

Equal Access Advisory Group - Theme of meeting, TRANSPORT

Meeting Notes – 31 May 2024

Attendance: - Deborah Lawson (Chair), Cllr Kay Wesley, Tom, Diane Ritherdon, Denis Murphy, Theresa, Jackie MacArthur

Apologies – Nicola (going to move to the Interest Group), Alec Scaresbrook,

1. Notes of the meeting of 19 April accepted as correct.
2. Theme of this meeting was **Transport**. Discussions were held around buses, private vehicles, car parking, taxis, travelling around Congleton.

a) Buses

- i) Bus stop near the War Memorial Hospital has changed, this appears to have created a problem for the drivers (Jackie check with bus operation.
- ii) Could do with bus services running during the evening visitor hours – can get there but not back. – To pick up with Cheshire East who commissions and subsidises the services. Check with the hospital to understand need.
- iii) CTC will respond to the CEC Bus Survey – to include comments of the group. Concern about the buses not going to places that they need to go, visually impaired people don't know when a bus is approaching – buses usually only stop when waved down.
- iv) CTC need to make sure that planning applications for larger new estates have road wider enough for future bus use.
- v) Understand which buses accept which style of chair.

b) Private Transport

- i) Lack of Disability Parking in Congleton. Many of CEC car parks are not meeting the minimum disability parking quota. Paper to the next Community Committee and letter to Cheshire East Council Parking team asking them to address the issue of lack of spaces

Car parks	Total Bays	Disabled Bays	What CEC recommend	Government Guidelines (Inclusive Mobility, DfT) recommend	British Parking Association recommend
Antrobus ST	84	2	2	5.04 bays	5.52 bays
Back Park St	98	3	2	5.88 bays	5.94 bays
Fairground	97	6	2	5.82 bays	5.91 bays
Princess St	90	2	2	5.4 bays	5.7 bays
West St	216	4	4.64 bays	12.96 bays	10.48 bays
High St		1			
Chapel St	52	0	1	3.12 bays	4.56 bays

- ii) share this information with Cheshire East Ward councillors and ask for their support to increase the number of spaces.

- ii) Issue about the quality of the spaces – only Fairground Car Park has good spaces at the back of the parking space. Many wheelchairs access via the back of the vehicle.
Congleton Hospital has 6% of disabled parking places.
 - iii) To check out other car parks – Morrisons, Roe Street, New Life Church, Meadowside Surgery, Barn Road, Tesco Express, West Heath Shopping Centre.
 - iv) Check out how many Blue Badges CEC issue to people in Congleton.
 - v) Create a poster – Inconsiderate Parking – your parking means I can't use the pavement in my wheelchair. Issue of parking across dropped kerbs in Swanbank, Moody Street.
 - vi) Letter to the Chronicle from the group.
- c) Taxis
- i) Lack of any taxis in Congleton able to take a power chair. Can we encourage any of the companies to invest in a vehicle that can take power chairs? Write a letter to the Congleton Taxi companies to see if any are considering it.
 - ii) Write to CEC licensing to see if they can help with encouraging taxi companies to take wheelchairs.
- d) Travelling Around Congleton
- i) Would like to see more dropped kerbs
 - ii) Potholes and uneven pavements cause a big issue for people in chairs
 - iii) Ideally need more crossing (CEC has a crossing strategy)
 - iv) Gutter drains cutting across the footpaths is a hazard to people in wheel and power chairs – could do with having a grid over the open gutters.
 - v) Overgrown hedges making pavements too narrow in some places is an issue – advised anyone noticing these to report on Fix My Street. Cheshire East can ask householders to maintain hedges – or check if it is maintained by CEC/ Streetscape
 - vi) Suggested that we could make some short videos highlighting the issues people are facing
 - vii) Concern about cycling in the pedestrian area – it is causing some people to feel nervous about going into town as they don't hear the bikes.
 - viii) Concern about cars using the pedestrian area as a cut-through between 4pm and 10am. Vehicles are only allowed – and the number of vehicles ignoring the bollards. Is it possible to have something more robust?
 - ix) Staffordshire Council has radar keys on gates at Rudyard Lake – would it be possible to do something similar where there are gates on paths in our area.

Date of Next Meeting – suggested late July – Jackie to organise and let people have the date.

