

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

NORTHAMPTON DIVERSE COMMUNITIES EQUALITIES FORUM

Thursday, 14 March 2013

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

2. WELCOMES AND INTRODUCTIONS

Everyone introduced themselves. Ten people attended the meeting including co-chairs Councillor Suresh Patel and John Rawlings. The minutes were taken by Joe Biskupski (Northampton Borough Council).

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS AND MATTERS ARISING

Anjona Roy queried whether the following reference in the minutes of the last meeting was correct: "The PCC is planning a formal review of 'stop and search' within his first year in the post".

Subject to clarification of the above, the minutes were agreed as a true record of the last meeting.

4. RECRUITMENT OF ARMY RESERVES AND CADETS (LT COL BLOMFIELD, DEIDRE NEWHAM, LT COL SIMON WORSLEY AND NICK SPOORS)

Lt Col Nick Blomfield, Deidre Newham, Lt Col Simon Worsley and Nick Spors introduced themselves.

Lt Col Blomfield (NB) introduced himself as the county chairman of the County Reserve Forces and Cadets Association. This is one of a number of Reserve Forces and Cadets Associations across the UK, and forms part of the East Midlands region, comprising Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire and Rutland.

He said that the Association is keen to establish closer contact with members of minority ethnic communities in the town. He is also keen to reach out to and encourage people to join the Territorial Army and also to the various cadet organisations.

Question: What are the nationality criteria for young people joining cadet groups?

Answer: This was unclear – further information will be sent to Joe Biskupski after the meeting.

NB said that he has been in post for two years and believed that the Association needed to do more to reach out to various communities across Northampton. He said that he believed that there is potential in getting more minority groups involved in the work of the Association.

John Rawlings commented that over the past years, the links between the army and the local community has been reduced.

There is a recognition that community engagement needs to be improved by the Association, and by the regular Army, whose presence in the town has declined over time. The Association recognises that it is important to engage with communities, especially with local BME groups, and would like to listen to the views of the Forum on how best to engage with local communities.

Lt Col Simon Worsley said that the cadets formed a significant draw for many young people, but that young people from BME backgrounds were relatively unrepresented in

Northampton. He added that, whilst they were sponsored by the Ministry of Defence, cadet groups were not a recruiting tool for the military services, and that they offered valuable activities for young people. The age range for cadets are; Army Cadets, 12 to 17 years; Sea Cadets 10 to 18, and Air Cadets 13 to 20 years. The cadets are run by adult volunteers. In the case of Army Cadets, members from BME backgrounds represent only 4% of the Leicestershire, Rutland and Northamptonshire branch membership.

The cost of participation is minimal and the charge is waived in cases of financial hardship. He added that the uniformed services such as the cadets or scouts are good for young people.

Question: Why is the Association interested in recruiting more young people and volunteers from BME communities now?

Answer: Nick Spoons said that he works for the Chronicle newspaper, and has recently joined the Association's committee. He said that there is recognition that BME representation is higher in some other counties compared to Northamptonshire, and this needs to be addressed.

Question: What areas have had a higher level of BME representation? The Association should try to look at good practice elsewhere – how have young people from BME communities been attracted to cadet groups?

Answer: Good examples are in Manchester and London. Leicester has a relatively low level of BME representation among young people, but some of the leaders are from BME communities.

The Association would welcome local leaders from BME communities to visit and better understand the work that is being done for young people.

There is an open evening at the Territorial Army base in Clare Street. This will take place on 20 March and is completely open to the public.

Jenny Campbell said that she will highlight this event on Inspiration FM.

Lt Col Robert Blomfield is keen to meet with Inspiration FM.

Anjona Roy said that the police are recruiting Specials, drawing their membership and leaders from similar groups. They are having an open evening at Wootton Hall.

AR said that some BME groups have a military tradition, such as the Sikhs. They work actively with young people.

Representatives of the Association could attend the Multifaith Day on 16th March in the Guildhall, where representatives of a number of faith and BME groups will be present.

The Association may wish to engage with BMESRP.

John Rawlings said that there were many examples of black and minority ethnic soldiers in British history, for example soldiers from Poland, the Caribbean or from the Indian Subcontinent. It is important to understand Northampton's communities.

Jenny Campbell said that many young black people hear historical stories of black soldiers. However, it is important that young people have positive contemporary role models.

Northampton Youth Forum would be a useful contact for the Association. Contact with the Forum should be made through Joe Biskupski.

Councillor Patel invited Lt Col Blomfield and his colleagues to come to a future meeting of the Forum. NB said that he would be pleased to do so.

5. PLANNING THE WORK OF THE FORUM FOR 2013/14

Item 5 has been deferred to a future meeting of the Forum.

6. MEETING DATES FOR 2013/14

The meetings for 2013/14 are scheduled as follows:

Tuesday 23 April 2013 – This meeting has been cancelled due to the elections on 2 May 2013.

Wednesday 5 June 2013

Wednesday 31 July 2013

Thursday 26 September 2013

Thursday 21 November 2013

Thursday 23 January 2014

Thursday 13 March 2014

Thursday 29 April 2014

Wednesday 4 June 2014

Wednesday 30 July 2014

7. COMMUNITY INFORMATION EXCHANGE

The Inter Faith Day will take place in the Guildhall on Saturday 16 May 2013.

The Police & Crime Commissioner is to be invited to attend a future meeting of the Forum. 21 November was suggested as a possibility.

8. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AT THE NEXT AND FUTURE MEETINGS

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING - WEDNESDAY 5 JUNE 2013

The date of the next meeting is Wednesday 5 June 2013. This will take place in the Holding Room, Northampton Guildhall.

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