

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

EAST AYRSHIRE WOMEN'S FORUM

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 1 MARCH 1999 AT 1400 HOURS IN THE MEETING ROOM, COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS, LONDON ROAD, KILMARNOCK

PRESENT: Councillors Jane Darnbrough, Irene Reeves, Jim O'Neill and Eric Jackson.

ATTENDING: Fiona Lees, Depute Chief Executive; John F Crawford, Head of Protective Services; Helen Bingham, Kilmarnock Women's Aid; Marlene Campbell, Area Manager, Housing Department; Marion Kelso, Personnel Services; Claire Livingston, Kilmarnock Town Centre Management Initiative; Susan McGregor, Community Education; Janet McGowan, Union of Catholic Mothers; Cathie Murphy, Union of Catholic Mothers; Sergeant Hugh Mitchell, Police Liaison Officer; Robert Patterson, Victim Support; June Peter, Finance Department; Carol Sinclair, Female and Child Unit, Strathclyde Police; Karen Tang, Business Advisor, Development Services; Yvonne Ward, Female and Child Unit, Strathclyde Police; and Melanie Macleod, Administrative Officer.

APOLOGIES: Councillor Douglas Reid; and Kirsty Ramage, Bellsbank Women's Project; Heather Gray, Hansel Community Support ; and Robert Leitch, Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce.

CHAIR: Councillor Jane Darnbrough, Chair.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

1. There was submitted and noted as a correct record the Minute of the meeting of the East Ayrshire Women's Forum held on 3 November 1998 (circulated).

MATTERS ARISING

2. There were no matters arising from the Minute of the previous meeting of the East Ayrshire Women's Forum.

REVIEW OF WOMEN'S FORUM COMPOSITION

3. There was submitted a report dated 21 January 1999 (circulated) by the Chair of the Officers' Working Group which invited the Forum to review its composition.

It was agreed:-

- (i) to note that Hazel Bingham, whose name appeared in the Appendix to the report against Kilmarnock Women's Aid, Cumnock Women's Aid and East Ayrshire Zero Tolerance, represented only Kilmarnock Women's Aid; and
- (ii) that the Director of Community Services write to East Ayrshire Zero Tolerance, Cumnock Women's Aid and the Rape Counselling and Resource Centre inviting them to participate in the Women's Forum.

REVIEW OF AREAS OF INTEREST TO THE WOMEN'S FORUM

4. There was submitted a report dated 21 January 1999 (circulated) by the Chair of the Officers' Working Group which invited the Women's Forum to review its areas of interest.

It was agreed that the following be added to the Women's Forum's areas of interest, viz:- Benefits/Welfare Rights; Caring and Carers Initiatives; the interior design of Public Sector Housing; the promotion of good health; and take-up of Health Services.

PRESENTATION FROM VICTIM SUPPORT

5. Robert Patterson, Area Co-ordinator for the charity Victim Support in East Ayrshire gave a presentation on the background to the Victim Support organisation, its aims and objectives and the ways in which it sought to support the victims of crime.

The expansion of Victim Support since its inception in 1972, was outlined, to a point in 1998 where 40,000 victims of crime throughout Scotland were supported by volunteer Victim Support visitors. It was explained that referrals to the service came from a variety of sources, such as the Council's Social Work Service, hospitals, GPs or victims themselves, though the majority of referrals came from the Police. The support offered by volunteer visitors ranged from providing a listening ear to offering assistance with insurance and criminal injuries claims.

Statistics were cited from the Social Work document "Costs, Sentencing Profiles and the Criminal Justice System, 1995" on crimes committed and expenditure associated with processing offenders. It was pointed out that victims themselves seemed to have been largely disregarded in the context of this document and it was suggested that this only served to highlight the importance of Victim Support in helping victims of crime.

Mr Patterson referred to information leaflets which would be available at the end of the meeting.

PRESENTATION ON SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE

6. It was noted that this item had been withdrawn from the Agenda, but would be presented at a later date.

"MAKING WOMEN SEEN AND HEARD"

7. The Head of Protective Services referred to a questionnaire which members of the Women's Forum would be requested to complete at the conclusion of the meeting and which would be circulated for completion to those not present, which sought background information on the role of organisations represented on the Women's Forum and their perception of the role of the Forum.

Following discussion, it was agreed that Officers explore the possibility of arranging an afternoon workshop or seminar to examine the role and future development of the Women's Forum.

CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN IN EAST AYRSHIRE

8. There was submitted a report dated 11 February 1999 (circulated) by the Police Liaison Officer which advised the Forum on the instants of Crime Against Women in East Ayrshire.

It was agreed:-

- (i) that future statistics include a breakdown of the age groups of those women who had been involved in crime in East Ayrshire, either as the victim or offender; and
- (ii) that the Head of Protective Services investigate the possibility of inviting a representative of the Criminal Justice System to speak to the Women's Forum on the processing of offenders.

ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

9. Following discussion, a number of topics were identified as possible Agenda Items for future meetings of the Women's Forum, viz:- presentations by some of the organisations represented on the Women's Forum and the establishment of a calendar of events, including both local and national initiatives, which the Women's Forum would wish to support throughout the year.

The meeting terminated at 1512 hours.

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