

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

Thursday, 17 November 2005

PRESENT:

T.Welsh (in the Chair)
S.Silver NBC
L.Ambrose NBC
M.Swann NBC
A.Bewers NLGBA
Dennis Individual
M.Felix N.R.E.C

1. APOLOGIES

There were none.

2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

At this juncture those present introduced themselves and congratulations were conveyed to T Welsh on becoming the Community Co-Chair to the Forum and to M Felix for expressing an interest in this position.

3. DECLARATION OF COMMUNITY CO-CHAIR TO THE FORUM

Following the election process for the Community Co-Chair to this Forum it was announced that T Welsh was formally elected as Community Co-Chair and he assumed the Chair for the meeting.

4. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2005 which had been previously circulated were agreed.

5. MATTERS ARISING NOT ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

There were none.

6. TOWN CENTRE COMMISSION - PRESENTATION BY M.SWANN

M Swann, Town Centre Commission Manager was present for this item. He advised that he had taken over the responsibility as the Town Centre Commission Manager and that this role was responsible for the Town Centre Commission. It was noted that this did not include responsibility for the Markets however. He gave a brief overview of the Town Centre Commission explaining that it had been established by the Borough Council and its purpose was to determine what was needed in the Town Centre. An action plan would be produced and it was

anticipated that local businesses and organisations with statutory/voluntary interest ie hospitals, West Northamptonshire Development Corporation etc were all organisations that would be involved in the initiative. The action plan was to be produced by March 2006 and finalised by September 2006. This timetable was realistic and allowed for realistic consultation. Hence he was attending the various forums as part of this consultation. He commented that this was all about what the community as a whole wanted for the town centre. About 150 people were involved in the action plan process but it was the intention of the Commission to set up small working groups of about 12 of those people to take it forward. This working group had drawn up Terms of Reference and its first meeting had been held back in September and included representatives from the Borough Council's forums. A major consultation event had been held at the County Cricket ground. One essential element was to ensure that information going out about the Town Centre Commission was as accessible and far reaching as possible. It was noted that M Swann and T Welsh had taken part in a study walk as part of the consultation event. It was suggested that members of this Forum and Race Equality Forum might like to do something similar and L Ambrose agreed to convey the suggestion to the Race Equality Forum's next meeting.

M Swann then opened up the discussion to members of the forum seeking their views and comments about the town centre with suggestions of how it could be improved, things they would like to see established within the town centre etc. For example in terms of this Forum improvements could be in terms of LGB issues and how the town could respond to their needs more effectively. It was anticipated that access would feature highly together with environmental issues in terms of LGB needs. Tom commented that one improvement from this group's perspective would be in having safe venues, places to go in the day time etc. He suggested that this issue should be kept on the agenda so that it could be further discussed and that in the interim further liaison be undertaken to seek the wider views of the gay community. It was also agreed that the NLGBA needed to be involved in the consultation so that they could be involved in the wider context.

In the context of discussing safety and safe venues etc reference was made to the Mayorhold underpass and it was noted that the lighting was very bad and these were issues that needed to be looked into.

Reference was made to Northampton at Night and it was considered it might be useful to get homophobic incident statistics from around the gay venues in town.

A Bewers welcomed the consultation with the NLGBA but commented that obviously he would need time to consult with the members. M Swann undertook to liaise with A Bewers as the contact in terms of the consultation with the NLGBA.

It was noted that there was further information regarding the Town Centre Commission on the Borough's website together with a questionnaire so in addition any views could be passed on in this way.

One final comment made was that the group considered that the Roadmender was a very important cultural institution to Northampton.

It was agreed to include M Swann's contact details the minutes, which were as follows – 01604 837681 or e-mail mswann@northampton.gov.uk, website <http://www.northampton.gov.uk/tcc>.

7. LGBT HISTORY MONTH UPDATE

L Ambrose advised that the Spencer Percival area in the Guildhall had been booked for the period between 4 January to the end of February for a display combining themes of the Holocaust Memorial Day and LGBT History Month. A Bowers welcomed this. He referred to the Holocaust Memorial Day meeting which he had attended the previous day and expressed the view that the NLGBA should be involved with both the LGBT History Month and the Holocaust Memorial event. The NLGBA could provide material to support the display. L Ambrose advised that the Black History Association had confirmed they would also be willing to support his idea.

A decision then ensued regarding Holocaust Memorial Day with the idea of producing something that showed local LGB people's experiences over the years, particularly during the 1940s. L Ambrose advised that she was looking to support the Holocaust Memorial Day activities by producing some web pages for the NBC website.

8. MEDIGOLD UPDATE

A Bowers referred to the discussion on this item at the last meeting when it had been agreed that, on behalf of the Forum, he would e-mail a form of words considered satisfactory for the questions section of the form to be submitted to the Consortium for consideration. However on reflection he felt that it was inappropriate to come up with a revised wording as in some ways that was tantamount to agreeing that there should be a form of wording in the form when really it was considered that this should be omitted completely. It was considered that it might be useful to have a copy of the Fire Service's Medical Questionnaire which had been referred to at the last meeting and L Ambrose undertook to liaise with the Fire Service with a view to obtaining a copy. It was noted that the current position was that discussions with Medigold were continuing and the Forum would be kept updated on the situation.

9. BME AND LGB ENGAGEMENT (CONFIRMATION OF SPEAKERS STILL AWAITED)

L Ambrose gave an update on this it being noted that the speakers had been unable to attend the last meeting and it was hoped that may be they would be able to attend a future meeting. However various attempts had been made over several weeks to get representatives from BGMAG and SAFRA to see whether they wished to come to the meeting. Whilst the latter had expressed an interest in attending they had not actually followed this up. L Ambrose had been in discussion with the SAFRA representative and discussed various ideas and joint working i.e. contribute to each others' newsletters, link to each others' websites, attend events together. It was noted that a community day in Errington Park had been planned for 24 June

next year and this might be an opportunity to get various groups together on a more informal basis rather than attending a Forum meeting. The view was also expressed that having speakers was something Forum members would like to pursue further. One suggestion was that perhaps the next MAGRAH conference might have a speaker or workshop around BME LGM Community Engagement. L Ambrose undertook to pursue this suggestion with the relevant officers.

10. INFORMATION EXCHANGE

A Bewers referred to World Aids Day and advised that the NLGBA would be working in conjunction with BBC Radio Northampton to produce a new film featuring three people with HIV.

With regard to the Holocaust Memorial Day it was noted that there would be a flower setting on Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January at 11.00am followed by a ceremony in the Guildhall.

It was noted that there would be a Youth Forum Awareness Event on 8 December in the Guildhall which could be of interest to any LGB Youth Groups.

Contact details for the Youth Forum were L Ambrose – 01604 837566 or e-mail lambrose@northampton.gov.uk.

M Felix advised that he would be interviewed on Radio Northampton on Sunday regarding the Race Equality Council and Racism in general.

11. ITEMS FOR NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS

It was noted that the usual budget consultation was scheduled for the next meeting. It was also agreed that the Town Centre Commission update remain on the agenda for the January meeting so that any feedback could be discussed. It was also agreed that the Holocaust Memorial Day update be placed as an item on the agenda. It was also agreed that an item "Open Forum of 2006" be placed on the agenda so that discussions could start with regard to this issue. With regard to future meetings it was suggested that one of those meetings possibly 15 May be held at the Alliance.

12. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS 11 JANUARY, 15 MARCH, 15 MAY, 12 JULY 2006

It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled for 11 January and that future meetings were scheduled for 15 March, 15 May and 12 July 2006.

The meeting concluded at 7.45pm