

Cross Party Group in the Scottish Parliament on Visual Impairment

Minutes of the Cross Party Group for Visual Impairment meeting held on Thursday 12 September 2013 in Committee Room 1, Scottish Parliament.

Present:

Stuart McMillan MSP
Dennis Robertson MSP (item 8 onward)
Neil Bibby MSP

James Adams, RNIB Scotland
Liz Anderton, Visibility
Tuesday Berry, Haggeye
Sam Brown
Catriona Burness, RNIB Scotland
Marion Butchart, Novartis
Mo Colvin, RNIB Scotland
Denise Dennis, Guide Dogs Scotland
Margaret Duncan, Scottish Government
Kay Eadie, Allergan
Dominic Everett, RNIB Scotland
Colin Gallagher, Guide Dogs Scotland
Mhairi Graham, SAVIE

Jane Horsburgh, Guide Dogs Scotland
Colin Howie, SCOVl
Bob Ironside, Perth Society
John Legg, RNIB Scotland
Aaron McHale, Haggeye
David McKerral, National Federation of the Blind
James Mowat
Sally Paterson, SAVIE
Mrs C Polland
Mary Rasmussen
Ken Reid, UK Vision Ambassador
Allan Russell, Insight Radio
Ken Swa, SVS
Jackie Thompson, Alcon
Stephen Van Putten, Royal Blind
Joe Wildy, Novartis
Helen Wilkinson, RNIB Scotland

1. Welcome and Introductions

Stuart McMillan MSP welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from:

Elaine Brackenridge, Royal Blind
Valerie Breck, Visibility
Amanda Burt
Jamie Cuthbertson, Macular Society
John Donaldson, Scottish Braille
Press
Jo Emblem, Police Scotland
Graham Findlay, NESS / SCOV
Omar Fummey, Police Scotland
Richard Hellewell, Royal Blind
Sheila Mackenzie, SSC
Paul McCloskey, CEC Libraries

Robert Mooney, Community
Wendy Rankin, Guide Dogs
Susan Robinson
Terry Robinson, Describe Online
Fiona Sandford, Visibility
Janelle Scotland, ASTN
Alex Scott
Janis Sugden, SSC
Mhairi Thurston, VISION2020UK
Counselling and Emotional Support
Services Group
William Wykes, Eyecare Scotland

3. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting held on 12 September 2013 were approved. It was noted that the December meeting had been cancelled due to bad weather.

4. Election of Office Bearers

The Convenor asked the Secretary to assume control of the meeting. James Adams explained that Parliamentary regulations require an annual election of the Group's office bearers at the AGM. The following nominations had been received.

Convenor: Stuart McMillan MSP
Vice Convenor: Neil Bibby MSP
Secretary: James Adams

No further nominations were received. The office bearers were elected by acclaim.

Action

- The annual return for the Group will be prepared and submitted – Secretary / Convenor

5. Update on Demand & Capacity Working Group

Margaret Duncan, Scottish Government reported in Richard Copland's absence. The Group completed the report in November and it was cascaded to all Health Boards on 19 December with a number of recommendations for action including ensuring there is an effective booking system, upskilling of

nurses to free clinical staff and where there is limited space 7 day working should be introduced to increase capacity. The next key stage is to develop Ophthalmic services and work with key stakeholders – a collaborative approach is important. It is hoped to make major progress over the next 12-18 months

There followed detailed discussion. The collaborative approach was welcomed. The issue of treatment of return patients was raised. It was reported this is being looked at as part of another programme, “Transforming outpatients” which covers all specialities. Involvement of Ophthalmology clinics was specifically asked to be included in November. This was welcomed but it was noted that anecdotal reports are that people are losing sight due to the length of wait for a return appointment. It was recognised that it will take time for the recommendations to be implemented. The Cabinet Secretary will receive 6 monthly update reports and it was agreed that a report also be made to this Group at either the October or December meeting.

Action

- Update report to be given at October / December meeting

6. Responsible Parking Private Members Bill

Jane Horsburgh reported on progress of the Private Members Bill being taken forward by Sandra White MSP to stop double parking, parking at dropped kerbs and double yellow lines etc. to ensure freedom of movement for pedestrians. It was hoped the Bill would have been presented by now but there were challenges over whether the Parliament had the power to introduce the Bill or if it was a reserved matter. The Non-Government Bills Unit have been dealing with these queries and it is hoped to move forward shortly. It was noted that the landscape has changed with the introduction of Police Scotland who are downscaling traffic wardens and local authorities are bringing forward decriminalised schemes.

There followed detailed discussion about the impact of decriminalised parking enforcement, the timescale of the Bill and which would be the lead committee – Local Authorities or Transport. It was also noted that the Bill would have no effect on private car parks or on private land. The Convenor raised a question about what the situation would be in the case of housing transfers and Jane will update his office on this matter.

Action

- JH to update Convenor’s office regarding housing transfers

7. Haggeye update

Aaron McHale and Tuesday Berry updated the Group on recent activity by Haggeye including:

- 2nd anniversary of Facebook page
- Participation in Bank of Scotland Money Matters programme – ran workshops to encourage better money management. One of 5 finalists from 300 entries.
- Engagement in RNIB Scotland Family Days
- Education, Respect, Awareness (ERA) project held successful 1st meeting in Dundee. Three further meetings are planned.
- Developing Issue 3 of “Haggazine” focusing on getting out and about. The magazine has been so successful the print run has had to be increased.

There followed discussion on a range of topics including Audio Description provision at cinemas. Local campaigning can be effective, but it was agreed it would be helpful for the Group to contact key operators asking for details about their provision and highlighting good practice.

Action

- Write to cinema operators regarding AD and update at next meeting - JA

8. SVS update

Ken Reid gave an update on recent activity including:

- The 2013 SVS conference was well attended and booking for the 2014 event on 26 March is still open
- The refreshed SVS strategy was published at the end of 2013 and will be the focus of the 2014 conference.
- See Hear is due to be published shortly – it is hoped it will include reference to “Seeing It My Way”
- Development work on Registration is ongoing

It was agreed it would be helpful to review Registration at a future meeting and also the refreshed SVS Implementation Plan when it is available.

Actions

- Review Registration at future meeting
- Review SVS Implementation Plan at future meeting

9. Blue Badge Consultation

Dennis Robertson MSP reported that today was the last day for submission of written evidence in relation to his Private Members Bill. There is positive progress with the Bill proceeding through Stage 1. There was a good response

to the consultation and thanks were tendered to all organisations / individuals who participated. It was noted that the Bill would have no effect in private car parks e.g. supermarkets however Health Boards have committed to reviewing their own enforcement of disabled parking and can issue fines. It is hoped to undertake Stage 3 in the autumn.

11. AOCB

8.1. Techshare Europe conference: Previously known as “Technology for Life”, RNIB Scotland will be running this successful event for the 3rd year on 4-5 September at the Glasgow Science Centre.

8.2. Positive Play DVD: a joint project by Royal Blind, SSC and RNIB Scotland this is aimed at pre-5’s and will be brought to a future meeting

8.3. Access for Assistive Technology: work has been ongoing to develop an exemplar of good practice for local authority technology managers. It would be helpful to bring to a future meeting to request the Group’s backing before disseminating. The Convenor noted that it may be helpful to request that this be included in Cosla’s new benchmarking tool.

Action

- Positive Play DVD to be included on future agenda
- Assistive Technology to be included on future agenda
- Request inclusion of access to assistive technology in Cosla benchmarking tool once best practice exemplar issued

12. Date of next meeting

5-6pm, Thursday 28 May followed by annual reception. Details TBC.