

# Minutes of Forum Meeting

## 7 October 2010

**Present: 22**

**Apologies: 2**

### **1. Welcome.**

Everyone was welcomed to the meeting and introductions made - this was Deborah's first forum meeting as co-ordinator.

### **2. Disability Equality Training opportunity**

Deborah introduced Gillian, who will be working on this project alongside forum members, and explained the project. The project will recruit 5 forum members to undertake a training course which will lead to their taking on a role as trainers in disability equality. Gillian will train alongside them in order to support them in their role as trainers. Trained forum members will then be able to provide training to both disabled people and service providers. In the first instance, expressions of interest were invited: there will be a more formal selection process soon. It is anticipated that the selection and training process will be completed by the end of 2010. Forum members then asked questions and made useful observations:

- Will there be any payment? This training role ought to be paid as it is providing a valuable service.
- The scheme is open to abuse; disabled people already volunteer their time for a lot of things, people need to value our expertise not get it for free.
- The training course needs to include marketing skills. Very valid points. The training doesn't and can't guarantee paid employment, but it does provide an opportunity, and once the service is up and running, it ought to be possible to market this as a consultancy.
- What is the "end product"? Is it about recent changes in the law, Equalities Act 2010, Transformation etc?
- If it's more personal, it is a liberating experience - changed how I thought about disability on a personal level. We have yet to meet with the trainers about the precise course content. We think a mixture of training skills, plus personal, legislative and social contexts of disability.

### **3. International Day of Disabled People**

It was decided not to use the UN official Americanism title "Persons with Disabilities", but Disabled People. Ideas on how to celebrate this were invited and discussed.

- Radio show. Thamasin has radio experience and proposed a broadcast via internet radio focussing on commonality; we all eat, sleep, breathe, shit and die! Therefore, a theme around food would emphasise common experiences. Speech radio is time consuming and recording would need to be done where there is no background hiss of air conditioning. There was a huge amount of enthusiasm for this.
- Should DBU take up the Mayor's dropped category of disability in the business awards? Maybe we could produce DBU awards for good practice

and also name and shame bad practice? Or suggest "most in need of improvement" rather than just "bad" Mixed reaction: it would be good to be able to recognise what is good, whether it is a council service or individual efforts by, for example, the local shop, but we need to be very aware of slander and would need to avoid the trap of giving DBU a bad name though "bad-mouthing" .

- An early evening event, such as a meal, bringing food to share.
- Inviting a councillor to come and share the event.
- Combine all ideas: invite a councillor to accompany members in shopping for food (impossible in the case of Ridley Road Market due to the lack of nearby parking bays for blue badge holders), cooking, getting to the venue via public transport - that would raise their awareness!

#### **4. Topic for next meeting**

There are still some outstanding action points from previous meetings.

- Housing - John Isted has offered to come to DBU to feed back on action points from previous DBU meetings on housing
- Parks. Access to parks, parking near or in parks, issues of shared paths with cyclists.
- Transport
- Parking on pavements

It was agreed to hold the next meeting on Housing and invite John Isted.

#### **5. Feedback from Transformation Board**

Andrea & Maureen gave feedback - there is also space for more forum members to become representatives on the Transformation Board - application forms were available to be completed at the end of the meeting.

- The on-line assessment is difficult - if you don't know how to do it by yourself you can request help from health professionals
- Forum reps invited to do an off-line pilot
- Website is not good enough. It is inappropriate, uses meaningless or derogatory pictures, an inaccessible colour scheme.
- Being on the Transformation Board is positive- Andrea & Maureen have felt that they have been able to challenge and that their input is listened to and acted upon. They also noted that no professionals on the Board actually live in Hackney, so there is a need for local people!

#### **6. Danny Thorpe - LBH events during the Olympic Games**

Danny gave a presentation on cultural & other events in Hackney during the Olympics & Paralympics.

- The council recognise that not everyone who wants to will be able to get tickets for events at the games, so Hackney is aiming to put on other events at various venues in the borough so that all residents can join in.
- The situation is still currently very fluid
- Hackney culturally rich but financially poor - no money from LOCOG. Will attract funding, sponsorship etc to area.

- Other Olympic boroughs have money from the Olympics for big screen, but Hackney having to fund own screens for Hackney Marshes & Shoreditch Park.
- Hackney Marshes proposed venue for largest event, 2-days of concerts, with up to 40,000 attendees each day.
- Doing nothing on the Marshes leaves it open to abuse for unlicensed, unorganised events, not benefitting local people.
- Concert is aimed at Hackney residents
- It is planned to have a specific viewing platform for disabled people.

Forum members had a huge amount of questions and suggestions and also brought up issues specific to them as disabled Hackney residents.

- Access - lack of parking for legitimate blue badge holders.
- Abuse of badges by non disabled users will exacerbate problem, how will this be monitored?
- Traffic chaos as road access to Marshes is limited, even if cars banned, buses will clog up access roads
- How will Hackney residents be prioritised?
- What is the application or allocation process?
- Will concert be free?
- Walking from designated car park point may be difficult - will there be seating en route?
- What about people who cannot stand around waiting - will there be a system of fast-tracking?
- What is planned for people who don't actually like pop music? Hope concert of Marshes not the only option!
- Use of public space - will Hackney Marshes be off-limit to us during Games?
- We need a decent allocation of disabled parking bays
- Visual aspect of presentation not very informative or accessible to some of us, please explain further.
- Biodiversity issues - building & noise on marches (Danny explained biodiversity officer has already inspected site and identified areas not to be disturbed - eg no proximity to bat population)

Forum members thanked Danny for his presentation - it sounds really exciting.

Action points for Danny to take away

- Provision of seating along the walking route from car parks
- "Fast tracking" for disabled people who cannot stand for a long time.
- Provision of accessible transport (via HCT) from key parts of Hackney for disabled people who do not drive/have a car.
- How can you help us to ensure legitimate Blue Badge holders use any disabled parking.

Since the meeting, the Olympic & Paralympic Games Unit has contacted DBU coordinator to thank forum members for their input; they have provided the Unit with a lot of food for thought and will be taking raising the many issues they raised in the event planning.