

**Northampton Borough Council
Northampton Diverse Communities Forum**

The Jeffery Room, The Guildhall, St Giles' Street, NN1 1DE.

Thursday, 20 September 2018, 11am – 1pm.

1. WELCOMES, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

Attendance: Pauline Woodhouse (PW, Co-Chair), Cllr James Hill (JH, Co-Chair), Jamie Wells (JW, NBC), Suzanna Storey (SS, Royal and Derngate), Erica Martin (EM, Royal and Derngate), Nazreen Altaf (NA, Community Law Service), Christian Buckenham (CB, Northants Police), Resul Karlillavi (RK, Individual), Abede Ahmed (AA, Somali Community), Sally Beardsworth (SB, NBC), Yvette Uylett (YU, Individual), Stuart Duff (SD, NBC), Nathan Green (NG, Individual), Donovan Allen (DA, NTCG), Mary Clarke (MC, Connected Together).

Apologies: Kamila Poole.

MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

3. COMMUNITY LAW SERVICE - IMMIGRATION LAW ADVISOR (WINDRUSH)

Nazreen Altaf – immigration solicitor at CLS

Weekly drop in at one stop shop weds morn 9:30 to 11:30

Drop in at Wellingborough 1st Monday of the month

Free immigration advice – advice about applications etc.

Windrush

What is it? Referenced to first ship that came 22nd June 1948 – 1st ship of nationals from Caribbean. Was a response to labour shortages after the war, came to rebuild the country.

Worked for 25 years and finally granted settlement. 1971 immigration act – same right as other British nationals. They were never issued with any documentation, just accepted they were now citizens.

Later laws made distinctions between who was born and immigrated to the UK. The rights act from 71 meant they could leave the country for 2 years and everything would be fine.

88 act took the right away, more than 2 years, you are not allowed to come back.

Theresa may when home sec wanted to tackle immigration, she brought in things that made it difficult for those who were here illegally to stay here. The people from the Windrush era who hadn't been out of the country, they never had the correct

documents to say they were legal in this country. The passports they would have had, were decades old and now illegible. Those who had a passport with an endorsement would now have to pass the British citizenship test. Employers would be fined if they couldn't prove their employee was in the country legally, this led to unemployment/suspension, which had a knock on effect that the individual would then suffer from debt because they couldn't get a job to pay the bills that they needed to.

If these people left the country, they were then not allowed back in as they did not have a British or endorsed passport. One man was stranded for 21 months. April 2018 is when the status they were given in the 70's to finally be recognised and given confirmation of what they were told in the 70's.

This immigration form is 19 pages long and the team can be contacted over the phone. Settled status, British citizenship or right of abode. To get a British passport you have to pay for the passport and apply separately.

Solicitors have to pass an exam every 3 years to be a immigration advisor/solicitor. If a solicitor practices without this, they can be imprisoned for up to two years.

If the application is refused, it can be reviewed. There is no fee for this application.

Q: When people go away and when they come back they're not allowed back in, how did they get out?

A: People are allowed to leave the country using their home national passport. Children were often included on their parent's passport. It is up to the individual to make sure that they have the documents to get back into the country. Now people get residents card but this was not available back in the 70's.

There is/will be a Windrush compensation scheme in place from the government which can be applied for.

Q: Does this effect people from other commonwealth countries?

A: There were different schemes for different countries when entering the country, unfortunately the islands documents had not been endorsed.

Q: Has this affected this county?

A: Yes, there have been lots of cases.

YU: No one has looked into the knock on effect it has had on the community.

PW: Thanked Nazreen for the very detailed talk with the fourm.

YU: The youth of today think they are disposable and that they are not being listened to. They are told how to behave and told what they should do.

MC: Although what happened is awful, it brought the community together to force action as a united group.

SB: If we didn't have such a diverse country, our emergency services would suffer.

4. SUZANNA STOREY & ERICA MARTIN - R&D OUR LADY OF KIBEHO AND FUN PLACES PROJECT

From the creative learning team.

Many people just see the Derngate as a theatre that does shows but there is a lot of community work/events that take place for the local community.

Difficult to reach the wider community and not those who are just interested in the arts. The arts should be as accessible as possible but the word needs to spread and people need to know to take part. Looking to build lasting relationships with all communities.

Fun Palaces – national project. Ideally arts and science based, it is about communities coming together with the aims for people to learn something new and to meet new people.

Next October – looking to do a community festival, whether it is a knitting group, a dance group etc., the space is there for people to teach others in the local community. Northampton is a very diverse town and we are looking to celebrate that.

SS – previously worked for the borough council and attended the DCF previously and it was discussed that there was a lack of opportunities for diverse communities. Now 4 years later working for the Derngate and trying to create schemes which gives opportunities to all and break the stereotype of what can be linked to the theatre.

PW – It would be helpful for you to get in contact with the youth clubs and forums, maybe have a small slot on Inspiration FM to explain what the schemes are about.

MC – I would recommend contacting the black history association. Morcea Walker would be a good contact. You really need to promote that there are opportunities for people to do things for free.

EM – we are aware we need to market things better.

There is another project which is a performance opportunity – Our Lady of Kibeho.

There are local auditions for community members, looking to reach out to the black community, anyone who feels they can represent the Rwandan community and looking to build relationships with those who may be looking to continue engaging with the groups at the Derngate.

ACTION: MM to send out application forms for Lady of Kibeho.

PAIGE - HAPPY YOU PROJECT

6. CLLR SALLY BEARDSWORTH - SCRUTINY QUESTIONS

Scrutiny questions.

Homelessness and how we are looking at the housing first model.

It is a very complex issue and there are numerous reasons why people are homeless, been to the hope centre and bridge.

Average age for someone who has had to sleep rough is 47 years old.

Many young people from 16-25 are invisibly homeless, often sofa surfing from house to house.

It is a huge project and we are looking to gather some statistics to help improve the lives and status of people who are homeless.

Cllr Beardsworth passed round the scrutiny questions and let the forum know that they can return them to mmacleod@northampton.gov.uk.

MC – in terms of core questions, can we only answer as an organisation or as an individual?

SB - You can answer as either or both.

MC - The littering fine seems too harsh, if someone offers to pick their litter up then they should be allowed. This is especially harsh on the homeless.
Also, people's bedding are being removed and thrown away.

SB – People often get new bedding and leave their old on the streets.

The forum discussed how there could be a warning before brandishing the £50.

7. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AT THE NEXT MEETING

FGM conversations – people can contact www.fgmconversations.com.

Looking what the next step for Northampton in celebrating windrush.

Cllr Hill to talk to Cllr Anna King to see if there are any upcoming celebrations.

Kosovo group has now been set up in Northampton.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The meeting concluded at Time Not Specified