



**Minutes of the East of England Faiths Council meeting held on
Tuesday 12 June 2012
St John's Innovation Centre, Cambridge**

Chairs: Anne Brown (AB) and Ellis Weinberger (EW)

1 Welcome

EW welcomed everybody to the meeting.

2 Minute of silence

Jim Platts introduced a moment of silence – ‘to find the community that we are together...’.

3 Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 March 2012 were accepted as a correct record.

4 Care networks in the community

EW welcomed and introduced Hilary Johnys (HJ), Senior Coordinator at Care Network (CN), a countywide organisation helping older and vulnerable people to stay independent. HJ explained that Care Network grew out of an initiative of the then Vicar of Comberton, who saw a need for a community car scheme about twenty-six years ago. It now has two arms: the first is a development team helping communities to develop their own schemes for e.g. mobile wardens, community car drivers etc. and the second is a direct service provider, whereby volunteers could help people returning from hospital resume independent living by providing assistance with basic tasks. This started from Addenbrookes and was rolled out across the county with lottery funding. Funding was lost about eighteen months ago but CN had been talking to the health authority about helping people to avoid hospital admittance and a scheme based on the ‘Welcome Home from Hospital’ model was trialled in Fenland and is now countywide. Again volunteers help people with basic tasks that mean they can remain at home rather than having to go into hospital because they cannot care for themselves. CN has over 130 volunteers, many of whom come from a faith background. CN is also piloting a programme to bring information into GP’s surgeries about different voluntary organisations and what they can offer patients e.g. self-help groups, financial advice: this has arisen from recent concerns that GP fundholders do not know what voluntary services are available and is being introduced in East Cambridgeshire.

EW thanked HJ for her informative presentation and invited questions.

Sister Iqbal Warsi mentioned a group known to her that supports people in this kind of way and commented on how helpful it is.

Jenny Kartupelis asked whether there are similar organisations in other counties. HJ thinks that British Red Cross and WRVS do something similar in some places and added that CN would be happy to advise people thinking of setting up such a group.

5 The Sikh approach to working with other faiths

EW introduced Dr Jagjit Singh Srail (JSS) an active member and founder trustee of the Cambridge Sikh Society which is focused on providing Cambridge with its Sikh Gurdwara. He has been the primary interface between the local Sikh community and the University and is also active in supporting the Sikh international agenda linking with others on the topics of Sikh human and political rights.

JSS began by talking about what Sikhs are: founded by Guru Nanak Dev towards the end of the 1400s, the Sikh nation was created at the end of the 1600s; Sikhs have a strong military tradition and much of India was under Sikh rule in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and Sikhs have lived under Mogul, British and India rule, which has sometimes resulted in tension and persecution; Sikhs form less than 2% of the Indian population; there are now more than 25m Sikhs worldwide and the Sikh diaspora is fast growing, has spread to Italy and S America in the last decade and now includes indigenous adherents. Sikh scriptures and traditions incorporate elements from Hinduism and Islam, and while Sikhism is monotheistic Sikhs believe that all faiths can be legitimate routes to God. It is an egalitarian faith, recognising the human race as one. JSS also referred to Amritsar, the 'spiritual home' of Sikhism, to the Khalsa, the Sikh baptism ceremony, and the concept of welcome and the Langar (shared meal), which are hugely important to Sikhs. For Sikhs in the UK the effect of the World Wars was significant, with many Sikhs joining the armed forces, and Sikh immigrants have moved from poverty to prosperity quite quickly. Today there are concerns about maintaining a Sikh identity but they are keen to promote and work for community integration.

EW thanked JSS for his fascinating presentation and invited

6 Questions and discussion

Sister Iqbal asked whether she would be permitted to visit a Gurdwara on her own: JSS replied that Sikhs warmly welcome visitors of other faiths and this would not be a problem.

Richard Jordan said that he had encountered Sikhism in the context of food, which had caused him to think about the Christian eucharist, which he had found challenging, and asked whether food has a sacramental meaning for Sikhism. JSS replied that for a Sikh there is nothing better to do than community service, and Sikhs will compete to prepare and give food. He also explained that receiving food while seated on the floor expresses equality and lack of ego.

Lakhwinder Singh Sagoo added that during the recession the Gurdwara in Southall has been providing a very large number of free meals.

Amrit Singh asked about timing for the Cambridge Gurdwara. JSS replied that it has been a three year project and they anticipate three to six months of fundraising for renovations, and hope to be open by the end of the year.

Raj Shah offered congratulations on the Gurdwara and asked about the frequency of the Langar. JSS replied that at the moment there is a monthly service at Arbury Community Centre but they hope to hold a weekly service at the Gurdwara.

At this point EW handed over the chair to AB.

7 Participatory budgeting: how faith groups can get involved

AB introduced Kevin Ambrose (KA), Policy Analyst, researcher, facilitator and consultant with over 25 years experience working in, and for, the local government sector. KA began by mentioning the references to community service and community involvement made by the previous speakers. He highlighted the disillusion felt by many about the ways in which decisions are made remotely from the local communities concerned. Participatory budgeting had its origins in Brazil over twenty years ago when after the end of a military dictatorship and with no real structures in place the citizens of Porto Alegre put their own structures in place.

The movement was picked up by among others Oxfam and Church Action on Poverty and there are now about 200 initiatives in this country; in this region there are examples in Norfolk, Hertfordshire and Luton, and KA went on to show a video from the experience in Hemel Hempstead.

At the end of the video AB thanked KA and asked for questions.

Sister Iqbal Warsi asked whether a similar event was planned for Cambridgeshire. KA replied that he wasn't aware of anything, but that people should press local politicians about participatory budgeting.

Jeremy Pearce asked how Herts County Council had reacted to the Adeyfield event. KA responded that HCC did review the event but the officers involved had been made redundant and he has no further information – he added that community development had been disproportionately affected by redundancies.

Stephen Copson asked about the balance between one-off grants and projects that need long term funding. KA thinks this is a problem that is being engaged with: it might be possible to encourage Councils to reserve say 1% of their budgets for such projects but this area is being squeezed financially despite Big Society, localism etc.

Anne Brown asked whether voting patterns had changed in areas using PB. KA said that there is evidence that using PB does increase turnout.

Raj Shah commented that in his experience with Cambridge City Council few people had turned up at local area committee meetings and that the loudest voices tended to be successful. KA responded that community development workers are key to the process as they have links to the local groups. Also, ground rules are needed (e.g. a limit to grant amounts) and safeguards must be built in.

Richard Jordan wondered what percentage of voters turned out in Adeyfield. KA does not have exact figures, although local councillors said they were seeing people they had never seen before, and he feels this area needs more research.

AB thanked KA for a fascinating and very helpful presentation.

8 Report on Faiths Council projects and matters; dates of next meetings

Jenny Kartupelis (JK), Director of EEFC, welcomed everyone, especially those attending for the first time, and thanked the speakers for their presentations, which all shared the common theme of faith being involved in the wider community. She reported as follows:

EEFC's support

At the last meeting, JK had reported support from the LAs of Essex CC, Herts.CC and Thurrock. These had now been joined by Cambs.CC and Peterborough City Council.

Survey of Councillors

A focus group had met at the end of May to consider how EEFC could best help with networking between councillors. As a result, EEFC will be working with East of England Local Government Association on member support and articles for local and national magazines. The guide for councillors working with faith groups, which will form part of their induction, will be published in the next couple of weeks.

[Now available on <http://www.faithneteast.org.uk/publ.htm>].

Inter Faith Week (IFW) 18 to 27 November

EEFC is organising a preparation day for local inter faith groups on **Tuesday 17 July**. There will be sessions on event planning and management, media relations, and finding partners. This will also be a chance to exchange experiences and learning from previous IFWs.

Consultation by Local Authorities

Cambridgeshire County Council is consulting on its business plan and spend on 18 July, and is keen for faith groups to attend and get involved. JK urged those groups in Cambs. to attend, and also said that it was likely other LAs would be undertaking similar exercises and, wherever possible, faith groups should be aiming to make an input.

EEFC's Tenth Anniversary

Delegates should have had their official invitation for Monday 25 June garden party in the grounds of the Bishop of Ely's residence at which Terry Waite will be the guest speaker.

Events

A repeat of the Faith and Emergency Planning seminar that EEFC had co-hosted with Peterborough City Council on 6 March has been requested by Welwyn Hatfield, and will be held on 27 November.

Faiths IT Helpline

JK reminded delegates that this free facility provided by the charity iTrust as part of COVER, would cease at the end of July, due to cessation of external funding. It would be possible to continue receiving this help by paying £50 a year to iTrust, and EEFC was emailing all on its database to explain whom to contact.

Resilience/emergency planning

JK invited Priscilla Barlow (PB) to update the meeting about resilience issues. PB reported that despite the loss of the regional resilience structure the Voluntary Sector group of which EEFC is part continues to meet. She reminded those present of the importance – particularly in view of recent flooding and the upcoming Olympic Games – of updating business continuity plans and also of giving thought to individual and family resilience.

Dates of future meetings

Thursday 27 September 2012
Thursday 13 December 2012

Wednesday 13 March 2013
Thursday 6 June 2013
Thursday 12 September 2013
Wednesday 11 December 2013

All 5.00pm in St John's Innovation Centre, Cowley Road Cambridge.

Priscilla Barlow
July 2012

EAST OF ENGLAND FAITHS COUNCIL

St John's Innovation Centre, Cambridge, Tuesday 12 June 2012

Attending Delegates

		Organisation	Faith
Kevin	Ambrose	Ambrose Associates Consultancy	
Gwen	Andrews	EEFC	
Priscilla	Barlow	Churches Together in Cambs	Christian (RC)
Anne	Brown	Methodist District, Beds, Essex, Herts	Christian (Methodist)
Andrew	Cogan	COVER	
Geoffrey	Cook	Commission for Dialogue & Unity	Christian (RC)
Stephen	Copson	Central Baptist Association	Christian (Baptist)
Paul	Ewans	Cambridge Regional College	Humanist
Sarah	Geary	EEFC	
Paul	Hills	Eastern Baptist Association	Christian (Baptist)
Pam	Hinds	Cambridge Interbeing Sangha	Buddhist
Chris	Jenkin	Cambridge Street Pastors	Christian
Hilary	Johnys	Care Network	
Richard	Jordan	Chelmsford Diocese	Christian (Anglican)
Ram Singh	Kalra	Peterborough Anglia Sikh Assoc (PASA)	Sikh
Jenny	Kartupelis	EEFC	Christian
Maire	Lawless	Stort Interfaith Group	Christian (RC)
Anne	Littlefair	EEFC Faith Development Officer	Christian (Methodist)
Dina	Mandalia		Hindu
Mary Clare	Mason	Faith and Cohesion Network	Christian (RC)
Samantha	Masters	Taoist Tai Chi Society	Taoist
Kate	Mitchell	Taoist Tai Chi Society	Taoist
Richard	Morgan	Church of England	Christian
Ann	Naylor	Essex County Council	
Sean	Oliver-Dee	Diocese of Peterborough	Christian (Anglican)
Thak	Patel	Think India / EEFC	Hindu
Vimal	Patel		Hindu
Jeremy	Pearce	Broxbourne Council/Diocese of St Albans	Christian (Anglican)
Jim	Platts	University of Cambridge	Quaker
Lakhwinder Singh	Sagoo	Cambridge Sikh Society	Sikh
Amrik	Sangha	Peterborough Anglia Sikh Association (PASA)	Sikh
Raj	Shah		Hindu
Gormail	Singh	Peterborough Anglia Sikh Association (PASA)	Sikh
Jagtar	Singh	Peterborough Anglia Sikh Association (PASA)	Sikh
Kulwinder	Singh	Peterborough Anglia Sikh Association (PASA)	Sikh
Sewa	Singh Nanuwa	Peterborough Anglia Sikh Association (PASA)	Sikh
Jagjit	Singh Srail	Cambridge Sikh Society	Sikh
Paula	Spalding	Cambridge Regional College	Christian (Anglican)
Lesley	Turney	EEFC	
Amin	Ullah Khan	Welwyn Hatfield Inter Faith Group	Muslim
Iqbal	Warsi	Anglia Ruskin University	Muslim
Ellis	Weinberger	Jewish Community, Cambridge / EEFC	Jewish

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Apologies

		Organisation	Faith
Donald	Allister	Diocese of Peterborough	Christian (Anglican)
Mirza Yousaf	Baig	Pakistan Cultural Association	Muslim
Jonathan	Baker	Diocese of Peterborough	Christian (Anglican)
Simon	Banks		Quaker
Tony	Barker	Church and Community	Christian (Baptist)
Virginia	Barnes	Cambridgeshire SACRE	Baha'i
Kathleen	Ben Rabha	Diocese of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich	Christian (Anglican)
Valerie	Berkson	CECF (Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum)	Jewish
Cliff	Broadhurst	Braintree District Inter Faith Forum (B-Diff)	Christian
John D	Brown	Discovering Sacred Britain	Christian (Anglican)
Judith	Bruni	Watford Interfaith Association	
David	Capey		Christian (Anglican)
Cynthia	Capey	SIFRE	Christian (Anglican)
Andrew	Coleby	St Albans Diocese	Christian (Anglican)
Geoffrey	Colmer	Central Baptist Association	Christian (Baptist)
Nigel	Cooper	ARU Chaplaincy/Cambs SACRE	Christian (Anglican)
Paul	Daltry	Minister for Church and Community Engagement	
David	Dean	St Philip's Centre / East Midlands Synod	Christian (URC)
Robert	Findlay	Harlow Inter Faith Group	
Sean	Finlay	Wisbech Interfaith Forum	Christian (RC)
David	Gillett	Norwich InterFaith Link	Christian (Anglican)
Mahendra	Gokal	Stevenage Gujarati Hindu Association	Hindu
Sadiq	Haq	Hertfordshire SACRE	Muslim
Alan	Hargrave	Ely Diocesan Board for Church in Society	Christian (Anglican)
Stephen	Harmer	Harmer Consulting	Christian
David	Hawkins	Diocese of Chelmsford	Christian (Anglican)
Peter	Hayler	Great St Mary's University Church	Christian (Anglican)
Graham	Hedger	Diocese of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich	Christian (Anglican)
Walter	Herriot OBE	EEFC	
Robert	Hill	Diocese of Peterborough	Christian (Anglican)
Paul	Hughes	Diocese of St Albans	Christian (Anglican)
Barbara	Johnson	Beds and Luton Fire and Rescue	Christian
David	Jonathan	Grassroots and Luton Council of Faiths	Christian
Prudence	Jones	East of England Faiths Agency	Pagan
Tahir	Kamran	Cambridge Muslim Council / EEFC	Muslim
Mohamed A	Kassamali	Peterborough Interfaith Council	Muslim
Brian	Keegan	Peterborough Interfaith Council	Christian (RC)
Habib	Khokhar	Ahmadiyya Muslim Association	Muslim
David	Lawson	Dacorum Sharing of Faiths	Christian
Richard	Leslie	Hertsmere Forum of Faiths	Christian (Anglican)
David	Lloyd	Herts County Council	
Cheryl	Lowe	Church Schools of Cambridge	Christian
Sue	Lowe	Office for Civil Society, Cabinet Office	
Jay	MacLeod	Diocese of St Albans	Christian (Anglican)

		Organisation	Faith
Peter	Maguire	Inter Faith Council Huntingdon & District (ICHHD)	Baha'i
Hilary	Marlow	Cambridge Interfaith Programme	
Paul	Martin	Building Bridges	
Peter	Meek	East Midlands Synod	Christian (URC)
Ralph	Meloy	Diocese of Chelmsford	Christian (Anglican)
Jonathan	Meyrick	Diocese of Norwich	Christian (Anglican)
Guy	Miller	Elim Pentecostal Church	Christian
Jafar	Mirza	Faiths and Beliefs in Further Education (FBFE)	Muslim
Ivor	Moody	Mid Essex Inter Faith Group	Christian (Anglican)
Christopher	Morgan	Diocese of Chelmsford	Christian (Anglican)
Peter	Mortimer	Diocese of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich	Christian (Anglican)
Pat	Mungroo	Ethnic Minority Network	
Neslyn	Pearson	Faith in Queen's Park	Christian
Neil	Perry	Romsey Mill	Christian
Reynold	Rosenberg	Welwyn & Hatfield Inter Faith Group	Jewish
Mohammed	Sarfraz	Peterborough Regional College	Muslim
Jehangir	Sarosh, OBE	European Council of Religious Leaders	Zoroastrian
Caroline	Shepherd	Cambs County Councillor	
Kevin	Skippon	St Andrew's Healthcare	
Valerie	Skottowe	Welwyn & Hatfield Inter Faith Group	Christian (RC)
Carol	Smith	Chelmsford Diocese	Christian (Anglican)
Dan	Smith	Hunts District Council	
Sushil	Soni	Ipswich Hindu Samaj	Hindu
Anil	Soni	EEFC	Hindu
Graham	Thompson	Methodist Church, EA District	Christian (Methodist)
David	Thomson	Diocese of Ely	Christian (Anglican)
Frances	Ward	Diocese of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich	Christian (Anglican)
Malcolm	Weisman		Jewish
Paul	Whittle	URC Eastern Synod	Christian (URC)
David	Wilman	Cambridge Interfaith Group	Christian
Simon	Wilson	Diocese of Norwich	Christian (Anglican)
Patricia	Wyman	Cambridge Regional College	Quaker