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**Disability Forum Minutes**

**Tuesday 14th January 2025 10.00am – 12.00pm**

Held at Atherstone Memorial Hall

Long Street

Atherstone

CV9 1AX

**Present:** Junaid Hussain (EQuIP), Deb Sharp (NWBC), Mike Jewkes (Disability Officer for North Warwickshire), Sarah King and Gracie Ford (Open Hands CIC) Jane French (Diabetes Support Group) Maria Beale (Cohort 4) Dan Sergant CAB) plus members of the public

| **Item** | **Notes** | **Action** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **1** | **Welcome and Introductions**  Junaid Hussain from EQuIP introduced himself and Deborah Sharp from North Warwickshire Borough Council to the attendees. We were very happy the meeting was so well attended, and it was nice to see lots of new faces. Junaid explained that we will not be sending out minutes from now on, they will be available on our NWBC webpage for everyone.  Sarah King from Open Hands introduced herself and explained their role. Open Hands Community CIC are dedicated to fostering an inclusive and supportive environment for everyone in North Warwickshire. They engage with the community, offer support and create a welcoming space where every voice is heard and valued. They are developing connections within the local community and businesses and work with NWBC and the CAB to provide support to vulnerable residents. A referral form for Open Hands will be added to our webpage by DS.  Jane French introduced herself, Jane is trying to set up a local diabetes support group, her details will be added to our webpage.  The main focus of the meeting was to set the agenda for the rest of the years Disability Forum’s meetings. DS to update the NWBC webpage and invite guest speakers. Suggestions for future guest speakers are welcomed. | **DS**  **DS**  **DS**  **DS** |
| **2** | **Apologies**  Sue Healey  Sally Roberts  Sheila Richards  Olive Lowe  Sheila Smith |  |
| **3** | **Plan for the year**  We set topics for the Disability Forum until next year. DS to add to the webpage.  **Employability**  Tuesday 8th April 2025 10am-12pm  Deb to invite DWP work coaches in to be guest speakers (Clive DWP?)  Deb to invite Disability Confident Employers (Holly - Nuneaton Signs?)  Mary from DWP to attend  Sally Roberts from NWBC to attend  Deb to invite Tom Seaman, Wonky Candles to be a guest speaker  **Accessibility**  Tuesday 8th July 2025 10am-12pm  NWBC Greenspace Officer Eleanor Evans/Deb Sharp presentation  Deb to invite WCC to attend regarding dropped kerbs etc  Deb to invite Sharon Bayne to talk about the Warwickshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan  **Mental Health**  Tuesday 14th October 2025 10am-12pm  Deb to invite Maria Beale – Cohort 4 to be a guest speaker  Junaid to invite speakers re mental health  **SEND**  January 2026 date/time and location tbc  Junaid to invite speakers re SEND | **DS**  **DS**  **DS**  **DS/JH**  **JH** |
| **4** | **Maria - Cohort 4**  Maria spoke about the issues some of the people she supports at Cohort 4 are having regarding accessibility. The ‘curly bridge’ in Atherstone which made the Carlyon Road Industrial Estate accessible was installed a couple of years ago. However, wheelchair or mobility scooter users still cannot access the industrial estate as there are no dropped kerbs. A member of Cohort 4 was beeped at and intimidated by cars and lorries upon accessing the industrial estate as she was forced to travel in the road. She was unable to travel along the pavements due to the lack of dropped kerbs.  Maria has spoken to WCC several times and been told there was nothing they could do due to cost. Junaid has supported issues such as this several times so he and Maria exchanged details and Junaid agreed to support Maria. | **JH** |
| **5** | **Activity Groups**  We need to add inclusive groups, clubs and activities to our Disability Forum webpage. Deb, Mike Jewkes and Sue Healy met before Christmas and discussed this. We need people to send information to us. | **DS/MJ/SH** |
| **6** | **Update Section**  It was requested that updates are regularly posted on the webpage so that people know that things are happening ‘behind the scenes’. Deb and Junaid thought this was a great idea. Deb to update regularly. | **DS** |
| **7** | AOB.  It was suggested that anyone who thought of an appropriate guest speaker contact Deb to approach. Mike suggested ‘The Disabled Adventurer’ who several people knew of and he said he would approach him directly.  It was also suggested that we have a Facebook page for the Disability Forum. Mike agreed to set one up and DS to assist with the admin of the page. | **DS/MJ** |
| **8** | Date of next meeting 8th April 2025.  **DS and JH to promote** | **DS/JH** |

**Minutes**

Taken by Deborah Sharp