



Bromsgrove
District Council
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

The Disabled Users Group

Meeting Monday 9th March 2009

10.00 am to 12.00 pm

**in the Committee Room at The Council House
Burcot Lane, Bromsgrove**

Present	
Granville Baker	Alvechurch resident
Ann Batchelor	Bromsgrove resident and carer
Gwyneth Breillat	
Mary Collett	Worcestershire Association of Service Users and Bromsgrove Disabled Access Group
Lorraine Graham	Padstone Day Centre (staff)
Jenny Lammas	Bromsgrove resident and Padstone Day Centre service user
Eileen Mulhall	Worcestershire Association of Service Users and Bromsgrove Disabled Access Group
Patricia Hackett	Bromsgrove resident and Mencap
Councillor Stephen Peters	Councillor for Hollywood and Majors Green
Fiona Scott	Equality Officer, Bromsgrove District Council
Ann Sloan MBE	Bromsgrove resident
Phil Street (Chair)	Executive Director, Bromsgrove District Council
John Tempest	Worcestershire Association of Service Users and North Worcestershire Mental Health Partnership

Attending as guest speakers	
John Godwin	Acting Head of Culture and Community Services, Bromsgrove District Council

Apologies	
Kenneth Breillat	Bromsgrove resident and Bromsgrove Disabled Access Group
Mr and Mrs Crossland	Bromsgrove Disabled Access Group
Robin Edwards	Bromsgrove resident
Wayne Knighton	Bromsgrove resident
Margaret Norton	Bromsgrove resident, Shenstone Court
Stephanie Sergeant	Rednal resident

1. Minutes of meeting 12th December 2008

Page 7 – paragraph 2nd from bottom of page.

Patricia Hackett asked that the reference to the provider of the community alarm service should state that the need is for a provider based in Worcestershire. Noted.

The minutes were otherwise agreed for accuracy.

2. Matters arising

Referring to Page 1, **Gwyneth Breillat** said that the issue of the dropped kerb at the end of Windsor Street has not been addressed. This has been brought up several times. The dropped kerb is behind the brick wall so mobility scooter and wheelchair users cannot be seen by traffic turning left into Windsor Street and this is very dangerous. It was agreed to discuss this under item 4. on the Agenda – Highways Issues.

As a general point of advice, **Councillor Peters** suggested that anyone would have a word with their County Councillor about highways issues.

3. Access to Leisure Services – John Godwin, Deputy Head of Street Scene and Community, Bromsgrove District Council

Phil introduced John as the Lead Officer for Leisure and Community services, a role to which John brings tremendous technical knowledge

The main issue is access opportunities for people with disability in terms of the facilities currently available. **Laura Kerrigan** is responsible for services for adults with disabilities. The aim is to make physical activity part of people's every day lives. For example, sessions have started at the Dolphin based on dance activities.

Previous meetings of this group have recorded comments particularly in relation to access to facilities and most of those comments have related to the Dolphin. The Dolphin centre was refurbished in 2005 in line with the Disability Discrimination Act regulations. The old centre layout was very disjointed. When the centre was originally built in the 1960s, it was on a steep bank. This resulted in treacherous stairs at the back of the building and meant amongst other things that there was a long walk from the changing rooms to the sports hall. When the Disability Discrimination Act came into force a decision was made to infill the L-shape of the building and create another structure on stilts and thereby include Disability Discrimination Act DDA compliant facilities.

The building standards document known as "Part M" sets a minimum standard for buildings which were met as well as additional facilities. There is a moveable hoist to lower people into the water.

Eileen Mulhall – some of the group members go to Chadsgrove School to use their heated pool.

It is accepted that the heating of the pool is important but it is difficult to compare because of the different size of the pool Chadsgrove with the Dolphin Centre as they are very different in size.

The water is 84° in main pool, the air temperature is about 86°. It is a multi use pool and the swimming club complain that this temperature is too hot, but disabled people complain that this temperature is too cold. Although the small pool is slightly warmer, the water is treated through the same system.

The industry standard is 82° but we've increased by 2 degrees for the benefit of the majority – increasing it by any more risks a failure of the heating machinery. The swimming club want 80° but have been told that they can't have this.

To warm the water by 1° takes four and half hours. There is a 12 hour total turnover of the water. To increase it by 2° would take 24 hours because of the large volume of water. In that time other users could be complaining. It would then take twice that time to get this temperature back down to the original. It would be impossible to control that volume of water to suit the needs of different people.

Eileen asked why the Council can't build a pool for the use of disabled people?

Chadsgrove School are in the process of widening community access to their heated pool with the support of Bromsgrove District Council.

There will be a new Dolphin centre at some point in the future and the new design would make use of two separate heating systems for separate pools but at the moment we cannot make the temperature changes happen.

Eileen pointed out that arising from the sessions at Chadsgrove, the coach there wants the users to go to the Dolphin centre to improve their swimming skills above and beyond what they can do at Chadsgrove.

Mary Collett said that disabled users are not asking for a therapy pool, they just want the ordinary pool slightly warmer.

Ann Batchelor confirmed that the Chadsgrove pool is a therapy pool, heated to 96°.

Gwyneth said that the small pool at the Dolphin is not accessible for disabled people. Couldn't disabled people have a fortnightly session following the mothers and toddlers session?

John (Godwin) is happy to look into providing a fortnightly session for disabled people. It would probably have to be on a Monday or a Friday and Liz Morgan from Chadsgrove School should be involved.

Gwyneth said that she had been to the Dolphin and had been lowered into the pool by the hoist but she was out of her depth and was petrified – she needs a rail to hold on to. She hasn't been to Bromsgrove baths since because she is frightened of the water.

Ann Sloan said that she understands that there would be costs for what the group is asking for but money was spent on the gymn but a rail at the side of the pool would cost little. **Ann** can't swim but goes in water to do some exercises.

If the Dolphin Centre is going to be rebuilt, hopefully disabled people will have some input to the design. Currently it is quite a long walk to the pool and for someone like **Ann (Sloan)** the height of showers is too high. It was accepted that when the Dolphin Centre was designed, there was less awareness of disability.

Mary Collett said that the hoist used to be able to go in the shallow end.

There are two points for accessing the pool with the hoist. The 3'4" water depth is no longer used as we have been told that people prefer the 4'6" depth because the pressure of the water helps them to move from the hoist into the water. Staff at the Dolphin spoke to the users they had at the time this was decided who said that they preferred to the 4'6" which is why only this one is now provided.

Gwyneth said that she was put right in the middle of the pool and **John (Godwin)** suggested that this was probably an operator error. **John** will personally arrange an appointment for **Gwyneth** to be re-introduced to the pool correctly and under supervision if she will contact him.

Ann Sloan asked if a rail could be installed. At the moment there is an indentation all round the side. This is known as the "scum channel" where the water flows from the top to the filtration system. The staff have to keep an eye open for children who work their way round from the shallow to the deep end holding onto the rim of the channel. A rail would be 12-18" above the water level and would be of no benefit. As the surface is tile not porcelain, it can't be drilled. Also there would be a health and safety problem as a rail could trap someone's arm or leg and could trap them in the water.

In a modern pool, water is pumped from the bottom upwards over the sides which filtrates the water. This brings the water level up to the top of the side of the pools so that you can just put your hands out on the side.

Gwyneth asked is whether there will be a walk in pool - she would be able to get in by sliding into the water. There are different styles – this would be a leisure pool rather than swimming pool. There is some thinking that we should go back to the Victorian principle of having changing rooms at the side of the pool.

Ann Sloan recognised that this group is trying to use a pool for activities that it wasn't designed for. Users in this group need equipment to use in the water – e.g. special types of floats and kick stools. **Ann** can do press ups in the water but not on land.

Some of the facilities talked about in this meeting have not been publicised. How many people know about the hoists? **Ann (Sloan)** only knew about it from the Health Service. People who can't swim can still benefit from the pool facilities.

Gwyneth said that everyone who works on roads and leisure facilities are able bodied and they don't think about what it's like to be disabled or having to manage with small children.

John (Godwin) agreed that there is some lack of awareness and lack of promotion. John has asked staff to look at more promotion and publicity and the Council is working with the Primary Care Trust on their health improvement programme and the exercise referral scheme from GPs.

Ann Sloan said that she didn't get her information from her doctor – it was the orthopaedic hospital in Birmingham. Although she had been told that there is no hydrotherapy pool in Worcestershire, in fact there is one at the Royal Worcester Hospital. However, Ann would have to buy her own equipment and take it backwards and forwards with her which would be difficult for her to do.

John (Godwin) will look into buying extra equipment if we can provide a list of items that members of this group want to use.

The new gymn facilities have got a lot of Inclusive Fitness Initiative equipment. **Patricia Hackett** has knowledge and experience of this Initiative and agreed with **John (Godwin)** to go and have a look at the new facilities.

It was agreed that a directory of facilities available for disabled people to use is needed. This could be something that would be for to Emma Barton to produce.

4. Highways issues for April meeting with Jon Fraser, Highways Department, Worcestershire County Council

As discussed Jon Fraser has agreed to attend the next meeting of this Group on 3rd April. The discussion today was to compile a list of items to send to him in advance of that meeting.

- **Chapel Street, Bromsgrove Town Centre** – terrible potholes which make it very difficult for those with mobility difficulties walking or when using a mobility scooter – this has been raised before when Windsor Street was resurfaced – the resurfacing went just round the corner into Chapel Street and then stopped.

- **Barley Mow Lane, Catshill** – the potholes have been mended but more more have appeared next to the repairs – the road is used by lorries on a regular basis – the camber of the pavement is too steep so **Mary** has to use the road in her electric wheelchair
- **Alvechurch, Bear Hill – Granville Baker** has been trying for 5 years to get the disabled parking bays right in Alvechurch – one on Bear Hill is used by anyone who is doing their shopping/unloading etc. – this space has been patched (very badly) and the markings have never been replaced - the row of spaces outside the Village Hall has one disabled space at the end at right angles to the road – this has a severe camber and driver vision problems as well as the triangular low level obstruction in the road surface - this space should moved to the top of the row where it would be parallel to the road and the traffic – other general parking spaces in the village square are not marked because the paint has worn off.
- Generally, repairs and actions to improve road and pavements surfaces are done without consultation.
- Disabled bays in the Council Car Park are too far from the Council House – can we have some more disabled bays near the council house? **Fiona** will make sure that for future meetings of this group a number of spaces will be coned off.
- **The dropped kerb at the end of Windsor Street (as mentioned before) is a priority.**
- Why can't dropped kerbs be done when the roads are resurfaced? roads – surely it is a more efficient way of doing things rather than coming back to do it the dropped kerb later
- **New Road car park** – the camber makes it difficult for disabled people to get in and out of their cars.
- Blue Badge parking spaces outside the Queen's Head are often abused by people without Blue Badges – can we draw the attention to the traffic wardens to regularly patrol?
- Disabled parking bays – the two outside Iceland were taken away and the 3 outside the Golden Cross were given over to taxis – why?

- **Patricia Hackett** asked whether the signs outside the Golden Cross could be “**disabled use daytime/ taxis at night**”?
- **Patricia** had contacted Fiona about the parking in Rigby Lane – cars park half on the pavement and half on the road.
- **Patricia** has emailed the County and has had no response – the road is cluttered with overflow parking from the station which obstructs parents with pushchairs and buggies and people in wheelchairs and mobility vehicles.
- This is a County Council matter and a Traffic order is needed.
- The cost of parking at the station is £3.00 a day – when the station is redeveloped there will be a massive car park – **Lorraine Graham** asked we could consider reducing costs to attract people to pay and save the costs that are incurred elsewhere because of the inconsiderate parking?
- The road is dangerous and the traffic flow is down to one lane and visibility is limited.
- **Rigby Lane** – schools coaches have difficulty parking.
- Possible need to consider residents only parking.
- **Ann Batchelor** asked about the Shopmobility town map which is needed to show routes around the town – need dropped kerbs outside **St Peter’s Church** to get into town.
- What about the estates e.g. Brook Court etc.? They need a route to get into town.
- Camber of pavements is a problem for people in wheelchairs and mobility vehicles – **Windsor Street is particularly bad**.
- **Lorraine** – Greenscope are campaigning for a dropped kerb for the use of service users from Green scope and visitors to Greenscope.
- **There are issues about the type of dropped kerb** – rough surfaces makes it harder for users of wheelchairs and mobility vehicles.

- **Gwyneth's** new scooter stops if it goes over a bump in the road.
- Are taxis parking on double yellow lines outside Iceland? If so, why aren't they being prosecuted? Some local authorities do their own enforcement and Bromsgrove is considering their position on this. Otherwise it is the police – they have one traffic warden for the whole of Bromsgrove District.
- When is Bromsgrove District Council responsible and when is the County Council responsible? **Jon - please explain exactly what Highways are responsible for?**
- Housing Associations have some responsibility for footpaths at their properties.
- It was noted that the County Council elections are on 6th June and if you want to contact your County Councillor about Highways issues contact Sue Mould to find out who your councillor is – elections@bromsgrove.gov.uk
- **Ann Sloan** has rung the Hub about this and other things and found them very helpful.
- **Lorraine** – Padstone and Greenscope are starting projects on travel training for adults with learning disabilities. In **Crabtree Lane**, the area free of parked cars is on a dangerous junction and needs at least a zebra crossing – this would give a focal point for those learning to enable them to use transport independently
- At the **Kings Head**, the crossing is worn out – it needs remarking - cars are coming round the corner they can't see that there is a crossing.
- In anticipation of the refurbishment of the toilet block by end of June 2009 at the latest, directional road signs for Bromsgrove should show the **Changing Places logo**.
- General issues of the attractiveness of the Town Centre – some people don't find it appealing enough to want to visit it – they prefer to go to Redditch.

- Pavements into town (Birmingham Road and Town Centre High Street generally uneven – makes it difficult for people in electric wheelchairs and mobility scooters.
- Recent road resurfacing work in Blackwell was done very well.

5. Other Items not on main agenda

5.1 Parking

The extra hour for Blue Badge holders has not been publicised. It has been in the newspapers and is mentioned in the Car Parks leaflet (circulated with the papers for today's meeting) but is not explained on the parking signs. **Fiona** to check.

5.2 Community Transport

There was a consultation meeting on 19th February which was attended by a number of people from this group. It is proposed that one wheelchair accessible minibus is purchased to start with. The Council is currently drawing up an agreement with WRVS. The minibus service will not affect the current Rural Rides provision. The new service is likely to be operating by September this year.

5.3 Railway Station development

The full funding has now been acquired. **Patricia Hackett** and **Eileen Mulhall** have been involved in the access issues for the new development. **Ann Sloan** would like some feedback about this. There will be lifts to enable access from one side of the station to the other. **Fiona** to invite Malcolm Richardson to a future meeting of this group.

5.4 Refurbishing of the town centre toilet block including a Changing Places facility

The project is now back on target with a likely opening towards the end of June this year. **Patricia** is now involved to ensure that the final design meets the requirements of the Mencap "Changing Places" standard. This will then mean that the Bromsgrove facility can be advertised in the Mencap national network of Changing Places and can carry the logo.

5.5 Dropped kerbs

The County Council wrote a reply to the Bromsgrove Disabled Access Group about the policy for installing dropped kerbs. See end of minutes for content of letter.

5.6 General comments

Eileen commented how much Bromsgrove is moving forward on things.

6. Items for meetings in 2009

**Bromsgrove Railway Development Project -
Malcolm Richardson, Network Rail – subject to his availability**

**Access to shops - Adrian Wyre, Building Control, Bromsgrove
District Council**

**Lifeline Service and Telecare - Rachel McAndrews,
Bromsgrove District Council**

**Results of Customer Standards Consultation and Customer
Satisfaction Survey - Hugh Bennett, Assistant Chief Executive,
Bromsgrove District Council**

**Social facilities in Bromsgrove in relation to reduction of Day
Care Services**

**Bromsgrove District Housing Trust – Aids and Adaptations
Working Group**

Hate Crime and Incidents Reporting System

7. Date, time and place of next meeting

**Friday 3rd April 2009, 10.00 to 12.00 pm, the Committee Room
at the Council House**





worcestershire
county council

Mrs A Crossland
Bromsgrove Disabled Access Group
49 Redland Close
Marlbrook
Bromsgrove
Worcestershire
B60 1DZ

27 January 2009

Dear Mrs Crossland

Request for Dropped kerbs

Thank you for your letter dated 17 January 2009 requesting dropped kerbs in Churchfields Road and informing us of the problems wheelchair users and mobility scooter users are experiencing with the dropped kerbs at the Stratford Road end of Windsor Street.

Due to the high number of requests and the limited amount of funding available, the budget for the current financial year has been allocated and there are no available funds for this financial year. However, I will be able to investigate your request for consideration in the next financial year.

On receipt of a request, a site visit is carried out to ascertain whether or not the scheme is feasible. The request is then scored against a number of criteria, including the potential to improve accessibility, the level of local support, and the potential for mode change. Once scored the request is placed in a table of desired infrastructure. The schemes with the highest scores and priorities are then taken forward for implementation. Unfeasible requests are also discounted.

Once all requests are scored the information is available for viewing on the Worcestershire County Council website (www.worcestershire.gov.uk/transport/walking).

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Yours sincerely

Caren Stevens
Project Officer



cc. Fiona Scott, Bromsgrove District Council

20090127 Broms Disabled Access group - Mrs A Crossland



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE