



COMMUNITY DISCUSSION: What is Pride?

Hosted by LGBT Health and Wellbeing with guests Scotch Bonnet, Trans Pride Scotland and Free Pride

Thursday 21st June 2018 at The Project Cafe, Glasgow.

Background

Proposed Question: 'Modern Pride events originated from protests to improve the rights of LGBT people. LGBT rights movements have been successful in changing laws in many countries over the last few decades. Is Pride now for celebration or is protest still needed?'

Glasgow Community Project holds a community discussion each quarter. They take the format of a panel discussion and allow our community members to engage with questions that are directly related to their LGBTQ+ identities and therefore and central to their lives. With Glasgow Pride being held in July 2018 we took the opportunity to present a panel of LGBT organisations/collectives that have a specific interest in Pride to get both their and our community members views on what they want from Pride events.

We proposed the above question as a starting point for the discussion as the LGBT rights movement grew out of protest. Modern pride events, although they may often still brand themselves as protests also tend to be highly commercialised and focus on celebration. We wanted to speak to community members in Glasgow about if they felt Pride in Glasgow and Prides in general were meeting what they as part of the LGBTQ+ community expected from the events.

About the event

Panel members at the event were Scotch Bonnet, Trans Pride Scotland and Free Pride. Scotch Bonnet is a collaborative group, working to provide alternative creative and social spaces for QTPOC and our allies. Trans Pride is a collective that held the first Trans Pride event in Scotland in 2018. Free Pride is an organisation that hold an alternative, free pride event, on the day of Glasgow Pride.

The event was attended by 25 of our community members and lasted 2 hours. After a short introduction by Ian, Scotch Bonnet, Trans Pride Scotland and Free Pride spoke about what they felt Pride is/should be for our LGBT Communities then took questions from community members.



WHAT IS PRIDE?

Is Pride now only for celebration
or is protest still needed?
Come discuss.

Booking preferred: www.bit.ly/WhatIsPride

Thursday 21st June | 6.45-8.45pm 

Terrence Higgins Trust, 274 Sauchiehall Street, G2 3EH

For more information, contact Ian:

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www.lgbthealth.org.uk



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Overview of Discussion

Panel: Saaqib, Zoe (Scotch Bonnet), Emma (Free Pride), Oceana, Alex (Trans Pride Scotland)

Staff: Ian, Clo

Each panellist introduces their organisation.

Oceana – Trans Pride:

- For many reasons, many trans people don't feel comfortable at mainstream pride events. One reason is that they feel it's only a party, and not a protest.
- When Trans Pride Scotland was first set up, there were 4 meetings to decide if it should even be called 'Pride.'

Emma – Free Pride:

- Free Pride started for a number of reasons, but most urgently was that the introduction of ticket prices to Pride Glasgow was an urgent access issue. Primarily, Free Pride is free. We feel that we shouldn't have to pay to celebrate our own existence.
- Also feel that there is a lack of space for more marginalised communities (eg trans people, disabled people, people in the asylum system, young people).
- There's also many other access issues – we prioritise access at Free Pride, booking wheelchair accessible venues, booking BSL interpreters for workshops and talks, and paying our artists and facilitators.
- We believe Pride is a protest. For the last 3 years, we've marched as a bloc on the Pride Parade, drawing attention to issues we feel are ignored. Last year we peacefully protested Pride Glasgow's decision to have the Police lead the march, and the police responded with arrests.
- There are issues and tensions with corporate Pride – it's clearly not working – so our focus is on creating community space.

Zoe – Scotch Bonnet

- Scotch Bonnet is creating art plus night-time spaces for QTPOC.
- Currently, we're working with Free Pride to discuss how race intersects with other issues with corporate Prides.

Saaqib – Scotch Bonnet

- Compared with Glasgow, there's an invisibility of POC in Edinburgh, so we are creating social spaces, to try and address this.
- Our events are a party, but it's also about encouraging people to be better allies.
- Our experience trying to organise spaces in Edinburgh and Glasgow, there is stark differences in both cities. Edinburgh is a space for disruption, Glasgow is somewhere we can create an alternative space.

Emma/FP

- Events like Free Pride are not just a response to Pride Glasgow, it's a celebration and protest in their own rights.
- We do want to continue as our own organisation, if Pride Glasgow became a free event we'd still continue to exist. We need Pride events that are free from dominant structures and hierarchies (white, cis, middle-class).
- We are an independent collective carving our own space. Our event involves community and grassroots groups.
- We do have a tense relationship with Pride Glasgow – they haven't been open to us existing as a separate organisation and event.
- We are open to dialogue with Pride Glasgow about how they can make their event and the parade more accessible, as we feel this would benefit our community/ies.

Oceana/TP

- Pride Glasgow does not look how I think a Pride event should look. You don't see community messages, you see branding.

Zoe/SB

- We expect to see differences, we can't homogenise experiences.

- The media portrays queer protest at Prides as ‘hi-jacking,’ which is wrong – these protests have been against corporations like Virgin Media that fund deportations of LGBTQI asylum seekers (ie in defense of LGBTQI people)
- Critical of LGBT community as a whole, because this discourse isn’t widely enough engaged in/talked about.

Saaqib/SB

- There’s nothing wrong with critiquing Pride, and saying ‘you’re not representing us.’
- Queerness embodies a radical repositioning of society. We shouldn’t look at queerness & black/brownness as mutually exclusive.
- Find that queerness is ultimately embodied in whiteness, I go to Pride and don’t see people like myself. This highlights a problem in the movement.



Selection of Questions/Topics from Community Members

Topic: Age and Pride

Emma/FP

- We're constantly having to remind people of Pride's history, it's vital we respect those histories. There's not a dichotomy of protest/celebration, our community has a rich history of parties and dancing. It's about corporate vs community.

Topic: Work groups/networks at Pride

Emma/FP

- Agree LGBT networks are important and admirable in the workplace.

Zoe/SB

- We have to be conscious of what a corporate logo detracts from at Pride.
- We need to come to Pride as individuals and work as part of a wider community.

Saaqib/SB

- It's about how you occupy space - not sure what visuals you would need.

Question: How can we reclaim Pride?

Saaqib/SB

- If we don't turn up, there is no Pride.

Oceana/TP

- I don't think we should reclaim it, they should be calling it something other than Pride.
- The corporate model's not going to stop, there's a place for it, but call it something else.

Emma/FP

- We should be focusing less on reclaiming, and more on carving out our own spaces.

Saaqib/SB

- We need to look at fragmented groups, and bring these together. That's the direction I would like to see it going in.

Emma/FP

- People's idea of Pride is different, and that's why it's good there's a number of alternatives, like free Pride, Trans Pride, etc.

Conclusion

The question proposed was a choice between protest and celebration. Although all agreed that Pride at its heart is always a protest, there was broad agreement that the event could be both protest and celebration.

Panel and community members from across diverse sections of our LGBTQ+ communities were more concerned with modern, commercial prides as they felt these larger pride events had lost the connection to grassroots LGBTQ+ activism and therefore didn't represent all LGBTQ+ communities. A result of specific sections of the community not being represented through the process of organising prides would therefore also result in a lack of access for particular LGBTQ+ communities.

In particular panel and community members highlighted a lack of representation and access for QTPOC, Trans, neurodiverse and Queer disabled people.

Both Free Pride and Trans Pride highlighted this lack of representation and access as core reasons for having separate events. Lack of access was highlighted as a range of issues such as lack of representation in organising events, cost and identity specific access issues. Scotch Bonnet specifically highlighted Pride and LGBTQ+ spaces being 'embodied in whiteness', and that LGBTQ+ movements had to address this to be inclusive of QTPOC.

Key message

Alternative prides such as Free Pride and Trans Pride are complimentary to larger modern pride events, rather than in direct protest against. Both can coexist as they are trying to achieve different objectives.

Modern Pride events have problems with representation and access and would benefit from consulting with alternative pride events, grassroots queer organisations and LGBTQ+ community development organisations to better understand how make events accessible for all LGBTQ+ peoples.

Selection of Community Feedback from the Event (taken from social media and feedback forms)

'The politics, critique, provocative stuff!'

'Great opportunity to discuss issues'

'Interesting discussion with varied perspectives'

'It felt open, relaxed, accessible'

'Size of group was good for discussion'

'The diversity of those present'

'Thought provoking topic'

'Inclusive'

Useful Links:

LGBT Health and Wellbeing

LGBT Health delivers a varied programme of services, projects, groups, courses and events in Edinburgh and Glasgow for people aged 16+. We welcome people with a diverse range of identities.

facebook: www.facebook.com/lgbthealthy

Website: www.lgbthealth.org.uk

Twitter: @LGBTHealthy

Edinburgh: 0131 523 1100

Glasgow: 0141 271 2330



Scotch Bonnet

Scotch Bonnet is a collaborative group, working to provide alternative creative and social spaces for QTPOC and our allies.

facebook: www.facebook.com/sctchbnnt/



Free Pride

Pride should be a protest and accessible to all. We are a group of LGBTQIA+ people with a vision to build something different. We want to "free pride"!

facebook: www.facebook.com/freeprideglasgow/

Twitter: @freepridegla



Trans Pride Scotland

The decision to have a Trans Pride Scotland event was originally made in a busy workshop held in the Trans Space at Pride Edinburgh in June 2016 and then further developed during a similarly busy workshop at Free Pride in August 2016. Conversation revolved around a general consensus that we needed a non-commercial, free, inclusive, accessible Trans Pride specifically designed by and for trans people in Scotland. Trans Pride Scotland is not a one off event, it is a movement aimed to bring together all sectors of the trans population in one place as a show of strength, solidarity and mutual support.

facebook: www.facebook.com/transpridescotland/

website: <https://www.transpridescotland.org/>

Twitter: @TransPrideScot

