Rugby Disability Voice

Championing visible and non-visible challenges

Meeting Minutes – 8th October 2026

Present: 9 attendees (including 2 x online)

In Attendance: Junaid Hussain (EQuIP), Ahmed Ghumra (EQuIP), Jai Mistry (EQuIP), Rebecca Ewers (RBC), Katie Boyce (RAGM), John Howes (RBC), Colin Horton (RBC), Veena Fatania (Healthwatch)

Apologies: Michelle Gravatt, Angie Gavin, Caroline Musaka

1. Welcome and Introductions

Members were welcomed to the meeting, and an overview of Rugby Disability Voice was provided. The group brings organisations and local residents together to raise accessibility issues and help ensure that local services reflect residents' needs.

The meetings also provide an opportunity to identify recurring concerns and invite relevant speakers who can help address these issues and support positive action.

2. Minutes of last meeting

Clifton Road pavement: An inspection was carried out following concerns raised about its condition. The repair work to the defects identified during the inspection has now been completed.

Whitehall Recreation Ground gates: Contact had been made with the relevant council team about difficulties opening the gates. A response was still awaited.

Rugby Town Centre walkabout: A walkabout had been organised, and feedback had been passed to the organisers regarding the barriers some people faced in attending. Feedback from the walkabout would be discussed at a future meeting, which the organisers were expected to attend.

Members also suggested exploring a mobility scooter hire service, similar to Shopmobility. This could involve investigating suitable providers and potential partnerships.

3. Rugby Art Gallery and Museum – Katie Boyce RBC/RAGM

Katie Boyce provided an update on the proposed redesign of Rugby Art Gallery and Museum. Consultation had already taken place with several groups, including Art Riot, the staff and the volunteers. Feedback from these consultations, together with the findings of an access audit, has been shared with the architects to inform a design that prioritises accessibility.

The entrance was identified as one of the main barriers. The existing ramp is long and winding, making it difficult to use with mobility scooters. Members also heard that the foyer could feel busy and confusing, with visitors finding it difficult to determine where to go.

The location and suitability of the existing toilets were discussed. The proposed redesign includes a Changing Places toilet to better support visitors with more complex needs.

Sensory accessibility was also being considered, including the effects of noise, lighting, crowding and unfamiliar routes. Attention would be given to acoustics and the provision of quiet spaces.

Within the galleries, the design would provide sufficient space for mobility aids, seating, and clear routes through the building.

Members suggested that the possibility of providing mobility scooter hire at Rugby Art Gallery and Museum should also be explored.

Action: EQuIP to look into hiring of scooters for the town centre area.

4. **Accessibility in green spaces and parks – Colin Horton and John Howes, Parks and Open Spaces/RBC**

Colin Horton and John Howes discussed accessibility in local parks and green spaces, including the design of street furniture, seating, gates and play equipment.

Examples of street furniture were shared, with an emphasis on consistent designs and inclusive seating. Members were advised that design specifications are provided to developers, although these are not always followed. There was also discussion about whether more inclusive table designs could be used.

Positive feedback was shared about the Brownsover play area, which was described as very popular and regularly used. Members also asked whether defibrillators could be made available at play areas.

The use of self-closing gates was discussed, particularly where gates are needed to protect people from nearby hazards. Brightly coloured gates can help people with visual impairments identify them more easily. Slower closing settings can also give people more time to pass through safely.

Parkfield Road: Members praised the park but raised concerns about access. These included a lack of dropped kerbs and vehicles parked in places that obstruct access. Members were advised that highways concerns fall within Warwickshire County Council's responsibility and that information could be passed on to the relevant team.

Action: EQuIP will arrange for photographs of the access issues to be taken and share them with the relevant Warwickshire County Council contact.

John Howes outlined forthcoming work to make park accessibility information available online, helping people plan their visits with greater confidence.

The team explained that they continue to monitor new products and welcome feedback on equipment and features that would improve accessibility. Members suggested seeking views from local schools, including schools supporting children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Members also suggested listing the available playground equipment on information boards. The possibility of providing further information through a QR code or an app was discussed.

Percival Road: A concern was raised about a gateway that is too narrow for mobility scooters. Members reported that users can become stuck or risk tipping over when attempting to pass through, creating a safety concern.

The Parks and Open Spaces team can be contacted at talkinthepark@rugby.gov.uk

5. AOB

Members were encouraged to complete the Echoes Charity mental health questionnaire.