

Registered Charity 1162234

YORK LGBT FORUM.ORG.UK

Don't Hide Your Heart!



Annual Report 2018

Friday 9th November

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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 the 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.

The objects of the Forum

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.

You can request the constitution by contacting us via email: yorklgbtforum@gmail.com.



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.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Bring On Tomorrow

We knew what we were taking on right from the start; the Barbican is a huge venue to fill. Not just audience wise, but cast, staging and music. We were entering the world of theatre and everything had to be considered from lighting, sound, props to costume, music and casting.

The technical staff at the Barbican were a huge help and they readily made things available for us to use, they negotiated on rates for us with suppliers and they made the get-in process so easy and smooth.

Between York St John University, Acomb Working Men's Club, John Cooper Studio and the Railway Institute we were able to arrange our rehearsals and we thank them all for their support.

Sam Melvin was a huge talented help - he took the pressure off me during rehearsals to play the piano. He played a huge part in the production and continued through to be lead pianist in the live orchestra.

Jessica Douglas stepped in at the last moment as our Musical Director - I had already prepped her, done all the music cuts and orchestrations, collected a list of musicians together and arranged all the band pieces. Jessica turned up on the day and led the orchestra brilliantly - she took the helm and whipped the cast into shape.

Our cast was put together from various amateur groups around the area - both LGBT and Straight allies who wanted to make a difference took part. It was a huge group effort and felt like a family. We were also lucky to have the volunteered services of our great narrators - Lisa Kelly, Jayne Knowles from YO1 Radio, Beth McCarthy, Jonathan Blake and Mr Gay Scotland (Steven Whyte). They all fitted nicely into the group and brought the piece together.

The event was put together to raise awareness around LGBT issues we face in society still today and more importantly to raise the profile of the LGBT Forum and spread the word about the great work we do 365 days of the year. We faced a lot of negativity around the project and were subjected to speculation that we would fail.

I, hand on heart as the creator of the project, take full responsibility for what went on that stage and what we delivered to the public. I have had numerous letters, emails, texts and messages since the event from the public saying how much they enjoyed it. I have had comments on how it has 'changed their perception', 'opened their eyes', 'made them understand' or simply just 'brought them enjoyment'. This is a huge achievement, this is what we measure the success of the project on.

Out of the 270 audience members, if 1% went away being affected, changed, enlightened or entertained; then we did our job.

This event was not meant to be a profit-making venture or a corporate sponsored event. It was carefully planned, put together with consideration for our community and delivered with pride and a purpose. Our financial records are open for everyone to see - the event did not make a profit. It made a small loss - but it gained in memberships, encouraging feedback, new business networks, new allies and it got York into the LGBT mainstream press in the UK. It showed York and our

LGBT community that we care, we support and we are here every day to fight for equality, social inclusion and that we have not forgotten how we got here.

We look forward to the coming year when we are going to be revisiting our hate crime awareness play 'Vincent River'. We urge everyone to come along and support the event in June 2019.

FINANCIAL REPORT 2017-2018

Unrestricted Income	Restricted Income	Total 2017-2018	2016-2017
£4,375	£33,533	£37,908	£4,608

Unrestricted Expenditure	Restricted Expenditure	Total 2017-2018	2016-2017
£6,406	£20,604	£27,010	£5,051

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total 2017-2018	2016-2017
Balance Brought Forward	£2,811	£134	£2,945	£3,388
Balance Carried Forward	£780	£13,063	£13,843	£2,945

Note: At the time of writing this Annual Report the accounts have not been independently audited.

OUR FUNDERS THIS YEAR

Name	Project	Fund
Lord Mayor Charity of the Year Fund	Mental Health, Free to be Me, Trans and Schools and Young People	£10,685.75
York Mind	Weekly Mental Health Group	£2,000
Joseph Rowntree Foundation	Mental Health, Free to be Me, Coffee Drop ins	£3,620
I Will Fund	Schools and Young People	£3,850
Police Property Fund	Hate Crime	£1,160
Big Lottery Fund	Mental Health (Peer Support)	£7,920
Comic Relief	York LGBT Centre Research	£4,600

We have been successful in gaining funding from the Foyle Foundation £2,000. This is for our IT Infrastructure project. We would like to thank all our funders.

CO-CHAIRS' REPORT – Ian Holdsworth and Lisa Kelly



The past year has been another hugely successful year for the Forum. We have brought our logo up to date with the vibrant rainbow heart design and launched our online shop, and our long awaited human rights garden became a reality too.

Sue Lister, a founder member of the Forum and our older LGBT subgroup coordinator, received her MBE from Prince William – a day to remember!

Lisa Kelly, our transgender subgroup coordinator, had her book, *Becoming Lisa*, published.

Our major event of the year, *Bring on Tomorrow* at the Barbican was also a big hit, raising the Forum's profile and raising awareness of LGBT history and issues through an excellent script and music.

Each and every one of our subgroups is working on important projects or is planning their next big project, and each of our subgroup coordinators deserves a round of applause for all their hard work throughout the year. It's a small team of active volunteers who all give up their precious time freely to make these projects work, often at their own expense.

We began our financial year on a very strong financial footing and, although our balance looks extremely healthy, it must be noted that most of our funds have been given or awarded in such a way that they can only be used for certain types of projects and we do need to be very careful with our general funds. You can help us with that. We are not asking for money; we ask that you help us with new ideas and new projects that can bring in some funds whilst raising awareness of the issues LGBT people still face in this country. So please do consider joining our subgroups and getting involved in some way, shape or form.

York is a fantastic city to live in, steeped in history and a major tourist destination, so whilst the good people of York may be on the whole largely accepting of LGBT people, the tourist element is an unknown quantity, as is the race-going fraternity, and pockets of abuse towards LGBT people still occur.

We should also remember that whilst in the UK we are free to live our lives openly, have marriage equality and laws that protect LGBT people, there are still areas that the UK must improve on especially with bullying in schools, invisibility in old age and general health care.

We only need to look towards other countries like America where the transgender rights have been all but wiped out, to realise that hard fought for rights can be systematically taken away by the state, so we cannot afford to rest on our laurels. We can congratulate each other on the rights and acceptance we have won over recent years....but we need to remain on guard.

Next year is the 50th Anniversary of the Stonewall Riots. We must never forget how far we have come since then and we must ensure we never need to have a modern Stonewall to keep and improve the rights we have gained.

We look forward to another successful year ahead, but please do give some serious thought to joining our team, it is your forum and your voice.

OLDER LGBT SUBGROUP REPORT: *Coordinator – Sue Lister MBE*

Free to be Me in Care has been the focus of the past year with the following successful presentations:

3 Aug.17	The Millings	Bedale
19 Sept.	St John's House	Kirk Hammerton
17 Nov.	Westfield Park	Goole
17 Apr.18	Wilf Ward Trust	Pickering
3 May/9Aug	Beverley Parklands	Beverley
14Aug/5Dec	The Water Mill	Walsall
29 Aug.	Larchfield Manor	Harrogate
30 Aug.	Wilf Ward Trust	Acomb
7 Nov.	Age UK York	York



During this time Kevin Sell announced that he would be moving to the Manchester area and, after half a dozen rehearsals, Ian Holdsworth stepped in as his replacement in May. Thank you Ian! Repeat bookings came in from Walsall, Yorkare, Wilf Ward Trust and Age UK York which shows our training is effective and valued.

Spurred on by the need to reach out to more distant areas of the country, and having enough money in hand from the Lord Mayor's Charity last year to pay for it, we booked in with Digifish in July with the aim of creating a DVD and online training to offer as part of the Forum's LGBT awareness raising for anyone working with older people anywhere in the country...and beyond. Watch for the launch on the York LGBT Forum website.

We will need help with the marketing. Please get in touch if you can lend a hand. The more networks we can access, the better!

Meanwhile, ***Paper Bag People*** (the Real People Theatre contribution to Free to be Me in Care) played at the Birmingham NEC in April as part of the Dementia Care & Nursing Home Expo. Hundreds rocked to the sound of Kathy Kirby's version of "Secret Love" – Ann and I think they got the message!

Our other major theme for the year was **ageing without the support of nearby children or family**, circumstances that affect the majority of LGBT people and millions of straight people. You are 'awoc' if you have never been able to have children, you never wanted children, your children are disabled or have died or moved away, or you are estranged from your children. The question is

*"Who will speak up for me and lend a hand when
I can no longer cope on my own?"*

In January 2016 Sue and Ann started **AWOC York**, a monthly group on the second Wednesday of the month at the Cross Keys on Goodramgate, alternating between afternoons and evenings. It's now the longest running and most successful group in the country. Notes from our speakers and discussions, along with details of relevant resources, are circulated to about 140 people. We are a peer-to-peer support group. Give Sue Lister a ring on 01904 488870 if you're interested. You can gain an overview of the issue on the national AWOC website at www.awoc.org.



Up to the eyes in AWOC issues, the Real People Theatre created ***NO KIDDING*** for York International Women's Festival in March 2018. Ten scenarios presented by a cast of ten generated discussions and involved the audience. The Lord Mayor, Cllr Barbara Boyce, and Civic Party attended and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive. In fact we were invited down to Todmorden for the Pushing Up Daisies Festival in May, presented extracts for the CYC Health & Wellbeing Board in April and the Festival of Ideas at the University of York in June, and revived the show for the York 50+ Festival on 6th October. "Have show, will travel." Onwards!

SCHOOLS & YOUTH SUBGROUP REPORT *Coordinator – Emily Roach*



Emily is a former lawyer who is now a full-time PhD candidate at the University of York, writing a thesis on transgender performance poets on YouTube. Emily's research extends to queering popular culture, online fan communities and post-Stonewall LGBT American fiction, including young adult fiction. Emily remembers when Section 28 was still in force and is committed to creative initiatives like the OutWord Bound project, which encourages young, diverse voices.

OutWord Bound Project. In 2018 we ran the third OutWord Bound Project creative writing competition for young people, in conjunction with York LGBT History Month. Based on feedback from 2016 and 2017, we developed a new timeline to enable as many schools as possible to participate in OutWord Bound in 2018, although the inclement weather at the start of the year and unexpected school closures impacted the number of entries we received. Manor Academy and Millthorpe School continued to be big supporters of the competition and we are grateful to staff at those schools for promoting the competition. The tone of many of the entries continues to highlight the importance of working with schools in the local community, capturing the anxieties of LGBT youth. We received approximately thirty entries and for the first year awarded a copy of Sandra Mitchell's *'All Out: The No Longer Secret Stories of Queer Teens Throughout the Ages'* to the prize winners together with monetary prizes. The prize giving event was generously hosted by Aviva and took place in April this year.

Youth Social Action Programme. As part of the government's #iwill campaign, designed to encourage young people to get involved with activism, Two Ridings Community Foundation has provided a generous grant to allow York LGBT Forum to roll out the successful Free to Be Me theatre project in schools. We are working with several volunteers from the University of York and York St John to develop a version of York LGBT Forum's popular Free to Be Me project which can be used in school assemblies to raise awareness of issues faced by LGBT teens and to promote a strong anti-bullying message. The funding has also enabled the Forum to produce brochures for schools, highlighting the work undertaken by the four primary LGBT charities in York (York LGBT Forum, York LGBT History Month, York Pride and Mesmac). We aim to send a pack of materials to the secondary schools in York this autumn and hope to be in a position to launch our Free to Be Me project by the end of the year.

Young Adult Fiction Book Club. Later this year we will be launching our LGBT book club, another initiative that is possible thanks to the Youth Social Action Programme funding. This group is aimed at young people aged 14 – 21 who are interested in LGBT young adult fiction. We will be reading a new book for each session and hosting meetings for the group to discuss the books together.

Other Initiatives. As part of the pack we will be sending to schools, we intend to provide a copy of a LGBT book to local secondary schools, an initiative the York LGBT Forum has funded for several years. This year we will be presenting *'The Full Spectrum: A New Generation of Writing about Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, and Other Identities,'* edited by David Levithan and Billy Merrell.

TRANSGENDER SUBGROUP REPORT *Coordinator – Lisa Kelly*



The past year has not been a great year for transgender people, with the media spotlight shining firmly on us. In previous years I have been warning the community about the issues in America around transgender rights and their anti-trans bathroom bills, and how those issues could easily cross the sea and become issues here, and that is exactly what has happened.

The media coverage has been at least 90% negative with weekly articles against transgender people and in particular against planned reforms to the gender recognition act of 2004.

With the Equality Act 2010, we don't have to worry about which bathroom to use, but this does not make it any safer for any transgender person going into a bathroom, But we cannot stand by idly while this movement gathers momentum, it must be quashed quickly and effectively, we cannot rely on our tabloid press who consistently run stories that damage our community.

What we need is everyone, our friends, family, allies and our LGBT community, to get behind us and help us in our time of need. The government's public consultation on proposed changes to the gender recognition act closed in October and we anxiously await the outcome. The changes, if passed, will make life much easier and less stressful for transgender people, if not, transgender people will be plunged back into the dark ages of the 70s.

I have spent the past couple of years speaking to organisations and businesses about issues facing transgender people and, by and large, public perception is improving but we are in the midst of an onslaught in the media. This is not helped by a minority section of our own community who oppose transgender people having any legal recognition or rights, demonstrated at London Pride in front of the world media when a small group hijacked the parade to protest against the Gender Recognition Act.

On a much brighter note, the transgender workshops have been hugely successful and spread further afield via outreach workers from gender clinics and other LGBT groups.

I myself have been quite prominent in local media, a portrait painted by Tanya Rabbe-Webber hangs at Beningbrough Hall and leads visitors into their 'women of power' exhibition, I introduced the film *A Fantastic Woman* about a transgender woman, at the City Screen in York which was well covered by local media and radio and my own book, *Becoming Lisa*, was finally published and is on sale in bookshops and online – with all the profits being divided between York's three main LGBT charities.

We have laid the foundations. York is a great city, but to build on those foundations we do need more people to get involved. I am donating a signed copy of my book to every secondary school in York and in the surrounding areas of York. My book is a seedling, a way into these wider communities, and the opportunity to grow that seedling and raise awareness in these suburbs and

towns can hopefully be grasped with both hands. It's a chance to reduce homophobia and transphobia within smaller communities and to help to make these places a safer place for any person to be able to come out and be themselves, whether they are transgender, gender fluid, non-binary, bisexual, lesbian, gay or any other gender identity or sexual orientation.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING REPORT: *Coordinator – Jake Furby*



Jake has worked with the LGBT Youth Group, York LGBT History Month 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 projects since last year and has influenced the York LGBT Forum 2017-2020 strategy focusing on the wellbeing of people. Based on this, the subgroup has created its own strategy and prioritised its projects. These are some of the project highlights this year.

Yor-Peer Support Group

We have been in partnership with Yor-Peer Support Group since January 2017 a not-for-profit voluntary organisation with membership. The support group is peer led and the Forum is helping Yor-Peer Support Group to become a registered charity. Jake is the vice chair of the organisation and one of the facilitators. We managed to secure funding from the Big Lottery Fund and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. The group meets twice a month on a Tuesday evening. Our key aim is to help people with, or who have or been affected by, mental ill-health. The York LGBT Forum believes in the social model of mental ill-health. One of the key projects is self-care kits which focus on ways of managing mental health distress and crisis.

York Mind LGBT Mental Health Support Group

We were successful in a joint bid with York Mind to deliver a LGBT Mental Health Group. The funding comes from the City of York Council. Health and Wellbeing Subgroup member and member of the Forum, Mark Haddon, has been facilitating the group.

Coffee Socials

The monthly coffee morning drop-in session has been running for over four years and has been successful in engaging people in the LGBT community. We have on average about 14 attendees a month. The coffee morning will continue to run every first Saturday of the month at MESMAC's York office. Because of the success of the coffee morning we have developed a coffee evening social which is funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Photography Course

S'ana Yates, a member of the Health and Wellbeing Subgroup and a member of the Forum, wanted to offer his skills in photography and offer a short 6 month course in the subject. The photography course was well attended, highly professional and brought in new people to the Forum. We would like to thank S'ana for all his hard work. The photos from York Pride will be touring the City of York!

York LGBT Centre Research

Our members have often said that York is lacking a LGBT Centre. Owing to this we applied to Comic Relief for funding focusing on a feasibility study. We were successful in our bid and are currently running a survey on the potential for a LGBT Centre.

Human Rights Garden

Jake had a vision of having a Human Rights Garden to celebrate York becoming a Human Rights City. After 3 years negotiating with the City of York Council we have been given an area in Clarence Gardens. We are doing this project jointly with The Conservation Volunteers.

Community Choir

Wayne Dawson wanted to offer his skills as a community choir facilitator for LGBT people. The Forum thought the idea was great and we initiated a 6-week trial. The trial was successful with an average of 16 people attending. We are aiming to get funding for the group.

Future Projects

1. Counselling Service
2. Finish the LGBT Centre Consultation
3. Sports and Activities Coordinators

INTERNATIONAL SUBGROUP REPORT: *Coordinator – Katie Becker*



The international subgroup supports the rights of LGBT+ people throughout the world, and has been very busy this year as there have been a lot of changes to laws and attitudes in many countries, both for better and for worse.

We were honoured to work with two LGBT+ Human Rights Defenders from Kenya who spent six months in York. The situation in Kenya is life-threatening for LGBT+ people, as they can face 14 years in prison, and authorities turn a blind eye to LGBT+ people being beaten, raped and killed. We are supporting several projects which our Human Rights Defender friends are setting up, and are selling beaded wristbands made by Kenyan LGBT+ women and refugees, as well as applying for funding for their projects.

In December we took part in Amnesty UK LGBTI's 'Write for Rights' campaign which supported individuals and lobbied governments on specific issues throughout the world.

In March we set up a York LGBT Forum group on www.meetup.com, and this quickly attracted over 150 members. This continues to be a successful way of advertising our social events, especially to those who don't use Facebook.

We have liaised with Central York MP Rachael Maskell throughout the year and she has been very supportive of our Kenyan friends.

There have been lots of distressing events in the news, such as the appalling treatment of trans women in Indonesia, and the repeal of marriage equality laws in Bermuda. In each case we endeavour to contact either Rachael Maskell, the Foreign Secretary, or the relevant Embassy or Consulate involved. We also wore red at our coffee morning in April, in solidarity with Justice for Chechnya (our photos were seen and retweeted many times).

We feel it is important to show solidarity with our LGBT+ siblings around the world, and that individuals and small groups CAN make a difference. This was shown in April, when gay sex was decriminalised in Trinidad and Tobago thanks to the almost singlehanded effort of human rights activist Jason Jones (who personally responded to our congratulatory tweet!). More good news came in April to Costa Rica, whose new, LGBT+ friendly president won a resounding victory.

Our international subgroup coordinator, Katie Becker, took part in Tokyo Rainbow Pride in May, speaking to many LGBT+ representatives from around the world, recording a video of support for equal marriage in Taiwan, and proudly waving York LGBT Forum's flag alongside European Ambassadors in the parade through Tokyo.

In June, we were photographed with posters of support for Swaziland's first ever Pride. These photos were shown on a large screen at Swaziland Pride, sending an important message of international solidarity to those in the parade.

Looking to the future, we will continue to support the Kenyan projects, as well as SMUG (LGBT+ safe houses in Uganda), and continue to lobby governments so that LGBT+ people everywhere can live their lives without prejudice and with pride.

BISEXUAL SUBGROUP REPORT: *Coordinator – Emily Roach*

Emily is a former lawyer who is now a full-time PhD candidate at the University of York, writing a thesis on transgender performance poets on YouTube. Emily's research extends to queering popular culture, online fan communities and post-Stonewall LGBT American fiction, including young adult fiction. Emily also researches bisexual erasure in mainstream media. Emily is a Stonewall Bisexuality Role Model.

The group was established earlier last year after recognising a need for specific representation in the work of the York LGBT Forum. Although bisexuality forms part of the LGBT acronym, it is still the case that bisexuals can often feel unwelcome in LGBT community spaces as well as in non-LGBT spaces. The presence of this group is designed to break down those fears and demonstrate that bisexual people are very welcome at York LGBT Forum events. Feeling invisible or erased has been proven to have a significant impact on mental health and the York LGBT Forum has always strived to be a place for people who identify with a sexuality outside the gay/straight binary – offering support to people who might feel erased or ignored by other LGBT organisations.

Establishing a bisexuality subgroup was a positive step towards letting bi+ people know that they are welcome at events organised by the York LGBT Forum and to encourage more bi+ people to get involved with their local LGBT community. The group has grown over the course of the year and we host bi-monthly meetings at The Cross Keys pub in Goodramgate. The word 'bisexuality' in the context of this subgroup is used as an umbrella term and events organised by the subgroup welcome people who identify with a non-binary sexuality, including bisexual, pansexual, demisexual, bi-curious, fluid, queer and so on, together with their allies. The group has a Twitter account and can be found @YorkBiGroup and all announcements for upcoming meetings are shared on the York LGBT Forum's Facebook page.

In other news. The York LGBT Forum proudly waved the bisexual flag at York Pride and continues to promote bi visibility in the local community, recognising bisexuality and other non-binary sexualities as an important part of LGBT identity. The subgroup will continue to work with people interested in events over the course of the coming months, to establish meet-and-greets beyond our bi-monthly pub meeting and to offer a comprehensive set of resources to those who are exploring their sexuality or who identify as somewhere on the bi spectrum.

HATE CRIME SUBGROUP REPORT: Position Vacant

We have been successful in a funding bid to develop Hate Crime Memes. This project is now being developed by one of our partners, Outsource.

The LGBT Forum is represented on the police Independent Advisory Group (IAG). The IAG is a district based group of independent community members from diverse backgrounds. The group meets to discuss community issues and act as a critical friend to North Yorkshire Police. The group is designed to improve policing and the confidence of our communities and to be dynamic and evolving to move with the changes within policing demands.

EVENTS SUBGROUP REPORT: *Coordinator – Steven Clark*



This year has been a strong year for events within the Forum. We teamed up with the Nags Head pub for some outdoor ventures; our 'After Pride Party' with Lloyd Daniels was a great success. Our hate crime walk again this year was well received and supported and our smaller events such as quiz nights, karaoke and curries have also been well supported.

We did however push boundaries and braved our critics by forging ahead with our biggest event to date, *Bring On Tomorrow*, which is our project highlight.

SELBY SUBGROUP REPORT: Quinn Brown

Quinn joined the Forum to be our first Outreach Subgroup Coordinator in Selby. Quinn has managed to organise

- A regular coffee evening social group
- A mental health group
- Attended and facilitated LGBT Social Nights

If you would like to be part of the subgroup contact Quinn via yorklgbtorum@gmail.com

MESSAGES FROM OUR PARTNERS & ALLIES

The Real People Theatre Company has been a partner in *Free To Be Me In Care* since its creation in 2015 and our *Paper Bag People* continues to engage staff in care homes with their hitherto invisible LGBT residents. Do you want to “go silently into that good night” still locked in the closet? If not, then we need to promote our LGBT awareness training in all care settings and hopefully our new online version will reach out nationally and internationally. Congratulations to the York LGBT Forum for enabling this work to flourish, helping to create a sea change in the culture of care.

Marije Davidson, Equality and Diversity Adviser "At York St John University we believe that York LGBT Forum is instrumental in empowering the LGBTQ+ community. We greatly appreciate the support that they give us in providing an inclusive, welcoming and safe environment for our LGBT+ staff, students and visitors. We are pleased that the Forum continues to hold their meetings at our campus."

Rachael Maskell MP York LGBT Forum provides such excellent solidarity, friendship and practical support for York's LGBT community, across the region and beyond. The work of the Forum has ensured that York is a safe, welcoming and inclusive city. I congratulate the Forum for the advocacy it has brought to challenge and change York and ensure that we live up to our accolade as the UK's Human Rights City.

Vicky Blakey-Archer York Mind

Now in its second year of delivery, York Mind are working with York LGBT forum as part of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Activities Programme. Within this partnership, York LGBT forum are delivering a weekly wellbeing group, providing a safe and supportive environment for members of the LGBT community who are experiencing difficulties with their emotional wellbeing.

York Mind is committed to ensuring that we are creating an inclusive, safe space for people who need mental health support and we look forward to seeing the LGBT wellbeing group growing in members, enabling us to increase our support to members of the LGBT community.

Cllr Keith Aspden, Leader of the York Liberal Democrat Group

Over the course of the 2017, the York LGBT Forum has played a pivotal role in increasing the awareness of issues facing the LGBT community across the city. There have been many activities and events held over the last year and this has been a credit to the membership of the Forum. 2017 has been an excellent year and congratulations are in order for everyone involved; I wish all the best for 2018!

Cllr Ian Gillies Leader of the Council

As always York Conservatives are pleased to support the work of the York LGBT Forum. Although society's attitudes towards members of the LGBT community have advanced almost out of recognition over the last several decades, it's still so important to have a forum working hard to ensure that we live in a tolerant, open and respectful society.

Rachel Earnshaw The Conservation Volunteer

TCV are loving developing the Human Rights Garden in Clarence Gardens with York LGBT forum. It is a unique idea and enables everyone to join in and be creative through planting and as the garden develops we will see the benefits to wildlife and the community.