

Notes of the Meeting to Discuss Disability Positive Congleton

Congleton Town Hall

Wednesday 31 January 2024

Present: Cllr Kay Wesley, Chair of the Congleton Town Council Community Committee, Nichola Brain, Alec Scaresbrook, Deborah Lawson, Tom Stephens, Diane Ritherdon, Pam Carey, Denis Murphy (Town Burgess), Jackie MacArthur (CTC officer)

1. Kay welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited everyone to introduce themselves and say a few words about their areas of interest.
2. Kay discussed the 7 points of action that CTC Community Committee had approved and that the Town Council will work on to get feedback from the group.

Disability Positive Agenda - Congleton Town Council 7 areas working on

- A)** A Survey of Congleton people with a disability to learn more about the issues that they are facing in Congleton and what they believe the Town Council or other groups could do to make their lives easier. **(Jackie to send a draft to the group to consider ahead of sending out to the public)**
 - B)** Continue to develop and offer awareness-raising sessions for Councillors and staff to help build an appreciation of the issues. The first visually impaired awareness session has happened, and more are in the planning stage. **(CTC started and ongoing)**
 - C)** Set up a Consultation Group of experts representing different disabilities e.g. visually impaired, hearing impaired, neurodiversity, dementia, wheelchair users etc. and work with them to compile priority areas to work on for Congleton. **(Agreed to form a group)**
 - D)** Create a disability Guide to Congleton – on paper and online- showing disability-friendly accessible buildings and facilities. **(Agreed people must have accurate information in advance of accessible facilities.)**
 - E)** Investigate becoming a Disability Confident Council/Employer **(For CTC to do)**
 - F)** Apply for funding (if possible) to progress these areas of work and consider providing a Changing Places Toilet within the town centre. **(for the future)**
 - G)** Plan further action based on input from the survey, the experience days, and the Consultation Group. **(for the future)**
3. Group agreed to form a group that can help advise and guide the Town Council through these areas of work. Group will be chaired by Deborah Lawson (agreed by

show of hands). Initially to meet monthly. Cllr Kay Wesley and Jackie MacArthur to continue to support the group.

The group discussed what it wanted to be known as. Interesting debate about whether to include the word disability. As a working title agreed 'Equal Access' group – possible tagline breaking down barriers for people with a disability / breaking down barriers in Congleton. Pam agreed to speak to a few people about the name and feedback. Noted that young people were more comfortable and confident with the disability title than older people. This suggestion will go forward to next meeting.

4. Other issues raised by people in the group:

Important to be truthful about where is accessible and where isn't.

Would be useful to develop a pack for businesses to help them understand what's needed. Understand the power of the purple pound.

CTC needs to get its own building and policies in order. Group is happy to advise on what is needed.

Include Transport and access to transport on an action list.

Make sure Town Council new website is accessible - group willing to test run it when ready.

Work on a check list for planning – both for sustainability and inclusivity

Issue of degrading pavements – difficult for those using mobility scooters and power chairs.

Attitudes are important and people need to be confident around communications.

5. Survey – to send out for the group to preview.

6. Group members present today agreed that it was ok to share their email addresses with each other. People who have expressed an interest in the group but not yet given permission will be sent updates separately until permission is given.

7. Sharing a report that Deborah prepared on Disability Awareness and points to consider for Congleton as ran out of time at the meeting.

8. Cllr Kay Wesley thanked everyone for their positive and interesting contribution.

9. Suggested Date of Next Meeting WEDNESDAY 28 FEBRUARY – 10am Town Hall