



THIFF meeting minutes, Tuesday 7th March 2017

Present: Alan Green, St John on Bethnal Green; Jan McHarry, London Buddhist Centre; Leon Silver, ELCS; Iqbal Raakin, LBTH; Gulam Hussain, LBTH; Barbara Disney, LBTH; Christine Hall, St John on Bethnal Green; DCI Ingrid Cruickshank, Metropolitan Police Tower Hamlets; Shihab Miah, Metropolitan Police Tower Hamlets; Bernd Halschka, Tower Hamlets LGBT Community Forum; Nat Roos, Fieldgate Street Synagogue; Hasya Qureshi, SACRE; Ram Chandra Saha, Vivekananda Human Centre; Shams Muhammad, Ebrahim College; Sigrid Werner, St George's/Soanes Centre; Gemma Cossins, THCVS; Dani Anderson, THCVS.

Apologies were received from: Sister Christine Frost, Sonya Sier, Cameron Kirkwood, John Hayes, Rev. Peter McGeary, Stephen Tunstall.

Minutes of previous meeting were accepted with 1 amendment: DCI Ingrid Cruickshank to be included under apologies. Amended minutes are attached separately,.

Autism Strategy

Barbara Disney gave a presentation on the Council's new Autism Strategy for adults, which is currently being consulted on. The Council are looking for involvement from people with autism and carers or family members. The LBTH strategy is in line with the national autism strategy, and aimed at those who don't need to access wider social care services but may need additional support. It is the only disease-specific strategy in the borough, and the Council are keen to improve learning and form partnerships with Tower Hamlets organisations.

The Council have produced a consultation questionnaire which will be circulated to the forum, and will shortly be available through Survey Monkey.

The full presentation and consultation questionnaire can be found on the THIFF website:

<https://www.faithintowerhamlets.org/documents/>

LBTH Community Forum

The Tower Hamlets LGBT Community Forum has been commissioned by the Council to run events and provide support to LGBT people in the borough. As part of this they are working to set up an ally programme and are seeking support from the local faith community to do so. The project is looking to establish relationships with potential allies to LGBT people within religious institutions to act as friendly contacts for newcomers. The forum discussed what organisations might be able to offer in terms of support and contact, acknowledging that it may be difficult in some ways. Anyone who is interested in taking part in the project or helping form connections in the borough should contact Bernd: lgbtforum@elop.org.

Hate crime update

DCI Ingrid Cruickshank gave an update on the latest available statistics on hate crime reports in the borough, which can be found on the THIFF website. Tower Hamlets Police have set up an oversight and taskforce



group for protecting vulnerable people, which should support further mapping of hate crime in the borough. They also have a new Faith Liaison Officer in post: Shihab Miah, shihab.miah@met.pnn.police.uk. This role will complement Lee Hawkins' role (Hate Crime Officer).

Information share

Alan: Refugees Welcome in Tower Hamlets contacted Alan in early March as they are keen to encourage local faith organisations to engage as community sponsors for Syrian refugees. Stephen Tunstall was unable to attend the March THIFF meeting, but has asked for information about the project to be circulated to the forum. Message from Stephan:

"I'm a member of St Peter's Bethnal Green and a leader of Refugees Welcome in Tower Hamlets. Through Refugees Welcome in Tower Hamlets, we have been campaigning for Tower Hamlets to resettle Syrian refugees through the government's Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme, which has resulted in 3-5 families being resettled in Tower Hamlets this year, as Joe mentioned in his presentation to the previous THIFF... Refugees Welcome in Tower Hamlets is keen to hear from local faith and community organisations that are interested in sponsoring a Syrian refugee family to resettle in our borough. The community sponsor needs to make an application to the Home Office, but will be supported by other local organisations who can take responsibility for securing housing, raising the £9,000 required, and organising practical aspects of their welcome and integration. If you are interested in this initiative, please contact stephantunstall@gmail.com or the threfugees@gmail.com."

Alan: the Council's review of anti-social behaviour work is ongoing – they are aware that faith communities are involved in dealing with ASB but unsure what issues they're facing. THIFF is holding an event in April on this theme – any ideas to feed in to this event are welcome, info will be circulated via the mailing list.

Dani: the THCVS annual conference is on 21st March at Oxford House, all welcome to attend

Gemma: THCVS is recruiting for a Partnerships Manager, deadline 24th March and details on the THCVS website: www.thcvs.org.uk

Sigrid: St George's German church is holding an event on 23rd March on the end of the German community in East London

Gulam: LBTH have developed a new community engagement strategy which will be going out for consultation in April

Iqbal: provided leaflets on free mediation service for neighbourhood conflicts

Ram: Holding a celebration festival on 19th March – for information see their website: www.vivekenandacentre.com