

### Minutes of General Meeting

<b>Date</b>	17 April 2018
<b>Time</b>	10.00-12.00
<b>Venue</b>	Ridgway Room Stoke Town Hall

Agenda topic	Action				
<p>Attendees:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• John Beech</li> <li>• Geoff Bryan</li> <li>• Pam Bryan</li> <li>• Stephanie Wood</li> <li>• Winston Green</li> <li>• Laura Dillon – office of Ruth Smeeth MP</li> </ul> </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jo Coulson Disability Solutions</li> <li>• Philip Woodward</li> <li>• Mick Jones</li> <li>• John Burgess</li> <li>• Lesley Smith (Stoke City Council)</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </table> <p>Apologies received from:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rob Lamonby</li> <li>• Janet Neilson</li> <li>• Maureen Washington</li> <li>• Carol Bullock</li> </ul> </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brian Turner</li> <li>• Pauline Betteridge</li> <li>• Angie Bunn</li> <li>• Mike Dixon</li> <li>• Pat Dixon</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </table>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• John Beech</li> <li>• Geoff Bryan</li> <li>• Pam Bryan</li> <li>• Stephanie Wood</li> <li>• Winston Green</li> <li>• Laura Dillon – office of Ruth Smeeth MP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jo Coulson Disability Solutions</li> <li>• Philip Woodward</li> <li>• Mick Jones</li> <li>• John Burgess</li> <li>• Lesley Smith (Stoke City Council)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rob Lamonby</li> <li>• Janet Neilson</li> <li>• Maureen Washington</li> <li>• Carol Bullock</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brian Turner</li> <li>• Pauline Betteridge</li> <li>• Angie Bunn</li> <li>• Mike Dixon</li> <li>• Pat Dixon</li> </ul>	
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<b>1. Attendees and Apologies</b>					
<p>John Beech welcomed members and visitors. He particularly welcomed Laura Dillon from Ruth Smeeth (MP)' s office</p> <p>Apologies received and noted.</p>					
<b>2. Minutes of meeting of 20 February 2018</b>					
Minutes were accepted as true record of meeting of 20 February 2018					

<p><b>3. Matters arising</b></p>	
<p><b>Dual purpose parking bays</b></p> <p>John Beech reminded members that certain disabled person's parking bays have also been designated as loading bays for nearby businesses and shops. STAND has requested a list of the locations of these bays on several occasions from Stoke Council but has not yet received it. The aim is to ask Stoke Council to change the TROs (Traffic Regulation Orders) to reserve these spaces for Blue Badge holders/</p> <p>Members discussed their concerns about getting involved in a confrontation with non- disabled people parking in disabled person's parking bays. Mick reminded members of a recent incident reported in the national press (One punch kills) where a motorist was challenged, punched and killed. He also outlined a confrontation he had experienced in which damage was done to his car.</p> <p>Geoff also asked the question if these dual purpose bays should be marked as such to clarify the situation. Members were unsure about this proposal.</p> <p><b>Action:</b></p> <p><b>Laura said that she would ask Ruth Smeeth's office to send a formal request for the dual purpose bay information from Stoke Council.</b></p> <p><b>Kingsway TRO</b></p> <p>Work has now been completed and access is available into Kingsway from Church Street Stoke. Mick Jones asked if parking was still available on-street in South Wolfe Street</p> <p><b>Action:</b></p> <p><b>Lesley to find out if on-street parking is still available in South Wolfe Street.</b></p> <p>Members asked if Parking Team were able to take applicants' photos for Blue Badges.</p> <p><b>Action:</b></p> <p><b>Lesley to contact Michael Clarke and report back to members.</b></p> <p>Members had a discussion about blue badge use and abuse. Phil said that there must be technology available that would enable a traffic warden to bring up photo and information about a blue badge holder and ensure that the blue badge holder was actually in the car.</p> <p>John Beech said that the law now allows traffic wardens to ask the driver to see the badge and then can confiscate if the badge is being used by someone other than its owner.</p> <p>Pam said that there is often confusion about dropping the disabled person off somewhere (e.g. theatre) and then using the badge to park up. This is against the rules. The disabled person must be in the car when it is parked.</p> <p>Laura said she has a disabled son and he has really changed since his Blue Badge photo was taken. She also had had experience of people tutting when they get out of the car because her son does not look disabled but he can collapse at any time. Members agreed that just because</p>	<p>LD</p> <p>LS</p> <p>LS</p>

someone doesn't look as if they have a disability, it doesn't mean they haven't got a disability. There are a wide range of disabilities. John Beech said that the Government is now consulting on extending the Blue Badge scheme to include a wider range for eligibility for people with non-visible disabilities. This was welcomed but may cause more confusion from those people who think that all disabilities are visible.

John also advised that many local authorities have got a poor record of prosecutions for Blue Badge abuse. Pam reminded members that Stoke Council had had a big "purge" on blue badge abuse and there had been a lot of publicity around the prosecutions they carried out. This had led to a reduction in the amount of abuse, What generally happened is that the council phoned blue badge holders to see if they were out and about and using their badge. If they were at home, the badge wasn't being used legally. John Burgess said that he had been one of the people that was phoned to check. Phil said that if the council had been phoning mobile numbers, the person on the other end could have been anywhere. John Beech advised that the council only phoned land lines. Members agreed that traffic wardens need to do more in terms of challenging motorists, enforcing blue badge rules and reducing abuse.

LS

#### **Action:**

**Lesley to ask Michael Clarke if he has had any reports on how the Blue Badge enforcement campaign has progressed since the law changed.**

Steph reported that people who are in receipt of the lower levels of PIP will be automatically entitled to a Blue Badge and will not need to go through any assessment process. John agreed and said that those not entitled to PIP (possibly because of their age) will have to have an assessment for their blue badge. Steph also noted that people can get PIP if they can walk 200m, so you don't have to have PIP to be eligible for a blue badge. Phil also asked why people who have had no change in health need to be reassessed when their badge expires.

Jo advised members that she had recently parked in Gitana Street Hanley. As this is not a time-limited parking area, she displayed her blue badge but not her clock. She received a fine which she is appealing.

Phil said he still felt that there were a lot of people who should have an assessment for a blue badge. He had witnessed people parking up walking from the parking to the shops and walking all round the shops – obviously well able to walk but still using a blue badge.

John said that the application form doesn't ask if you can walk 50m. He gave an example of blue badge misuse. Someone in constant pain and waiting for a hip replacement is assessed and given a badge for 3 years. However, after a few months, they have their operation and become mobile. But they still keep the badge for the full three years – even if they no longer need it. Another example is when a family member who is a blue badge holder dies and the family keep using the badge. This has been stopped to a great extent because when a death is registered it flags up that a blue badge is no longer needed for this person and the family is asked to return it.

Phil said he still wanted a fairer system. He thinks that there should be a £1 for 24 hours charge for parking for blue badge holders, with the ticket being transferable to other car parks across the city. John disagreed saying that £1 a day can add up over a week and some people may not be able to afford to pay. It was noted that some areas across the UK charge their Blue Badge holders to park. Laura asked if the group were aware of any challenges across the UK as she felt that charging devalues the Blue Badge.

<p><b>4. Blue Iris update</b></p>	
<p>Lesley handed out a brief update to members. She advised members that the Big Lottery funding period has now ended. Stoke Public Health Team are providing a small amount of funding to enable her to carry on for another 12 months and to give time to look for further funding to develop the project. STAND will still have a role in Blue Iris but will not project lead. This will free up time for core business.</p> <p>Pam said that she has received some lovely positive comments about the Newsletter.</p> <p>Phil said that he would like to see bus drivers as Blue Iris supporters – Blue Iris buses.</p>	
<p><b>5. Parliamentary Visit</b></p>	
<p>Pam reported back on STAND’s successful visit to Parliament on 27<sup>th</sup> March. Members met with MPs and discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pavement parking</li> <li>• North Staffs Justice Centre issues</li> <li>• Blue Iris and its future.</li> </ul> <p>Pam said she hoped that this was the beginning of a good relationship and that there seems to be a real push to get people involved in the work of Parliament.</p>	
<p><b>6. North Staffs Justice Centre (NSJC)</b></p>	
<p>Pam reported that there had been a meeting at NSJC. 5 people from NSJC came to meet STAND members and had a walk through the building. Necessary improvements were highlighted. Lesley has offered to visit to give a professional opinion. This will take place on 14 May 2018.</p> <p>Pam has asked Trudy to get back to her to tell her what can and can’t be done.</p> <p>One of the key issues reported by disabled people is the lack of training and disability awareness which has led to some quite dangerous practices. NSJC indicated that they did not have much responsibility for security but Pam said she was still pushing for action to be taken. The guard’s lack of knowledge could lead to someone’s death.</p> <p>Our MPs are looking if appeals can be held in a more suitable venue. Pam said she had the feeling that there was a will to sort out the problems reported.</p> <p>Jo reported that STAND has been tagged in a tweet from a Guardian journalist who is looking for cases where people have struggled to access PIP appeals. This is obviously a national issue</p> <p><b>Action:</b>  <b>Jo to respond to Guardian tweet.</b></p> <p>John Beech said that parking is a key issue. At the moment NSJC are advising people to park on Sainsbury’s but this car park is to be redeveloped and the council offices are set to move – all of which will adversely impact on an already unfit parking system. In John’s opinion, the building is not fit for purpose – there are a number of serious issues including parking and distance to court rooms. There are also concerns over whether it is appropriate for vulnerable</p>	<p>JC</p>

<p>people going to NSJC in a “non-criminal capacity” to be mixing with people accused of crimes.</p> <p>John noted that when you appeal, you are asked to fill in a form and give details about any “special needs”. But this information does not go to the court it goes to a contracted service – there is no back office at the court/ no reception/ no caretaker.</p> <p>Security is provided by G4S. This is a national contract and it is not known if security staff has received disability awareness training.</p> <p>Pam said she had asked NSJC for an access audit of the building and the appropriate equality impact assessments. Pam has been assured that the audits have been done and updated each year but has not yet received them.</p> <p><b>Action:</b></p> <p><b>Laura will request copies too.</b></p> <p>A discussion was held about the possibility of moving PIP appeals to Bennett house but Steph said that this building is not accessible although she agreed that it is better than NSJC.</p>	LD
<p><b>7. Sainsbury’s Parking bays</b></p>	
<p>Pam reminded members that there had been an issue with misleading signage at Sainsbury’s Hanley. The sign makes it look as though parents and children can use disabled person’s parking bays. Pam has been in touch with Sainsbury’s who advised that this was not the case and that parents and children had their own spaces and action would be taken against people parking in the disabled persons’ parking bays who were not blue badge holders. John Burges reported that there are no parent and child spaces outside the supermarket. Pam has asked Sainsbury’s for details of fines issued by the parking company that manages the car park but has not yet received a reply. Gareth Snell MP has also contacted Sainsbury’s and has received the same letter as STAND – word for word.</p> <p><b>Action:</b></p> <p><b>STAND members will visit Sainsbury’s to check availability of parent and child spaces. Pam to arrange.</b></p> <p>Phil advised that abroad, disabled person’s bays are marked in a different colour to parent and child spaces to differentiate between the two.</p> <p>John reminded members that the law says that supermarkets have a duty to enforce parking for disabled people. Pam said the law states that the landowner has this enforcement duty but some businesses do not own the land on which the parking is situated e.g. Festival park. Owners often farm out parking enforcement to parking companies and it is difficult to get hold of land owners to challenge them. Blue badge abuse is not taken seriously by landowners and so it will carry on. There are no real sanctions and members said they would like to see firmer enforcement and bigger sanctions to reduce abuse.</p> <p>Phil advised that he had been advised that if the closest meter is out of order, you will have no fee and no fine.</p>	PB

<p><b>8. Smithfield 1 and 2 parking</b></p>	
<p>Pam said that there is due to be further development of the Smithfield site. STAND had been advised that the disabled person's parking bays to the front of Smithfield 1 and 2 were to be removed. Proposed on-street replacement was not suitable for disabled visitors to Smithfield One – because of excessive travel distances. STAND had made the council aware that this would be a breach in the Equality Act as they were making it unreasonably difficult for a disabled person to use services in Smithfield One.</p> <p>Tom Coates (Stoke-on-Trent City Council Development Control) has been very supportive and in his latest emails, he had reported that the bays outside Smithfield One would be retained with possible access off Warner Street.</p> <p>Jo said she had submitted a FOI request and asked how many disabled people were employed in Smithfield One.</p>	
<p><b>9. Red route Waterloo Road</b></p>	
<p>John Beech said that the Cabinet member Councillor Jellyman seems to be tasked with putting these all round the city. This issue has been raised with Ruth Smeeth MP and Gareth Snell MP as red route effectively make areas no-go for disabled people. The argument for the red route in this area is that double parking is blocking the road. But what happens to the businesses if customers can't park or deliveries be made? Members decided that it had not been thought through properly. Laura said that Ruth Smeeth has taken this up as businesses will suffer, disabled people won't be able to access the businesses and it will kill Burslem. There is also the question as to whether single or double red lines are proposed. Single lines will allow some limited parking.</p> <p>Pam said the problem is lack of enforcement. Laura said that a red route still has to be enforced. John believes that the route will be enforced with ANPR it's a cost cutting exercise.</p> <p>Consultation will not start until Autumn.</p> <p>Pam said she has a suspicion that the council has reduced the number of enforcement officers. Lack of enforcement in Longton is leading to some ridiculous and unsafe parking.</p> <p>John Beech said that STAND will set up a petition against the Waterloo Road Red Route.</p>	
<p><b>10. AOB</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pam thanked those members who had returned their Data Protection form. This is in response to changes in the Data Protection law coming in after May 24<sup>th</sup>. If members don't send the form back, Pam will have to remove them from STAND's database and will be unable to send updates.</li> <li>• Phi asked if members thought it was appropriate to invite the Guardian reporter to STAND's meeting .Members discussed but decided on balance not to do so.</li> </ul>	

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Laura advised that she was also a local councillor for Kidsgrove area.</li></ul>                      |  |
| <p><b>Date of next general meeting: Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> June 10.00am – 12.00 noon</b></p> <p><b>Meet in Kingsway at 9.45am please</b></p> |  |