

Southend Youth Council September Meeting

Youth in attendance:

Edward Feddon (EF)- Youth Mayor
Nadia Ahmed (NA)- Deputy Youth Mayor
Isreal Genius (IJ)- MYP & Election Officer
Andy Wilkins (AW)- YEA Member & School Reps Co-Ordinator
James Finn (JF)- Junior 3rd Sector Officer
Saffron Reinecke (SR)- LGBT+ Officer
Felix Johnson (FJ)- Chancellor & 3rd Sector Officer
Maise Riley (MR)- Chase School Rep
Theo Paphitis (TP)
Eugene Vlas (EV)
Cat Letley (CL)
Jessica Chapman (JC)
Zia Mitha (ZM)
Madi Noakes (MN)
Matt England (ME)
Muhammad Ibrahim (MI)
Marco Mann (MM)
Bayley Soper (BS)
Charlotte Fasey (CF)
Helen Jones (HJ)
Yasmin Bey (YB)
Jasmine Thompson (JT)
Clara Marks (CM)
Naomi Malamba (NM)
Saidhbh Brien (SB)
John Jenkins (JJ1)- Minute Taker
(Kelly Redston (KR) - Youth Worker)
Gina Denham (GD)
Cllr Alex Bright (AB)
Cllr Ann Jones (AJ)

Apologies:

Katie Chester
Devang Thacker
Bertha Sibanda
Joshua Naish
Daisy Sampson
Iorath Bennett

Bolded - actions from meeting

The meeting was opened by Edward Feddon at 17:06

EF - Welcome to (my last) meeting. Hope all had a good summer - congrats to everyone at their new sixth forms. Welcomed newcomers to SYC. Introduced youth councillors.

AB - Last time at YC meeting - I was deputy Youth Mayor, good to be back. Introduced himself as cllr for Southchurch ward (youngest cllr). Part of Holocaust Memorial Day Working Party - annual service. Next service on Sun 28th Jan. Asked to come along and see if YC is interested in getting involved. Looking for a school/youth group that would like to make a presentation. Young person's perspective on Holocaust - time frame of 5 minutes. Perhaps someone who was visited a death camp abroad, or someone who is involved in any projects/would like to be involved in projects. Leigh North Street Junior School had slides and a presentation of the project. The Mayor & Dignitaries will be in attendance. A holocaust survivor may be present. Here to answer questions.

IG - When were you DYM?

AB - 2010/11.

KR - FJ ahas printed records of SYC - started in 1951.

IG - Has spoken to Cllrs and is attempting to get the records.

GD - Powerpoint about my personal experience, which will be different to a young person's experience. Came out in 1998 - someone adopted a typical mind - still evident now. Someone believes you share the same values and believes. Came out whilst in the police force. No peer support groups - front pages reported about me. I didn't come out because of the social contexts around that time - many rules and bans in place. I lived a double life - never fully transitioned in old force. I was 'myself' in the evenings. Couldn't come out/transition properly as the old force muted me. Once I transferred to Essex police in 2007, I transitioned. People still make bigoted comments today. Was always listening out to see if Essex police made derogatory comments - officers were ethical. Was encouraged to be myself by the force. The concept of coming out as a straight ally is in a project with Stonewall. My journey has been one of gender dysphoria - have met some amazing people along the way since I've come out. I see the world in colour, rather than in black and white. In 2014, I found the polar opposite of 1998. We should celebrate our differences. Small things like having two warrant cards made me more comfortable in the force.

Values and Beliefs - as pertinent now as it was in the past. People exaggerate what transitioning means to them. In May 2014, when I saw my GP, the first told me I was too old to transition and was encouraged to get counselling. GP asked if my wife 'tolerated' me. Some trans people transition to something which they're not anyway - I do what I want, not what is expected of me. My mum encouraged me to 'not have a sex change'. Dad - 'how far transgender are you going to get?' Words & Phrases - I visited a fast food outlet, and asked for raffle prizes - did not end well. Defined transgender, cisgender, non-binary, cross-dresser.

Gender Clinics - Very slow moving. 3 years from being referred to having third appointment. Slow process. Peer support is important to sign-post process. Work that SYC are doing is very important.

NHS Experiences - many of our members go to doctors' surgeries. Doctors tell people to go to counselling, tell trans people they are going against God's will. Survey took place with Transpire members. 78% said GP did not give appropriate advice. 66% said GP did not have good understanding.

Mental Health - 48% trans people under 26 had attempted suicide, 59% had considered (recent survey.) Students are worried about the LGBT suicide rate for trans people. Peer support give someone a sense of belonging and self esteem. Researchers found a number of factors influence this suicide rate. The more forms of discrimination transgender people will experience, the more likely they are to commit suicide. Some people have de-transitioned because it was so difficult. I could never go back to the person I was, living a lie.

Peer Support - Transpire has roughly 380 members, I started it in 2016. Set up because not everyone has supportive family/employer. Transpire provides friendship as not everyone is supported by their friends and family. Transpire also chaperones people to doctors and GP surgeries. Hate crime ambassadors work within Transpire.

Bureaucracy - tried to change exam certificates. Struggle to change data such as marriage certificate informations. Many have experienced unsupportive environments. I tried hard to be liked and approved of, and now I am happy as who I am. Not sure if Gina Denham would've chosen to join the police?

Inequality - had to prove that I had lived in the acquired gender for two years. Government recognise training needed to be put in place, but put fireman in the report. Action plan currently in place.

Manager's Checklist - slowly faded away when transitioned. I plan to retire next year, so I have made a Manager's Checklist, which may also be initiated within the council. It asks, have you considered the following things?

Everyone has an opinion - number of typical questions asked regularly, all controversial.

Changing your perspective - we are all superheroes with a gift, we are all different and unique.

There is someone sat next to you who has problems with themselves going on.

Reflection - someone from old police force outed me, but they didn't judge me.

Have come today as a representative of Transpire, and would like to work with SYC.

Open questions up to the floor.

What is a typical mind?

GD - Googled it, you see things through a set mindset. "I never did like football, but the men on the team assumed I liked football" Innocent example of a typical mind. Some people, with they typical mind, sees things as impossible.

TP - How did the operation take place? NHS?

GD - Female to male is very expensive. Top surgery is roughly £6,000. Surgery for someone transitioning from male to female is £15,000. I funded my own transition to a certain extent. Many different types of surgery all cost varying amounts. NHS waiting lists are very long - can take up to 6 years to begin surgical procedures.

NA - One sentence to someone starting their journey.

GD - Be yourself, it worked for me and will do for you. We can't tell people what they should do.

GD - Literature has been passed around (and will be further by email). We have one monthly meeting on a Saturday at Attic Cafe. Have just been given money from the People's Health Trust - we want you to help people have fun - to reduce social isolation and bring people together. In October, it is hate crime awareness week, we are doing an event in Victoria Shopping Centre. We will also be in Castle Point this week. On 20th November, it is Transgender Day of Remembrance. We had good attendance last year with a candle vigil. Perhaps flag raising of Trans flag. 300 people killed worldwide last year just because they are trans.

SB - How long did it take you to accept who you are?

GD - I didn't know what trans was in high school. When I was 5, I had my earliest recollection of it. Had no role models, fought against who society wanted me to be. It wasn't until 96/97 that I had a laptops and could google what it really meant. I don't regret my past, but I am so glad of where I am today.

TP - Was there any physical impairments after op?

GD - Was on hormones and was watching a film, in which something happens to a dog. I was really upset at this, had never cried or felt like this in the past. Hormones are so powerful and can change you. My run time slowed down - became slower. I find it interesting if I meet someone who is transitioning female to male. I appreciate nature far more now.

EF - Welcome back. BBQ was a success. Attended the people scrutiny committee group. I am leaving after this meeting

NA - Transport meeting was good. Arriva wants young people to learn more about prices, and a way in which schools can purchase cheaper tickets on behalf of students. Attended another event with IG, we will have a stall.

IG - Make your mark (MYM) got almost 1 million ballots last year. Need to survey young people in Southend, got 5,000 last year. We would like 50%. Have contacted all local groups. Need to ensure all in schools will get ballot filled in. We don't have all schools represented here. Will also communicate with schools that we aren't linked with.

FJ - Does everyone need to fill it in?

IG - Spoil ballot.

AW - Colleges?

KR - Clarify if it is an Essex vote or Southend vote.

KR - All schools have a letter and 20 ballots. **Further information will be put on SYC website.**

IG - Mental health campaign. I am running for vice chair on NHS CCG advisory board. Looking to set up a peer support group for young people through 1 in 4. On Healthwatch board of directors. Over next couple of weeks, will put together a team for research and implementation. Other opportunities - YMCA mental health day in October - **to be clarified** - will partner with them for that.

MYM is very important and all votes need to be in by the next YC meeting.

EV - Was reading on SBC website that SYC was for 13-19.

IG - We operate on year 7-14.

IG - Will **share tally sheets**.

KR - **Happy to go out and share with schools.**

AJ - **Email information to Cllrs distribution list please - members' secretary.**

SR - LGBT update. Had a few meetings - with Gina and with Dan from SAVS. Looking positive, is a process. In the process of figuring things out. Will organise a committee meeting, **will be circulated.**

EF - Farewell speech, **will be circulated.**

EF - AOB

JF - Transport meeting - outside SYC, I will be getting a depot tour at Arriva. **Questions to be asked through Kelly.** Deadline of one week.

KR - Have sent out an email to EF & NA. Convention 2 coming up on Saturday 7th October. Cannot make this date. IG will be going. Open invite **will be sent out.** There are financial limitations. Emma will be going. **Response deadline is next Wednesday.** Could pay for 3 members to visit.

- 50th Anniversary of decriminalisation of homosexuality in UK - **to be sent out.**

AW - planning on reforming what I am doing in the next month. Contact on social media.

KR - Election next meeting. If you want to stand for YM, please let me know. FJ has requested hustings - **will look into it on time slots. Let know RE standing for election in next week.**