



Council for
Christian Muslim
Relations

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Council for Christian Muslim Relations (HW)

Monday 16th August 2016

Minutes

Present: Chauhdry M Shafique (Chair), Hugh Ellis (Vice-Chair), Stephanie Rybak, Mark Macaulay, Helen Byrne, John Bajina, Stephanie Rybak, , Riaz Ahmed, Asmat Mohammed, Dr H Ramzy, Laurence Smy, Sajid Ali, G Rabban Shah, Mazhar H Shah, Simon Crisp, Christian Puritz, Paul Bowen, Jeffrey Singleton, Mohammed Azad, Asif Jamshaid, Zakir Paul Hussain, Zafir Iqbal, Andy Smith.

1. Welcome and Introduction

Shafique opened the meeting with a welcome to all and especially a warm welcome to those joining the CCMR meeting for the first time and the guest speaker. Shafique paid tribute to Revd John Richey who has moved to a different role in his ministry and therefore with a heavy heart has said he is unable to continue attending the CCMR meetings in the same way as he has done over the years. Shafique said he had mentioned to John that he is very welcome to attend at any point in the future should he be able to.

2. Apologies

Imam Sultan, David Snoxell, Tony Dickinson, Anouar Kassim, Praveen Liyanage, Steve Baker, Yousif Al-Khoei, Jenny Taylor, Tony King, Toni Brodelle, Nick Thompson, John Parry, Katy Simmons, Daniel Sullivan.

3. Minutes of the last meeting 25th July 2016

Mark Macaulay and Laurence Smy asked that their apologies be included.

4. Current Issues

Sheikh Ramzy spoke about a number of issues in the media nationally and internationally affecting the Muslim community and Islam. Shafique clarified at this point however that by current issues we mean local current issues in this particular context and as far as the issues raised by Sheikh Ramsay are concerned of course we include them in our programme of discussion as and when relevant.

A member asked a question about what was happening to the current investigation being carried out in relation to the 3 local Imams and their sermon on Mumtaz Qadri's assassination of the Governor of Punjab in Pakistan. Shafique ruled that as the matter was under investigation by an independent person it will be inappropriate to say anything about this matter at this point.

5. Think Tank

Laurence Smy reported that the intended topic 'Resisting Radicalisation' did not get discussed in pending the outcome of the investigation by Khurshid Drabu.

6. Guest speaker

Chauhdry Shafique the Chairman introduced the guest speaker Zakir Paul Hussain from Abbotabad in Pakistan and extended a very warm welcome to him. The Chairman also acknowledged with great admiration that Zakir had come to us here in High Wycombe, in the UK especially to make his presentation on our developing interfaith partnership and thanked him and his colleagues back home for their involvement in this project and hospitality when Chauhdry Shafique has visited them in Abbotabad.

Zakir Paul's presentation consisted of a detailed account of the background of the Christian minority community and their experiences in Pakistan which is of course a majority Muslim country. Against this background of a community historically under some pressure because of their different faith, Zakir Paul went on to give a fascinating personal account of his own changing experiences and encounters both in the friendship circles as well as his working environment as a practicing lawyer following the tragedy of 9/11 in New York in 2001.

We heard how as a fallout from 9/11 and later other terrorist activities including 7/7 in London UK in July 2005, adversely affected the attitudes of Muslims towards their fellow Christian citizens. Zakir Paul went on to describe in some detail the techniques and social strategies he and his community leaders used to cope with the stresses and strains that started to emerge in this climate of religious extremism. He also however was anxious to point out that there were many Muslim religious leaders and official organisations as well as other people in the community at large who were concerned to show and provide moral and practical support and solidarity and reassured him and his Christian brothers and sisters for their future status in the country as equal citizens.

The CCMR members were enormously impressed with the high quality of presentation and its personalised content which was followed by a very interesting and constructive range of questions and answers.

7. Vote of thanks

The Reverend Hugh Ellis, vicar of All Saints Parish Church and Team Rector of High Wycombe, UK, gave a heart warming vote of thanks to Zakir Paul for his presentation and his trip to the UK and to Pastor Asif for his very professional translation service.

8. Date of next meeting

No date was set for the next meeting.