

Bewdley Anti-Racism Group Report to Bewdley Town Council

History

This group was formed from the dynamic coming together of Bewdley residents both young and old over the events in America with the killing of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matters protests there and in the UK.

A group of young people organised a take the knee vigil in Jubilee Gardens and another vigil was organised by a local resident by the Stanley Baldwin statue. This led to a number of concerned local people commenting on Facebook groups about the need for anti-racist work in Bewdley and eventually a group was formed.

We became a formal constituted group in October 2020.

Aim

The aim of the group is:

‘to make Bewdley a more inclusive and anti-racist community that welcomes and values diversity by raising awareness of racism and other forms of injustice’.

Activities

As with many groups, Covid has had severe restrictions on the groups activities, however we have continued to be as creative as possible.

Walking Tour

A walking tour of Bewdley has been created highlighting some of Bewdley links to the slave trade and its link to the abolitionist movement. A pdf of the walk is attached for all those interested. It has been displayed in the museum and has proved very popular.

The leaflet tells a story about the history of Bewdley, demonstrating historical connections between the town and slavery whilst also celebrating the town’s history of radicalism. It explores two issues:

- That Bewdley’s Georgian grandeur is in part the result of wealth derived from slavery; that we are therefore surrounded by, and still benefit from, the historical results of racism and oppression; and that this is an issue much closer to home than people might realise.
- That we can also trace a path back to those in our town’s history who fought for the abolition of slavery; that we are historically a radical town that stands up for those who are oppressed.

The tour is designed to introduce people inquisitive about Bewdley’s black history, to places and people forming part of that story.

The creator and residents have been interviewed doing the tour by Hereford and Worcester radio.

Bewdley Town Council Motion

We worked with the town council to support the creation of a motion that was adopted on 7th September:

“Bewdley Town Council is committed to raising awareness of racism and other forms of injustice in order to make Bewdley a more inclusive and anti-racist community that welcomes, values and celebrates diversity. It will support groups and organisations in the town that share this objective with the Town Council”

Facebook Group

We have a closed, and therefore a safe space, Facebook group of 230 concerned local people who are interested in supporting Bewdley in an anti-racist future.

21 Day challenge

We encouraged members to carry out a 21-day challenge where they learnt something new each day ending in an online event to commemorate the UN Day for the Elimination of Racism on the 21st March.

Book Club

Supporting members to grow and learn by reading books together.

Our Forward Plan

We have created a plan of activities to take us through the year. Members will work in small groups to advance and develop a range of ideas, some of which are:

- Blue plaques
- Heritage weekend activities
- Museum exhibitions
- Supporting community groups to build anti-racism into their activities
- Working with local businesses to create a safe and inviting town for people to visit and live
- Create a website
- Black History Month events
- Educational leaflet production
- And anything else that people come with!

We look forward to working with the Town Council and any interested groups and individuals to make Bewdley a more inclusive town.

Sarah Lange, Bewdley Anti -Racism Group

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