

Suffolk Coastal Disability Forum

**Minutes of the Meeting held in the Richards Room, Martlesham
Community Hall, on Tuesday 9th January 2018, at 2pm**

**SCDC: Suffolk Coastal District Council, WDC: Waveney District Council
SCC: Suffolk County Council**

Present:

Linda Hoggarth	Disability Forum for Suffolk (Chair)
Gillian Benjamin	Active Communities Officer, Suffolk Coastal & Waveney District Councils
Richard Best	Active Communities Manager, Suffolk Coastal & Waveney District Councils
Simon Daws	Resident
Michael Friend	Carer and Hollesley Parish Council
Paul Kelly	Resident
Liz Mark	Resident and Bawdsey Parish Council
Kathy May	Resident
Damian McCarthy	Leading Lives
Margaret Morris	Resident (Secretary)
Cllr Steve Gallant	Suffolk Coastal District Council (Cabinet Member for Community Health)
Kerry Overton	Community Development Officer, Healthwatch Suffolk
Graham Walker	Kirton and Falkenham Parish Council

Guests:

Laura Hack	Project Manager, Suffolk Coastal & Waveney District Councils
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Apologies:

Steve Hodgkiss	East Suffolk Association for the Blind
Sylvia Izzard	Resident
Darren Knight	Head of Customer Services, Waveney & Suffolk Coastal District Councils
Linda Layton	Resident and Carer
Maureen Mee	Resident
Tim Snook	Leisure Contracts Manager, Suffolk Coastal District Council

1. Welcome & Introductions

Linda welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly Cllr Steve Gallant, the new representative from Suffolk Coastal District Council, and introductions were made. She explained that the meeting was being held in the Richards Room, Martlesham Community Centre because of concerns regarding the difficulty in evacuating the first floor meeting room at East Suffolk House in the event of an emergency.

2. Apologies

The above apologies were received and noted.

3. Redevelopment of Leisure Centres in Woodbridge, Leiston and Felixstowe.

3.1 Laura Hack, Project Officer, Suffolk Coastal District Council was welcomed to the meeting and invited to talk about the redevelopment of Leisure Centres in Woodbridge, Leiston and Felixstowe.

3.2 Laura explained that she was attending in place of Tim Snook, Leisure Contracts Manager who was on leave. She said that the redevelopment is part of the Council's forward thinking for about 20 years via its East Suffolk Business Plan; all the Leisure Centres now need enhancing and redeveloping.

3.3 Work to update the Deben Swimming Pool commenced in September, 2017 and is due to be completed in July/August 2018. While the pool itself will not change, there will be a lift to the first floor, a gym, better village changing facilities with family facilities as well as individual cubicles with showers. A new free standing hoist will be provided. There will be a new main entrance and reception and vending area.

3.4 In response to a question about the temperature of the water in the swimming pool, it was noted that there is a compromise to be achieved between swimming clubs that want 24 degrees and people with disabilities who require a much warmer temperature. The pool temperature is likely to be 26 degrees.

3.5 With regard to the Leisure Centre at Leiston, there will be a public consultation to give the opportunity for the people to give their views. It is hoped that work can begin in the autumn of 2018. It is a very big site and changes will be more to the changing room / plant areas than the actual pool. There will be a Changing Places facility / soft play area /

gym / rooms that can be booked for meetings. The squash court is being retained. Cllr Gallant assured members that a hoist will be provided. The pool itself is in good condition. It is likely that the pool will be closed from September – December 2018.

3.6 Felixstowe Leisure Centre and Brackenbury Leisure Centre:

3.6.1 In respect of Felixstowe, where there are currently two facilities, a public consultation will be held to ascertain the kind of leisure facilities that people would like. The Sports Consultancy would be looking at the feasibility and options for Felixstowe including the location of a Leisure Destination facility which would serve people from a wider area than just Felixstowe. There is a total planned spend of about £20m. Support would be available to complete the consultation questionnaire at Woodbridge and Felixstowe Libraries. Input from the Forum will be welcomed. The consultation would last for three months and be widely advertised.

3.6.2 The new Leisure Centre may be sited on land owned by Suffolk Coastal District Council near The Grove. There is permission for housing, and some land would need to be released for a Leisure Centre.

3.6.3 A new facility would require 250 free parking spaces, an 8 lane swimming pool, an adjustable depth pool for children, and a leisure water area with play features. Other suggestions are a climbing wall, a café, a health and fitness gym and a thermal suite.

3.7 Laura confirmed the intention of Suffolk Coastal District Council to consult with the Forum and it was understood that Tim would be in touch to discuss the Leiston redevelopment on his return from leave.

3.8 If necessary, a specific meeting could be held with Forum members to identify the features that would assist the majority of disabled people to use Leisure Centres.

3.9 Laura was thanked for her presentation and it was noted that the Forum would be kept up to date as the redevelopment programme progresses. Laura's presentation is attached.

4. Consultation on options on ways to consult the Council

In the absence of Darren Knight, Head of Customer Services, Waveney and Suffolk Coastal District Councils, this item was deferred.

5. Follow up on actions arising from the Woodbridge Action Day

5.1 A meeting between Clare Perkins, the Mayor of Woodbridge, Chris Walker, Clerk to Woodbridge Town Council, Robert Scrimgeour, Principal Design and Conservation Officer, Suffolk Coastal District Council, and the Planning Group of the Forum had taken place on the 4th December, 2017 to discuss the recommendations within the Report from the Woodbridge Action Day. As a result, the following actions were noted:

- Woodbridge Town Council would develop a page to assist disabled residents for their website. Currently this consists of links to download documents produced by the Forum. Members were asked to consider what would be helpful to include on this page such as the location of accessible toilets.
www.woodbridge-suffolk.gov.uk/community-information/disability-forum/
- A copy of the Choose Woodbridge Town Guide 2017 has been made available. It was thought that it would not be too difficult to add a wheelchair symbol to the entries for businesses that are fully accessible. Whilst this may be too late for the 2018 Town Guide, it was something that could be included in future issues.
- Two members of the Forum have been invited to the Joint Highways Committee meeting in January where the concerns relating to relevant issues such as state of the pavements, bollards, and thoughtless location of A-Boards would be raised (only 1 A Board is allowed per business). It was agreed that Linda and Simon would represent the Forum.
- A joint letter from Woodbridge Town Council, Suffolk Coastal District Council and the Forum will be drawn up to send to all businesses in Woodbridge to encourage them to ensure their premises are disability friendly. Linda has begun to draft this.
- The consultation undertaken by the Thoroughfare Working Group has resulted in the option to allow no access at any time except to permit holders and for loading/unloading being the most popular. The Forum supported this option on the grounds of providing a safer pedestrian environment.
- The Mayor would discuss with Choose Woodbridge the provision of an annotated map.
- It was noted that the Turban Centre is privately owned so it is difficult to progress any changes to improve access.
- The ongoing issue of the hazardous surface of the pathway leading from The Avenue to the Riverside was raised and the actions of Sylvia to bring about a solution to this were noted.

- A Changing Places facility was thought to be an excellent development for Woodbridge, possibly in the toilet block in the Avenue Car Park.
- Members have been asked where, in the Thoroughfare, additional benches could be provided.
- 16 Car Parks have been accredited throughout Suffolk Coastal as meeting the standards of Disabled Parking Accreditation, a scheme which is owned by Disabled Motoring UK and managed by the British Parking Association. Further information can be found at www.dpaccreditation.org.uk. Whilst the Station Road Car Park is accredited, it was noted that work is to be undertaken to solve the flooding of the blue badge parking spaces when it rains.

5.2 Cllr Page has pursued the highlighting of the plain black bollards in the Thoroughfare and it is understood that the highlighting is to be carried out.

5.3 A joint letter from the Forum and Suffolk Coastal District Council's Conservation Officer has been sent to over 100 businesses that operate from listed buildings to encourage them to be more proactive in terms of accessibility.

5.4 The Planning Group would continue to progress the identified actions.

Action: Planning Group

6. Minutes from the Meeting held on 3rd October, 2017

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 3rd October, 2017 were agreed as correct.

7. Matters Arising

7.1 Item 6.1 Bin Collections: Complaints continue to be received about the bins being left blocking gates and pavements. Cllr Gallant noted the issues. He also explained the reasons for the new charge of £43 per year, from April, 2018, for having a brown bin.

7.2 Item 6.2 East Suffolk House:

7.2.1 Cllr Gallant updated the meeting on his discussions within the Council. He said that the Council has found that East Suffolk House is not suitable for Forum meetings if the meetings have to be held in the meeting rooms on the first floor because of the evacuation difficulties.

This does not affect Planning Group meetings which are held in a ground floor room.

7.2.2 It has been found to be acceptable for other meetings to be held at East Suffolk House as the risk is regarded as low for the number of people with mobility difficulties attending, for instance, at a Council meeting.

7.2.3 In response to a question, Linda said that the Forum had been set up in conjunction with the Council, to provide a Forum whereby the Council can consult with people with disabilities within Suffolk Coastal. Historically, the Council had provided the venues for meetings as is the case with other Forums such as Waveney and Forest Heath.

7.2.4 As the Forum could no longer hold its main meetings at East Suffolk House, then ongoing funding would be needed to pay for venues as the Forum has no income. She noted that the Waveney Disability Forum meets at Riverside House and is well supported by Waveney District Council.

7.2.5 Cllr Gallant asked to be notified of the most suitable locations for meetings and the cost of hiring the venues for 3 hours at a time.

7.2.6 It was noted that the use of East Suffolk House demonstrated the ongoing support for the Forum by the Council. Whilst, in the future, there may be a case for merging the two Forums (Waveney and Suffolk Coastal) into an East Suffolk Disability Forum, there was unlikely to be any support for this option from disabled people who would be unable to travel long distances to attend meetings.

7.2.7 Members had been asked where they would like meetings to be held. The resulting choices were East Suffolk House; the Richards Room, Martlesham; Woodbridge; Felixstowe and Kesgrave. One member had offered a venue in Saxmundham.

7.2.8 Members agreed that the April meeting would be held in the Richards Room, Martlesham, and the July meeting would be held at a venue in Felixstowe.

7.2.9 The Planning Group would research the cost and suitability of meeting rooms.

Action: Planning Group

7.2.10 Linda thanked Cllr Gallant for taking these concerns forward.

8. Updates on Specific Issues

8.1 Disability Focus 2017: The report of Disability Focus had been circulated to members via e-mail. Arrangements will be made to provide hard copies to those without internet access.

8.2 Felixstowe Action Day:

8.2.1 It was not known whether Mike had followed up the preparation of an information guide to assist disabled visitors and residents with Felixstowe Forward.

Action: Mike Titchener

8.2.2 Margaret will check on the current positioning of A-Boards and banners in the Shared Space, Hamilton Road. She will report to the Planning Group.

Action: Margaret Morris

8.3 Report from Planning Group:

8.3.1 The membership of the Planning Group has diminished in recent months and members were asked if any of them could spare the time to attend the quarterly meetings. Cllr Gallant and Paul expressed interest and will be added to the mailing list.

8.3.2 Work continues on outstanding issues particularly involving the Woodbridge Action Day.

8.3.3 The information leaflet on wheelchair accessible transport has been completed and is available to download. Copies of the leaflet are being circulated to GP Surgeries, Libraries and Parish Councils. Cllr Gallant requested a copy to be emailed to him.

Action: Gillian Benjamin

9. Views on Health and Social Care with Healthwatch Suffolk

9.1 Kerry provided an update regarding the Domiciliary Care project. It was noted that 98% of respondents say that Social Care is very good. So it is just 2% that gives serious cause for concern. Work continues on undertaking specific case interviews.

9.2 Healthwatch Suffolk has a current priority of primary care and feedback is currently being sought on the Care Navigation system where receptionists have been trained to identify the right person to deal with a patient's problem in order to free up GPs to see those patients they really need to.

9.3 Copies of the summary of 'My Health, Our Future' were made available. This report identifies the results of engagement with 6,800 Suffolk students to talk about mental health and wellbeing issues that affect their lives.

9.4 As a result of the incoming EU General Data Protection Regulation, there will be new rules around the storage and handling of personal data. In terms of the NHS, patients now need to give their written consent for their notes to be available to be seen by other health professionals. Patients can agree to share their summary care record with additional information or their full electronic health record. Forms to give consent are available in GP surgeries.

10. Information Round

10.1 Disability Advice Service East Suffolk: Members were pleased to note that the Disability Advice Service East Suffolk has been awarded £301,210 from the Big Lottery Fund. This funding will be used to increase the availability of the service to people living in rural areas and provide additional telephone advice and appointments. It is understood that a number of volunteers will be trained as advisers.

10.2 Mobile Telephone Signal: It was noted that the mobile signal in the Hollesley area is very poor, giving problems in an emergency.

10.3 Saxmundham NHS Clinic: It was reported that there are difficulties in making appointments at this clinic now that there is no longer a secretary in post. Appointments have to be booked directly with the relevant health professional and it is not always easy to contact them. Healthwatch Suffolk was asked to investigate.

Action: Kerry Overton

10.4 Beardmore Retail Park:

10.4.1 Simon reported that he had met with Ben Woolnough, Major Projects Advisor, Suffolk Coastal District Council about the safety issues for pedestrians using the Beardmore Retail Park.

10.4.2 They had walked the site and this allowed Simon to explain the hazards first hand. This had been a useful discussion and it was hoped that the improvement opportunities identified could be followed up where possible.

10.4.3 Members noted that crossings controlled by traffic lights did not give sufficient time for people with mobility difficulties to cross safely.

11. Dates of Meetings in 2018

The dates of the remaining meetings in 2018 are agreed as the 10th April, 3rd July and 2nd October. These are all Tuesdays. Timings and venues will be confirmed as soon as possible but it is planned that the April meeting will be held in Martlesham and the July meeting in Felixstowe.

Action: Planning Group

12. Date of Next Meeting

This will take place on Tuesday, 10th April, 2018. The venue and timing for the meeting will be confirmed as soon as possible.