

Equal Access Advisory Group - Theme of meeting, Progress and Plans

Meeting Notes –30 September 2024 – Congleton Town Hall

Attendance: - Deborah Lawson (Chair), Cllr Kay Wesley, Pam Carey, Theresa Graystone, Alec Scaresbrook, Angela Ward, Jackie MacArthur, Cathy Dean

Virtual – Tom Stephens

Apologies – Denis Murphy, Diane Ritherdon

1. Everyone gave a brief introduction and welcome
2. Notes of the meeting of **9 August** accepted as a correct record
3. Actions from previous minutes
 - **Action:** - Kay and Theresa to check out routes from Able World to Readsmore Surgery – tbc
 - **Action:** - People to report broken pavements etc via FIX MY STREET – ongoing
 - **Action:** - Jackie to provide maps to Denis to note dropped kerb places
 - **Action** - Jackie & Kay work on an accessibility leaflet for shops – underway
 - **Action** - Ruth Burgess CTC looking at the gaps for benches
<https://openbenches.org/#53.16171/-2.211541/17>
 - **Action** – article in Bear Necessities – issues with bins, parking and A boards
 - **Action** interviews with Congleton Radio delayed until October
 - **Action** -list of articles for the Chronicle.
 - **Action** – Deborah to speak at the Community Committee – happened 29 August – and subsequent press coverage.

Projects

[Project Plan for Congleton Equal Access](#)

The group looked through the project plan and added comments and additional actions to each of the sections General and Council, Events, Publicity and Education, Town Centre, Business and Transport.

Noted actions that still need to be done. Part of what the group can do is raise awareness and help people to understand the need and reasons for change.

The whole group needs to own the work plan. Kay, Deborah, Cathy and Jackie have access to the Project Plan. Note that Jackie will be leaving on the 1st of November.

Further items considered:

1. Bus Shelters face the wrong way – they offer no protection from passing traffic – pass to the bus team at CEC for comment (JM)
2. Bus Shelter by Aldi on Viking Way - when can we expect buses (JM)
3. If putting on buses for events it needs better marketing. If road closures mean buses divert this should be made clear at the bus stops. (JM to alert Event staff)
4. With the shops, keen for the business to self-assess – we are not judges, looking to get positive publicity for disability-friendly businesses

5. Issue ongoing with Tesco and Morrison's mobility scooter – ultimately want to see both shops have two scooters and always charge up. It is best if users can book. M&S say they are too small and Aldi currently not interested. Worth contacting them all and explaining the need. It's the big basket on the front of the scooter that is essential to allow the person to shop.

4. **Active Travel**

Alec reported on several successes that the Active Travel group – part of Congleton Climate Action Group – has had with getting barriers to access removed on paths across Congleton. The group still has a further 29 to achieve!

The group is looking for spaces that are 1.2m to 1.5m - big enough for a motorized scooter, but not for a car.

The Group received a lot of support for their work at a stand at the Green Fayre on 28 September. Suggested there is a huge hidden cost to our broken pavements with injuries.

The group can access the Google Doc for Active Travel via this link.

5. **AOB**

- a) Does the group think there is any chance of getting a Shop Mobility back into Congleton? This was previously based in the former Council offices at the back of the Town Hall. It was intended to move into the Scarborough development in 2012. There is a shop mobility in Crewe and Macc. The Congleton Shop Mobility was previously run by volunteers.
- b) Congleton Website is in the process of being developed. The group will get a chance to preview and Deborah and Alec gave useful comments via the user group. It will be accessible and attractive.
- c) Jackie wished everyone well with the project and will continue to take an interest in the group, but will not be able to attend future meetings when she changes roles.

Date of Next Meeting – Cathy to arrange. It was suggested mid-November, but more likely to be early December as the reduced team has some big events.