

Cross-Party Group on Changing Places Toilets

Wednesday 1st of February 2023 at 6pm

Minute

Present

MSPs

Jeremy Balfour MSP
Paul O’Kane MSP
Collette Stevenson MSP
Tess White MSP

Invited guests

Mike Adams OBE, Purple
Marina DiDuca, Visit Scotland

Non-MSP Group Members

Patricia Ferguson
Dr Caroline Gould
Dr Gerald Melvin
Sarah Heyward
Lorna Fillingham
Laura Rutherford
Jenny Miller
Fiona Souter
Jan Kerr
Robert Dick
Pippa Swan
Craig McEwan
Cameron Smith
Jill Clark
Libby Herbert
Sandy ?
Fran Hutchison
Arron Ashton
Claire D’All
Ria Joyce

Amanda Foster
Cara Devaney
Luke Murphy
Lois Speed
Rory Stride
Angela Dulley

Apologies

Jackie Baillie MSP
Fiona McLeod-Chiarini
Linda Riley
Martin Robertson

Agenda item 1

Paul started off the evening welcoming everyone and explained that we would be starting with the formality of the AGM for Changing Places Toilets CPG.

The minutes from the previous meeting was agreed.

Paul gave a warm welcome to Collette Stevenson MSP stating that Collette was very keen to get involved with our Group; that when Paul went to the Standards Committee to propose the Group for the first time. Collette asked some very interesting questions. Also, to welcome my colleagues Jeremy and Tess White MSP.

Agenda item 2

AGM

This evening the formality of having our AGM, ensuring we have the correct office bearers for continuing the Group so we can make a submission to the Parliament that we intend to continue.

I think it has been a very constructive dialogue as a Group, a new group, newly formed and raising the issues that don't always have the spotlight at Parliament or in our public life. I know that everyone that has contributed to the group has been committed to raising these issues and keeping those various people's feet to the fires to make sure we deliver on Changing Places Toilets.

So, I will begin with any nominations for Convenor of the Group. Jeremy Balfour MSP nominated Paul O'Kane MSP to be Convenor of the Group, which Paul stated he was happy to continue. Collette Stevenson MSP was happy to second this nomination. No other nominations were put forward.

For Vice Convenor, Paul asked Jeremy if he is willing to continue this post. Jeremy agreed and this was seconded by Tess White MSP. No other nominations were put forward.

For Secretariat, Paul explained that is an important one as it keeps us right in terms of our papers and agendas. Our suggestion is PAMIS and Angela Dulley work collaboratory. We have an open planning process for agenda setting, so if anyone has ideas and wishes to contribute, they are welcome to do so. Paul nominated this and was seconded by Jeremy.

This concludes the formal part of the AGM and this will be submitted to the Parliament.

Agenda item 3

Mike Adams OBE from the charity Purple discussing Purple Tuesday and the financial benefits to business. Mike has over 25 years' experience in the field of disability.

In 2013, Mike chaired the UK Government's national Access to Work Expert Advisory Panel which produced over 20 recommendations for the UK Government's flagship disability employment programme.

Mike spoke about how he is pleased to be asked to present this evening, especially with Marina DiDuca. Visit Scotland has been an integral part of Purple Tuesday.

Purple Tuesday in an initiative about improving the disabled customer's experience. It originated six years ago when Mike was out shopping with his non-disabled partner and they went into twenty-eight shops in one day. In twenty three of the twenty-eight shops, the frontline staff either ignored us or only spoke to my non-disabled partner. What they worked out was that it wasn't direct discrimination but more a fear of unintentionally saying or doing the wrong thing. Purple Tuesday was created as a way of providing accessibility solutions for businesses to drive a better quality for disabled people. Today I chaired a meeting for disabled ambassadors for Purple Tuesday for this year. One of our ambassadors spoke about his experience in a well-known electrical company in the UK; he is a wheelchair user. They were looking at televisions with their partner and behind them in the store, was a couple with no visible disability. He found it interesting that the staff went directly to the people behind and they found themselves ignored. There is a long way to go with consumer awareness. We have an animation presentation for Purple Tuesday which is having its premier tonight so the Group will be the first to see it.

<Unfortunately, we had a technical glitch and only audio was available, but a copy of this video is attached>

Mike spoke about the “Purple Towns” which is the consumer spending power of disabled people and their families, we are talking about £274 billion pounds a year rising at 14% per annum. That equates to a very large number and we know only 10% of businesses have any strategy to access the disability market. Quite frankly, in this world of economic and cost of living now, how many businesses can simply afford to write off 22% of the population by not delivering them a quality experience. That is the premise behind Purple Tuesday.

I would like to say that Purple Tuesday is absolutely about the lived experience insights of disabled people supporting businesses to improve their accessibility and it is increasing disabled people who are leading this change in accessibility; giving businesses the answers that work for businesses because they attract more disabled customers and their families but actually support all disabled people in terms of getting a better quality experience. All of us will know, that to go somewhere and not be treated very well, the likelihood of us going back is zero and the likelihood of us telling everyone, TripAdvisor and social media about how poor accessibility is high. It is important for all disabled people and their families across the UK, and as you have heard in the presentation, in five years we have increased Purple Tuesday to make it global. In November 2022, we celebrated in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. We celebrated in Pakistan and Malaysia and in Minnesota in the USA.

Anyone who knows their music will know that the capital of Minnesota is Minneapolis, the hometown of the music artist Prince.

We were able to go into the home of Prince, and into his home recording studio of Prince of where he spent the last three years of his life. We took along a disabled deaf choir who delivered a rendition, in American sign language, of Prince’s iconic song “Purple Rain”. This visual recording of this went viral across the world and raised the profile of these issues of the disabled consumer.

I am really proud of Purple Tuesday and since its inception, has been heavily supported by Scotland, by disabled people in Scotland, by businesses in Scotland and we have worked with Visit Scotland for the last three of four years which I am delighted about. Marina is going to talk in a moment about our plotting and planning for Purple Tuesday 2023 to increase the profile in Scotland even more, so that every business is aware, business understand and get involved in delivering a great customer experience for disabled people and their families.

Mike thanked the group and asked if Angela can send the link to the animation presentation to the members of the Group and Mike will also send the link for the Purple Rain video that went viral to share. Mike asked us all to please support Visit Scotland this year, please support Purple Tuesday because it is a great initiative for disabled people to lead, in terms of improving customer experience”

Agenda item 4

Marina DiDuca from Visit Scotland.

Marina will be discussing their Inclusive Tourism Business Engagement Programme - a project to highlight accessible venues in six regions of Scotland working in partnership with AccessAble.

There will be opportunity to raise any questions or points you have for Mike and Marina.

Angela then asked Marina to share her presentation on screen.

Marina thanked Mike for the link to their organisations and the slideshow commenced.

“I am going to talk you through what responsible tourism comprises of at Visit Scotland and how inclusive tourism is part of our responsible tourism agenda and strategy.

First, what we are trying to do here - Responsible Tourism considers not only the needs of the visitor and the industry, but also the host communities and the environment. It is all about creating better places for people to live and visit, from an economic, environmental, and social perspective.

We have four pillars within our strategy; inclusion and ensuring tourism in Scotland is inclusive is one of four pillars that I am going to discuss tonight.

In statistical context, the value of the accessible market to Scotland. These figures from 2019, pre-pandemic, is the best full set of statistics that we have currently. We should have the 2022 figures soon. To give some context, UK domestic overnight visits are work 2.55 million and that is 18.5% of the total number of visits to Scotland so it is a high proportion of our overall tourism market. The expenditure for overnight trips is £611 million pounds. Just short of the 20% of all domestic visitor spend.

We know from our partners at Euan's Guide, that 83% of disabled customers tell others about their experience and 49% share on their social media.

Our focus is on information on provision and customer service and its all about improving those aspects of tourism in Scotland. Tourism is for all and we want to try and support equal access to tourism for everyone. We do that with two key points of activity. One is about improving visitor experiences and that is where collaboration and partnership with Purple is so important. We have other partners who we work with but over the past couple of years we have worked with Purple a lot in sharing Mike's great tips that he shares on his YouTube channel for Purple and other materials that he shares for free on his website, that we share with the industry.

The other part of our portfolio that we try and encourage is improving of quality of information. It is important, we know from statistics that we see from others and our own research, that disabled people need detailed information. It is wholly important to them to have correct information in that planning phase and to know what the venue is like, to know what facilities are like on the ground, for them to have the confidence and the reassurance that the venue is able to cater for their needs.

Obviously, the market that we are talking about, the people element of this, it's about disabled people, it's about senior travellers but it is also about low income families because there are barriers.

If we are really trying to make Scotland and Scottish Tourism accessible to all, we must think about the financial barriers that exist as well. I will talk about a programme that we ran, post Covid, that was all about social tourism.

On our website we have a tool that helps businesses create accessibility guides. This is a walk-through process that business does, answering a series of questions about their access facilities and services. It all about what they have, it is not about what they don't have so it is describing not prescribing what you have in your business. At the end, the system creates all that data into a digital access guide which visitors can access, either through a link, directly as a digital guide or they can download it as a Word document."

An example of an accessibility guide for self-accommodation was shown from The Rings in Fife.

We also have tips how to create an accessibility guide and fantastic videos that talk the businesses through the process as well.

We have developed, in partnership with an organisation called Customer Excellence, a classroom style training course, which is all about welcoming customers and it is for frontline staff, there will be individual delegate places promoted this year, throughout Scotland. Businesses can also engage with the organisation and ask them to come in and do an in-house course for them. It covers lots of fantastic subjects as an example, how to make your website accessible; how to welcome all customers irrespective of their individual access requirements or needs. It supports, extremely well, our Purple collaboration and our support to Purple Tuesday this year.

The other venture we have completed on Activity is we have created a new project called Accessible Highlights in Scotland and we are working with AccessAble, the largest UK provider of access ability information. They have a website and an app which is by used by disabled people, they have five million users, per year. Visit Scotland is working with them and over a hundred businesses put themselves forward to have an access audit and a guide produced. This is happening in Spring 2023. Once we have all the access information, it will be posted on Visit Scotland's website and we will be creating itineraries – places to see and do in those regions.

We have four regions that we are concentrating on: Edinburgh and Lothian, South of Scotland, Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire and Fife, Dundee, and Angus.

All the businesses signed up are super excited and we have completed a project with Purple. Monthly training webinars and we have been able to package that in and the one hundred business that are working with us will be able to have access to those training resources as well.”

At this stage the Parliament’s Zoom timing threw us out of the chatroom. A new link had been provided to reconvene.

Finishing her presentation, Marina continued:

“We have a toolkit on our website which allows businesses to access a whole number of advice and signposting materials and one of things we were really keen to do is add knowledge to the toolkit about Changing Places toilets. I have contacted Changing Places UK Team and I am waiting on the team to give me dates to meet. Our updated toolkit will be ready to be released the end of March 2023.

The last project that I wish to speak about is a social tourism project that we completed; it was a Covid-19 recovery programme. It was about trying to help low income families and unpaid carers have holiday breaks after Covid-19; we worked with two charity partners. It has been such a successful programme. We have managed to help over ten thousand people benefit for a break, £1.3 million spent on social tourism breaks, over three thousand breaks taken and two hundred and twenty-nine participating businesses that had taken part in the programme.

The legacy of this project is that we shall continue to carry on with the partners but on a promotional campaign; there is no budget to support breaks, but we will be encouraging businesses to offer donations and value-added breaks. The accessible offering that the businesses had through the access guide were well received by the carers and the low-income families because many of them needed that information to be able to take that break. It gave evidence that it supports so many people to take breaks by providing that accessible information.

The Accessible Tourism Highlights in Scotland, working in partnership with AccessAble where we will collate information for accommodation, visitor attraction and restaurants in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, Edinburgh and Lothians, Fife, Dundee and Angus, South of Scotland. Launched at the end of April/beginning of May we will have highlights somewhere in the region of fifteen and twenty highlights in four of the different regions of Scotland. Talking about their accessibility facilities and services, also covering accommodation. We will be talking about Euan’s Guide reviews and we will also be adding, once I have spoken to the team at PAMIS, the

Changing Places Map to our website. We cannot add anything momentarily, as we are redesigning our website and there is a content freeze but hopefully, we will be able to add that shortly.”

Agenda item 5

Angela thanked both Mike and Marina for their excellent presentations and stated that both presentations and the link to the disabled deaf choir that Mike spoke of.

Angela asked if both Mike and Marina would take some questions and both agreed to this.

Patricia Ferguson asked “I’m finding when I try and book a stay, I am receiving push back. Is there any law that can be stated? As an example, my son is getting married this year and I prebooked the stay with the understanding that they will make the room into a disability room. I emailed them examples of the room. Her son then went elsewhere to find a more suitable room and when I telephoned the first booked accommodation I was told “thank goodness, we were not going to make it a disability room”.

Marina stated that there is a legal responsibility to make reasonable adjustments. The Equality Act states that anyone who offers a service to a customer must make reasonable adjustment. What is difficult, sometimes, is to establish what is a reasonable adjustment. What is reasonable to one business is not reasonable to another. It does sound like the experience that you have received there is not satisfactory. If they took the booking, they should have prepared to take the reasonable adjustment to welcome you. Their attitude was completely wrong, and I would say that the businesses that work with Visit Scotland, many of them see the accessible market as an important and valuable market to their bottom line. There is a high loyalty factor at play; people will return time and time again. I would like to think that this is a minority experience that you received and in terms of legality, the business should be making reasonable adjustments.

Mike stated this experience is why Purple Tuesday exists. There is an economic argument and discussion as well as the social and customer service argument. I was working with a company in Manchester – The Brooklyn Hotel, and they have four fully accessible rooms and within their whole hotel, those four rooms earn more revenue, per year, than rooms that are not adapted.

Marina’s point about loyalty and the demand, notwithstanding terrible customer experience, the financial economics of that just don’t make sense.

Dr Caroline Gould stated that she appreciated that a number of organisations thinking that they are being really helpful but we have a number that we have a number of problematic situations such as building standards accept minimal turning

circles for wheelchairs of 1.5 metres and yet we have many modern day wheelchairs that wouldn't even hope to turn in 1.5 metres. I am disabled, I use a large powered wheelchair, I must have my legs out in front of me as I cannot bend my legs, therefore I need a large turning circle, as do many others.

I would like to know who decides what is accessible as I am a qualified access auditor and I have yet to meet organisations or service providers who follow the minimum guidance but the British Standards for accessibility is considered the best practised guidance. It clearly states in its forward that turning circles, that they provide in Annex G, for wheelchairs is way out of date and is based on 1990's research and anyone who uses these chairs will tell you that we are living longer, with long term conditions, have more equipment and have more functions of their wheelchairs, will need more space. Until the building standards change and we change this from all other aspects, then nothing will change. I'm sick to death, living here on Skye Lochalsh, every year I receive hundreds of complaints from disabled people. I looked today at AccessAble and there is nothing for fifty miles where I live, that there is nothing accessible from a M&S food hall on the mainland, which is a two hour drive and a Tesco Metro which is also a two hour drive. The distances on the website are completely wrong, they are more as the crow flies rather than the reality. The problem I have here in a remote rural area is there tends to be a lot of small service providers and they are getting away with it not being reasonable, so I am having to travel 52 miles to get cash. From my home it is 500 yards to purchase fuel for my wheelchair accessible vehicle and have to pay for it in cash because places aren't accessible and I don't know how to get across that I have repeatedly said to Visit Scotland and other organisations that speak about the Purple Pound that it is not valued here; we don't count and its time that the Equality Act did not have the onus on the disabled person to actually challenge the law. It should be in such a manner that people can be penalised for not providing what they should provide and have a proper baseline to what is acceptable. I am tired asking hotels what they have when I book; they lie because they want the customer to arrive. It is no use when I get there and I cannot park in their car park as it has restricted height barrier that they cant open; I cant get into the lift to get to reception and they claim that is all they can do. When I have paid a deposit, I have done everything right by asking all the right questions and I have been lied too.

I would like to know who decides what is claimed to be accessible and what basis because you are getting it wrong."

Marina replied "At Visit Scotland, we never ever state something is accessible; my main point earlier was we ask businesses to accurately describe their facilities and we don't stop there, we encourage them to work with companies that are qualified Access Auditors but it is something that is voluntary, we encourage, we act as ambassadors, we try and tell your story to the industry and I spend most of my time giving presentations to businesses, talking about the value of getting it right. The fact that if you get it right you will have loyal customers. The barrier that exists, the

real barriers that exist but it is not a compulsory option, its not that Visit Scotland can make compulsory so what we do is showcase businesses that do it well and when we say do it well, it is from their customer base that is saying they do it well. We try and hold those businesses as best-case scenarios and try and reveal the ones that have got good access facilities, as defined by the customers that are using it, not defined by Visit Scotland. We would never state what is good accessibility; the important thing about inclusion is making sure that you provide accurate and reliable information upfront. Customers then can make an informed choice and decision. The law is there, you must make reasonable adjustments and what we are trying to do is pull all the legislation and all the advice and tips together to encourage and really tell a story about businesses getting this right and how it is hugely successful for them, from a commercial point of view and a social commitment point of view. So, I would say to you Visit Scotland never says this is what is good accessibility. We state that there are things that make up good accessibility and what good customer service looks like, the work that we do with Purple and the Access Guide is the key thing. We really, really try to push home to businesses that it is important to adequately describe your facilities on the ground.”

Dr Gould further stated “ When we have approached Euan’s Guide, Visit Scotland and various other organisations they are not interested if we want to criticize facilities; people like me don’t go anywhere anymore as we cant find a single public toilet that we can access on our way to staying somewhere; when we had a new hospital here in Broadford in Skye that opened last year and I still cant find a suitable toilet in it that I can use, either as an inpatient or an outpatient. Something is seriously wrong with accessibility guides and building standards; until that changes nothing will ever improve for those of us that have larger wheelchairs and mobility problems.”

Fiona Souter asked, “My question is to Marina about the training for frontline staff that is being developed and I wondered do Changing Places toilets feature within that training or could they if they don’t?”

Marina replied “I think there is something we could add in; the course itself has a lot in it, it is like a manual or a handbook. If there is something that we can add into the handbook that is easier to facilitate. I think we can talk offline what that would look like. I’m really keen that we get the Changing Places information on the dot org website.”

Fiona stated that PAMIS do a specific course that is quite detailed but also for frontline staff, specifically for Changing Places Toilets and welcoming users that have profound learning disabilities at their venue.

Marina said we can work up a slide and include for the trainer to provide the information and include on our website.

Fiona said to Mike “Thank you for the Purple Tuesday presentation; I just wondered what you have done in the past to highlight Changing Places toilets as part of Purple Tuesday?”

Mike replied that Changing Places is a partner of Purple and supports Purple Tuesday; we support National Toilet Day as well. We work closely with Changing Places. Listening to Dr Gould, it is frustrating to hear that a new hospital, for example, doesn't have the specification to enable modern wheelchair users to use any facilities and I have been doing this a long time and I expect we will still be doing this for a long time before we get common sense. Purple Tuesday contributes to raising awareness about the issues, but that awareness must translate into involvement and engagement, and practise changing on the ground. Your work with Visit Scotland and Purple Tuesday needs to happen to drive awareness and involvement and to your point, I always say would you go into town or shopping centre knowing that you absolutely could not go to the toilet or if you did need to go to the toilet, you would lose your dignity as you would have to lie on a dirty toilet floor and the answer is got to be No. Therefore, Changing Places across Scotland is needed as it is just so important.

Sarah Heyward stated her place in the Group is representing the Tyndrum infrastructure Group which is a charity she has set up specifically to facilitate the building of a Changing Places toilet in the village of Tyndrum on the A82; half way between Glasgow and Fort William. At the moment there is no facilities between Dumbarton and the Isle of Barra for travelling that particular road. It is much needed. Happily, I state that we are completing a development feasibility study and have a costed plan. So, we will be very soon in the position to go out for capital to build this CPT at long last.; I have been working on this for five years. I own a chippy in Tyndrum so this is interesting hearing this from a hospitality point of view. I have to say, Caroline, I hear your frustration; I obviously don't see it as I am able bodied but I am aware of it because this journey I have been on, which has initiated because my father became very poorly an neurological illness so I have first hand experience of the effect of caring for someone with severe disabilities and the limitations of quality of life and the lack of facilities. One of the things I am very mindful of and I have spoken with PAMIS about is the specification, in my opinion, needs to be regularly reviewed. It would be a catastrophe for us if the toilet that we do finally build in Tyndrum has any complaints. There is absolutely no reason for that to happen and I would suggest is that the Cross-Party Group could facilitate is a regular review of that specification. The aids and wheelchairs are probably developing much quicker than the specifications are in this day and age. The project managers like me need to have the up to date information otherwise we build the wrong thing.

I also think there needs to be an education across the spectrum about Changing Places toilets as the majority of the public are unaware what they are.

Could the Group look at strategy?

Lorna Fillingham stated that she is based in England and would direct her comment to Visit Scotland. Lorna has lobbied the UK Government to change the building regulations in England and Wales. What has put me off visiting Scotland is the fact that A/ there is no Changing Places Toilets on the roads and B/ a lot of the places that we would like to visit haven't got Changing Places toilet facilities available. I want to echo the points raised by Dr Gould and put the question to the MSP's today – is there going to be any investment put into Changing Places network across Scotland? In England and Wales, we have the scenario that they are having to bring this up time and time again, that having disabled children changed on public toilet floors on the roads to Scotland's major tourist attractions, disabled adults having to sit in their own body fluids, it is carers that's are having to lift them up from floors, unpaid carer and paid carers like nursing staff, teachers, teaching assistants so there is a duty of care here for all of those people.

When talking about accessible hotel rooms and the lack of hoists available in the rooms for those who would also be needing Changing Places Toilets. I would ask the MSP's what is happening to the investment that is promised a year or so back? This a huge requirement for those who wish to install one to proceed.

Angela stated that Paul has a written question to the Scottish Government asking that question and will circulate the reply once it is received.

Jan Kerr asked her question to Marina – is there any statistics to the number of people that use access guides? I was involved in drawing one up. I am also a carer and when I go on holiday with a friend who is a permanent wheelchair user, I have never used an access guide, that's not how I make my choices. I am curious to find out are there any statistics of people using them? I find they are quite long and involved.

Marina stated that AccessAble quote five million users accessing their guide on their website. It is quite a simple website to use. It breaks down the facilities so you would tick box what you were looking for. I think the problem may be that you are being given a lot of information that relates to people with very high accessibility needs so I think you are looking at the widest possible benefit for people that would have very specific needs. Visit Scotland would explore any useful tools that aren't access guides should they be presented with any. Until we have that we have to push this agenda forward.

Lois Speed agreed about the Brooklyn Hotel in Manchester getting the customer experience right. Lois was able to take one of her adult children away, but she still faced issues with the Changing Places on her journey being out of order or out of service for some reason. Her question is do we know how many accommodation providers in Scotland have the track and hoist facilities that someone who requires a Changing Places can stay with? I definitely find that this is the part of making a booking and trying to plan when you do stay over.

Marina stated that Visit Scotland don't have anything that is readily available about the hoist information which is why we are gathering detailed information on all facilities through this work with AccessAble and then you will be able to tick a box. At the moment we need to drive up the number of businesses that have a quality assured access guide to make sure those searches are worthwhile, or you are just not going to see many businesses appearing on the search.

Robert Dick stated that he is a member of the Stirling Area Access Panel and he finds it frustrating that people comment on the size of accessible toilets and Changing Places toilets. All the building standards makes it quite clear that they are minimum standards so if there is a group of people who are involved in the development of having a Changing Places toilet, they can have one made larger to suit. There is no issue there. Secondly, I would like to comment about my experience in staying in two hotels in Aberdeen. Both were appalling and I use a rollover and should probably be in a wheelchair and the access was absolutely terrible.

As time was running out on the 40-minute allocation that the Scottish Parliament Zoom account provides, Angela asked Robert to put his comments in writing and she would pass onto Marina at Visit Scotland.

Lastly, Pippa Swan stated that she Chairs Dumbarton Community Council. I am intrigued to what role the Cross-Party Group plays in having conversations with the Scottish Government about the release of this £10 million pound funding? The reply I had back from Kevin Stewart MSP yesterday stated the Scottish Government is still trying to explore ways of ensuring that the money is well spent. Surely, you guys, with all your experience, you are into your second year of the Cross-Party Group for Changing Places Toilets. Are you not front and centre in these discussions or are you just side-lined?

Angela replied that we are pushing the Scottish Government; we are asking written questions; we are trying to have questions asked in the Chamber. We are not getting answers, we are receiving the same reply as you received yesterday.

Pippa concluded it is not the timing of the funding, it is this flannel about saying that the first phase is to try and understand the best way to spend the money, for goodness sake, the standards are identified, they are almost like plug in and play, so what is this flannel about ensuring the money is well invested? They have been giving money away in England for two years. They have all that experience to draw from. Where does this Cross-Party Group sit, we should be really turning the screw on the purse holders?

Angela stated we did have the Minister, Kevin Stewart MSP at our last meeting. We did not get any commitment at all. Therefore, we are asking questions and what we will be pushing for. Your frustration on your face Pippa, is what we have been experiencing for several years for this.

Pippa then stated, here we have this high-powered cross-party group, you have a status, and no-one is listening to you. Is this the way that the Scottish Government works? Is this normal practise?

Angela acknowledged Pippa's frustration and with one minute of Zoom time left Angela asked if any further questions could be emailed to her and she would pass on and speak about it at the next meeting.

Then the meeting ended abruptly, and Angela emailed all participants apologising for the ending and the lack of proper facilities online that allows disability aids to be compatible.