**Faith and Cultural Area Meeting - Minutes**

**Held on Friday 23rd November 2012 – 12:15pm – 1:15pm - 8W 2.10**

**Attendance**

Present:

**Societies:** Bath Anglican Society (BANG), Bath Area Malaysian & Singaporean Association (BAMSA), CathSoc, CySoc, German Society, Japanese Society, Krishna Consciousness Society, Lithuanian Society, VietBath, Welsh Society,

**Societies Exec:** Alix Chadwell, Jacqueline Ip, Lucy Woodcock, Nicola Donnelly, Scott Burfiend,

Charlie Peck (Festival on the Hill representative), Mujeeb Zia (Peace Week representative), Christopher Roche

Apologies:

French Society, Jewish Society

**Items Discussed**

**Introduction:**

* Jacqueline introduced herself as the Faith and Cultural area representative just in case anyone had not had the opportunity to meet her at a 1:1 meeting. She also mentioned that the next set of 1:1s would be happening soon, so societies should look out for this.

**Festival on the Hill/Peace Week**

* Jacqueline introduced the ideas of Festival on the Hill and Peace Week to the societies present.
* Festival on the Hill will be held on the week beginning the 4th of March. Societies will be encouraged to get involved with regards to food, music, events, debates etc. As of yet, there are no set plans and it is up to societies to get involved as much as they want to and contribute ideas etc.
* Peace Week would be held on the week commencing the 18th February (2 weeks after ISB). There would be opportunities for the faith and cultural societies to get involved with the week and help to organise and coordinate events.
* Alix emphasised the fact that at the moment, there are no concrete event ideas about Peace Week, so it was very much up to the societies to think of what sort of events they would like to see happen and then the organisers would look into the feasibility. The core organising groups are leading the central promotion, but it is important that the societies get their members on board to help make the events popular.

The meeting then split into two groups: Faith societies and Cultural societies.

**Minutes from the Faith societies discussion:**

**Peace Week:**

* Krishna Consciousness discussed hosting a meditation event by the lake – they are keen to get involved as is their speaker.
* BANG currently host informal discussions at their meetings, they suggested an open debate format during Peace Week. BANG felt it would be a good idea for each faith to discuss their interpretation of peace and work towards a consensus on what peace is.

Krishna Consciousness suggested a Question Time style forum with a representative from each faith. But they felt there was potential for the forum to become heated and as a result the focus of the discussion should be on peace rather than faith topics.

* CathSoc felt it was important to raise awareness of people in less secure environments around the world who don’t have the luxury to focus on peace.
* Mujeeb Zia said that the Buddhist Meditation and Humanist/Atheist groups were keen to be involved. Possible topics of discussion could be fostering brotherhood and sisterhood, encouraging neighbourly love in society.
* BANG added that the morality of armed forces proved to be an interesting debate at their own meeting, so it could be a good topic to use in the future. Mujeeb Zia said that the MUN group are working on similar topics and he encouraged BANG to contact them for involvement.
* Christopher Roche asked whether we will get external speakers for the events/forums? Mujeeb Zia said that interested groups are encouraged to contact potential speakers for the forum
* Mujeeb Zia had spoken to Mother Sarah (Chaplain) about ‘Purification of the Heart’; she is keen to be involved and will organise a discussion on this topic, including finding speakers and funding.
* Faith groups should focus on ‘Why and How to Love your Neighbour’ and aim to set a precedent for the local community by providing examples on campus.
* Scott Burfiend spoke about the potential to open talks to the public but said that logistics would need to be looked into.
* CathSoc said that given that it is our first Peace Week perhaps we should think on a smaller scale first and Christopher Roche raised the point that the public may not engage so well with a student panel discussion.
* The ‘Love Your Neighbour’ forum was set for evening of Tuesday 19th February. Scott Burfiend to circulate the date, time and blurb of the forum to all the Faith Groups.
* All groups were asked to source speakers for the panel by the 9th December.
* Scott Burfiend and Mujeeb Zia to submit event planner and SRF by the end of S1.
* Mujeeb Zia to create Interfaith Panel mailing list.

**Minutes from Cultural societies discussion:**

**Festival on the Hill/Peace Week**

*All You Can Eat Buffet*

* The idea of an ‘All You Can Eat’ buffet was suggested, where people would have the opportunity to taste food from different cultures and interact with each other.
* Questions were raised about where the food would be cooked? Last year, Westwood kitchens were used to cook the food and societies were encouraged to communicate with their freshers to gain access to use their kitchens on campus. Jacqueline requested that if societies were interested in taking part in this event, they should get in contact with her by Friday 30th November.
* It was undecided whether the buffet would be an event held as part of Festival on the Hill or Peace Week. Jacqueline would communicate with event organisers to resolve this.
* Both the Claverton Rooms and the Tub were suggested as potential locations to hold this event.
* The time of day at which to hold this event was also considered. Lunchtime would mean that there was more people on campus, yet dinner would allow people more time to cook the food/eat/socialise etc.
* The type of food to serve was also discussed i.e. meals/finger food/mixture etc.
* It was suggested that societies think carefully about what foods they would offer in order to keep their costs to a minimum. The idea of pre-paid tickets was suggested to guarantee funds.
* The committee that ends up organising this event would have to have a funding discussion with their area of the SU.
* Some societies said they would need an idea of funding as soon as possible to allow them to buy food from their native countries over the festive period.
* Participants were reminded that risk assessments would need to be carried out prior to this event with the help of Carmela Lear.
* It was agreed that the ‘All You Can Eat’ buffet concept was popular and feasible and it was left to the organisers of each event to discuss which week this event would belong to.

*Global Peace Exhibition:*

* The idea of designing posters portraying how the idea of peace differs from country to country was suggested as a possible event for Peace Week by Jacqueline.
* These posters could potentially be displayed on the Parade although no locations have been confirmed yet.
* The idea of this exhibition was met with general approval.

**Student’s Union Engagement with International Students.**

* The SU is currently facing a problem with getting international students involved in elections. This is a problem from the student officer elections through to cultural committee elections, both with nominations and voting. Alix asked whether the societies knew if there were any particular reasons why this was the case? With such a big cohort of international students, it seems odd that the international students are not involved with these decisions.
* It was mentioned whether the use of Facebook to publicise elections etc would be causing a problem for the Chinese students.
* It was felt that potentially culture isn’t the issue with regards to turnout. More the fact that if you are not engaged with the union in the first place, then you are not inclined to vote in the elections.
* Societies commented on how the links to elections on the homepage of BathStudent was useful.
* It was suggested that sometimes international students might feel that their level of English fluency would cause a problem for them getting elected, i.e. standing and writing manifestos. Alix said she would pass this point on and see whether anything could be offered to support international students wanting to stand in elections.

Jacqueline thanked everyone for coming and the meeting was brought to a close at 1:05.