

**Northampton Borough Council
Northampton LGBT and Q People's Forum**

Tuesday, 8 May 2018

Present: Cllr Anna King (Chair), Matthew Toresen (VIN, co-chair), Aimee Luck (NBC), Steve Bedford (Police), Serita (St. Andrews), Aidan, Philip, Paula, Ian, Will.

Apologies: None received.

1. WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

Cllr King welcomed everyone to the forum.
Round table introductions.

2. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

Minutes declared accurate.

Matters arising: Hate crime training is now being included in taxi driver training.
Other actions completed.

3. UNITARY DISCUSSION

Anna gave an overview of the current position with regards to local government re-organisation. The County Council proposal of a single countywide unitary authority is not supported by cross-party members of Northampton Borough Council who have called for a special council meeting. This meeting will take place next week. Anna read out the letter to the forum members about the process. The letter can be found on the Borough website [here](#).

Anna summarised the letter, which proposes Northampton become a unitary authority on a wider boundary. The case for a unitary authority for Northampton has cross-party support.

The public will have the opportunity to give their views and feedback during the consultation period which will go live shortly. Anna invited members to give feedback now or ask questions.

Q: What will be the process of the unitary?

A: This has not been decided as yet and will take public feedback into consideration

Ian talked about Voluntary Voices Northampton, created to give the voluntary sector a voice in relation to commissioners at Northamptonshire County Council. The group represents voluntary sector organisations and infrastructure bodies across Northamptonshire and would be a good place to share this information to.

Action: Ian to share information on the unitary proposals and consultation to Voluntary Voices Northampton.

4. ACTION PLAN

Anna explained the Action Plans for new members.

Matthew gave an overview of Straight Allies campaign. Looking to sign up venues to be LGBTQ friendly spaces that are aware of issues and able to support. A number of organisations signed up originally but we will be looking to re-launch this.

This forum is a Hate Crime reporting centre, reminder that members can report into officers at the forum meeting.

LGBTQ Pride was very successful. A new member came to the forum as a result of the event and thought it went very well.

Suggestion to promote Straight Allies with America in future.

Action: Aimee to send a thank you letter to Northampton MA and the Mayor on behalf of the forum.

St Andrews have arranged a speaker from Stonewall that could link in with forum activities. They are looking at an event around role models that includes LGBTQ roles models. Anna suggested a need to re-establish the link with St Andrews for partnership working.

Action: Aimee to liaise with Serita.

Ian gave an update on the Umbrella Fair, Q stage Action:

UFO have been very proud to have an LGBT presence at all of the Umbrella Fair festivals, more recently known as Q-Stage. The festival is a free volunteer led music and arts festival and is costing more to put on as it continues to grow.

UFO's focus is around the pavilion and building a more cohesive community and raise awareness of what they do throughout the year, not just on festival weekend.

The growth of the festival is impacting on pavilion and there are less volunteers each year. As a result the festival will be downsized and moved to surrounding the pavilion, and there will no longer be a Q-Stage.

However, one suggestion is to use the whole month instead of just a weekend which might give an opportunity to have a LGBT focussed weekend event.

Carnival – Forums float

The Lowdown want to combine with the forums to put together the float. Waiting on more details.

Action: Aimee to circulate further information with forum, for anyone wanting to be involved in a steering group.

Q: Does the action plan cover a wide enough scope around the Borough?

A: The purpose of the forum is to engage with LGBTQ communities and groups.

There is the opportunity to use the forum to create community driven events such as a Pride Picnic. It is then the responsibility of the communities to take ownership of activities and drive them.

The Forum is really good at engaging with community-minded people, not particularly good at accessing commercial and harder to reach groups of people. This is something to work on.

Q: Why have events failed in the past?

A: Turnout- some people don't feel comfortable to go out to an LGBT event and be identified.

The enclosed venue at Phipps was seen as a positive in addressing this, as it provided a little privacy which may have attracted more cautious or wary members of the LGBTQ community.

Projects and events need to be owned by the community as opposed to being dumped on them in order to be successful and long lasting.

Members commented that some events can be overwhelming. There is only one gay bar in the town that many LGBT people do not feel comfortable going to. The town is missing spaces that provide opportunities to share stories and talk with like-minded people.

There is a need for more spaces that are Gay friendly and focussed where people feel comfortable. That used to be the UFO festival but possible it has grown too big to meet this need.

5. IDAHO

International Day Against Homophobia is on Thursday 17 May 2018.

Mayor making will also be taking place on this day, so the current Mayor, Gareth Eales will raise the flag in the morning and after Mayor making the Mayor elect, Cllr Tony Ansell will speak at the Minute of noise. This will be followed by refreshments at the One Stop Shop.

Action: Steve Bedford to arrange for Police motorbike for minute of noise.

Everyone is welcome to bring instruments etc. to make noise on the day!

6. I'M STILL ME

Anna explained the LGBT Partnership consisting of organisations across the county to put on conferences aimed at professionals mostly around education, primary and secondary but others attend. This is the fourth year and has been well received. County Council are supporting this year and the conference will take place at Angel Square on Monday 2 July.

Action: Aimee to circulate the event link to the forum.

Comments made that there is a need to strengthen the networks between attendees for support which will hopefully improve this year.

Q: Do we keep a list of the schools that have attended- is it working, having an impact?

A: Yes we keep a list but knowing the impact is a weakness that we need to follow up on. We do get very good feedback from those who attend and say that the resources are especially useful.

7. COMMUNITY INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Steve Bedford circulated a print out and gave an overview of Hate Crime statistics in the county.

Action: Steve to send Aimee pdf to be circulated to the forum.

Reported LGBT hate crimes are generally low. The forum was reminded that international events have a particular impact on hate crimes and reporting.

Members were reminded of the Crane project and the intelligence that is received through this. However, The police are keen for people to report directly or through Truvision website if able to do so as they would like to be able to build information of perpetrators. Evidence of this type of history can be very important when a perpetrator goes to court for other offences as it builds a picture of their behaviour over time.

Steve promoted the Neighbourhood alert service which lets you know about crimes in the area. You can set it to receive what is relevant to you according to location and other factors.

Serita informed everyone that events are taking place at St Andrews in June.

St Andrews are also looking to do something for National inclusion week in September. If anyone in the forum would be interested in doing anything during that week they could link in.

Cllr King suggested doing something to promote forums at the event.

Action- Aimee to share other forums details with Serita.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Cllr King informed the forum that a geodesic dome will be set up on Becket's Park one weekend in August for the Kinky Boots launch. The dome will be open at International Youth Day on Saturday 11 August IYD with virtual reality and other activities. The dome will then be showing cinema screenings of Kinky Boots on Sunday 12 August. There will also be 4ft tall boots made by Festive Road, on display to advertise the production.

Cllr King suggested using that Sunday for an LGBT Picnic. The forum liked this idea.

Forum expressed a desire to reconnect with Lesbian Line who have been missed recently.

Action: Matthew to contact the coordinators directly to ask if they would like to be involved in organising the picnic.

9. ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

No items suggested.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be the social meeting on Tuesday 17 July. The forum decided to meet at the Mail coach.

The meeting concluded at 7.50pm.

