

**Falkirk Access and Assessment Group  
Minutes of Annual General Meeting  
13<sup>th</sup> June 2008  
Forth Valley Sensory Centre  
Camelon**

**Attendees**

Henry Sherlock (Chair)  
Peter Rowe (Secretary)  
George Cross (Service User and Chairman of the Macular Disease Group)  
Billy Frame (Service User)  
Councillor John Mcluckie  
Denise Rooney (Forth Valley Fire Department)  
Margaret Watkin (Service User)

**Apologies**

Pauline McGrillis  
Margaret Stevenson

**1. Welcome From The Chairperson**

The Chairperson opened the Annual General Meeting (AGM) with a welcome to all attendees.

**2. Introductions**

All attendees introduced themselves, stating who they were and their role at the meeting.

**3. Minutes of Last AGM Held 28<sup>th</sup> March 2007**

The Secretary apologised for the lack of minutes and agreed to circulate copies. The Secretary also agreed to ensure that they would be put on the web site as soon as possible.

**4. Chairperson's Report**

The Chairperson's report was read out to all attendees. The Group thanked the Chair for all the work carried out over the last twelve months. and it was confirmed that a copy would also be placed on the Group's web site. A copy of the full report can be found at **Annex A**.

**5. Treasure's Report**

The Treasure's report was not available but attendees were informed that the report would be circulated later and placed on the web site. The Group were assured that there were enough finance's to see us through another twelve months.

## **6. Secretary's Report**

The Secretary read his report to attendees. The Chair and the Group thanked the Secretary for his work carried out over the last twelve months. It was also confirmed that this report would be placed on the website. A copy of the Secretary's report can be found at **Annex B**.

## **7. Election of Office Bearers**

As no formal nominations had been made, the current office bearers agreed to stand for a further year. The Group unanimously supported this.

## **8. Any Other Business (AOB)**

### **National Entitlement Card**

It would appear that the National Entitlement Card continues to cause confusion and concern amidst our disabled community. Confusion still remains over the companion component and how different Council Authorities, rail providers and even bus drivers interpret its use. There has even been speculations made by several Councils regarding the imposing of certain sanctions. The Chair has already got this as an action point but agreed to try to get this issue on the agenda at the next Scottish Disability Equality Forum (SDEF) board meeting.

### **Licensing Board**

The Group asked why the licensing board was granting licenses to service providers when their premises and indeed some of their services were not accessible. Councillor John Mcluckie agreed that as part of their Disability Equality Duty the Group had a right to ask such questions. The Chair stated that he had been involved with the initial Licensing Board Disability Equality Scheme and was advised that he would be invited to future meetings to discuss disability issues. However, no invite has ever been made. Councillor John Mcluckie agreed that it would be only fitting for a representative of the Group to work with the Board. Councillor Mcluckie agreed that he would take this request forward at the next licensing board meeting.

### **Council and Other Public Buildings Egress**

A discussion ensued regarding the problems of fire egress and how Council and other public building owners managed the safety of disabled people in the case of a fire. It was agreed that further investigation was required and it was also agreed that a member of the fire and rescue service be invited to speak at a future meeting. This will form a new **Action Point AP45**

### **Becoming Involved At The Earliest Stages**

A discussion took place that identified once again the need for disabled peoples involvement to take place at a much earlier stage than is presently being undertaken. It would appear that disabled people are only being involved after critical decisions regarding services and building planning has

taken place. The Group agreed that in line with the Disability Equality Duty there was a need disabled people involvement from the beginning of any plans. The Chair confirmed that he was in the process of talking to the architects and planners as part of their on going awareness training and as part of the Council's own Disability Equality Scheme. Councillor Mcluckie supported this and stated that he felt it was vital that Council officers attended the Group meetings and carried the feeling of the Group back to their Departments. Councillor Mclukie stressed the importance he places on cooperation between the Council's officers and members of the Group on disability issues. It was agreed that the Secretary will invite Council officers to future Group meetings.

### **9. Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Group will take place on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2008 at the Forth Valley Sensory Centre, Camelon, Falkirk at 1.30pm.

# Falkirk and District Access and Assessment Group Annual General Meeting 28<sup>th</sup> May 2008 Chairperson's Report

## 1. Introduction:

It has now been two and a half years since I was invited to be the Chairperson of the Group. In that time I have learned a lot. Not just about access, but about the community I live in, the people who live and work in that community and of course, a lot about myself. I know that I have made mistakes, or should I say, intellectual pauses along the way, but it has been through them that I have honestly learned the most. This year has been another exciting year as the Chair of the Group. I have had the greatest of pleasure working with a broad spectrum of people from many differing organisations and backgrounds and can honestly say that I have enjoyed every minute. I recognise that there is still a lot of work for us to do, but with the dedication of our members and the continued support of our community we can address those issues many of us face on a day to day basis. We know that we can not do this alone and that is why most of this year has been spent working with organisation officials who can help us achieve those changes. I feel that the success of our Group over this last twelve months has been down to the way we conduct our business. Our approach to issues is sensible and our message is consistent and it is great to know that we now have a voice. A voice that I hope will get stronger and stronger each day, each week, each month and each year. A voice that will continue to say "we are your community". A voice that will say "we have the same needs". A voice that will always say "we are equal". A voice that maybe some day will be silent because we have access, we have independence and we are treated as an equal.

## 2. What have we achieved?

The Group has once again maintained its strong voice in the community and is stronger than ever. The commitment of the Group has proved to be the main backbone of all that we have done. Although our membership has not grown over the last twelve months, our determination and commitment have. Our main strengths have been in our involvement and negotiation with key players within our community. In the last twelve months we have, as a Group:

- Maintained our information pack
- Maintained our Action Point log insuring that none of the issues are forgotten
- Had positive media publicity
- Successfully networked with key players in our community
- Provided advice and consultation on Disability Equality Schemes

- Maintained the bus forum
- Continued to attend access/equality forums and seminars
- Provided advice and awareness
- Raised issues with Members of the Scottish Parliament
- Raised issues with goods and service providers

We have also continued to bring people in. We have continued to let the community know who we are and have been lucky to have had regular attendance of key players at our meetings. They have been:

- First Bus Company
- Central Scotland Police
- Forth Valley NHS Trust
- British Waterways
- Scottish Disability and Equality Forum
- Falkirk Licensing Board members
- Falkirk Traffic
- Parking Officers
- Town Centre Management
- Local Authority Human Resources
- Macular Disease Support Group

### **3. Financial Status:**

At this time, our Treasurer (Provost Pat Reid), states that our Group has enough finances to at least see us through the next twelve months. The Treasures Report will be heard later.

### **4. The Future**

Our Group continues to be a success. It continues to be so, due to the efforts that each and every single member and stakeholder puts in. It is refreshing to know that people who participate in our activities share the same enthusiasm and belief. This is an encouraging sign and we have proven we can survive and our voice is being heard. Yes, there is still a long way to go, but we must always remember that we have also come a long way. That the work we do, and have done, has made a difference to peoples lives. In some cases, a significant difference. We continue to have a fantastic network of people to whom we have a voice. A voice that is getting heard. A voice that is getting stronger. The stronger the voice, the better our future will become. Now that we have people listening and working with us, our future is looking good.

Within the next twelve months, in no particular order, our Group will:

- Elect the four office bearers
- Continue to address access issues at every level
- Continue to make people aware
- Continue to network with stakeholders and key players

- Find a way of sustaining the Group
- Encourage growth of our membership
- Continue to participate and monitor Disability Equality Schemes
- Develop the skills of the Group
- Network with other Access Panels
- Enjoy the work we do

## **5. Final Note**

As the current Chairperson of the Group, I would like to say that I have thoroughly enjoyed the last twelve months. It has not all been plain sailing and it has been an exceptionally busy time. I also have to be completely honest and say that, sometimes, it has been difficult. Sometimes it has been worrying. However, most of the time, it has been enlightening, exhilarating, exciting and most importantly enjoyable. I have also had the fantastic privilege of opportunity to work with many different and exciting people and organisations. Each and every one with the same goal at its core. The last twelve months have been an incredible challenge as the Chairperson, but one which I have relished and hopefully done the Group proud. All that is left to say is that I hope that the next twelve months prove to be as successful as the last twelve months. I would also like to thank the Group, its members, its users, stakeholders and network organisations for the last twelve months and every success for the forthcoming twelve month ventures. May the Group continue to go from strength to strength.

Henry Sherlock

Falkirk and District Access and Assessment Group  
Chairperson

## Annex B

### **Falkirk and District Access and Assessment Group Secretary's Report AGM 13<sup>th</sup> June 2008**

As you all know this year has been very difficult for me on a personal level and I hope that the group will forgive the slips and glitches which have occurred.

This has been a year of slow progress the equality policy's of a number of organisations have been passed to the group for comment I would like to commend the chairman for his extensive work on these documents

The visually impaired walk with the Provost and councillor Meiklejohn were a great success and an offer has been made to do similar walks with other council members in their own wards none have come forward as yet but it is early days.

There has been a very constructive meeting with the Architects regarding consultation the chairman and myself are invited to speak at one of their lunchtime training sessions we are currently working on a presentation.

The Web site is now working well the council's web staff are putting things up on the site within hours so all minutes notes of meetings and agendas are available to download.

Peter Rowe  
Secretary