

# NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

## RACE EQUALITY FORUM

Thursday, 30 August 2007

**PRESENT:** Councillor Collins (Chair)  
N. Aggarwal- Indian Hindu Welfare Organisation  
C. Owusu- Akutto- Divine Prayer Society  
Archbishop S. Owusu- Akutto- Divine Prayer Society  
L. Ambrose- NBC  
A. Arden- NBC  
J. Campbell- Inspiration FM Radio  
P. Chahal- Sikh Community and Youth Club  
Sgt P. Colhoun- Police Hate Crimes Unit  
V. Dumbleton- County wide Travellers Unit  
M. Hayes- Northampton General Hospital  
T. Loveridge- Individual  
M. Walker- Northants County Council

### 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mr Mistry and P St Claire.

Councillor Collins introduced himself as the Councillor Co-Chair of the Forum and members introduced themselves.

### 2. MINUTES

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

### 3. MATTERS ARISING NOT ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

#### (A) Equalities Standard

L Ambrose reported that all service areas of the Council had now been asked to make equality impact assessments of their operations and initial returns had indicated that further investigation of policies etc were necessary which was a positive sign that service areas are committing to improve.

#### (B) Youth Festival

L Ambrose reported that the Youth Festival had been a great success and the support from Inspiration FM had been much welcomed. The BBC and Northants 96 Radio had also provided some support and the event had been well attended and supported by all age groups and with people from many ethnicities and backgrounds participating. L Ambrose understood that NBC was considering whether this might be possible; this year it had been funded by Money 4 Youth, rather than from the Council's own budget's.

### 4. BLACK AND MINORITY ETHNIC EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT UPDATE - MORCEA WALKER

M Walker circulated statistical returns for Key Stages 1, 2, 3 and 4 broken down by

ethnicity; and a summary of GCSE results by secondary school. The information was resourced by the Information Management Research Systems.

In respect of Key Stage 1, M Walker noted that the results indicated no particular concern. However, there needed to be an awareness of "new arrivals" and those still needing support with language and other specific cultural issues. She also noted that Traveller children were not included, as there were too few to provide a viable statistical unit. It was noted that the role of the Home School Liaison Officers in supporting communities over issues such as exam results had been greatly reduced. Contact could be made with the Race Equality Team (previously the Multicultural Service) for further details. The prime responsibility for managing schools was with the school governors.

In respect of Key Stage 2, it was noted that Indian and White/ Asian groups were doing particularly well and that science results for four of the Black groups, Pakistani, white Irish and white/ Asian were good. Maths was an area needing investigation and perhaps could be referred to the Northamptonshire Inspector and Advisory Service in order to find a reason for this and to improve results. The "problem" in 2007 seems to be within the Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Black African, Somali and Other White communities when looking at the results overall.

In respect of Key Stage 3, M Walker suggested that careful scrutiny of the information would throw up a number of issues. As a County results were below the national average in several curriculum areas. Careful monitoring and special projects could be a way forward.

A discussion ensued and comment was made about the need for breadth in the curriculum. N Aggarwal Singh commented that there were thirty six family support officers in schools throughout Northamptonshire but that their existence and role was not widely known by parents.

In respect of the GCSE results, M Walker noted that young people within the Black categories (except White and Black African) where the results were well down on the overall County result in 5+ A\*-C. Of particular concern was that the results were particularly low where English and Maths were included. These results could affect students ability to take advantage of further education opportunities. More effective measures were needed to effect a change. The County Council and schools governing bodies had a role in this.

Pakistani results of 5+ A-C were well above national figures. A small number of communities were out performing local results but still needed support to do better.

M Walker gave additional information about supplementary schools. These were established in and by the community and supported by the County Council. They were usually held at weekends and students learn their mother tongue and some "cultural" work. African- Caribbean school concentrates on Maths, English and Culture. Some students do GCSE, AS or A level in their mother tongue and the results are excellent. Points gained from the grades achieved go to their mainstream schools.

Where schools were performing well in terms of their overall exam results, then all students, from whatever ethnic group, religion, class etc., work to their potential.

M Walker was thanked for her presentation.

## **5. COMMUNITY CENTRE WITH TEMPLE FOR NORTHAMPTON EAST PROJECT**

## **- UPDATE - INDIAN HINDU WELFARE ORGANISATION**

N Aggarwal Singh reported that progress on the project for a community centre at Lings Way was progressing and a first business plan had been completed and a presentation made to the County Council's CEFAP Panel had been made in February 2007. The presentation had been commended by Councillors in terms of the quality and information given. A presentation had also been made to the WNDC through the Faith Forum in May 2007 and an officer from WNDC was now supporting the project. The project team had also secured the services of Mick Young and Cobley, a Desborough accountancy firm, on a voluntary basis. Following the death of Tom Hancock, a new architect had been engaged and discussions had commenced with planning officers ahead of submitting a planning application, hopefully in February 2008 with a blessing to take place on the site in May 2008.

In terms of events organised by the Hindu community the Diwali Lights event continued to get bigger each year and it was hoped to add a float and light a candle at All Saints as part of this year's celebrations. This year's event would be opened on 27 October and it was hoped to run a number of activities before the event and on the day.

The spring ball had been organised by young people from the Hindu community and had been a great success and similarly they had organised a Bhangra party for young people as a post school exam school event. Some of the money from this was to be donated to the Bangladesh Flood Appeal.

Kabbadi and Dhol taster sessions had been held thanks to Money 4 Youth funding and had been successful. The Dhol sessions were to be restarted soon in conjunction with the Sikh community. The Kabbadi sessions had been organised with funding granted under the Money 4 Youth initiative and commenced on 4 August. They were held at Lodge Farm every Friday, 7:30 pm to 8:30 pm and were open to all to attend.

On Sunday 2 September a trip to Neasden and Hare Rama Hare Krishna Temple had been organised and there was one spare space available.

N Aggarwal Singh noted that Navratre commenced on 12 October until 21 October and Sharad Poonham on 26 October at University Northampton, St Georges Avenue and which was free to attend.

## **6. MONEY 4 YOUTH - UPDATE**

### **(A) D J Classes**

P Chahal commented that a Money 4 Youth grant had been received to run D J classes and so far a number of boys had signed up to them but it was hoped to get some girls involved as well. It was intended that classes would run on Friday evenings, 6:00 to 8:00 pm, from 14 September and the help of a student from UCN who was undertaking the music production course had been obtained. She commented that she was hoping to get more interest from the Spring Boroughs area and to eventually gain the support of Inspiration FM once the classes were established.

L Ambrose commented that in respect of Money 4 Youth, further bids were being invited as capital and revenue monies were available. The Youth Forum would be considering further the ideas on 22 September and previous ideas submitted but not funded would be re-examined. There were some constraints on the scheme; that projects couldn't duplicate something that already existed or that someone else was providing. It was also noted that some ideas that might not be appropriate for funding under Money 4 Youth

could be referred on to other agencies from whom support might be more appropriate.

## **7. HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL 2008 AND 2009 - UPDATE**

In respect of February 2008, L Ambrose gave an update on behalf of the Holocaust Memorial Steering Group, noting its membership is open to community organisations to join if they wanted to do so.

On 27 January 2008 there would be a ceremony at lunchtime and an evening event both at the Guildhall. Parklands Primary School and the countywide Music and Performing Arts Service would be participating. Other community organisations should also be involved.

L. Ambrose reported that the Youth Forum, working together with Northampton Carnival and the Anne Frank Trust, was launching an Anne Frank Youth Ambassadors scheme, looking to identify young people, educators (teachers, youth leaders, faith leaders etc), and organisations that influence others and do things to help communities, stand up to bullying, challenge discrimination or overcome personal tragedy or barriers to achieve. The winners would be invited as VIP guests to the Northampton Carnival and would get their awards on the big stage. Some nominations would be submitted to a national awards scheme too. The closing date was 10 March 2008. There's an on-line form at [www.northampton.gov.uk/annefrank](http://www.northampton.gov.uk/annefrank) or people can get more information from L. Ambrose tel 01604 8937566 or e-mail: [lambrose@northampton.gov.uk](mailto:lambrose@northampton.gov.uk).

Under the "Imagine...remember, reflect, react" theme for Holocaust Memorial 2008, it was also proposed to have a number of eco- friendly balloon launches around the Borough containing people's dreams. The ability to do the eco- friendly balloon launches would depend upon the outcome of a funding application made by Northampton Carnival to the County Council's small grants scheme. It was hoped that Northampton Town Football Club would be supporting next year's Holocaust Memorial activities too.

On 3 February 2008 the Synagogue Lecture would be given by John MacDonald, formally a lecturer at the University of Northampton and now in Oxford and would concentrate upon witness testimonies of the Nazi Holocaust.

In respect of February 2009 the updated Anne Frank Exhibition would be available for a month, which individuals and groups would be able to access. There would be opportunities for community members to participate. The exhibition would take up the whole of the Great Hall and there were plans for a subsidiary exhibition in the Central Museum to focus on community in Northampton. Support from members was encouraged.

It was noted that the Prison Service and the Performing Rights Society had joined the Steering Group.

## **8. INFORMATION EXCHANGE**

"At the Heart of the Community"; Older People's Mini Conference – 11 September 2007, 10:30 am to 2:00 pm at the Guildhall.

Local Democracy Week; Joint Forums Event – 13 October 2007 10.30 to 3.00pm at the Guildhall. To include speed-dating style activity to break down barriers and help people find out about the roles other people perform in the community. Councillors would be taking part. Volunteers from the community were also wanted. There would be workshops for young people and others too and the chance to meet the Mayor and see some special

places in the Guildhall not normally open to the public. For more information please contact L Ambrose tel 01604 837566 or e-mail [lambrose@northampton.gov.uk](mailto:lambrose@northampton.gov.uk)

Weddings & Civil Partnerships Fair – 3 November 2007 at the Guildhall.

### Fostering and Adoption

M Walker circulated a notice in respect of an Adoption and Fostering evening for the black communities within Northamptonshire on 27 September 2007 at 6:30 pm at the NWICA, 42 Sheep Street, Northampton.

### Bangladesh Flood Relief Appeal – Curry Night

M Walker also made reference to a curry night to be held on 4 September 2007 in order to raise funds for the Bangladesh Flood Relief Appeal.

### Umbrella Fair and Pink Picnic- Abington Park

L Ambrose made reference to the “Pink Picnic” scheduled for 2 September 2007 at Abington Park and the Umbrella Fair on the same day at Abington Park as well.

## **9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### (A) Ecton Park Travellers Site

V Dumbleton reported that a temporary manager from the Gypsy Council (one person) had been imposed on the residents of the site and referred to recent Press reports that a ninety nine year lease had been agreed for the Site. She commented that some years previously the Borough Council had surveyed the Gypsy residents about whether they would prefer the Site to remain within Council ownership or to be managed by a registered social landlord and at that time they had indicated a preference for remaining under Council management.

T Loveridge commented that he would like a meeting with the Council to discuss the management issues of the Site and that no consultation had been held with the residents. They had been told that the Council’s Cabinet had made the decision and it was now too late to discuss it. As an example of events that had been happening it was noted that all the plots had been arbitrarily renumbered and the consequent effect and confusion for the residents in terms of receiving their post, which included important correspondence concerning bank accounts, medical appointments, etc, etc that had gone astray.

**Action: Councillor Collins undertook to discuss this matter with the Leader of the Council and the appropriate Portfolio Holder and to arrange a meeting as requested by Mr Loveridge.**

### (B) BME Housing Strategy

A Arden circulated the BME Housing Strategy Action Plan 2007-2011 which was intended to take account of BME needs.

**Action: A Arden to make a further report to the Forum at their meeting scheduled for 8 January 2008**

## **10. ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

Police, Faith and Race Hate Crimes issues to form the theme of the next meeting.

**11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING 28 NOVEMBER 2007**

The date of the next meeting of the Forum was confirmed as being 28 November 2007.