

BRACKNELL FOREST ACCESS GROUP
9 OCTOBER 2019
7.30 - 9.20 PM



Present:

Councillor Mrs Isabel Mattick, Bracknell Forest Council (Chairman)
Councillor Michael Brossard (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Lizzy Gibson
Councillor Mrs Sandra Ingham
Andrea McCombie-Parker, The Ark
Laura Mitchell, Berkshire Vision
Mary Waight, Community Learning Disability Services, BFC
Clare Rebbeck, COATS
Alain-Marcos Basurto Castillon

Apologies for absence were received from:

Ray Edwards MBE
Jane Figg
Mark Sanders

Also Present:

Katie Dyton, AccessAble
Samantha Wood, Bracknell Forest Council
Harjit Hunjan, Bracknell Forest Council

1. Presentation from AccessAble

Katie Dyton from AccessAble attending the meeting to present on AccessAble's work since its name change from DisabledGo.

DisabledGo had been founded by Dr Gregory Burke, a wheelchair user who had encountered accessibility challenges while at the University of Cambridge. Dr Burke's challenges in getting to usual student locations were such that he experienced a lack of spontaneity and an increase in social isolation. The first version of DisabledGo's access guide was launched as a result with Croydon Council in 2002.

AccessAble's social mission was to empower disabled people to make informed decisions about venues and locations where they can go to enjoy themselves. The information on the guides was also useful for people with other disabilities who were not wheelchair users, and parents with buggies.

The access guides included 1000 pieces of information per guide, and all information was factual and objective as AccessAble recognised that every disability had different requirements of a venue. Every piece of information in the access guides had been requested to be provided by a user. All assessments were delivered in person by a trained surveyor, and every guide was checked for quality by an external organisation before being published.

Katie demonstrated sections of the [AccessAble website](#). The website included photos and symbols and included information such as whether there was level access within the venue. Each entry also included information about the inside of a venue, including

whether background music was playing, whether seating furniture was movable and whether staff had been disability equality trained. Each guide included a section on the venue's toilets, around location, access, fixtures and dimensions.

The change from DisabledGo to AccessAble had seen a new and mobile app website launched, which both worked with screen reader software. The app was available and free to download on Android or Apple phones. An EasyRead version was available of every access guide, which summarised the entry by key text and photos.

In response to questions, the following points were noted:

- The website included route guides and shopping area guides, including routes from public transport points. Route guides were available for The Lexicon.
- The venues on the website were reviewed annually, and the venue would be revisited if any changes were reported.
- The current contract between Bracknell Forest Council allowed for 10 additional venues to be added to the guide each year.
- Members of the public could use the suggested venue function to propose a new venue for the guide.
- Members of the public who did not have online access could phone Access Able and request paper copies of the guides relevant to them.
- The data on the website was for public use, but the platform itself was closed with closed data access.
- The website didn't have Google maps integration as there was another mapping function on the website.
- AccessAble had agreed a partnership with TripAdvisor to link the guides with reviewing pages on the TripAdvisor website.
- Katie offered to send leaflets to any organisation who would like some.
- It was agreed that the presentation slides would be shared with the group, and Katie offered to present to other interested groups in the borough.
- It was recognised that not all Councils bought into AccessAble's work.
- AccessAble had just partnered with Transport for London to cover 6 pilot train stations but did not cover motorway service stations unless they were included in a local authority's access guide.
- The guides did not generally cover large events such as Glastonbury and Royal weddings but could cover one off events if the host organisation funded this work.
- AccessAble did analyse their user base through user numbers and user journeys available on Google Analytics, but could not take age and location into consideration under GDPR regulations.
- It was suggested that the text formatting on each entry be revisited to frontload where services were *not* available, to make the information clearer at a glance.
- It was noted that the information could not be RAG rated as this would mean the information was no longer objective.
- A surveying day would be planned for Bracknell Forest so that service users could experience what surveyors look for when visiting a venue.
- It was noted that AccessAble were in the second of a three year contract, joint funded by the Lexicon and Bracknell Forest Council.
- Organisations could opt in on an individual basis for around £150 for a detailed access guide per venue.

2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2019 were approved as a correct record.

3. **Future of the Access Group and Revised Terms of Reference**

The Access Group conducted a short workshop on its priorities and considered the following questions:

What do you perceive to be the purpose of the Access Group?

- A name change would be welcomed, other groups call themselves 'Disability Advisory & Access Forum'
- Specific issues tackled in meetings
- Protected characteristics covered
- To be an accessible form – consider time of day, location, parking requirements
- Access in its widest form, including access to employment
- To lead to action, not just discussion
- Information sharing and signposting
- To communicate more widely, both internal in Council and external
- Set goals on each item/presentation to assess what has been achieved
- Look at dementia forum model

Any suggestions for discussion or presentations at future meetings?

- Transport including free bus passes, Courtney buses and the R bus
- Plans for accessibility in The Deck
- Crossover with other Access Groups
- Personal information sharing within the Council (under GDPR)
- 'Where we are now' – an assessment of current accessibility
- Information provision through the website and Easyread
- Leisure provision for those with a disability
- Frimley ICS Barriers to Health and Wellbeing report
- Legal rights of the disabled
- Event with Paralympians etc to inspire young people
- Organisations' use of the Equalities Act
- Educating bodies on legal minimums and best practice

Anyone not present today who should be represented in the future?

- Citizens' Advice Bureau
- Public Health
- Involve – befriending scheme
- User led & advocacy groups
- Transport providers (including voluntary car shares and Sandhurst minibus etc)
- Wildridings Primary School
- Business representatives

4. **Items for Future Meetings**

This item was discussed under the previous item.

5. **Any Other Business**

There were no other items of business.

CHAIRMAN