

## SPIRITUAL CAPITAL

### Notes on Steering Group (SG) meeting 29<sup>th</sup> August 2007, at 16 Queen Anne Square

#### 1. Present

Prof Paul Ballard (PB), Chris Daley (CD), Mr Muhammad Jabbar, Revd. Keith Kimber (KK), Revd Monica Mills (MM), Mr Malcolm Thomas (MT) and Mr Roy J. Thomas (RJT),

Also present Mr Matthew Trick, a student at St Michael's College, on placement shadowing MM

#### 1. Apologies for absence. Dr Keshav Singhal

2. Notes of 09/07 SG meeting, already circulated, were considered. On Item 6., the development of the Spiritual Capital website and blog was drawn attention to by KK, and members asked to read, and propose more case studies for addition.

#### 3. Progress reports

RJT's report recounted various meetings and investigations from which he and KK had been able to develop the understanding of Spiritual Capital and who is interested in it. Special note to be made of contact being sought with the Templeton Foundation, which has invested in a Philadelphia University research programme on this issue. Also a meeting with Cllr Francesca Fontemaggi who has a keen interest in our subject and even blogs on it. It was agreed she would be a valuable ally on the other side, when it comes to promoting interest in the conference, but her involvement directly in the research might compromise our efforts at an independent assessment of the situation. Organ donation was discussed as an area where there are inter-faith issues in engagement with the medical dimension of civil society. Reference was made to religious data drawn from the last national Census, and what the implications of this might be for the way in which information might be presented in the reference handbook on Cardiff religious communities.

Note was taken of Rebecca Edwards' report on her work in progress. This led to agreement that the questionnaire must be ready for approval by the next meeting.

*(KK says with hindsight - I think this is too late, given that meeting is five weeks away.)*

4. Case studies and information – the Spiritual Capital blog was mentioned, also the need for there to be positive examples of inter-faith engagement in civil society to celebrate, as well as examples of dis-engagement. **To be explored next time.**
5. Positioning the project – the websites are only a start, further effort is needed to follow through on media contacts already made. The School of Journalism was mentioned as a potential target on interest, also the need to cultivate relationships with someone who will challenge intentions as well as someone who'll be sympathetic. **Also to explore next time.**
6. Conference - RJT would like to invite the head of the Templeton Foundation as a key speaker. Given the conference will only be five hours plus lunch across the middle of a day, It's unlikely that more than one speaker will be of use – certainly if the objective is to give feedback to civil authorities, and to open an initial dialogue between them and the city's religious communities en bloc, it will be necessary to include workshop elements. Special mention was made of using Revd. Aled Edwards (CYTUN Secretary), as a facilitator to bring into the conference planning process. See:- <http://alededwards.blogspot.com/>

7. Presentation on the Muslim perspective in Cardiff - (MJ) The paper, previously circulated, was presented by MJ and provoked discussion. Of particular interest was the comparison made between the Welsh language community experience in Cardiff in the 60's and that of the Muslim groups which tend to bond together through their desire to nurture their children both in Islam and their home culture. There is unity and uniformity in religious practice between groups, but diversity due to the languages or culture in common. Also notable is the unique social role played by Mosque elders and the wider community in providing advice and help on immigration and other matters, and notably whenever there is a death in the community. A Ramadan iftar meal is being planned to take place, possibly in City Hall on 20<sup>th</sup> September. More details of this will be circulated in due course.  
It was observed that whilst the economic contribution made by all religious communities may be to some extent measurable, it is impossible to assess the impact of the absence of religious communities altogether from public life, because of what is taken for granted. The challenge we have is to highlight where and how the contribution is noted and where and how it is ignored.
8. Other business. Both PB and MJ consented that their submissions to the group could be published on the project websites.
9. Next meeting – 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 6.00pm, at 16 Queen Anne Square.