

Community Base participant group meeting 25th October 2007

The meeting was attended by Colin and Annette (Community Base), Vic (Carers Centre), Louise (Working Together Project), Olivia (NHS Support Federation), Elinore (Carr-Gomm), Ros (AMAZE), Katy (Community and Voluntary Sector Forum) and Jane (Assert and Community Base trustee)

1 Heating

Annette mentioned that we were getting gadgets that allow heaters to be programmed to turn off on particular nights, for instance at weekends or when a group was away, but come on the night before the room is used again. Vic asked if an email reminding people about this could be sent out and it was agreed to do this.

2 Ecubes

Colin reported that we had bought ecubes to make our fridges more efficient but they were not suitable for our fridges as they are domestic fridges, something we'd not been told when we got them.

3 Tables

Louise requested that we get two more table for the conference room. Ros agreed with this suggestion. Annette and Colin said they would look into it.

4 Mice

Annette reported that the mice problem was under control but that it was impossible to make the building mice-proof. Vic emphasised the importance of not leaving food waste in desk bins as this would attract them

5 Request for dishwasher in the conference room

Colin said he had had a request for a dishwasher in the conference room and wanted to give his reasons for believing this would not be a good idea and get views from people at the meeting. He gave a number of reasons

- As our water is heated by solar panels, and a dishwasher would heat its own water, a dishwasher would negate the point of having solar panels, increasing our use of unrenovable energy when we are trying to reduce the energy use of the building. We have been advised by the Carbon Trust against getting a dishwasher on energy efficiency grounds
- At present groups have to leave the conference room and its kitchen clean and tidy and put dishes away at the end of a hire period. If a dishwasher was used during the day groups would have to come back to put away loads, put in second loads and so on while other groups were using the room
- If the dishwasher was used during the day there would be noise and inconvenience for groups while it was running
- If the dishwasher was only used at night by paid staff, the suggestion that has been made to the board, this would be unhygienic, with dirty plates and cups lying in the kitchen throughout hot summer days and groups wanting to use plates and cups later in the day sometimes not being able to find clean ones
- A dishwasher would cost money to buy, install and maintain and cost electricity to replace the current solar powered energy we use. If used only at night, we would need to employ people to come in late at night, but only some nights, to be paid unsocial hours rates to put on a number of dishwasher loads then put away dishes. This would lead to increased charges for room users.

Ros said a dishwasher would breach the principle that groups leave the conference room clean and tidy and with dishes and cups put away. Jane said that dishwashers were very hygienic but that putting one in the conference room would lead to disruption for groups – Assert could not have held their recent agm if a dishwasher was going during it.

Vic said the issue had arisen because of the difficulties of the current washing up arrangements with water that is not hot enough, a sink that is not very big and groups having to find time to wash up, something they didn't need to before. Katy thought having a dishwasher was sensible because having to wash up by hand made the working day longer for staff putting on events. Katy agreed the water wasn't hot enough.

Louise said washing up was difficult at the moment as it took time, the sink was not big enough and there were not enough dish towels. Jane said that a dishwasher would not handle all dishes for even a medium size event in one load and wondered who would manage the second and third load? Ros suggested that having two sinks, a bigger one and a rinsing one, and a good rack would make washing up in the conference room kitchen a lot easier. Ros also suggested mugs be taken away and washed properly by the cleaners periodically.

Annette said she would look into making sure water was hot enough (though not too hot!). Colin said he thought there had been a lot of useful suggestions and that the board was going to be discussing the issue at its next meeting on 6th November.

6 Xmas party

Colin asked for suggestions for the xmas party. Jane suggested putting posters up about it. There was general agreement to have it on a Thursday, either 13th or 20th December. Katy though previous xmas parties had been too light and Annette agreed to get fairy lights. Colin agreed to look into getting a cake. It was agreed to ask Ade's band to play and put a picture of his unicycling bagpipe playing on the poster as a surefire crowd puller.