

# NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

## NORTHAMPTON DISABLED PEOPLE'S FORUM

Friday, 17 January 2020

|          |                   |                         |
|----------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Members: | Martin DeRosario  | Co Chair                |
|          | Cllr Phil Larratt | Co Chair                |
|          | Martin Page       | DWP                     |
|          | Sarah Ribchester  | Teamwork Trust          |
|          | Glenn Pearcey     | Teamwork Trust          |
|          | Rebecca Gill      | VR Therapies            |
|          | Carl Weininger    | Polio Association       |
|          | Yemi Holman       | Northamptonshire Police |
|          | Debs Burns        | NBC                     |
|          | Doug Peacock      | Stroke Association      |
|          | Debbie MacColl    | NBC                     |

### 1. WELCOME, INTRODUCTION AND APOLOGIES

Martin welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Jane Linnacker, Bev Mennell, Rufia Ashraf and Rachel Clements.

### 2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Registration scheme for people with disabilities. Debbie stated that if the Forum wanted to progress with this we would need to be very clear what we were trying to achieve. If the idea was to offer discounts from local businesses, someone would need to put some time for setting this up and she could not commit to this long term not knowing what might be happening with Unitary. Martin said he knew about the legislation referred to in the last minutes but it was now obsolete. Carl stated he would like to progress it at some stage and would lobby his MP but expected there to be issues around privacy.

#### **Hate Crime**

Yemi Holman, Hate Crime Officer for Northamptonshire Police, introduced herself and gave out some leaflets explaining how to report hate crime. There had been an increase in reported disability hate crime and encouraged everyone to report any incidents.

The main issues people had experienced were to do with parking in disabled bays in supermarket car parks and other disabled parking bays. Yemi stated that people should always consider their own safety before getting in to a confrontation with anyone but they could report to security at supermarket car parks. However, it was reported that some supermarkets did not challenge anyone as they were concerned for their own safety. As it was not public land the police could not get involved in parking issues but could if it became public disorder. Yemi asked that information was passed on so that the police could work with the supermarket. Cllr Larratt expressed concern over losing about 4 parking bays on George Row and Carl stated that blue badge restrictions were being relaxed so there would be more users for less spaces.

## **Unitary Update**

Cllr Larratt reported that Shadow Cllrs would be elected in May. The existing Cllrs would carry on until 31 March 2021 alongside the Shadow Cllrs. No update yet on the forums or who would be taking responsibility for various buildings. The consultation for New Parish Council had been completed and there had been significant support for Kingsthorpe and Far Cotton Parish Councils. The remaining non-parished areas would be part of a new Town Council. If the Guildhall was not transferred to the new Town Council it would be the responsibility of the Unitary Council.

### **3. VIRTUAL REALITY THERAPIES - REBECCA GILL**

Rebecca had set up a Social Enterprise using Virtual Reality (VR) for therapeutic benefits and she would be opening up her own premises in town later in the year. Her background was a learning disability Nurse. VR made physio an immersive, fun experience and patients were receiving physio without realising it. It was hoped that eventually treatments could be given free for charities eventually but funding was an issue and Rebecca had taken out a loan and had received a grant from the University to help with the technology. Action: Debbie put Rebecca in touch with Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire. Currently working with a company for people in care where the main events of the life story of the person could be brought up to keep carers informed and better able to understand that person. It was important to understand the individual so that phobias could be avoided. Carl stated it would be good for those with Alzhiemers.

### **4. ACCESS TO WORK - DAVID WELLS**

Access to Work had been around since 1994 to help those with disabilities get into and stay in work. It was not a benefit but an individual grant for equipment, service, transport or what ever that person needed that was 'reasonable adjustment' that would be expected from an employer. It was a flexible programme and individual to the applicant.

Conditions were that the applicant had to be over 16 years old, the disability was long term, not claiming Employment and Support Allowance, lived in and paid tax in UK. It was worth anyone with a health condition in enquiring.

Types of help included:-

Special aids/equipment (ie orthopaedic chair/specialist software)

Adaptations to premises/equipment/vehicles

Travel to work – this could even pay for a driver.

Travel in work.

Support work – eg sign language interpreter.

Employers may need to make a contribution. For the first 6 weeks of employment or if the company has less than 50 employees there will be no charge, then a sliding scale. If the individual moves job they can take equipment with them.

An individual can make more than 1 application and can make extra claims if the condition deteriorates up to a maximum of £59,200 per year.

Applications can also be made by those wanting to set up their own business.

In 2018 53,000 applications were received with 95% being approved.

Applications can be made online – <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work/apply>  
Or by phone – 0800 121 7479  
Or textphone – 0800 121 7579

**5. WILTSHIRE FARM FOODS - INTRO TO SERVICE AND TASTING OPPORTUNITY - JESSICA SANDERSON**

Wiltshire Farm Foods were nutritionally balanced, frozen, individual meals. They delivered all over Northamptonshire and drivers were very experienced using key safes etc and would also put the food away if required. They were all caring people who had worked for the firm for a long time and were all DBS checked.

The meals were cooked from frozen either in the oven or microwave. There was a range for those with heart conditions, mini meals for those with small appetites but extra calories, vegetarian (and a few vegan), a free-from range for all the major allergens, a softer range for those with swallowing difficulties and they all came in small/mini and hearty sizes in recyclable plastic. They were very easy for those who had difficulties in preparing their own meals.

The company had won the Queens Award for Enterprise for sustainability for their sourcing and production of feed and the way they worked with communities.

Food can be ordered through the website or online.

**6. ACTION PLAN**

Debbie to draft up and circulate.

**7. COMMUNITY INFORMATION EXCHANGE**

**International Women's Day**

Debbie told the meeting of the event on Saturday 7 March, 11am – 3pm at the Guildhall to celebrate International Women's Day. Inspirational Woman award nominations were currently open and closed on 27 January. An email was sent out after the meeting with the link in case anyone wanted to do a nomination.

**ITEMS FOR NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS**

**DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

**The next meeting of the Disabled Peoples Forum will be held on Friday, 20 March 2020.**