

Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

Current Activities Report

AGM 27 June 2010

Scottish Parliament and Government

SCoJeC continues to monitor activity in the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Government on a daily basis. We forward relevant information to a wide range of Scottish communal organisations including Jewish Care, Cosgrove Care, Calderwood Lodge, Calderwood Jewish Education, and the Northern Region of the Union of Jewish Students and Chaplaincy, and to UK bodies including the Board of Deputies, Jewish Leadership Council, CST, the "Antisemitism Coordinating Unit", Shechitah UK, and other interested bodies, and we also brief them as necessary on, for example, relevant parliamentary procedures.

We also continue to brief MSPs on issues concerning the Jewish community, and, where appropriate, put them in touch with other organisations, such as the Care organisations, the Glasgow Jewish Representative Council, and the Israel Information Office, which have been able to provide information on specific issues.

First Minister

SCoJeC met the First Minister, Alex Salmond, to discuss antisemitic graffiti daubed in Glenduffhill Jewish cemetery in Glasgow: "SNP/Hamas/Jews out of Scotland", and "SNP/Hamas/Kill the Jews". Mr Salmond was appalled that the name of the SNP had been abused in this way, and described the perpetrators as "deranged".

Other subjects discussed at the meeting included *Scotland's Jews*, which with the support of the Scottish Government, SCoJeC had sent to every school, public library, and university in Scotland, as well as to relevant departments in organisations such as the Police, NHS, and Scottish Prison Service, the *Jewish Way of Life* educational resource which we hope will shortly be hosted on the SCoJeC website, and the use of MRI scanning as an alternative to surgical post-mortem examinations. For a full report see http://www.scojec.org/misc/2009/09xi_fm/fm.html

Security

SCoJeC, together with the CST, have had several meetings with the Scottish Government Community Safety Unit and Police at the CSU's request to discuss the current increase in antisemitic activity. They were evidently shocked by the nature of recent incidents, and expressed concern that vulnerable members of the community, especially students and those in rural areas, now feel under threat, and undertook to draw the attention of relevant local authorities and police forces to increased needs of the community.

Crown Office

In March 2008, SCoJeC reported a series of extremely antisemitic comments on the Scotsman and Herald website blogs to the police. In October 2009 we were informed by the Director of Operations at Crown Office that a man had been arrested and charged with an offence under the Public Order Act in connection with this. He subsequently appeared before Edinburgh Sheriff Court, and was committed for further examination and bailed. We understand that the case will be tried later this year.

Post Mortem Examinations

SCoJeC has continued to discuss alternatives to surgical post-mortem with the Lord Advocate, Ministers, MSPs, and health professionals, with a view to increasing the use of “view and grant”, and introducing radiological scanning, including MRI, as an acceptable alternative to surgical post mortem. Both Crown Office and the Cabinet Secretary for Justice have confirmed that legislation is not required before scanning can be employed in this way. We have recently convened a meeting of all interested parties, including both religious and medical experts from the Muslim community, and we will shortly be meeting the Solicitor General to discuss how best to progress the matter.

Census

SCoJeC continued to raise concerns about the ethnicity classifications to be used in the 2011 census with Ministers, MSPs, and with the General Register Office for Scotland. Unfortunately it now seems that the religion question will be even less informative than in the 2001 census.

Disclosure

SCoJeC is represented on one of the Scottish Government consultative groups advising on the secondary legislation for the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act, which will make wide-reaching changes to the “Disclosure” system for people working with children and vulnerable (or “protected”) adults, and which is planned to commence later this year. In the short term this will require all those who already have Disclosure to re-apply for membership of the new system, but in the longer term it is hoped that this will reduce the need for multiple disclosures.

Faith Liaison Group

SCoJeC is represented on the Scottish Government Faith Liaison Group (FLaG) which enables policy civil servants from all Government departments to consult representatives of faith communities on proposed initiatives. In addition, because of changes in the way the group functions, a separate group of the non-civil service members has been established, and Ephraim has been asked to convene this.

The most recent meeting was concerned with the Government’s “Single Outcome Agreements” with local authorities, and allowed us, along with representatives of other minority communities, to raise concerns that the Government’s “localisation” agenda will have a detrimental effect on small and scattered communities that are virtually invisible at the local level, and so can only be supported through national networks. Other members raised issues such as the negative signals sent by liaison with faith groups being the responsibility of the Community Safety Unit of the Justice Department; and the effect in Scotland of international events.

Diversity Training

At the request of the Scottish Government Diversity Adviser, SCoJec has contributed to a series of seminars for civil servants to raise awareness of the Jewish community in Scotland.

Consultation Responses

SCoJeC has responded to consultations on a wide range of issues (full list attached), and would like to thank the many individuals and communal organisations whose expertise has contributed to these responses. All consultation responses are available online at <http://www.scojec.org/consultations/consultations.html>, and information about consultation responses in process of preparation is available at http://www.scojec.org/consultations/current_consultations.html

General Election

SCoJeC joined a wide range of organisations within and without the Jewish community in supporting a statement, issued by the Board of Deputies, the Jewish Council for Racial Equality and the Three Faiths Forum, condemning “*political forces who would seek to divide our country by promoting ideologies of racism and prejudice.*” The full statement is available on the SCoJeC website at http://www.scojec.org/misc/2010/10iv_election.html

Other organisations

Disclosure Scotland

SCoJeC continues to act as a Registered Body with the CRBS (Central Registered Body in Scotland) to enable communal organisations to meet the requirements of the Protection of Children (Scotland) Act. We also, at their request, administer Disclosure applications for the Scottish Interfaith Council, BEMIS, and the Scottish-Iranian Association.

We attend regular meetings with the CRBS and the Scottish Churches Committee Child Protection Group to discuss issues around Disclosure and to share information and expertise.

We are currently preparing for the new “Protection of Vulnerable Groups” scheme which is due to commence later this year, and will ensure that all communal organisations receive timely information about the new requirements.

UK Border Agency

SCoJeC continues to act as a sponsor under the “points-based immigration system” to assist communal organisations that wish to employ individuals (paid or as a volunteer) from outwith the European Economic Area. There is no other route by which such individuals can enter the UK – even a rabbi who comes to Scotland to officiate at a single wedding must qualify under this scheme in order to obtain a visa. This is a significant service to communal organisations, who would otherwise have to register separately, with associated costs and other risks.

General Register Office for Scotland

SCoJeC is also the single point of contact for the General Register Office, to enable them to verify the bona fides of ministers from abroad who wish to perform Jewish marriage ceremonies in Scotland. We have had the full co-operation of all the religious denominations in the UK in making these checks.

Jewish Leadership Council: Political Affairs Brief

SCoJeC continues to produce a daily digest of political matters affecting the Jewish community at the request of a consortium that includes the Board of Deputies and the Jewish Leadership Council. The briefing covers activity in the UK and Scottish Parliaments and Governments, the Welsh Assembly and Assembly Government, the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive, the European Parliament, and other relevant organisations.

BEMIS

SCoJeC's director, Ephraim Borowski, is also Vice-Convener of BEMIS (the Scottish ethnic minority umbrella organisation), and we welcome continued collaboration on projects such as MEMO and MEMO+. (see *below*). We are currently discussing plans for a second interfaith pilgrimage which we hope will take place next year.

(For information about the first interfaith pilgrimage, see http://www.scojec.org/events/2008/08vij_pilgrimage/menu.html)

STUC

SCoJeC continues to meet with the STUC to discuss matters of mutual concern, but we remain concerned that some STUC statements about Israel have antisemitic overtones, and are in danger of crossing the line from legitimate criticism of particular Israeli policies or actions to saying that support for Israel is not merely wrong but illegitimate.

Prison Chaplaincy

Following consultation with the Student Chaplain, the Chaplaincy Board, Jewish Care, and Rabbi David Rose (the current nominated prison chaplain), it was agreed that SCoJeC should in future be the single point of contact for enquiries relating to prison chaplaincy, representing the community on relevant policy committees, as and facilitating contact with the appropriate Rabbi or other relevant person when this is requested by a prisoner or member of the Scottish Prison Service.

Interfaith

Church of Scotland

SCoJeC continues to hold regular meetings with the Church and Society Council of the Church of Scotland to discuss matters of mutual interest.

Roman Catholic Church

An event is currently being planned with the Roman Catholic Church to mark the 45th anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*, the Vatican document which opened the way for dialogue between the Jewish and Catholic communities. This will be jointly hosted by Rabbi Rubin and Archbishop Conti, and will take place on 6 October 2010 at Giffnock Synagogue. Rabbi David Rosen, who has recently been awarded a CBE for his contribution to Jewish-Catholic relations, and Professor John Pawlikowski have both agreed to participate.

Jewish-Muslim relations

SCoJeC issued a statement in advance of the "Scottish Defence League" event in Glasgow to express concern that this should not be permitted to damage good community and interfaith relations in Scotland. The full text of the statement is available on the SCoJeC website at

http://www.scojec.org/misc/2009/09xi_condemning_hatred.html

Externally Funded Projects

Outreach

a) SCoJeC continues to be contacted by isolated Jewish individuals responding to the leaflets and posters which have been distributed to all libraries in Scotland, many of whom ask to be put in touch with other Jewish people. All of these have been sent back-issues of *Four Corners*, added to the mailing list for future issues, and, where possible, have been put in touch with other local Jewish people.

b) SCoJeC is currently working in partnership with Northern Region Jewish Chaplaincy, Edinburgh Cheder, and Limmud, to undertake projects that enable cross-communal participation in activities and events.

MEMO and MEMO+ (Minority Ethnic Matters Overview)

We continue to receive very positive feedback about MEMO, the weekly bulletin of information relevant to minority ethnic communities in Scotland, which is compiled in response to a request from BEMIS. MEMO includes information about relevant activity in the Scottish and Westminster Parliaments, the Scottish Government and Whitehall, organisations such as the NHS, Equalities and Human Rights Coalition, as well as details of relevant consultations and new publications.

MEMO+ is an occasional publication, supported by the Scottish Government and BEMIS, that provides more in-depth information about particular issues, such as the party manifestoes in the recent General Election, and the make-up of the new UK Government.

Other Activities

Supporting individuals and communities

SCoJeC liaised with the CST, police, Jewish communities, and individuals in relation to security and antisemitic incidents, many of which appear to result from the situation in the Middle East. In particular, we provided a listening ear and reassurance for people from the smaller communities and isolated individuals in rural areas who have been victims of antisemitic incidents, or who are apprehensive that they may be.

Four Corners

Four Corners continues to be very well received. The majority of paper copies are sent to people living in the smaller Jewish communities or outwith any Jewish community, but it also has a large online readership.

Public Resource

Website (www.scojec.org)

The website continues to be extremely well used, receiving a total of 239,084 hits during 2009. The "Guide to Jewish Facilities in Scotland" is particularly popular, as are *Scotland's Jews*, *Four Corners*, the Yom Tov calendar, and MEMO.

Jewish Way of Life online resource

Following a meeting with Trevor Pears to discuss co-operation between the Pears Foundation and SCoJeC to develop a Scottish version of the *Jewish Way of Life* CD-ROM, which has been distributed to all schools in England and Wales, SCoJeC has been negotiating with Learning Teaching Scotland (LTS) to make the resource available in Scottish schools. Since LTS advised that an online resource would be preferable to a disk, the *Jewish Way of Life* will shortly be available on the resources page of the SCoJeC website at <http://www.scojec.org/resources/resources.html>

Ephraim and Leah would like to thank the Council, and especially the Executive, for their ongoing support throughout the past year.

Ephraim Borowski

Leah Granat

June 2010

Consultation Responses submitted since the last AGM

Please note that copies of all of these responses, and of responses submitted in previous years, are available on SCoJeC's website at <http://www.scojec.org/consultations/consultations.html>

Points-Based System – Religious Categories Survey (*UK Border Agency*)

Proposed changes to Child Protection Registrations in the Annual Child Protection 2010/11 survey (*Scottish Government*)

Draft Guidance on Parts 3, 4, 5, and 6 of the Public Health Act (*Scottish Government*)

PE1262: Faith Schools (*Scottish Parliament*)

Code of Practice for the Welfare of Livestock: Meat Chickens and Breeding Chickens (*Scottish Government*)

Protection of Vulnerable Groups Act: consultation on draft guidance and secondary legislation (*Scottish Government*)

Options for future charity appeals route in Scotland (*Scottish Government*)

Draft Do Not Attempt Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation Policy (*NHS Scotland*)

Budget strategy and equality groups (*Scottish Parliament*)

Death Certification, Burial and Cremation (*Scottish Government*)

Independent Budget Review

End of Life Assistance (Scotland) Bill (*Scottish Parliament*)

Spring 2010 Census Consultation: Statistical Outputs (*General Register Office for Scotland*)

PE1323: Shia Muslim Community Centre (*Scottish Parliament Public Petitions Committee*)

Draft Equality Plan 2010/2011 (*Scottish Social Services Council*)

ACPOS draft Hate Crime Guidance Manual

Events since the last AGM

June 2009

Policy Briefing: Disclosure, Points-Based Immigration System, Fire Safety, and Charity Law. http://www.scojec.org/events/2009/09vi_briefing/briefing.html

November 2009

Policy Briefing: Disclosure, Points-Based Immigration System, Fire Safety, Charity Law, Strathclyde Police, and CST.

November 2009

Kosher Ceilidh Tour attended by almost 1,000 people at 12 venues (listed below), including almost 200 from outwith the Central belt.

http://www.scojec.org/events/2009/09xi_soul_train/soul_train.html

- Aberdeen
- Glasgow:
 - Giffnock Synagogue
 - Calderwood Lodge
 - Jewish Care
 - Cosgrove Care
 - Friendship Club
- Edinburgh:
 - University (students and local community)
 - Cheder
- Lochgilphead
- Maybole
- Portree
- St Andrews: University

April 2010

“ACT Now” youth event in association with Maccabi

http://www.scojec.org/events/2010/10iv_act_now_1/act_now.html

June 2010

Barbecue, in association with Dundee Synagogue

http://www.scojec.org/events/2010/10vi_dundee_bbq/bbq.html

June 2010

Briefing and discussion about alternatives to surgical post-mortem

Meetings, Briefings, Conferences etc attended since the last AGM

Regular meetings

Scottish Government Faith Liaison Group
Scottish Government Voluntary Sector Advisory Group on the Protection of
Vulnerable Groups Act
Scottish Parliament Cross Party Group on Human Rights
Scottish Parliament Cross Party Group on Race Equality
NES Spiritual Care Development Committee
NHS Lanarkshire Spiritual Care Steering Group
Strathclyde Police Lay Advisory Group
Central Police Diversity Advisory Group
Church of Scotland
STUC
SCVO Equalities Co-ordinating Group
Human Rights Consortium
BEMIS
BEMIS/Equality Network: INclusion
Scottish Inter-Faith Council
Interfaith Group on Domestic Abuse
Ethnic Minority Civic Congress
Policy Officers Network
Scottish Churches Committee Child Protection Group
Central Registered Body in Scotland Faith Liaison Group
Faith in Communities Scotland
Board of Deputies
Antisemitism Co-ordinating Committee

Occasional and one-off meetings, seminars and conferences

First Minister, Alex Salmond
Scottish Government Community Safety Unit
Scottish Government Race Equality Conference
Scottish Government National Conversation
Scottish Government counter-terrorist workshop: New Salesman, Castle Rock
Scottish Government consultation: Death certification, burial, and cremation
Scottish Government consultation: Do not attempt cardio-pulmonary resuscitation
Scottish Government consultation: pandemic flu

Lord Advocate, Elish Angiolini
Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Conference
Scottish Parliament: Anne Frank Day debate
Scottish Parliament reception to mark the start of the Swedish Presidency of the EU
ACPOS
Strathclyde Police: Preventing Violent Extremism
COPFS/ACPOS Hate Crime conference
SEMPER conference
Scottish Prison Service
CST telephone briefings on antisemitic incident statistics
Dumfries and Galloway Procurator Fiscal Service
OSCR conference
NES Spiritual Care conference
Equalities and Human Rights Commission conference: Significant Inequalities in Scotland
SCVO Equalities and Human Rights Conference
GROS consultation meetings: 2011 census
Central Registered Body in Scotland
BEMIS/Fawcett Society/Scottish Women's Convention conference: Ethnic Minority
Women and Politics

Scottish Museums Trust
Holocaust Memorial Day
Holocaust Educational Trust event
Trevor Pears, Pears Foundation
Voluntary Action Fund seminar: Horizontal Equalities
Voluntary Action Fund seminar: Governance
Voluntary Action Fund seminar: Funding Evaluation
Scottish Association of Regional Equality Councils launch: Scottish Parliament
West of Scotland Regional Equality Council
Interfaith dialogue hosted by Archbishop Conti
Interfaith media training
Learning and Teaching Scotland
UJIA
GJEF: lecture by the First Minister
GJEF/JCORE/UJIA anti-racism youth event
Making Good Society launch
Scottish Household Survey
Scottish Social Attitudes Survey