

Minutes for GDA Meeting

Wednesday 28th January 2009

1. **Roll Call and Apologies.** Deputy Dave Jones and James Roberts (Housing Dept) would attend.
Apologies. Peter Keeling, Jenny Hooper, Jackie Tebbutt
2. **Chairman's Welcome.** As Deputy Jones might be delayed because of the States meeting. R Platts suggested starting the meeting and adjourning when Deputy Jones arrived.
3. **Minutes of previous meeting.** Signed as a correct record
4. **Matters Arising from Minutes.**
 - **Entry to Museums.** A R Sheerin has made enquiries for a two for one entrance fee (for a disabled person and carer) to all museums on the island.
 - **Priaulx Library** D Purdy had written to Clare le Pelley re improvements to the Library. The Friends will respond. The proposed lift will conform to UK standards. There is concern about the steepness of a ramp. Dave to consider exploring this further.
5. **Guest speaker - Deputy Jones, Minister, Housing Department**

Deputy Jones welcomed the chance to correct any misunderstandings, which may have arisen during the lobbying of deputies at the recent States Meeting.

 - Deputy Jones is sympathetic to moves towards equality of opportunities for all members of society.
 - Housing in particular has been instrumental in breaking down the barriers and their work in partnership with Guernsey Housing Assoc and Steve Williams is paying dividends. New developments/specialist adaptations and the move towards lifetime homes are all recent initiatives. At present spread over 4 sites, 150 homes are in social, rental or partial ownership schemes
 - All new builds conform to lifetime homes standards.
 - Whilst under construction all aspects of the build are considered with OT and user group involvement.
 - Guernsey is ahead of the game as although DDA legislation is not in place at present the States agree to standards voluntarily.
 - Consideration is given to the needs of present and future tenants. It is the obligation of a tenant to return the property to the original specifications when they leave. Social Security can assist with costs of adaptations to property in certain instances.
 - **James Roberts** The Housing Department is committed to meeting the needs of disabled people. Reforming allocation policies to encompass young single persons is being addressed in order to benefit a wider

range of clients. Decent affordable housing for all is the aim of the departmental strategy planning. The aim was to provide a correct menu of services. This involves bi lateral agreements with HSSD, GDA, as a contract of care must include support. Corporate Housing Plan is far reaching. The aim is to tailor to suit demand and service level agreements between departments.

Chairman Rob Platts thanked Deputy Jones and a gave a brief resume of the aims of the GDA as presented to the Social Policy Council. Rob Platts feels that it is the duty of deputies to help the GDA achieve the goal of getting disability issues on the political agenda. The States website has still not been adjusted to include disability information despite assurances from the previous Chief Minister. R Platts felt that the message from Deputy Jones was positive and he thanked him for his input and support

Rob Platts asked for Deputy Jones's commitment to chase the web site improvements and Deputy Jones agreed to look into this.

Rob Platts went on to ask whether the Deputy would support a vote to investigate disability discrimination legislation. Deputy Jones suggested that he would, providing the intention was to produce legislation that was tailored to fit Guernsey.

In final comments Deputy Jones emphasised the important role of lobby group in influencing the States. He also suggested that increased fines for parking in disabled bays could raise awareness, but cautioned that legislation could require more staff and more costs. Adoption of UK legislation across the board would not be welcome in Guernsey. Reasonable adjustments/equal opportunities and a change of attitude would be acceptable to the majority.

In a brief question and answer session the following points were raised.

- **Deputy J Gollop.** *There is an unresolved difference of opinion. Elsewhere legislation shapes behaviour. Here in Guernsey it is the opposite - changes of attitude must happen before laws are introduced.*
- **Deputy Jones.** *Getting a law is one thing, getting it onto Statute Books is another.*
- **Rob Platts.** *On behalf of the GDA he will be writing to the Social Policy Group asking for them to prioritise proposed legislation.*
- **A R Sheerin** *Breaking down the barriers of public perceptions is as important as physical barriers.*
- **B Vaudin.** *Facilities for young disabled people are inadequate. She asked if consideration could be given for a change of use of the Castel hospital site as a supported living complex.*
- **Deputy Jones** *Multi agency meetings are welcomed. The current initiatives with prisoners and special needs were the result of arguing the case for such strategies. The work, which has been*

done by Lois King on the housing needs of the elderly, has been very worthwhile.

Actions:

1. D Jones will find out when disability discrimination legislation will be coming to the Policy Council.
2. R Platts will write to the Policy Council to find out what priority it will be given.
3. D Jones will send the GDA the UN Convention papers that were presented to the ERG.
4. D Jones will liaise with Jane Stephens with regard to galvanizing the support of other deputies.
5. GDA members will raise individual housing cases with Jim Roberts.
6. R Platts will talk to Lois King.

Deputy Jones and James Roberts left the meeting

6. Agenda Items

Chair -

- a) **Feedback from meeting with Chief Minister.**
 - **R Platts and Shelaine Green met the Chief minister before Christmas. The Chief Minister indicated he is broadly supportive of GDA aims but redirected the questions about prioritisation legislation and the appointment of a disability officer back to the Social Policy Group**
- b) **Feedback from January Disability Forum meeting**
 - **The Forum agreed to adopt the UN definition of disability.**
 - **Jane Stephens was appointed Disability Champion. Mike Hadley remains the Chair for the present.**
 - **An advertisement for post of V Chair and feature article is planned for the near future as the previous adverts and press coverage were mis timed over the Xmas period.**
 - **Education are to be asked to investigate the renaming of St Sampson's High/Le Murier Schools as it was felt that having the two names was discriminatory.**
 - **Karen Leach is to be asked to speak to the March meeting to emphasise the pan impairment message of disabilities, which are not visible.**
- c) **Role of GDA representatives.**

- Members were asked inform the charities they represent of the content of the meetings and feed back information for future discussion.

d) Lottery application. Completed

e) Equality training. Postponed but it was agreed that this should be re-scheduled. Aindre Reece-Sheerin will provide some supporting material to accompany future notification of this training. Rob Platts urged GDA reps to support this valuable initiative.

P.R Following the lobbying of deputies S Green had written to thank all deputies and had 15 replies.

D Purdy wrote a letter of thanks to all involved via the Press.

R Platts has also had a letter printed supporting the proposed improvements to access in the Town Church area.

Report from User Group (Wendy Beaven): The next meeting will take place on 4th February. Members are urged to attend. A representative of the Airport Management Staff will be present

7. AOB

- AR Sheerin. States at present has no policy in place for responding to communications. A ten-day guideline should apply.
- Tory Russell. For members interest Alzheimer's UK are publishing a dementia strategy.
- Sue Vernon representing Guernsey Drivability distributed leaflets and contact details of the service.
- R Platts. The HSSD Board have rejected funding a wheelchair service.
- The meeting was informed of the sudden death of Michelle Sindon who had been on the island for a short time
- Meeting closed 9.15pm.

8. Date of next meeting. February 25th