

**Present:**

Councillors Eden (Chair), Williams (Vice-Chair), Khan.

**Apologies**

**1. Notes**

There was a short discussion on Crossrail; this had been carried on, but policies seemed to be skewed to private car use.

It would be better to look at a range of measures to help all people, not just those in the higher economic position.

Bob Bristow brought up the subject of Shared Spaces.

Matt Rodda said that he was concerned; the idea had come from an academic in The Netherlands, but it seemed to have been taken too far. Many people find using Shared Spaces difficult.

A bridge used for walking and cycling was not so much of a problem, but only slow-moving.

Matt Rodda said that he preferred traffic calming measures that didn't involve shared spaces. He said that, in The Netherlands, most people used bikes anyway, so even drivers had had experience of what it was like to ride one.

Diane Goodlock mentioned problems with cyclists in London Road; cyclists used every footpath, and they shouldn't have been doing so.

Matt Rodda agreed that road safety needed to be addressed, by the use of speed cameras, etc. The target was zero road deaths. Positive behaviour needed to be encouraged. Things could change; safe spaces were needed.

There needed to be better relationships with the University of Reading and the local NAGs - Neighbourhood Action Groups. PCSOs - Police Community Support Officers - were needed.

The University of Reading needed to take disciplinary action; the students had been parking their cars outside residents' houses and then only moving them once a month. It was reported that there were to be monitors from the University in each street, starting in October.

There had been a national campaign by Guide Dogs on parking on pavements.

Matt Rodda had been to the local Mobility Team's office in Winnersh.

In some streets cars were allowed to park on pavements in very narrow streets. This made more work for Local Authorities. Bob Bristow said that,

on some cars, the wing mirrors folded in so that they were no longer an obstruction, and that this needed to be standard on all new cars.

The state of pavements was also very important in order for people to be able to get around safely.

Dropped kerbs were a problem; they were not always matched on the other side of the road; this was mainly because the dropped kerbs were intended for vehicles, rather than pedestrians.

People still fell over wobbly paving slabs.

Matt Rodda asked the group about which forms of traffic calming were best.

Table Crossings were good for wheelchair users, but not for blind people.

In Waltham Forest in London, some streets had been closed off.

People had been known to park over Table Crossings.

Matt Rodda said that if there was more of a pavement culture, there would be less of a traffic problem and traders would be happier.

Play streets were thought to be a good idea; children would take over the roads. It was important to be sensible about which roads to close off.

In Waverley Road residents were investigating the possibility of having a play street, where not just children could play but also adults could stop for a cup of tea and a chat.

Bob Bristow said that in Friar Street some kerbs were too low for blind people to be able to define the edge.

There was a discussion about the proposed changes to charges for people using bus passes. People said that they would like it to be free all the time as it was, or as affordable as possible.

However, it was recognised that there were major cuts being made to grants given by the Government to Local Authorities and there was much less money to spend, and Council Tax was also being squeezed.

Matt Rodda said that he was also aware of the changes to bus services which had been imposed on companies such as Readibus; which also affected volunteer drivers and those driving their own buses. Drivers would possibly have to take an advanced test, which would cost a lot of money.

Matt Rodda had been raising awareness of these issues and making sure that it was known that services such as Readibus were extremely useful for many people.

Cllr Eden had been lobbying about bus passes and had raised the issue with the Deputy Leader and officers. Changes were possibly to be made.

Diane Goodlock had recently met another member of the group in town and she knew that several years ago his family had relied on a bus pass; the family could not have managed to get their son to school if he had not had one.

Rachel Eden said that it was far better for people to use public transport.

It was taken as the view of the meeting that there was a disproportionate affect on people going to work, hospital appointments and so on.

Matt Rodda told the Group about how many, many students in the area had been campaigning for him to be the MP for Reading East. He said that it was a privilege to work in part of British life that had been working for centuries.

Matt Rodda invited members of the Group to visit the Houses of Parliament; this would take place next year.

Matt Rodda said that there were many routes around and he had briefed his staff on access issues.

Bob Bristow said that he had had a guided tour many years ago; and the security was far less than it was now!

Matt Rodda thanked the Group for our engagement.

Diane reported that she had had problems at the rehab unit at the Royal Berkshire Hospital; people used to be able to park there but now electric cars had been placed there and a scanner at the other end. There were now only 5 accessible bays that were quite often used by people who should not have been using them. It was now not possible to get to the wheelchair clinic.

Councillor Eden and Helen Bryant briefed the group about Purple Tuesday, which was to take place on Tuesday 13 November. This was an annual event which was to encourage those managing shops and shopping centres to ensure that disabled people could use their facilities easily and to put forward ideas that could be put in place in the future.

The meeting ended at 15.25.