

## **Equal Access Advisory Group**

### **Meeting Minutes – In-person and Virtual 11<sup>th</sup> September 25**

**Attendees** – Dr Deborah Lawson (Chair), Cllr Kay Wesley , Cathy Dean, Tom Stephens, Denis Murphy, Theresa Graystone, Matt Sanders

**Apologies** – Alec Scaresbrook, Diane Ritherdon

1. **Welcome from the chair – Deborah welcomed everyone to the meeting**
2. **Notes** of the meeting of 17<sup>th</sup> June 2025 were accepted as a true record.
3. **Actions from previous minutes**

#### **Dropped Krebs Agenda Item**

- **Action** - Kay and Theresa to check out routes from Able World to Readsmore Surgery – **carry forward**
- **Action** – Dropped kerbs – Denis is continuing to review dropped kerbs around the town centre. Footpath Morrisons no dropped kerb - Kay added to the action plan **(Ongoing)**.  
Deborah to look at the route from an area where there is a high population of disabled residents into town/Tesco when the weather improves **(Completed)**.
- **Action** – Cathy/Debbie design a social media campaign on improving attitudes to disabilities, and highlight it before big events. “Be Kind” or “Accessibility Benefits Everyone” campaign. **(Completed Update in Agenda)**
- **Action** – ask Celeste to design business posters (use disability welcome logo) be kind/accessibility welcome. Deborah to send over a document, which includes good visuals for shops to use. **(Completed)**
- **Action** – Cathy to research the best e-learnings and disability-positive training for staff and councillors. **(Assigned to Tom to research.)**  
- **Completed – update below in agenda item**
- **Action** – Contact CAB to see if they will come to Congleton so people can have face-to-face contact. – **Kay Contacted and passed to the Chief Officer, will follow up.**
- **Action** - Cathy to follow up with Mark (Town Hall Manager) regarding the ramp, accessible toilet sign and mirror in the accessible toilet (button also temperamental) – Permanent Ramp not possible, investigate a removable ramp and bell at the back door:  
**Update** - Temporary ramp also not possible because of the gradient. Due to the distance from the back door to the Information Centre you can't use a standard

model. CIC isn't open at the same times as the building. The button on the disabled toilet is temperamental but costs around 7K to replace.

- **Action** – Distribute the updated event guidance document to local event organisers.
- **Action** – Kay to follow up with businesses that have applied for the disability welcome scheme. Provide information on the website about the award criteria.

**Completed** – agenda item

- **Action** – Arrange a meeting with the Cheshire East Officer - Sam Burnard - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer.

**Completed** – Sam Burnard (Equality & Inclusion Officer, Cheshire East) has agreed to come to the next meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> November to present and talk to the group.

- **Action** – Discuss with Events Manager & Chief Officer regarding promotion of the book. The book is being developed as a social purpose project, with a significant portion of profits being used to donate free copies to schools, hospitals, and other charitable causes.

**Completed** – Details of the book were shared at the play day and on social media.

#### 4. Review of Disability Pride Month Campaign

During July CTC ran a social media campaign on Disability Pride month. The top post received 18 comments, 14,684 views and 123 interactions.

Attached in Appendix 1 are further SATS.

One member of the public thanked the EAG as they now finally feel seen.

We will continue to share relevant information across our CTC officials, press releases, disability corner articles etc

#### 5. Disability Welcome Scheme Update

Tom's research into training for best e-learning and disability-positive training for staff and councillors resulted in either being very expensive or too technical.

Equality and Human Rights Commission had a useful guide titled 'Retailers' legal responsibility to disabled customers'

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/guidance/retailers-legal-responsibility-disabled-customers>

SCOPE Business has some free courses.

Develop a programme of training for staff, councillors and local businesses.

Experience sessions – wheelchairs/neurodiverse etc

**Action** – Add resources to the disability page on the website. Ask for a training budget for CTC in the budget setting.

The Disability Welcome Scheme leaflet is to be reorganised into new sections: Legal Requirements, Silver, and Gold. This is in response to businesses asking what makes gold vs silver, and businesses must meet legal requirements.

Service Dogs and Guide dogs are not mentioned on the leaflet.

We could do some social media posts around the differences between assist dogs.

**Action** - redesign leaflet – Cathy/Kay

## **6. Colouring Competition Entries**

Thanks to all the children who entered the colouring competition during the play day on 29<sup>th</sup> July 25 for disability pride month and the launch of Deborah's book 'Damsons Friendship Wish', now a bestseller!

<https://deborah-lawson.co.uk/damsons-friendship-wish/>

From the entries, a 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place were selected by the group.

**Action** - Cathy to contact the winners and arrange a photo call.

## **7. Dropped Kerbs**

Surveying the towns' dropped kerbs has been an action point for a number of meetings, it's not in the remit of CTC to install dropped kerbs but can we at least lobby Cheshire East to install them?

Group members to send to Cathy via WhatsApp (07977 065 647) or email ([cathy.dean@congleton-tc.gov.uk](mailto:cathy.dean@congleton-tc.gov.uk)) any problem areas.

**Action** – Invite Cheshire East Highways Officer to Equal Access meeting.

## **8. Community Toilet Scheme**

A Community Toilet Scheme allows the public to use toilet facilities in participating local businesses and organisations during their normal opening hours. Similar schemes have already been introduced by councils in other parts of the country.

There is a long-standing issue with the limited number of public toilets in the town centre, which CTC is actively addressing. This scheme is not intended to replace the proposed CTC toilets, but rather to supplement them by increasing provision and helping people easily find available facilities.









**Action** – Cathy to contact other councils to see what other councils have done, contact businesses to access support for the scheme.

## **9. AOB**

- Jazz and Blues Event

Thanks to the team at Jazz and Blues for making the event as accessible as possible through improved guidance in the booklet, large print and accessibility information.



Preview ↑↓			Views ⓘ ↓	Reach ⓘ ↑↓	Interactions ⓘ ↑↓	Net follows ⓘ ↑↓	Impressions ⓘ ↑↓	Comments ⓘ ↑↓
	<b>1 in 7 people in the UK lives wi...</b> Published • 5 Jul at 14:35	...	14,681	9,647	123	0	10,646	18
	<b>The energy required to raise a...</b> Published • 23 Jul at 16:51	...	4,021	2,444	16	0	2,676	8
	<b>The Disability Pride Flag was d...</b> Published • 3 Jul at 10:00	...	4,015	2,304	42	0	2,479	1
	<b>A story that recently made nati...</b> Published • 15 Jul at 17:42	...	3,207	1,972	25	0	2,102	0
	<b>Disability Welcome Congleton ...</b> Published • 18 Jul at 18:32	...	2,446	1,584	16	0	1,619	0
	<b>Disabled people are active me...</b> Published • 20 Jul at 09:44	...	2,217	1,258	15	0	1,415	0
	<b>Did you know? 1 in 5 peopl...</b> Published • 7 Jul at 17:39	...	2,209	1,412	12	0	1,472	3
	<b>Dr Deborah Lawson, Chair of t...</b> Published • 11 Jul at 15:09	...	2,161	1,159	48	0	1,268	4

