

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

Thursday, 10 January 2008

PRESENT:

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| Tom (in the chair) | Individual |
| Councillor Church | NBC |
| Dennis | Individual |
| Paul Colhoun | Northants Police |
| Stuart Docker | NBC |
| Mike Kitchen | NBC |
| Lindsey Ambrose | NBC |

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Everyone present introduced themselves in turn.

2. APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Stevie.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2007 were agreed.

4. MATTERS ARISING NOT ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

At this juncture an issue regarding works in Becketts Park and Midsummer Meadow was raised as a Matter of Urgency. M Kitchen and S Docker from the Borough Council had been invited to make a short presentation with regard to this item. M Kitchen firstly advised of the background to the scheme stating that earlier in the year Northampton Enterprises had approached Northampton Borough Council to advise that there was a shortfall in cash and enquiring whether the monies could be spent in the current financial year. As such waterside areas in Northampton had been looked at and a piece of work in Becketts Park and Midsummer Meadow was identified. This would upgrade and improve the area. Subsequently an expression of interest was placed followed by further bids. The first expression of interest was placed in August but it was not until 28 November that approval for funding for the scheme was received. In view of the timescale and the need to get the work completed in this current financial year it was essential that works commence as soon as possible. It was noted that the £357,000 was match funded by Northampton Borough Council from the LABGI reserve. This element of the funding was not time restrained and therefore they were looking to use this on a feasibility

study on Becketts Park to see what improvements could be made to Becketts Park and use of the waterside facilities generally.

M Kitchen then explained the actual works that were taking place which in Becketts Park were focussed upon improving the area at the side of the railway embankment. In terms of Midsummer Meadow a footpath and cycle path were being installed and there was the desire to get the public to appreciate the wildlife and the river more and to make it a safer place generally for people to visit. The Environment Agency would be putting in a new landing stage where the old swimming pool used to be located. Also the tree planting over the years had not been managed and this was being looked at as well as possibly reducing the height of the bunding to increase the natural surveillance of the parking areas.

Having heard the presentation and the type of works that were taking place the group welcomed these improvements. In response to a query it was noted that there was a plan to put in more litter bins. In terms of further works it was noted that there would be the need for a Steering Group to be established as the intention was to get as wide a consultation as possible as it was accepted that these initial works had not perhaps allowed for as much consultation as would have been desirable due to the restricted timescale. However future consultations would be with various groups and the Police and would include liaison with this particular group in future. Following the concerns that had been expressed by this group regarding the works and the lack of consultation the works had been put on hold until this meeting. Work was due to start again the following Monday and the group gave their endorsement to the works proceeding.

M Kitchen was thanked for the update and clarification of the situation.

With regard to the HIV Policy and Pre-Employment Screening Update L Ambrose advised that H Crabtree had now left the authority and that M Mina was the Interim Manager in HR. One of the things that had been requested by this group which H Crabtree had obtained was Camden's Pre-Employment Questionnaire and copies of this were circulated to the group for information. It was noted that this would be discussed further under the relevant item on the agenda.

A Bewers referred to the discussion at the last meeting regarding the Anti-Bullying work by the NLGBA and Northamptonshire County Council and that the launch referred to had taken place with over 50% of the schools attending which was very good attendance. He added that NLGBA and Northamptonshire County Council should be given credit for achieving this.

A matter for noting was that K2 had opened again as a gay venue.

5. SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME CONSULTATION - DISCUSSION

Copies of Northampton Borough Council's draft Single Equality Scheme 2008-2011 were circulated for the group's consideration. It was noted that this was a draft and that some legislation was still missing from the document but would be added to the final version. A press release from the Equality and Human Rights Commission was also circulated for information entitled "Commission Supports Anti-Homophobic

Hate Crime Legislation". A Bewers advised that he would e-mail this to NLGBA membersl.

6. HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL AND LGBT HISTORY MONTH - UPDATE

L Ambrose gave an update with regard to this year's Holocaust Memorial Day event and circulated a poster advertising some of the Holocaust Memorial activities taking place this year. It was noted that on Sunday 27 January a memorial ceremony would take place in the Courtyard of the Guildhall commencing followed by a ceremony in Wellingborough and then an evening event at the Guildhall. The event would include performances and contributions by young people from Northants Performing Arts and Music Service, Parklands Primary School and Northampton Youth Forum.

Andrew advised on the work being carried out by the LGBT which included working with the Attic Youth Group, the showing of a film "Death in the Attic". It was hoped to reproduce the rainbow flag this year although somewhere was yet to be found where it could be displayed.

7. NBC PRE EMPLOYMENT SCREENING PRACTICE AND POLICY - UPDATE

As referred to earlier the Camden Pre-Employment Questionnaire had been circulated for information. The group in discussing this Questionnaire queried some of the questions asked as they felt they could give rise to disclosures on sexuality and sexual health. Concerns were expressed over this. It was felt that perhaps the views of the Equality and Human Rights Commission should be sought in terms of questions on such forms giving rise to possible disclosures of an individual's sexuality and sexual health.

8. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY CONSULTATION

L Ambrose circulated a draft of Northampton Borough Council's Community Engagement Strategy for the group's information. She added that the Council would be monitoring all equality strands and that comments on this strategy could be made should anyone wish to. Andrew asked how the Borough would engage with the gay community. L Ambrose advised that the Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement wished to see all Forums included in consultation. Andrew undertook to e-mail this out to all of his members who were on e-mail.

9. INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Copies of a poster were circulated for information advising of a lecture by Ben Summersgill on Gay Equality in the Twenty First Century as part of the University of Northampton's Equality and Diversity Research Group's Spring Lectures. This particular lecture was due to take place on Tuesday 5 February at 3.30pm in the Holdenby Lecture Theatre 1 on Park Campus.

L Ambrose then gave an update regarding the Money 4 Youth Initiative stating that one recent project was the funding of Duston Community Gym. There were other projects in the pipeline and there was funding available until 2011. Young people were being encouraged to send in ideas.

It was noted that the budget consultation process was currently underway.

Information was on the Borough's website and leaflets available at the One Stop Shop in terms of the proposals and consultation process.

10.ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was none.

11.DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

It was noted that the next meeting was scheduled for 11 March.

The meeting concluded at 7.50pm