

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

Thursday, 8 November 2007

PRESENT

Tom (in the chair)	Individual
Councillor Church (co chair)	NBC
Paul Colhoun	Northants Police
Lindsey Ambrose	NBC
Jo Wood	NCC

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Everyone present introduced themselves in turn.

2. COMMUNITY CO-CHAIR ELECTION RESULT ANNOUNCEMENT

It was noted that the nomination for Tom as Chair had been uncontested and that he had agreed to stand again as this Forum's Co-Chair.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from A Bowers and H Crabtree.

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2007 were agreed.

5. 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 Highways updates but that she would still continue to chase.

With regard to the HIV policy and pre-employment screening update, it was noted that in terms of the changes requested by the Forum H Crabtree was pursuing this and would be reporting to the Forum in January. One action that had been carried out in terms of checking that the screening was compliant and did not contravene

any regulations.

6. ANTI BULLYING WORK BY NLGBA AND NORTHANTS COUNTY COUNCIL

Jo Wood, from Northamptonshire County Council, was then introduced to the Group. She stated that she had been invited to the meeting to explain about a piece of work that she had been doing with the NLGBA over the last four years in terms of anti-bullying work in schools and which would be coming to fruition in the next few weeks. She stated that the project had begun in 2004 with the aim being to tackle homophobic bullying. A Steering Group was established in 2004, which included representation from the NLGBA, the Police, Northampton Borough Council, Connexions, etc. Research had been carried out with three schools; one in South Northants, one in the Town and one in Wellingborough and nearly nine hundred students between years 9 and 10 had been surveyed. Staff had also been surveyed and sixty seven had responded to the survey. Following this, the piece of work was published showing that 64% of those surveyed had witnessed homophobic bullying. 26% of eight hundred and ninety nine persons had reported being bullied themselves. The main issue was to get funding together to pilot this in the three secondary schools. One of the key funders was the Anti-Bullying Alliance. Jo explained further about the funding issues around the pilot stating that this had resulted in piloting one school in East Northants. She was currently trying to get schools to attend the launch on Monday 26 November in the morning. L Ambrose stated that if she sent her the information she would pass this on through her contacts with the Youth Forum. Jo then circulated leaflets and literature that had been produced with regard to the initiative. The Group discussed this further and how other groups could become involved and assist. L Ambrose commented that the Youth Forum would be pleased to work with this Forum and Jo regarding anti-bullying.

7. HATE CRIMES FORUM MIDSUMMER MEADOW WORKING GROUP AND NIAG UPDATE

Paul Colhoun reported on this item stating that the Midsummer Meadow Working Group had met and that it had been a positive meeting with a lot of progress being made. It had been agreed that the key players for the Group were to continue to meet and keep in regular contact so that hopefully there would not be a repeat of the issue that had given rise to the recent problems. With regard to hate crimes/NIAG he stated that the launch of the Northamptonshire Hate Crimes Forum had taken place and would be looking at issues that covered all areas of hate crime.

Councillor Church commented that he considered there was the need for Neighbourhood Wardens to have some training on LGB issues generally to make them aware of potential problems and situations such as that which had occurred at Midsummer Meadow. Reference was then made to one of the bridges at Midsummer Meadow, which was in need of repair. **ACTION It was noted this was the responsibility of the County Council and therefore was possibly an issue to be raised with the County to see when they were likely to repair and reopen the bridge.** This was considered to be fairly urgent as it prohibited access to Nene Valley Way.

8. TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Tom referred to the Central Area Action Plan and the Economic Development Strategy stating that both were difficult to access on the Northampton Borough Council website. He stated that location of venues for the gay community had been mentioned in the past and he wanted to know how to get this point across to the community so that they could feed in any comments accordingly. Tom considered that there was the need to have a safety walk around the Town to highlight any issues of safety. He stressed the importance of the Forums being able to access the Central Area Action Plan so that comments could be made on it. Councillor Church stated that it was not a detailed master plan but that as a general comment it should include the fact that in terms of all new development issues safety should be borne in mind. He stated that specific areas of concern could be highlighted at the moment, which then could be addressed in the regeneration of the areas. **ACTION L Ambrose suggested that Tom draft something with regard to this to pass on to the other Forums.**

9. CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS AND WEDDINGS FAIR FORUMS ANNUAL EVENT - UPDATE

L Ambrose advised that the event had gone well and thanked Andrew for his hard work and efforts in making the event come together. The Group also placed on record thanks to Lindsay for her hard work in making the event a success again this year. It was considered that now possibly an event dealing with another theme, such as perhaps anti-bullying, could be a project for next year.

10. HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL PLANNING UPDATE

L Ambrose advised that Corby Borough Council had expressed a wish to be involved in the Anne Frank Trust Exhibition in 2009. She referred to various activities that had been planned for next year's event, which included the White Balloon Launch. It was also noted that the Countywide Performing Arts would be taking part in the event. The new Community Forum had been invited to take part and they were also looking to involve the Faith Group in the event.

11. INFORMATION EXCHANGE

It was noted that there would be steel band playing on the Market Square on 8 December.

12. ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

It was noted that items for discussion at future meetings would include anti-bullying with perhaps the Youth Forum being invited along to take part in this discussion, an update on the Holocaust Memorial Planning and an update on HIV policy and screening.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled for 10 January at 6:30 pm at the Guildhall.

The meeting concluded at 8:05 pm.

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