

STAND

Stoke-on-Trent Area Network for Disability

Stoke-on-Trent Area Network
for Disability
stand-stoke.org.uk

Minutes of the General Meeting held at 10.00am on Tuesday 11th August at Stoke Town Hall.

Attendees:

Geoff Bryan (Chair)
M Ashcroft???
Angie Bunn (Disability Solutions)
Pam Bryan (Secretary)
John Burgess (Deputy Treasurer)
Michelle Cooper
Michael Clarke
Winston Green (Treasurer)
Mick Jones
Denise Keen
Val Lewis (Healthwatch Stoke)
A May (Healthwatch Stoke)
Alan Mountford
Mary Ann Oram
Jennifer Pardue (MS Society)
Barry Simpson
Jean Simpson
Mick Simpson (Sentinel)
Christine Whitehead (Asst. Director Health Services)
Ann Whitehurst
Philip Woodward
Stephanie Wood

Apologies:

John Beech
Alan Dutton
Brian Hulme
Tracy Kirkham
Les Smith
Val Turner
Brian Turnock

2. The minutes of the previous meeting held on 14th April 2015 were confirmed as a true record.

3. Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting

a) Parking Petition Update

Pam confirmed that the online petition had raised more than 200 signatures and thanked everyone who had signed it.

Standing up for People with Disabilities

She had presented it to the Council and was awaiting follow up from them. Mike confirmed that there were currently 13,000 blue badge holders in the Stoke-on-Trent area.

b) Abuse of Blue Badge Spaces on Private Land

Pam had written to local MPs and the Dept. of Transport about the problems of abuse of disabled bays on the Festival Park site. It seems that owners have to ensure that suitable spaces are available and disabled drivers have the right to challenge service providers. Further details are on the STAND website.

c) Chiropody

Brian not present so this would be ongoing for the next meeting.

d) Tontine Street Kerb Edges

John was not present so this would be ongoing for the next meeting.

e) Motability Scooter Access in Meir

Jennifer confirmed this was still ongoing and Mike offered to pursue this.

f) NHS Complaints System

Pam reported that Brian's chiropody complaint had not been pursued as the Ombudsman required a paper trail. She said that not everyone was computer literate. She had now complained to the NHS and the Patients' Association. Although all complaints should be logged and counted, this was not done currently so Pam would pursue this.

4. Green Door at Hanley Forest Park

Pam reported a successful day as £67.00 from the stall was raised and she thanked all who helped and gave prizes.

5. Independent Living Fund

Christine Whitehead confirmed that the government would be transferring responsibility for ILF payments to Councils w.e.f. 1st July 2015. Stoke Council was developing a code of practice to enable them to meet the required needs and was currently reviewing the 36 people in their area to obtain as good an assessment as possible. She stressed that eligible needs would be met by the Council. A Strategic Manager Panel, consisting of two Council Officers, would be set up to check the reviews were consistent. Any reductions in the level of support would take place on – 1st October.

The Council would not know what funds it would receive until the Autumn budget. She confirmed that the Council had a surplus of £28,000 to fund any possible redundancies of support workers and if a further surplus became available she would recommend that it be used for people with disabilities.

Anne pointed out that ILF should meet continuing needs and was so important for a life of well being. Christine said she would try to ensure some involvement by a disabled person in the decision making to ensure transparency of the process. Val (Healthwatch) appreciated the limitations of funding but was concerned that the eligibility criteria should treat everyone as an individual. Healthwatch would be happy to provide input to the Council and referred to the 12 point Gold Standard Charter for Dignity and Respect which they had produced. Christine said she would be happy to meet independently to discuss matters further. The Chair thanked her for coming to the meeting and clarifying the situation.

6. Abuse of Blue Badge Bays by Taxi Drivers/Extra Charges for Disabled People

This problem was occurring in Hanley outside Poundstretcher, in Tontine Street, by Argos, and by Marks and Spencer. Mike agreed to speak to the Taxi Licensing Manager and Pam suggested he liaised with Michelle who was aware of taxi drivers charging three times the standard fare to assist a disabled person. It was suggested that this was breaking the law and Mike agreed to check this with the head of licensing and report back to Pam. Further comments were made about parking abuse by private hire cars in blue badge bays and by ATMs in Longton. Mike would follow this up and said that the area now had more enforcement officers to prevent this kind of abuse. The Chair thanked Mike for attending.

7. Any Other Business

a) Hospital Parking

A problem was highlighted about the lack of parking spaces near to the cancer unit. Pam had raised the idea of bookable spaces with the hospital. They replied that this would be too difficult to arrange but were exploring other options including a number plate recognition system. Pam will follow this up.

The hospital stated that no ticket machines were further than fifty metres away from blue badge bays. Pam said that the area close to the main door

and at the far end had been reconfigured to improve access to spaces. She said that she had requested an amendment to original plans showing disabled bays too far from the entrance but this had not been done.

b) Pavement Parking

A Private Members' Bill to ban on-pavement parking generally is being introduced to Parliament and she has asked local MPs to support this. PCOs can now put advisory notices on cars parked on pavements or verges but it was noted that they had not yet been issued with the relevant ticket books to do this. Pam would pursue this.

c) Museum Canopy

Winston agreed to check that a canopy had been provided over the door at Hanley Museum as previously promised.

d) STAND Publicity

Michelle will ask local supermarkets if we can have publicity stands.

Dates for Next General Meetings:

Tuesday 27th October

Tuesday 8th December