

Northampton Borough Council

Northampton Women's Forum

Tuesday, 23 March 2021

Officers at the meeting

Pauline Woodhouse (Co-Chair), Morcea, Neelam, Alex, Gwen, Debbie Burns (NBC) and Debbie MacColl (NBC)

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Everyone was welcomed to the meeting. Apologies were received from Cllr Anna King, Rachel, Sally, Annabel and Jodie.

2. 2021 CENSUS

Gwen, the Census Community Engagement Manager was attending the meeting in case anyone had any queries about the Census or difficulties in completing their form. Issues encountered were

- Mixed messages around the timeframe for completing the form
- Difficulties of those not able to use a computer for various reasons
- Difficulties of those without good English

Gwen explained that Northampton was seen as compliant with 94% return in 2011 so was not in receipt of as much resources as some other areas. It was hoped that most people would complete the form on or around 21 March, it would remain open for sometime and people would receive a visit if they had not completed it. In normal times there would be more face to face help but it was not possible in Covid times to do so. There was a help centre based in St James, serving the whole of West Northamptonshire, tel 01604 446 1888. They were not taking drop ins but you make an appointment for a face to face if necessary or be helped over the phone. For those not easily able to read English, there were questionnaires in different languages on the website but this of course, was not much help for those who also had no access to a computer. The website also had British sign language videos and you would request a braille copy. If you wanted to complete a paper copy you could request one. The 2011 Census issued paper copies but gave the option on completing online. This time it was aimed at getting as many people as possible to complete online.

Issues were also raised that the Windrush generation would likely be reluctant and suspicious after what had happened to them.

Gwen reiterated how difficult it had been this time and normally the team would be out and about helping and advising people but it was just not possible at the moment. Although there had been a lot on TV, radio, social media and newspapers, if you didn't engage with any of these, you could easily miss the information. There had been a much larger amount of people requesting paper copies than had been expected which had led to delays in getting them out and difficulties in getting through on the helpline. There were currently 30,000 people working on the census.

3. INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Evaluation

The event had a packed and varied agenda with the intention of appealing to all the family and not just women. There had been an issue in going live at the beginning, otherwise things had worked pretty well. Pauline stated that she had had mixed emotions – it had been wonderful to hear from previous winners what the award had meant to them and also from this year's shortlisted and winners. She wanted to formally thank everyone who had contributed to the event and to Debbie and Debs who had pulled it all together. It was also great to have the recorded content to look back on. The photo montage at the end had been especially emotional.

Debbie stated that the one thing that could not be practised was the thing that went wrong – the going live of the event. However, it was quickly rectified and did not take away too much from the event. There had been 914 views to date.

Neelam said she thought the event had been absolutely amazing and well organised and had made her feel goosepimply. She was very pleased the Business category and special recognition category had been added in the Inspirational Women awards. Morcea added, that although she had only dipped in and out, it seemed very well. Alex added she had not seen it live but had viewed the recorded version which had been great as she could skip to the bits she was most interested in. Everyone also commented that the 2 co-Chairs had worked very well together and made it all quite seamless.

It was agreed that change could be good and perhaps there could be some interviews that are filmed at the live event in future and recorded so people could catch up with them when they got home.

The event had been viewed from India and Dubai making it a truly international event!

Action: Debbie to circulate the link for the electronic card with the minutes, giving a cut off date. It could then be circulated to the forum.

4. BAME GROUP UPDATE

The minutes of the last meeting had been circulated to the Forum and the next meeting was due in April. The Terms of Reference still needed to be agreed.

Action: Debbie to send the Co-Chairs of the BAME group the draft ToR and ask them to develop it in time for discussion at the April meeting, then it could come to May's Women's Forum for sign off.

Future Dates are:-

April 13

June 8

August 10

October 12

December 14

February 8

April 12

All meetings are at 10am and the Zoom joining details are:-

[Join Zoom Meeting](#)

<https://zoom.us/j/93562743005?pwd=enVYNnNVeVRiTW9iUUJSQld5bVZ2Zz09>

Meeting ID: 935 6274 3005

Passcode: V67q4y

Various subjects were discussed including how there was nothing for people with no recourse to public funds. It was suggested that the BAME group approached the Southall Black Sisters to find out how they managed. It was felt that we couldn't keep on relying on them to help women from Northampton although they never turned anyone away. However, it was felt the group was not yet at that stage. It was also suggested the Chair of BAME meeting attended the Women's forum to feedback to the Forum.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

6. COMMUNITY INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Morcea reminded the group that Ramadan started on 6 April and the Easter season was almost upon us.

7. ITEMS FOR THE NEXT AGENDA

Mental Health

Violence against Women (IAG item)

8. NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 25 May 2021, 11am – 1pm

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://northamptonshire-
gov.zoom.us/j/69086084132?pwd=b09Ua2FOVHNwQ2RkNnY4bHNWWmJGUT09](https://northamptonshire.gov.zoom.us/j/69086084132?pwd=b09Ua2FOVHNwQ2RkNnY4bHNWWmJGUT09)

Meeting ID: 690 8608 4132

Passcode: 692777

The meeting concluded at Time Not Specified