

## Minutes of Meeting 34

*Saturday 9 June 2007*

Guildhall, Saltash

### ATTENDANCE

Carl: Police Authority  
Juliet: Force Diversity Manager  
Kay: Gender Trust  
Keith: Independent member  
Mark 2: Plymouth Pride Forum  
Michael: Intercom (Chair)  
Paul: Eddystone Trust  
Rhea: Independent Member  
Sorrel: FFLAG  
Teresa: Force Diversity Officer  
Tess: Intercom Trust

### APOLOGIES

Andy: Intercom Trust  
John: Force Diversity Inspector  
Kevin: Number One Centre Trust  
Mark I: RESPECT Youth Group  
Nic: Western Boys  
Tony: Deputy Chief Constable

The meeting opened at 10:30am.

### *Minutes and matters arising*

Michael asked that his thanks to Tess be noted for preparing the minutes. There were no matters of fact to be corrected and the minutes were agreed as a true record. Michael noted his pride in the longevity of the PLG.

In response to matters arising in the last minutes Carl clarified his position: the Police Authority holds the Chief Constable to account and due to recent changes in legislation emphasis has shifted from the *monitoring* to the *management* of Force performance, which allows for a greater degree of active involvement. There is currently some debate as to whom the Police Authority holds to account apart from the Chief Constable directly. This debate includes the role of BCU Commander. Carl confirmed that this represents a significant shift but one that the Police Authority see as a positive change. Keith asked whether this would bring any benefit to minority groups and it was felt that it could well do. Michael said he had enjoyed delivered a day's training for the Devon and Cornwall Police Authority but was concerned that only one Member had turned up (all the rest were either officers, or Members of a different Police Authority). Juliet suggested there should be an audit and Keith agreed that there should be rigour with statutory authorities such as the Police Authority.

As regards the Eathorne case, Juliet informed everyone that John is currently trying to contact the Head of the Criminal Case Review and will inform the Group of any developments. It was asked if the Group would like DCI Chris Brown to re-attend the Group to discuss this matter and it was felt that this should be dependant on the answer we receive. Juliet passed on to the Group that Tony is planning to talk to the Head of Crime about the media strategy around the Eathorne case.

**Action: Juliet to chase-up**

With regards to street-preaching guidelines in Cornwall, on further investigation it seems that these guidelines don't actually exist yet. Paul felt that it would be good to have some. Michael said that difficulty lay in defining exactly what constituted a public order offence or breach of the peace.

Juliet reported that the Diverse Communities Team had provided an outline of which member of the team would be attending each PLG over the coming months. She also said she had liaised with the team responsible for the D&CC website about creating a high-profile PLG page but there were currently problems with the architecture of the site. However, the addition of the IAGs is imminent and Juliet asked that members take the time to see how the website works.

Juliet added that the Google language tool has been added to the site. Michael noted the importance of having Polish added to the list of languages this tool provides, and reported that Intercom has had dealings with LGB/T Polish workers who feel very oppressed by local prejudice within Devon's Polish communities. It was felt that our statutory partners should keep their eyes open for ways to help with this. Juliet said there are a number of languages needing to be added and this is being addressed, thanks to the motivation Tony's involvement has given. Paul informed the Group that anyone in need of a Polish translator should contact Danny as he has contact with a freelance translator. Juliet spoke about PA8, an organisation which provides support for migrant workers, and highlighted the importance of making links with organisations such as these in order to address these cross-cutting issues. It was noted that using local translators on LGB/T issues raises very serious potential issues of confidentiality.

Michael confirmed that the community safety part of Intercom's new website was completed and added that he hoped the PLG would soon have its own domain name.

In respect of Plymouth BCU, it was reported that Chris Singer has moved on to S&W Devon. The Group sends him their good wishes. Chief Superintendent Jim Webster has started as Commander of Plymouth BCU, and the new Partnership Superintendent is Elaine Marshall. Members of the Group said that in their experience Elaine has always been open to frank dialogue and has a good level of knowledge about the issues.

Rhea reported that there had been a lot of publicity about the new Community Justice Schemes and felt that the joint meeting proposed at the last PLG should be held sooner rather than later. Mark confirmed that there was concern amongst court officers over the new process and who would be consulted. Juliet felt it would be useful to take these concerns to Jim Webster.

**Action to be carried forward: Michael to arrange joint meeting  
Action: Juliet to e-mail Jim Webster**

With reference to the Plymouth Policing Board, it was noted that it should now be Jim Webster who is approached for information. Rhea suggested that issues such as the Plymouth Policing Board could be added to an e-mail tree to ensure constant consultation. Carl informed the Group that David Money is currently the only member of the Police Authority who is local to Plymouth.

**Juliet: to email Jim Webster to ask him how he will take the Plymouth Policing Board forward and copy in David Money and Michael**

Juliet reported that the Force's Gender Equality Scheme is now downloadable from the D&CC website. The key issue for the Group is looking at the document in terms of trans issues and Juliet urged everyone to let her know if they found anything in the GES they weren't happy with.

**Action: members to provide feedback on GES**

Juliet added that a community member has been working on D&CC's Trans policies, and the Avon and Somerset Constabulary's legal team are currently checking them for current compliance. The relevant policies will then come out for consultation and advice will be sought on how they can best be implemented and supported.

Mark said that some organisations had altered their systems to include information on trans issues 10/15 years ago. Michael noted the importance of restricting access to this information in order to comply with the Gender Recognition Act 2004 (GRA). Juliet said that the majority of these systems have a mechanism to lock out all but named HR personnel. Michael noted that the ACPO guidance on the GRA was written in D&CC by the trans members of the PLG at that time and encouraged members to read it (bearing in mind that it may now be slightly out-of-date in terms of new legislation).

Juliet reported that Chief Supt Ian Ansell was due to be in touch with the Group. Keith suggested that the Group write to him and ask to hear from him within ten days.

**Action: Juliet to chase-up and copy in Tony and Michael**

A service delivery summary has been drafted by the Police following Intercom's seminar on the Goods and Services Regulations. This will be circulated to members of the Group and feedback is invited. Teresa said that the writers have tried to avoid making it so cumbersome that it can't be used as a resource and have tried to include lots of examples relevant to the Officer's daily work. Juliet said that they need this feedback as soon as possible and would appreciate it within ten days.

**Action: Teresa to e-mail document to Tess for circulation  
Action: members to provide feedback within ten days**

Juliet queried whether Michael was being regularly supplied with statistics for the PLG from the Diverse Communities Team. Michael said this had been sporadic.

**Action: Juliet to chase up**

## **1. *Workplan for the Group until March 2008: identifying areas for scrutiny***

Michael outlined the intention of this agenda item: to identify areas in need of particular scrutiny involving serious issues and with practical outcomes. The Group needs to remain community-led and our planning should be based around key community priorities.

Areas that were suggested were:

- policing of public sexual behaviour, and safety when cruising
- crime against older gay men. (It was noted that some victims of assault/burglary have been targeted through Gaydar; and that if burgled by a guest in your home insurance will not cover this loss.)
- perpetrators who target LGB/T people through one route or another

- ensuring that victims feel they can trust the police enough to approach them. The general issue of trust and confidence, and specifically people's reluctance to report (including fear of a negative response from officers in police stations, or when visiting LGB/T people's homes) was taken up by several members.
- neighbourhood policing and the strategy of 'Police and Community together' (a way of delivering citizen focus): this raises questions of which / whose communities are being genuinely involved.
- same-sex domestic violence
- local police officers being careful to communicate with the voluntary sector
- phobic bullying within schools
- the disproportionate impact that low-level crime has on LGB/T victims, especially when they share the community reluctance to report
- training issues: are officers in fact now developing resistance on LGB/T community issues?
- critical incidents training and how useful independent advisors can be in crime investigation.

Juliet said that for her the emphasis lay not with *what*, but rather *how* – i.e. how will the Group be effective and how will the Group make the Police accountable. She added that rather than only raising issues the Group needed to be holding senior Police Officers to account, as the problem is no longer a lack of knowledge about the barriers to reporting. Juliet highlighted that things will only change if Senior Officers are asked: 1) how they are planning to tackle an issue, 2) what evidence they are going to produce, 3) if they will come back to a future meeting to demonstrate the work they have done and, 4) how the Group can help them achieve their aims.

Keith welcomed this approach and felt that if the PLG could be felt to have more teeth this could help to increase reporting. Carl noted that the Police Authority's position on the Group adds weight to the Group, since attending Officers will be conscious of the fact that a representative of the PA will be considering the Officer's words in terms of performance management. Carl felt it was also important to recognise the time limitations for each officer as theoretically they are being held to account by the other IAGs as well and 'holding to account' has to be meaningful.

Keith felt it would be useful if meetings with senior officers had a clear structure with questions. It was also felt it would be useful to send questions ahead of the meeting so visitors can bring appropriate evidence and answers. This would also prevent momentum being lost on an issue as visitors would be equipped to answer questions there and then (as opposed to collecting evidence after the meeting to be brought back to the Group at a later date). Juliet noted the importance of asking for specific data and added that other key questions to ask of Officers included querying key diversity targets in specific areas, asking how Officers are planning to build on previous work, and determining how the Group can quality assure that the Police are getting it right and making more of a success of it.

It was felt that, with the backing of Middlemoor, the Group can only improve their efficacy and, rather than just reacting to situations as they arise, can identify key issues and work to identify standards, questions, and data they want to see. Juliet assured the Group that the Diverse Communities Teams will provide whatever information they can but that it was important to get that framework of questions pre-determined. For instance, members should spend some time preparing questions on neighbourhood policing for Bob Spencer to answer at the next meeting.

Michael said that all of these issues could be thought of in terms of a triangle - with under-reporting at one corner, marketing and persuading people to report at the second corner, and support after reporting at the third. It was agreed that there is currently not enough capacity to

provide adequate support after reporting, either from LGB/T community organisations or from generic organisations.

Juliet noted the need to raise awareness about what constitutes a hate crime and who can be contacted in the event of such an incident. It was felt that people need to be encouraged to stand up against, for instance, being spat at in the street.

Keith enquired about any awards for Police Officers that are given in the region that are congruent with the objectives of the Group. Juliet said that there were Chief Constable's Commendations and Commander's Awards and that any Sergeant can nominate their staff for these. Keith asked if we were allowed to nominate for this as he felt it was important to balance the 'carrot' with the 'stick'. It was suggested that this could be a standing item on the agenda and if well-publicised could help build-up confidence.

The Group went on to discuss under-reporting, the development of a community-led strategy and the development of a publicity drive to raise the profile of the Group. Rhea suggested that members revisit their terms of reference in order to avoid diluting the Group's original purpose.

**Action: Michael to circulate terms of reference**

Keith felt there would be merit in increased dialogue with the other IAGs in order to find key topics to address that were common to all of the groups. Michael noted that there are shared issues around training and professional standards. Juliet added that all minorities have issues around under-reporting and barriers to reporting; it is also important to remember that the groups do overlap in terms of who they are representing. She felt there could be room for joint working, and suggested it could be useful to inform the other IAGs of visitors to the Group, the topics that will be discussed and invite concerned parties to attend from across the groups. Michael said that both he and Sonia (Chair of the Race IAG) had reservations about this approach. It was noted that in terms of reviewing documents and providing feedback, copying across the groups would lend strength and could also be a good way of raising the profile of the Group.

Juliet said that issues about the website and call-handlers had come up in every IAG and suggested that a meeting be organised for interested parties from any of the Groups to attend. She went on to say that members should not feel obligated to attend if they felt uncomfortable about the confidentiality issues raised by joint-working.

**Action: Juliet, Michael, Barbara and Sonia to set up joint meeting**

## 2. Other business

### Minuting Protocol

The issue of formal sharing of minutes between IAGs was raised. Rhea queried whether they should be completely de-personalised and felt this issue needed some thought. Michael noted that the minutes from the PLG are in the public domain as soon as they have been agreed as a true record because the Police are covered by the Freedom of Information Act (hence community members are only referred to by their first names). The difficulty is to balance openness with confidentiality and to ensure that there is no barrier to new members joining. Juliet suggested a process by exception whereby individuals can dictate the level to which they are named. It was noted that Police Officers are only fully named on their first visit to the Group, after which they are referred to by first name as Michael is reluctant to make the distinction between members.

Michael suggested that the community members review the Group's procedures in general and assess how co-ordinated they are with the other IAGs and the critical incidents group.

**Action to be carried forward: Michael to write introductory document**  
**Action: members to inform Michael of any ideas/concerns around procedures**

### **Police Authority representation**

Carl informed that Group that he had been given the community portfolio by the Chairman and that he felt it was useful for him to be on the PLG in order to provide an insight on policing from the Police Authority's perspective. He added that his term of office was ending next March and that he will not be re-appointed. Carl went on to say that he perceived very few members of the PA with any great sympathy, empathy, or indeed interest, in diverse communities and felt this raised the larger issue of PA representation and involvement in diverse communities. It was felt that this issue should be added to the debate on procedures and membership.

### **Safer Cruising Project**

Teresa said she would write an update on the Safer Cruising project and circulate it.

**Action: Teresa to e-mail update to Tess for circulation**

### **New Community Worker**

Michael reported that Intercom's new member of staff, Sarah, would spend the next eighteen months working on LGB/T History Month and general community heritage projects. The post is funded by the Local Heritage Fund. He invited members to contact her by e-mail: heritage (at) intercomtrust.org.uk.

The meeting closed at 1:05pm.