

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

NORTHAMPTON LGBT AND Q PEOPLE'S FORUM

Tuesday, 20 September 2011

PRESENT: Barry Hansford (Community Co- Chair), Representative Lesbian Line, Matthew Toresen, (Northampton Volunteering Centre and FAN Northants) Kieran Phelan,(Northampton Youth Forum) Karen, (Northants Police Hate Crime Unit)Andrew(SOLAR) and Director Learner Support Northampton College and Lindsey Ambrose ,Community Engagement and Equalities Officer.

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Community Co-Chair, Barry Hansford, welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Kieran from Northampton Youth Forum and a representative from SOLAR the HIV Charity. It was noted that Matthew Toresen was attending both on behalf of Northampton Volunteering Centre and FAN Northants.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were given on behalf of Ben from OPEN and Cllr David Palethorpe.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Minutes were approved except that Matthew Toresen's name should be included in the list of people who were at the meeting.

4. SOLAR: HIV, TRANSMISSION AND STIGMA

SOLAR was established in about 2006 to raise community awareness of HIV infection. It used to have Northants County Council funding. This made it easier for it to work as it could employ some staff.

Last year HIV infection was found to be rising faster in Northampton than in other parts of the East Midlands.

In Northamptonshire people who believe they are not infected still tend to look at HIV as something that happens to other people and nothing to do with them. It is a worry that people assume they will not be infected. But HIV does not discriminate and lots of people are at risk – they just do not know it.

Stigma is a big concern. Stakeholders, such as the NHS and Northants County Council services sometimes still seem to look at people infected with HIV as if they come from a different world.

People need to learn more about HIV. Now there is good medication, living with HIV is living with a chronic disease.

SOLAR has been trying to distribute condoms, for example at the Umbrella Fair, in pubs and bars. There has been a good response. But sometimes, when people are drunk this approach does not work so well. So it was good at the Umbrella Fair to see people openly taking condoms and not afraid to talk about the issues.

Most people visiting SOLAR to use its services do not want anyone else to know. At the

Doddridge Centre it has been difficult sometimes as to get into the building people are asked about which service they have come to use.

Funding is an ongoing problem, but SOLAR are doing what they can to keep going.

Action: Matthew Toresen and SOLAR to discuss potential for some joint work

The Forum discussed about sex education. Kieran said at his school, Kingsthorpe College, the emphasis was on curable diseases with HIV dealt with in one lesson and infections mostly dealt with by showing grim photographs rather than discussing real-life case studies. Members of the Forum discussed about how teachers still often seem to get embarrassed when doing sex education and this can be unhelpful.

Action: SOLAR to look at contributing some personal stories, anonymised if people would prefer, to the Stamp out Hate Crime Exhibition youth forum are making. SOLAR to liaise with Lindsey Ambrose about this.

5. HATE CRIME AND HOMOPHOBIC BULLYING:

Kieran from Northampton Youth Forum told everyone about their new Stamp out Hate Crime campaign.

During summer 2011 over 90% of people surveyed by the youth forum said they felt homophobia and bullying were serious issues which needed more done about them. They asked the Northampton Youth Forum to do something.

People surveyed also identified that where young people or others have low self-esteem and low self-confidence it can be harder to cope when someone targets them. Friends of a young lady in the town who had committed suicide during the summer due to cyberbullying, asked Northampton Youth Forum to do something to help more young people feel able to get help and not suffer in silence or take their own lives.

People told the youth forum that they heard the word 'gay' used in a negative way all the time or often.

The youth forum decided that the word 'bullying' is tarnished, seen as childish and not serious. They felt that young people are often the perpetrators of hate crime and bullying as well as often the victims of hate crime and bullying. They felt that a fresh approach, raising awareness of the concept of 'hate crime' was what would be most helpful. But the logo image of a man's head currently being used by the Police and others to promote hate crime reporting seemed to young people on the youth forum inappropriate and not likely to get young people's interest.

Kieran attended meetings with managers from services at the council. The Northants Police and others helped make checks and agreed that the youth forum could use a version of the old footprint image which had been very popular in an anti-hate crime campaign a few years earlier. The young people came up with some ideas how to modernise the image. They worked with a Northampton Borough Council graphics designer to create a logo which they are now using.

On 3 September 2011 the Stamp out Hate Crime Facebook page was launched: www.facebook.com/stampouthatecrime Northampton Youth Forum would like lots of people to 'like' this page and follow it. This should be a show of solidarity behind the message. It should also help people to get informed, find out about free resources and ways they can do

things in their own groups for free or very low cost, to educate each other so that hate crime reduces and when it does happen people can feel more able to speak up about it. In the first three weeks the Facebook page had over 30,000 post views and got over 150 people signing up to it.

The youth forum want their campaign to support and work with other projects and organisations rather than to duplicate. They want adults working in different places to take part in Stamp out Hate Crime stands at events together and to find out about one another's work – from workshops tackling low self-esteem, to how to report hate crime effectively.

There were plans under way for the youth forum together with Northants Police Hate Crimes unit reps to have a Stamp out Hate Crime stand at Fanny's Christmas Ball on 10 December 2011 (probably to be staffed just by adults because of it being a late night event for adults).

The youth forum wanted to get volunteers to share their personal stories of surviving hate crime and bullying for an exhibition they are making which should be portable and available with an online version in the future too – to help raise awareness of help available, inspirational stories, and educational content about issues such as use of language. Anyone interested should contact the youth forum's co-ordinator Lindsey Ambrose tel/text: 0779 53 33 687 or email: lambrose@northampton.gov.uk.

The Forum noted that the OFSTED schools inspection framework is directly relevant: homophobic bullying is specified and pupil behaviour is something which is examined.

The public sector equality duties require councils, schools and other public services to have due regard to fostering good relations, advancing equality and the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation so lots of organisations should be looking to set objectives including around homophobia.

Note further to the meeting: the government has confirmed that from January 2012 OFSTED will require schools to measure the progress of LGB pupils.

Some members of the Forum suggested that youth forum contacts Schools Out, part of the LGBT History Month organisation and which has excellent resources and policies for schools.

Barry suggested that staff in organisations wearing rainbow ribbons could be a useful way to quietly message that the person and organisation is LGBT-friendly. This approach has worked well at Northampton College.

Action: Barry to provide supplier details so that the youth forum could obtain rainbow ribbons.

Note Further to the meeting: the supplier was confirmed as Lavender Lifestyles.

Representatives of Lesbian Line suggested that there could be a Stamp out Hate Crime stand at their women's disco at Lings Forum on 19 November. This event would be women only.

Action: Lindsey and Kieran to look at whether it would be possible to have a stand at the disco and follow up with the Lesbian Line

Action: Lindsey to email Barry Hansford the Stamp out Hate Crime logos for him to use around Northampton College

6. FAN: A NEW LGBT GROUP FOR SOCIAL EVENTS IN NORTHAMPTON

Matthew Toresen advised that FAN Northants was now officially 5 weeks old! He was delighted at the brilliant reception from so many people who wanted it, welcomed it and had offered to volunteer and help the group get established.

Matthew hopes that FAN will become a skills hub for LGBT groups and become big enough to subdivide into groups that can follow their particular interests such as a book group.

With no money initially, Matthew had taken an innovative approach to getting some fliers done for Fanny's Christmas Ball: using one of his old photographs of his Christmas decorations and adding some text to it on a Kodak machine in a local chemist for just a few pence per copy. This had helped to get more interest in the plans. Now FAN were able to look at getting some design work done and hoped to have tickets and fliers ready from 29 September 2011 when the group was next due to meet. The Ball would be at the Freemason's Hall, St George's Avenue 8pm to 1am on 10 December 2011. Tickets £20 per person. The price would include a light buffet.

Claire Summerskill the comedian was booked to perform at Fanny's Christmas Ball, a lesbian musical duo from Dublin, a disco and Graham Sargeant a local magician.

FAN were also looking at working with the Umbrella Fair in 2012 and hoping to get involved with organising the event, possibly taking part of the site for a 'pride' activity building on the old traditions of the pink picnic.

There was also interest in working with Northampton Carnival.

Funding so far had come from SPECTRUM (the LGBT diversity group at Northants Police) £500 and about £300 from Northampton Borough Council (this forum and Housing services). Northants County Council had declined to fund FAN.

The Ball should hopefully attract about 300 people. If so they could be signed up to FAN's database and the event should help fundraise for FAN as well as cover the costs of organising the Ball itself.

FAN had got a domain name for a website: www.fannorhtants.co.uk

FAN had got a Facebook page which Kieran from Northampton Youth Forum and Lindsey Ambrose had helped Matthew to set up after the last Northampton LGBTQ People's Forum meeting.

Action : Lindsey Ambrose to order 100m rainbow ribbon for use by FAN at the Ball by way of further support from Northampton Borough Council

Action: Barry Hansford would look to liaise with LGBT youth at Northampton College about involvement with FAN

7. WORLD AIDS DAY 2011 PLANNING

Agreed: the ceremony would be in the Northampton Guildhall courtyard at 3.30pm on 1 December 2011 with contributions by Northamptonshire Police Hate Crimes Unit, Northampton Youth Forum and SOLAR; other people would be welcome to say a few words or make a short performance contribution too. Lindsey Ambrose had ordered tea and coffee to be available to help people keep warm and feel welcomed.

Agreed: display stands: there would be a Stamp out Hate Crime campaign stand and the limited space in the Spencer Perceval area should also allow SOLAR to have a stand and

NREC if they wished as in past years. These would be 2pm – 5pm and content should be suitable for a public area used by small children and families for weddings, civil partnerships and other formal ceremonies.

Action: Lindsey Ambrose to seek confirmation from Ian Swift about whether the Guildhall would be lit up in red again on 1 Dec 2011.

Note further to the meeting: Ian Swift confirmed he had made arrangements for the Guildhall to be lit up in red on 1 Dec 2011. This will involve reusing the light bulbs from last year to help minimise the costs of doing this.

Northampton College would be selling red ribbons again.

Northampton Borough Council has the web page www.northampton.gov.uk/worldaidsday which can be used to list activities happening at various places in Northampton area so long as people provide information in good time for Lindsey Ambrose to update it.

Action: ALL please let Lindsey Ambrose know as soon as possible about the dates, times, places and other details for any events and activities for World AIDS Day email: lambrose@northampton.gov.uk

The Stamp out Hate Crime campaign would obtain red ribbons for its campaign stands and encourage people to get involved in their schools and local groups in supporting World AIDS Day.

Action: Lindsey Ambrose to liaise with SOLAR about further arrangements

Northampton Town Football Club had confirmed that the match on 19 November would be Stamp out Hate Crime themed and would include mention of the World AIDS Day activities coming up – helping to make the link between the stigma and discrimination faced by people with HIV as well as raising awareness of issues about hate crime and bullying generally.

Action: Lindsey Ambrose to provide content for the football match programme.

8. COMMUNITY 'PRIDE' EVENTS PLANNING: UPDATE

Agreed: this had been covered adequately through discussion about FAN under Item 6

9. HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY 2012 PLANNING

There will be a ceremony 11am on 27 January 2012 at Northampton Guildhall. The Northampton Youth Forum will hopefully be able to lead the ceremony as in past years. The Mayor will be invited.

The ceremony is an opportunity to draw attention to hate crime, discrimination, bullying, stigma and help available in our community today, as well as to reflect on people who have died as a result of genocide. The Northampton Youth Forum want to use the event to highlight the Stamp out Hate Crime campaign.

The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust has produced new materials for 2012 which specifically include some aimed at challenging homophobia and negative use of the word 'gay'. These can be found at www.speakupnow.org.uk

Northampton Borough Council will be able to publicise listings of activities due to take place

to recognise Holocaust Memorial Day so long as information is provided in good time to Lindsey Ambrose to update the web pages.

The Facebook page Holocaust Memorial Day in Northampton would be updated with details of events so long as people let Lindsey Ambrose know in good time.

Action: ALL – anyone who would like to take part to say a few words and/or have information about their events included on the web presence please contact Lindsey Ambrose email: lambrose@northampton.gov.uk or tel/text: 0779 53 33 687

10. COMMUNITY INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Lesbian Line

The group has got a grant for disco equipment. Fundraising through people paying on the door at the discos will help too.

There is a disco on 19 November at Lings Forum. The venue is getting a bigger lift so there should be better disabled access which will be helpful.

Lesbian Line would like Luisa Jepson from the Northants Police Hate Crimes Unit to talk to them about hate crime.

Action: Luisa Jepson to liaise with Pauline Sturman and Lesbian Line

Last year £2,000 grant-funding paid for lots for Lesbian Line. It has been quite difficult to do as much as would be liked as people involved in running Lesbian Line are all working full-time.

Action: Lesbian Line to liaise with FAN Northants about dates for future events so as not to clash with one another.

Lesbian Line hope to do some training with Relate. The past year has shown the need for Lesbian Line, with lots of new people coming in and getting in touch. Many of these are people who have been married with children and have been struggling with their sexuality – they are making contact once their children have grown up. As there have been several people in this position they have been able to help support one another.

Lesbian Line are starting a Facebook page.

Lesbian Line are allowing other people to advertise on their website e.g. walks which may be of interest to their members.

Action: Lesbian Line to give Lindsey Ambrose the Facebook page link so that it can be flagged up on the Forum's web presence

Northamptonshire Police

Karen introduced herself and her work in the Northants Police Hate Crime Unit.

There have been lots of changes in the structure of Northamptonshire Police. Those for dealing with hate crime offer some advantages. For example, there is now a countywide

approach to dealing with hate crime. This means that people can expect the same approach and the same service wherever they live or suffer an incident in Northamptonshire.

The Hate Crimes Unit now review all incidents reported, following them from the control room to see how they are progressed.

The Hate Crimes Unit only investigate the hate crimes, not the incidents, but they are having to prioritise: they tend to be directly involved in investigating the more serious and complex cases. Other cases may be dealt with by any Police Officer with the Hate Crimes Unit overseeing them. This is a good thing, integrating thinking about hate crime and recognising it into the work of all Police officers.

The Hate Crimes Unit hope to attend these Forum meetings. It may be different members of the team from time to time – an opportunity for everyone to get to know each other and build working relationships, so this should be a good thing.

The Hate Crimes Unit do not cover forced marriages per se for investigation. This is covered by the Sunflower Centre.

11. ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Please email Barry Hansford and Lindsey Ambrose with requests for items you would like to see on the Agenda for future meetings:

Barry's email: Barry.Hansford@northamptoncollege.ac.uk

12. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meetings of the Forum were confirmed as

- 24 January 6.30pm at Northampton Guildhall
- 13th March 2012
- 22nd May 2012
- 3rd July 2012