

Making Stonehaven's Leisure Facilities More Accessible

PAMIS works in Aberdeenshire to support families of those with some of the most acute disabilities. Working in partnership with Kincardineshire Development Partnership and Crossreach, we held a Big Ideas World Café consultation event on Monday 20th November to find out what local leisure facilities disabled people use, how they could be better utilised and what new facilities they would like to see on offer for them.

We hope that Stonehaven Town Council and the Stonehaven Town Partnership can use the feedback and suggestions in this report to feed in to the plans for greater accessibility for the town and moving forward as the plans for the Grand Promenade move forwards.

Toilets

It was generally agreed that accessible toilet facilities in Stonehaven are inadequate. More ambulant disabled people using the Town can manage better, even though in many cases it is not ideal if an adult needs help with toileting a disabled loo isn't a large space but those requiring weight-bearing support in seeing to personal care needs describe provision as "rubbish". These individuals require a larger room to manoeuvre with carers, specialist equipment such as a tracker hoist and a height adjustable changing bench to go to the loo safely and with dignity. PAMIS is the main Scotland member of the Changing Places Consortium. <http://pamis.org.uk/campaigns/changing-places-toilet>



Families and carers felt that they wanted toilet and leisure facilities on the front near the sea and other attractions, rather than “hidden away” and which was therefore less inclusive.

A popular request was for a Changing Place for the centre of town. It was suggested that the nearby Caravan Park or somewhere near the playpark may be a suitable location if there was buy in from relevant stakeholders.

Action: Explore the feasibility of getting a Changing Place for Stonehaven Town Centre

Pavements and Pathways

Parents and carers of those supporting wheelchair users feedback that they face difficulties in accessing the town, due to a lack of dropped pavements, difficult path surfaces and few shops, hotels and restaurants that they could physically access. One Mum said “we don’t go out because we can’t but would do if facilities were on offer”. The additionality to Stonehaven’s tourist offer from greater accessibility is obvious. Families would spend more time and money there and a well-planned approach to accessibility would put Stonehaven on the map for visitors.

Paths covered with gravel or chuckies, such as in Mineralwell Park are very difficult for someone pushing a wheelchair. There were suggestions to make the following paths wheelchair accessible i.e. give them a hard and even permanent surface, such as tar-mac or other suitable alternative.

- Mineralwell Park paths
- From the War memorial to Dunnottar Castle
- From Dunnottar Castle Car Park to the area where the castle becomes visible
- Beachfront in the Grand Promenade work

Action: Explore how paths could be made more accessible to wheelchair users

We also had a suggestion for the creation of an ‘accessibility map’ with colour coded maps for walks around town of different levels of difficulty. Green could be easy, amber, medium, and red for hard. It was noted that Stonehaven is on a gradient and not all streets have adequate wheelchair-friendly pavements. This resource could also be used to help visitors navigate the town and could be linked up to walks around Dunnottar Woods and the coastal path. Signage in the Town would also be necessary for this to work.

Action: Ascertain the possibilities of maps and signage in Stonehaven to express the level of gradient and ease of access.

Trapolening and Rebound

A key theme among the Families and carers of some of the more disabled residents was the loss of the trapolening/rebound sessions that used to take place at the Green Hut on the seafront. This is a physically therapeutic activity that helps manage pain and allows free movement out of the person's wheelchair. Sessions came to an end when a member of staff was injured in putting up the trampoline and thus were stopped on the grounds of health and safety.

Disabled people now have to travel with their families or carers to Banchory, which adds travel time and costs on to their day and is more logistically difficult if taking a group out at the same time. Having this service locally would be much better for this group of people and their support workers.

Action: Consult with relevant stakeholders regarding appropriate training could be offered to staff in handling equipment to enable rebound/trapolening sessions to re-start.

Action: Explore any alternative venues for the rebound/trapolening to take place

Stonehaven Leisure Centre

Feedback was largely positive about the use of the Leisure centre. For the more able, instead of having classes specially laid on for them as 'disabled people' they were keen to integrate where and when it was possible to encourage and enable intergenerational integration such as for the Dementia Disco and the Dementia Walking Group. Additionally, a number of service users suggested that a ramp for the entrance to the leisure centre would be a good idea

Action: Explore the possibilities of disabled people joining in outdoor exercise sessions put on for older adults with dementia

Action: Ask Leisure Services the availability of more accessible older adult outdoor gym equipment and explore the alternatives.

Action: Find out where a ramp is needed and explore the practicalities of this with key stakeholders.

Stonehaven Swimming facilities

However we heard that the swimming pool disabled changing facilities were not ideal as there is no direct access to the pool from the disabled changing room, so service users have to come into a general area to get to the pool, which takes some time and also can cause embarrassment. They would like to see direct access to the pool from the disabled changing area. Additionally, those representing the more disabled people asked if the temperature of the pool be raised as it is too cold at present. Someone suggested the installation of a small hot tub or Jacuzzi if this was feasible.

Action: Explore the possibilities of direct access to the pool from the disabled changing rooms

Action: Ask if the temperature of the swimming pool could be increased to benefit those with lower mobility

Action: Ask if there could be a hot tub or jacuzzi installed for those that needed higher water temperature

Alternative venues for Swimming

Some of the more disabled service users were using the heated pool elsewhere in the Town, however there had been a problem with the availability of lifeguards so this resource has been dis-continued.

Action: Explore the alternatives for swimming in Stonehaven and the practical arrangements this could require

A Place to go for information on accessibility

In the discussions it was pointed out that there should be a place where people can go to get information about accessible facilities in the town. This should be incorporated into visitor leaflets on the town and be available at the Tourist information, or possibly a disability info hub somewhere in the town.

Action: Work with Council and local tourism stakeholders about how accessibility information can be incorporated into general tourism literature.

Action: Ascertain the practicality of having a disability info hub in Stonehaven

Cinema Club

Based at Mearns Academy, this is a very useful resource used by those with Autism. Disabled people would like to see this widened to include them.

Action: Explore the possibilities of widening access to this with the Cinema Club and Mearns Academy. Look into having Have a Stonehaven venue?

Library at Mearns Academy

Seen as a very useful resource

Action: Ask if some handrails could be added at Mearns Academy Library to make it more accessible

Stonehaven Land Train

Action: Explore if the Land Train could be made more accessible by adding a wheelchair accessible carriage?

Johnshaven Primary School

It was suggested that better use could be made of this

Facilities used in the wider area that are working well

Families, carers and disabled people fed back about the resources out with Stonehaven that they enjoy doing. These comprise:

- Portlethen Swimming Pool for more disabled folk
- Montrose Leisure Centre for accessible football
- St Cyrus Bowling- accessible bowls
- Mearns Academy Library
- Kinneff Hall accessibility sports

The following are the ideas that the participants had for new leisure opportunities for disabled people in and around Stonehaven.

New things

Accessible Football

Suggestions of working with Aberdeen Football Trust and Scottish FA to lever in accessible football, walking football that already take place in Aberdeen.

Action: Explore how disability groups could lever in Accessible Football resources from AFC Trust

Action: Working with Lyons Rugby Club to explore accessible opportunities for 'motion and movement'

and fitness equipment

Accessible Sport Equipment.

Families and carers of the more disabled people strongly supported the ideas of;

- I. A wheelchair roundabout at the play park/Mineralwell Park
- II. An electric wheelchair bike for the promenade
- III. An electric wheelchair bike for the new tar mac path between Inverbervie and Gourdon
- IV. A beach-accessible wheelchair for the Harbour Beach
- V. A wheelchair-accessible Rickshaw for Stonehaven

These projects would require good partnership working, clear roles and responsibilities and buy in from organisations involved, particularly with the bikes, to ensure the practical considerations of storing, maintaining and booking the equipment is managed well.

Carers said that Carronhill has an accessible swing for children with disabilities.

Inverbervie Pre-School are planning significant structural changes to make it more accessible, including a Changing Place so this may be an additional option to make the town and the Inverbervie-Gourdon pathway more accessible

Action: Explore with local stakeholders and partners/Cycling Club re the possibilities were in getting a range of accessible bike equipment for Stonehaven front and Mineralwell Park

Action: To explore with Carronhill School if their swing could be used by a wider group of people and how this could be made possible.

Action: Explore with stakeholders in Inverbervie about a possible location for a Changing Place.

Sea pursuits

Making the most of Stonehaven's coastline was also discussed, including the possibilities of accessible kayaking and paddle boarding.

Action: Explore with local stakeholders and providers the possibilities of offering accessible water sports activities locally

Other Leisure activities

- Maryculter Carriage Driving is popular with wheelchair users – could this be brought to Dunnottar Woods?
- Pony AXE S – wheelchair accessible pony rides – Dunnottar woods and surrounds. £500 funding already secured.
- Accessible inflatable assault courses
- Boccia (accessible bowls)
- SOMA (Sporting Opportunities for Motor Activities) group
- Marquee events
- Karaoke
- Accessible discos
- Dates 'n' mates (the model in Aberdeen has been very successful)
- Accessible music workshops
- A curling/skate park at Christmas
- Inspire Café?

Action: Identify partners who could work together to develop a programme of leisure events such as horse-related events, sports activities and Karaoke for disabled groups

Action: To find out about the Inspire Café idea for the old toy shop in Stonehaven

Transport

Transport is a significant driver in the accessibility to leisure facilities for disabled people. Not all disabled people have access to a car and services may be some distance away from where they live. However it is clear that it is not possible to replicate all the opportunities taking place in neighbouring towns in Stonehaven. The question is then, how can we make transport more affordable? Can we make better use of the community ambulance, dial a bus to make it easier to get to accessible venues such as Portlethen Campus, Montrose Leisure Centre, Aberdeen Sports Village, and St Cyrus Bowling Club?

Action: Explore the opportunities to make best use of transport facilities to keep down costs

The need for a collaborative approach

The conversations have clearly shown the need for collaborative partnerships in Stonehaven and surrounding area and a co-ordinated approach the Town is to offer more accessibility and this could include sharing premises and other resources. Aberdeenshire Council, Stonehaven Town Partnership

and Stonehaven Town Council are key players along with community organisations, third sector providers, care providers, education, disabled people and their carers. Given the current financial challenges of public sector bodies the Big Idea's group is looking at sourcing alternative funding for some of these discrete projects which statutory funding are not able to consider.

No	Action	Partners	Possible Funding Source	Lead stakeholder
1	Action: Explore the feasibility of getting a Changing Place for Stonehaven Town Centre	Stonehaven Town Partnership/Council Promenade Group		PAMIS
2	Action: Explore how paths could be made more accessible to wheelchair users	Stonehaven Town Partnership/Council Promenade Group		PAMIS
3	Action: Ascertain the possibilities of maps and signage in Stonehaven to express the level of gradient and ease of access.	Jo Duck Abshire Council		Universal
4	Action: Consult with relevant stakeholders regarding appropriate training could be offered to staff in handling equipment to enable rebound/trapolening sessions to re-start.			PAMIS
5	Action: Explore any alternative venues for the rebound/trapolening to take place			PAMIS
6	Action: Explore the possibilities of disabled people joining in outdoor exercise sessions put on for older adults with dementia			Other
7	A9ction: Ask Leisure Services the availability of more accessible outdoor			Other

No	Action	Partners	Possible Funding Source	Lead stakeholder
	gym equipment and explore the alternatives.			
8	Action: Find out where the ramp is needed and explore the practicalities with key stakeholders			PAMIS
9	Action: Explore the possibilities of direct access to the pool from the disabled changing rooms			PAMIS
10	Action: Ask if the temperature of the swimming pool could be increased to benefit those with lower mobility			PAMIS
11	Action: Ask if there could be a hot tub or Jacuzzi installed for those that needed higher water temperature			PAMIS
12	Action: Explore the alternatives for swimming in Stonehaven and the practical arrangements this would require			PAMIS
13	Action: Work with Council and local tourism stakeholders about how accessibility information can be incorporated into general tourism literature			Universal
14	Action: Ascertain the practicality of having a disability info hub in Stonehaven			Universal
15	Action: Explore the possibilities of			Other

No	Action	Partners	Possible Funding Source	Lead stakeholder
	widening access to this with the Cinema Club and Mearns Academy. Look into having Have a Stonehaven venue?			
16	Action: Ask if some handrails could be added at Mearns Academy Library to make it more accessible			Other
17	Action: Explore if the Land train could be made more accessible by adding a wheelchair accessible carriage?			PAMIS
18	Action: Could better use be made of Johnshaven Primary School?			Other
19	Action: Explore how disability groups could lever in Accessible Football resources from AFC Trust			Other
20	Action: Working with Lyons Rugby Club to explore accessible opportunities for 'motion and movement' and fitness equipment.			Other
21	Action: Explore with local stakeholders and partners/Cycling Club re the possibilities were on getting a range of accessible bike equipment for Stonehaven front and Mineralwell park			PAMIS
22	Action: Explore with Carronhill if the their swing could be used by a wider group of people and how this could be made			Other

No	Action	Partners	Possible Funding Source	Lead stakeholder
	possible			
23	Action: Explore with stakeholders in Inverbervie about the possible plan for a Changing Place.			PAMIS
24	Action: Explore with local stakeholders and providers the possibilities of accessible water sports activities locally			PAMIS
25	Action: Identify partners who could work together to develop a programme of leisure events such as horse-related events, sports activities and Karaoke for disabled groups			PAMIS + other
26	Action: To find out about the Inspire Café idea for the old toy shop in Stonehaven			PAMIS
27	Action: Explore the opportunities to make best use of transport facilities to keep down costs			All

