



# 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 Wednesday 8 June, 2011 at 10.30am

Present:	Andrew Baldwin	HDC Councillor
	Peter Billington	HACVS
	Lilian Bold	LINK (voice on health and social care)
	Damian Brewer	HDC Equalities Officer
	Susan Carter	Independent
	Jill Hardie	WSCC, Adult Services (Strawford Centre)
	Steve Hendry	Independent
	Margaret Killner	Independent
	Yvonne Law	Independent
	May Pope	Independent (was Carers)
	Janet Raybould	4Sight
	Pat Rutherford	Parish Councillor
	Emma Smith	WSCC Rehab Officer for Visually Impaired

**Invited speakers** Andy Skipper HDC, Taxi Licensing Manager

### 1. Welcome, Apologies and Introductions

Andrew Baldwin, Cabinet member for the Environment and Sustainability, Horsham District Council (HDC) chaired the meeting and took the Minutes. The Chairman welcomed everyone. Apologies received from Margaret Alford and Joyce Narborough.

**2. Minutes of the meeting held on 14 April 2011** – agreed as a true record. No matters arising. Action - Damian to arrange for these to be added to the HDC website.

### 3. Update on previous items

- (a) **Horsham bus station** – Damian to check with the County Council to see if there is any possibility of an audible system being installed to alert blind people. If something is in the way then buses often pull up at a different stop in the Carfax. It was agreed we ask Metrobus to see if they could send someone to our next meeting in September because we had other concerns like audio timetable
- (b) **Roffey Millennium hall** – there are 3 accessible parking bays for disabled blue badge holders. The District Council's Parking Services to install clear signage for the two disabled bays nearest the entrance.
- (c) **"Key fobs"** – Jill reported that someone she knew had not had much luck with a fob. From the feedback there appears to still be some issues with these
- (d) **Chesworth Lane – wheely bins causing an obstruction**. Andrew said that he had recently met a District Council Officer on the site. In order to alleviate the issues which have arisen from the existing collection point, residents will be sent a letter to ask them to place their bins on the opposite verge starting, hopefully, this month.

- (e) **Aiming high** – following the speaker at the previous meeting, Andrew confirmed that HDC has found some extra money to enable more trampoline classes to take place
- (f) **Electric charging points** in the disabled bays at Park House – two electric charging points have been installed. Two new disabled bays will be created opposite the southern exit to the car park. Pay £50 a year and then free use of any charging point in UK.

#### 4. Taxis and Private Hire vehicles in Horsham District

Andy Skipper gave us a very interesting and informative talk and answered questions. The Department for Transport talked about introducing mandatory requirements for Councils a few years ago but nothing has happened. Individual Councils can do their own thing. HDC insist on taxi drivers having rigorous tests and all are checked for criminal records. A lot of taxi regulation is 30 years old.

The existing Council policy needs to be reviewed and updated – this Access Group will be consulted when the review happens. HDC does not have a set policy for wheelchair vehicles. The Council wishes to see a mixed fleet with an increase in the number of vehicles which can take a wheelchair. Presently there are 2 hackney vehicles and one private hire vehicle suitable for wheelchairs. There is a list on the HDC website under T for Taxis with contact details for wheelchair accessible vehicles i.e.

Hackney Carriage – Airport Taxi Specialists – Horsham 217721

Hackney Carriage – Horsham Cars – Horsham 267676

Private Hire – Jake Private Hire – Horsham 786818

HDC receives very few complaints from disabled people, possibly because many use community transport rather than taxis. Most disabled people can, with assistance, get out of a wheelchair and into the taxi then the wheelchair can be folded into the boot. A disabled person has to do more planning in advance of a journey.

Taxi firms are struggling, no rate increase since the end of 2008. Fare increases have to be agreed by the Council. The meters work on distance and on time. Flat rate of £3.40 for the first 5 or 6 minutes or travelling the first 1350 metres. All the taxi ranks are in Horsham town.

HDC is looking at making any new operator buy a vehicle which can take a wheelchair. A new vehicle suitable for a wheelchair costs around £30,000. The side loading vehicles cannot all accommodate a very heavy wheelchair. A taxi with a rear hatch and lift can take the heavier wheelchair but in an accident could be a problem with egress as many accidents involve vehicles being hit from behind. HDC has consulted with the local taxi operators and also the Hackney Carriage Association. The Council has asked for the taxi rank at the railway station to be repositioned so people can get in easier- better to load from the pavement not the road.

The national average journey for a paying passenger in a taxi is only 2 miles. Taxis have to be less than 5 years old and are exempt from providing child seats. Taxi drivers have discretion regarding the carrying of animals but they do accept guide dogs.

Hackney/ taxi – they can go anywhere. There are 54 in the District and they have to be white. Tend to be used for shorter journeys. As soon as a taxi is flagged down they can start to charge. If the roof box is lit then you can flag down a taxi anywhere, doesn't just have to be from a taxi rank.

Private hire – 128 vehicles in the District, 41 operators. Can be any colour but not white. They have to be pre-booked. They can charge you what they want including “dead” mileage i.e., driving to pick you up. You should agree a price before they pick you up. You cannot flag them down, you have to contact them in advance. They should have a roof box on when being used as a taxi.

Agreed (a) Andy to do an article on taxis and private hire in a future edition of Horsham District News (b) HDC needs to review the current policy

## 5. Health update –

- (a) Lilian brought along the Stroke DVD. Unfortunately inadequate sound so unable to see it. Andrew will watch it then pass it on to May, Peter and Jill. Anyone else wants to see it to contact Andrew on H 275156. It has been made to show to community groups as a way of raising awareness of stroke, to stimulate discussion and to encourage people to take action that could help reduce the incidence of stroke and improve the lives of those affected by it. The Stroke DVD will be officially launched on 17 June at County Hall North between 10.30 and 4pm – various stalls. Check out the LINK website = [www.makesachange.org.uk](http://www.makesachange.org.uk)
- (b) Stroke services – still waiting for 24 hour 7 day a week clot busting service in West Sussex. If someone has a stroke caused by a clot they need a scan within 3 hours in order to get the clot busting drugs. Between 5pm and 9am and at weekend the patient has to go to Guildford or Brighton
- (c) LINK is in a transitional year. Originally told it would cease in April 2012 but now told it will go on until July 2012 then move to Health watch. There will be a Health watch Committee for West Sussex.
- (d) LINK carry out enter and view visits on discharge to see about the quality of the care a person received whilst in hospital and to see if they had problems with nurses etc
- (e) Government’s proposed NHS changes – good news is that it will now include the involvement of nurses
- (f) North East Review – the update was requested at the last PCT Board meeting as to the present position regarding the outstanding recommendations. The deadline for their promised response is nearly up. Andrew said that a meeting is being arranged for Councillors from Horsham, Crawley and Mid Sussex councils to meet with the PCT to get an update. Andrew will provide feedback once the meeting has taken place

## 6. Suggestions for future speakers

- Gemma Crowther, Chief Executive Officer, Voice for Disability to give us a talk at the next meeting
- Metro bus

## 7. Any other business

- (a) the top of the street lamp opposite the entrance to Chesworth Close is in need of attention, column number 6. Andrew will report it. The free phone number is 0800 048 2435. They will ask you for the column number
- (b) toilets under Beales – not very clean. Damian to report it to relevant authority. Please note the disabled toilet in Beales shop is very nice and clean
- (c) request for a zebra crossing in Denne Road near West Hope – Jill to confirm where exactly it is then let Damian know so he can contact County Councillor David Sheldon

- (d) A Board outside the Station Beefeater – this is in the middle of the pavement. The protocol does not apply there or in East Street but Andrew to report it to Garry Mortimer-Cooke and also the fact some people said the A Boards in the Carfax are creeping out too far
- (e) the old Sussex Stationary shop in Swan Walk – they have successfully appealed against the Council's refusal to give them planning permission to extend out and incorporate the sheltered bit within the shop. Need to make sure the first 2 metres of paving from the new shop front is smooth. Damian to contact HDC's Planners and the County Council

**8. Days and times of these meetings for the remainder of 2011**

Thursday	8 September	10.30am to 12.30pm
Wednesday	2 November	10.30am to 12.30pm
Thursday	15 December	12 noon to 2.00pm

The meeting closed at 12.30pm.

Minutes typed up and distributed by Andrew on 12 June 2011