



HAMPSHIRE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES FORUM

Email: romsey@hcff.org.uk .

Web address: www.hcff.org.uk/Romsey.html

MINUTES OF THE ROMSEY BRANCH MEETING

WEDNESDAY 26 SEPTEMBER 2007 AT 'CARERS TOGETHER', LOVE LANE, ROMSEY

PRESENT:

Jane Parker (Chair)	HCFF South Area Manager
Alison Horn	HCFF Romsey Branch Coordinator
Donna Carroll	Childcare & Youth Activities Manager, Mountbatten School donna.carroll@mountbatten.hants.sch.uk
Helen Giles	Hampshire Library & Info Services helen.giles@hants.gov.uk
Yvonne Hill	Parent representative (via post)
Lucie Howkins	HCC Children's Centres lucie.howkins@hants.gov.uk
Cllr David Knight	North Baddesley Parish Council/Arc Bus Project theknightz@hotmail.com
Tara McFadyen	Solent Youth Action tara@solentyouthaction.org
Tony McGovern	Mountbatten School Community Manager tony.mcgovern@mountbatten.hants.sch.uk
Bev Wickham	Early Years Co-ordinator Libraries bev.wickham@hants.gov.uk

APOLOGIES:

Angela Bevan (Abbey United Reform Church & Romsey Sea Cadets), Lyn Bird (Toy Library & Romsey Opportunity Group), Lucy Bucknell (Pre-School Learning Alliance), Jan Lefley (Romsey Community School), Debra McAndrew (HCC), Anne Meader (RAIN), Di Metters (Usborne Books), Wendy Morrish (Test Valley School), Faye Rowe (Not Just Talking) Lorna Wagner (National Childminding Association)

ACTION

1) WELCOME & APOLOGIES

Introductions made and apologies were read out.

2) PRESENTATION BY LUCIE HOWKINS

Lucie outlined progress on the Romsey Children's Centre and associated matters.

As it had not been possible to find a site for a North Baddesley children's centre, Lucie reported that Romsey and North Baddesley would be twinned, with Romsey as the gateway building, and North Baddesley services accessed through community centres, village halls and schools, where possible.

Jim Bird of the Rock Solid North Baddesley project had shown interest in working with the children's centre.

Jim would be shortly taking over a shop in Fleming Avenue, and it is expected that the children's centre coordinator will be based there. It is also hoped to have a family support outreach worker and community beat offices on the premises.

(David Knight was able to update the meeting on the progress of the shop – he advised that the premises will become a 'one-stop shop' used by PSCOs, a youth worker, the parish council, as well as the children's centre staff. It will be funded by the True Life Christian Fellowship Church in North Baddesley. The lease for the shop is being negotiated at present, and the premises will be open Mondays-Fridays).

The work on the children's centre on the site of the new Romsey Primary School commenced in June/July this year, and it is hoped that all the work will be completed by September 2008. The advertisement for the children's centre manager and coordinator will go out in October. The manager will be full time, the coordinator's role will be for 18.5 hours. In due course admin and finance offers will be appointed. In 2008, a family support outreach worker will join the team.

Taking into account the additional challenges presented by the twinning arrangement, Hampshire County Council will run the children's centre. Sally Taylor will be the HCC Quality Performance officer, organising line management of the centre.

The current Focus Group will become the Interim Partnership Board, which must consist of one third parents, one third voluntary representatives and one third private/public sector representatives. The role will be similar to that of a school governor, Lucie reported, with some training required. She is hoping to increase the number of parents involved, and as part of this, she is organising a free family art day at Romsey Infant School on 10 November. As well as making items to take home, those present will contribute to a canvas mural which will initially be displayed in local schools to help spread the message about the children's centre. Once the centre is open, the canvas will be displayed in the reception area.

As another way of involving parents, Lucie is also hoping to organise a family forum/lunch club. Details will also be publicised on the Romsey Contact website and via flyers etc.

Lucie completed her report by announcing that the children's centre has funding secured until 2011.

3) PRESENTATION BY TONY MCGOVERN

Tony reminded the meeting that the Extended Services involves 15 local schools, and works closely with local agencies to improve the opportunities for local families and children.

High on the list of priorities for the Extended Services was a signposting facility, as schools reported that they were not able to give information to families.

Since research showed, most families had ICT, the Romsey Contact website was set up some 2/3 months ago, with help from one of the ICT staff at Mountbatten School. On the site are links to local schools, other useful websites and areas of interest under the Extended Services umbrella.

Believed to be the first of its kind, the website was intended to be low-key to start with to make sure everything was working. Despite that, during the last two months, the site has had 43,000 hits.

Tony mentioned that he does not want the site to be “his”, but for local families, children and practitioners. At the start of the project, it had been decided to provide links to other useful websites. However, some – for example the toy library - do not have their own site, and it has been decided to add more information where appropriate.

Feedback on the website was requested – format, ease of use, things that are missing etc. Tony also asked that feedback be included as an agenda item for the next HCFF branch meeting.

All &
Romsey
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Coord.

There will shortly also be a new Romsey Contact newspaper to tie in with the website. There will be 28 pages, some in full colour, containing some advertising, produced by a local publisher. The newspaper will promote local services; be published three times a year (October, spring and summer), and will contain details of events and services. There will be 7,000 copies printed and distributed to local cluster schools and other local outlets.

Tony mentioned that the website and newspaper are funded from the Extended Services budget.

In response to questions from the meeting about publicity, Tony advised that he was planning to produce postcards in due course.

For future developments, Tony said that he hoped to have screens in some schools and possibly the library with Romsey Contact as the front page. It is also hoped to involve some children in the website development.

4) PRESENTATION ON FOIL RECYCLING

Unfortunately Mike Pratt had been unable to attend the meeting, so Alison Horn gave a very brief overview. Already present in Andover, foil recycling bins will be coming to Romsey. Mike hopes to contact organisations interested in collecting the foil for recycling. For further details, contact Mike at Test Valley Borough Council.

5) MINUTES FROM THE LAST MEETING

There were no matters arising.

6) HCFF AGM

Jane outlined the details of the meeting to be held on Tuesday 27 November from 10 am – 1 pm at Littleton. After the business element, there would be presentations, and the opportunity to network. Lunch will be provided.

As a representative from the Romsey branch will be required, Tony McGovern and Donna Carroll kindly agreed that one would attend, which was approved by those present. Details will be sent in advance to them, including the accounts to be adopted. Should this for any reason not be possible, it was agreed that the Romsey Branch Coordinator will take on the role.

The AGM pack including the accounts is available to anyone who wishes to receive it. Yvonne Hill requested details, and these will be forwarded in due course.

Romsey
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Coord.

David Knight asked if the information would be available on the website. Jane Parker agreed to look into this.

JP

Invitations to the AGM will be issued shortly.

7) INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Jane Parker advised that branch coordinator Alison Horn would shortly be leaving. In the circumstances a new HCFF area would be created for Romsey, Hythe & Totton, which would enable resources to be shared.

Alison thanked everyone for their help and support.

The main focus of HCFF's current activities is a childcare consultation on behalf of the EECU, which will concentrate on 0-3s and rural areas. It is hoped the majority of the work will be completed by the end of October.

Activities also include providing information to parents and supporting children's centres where possible.

Helen Giles reported that Camilla Campbell had moved from Romsey Library to Winchester. Helen and Emma Ostler are now covering the New Forest and Romsey areas, helped by the Early Years Coordinator (Bev Wickham).

Helen reminded the meeting about the Book Start Plus packs available for children from 18 months. The pack includes books, crayons, stickers, etc. There are versions for other languages and for those with special needs.

Any questions about the Book Start Scheme should be addressed to Sandy Roberts, Book Start Coordinator on 077937 58692, email: sandy.roberts@hants.gov.uk.

On 23 October, Helen advised that the Book Start Bear will be visiting Romsey Library to publicise Book Start Week.

Helen asked that her colleague Emma be added to the circulation list. Her email address is: emma.ostler@hants.gov.uk

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Bev Wickham told the meeting that she is keen to make contact with under 5s groups (including childminders, parent & toddler and travellers groups). Bev is also working in conjunction with children's centres. Her post has funding until March 2008, which she hopes will continue.

Tara McFadyen explained that she covers the Winchester, Southampton, Eastleigh, New Forest and Romsey areas. She is looking for both volunteers and families interested in the Buddies Scheme. (The families are usually referred to Solent Youth Action).

Buddies is a mentoring project which matches primary school aged children with special needs with volunteers (who are often college/university students) to be involved in after school clubs, such as Beavers, Cubs and sports activities.

David Knight outlined progress on a number of projects he is involved in. The Arc Bus Project caters for approx 80 children. This has expanded and a new feature is a motor bike workshop, based on a trailer. This helps to teach new skills to older children who may left school without many.

Next year, 'Hope 08', a church project, will be focusing on community action projects. The Romsey group is organising lots of activities, with youth groups helping on a range of projects such as gardening, shopping, etc.

The North Baddesley Rock Solid bus continues to operate two nights a week, with approx 80 children involved.

David is also involved in project called Dynamite Plus, which is linked to the New Life church. Approx 30 children come along, and the project is going well.

Tony McGovern told the meeting about the new Extended Services mobile playbus project. Consultations had highlighted the need to travel for rural families, so during the summer holidays the bus went to Awbridge, Nursling, Wellow and Braishfield. The project was a great success for the children, and gave the opportunity to talk to parents at the same time.

Hampshire County Council may support the project in future.

Donna Carroll outlined the success of the first full summer 11+ playscheme at Mountbatten School, which was set up following feedback from children and parents about the need for the group.

The special needs club has Children's Fund funding until the end of February 2008. There's no other club like this in the area, and it is hoped that funding can continue to be found.

8) DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

To be advised. HCFF coordinators will liaise to ensure that the January meetings do not clash with one another. It was agreed, however, that Wednesday mornings were suitable.

THANKS AND CLOSE OF THE MEETING



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