

Suffolk Coastal Disability Forum

Minutes of the Meeting held via Zoom on Tuesday, 6th July, 2021,
at 2 pm.

Present:

Linda Hoggarth	Disability Forum for Suffolk (Chair)
Cllr Sue Bale	Mayor, Woodbridge Town Council
Peter Coleman	Resident & Governor, Norfolk & Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust
Deborah Darby	Melton Parish Council
Simon Daws	Resident, Co-ordinator for the Guide Dogs Forum
Stella Frangleton	Diverse Communities Advisor, Suffolk Police
Bryan Frost	Resident & Trimley St Mary Parish Council
Jan Gregory	Dementia Together
Paul Kelly	Resident
Geoff Manning	Resident
Gill Manning	Resident
Margaret Morris	Resident (Secretary)
Joss Mullett	Health Projects Officer, East Suffolk Council
Kerry Overton	Community Development Officer, Healthwatch Suffolk
Cllr Caroline Page	Resident & Suffolk County Council
Lisa Tyte	DIScoverABILITY

Guests:

Lorna Bellamy	Parish Nurse, Walton Parish Nursing, Felixstowe
Hayley Stearn	Connect for Health - Social Prescribing Project Lead, Access Community Trust

Apologies:

Nigel Crisp	Staff Manager – Ipswich, First Group
Jane Drummond	Resident & Martlesham Parish Council
Trevor Garrod	East Suffolk Travellers Association (ESTA)
Becki Gaunt	Flagship Housing
Steve Hodgkiss	Resident, Disability Forum for Suffolk, Suffolk Sight
Sylvia Izzard	Resident
Simon King	Coordinator, Suffolk Voluntary and Statutory Partnership
Linda Layton	Resident
Chloe Lee	Communities Officer for Felixstowe, East Suffolk Council
Sue Medley	Resident
Yvonne Smart	Trimley St Martin Parish Council
Cllr Edward Thompson	East Suffolk Council
Graham Walker	Kirton Parish Council

1. Welcome & Introductions

Linda welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made. Members were reminded that Joss Mullett, Health Projects Officer, East Suffolk Council will be supporting the Forum going forward. However, Chloe Lee, the Communities Officer for Felixstowe, East Suffolk Council, remains interested in the Forum's activities and the Forum is most grateful for all her encouragement, enthusiasm and help.

Linda was congratulated on being presented with a Suffolk Medal at the start of Suffolk Day. Linda was one of two recipients of the Suffolk Medal this year who have "selflessly delivered a lasting and positive impact on the lives of people in the county".

2. Apologies

The above apologies were received and noted.

3. Social Prescribing

3.1 Linda welcomed Hayley Stearn, the Connect for Health – Social Prescribing Project Lead, Access Community Trust and invited her to tell members about her work.

3.2 Hayley explained that, across Suffolk, there are a number of groups involved in the provision of Social Prescribing. Her particular area covers Felixstowe, Saxmundham, Leiston and Aldeburgh. The work is funded by Ipswich & East Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group and is linked to the Integrated Neighbourhood Teams.

3.3 The aim of Social Prescribing known as Connect for Health in Suffolk, is for Community Connectors to take support to people who need it, rather than them having to go to an organisation themselves. Community Connectors can spend more time with people to find out what they need and what would help them. A visit to a doctor is much more time-limited and a person's issues are not necessarily medical.

3.4 The Community Connector can put a person in touch with other services or refer them to an organisation for support. They can help develop the confidence of a person to be able to access activities to improve their quality of life and alleviate social isolation.

3.5 Hayley explained that they have had to adapt their way of working during the Covid-19 pandemic and have had to provide support by telephone or e-mail. However, as restrictions ease, they are beginning to meet people on a

face-to-face basis again which is better for identifying needs. It has been more difficult as regular groups that could help people have not been meeting.

3.6 The main concerns centre on social isolation; homelessness; money/debt/benefits issues; weight; health; and low mood.

3.7 Referrals can be from various sources – though the criteria for support are that the person should be 18+ and registered with a local GP surgery. Hayley said that 500 referrals had been made to their service.

3.8 In response to questions, the following comments were noted:

- In Woodbridge, Connect for Health is provided via the Shaw Trust;
- Joint work has taken place in surgeries between Connect for Health and Healthwatch Suffolk;
- Care navigators in GP surgeries can make referrals without the need to be seen by a GP;
- Individuals can self-refer to Connect for Health;
- People with disabilities may need more support to access the service, including transport (the lack of it or the cost) and the need for someone to go with them to activities;
- Organisations such as Felixstowe Helping Hands may be able to assist people with disabilities needing help;
- There is a clear link between access to green spaces and mental health.

3.9 **‘Happy to Chat Benches’:**

3.9.1 Members noted the growing number of ‘Happy to Chat Benches’ throughout Suffolk. The aim is to address social isolation within Suffolk communities by encouraging people to chat together even if it is just to say a quick socially distanced hello. This is done by installing ‘Happy to Chat’ plaques to selected benches in public places. Some are part of the Suffolk Mental Health Programme, an initiative co-ordinated by Healthwatch Suffolk, with the support of the Suffolk Voluntary and Statutory Partnership (VASP). The intention is, with the support of local councils, to have designated ‘Happy to Chat Benches’ in communities across the county.

3.9.2 There are seven benches in the Kesgrave, Martlesham and villages Community Partnership area. Some benches are included in the Healthwatch Suffolk initiative where they feature a ‘A Happy to Chat Bench’ plaque. East Suffolk Council is supporting this development and more locations can be found in the following news item.

<https://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/news/talking-benches-to-help-tackle-loneliness/>

3.9.3 It is not known whether Felixstowe has any designated 'Happy to Chat Benches'. However there is a considerable amount of information to help people with disabilities on the Visit Felixstowe website, go to the website below and click on the Felixstowe Accessibility Guide:

<https://www.visitfelixstowe.org.uk/visitor-information/publications/>

3.9.4 Members observed that often people sit on benches at bus stops, not because they want to catch a bus, but because they want someone to talk to.

3.10 Hayley was thanked for her presentation and for responding to members' questions. For more information on the Access Community Trust and Connect for Health, go to:

<https://www.accessct.org/adult-services/wellbeing/social-prescribing/>

4. Walton Parish Nursing (Felixstowe)

4.1 Linda welcomed Lorna Bellamy, Parish Nurse, Walton Parish Nursing and invited her to talk about the service that is provided.

4.2 Lorna explained that Parish Nursing is world-wide and that there are about 100 such organisations set up in the UK. Walton Parish Nursing has been in existence since 2006.

4.3 There are two part-time members of staff, Lorna who is a general nurse and John Gillett who specialises in mental health. It is funded by the three Churches in the Walton Parish who together form a Management Committee. It is a charity and the Management Committee also seeks grants to help with funding. Their activities are also supported by volunteers.

4.4 It is open to all and it is not necessary to have a connection to one of the three churches. However, of the people who are seen by the service, 50% are connected to the church and 50% are not.

4.5 When Lorna first sees someone, she begins by assessing their needs. She is able to refer them on if she feels that is necessary or signposts them to other organisations or services. This may also include end of life care.

4.6 They run a group called 'No Labels' which helps support people with mental health issues and normally meets twice per month. In addition, there is a group for young mothers and the Chair-based Exercise Group is due to resume in September.

4.7 Lorna said that, since the Walton (Felixstowe) GP Surgery had closed, they were even busier though their work is restricted largely to the geographical boundary of Walton Parish. Connections between other GP Surgeries in Felixstowe have been made.

4.8 Referrals can be made by people referring themselves, or by any organisation. There had been 1,000 referrals made including 400 relating to reducing isolation. It is a service that is very much appreciated by those using it and staff become friends.

4.9 The value of early checks was noted such as blood pressure checks at The Laydens Community Café in Felixstowe.

4.10 More information can be found at <https://www.waltonpn.org.uk/>.

4.11 Members were impressed at the work that is undertaken by Walton Parish Nursing to support the community and hoped that it will be able to continue to be funded. It would be good if other Parish Nursing services could be developed in other areas in East Suffolk. There was definite interest in the Trimley area.

4.12 Linda thanked Lorna on behalf of the members for her interesting and helpful presentation.

5. Minutes from the Forum meeting held on 13th April, 2021.

The Minutes were agreed as a correct record.

6. Matters Arising

6.1 Item 5 Car Parking Issues:

6.1.1 Woodbridge Town Centre – The Thoroughfare: The Forum has received a small number of concerns regarding the lack of parking for blue badge holders in the Thoroughfare. Cllr Page explained that previously blue badge holders could apply for a special badge which allowed them to park there. There was never any parking in the Thoroughfare for all blue badge holders. It was not intended to provide special parking badges under the new arrangements. The difficulties being experienced related to people who were not wheelchair users but had very limited mobility and they should raise their concerns with Suffolk Highways. Cllr Page could also be contacted via her social media. An experimental Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) is in force and members were advised that if they wished to comment they could contact Woodbridge Town Clerk. Cllr Bale said that blue badge holders could park at the back end of the Co-op as there is then access through to the Thoroughfare. Members also suggested that people could use a wheelchair as a walking aid to assist them to reach the shops.

6.1.2 Additional Parking for Blue Badge Holders in Woodbridge: East Suffolk Council's Car Parking Manager has been asked if there were intentions to provide more parking spaces for blue badge holders in the Car Parks close to the Thoroughfare. He has responded to say that there are

already designated parking spaces in all the Council's off street parking places around Woodbridge. Installations are being reviewed and the Council has and will be making adjustments following assessments by the British Parking Association.

6.1.3 Hamblin Road Car Park, Woodbridge: In response to accessibility issues which had been reported to the Council, the Car Parking Manager has advised that new bays and pedestrian walkways to dropped kerbs have been installed in this car park. Positive feedback has already been received. There is more work to do, especially the investigation of solutions to protect the footway from overhanging vehicles. A follow up visit would be made to inspect the changes.

Action: Margaret Morris

6.1.4 Parking in Aldeburgh: Further to a query about parking spaces for blue badge holders in Aldeburgh having gravel surfaces, the Car Parking Manager said that there is an all-terrain wheelchair adjacent to these bays in the Thorpe Road Car Park – this is the only parking that has a gravel surface. No asphalt surfacing works are planned for this location and drivers or passengers who require a more solid surface may consider parking in alternative locations.

7. Issues, Concerns and News from Members

7.1 Parking at Ipswich Hospital: There is a new parking system at the Ipswich Hospital and blue badge holders are required to register their badge in order to qualify for free parking. Members raised concerns about blue badge holders being expected to go to the office near the South Wards to register their badge. This is a significant distance if the badge holder is going to Outpatients or to the North Entrance. However, it is possible to register a blue badge at Outpatients Reception but staff there are not always clear about the regulations. A blue badge holder should only have to register their badge once. There was also a concern about the instructions on the signs close to the blue badge parking. If there are difficulties then contact Lyn Cottrell, Customer Services Manager via e-mail: travel.plan@esneft.nhs.uk . Further information can be found at <https://www.esneft.nhs.uk/changes-to-parking-at-ipswich-hospital/>

A volunteer who is taking a patient to the hospital should contact the hospital the day before the appointment to seek a volunteer permit.

Post Meeting Note:

Through Healthwatch Suffolk, Kerry raised these issues with the East Suffolk and North Essex Foundation Trust and updated members as follows:

- The website will be updated to say where badges can be registered as there are various points this can be done within the Hospital.

- There will be an e-mail sent to all Reception Hospital staff to remind them of the blue badge registration requirements.
- There is currently an audit taking place of the signage for blue badge holders, once this is complete, an update and next steps will be sent to Kerry which she will share with Forum members.
- With regard to including information about blue badge parking on letters to patients, Kerry is assured that a discussion about this will take place and the Forum will be updated.

7.2 Bus Services into Ipswich Hospital: The fact that only a few bus services are actually able to go on to the Ipswich Hospital site remains of concern to members. Therefore, people are faced with a long walk from outside the site to reach the hospital entrances. Cllr Page will raise this with Suffolk County Council. As redevelopment has begun in the area where the bus stops are, arrangements in respect of access by buses may change.

7.3 Swimming for People with Disabilities: Simon raised the issue that swimming sessions for disabled people at the Deben Pool are not likely to resume before September. Places Leisure have attempted to find a solution to enable him to swim during a mainstream session but this is not satisfactory. Geoff has encountered problems at the Felixstowe Leisure Centre where people are allocated a 45-minute slot which was not long enough for a disabled person who needed extra time to change. Therefore, he too was unable to swim at present. Linda had been in contact with East Suffolk Council who are monitoring the result of ongoing discussions with Places Leisure to ensure this is resolved as soon as practically possible.

7.4 Location of Seating: Bryan said that it would be helpful to know, in advance of visiting towns, where seating was located so that he could be confident that he would be able to rest when out and about. Members agreed that it ought to be possible for there to be Town Maps identifying the location of benches. This will be raised at Woodbridge and Felixstowe Town Councils. Parish Councils could also take up this idea.

Action: Cllr Sue Bale / Margaret Morris

7.5 E-Scooters: Concerns were raised about the use of e-scooters. They are quiet and very fast and present a danger to the safety of all pedestrians especially those with disabilities. There are currently no trials on their use in Suffolk. Stella advised that various attempts were being made to curtail their use.

7.6 Community Partnership Roadshows: A series of community face-to-face events are planned across parts of East Suffolk. These events organised by East Suffolk Council in partnership with the Ipswich and East Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group are part of a Health and Well-being Roadshow designed to encourage families and residents of all ages to meet local groups,

organisations and service providers from their local community to find out what help and support there is for them in the community to improve their health and well-being. Five free events with free refreshments are planned as follows:

- Monday, 26th July, 11am to 2pm, Framlingham Sports Club, IP13 9HS
- Tuesday, 27th July, 11am to 2pm, Kesgrave War Memorial Community Centre, IP5 1JF
- Friday, 30th July, 11am to 2pm, Felixstowe Seafront and Leisure Centre, Beachsides Events Area, IP11 2AE
- Tuesday, 3rd August, 11am to 2pm, Sax'cess House, Saxmundham, IP17 1AE
- Friday, 6th August, 11am to 2pm, Burness Parish Rooms, Melton, IP12 1PW

Margaret planned to attend some of these and members would be welcome to join her if available.

Action: Margaret Morris

8. Draft Terms of Reference

8.1 Linda explained how the Planning Group had been involved in a joint meeting with representatives from the Waveney Disability Forum where the Terms of Reference were discussed.

8.2 It is planned that the Terms of Reference will be an agreed document and be the same for both the Suffolk Coastal and Waveney Disability Forums. As a result, a draft Terms of Reference was sent out for comment.

8.3 The Planning Group had responded to this first draft and was anticipating that a second draft would be available to distribute to members, taking account of their comments and those from the Waveney Disability Forum.

8.4 However, a second draft was not yet available. It was expected that a further meeting would be held. Members agreed that they were happy for the Planning Group to undertake this work on their behalf.

8.5 It was noted that the Forums are intended to be independent reference groups to provide a collective voice on disability issues. Whilst grateful for the ongoing support from East Suffolk Council, the Forums are not run by the Council.

8.6 The Planning Group would continue to work towards finalising Terms of Reference that are acceptable to both Suffolk Coastal and Waveney Disability

Forums, at which point the document will come to a Forum meeting for approval.

Action: Planning Group

9. Views on Health and Social Care with Healthwatch Suffolk

9.1 In addition to the information on the Healthwatch Suffolk website, <https://healthwatchsuffolk.co.uk/>, Kerry provided the following:

9.2 Learning Disability Support

- A team that covers all practices in Suffolk except Waveney
- Support for those with learning disabilities to have their health needs met – physical/behavioural/mental health
- Work with the surgery staff (doctors, nurses, reception and managers) to make sure you get good quality care
- Offer advice to the surgery, families, social care professionals and support staff

An easy read document explaining everything in full can be accessed at <https://suffolkordinarylives.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Primary-Care-Liaison-Service-booklet-DECEMBER-FINAL-online.pdf>

9.3 Lifestyle Survey: “Over the past 18 months the Covid-19 pandemic and the lockdowns have changed the way we have been able to live our lives. We would like to find out more about what impact the changes to your lifestyle have had on your wellbeing.”

“Many factors affect our health and wellbeing. This can include the genes you inherit, and the choices you make about whether you smoke, drink or take regular exercise. Other factors that might affect your wellbeing include employment and income, access to family and other social support and the environment in which you live.”

“Your participation is completely voluntary, and your responses will be anonymous. There are seven short questions in total.”

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/Lifestylesurvey/>

“We would appreciate as well as your own participation for you to consider passing this on to those in your personal and professional network who are in Suffolk.”

9.4 Dental HealthCare Suffolk: Community Dental Services in Suffolk are now provided by Cambridge Community Services NHS Trust. The contract covers Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridge and Peterborough (it does not cover Waveney).

- A patient can access this service **only** by being referred by a dentist. (This of course has its own obstacles).
- The patient gets treated by them for a 'one-off' treatment and then has to be seen by a general dental practice **unless** the patient reaches a 'score' of 10 points or more.

(The score of points is determined by assessment on their visit taking into account difficulties such as being able to sit in the dentist's chair. The responses to these questions build a picture for points.)

- Siblings cannot be seen at the same time anymore.

The criteria are as follows:

- Complex medical conditions
- Mental health conditions
- A disability too complex for general dental practitioner care
- Will see 'child in pain' for emergency, but they will have already had to have presented to 111, A & E or elsewhere.

If anyone has difficulty in accessing a dentist, then contact Kerry at kerry.overton@healthwatchesuffolk.co.uk

10. Information Round / Any Other Business

There were no additional items

11. Meetings in 2021

11.1 Members were asked if they wished to meet face-to-face or continue to meet via Zoom. It was agreed that the October meeting would be held via Zoom.

11.2 The Planning Group has agreed that the date of the next meeting will be **Tuesday, 12th October, 2021, at 2pm.**

Action: All to note