

MULTI-FAITH GROUP FOR HEALTHCARE CHAPLAINCY

21st May 2009

Present: Mr Manhar Mehta (In the chair)
Dayasara Imam Yunus Dudwhala
Revd Nigel Goodfellow Revd Debbie Hodge
Revd Derek Johnston Hon Barney Leith
Mr Sital Singh Maan Mr Ron Maddox
Revd Fr Paul Mason Mr Keith Munnings
Mr Chowdhury Mueen-Uddin Mr Kishor Ruparelia
Rabbi Meir Salasnik Pandit Madhu Shastri
Ms Sue Solway

In attendance: Mr Tim Battle

18/09 Welcome to new members

The Chairman welcomed Ms Sue Solway to her first meeting.

19/09 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Kobad Avari, Ervad Rustam Bhedwar, Revd Stig Graham, Mr Roger Green, Mr Peter Hulme, Revd Edward Lewis, Mr Baldev Singh Mawi, Mr Jayman Mehta, Revd David Mitchell, HM Shafique Rahman, Revd Mark Stobert, Mrs Deborah Wheeler and Rt. Revd Tom Williams.

20/09 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 25th February 2009 were agreed.

21/09 Co-option of Co-Chair, Standards Committee 2009-10 (ref min 1/09)

The Council noted with appreciation that Revd Fr Paul Mason had agreed to be co-opted as Co-Chair of the Standards Committee.

22/09 Central allocation for hospital chaplaincy 2009-10

The Vice Chairman reported that Barry Mussenden had indicated that grants from the central allocation would be issued in the near future.

23/09 UK Board for Healthcare Chaplaincy (UKBHC) (ref min 7/09)

Revd Debbie Hodge reported that the meetings between representatives of the Churches' Committee for Hospital Chaplaincy (CCHC) and of UKBHC had ceased. UKBHC had indicated that it was committed to reconciliation but unclear as to how to take discussions forward.

Tim Battle reported that the NHS Chief Executive had clarified the NHS view of the recent letter from UKBHC to NHS Chief Executives. This clarification indicated that the development of UKBHC had been undertaken without NHS involvement or commitment; that chaplains were not required to register with UKBHC; and that the NHS was not seeking statutory regulation of healthcare chaplains.

The point was made that these initial comments followed complaints to the Secretary of State about UKBHC by the two Archbishops. Inter alia, their concern had been over UKBHC's lack of emphasis on faith community involvement in chaplaincy. In discussion, it was agreed that such involvement was necessary and that its apparent omission was based on a misunderstanding.

The Chairman suggested that, not least because of the difficulties between the CCHC and UKBHC, there was a need for dialogue between MFGHC and UKBHC. It was noted that both organisations were meeting in London in September and it was agreed to suggest an informal meeting of representatives on either the 24th (MFGHC Council) or 30th (UKBHC) September.

24/09 Engagement of chaplains in public institutions (ref min 8/09)

The Vice Chairman reported that The Muslim Council of Britain had ceased to attend the meetings on this issue because of the focus on the Muslim community which all concerned considered unfair. He understood that Edward Lewis was in discussion with Chris Charlton of the Department of Health on these issues and that they would be able to provide an update in due course.

25/09 Authorising Bodies for healthcare chaplains (ref min 10/09)

The Vice Chairman reported that Barry Mussenden had indicated that the Department of Health was content with this list and would confirm this in the near future.

As a demonstration of the need for authorisation processes, it was reported that the Star Agency was saying that it was approved by the Department of Health and that it was able to supply chaplains to the NHS. It was agreed that the Administrator should enquire further.

26/09 Religion or Belief: A practical guide for the NHS

Tim Battle thanked colleagues for comments received. He would prepare a draft and circulate it for comment by the end of June.

27/09 Report of the Project Board for the Authorisation and Regulation project – May 2009

The Council received the May report of the Project Board for the Authorisation and Regulation project.

It was agreed that the representatives of the Council on the Reference Group should be the Vice Chair, a representative of the other world faiths and one representative for each of the three Christian Churches.

28/09 Appointment of Honorary Treasurer for MFGHC

The Chairman reported that, as part of the discussion over project finances, it had become clear that there was a need for the Council to consider the appointment of an Honorary Treasurer. He considered this would assist the executive as well as preparing the MFGHC for future changes.

Members approved the Chairman's proposal and approved the duties required of an Honorary Treasurer as set out by the Project Board. It was agreed that the Honorary Treasurer should be a member of the Executive Committee and that the appointment could be extended once. It was also agreed that an honorarium might be paid to the Treasurer in recognition of the time involved in these duties.

The Council resolved to approve an Honorary Treasurer in accordance with these considerations. After further discussion, and following a proposal by Barney Leith seconded by Ron Maddox, Keith Munnings was elected Honorary Treasurer 2009-10.

29/09 MFGHC Biennial Review 2007-08

Council received a copy of the Biennial Review for 2007-08.

30/09 Report of the Chair/ Vice-Chair/ Chief Officer – May 2009

Reports were received of the recent Muslim community training course; the Jain community training day; the Sikh community prayer week and the Bahá'í supervision day at John Radcliff Hospital.

The guidance about the influenza pandemic issued by the Department of

Health to third sector organisations was noted.

31/09 Relations between chaplaincy bodies in membership of MFGHC

The Chairman reported that correspondence had been drawn to his attention which suggested that one chaplaincy body in membership of MFGHC was attempting to undermine the work of another, also in membership of MFGHC. He had written to both organisations and had received a response indicating that the correspondence arose from a long-standing dispute which had not been resolved. The Chairman considered that a resolution of this dispute would be beneficial for chaplaincy and for the working of the Council. He therefore proposed to continue the dialogue with these bodies to see whether his good offices could assist them in a resolution.

Members endorsed the approach being taken by the Chairman.

32/09 Comments by the National Secular Society

Council agreed to prepare a statement in response to the issues raised by the NSS in their recent comment about the funding of healthcare chaplaincy.

33/09 Date of next meeting

The Council agreed to meet again at 11am on Thursday 24th September 2009 at Church House, Westminster.

TB 270509