

# **Minutes of the meeting of the Romsey Branch Local Forum of Hampshire Children and Families Forum, held on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> April 05 at 7.15pm in the Appletree Centre, Princes Road, Romsey.**

## **Present:**

Lyn Bird  
Camilla Campbell  
Jenny Hine  
Di Metters  
Joan Stallwood

## **Representing:**

HCFF Romsey Co-ordinator  
Children's Librarian, Romsey  
Young Carers Development Worker  
Toddler Group, Romsey Infant School  
Romsey Family Support Group

## **Apologies:**

Jim Bird                                      Rock Solid Youth Project / Footprints Youth Group  
Chair of Governors North Baddesley Junior School  
Suzanne Gee                                      NSPCC  
Samantha Herrick                              Family Learning, Romsey Community School  
Helen Powell                                      Pre- School Learning Alliance  
Mavis Watts                                      Romsey Opportunity Group

### **1. Welcome / Introductions.**

Signing in sheet passed around those present. Unfortunately the Forum had clashed with at least 2 other local meetings and therefore was low attendance.

### **2. Minutes of last Meeting / Matters Arising (Non Agenda)**

Minutes agreed as written with a correction of spelling and details which should read; "Karon Stickler" – Co-ordinator for Opportunity Group.

### **3. Consultation and Information Events**

The consultation regarding Out of School Care for 10 – 13 year olds had been more difficult especially with 'unbiased' information. Lyn had consulted Parents after school but the figures were then swayed with almost all parents not needing after school childcare. Some required holiday care and occasional babysitting usually provided through families and friends. To balance some of the opinion Lyn then visited an after school club for their views. An unbiased opinion was then sought consulting a Dance school.

Of the 26 completed questionnaires the majority of children were aged 11. There was an overall satisfaction that childcare was easily available however most parents did not require childcare for this age. Reasons given were; Informal care used (6) Children thought responsible enough to be alone (4) Too expensive (4) Shared between parents (3) and not needed (3)

All those that required childcare did so because of work. Types of childcare used were; After – School clubs, Childminders and a Breakfast Club which parents were very satisfied with. They had found out about the childcare via word of mouth or school.

Lyn has produced a contact sheet with details of all out of school Childcare facilities and Childminders who take an extended age range. This research will be published via the newsletter, web-site and the libraries. There are 3 holiday schemes, one which has places specifically for children with special needs, one that is entirely for special needs and a sports based scheme. There are 4 after – school clubs and 2 breakfast clubs.

Lyn has spoken to Wendy Herbert at Youth in Romsey who clarified that under 13's are able to access their facilities with inappropriately aged material being moved at certain sessions. Rock Solid also use the same principle regarding in - depth literature.

The next Consultation topic is the availability of NHS Dental care and Dental awareness.

Lyn and Camilla were having difficulty booking a stall for the Mayor's Picnic but Lyn had written to the Rotary Club asking for a new contact name. It was felt worth pursuing as the previous one had been such a success.

#### **4. Progress Reports from Co-ordinator**

The proposal that HCFE should extend their age range up to 19 years will now be voted on at an extraordinary meeting held by the Executive. The recent Focus Day was again very successful and Lyn congratulated Camilla for taking part in the Evaluation session held in the style of 'Just a Minute'.

Joanna has only just returned to the Toy Library due to severe morning sickness. Di has been an invaluable help during daytime sessions and a new Parent volunteer has also just started helping. The evenings have been particularly difficult to cover, leaving Lyn alone some sessions. Levels of staffing need to be kept to at least 3 per session as the workload is heavy due to moving difficult chairs and tables.

#### **5. Children's Act 2004 and Children's Centres**

Lyn and Camilla had attended the Implementation in Hampshire briefing in Romsey. Lyn had raised the concern that not enough attention was being paid to the under 5's sector. The presenter was not aware if Nursery staff had been invited to the briefings and would let Lyn know. The new Director for Children's Services should be appointed in the next few weeks.

Lyn had read the Government's recent document "Choice for parents, the best start for children" a 10 year strategy for childcare. A key feature is the development of **Children's Centres**. These are mostly being developed from Surestart Programmes and Early Excellence Centres which has already begun, however **'by 2010 there should be a Children's Centre in every community'**.

**Lyn has made preliminary enquiries in regards to planning a Children's Centre for Romsey.**

The General Election would be likely to cause delay in any further enquiries regarding a long term Government Strategy. The first step is to identify a site and Lyn thought the timing might soon be good to enquire possible planning within the new Romsey Primary School. Di reported that a new joint Governing Body will soon be formed and a future Headship appointment. Lyn will endeavour to keep up to date with the targets and progress.

#### **6. Children's Fund Projects Update**

Camilla had attended the Test Valley Partnership but several others including Lyn and Jim had not received any notification.

There was considerable concern that some projects would no longer be viable due to the cut in Grant this year. All projects would suffer but those that employed staff e.g. NSPCC would find it difficult to survive. We would particularly miss Suzanne as her contacts and anti – bullying work had recently further developed.

#### **Young Carers – Jenny Hine**

The Young Carer's Conference was held in Romsey and attended by approx 80 people. Sandra Gidley MP spoke well, being very positive about Young Carers. There are now 2 Befriending 2 youth clubs; Stockbridge Test Valley School and All Saints North Baddesley. The Young Carers Festival will be held in Botley during the first weekend in July. Trafalgar 200 will have 40 International Navies and the Queen visiting Portsmouth. 50 young people have been invited through YC to go aboard the ships. Youth in Romsey are visiting schools. Research project – Holistic Family Learning pathway to efficient services. New legislation could mean that Voluntary Groups may be inspected.

#### **7. Information Exchange**

##### **Joan - Family Support Group and Opportunity Group.**

**Opportunity Group** – Places are now full but would not turn anyone away. More volunteers are required.

Family Support group AGM is on 4<sup>th</sup> May 7 – 9pm. There is a fundraising stall at the Convent Hall on the 30<sup>th</sup> April 11 – 3pm.

**Camilla** – The Library will be closing over the Summer holidays for approximately 8 months but a date has not been announced yet. We will try and get it into the Newsletter. Camilla will be out visiting the groups as most Library activities will need to stop. Di offered to find out if Romsey Infant would be available as a base for some sessions. Joan suggested that the Appletree centre may be vacant on the first and third Tuesday afternoons.

**Di** – New poster for the Nursery 3's, Triangle group and Bumps, Babies and Beyond. These sessions are Wednesday and Thursday 9.30 – 11.30. Tuesday is Stay and Learn 10 – 11am and Friday is a Parent music and story group 9.30 – 11.30am.

**Next Meeting:**

**Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 05 at 7- 15pm Venue– Appletree Centre, behind Romsey Library.**

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