



## Minutes of Executive meeting 27 May 2020

Virtual "Zoom" meeting hosted by AK, in 2 parts 18:40-19:05 and 19:15-19:45

Attending (\*indicates attendance only in 1<sup>st</sup> part):

Senevi Aturapana	Buddhist
Yazad Badha*	Zoroastrian
Gopal Bhachu (Treasurer)	Sikh
David Cryer (vice chair)	Humanist
Varsha Dodhia	Jain
Peter Juler*	Christian
Anthony Kaiser (secretary)	Jewish
Jack Lynes	Jewish
Sonoo Malkani (chair)	Hindu
Abraham Matthews (membership officer)	Christian
Ummi Merali*	Muslim
Lydia Nazerian*	Baha'i
Dr Rajrarjeshwar Parmar	Hindu
Jon Spain	Jewish
Rany Vignasen	Quaker

### PART 1

1. **Welcome** from Sonoo Malkani
2. **Apologies for absence:**

Patria Aquino	Baha'i
Dilip Chaubal	Hindu
Punitha Perinparaja	Hindu

3. **Reflection** sent by Punitha Perinperaja who was unable to join us

From the **Bhagavad Gita:-**

Though the wise one sees, hears, touches,  
Smells, eats, moves, sleeps, and breathes,  
The awareness of the TRUTH remains  
As a constant refrain,  
Ever reminding, ever alerting,  
That the doer is the Higher SELF  
And not the ego-bound Lower SELF.

SM asked DC to add this and all reflections to the HIF website. He agreed, but pointed out that they are available through the meeting minutes which are already on the website.

#### **4. Report of Executive Officers' Consultation meeting 24.2.20 (DC)**

The meeting was attended by SM, DC, GB, AM, JS and AK. Its purpose was to progress the HIF application for Charitable Status.

The application had already been submitted, but not yet accepted, as further documents and amendments were required.

SM questioned the purpose of applying for charity status since we wanted to be sure how the extra funds would be used. The officers agreed that the application should be postponed until this was clarified; although GB abstained.

GB expressed disapproval of the postponement, and asked for wider input from the HIF Executive which had previously supported the application on the original terms. SM assured him that the project has not been abandoned.

It was agreed that this issue should be considered in detail again at the next Executive meeting. GB suggested that it should be sorted by the Events subcommittee, but DC explained that the subcommittees are effectively defunct, none of them having operated for over a year (except from the Holocaust Memorial Day event planning committee). Currently the subcommittees have been replaced by Executive Officers' meetings, who bring plans to the full Executive for ratification, owing to capacity issues.

GB was asked whether the Charities Commission required any further documents for the HIF application. He told us that we have already produced more policies than they need!

## **PART 2**

#### **5. Documents for approval (SM)**

The **Code of Conduct** policy was previously ratified by HIF executive. It was retabled in its most recent form and ratification sought again. JL objected to some of the items because they were too obvious to need stating (eg avoid deliberately offensive or insensitive comments or language) and thus demeaned the HIF. SM and DC attempted to clarify the need for an explicit framework to be available to deal with challenging committee members.

At this point JL lightheartedly suggested an extra rule, “no spitting”, to highlight his argument. DC admonished him for his sarcasm. JL indicated that he would complain about this challenge. JL has detailed further aspects of the interchange between himself, DC and SM:

I [JL] since heard (and he [DC] had confirmed) that he wanted Punitha and myself to take a back seat and apparently cease to have a say in HIF affairs. Looking at the proposed Code of Conduct at our recent Zoom meeting, I said that such an attitude, in my opinion, breached the ruling about respect for one another or undermining another member. In reply to my question, asked through the Chair, to David, as to whether he stood by his view expressed and if he therefore accepted it as a breach of the proposed code, he replied very simply, and very firmly, "Yes". So far as I am concerned this is unacceptable.

The consensus for the code of conduct policy was for ratification (roughly 11 out of 12 attendees); with 1 objection.

The **Complaints** policy had been tabled but SM explained that there were numerous drawbacks in its current expression (some of which she detailed) and considerable further work was necessary. VD suggested that it be reviewed by an especially constituted subcommittee, and this was agreed.

The **HIF Constitution** was not available to the current HIF Executive Officers but bears re-examination since last ratification. Several attendees (in particular GB) thought they had a copy and offered to circulate it. This should also be considered by the same subcommittee as above. SM will participate on both committees.

There is currently a written Constitution prepared for the HIF submission to the Charities Commission. However, this version is more suitable for a charitable body than for the HIF.

## **6. Report of David Cryer’s resignation and its withdrawal (DC)**

This was not considered further than for DC to check that everybody was aware that he had resigned and is now reinstated.

## **7. Appointment of new Secretary**

AK was welcomed back.

## **8. Plans for HIF/Publicity (SM)**

Just before he resigned, DC set up an HIF YouTube channel, but it has not yet been updated in the circumstances of his absence and the Covid-19 pandemic. DC will

continue to oversee it. Any contributions offered by HIF members should be channelled through DC.

DC will also continue to maintain the HIF website.

## **9. HIF Membership (SM)**

It was agreed at a previous Executive meeting that all HIF Executive members should assist AM in recruiting new HIF members, of which AM approved! AM continues to keep the Chair, Treasurer and Secretary of the status of membership. He also clarified that the website shows details of how to pay for membership. SM suggested a review of new members at the next meeting.

## **10. HIF links**

### **10.1. Harrow Youth Parliament**

AK to write to YB about progress.

### **10.2 Harrow Police**

SM is the link.

### **10.3 Harrow Council**

AK to clarify the status of the liaison.

### **10.4 Harrow Safer Neighbourhood Board (HSNB)**

SM is the link; she is the vice chair.

### **10.5 Interfaith Network (IFN)**

Phiroza Gan is designated HIF representative but not always able to attend (she has recently been unwell and left short of food by the pandemic circumstances; better now). Is a new rep required? SM volunteered to fulfil this role.

There is also a London Boroughs Faith Network of which SM has been a longstanding member.

### **10.6 SACRE**

VD is HIF representative, but the organisation is on hold for the pandemic, hoping to resume in September or October.

### **10.7 Harrow Environmental Group (for tree planting)**

VD is involved in the "Planting for Peace" programme.

## **11. Visits to Harrow Religious Institutions SM**

RP has offered actual or virtual visits to his temple (Hindu).

So has Vishal Sodha, a new member of HIF.

AM advertised a Christmas Carol Concert at his church on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> December.

[AM subsequently informed AK that this date clashes with the concert at St Mary's Church in Harrow, to which HIF has already been invited]

## **12. Signposting public to sources of support**

This was discussed along with item 4.

SM asked AK to write to local religious leaders asking what they are doing for their communities during the pandemic, so that we may signpost the public to these resources.

VD explained that the £2400 funds (arising from HIF membership or any other source; except for the HMD event dedicated funding) does not have restrictions on what it can be spent on. So it could be used for example to buy and distribute commodities for disadvantaged individuals affected by the pandemic restrictions in Harrow.

The issue of voluntary spending and partnering with other organisations in Harrow will be considered at the next Executive meeting.

## **13. Pat Stevens memorial**

Deferred to next meeting.

## **14. Harrow Central Mosque plans to broadcast prayers by loudspeaker (SM)**

Initially informally in March 2020, but after 22<sup>nd</sup> April through a formal planning application to Harrow Council, HCM has sought to broadcast the Muslim Call to Prayer at 6 PM on Friday evenings by loudspeaker from HCM for 3 months. The secretary of the Harrow Central Mosque, Jahangeer Choudhury, and his wife Rehana aspire that this initiative will be taken up by other mosques in Harrow and eventually spread nationwide. They have also indicated that the action will benefit the British Heart Foundation, although it is not clear by what mechanism.

SM was asked to give the HIF members' views to the Council on the following day. She emailed them immediately and received more than 20 replies. The consensus view was not to approve the application for a variety of reasons,

especially the nuisance of noise pollution and because it might be offensive to the religious beliefs of some members of the general public. She passed this on at a virtual meeting which was attended by a number of representatives including the CEO of Harrow Council and some Faith Leaders from Harrow, plus the Chair of Harrow Interfaith, attended the Virtual Council meeting on 22 April 20. The formal application has led to objectors preparing an opposing petition to the planning application, which closes in about a week (20, 000 signatories at this time). The Council planning committee meets on 17<sup>th</sup> June to make a final decision about the application.

#### **15. Interfaith week**

Deferred to next meeting.

#### **16. AOB**

Not considered through shortness of time.

**17. Next meeting: Zoom Pro meeting Wednesday 17.6.20 from 6:30 PM** (AK to ask UM to arrange ✓)

#### **Actions:**

- DC to add “Reflections” to website
- Charitable Status application to be discussed at next meeting **on agenda**
- Complaints policy to be reviewed by a subcommittee
- HIF Constitution to be reviewed by this subcommittee
- GB to send HIF constitution to Executive
- Review new HIF members at next meeting **on agenda**
- SM/AK to write to YB about Harrow Youth Parliament ✓
- AK to explore Council representation on HIF Executive ✓
- Consideration of new HIF rep to IFN
- Action for Planting for Peace?
- AK to write to local religious leaders about their community support activity during pandemic
- HIF Voluntary action and Partnering programme to be discussed at next meeting **on agenda**

- AK to ask UM to arrange next Zoom meeting ✓

*Mrs S.P. Nalkani*

SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_ Dated \_\_\_\_\_