager explained that the security on the Ground Floor at King's Court was currently being considered.</p> <p>AGREED: H Howell to feedback the above comments to the Working Group on 3 July 2013.</p>	HH
7.	<p><u>GUEST SPEAKER – GENENE HENSHAW AND HELEN SISMORE – LIFE WITH A GUIDE DOG</u></p> <p>Genene Henshaw gave an overview of life before and life with a guide dog.</p> <p>Helen Sismore gave an overview of the work carried out by the Guide Dogs Association, which included the four campaigns set out below, that helped to improve people with sight loss ability to get around safely and with ease (a copy is attached at Appendix 1):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streets Ahead. • Talking Buses. • Dog Attack. • Safe and Sound. <p>Comments and questions were invited from the Forum, some of which are set out below.</p> <p>In response to questions regarding the application form for a guide dog, Helen Sismore explained that there was a speech software package and also the document could be enlarged to enable the form to be completed.</p> <p>Following questions on Dog Attack, Helen Sismore explained that this was now considered as a hate crime and work had been undertaken with the Police and Parliament, as a result all puppies would now be micro-chipped. Guide dog owners could now report the crime to the Police. The Forum was advised that the Police, MPs fully supported the initiative.</p> <p>In response to comments and questions regarding audio installations on buses, Helen Sismore explained that she had recently held a meeting with B Colson and that he was not intending to install audio equipment on his fleet of buses, mainly</p>	

	<p>because he was a small operator and the cost involved. However, Mr Colson was a member of the Shadow Meeting and training was being investigated for bus drivers assisting those passengers with sight loss.</p> <p>Following questions relating to the training period for Guide Dogs, it was explained that it took 18 months to train a dog before it was matched with its owner. Genevieve Henshaw informed those present that she had stayed in a hotel to receive the necessary training for three weeks, after which she was visited regularly by a Guide Dog Mobility Instructor.</p> <p>The Chairman on behalf of the Forum thanked Genevieve and Helen for an interesting and informative presentation.</p>	
8.	<p><u>ANNUAL REPORT 2012/2013</u></p> <p>Allison Bingham presented the Forum's Annual Report for 2012/2013 which had been circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>AGREED: The Forum's Annual report for 2012/2013 be approved.</p>	
9.	<p><u>BUDGET</u></p> <p>Allison Bingham presented the Forum's budget and advised that there was some budget remaining to be spent within the remit of the Forum.</p>	
10.	<p><u>SECRETARY'S CORRESPONDENCE</u></p> <p><u>St James Pool – Swimming Sessions for Disabled Users</u></p> <p>Allison Bingham read out the following response from the Operations Manager after the last meeting of the Forum:</p> <p><i>St James Pool caters for a wide range of disabled users throughout the week, the majority of whom are happy to use the facilities alongside other users. The numbers at this session have declined over the years and when the club folded, the venue continued to give the time for these users. This session is advertised in the programme along with the other sessions at the centre, but posters would be produced and sent to relevant groups in the local area.</i></p>	

<p>11.</p>	<p><u>SCHEDULE OF FUTURE MEETINGS</u></p> <p>AGREED: The Schedule of meetings for 2013/2014 were agreed as follows:</p> <p>Wednesday 4th September 2013 at 2.30pm Wednesday 20th November 2013 at 2.30pm Wednesday 5th February 2014 at 2.30pm Wednesday 23rd April 2014 at 2.30pm Wednesday 2nd July 2014 at 2.30pm – Annual General Meeting</p> <p>All meetings to be held in the Committee Suite, King’s Court, King’s Lynn.</p>	
<p>12.</p>	<p><u>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</u></p> <p><u>Lynnsport</u></p> <p>Gene Henshaw reported that she was attending Lynnsport on 2 July for her gym induction session.</p> <p>Helen Sismore explained that following the visit to Lynnsport, a number of actions had now enable the facility to be full accessible to those people with a disability which was a result of input from the Forum.</p> <p>Allison Bingham advised that this issue was on the Corporate Equalities Group Agenda to include the other Council owned sports venues.</p> <p><u>Winter Warmer</u></p> <p>Allison Bingham informed the Forum that the event would be held on 20 September 2013 in The Town Hall, Downham Market. A number of organisations had expressed an interest in participating and invitations and posters would be sent out in August advertising the event. All vulnerable groups were welcome to attend.</p> <p><u>Audit of Venues within the Borough</u></p> <p>The Forum was invited to put forward suggestions of venues which Members could undertake an audit as previously done at Sandringham.</p> <p>Gene Henshaw suggested Houghton Hall.</p>	<p>AB</p>

	<p><u>Attendance at Forum Meetings</u></p> <p>Councillor Bubb commented that he was conscious that not all representatives of disabled groups attended meetings and perhaps a reminder could be sent out to such groups. Allison Bingham undertook to send out a covering note with the Winter Warmer invitations in August.</p> <p><u>Obesity</u></p> <p>Councillor Bubb enquired if obesity could be considered within the remit of the Forum. Helen Sismore commented that there were a number of Health and Well Being groups available since the structure changes that had been made to the PCT. Allison Bingham agreed to liaise with the Clinical Commission Group based at King's Court as to whether it was appropriate for a presentation to be made to a future meeting of the Forum. Councillor Lawrence referred to the Do Something Different Initiative. Allison Bingham agreed to discuss this further with the Project Manager.</p> <p><u>Changes to entrance of Lynnsport</u></p> <p>Allison Bingham advised that because of the design of the front entrance, Lynnsport suffered from a significant amount of heat loss from the building. It was therefore proposed to install sliding doors at each end of the automatic doors. No change to the structure would occur. Drawings would be presented to the next meeting of the Forum.</p> <p><u>Membership of the Forum</u></p> <p>Helen Sismore indicated that she would like to become a member of the Forum.</p>	<p>AB</p> <p>AB</p> <p>AB</p> <p>AB</p>
<p>13.</p>	<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 4th September 2013 at 2.30pm in the Committee Suite, King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn.</p>	

The meeting closed at 4.28 pm

Appendix 1

Guide Dog Campaigns

We have 4 campaigns. All are campaigns to help improve people with sight loss ability to get around safely and with ease.

<http://www.guidedogs.org.uk/supportus/campaigns/>

Campaigns Team: 0800 028 4348

Helen Sismore – East Anglia (Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire)
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1. Streets Ahead
2. Talking Buses
3. Dog Attack
4. Safe and Sound

Streets Ahead

- Tripped on a broken kerb?
- Been hit in the face by an overhanging bush?
- Injured yourself walking into A-Boards on your local high street?
- Felt unsafe due to the close proximity of traffic driving by?
- Struggled to find a safe place to cross the road?

This is why Guide Dogs are launching their Streets Ahead campaign.

- Provide blind and partially sighted people with the tools to help them engage with their local authorities and developers and ensure that inclusive design principles are at the heart of new projects.
- Work with engineers, architects, town planners and other urban design professionals so that the needs of blind and partially sighted people are well understood and that they are properly consulted at the earliest possible opportunity and not as an afterthought.
- More councils to follow the lead of ones like Manchester City Council in their decision not to have shared surface streets in residential areas and consider the needs of all people using streets at the beginning of the design process.
- Inform local shopkeepers and councillors about the unnecessary nuisance of A Boards and other poorly positioned street furniture.

- Change the behaviour of inconsiderate motorists, whose thoughtless parking is damaging pavements. This costs councils millions of pounds in repairs, can cause injury to blind and partially sighted people, and impede their passage and that of other disabled people along our footways.
- Show householders that by maintaining their hedgerows, taking the time to trim overhanging branches and thinking about where they put their wheelie bins, they can help to make using our footways easier and safer for blind and partially sighted people - and at the same time make their own environment more attractive

Local area performed in our [2012 "Street Clutter Survey"](#) to highlight the problem of unnecessary A Boards and other street clutter.

What can you do to help?

[write to your local councillor about poor parking and cracked pavements](#) using our online form.

Ask your local newspaper to start a campaign to remove overhanging branches to tidy up your streets

[Report broken streetlights](#)

Talking Buses

Buses play a vital role in enabling disabled people, including those who are blind or partially-sighted, to live more independent lives. But the worry of not being sure if you have got on the right bus, where you are on your journey, or when your stop is coming up, puts many people off using them.

Guide Dogs is campaigning for a change in the law to make audio and visual information – including audible announcements of the current stop, next stop and final destination – available on board bus and coach services across the UK.

This will enable blind and partially-sighted people to use buses with confidence, and improve the experience of bus travel for all passengers

Talking Buses across the country

Are there Talking Buses where you live (that aren't on our list)? If so, please [email the Campaigns Team](#) to let us know.

<p>London (All Talking Buses)</p>	<p>Transport for London has now completed its roll-out of the iBus system. This now means that every bus operating in London – more than 8,000 buses – has audio visual information on board. This is one of the largest projects of its kind.</p>
<p>Nottinghamshire (Some Talking Buses)</p>	<p>Nottingham City Transport has a roll out programme for on-bus displays and announcements which is nearing completion. The remaining 40 routes will be completed by 2014. In 2003, the Trent Barton company relaunched their Rainbow service, which serves Nottingham, Long Eaton, Derby and East Midlands airport. This service was launched with 25 new buses, all with audio visual information and low floors. The new service has been well-received, with a customer survey in 2008 revealing that 85 per cent of all passengers found on-board announcements very useful or quite useful. Trent Barton will introduce on-bus audio announcements for all their commercial routes into Nottingham by 2014.</p>
<p>Reading (Some Talking Buses)</p>	<p>Five years ago, Reading Transport and Reading Borough Council together started a massive investment in upgrading the quality of Reading's main bus routes. These "Premier Routes" give travellers audio visual on-board announcements.</p>
<p>Coventry and Warwickshire (Some Talking Buses)</p>	<p>In February 2012, Travel De Courcey became the first operator in the West Midlands to introduce audio announcements to help blind and partially sighted passengers. The audio bus announcements will be launched on the Coventry to Leicester X6 service and will be fitted as standard on any new buses added to the firm's fleet. In June 2012, Travel De Courcey launched three "Park and Ride" Talking Buses in Coventry.</p>
<p>Birmingham (Some Talking Buses)</p>	<p>National Express West Midlands have introduced both audio and visual next stop announcements to journeys in Kitwell and Woodgate! Services 22 and 23 now come complete with the distinctive tones of local DJ, Phil Upton. The automatic announcements can be heard prior to and on arrival at a stop.</p>

	Video screens work in conjunction with the announcements and show a visual display of the next stop. The company say the announcements "have proven incredibly useful for visitors to the city and passengers with visual impairment." Ten shuttle buses servicing the NEC in Birmingham are, as of August 2012, Talking Buses.
Edinburgh (Some Talking Buses)	Edinburgh Council has backed our campaign. Lothian Buses (the main operator in the city) has introduced audio visual announcements on its busy "Route 10". These buses began their journey in the Scottish capital in September 2011.
Aberdeenshire (Some Talking Buses)	Stagecoach Bluebird have launched a customer information system on-board the Royal Deeside routes in partnership with Aberdeenshire Council. The company has worked with Hanover Displays to provide an audio and visual information screen on board the coaches. The information screens will provide details of the next stop, interspersed with relevant route information and promotional messages. The equipment has been fitted to the 12 coaches operating on the Royal Deeside routes 201, 202 and 203. Stagecoach Bluebird have also launched a customer information system on-board the two JET bus services operating to Aberdeen Airport. The equipment has been fitted to the 4 buses operating on the JET 727 bus route between Union Square and Aberdeen Airport and the JET Connect (route 80) bus connecting Dyce Rail station with the airport.
Warrington (Some Talking Buses)	Network Warrington currently have 6 AV systems on their hybrids that were introduced into service at the end of 2012 and in early 2013. They are due 6 more Talking Buses in March 2013. Network Warrington have committed that audio visual equipment is now a standard feature for all new bus deliveries.

Over 35 charities support the campaign. If you are a charity and would like to support the campaign please contact the campaigns team on **0800 028 4348**

How you can help – use our on line template to write to your MP

Dog Attacks

Dog attacks are of great concern to Guide Dogs and to guide dog owners. The number of guide dog owners who are reporting dog attacks on their

dogs is increasing. Our latest research shows the number of reported attacks on guide dogs has risen from three a month to over eight dog attacks a month within a 24 month period from June 2010 to May 2012 we have now received data to say they have increased to 10 per month.

In most cases the cause of the attack was unprovoked, and the aggressor dog was uncontrolled and off the lead.

Guide Dogs backs compulsory microchipping, but wants proposals to go further. Read [our reaction](#) to the Government's proposals about microchipping.

The impact on guide dog owners and guide dogs

Dog attacks can have a devastating impact on both the people and dogs involved. Three guide dogs have been permanently withdrawn, and two others are currently being assessed to see if they are able to continue working. The other major impact is that blind and partially sighted people are left without a guide dog, their mobility aid, and become housebound until they can be matched with a suitable dog.

Some guide dog owners have been left too frightened to go out as a result of an attack. One guide dog owner wanted to move house due to the response of the owners of the attacking dog, who in some cases used verbal abuse against blind and partially sighted people. Some appeared to be under the influence of drink or drugs, and in one case, the owner of an aggressive dog laughed at a guide dog owner during an attack on his guide dog.

How you can help – use our on line template to write to your MP

Safe and sound How do you 'stop, look, listen' when there isn't anything to listen out for?

Electric, Hybrid and quiet combustion engine cars are making today's vehicles quieter; posing a serious risk to blind and partially sighted pedestrians.

Research has shown that electric and hybrid cars travelling at certain speeds can only be heard less than a second before impact.

We are therefore campaigning for the installation of audible sound generators on cars to improve road safety for all pedestrians.

Quiet vehicles present a real danger to pedestrians who cannot hear them. If you are blind or partially sighted, you rely on vehicle noise to identify a safe gap in the traffic to cross a road. The government is encouraging the greater uptake of these vehicles due to their environmentally friendly credentials - it is therefore more important than ever that we ensure safety issues such as lack of noise are dealt with early on to prevent further problems in the future.

There has been deep concern expressed by people who are blind and partially sighted that if you cannot see or hear a car, how can you avoid it and cross a road safely? The "Safe & Sound" campaign calls for the mandatory introduction of audible sound generators on cars. [Help us campaign for safer roads now!](#)