



Minutes of Executive meeting 17 June 2020
Virtual “Zoom” meeting hosted by UM 18:30-19:40

Attending:

Yazad Badha	Zoroastrian
Gopal Bhachu (Treasurer)	Sikh
Alex Dewsnapp (Harrow Council)	--
Varsha Dodhia	Mahavir Foundation
Peter Juler	Christian
Anthony Kaiser (secretary)	Jewish
Jack Lynes	Harrow Bereavement Cares
Samia Malik (Harrow Council liaison) (SaM)	--
Sonoo Malkani (chair) (SM)	Hindu
Abraham Matthews (membership officer)	Christian
Umami Merali	Muslim
Lydia Nazerian	Baha’i
Dr Rajrarjeshwar Parmar	Hindu
Jon Spain	Jewish
Rany Vignasen	Quaker

PART 1

- Welcome** from Sonoo Malkani
- Apologies for absence:**

Senevi Aturapana*	Buddhist
Dilip Chaubal	Hindu
David Cryer (vice chair)	Humanist
Punitha Perinparaja	Hindu

*received 18.6.20

- Reflection (YB)**

Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to reflect on my religion and the material impact it has had on my life and who I am today

Being born into Zoroastrian Faith, I take pride in the fact, that my religion is one of the oldest religions in the world today. As many of you know, I am also a Zoroastrian priest, a privilege that is passed down through the family line.

Our religion believes in 1 God Ahura Mazda meaning (Wise Lord) and one prophet Zarathustra. We worship all 7 elements on earth and all 7 elements are looked after, by a particular divine being called Yazata or Yazad which also means worthy of worship.

My religion is the keystone of my life and I am proud to be a Zoroastrian. The Religion has always influenced me to follow righteous path, to embrace our religions 3 basic tenets, these are Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds, always help others in whatever way I can, to do charity as and when required and to fulfil all my responsibility towards my family, towards my fellow community members and humanity at large

For me Zoroastrianism does not exist in isolation. It is part and parcel of my life. It is who I am, what I do. It defines my identity at the core.

The Zoroastrian religion believes in purity and righteousness and as a true Zoroastrian and the priest representing my community, I understand the importance of these virtues and consistently strive to imbibe these in my day to day life simple examples like keeping the body clean, praying and keeping the mind clean and removing all negative thoughts and replacing with constructive, kind, truthful and creative ideas.

Zoroastrians believe that the world is always improving. We believe that the world today is better than what it was yesterday and the world tomorrow will be better than today because everybody has the capacity to do Good thoughts, words and deeds.

As I have said, I am a Zoroastrian priest and therefore, have a duty to serve the community in both joyous and sad times.

During this unprecedented period, I, like many other religious leaders from various communities and faiths, have had to adapt, alter and change the way I reach out to the Zoroastrian community. Using media such as WhatsApp and Youtube, different prayers that would normally be attended in person are still able to be listened to and viewed by all, including those individuals that may need it the most i.e the elderly, the sick etc.

“Atha Zamyat, Yatha Afrinami”- May it be so as we pray, Oh Ahura Mazda. Amen.

4. Minutes of the meeting 27.5

5 JL said he had spoken to DC and asked him to confirm whether he (DC) still held the same views as he had done last year at the Executive meeting, that Punitha and he (JL) should be quiet and not speak or participate at our Executive meetings, to which DC answered emphatically "YES". JL remarked that at least DL was being honest.

There was some confusion about exactly what was said by DC and JL at the last meeting, and whether the minutes were accurate. This disagreement was unresolved.

10.1 Only AK was to write to YB.

11 Vishal Sodha has also offered visits to his Temple.

14 Add Jahangeer Choudhury's surname.

Add "a number of Council representatives including the GEO, the director of HCM, and some religious leaders" to those attending the virtual meeting.

5. Matters arising

10.1 YB explained that it has been difficult for him to get in touch with the Harrow Youth Parliament, partly because he has been unwell (now recovered) and partly because access is difficult. He sought help to achieve liaison. SaM suggested contacting Mark Scanlon, Head of Service; she will pass on his contact details if YB emails her for them.

10.3 SaM apologised for her non-attendance at several meetings of the HIF. She had been on leave on one occasion, but had not been notified of several others. SM apologised to her, and asked AK to ensure that SaM was definitely on the mailing list henceforth.

11 AK suggested that an individual should organise the visits to Harrow Religious Institutions when this became possible. SM approved and sought volunteers. AK volunteered.

Dr Parmar reiterated his invitation.

Vishal Sodha (see item 11) has offered a visit to his Temple to HIF members after the conclusion of pandemic lockdown.

AM pointed out the clash of Carol Concert dates this year; his church's concert is on 6th December from 5 to 7 PM. SM offered on behalf of the HIF that each would choose which concert he/she wished to attend.

6. Promoting payment by HIF membership (SM)

AM said that all members were paid up for 2019, but SM revealed that AM himself had paid some of these fees! She said that this was not the norm and must be avoided.

SM and AM will review the list of members unpaid-up for 2020 and write to them.

7. Charitable Status Application (GB)

GB expressed concern that the decision to suspend the application at the Executive Officers' subcommittee in February wasted 18 months of hard preparatory work by Shabbir Merali and himself, and was pleased at SM's assurance that the application would still proceed. SM suggested that all the documents necessary for application should be reviewed, but GB explained that they had already been ratified recently. He suggested that the whole issue should be tabled at the AGM for final ratification.

SM offered to contact Shabbir to thank him.

SM reiterated that she had expressed doubt at the February meeting about what monies raised would be used for, but GB reassured her that the Charities' Commission would not ask about that so this is not an issue which should retard the application. JL pointed out that achieving Charitable Status would not generate funds; it would be necessary to fund raise, for which Charitable Status is not necessary, but adds credibility. He went on to point out that it would be easier to raise funds with a larger membership, but an effective membership drive requires more human resources than HIF has, hence his suggestion that one use of HIF money should be to hire administrative help to this end.

8. Subcommittee for review of policies (SM)

The need to review the Constitution at all was discussed, since the 2015 one was thoroughly discussed at the time. Should the review be of the 2015 Constitution or will it be superseded by the more recent one supporting application for charitable status?

GB was asked to forward all documents connected with this application.

9. Pat Stevens commemoration (SM)

a) Church commemoration

SM will speak to Varshia Dodhia about this; paying for instalment of a bench outside St John's Baptist Church, Stanmore, with explanatory plaque had been agreed at a previous meeting. However we need to check with the church that that is what they would like.

b) Public commemoration

SM asked YB if he could check with Malcolm Deboo, of the ZTFE, whether the organisation was still prepared to host this event.

10. National Interfaith Week (JL)

This is scheduled for Sunday 8th to Sunday 15th November 2020, the first day being Remembrance Sunday and the last day coinciding with Mitzvah Day.

Since we have been forced to become adept with media for virtual communications by the pandemic social restrictions, he suggested that each religious community from HIF should prepare a 30 minute Zoom presentation for that week. Each could be recorded and broadcast more than once.

SM reminded the Executive that Rabbi Berger, national organiser of Mitzvah Day, has previously offered T-shirts and other support, although not funding. She will contact him to discuss joint plans for this year.

11. New HIF Members (SM)

The following have joined recently:

- Bhupindersingh Bhassein
- Manji Kara
- Kuha Kumaran
- Brian Rose
- Vishal Sodha
- Howard Stone

SM observed that there were no longer any “Welcome packs” for new members, but she will write to all of them to welcome them. She also suggested inviting them to be observers at the Executive meetings.

12. HIF Voluntary Action and Partnering programme (SM)

Charmian Boyd is CEO of Harrow Carers. SM will liaise with her about partnering. AD endorsed Ms Boyd’s effectiveness.

13. Harrow Central Mosque application to broadcast prayers (SM)

This application was withdrawn on 15.6.20.

GB revealed that the Leader of Harrow Council has asked all community leaders (including himself) to get in touch with him to “see how things are now”, in the aftermath of this process.

14. Upcoming events

It will be World Humanist Day on Sunday 21.6.20. AK was not aware of any specific activities planned by Harrow Humanists.

It will be World Yoga Day on the same date, and free yoga sessions may be available. SM will try to send on the link to the HIF executive.

15. AOB

a) HIF AGM

GB asked about the timing of the next AGM, since the one scheduled for March was cancelled because lockdown started around that time, and could it be a virtual meeting.

SM rejected the possibility of a virtual meeting because so many people would be unable to participate.

JL proposed that, with the AGM in abeyance, the same officers should stay in post until the next AGM.

It was proposed that we should schedule the next AGM for March 2021, and this was supported by most of the committee (6 spoke in favour, and none demurred). GB pointed out that an EGM could be held earlier if necessary.

JS questioned if it would be constitutional to defer until March 2021; SM promised that we will carefully inspect our Constitution to decide.

b) Members with irregular attendance

SM was concerned that Jaffer Ladak was an infrequent attender at Executive meetings. Should he remain on the HIF Executive? SM aspires to the entire HIF membership considering themselves as one big, participating family. UM knows him and will investigate.

16. Next meeting: Zoom Pro meeting Monday 20.7.20 from 6:30 PM (UM to arrange)

Actions:

- YB to send AK an electronic copy of his reflection
- YB to email SaM for Mark Scanlon contact details; SaM to provide them
- AK to ensure that SaM is added to the Executive mailing list
- AK to organise visits to Religious Institutions
- SM to thank Shabbir Merali for his work preparing for Charitable Status application ✓
- YB to check with Malcolm Deboo about hosting a public event to commemorate Pat Stevens
- SM to contact Rabbi Berger for joint HIF/Mitzvah Day activities
- SM to write to welcome new members
- AK to invite new members to future Exec meetings
- SM to liaise with Charmian Boyd, CEO Harrow Carers
- SM to send the free yoga link to the Exec if she can
- Inspect 2015 Constitution for conditions governing postponed AGM
- UM to contact Jaffer Ladak

Mrs S.P. Malkani

SIGNED _____ Dated _____