

**BRACKNELL FOREST ACCESS GROUP**  
**20 JUNE 2018**  
**7.30 - 8.45 PM**



**Present:**

Councillor Clifton Thompson (Chairman)  
Councillor Jim Finnie (Vice-Chairman)  
Councillor Michael Brossard

**Also Present:**

Jane Figg, Macular Support Group

**In Attendance:**

Sam Wood, Communities and Engagement Officer  
Steven Caplan, Chief Officer: Property, Corporate Property and Resources  
Alison Sanders, Director of Resources  
Martin White, Bracknell and Wokingham College  
Vronwyn Hutch, Bracknell and Wokingham College  
Emma Shaw, Community Team for people with Learning Disabilities

**Apologies for absence were received from:**

Councillor Mrs Jan Angell  
Mira Haynes  
Muriel Rawsthorne  
Abby Thomas  
Louise Lucio-Palk

**91. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes from the meeting of 21 February 2018 were approved as a correct record.

Matters arising from the minutes were:

- It was commented that Campbell Christie had now left Bracknell and Wokingham College but his colleagues were going to present at the meeting.
- The Disabled Go items were being covered in the following agenda items.

**92. Presentation from DisabledGo**

Emily Edgar gave a presentation on how and why Disabled Go was founded and updated the group on current activity in Bracknell.

Disabled Go was founded by Gregory Burke who had become disabled following an illness and noticed he now faced lots of barriers which he hadn't faced previously. He often could not be able to get into shops as there were steps or he wouldn't be able to sit at the table of a restaurant.

As a result he visited 200 disability organisations to find out what information disabled people needed and launched the Disabled Go website with factual information regarding things such as access, signage and hearing loop systems.

Disabled Go had been working in Bracknell since 2011 and currently worked with 350 partners. They provide detailed and consistent information by visiting venues in person. The information is reviewed annually so that it is always up to date. They have over 100,000 users per month.

Currently there were 500 venues live in Bracknell including the Lexicon which would be going live in September 2018 along with the launch of the new Disabled Go App.

It was questioned whether Cineworld had been looked at in Bracknell as access problems had previously been highlighted by the Access Group and if recommendations could be made. It was confirmed that two screens had been looked at, however they didn't advise companies on how to improve their facilities unless asked although they did make suggestions.

It was questioned how many local people used the app and Emily confirmed she would send out details including the percentage of local people and tourists using the service.

**(Action Emily to send data)**

It was noted that people with disabilities may not use a computer and it was questioned how they could access the service. It was confirmed that they could call Disabled Go who would be able to advise on where they wanted to go.

**(Action: Emily to send group phone number)**

It was noted that the new app would also 'talk' to you and be able to read out information.

It was questioned how new facilities were accessed and it was confirmed that Disabled Go would visit each area annually.

**93. Presentation from Bracknell and Wokingham College on provision for students with Learning Disabilities**

Representatives from Bracknell and Wokingham College, Vronwryn Hutch and Martin White presented to the Access Group on how they support students with a learning difficulty or disability.

It was explained that the College aimed to work together to help learners to have the best experience at college regardless of their learning difficulty or disability.

- The programmes are all study programmes which combine life and study skills. There are two groups: Ambitions and Aspirations and mainstream study programmes.
- Learners often had special educational needs or a EHCP.
- There was a new programme which was a supported internship designed to give the learner prolonged work experience in a sector such as car maintenance. Along with extra maths and English to help them achieve with the ultimate goal to get them into the work place. So far this had been well received.
- The Apprenticeship courses could include various subjects including hairdressing, electrician and marketing.
- They also supported learners with work experience programmes

It was noted that Bracknell and Wokingham College would join with the ACTIVATE college group in October 2018. ACTIVATE had high quality special needs courses and could offer a wider range of courses than currently available at Bracknell and Wokingham College.

After questions, it was confirmed that Bracknell and Wokingham had close links with Kennel Lane School and Addington in Wokingham and close links with all main stream schools, independent providers and SENCO's. The College arranged transition periods with the schools if needed to help students adjust.

A typical example of the transition help provided, was where the College had worked closely with a guide dogs charity to ensure the building was easy to navigate and so the guide dog and student could both get used to the building and get around unaided. This was a success and the student was now attending university.

It was commented that there were no age limits on apprenticeships and red diamonds members had found the courses at the College beneficial.

It was confirmed that the college had 1000 mainstream students every year which included 63 students with a EHCP and studying in mainstream courses. It also included 32 students on the foundation course and 200 students also had in class support with specialist or 1:1 help with English and Maths. The courses were successful and well liked because they met the individual at their point of need.

The Ambitions Course lasted up to 3 years and was a flexible study programme for learners with support needs. The course included work skills and life skills were also covered along with work experience. Following the course, students would move onto supported internships or start working.

The Aspirations was a 1 year course designed to help students before they move on to college life. The students may have done GCSE's before and majority have ECHP. The students study Maths, English, Life skills and complete work experience to help them get into the workplace.

It was noted that the learner would decide what particular subjects they wanted to do from a range of options. Options for the courses included; performing arts to develop confidence, cooking, working on the land share, carpentry and supported internships. The students were also an integral part of the community and raised money through RAG week.

It was noted that OFSTEAD were pleased to have integration between students with additional needs and mainstream students.

It was confirmed that the slides would be circulated to group members

**(Action: Emma to circulate)**

It was questioned what age range the students were and it was confirmed that there was no age restriction for students with an ECHP and that students arrived from the age of 16. The college were conscious that they didn't want students to become too settled but push them onto new things.

It was noted that students aged 24+ would still have the courses available to them but the cost would be funded through a loan and it was acknowledged that there were funding issues over the age of 24.

It was questioned what support was given from local companies regarding work experience and it was confirmed that Level 2 hospitality courses had work experience with Waitrose. They were also supported by local hotels, garages, building sites and care homes.

The Access Group thanks Vronwyn and Martin for attending their presentation.

#### 94. **Building Accessibility**

Steven Caplan presented on the Access Improvement Programme Progress Report. It was noted that the Council was committed to making sure all public buildings are accessible and providing the funding to make any improvements required.

It was confirmed that the 2018/2019 programme of works would be focused on the carparks (point 2.6). The work to be completed was considered quite straight forward and would involve installing handrails and automated doors.

It was noted that all buildings would be fully accessible by the end of the financial year before considerations were made about works to buildings which were not publically accessible.

Following questions and discussion the following points were noted:

- South Hill Park was not shown in the report because it was a third party property. The broken lift at South Hill Park was their responsibility to fix.
- It was noted that Coral Reef's new design and layout meant wheel chair access was not difficult however this would now be the responsibility of Everyone Active who was another third party operator. This also applied to the Bracknell leisure centre although it was hoped the refurbishment would mean better access.
- It was noted that it would be good to have an extra column on the report which showed when DisabledGo had reviewed the property and a list of the available facilities. **(Action: Sam Wood)**
- It was noted that some buildings hadn't been re-audited in some time and it was confirmed that 2016 was a bench mark list. This would be noted and reviewed. **(Action: Steve Caplan)**
- It was noted that it would be the building manager's responsibility to make sure that the building remained accessible.
- Buildings were audited by independent companies.
- It was noted that there was no particular programme for future actions as all publically accessible buildings were now 100% fully accessible. However other service buildings to make sure they are accessible as well.

#### 95. **Tour of new Council offices**

The group would be given a tour of the new council facilities following the meeting by Alison Sanders.

#### 96. **Any Other Business**

It was questioned whether there were any further updates for the Safe Places Scheme. It was confirmed that Phil Jarvis was continuing to assess shops located in the Lexicon and encouraging shops to sign up.

Bracknell and Wokingham College confirmed they were a safe place and that they advised students to look for a safe place sticker if they needed help.

It was noted that the lift which goes from Waitrose to H&M had been out of order a lot. The handrail on the steps were very slippery as its metal. It was reported it is working at the moment. This will be mentioned to the Lexicon who own the lift.

Jane Figg spoke to the group about the London transport badges which allowed you to ask people to give up their seat on public transport. There was also a similar scheme in place at Heathrow Airport also do so if you have a hidden disability and work very well. (sunflower lanyard) you can write to Heathrow and they will give you one. Although there may need to be some more staff training on this.

The detail for accessing the Heathrow Scheme were:  
[special\\_assistance@heathrow.com](mailto:special_assistance@heathrow.com) / 0208 757 2700

Alison Sanders reported the Bracknell Forest Council website was recently assessed by SOCITM (Society of IT Managers) along with all local authority websites in England and came out top of the Berkshire authorities & joint highest score nationally for accessibility on the website. The website is checked and accredited by the Shaw's Trust, who are accessibility specialists.

It was reported that the charity, The Ark trust had visited the Council Chamber and had a Q&A session with local councillors as part of their Empower Course with UK Parliament which encourages adults with disabilities to engage in Civic life.

#### 97. **Items for Future Meetings**

The items suggested for future meetings were:

- Bobby Mulheir wanted to have a workshop with the Bracknell Forest Access Group on people accessing council facilities.

Group members were asked to note future meeting date of 10 October 2018