



South East England

REGIONAL

FAITH

FORUM

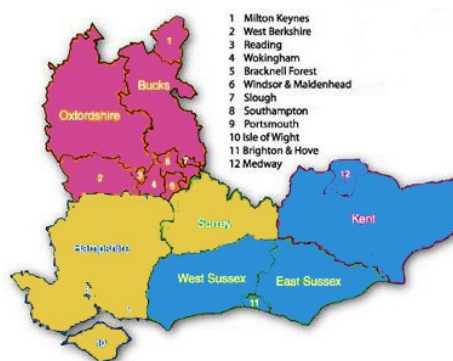
FUTURE

PROPOSALS

ORGANISATION & GOVERNANCE

ACTION PLAN 2009-2012 - SUMMARY

All SEEF's recent work has confirmed the great variety of the South East Region. In order to value the diversity of its faith-expressions in daily life the region should continue to be approached as THREE SUB-REGIONAL AREAS: Eastern, Central and Thames Valley.



THE CONSULTATIONS, using direct conversations, meetings, questionnaires and most importantly sub-regional area conferences involved more than 250 people drawn from a wide variety of organisations. The responses have been drawn together in a SUMMARYⁱ. The proposals about **SEEFF's future ORGANISATION & GOVERNANCE** and its **ACTION PLAN (2009 TO 2012)** have taken seriously all the consultation responses.

“What is a Regional Faith Forum (RFF) for?” was the fore-most question and the consultations have affirmed that ***SEEFF needs to be a hub and focus that supports and brings together the interests of grass-roots faith communities (local groups and networks), non-faith organisations and regional bodies to promote mutual faith understanding and engagement in social actions for the benefit of the whole community.***ⁱⁱ This largely agrees with the RFF vision in *Face to Face and Side by Side – a framework for partnership in our multi-faith society.*ⁱⁱⁱ

These proposals are designed to enable SEEFF to set up new Organisational and Governance structures. They may be used as **a framework for establishing the new governing body**, which may then, in consultation with the membership, revise them to create appropriate arrangements for a sustainable future.

The **three main parts** of SEEFF's new structures are its **Governing Body, Sub-Regional Areas** and **Membership**.

GOVERNING BODY

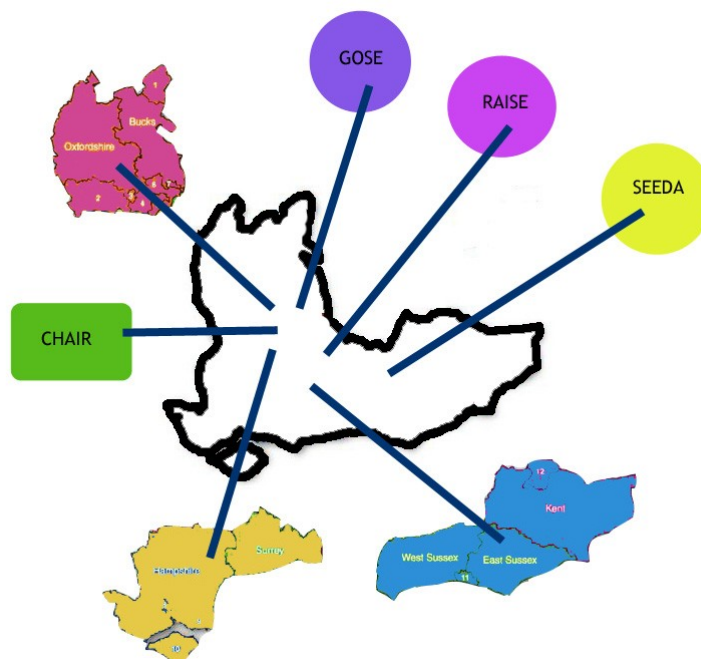
The new governing body (**The Regional Board**) needs to be drawn from and represent the interests and concerns of the sub-regional grassroots faith communities. It also needs to include the key regional bodies that represent government, the third sector and the social, economic and community development of the region. It is therefore proposed that:-

- **A Chairperson** is drawn from and **elected** by SEEFF's Full Membership (*please see below*).
- **Each of the three Sub-Regional Areas will elect four representatives.** These will be elected by SEEFF's Full Members who belong to the respective Sub-Regional Area (SRA). The candidates for each SRA will be SEEFF Full Members in the respective SRA and have been nominated and seconded by SEEFF full members in the SRA. **One of the four** will be elected to specifically **represent the interests of young people**.
- The Regional Board will invite the **regional bodies** GOSE (Government Office for the South East), RAISE (Regional Action and Involvement South East) and SEEDA (South East England Development Agency) **to each appoint one representative.**

The Regional Board will seek to be represented on the RAISE Board and the successor to SEERA (South East England Regional Assembly).

The Regional Board will therefore consist of a minimum of 16 people and meet not less than four times a year, one of which will be its annual meeting at an Annual Conference for the whole region.

It would have the power to co-opt and also invite other people, such as staff and volunteers, to be in attendance. The Board will aim to have among its membership representatives of all nine of the UK's major faiths^{iv}: also it will have regard to a reasonable gender and age balance. To achieve this diversity the Board may need to co-opt appropriate people.



SEEFF will need to contract with other organisations and therefore be a recognised legal entity. Rather than remaining as an unincorporated body by association, it is proposed that SEEFF should seek to become a registered company.

SEEFF is an organisation that provides benefit to the public and is for the advancement of religion, the advancement of citizenship and community development as well as the promotion of religious and racial harmony, equality and diversity. As such it could qualify as a registered charity^v.

It is therefore **proposed that the SEEFF Regional Board becomes an incorporated registered charity**. It would take advice about becoming a company and charity and may consider the option of being a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

Administration & Co-Ordination

The Regional Board will appoint a CO-ORDINATOR whose main work will be to manage the day to day business of the Regional Faith Forum and its Board and be responsible for SEEFF's liaison and communications. The Co-ordinator will attend the Regional Board meetings.

SUB-REGIONAL AREAS (SRA)

The heart of the region is in its grassroots and it is among and through them that dialogue, social action, partnership and all the many aspects of inter and multi-faith experience are lived out.

The South East's Sub-regional Areas (SRA's) are vital for encouraging and enabling, bridging and being the communication channel between the Regional Faith Forum's centre and the local faith communities.

The SRA's will each elect four people to serve on The Regional Board.

Each SRA will form a **Faith Forum Support Group** and, in consultation with the Regional Board, appoint a voluntary CONVENOR. The Support Groups will promote SEEFF's purposes, aims and objectives and help deliver the parts of the Action Plan appropriate to the Sub-region. They will include both Full and Associate Members and involve Local Strategic Partnerships and Voluntary & Community organisations.

The three Sub-Regional Area Convenors will regularly liaise together and with SEEFF's Co-ordinator, and be invited to attend the Regional Board Meetings.

Each sub-regional area will aim to have not less than one gathering each year, and arrange other events as necessary.

MEMBERSHIP

As one of the key bodies for the region, SEEFF's main responsibility will be as a "hub and focal point" for faith communities, organisations and groups. It will also be open and inclusive for all organisations and people engaged with faith.

In order to be open and inclusive, and also respect the diverse and particular needs of the people and organisations, some of whom will work with faith communities, but not be faith bodies themselves, SEEFF will have **two levels of membership**.

- **Full membership**, with voting rights, will be open to faith organisations and people who belong to faith communities, groups and organisations within the region.
- **Associate membership** (non-voting) will be open to non-faith organisations and people who represent them.
- Faith and non-faith organisations that are **outside the region** may be non-voting associate members.

TAKING THE PROPOSALS FORWARD

- Following the acceptance of these proposals at the 28th April conference ...
- The Interim Planning Group will invite, from the SEEF membership, nominations for The Chairperson and Regional Board members to represent the three Sub-Regional Areas.
- Election papers will be sent to the SEEF Membership.
- Completed election papers will be received and processed by RAISE and declare the results of the election.
- GOSE, RAISE & SEEDA will be invited to appoint its representatives.
- The Regional Board will hold its first meeting; proposed for Wed. 1st July 2009.
- The Board will appoint a vice-chair, secretary & treasurer.
- All previous interests, responsibilities, assets and liabilities will be transferred to the Board. (*See below*)
- The Board will adopt and begin to execute the SEEFF Action Plan 2009-12 and agree the Budget.
- It will recruit a Co-ordinator.
- It will seek professional advice, and move towards incorporation and charitable registration.
- It will enable the Sub-Regional Areas to set up their Faith Forum Support Groups and appoint volunteer Convenors ...

TRANSFER OF INTERESTS, RESPONSIBILITIES, LIABILITIES AND ASSETS

When the new Board is formed, a chair appointed with a vice-chair, secretary and treasurer, and the development of its new governance documents (constitution and articles) in process, the current SEEFF Interim Planning Group, and all others involved in SEEFF's organisation to date will hand over their interests, responsibilities and assets (including funds) belonging to SEEFF to the new Board. The signatories for SEEFF's Bank Account will be changed according to the new Board's requirements and mandate.

DRAFT SEEFF ACTION PLAN 2009-2012 - SUMMARY

This Action Plan takes into account the findings of the consultation and incorporates the current (2008-11) plan. It is proposed that following acceptance at the 28th April 2009 Conference it will form the basis of the Action and Business Plan to be adopted by SEEFF's Regional Board. The Action Plan will be resourced by a Budget to be agreed by the Board.

1. THE REGIONAL BOARD		
2009-2010	2010-2011	20011-2012
a) Full Membership to elect a Regional Chair by the first meeting of the Board (proposed July 1 st)		
b) Full Membership to elect and Regional bodies to appoint members to the Regional Board by end June (in time for July 1 st)		
c) At its first meeting (July 1 st) the Regional Board will adopt: The Statement of Purpose for SEEFF and The Action Plan & Budget . (see <i>Regional Faith Forum Future – Proposals</i>)		
d) The Regional Board will agree a draft programme for 2009-2012 by Aug 1 st for acceptance by the Sub-regional Faith Forum Support Groups.		
e) The Regional Board will agree a job description and appoint a Regional Coordinator (part-time) by 1 st September 2009.		
f) The Regional Board will create governance papers to lead to formal status.	Achieve Incorporation and Charitable Registration	
g) The Regional Board in co-operation with the Sub-Regional Areas will define the two levels of membership – Full and Associate . (See <i>Regional Faiths Forum Future p. 5.</i>)	Increase membership	Monitor and review membership
h) The Board will meet not less than 4 times per year .		

N.B. The Regional Board members and the Sub-regional Faith Forums Support Group Convenors will receive payment for travel expenses.

2. SUB-REGIONAL AREAS		
2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
a) Each Sub-Regional Area will set up a Faith Forum Support Group		
b) Each Sub- Regional Faith Forum Support Group will appoint a voluntary Convenor by end Oct. 2009		
c) The Sub-Regional Faith Forum Support Groups will have at least one gathering a year and arrange other events as necessary. They will address needs of local member organisations.		

3. REGIONAL COORDINATOR		
2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
a) Appointed by Regional Board by 1st September 2009 (see (e) above)		
b) The Regional Coordinator will create a work programme for the year for the approval of the Board		
c) The Regional Coordinator will liaise regularly with the Sub-regional Area Convenors		

4. COMMUNICATION		
2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
a) The Regional Coordinator will contract a Web specialist to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up an interactive web-site. • To manage the web-site and up-date it according to information from local, regional and national levels. This contract will be managed by the Regional Coordinator. 	Encourage web-site interactions. Monitor web site development. Appoint Web-specialist for a further year.	Revise web-site use and re-design if needed.
b) The Regional Coordinator will create a comprehensive membership & faith information database for the Region using information already gathered and in continuing co-operation with the Sub-Regional Faiths Forums Support Groups.	Review to ensure that it is as up to date as possible.	
c) Try to ensure a good information flow between national, regional and local inter faith networks and faith groups .		

5. DEVELOPING INTER-FAITHS DIALOGUE AND ACTION		
2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
a) The Regional Board will support the SEEFF-SEEDA Economic Impact of Faith Research Project and facilitate the dissemination of its findings across the Region.	In collaboration with SEEDA encourage Faith and non-Faith bodies to develop the possibilities offered by the research.	Monitor and review the impact of the research. Encourage areas with special needs.
b) The Regional Board & Sub-regional Faith Forum Support Groups will promote Inter-Faith Week (15 to 21 November 2009)	As Year 1	As Year 2
c) The Regional Coordinator, the Sub-Regional Faiths Forums Support Groups and Convenors will develop and strengthen the Faiths network for the Region.	Review and address gaps	Identify key areas in which to focus local participation.
d) The Regional Coordinator and the Sub-Regional Faiths Forums Support Groups and Convenors will develop partnerships with public bodies within the Region to enable SEEFF to be influential.	Engage existing Faith-links on LSP's. Review and address gaps	
e) Develop partnership opportunities that aim to deliver Local Area Agreement priorities (e.g. for children & young people, health and well-being, safe & strong communities, housing, transport, environment, economic development, and third sector).	Monitor progress and continue to develop.	
f) The Regional Coordinator and the Board will develop relationships with Government as appropriate to enable SEEFF to be influential	Review and set targets	
g) The Regional Coordinator will work to improve information flow between national, regional and local bodies.	Review and set targets	
h) The Sub-Regional Convenors and the Regional Co-ordinator will advise local groups on appropriate speakers/advisers		

6. DEVELOPMENT OF ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS		
2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
a) Identify training and development needs of individuals in Faith Organizations and either deliver training or signpost to existing opportunities.	Continue to review needs and meet them	
b) Identify training and development needs within public bodies – signpost or deliver training.	Continue to identify needs and meet them	
c) Share successful practice from Faith groups across the Region and beyond		
d) Encourage development of “religious literacy” and liaison with educational bodies such as SACRE’s		
e) Encourage Faith communities to tackle difficult issues such as racism and developing social cohesion.	Use the learning in year 1 to develop skills	
f) The Board will organize a Regional Conference each spring.		
g) The Sub-Regional Faiths Forum Support Groups will organize a conference for the end of each year.		

7.FUNDING		
2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
a) The Board will seek funding to deliver the Regional Action Plan	Review funding needs and seek funding. Seek funding for the sustainable future for SEEFF from Year 3.	Continue to identify and secure sustainable future funding.
b) Assist Local groups to identify funding streams.	As year 1	As year 2
c) Support local groups around funding- application, monitoring and evaluation. (<i>Consider the ideas in the Consultations: see Summary of Consultations January to March 2009: p.7</i>)		

8. SPECIFIC GROUPS		
2009-2010	2010-2011	20011-2012
a) Youth - monitor young peoples' involvement in SEEFF.	Identify specific requirements in relation to young people.	
b) Monitor the place of women's groups in the Sub-Regional areas.	Encourage, as necessary, the progress of women's groups.	
	Identify the need to set up short- term and /or permanent initiatives with and for other specific groups.	

9. MONITORING AND EVALUATION		
2009-2010	2010-2011	20011-2012
a) Monitor progress through the Annual conference and the web-site	Evaluate progress in relation to: 1) Raising of Faith's profile with public bodies. 2) Success through strengthening of inter-faith groups. 3) Progress of projects in partnership with Faith and Non-Faith bodies.	Gain funding to evaluate the impact/engagement of Public Bodies with the faith Sector in relation to : 1) Young people 2) Health and Community safety 3) Housing and the environment. 4) Transport 5) Economic development. 6) The effectiveness of the SEEFF Board and Sub-Regional Organisations.

NOTES

See SEEFF Scoping Governance & Organisation SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS
January to March 2009. On www.se-faithforum.net

- ii This might be adopted as ***SEEFF's statement of purpose***.

SEEFF is a hub and focus that supports and brings together the interests of grass-roots faith communities (local groups and networks), non-faith organisations and regional bodies to promote mutual faith understanding and engagement in social actions for the benefit of the whole community.

- iii *Face to Face and Side by Side – a framework for partnership in our multi-faith society*. Published by the Department of Communities and Local Government in July 2008. Please see www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/facetofaceframework
- iv Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Islam, Jain, Jewish, Sikh, Zoroastrian
- v The Charities Act 2006 www.charitycommission.gov.uk