

A PROPOSAL FROM THE EEFA TEAM.

Almost forty years ago, Cynthia and David Capey saw the need to encourage inter-faith endeavour. Consequently, Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource was established. At the turn of the century, Central Government was promoting Regionalisation and was also interested in supporting inter-faith activity. SIFRE was asked to establish a Regional equivalent which became known as the East of England Faiths Agency (EEFA). Whereas SIFRE was a registered charity, EEFA was set up as a Community Interest Company (CIC).

Over the life of SIFRE, inter-faith activity everywhere, first prospered and more recently diminished. SIFRE was wound up a few years ago and its place in Suffolk has been delegated to a number of more local inter-faith groups. Likewise the demand on EEFA has been affected. Its involvement in Regional Activities has all but disappeared and although it continues to stimulate the inter-faith scene for the wider community, its ongoing important role is to provide schools with speakers from the faith communities and to organise school visits to places of worship.

EEFA currently does not employ any administrative staff; all school work is set up by voluntary effort. From the start, speakers have been paid and places of worship receive a standard donation for hosting visits.

The present administrative team is way beyond retirement age and is looking to ease off a little. However it values the work it enables and would be very sad if this was to stop with their withdrawal.

We wonder whether SACRE could move into a closer partnership with EEFA such that EEFA becomes an ancillary company of SACRE. At the present time, EEFA has accommodation in the centre of Ipswich and a salaried administrator could be based there.

Schools have the opportunity to make booking on line and the administrator would be able to attend to any such requests. The job description of the administrator would include acknowledging school requests, sourcing the appropriate faith speaker for the assignment, advising the school of the booking, appointing the speaker, receiving the speakers claim for fees and expenses after the event, invoicing the school after the event and making arrangements for the speaker to be paid. (The speakers fee is subject to income tax). If the payroll could be handled by the county, this would relieve the administrator of a significant piece of work!

The income presently generated by EEFA from this activity is sufficient to pay the incidental running costs of the operation – Public and Employer Liability Insurance, computer consumables, internet and telephone charges etc.

EEFA is planning to approach the Keswick Hall Trust for funding to cover the salary of the administrator if SACRE is in principle prepared to support this proposal.