

**MEETING OF THE BIRMINGHAM COMMONWEALTH ASSOCIATION –
COMMUNITIES**

**MONDAY 14TH JULY 2014 AT 11.00AM IN COMMITTEE ROOM A, EDUCATION
BUILDING ,MARGARET STREET , BIRMINGHAM**

Attendees

Marcia Lewinson – Waits Action

Richard Francis – First National Bakery

Heather Law - BCC – International Team

Mike Murray – BCC – International Team

Garry Peal – BCC – Sports and Events

Marcia McLaughlin – The Phoenix Newspaper

Stuart Hatley – The Phoenix Newspaper

Steve Williams – The Phoenix Newspaper

Daniel Riley – The Phoenix Newspaper

Satpal Hira – BCC – Communities

Beverly Lindsay – Association of Jamaican Nationals

Angela Denton – Walter James Photography

Bentley Cunningham – Jamaican Cultural Association

Keith Stokes Smith – Honorary Consul, Lithuania

Wade Lyn, CBE – Honorary Consul, Jamaica

1. Welcome and introductions

Keith Stokes-Smith-Chairman of the Commonwealth Association

- The Distinctly Birmingham strategy sets out the overarching objectives of all four area focused associations, comprising: China; North America; Europe and the Commonwealth (CW)
- The CW has three distinct subgroups: culture; business and trade and education. A fourth is currently being considered – sport and culture
- Has contacted many different community groups to encourage participation – including High Commissions.

Mike Murray-Birmingham City Council support

- Both Mike Murray and Heather Law provide council support to the association. Unfortunately there is no funding from BCC, other than their time.
- Within the parameter of the DB strategy, the association can shape its outcomes and direction.

Heather Law-Birmingham City Council support

- Is to support the association by helping to identify publicity opportunities, plus raise awareness of EU funding opportunities which may be available.

Focus Group Chairman-Mr Wade Lyn, CBE

- Is delighted to chair the group in order to get it off the ground.
- Wants to achieve better cohesion within the Commonwealth communities. The group will also cut across into trade/education.
- Is keen to identify practical outcomes and measure the activities of the group.
- We need to identify publicity opportunities e.g. Commonwealth day – 10th March
- Sept 11th 2015 – Queen will have exceeded Queen Victoria in terms of length of reign by one day and we should mark this.
- Both KSS and WL are keen to increase the diversity of stakeholders around the table.
- Is keen to identify what the priorities are for the group.
- Communities meetings should occur every three months. However, there is flexibility in this and the group could convene more frequently depending on need.
- In terms of co-ordination of meetings, BCC will assist, plus Wade has support, as well as KSS.

WJ – Offered to publicise the network on his facebook page.

WL: First objective of the network should be to promote the website

BL: has a data base of 30,000 contacts

Marcia M: The Phoenix newspaper has a readership of 80,000. This could be a potential source of outreach.

KSS- Has publicised the group on a radio interviews with Dave Prince, People Community Radio

1. How could we do the elements of current engagement more effectively by working together?

- Desire to get a cross section of the communities to events.
- Need to target community organisations and then ask key people to represent the communities via an invitation.

2. What new forms of engagement should we be doing/considering?

- Currently we have a website; are doing radio interviews; have invited people to attend the meetings and have used existing networks – Beverley and Wade's
- We could also make use of the Phoenix's reach
- SH has access to other communities through his work in the equalities department. He will circulate to the social cohesion forum and faith organisations. There are about 680 organisations which can help us achieve our objectives.
- We aren't looking for a great volume of representation, but rather ambassadors who are able to promote the activity of the group.
- The group should consider developing a flyer/ terms of reference
- Perhaps consider having a launch- three – six months' time.

5. What priorities should we be looking at?

Widen representation

Find new/better ways of publicising our existence

Promote website and raise profile of events taking place

Issues to consider going forward:

- Consider women's issues
- Community safety
- Five aside football and cricket
- August – Annual Independence Service commemorating 100 anniversary of WW1 with Lord Lieutenant of the West Indian regiment.
- 18th October – national heritage week at Aston Villa in relation to unsung heroes in the community
- Consider branding of events with CW Association logo

6. Date of next meeting: 10th September 3pm, Committee Room 6, Council House.