

## **Statement to B&NES Council -- 11 Sept 2014**

I'm Marian McNeir, Co Chairman of the Bath Area Cultural Forum which represents 80 + Arts Organisations in the Bath area. I am addressing you this evening on behalf of the CF but also on behalf of the Child Friendly City Steering Group, which is representative of local arts and education groups including 5x5x5= creativity, BSU, the egg, Mentoring Plus, St Andrews Primary School , Creative Bath and Bath Festivals.

One of our main aims is to seek UNICEF accreditation for Bath and N.E.Somerset as a Child Friendly City / Area. To do that we would have to meet the UNICEF criteria which we endorse anyway and feel very confident in achieving with the support of B&NES Council.

Cabinet heard yesterday how it is essential for children and young people to believe they can be part of the social and cultural life of the City / Authority. An important aspect of this would be to show a public commitment to the next generation.

Young people would be involved in developing services and opportunities within their communities. We plan

to work with various youth organisations including the Youth Parliament. One example has been their desire to have safe places to play and members have worked with Parks Dept and Mentoring Plus to develop the Skate Park in Victoria Park. This is only one example of good practise – we need to support other community youth initiatives which would also be in accordance with the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child.

Bath and N.E.Somerset could lead the way with many organisations and schools and colleges working together with a common aim, thus inspiring and uniting communities.

It's not a pipe dream – Newry in N Ireland has done it and consequently has become a model of citizenship and involvement for young people, who now take a pride in their city.

Our vision would be to designate 2015 as Bath and N. E Somerset's Child Friendly City Year. For example we could involve the children and young people in the Good Ideas Grant for the Child Friendly City to get things off to a lively start. And why not do a Family Trail like Bristol did with Wallace and Grommit -- it would be a great way to bring Art onto our streets and excite

the imagination of children and their families. This is just another example of making the presence of children visible in our communities.

It's an exciting project which would make a difference to so many young lives and we, as the Child Friendly City Steering Group, would hope to be able to work with the Council to progress achieving the UNICEF Child Friendly City Status Award.

Addendum with details of CFC Steering Group and Partners to be attached.

Marian McNeir Sept 11 2014