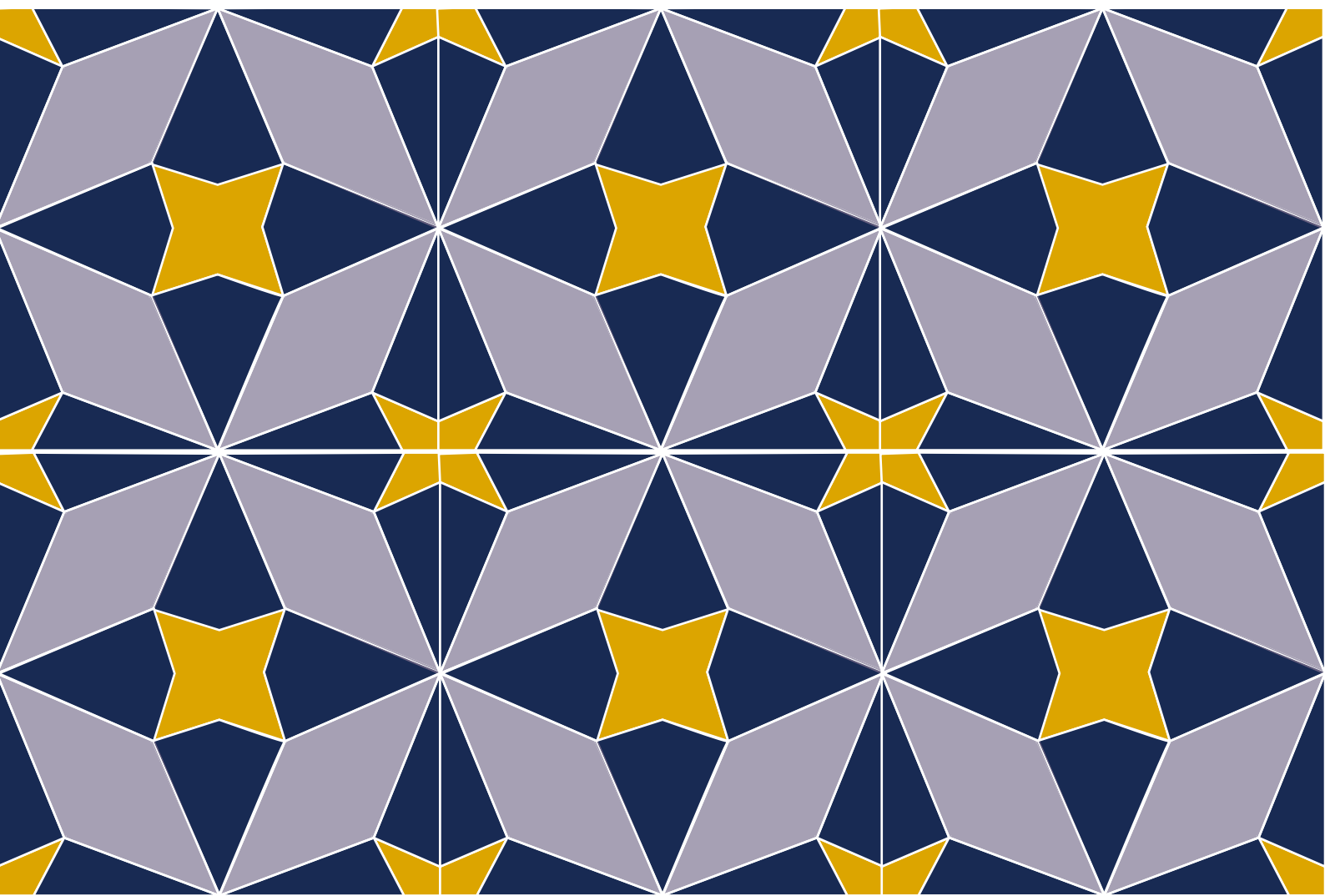


YOUR VOICE

NEWSLETTER OF THE BLACK & MINORITY ETHNIC FORUM PROJECT

NORTH SOMERSET JULY 2006



WHAT THE PROJECT IS ABOUT

This is a new project which has been set up to reach out to people from minority ethnic backgrounds to ensure they are receiving appropriate services, link people up with one another and help groups evolve and develop so that they can become self-supporting. This may involve practical help with venues for meetings, arranging training or help with funding applications. We also will aim to engage with existing groups and networks with the aim of setting up a Forum for all people in North Somerset of minority ethnic origin.

A Black and Minority Ethnic Forum can

- give the minority ethnic community a voice
- be a focal point for the BME voluntary sector in North Somerset
- provide mutual support in the face of difficulties and prejudice
- lobby for the ethnic minority community
- help BME groups and individuals fully participate in the economic and social life of the area
- have an influence on local policies
- contribute to the planning and development of local services
- highlight the contribution to the area made by BME citizens
- make a real difference to the lives of all people from BME back grounds in North Somerset

WHO ARE WE?

There are two of us employed on the project : **Quentin Isaac and Lesley Scally**. Lesley offers a casework service to help people find the services they need, while Quentin is looking at the ethnic makeup of North Somerset and how this is changing. Both of us are working to set up the Forum. **Phone us on 01934 4144 55 or email bmeproject@srec.org.uk**

The project is paid for by money from the Big Lottery and is run by Somerset Racial Equality Council.

WHERE ARE WE?

On Tuesday 30th May the Black & Minority Ethnic Forum Project moved to the newly renovated Badger Centre, previously the Heritage Centre on Wadham Street. The Badger Centre is a new multi-purpose centre for individuals and voluntary groups in North Somerset. It is situated in the heart of Weston-Super-Mare within a magnificent Victorian building that has been converted to create a contemporary and vibrant hub for community and voluntary activity.

A wide range of services and facilities are available here, including office space, meeting rooms, an advice and information point and coffee shop. The Badger Centre is also home to other key organisations, the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), The Quartet Community Foundation and Voluntary Action North Somerset (VANS). North Somerset now has a dedicated centre offering coordinated support and services to local people and voluntary groups. Contact the badger centre or call in at the reception desk to find out how it can help you.



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

BLACK & MINORITY ETHNIC FORUM MEETING

As previously mentioned in this news letter we are try to bring together as many Black & Minority Ethnic people as possible to become part of the Forum. The benefits of the Forum have already been explained. Our aim is to have the first meeting at the end of October. As we are still unsure of the number of people that do have an interest we are asking you to contact us in any form. Whether you would like to write a letter, give us a call, send an e-mail or even come to the office in person you are more than welcome.

When you do contact us we will ask for your contact details and find out what day and time are best for you in general, hopefully will then be able to try and cater for everyone's needs.

By taking part in the Forum you will get the chance to have your say within North Somerset, the area you live and work in.

So what do you have to lose?

Updates will be printed in the bi-monthly newsletter giving you the chance to monitor the progress.

**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

NEED ANY HELP?

Are you aware of all the services that you are entitled to? Do you have problems accessing services that you know you are entitled to?

The Forum Project offers a case work service to Black & Minority Ethnic people who are unsure of what their entitlements are. It is mainly a sign posting service helping people to see what is available to them and their families. We are also available to help complete any forms that you may need to fill out.

The service is there for anyone who is unsure about anything, if we don't know the answer we will find someone who does. This service has now been operating for 4 months and so far we have helped many individuals who were not sure what to do or where to go. So if you feel the same please do not hesitate to contact us and we will be sure to try and help in what ever way we can.

OF INTEREST TO GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS

We have a directory of contacts providing services to travelling people in England and Wales, which is produced by Friends Families and Travellers (FFT), a national voluntary organisation that was set up just over ten years ago to provide support, advice and representation to Gypsies and other Travellers.

FFT says "This directory is one of several independent specialist services which FFT offers to Travelling People and related service-providers. Our organisation is recognised nationally as having expertise in Gypsy and Traveller issues and our representatives sit on a number of local authority policy development panels at county and regional levels. We are also official consultees of the Gypsy Unit at the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE)."

Please contact us for information from the directory using the 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 below.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Any ideas for celebrating Black History month this October?

If you have any suggestions or plans please let us know.

Next year is the 200th Anniversary of the abolition of slavery in Britain. Ideas for marking this important event would be very welcome, particularly celebrating the role played by Black campaigners.

AFTERNOON TEA WITH A TOUCH OF SPICE

The Community Safety & Drug Action Team did themselves justice on Saturday 27th May when they brought together the Mothers Union and the Other Women's Network. The Other Women's Network performed a number of acts ranging from classical singing to Thai dancing. The event was refreshing and helped to give all in attendance an insight into other people's cultures and ways of life. The Other Women's network also provided a collection of mouth watering traditional Thai and Filipino food whilst the Mothers Union provided the liquid refreshments. The afternoon was enjoyed by all and was a learning experience for all in attendance. Well done Ladies.



TYNTESFIELD

Did you know that during the 2nd World War Tyntesfield, the estate at Wraxall in North Somerset now owned by the National Trust, was used as an army hospital for American soldiers? In line with the US policy of racial segregation at the time (the Jim Crow laws), there were separate hospitals for black and white soldiers within the grounds with a considerable distance between them. There are plans to do some research into this, the impact that the hospital and its patients had on local people and their attitudes at the time to segregation.

If you know anything about this, know someone who was affected or would be interested to find out more please get in touch. We'll let you know what we find out in future newsletters.

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