

**BRACKNELL FOREST ACCESS GROUP**  
**22 APRIL 2015**  
**7.30 - 8.47 PM**



**Present:**

Councillors Thompson (Chairman), Finnie (Vice-Chairman) and Harrison  
Councillor Mrs Jan Angell, Bracknell Shopmobility  
Geraldine Edmond  
Jane Figg, Macular Support Group  
Sarah Gaitely, Konnections  
Geoff Hallett, BADHOGS  
Mrs Isabel Mattick, Triple A  
Muriel Rawsthorne, Bracknell Forest Homes Tenants and Leasholders Panel  
Mary Waight, Community Learning Disability Services, BFC

**In Attendance:**

Alison Sanders, Director of Corporate Services  
Abby Thomas, Head of Community Engagement & Equalities  
Alison Koen, Bracknell Forest Council  
Caroline Rathmell, Dementia Action Alliance

**Apologies for absence were received from:**

Councillor Ms Brenda Wilson  
David Ariss  
Fiona Goodhand, Older People and Long Term Conditions  
Mira Haynes, Bracknell Forest Council

**35. Apologies for Absence**

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting. He advised that Cllr Ms Brenda Wilson had sent her best wishes to members and advised she was no longer able to stand as a Councillor.

**36. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2014 were agreed and proposed as a correct record by Muriel Rawsthorne and Councillor John Harrison.

Matters Arising

Abby Thomas advised that Mark Sanders asked for it to be noted that he would be happy to come and talk to the group regarding the services available from The Ark at the Youth Centre in North Ascot.

**37. Safe Place Scheme**

Alison Koen introduced herself as Business Development Manager for the Community Team for People with Learning Disabilities at Bracknell Forest Council.

Alison advised that one of her tasks was to re-launch the Safe Place Scheme. Alison described the scheme as a 'safe place for vulnerable people to go for support if they felt scared or anxious' when they were out in the community. Safe places included businesses, retail outlets and amenities in the town centre and some outlying areas including Crowthorne and College Town. Premises would display a sticker letting people know that they could provide a safe place for the vulnerable person. Any person using the scheme could carry a Safe Place Card which had their name on it and the details for up to 2 people who could be contacted to help provide assistance to the vulnerable person. Staff at premises who had signed up to the scheme had a cue card which gave them guidelines on what to do to temporarily help provide support to the vulnerable person.

The scheme had originally launched in Bracknell in 2010 with 52 'safe' premises and this number had now grown to 85 premises. Alison explained the re-launch was needed due to Bracknell's regeneration which had meant a change in business tenant mix. Originally aimed at people with a learning disability, the scheme was being re-launched to comprise other vulnerable groups including people with autism, dementia, physical disabilities and those with sensory difficulties.

Alison read out a couple of examples of how the scheme had successfully worked for people when they had found themselves in vulnerable, difficult situations in the community.

Alison said the Mayor would re-launch the scheme at 2pm on 11 May in the foyer at Time Square. The re-launch would last for one week and there was to be a stand – shared with Dementia Action Alliance – in the foyer at Time Square with updated literature including easy-read leaflets.

Alison said work was continuing to sign-up more businesses to the scheme and to spread the word amongst vulnerable groups. In addition, details of the scheme were included in the town's retailers customer service guide for people with disabilities. Further information could be found on the website <http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/safeplace>

The Chairman thanked Alison for her interesting presentation and said he hoped to attend the re-launch on 11 May.

### 38. **Dementia Action Alliance (DAA)**

Caroline Rathmell, DAA co-ordinator for Bracknell Forest presented on the work of the Dementia Action Alliance. Caroline said Bracknell Forest Dementia Action Alliance was part of a national scheme initiated by the Alzheimer's Society set up to help make communities and environments dementia friendly and to help people with dementia live at home for longer. Almost 1,200 people in Bracknell Forest over the age of 65 had dementia and this figure would increase due to the ageing population of people who moved to the area in the 1950s and 60s. Bracknell Forest achieved recognition in November 2013 by the Alzheimer's Society that it was 'working to become dementia friendly'. Caroline reported there were 145 DAAs around the country and Bracknell DAA has been running for 5 years.

The purpose of the DAA was to improve dementia awareness and encourage organisations to become dementia friendly with proposals such as providing seating areas for, and being more patient with, people suspected of having dementia. Caroline reported that 13 organisations had signed up to the DAA to-date, the majority of which were in the town centre. Organisations in outlying areas were being targeted and Caroline advised that Easthampstead Baptist Church had signed up to

the scheme this week. Caroline said that to be recognised and promoted as being part of the scheme, organisations must commit to 3 actions they would do to become dementia friendly. Staff were to be provided with a booklet containing guidance on how to help and support people with dementia. In addition, coin cards were also to be given to shops which can be kept in the till and used to help people with dementia with coin recognition at point of sale.

Caroline said Dementia Action Alliances was supported by 'Dementia Friends' of which there were 134 in Bracknell. Caroline reported that the Government had a target of achieving 3 million Dementia Friends nationally by 2020. Caroline advised the DAA ran regular Dementia Friends sessions with the next one taking place at 2pm on Tuesday 28 April at the offices of the Town Council.

Isabel Mattick said she was disappointed that no reference had been made in Caroline's presentation of people with early onset dementia. Caroline acknowledged Isabel's point and confirmed there were approximately 40 people in Bracknell Forest with the condition. Abby Thomas advised members that early onset dementia was included in Dementia Friends sessions.

Muriel Rawsthorne highlighted the need for Banks to improve their services for people with Dementia by giving an account of a neighbour's recent struggles due to a lack of understanding by Bank staff. Caroline said that problems often arise with people forgetting their PIN and advised that The Halifax and Lloyds Bank were part of the national Alliance and offered staff training so they could give more time to people with Dementia.

The Chairman thanked Caroline for her attendance and for her interesting presentation.

### 39. **Disabled Go Annual Review and Contract**

The meeting considered the Disabled Go Annual Review and Contract and Abby Thomas made the following key points:

- (a) Approximately 600 venues in the Borough were listed in the access guide;
- (b) 67 venues were added to the access guide during the review – 56 Key Access Guides and 11 Detailed Access Guides;
- (c) Existing venues were contacted annually to establish if updates had been made;
- (d) 20% of venue entries required review due to data changes such as opening times and visitor information;
- (e) 20% of venue entries required review due to non structural changes including the installation of a hearing assistance system and information being available in different formats such as large print or Braille;
- (f) 4% of venue entries required review due to structural changes such as the addition of accessible parking bays and the installation of automatic doors

Abby reported that a number of improvements had been made across Bracknell Forest including the installation of a new accessible toilet at Mill Pond and automatic main entrance doors at Kerith Family Church and Sandhurst Town Council. Members were advised that full information and new photographs had been added to the access guide for all improvements and changes.

Abby advised the meeting that the Disabled Go contract was up at the end of the year and consideration would be given as to whether the contract should be renewed.

Abby advised members that currently the access guide was used by slightly more than 3% of the population.

Abby advised that website usage for the access guide had increased from 9,401 views in 2012 to 15,055 views in 2014 and unique views to the site had also increased over that time.

Isabel Mattick reported that members of Red Diamonds had used the guide and she would like to see it continue.

Cllr Jim Finnie requested the addresses of the venues listed in the guide be updated to include the town or village they were located in.

***(Action: Abby Thomas)***

#### 40. **Any Other Business**

##### A Frames

Isabel Mattick reported on the difficulties encountered by older people and those with mobility issues when A frames were situated hazardously outside shops and businesses, citing Bentalls' A frames in particular. Members agreed that unless the transgression took place on a public highway no action could be taken by the Council. Members requested that the matter be referred to Assistant Chief Executive Victor Nicholls for consideration and to Vincent Paliczka, Director of Environment, Culture and Communities with a request that he submit a response to the group.

***(Action: Victor Nicholls and  
Vincent Paliczka)***

##### Wheelchair Access

The Chairman read out an e-mail he had received from David Ariss regarding access to the town centre for wheelchairs as some barriers were difficult to get around and some paths were very bumpy and muddy. The Chairman requested that this matter should be referred to Vincent Paliczka. Cllr Jan Angell advised members that it had been brought to her attention by some wheelchair users that they had experienced problems accessing the library due to the surface of the approaching path. The Chairman requested for this issue to be referred to Victor Nicholls.

***(Action: Vincent Paliczka and  
Victor Nicholls)***

##### Main Lift at Sports Centre

Isabel Mattick reported that the main lift at the Sports Centre has been out of order for 3 weeks. Isabel advised that maintenance workers had attempted to resolve the issue on 3 occasions without success and the ongoing issue was causing problems for some visitors to the centre in terms of movement around the building. Alison Sanders agreed to take the matter up with the Borough Surveyors.

***(Action: Alison Sanders)***

### Drop Kerbs

Isabel Mattick stated that some drop kerbs required a channel to be constructed on their edge to prevent people from rolling or falling into the road due to the sensory surfacing and cited the crossing from McDonald's to Skimped Hill as an example. The Chairman suggested Isabel refer the matter to Vincent Paliczka.

**(Action: Isabel Mattick)**

### Learning Disability Awareness Week

Mary Waight advised members that week beginning 15 June was Learning Disability Awareness week. The event was being led by Mencap with events planned to take place across the whole week in the town centre. Further information could be found on the Mencap website.

### Binfield Pavements

Cllr John Harrison said he had received complaints from older residents in Binfield about the condition of the pavements in Forest Road and near the roundabout in Haddenhurst Court. Cllr Harrison said he had reported the problem to the Highways department but had been advised the pavements were in an acceptable condition. The Chairman requested the matter be referred to Vincent Paliczka.

**(Action: Vincent Paliczka)**

### Block Paving

Jane Figg from the Macular Support Group said that the block paving being laid as part of the town's regeneration can lift slightly and become uneven, causing problems for people with a visual impairment. It was suggested that this issue may be caused by the type of concrete bed that had been laid. The Chairman requested that this matter be referred to Vincent Paliczka.

**(Action: Vincent Paliczka)**

### Access to Princess Square

Geraldine Edmond advised the group that she suffered from a progressive lung disease and as a consequence she used a taxi service to get to Princess Square. Geraldine said she was dropped off in the car park at level 1 but taxis were unable to park near the lifts safely forcing her to have to walk quite a distance to the lifts to access the shopping centre. The Chairman recognised this difficult issue and asked for the matter to be referred to Vincent Paliczka.

**(Action: Vincent Paliczka)**

## 41. **Items for Future Meetings**

The next meeting of the Bracknell Forest Access Group was to be held on 17 June 2015 at 7.30pm.

The Chairman said he would be in attendance pending re-election following the General Election.