

THIFF meeting minutes, Tuesday 9th May 2017

- 1. Present:** Alan Green; Jan McHarry; Leon Silver; Cameron Kirkwood; Dani Anderson; Maxine Moar; Iqbal Raakin; Gulam Hussain; Tony Selman; Shihab Miah; Jalal Aziz; David Barker; Cath Smith; Soniya Sier; Marzufa Karima; Shams ad-Duha; Ram Chandra Saha; Deborah Weston; Maduka Ogbuonya
- 2. Apologies** were received from Nathaniel Roos, Rev. Fiona Stewart-Darling, Rev John Hayes, DCI Ingrid Cruickshank and Shafiul Islam
- 3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**
Minutes of previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record.

4. THE Partnership

Cath Smith delivered a presentation on Tower Hamlets Education Partnership (THE Partnership): THE Partnership was formed 2 years ago, when conservative government expressed an interest in transforming schools into academies. The aim was for the 106 schools in Tower Hamlets to work together, whether they became academies or not, to work towards a common purpose which is school improvement. So far, 69/70 schools have showed an interest in joining THE Partnership, mostly primary schools and nurseries. Secondary academies are waiting to see what THE Partnership is delivers before joining.

The body wants to do everything in schools to allow every child to have the best possible experience. It defines success by: raising aspiration, achieving high value, fostering trust and support between schools and the community, and ensuring that all schools prioritise equalities, inclusion, transparency and accountability.

The Partnership has a two-pronged approach to school improvement: 'growing the green' (expanding on the positive) and 'heavy lifting' (supporting struggling schools). Collaboration, sharing and openness are recognised as key ways to improve schools.

THE Partnership also delivers training, provides information including data packs and is driven to work together. Peer review is also integrated into its delivery plan which includes self-evaluation.

One of the way it shares information is through newsletters e.g. disseminating information on training.

Good practices, policies and people (their skills) are also shared. The Partnership seeks to harness different skills and utilise them to make young people greater and provide support to schools that are wobbling.

THE Partnership is seeking to create an Advisory Council comprised of various community stakeholders – people who are interested in children's education –

which will include a representative from a faith organisation such as the Inter-Faith Forum. The Advisory Council will be responsible for shaping the work of the Partnership.

ACTION: THIFF to appoint a representative by 6th June to join the Advisory Council and represent THIFF.

ACTION: THE Partnership to emphasise the importance of inter-faith work to secondary schools.

ACTION: THE Partnership to disseminate syllabus which SACRE produces to members.

Shay stressed the need to have Police in the Advisory Council.

ACTION: Cath to consider whether the police should have a role in the Advisory Council.

More information on THE Partnership available here:

<https://the-partnership.org.uk/>

5. **Hate crime data sharing**

DCI Cruickshank and PC Hawkins were on annual leave so were not available to speak on the data. Data in the current format will no longer be provided as Police made a decision centrally to provide hate crime data to local Police offices on a daily basis instead of weekly; PC Hawkins does not have the capacity to analyse data in the new format and produce quarterly briefings. The data for this quarter is incomplete as the roll out of new data format has already started.

The numbers of faith incidents for this period are similar to the same period last year. There was a spike in hate crimes after Brexit but data has now returned to similar numbers as last year. Election may have an impact on the number of hate crime incidents but we cannot realistically predict this at this stage.

Alan Green welcomed the appointment of Shay (Shihab) a dedicated faith officer from the Police. Leon mentioned that a continuing problem of rubbish being dumped outside the synagogue has been resolved after a report was made to Shay.

Tony stated that there are usually graffiti and rubbish dumped near Sandy's Row Synagogue but thinks this is because the synagogue is situated near a pub rather than the incident being motivated by racism or faith-hate.

Alan encouraged reporting of graffiti to the Police, whether they are hateful in nature or not. He also mentioned that there are securities grants available for places of worship that are vulnerable; Shaf Islam from the Council can assist in making application. The process is quite complicated and Home Office usually provides a day's notice before application window closes.

ACTION: Alan to circulate Shaf's contact details to THIFF network.

Shafiul Islam, Community Engagement Coordinator, 0207 364 6336,
Shafiul.Islam@towerhamlets.gov.uk

ACTION: Shay to link with Shaf to discuss funding for churches and mosques that have been burgled in the borough.

Figures of crimes are available on the Met website on a ward level:
<https://maps.met.police.uk/your-area/>

6. Tower Hamlets Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Review

Maxine Moar from the Council introduced this agenda item.

ASB perpetrators do not have a general profile; people from all works of life cause ASB.

ASB covers a range of different issues and is a priority for the Mayor. Following a review, Maxine and her team provided 12 recommendations to the Chief Executive and the Mayor.

As part of their review, Maxine's team worked in partnership with different organisations, including housing associations and the police.

The review found that a few things do not work very well; one of these things included the collection of ASB data. A suggestion was made in the review to have joint-up data collection with housing association; this can be utilised to map hotspots.

The review also found that communication needs improving. Good news sharing rarely took place. To progress this recommendation a Communications Group has been set up.

Another recommendation on the review highlighted the need to restructure where staffs are based, staff that address ASB should work in different geographic areas as opposed to being centrally based.

There is a role for the community to change attitudes towards ASB – does the Forum feel a Faith sub-group should be set up to change attitudes of the community towards different forms of ASB? The subgroup can educate people about what is considered ASB and what is not; for example using Class A drugs is not ASB (they are crimes), cannabis smoking is considered as ASB. Also when are young people just being young people and when is it considered ASB?

Messages from faith sector can include messages around roles and responsibilities toward litter and the effects of Nitrus Oxide (laughing gas), especially when used in conjunction with Cannabis (the legal position on Nitrus Oxide is that you can use it but not sell it).

Shay pointed out that Police school officers are working with schools to raise awareness around Nitrus Oxide. He also mentioned that Police through operations against Nitrus Oxide targeted 6 shops, 2 of them were successful.

Shams suggested that the public authorities should provide information on key messages which the faith sector can put out. The difficulty is that the youth that cause the majority of ASB are not faith space users so it is challenging to reach this group. Shams suggested that one way could be through social media, through people they follow or advertising on Youtube. Reaching them through parents is not always effective as many of these young people have broken relationships with their parents and other times parents do not believe that their children engage in these activities. Can we provide PSHE lessons for prevention?

Gulam pointed out a practical example where community messages worked in reducing ASB: the hiring of cars by young people during Eid. Shay informed the group that an operation will take place during the last week of Ramadan and on Eid, providing central police office accept the bid. The bid includes support to the borough provided by territorial support group and safer transport unit to enforce action against hire care firms.

Other recommendations within the review includes:

- Better case management systems
- Better work around victims and perpetrators
- Ensure that messages around use of 101 number is clearer.

Shay informed the group that the police have new structure for ASB set by Head Office. In the new system Bethnal Green has been merged with Hackney therefore resources will be tighter. ASB bus will no longer be used due to its limitations.

7. The New Religious Education Curriculum

Deborah Weston introduced this agenda item.

SACRE produce agreed Religious Education curriculum each year which they recommend to the Council. The Council then publishes and publicises the syllabus and has no right to veto. The syllabus is advisory to schools.

RE Today was commissioned by the Council to provide training and additional resources to Tower Hamlets Schools. As part of this it trained faith ambassadors from secondary schools to teach pupils from primary schools about their own faiths.

ACTION: THIFF is requested to help RE Today in making the group of faith ambassadors more diverse by suggesting students in year 12 to take part in the scheme.

8. Information Share

Shay: Police carried out weapons sweeps across the borough and discovered numerous weapons; including a firearm in Bethnal Green, knives in a weapons cache in Shadwell; an axe in Poplar and knives in Whitechapel.

ACTION: THIFF asked to pass message on to congregation regarding the dangers and consequences of carrying weapons.

Jalal: Recovery College provide free courses in summer on mental health and wellbeing. Also ASB and other crimes can be reported through OWL (Online Watch Link), which acts as an online Neighbourhood Watch. Faith communities are asked to display flyers regarding OWL in their respective faith spaces.

More information can be found here:

<https://www.owl.co.uk/>

ACTION: Shay to bring box of flyers on OWL to next THIFF meeting.

John Barker: standing in Poplar and Limehouse as an MP candidate.

Shams: Ramadan is expected to begin on 27th May and Eid is likely to be on 26th June.

Ram: Vivekananda Centre organising a festival at Logan Hall, Russell Square on 2nd July. All invited to attend.

Dan DeHarnes: event on moral sources and civic good in Tower Hamlets taking place on 24th May, 7-9:30 at Hanbury Hall. All invited to attend.

Next THIFF meeting will be held on 11th July.