

Equality Forum

Thursday, 18 April 2013

Present: Councillor Hasina Khan (Chair), Councillor Steve Murfitt (Vice-Chair) and Councillor Jean Cronshaw

Councillors also in attendance: Councillor Julia Berry

Officers: Chris Sinnott (Head of Policy and Communications), Cathryn Filbin (Democratic and Member Services Officer) and Sarah James (Partnerships Manager)

Partner officers: Stephanie Iaconianni (Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust), Jeanette Hickey (Lancashire Constabulary) Tony Devlin (New Progress Housing Association)

Also in attendance: Zed Ali (Lancashire BME Pact), Kanwal Ambrine, Estelle Brown (Chorley Pensioners Association), Richard Fawcett (Chorley Youth Council), Yvonne Finlayson, Ethel Hartley, Deanna Hartley-Davis (Runshaw College), Amina Iqbal (Women Forum), David Jones (Deaf Forum), Ginny Jones, Suzie Jones (Chorley and South Ribble Disability Forum), Maureen Kay (Disability Forum) Ronald Kay (Disability Forum), Zara Khan, Zafar Khan (Taxi Driver), Alice Maine, Lillian Njueiuna (Women Forum), Maria Michaels (Stepping Forward), Marilyn Porter (Crossroads), Marion Rawnsley (Chorley U3A), Terence Reynolds (Deaf Forum), Zohaib Sajid, Rohail Sajid, Carol Sharples (Age UK Lancashire), Jeannie Stirling (Homestart and VCFS), Frank Stringfellow (Deaf Forum), Marel Urry (Rural Watch and Hoghton Parish Council), Saraa Virdee (Runshaw College), Patricia Weston,

Schools: Shaistha Khan, Shirly Babu, Maria Babu, Spohie Terry and Chiera Unsworth (Albany Academy), Nathan Devlin and Ruari MacLeod (Holy Cross Catholic High School), Shannon Jolly and Daniel Parker (Parklands High School)

13.EF.70 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked those on the top table to introduce themselves. Attendees were reminded to introduce themselves, state the organisation they represented, if applicable, and to use the microphone when addressing the meeting.

13.EF.71 MINUTES

The minutes of the Equality Forum held on 6 March 2013 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

13.EF.72 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Alison Hansford, Councillor Steve Holgate, Councillor Rosie Russell, Reverend Martin Cox, Diane Gradwell (Citizens Advice Bureau) and John Miller (LGBT community).

13.EF.73 SCHOOLS MULTI-FAITH PROJECT

Members of the Forum were informed that high schools across the borough had been invited to take part in a multi-faith project which would result in a display of art work that symbolised what faith meant to the pupils, and the similarities between faiths.

The Chair invited Members of the Forum to take part in small group discussion about what faith meant to them individually, the similarities between faiths and what did they think would be useful for this project to produce?

Feedback from the discussion included:

- Faith created stronger communities
- Although there were many different faiths they were very similar by promoted peace and understanding

The finding from the discussions would be collated and circulated to members of the Forum and to the high schools to aid the multi-faith project.

13.EF.74 NETWORKING BREAK

The Chair invited a short networking break.

13.EF.75 LANCASHIRE LGBT

Lewis Turner gave a presentation on the Isaac Hitchen Project.

Lancashire LGBT charity was established in 2010, and conducted a survey of 492 people and held focus groups that involved 82 participants across the county.

The key findings for Chorley included:

- Isolation – ‘big LGB&T community’ in Chorley but no connection between people
- Nowhere local for LGB&T people to meet and socialise – would like a community group
- People who were visibly gay or transgender did not feel safe outside the home

As a result of the finding the Isaac Hitchen Project was formed and successfully applied for funding with the Big Lottery. It currently employed a team of four people.

The aims of the project were to:

1. Reduce isolation of LGBT people in Lancashire
2. Improve the mental health and well-being of LGBT people in Lancashire
3. Increase LGBT people’s active involvement and influence in their local communities in Lancashire
4. Educate service providers about the needs of LGB&T people

To achieve the aims of the project it was intended to provide:

- ‘OUTpost’ a drop-in information and support service
- Develop a volunteer training programme to run LGBT defriending and peer support groups
- Develop a group of Community Champions who would be training to act as advocates for the LGB&T communities in their local areas
- Deliver awareness training to service providers

The Chair thanked Lewis for his presentation and invited members of the Forum to raise any questions.

- Stephanie Iaconianni asked how the project coordinated with the Navaho Charter Mark. In response, Lewis advised that the Project was working with the Navaho Partnership

and had recently conducted a joint mystery shopper exercise amongst those organisations who had been awarded the Charter Mark. Only half of those organisations contacted were able to answer questions on the Charter Mark. As a result of the findings it had been decided to re-brand and re-fresh the Charter Mark.

- In response to Maureen Kay's question about the deaf LGBT community in Chorley getting involved in the project, Lewis advised that people from all communities were very welcome to get involved in the project.
- Suzie Jones advised that the Chorley and South Ribble Disability Forum would be able to offer assistance to the project when reaching out to the deaf LGBT communities. Lewis welcomed the offer of assistance from Chorley and South Ribble Disability Forum.
- In response to Suzie's question about early intervention strategy for young people who could be open to abuse from their parents, Lewis advised that leaflets were available to help parents of an LGBT child understand more about them. An event to be held later in the year had also been arranged for parents of LGBT children with a view to forming a network.
- Zed Ali asked about raising awareness within the BME groups. Lewis advised that the project was written to include people with disabilities and the BME communities as well as white people.

13.EF.76 OPEN FORUM TO DISCUSS ANY ISSUES FOR EACH EQUALITY STRAND

- Estelle Brown raised concern about the state of the footpaths in Chorley, and asked that Councillors try using a motorised scooter or wheelchair to see how difficult it is. Councillor Cronshaw advised that she was aware the streets were getting worse and that some of the curbs were too high but that the Council was restricted as it was the responsibility of Lancashire County Council. Chris Sinnott advised that the comments raised would be forwarded to Lancashire County Council's Highways department.

- In response to questions regarding the participation of Chorley groups in the Carnival and the Big Drum day. Chris Sinnott advised that both the Carnival and Big Drum day were organised by external organisations. The Big Drum day event did receive funding toward the event and the organisers would be approached about the involvement of local groups.
- Suzie Jones asked if the Council would be arranging interpreters for the Carnival event. Chris Sinnott advised that the Council would not be providing interpreters at this event as the Council had not organised it, but would make this suggestion to the organisers.
- Zed Ali advised that many black minorities did not understand British culture, did the Council organise any events to encourage community cohesion. Chris Sinnott advised that the Council had arranged a programme of events for the summer months, including Picnic in the Park, which would provide people with the opportunity to mix with others from different backgrounds.
- In response to a question regarding dance education in schools, Chris Sinnott advised that it was difficult for the Council to get this on to the curriculum as the Council did not have responsibility for schools. However, through the Council's Sports Development Team are trying to look at introducing activities other than sports in schools.
- Jeannie Stirling advised that RADAR keys can be obtained at Shopmobility.

13.EF.77 NOTICES / FEEDBACK / PUBLICITY

- Residents in rural communities were encouraged to report any incidents of suspicious activity, such as sightings of suspicious vehicles or concerns about stock or poachers to the police by telephoning 101, which was the number to call for all non-emergency calls.
- In the Know is a free messaging service from Lancashire Police where you could receive information from crime in your

area to the latest jobs by text or email. To sign up register online at www.lancashire.police.uk/intheknow

- Crossroads Friendship Circle holds monthly meetings, activities and outings for those who care for people with dementia. The cared for would be looked after by experienced carer support workers. For more information please contact Susan or Joanne on 01257 230698.

13.EF.78 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Members of the Forum noted the dates of future meetings, which would take place at 6.30pm, in the Lancastrian Room, Town Hall, Chorley unless otherwise advised:

- 22 July 2013
- 17 October 2013
- 23 January 2014
- 3 April 2014

Chair