

Unrestricted

**BRACKNELL FOREST ACCESS GROUP
2 JULY 2014
7.30 - 8.40 PM**



Present:

Councillors Thompson (Chairman), Harrison and Ms Wilson
Alan Dale, Be Heard in Bracknell
Geraldine Edmond
Jane Figg, Macular Support Group
Sarah Gaitely, Konnections
Mira Haynes, Bracknell Forest Council
Muriel Rawsthorne, Bracknell Forest Homes Tenants and Leasholders Panel
Mary Waight, Community Learning Disability Services, BFC

In Attendance:

Abby Thomas, Head of Community Engagement & Equalities
Darren Burgess, Bracknell Forest Council
Dean Eales, DisabledGo

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor Jim Finnie
Ray Edwards MBE, Limbicare
Andrea McCombie-Parker, The Ark
Jacqui Ryder, Bracknell Shopmobility
Mark Sanders, Healthwatch
Helen Barnett, Bracknell Regeneration Partnership
Alison Sanders, Director of Corporate Services

25. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Bracknell Forest Access Group held on 7 May 2014 were agreed as a correct record.

Arising on the minutes, the Group was advised that it was anticipated that the Bracknell Forest Retailers Guide would be published by the end of August; comments on the draft had been incorporated. All members of the group would receive a copy of the Guide and it would be made available on request. The Guide would be officially launched in September/October 2014 in partnership with the Bracknell Forest Regeneration Partnership

26. Access Improvement Plan Progress Report

Darren Burgess, Principal Building Surveyor presented the Access Improvement Programme Report to the Panel. A number of improvement works had been recently completed, these included The Youth Offending Service at Binfield Road, the children's respite centre at Larchwood and Bracknell Family Centre at Wick Hill Cottage. The works included improvements to access ramps and steps and improvement to bathroom facilities at Larchwood.

Improvement works had started at Bracknell Forest Leisure Centre, this included widening of doors in the buildings, installation of hand rails, updating accessible toilets (both male and female individual toilets) and changing facilities and improved signage and notices within the centre. The Panel noted that these works were worked around the use of the centre to permit the centre to remain open during the works with minimum disturbance to the users of the centre.

Other works that had not been part of the Access Improvement Plan had been included where there were accessibility issues that had been identified, including where other work had been carried out on council buildings. These included improving access issues at Great Hollands Community Centre and Library, whilst the centre was being redeveloped. The work would be completed by the end of July. At North Ascot Library the issue around the accessibility inside the building was being addressed, in consultation with the library service.

The list of Publically Accessible Buildings had been circulated. The Council now includes on this list the two Bracknell town centre car parks at Charles Square and High Street. Studies had been commissioned to assess what work is required to bring them to the agreed accessibility standard.

Arising from the questions and comments from the Group, the following points were noted:

- The bathroom facilities at Larchwood had been updated, SG reported that there appeared to be a problem with restrictive space for assisting a quadriplegic young person. The family had been advised that the centre could not accommodate this family. This matter would be addressed with the Manager at the centre and with the children's social care section at the Council.

Action: *Darren Burgess to contact the manager of Larchwood.*

- Adult Social Care buildings that would form the 2014/15 improvement works would include Heathlands and Ladybank. Work had previously been completed at Waymead.
- There was no plan to re-audit the premises on this list, issues were addressed if and when they arose.
- Bracknell Bus Station was not within the remit of the Council. It would be part of the regeneration of the town centre and would form part of the Bracknell Regeneration Partnerships programme for the redevelopment, accessibility would be part of that programme.

27. **Disabled Go Annual Report**

Dean Eales, Account Manager at Disabled Go, presented the annual review of Disabled Go in Bracknell Forest. He gave an overview of Disabled Go's operations; they assessed premises and business for accessibility from a pan disability perspective. They had 130,000 venues registered in the UK, Ireland, Guernsey and Isle of Man. All venues were assessed using the same template, which had been devised in consultation with disability groups and individuals with a disability. Each individual venue was contacted and revisited annually to ensure the information held by Disabled Go was up to date. The information provided also assisted families with

pushchairs and other older people who may not be classified as disabled, but benefit from the information that Disabled Go collated.

In Bracknell Forest five venues had been removed from the list, some because they had closed. Bracknell Shopmobility had relocated within the town centre and would be visited shortly to be assessed and would be re added to the list of venues on Disabled Go.

The Disabled Go website gave full details of the venues registered with them. It showed a photograph of the venue, and had 20 symbols that could be used to identify what was and wasn't available, such as designated seating areas, accessible car park, opening times, inside access and so on. New additions included a google map link, and the ability to leave a comment or review from the visitor about the venue. Disabled Go was also looking at ways to raise awareness and investigating promotional livery on their vehicles and window stickers showing membership of Disabled Go at venues. Both these initiatives would have QR codes that could be scanned with smart phones and information download to the smart phone on the move.

The Disabled Go website had been redesigned with additional functionality introduced and ReciteMe had been included which spoke aloud sections of the website when the computer mouse hovered over an area. The website was able to be translated into 55 different languages; text could be changed to different fonts as well as dyslexia friendly fonts. The new website should be launched in mid July; Dean Eales welcomed any comments on the website before it was launched.

Arising from the questions and comments from the Group, the following points were noted:

- Disabled Go Bracknell Forest was funded from Bracknell Forest Council, Thames Valley Police, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, Bracknell Forest Homes and others.
- 600 venues were listed under Bracknell Forest, with 150 or so of those being public venues.
- Following the introduction of the Care Bill other indicators could be introduced such as Autism Friendly, Dementia Friendly, Safe Places in conjunction with existing Council initiatives.
- Local logos could also be incorporated into the guide.

The Panel thanked Dean Eales for the full review of Disabled Go in Bracknell Forest.

28. **Items for Future Meetings**

It was agreed that the following items would be discussed at future meetings of the Group:

- Master Plan for Accessibility.
- Access for trains and access at stations.
- Bracknell Town Centre Regeneration.

29. **Any Other Business**

There were no additional items of business.

30. **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Bracknell Forest Access Group will be held on Wednesday 1 October 2014 at Easthampstead Baptist Church.