

**MINUTES OF THE HASTINGS & ROTHER
ACCESS GROUP Tuesday 8TH JUNE 2010
AT 2.00PM IN THE TOWN HALL, HASTINGS**

Present: Dave Rogers (Chair), Ann Hadland, Phyllis Filmer, Alan Care and Terry Steeples

Apologies: Rosemary Iddenden, Debbie Peters (RDC)

Minutes of meeting held 11th May 2010: The minutes were read and agreed by those present at the previous meeting on the 11th May 2010.

Matters Arising: Item 1: It was agreed that Rosemary and Alan would spend some time looking at Hotels & Guest Houses, which offer Disability Access, either directly or with some assistance by staff members; this was still ongoing and would report back to the next meeting.

Item 2: Debbie was to look at the access at Coghurst Wood Caravan Park and the 1066 Web site for any current lists. Alan reported that he had attempted this and downloaded the first 30 pages and was beginning to feel suicidal, so gave up any further searching. We will await Debbie's comments at the next meeting; again Alan suggested that the Welsh Tourist Board had a well detailed Web Site giving all relevant details of their accessibility at a great number of Hotels and Guest Houses. This morning both Ann & Alan had attended the Rother Rural Access meeting and met Brenda Moon who had suggested that we should use the Rural Rother Magazine and it was agreed that Ann would pass on this suggestion to Rosemary on her return from holiday.

Item 3: Pebsham Country Park – not accessible to disabled people and at present there is no possible date when access would be available, as if access was granted to Wheelchair users, it would also open access to Motorcyclists that have previously caused problems. Alan suggested that by using the 'Radar Key' scheme disabled people could gain access and then close the gates behind them. Also as the area had already been greatly 'Bulldozed' that more could have done in some areas giving level access, Terry will contact the Park Warders and organisers to ask if this could be done.

Debbie was going to bring an updated list of all Councillors in Rother, which wards they represent, and what are their areas of expertise, but this may still be like HBC who are still resolving their list and there is still another election next month.

AOB: Terry asked if anyone had been to the new Station Plaza Medical Centre, both Phyllis and Dave had been along with Terry, who reported about the new Dentist suite that was equipped with revolutionary new hoist that allowed Wheelchair users to remain in their wheelchair whilst being tilted and treated. Alan said that both the Cooden Dental Practise and the Wellington Mews (off Stonefield Road, Hastings), had Disability Access but didn't have this new equipment. Dave suggested that this could be part of the database of accessible Hotels etc.

Alan reported that at the new Tesco at Churchfields, St Leonards-on-Sea Disabled toilets had an obstruction (Sanitary Towel bin) adjacent to the toilet, thereby restricting a wheelchair user any chance of being able to slide onto the toilet seat. He went to the Customer Services, who basically

just shrugged their shoulders (not quite saying 'Tuff') and said that unfortunately others had to use the toilet that needed the facility, but finally said that they would report it. Alan said that if he was in urgent need for the toilet, he would have at least a 12 minute delay whilst he returned to his car and drove back home which could result in some extreme embarrassment. A couple of weeks later he checked to see if anything had been done and was surprised to find the bin still there, on his way to the Customer Service desk he saw the Manager and a Toilet staff member and told them about his restricted access problems and possible cause of embarrassment. When they checked it with Alan, they said that there was a small bin that could go up against the opposite wall, so would that be any help. Alan said that it certainly would, so they moved the large bin and replaced it with the smaller size.

Ann reported that last Friday, whilst attending some Training in Bexhill-on-Sea, she, along with other wheelchair users returned to Bexhill Railway station and when a member of staff saw them and knew they would require assistance and a ramp to get onto the train 'turned his back and closed the doors', because the next train was full of prams/buggies. They had to wait for the third train to arrive, and then were given the help and ramps as required. So again Rosemary would be asked to report this incident, and Ann would give the relevant time, dates etc of this problem. Terry reported that at a previous meeting Rosemary had reported that any train user coming back from London and wanting to alight at Battle was forced to travel to Hastings and then travel back to Battle. Thus causing extra travel and discomfort when all it required was a gate and path towards Marley Road, where they could be collected. Terry reported that he had also reported this at the Transport Group meeting last week in Lewes and this was been chased up by ESCC. Also Terry said that a Transport Conference had been arranged at Uckfield Civic Centre on the 30th September when various seminars and stalls would be available to get information and guidance regarding Transport and various problems in Rural and Urban areas within East Sussex, so a date for everyone's diary.

Dave reported that staff had been ranting at him, as if he had told them he was getting off at Orpington, they could have directed the train to another platform, and allow him easy alighting without having to use the stairs. He gave his daughter his car keys and she went and got his false leg (Doris), which he put on, and left the station staff still ranting on about his problems having to use the stairs.

The meeting finished at 15:08pm

Date of next Meeting Tuesday 13th July 2010 at the Town Hall, Hastings