

Minutes of General Meeting

Date	Tuesday 14th April 2015
Time	10.00 am to 12.00pm
Venue	Stoke Town Hall

Agenda topic	Action
<p>Attendees and Apologies</p> <p>Present:</p> <p>John Beech (Chair) Geoff Bryan (Deputy Chair) Pam Bryan (Secretary) John Burgess (Deputy Treasurer) Leslie Smith (Access Officer) Alan Rose (Membership Secretary) Angie Bunn (Disability Solutions) Matt Simpson (Sentinel) Brian Turnock Mick Jones Jennifer Pardue Phil Woodward Val Turner Cheryl Barnett Michelle Cooper Ruth Smeeth Terry Crowe Adam Blakeman (Press Officer S-o-T)</p>	<p>Apologies</p> <p>Winston Green (Treasurer) Adam Snow (Parking Consultant) Stephanie Wood Tristram Hunt MP Joan Walley MP Rob Ffello MP Angie Bunn (Disability Solutions) Barry Simpson Pat Dixon Mike Dixon Lynn Hughes Fiona Farrel Alan Mountford Janet Neilson</p>
<p>2. Ruth Smeeth STAND member and parliamentary Candidate for Stoke North</p> <p>Ruth introduced herself to the group and pledged her support for the work that STAND is doing. Members supported the move to thank Joan Walley for her fantastic support and wish her well on her retirement from office as MP.</p>	Pam Bryan
<p>3. Council Decision to Charge Disabled People to Park</p> <p>As expected this topic provoked a lively debate. Les thanked us for asking people to provide responses. 54 were received and the main problems highlighted were: Financial, Access problems with ticket machines, Extra distances to be covered,, On street parking access, Policing of Blue Badge Bays, Extra cost on transport costs, Extra problems due to short term parking and disabled people who work, The need to tell everyone about these changes. STAND received an assurance that the charges will not be imposed until and unless all the necessary work has been carried out so that disabled people are not unfairly discriminated against. Shopmobility will not be affected by any of the proposed changes. ie still able to park free of charge. It was said that these measures would help to stop abuse of blue bays but in reply members said very forcefully that this is the job of the council, to police the bays and stop abuse, not to penalise every disabled person in order to stop abuse. The issue of the problems faced by working disabled people was raised and the Access Officer said that This would not be allowed to happen as it would amount to constructive discrimination. Let us hope that Councillors agree. A great deal was said about the unfairness of these charges when the majority of disabled</p>	

people were unable to avail themselves of free bus passes or other services paid for by the Council. The problem of Government cuts was raised and It was said that the Council could not use the money raised for any other purpose than parking services as this money was ring fenced. The parking account was in surplus so there was no need to raise money. It was queried whether this money raised was to be used to fund the free parking at weekend that had been proposed as disabled people choose not to shop at weekend whenever possible.

The issue of availability of off street parking was raised and the problems caused by pedestrianisation driving disabled people out of towns as they are unable to get to places they want to visit. All exemptions on blue badge bays would have to be discontinued in order to ensure that disabled people were able to park. There are 26000 blue badge holders in Stoke-on-Trent (T Crowe) who would be affected by these changes.

We now have enough sinatures to attend a meeting with the new Council, after the election to ask them to think again.

4. Minutes of last meeting were signed as a true record.

5.Matters Arising from Minutes.

Chiropody Brian has had a reply from the Ombudsman saying that he needed to complete the Trust's Complaints Procedure. This is extremely frustrating as he had followed every avenue but unfortunately this all has to be documented. Possibly all the phone calls are not documented. He now has PALs to help him through the process and Pam is to write to the Patients Association high lighting this as just how difficult it is to get a satisfactory outcome from a justified complaint.

UHNS Court Case Update Looks as if this has stalled. More information when Steph is well enough to attend.

Tontine Street Kerb Edges Accidents are still happening, both able bodied and disabled people are still falling victim to this pavement. Officers and Cabinet members will be invited to the Aug meeting to see what can be done.

Mobility Scooter Access in Meir Jennifer has contacted contact Carl B from the Highways dept. and it is hopeful that work will start soon

Chemist Delivery Vehicles blocking the pavement outside the chemist in Meir

No Update as yet..

Blue Badge Abuse on supermarket car parks Members have voted for their favourite store and the winners will be presented with a cup at our next meeting. Many thanks to everyone who voted. All the votes will be counted in May, so if you have not already voted please do so before May 1st.

6 Volunteers needed for the event at Hanley Forest park on 25th July Please contact Pam if you are available to help 01782 332349 pamanne2@hotmail.com

7. Donations

Unite Union £120 Pam and Geoff Bryan £100

9. AOB

Mike warned members to be cautious about a company called Pell and Balles who had telephoned him about giving money.

Alan suggested that members might like to suggest that they may like to think about not giving/receiving card/presents this Christmas and donate the money to STAND.

Date of Next Meetings is the AGM is on Wed 17th June

Les will you please book a room for this date

Pam
Bryan
Brian
Turner

Pam
Bryan

Adam
Snow

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