

Outhouse Consultation Meeting October 19th 2004 - Action Plan

The purpose of the consultation meeting was to provide centre users, volunteers and members of the LGBT community with

- a progress report on the previous 12 months in outhouse
- an outline of current plans
- an opportunity to voice opinions on outhouse

In order to facilitate feedback, everyone present was asked to write their reaction to 3 questions:

- What do you like about outhouse?
- What would you improve in outhouse?
- Are needs in the community which outhouse could be meeting?

The answers to each question were compiled into logical groups and then discussed in turn. The following lists each group of answers and the outcome of the discussion.

1. What do you like about outhouse?

- Friendliness / Atmosphere / Staff / volunteers /Users.
- Information – About groups and on the phone
- Art exhibitions
- Computer Room
- Sense of Community and Support for groups.
- The café
- Champagne Breakfast

The range of different answers shows how many activities take place in the centre and how they are appreciated.

2. What Would You Improve In Outhouse?

The Stairs

Participants were concerned at both the condition of the staircase and the décor. Renovations of the staircase are included in the building plan but completion of this work will be expensive and no funding source is currently available for this work. Outhouse will ensure that improvements to the stairs are given priority as funds become available.

Rainbow flag / Sign outside.

This requires planning permission which is why we do not have one at present. We will include this of the planning application which is due to be submitted shortly so hopefully we will be able to erect a flag and sign in 2005.

Improve Café Range.

We are actively considering introducing a wider range of food including a hot dish.

Security / Reception at all times.

Outhouse understands the importance of this and have applied for funding from the health board for 2005 for an additional staff member for reception and security duty.

Outhouse only open to Belong To during their time on Sunday.

The centre is for the whole LGBT community and sometimes we have to accommodate several users in the building at the one time.

Décor – Chairs / Sofa / Colour

We'd love to be able to install more co-ordinated décor in the café and upgrade the furnishing throughout but these items are expensive. We'll look at making low-cost improvements and examine possibilities for sponsoring some items.

More Fun / Social outings and Activities.

The Halloween party is planned for Oct 31. The newly-formed fundraising and events committee are planning a calendar of events for 2005.

Youth Section in Library

Our library is based completely on donated stock. We hope to get all GCN's review copies of books which should boost the number of youth-oriented books. If anyone has any youth books to contribute, please get in touch !

More Advertising

From next year we will have a regular outhouse space in GCN. We also have an advertisement in Northside News. Advertising in the mainstream media is expensive but we hope that our events in 2005 will generate publicity and improve the profile of the centre.

3 Are There Needs In The Community Outhouse Could Be Meeting?

More Support groups: Women's health, Older people, TV'S etc.

We have applied for funding under the ? for a personal development course for lesbian/bisexual women's sexual health

More courses

Language and art classes were the 2 most commonly mentioned at the meeting. We have recently stated art classes but there are no language classes at present and we have often had a disappointing turnout for language classes in the past. We'll keep the situation under review.

Welfare Support

The specific areas mentioned were a Job Club, Housing Support and Social Welfare advice. We have a good working relationship with our local Citizens Advice Centre based at Macro on North King Street. They seem to be very LGBT-friendly and have helped a number of centre users.

Better Promotion of Outhouse

Obviously the more people who know about outhouse, the better we are serving the community. As noted above advertising in the mainstream media is expensive but we hope that our events in 2005 will generate publicity and improve the profile of the centre. It was also suggested that we should target tourists. Outhouse staff have compiled the Irish listings for the 2005 Spartacus guide and we hope that this will encourage visitors from abroad to visit the centre. We will also liaise with Dublin Tourism in terms of listings, links to our website, etc.

Hobbies and Activities

The specific areas discussed were Films, Arts, Sports. It was noted that a Film Club has been set up and has shown videos in the centre on Saturdays. We have applied for funding for a video projector which will make it easier to show videos, etc. to a larger audience. We have number of theatre groups who use centre space for rehearsals and as noted already art classes have commenced recently. We will need to review these activities to see if they can be expanded.

Celebratory Events

Outhouse has organised a number of events and the centre has also been used on occasion for other celebrations by members of the community. The newly-formed fundraising and events committee are planning a calendar of events for 2005 and some will be of a celebratory nature.

Longer opening hours.

We don't currently have the resources to cover extended hours. However we are applying to the health board for funding for an extra person for reception/security purposes and this will enable us to look at extending our hours. It was pointed out that we are currently open for 63 hours per week which is better than most community centres.

Introduce Membership

It was suggested that this could promote a sense of belonging to centre users who call in regularly but are not members of particular groups. The members could elect a representative to the Management Committee, benefit from reduced rates for Internet access, etc. Outhouse will work to set up a scheme over the coming months.

Have an off-licence

The original suggestion for the basement included a bar/theatre space but we've since decided not to pursue this as fire regulations would permit only a small number of people in the basement and this would render a bar/theatre uneconomic. We have an option to obtain a wine licence for the café but we'd like to get more views on this.