

WEST BERKSHIRE DISABILITY ALLIANCE

Minutes of Members Open Meeting Held at Greenfield House, Highview, Royal Avenue, Calcot. Monday 16 MAY 2005

Present:

Mick Hutchins, Peter Dolphin, John Clarke, John Carr, John Holt, John Head, Cliff Haines, Pat Backholer, Cathy McCall, Alice Mayoit, Eileen Kearns, Peter Absalom, Phil Woollcombe, Doreen Bullen, Ann Darby, Doreen Turner, Trevor Dobson, Shan Mills, Helen Cunningham, Jim Sweeting, Janet Parker, Christine Eeley, Betty Hatton, David Sharp, Susan Tabor, George Athorn, Betty Hatton and Dave Foster

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chairman welcomed the members to the Open Meeting.

He went on to particularly welcome the speakers, Helen Cunningham Disability Sports Development Officer for the Berkshire Sports Partnership, Shan Mills and Trevor Dobson from the Ormonde Resource Centre.

Apologies were received from Peter Mason, Ron Renton, Roy Smith, Jill Bosley, Molly Davison, Charles Baxter and John Dolton.

2. PETER EDWARDS – POLICE LIAISON OFFICER

Unable to attend.

3. HELEN CUNNINGHAM - DISABILITY SPORTS DEVELOPMENT OFFICER FOR THE BERKSHIRE SPORTS PARTNERSHIP

Helen Cunningham explained that she had worked closely with the Culture and Youth Services department of West Berkshire Council, to develop sports facilities for disabled people of all ages and to make them accessible.

West Berkshire Council have a disabled sports directory on the Council website.

Helen told the meeting about the Park House Sports College scheme for young disabled people. The young people on the scheme undertake five weeks of training and involvement. After this time, they have the opportunity to join mainstream activities.

She went to say that she is busy raising the awareness of sports coaches and leisure centre managers, about Disability Discrimination legislation and inclusive programmes of fitness.

She further went onto explain the Inclusive Fitness Initiative (IFI). It is a multi million pound Sport England and English Federation for Disability Sport Funded Programme project. The project is about assisting leisure centres nationally, in providing accessible and inclusive fitness facilities, catering for the needs of disabled and non-disabled people alike. Helen invited members of the WBDA to attend the official launch of the IFI project at the Kennet Leisure Centre. The launch will be on 27 May starting at 10.30am. This project is the first in West Berkshire, the fifth in the South East region and one of only one hundred and fifty centres nationwide to get this prestigious award.

The Kennet Leisure Centre project has been set up as a model. Helen will be going out to other leisure centres to carry out assessments, so as to establish what needs to be achieved to move forward. This will ensure inclusion as well as providing awareness training. Following her assessments, Helen will report back to West Berkshire Council. The WBDA asked that the assessment results could be provided to them, in due course.

Jim Sweeting of West Berkshire Council Culture and Youth services department, spoke about the Councils programme for inclusion, he highlighted 2007 as an important date. At this time the contracts for the leisure centres are due for renewal. This will be the opportunity WBC can control what it wants to achieve, how to achieve it and agree the timescale for implementation. He went on to say, he would welcome any ideas and feedback on related issues.

Helen was made aware that the Stroke Club would like to have opportunities to swim. She said this could be arranged, the club management must contact the Council, explaining this is the correct route for any individual or group, whatever the sporting or fitness activity. However, she said that she was always available to speak with, to give advice and provide a signpost.

4. MINUTES & MATTERS ARISING FROM WBDA OPEN MEETING MONDAY 21 MARCH 2005

The Minutes of the West Berkshire Disability Alliance Open Meeting held on Monday 21 March 2005, were accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

Matters Arising

Item 4 (2)(4f) – Hydrotherapy Pool

John Holt gave a brief update on progress of this project. He also informed the meeting that there is a pool 'on the blocks' for The Royal Berkshire Hospital.

Item 4 (5c) – REACT Scheme

John Clarke confirmed this project is running along very well and new sponsors are coming forward.

5. THE ORMONDE CENTRE – REACHING OUT ACROSS WEST BERKSHIRE

This was a joint presentation by Shan Mills and Trevor Dobson from the Ormonde Resource Centre.

The Centre is based at the Newbury College campus. It comes under the control of West Berkshire Council Social Services department. Its purpose is to provide adult support services for people with physical disabilities in West Berkshire, aged 18 – 65 years. It is a base to maximise choice, control and quality within each persons life, by providing an equal opportunities service. Programmes of activities are developed in partnership using external resources to encourage independence. The service is accessed on a referral only basis by Care Managers.

The Ormonde Centre is aware of the demand and need to support the eastern part of the district. To that end it provides 'East of District Day Services'. The service is situated in Greenfield house and is available two days per week, it has its own staff team and transport and again it is accessed by referral only.

'East of District Day Development'

- Developing a specialised service for people with head injuries in partnership with the Headway organisation.
- Providing courses with partners eg Newbury College.
- Providing photography course funded by Ufi.
- Soon to have own UK Online Centre provided by BNLC

ORMONDE OUTREACH PROJECTS

The outreach projects do not require a referral but work on a 'drop in' basis.

Waterside Café

- Waterside Community Centre, Newbury
- Run by users
- Business enterprise
- Community Drop in Facility
- Tuesday and Thursday

Friday Club

- Lambourn Centre
- Community Drop in facility
- Supported by ORC staff
- Fridays

Riverside Coffee Shop

- Riverside Community Centre, Newbury
- Recycled Teenagers Club (over 50's)
- Community Drop in Facility
- Supported by ORC staff
- Fridays

Wednesday Drop In

- Frank Hutchins Community Hall, Thatcham
- Community Drop in facility
- Supported by ORC staff

Saturday Drop In

- Frank Hutchins Community Hall, Thatcham
- Community Drop in Facility
- Project manager and staff
- Supported by ORC staff

OOPS Home Support

- Commissioned to visit individuals
- Those unable to get into the community
- IT support – training
- Supported by ORC staff

Developments

- Increased staff team
- An increased service across West Berkshire
- Digital photography
- Work skills courses
- Opti-music summer school
- Disability awareness training
- www.diwb.org

How are these projects funded?

- West Berkshire Social Services
- Vodafone Foundation
- BNLCF
- Ufi – WAPAF
- Ufi – Big Lottery Fund

Future Developments

- 60 plus service
- Drop in for east of district

Disability Information West Berkshire (www.diwb.org)

- Development – redesign website and place on new server BNLCP
- Funded by Ufi through Big Lottery Fund
- Get even more local information
- Create partnerships with voluntary and statutory bodies
- Keep it up to date

Trevor Dobson told the meeting, two years ago the Ormonde Resource Centre had developed and piloted a Disability Awareness programme. This was in response to the Disability Discrimination Act. He explained there was a rolling programme of training being undertaken for West Berkshire Council, ten sessions had been completed. There is a commission from the Thames Valley Police at Sulhamstead Police Training College for their officers; this is based on disabled people attending Courts.

Shan and Trevor said that there is often the comment ‘wonderful things happening in Newbury but how do people get there, all my Council Tax seems to be spent there’. Hopefully, people can now understand there is plenty going on outside Newbury and more is being developed. They went on to remind members that information is available from the Mobile Library service, at the same time it is worth looking at what that service has to offer disabled and older people.

6. CALCOT, PANGBOURNE, THEALE, READING – ARE THEY ACCESSIBLE

The Chairman led this item as a session for information gathering. He made it clear that the WBDA has a limited knowledge of matters in the eastern area of the West Berkshire district, in comparison with the western. He went on to explain that this situation must change and this meeting was a start to that process.

He explained that the West Berkshire Access Guide was applicable across the whole district and that the WBDA had

worked in partnership with West Berkshire Council, to produce this booklet.

Set out below are bullet points that give a brief outline of the accessibility issues discussed:

- Ford's Farm is out on a limb being it is not Calcot; it is on the other side of the A4 Bath Road, which provides a barrier.
- Newbury and Thatcham are perceived as being reasonably accessible but Pangbourne, Theale etc. as not.
- Getting to the doctor's surgery is seen as a problem.
- Getting to the Pharmacy is a problem for some. Where there is a delivery service this does not work as well as it should.
- Residents feel more aligned to Reading than Newbury.
- It is easier and less costly to travel to Reading rather than Newbury and Thatcham.
- Reading has more choice than Newbury and Thatcham.
- When travelling to Newbury it means a change of buses for some people. This is also applicable travelling more locally in the eastern area.
- Travel tokens – continuation of the scheme, acceptability on rail and taxi services
- Enthusiasm and support for the Readibus service, would like to see larger buses able to carry more people.
- Streatley only one bus per week.
- Streatley parking on pavements, including dropped curbs, prevents wheelchair, mobility scooter etc. users, access.
- Streatley narrow lanes prove dangerous for wheelchair, mobility scooter etc. users. This is due to lack of speed limits,

hedges not being cut back and sections of unmade roads being churned up by off road vehicles and quad bikes.

- Lo-rider buses – disabled provision taken up by pushchairs and buggies.
- There is a charge for Shopmobility scooters in Reading.
- In the Oracle the Blue Badge scheme only entitles a car to be parked in a disabled bay, there is a charge for parking.

George Athorn suggested that the WBDA develop a questionnaire to survey members and perhaps others. This should be an endeavour to identify and quantify the extent of concerns, as a whole. It was agreed this would be taken to a WBDA Executive meeting.

The Chairman said it was essential to have an east of West Berkshire member on the WBDA Executive. He explained this could be achievable fairly soon, as the Annual General meeting was due on 18 July. At the AGM, elections to the Executive were due to be held.

7. COMMUNITY CARE IN THE EAST OF WEST BERKSHIRE – IS IT WORKING?

This was a brief discussion but not a great deal forthcoming. The Chairman said that this could be put on a future agenda, when members had given more consideration. In the meantime, if thought could be given to this matter, observations should be forwarded to the Chairman in writing or e-mail or if need be telephone.

John Holt reminded the meeting that for anyone using West Berkshire Home Care service, there was a user group. This group met regularly, to keep people abreast of current issues as well as raising concerns. Transport to and from these meetings was available by arrangement.

8. TRANSPORT IN THE EAST OF WEST BERKSHIRE – IS IT ACCESSIBLE?

This item had been dealt with in the discussion under item 6 above.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman declared there was no time for Any Other Business, commenting that there was probably little else to bring forward at this time. It would appear that everyone had a good airing of topics, under item 6 above. He thanked everyone for attending, believing that the meeting had been very useful and he, for one had a better grasp of issues in the eastern part of the district. Furthermore, he confirmed that east and west of the district needed to come closer together to work from a position of strength, he looked forward to further meetings at this venue.

10. DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT WBDA OPEN MEETING

Monday 5 September 2005, commencing 1845 hours at John O'Gaunt Youth and Community Centre, Priory Road, Hungerford, Berkshire.