

### Minutes of General Meeting

<b>Date</b>	12 June 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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geoff Bryan</li> <li>• Pam Bryan</li> <li>• Stephanie Wood</li> <li>• Louise Harris</li> <li>• Winston Green</li> <li>• Emily Horsfall and Chloe (office of Gareth Snell MP)</li> <li>• Rob Lamonby</li> </ul> </td> <td> <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>• Sheila Farmer</li> <li>• Jennifer Pardue</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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Horace Hodson</li> <li>• Janet Neilson</li> <li>• John Beech</li> </ul> </td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Angie Bunn</li> <li>• Mike Dixon</li> <li>• Pat Dixon</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </table>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geoff Bryan</li> <li>• Pam Bryan</li> <li>• Stephanie Wood</li> <li>• Louise Harris</li> <li>• Winston Green</li> <li>• Emily Horsfall and Chloe (office of Gareth Snell MP)</li> <li>• Rob Lamonby</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>• Sheila Farmer</li> <li>• Jennifer Pardue</li> <li>• Lesley Smith (Stoke City Council)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Horace Hodson</li> <li>• Janet Neilson</li> <li>• John Beech</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Angie Bunn</li> <li>• Mike Dixon</li> <li>• Pat Dixon</li> </ul>	
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<b>1. Attendees and Apologies</b>					
<p>Meeting was chaired by Geoff Bryan.</p> <p>Geoff welcomed members to the meeting.</p> <p>Apologies received and noted.</p>					
<b>2. Minutes of meeting of 17 April 2018</b>					
Minutes were accepted as true record of meeting of 17 April 2018					

<p><b>3. Matters arising</b></p>	
<p>The majority of items which were Matters Arising were agenda items for the meeting.</p> <p><b>Guardian Tweet</b></p> <p>Jo said that the Guardian had printed another story about disabled people and their struggle to access PIP appeals.</p> <p><b>Data Protection</b></p> <p>New General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) came into force on May 25<sup>th</sup>. In preparation for this, Pam had contacted all members on STAND's database to ask for their consent to retain their details and send mailings. Many people had replied but around a quarter of members had not and Pam is now unable to correspond with them. Pam advised that the majority of people who had not replied were non-active members. On the positive side, that means that the people on our current database are those who actively participate in STAND's work and we have considerably cut down on postage costs. Pam said that she was happy because the people receiving information from STAND are those who <b>want</b> to be part of STAND.</p> <p>Phil asked if we could look at reducing postage costs further by sending email to those who have it.</p> <p>Jennifer said that she had qualms about not sending people things just because they don't respond. People with disabilities can be out of action for months with ill-health and may be upset if they are taken off the mailing list. Pam agreed but said that GDPR had made it impossible to keep people on mailing lists without their express consent.</p>	
<p><b>4. Sainsbury's (Hanley) Parking</b></p>	
<p>This was an issue that was reported by John Burgess. Signage in Sainsbury's car park seemed to indicate that parent/ child could park in blue badge spaces. John reported back on STAND's visit to the car park. He said that each disabled person's parking bay had the wheelchair logo marked out, so it was obvious which spaces were for blue badge holders. Parent and child spaces were around the corner. Parents with children had been noted parking in the blue badge spaces previously but on the day of the visit, no-one was parking in the spaces without a blue badge. There was an official checking parking bay use on the day of the visit. So Sainsbury's were complying with their stated policies.</p> <p>Pam has written to the company explaining how confusing the signs are but said that STAND can take no further action at this stage. She considered that this was a partial success for STAND.</p> <p>Geoff said that as Asda were taking over Sainsbury's and STAND members should keep checking that blue badge spaces were being reserved for blue badge holders only. Pam reminded members that Asda had previously won STAND's parking award.</p>	
<p><b>5. Visit to Claymills Pumping Station</b></p>	
<p>John Burgess reported on STAND's recent visit to Claymills at Burton-on-Trent. He said STAND members had been amazed by the facility. He believed that they had got everything</p>	

covered in terms of access for disabled people. STAND members had requested provision of a few ramps and been advised that they would be provided. John considered that Claymills was well worth a visit. Claymills have asked STAND to go back when they have built their new visitor centre.

Pam added that she received an email from Claymills thanking STAND for our support. She noted that it is unusual for STAND to work out of our area but we had had a request for help from Claymills and she considered it was a mark of respect for our organisation's growing reputation, to be asked to help.

Mick said he had visited the National Memorial Arboretum and it was very accessible. It was also a very moving experience and he recommended that members visit.

Jennifer said that this was a directly opposite experience to one she had had when on a visit to a National Trust stately home near Llandudno with the MS Society. They had been told the stately home was accessible but when they got there, it wasn't.

Pam said that there is often a need to ask very specific questions when you ring up to ask about accessibility. A flat gravel path might seem accessible to premises controllers but it isn't to someone in a wheelchair! Pam said that they don't have anyone to tell them how to make things properly accessible. Lesley advised that the National Trust does have an access officer and that people should contact this person when they encounter difficulties.

## 6. Red routes

Pam said that STAND will object to all red route proposals and suggest that instead the council undertakes proper, effective enforcement to deal with parking issues. Red routes are no-go areas for people with disabilities. Lesley said that she has asked that STAND is part of any red route consultations. The Waterloo Road consultation is planned for the Autumn.

Phil advised that Unite the union will also be objecting to red route proposals as it penalises their members.

## 7. Blue Iris

Lesley handed out an update to members. Blue Iris is really progressing well. By the end of June, there should be around 3000 people wearing the Blue Iris badge.

Almost 100 organisations have engaged to Blue Iris and a number of these are partnering with Blue iris to develop the initiative with a view to spreading it UK wide. There has already been some interest from other parts of the UK. This working group will meet on 18<sup>th</sup> July.

Lesley is investigating an international partnership with 3 charities from Seattle USA and will report back on progress.

Lesley thanked Des Elliott (Blue Iris supporter) Mick Jones, John Burgess and Jo Coulson who had very kindly offered to attend outreach events:

- 16<sup>th</sup> June – Stoke Pride (Des)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 21<sup>st</sup> June – Burslem Park (Jo and Mick)</li> <li>• 23<sup>rd</sup> June – Hartshill Summer event (Mick and John)</li> <li>• 30<sup>th</sup> June – Spitfires and Oatcakes (TBC)</li> </ul>	
<p><b>8. Smithfield parking</b></p>	
<p>Pam said there had been a proposal to remove the on-site parking at Smithfield. STAND has been working with planning and other council officers and has now received assurance that the onsite parking for Smithfield will be retained. There will be a new access off Warner Street as there are safety issues accessing off Broad Street due to on-going building work.</p> <p>Pam also advised that STAND is on the consultation list for the next phase of the development. There is going to be extremely limited parking on the development but Pam has been assured that there will be disabled person's parking bays on site.</p> <p>Mick said that the council should properly consult on where parking bays are located or relocated. He said they are moving bays willy-nilly with no consideration to disabled people. Pam said that it limits what disabled people can do when there is n parking or parking at a distance</p> <p>Members had a discussion about the variance in maximum travel distances that the Government says that disabled people should be able to walk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 50m for ESA/ Blue Badge but only</li> <li>• 20m for PIP</li> </ul> <p>The difference does not make sense. Phil asked Emily if Gareth could raise this issue in Parliament.</p>	
<p><b>9. Dual purpose parking bays</b></p>	
<p>Laura from Ruth Smeeth's office had put in an official request to Stoke Council as to where the dual purpose bays and had been advised that they don't exist. This means that vehicles should not be loading and unloading in disabled person's parking bays at any time.</p> <p>Pam passed on thanks to Laura.</p> <p>Louise reported an issue with the disabled person's parking bays in Hanley opposite where Argos used to be. There is an area next to the disabled person's parking bays that looks like it is a parking bay when in fact it is a no park zone. The area is not marked with the wheelchair symbol but could confuse other blue badge holders.</p> <p><b>Action</b></p> <p><b>Lesley to contact Mike Clarke Parking</b></p>	<p>LS</p>

## 10. North Staffs Justice Centre (NSJC)

Pam said she was really pleased following liaison with NSJC. There was a real willingness to do what was needed to improve accessibility for disabled people. The interest from MPs had helped to raise this willingness up a notch!

Pam said that NSJC were investigating a digital option for those people who were unable to stand the stress of a court appearance for a tribunal hearing. This would be set up in the appellant's home. NSJC stressed that this was potentially to be offered as an option rather than as an alternative. Some disabled people had already advised Pam that they don't want this option if it will potentially replace a court appearance as they prefer to state their case in person. The court is looking to set up the technology of this option and trial but will be coming back to STAND for their opinion.

Phil said it should be down to each individual as to whether this is a suitable option. He felt personally that he had had a better result from his personal appearance in court. But he did emphasise that it had been a very stressful experience and he, as quite a confident person, had found it very hard. A court is "hostile environment" and this adds to the stress.

Pam said that tribunals are very stressful and for some people, such as those with mental ill-health, IT could provide a useful solution.

Louise said that her partner had autism and mental ill-health. Because of his disabilities he was not articulate and was refused PIP. He was advised to appeal but couldn't cope with the stress so he is still not receiving PIP despite his disability needs. Pam commented that this must happen many times to vulnerable people. It is an inherently unfair system.

Jennifer also reported that she did not go for her tribunal as it made her so ill. Mick agreed that the assessment is so daunting for someone who has never undergone such a thing before. The people who work in the court are not stressed – it's just their office and they struggle to understand what a hard and stressful experience this is for disabled people.

Jennifer said the technology would add to her stress and she didn't relish the idea of someone coming into her home to set it up and check out where she lives. She couldn't stand the camera looking at her. She was also concerned that it was the thin end of the wedge and that people may end up having to undergo their appeal via technology.

Phil said he thought it would be an eye-opener for MPs to sit in on an assessment and said they were more than welcome to sit in on his.

Emily said that the court had made it very clear that the IT solution would only ever be an option. NSJC had been incredibly willing to make changes and it had been a very positive experience.

Pam outlined some of the areas discussed and solutions offered:

- Parking – key issue. NSJC will reserve one space on the rear car park which can be requested and which will be available on a first come first served basis

**Action: Pam will ask NSJC what happens when more than 1 person requests the bay**

- Disabled people who are unable to get in by car can request an accessible taxi which

PB

NSJC will pay for.

- NSJC are also liaising with Newcastle council to see if they can negotiate blue badge parking on the new development planned for Sainsbury's car park.
- Cobbled area on the corner of the building will have a white edge painted
- Automatic main entrance doors are due to be repaired
- Trudy will contact Angie Bunn when she is back off sick leave to discuss induction loops
- Signage updates planned
- Some key internal doors to be automated
- Some furniture will be removed in the courts to improve manoeuvring space
- Minor updates to the accessible toilets
- Soundproofing to consultation room
- Memo sent out to security staff reminding them that they are not allowed to touch the person or bag of visitors. Visitors must show security the inside of their bags. There will be a meeting between G4S (security company), STAND and Disability Solutions as STAND is still unhappy at the level of disability awareness training.

Pam advised that she had been really pleased about the keenness and willingness to improve of the staff at NSJC. The work for which they have already been granted funding should be complete within 12 weeks.

Pam and STAND offered sincere thanks to our MPs, their officers and Disability Solutions for their support.

Mick thanked everyone who has been involved. He said there were a couple of extra issues:

- Could disabled people use the side door instead as they used to be able to before increased security measures? Pam said that disabled people can request access at this entrance but that the ramp has issues and that side of the court is used for justice cases which may not be appropriate for vulnerable people.
- Crowds of people right outside the door smoking and generally hanging about can be off-putting

Pam also reported that NSJC is now getting the information about access requirements that disabled people fill in on their appeal forms, so now they can better prepare to meet needs.

Emily asked that if people coming for PIP or ESA appeals encounter problems they should put in a formal complaint as soon as the issue arises. This ensures that NSJC can use CCTV footage if necessary and deal with issues in a timely fashion.

Pam asked that Steph passed this information on to her CAB colleagues, the information will also be put on STAND website and Disability Solutions will also pass on the word.

<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>Pavement issues with severe tripping hazards reported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By John Burgess by Wetherspoons Hanley</li> <li>• By Sheila Farmer outside former Woolworths Stoke</li> </ul> <p><b>Action: Lesley to report to Highways</b></p> <p>Mick reported an incident he had read about in the Sentinel. The spy car had parked in a drop off place outside the railway station. A car had been forced to park in the bus lane to drop someone off and had received a parking fine.</p> <p>Lesley advised that a plan had been drawn for refurbishment of Hanley Market WCs. The facility will now have more toilets, good quality accessible toilets and a Changing Places WC. This is a refurbishment of the existing traders and public WCs at the back of the building and will only be open when the market is open.</p> <p><b>Action: Pam will liaise with Councillor Jellyman as this arrangement is not what was agreed when Crown bank toilets were demolished</b></p> <p>Louise reported that the hoist in the changing Places facility in Hanley bus station has been out of order for 2 -3 months.</p> <p><b>Action: Lesley will contact Bus Station Manager</b></p>	<p>LS</p> <p>PB</p> <p>LS</p>
<p><b>Date of next meeting : AGM 11 September 10.00am – 12.00 noon</b></p> <p><b>Meet in Kingsway at 9.45am please</b></p>	