

Hampshire Children and Families Forum – Basingstoke Branch

Minutes of the Summer Term Branch Meeting of Hampshire Children and Families Forum, Basingstoke Branch held at Marnel Early Years Centre Shetland Road Popley Basingstoke Hants on Friday 21 April 2006 at 12.30pm to 2.00pm

Present: Alison Newman – Childminding Network North Hampshire
Paul Harvey – Basingstoke District Borough Council
Debbie Ruppenthal – Speakeasy Advocacy
Nicky Blunden – Pre-school Learning Alliance
Joan Bunn – Pre-school Learning Alliance
Lesley Allen – Senior Development Officer PLA
Karen Williams – Portage Team Manager
Jennifer Malins Pre-school Learning Alliance
Mary Hogg – Early Education & Childcare Unit
Jo Whitfield – HCFF Area Manager
Brigid Bell – HCFF Co-ordinator

1. Welcome and Introductions

Jo Whitfield welcomed attendees to the meeting and introductions were made.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Alison Newman, Sharon Goodchild, Eileen Clews, Kim Taylor, Sue Riley, Evelyn Askew and Philippa King

3. Minutes of last meeting

Minutes of last meeting were agreed.

4. Co-ordinators Report

Brigid distributed a copy of her report of the main projects worked on and meeting notes for the CAMHS Local Implementation Group (attached).

5. Consultation and Research.

Jo advised the attendees that the P & T Research report was complete and had been placed on the website www.hcff.org.uk Lesley Allen welcomed the research and was looking forward to reading it on the website.

Brigid also advised the meeting of the research and consultation taking part this term on pregnant teenagers and young parents would soon be complete.

Jo advised the attendees that no further consultation was planned for the future but research was being planned with regard to vulnerable people.

6. Speaker Cllr. Paul Harvey – Leader of Basingstoke & District Borough Council

Cllr. Paul Harvey was welcomed and introduced by Jo to the meeting. He thanked us for his invitation and explained that his objective was to get out to as many voluntary groups as possible to explain the Strategic Plan for Basingstoke & Deane 'Pride in Our Place'. He explained the plan is a large document and was in the process of being made smaller so that it is accessible to more people. The whole plan/presentation can be viewed on the Basingstoke and Deane Website www.basingstoke.gov.uk He explained that this is year three of the plan, which takes the borough through to 2013. He said that the relationship with the voluntary sector funding was changing and the borough

would be in a tight revenue position. It is recognised that because of the demographics of the area there is a need to work smart with the budget revenue spend. Mary commented that there was one school in Basingstoke where 19 languages were spoken.

He talked about the vision the council had and how it would work under it's six headings

- A safer community,
- A healthy community,
- A learning and creative borough,
- An economically prosperous borough,
- An environment that is good to live in,
- An exclusive borough with strong communities.

He recognised the government's plan for Children's Centres and said that the council wanted to help with land for the children's centre for Popley. He also welcomed the graduated model for Buckskin, South Ham, Brighton Hill and Oakridge and thought that this could work well for these areas.

The borough wants to generate money for a mix of housing. Paul highlighted the housing waiting register at 5000+. And seventy percent of 18/19 years olds needing a home of their own, he also said there is a gap of sheltered housing for young people. Help was needed for young families and the plan is to redevelop sheltered housing within the town to provide more accommodation.

It is also recognised that people want safer streets and the community wardens are to focus on improvement, getting out and about and being seen in the community and linking with the community centres more. There is a need for the management committees to be re-educated to let young people use the centres.

The council would also be focusing on learning skills, relationships, partnership working especially with schools and in particular extended schools would be on the agenda.

Paul said he had been in talks regarding the planned Discovery Centre and it is looking unlikely that all the requirements will be accomplished due to budget constraints. One of the options discussed was that the site of the old police station at Basing View could be the site. Karen made it very clear that this would not be a good option for the families she works with at Portage and they were unlikely to access it.

Jo and Brigid highlighted that HCFF would be very keen to attend the LSP meetings and Paul said he would talk to Stephen Sheedy regarding representation from HCFF.

Paul also said he would talk to the over 55's forum regarding Home-Start and the need for trustees.

Jo thanked Paul for his presentation and he then left the meeting.

7. Items for Newsletter

Brigid advised that the deadline for the next newsletter was 5 May 2006 and invited attendees to submit articles.

8. HCFF Website

Brigid advised attendees of the HCFF website and asked for items for this. Brigid explained about the opportunity for information sharing to a wider audience and pointed

out that the branch website has a calendar and bulletin page especially for groups working with families.

9. Members Information Sharing

Mary advised attendees that the site for the Children's Centre in Popley had not been agreed, and recommendations are still being discussed and many sites are still being looked at. There is cause for concern that when John Hunt School closes 118 places for childcare for under 5's will be lost.

There needs to be choice for parents and this is in the 10 year strategic plan.

It was also reported that one pre-school had closed at the Ridgeway Centre, Buckskin. Discussion took place regarding the issue why families in Buckskin/South Ham area are not all accessing pre-schools. It was suggested that some parents may not be aware of what they are entitled to or what is available.

It was also discussed that with the new EYDCP regulations for provision of Early Education that all Pre-schools and Nurseries should be reminded that they have to offer 5 sessions for 3 and 4 year olds.

Lesley reported that there would be focus on Parent and Toddler groups during the next term as the PLA would be conducting a study.

Lesley also reported that Nicky had settled in well and was focusing on visiting groups that had not had a visit for some time.

Karen had brought some new leaflets regarding Portage Services in Basingstoke and urged everyone to continue to refer families that required their service.

10. Date and Time of next meeting

The next meeting of Hampshire Children and Families forum will take place on Friday 15 September 2006 at 12.30 at Marnel Early Years Centre, Shetland Road, Popley, Basingstoke RG24 9PT. Please telephone Brigid Bell on 01256 421819 or email Basingstoke@hcff.org.uk should you wish to make your apologies.