



**Date:** 29 September 2011  
**Time:** 11.00 am – 1.00 pm  
**Venue:** Barton Hill Settlement

**DISCLAIMER:** These meeting minutes are **DRAFT** minutes. And their status will remain that of a draft until approved at the subsequent meeting.

## Bristol Somali Forum Minutes

**Type of meeting:** BSF Monthly Meeting

**Chaired by:** Abdi Mohamed

### Attendance

| Name                | Title                           | Representing/Organisation             |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Said Burale         | Treasurer                       | Bristol Somali Forum                  |
| Abdi Mohamed        | Secretary                       | Bristol Somali Forum                  |
| Claire LittleJohn   | Development Worker              | Bristol Link                          |
| Rhian Loughlin      | Head of Services                | Wellspring Healthy Living Centre      |
| Suad Abdullahi      | Project Manager                 | Migration Impact Fund, BCC            |
| Habon Ibrahim       | Pastoral Support Worker         | Fairfield High School                 |
| Muna Abdi           | Chair                           | Somali Women's Voice/Amaana           |
| Nick White          | Participation Director          | Travelling Light Theatre Co.          |
| Khalif Noor         | Education Officer               | Hannah More Primary School            |
| Phil Cotgreave      | Team Manager                    | Youth and Play Services               |
| Neil Burwell        | Community Safety Officer        | Safer Bristol                         |
| Martin Gainsborough | Reverend                        | St Luke's Church                      |
| Deborah Frazer      | Reverend                        | St Luke's Church                      |
| Roger Allen         | Tenant Participation Officer    | Housing, BCC                          |
| Mark Allen          | Health Promotion Specialist     | NHS Bristol                           |
| Munawar Hussain     | Community Engagement Officer    | Bristol Libraries                     |
| Ahmed Abdi          | Achievement Manager             | Barton Hill Primary/Tawfiq Mosque     |
| Steve Wilmshurst    | Manager                         | Easton Jubilee Trust                  |
| Abdullahi Farah     | Office Manager                  | Somali Resource Centre                |
| Abdi Barud          | Development Worker              | Somali Resource Centre                |
| Abib Mohamed        | Committee Member                | Somali Resource Centre                |
| Omar Sabriye        | Community Elder                 | Somali Resource Centre                |
| Ikran Jibril        | Advice Worker                   | St Pauls Advice Centre                |
| Liban Obsiye        | Volunteer                       | Amaana                                |
| Safia               | Community Member                |                                       |
| Steve Vaughan       | Community Engagement Team -SB   | Avon and Somerset Police              |
| Emily Growney       | Project Manager, Parent Support | Family Information Service, CYPS, BCC |
| Cllr Brenda Hughill | Councillor (Labour)             | Lawrence Hill Ward                    |
| Cllr Gus Hoyt       | Councillor (Green)              | Ashley Ward                           |
| Cllr Jon Rogers     | Councillor (Lib Dem)            | Ashley Ward                           |

### Apologies

Apologies were received from:

|                          |                    |                       |
|--------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Cllr Clare Campion-Smith | Cllr Peter Hammond | Mariateresa Bucciante |
| Cllr Derek Pickup        | Latif Ismail       | Alice Meason          |
| Cllr Margaret Hickman    | Ian Quaife         | Ruth Cornish          |
| Cllr Faruk Choudhury     | Liban Mohamed      |                       |
| Cllr Lesley Alexander    | Ahmed Awale        |                       |

### Agenda items

1. Introductions, Previous Minutes and Matters Arising, and BSF Update
2. School Choices and Parent Support
3. Stop Smoking
4. Somali Men's Health Project Report
5. Somali Disability & Elderly Association (SDEA)

6. A.O.B

## 1. Introductions, Previous Minutes and Matters Arising, and BSF Update

1. **Welcome:** Abdi Mohamed took the chair and welcomed everyone.
2. **Previous Minutes:** It was agreed the minutes of the Forum meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2011 were a true and accurate record.
3. **Matters Arising:**
  1. Regarding a meeting scheduled on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2011 to discuss about the **street selling of Khat** with a delegation of the Somali Forum, Neil Burwell stated the meeting had taken place and the following had been discussed:
    1. **Health related issues** and the need to produce a leaflet.
    2. The **impact** on people congregating on pavements, and the **impact on businesses**.
    3. **The mess left behind and enforcement powers** to deal with that.
    4. Having a **positive dialogue with Khat sellers** and giving warning first to those sell Khat on the streets.

## 4. BSF Update

1. **FGM** – AM advised that the Management Committee would look at how to **address issues related to FGM strategically**. These issues were discussed extensively in our last meeting and the main concerns were:
  1. **Lack of acknowledgement** of the current perception of the Somali community and the work they have done over the last 15 years regarding FGM.
  2. **Tackling misconceptions** about the community.
  3. Concerns about the **lack of community consultation** and the need to **inform parents appropriately**.
  4. Promoting **positive engagement** by linking with the **FGM Steering Group/Strategy Group**.
1. **A new market in Old Market** – AM also stated that Mariateresa Bucciante, Old Market Association Secretary, had sent an email in relation to a market they would like to start somewhere in Old Market. She had stated there would be a proposal to be discussed with BCC. And members who were interested in should contact her.
1. **Linking with Stapleton Road Activities** -- Phil Cotgreave advised that Rick Palmer who was tasked to coordinate activities in Stapleton Road had been informed about the Forum discussions, as agreed in the Forum meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2011.

## 2. School Choices and Parent Support

1. **School Choices** – Emily Growney (EG), Parent Support Project Manager at BCC Parent Support Team based at Family Information Services, said in order to understand what influences Bristol parents in their choice of schooling for their children, a pilot questionnaire (parental choice questionnaire) had been designed which had received about 1000 replies. The questionnaire had been revised; it was then available online <http://bit.ly/parentchoices>.

They also needed to:

1. **Capture the voice of the Somali parents.**
2. **Find a way of working together.**
3. **Understand how parents choose their school and respond to their needs.**

2. **Parent Support** – EG also said the Parent Support Team was part of the Extended Services and Learning Partnership and they have provided a range of services including:

1. Commissioning parent support services; including Re-commissioning telephone coaching provided by Family Lives (formerly Parentline Plus), Bilingual mentoring project at the City Academy, SPAN Parenting courses - they have already delivered a course for Somali women with a Somali mentor from Bilingual Family Project and will deliver one in Polish in Lawrence Weston in November.
2. Commissioning CAF (Common Assessment Frame).
1. Resources including handbooks and a menu of parenting courses for parents are available at <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/support-parents-and-carers>
2. Resources for professionals including the Support for Parents Directory updated in October 2011 can be found at <http://www.bristol.gov.uk/page/resourcesprofessionals>.

1. **Discussions** – The following points were from the ensuing discussions after EG's report:

1. Could have had connections with school parents such as Somali Parent Network at Fairfield.
2. School parent networks were usually facilitated by schools.
3. Questionnaires would help parents to make their choice.
4. Would be very helpful to make questionnaires easier for parents to understand – maybe writing a blurb.
5. Should have had/done BME Needs Analysis specific to Somalis.
6. Language delay for early years – support was needed.
7. Handbook for parents was available (downloadable) – English, Somali and Polish.
8. Children needed a good start, but primary school places were in demand. Most parents didn't get their 1<sup>st</sup> choice.
9. School appeals had been designed in favour of schools – oversubscribed. Parents had always ended up losing the appeal.

2. **Actions**

1. **Emily Growney to make questionnaires easier for parents, maybe writing a blurb.**
2. **Muna Abdi to arrange a radio interview for Emily Growney at the BCfm Somali Women's Show.**
3. **Emily Growney to make sure that the voice of Somali parents is captured.**
4. **Somali Forum to enable service providers explore ways of working with Somali-led organisations and the community.**

3. **Stop Smoking**

1. Mark Allen (MA), Health Promotion Specialist, NHS Bristol, informed the group that he has delivered Stop Smoking Services to the Somali community (project which has offered services tailored to the needs of the Somali community); and he has also looked after Stop Smoking Advisors in South Bristol, managed stop smoking groups and supported people to stop smoking in work places and schools. MA specifically noted the following:
  1. Services were not currently accessible to the Somalis.
  2. There was a higher than average smoking prevalence among Somalis in Bristol, as it was believed, and poor access to stop smoking services.
  3. “31% of Somalis were smokers (Islington 2005) compared to the UK average of 21% in 2011, there had been a low awareness and use of services.”
  4. “Reducing smoking prevalence among people in routine and manual groups, some minority ethnic groups and disadvantaged communities would help reduce health inequalities more than any other public health measure (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE), 2008: Smoking Cessation).”
  5. “71% of Khat users in the Islington study had smoked.”
  6. It was estimated that 60 – 70 % of Somali men in Bristol chew Khat regularly.
  7. Khat was not classified as an illegal drug and its usage was not banned. “The evidence of harm resulting from Khat use is not sufficient to recommend its control (The Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs, 2005).”
  8. There was intense debate within the Somali community on the use and misuse of Khat.
  9. Heavy tobacco smoking and second-hand smoking were major health risks.
  10. Alternative tobacco use, Shisha – an hour water pipe smoking sessions delivers as much smoke as 100 cigarettes. Chewing tobacco also carries many health risks.

1. The project, Stop Smoking Services for the Somali Community, would:

1. Aim to increase awareness among the Somalis.
2. Provide training for trusted members of the community to deliver the work/services – Somali Health Champions.
3. Use community settings such as cafes, and community centres.
4. Start with information sessions on dangers of second-hand smoking (smoking indoors), excessive Khat use and smoking.
5. Support people to stop smoking and reduce Khat use.

1. **Pilot** – awareness sessions had been delivered by a member of the community; it had gradually achieved some success.

2. **Future plans:**

1. Somali Health Champions – so far, 4 young men were currently going through the application and training process.
2. Needed to recruit and train female and older Somali men as Health Champions.
3. Considered to find suitable venues and ways to access smokers.

1. **Discussions** -- The following summarises comments made by participants after MA's report:
  1. Khat – its effect and related issue – had been debated within the community for many years, in the past and at the present. The debate would continue. Its effects were not physical, but psychological.
  2. Various issues including lack of sleep, unemployment, among a list, had been linked with Khat.
  3. Khat houses (Marfishes) – relevant issues should be addressed appropriately. These include opening hours, ASB, and health.
  4. Enforcement officers from Bristol City Council should be approached in order to understand what has already been achieved / planned and who involved.
  5. In Bristol, there would be Cross Party Working Group on Drug Addiction.

## 2. **Actions**

1. **Mark Allen to recruit and train female and older Somali men as Health Champions.**

## 6. **Somali Men's Health Project Report**

1. Claire LittleJohn (CLJ) advised that the work of Bristol Link have mainly involved collecting issues on people's health and social care. And as a Development Worker, she had to go out and work with local communities. They had worked with Somali women last year and a report (findings – issues and concerns raised and recommendations) had been presented to the Health and Social Care Commissioners as a result.
2. CLJ presented a draft report which was based on the issues and concerns collected through one-to-one interviews with Somali male individuals who had attended lunch club and health awareness sessions, which had been organised and delivered by Somali Disability and Elderly Association (SDEA) in partnership with NHS Health Trainers, as well as additional discussions with relevant people and organisations –including the Somali Forum, Somali Resource Centre, NHS Health Trainers, Wellspring Healthy Living Centre, and AWP Somali Mental Health Worker.
3. CLJ reported that the main issues were:
  1. **Language barrier** – interpreters should be used more widely.
  2. **GP**
    1. Lack of awareness of the available services.
    2. Many people did not have a doctor/did not register with a doctor.
    3. GPs did not take patients seriously.
    4. Needed to be able to access full health checks; did not go to the doctors regularly.
    5. Clearer explanations and checking whether patients had understood the reason for the course of treatment was vital.

**1. Dentist**

1. Lack of knowledge around access to dental services.
2. Language barrier – interpreters should be available and used to ensure understanding for courses of treatment, available services and entitlements.

**1. Mental Health**

1. Issues related to mental health were a great concern.
2. Isolation and exclusion, and refugee experiences and trauma had major impacts on the emotional wellbeing of Somali men.
3. Unfamiliarity with UK medical terminology, coupled with stigma around mental health issues within the community, had caused people not to seek help.
4. Chewing Khat and mental health were felt to be related.

**1. Secondary Care**

1. Secondary Care services and the use of Bristol hospitals were limited.
2. Support was needed to gain knowledge/understanding of available support and services, and how to get into the system.

**1. Information**

1. Generally, there was a lack of knowledge around health – e.g. prevention and awareness of symptoms and what to look for, cholesterol, stroke, dementia, cancer, blood pressure and diabetes, etc.
2. Needed more information about the effects and impacts of using drugs and Khat.

**1. Other**

1. Lack of exercise was an issue.
2. Lack of engagement with Somali men was a specific issue.

**4. Discussions**

1. Cuts had greatly effected on local BME groups; Somalis, most of them, were not familiar with rights (UK Human Rights Legislation). Therefore, did you (Bristol Link) carry out Equality Impact Assessments?
2. In response to the above question, CLJ said that she was not sure. But this can be confirmed.
3. Regarding a comment and question about the next step or who would receive the report and what would happen. CLJ stated that the Health and Social Care Commissioners would receive the full report with recommendations.
4. Bristol Link has the statutory power to make recommendations and require a response within 20 working days.

**1. Actions**

1. Claire LittleJohn to confirm whether Equalities Impact Assessments had been carried out – detailing relevant projects/programmes.
2. Claire LittleJohn to circulate (provide a copy to the forum) the full report when is ready.

**7. Somali Disability and Elderly Association (SDEA)**

1. Ahmed Awale couldn't attend the meeting as he wasn't well, but a Power Point presentation he had sent to the Forum Management was shown to the group with the help of AM and Said Burale (SB).
2. SDEA provides a range of services including:
  1. Lunch club for elders (men only).
  2. WECIL Direct Payment advice.
  3. Work around or related to BCC Social Services Care Assessment Team.
  4. Housing advice for the elderly and disabled.
3. SDEA delivers culturally responsive services to Somali elderly and disabled people who face/have many health and social needs such as:
  1. Language and cultural barriers.
  2. Isolation and social exclusion.
  3. Loss of social status and social networks.
  4. Stigmatisation – The Somali language sometimes attaches labels to those who are disabled. Appropriate terminology must be adopted.

## 8. AOB

1. **Bristol Libraries** – Munawar Hussain, Community Engagement Officer, advised that successful engagement programmes have been delivered to the Somali community since 2001. These include:
  1. **Cultural events** with Ragheh Omaar, former BBC World Service Correspondent, and Dr Martin Owen, Professor of Somali Literature and Language at the School of African and Oriental Studies (SOAS), University of London.
  2. **Community events** with Khalif Noor and some of the community members and organisations.
  3. **Cultural awareness sessions** for Bristol Libraries staff delivered by Abdi Mohamed.
  4. **Work Placement Programme for Somali young** people has been delivered in conjunction with Elays Network. The programme successfully provided work experience for 3 long-term unemployed young people, so far. It had produced a fruitful outcome and they were committed to continue when viable resources have come available.
  5. **Junction 3, M32**, would open (in the) autumn 2012; three coffee mornings for consultation had already taken place. Another consultation was going to happen on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2011 at 10 am at the Trinity Arts Centre. Knightstone Housing Association and SPAN (Single Parents Network) were going to be participating.
  6. **Black History Month** – they had planned two talks with:
    1. **Courtia Newland**, on 4<sup>th</sup> October – A book of Blues, the author's latest collection of short stories.
    2. **Gary Younge**, a feature writer and columnist on American affairs for The Guardian, on 25<sup>th</sup> October – Who are we and does it matter in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?
1. They had prepared a **Reading List** for the Black History Month.

1. Participants noted the following points in the discussion:
1. Somali books were in the Central Library and also in St Pauls and Easton libraries. But Bristol Libraries have monitored their usage to understand the demand.
2. Mobile library services were available. It has been coming to Barton Hill Settlement on monthly basis, but they had no Somali books.
3. Tawfiq Mosque and Community Centre could be linked to the library services to increase community engagement.

4. **Actions**

1. **Munawar Hussain to develop a link between Bristol Libraries and Tawfiq Mosque.**

2. **Petition to ban Khat – Association of Somali Mosques**

1. Ahmed Abdi (AA) advised that Somali mosques across UK set up an association; it had 16 members. The Association was planning a petition to the government to request the banning of Khat.
2. A link to the petition would be provided to the Somali Forum.
1. The following points were from the ensuing discussion:
  1. If Khat was banned, criminal issues would arise. So we should be open minded and look the Khat issues in a more balanced way.
  2. Research was not representative; don't think this was a chronicle within the community. Better not to go heavy handed.
  3. Could we widen the debate and include other communities; it could bring tensions and racism otherwise.
  4. In response to the above comments, AA said that the issue was mainly raised by Somali women who had concerned about the problems that Khat had created within the community such as family breakdown, and social and economic problems, too many to list.

2. **Actions**

1. **Ahmed Abdi to provide the link to the petition to the Forum.**

3. **Section 7 on the Terrorism Act**

1. Steven Vaughan stated the legislation was draconian. It focused point of entry such as Bristol Airport. As a result, Local Accountability Group was set up to talk about issues at the airport such as questions 'what clothes your children wear' – which was reported previously.
2. Forum members, Muna Abdi and Liban Obsiye, were part of the group who were looking at these issues.
3. People would be stopped under Section 7. Therefore, how could we mitigate the negativity around it?



1. Specific, detailed information – e.g. time, description of the area, what is said, etc. –should be provided in order to identify inappropriate questions, and then address the issue more appropriately.

**4. BCC Budget 2012/13**

1. Cllr Jon Rogers advised that BCC Cabinet had been discussing next year's budget, but at the time you should only need to know that there would be changes to the old ways: some would lose and some would gain.
2. They would be looking value for money. They would not be supporting/funding those who would take £5 and return £1's work.
3. Officers were at the time answering specific issues.

**2. Date of Next Meeting**

| <b>Date</b>                   | <b>Time</b>         | <b>Venue</b>                            |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> November 2011 | 11.00 am to 1.00 pm | Barton Hill Settlement<br>43 Ducie Road |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> December 2011 |                     | Barton Hill<br>Bristol<br>BS5 0AX       |

**The meeting ended at 1.05 pm.**