

**Minutes of the  
Central Beds Access Group Meeting  
6<sup>th</sup> October 2009  
Priory House  
Chicksands**

<b>Present:</b>	Roy Storey	CBAG
	Ian Kelly	CBAG
	Martin Usher	CBC Access Officer / CBAG
	Steve Nash	Aragon Housing / CBAG
	Rex Skinner	CBAG
	Charlotte Bonser	Bedfordshire LINK
	Norman Costin	U/Cllr. Central Bedfordshire Council
	Lorna Walker	CDO Greensand Trust
	Simon Daize	Beds Police / CBAG
	Mick Dillon	DRC
	Douglas Campbell OBE	DRC
	Carl Davies	DRC
	Annabelle Waterfield	Hertfordshire Action on Disability
	Shirley Mead	Hertfordshire Action on Disability
	Richard Kennedy	FTC

1	<b>Welcome, Introductions and Housekeeping</b>	
	The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting and asked that all present introduced themselves.	
2	<b>Apologies Received</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clare Harding      CBC</li> <li>• Jon Balaam        Greensand Trust</li> <li>• Peter Keates      CBC Building Control</li> <li>• Sally Aspinall    CBAG</li> <li>• Jean Bird         B.G.D.A</li> <li>• Brian Bird        CBAG</li> <li>• Stephen Sleight   BRCC</li> <li>• Vivienne Payne   Bedfordshire NHS</li> </ul>	
3	<b>Agree Minutes of Meeting of 16<sup>th</sup> July 2009</b>	
	Accepted as a true and accurate record and agreed by all present.	
4	<b>To receive a report from the Chairman regarding linking Access Statements to all Licence Applications</b>	
	The Chairman explained why this matter needed discussing. It was explained that a public meeting had been arranged by the CBC at a venue which did not meet Part 3 of the Service Providers Act of the DDA. It is	

	<p>proposed that the Licensing Authority takes action to ensure that all Licence Applications contain an Access Statement. This matter has already been discussed with the Corporate Policy Advisor (Equality &amp; Diversity) Business Transformation and The Access Officer of the CBC further meetings will be taking place later this month.</p>	
5	<p><b>To receive a report regarding Wrest Park, (Ian Kelly &amp; Martin Usher)</b></p>	
6 & 7	<p>There has been two meetings one in July and another in September. The main purpose of July meeting was to initiate the consultation with CBAG with regard to access to the proposed Walled Garden and the Visitor Centre. Much had been achieved since the original meeting. EH had appointed RH Partnership as architectural advisers and were about to appoint Landscape Designers. A Community Engagement / Audience Manager had been appointed - Lisa Owens. Alex Sydney explained the design theory and layout of the proposed Walled Garden and Visitor Centre and stated that he wanted to establish a set of basic specification for access to be implemented throughout the project. It is estimated 146 car parking bays with a further car parking in the lower section of the walled garden adjacent the rear wall will be available</p> <p><b><u>Visitor Centre</u></b></p> <p>The preliminary drawing showing the layout was viewed it showed a main pathway to left hand side of Eagles Gate leading past the Visitor Centre to the entrance of the Mansion and Gardens. This meeting continued in the Walled garden where issues of pathways and surfaces were discussed.</p> <p>The September meeting involved meeting with the Landscape Architect of the Landscape Agency who will be overseeing the access to the historical gardens. Once again after lengthy discussion within the main house a tour of the grounds took place. It was that many of the original pathways which at present are under mown lawns will be returned to their original format which will be a surface yet to be decided but possibly a type of hogging will be used. The Architect was very amenable to suggestions put forward by the Access Group and all felt that a way forward was being agreed.</p> <p>Another meeting will soon take place to discuss signage, interpretation and way finding. The Access Group is very pleased with the way English Heritage is approaching this enormous project.</p> <p><b><u>To receive a report regarding The Woodland Centre (Lorna Walker)</u></b></p> <p>The Greensand Trust met with Roy and Martin on 29<sup>th</sup> July. We noted their comments and sent these to the architects for inclusion in the plan. As a result the disabled Car Park has been moved to the main car park. All the pathways will be solid surfaces and benches will be provided at appropriate distances.</p>	

We are now in the final stages of design and are ready to go to tender.

The project depends on the highways issues being resolved. They are proposing to close both gaps in the central reservation and to make the lay-by one way. Central Bedfordshire Council are responsible for this so will carry out public consultation and come to a conclusion on the most appropriate scheme. This decision has the ability to prevent the project from being delivered so is crucial.

We are having a community consultation event on the 8<sup>th</sup> October where the architectural drawings will be on display – do come along.

We need as much support as possible to ensure the project goes ahead. Ways in which people can help are to write to the local councillors in support of the project and outline the benefits of this project to the disabled community (which out way the concerns over highways). Also you can show your support when highways do their public consultation on the road alterations because if they only receive negative comments they will have to reject the project and this will be a great loss for the community.

Forestry Commission are working on the provision of more accessible routes within the wood.

### **To receive a report on the Manor Park (Lorna Walker of the Greensand Trust**

#### **Access issues:**

On 18<sup>th</sup> September there was a meeting with Carol Carter, Councillor Quantrill, Roy and myself to discuss the steps and ramp where you go from the woodland back into the parkland. The ramp had already been removed but the steps were still there.

It was agreed that the steps would be removed and a new ramp installed. At the meeting we thought that the slope could be re-graded to an acceptable gradient and the path wide enough not to need hand rails, but some could be added in at a later date if necessary. Roy suggested surfacing the ramp with breedon gravel. I have obtained quotes for this. I also confirmed with the Central Bedfordshire Council Archaeologists that they are happy with our plans for improving this access point.

Since the meeting the steps have been removed and the gate has been locked. I have looked into cost and got one of our rangers to draw up a plan of the works required and it is a much bigger job than anticipated. If we are to go ahead with the original plan we will need to seek funding. Councillor Quantrill thinks he has an alternative place for a path that will not need so much work and would like to arrange a meeting with Roy and myself to discuss his plans. Carol will be in touch with a date.

	<p><b><u>Other points raised:</u></b></p> <p>I am looking into funding options to restore the lake. I have found a couple of possibilities and am currently gathering quotes so will proceed from there.</p> <p>There are a lot of self set trees in the arboretum that need removing – this can be done with volunteers under the guidance of GST and/or the grounds staff. Chris Bland, from Its Great Outdoors, who organises activities for Youth Offenders and other groups, is willing to lend a hand with his groups if possible. Last year one of his groups helped vegetation clearance from the lake.</p> <p>A meeting will be arranged with Flitwick Manor to discuss the helicopter landing area. A warning sign is needed and the fence needs some attention. Prior to this meeting we need to investigate the regulations for air traffic over public amenity land.</p> <p>It was agreed that the felled trees that have been left in the arboretum will be used on site as seats/perches.</p> <p>Where the path enters the arboretum from the parkland needs attention. A mini digger is needed to remove the rubble that has been used to build up the path as it is a serious trip hazard.</p> <p>Work is necessary to make the bridge safer. The grounds staff will make sure it is made more obvious by marking the four corners. GST is looking into possible funding for the restoration of the bridge.</p> <p>Lorna answered questions regarding “grants” from R Kennedy explaining that it would be the FTC who would need to apply for such grants with assistance from GST.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked Lorna for producing two excellent reports.</p>	
8	<p><b><u>To receive a report about the Community Beds (hospital) Review</u></b></p> <p>Charlotte Bonser of Bedfordshire Link explained that for some time now she had been attempting to get an answer relating to this issue and had been unsuccessful due to key personnel changing positions within the Bedfordshire NHS. Charlotte informed those present that the access group had been trying to establish what and who fits where, Steppingley being a classic case.</p> <p>The Chairman had given Charlotte an email he had received that afternoon sent by a NHS officer requesting: - “If the group or individual members have any queries or requests for information relating to local health services or wish to secure attendance by a representative specialising in commissioning certain services or developments”, as Charlotte stated, “we have doing this since earlier this year”.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked Charlotte for her continued quest is attempting to</p>	

9	<p>get answers from people who appear not to be prepared to give them. Annabelle Waterfield of the Charity, "Hertfordshire Action on Disability" who had been invited to attend the meeting by the Chairman gave an insight into the work the Charity is involved with. Mick Dillon of the DRC has known Annabelle for a number of years and although there are many issues which both organisations are involved with in their respective counties there is one that both feel could benefit and compliment each other that is the "Transport Scheme" which is a very successful initiative that is run in Hertfordshire. The access group has been invited to attend the HQ of HAD.net to see at first hand their accomplishments. HAD were thanked for this offer and a date is to be arranged.</p> <hr/>	
10	<p><b>The next Meeting of the Access Group will take place on :- Tuesday 8th December 2009 Room 13 Priory House Chicksands Shefford</b></p> <p>The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8 .15 pm</p>	