



Hebden Bridge Disability Access Forum

HBDAF Annual Review March 2024

This review covers 18 months since our last Annual General Meeting, AGM, in September 2022. It includes many, but not all, of our activities during that time.

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1. Current membership

- currently 32 members, 14 associates, 20 members-only google group members. One member has left and several have joined since last AGM in 2022.

2. Regular activities

- We regularly circulate local disability related and service information to HBDAF membership and associates, including weekly newsletters from our Disability Partnership Calderdale colleagues
- extra information is circulated via google group
- HBDAF meets on the third Monday of each month currently by hybrid meetings in Hebden Bridge Town Hall and simultaneous zoom video link. We re-started physical meetings in May 2023, after 3 years meeting by zoom since the Covid pandemic
- We continued our additional informal chat meetings, no agenda or minutes, first Monday of each month by zoom video link. Peer support and general chat, plus another chance to raise access issues in a different format to our formal meetings. Helps us to be inclusive as some members prefer the chat meetings. We have suspended these meetings since December 2023, awaiting discussion at our AGM in March 2024.
- GP Patient Participation Group - our members Ken, Sam and more recently Maggie, relayed information from the practice back to HBDAF, and fed in HBDAF concerns and questions
- With support from Healthy Minds, we continued our occasional HBDAF “Focus on Mental Health” meetings to increase inclusion

- #### 3. Consultations
- on access issues by many and varied HBDAF members. By a mixture of Zoom or video meetings, in person meetings, hybrid meetings, site visits, phone and email

- Discussed accessible meeting guidelines and procedures with Hebden Royd Town Council, and updated our own meeting guidelines for zoom meetings and hybrid zoom and physical meetings
- Wainsgate Chapel Memorial Garden
- Wadsworth community centre toilet alterations
- Environment agency stakeholder group and information centre access
- Wadsworth Post Office portable ramp
- Heptonstall Museum access
- Hebden Bridge Picture House Screen 2 consultation
- Hebden Royd proposed Swimming Pool

4. Planning group

Graham, June and our associates Carol and John continued to monitor applications to Calderdale Council for Planning Permission. We made public comments on the planning portal where appropriate.

For one Hebden Bridge town centre application, after our comments the developer consulted us and changed their design to make ramp access to two ground floor apartments, so they are more accessible to people with mobility impairments.

We have recently consulted with Calder Valley Community Land Trust about access improvements to their planned development of an Enterprise Centre and 19 new homes in our neighbouring town of Todmorden.

5. Calderdale Council Local Plan – Supplementary Planning document, Placemaking and Design Guide

We have continued to submit our views and recommendations on Accessible Housing and neighbourhoods policy, to the architects writing the Placemaking Guide. We did this via them attending our HBDAF meeting, then Graham and June joined their Community Review panel. We achieved substantial changes to the readability and accessibility of the document, and a very prominent statement about inclusive design in the document, as well as a number of changes throughout the document.

6. Highways issues

- Finally achieved a new A boards licensing policy from Calderdale Council to greatly reduce the number of A boards in Hebden Bridge Town Centre. 12 month trial started in June 2023, which we hope will be extended to all of Calderdale after the trial.
- Monitoring of unauthorized a boards and pavement obstructions, which we report to Calderdale Council. Members and associates do this regularly, with good response from the Council.

7. Access maps and guides

Published an updated Hebden Bridge Step-Free access map and guide in October 2022 and December 2023, and circulated and publicised them widely. 2022 edition had public seating added for the first time.

8. Networking with other local disability groups and services

We continued communication and joint working with colleagues in Calderdale, particularly Accessible Calderdale Disability Access Forum, ACDAF.

9. Signposting residents, and visitors, to local facilities and services

HBDAF receives occasional phone calls and emails from people with specific individual inquiries. We cannot provide any services or advise individuals on financial or care and support matters. But we do use our extensive networks, contacts and local knowledge to signpost people to advice and services, whenever possible.

Some examples in the past year include:

- We signposted a local resident to advice on neurodiversity assessment, to Healthwatch Calderdale, Patient Participation Group for HB GP practice, and Society for Neurodiversity.
- A Calderdale Family support worker contacted us about a family. We signposted to sources of help for their disabled child, including local Parent/Carer support at Unique Ways, local National Autistic society branch, Disabled Children's social work team.
- We helped a visitor from Wales to borrow a manual wheelchair for a visit to Christmas markets in Hebden Bridge, loaned by the Town Hall
- We signposted a local resident to Calderdale Council Gateway to Care, for advice and assessment for home adaptations and homecare. Also to Healthy Minds local worker for wellbeing support, to Reengage for social activities, and to Disability Support Calderdale for advice on financial benefits
- HBDAF lobbied Calderdale Councillors and housing officers about issues of homelessness for disabled people, after an approach from a local family.