



HORSHAM AND DISTRICT *ACCESS FORUM*

The Horsham and District Access Forum brings together local people who work towards improving access to public places for everyone, whether they are disabled or able-bodied, parents with children in pushchairs, or the elderly.

MINUTES of meeting held on Thursday 9 September 2010 at 10.30am

Present:	Andrew Baldwin	HDC Councillor
	Damian Brewer	HDC – Equalities Officer
	Susan Carter	Independent
	Steve Hendry	Independent
	Rory Jarman	HDC Officer
	Margaret Killner	Independent
	Yvonne Law	Independent
	Joyce Narborough	Independent (was Arthritic Care)
	May Pope	Independent (was Horsham Carers)
	Janet Raybould	4sight
	Pat Rutherford	HDC Councillor
Invited speakers	Anna Camp	HDC – Community Development Manager
	Alex Gander	HDC – Environmental Waste Serv Manager
	Judy Buckley	HDC – Head of organising Elections

1. Welcome, Apologies and Introductions

Andrew Baldwin, Cabinet member for Housing and Community Development, Horsham District Council (HDC) chaired the meeting and took the Minutes. The Chairman welcomed everyone, especially Steve then people introduced themselves. Apologies received from Margaret Alford, Lilian Bold, Gillian Christensen, Elizabeth Green, Jill Hardie, Norman Raby, Terry Rixon, Emma Smith

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2010 – agreed as a true record. Damian to add them to HDC website

3. Matters arising not covered elsewhere on the Agenda

(a) “A” Boards – West Sussex Highways are responsible for these. The trial has been running several months - so far 65 licences have been issued to local retailers. Those that have a licence appear to be complying with the terms and conditions. Any enforcement action will start in October with warning letters followed by removal of the offending boards for those premises who have not applied for a licence or who are not complying with the licence. East Street excluded for now due to ongoing roadworks but likely to be brought into line with the rest of the town in due course. Consideration may be given to imposing a fee in the future but this has not been agreed. An “exceptions” protocol is being developed to deal with several premises which are likely to fall outside the general terms and conditions.

(b) East Street update - £450,000 has been spent by WSCC and HDC on improving the street scene and road surface. Works due to finish soon with the official opening possibly 15 or 16 October. Kerbs have been removed to improve accessibility particularly for the elderly and mobility impaired. A “safe” footway area has been

provided for blind and partially sighted pedestrians using a hazard tactile paving in place of the kerb. The only motor vehicles who can use it are blue badge holders, vehicles wishing to load and unload, the emergency vehicles, statutory undertakers like gas, water and the Council's maintenance vehicles. Waiting bays will be provided for loading vehicles and blue badge holders. Cycling is permitted in both directions.

- (c) Patient transport to Redhill hospital – Community Transport schemes don't operate in time to get people to Redhill for 8am appointments. Anna gave out details of the G4S arrangement. They are contracted until at least the end of March 2011. They serve Horsham town and most of the villages in the north of the District. If you need to use them, they will ask you two questions. You only qualify for G4S transport if the answer to the questions are both no. Anna to remove phone numbers of e.g. PCT then add it to the HDC website to replace the one already on the website

4. Question and answer session with Alex Gander, Manager of Environmental Waste Services at HDC

Alex explained that the new system was designed to be more efficient - there used to be 3 separate crews but now the same crew do the same streets so they get to know if there are problems and which houses have assisted collections. There are two drivers per vehicle – one of them goes ahead of the vehicle to make sure the bins are paired up and in the correct position and to collect those bins which have assisted collections. Those people with a fully assisted collection have an "A" sticker on their bins.

Residents should leave the bins on the edge of the pavement. Where it is safe to do so they collect from one side of the road so it leaves the other pavement clear. There are around 56,000 properties in the District. Acorn Plus scheme has now been rolled out throughout the District except for about 700 houses in rural areas.

Alex explained that if residents are experiencing problems or struggling then HDC will try to work with them to see what the problem is and try to eliminate it e.g. change the side of the road where they collect from or put the bin in a different position. The collection days will not be changed but possible the collection times are rearranged to help overcome any difficulties. The smaller bins are more likely to topple over. Now the drivers are more experienced, fewer bins should be toppling over. If the vehicle "eats" a bin the driver would wherever they could leave a card and HDC would replace the bin free of charge. It is not always possible to know which house the bin was from – in these circumstances the driver would note it down e.g. a bin from near X Main Street eaten up. Alex explained that HDC is keen to encourage recycling and that smaller bins are available upon request.

Steve asked for another communal blue lidded bin be provided for Tanfield Court in Guildford Road. Alex to pass this request on to the depot. Andrew thanked Alex for attending.

5. Suggestions/ complaints

- (a) East Street – Janet mentioned that she has received feedback to say that the tactile paving was not easy to feel for a blind or sight impaired person. Concern expressed at the type of tactile paving – some dogs don't recognise it and so are ignoring it. Andrew asked for further feedback at the next meeting.

- (b) Middle Street – a new shop selling furniture etc is leaving some stock outside the shop and this is causing obstruction. Damian/Rory to check if they need a licence and HDC to take appropriate action e.g. Street Scene wardens to speak to the shopkeeper
- (c) Shopmobility – Rory to make sure the HDC literature and website all show the correct opening times. See Actions from the last meeting
- (d) Cycling over the bridge outside RSA between the Black Jug pub and the Carfax – Chart Way. There is a sign on the Carfax side telling cyclists to dismount. Need a sign on the other side. Andrew thinks it belongs to RSA but could now belong to WSCC. Damian/Rory to check it out and action.
- (e) Steps next to Linden House (adjacent to County Hall North) which lead down to Albion Way and Madiera Avenue – Steve requested that the edging on the top and bottom steps be painted white or yellow so it is easier for sight impaired people to see. This used to belong to RSA but could be WSCC now. Also same action needed for the steps from near the old church spire to the Carfax. Damian/Rory to check it out and action
- (f) Still overgrowing hedges outside “Greenacres” in Chesworth Gardens. Andrew to investigate and action
- (g) Hedges overgrowing footpath along riverside walk at the bottom of Copse Close. Andrew to investigate and action
- (h) Still puddles near the disabled bays in Soutjh Street (next to the Christian Centre). This was raised at our December 2009 meeting. Damian/Rory to contact Cllr Sheldon to see if he can chase up WSCC Highways.

6. Discussion regarding WSCC’s decision to cease some social activities at day centres

Harwood House due to close in 18 months. WSCC are presently consulting regarding the future of day centres. Plan is to give people who would use them a personalised budget to spend on what they want but many people attend day centres for company. Damian/Rory to include update when the Agenda is issued for the next meeting.

Janet explained that it is very difficult if not impossible for blind or sight impaired people to use the swimming pool at the Pavilions. There is no where to leave the guide dog except the Manager’s office which is on the first floor, to avoid being a nuisance people are expected to go during quiet times like Sunday night or between 8am and 10am but bus passes don’t start until 9am!. Agreed we ask someone from DC Leisure or Steve Hawker from HDC to attend our next meeting.

7. What can HDC do to encourage more residents, especially those with disabilities , to register to vote – Judy Buckley Officer in Charge

There is a legal requirement for everyone to register to vote but people cannot be made to vote. Each year, around this time, HDC send out registration forms to every household and then reminders are sent and if no response someone visits. Presently only done by post. 95% of the forms come back eventually. Some Councils allow internet registration or have a phone number for people to ring in and say the details are unaltered.

Steve said he would like to see more electronic or internet registration. Would have to be in word format. Damian suggested targeted marketing e.g. contact Talking newspapers for the Blind, County Council will know where people with learning difficulties live, work with Gypsies and Travellers communities.

8. Any other business –

- (a) Need to try to encourage more people to attend these meetings. Damian to do another press release (WSCT and Resident) and to contact Parish Councils and HACVS again.
- (b) Gillian has written to say that the West Sussex Carers Policy and Development Group, which used to meet at Billingshurst Village hall, have changed the way they operate and now instead of being open to anyone people have to be nominated to attend. Andrew asked May to see if she can find out anything. Damian/Rory to check this with WSCC and to feedback at next meeting.

Future dates for rest of 2010 – Wednesday 3 November, and Thursday 16 December.

The meeting closed at 12.15pm.

Next meeting is Wednesday 3 November at 10.30 in The Wicker room, Park House. Prior to the meeting let Damian know if you are attending AND you need a permit to park for free.

Minutes produced and distributed by Andrew Baldwin on 10 September, 2010