

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
LESBIAN, GAY AND BISEXUAL PEOPLE'S FORUM

Wednesday, 14 September 2005

PRESENT:

L.Ambrose (in the chair)	NBC
Councillor Hill	NBC
M.Felix	N.R.E.C
E.Downes	NBC
Julie	Individual
Dennis	Individual
Steven	Individual
L.Hodson	Fire Service
Sgt P.Colhoun	Nptonshire Police
Andrew	N.L.G.B.A

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Tom (Co-Chair), Councillor Acock and S Silver NBC.

2. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING (PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED)

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2005 were agreed.

3. MATTERS ARISING NOT ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

It was noted that this Forum took part in the Balloon Festival as part of the Community Forums.

4. ENGAGEMENT WITH BME LGB PEOPLE - SPEAKER FROM BLACK GAY MEN'S ADVISORY GROUP

It was noted that unfortunately at very short notice the Speaker from the Black Gay Men's Advisory Group had been unable to attend this meeting but L Ambrose agreed to ascertain whether he would be able to attend the next or a future meeting instead. Andrew commented that the BMA having dialogue with such groups as the NLGBA was welcomed as it recognised the need to have closer liaison with black gay people. L Ambrose circulated a note from various websites beyond Northampton relating to Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual People and particular reference was made to the SAFRA project which was a resource project working on issues relating to LGB or transgender women who identified as muslim religiously and/or culturally. It was agreed that L Ambrose approach the SAFRA project also to see if a representative from that organisation would be able to attend the next or future meeting along with a representative from the Black Gay Men's Advisory

Group.

5. LGBT HISTORY MONTH 2006 PLANNING

L Ambrose referred to the fact that a government letter regarding this had been received last year at short notice and the group had expressed an interest in becoming involved for 2006. The Alliance had also expressed an interest in working with the forum on the project. A Bewers commented that the issue for the Forum was one of resources and L Ambrose undertook to raise this with the Portfolio Holder. It was agreed that the group would still wish to have some involvement and it was agreed that L Ambrose liaise with C Able from the Black History Project. Volunteers agreed to try to meet before the next forum meeting to look at what might be done.

M Felix advised that he was organising a Race Action Northampton roadshow during the Anti-Racism Week and would welcome any involvement from this Forum.

6. FIRE SERVICE UPDATE L.HODSON DISTRICT LIAISON OFFICER

L Hodson, District Liaison Officer for Northants Fire Service was present for this item. He stated that the purpose of his attending the meeting was to let the group know what the Fire Service was doing in terms of a service to the community. One of its principal activities was fire safety in the home and the idea was to get officers to visit the homes of as many members of the public as possible to check for fire safety, fit smoke detectors etc. The Fire Service had fully embraced the equality legislation over the last few years and had impact assessed all its policies and procedures in the last few years. He reassured the forum that this involved LGB awareness and sensitivity when visiting peoples homes. To this end an Equality and Diversity Officer for the Fire Service had been employed. He referred to a leaflet displayed at the meeting which gave details of the home safety service provided and the number to ring to book an appointment. L Hodson also undertook to liaise with A Bewers with regard to this matter so that A Bewers could pass on this information to NLGBA members. L Hodson then elaborated further in terms of diversity training within the Fire Service and A Bewers commented that the NLGBA would be interested to be aware of the sexuality aspect of the diversity training and would possibly be able to assist and liaise with the Fire Service with regard to this. It was therefore agreed that L Hodson and A Bewers would liaise accordingly.

7. MEDIGOLD UPDATE

E Downes, Interim Head of Human Resources for Northampton Borough Council reported on this item in terms of an update following the issues he had undertaken to pursue from the last meeting. Legal Services and Equalities officers had been involved and had prepared guidance notes as suggested at forum meetings to go with the form which might offer some clarity and re-assurances about the form and procedures. He circulated copies of the draft document entitled "Northampton Borough Council's Commitment to the Equality, Diversity and Health of its Employees" for the group's consideration. It was noted that this document was out for consultation currently and was due to be submitted to all the Community Forums for their views. Attention was drawn to page 3 which showed a copy of the envelope that would be included with the form to be sealed and posted back to the Borough Council's Human Resources. Also it was noted that it was clearer that

information would not be shared with HR or line managers and appropriate parts of the form had been deleted. A Bewers expressed the view that some wording was still inappropriate. E Downes commented that he had taken advice from medical advisors and the Legal Department but if this group was still not satisfied then he would take it back to the Consortium to be further considered. A Bewers then raised concerns over the confidentiality aspect and the fact that Medigold had still not made clear what it would do with the information as there was no clear process as to how the information would be dealt with and what they would be doing with the information. He referred to the mention of first aiders in Medigolds comments to date. Therefore on two issues he still had concerns namely the continuing erroneous language in the questionnaire and disclosure of information in the questionnaire. The group concurred with these points raised. Comment was made that Northampton Borough Council needed to work to the current Best Practice and there was a wish to adopt the National Best Practice and it was suggested that meant to ignore HIV status as Camden did. It was agreed that until this issue had been satisfactorily concluded that it remain on the agenda of this meeting. It was agreed that A Bewers on behalf of the Forum e-mail a form of words that it considered satisfactory for the question section of the form to be submitted to the Consortium for consideration. L Hodson referred to practices within Northants Fire Service and expressed the view that this whole issue should be impact assessed. It was agreed that he would pass on the forms used by Northants Fire Service to L Ambrose and E Downes. It was agreed L Ambrose and E Downes would further liaise with K Kinton and J Morgans re the Forum's ongoing questions and concerns.

8. COMMUNITY CO-CHAIR ANNUAL ELECTION PLANNING

L Ambrose advised that it was time to be considering the election of the Community Co-Chair and briefly outlined what was happening with some of the other Forums with regard to this issue. Councillor Hill as the Portfolio Holder had suggested a process. Voting was to be by post and ballot papers could be sent to anyone who had attended a meeting of the Forum this calendar year. It was agreed in terms of this Forum that anyone who had attended the meeting as a member of the Forum within the last 12 months could stand as Co-Chair and vote. It was agreed the postal process would start after this meeting and the new Co-Chair should be confirmed at the Forum's next meeting.

9. TOWN CENTRE COMMISSION AND NORTHAMPTON BY NIGHT EVENT

L Ambrose stated that this item had been placed on the agenda to raise the Forum's awareness that the Town Centre Commission was a recently created body and that M Swann was dealing with the project on behalf of the Borough Council. Each of the Forums had been invited to have representation on behalf of the Commission and T Welsh as the Co-Chair had agreed to be this Forum's representative. A workshop and meeting was due to take place on Saturday of this week between 9.30am and 1.00pm and some places were still available. It was suggested that M Swann be invited to the next meeting of this Forum to make a presentation about the Town Centre Commission. This was duly agreed.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

A Bowers referred to the London Gay Film Festival and to films that were being shown the following evening at Lings Forum cinema.

M Felix then referred to the first issue of the Newsletter Race Action Northampton produced by Northamptonshire Race Equality Council and circulated copies to those present. He asked that any topics or issues for future newsletters could be e-mailed to him.

11. ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

It was agreed that for the next meeting agenda items include Medigold Update, and an Update on the LGB History Month. Consideration of the item listed on the agenda namely Proactive Education of Work and Engagement with Young LGB People in Schools and Colleges would be left on the agenda as an item for discussion at a future meeting.

(A) PRO-ACTIVE EDUCATIONAL WORK AND ENGAGEMENT WITH YOUNG LGB PEOPLE IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the Forum was scheduled for 17 November 2005 at 6.30pm at the Guildhall.

The meeting concluded at 7.45pm