

Minutes of General Meeting

Date	Tuesday 1 st April 14
Time	10.00am 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) Stephanie Wood (Deputy Secretary) Winston Green (Treasurer) John Burgess (Deputy Treasurer) Paul Bicknell (Corporate Fraud Manager) Ian Tamburello (Strategic Manager, Enforcement and Operations) Terry Crowe (Cabinet Member for Transformation and Resource) Rebecca Elliot (Healthwatch) Hannah Titchener A Smith Mick Jones Brian Turnock Jennifer Pardue Fiona Farrell Pat Leyland Jean Snape Stewart Barker Hannah Hulme (Sentinel) Philip Woodward Barry J.Simpson</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td> <p>Apologies</p> <p>Angie Bunn Malcolm Dawson Joanne Bookless Lesley Smith Kath Banks</p> </td> <td> <p>Mark Fisher UHNS Mike Brown UHNS Val Turner Val Lewis Pauline Betteridge</p> </td> </tr> </table>	<p>Apologies</p> <p>Angie Bunn Malcolm Dawson Joanne Bookless Lesley Smith Kath Banks</p>	<p>Mark Fisher UHNS Mike Brown UHNS Val Turner Val Lewis Pauline Betteridge</p>
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1. Blue Badge Abuse Paul Bicknell Corporate Fraud Manager

Paul explained that in Stoke we have 13,000 blue badge users and it was essential that we enable those users to be able to use the blue badge spaces available and cut back on the fraudulent use of blue badges. The council were being proactive in monitoring this abuse. A small scale operation found that there were 10 cases of abuse with a very short period. This abuse not only deprives genuine, disabled users of a space but it also defrauds the public of the money the people should be paying to park. This operation will be rolled out across Stoke-on-Trent and together with the "Spot the Cheater/Cheetah" campaign and the resultant publicity, will start to raise awareness and help to prevent this abuse.

Fines can be as much as £5000 and a person could be left with a criminal record. Members are asked to ring the fraud team on 01782 236800 if they suspect the long term abuse of blue badges.

John Beech pointed out that Council parking enforcement officers can now enforce the proper use of Blue Badge Bays even on private land since the new law came into operation at the beginning of this year. However this remains a problem outside some supermarkets. A court case last year said that these supermarkets/stores are responsible for enforcing these bays are properly used. John said that any member who sees this abuse should report it to the manager of the store in question as they have a duty to act.

Jennifer highlighted the problem of people with hidden disabilities, for example people with MS being targeted. Members accepted that this might be a problem but believe that no genuine disabled person would mind being asked to show officials their blue badge, as we are all aware of the problems that blue badge abuse is causing for disabled people.

Paul received applause from members, for his report and work on this issue, and the Council was congratulated for their action.

1. Tontine Street Danger of Tripping report written by Andy Norman 17.3.14

I have been asked to provide an update regarding the new paving in Tontine Street / Percy Street. The design for the scheme was undertaken with the aim of accommodating the needs of a wide variety of users as required by legislation covering new schemes proposals. Considerable research into design guidance from Department for Transport, Guide Dogs UK and other sources was carried out as well as consultation involving disability groups and visits to similar schemes in other cities to inform the layout and choice of materials. The installation of the 60mm kerb face wherever possible was something blind and partially sighted users are particularly keen on being provided and a dark granite was used at the kerb line to provide a contrast between the footways and the carriageway. Although the kerb and adjacent channel are the same material there is a visible difference between the two with a contrast in the units sizes used. Independent road safety audits carried out at both design stage and following completion have not raised any issues with the design and choice of materials however we have been made aware of similar concerns and trip incidents by a number of people. As a result work started last week on the installation of hazard markings along the kerb edge using stainless steel discs inlaid into the granite kerb. We shall continue to monitor the situation following the installation of the markers.

Regards

Andy

Andy Norman | Senior Engineer

2. Stafford Street dropped kerb written by Dave Stubbs 11.3.14

Ref the dropped kerb in Stafford Street – we are still currently investigating the options to provide an additional dropped kerb for pedestrians – given the new traffic arrangements on Stafford St. We are currently hopeful that we can provide further assistance on this, and if this is the case, we would be looking to deliver this improvement in April / May ie in the new financial year. Before we install any new dropped kerbs, we will send any proposal we develop to Pam for consultation with the STAND members.

Thanks

Dave

David Stubbs | Highways and Structural Engineering

Pam will put this on the agenda for the next meeting for an update on progress.

3. UHNS Parking Future Action by Healthwatch Rebecca Elliot

Rebecca described the action that Healthwatch was taking regarding wider, general access issues at UHNS and asked if STAND would be willing to feed into this work.

Pam emphasised that the big outstanding issue for STAND is that, **by imposing a system of pay and display parking on disabled people, which forces disabled people to walk up to 25 meters to the pay machine and 25 meters back to their car, this is putting disabled people at a marked disadvantage.** They then have to walk up to 134 meters to the entrance before starting another journey to their destination inside the hospital.

A number plate recognition system would not have caused this unnecessary extra journey. Extra time allowed on the ticket to take account of the extra time taken to travel the same distance as an able bodied person would have helped but these measures were not taken.

Jennifer highlighted the problem that MS sufferers face, as they only have so much energy/stamina and this journey is damaging their health and self reliance.

People with heart conditions cannot sit on the seats provided, in the cold as this is dangerous for their health condition. Is it fair or reasonable to expect a disabled person to have to endure these conditions at a HOSPITAL?

Overcrowding on the car parks was severe at certain times and members felt that this was made worse by many patients being told to turn up to the same clinic at the same time. Healthwatch was asked to deal with this and report back to us.

Several members gave accounts of problems they had experience during visits to UHNS. Clinics over running, no parking spaces, distance they had to walk, blocked lowered kerbs, not being able to read the signs, etc.

Members felt that action was needed because as far as disabled parking was concerned the hospital parking was still, in the words of one member, "A complete mess". And disabled people were suffering for UHNS lack of action on the matter of the distance they had to travel to get to

PB

PB

RE

an appointment.

As STAND has done a considerable amount of work around this issue, members felt that they would be very happy to feed into the work that Healthwatch is doing. Pam will be the primary contact.

PB

4. UHNS Parking Update/ Mystery Shop Pam Bryan

Apologies from Mark Fisher and Mike Brown but a full report had been sent and was read, in conjunction with the Mystery Shop/ Photographic Report that STAND did on 11.3.14.

Members expressed their dissatisfaction that these officials were unavailable when such an important issue that had been outstanding for a very long time was being discussed.

Good News

The whole situation had improved a great deal since we did the last Mystery Shop in Nov 2012.

Traffic was moving not queuing.

No Fights/frustration about parking spaces.(at the time we visited)

The drop off zone outside the main entrance was manned and working safely.

Signs had been put in place, but there were concerns about the size of print and readability in poor light.

Blue Badge abuse was down but still happens.

We have been assured that there will be 5 disabled bays outside West Building when the area is relined. (presently only 2)

Disabled bays will be placed outside the main entrance when all of the ambulances have been relocated. (Where will they access the ticket machine?)

Issues Outstanding From the Mystery Shop

Volunteers, there are insufficient to maintain a reliable service. *Mark Fisher assures us that there is to be a major recruitment drive in early April. He will keep us informed.*

Inaccessible pay and display machines because people park, obstructing the dropped kerb, which means that disabled people have to travel even further to access a machine.

MF

Mark says that the parking company has been asked to ensure this does not happen. The problem remains that once someone has blocked the kerb then that remains blocked until the car owner returns, which caused huge problems for all the disabled people trying to use that machine.

This also highlights the problems that are caused when people need to park and there are insufficient bays available.

Obstructions *Mark has ensured that the big yellow salt bin will be moved.*

Blue Badge abuse *Mark agrees has asked the parking company to be vigilant in this area.*

Proposed disabled bays outside the main entrance. *Mark says that it is hoped that the completion date for this project will be the end of May 2014.*

Information Point *A new hospital map will be displayed as soon as it is ready.*

Car park C is unsuitable for disabled people because of the incline up to the Cancer Building and West Building but there are no signs to advise of this, but Mark says *it is not shown on any of the maps included within appointment letters.*

Car Park M outside the Trent Building. When we visited there were NO disabled bays available and raised a huge concern. *Mark tells us, I can advise that car park 'M' outside the Trent building is currently under construction, as is the new Trent Main Entrance facility. There are a total of 4 disabled bays currently available in this area. On completion of this scheme, a total of 16 disabled parking bays will have been created and introduced. The area that we saw is being used for a Mobile operating theatre and ward and will be joined by a mobile MRI scanner. 4 disabled spaces have now been reinstated.*

Car Park outside A&E We were horrified when we saw that although the disabled spaces were reasonably close to the door a disabled person had to travel a huge distance to the children's department up a ramp in order to get a ticket and then do the same huge distance to put the ticket on their car. *Mark says, I note your concerns regarding the 3 separate disabled parking bays near to the A&E Entrance. The Trust, following evaluation, were aware of this and have a number of new Pay & Display machines on order and upon receipt, the Trust are looking at the feasibility of placing an additional pay machine into this area.*

Problems with size of print and location of signs Mark said, *With regards to signage, whilst the Trust believes all signage fully complies with legislation and best practice guidelines, I requested that a signage audit be carried out across the site.*

Pam told members that the UHNS had made a number of improvements but the main problem of the distance a disabled person had to walk to access the hospital was unacceptable. Seats along the way to rest and recover was not an answer and disabled people could not rely on the volunteers.

Action

Members received a proposal from Steph to take legal advice from Unity Law. Members were enthusiastically in favour of this motion. Steph would make this contact and report back at our next meeting.

SW

Pam thanked members for their letters to MPs and advised that all 3 Stoke MPs and Paul MP for Newcastle were all trying to help. Several MPs are raising this matter with Mark Hackett Chief Executive in their monthly meetings and she was hopeful that they could get the UHNS to stop charging disabled people until a suitable pay system could be installed. Pam will keep members updated on progress in the hope that court action will not be necessary.

John Beech said that we have had numerous meetings with UHNS throughout the planning and building process (as DUPG) and the management of the hospital did not do anything about the problems we highlighted so the blame for the problems sits squarely on the Board members shoulders so he hoped that if there was a financial penalty it would fall on the people responsible and not taken from patient care.

PB

Pam will also contact Mark Fisher to thank him for his report, keep him updated on action and to extend an invitation to our next meeting.

PB

5. Minutes were taken to be a true record proposed by John Burgess seconded by G Bryan

Matters arising	
<p>6. Obstructed Pavements</p> <p>Phil had raised this because of the problems that wheelchair, buggy and pushchair users have in trying to get past these obstructions. He had contacted the police about this and we had tried to get someone to talk to us about this issue but unfortunately no one was available. Phil proposed that we invite the Crime and Police Commissioner to our next meeting. All members were in agreement. Pam will invite him and also arrange for Ian Tamburello to be in attendance once the invitation has been accepted.</p>	
<p>7. Proposed Closure of Public Toilets Ian Tamburello</p> <p>We have an assurance that No Public Toilets will close until there is a suitable alternative for disabled people. The council are looking at ways in which the toilets can be updated, refurbished and funded. Ian will keep us informed and consult us about any proposals/inspections. Members highlighted the need for disabled parking bays near the toilets, hoists in the toilets, mirror and somewhere to hang coats etc.</p>	PB
<p>8. Shopmobility Ian Tamburello</p> <p>It was hoped to keep Shopmobility in the Shopping Centre but the building work meant that it was not safe to do so. Shopmobility will be temporarily rehomed in the old bus station while negotiations take place to return it to the Shopping Centre.</p> <p>Opening event next Tuesday 8th April, Ian will Email Pam and she will email members.</p>	IT PB
<p>9. WH Smith John Burgess</p> <p>All aisles are now clear and can accommodate wheelchairs.</p>	
<p>10. Tunstall Car Park Pam Bryan</p> <p>This car park has now become a limited parking time facility but you can park for 3 hour for free and so should not cause any problems for visitors to the health centre.</p>	
<p>11. Event at Hanley Forest Park 16th Aug.</p> <p>Pat Leyland promised to think about helping with this one and get back to Pam. If Pat can take this on we will need volunteers prepared to help for a few hours on that day.</p>	PL
<p>12. Donations/Funding Bid</p> <p>Willfield Camera Club gave a donation of £23.60. Phil is to try to get us a donation from Unite. He will keep Pam informed as to progress.</p> <p>We have received a bid for £500 to cover most of our costs for next year.</p>	PW
<p>13. Date of Next Meeting Tuesday 3rd June 10 am -12.30 pm</p>	
