

Northampton Borough Council - Northampton Disabled People's Forum

Friday, 10 February 2017 10:30 -12:30pm

1. WELCOMES, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

Present: Cllr Phil Larratt (Co Chair NBC), Martin De Rosario (Co Chair NBC), Cllr J Davenport (NBC), B Barber (Individual BB), L Barber (Individual LB), V Rockall (NBC VR), J Dale (JD), A Leighton (Northampton Highways AL), D Simpson (NBC DS), Cllr R Ashraf (NBC CA), K Mills (NBC KM), Alastair Ulke (Northampton Chronicle & Echo AU), Beverley Mennell (Individual BM), Carl Weininger (British Polio Fellowship CW), Gillian Rice (British Polio Fellowship GR), Nisha Mejer (Individual NM), Luisa Jepson (Northampton Inter Faith Forum LJ).

Apologies: Jacqueline Forrest-Smith, Graeme Wilson, Michael Jackson, Alice Morgan

2. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

Minutes recorded and approved.

No matters arising.

3. VOICE

Will attend future meeting.

4. DISABLED PARKING

CP: over the years the ability to park on streets has become more difficult. Spaces are diminishing.

Spaces around the bus station. Bradshaw St and St Giles St have reduced.

There are issues around Mercers Row. Car parks are too far away for people with disability.

There is little or no enforcement for the Blue Badge system. The system is being abused.

BM: Disability is not always visible. Need officers to enforce as there is too much abuse.

AL: In terms of allocation of disabled spaces there has been a slight increase over the last 7 years. People with disability can park on yellow lines. We need to balance the need of the town and disabled parking. Open to ideas and views of the forum and feedback will be taken back to the team.

CW: Has been disabled since 1957. Society has become non-confrontational.

People are issued blue badges and not scrutinised enough and the criteria vary.

Too many blue badges issued and not enough spaces.

St Giles – cannot park there as there is too much obstruction. The bus bay has been put in the middle of the road.

AL: The design of St Giles has gone through safety audit and the delay is short.

PL: How do you deal with a dropped kerb that doesn't lead to anywhere? This becomes confusing.

AL: Will look into this.

BM: A huge amount of money has been spent on St Giles St. Matters such as these should have been looked at in more detail. This is public money and the expenditure was colossal. No thought has been put in for the disabled bays.

PL: It is better for wheelchair users at St Giles St. Spencer Parade needs to be reviewed next.

ACTION: AL to look at whether the street is wide enough to park on both sides of the road.

CW: Made a Freedom of Information request. There was no consultation from the Disabled Peoples Forum about disabled parking.

CL: There has been a clear lack of communication with this forum for the design of Saint Giles St.

Going forward, the forum will need full and inconclusive consultation. Where spaces are lost, would like to be replaced and want the abuse of the blue badge system addressed.

LB: People are getting older and cannot get on buses and therefore cannot travel into the town centre.

CL: Buses don't always go into town and people should consider taxis.

BM: It is important that NBC listens to the forum. They are servants to the people.

JD: Happy to talk about future projects with the forum. NBC funded St Giles St and NCC designed it. The organisations worked in partnership.

ACTION: AL to return to the next meeting to give feedback.

5. ACTION PLAN - LUISA JEPSON - NORTHAMPTON INTER FAITH FORUM HATE CRIME PROJECT

LJ works in partnership with Northamptonshire Rights and Equality Council (NREC). LJ was part of the Hate Crime Unit for Northampton Police before it was disbanded.

Northampton has seen a decrease in reporting of Hate Crime and incidents.

MD and BM are Hate Crime champions and would like to use this forum to capture incidents and to create evidence to present to the Police.

VR: NBC has funded this project for a year and there is still a lot to do. Needs to go across the forums and support is needed.

BM: This is a good start and will need to be funded for more than a year.

It was decided that LJ can attend the forums quarterly.

CA: Will also speak to Stephen Mold.

6. COMMUNITY INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Graeme gave an update for Disabled Sports.

BM: This town lacks toilet facilities which is a basic human right. This needs to be addressed.

CL: There are new toilets in Abington St and Victoria St.

CD: There are not enough facilities for carers.

CW: There is a lack of signage for toilets. **ACTION:** NM to contact John Dale regarding this.

BM: Contact someone from Diabetes to attend Forum.

7. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

May 12th Guildhall 10:30am -12:30pm