

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE OADBY & WIGSTON MULTI-CULTURAL GROUP  
HELD AT THE CHURCH ROOMS, HOLY TRINITY METHODIST CHURCH, HARBOROUGH  
ROAD, OADBY ON WEDNESDAY, 19 DECEMBER 2007, COMMENCING AT 7.15 PM**

Present: Councillor Mrs S B Morris - Chair

Councillors: J Kaufman, S M Rizvi, Mrs R I Sylvester and J Vickerstaff (5)

Also in Attendance: W, Belgrave, Mrs C Hardy, Z Hassam, B Khanna, Ms S Kang, S Kassam, G Lamb, Mrs S Lamb, M Moghal, A Mohindra, Reverend Dr A Mosley, R Sandhu, Mrs S Seth, and P Valentine.

Officers Present: P Johnson, Mrs K Faulkner and A Wood (OWBC)  
PC A Raybould and Ms L Spencer (Leicestershire Constabulary)

Apologies for Absence were received from: Councillors T S Biring and P Hings, C Kotecha and A Mehr.

**30. MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 17 October 2007 be taken as read and approved.

With the consent of the Group, the Chair took consideration of Agenda Item Number 7 next.

**31. MUSLIM BURIAL GROUND – PROGRESS UPDATE**

The Chair introduced Mr Johnson the Council's Deputy Chief Executive who proceeded to guide Members through the written report contained within report pages 90 to 91. Given the limited life of the existing Cemetery in Oadby, a site was identified off Gartree Road and negotiations commenced with a view to the purchase of this land. In view of the lack of progress in negotiating with the owners of the land, enquiries were made of Leicester City Council to check the position regarding the existing facility in Saffron Hill Cemetery and information received indicates that this may continue for a further 15 to 20 years.

During the subsequent discussion, reference was made to Muslim Burial facilities provided elsewhere in the County and that it was not essential to provide prayer facilities.

The Deputy Chief Executive asked Members to consider that if a need was being met by the provision at Saffron Hill Cemetery, there is no justification in expenditure on another facility in the absence of the outcome of the Government's research of future Cemetery provisions.

Councillor Kaufman suggested that this matter be referred to the Muslim Burial Council of Leicestershire in order that their opinion could be sort and their comments taken into account. In addition, discussion took place regarding the capacity of Wigston Cemetery, for which detailed information was not readily available.

The Deputy Chief Executive therefore confirmed that a report incorporating these matters and an indication of future plans would be brought before the next meeting of the Group.

The Chairman thanked Mr Johnson for his presentation and he left the meeting at 7.50 pm.

**32. MULTICULTURAL CALENDAR 2008**

During consideration of this item, Mrs Hardy drew Members' attention to the fact that when considering the Chinese New Year, "Chinese" is not a faith and this should be removed from the Faith column.

Similarly, Councillor Kaufman drew Members' attention to the fact that the Holocaust is not a Jewish matter and that reference to the Jewish Faith should be deleted. Mr Kassam asked Members to consider what had been achieved on this day with the joint celebration of Eid ul Adha and Christmas which had brought together within the community, many representatives of the different faith communities to celebrate the two different festivals. The Chair added that this was a unique occasion, being the only Group in the country that undertook such joint celebrations. Even the local press had acknowledged this.

Accordingly, when considering the possibility of a joint celebration of Hannukah and Christmas in 2008, this should be carefully planned and well organised. Picking up on this, Mrs Seth requested that invitations to events be sent to Members well in advance and considered that a week to ten days was the minimum that Members required. Mr Sandhu pointed out that that date scheduled for Easter was incorrect, which was noted and this and other amendments as referred to above would be taken into account and the calendar published accordingly.

**33. MULTICULTURAL SOCIAL EVENING**

Mr Lamb referred to the papers which had been incorporated with the Agenda and asked for comments on the proposed invitees to this event on 12 March. He also referred to the letter from the Chair of this Group which would be the means of invitation, and most importantly, the response would give groups the opportunity to let us know of any amendments in order that the records could be maintained up to date. He therefore asked all Members to carefully consider the contact details and inform him of any necessary changes.

**34. MULTICULTURAL GREETING SIGN PROPOSALS**

During discussion on the next event, which was the Chinese New Year, Mrs Hardy provided the Community Liaison Officer with some publicity material in order that the Multicultural Greeting Sign could be programmed to include a greeting in Cantonese. It was also agreed to confirm the dates when this greeting would appear.

**35. ATTENDANCE AT GREETING SIGN EVENTS**

The Chair introduced this item because she was concerned at the poor attendance by non-members of the respective faiths at events held by other faiths and quoted the examples of the Celebration of Easter which was attended by predominantly white members, whereas Diwali was the opposite.

She urged Members to present a united front in order to deter the latent threat of racism which lies beneath the surface. Mr Kassam who had attended the recent meeting of the Oadby Forum where this had surfaced through letters received regarding Master Plans for Oadby Town Centre, considered that these opinions were in the minority and that it was the majority who wished to live together in harmony. Councillor Kaufman added that it was therefore essential for representatives of all the faiths to attend all of the events in order to demonstrate this unity amongst the communities. Mr Moghal observed that this was a long

term process of education and rather than attempt to change the mindset of the minority, it is better to isolate and rebuff such ideas in order that they gain no audience.

**36. NATIONAL HOLOCAUST COMMEMORATION DAY**

Members considered the draft programme as set out in the booklet sent separately with the Agenda, and were asked to contact the Council's Arts and Heritage Co-ordinator, Ms Sallie Wocha on 0116 2572667 with their suggestions. However, volunteers for the readings were required and the following offered their services:

Councillor Mrs S B Morris, Reverend Dr A Mosley, Mr A Mohindra, Mr R Sandhu, Mr M Moghal, Councillor S Rizvi and Mrs Seth.

It was confirmed that the Council now had a satisfactory Public Address System to ensure that all those visiting the event would be able to hear what was being said.

**37. SENIOR CITIZENS ACTION GROUP**

The Community Liaison Officer, Mrs Faulkner, addressed the Group regarding the meetings of the Senior Citizens Action Group which take place four times a year and referred Members to the poster attached to the Agenda papers. She asked Members to convey the details back to their communities in order that the make up of the Senior Citizens Action Group could more accurately reflect the make up of the residential population.

**38. THE ALPHA COURSE**

The Chair confirmed that this item was included on the Agenda for information only and the Group was not actively promoting this.

**39. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 1) The Chair, Councillor Mrs Morris, requested that the minutes of meetings be distributed to Members as soon as possible, and that the date and venue of the subsequent meeting be included in this document in order that Members may have as much notice as possible of subsequent meetings. The discussion went on to consider that Members be made aware at the outset of each Municipal Year of the whole years meeting dates and that this continue to be published with each set of minutes in future.
- 2) In response to the suggestion that the Muslim Group of Oadby be allowed to make a presentation at the next meeting of the Oadby Forum, the Chair suggested that this be considered by the Group first and that this be an Agenda item on the next meeting of the Group since at present it contains a suggestion relating to only one faith, and this needs to be considered by all.
- 3) Mrs Lamb urged everyone to attend the Mayor's Ball on the 8 March 2008 indicating that tables of up to ten would receive a discount on the individual cost and asked Members to sell the idea to their communities. She went on to confirm that there would be an auction to raise proceeds for the Mayor's Charity and that some prizes had already been donated but the organisers were looking for more.

The menu for the meal had been chosen specifically in accordance with the theme of the evening ("East Meets West") and that those booking tables would have the

opportunity to choose their meals in advance. There would be three courses with waitress service and a drinks reception paid for out of the sponsorship monies raised.

- 4) Mrs Faulkner drew Members' attention to the meeting being held at the Offices of Voluntary Action for Oadby and Wigston (next door to the Council Offices) on 29 January 2008 when seminars would be held on How to Obtain Grant Funding for Community Groups.

**The meeting closed at 9.00 pm**

**Future Meetings of the Multicultural Group:**

Wednesday 6 February 2008

Council Chamber

Wednesday 9 April 2008

- Venue to be decided