

WEST MIDLANDS SPECIAL NEEDS TRANSPORT LTD

RING AND RIDE WALSALL

MINUTES OF THE WALSALL DISTRICT ADVISORY GROUP

Held at: The Council House, Walsall

Date: 3rd March 2010

Present: -

Mr D Rogers	Operations Manager – W.M.S.N.T
Mrs S Cozens	Walsall Depot Manager – W.M.S.N.T
Mrs Warren	Chair – Service User
Mrs Withers	Arthritis Care
Mrs Smith	Arthritis Care
Lisa Percox	Midland Mencap
Mrs Yates	Service User
Miss Stevenson	Service User
Mrs Hemmings	Service User
Mrs Rawlinson	Service User
Mrs Simmons	Service User
Mrs Satterthwaite	Service User
Mrs Onions	Service User

1. **Introduction** The meeting was chaired by Judith Warren who welcomed everyone to the meeting. Members introduced themselves to the meeting.

2. **Apologies** The following apologies were accepted:

Peter Maggs – Chief Executive – W.M.S.N.T
Cllr Wilkes – Board Member – W.M.S.N.T
Duncan Ashlee – Development Manager – W.M.S.N.T
Mrs Sheldon – Service User
Eileen Moseley – Service User
Mrs Bates – Service User
Mrs Sheriff – Arthritis Care

3. **Minutes of last Meeting**

- Minutes from previous meeting on 3rd December were agreed.

4. Company Update

- Des apologised to Users for any inconvenience caused during the bad weather in January when the service was withdrawn on 2 occasions. The decision had been made with everyone's safety in mind.
- The 3- year Business plan with Centro was being signed today.
- Birmingham Council had extended some school contracts with the company this would enable us to carry on providing extra resources by using the vehicles & drivers to do Ring & Ride work in between school runs and during school holidays.
- In the next 6-8 weeks Walsall Depot would be having 18 new Ford vehicles with the current fleet being moved onto school contract work at other depots.
- In the next Newsletter there would be a 'Kids page' to encourage young Users to use our service. As well as Ring & Ride Users the newsletter would also be sent out to parents whose children travel on our school contracts services to encourage them to use our service outside of school hours.
- Also in the newsletter there would be a questionnaire for Users asking them what problems they have when they make cancellations & if we can improve the service.
- All staff who work for us are now required to have CRB checks from 30th June 2010.
- The Scheduling system had been tested at the South Birmingham depot & some minor problems had occurred with it, which were being corrected. Until it is running at the South Birmingham Depot properly it will not be rolled out to other depot's.
- The company were providing transport for Acorns Children's Hospices in Walsall & Selly Oak on the 10th April with volunteer drivers to take children to the Severn Valley Railway.
- Des reminded Users that Contracts vehicles are available in school holidays should groups of Users wish to go out on trips outside the West Midlands. For more information you should contact our Contracts Department on 0121 446 6172.

5. District Managers Report

- In the current financial year the number of trips that we have completed are up 2.12% on this time last year. That figure is down to what we were hoping for due to the bad weather in January which affected us, we did try to get as many Users picked up to go to doctors appointments & shopping as we could but there were 2 occasions when we had to withdraw the service due to the atrocious road conditions. Since April we have been averaging a 2-3% increase on trips every month but January saw a decrease of just over 14% compared to last year.
- The amount of trips that we have not been able to complete has gone up by 43.91% on last year.
- At present we have 8010 Users registered with the service of which 3370 are active. In February we had 1745 Users making use of our service & they averaged 2.31 trips per User per week.
- We have 3 vacancies advertised at present. 2 driver vacancies & 1 Operations Co-ordinator vacancy.
- The depot is having 18 Ford Vehicles this year, which will all have front door entrances.

6. User Issues

- Miss Stevenson asked if there had been any progress on Fares for essential users. Des Rogers said that WMSNT had put it forward to the Integrated Transport Authority but could do no more. It was suggested that Miss Stevenson could write to Lord Adonis the Secretary of State for Transport. Lisa Percox from Mencap commented that she had also bought it up with Centro.
- Miss Stevenson asked about procedures for assessing wheelchairs, there had been an incident when Miss Stevenson had not been able to travel as her electric wheelchair had not been assessed. Sue apologised for the incident, which had been down to human error & explained that there is no such thing as a standard wheelchair & we have to make sure that when Users travel in our vehicles they are firmly secured. We ask Users to let us know if they change their wheelchair so that we can carry out a risk assessment so that we know in advance what equipment to send out with the vehicle when Users make a trip.
- Mrs Simmons asked about maintenance of vehicles she had travelled on the same vehicle on 2 occasion's 2 weeks ago with the same driver & he had experienced problems with closing passenger doors. Sue explained the fault reporting procedure that the Company had in place & would look into the matter & ring Mrs Simmons next day.

- Mrs Simmons asked about 3 Users who had not been able to get an outward journey to church on the 2nd March. Sue would look into this & speak to Mrs Simmons on Wednesday.
- Mrs Hemming said that on the 2nd March she had been picked from a club she attends at Aldridge Methodist Church & the driver had been asked to take a User who had not booked home & he had said he could not as he was not covered by insurance. Des Rogers explained that all Users are covered by insurance & the correct procedure would have been for the driver to radio through to the depot & confirm the Users details. The reason that he should contact the office is so that in the unfortunate event of an accident we have a record of who is on our vehicle should we be asked by the emergency services. Sue said that she would speak to the driver concerned & ring Mrs Hemming on Wednesday.
- Miss Stevenson asked the definition of ‘Vulnerable Users’. Lisa Percox explained that in Mencap’s case it is Users with Learning Difficulties & Mental Health problems etc.

7. **Date of next meeting**

- Wed 2nd June 2010

All meetings 2pm Walsall Council House