

# National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom

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### **Work at the Guardian's Resting Place**

The project to renovate the Guardian's Resting Place and surrounding area is continuing apace. Plans are being formulated for the next phase of the work—including the extension of the paved path around the Resting Place, erecting gates to stop the flow of traffic in the immediate vicinity, security arrangements and the redevelopment of the custodian's office. The National Assembly is drawing on expert guidance to assist in this process. At a recent meeting a further drafting of these plans was considered and they are now in the process of being refined.

### **The National Spiritual Assembly's retreat weekend**

Last weekend, the National Assembly, together with our dearly loved Counsellor, Dr. Shirin Fozdar-Foroudi, spent a weekend in retreat in Wiltshire with the purpose of reflecting together on guidance about how, as Institutions, we might together develop systematic approaches to fostering the spiritual health of the community and its protection. It was truly a rich experience and the outcome was that a number of areas of focus were identified which the National Assembly and the Counsellors wish to learn about together over the coming years. These included learning about how to:

- bring the community closer to the Universal House of Justice
- foster universal participation towards a common goal
- engage in collective endeavours towards a common goal at a cluster level
- work in a few clusters to enable all those on our list of believers, in the course of each cycle, to engage in the work of the Plan, and to try to measure the outcome of this effort
- be more encouraging of the achievements of the believers, the community and institutions
- facilitate the flow of love
- take advantage of social media and the internet, including official Bahá'í resources, for the advancement of the Faith and to promote a greater expression of Bahá'í spirit and etiquette in these spaces
- deepen those who may be challenged by the laws to overcome their difficulties by raising awareness of the significance of the Revelation and empowering souls to engage in acts of service
- increase the believers' (and particularly the youths') understanding of and devotion to the laws and principles of the Faith

- develop the capacity of Local Spiritual Assemblies in their efforts to foster the spiritual health of their communities.

This was a purposeful, spiritually enriching and thought provoking weekend of consultation. On the Saturday afternoon Dr. Fozdar-Foroudi and the National Assembly had the bounty of visiting the apartment of the Master in Bristol, at 17 Royal York Crescent, where we reviewed some initial plans for its restoration. In this sacred place of peace and tranquillity that will forever be associated with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá—the Mystery of God, the Most Mighty Branch—the spiritual well-being of the people of the United Kingdom and the efforts of the community of the Greatest Name to achieve the goals of the Five Year Plan and of doubling the number of core activities were remembered in fervent prayer.



*Counsellor Shirin Fozdar-Foroudi (3rd from left) and members of the National Spiritual Assembly outside 17, Royal York Crescent, Bristol*

### **Developing the administrative capacity of the National Assembly**

The National Assembly has been consulting on the guidance contained in this year’s Riḍván message concerning the functioning of National Spiritual Assemblies:

Often prompted by the demands of growth, a range of National Assemblies are building up their administrative capacity, visible in their thoughtful stewardship of the resources available to them, their efforts to become intimately familiar with the conditions of their communities, and their vigilance in ensuring that the operations of their National Offices grow ever stronger; the need to systematize the impressive body of knowledge now accumulating in this area has led to the creation at the World Centre of the Office for the Development of Administrative Systems.

One outcome is that time is now being given at each meeting to systematically reflect on different aspects of the National Assembly’s functioning including the flow of information, the effective use of statistics, the use of spaces for reflection, and the Assembly’s collaboration with other Institutions.

### **Supporting Pioneers**

In consultation with Dr. Shirin Fozdar-Foroudi, the National Assembly has been considering refinements to the process by which the Institutions facilitate and support the deployment of pioneers. Notably, steps have been taken to streamline the collaboration between the UK Pioneering and Travel Teaching Committee and Regional Bahá’í Councils, which between them

would naturally take the lead in supporting adults and youth who are offering a period of service as pioneers.

### **Staffing needs at the Bahá'í World Centre**

The National Assembly devoted some time to consider ways in which it can help the World Centre with its ongoing efforts to recruit volunteers to serve there. The needs were highlighted at this year's Summer Schools and other lines of action have also been considered to this end.

### **Disaster Relief Fund**

The National Assembly wishes to remind the friends of the Disaster Relief Fund, which is managed from the Bahá'í World Centre. The fund channels resources to nations, such as Nepal and Vanuatu, which have been stricken by natural disasters. Individuals and institutions wishing to direct their contributions to this fund may do so through the National Assembly, earmarking the contribution accordingly if it is intended for a specific country. Please note that only Bahá'ís may contribute to this fund.

The National Assembly is also delighted to welcome a number of new staff to the National Bahá'í Centre, who are already making a wonderful contribution to the work of the various departments and offices that are based there.

With our warmest love,

*National Spiritual Assembly*

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM