



Better Connection Project

First Steering Group Meeting

Thursday 15 February 2024, 2.00 PM to 4 PM at Mint Methodist Church

Minutes

Present: Mahi Ahmed, Kate Hannan, Muktar Ahmed, Mahsin Mahbub, Alan Quick, Mathew Jose Mangatt, Syed Mishkat Alam, Rachael Skelton (via ZOOM), Arlene Lewis, Amritha James, Joy Okumbor

Apologies: Fasihullah Hakimi, Dawn Rivers

1. Welcome & Apologies

Kate chaired the meeting and welcomed everyone. Apologies noted above.

2. Introducing Partner Groups (Afghan, DBA, Nigerian, Filipino, Kerala and All Souls Day)

Mahi spoke on behalf of Hakimi and introduced Mishkat as the representative of the Devon Bengali Association. Mishkat talked about the Badminton Tournament. He said DBA tries to have three different events each year; Victory Day celebration, Annual Picnic and a community get together.

Joy from the Nigerian community in Exeter told us that they have a new group that they are running currently for the past two years. They have not received any funding and there are at least 300 members in the community. They aim to hold three different events yearly; first one in February (something visually), a children's event in April and the biggest one is Nigerian Independence Day on 1st October.

Amritha introduced herself as the representative of the Kerala Community. The three events they have are Easter Vishu Eid in April, A Sports Day and Onam. They are struggling to find a venue as the number of attendees are very big.

Kate spoke about All Souls Day celebration that was held in St Thomas last year and IE supported them. It was initiated by a Polish lady and a Mexican lady. This is the celebration of remembering the dead and how different communities remember the dead members of the families and their loved ones. It was a smaller event yet very



multicultural. Hence, it fits within the requirements of the Better Connection Project. Kate and Mahi to meet the lady before the launch event.

Arlene introduced herself as the chairman of the Filipino Community Association.

Rachael introduced herself and told us that they are the external evaluators of our Inclusive Communities Project. She is observing how the project has moved on to Better Connection Project.

3. Introduction New Staff

Kate introduced the new staff Neomi as Drop-in Coordinator, Mahsin as Project coordinator and Matthew as the Project Administrator.

4. Project Plan / Budget for the Better Connection Project

Muktar presented the budget plan and explained different components. In total we have put together £21,600 for events and activities. He explained the events must be cross-cultural. We've also budgeted £8,400 for some of our physical activities. Each activity will have 30 sessions.

Mahi explained how we are merging all our previous projects into the new Better Connection project. Therefore, we are not stopping any of the ongoing projects; instead, we are incorporating additional events on top. In the next Steering Group meetings we can invite all our physical activities facilitators.

Kate explained how the lottery works.

5. Nominate Chair for Steering Group

Kate suggested that we should rotate the chair for the meetings. If we have four meetings a year, each time we nominate someone for the meeting. The chair will collaborate with Mahsin to create the agenda for the meeting.

Alan kindly accepted to be the chair for the next meeting. For the second meeting Arlene offered to chair.

6. Confirm Steering Group members –

- **Devon County Council (Councillor) –** Cllr Roger Croad!, Simon Kitchen
- **Exeter City Council –** Dawn Rivers,



- **Live and Move** – Mahi, Rachael
- **Police** – John Heath
- **Councillor (Cllr Martin Pearce)** – Martin Pearce, Roger

Also, Sonia, Emdad and Al-Amin as the physical activities' facilitators.

We could also invite Dr Deborah Morgan, Ed Show, Barbara Beames (if the event is in Wonford area), Community Builders from the relevant areas.

7. Discuss Terms of Reference

Kate informed us that we would need to establish a contract between different partner organizations. This contract will outline the expectations between Inclusive Exeter and the partner organizations.

- Regarding events, Inclusive Exeter will assist our partners in making them more cross-cultural.
- Attendance at all four meetings is expected from everyone involved.
- We would like two representatives from each community to ensure they receive all relevant information discussed at the meetings.
- The communities are allowed to spend the allocated money however they see fit. However, Mahsin and Matthew will work closely with them regarding invoicing.

The Kerala Community's Easter, Vishu, Eid event in April will mark our first community event.

Arlene is still looking for a venue for the next Sports Fest.

Actions:

- *Arrange a meeting with Amritha to discuss the Easter Vishu Eid event in April.*

8. Project Launch planning – Speakers / Guest / Food / Workshop

We had two planning meetings before the Launch Event on 7th March.

Muktar provided a briefing on how the event will commence. Everything went well. The event was a success.



9. Pencil Date of Next Meeting dates for the next two years

Tentative Date for the Next Steering Group meeting: Thursday, 18th April 2024 7 PM – 9 PM at Wonford Community and Learning Centre.

The following ones could be on Thursday 11th July 2024, 17th October 2024 and 23rd January 2025.