

# OLDER LESBIAN AND GAY FORUM PLANNING GROUP

## *Minutes of the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> April at Be You offices in risc, London Street, Reading.*

**Those present:** Nigel Tooke, Jenny Stroud, Margaret, Gill Flanagan, Nakhat Zahir (RVA) and Jenny Ward.

1. Apologies were received from Maria, Jane, Rita, Rebecca, Kevin and Penny, as well as Lesley Sherwood from Age Concern who had hoped to attend.
2. Notes of the last meeting and matters arising: Gill agreed to look at some web sites regarding studies which may have been done on older gay men and lesbians. In particular Gill mentioned the Joseph Rowntree Trust and the Centre for Studies in Ageing. Jenny Stroud will check with Stonewall.

We agreed the draft aims and objectives.

3. Funding Application: The present round of Awards for All would need an application to be in by 1<sup>st</sup> May. Nakhat explained that if we miss that date the next “package” of funding will not have a deadline.

We discussed appointing a chair, secretary and treasurer. Nigel agreed to stand for any of the posts. Jenny agreed to stand as chair, but as so many people were unable to attend we decided to leave the final decision until the next meeting, and to postpone the funding application until we had a chance to discuss a budget.

3. Name for the Forum: - Margaret suggested “Gay Age”, Nakhat suggested “REGAL Forum” (Reading Elderly Gay and Lesbian Forum). We agreed to consider some more options and ask other members of the group.
4. Report on meeting with Age Concern Reading: Jenny Ward met with Lesley Sherwood (Chief Officer) and Jane White (Information and Advice Officer) on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup>. This was a very positive meeting and AC Reading are very keen to work with us and to help. They have an application in for some Lottery funding which, if successful, will mean they will be able to appoint 2 Development Workers, and some of their time may be made available for us. Lesley hopes to attend future meetings of the Planning Group, and will send a copy of the Development Plan to Jenny Ward.

5. Opening Doors Conference: This conference is being run by Age Concern England on 30<sup>th</sup> April in London. It is the first national conference aimed at highlighting the needs of older lesbians and gay men. Jenny Ward asked Kenric if they would agree to fund her attendance (£65 per person) and the Kenric Management Committee have agreed to this. In return Jenny will be writing an article on the Conference.
6. Article for Reading Voluntary Action Newsletter: The group agreed the content (Jenny had a deadline of 4/4 to get the item in), although it was pointed out that the name Reading Older Gay and Lesbian Forum had been used. Jenny explained that she had to use a title for the purposes of the article – it is not a problem if we change it as the group is still formulating ideas.
7. Any Other Business: Margaret raised the issue of SAGA and whether we should write to them re leisure activities etc for older gay men and lesbians. Jenny said that she was aware that Rita had been interested in doing so, so we will discuss it at the next meeting.

Nakhat asked if we had considered how we would be achieving our aims and objectives, as donors will want to know that we have clear plans. Gill suggested that we could hold an “Open Day” as a combined information and publicity session, and invite older people as well as service providers. This is the sort of activity that we will need to budget for, and without funding we cannot achieve very much. Gill also suggested that we could contact Basil Newby, who is a gay man and runs a trust fund. He may be willing to help us prior to our funding bid being agreed.

This will be an item for the next meeting as we need to consider a budget and financial implications of plans for the group’s activities.

Jenny Ward also reported that she had attended a “Question Time” today, run by Reading and Berkshire Age Concern, which was broadcast live by BBC Radio Berkshire and hosted by Andrew Peach. The Panel included Jane Griffiths MP, Director of Social Services, a representative of the Primary Care Trust, a member of the Clergy and a representative from the British Legion. Jenny had been able to put a question to the panel about the issues facing older gay men and lesbians, and this had met with a considered and positive response from the Director of Social Services and Jane Griffiths, although the Canon (?St. Marys Butts) had delivered a somewhat less than useful response!

8. Date of next meeting – Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> May, 8pm, again at risc.

