

## **Lambeth LGBT Forum Meeting**

### **Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2005**

#### **Present**

Daniel Fitzgerald

Tom Willets

Daisy

Lee Winters

Tim Chambers

Min Rodriguez

Gary Whiting

Graham Aldus (Lambeth Met LGBT Liaison Officer)

Gerald Gohler

Carolyn Melvill

Adele Van Staden

Stephen Chumbley

Philip Inblesant

Robert Brown

Thierry Muller

Pippa Gascoine

Tom Hanworth

John Cooper

Stephan Gregoire

David Nelson

Barry Rae

Amy Donovan (Lambeth LGBT Anti-Hate Crime Coordinator)

#### **Apologies**

Katy Shaw

Chris D'Souza

Fraser Serle

#### **GUEST SPEAKERS: Min Rodriguez (Lambeth LGBT Forum member), Doreen McKenzie (LBL Register Manager) and Judith Gent (Superintendent Registrar).**

Min provided an informative overview of how the new civil partnership legislation will affect same-sex couples in relation to areas such as pensions and taxes. She highlighted that the couples who are nearing retirement age stand to gain considerably from accessing the civil partnerships.

Doreen and Judith provided an interesting overview of the process for obtaining a civil partnership through the Lambeth Council. The copy of their presentation is attached to the email for your information. They also ran us through a mock civil partnership to ask our feedback on the standard template that they will make available to couples.

I have copies of a resource produced by the Department of Trade and Income for those of you who missed the discussion or would like further information on the implications that such legislation may have on your relationship. It is also available on the internet [www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/civilpartnership.htm](http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/civilpartnership.htm)

## **Minutes from the August meeting were agreed as accurate.**

Actions arising from the last minutes:

- Amy contacted Unison and the Council's LGBT Forum and informed them of LGBT History Month.
- Amy has had initial discussions with the Rukus! Federation about having the 'Queens Jewels' photographic exhibition on display during LGBT History Month which have been positive.
- A letter outlining the Fourm's dissatisfaction with the way in which the Royal Vauxhall Tavern was sold was compiled by Danny, Min and Amy and sent to the Council's Director of Business Development. We are awaiting a response. A copy of the letter is attached at the end the minutes.

## **Clapham Murder update**

Graham provided an overview of the Jodi Dobrowski's horrific homophobic motivated murder and how important it is that these perpetrators are caught. He mentioned that two people had been released on bail in relation to the murder but was unsure as to their level of involvement in the case. Subsequent to Graham's update at the Forum two suspects have been apprehended and charged with the murder.

Amy highlighted how her and Graham are working as part of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership to develop a interagency strategy for addressing and responding to sexual activity in public spaces. Amy highlighted that it is vital that the LGBT population are part of this process and are consulted with adequately to ensure that the strategy is constructive and does more than simply blame the victim or marginalise the men who have sex with men (msm) and LGBT population even more. A subsequent discussion with Chris D'Souza raised the possibility of using the next forum meeting to seek feedback from the msm and LGBT population on this issue.

## **LGBT History Month update**

The Lambeth LGBT Forum has been pivotal in lobbying for the allocation of a budget for LGBT History Month which is in the vicinity of £10,000. I want to highlight that LGBT History Month is an opportunity to not only showcase the talent which exists within the Lambeth LGBT population but also to raise the profile of our issues and needs. I would like to see a wide array of events ranging from the arts through to political discussions. It is important that we use this month as an opportunity to challenge the inequalities and institutionalised discrimination that LGBT people face on a daily level.

**Action: Please email Amy any ideas that you have for events during this month – ranging from the purely social/entertaining to political events.**

*Below is a list of events which have been suggested for LGBT History Month (they are not exhaustive)*

- Queens Jewels Exhibition (possibility at the Black Cultural Archives).

- A photographic exhibition displaying the work of different LGBT photographers in Lambeth.
- LGBT Films at the Ritzy.
- High visibility within Lambeth Life, including the front cover of the October edition.
- Buildings of historic interest tour.
- A plaque ceremony acknowledging Noel Cowards place of residence in Lambeth and the fact that he was gay.
- Health First and PCT to run a health promotion activity for LGBT people.
- High visibility awareness raising campaign targeting the heterosexual population on raising awareness of LGBT hate crime and issues.
- Develop an educational resource from the events scheduled in Lambeth LGBT history month. It is important that our history is not lost and such a resource would allow us to promote our history outside of February.
- All libraries to participate and provide booklists and new LGBT books.
- A panel discussion around homophobic lyrics in music
- A panel discussion on how sexual violence impacts upon LGBT females.

### **Update from the additional meeting to develop a recruitment and media strategy for the Forum**

The purpose of this meeting was to brainstorm ways in which we can promote the LGBT Forum which would feed into a recruitment and media strategy for the Forum. The main suggestions are outlined below:

- Having a yearly 'Speak Out' event which would allow the forum to feed back to the LGBT population and Council its achievements as well as ensuring that the council outlines what it has done to improve the borough for LGBT people since the previous year. This is important in terms of accountability, particularly by the Council to the LGBT population.
- Regular press releases
- Updated email list

**Action: Can people please send me email addresses for email lists that you think we need to be promoting the Forum meetings and activities via.**

### **Linking Up London Conference**

The purpose of the conference is to give all LGBT forum and networks in London a chance to get together, share best practice and learn about ways they can help their local group to grow.

The conference will take place on Saturday, 29<sup>th</sup> October 2005, Islington Town Hall from 10.30am – 5pm. I will be attending and presenting with Danny, it would be great if as many of you as possible could attend this event. Please contact me if you would like to attend – even if it is for part of the day.

**Action: Inform Amy if you are interested in attending this conference.**

## **LGBT Matters Research**

Amy and Graham discussed how important it is that as many people as possible complete the LGBT Matters Research questionnaire which is available online at [www.lambethlgbtmatters.com](http://www.lambethlgbtmatters.com)  
Paper versions of the questionnaire are available for those who don't have access to the internet.

### **Next meeting**

The next meeting is set for 7-9pm 15 November at the Brixton Town Hall.

Topic: Discussion with the LGBT and msm population on the interagency sexual activity in public places strategy which is being developed. I am hoping to have some key Met. Police and Council staff present. I will send a meeting agenda out once these details are confirmed. Please invite all who may be interested.

## **Letter to the Council regarding selling of the Royal Vauxhall Tavern:**

Lambeth LGBT Forum  
C/o Amy Donovan  
LGBT Hate Crime Coordinator  
Lambeth Crime Prevention Trust  
2-6 Atlantic Rd  
London SW9 8HY

Tel. 020 7326 2684

20 September 2005

### **Re: The Royal Vauxhall Tavern (RVT)**

To whom it may concern:

A primary role of the Lambeth LGBT Forum is to liaise between the LGBT population and the Council on issues impacting upon LGBT residents and service users. The Lambeth Council's decision to sell the Royal Vauxhall Tavern, with no consultation with the LGBT population, was a significant issue which we felt compelled to respond and express how deeply upset we are.

Last week the LGBT Forum met with a Council representative to discuss the launch of Lambeth's first LGBT History Month in February 2006, ironically, this occurred on the day that the RVT was auctioned. In discussing the matter, the Forum made very clear their devastation at both the Council's decision to sell the RVT and the manner in which it did so.

The Royal Vauxhall Tavern is of considerable historical significance to the LGBT community within Lambeth and London. Built in 1868 it has been continually a LGBT space for 150 years or more, thereby making it unique to Great Britain. Moreover, it is perceived as a cornerstone to the now very prominent Vauxhall LGBT business community. The Lambeth LGBT forum strongly believes that the Council's handling of this situation does little to acknowledge the contribution that LGBT businesses have made to the area's regeneration.

The widely read, and highly regarded, Pink Paper included an article about the Lambeth Council's decision to sell the RVT in the 15<sup>th</sup> September edition titled, "Duckie to raise £1m to save pub from

corporate tossers". This article expressed the view that those using the venue were not informed of the decision to sell the building until six days before the auction day. Whether this was the case or not, the damage has been considerable to the LGBT population's perception of the council. This perception is one which the LGBT Forum has been working hard to improve and such press is detrimental.

The sale of the RVT may have been the realisation of an asset for Lambeth Borough but consideration needed to be paid to the impact that it will have on the local LGBT businesses and population. It has been rumored that the buyers intend to maintain the RVT as a gay venue, however, there is no guarantee that it will remain so in the future.

We feel strongly that the Council must ensure that procedures and processes are in place to avoid a repeat of this incident. LGBT history and lives have historically been disregarded and marginalised and the selling of the RVT only serves to perpetuate this. It is imperative that in the future Lambeth council seeks the Forum's immediate advice on such matters.

Key issues:

- Under the Freedom of Information Act (2000) can you please clarify the date that leaseholders were informed of the Council's decision to sell?
- What procedures exist for establishing whether council assets are of cultural significance to the diverse groups within this borough?
- What procedures exist for community groups to identify a building as being of cultural significance?
- Why was the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender population, including the Lambeth LGBT Forum, not consulted on the decision to sell the RVT?

Conclusively, we hope that you find this letter useful. It is important that a good relationship exists between the Lambeth Council and the LGBT population, which is estimated to make up 15% of borough residents.

We look forward to your prompt response and are happy to enter into discussions if you feel it would be useful.

Yours Sincerely,

Daniel Fitzgerald  
pp. Lambeth LGBT Forum