

Derek Wheeler

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To: Will Haire/OFMDFM/DFP@DFP

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Subject: Summer Intervention Programme North Belfast

Please find attached a draft response to John Hunters memo to you of 12 June. The draft incorporates Mary Bunting's views.



Draft WH response to John Hunter DSD

Derek J. Wheeler

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Draft response to John Hunter DSD.

Date June 2002

cc PS Mr Loughran
Mary Bunting
Danny McNeill
Evelyn Cummins
Derek Wheeler

From: Will Haire

John Hunter

SUMMER INTERFACE PROGRAMME IN NORTH BELFAST

Thank you for your note of 12 June in which you express concerns about the delivery of the proposed summer interface programme for North Belfast.

1. The proposal to the First Minister and Deputy First Minister draws specifically on the positive results of actions generated by the North Belfast Community Action Project in their work with umbrella community groups. The proposal aims to support such groups and further assist in building their capacity as recommended by the Report of the North Belfast Community Action Project (the Report). I think we all recognise the importance of early interventions – ‘quick wins’ following the publication of the Report. This short-term programme aims to show groups real action on the ground resulting from the Project.
2. The proposal results from preliminary consultation with key community groups about the prospects for the community sector operating such a programme. I enclose a copy of the notes of this consultation, which was conducted by Venture International on behalf of the Project. In

developing the proposal, we have also drawn upon the wider North Belfast experience of Sandra Buchan, who has had direct involvement in summer interface programmes in North Belfast in previous years

3. The key focus of the proposal, which we believe sets it apart from other work, is that the umbrella groups **themselves** would be directly involved in the development and delivery of the programme. This would help to keep up the momentum of the good work of the Dunlop project. By involving the key umbrella groups in an intervention programme we believe that this would add to the capacity of these groups to intervene in and address interface issues both during the summer and in the future. We would also hope that through this work, the foundations might be laid for further partnership working both within and across communities. As you know, the focus on partnership working is a key feature of the recommendations of the Dunlop Report.
4. We strongly support your views about drawing upon existing expertise and co-ordination. As a first step, it is proposed that Derek Wheeler will convene a meeting with all the various funding agencies involved, to ensure that the programme complements rather than competes with other schemes. This would be a one-off meeting not a continuing group (unless required for monitoring purposes). It would appear from early soundings with some of the key agencies that such a meeting would be welcomed and is urgently needed in the light of the short time available before the summer.

5. In your note, you have highlighted the difficulty in confining such a programme to interface areas within North Belfast. While there clearly may be a need to extend the scope of this work, at this stage, this Department has no direct involvement in other interface areas. That said, we have not yet had a response to our proposal from Ministers and if such a proposal should arise from them, we will clearly have to consider it. Given the very short timescale available, I do not believe that it would be practicable, for the North Belfast team associated with this Department to broaden its work to cover a Summer Intervention Programme for other interface areas. In the circumstance of such a proposal emerging, the sensible approach would seem to be to build on existing programmes and we would be happy to explore this further with you.
6. While I appreciate the concerns you have raised, I hope that this will re-assure you that while we hope that this programme will help to address the need for intervention in interface areas during the summer period, we do not wish to interfere with or duplicate good work that is already being done by your department and other agencies. Rather we are concerned to show early action from the North Belfast Unit and to 'kick start' partnership working at interface areas in North Belfast.

Will Haire

**Sandra Buchan
North Belfast Community Action Project
55 Adelaide St
Belfast
BT2 8FE**

23 April 2002

Report on Meetings with Youth/Community Representatives and Workers

Dear Sandra

This is a report on the results of my meetings with local youth/community representatives and workers from the interface areas of the New Lodge, Newington, Limestone Road and Tigers Bay areas. Two meetings were held at the request of the North Belfast Community Action Project.

Meeting Held on 11 April 2002 in the Ashton Centre

The purpose of the meeting was to see if there was any way to alleviate the tension at interface areas over the summer months. The focus was on youth and the provision of youth services over the summer months. It was pointed out that this type of comprehensive, area-wide, meeting had not been held like this before now.

The group discussed three core questions:

- ❖ What is already planned in terms of youth services for this summer?
- ❖ What might be effective in combating "recreational" rioting at the interfaces?
- ❖ What practical support would the group like to see in place to help ease tensions over the summer months?

Ashton Centre Meeting

**Jim Deery (NLCP)
Billy McDonald (Artillery)
Harry Murphy (Artillery)
Joe Doherty (Hillview YC)
Bill Shaw (174)
Michael Burns (Star)
John Flemming (Newington RS)
Tierna Cunningham (Star)
Ciaran Wright (Star)
Paul Collins (Corner House)
Trish O'Kane (Star)
Paul Roberts (Ashton Centre)
Margaret Valente (Star)**

What is already planned in terms of youth services for this summer?

The group listed a range of activities already planned or to be planned in their areas during the summer months:

- ✧ 4-week BELB summer scheme including day trips etc.
- ✧ Community festival around sports activities for 3-4 days in August 02
- ✧ Summer scheme for 10-13 year olds
- ✧ Summer scheme for under 12 year olds
- ✧ **Planned trips out of the area in July 02**
- ✧ **Summer programme of youth activities (15 yrs +)**
- ✧ **DJ school**
- ✧ **Young women's group**
- ✧ **Day trips for young people over summer period**

The problems encountered by the youth and community workers included a lack of funds for the type of activities that might appeal to older youths and the need for help on the ground to organise and supervise large numbers of potential participants in youth activities.

The group was very open and realistic in its analysis. For example, it was pointed out that despite taking specific action in the past - opening up youth venues to midnight during times of high tension – some youths still preferred the excitement of rioting to organized youth activities. These were comments coming from experienced and dedicated youth workers.

The participants at the meeting agreed that there was a gap in coordination of programming of events and activities and in getting information to residents about the programmes being run across the areas.

Other issues were:

- ✧ **Getting the use of educational facilities (e.g. sporting) during the summer break**
- ✧ **Problems with the cost of insurance for the use of venues**
- ✧ **Access to affordable transport**
- ✧ **Lack of resources to react quickly at times of high tension.**

The main funding sources for current activities were listed as:

- BCC/BRO
- BELB
- Comic Relief
- Department of Foreign Affairs (RoI)
- IFI Community Bridges

What might be effective in combating “recreational” rioting at the interfaces?

- ❖ Offer alternatives to boredom and street corners and the graduation to rioting
- ❖ Take early action to stop pre-rioting activity
- ❖ Organised sports’ days, fun days, festivals and events
- ❖ Residential sessions that get young people out of the area and encourage positive activities
- ❖ Activities and events that might realistically appeal to teenagers including what were described as “high octane” activities. Ideas for additional activities that required additional resources were: sports, cinema, DJ school, internet programme, go-karting, water sports.

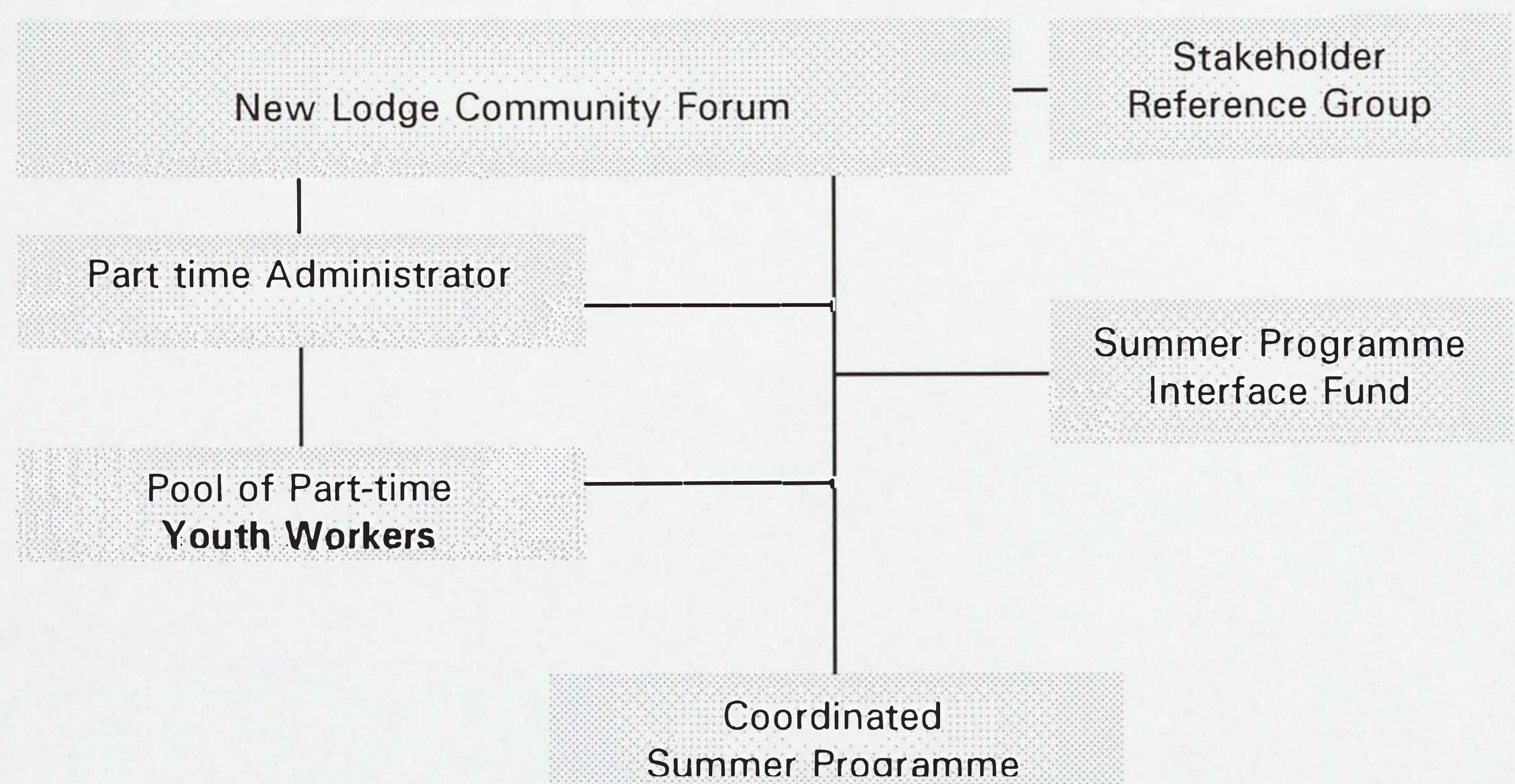
What practical support would the group like to see in place to help ease tensions over the summer months?

The group discussed what might be effective in easing tensions this summer and there appeared to be consensus around the following:

- ❖ Establish a pilot programme in the New Lodge area and Newington
- ❖ Employ a part-time, temporary Administrator to draw up a coordinated summer programme of events aimed at all ages and across the area, taking into account all of the activities and events currently planned
- ❖ Draw up and implement a communications plan to ensure that all households and organisers are aware of the full range of events planned in the summer programme
- ❖ Negotiate with schools/BELB for use of resources over the summer
- ❖ Block book facilities and venues in order to gain economies of scale and provide access to activities at times of greatest tension
- ❖ Make part time, temporary youth and community workers available to help organise events and activities and place on alert or on preventative duties at times of high tension

- ❖ **Encourage parental involvement in activities and organised programmes**
- ❖ **Create a more positive, festival type atmosphere with a series of organised music, dance and arts events**
- ❖ **Provide programme funds, including a contingency fund, to fill gaps in the current summer programme**

Summary of Outline Proposal



Meeting Held on 15 April 2002 in the LNBCC Offices

This meeting was attended by members of the LNBCC, Duncairn Community Forum and representatives from the BELB, Belfast City Council and Arts for All. The group had tried to produce a coordinated summer programme last year however the process started too late and did not get anywhere.

The group discussed three core questions:

- ❖ What is already planned in terms of youth services for this summer?
- ❖ What might be effective in combating "recreational" rioting at the interfaces?
- ❖ What practical support would the group like to see in place to help ease tensions over the summer months?

LNBCC Meeting

Stephen Nicholl (LNBCC)
Joan Montgomery (Arts for All)
Nicola Wallace (Duncairn CF)
Gary Lavery (Duncairn CF)
John Dempsey (Duncairn CF)
Bill Cooper (BELB)
Leslie Godfrey (BELB)
Henry Mohamad (BCC)

What is already planned in terms of youth services for this summer?

There was general dissatisfaction with the level of provision and a clear difference between upper and lower Tigers Bay in terms of what is planned for the area. It was felt that events planned in one area were not accessible to another. The Duncairn Community Centre is closed and the Mountcollier Area Resource Centre is under used at present.

The events planned that the group were aware of were:

- **Summer scheme organised by Belfast City Council**
- **Fun day at the end of May 02 to be organised by a group of parents**
- **Would like to plan day trips and a residential but no funds and limited experience**
- **The Mountcollier Area Resource Centre (BELB) is available for use by the community but was said to be "a great Centre in the wrong place"**

The group reported current funding sources as BCC/BRO and BELB.

What might be effective in combating "recreational" rioting at the interfaces?

The group felt that organised, coordinated activities across the area, especially at "times of potential danger" might help defuse tensions on the streets. It was acknowledged that a sustained and coordinated programme of events, including developmental work within the area and not just busing people out, might reduce the level of negative incidents.

There are buildings available but skilled people are needed on the ground to help local people to organise and also to build their own skills for the future.

What practical support would the group like to see in place to help ease tensions over the summer months?

The group agreed by consensus that the following actions would help in the area:

- Organise a 9-week summer scheme, operating across the area and getting good community involvement in planning and organisation
- Maintain and promote a diary of activities
- Provide volunteer training and temporary (summer) youth workers
- Make available some funds to develop programme activities where there are gaps in provision in terms of dates, times and age groups
- Maintain a parallel process across the interface and forge linkages and cooperation in planning, at least with programme organisers.

Summary of Findings

There was common ground in the conclusions reached by the two (nationalist and loyalist) groups. The nationalist side was starting from a more comprehensive baseline however in both cases the level of formal cooperation in programme planning and sharing of information was weak. There appears to be more activity planned on the nationalist side however it is also clear that they find it no less easy to deal with the sporadic outbreaks of interface rioting that is associated with young people seeking recreational excitement, in summer evenings, in their teenage years.

In summary, the common themes agreed by all were:

- **Coordination of programme planning of activities across the areas**

- Provision of “people resources” to help plan and organise activities on the ground
- High levels of youth and community involvement in the planning and implementation of events and programmes
- Working closely with stakeholder organisations including BELB/BCC/BRO to coordinate resources and activities.

Potential Benefits/Outputs

The potential benefits of a new approach to the coordination and planning of a summer programme for youth in the interface areas were highlighted as:

- Reduction in tension
- Less involvement in rioting
- Increased resident and parental involvement
- Improved community safety – less injuries and incidents
- Economies of scale in organizing and funding activities
- Community participation and involvement in planning the programmes
- Improved mutual understanding and community relations through planning and reflective learning with counterparts across the interface
- Pilot for process that can be extended to other areas and throughout the year where appropriate
- No. of events
- No. of participants
- Cost per participant

I trust that this report provides you with a fair and accurate summary of the results of the two meetings and can act as the basis for further discussion on the issues raised. Follow-up meetings were provisionally arranged for 29th and 30th April 2002 however I understand that you will be contacting the groups to put a hold on these for the moment.

Yours sincerely

Richard O’Rawe
Venture International