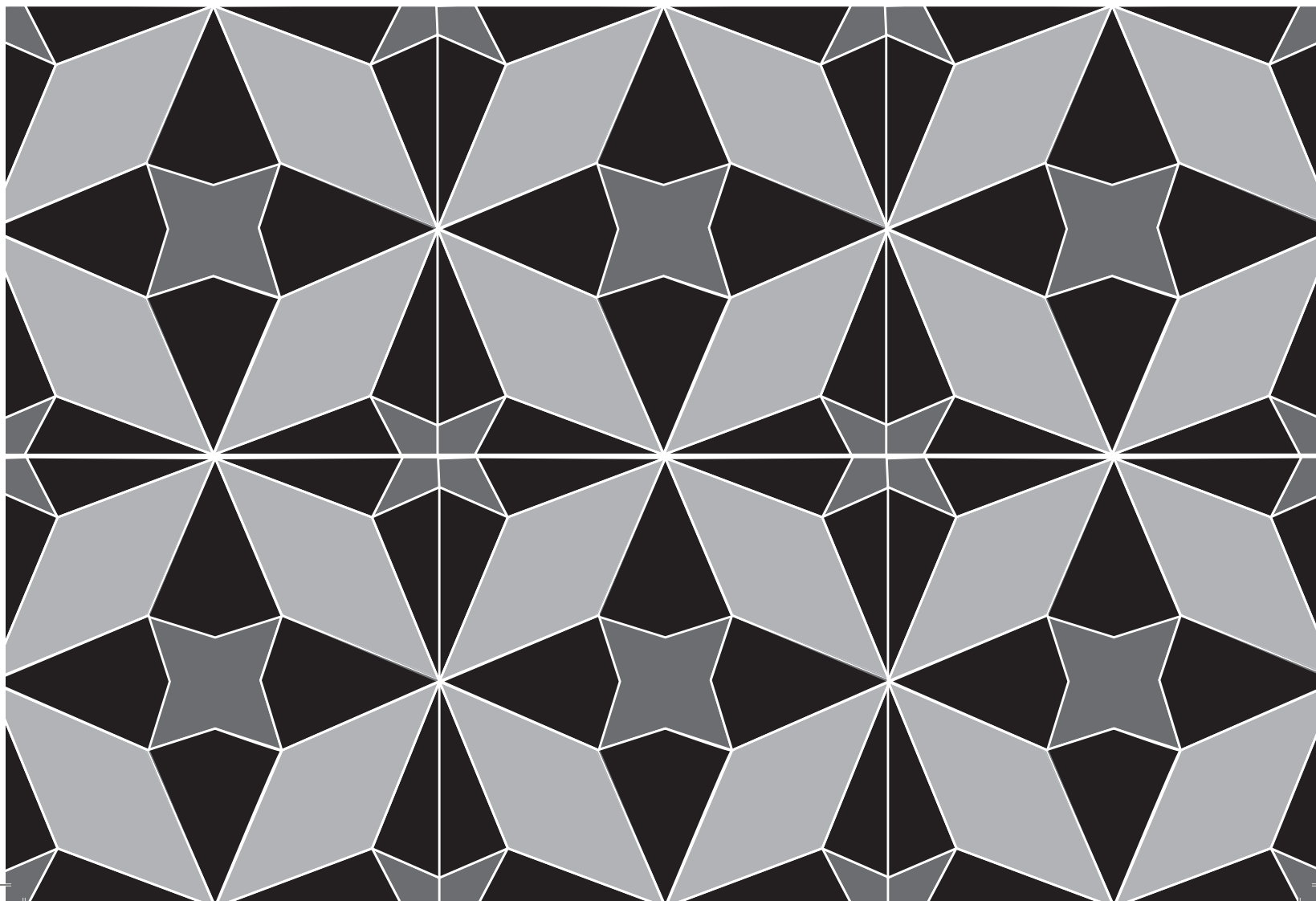


YOUR VOICE

NEWSLETTER OF THE BLACK & MINORITY ETHNIC FORUM PROJECT

NORTH SOMERSET JANUARY 2007



FIRST FORUM MEETING

On Thursday 26th October 34 people from 16 different nationalities - taking in Africa, Asia, South America and Europe - came together for the first meeting of the North Somerset Black and Minority Ethnic Forum. There was a buzz of excitement about the meeting and it was clear that the Forum was very much welcomed by all present. Jamshid Ahmadi spoke about the experience of the Somerset Black Development Agency which he chairs. He explained how the Agency had come about and developed, from a small beginning some two years ago into a body which now is an umbrella organisation for BME groups in Somerset. Jamshid's clear and encouraging talk gave a vision of what the Forum could develop into which led to a very positive and productive discussion. Various issues were raised which will be looked into more fully over the coming months.



All hands were raised when the question was put whether to set up a Forum for North Somerset and it was agreed that the Forum would meet every 3 months. A steering committee was elected which will guide the work of the project and plan future Forum meetings.

If you would like to know more about the Forum and when it will be meeting please contact the project.

MEETING OF POLISH COMMUNITY

On Tuesday 19th September a meeting was held at the Badger Centre for the Polish community in North Somerset with the Honorary Polish Consul from Bristol, George Peszynski. There were speakers from NHS Direct on the National Health Service and from the Immigration Service on issues for people coming to work in Britain such as the Worker Registration Scheme. They spoke in English (an interpreter was available but not needed) and covered a variety of topics which led to many questions and some useful advice. People then enjoyed hearing the Consul address them in Polish. The meeting was well attended, and everyone agreed that it would be useful to have regular meetings combining information with an opportunity for people to meet up socially.

The next meeting is planned for Wednesday 10th January and will be held at The Campus, Highlands Lane, Locking Castle, Weston.

For more information contact the project on 01934 414455



We are going to produce this newsletter every two months, if you would be interested in attending a focus group to feedback on content, look, distribution etc. please contact us using the details supplied on the back page.

ARE YOU BEING TREATED “FAIR”LY?

North Somerset Citizen's Advice Bureau, which is based at the new Badger Centre in Wadham Street, Weston-super-Mare, is launching a new Strategy called FAIR. This stands for Fair, Accessible, Inclusive and Relevant.

In the past, we have assumed that everyone who lives or works in North Somerset knows about us, and knows that our advice service is free, confidential, and impartial, and available to all regardless of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, age or nationality. But now we are reaching out to find those groups or individuals who may be experiencing discrimination because of who they are, and who may not realise we are there for them.

So if you are suffering from racial discrimination - at work; when buying goods or services; when trying to buy or rent somewhere to live; at school or college; or when dealing with the Council or the Police - come and talk to one of our advisers about your rights.

We provide a drop-in service on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday
10am to 3pm at the Badger Centre, Wadham Street, Weston-super-Mare

On Thursdays we provide a Telephone service only
10am to 3pm Telephone: 0870 121 2017

We also provide drop-in services in Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead on certain days of the week. Visit our website www.northsomersetcab.org for more details.

YOUR NORTH SOMERSET

On Sunday 21st January 2007, North Somerset Council, Avon and Somerset Police and North Somerset Primary Care Trust are running their second Your North Somerset event at the Winter Gardens in Weston-super-Mare.

The event will be open from 12 midday until 4pm.

This event focuses on people from minority ethnic communities who our research shows are less likely to use public services. We will be showing people what services are available to them and how they can make use of these services. Information available will include:

- How to access health services
- Housing advice
- Employment information
- Crime reduction and community safety advice

While the main aim is to share information about North Somerset Council, Avon and Somerset Police and North Somerset Primary Care Trust the event will also feature food-tasting from around the world, entertainment, fun activities for children and a crèche.

People from all communities of North Somerset are welcome to attend this event.

If you would like further information please call 01934 634832 or email equality@n-somerset.gov.uk.

Louise Roberts
Equality and Diversity Manager
louise.roberts@n-somerset.gov.uk
01934 634832

**Your contributions
to future newsletters would
be very welcome.**

**Let us know what interests you,
details about future events,
websites, exciting recipes etc!**

See contact details
on the back page

USEFUL WEBSITES:

www.srec.org.uk - Somerset Racial Equality Council

www.equalitysouthwest.org.uk - Equality South West

www.blink.org.uk - Black Information Link

www.cre.gov.uk - Commission for Racial Equality

www.asylumbristol.org.uk - Bristol Defend the Asylum Seekers Campaign

Found any interesting or useful websites that you would like to share with others? send us the details using the contacts on the back page.

FREE COURSES!!!

**Do you need help with your English?
Do you want to learn something interesting?**

If your answer is yes, we from the Community Learning Service at North Somerset Council can arrange a course for you.

We can offer a 10 hour course, spread out over 5 weeks, to help you with your English before you go to the College, or do any other course you are interested in. It can be computers, arts and crafts, relaxation, healthy cooking, aromatherapy, make-up or anything else you would like to learn.

These courses can be run at a time and place to suit you and we can also help if you need childcare or an interpreter.

And if after this course you would like to do another course we can provide all the information, advice and support you need.

Everything is free!

If you are interested call Cirlei (Chile) Ioris, Community Learning Development Worker on 01275 884968 or contact The BME Forum Project on 01934 414455



**WITH BEST WISHES
FOR THE NEW YEAR
TO ALL OUR READERS**

VICTIM SUPPORT AVONVALE

Victim Support is a charity that exists to help victims of crime. Victims often feel upset and angry because of the crime and talking to someone can help relieve some of that anger and fear.

When a person is referred to us, we get in touch by letter or phone to offer our help. If a victim requires a visit from a volunteer this can be arranged and the victim and volunteer then meet either at home or in a neutral place.

Volunteers are well trained and can suggest ways of helping/finding further help. They can assist filling in forms, and help with claims for physical injury compensation.

You do not have to be a victim of serious crime or even to have reported a crime to the police to receive our help. Whatever the crime, be it racist, violent or not, Victim Support is available to help. We are here to help you. Please do not hesitate to get in touch – you may be surprised how much we can help!

We can be reached in North Somerset by phone on 01934 638179 or by letter at Victim Support, The Police Station, Walliscote Road, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 1UU or on the web www.victimsupport.org

To contact us phone 01934 414455, email: bmeproject@srec.org.uk or write to us at Badger Centre, 3-6 Wadham Street, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 1JY