

Notes from AGM and All Party Parliamentary Group on Faith and Society, 21 January 2020.

Present:

The Rt Hon Stephen Timms MP, Chair (ST)
Steve Double MP
Fiona Bruce MP (FB)
Derek Thomas MP
Cherilyn Mackrory MP
Alasdair Gordon, Office of Stephen Timms
Naomi Grant, Office of Stephen Timms
Daniel Singleton, FaithAction (DS)
Jeremy Simmons, FaithAction
Matthew Allen, FaithAction
Jenny Hadgraft, FaithAction

Apologies:

David Lammy MP
Jon Cruddas MP
Gary Streeter MP
Tim Farron MP
Maeve Sherlock MP
David Linden MP
The Rt Hon. the Lord Tyler
The Lord Alderdice
The Lord Singh of Wimbledon CBE
The Baroness Neuberger DBE

Minutes

1. Welcome
ST welcomed those present, thanking them for attending and offering the apologies of those listed above.

2. Election of officers

Officers were elected as follows:

Chair – Rt Hon Stephen Timms MP
Vice Chair – Fiona Bruce MP
Vice Chair – Gary Streeter MP
Vice Chair – The Baroness Neuberger DBE
Vice Chair – The Lord Singh of Wimbledon CBE
Secretary – Rt Hon David Lammy MP
Treasurer – Steve Double MP
Officer: Jon Cruddas MP
Officer: David Linden MP

3. Aims of the APPG

The aims of the group were confirmed as:

- a. To promote understanding of faith-based organisations engaged in social action in the UK, and recognition of their value;
- b. To highlight the social, civic and spiritual capital that faith-based organisations contribute to communities throughout the UK, and to identify and promote best practice among organisations;
- c. To consider regulatory and legislative arrangements which can make the most of the potential contribution of faith-based organisations;
- d. To learn from and contribute to international conversations, policy and civic action on the contribution of faith-based organisations.

4. Activity of the group in 2018-19

DS updated the AGM on events that took place during the year, which began with the presentation of findings from Leeds University on their Keeping Faith in 2030: Religions and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The APPG hosted a discussion in February, with students from King's College London on the interface of faith and politics.

In May there was a panel discussion with members of Department for Education and Ofsted on the new Sex and Relationship Education legislation for schools; several Jewish education groups attended and gave their input.

A report on loneliness, titled Up Your Street was launched in July – one of the case studies in the report has been mentioned in the recently published Loneliness Annual Report: The First Year.

The Faith Covenant continues to have a positive impact and there is currently some new Councils that are interested in it. A recent meeting celebrated two years of the Faith Covenant in Essex, where it continues to be very successful and will potentially link into social prescribing in the area.

5. New Areas of Work

ST updated the AGM about new areas of focus for the APPG. There will be an event jointly hosted with the APPG on Modern Slavery. There is also potential to be involved in the work surrounding faith and alcohol treatment. Following on from the research on loneliness, the work on social prescribing will continue. There will be a visit to Essex, to speak to partners involved with the Covenant. ST said that there should be a 'lessons learned' exercise about the Covenant, to review good examples as well as *****. The FaithAction manifesto will be reviewed. DS said that there will be upcoming talks with the NHS, as they are very interested in the Covenant.

DS raised the possibility of blogs by MPs to raise awareness of the work that the APPG does.

FB said that the APPG should consider looking at a family hub located in Chelmsford, which is a good example of how they should be run – it would be interesting to know how faith organisations are engaging with the Chelmsford hub – and more widely with other local authority led hubs.

ST made the attendees aware of an event on 12 February at St Pauls Cathedral to celebrate faith-based homelessness shelters, and the work of the volunteers that are involved with them.

Close

ST asked if there was any other business. There being none he thanked everyone and closed the meeting.