



York LGBT Forum Annual Report 2015

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Registered charity number: 1162234

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About Us

The York LGBT Forum is a registered charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) with wider membership, registered charity number 1162234. This structure allows York LGBT Forum full members to have voting rights on the management of the organisation.

The York Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Forum was established in 2006 to act as a strong and unified voice for the local LGBT community. The Forum works on behalf of the York area but is not exclusive to York. We also support people who identify as LGBT internationally.

Owing to our charitable constitution being 22 pages long it was decided not to include the whole constitution within the Annual Report. The objects were created to best demonstrate what our organisation's aims and objectives are. You can request the constitution by contacting us via email.

The objects of the CIO

1. To promote equality and diversity for the public benefit by:
 - The elimination of discrimination in relation to lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex, queer, questioning (LGBT) and allies and associates living within the city of York and its environs;
 - Challenging homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, or any associated negative attitudes and behaviour within society;
 - Working with partners and organisations, public and private, in developing initiatives that will enhance and safeguard LGBT people's lives, ensuring their inclusion in all aspects of life, and that their human rights are protected; and by
 - Advancing education, raising awareness and promoting a culture based on equality and diversity.

2. To promote social inclusion for the public benefit by preventing lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex, queer, questioning people (LGBT) and allies and associates from being socially excluded from society on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity; and

3. To further any other purpose which is charitable according to the law of England and Wales for the public benefit as the trustees see fit from time to time.

The Forum actively promotes awareness and understanding of LGBT needs to enable full participation in society and works with many others to reduce the fear of crime and bullying, particularly in schools. It also encourages greater participation in the prevention and detection of homophobic, transphobic and biphobic discrimination.

Areas we work in



The York LGBT Forum is based in York and the majority of our work is in the city. However we cover York's surrounding environs in North Yorkshire, working in partnership with organisations such as North Yorkshire Police, OLGA (Older Lesbian Gay Bisexual & Transgender Association) in Scarborough and Yorkshire MESMAC.

An Overview of Initiatives

We have worked with the City of York Council (CYC), health organisations, local businesses and organisations to ensure that they are considering the needs and requirements of the LGBT community. We have been included for the first time in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment in which LGBT health inequalities and monitoring were reported as issues the CYC would like to address.

We have written letters to the Russian and Ugandan Ambassadors concerning the anti-gay laws in Russia and Uganda. This year we introduced a new international arm to the Forum which raised over £500 for Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG) as a contribution towards safe housing. We also contributed to Holocaust Memorial Day and are planning LGBT representation in 2016.

We have supported a number of people through the reporting and investigation process of LGBT hate crime and work closely with the North Yorkshire Police. Our hate crime subgroup is working to address the difficulties around reporting LGBT hate crime. It is hoped in the future that the Forum will become a hate crime reporting centre.

We are working towards holding a LGBT creative writing competition for schools in the York area and will award prizes for the best entries. We were unsuccessful in our bid to become Stonewall Education Champions through which we hoped to deliver LGBT awareness raising in schools.

However, we did receive positive reviews about our bid and have been encouraged to apply again in the future. We have also set up a Pinterest site for young LGBT people:

<https://uk.pinterest.com/yorklgbt/youth-lgbt-resources/>

We continued to work this year with York Explore to get LGBT library books purchased, as well as putting together a massive LGBT research resource including books, websites and research reports. You can find this on our website. We are still working towards York's first LGBT archive.

We have supported new and existing LGBT social resources, including the Coffee Morning, LGBT Lesbian Social Group, York LGBT History Month and York Third Saturday.

We have created, piloted and are running care staff training, **Free to be Me**, to raise awareness in care homes of those residents who are LGB or T and how to support them. This has been expanded into training in the workplace for statutory and charitable organisations and businesses.

Representatives on working groups and at meetings

We currently represent the LGBT community on the CYC's Equality Advisory Group, North Yorkshire Police's Independent Advisory Group and Healthwatch York and attend as many policy-making meetings as we can to make sure the voice of the LGBT community is heard.

We have worked closely with many organisations this year, from North Yorkshire Police (NYP) York Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Healthwatch York, York Housing Association, York Pride, York St John University and the University of York on LGBTQ awareness, attending events, giving information and advice and offering the LGBT perspective.

Officer Reports

Co-chair report

Co-chair: Kevin Sell and Lisa Kelly



Kevin is a committed LGBT activist and in addition to being co-chair is involved with the following subgroups: older persons, schools and health and wellbeing. Kevin additionally volunteers for Circles of Support and Accountability (working with sex offenders) and is in the process of becoming a friend of Human Rights Defenders at the Centre for Applied Human Rights - University of York. Kevin is a Quaker, Aston Villa supporter and a qualified counsellor.



Hi, I'm Lisa, Transgender subgroup coordinator and co-chair. I got involved with the Forum because I am passionate about all things LGBT and a campaigner on rights for LGBT people. I firmly believe that with my own experiences of being transgender, I can also help other transgender people along their path towards their chosen gender. I am passionate about bringing transgender issues into the public eye and making York much more accepting of transgender folk along with LGB folk too.

2015 has been a truly momentous one for the Forum. We started with upheaval and major changes to the committee. Since then we have proceeded to first stabilise the Forum and put into place sound structures and then to initiate and develop significant projects. Our subgroups are going from strength to strength with their ongoing projects, some of which are now reaping the rewards of the hard work put into them. You can read all about these in the subgroup reports further on in this annual report.

Perhaps the most significant and far reaching change is the Forum becoming a registered charity, which was officially confirmed on 16th June. Jake Furby and Kevin worked together to develop a new constitution based on a model acceptable to the Charity Commission and to satisfy all their requirements. When we say that Jake and Kevin worked together, we really mean that Jake did the work and Kevin assisted him the best he could and, along with contributions from other Forum members and committee members (now trustees), we got there in the end.

Along with becoming a registered charity come greater responsibilities and so we have been developing policies and procedures appropriate to the Forum's activities and these can be viewed on our website. We regard these as 'living' documents, which can be developed according to our experiences and needs, so feedback is essential to this ongoing work.

The financial position of the Forum has significantly improved but in order to obtain funding we need projects that capture the imagination and can be seen as beneficial to LGBT people, while crucially ensuring that we have the resources to deliver. Members are encouraged to put forward creative ideas for new projects that can be used in funding applications.

The most challenging problem facing the Forum, in our view, is a shortage of activists, willing and able to commit the necessary time and expertise to initiate and develop the projects so important to the Forum's future.

Many LGBT people might believe that all the battles have been won and there is little else to do. While it is true that the UK is one of the best countries, perhaps even the best, for LGBT people to live in, we mustn't lose sight of the fact that there is a significant minority of people dedicated to making life difficult for us. If we are complacent this minority could gain enough influence to unpick the gains made in recent years.

Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic hate crimes and bullying remain serious issues. Young people need support and education about LGBT life to enable them to develop in an environment where sexual orientation and gender identity do not set people apart.

We should also remember that in many countries around the world LGBT people are treated abysmally - our developing International Subgroup needs support and welcomes practical and financial help.

Our appeal to Forum members is to get involved. Everyone is welcome at subgroup meetings and we can only continue to do valuable work through the commitment of members. However much or little you can contribute for the benefit of LGBT people, your support will be greatly valued.

Thank you to all Forum members for your continued and future support.

Treasurer's report

Treasurer: Ian Walker

Receipts & Payments for the year ending: 31st July 2015

Receipts	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	2015 Total Funds	2014 Total Funds
Grants	£ 1,000	£ 500	£ 1,500	£ 700
Donations	£ 1,333	£ -	£ 1,333	£ 103
Training Fees	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -
Total Receipts	£ 2,333	£ 500	£ 2,833	£ 803
Payments				
Marketing, Printing & Leaflets etc	£ 777	£ -	£ 777	£ 232
Stalls & Event costs	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 65
Volunteer Travel & Expense Costs	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 254
Memberships & Subscriptions	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 40
Insurance costs	£ -	£ 80	£ 80	£ 79
Training Materials	£ -	£ 217	£ 217	£ -
Administrative expenses	£ 108	£ -	£ 108	£ -
Bank Charges	£ 8	£ -	£ 8	£ -
Total Payments	£ 893	£ 297	£ 1,190	£ 670
Net of Receipts/ (Payments)	£ 1,440	£ 203	£ 1,643	£ 133
Balance Brought Forward	£ 630	£ -	£ 630	£ 497
Balance Carried Forward	£ 2,070	£ 203	£ 2,273	£ 630

Statement of Assets and Liabilities at: 31st July 2015

Assets	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2015 Total Funds £	2014 Total Funds £
Cash at Bank and in hand				
Current Bank Account	£2,070	£203	£2,273	£630
	£2,070	£203	£2,273	£630
<hr/>				
Liabilities	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2015 Total Funds £	2014 Total Funds £
Independent Review Fee	£54	-	£54	£54
	£54	-	£54	£54
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Older LGBT Subgroup Report

Older LGBT Coordinator: Sue Lister



Sue has been a member of the Committee since the start of the Forum in 2006.

She is a staunch campaigner for all things vegan, organic, green energy (not nuclear or fracking!), women's rights, animal rights, human rights and responsibilities, steady state economics, et al.

Sue is passionate about Older LGBT matters and is ready and willing to take our LGBT awareness training, **FREE TO BE ME**, out into the world!

Group Members

We have been fortunate to have a very committed group attending meetings every six weeks or so with both Forum Co-Chairs, community members, CYC Older People's Housing Advisor and representatives from Age UK York, OCAV, and York MIND. Anyone interested in older people's issues is welcome to attend.

FREE TO BE ME in Care

We were very concerned that most older LGBT people go back into the closet when in need of care so together we have created **Free to be Me**, a 2-hour training session for care staff, which was showcased at the York 50+ Festival on 30 September 2015 and is now available for booking by care homes and care agencies.

Here are some of the comments from our 3 pilot presentations:

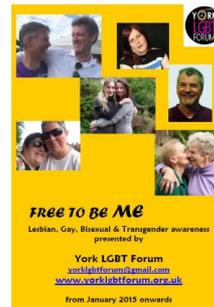
Nice range of people, styles, content. Different approaches give a balanced session...The use of multiple presenters was very effective...Keep the presentation as friendly as it was today...

Dramatically open and engaging. I was surprised...

It made me a lot more aware about the dangers of pre-conceived notions...

Increased awareness of how best to support people within our service...

All homes should have this training; really interesting; brilliant, thank you!



FREE TO BE ME in the Workplace

A one-hour version adapted to the workplace is now ready for pilot presentations. Various organisations have shown a keen interest including the City of York Council, the CVS, the North Yorkshire Police and the Vale of York CCG. If the demand grows, we may have to look at making a video with our 4 presenters, Kevin, Lisa, Ann and Sue. Mind you, having the four of us in person makes for a memorable experience!

Human Rights

Sue & Ann attended the 3-year training, *Our Rights Our Voices*, with Age UK and the Forum received a grant of £500 to incorporate human rights into our work which *Free to be Me* will continue to do.

Funding

Kevin and Jake put forward a bid to the Aviva Community Fund in support of *Free to be Me*, people voted via social media, and we were awarded £1,000 for our project which was a huge step forward. We were then overwhelmed by the generosity of OLGA (the older lesbian, gay, bi and trans association based in Scarborough) who had recently been awarded the title of Community Group of the Year by Stonewall, and passed on £1,000 to the York LGBT Forum to continue our work with the older LGBT community. THANK YOU!

Dementia

As Dementia Champions, Sue and Ann have now run successful information sessions for the North Yorkshire Police, Virgin East Coast Trains and the Halifax Bank as part of the Alzheimer's Society bid to create over one million Dementia Friends by 2015. They are now well over the million and are aiming to reach 4 million by 2020. More research is needed on how dementia affects LGBT individuals.

Contacts

We are in contact with the Care Quality Commission, the Out in Leeds older LGBT social group, the Equity Partnership in Bradford, the Barnsley LGBT Forum, The Last Outing project at the University of Nottingham, the Independent Care Group, York Housing Association, Age Action Alliance and Ageing without Children...among others.

Onwards and upwards!

Schools and Young People Report

Schools and Young People Subgroup Coordinator: Hannah Smith



Hannah works full time as a Business Analyst in IT at the University of York.

Having witnessed & experienced firsthand the struggle of 'coming out', Hannah is passionate about the work the Forum hopes to achieve in relation to its schools initiative.

Hannah is keen to raise awareness of LGBT matters that affect young adults and their families.

What's happened in the last year?

We successfully donated a copy of the "It Gets better" book by Dan Savage & Terry Miller to all secondary schools in York.

The highlight of this activity was donating the book in person to Fulford School in October in conjunction with a visit from Sir Ian McKellen who was only too happy and willing to sign the book on our behalf.

Our Pinterest site continues to grow. The site is a fantastic, colourful resource base of information and signposts for young LGBT people.

In July we applied to the Stonewall Schools Train the Trainer programme. Sadly we were not successful. However our application received extremely positive feedback from the judging panel and here is a quote from the feedback we received:

"We were hugely impressed by your application and demonstrable commitment to this work. However, following a rigorous selection process, we have selected organisations that have the greatest capacity to deliver this training that will ensure the greatest reach, regional spread and diversity. We are however intending to run this project again, so there may well be opportunities in future years to become a training partner. We will notify you of future opportunities to do so.

I want to stress that this is not in any way a reflection of or judgement on your work, which I know is making a real difference in your area and beyond. Indeed, Stonewall relies on working with organisations such as yours so that – together – we can improve the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people."

Alex Newton on behalf of Stonewall

Current Project

Planning for our next schools-related project is well underway and we are very much excited by our proposal. The idea is to hold a creative writing competition for all 11 – 14 year olds in York with the title - 'OutWord Bound'.

Young people from York will be encouraged to write a piece of fiction, non-fiction or poetry that explores the themes of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender life. Entrants may wish to write about their own personal experiences, coming out, bullying, a family experience, the challenges still being faced today by the LGBT community or perhaps a future world view that explores how societal change can help enhance the lives of the LGBT community.

We are working towards a launch date of November 2015 and the closing date will be 31 January 2016. The closing date coincides with the start of LGBT History Month and judging will take place throughout the month. Winners will be announced at the end of February 2016 to mark the end of LGBT History Month. A panel of judges will be selected to critique and assess all submissions. In line with the National Curriculum, our judges will be looking for accuracy, imagination and fluidity. The judging criteria will also take into account originality, enjoyment and relevance to LGBT related issues. In support of the November launch, we plan to donate a second book to all secondary schools (one possibility - ***This Book is Gay*** by James Dawson).

A bid for funding to support our project has recently been submitted to the Richard Weare Endowment Fund. At the time of writing this report, we are waiting the outcome of this bid application.

If we are unsuccessful in our bid, the team still plan to go ahead with the project although a much scaled-back version of the plan will be implemented.

If anyone would like to get involved and help support the project (financially or administratively) then please do get in touch with either Kevin Sell or Hannah Smith.

Trans Subgroup Report

Trans Subgroup Coordinator: Lisa Kelly



The Transgender Subgroup has suffered from very low member numbers. It is a fact that many transgender people in and around York tend to avoid the public eye, especially at night. One of the reasons behind this may be that people have to get dressed and then escape from their neighbourhood without being seen or recognised by people who know them and, once away from their neighbours, they then run the risk of bumping into someone they know when they get into town.

Not all transgender people are people who are transitioning or have transitioned. Those on their chosen path of transitioning need the support of everyone around them and can do without any nasty comments aimed their way when out in public. Those who are quite happy to remain as occasional cross-dressers have different reasons to stay out of the public eye – they may be married and need to do their dressing well away from anyone who could know them or recognise them.

The aim of the Transgender Subgroup is to raise public awareness of issues surrounding transgender people and try to make it more acceptable to the general public; to give people the knowledge they need to avoid any comments or behaviour that could push a transgender person over the edge; and to make it safe for transgender people to go out in public and enjoy a trouble free time.

More than 70% of transgender people have at some stage thought about ending their life.

Over 40% of transgender people have actually attempted to end their life.

These figures are far too high.

November each year sees a week dedicated to transgender people, trans awareness and trans memorial. We hold a candlelight vigil on Transgender Memorial Day at the gates of the Museum Gardens where we remember all those who are no longer with us.

York now has its very own dedicated social night out for transgender people, held in a safe place, Thomas's of York, where we are welcomed by everyone and we welcome everyone to join us for the night. It is York Third Saturday (YTS) and is on the 3rd Saturday of each month.

YTS started out at Monroe's showbar which has now closed and was quite well attended. In January YTS became a 3 pub night but it was soon clear that this format was failing as 2 of the venues meant having to pass hen nights, stag do's, race goers, etc. and so, after a short break, YTS returned in July to its current venue, Thomas's of York, and it is now growing monthly.

The subgroup itself has had a few meetings and is progressing towards to having a hard hitting, but user-friendly information leaflet that we hope the general public will read with interest. We are

also working on approaching outlets in York and challenging them to show that they welcome all people equally and will deal with transphobia if and when it raises its ugly head.

It's early days for these projects and I would urge all LGBT people and allies to come along and get involved, not just with the Transgender Subgroup but with Forum itself.

Health and Wellbeing Subgroup Report

Health and Wellbeing Coordinator: Jake Furby



Jake has a strong counselling background having completed a BA (Hons) Counselling Studies course at York St John University in 2012. During this time Jake also worked with the LGBT Youth Group and York Pride.

Jake is passionate about promoting LGBT rights and has campaigned on many issues including equal marriage, transgender recognition and advocacy for LGBT people across the world.

The Health and Wellbeing Subgroup has furthered its aims since last year. Furthermore the Health and Wellbeing strategy 2014-2017 has been adopted as the strategy of the Forum. One of the major successes regarding the future of the York LGBT Forum was achieving charitable status.

Coffee Morning

The monthly coffee morning drop-in session has been running for over a year and has been successful in engaging people in the LGBT community. The coffee morning has been reviewed twice since its inception and the recommendations have been implemented. It was highlighted that retaining new members has been difficult, advertising the coffee morning has been a struggle and the membership is gay, cis-male oriented. In the first 6 months the average number of attendees was 8; in the second 6 months the average number of attendees was 9. The year review included a questionnaire in which the following positive outcomes were noted: people felt less isolated, there was improved wellbeing and an increase in engagement with the wider LGBT community. Copies of the reports are available. The coffee morning will continue to run every month at MESMAC's York office and there have been discussions about developing the group further to include a variety of social events, including attending the cinema and eateries.

LGBT Social Group

The LGBT Social Group has struggled to be implemented due to lack of funding and resources. The group has had 2 pilots and at the 1st pilot a LGBT history walk had 5 attendees which didn't meet the target of 10 attendees. A further review was issued on 14/05/2015 in which funding was highlighted as a key to the social group's success. So far the group has not been successful in its bid for funding. The social group has created a Facebook page to gain members. Due to the membership of the page being over 100 it was decided to re-launch the social group with the first event being the York Third Saturday. However one could not tell who came for the social group and who did not. The goal of this project is to foster a safe LGBT social community within the city and help reduce isolation amongst the LGBT population. This will be achieved by the group engaging in social activities in the wider community. The project will aim to reduce isolation amongst the diverse age groups of the LGBT population. It will be held five times a year and

appropriate activities will be chosen by members, keeping in mind those who are in poverty and disabled people, therefore funding will be sourced. Reports are available on request.

LGBT Befriending Group

Research was undertaken with the aim of establishing a befriending group. It was decided that currently the York LGBT Forum did not have the resources to offer the service. After a discussion with the Older Lesbian Gay Bi and Trans Association (OLGA) it was agreed that LGBT people who are 55+ could use their telephone befriending service. A report is available on request.

Liaison with City Of York Council

We have been working with the City of York Council on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). For the first time the LGBT community has been acknowledged in the JSNA and we hope to address the following issues together:

- Monitoring sexual orientation and gender identity in services to highlight the needs of the LGBT community as currently there are no records/statistics of LGBT service users in York
- To audit the health and social care system against the LGBT Public Health Outcomes Framework.

Here is the [link](#) to the document:

[http://healthYork.org/the-population-of-york/specific-population-profiles/lesbian,-gay,-bisexual-and-transgender-\(lgbt\)-population.aspx?expandall=true&pdf=true](http://healthYork.org/the-population-of-york/specific-population-profiles/lesbian,-gay,-bisexual-and-transgender-(lgbt)-population.aspx?expandall=true&pdf=true)

Comment: This link does not work. Sue - it works for me!

Youth Group

A LGBT Youth Group has been set up by Yorkshire MESMAC in York and is well attended. In the future it is hoped that the LGBT Youth Group will feed in their needs to both York LGBT Forum and York Pride.

LGBT Healthwatch Champion

Currently the Health and Wellbeing Coordinator is the LGBT Healthwatch Champion and attends meetings with Healthwatch about health and wellbeing services in York. The Forum has been a featured partner in their newsletter, including the LGBT Forum "Free to be Me" training. Looking to the future we will be working with Healthwatch in reviewing HIV services in York and LGBT access to GP surgeries.

Achievements relating to the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2013-2017

The Health and Wellbeing group has met the following targets set in the document:

- LGBT & Care Homes: please see the Older LGBT Subgroup report for more details
- Sexual Health: joint partnership work with MESMAC and North Yorkshire Aids Action is ongoing with the Forum signposting people to MESMAC and North Yorkshire Aids Action for help
- LGBT Police Liaison Officer: please see the Hate Crime Subgroup report
- Please see the Schools' Subgroup report for more details on education.

Future Work

Looking to the future, the Health and Wellbeing Subgroup would like to see the following established in York:

- Counselling Service
- Health and Wellbeing Centre
- Research to be completed
- Hate Crime support line
- Befriending Group
- To work with Lifeline

International Subgroup Report

International Subgroup Coordinators: William Roche and David Sylph

The International Subgroup's aim is to campaign and improve LGBT rights across the world. Although we were voted into position late in the year we have already campaigned on a number of different issues.

Ireland Equal Marriage and Gender Recognition Act 2015

Along with Amnesty International we campaigned for Equal Marriage in the Republic of Ireland. We also promoted and campaigned for the Ireland Gender Recognition Act 2015 and have been involved in trying to replicate this for Britain.

Uganda

York has a history of supporting LGBT rights in Uganda and pays tribute to David Kato, a Ugandan LGBT activist, who studied in York under a protected scholarship, but was murdered on his return to Uganda. We have held a fundraiser for Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG) in which we raised £500 for the charity. We have also written to Dr John Sentamu Archbishop of York addressing the issues LGBT people face in Uganda.

Human Rights Defender Befriender

Our chair Kevin Sell is looking to become a Human Rights Befriender at the University of York's Applied Centre for Human Rights. We have worked with this organisation throughout the year and have had guest speakers from Bulgaria.

Russia

We have written to the Russian Embassy about the discriminatory laws against LGBT people in Russia.

Holocaust Memorial Day

We support Holocaust Memorial Day in York and will be looking at historical persecution of LGBT people and ways to address the persecution of LGBT people today.

Hate Crime Subgroup Report

Hate Crime Coordinator & Hate Crime Community Champion: Jake Furby

Working on LGBT hate crime has been a high priority for this year. In the short time I have been in the post I have been trained in hate crime reporting by York Racial Equality Network and I am now the York LGBT Hate Crime Community Champion. The role will be described on our website and social media pages where it will be explained how the Hate Crime Coordinator can help people who experience incidents of hate crime.

As part of this role I attended a large event at the University of York to address the issue of hate crime. It has been suggested that a hate crime forum should be created.

Hate Crime Reporting Centre

There is still funding available for the York LGBT Forum from the North Yorkshire Police Crime Commissioner to establish a hate crime support line or a similar project. The York LGBT Forum would like members to make suggestions on how to achieve this.

Police Liaison Officers

We currently have two Police Liaison officers who help us to gain a picture of reported hate crime in York and we discuss how we can work together to increase hate crime reporting so that it becomes a more accurate representation of hate crime in York. We are discussing whether LGBT awareness training could be provided by the York LGBT Forum and have discussed the benefits of having a police LGBT staff network. We would like to thank them for helping us address these issues.

Police Independent Advisory Group

Our Co-chair, Kevin Sell, represents the Forum and brings LGBT issues to the table.

Hate Crime Research

North Yorkshire Police Crime Commissioner has commissioned research into North Yorkshire's hate crime to which the York LGBT Forum contributed as well as members of York's LGBT Community.

Vacant Posts

We will be electing new committee members at the AGM who will become "trustees" of the charity. We have developed an easy guide for new trustees to help them to understand their responsibilities. A role description is available for all positions.

If you are interested please email us at yorklgbtforum@gmail.com, give a description of your experiences and attend one of our meetings.

Secretary

We have not had an official Secretary this year however the role has been covered by Sue Lister as Acting Secretary. We would like to thank her for her hard work during this time. We would also like to thank members who helped with the secretary's duties - the support of members is essential to the wellbeing of the York LGBT Forum!

Events

Although this position is now vacant, we would like to thank Richard Wordsworth and Alan Garnett for taking on the role of event coordinators for a short time. With their help, this year we attended York Pride 2015, gained new members for the York LGBT Forum and raised our profile.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all of our members, supporters and partners, including:-

- Aviva Community Fund for the very welcome £1000
- OLGA for their friendship and help and generous £1000 donation
- Mulberry Court Care Home for use of their premises for our Older LGBT Subgroup meetings
- Brigantes for providing rehearsal space for our *Free to be Me* training
- York St John University for providing a room for our monthly Forum meetings
- City of York Council for providing a room for our monthly Committee meetings
- Our CVS friends who have been so helpful over the past year
- The York Explore Library who have always been helpful towards us and followed up the suggestion last year of a mobile library at York Pride by coming back again this year (and also offering judges for our proposed creative writing competition)
- Age Action Alliance for their welcome and support
- Fulprint for the generous sponsorship of our Annual Report!

Corporate Members

Aviva Pride
Conservative Party
Green Party
Healthwatch York
Labour Party
Liberal Democrats
University of York Graduate Students Association
York Early Intervention Team
York Housing Association
York St John University
York Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
York Unitarian Chapel

Messages from our Partners and Allies

"It's really encouraging the way the York LGBT Forum has become an integral part of civic life in York, playing its part in making the city a better place to live. The council welcomes the forum having achieved charity status and looks forward to working with you where possible on future initiatives to benefit residents of York". *Cllr. Chris Steward, Leader of the City of York Council*

"York LGBT Forum provides practical action to ensure that York is an inclusive welcoming city. I would like to thank everyone involved in making your own activities and York Pride so successful this year." *Cllr. Andy D'Agorne, Leader of the CYC Green Group*

"Having championed the areas of Equality, inclusion and diversity all my life in a private capacity and for over 6 yrs on the council, the last 4 yrs spent as Lead Member on the City of York council's Local Government Association Equalities and Diversity Peer review for which we achieved Excellence status in December 2014, I can honestly say that the input from the York LGBT Forum and the evidence base from the partnership working they undertake with the council and with many other key organisations in the city proved to be an invaluable tool on our road to achieving Excellence. I know the council value their work and they should be very proud of the progress they have made over the last year in raising awareness of LGBT issues and forging new partnerships". *Cllr. Sonja Crisp, The Right Honourable The Lord Mayor of York*

York Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust values the work of the Forum promoting awareness of LGBT issues and supporting the Trust to assess our Equality Delivery System. We would like to thank them for their continued support. *Margaret Milburn, Equality & Diversity Facilitator*

"I would like to congratulate the York LGBT Forum on its fantastic work in 2015. The Forum plays a vital role in making sure the voice of the LGBT community is heard and in helping to create a more open and inclusive society for all residents in York. As this report makes clear the Forum has undertaken some great initiatives this year, including Coffee Mornings, Social Groups and the York LGBT History Month. Looking ahead I wish the Forum every success in 2016 as it embarks on its first full year as a registered charity."

Cllr Keith Aspden, Liberal Democrat Group Leader and Deputy Leader of City of York Council

"It's encouraging to see that the Forum is going from strength to strength and remains dedicated to the LGBT community in York. We look forward to more partnership working with the Forum and appreciate the skills and knowledge that they willingly offer to their members".

Julia Histon, CEO York Housing Association