

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

Wednesday, 12 September 2007

PRESENT:

Tom (in the chair)	Individual
Councillor Church (co chair)	NBC
Paul Colhoun	Northants Police
Lindsey Ambrose	NBC
Andrew Bewers	NLGBA
Dennis	Individual

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Everyone present introduced themselves in turn.

2. APOLOGIES

There were none.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2007 were agreed. Andrew drew attention to the fact that under item 5 regarding the restructuring of MAGRAH, NIAG and Hate Crimes Forum the minutes referred to the last meeting of MAGRAH but should in fact read the last meeting of NIAG.

4. MATTERS ARISING NOT ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

L Ambrose advised that she had still been unable to obtain the information requested from Highways regarding various County Council's Highways Updates but that she would continue to chase.

A Bewers stated that he would give an update regarding Midsummer Meadow under Any Other Business.

L Ambrose advised that the Youth Festival had gone ahead on 21 July and had proved to be a great success with a very good attendance including some young LGB people who had been pleased to see NLGBA information and spoke highly of Attic Youth Group.

5. COMMUNITY CO-CHAIR ANNUAL ELECTION UPDATE

L Ambrose advised the Community Co-Chair Annual Elections for the Forums was due and that the format would follow the same lines as the previous year.

6. HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL UPDATE

L Ambrose advised that the Steering Group continued to develop plans for the 2008 Holocaust Memorial activities. She stated that there would be the usual ceremony in the courtyard at the Guildhall on the day itself namely 27 January with an event in the evening at the Guildhall. The County-wide Performing Arts and Music Service

would be providing a series of readings, performances etc. The synagogue lecture would be 3 February by Jonathan McDonald about Witness Testimonies from the Holocaust. She added that the thoughts for the 2009 event centred around the Ann Frank theme along with the showing of the "Ann Frank and You" Exhibition.

7. HIV POLICY AND PRE EMPLOYMENT SCREENING UPDATE

H Crabtree gave an update on the latest position with regard to the HIV Policy and Pre-Employment Screening. He briefly outlined the background to this recalling that back in January he had submitted a revised Policy update for discussion and comment. He had taken into account the result of those discussions and subsequently question 17 was no longer relevant and had been removed from the Borough's Council Occupational Health Questionnaire in July. Andrew commented that question 7 asked about an applicant's drug regime and he expressed the view that by describing any drugs an applicant could be declaring their HIV status and so he was still uncertain whether Medigold would disclose that information to an employer. Councillor Church suggested that a better way of phrasing the question would be something to the effect of "Are you taking any drugs etc which could have an impact on your work". The legal situation regarding this was questioned and Tom suggested that this be put to the Council's legal team.

ACTION:

- (1) Howard undertook to raise this with the Borough Council's legal team to enquire whether there were any areas of concern on the questionnaire and he also stated that he would go back to Medigold to see whether they had taken any recent legal advice on the questions.**
- (2) Camden had been used as an example of best practice with this and it was also suggested that they be approached to see what they did on this particular question. Howard undertook to take this up with Camden.**

8. HATE CRIMES FORUM AND NIAG UPDATE (INCLUDING ANTI BULLYING AT WORK UPDATE BY A.BEWERS NLGBA)

Andrew advised that NIAG had met on 24 July which it was thought would be its last meeting and that it would then merge into the Hate Crime Forum West. However there had been no real consultation with NIAG and it had been felt that there were a number of outstanding issues to be discussed and answered regarding this merger. Therefore at its meeting NIAG had put a number of questions to Paul Crofts the Chair of the Hate Crimes Forum West. There would be a period of the Forum running parallel with NIAG until the question issues had been resolved although Andrew was hopeful NIAG would merge ultimately. It was noted that community engagement and the mechanisms for community engagement could be matters for further discussion at a future date for this Forum.

9. CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS AND WEDDINGS FAIR - 3 NOVEMBER 2007 UPDATE

It was noted that this was scheduled for 3 November at the Guildhall and that the Guildhall office would be supporting the event. Flyers publicising it would be put out shortly. The Registrars had also got publicity for this. Some companies had booked places for the event but it would be necessary to review the position at the end of September to see how many firm bookings there had been and whether it was

feasible to proceed with the event. It was noted that the cost was £40.00 for a stand which made it a very affordable event for small businesses. Suggestion was made that perhaps the Events Area on the Market Square could be used to advertise the fair in advance such as putting a wedding limousine on the area promoting the fair.

10. LOCAL DEMOCRACY WEEK ACTIVITIES 13 OCTOBER (JOINT FORUMS EVENT) AND 20 OCTOBER (OLDER AND YOUNGER PEOPLES MEETING) UPDATE

L Ambrose advised that Local Democracy Week commenced on 13 October when there would be a Joint Forums event and that there would be an older and younger people's meeting on 20 October. She called for any ideas on activities workshops for the Joint Forums event.

11. TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENT CONSULTATION UPDATE

Tom gave an update on the latest meeting of the Town Centre Steering Group. He reminded that it involved representatives from different parts of the community. He stated that one of the main topics of discussion was the appointment of a new officer Phil Dobson in planning to deal with this issue. There had also been a presentation by Taylor Young regarding the development of the Bridge Street and St Johns area. Tom stressed the need for the Forums to be represented on the Town Centre Steering Group so that issues that had been problems for the Town Centre in the past would not be issues for the future. He commented that things seemed to be moving at a rapid rate and expressed concern that the consultants who were not local to the town did not run away with the scheme and produce something that was not in the best interests of the residents of Northampton. He stated that the redevelopment of Marefair would appear to be going ahead very soon and was being done by these outside consultants.

It was noted that there would be an exhibition in the Guildhall in the next couple of weeks on the development and he urged everyone to go along to see what the proposals were so that they could be discussed at the next meeting of this Forum and any comments/observations passed on. In his view things were moving at too fast a pace and unless the community made its views known he felt that the town would end up with something that was not wholly beneficial to the community.

Councillor Church commented that the scheme for Marefair was a WNDC scheme and would happen quickly. He too commented upon the apparent lack of consultation. He stated that the rest of the development proposals would not happen so quickly and that there would be an issues and options consultation together with an exhibition in the Grosvenor Centre. He stated that this was about the long term planning process and the Council would draw up plans as a result of this.

It was noted that A J Gray in the Borough's Planning Department would be involved in the Local Democracy Week activities to get people's views on this. It was agreed that the Joint Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper would be put on the agenda for discussion at the next meeting. The Joint Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper was available on the Borough's website or should anyone require a copy then they could contact A J Gray in the Borough Council's Planning Department

accordingly.

12. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT UPDATE

L Ambrose advised that an Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group had been considering community engagement and would be making recommendations to Cabinet later this month. It was noted that the new administration was keen to support the community.

13. INFORMATION EXCHANGE

L Ambrose advised that the Pensioners Forum Annual Event had taken place the previous day and that there had been an attendance of around 70 at the height of the event. Andrew stated that he had attended the event and that there had been some interesting information on older LGB people. He stated that for him the event had been about visibility for LGB people by NLGBA participating in the event. He mentioned he had got a new member for NLGBA as a result of taking part. Tom suggested that perhaps an item for discussion at a future meeting could be issues concerning older LGB people.

ACTION: Andrew stated that he would look at what was happening regarding this within care home provision and whether sheltered housing staff had any training on LGB issues.

L Ambrose advised that there was some further money available under the Money for Youth scheme and that a shortlist of further projects would be considered on 22 September. She therefore urged that ideas from young people for projects should be submitted to her by 20 September.

Andrew commented that the Umbrella Fair that had been held in Abington Park on 2 September had been very successful in terms of green issues and cultural diversity.

It was noted that the launch of the school's anti-bullying teachers resource pack would take place on 26 November and it was suggested that Jo Wood be invited to the next meeting of this Forum to speak on this issue.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Maggie Hayes, a Senior Manager dealing with Equality and Diversity at Northampton General Hospital introduced herself to the group. She stated that she had come along to this meeting to forge contacts and guidance in terms of issues surrounding patients undergoing transsexual reassignment. She briefly explained the sort of problems that they were faced with.

ACTION: Andrew advised that he would liaise with her and give her the contact details of other organisations that could assist and give advice and guidance on this issue.

Andrew then referred to the discussion that had taken place at the last meeting regarding Midsummer Meadow and thanked all those who had been involved in getting the issue of the gate sorted out.

ACTION: A meeting of the Midsummer Meadow Working Group to be arranged.

