

Minutes AGM

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Wednesday 12th September 2018 Unitarian Church, B

1. Welcome: Tarang Shelat, (Advisory Chair)

2. Apologies: Jimmy Suratia, Ann Lovelock, Arvinder Jain, Rabbi Lior Kaminetsky, Shaffi'I Mohyaddin Abokar, D Sampson, Pat Davis, Rev. Winnie Gorden, Jeremy Howard

3. Present: Lord Mayor Councillor Yvonne Mosquito, Dr Peter Rookes, Dan Griffiths, Andy Salmond, Shenaz Sajan, Ruth Tetlow, Sabir Elias, Tarang Shelat, Jane Bailey, Yann Lovelock, Dr Jagjit Singh Taunque OBR, Mrs Anjines Shelat, Dr Pyara Singh Bhogal, Andrew Nichols, David Wills, Dr Andrew Goldstein, Kathryn Azarpay, Richard Tetlow, Paul Overton, PM Laow Panyasari, Phra Direk Becha, Patrica Earle, Farkhondeh Karimi, Violet Owen, Yousef Hanif, Abdel Ali, Rev David Butterworth (Methodist), Bill Ozane, John Nightingale, Chris Martin, Peter Hulme (guest speaker) Sylvia Girling, Jude Tanner

4. Minutes of Last AGM: Agreed

5. Reflection: Tarang Shelat:

BCF is a family of faiths and as such call on members of all faiths large or small to get involved. BCF prides itself on representing faiths and also supporting faith. BCF needs everyone's input, ideas, and thoughts so that we reflect your needs. BCF is a partnership so do give your feedback through the new active BCF website, thanks to Sabir, and through email. If you are not already a BCF member, please become one.

6. The Lord Mayor Yvonne Mosquito

The Lord Mayor thanked the committee and members and said it was a great and special honour to accept the Presidency of BCF. As a person with a strong belief in God, she went on to say that she felt a particularly special honour is representing people of different faiths: Our City without faith is a more impoverished City. The Lord Mayor requested prayers for the City and for all those who have no voice. She said it was especially crucial in these financially challenging times which affects most detrimentally the most vulnerable people.

The Lord Mayor spoke of taking up her role as Mayor of Birmingham in May 2018: a God given role, and a service to all communities and faiths in Birmingham. She went on to provide examples from the lives of real Birmingham people she has met in the course of her duties and how they have inspired her in her conviction of the power of faith and prayer. The Lord Mayor added the city needs to recognise and capture the talents of its young people as part of the investment and building which is taking place in Birmingham. She looks forward to working with the office of the Lord Mayor with the dignity it deserves and to supporting the work of BCF.

7. Annual Report by Dr Peter Rookes (Secretary)

Peter thanked the Lord Mayor for her address and accepted the Presidency of BCF. Peter went on to thank all committee members for their service to BCF in their various roles including Sabir Elias for his work on the BCF website, to Kathryn Azarpay, and to Ann Lovelock who had previously done a first class job in her treasurer role with BCF.

Birmingham Council's 'Faith Covenant' has been very positive and BCF is pleased to see Councillor Tristan Chatfield (who signed the Covenant in 2017) continuing in his role as the city council Cabinet Member for Transparency, Openness and Equality and looks forward to BCF developing a long-term relationship with the Faith Covenant and Councillor Chatfield.

BCF has participated in approximately 14 events and activities over the year, including National Interfaith Week with around 500 people supporting various events in Birmingham during that week. Faiths For Fun brings together young people from 7 – 11 years, with their parents/carers and relatives for a day in which they explore seven different faiths through group fun activities. The annual Health, Wellbeing and Faith Seminar brings together health professionals and faith leaders to explore various topics. BCF jointly hosts the yearly Roger Hooker Memorial Lecture supported by the Council of Christians and Jews, an annual Sacred Space dinner bringing together people of different faiths to listen to a guest speaker and to share in a meal. Footsteps (Faiths for a carbon free future) is a project of BCF. Peter is also a Trustee of Birmingham Voluntary Services Council through which he has a specialist focus on Health, Wellbeing and Faith. BCF is also a member of the National Interfaith Network and contributes to their AGM and other activities exploring faith work.

BCF has ten faiths in full membership and would like to embrace more faiths into taking up membership. The organisation now has a new and dynamic website and is also making progress on a regular newsletter and communication will be better from now on.

BCF bank balance for the end of the year is £6298.33, thanks to David Wills (Treasurer) for preparing the finance report (attachment).

FootSteps: Presented by Ruth Tetlow: Ruth gave an overview of the Footsteps (Faiths for a low carbon future) as attached in the agenda papers. The Footsteps project came out of the Paris Climate Accord in 2015 and had organised and participated in a large number of faith-based events which have focussed on or incorporated an awareness of the environment and reduction of plastic waste. These events are described in the attached Footsteps Report.

8. Awards:

Andy Salmond introduced Violet Owen who was awarded Life Membership for her many years of support to BCF and Interfaith and presented to her by the Lord Mayor. Violet thanked BCF for the award and said that she was in 'sheer disbelief' when she learnt of the nomination. She went on to say how she had always been passionate about interfaith work and committed to supporting BCF.

Dr Bhogal thanked the Lord Mayor, and introduced Dr Jagjit Taunque as a 'Soldier and a Saint' in his many years of support and struggles for faith recognition. Dr Taunque received his award from the Lord Mayor. In turn, Dr Taunque thanked the Lord Mayor and the members of BCF for their appreciation of his service.

9 - Approval of Policy Changes:

Yann Lovelock explained that there had been changes to the law and in particular changes in the requirements of the Charities Commission. These include the need for Trustees to take a much more active role in the organisations to which they are trustees. BCF also aims to have better gender and age representation in its trustees.

- a) It was agreed to vote for the proposed changes by a show of hands
 - i) Policy changes as per attached agenda paper – Carried unanimously

10 – Appointment of Officers:

- i) The following are nominated and appointed Trustees:

David Wills,
Andy Salmon,
Dr Peter Rookes,
Sabir Elias,
Ruth Tetlow,
Shenaz Sajan

- ii) The following persons are appointed Senior Advisors (with advisory role only):

Jalal Uddin (Muslim), Yann Lovelock (Buddhist), Ruth Tetlow (Christian), Violet Owen (Baha'i) Dr Jagjit Taunque (Sikh)

- iii) The following persons are appointed officers:

Chair – Andy Salmon (Baha'i)
Vice Chair – Dan Griffiths (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints)
Advisory Chair – Jimmy Suratia (Zoroastrian)
Secretary – Dr Peter Rookes
Minute Secretary – Kathryn Azarpay
Membership Secretary – Sabir Elias
Treasurer – David Wills
Funding Officer - Jane Bailey
Communications/Web Manager – Sabir Elias
3rd Sector Liaison Officer – Dr Peter Rookes

11. Incoming Chair and Vice Chair

Incoming Chair and Vice chair formerly took their chairs

12. Peter Hulme key note speaker:

Peter Hulme delivered a talk on the importance of reflection and meditation in facilitating meaningful and peaceful dialogue and understanding between different faiths. Peter's background is in English Literature and Psychology and is of the Bahai faith. Part of his faith philosophy is the idea that all people of faith (and sometimes those with no faith) are approaching the pinnacle of a mountain but all from different directions and taking different paths on the way up. All great religions are from the same source, and all human beings created from the same dust. The full text of his talk is attached.

13. The Year Ahead: Andy Salmond (Chair)

Andy spoke of the air of division in society that is presenting significant challenges for people of faith. As an organisation, BCF will continue to build on its successes and to support

existing projects, and more than this it will look at new and different projects not yet tried. Despite our differences, we can reach success – unity in diversity helps us achieve more.

14. Any other business:

- a) The Sacred Space Dinner is taking place on 3rd December, 7 for 7:30 pm. Purple Rooms, Stradford Road, Hall Green, including guest a speaker on the topic of Faith and Sustainable Consumption. Further information is available on the BCF Website and from Jane Bailey.
- b) Events could include more Arabic sacred music
- c) Human Chain around Birmingham, Saturday 29th September, in continuing challenges of debt. (contact Ruth Tetlow for further information)
- d) Interfaith Forum, Thai British Buddhist Trust (Wat Mahathat Temple Kings Bromley) Sunday 30th September 2018, 08:30 to 09:15 arrival and registration
Morning session: Living with Death, Afternoon session: Securing the Environment for Future Generations. 11:30 to 13:00 Lunch/Free time

15. Vote of Thanks: Incoming Vice Chair, Dan Griffiths:

Dan offered his thanks saying ‘thank you is simple but full of meaning’. Dan continued: thank you to the Unitarian Church for allowing BCF to host its AGM in its wonderful building. Thank you to the Lord Mayor - a person of faith and a supporter of faith, to Tarang for the evenings reflection, and Jimmy Suratia in his absence – ‘the reflection maker’, to Andy Salmond, to the QE Hospital for giving space to hold BCF meetings, and ‘to all for being here and for what you do in your communities’.

16: Refreshments: A selection of delicious vegetarian food and drinks were served courtesy of the Bahai community members.