

## **Disability Advisory Group**

Thursday 26 July 2018, 2 pm

The Ardhowen, Enniskillen

**Present:** Councillor Victor Warrington (Chair), Councillor Debbie Coyle, Councillor Errol Thompson, Councillor Garbhan McPhillips, Eileen Drumm, Gerry Knight, Gerry Maguire & Joanne McDonald.

**Apologies:** Andrew Wilson, Dermot Devlin & Robert Gibson.

**In Attendance:** Margaret McMahon (Head of Policy & Strategic Services), John McCullagh (Head of Waste & Recycling), Gerry Donnelly (Licencing Manager), Kathryn Armstrong (Licencing Officer), Tim Foley (Enforcement Officer), Finbar Maguire (Policy Officer – Equality), Matthew Nevin (Access & Inclusion Coordinator) & Laura McCreesh (Mencap -Employment & Personal Development)

### **1. Welcome**

Councillor Warrington welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### **2. Apologies**

Apologies were accepted.

### **3. Review of Minutes of Thursday 29 March 2018**

Members of the Group reviewed the minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 24 May 2018.

Proposed: Gerry Knight

Seconded: Gerry Maguire

### **4. Matters Arising**

#### **Public Realm Scheme**

Margaret informed the Group that a previous meeting regarding the Public Realm Scheme had to be postponed and that Allison McCullagh was working with the Consultant to arrange another meeting soon.

## **Pool Pods**

Gerry K. explained that he had seen the Pool Pods in action and welcomed the support they offer to people with disabilities.

## **5. Enniskillen Public Realm Scheme**

Councillor Warrington welcomed that the consultation was still taking place and encouraged everyone to attend and provide feedback.

## **6. Drop-In Sessions**

Matthew presented a report detailing the suggested dates and locations for the Disability Advisory Group Drop-In Sessions.

Councillor Warrington welcomed the events and encouraged all members to attend where possible.

**Action:** Finbar/ Matthew to arrange sessions and advertise on Social Media

## **7. Update: Access at The Ardhowen**

Jackie explained that The Ardhowen was going through an economic appraisal to consider all future options. Jackie added that staff have met with an architect and unfortunately changes to the accessible seating can't be completed at this moment.

Jackie explained that all options for the redevelopment explored improvements to the venue's access, including increasing the number of accessible seats.

Gerry K. welcomed the improvements and noted the need to consult with people with visual impairment during any redevelopment.

**Action:** Jackie to consult with Visual Impairment Group during re-development.

Gerry M. queried whether Row C would be improved for people using wheelchairs. Jackie explained that Row C would be improved, with the potential of extending the accessible seating to various rows in the auditorium.

All Members welcomed the update.

## 8. Dates for Awareness Training

Finbar presented a report on the proposed sign language training for staff during the 18/19 financial year. Finbar explained that front-facing staff would be able to attend taster-sessions on sign language, with the option to enrol on the South West College accredited course afterwards. Finbar added that the proposed training would be rolled out to staff in September.

Councillor Warrington welcomed the proposal and explained that he had personal experience of witnessing the benefit of using sign language in his personal and professional life.

Gerry M. stated that he hoped awareness training would be mandatory for all staff in the near future. Eileen agreed and welcomed the sign language training.

**Action:** Finbar/ Matthew to proceed with the Sign Language Training.

## 9. Potential Publicity – Programmes/ Newsletters

Matthew presented a report on the potential options for publicising the work of the Disability Advisory Group including: an Accessibility Programme and through the 'InFO' Resident's Newsletter.

Matthew added that the coverage could include the following:

- Advisory Groups
- Autism/ Dementia Friendly Work
- Drop-In Sessions
- PASS Scheme
- Inclusive Sports Equipment
- Jam Card
- Venue Access Webpage

Gerry K. suggested that some information on the Pool Pods should also be included. Margaret agreed and added that it could fit under the Inclusive Sports Equipment.

**Action:** Officers to include the above topics in the two publications.

## 10. Waste & Recycling

Councillor Warrington welcomed John McCullagh, Head of Waste and Recycling, to the Meeting.

John explained a number of ways which Waste & Recycling can help people with disabilities, including:

- Assisted Bin Lifts
- Large-Print Bin Calendars
- Food waste collection exemption for people with Dementia.

Gerry M. welcomed the information and encouraged members to pass it on to family and friends.

\*Councillor Coyle entered the meeting\*

Gerry K, Joanne and Gerry M recommended that John contacted local Dementia, Learning Disability and Visual Impairment Groups.

**Action:** John to contact local Dementia, Learning Disability and Visual Impaired Groups.

\*Members were provided with a tour around the Auditorium and Back-Stage Area\*

## 11. Marble Arch Caves

Finbar provided a report on the suggested improvements to the Marble Arch Caves Global Geopark. Finbar explained that the Caves hope to implement relaxed tours for people with autism, increase Autism-Friendly activities, work on an Access Action Plan, and improve online information.

Finbar explained that while the caves would never be fully accessible, due to its physical nature, staff are investigating the possibility of virtual and relaxed tours. Finbar added that 3 relaxed tours would be trialled in September.

All members welcomed the improvements.

**Action:** Finbar to arrange relaxed tour and keep members up-to-date.

## 12. Clean Neighbourhoods & Licencing

Tim provided information on the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. Tim added that if an object blocks a pavement it can be deemed illegal, removed and the business fined £75.00.

Councillor Coyle queried whether bins blocking pavements could be removed. Tim advised that if bins are blocking pavements it would be best to speak with the owner in the first instance.

Gerry K. raised an issue regarding a clear sign with a concrete base blocking the footpath on High Street, Omagh. Gerry K. added that the sign was particularly dangerous for those with visual impairments.

**Action:** Tim to investigate position of sign.

Gerry Maguire agreed and pointed out that signs do obstruct people using wheelchairs and could lead guide dogs onto the road to avoid them.

Gerry Donnelly provided an outline of the Licencing of Pavement Cafes Act (Northern Ireland) 2014. Gerry D. added that the guidance from Department of Communities had not been provided yet and that the Council is continuing to offer guidance to businesses to prevent any pavements being blocked. Gerry D. highlighted that the Public Realm Scheme in Enniskillen would help make the pavements more suitable for cafes.

Eileen asked if the businesses were compliant. Gerry D. responded that nearly all were compliant and that Licencing Officers were keen to work with businesses before removing furniture or issuing fines.

Gerry D. informed the Group of changes to the Off-Street Car Parking, including refurbishments, improved accessible parking and changes to charges.

Eileen mentioned that she was aware of several issues with the car park at the Buttermarket including lack of dropped kerbs, the state of the footpaths and the positioning of accessible spaces.

Gerry K. informed the Group that he often sees people parking in accessible spaces as markings on the ground may not be clear. Gerry K. queried whether signs could be displayed to avoid any confusion.

**Action:** Gerry D. to investigate queries.

Councillor Thompson highlighted a problem with abuse of accessible spaces at the Show Grounds in Omagh. Councillor Thompson suggested the Group writes to Omagh Retail Park asking them to look at potential solutions.

Joanne agreed and highlighted the need for discretion as people may have a hidden disability and the right to use the spaces.

**Actions:** Officers to draft letter for the next meeting

### **13. Any Other Business**

Margaret explained to Members that Officers had contacted the NOW Group to look at how the Council could roll out the JAM Card to all front-facing services. Margaret proposed that the Council purchases the e-learning training package for 50 members of staff.

All agreed

### **14. Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting will take place on Thursday 20 September 2018 at 2 pm.