

UNIT CONVENTION RECOMMENDATIONS - December 2015

Unit Name	Subject	Recommendation	Response
<p>LEICESTERSHIRE [EU59]</p>	<p>Children</p>	<p>A web site required to download material and activities for children of primary school age that can be used in schools or at home.</p>	<p>The reasons for this recommendation are appreciated. It is felt, however, that the provision of materials and activity ideas for children would best be disseminated through the training institute, which fosters a pattern of training, accompaniment and a process of collective learning, all of which are vital for being able to offer education for children with increasing effectiveness. This is the context in which capacity can be best built in this area, rather than through sharing information online. Experience has shown that materials are best developed through teachers coming together and sharing ideas at the grassroots. If there are specific questions, then it is recommended that individuals get in touch with their training institute coordinator.</p>

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<p align="center">BRISTOL [EU04]</p>	<p align="center">Communi- cations</p>	<p>Consultation amongst friends focused on the reality of the Bristol community and how we can meet the requests of the NSA to increase the numbers of core activities. We consulted on some of the barriers we have in increasing core activities and it was felt that we do in fact have the necessary resources but however we may lack commitment and ability of individuals to sustain core activities. Some friends also felt that they did not necessarily feel connected all the time with the institution of the National Spiritual Assembly and that it feasible it would be wonderful to have some members of the NSA who live closest to Bristol, visit our community once during the year.</p>	<p>The National Spiritual Assembly appreciates the desire of the friends to respond to the requirements of the Plan and believes that to sustain and increase core activities it is important to work closely with the agencies serving the cluster as well as the Auxiliary Board member and assistants and in so doing, to learn how to have more intensive expansion phases. Such efforts would result in a sustainable process of development. National Assembly members, as individuals, will of course join in community activities but it is not the policy of the National Assembly to send members on visits to communities, as given the size and needs of the national community this is not a sustainable approach.</p>

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<p>HIGHLANDS & WESTERN ISLANDS [SU89]</p>	<p>Communi-cations</p>	<p>Concerning the statement in National Assembly to Convention "...meeting the goal set for the UK community of doubling the number of core activities by the end of the Plan" but also relating to other national demands. The Convention would like the National Assembly to consult more with grassroots before making blanket demands on the community. We would like more spiritual encouragement "free from psychological pressure" * from the National Assembly as example shown by Shoghi Effendi in Ten Year Crusade. *(UHJ letter)</p>	<p>The National Spiritual Assembly will encourage individuals, teaching teams, friends in neighbourhoods etc. to set their own goals for the first six cycles of the Plan. We note too that clusters agencies, even prior to the beginning of the Plan, had set goals for their clusters. Prior to setting the overall goals for the number of clusters to reach the second and third milestones, the National Spiritual Assembly will consult with the Regional Bahá'í Councils.</p>
<p>DUNDEE & SURROUNDING AREAS [SU87]</p>	<p>Communi-cations</p>	<p>That ways to improve delivery of all communications to all Baha'is in Scotland be sought.</p>	<p>The Regional Council for Scotland will be asked to consider this recommendation</p>

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WARWICKSHIRE, SOUTH SOLIHULL [EU50]	Database	<p>Can the NSA review the records system to enable changes to be implemented in a timely and accurate manner, because we have experienced repeated problems, for example, when it has taken three years to add believers to the register and to have inaccuracies corrected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If resources are needed, then it is proposed that a number of local volunteers around the country be found to support National Office in this task • As postal addresses are no indication of administrative areas, procedures should be implemented which involve those reporting changes in address records to specify the actual potential LSA areas involved, meaning towns, or district wards in rural areas. Appropriate information ‘fields’ to be set up on procedural forms. • Can the NSA once again lovingly encourage parents to register their children as Baha’is with National Office? 	<p>The records system is under review at present and it is hoped that a more reliable system can be introduced in due course. The system is, however, dependant on accurate and regular updates from communities and individuals concerning any changes. If changes are found not to have been made after requests to do so, friends should contact the National Assembly directly and the matter will be looked into. The National Assembly will issue regular reminders to the community regarding the registration of children.</p>
CENTRAL, WEST SCOTLAND [SU86]		<p>The Unit Convention recommends that the National Spiritual Assembly reviews the means by which the data base of all believers is kept and ensures that it works as an integrated and unified system which is used by both the communities and all National agencies.</p>	
SHETLAND & ORKNEY ISLANDS [SU90]	Delegates	<p>Unit Convention asks that the National Spiritual Assembly considers offering financial assistance to any delegate from the outlying regions of and the islands off the UK Mainland to attend National Convention. The cost of travel from these areas is considerable both in terms of time and money, often many times more expensive than the cost of intercity travel within the UK mainland and often necessitating at least one, often two more nights away from home. The friends on the islands, in particular would feel reassured if the cost of flights and accommodation where required could be covered.</p>	<p>Given the importance of attendance at Convention by delegates, if needed, funds are available to assist with travel and accommodation. Delegates are informed of this and this has always been the case.</p>
East Lancashire [EU71]	Expansion	<p>Should the National Assembly encourage the Friends to widen their sphere of activities to attract people to events from which in time they might be</p>	<p>The Universal House of Justice has set out for the</p>

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		invited to attend the core activities? Focusing just on core activities to the exclusion of all else is obviously not proving widely effective in attracting souls.	Bahá'í world a wide framework in which the actions and activities of the friends can find a place. However, the institute process and its related four core activities have a particular purpose and coherence which aim at the spiritual and social transformation of individuals, communities and institutions. Under the guidance of the House of Justice, the Bahá'í community is engaged in a 25 year-long effort to learn how to make this process effective and the National Assembly is confirmed in its belief that the efforts of the friends will lead to a major advancement in the process of entry by troops by the end of the 25 years in 2021.
GREENWICH & BEXLEY [EU30]	External Affairs	The Office of Public Affairs (OPA) should consider developing an information pack for parents and LSA's to present to schools with stories, songs and poems on teachings of the Faith and its relationship to other religions for religious education in schools.	At present, two education packs already exist: one for upper primary (Key Stage 2 pupils, ages 7-11) and the other for

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		Two packs I reading lists are probably required one for primary schools and another for secondary schools.	secondary (Key Stage 3, ages 11-14). The Key Stage 2 pack was developed by the Religious Education Task Force, which operates under the Office of Public Affairs, in collaboration with the Warwick Bahá'í Bookshop. The Key Stage 3 pack was developed by the Warwick bookshop themselves. Both are available to order from the Warwick Bahá'í Bookshop, for £15 each plus postage (www.warwickbahaibooks.hop.co.uk). It is understood that materials are also being developed for lower primary (Key Stage 1, ages 5-7).
GREENWICH & BEXLEY [EU30]	External Affairs	Other items discussed were a pack I reading list to introduce the Faith as part of British Society and to show the Baha'i credentials as a recognised world religion for the police and community organisations concerned with religions. These could be PDF files for communities to print out locally as needed.	The National Spiritual Assembly encourages local communities to develop their own materials relevant to their local needs drawing on information available at www.bahai.org , www.bic.org and

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			<p>www.bahai.org.uk In addition, the National Assembly feels that it would often be sufficient and even desirable to direct any interested parties to the UK Bahá'í website, www.bahai.org.uk. This approach could attract visitors to the site and increase the traffic.</p>
HERTFORDSHIRE, SOUTH WEST [EU42]	External Affairs	Participation in Radio 4's "Thought for the Day".	This matter is being explored by the Office of Public Affairs, but may take some time to come to fruition.
ISLINGTON & HACKNEY [EU31]	External Affairs	<p>Media presence: The unit consulted on the role of Media in our communities and the Faith at large and how we live in an era where Media has a large voice and presence. This resulted in a unanimous feeling that as a unit and at national level further efforts need to be made to establish a higher quality and greater quantity of content that can be shared both internally as well as externally to the Baha'i community. Given that there are a lot of very talented people in the community that can and have contributed to Baha'i media presence in the world. We would like the NSA to consider to formalise an Audio-visual department that would look at the creation, production and dissemination of Bahá'í material — to be used internally and externally to the community.</p>	The reasons for this recommendation are appreciated. Initial steps have been taken to systematise the way in which the National Assembly collects and manages media material, and to explore what possibilities and resources are available to the community in this area.

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CARDIFF [WU49]	External Affairs	Resolution was passed to ask the NSA to send out the guidance's relation to our current society issues and to simplify the Universal House Justice notes/ guidance's/ stances papers so it would be easier for the man in the street to understand them (as they are usually written in such a high level language and wording that most common people are not able to understand them)	The National Spiritual Assembly does and will continue to do this when necessary. Friends are encouraged to look at the Bahá'í International Community's web site for its statements on a wide-range of subjects [www.bic.org]. The Office of Public Affairs is also systematically developing the capacity to participate in discourses on contemporary issues which will include the production of suitable documents.
GREENWICH & BEXLEY [EU30]	Local Spiritual Assemblies	The NSA should encourage communities with established LSA's to be aware of and support the core activities of neighbouring communities, particularly those without LSA's	A deepening programme has been prepared for Local Spiritual Assemblies which highlights their role in relation to the work of the Plan. This deepening will be rolled out in the coming year by Regional Councils
LEICESTERSHIRE [EU59]	Pastoral Care	All LSA's in the UK to appoint one person to take responsibility for pastoral care in their communities.	The National Spiritual Assembly is aware of the need to develop the capacity of local Assemblies to handle

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			pastoral care matters. As one step to support Local Spiritual Assemblies in this, a deepening has been prepared which will be made available to Assemblies during the coming months through Regional Councils
NEWPORT [WU95]	Spiritual health of the community	Reflection meetings to be encouraged to include more inspirational and uplifting stories about our recently passed on souls in our own areas making it more personal and/or more generally the Hands of the Cause, early believers and other Holy Souls. Friends be encouraged to adopt a holy soul every cycle to focus on, calling upon them for inspiration and intercession, this can be a specific soul for specific tasks.	The recommendation will be passed to Regional Bahá'í Councils to draw upon as they feel appropriate
EAST KENT [EU13] NORTHERN IRELAND, WEST [NU78]	Spiritual health of the community	Large group consultation on what the balance should be between trying to reignite the fire of the love of Bahá'u'lláh into the current Baha'is who are distant from the community and trying to find new souls who may accept the Teachings. This came as a result of the knowledge that there were only 58% of votes received by the whole community. We hope the National Spiritual Assembly may guide us on this matter. Convention noted with great concern the growing alienation from the community and community activities of many of the Friends and a failure to integrate them into those activities. We understand that this was raised at National Convention 2015 but feel the need to recommend active systematic measures. This lack of integration takes various forms e.g. the emphasis on youth leading to older Bahá'ís feeling they are no longer relevant; a feeling of disempowerment on the part of individuals and	This matter was consulted upon at length by the National Assembly. The many facets of the spiritual health of the community have indeed become a major area of ongoing deliberation by the National Assembly, especially in the last year or so, and this will no doubt continue to be a significant area of focus and learning over the months and years ahead. A number of approaches

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		<p>groups not in areas of cluster activities who receive little or no communication or encouragement and feel they have been forgotten about; a distancing from the community on account of lack of sharing of information and guidance; and a lack of communication from or contact with the institutions that should be guiding sharing and encouraging. We feel the extremely low voting rate for Unit Convention – individuals and whole families who we know to be dedicated Bahá'ís but not now as active in the wider community as they were did not attend or submit postal ballots – is one sign of this.</p> <p>Convention therefore RESOLVED to ask the National Spiritual Assembly to take a systematic in-depth study that will reach out into the community to assess the extent of this issue, and the key elements causing and worsening it, with a view to appropriate sustained measures being taken to resolve the malaise.</p> <p>This study may best be conducted by a dedicated task-force establishing and using its own methods and means of information-gathering from the Friends. We respectfully say that while the existing institutions such as the Bahá'í Council, Training Institute and its agents, and Board Members and their assistants may be a source of information they not be sole or even chief such source. This is because (a) as many of these are “working with success” they may not be aware of the extent and distribution of the problem, and (b) experience has shown that their awareness of realities regarding individuals and areas has not always been as good as they believed it to be.</p>	<p>are already emerging to help invigorate the spiritual life of the community and include; building the capacity of Local Assemblies for foster the spiritual health of their communities, efforts to draw the community ever closer to the Central Figures of the Faith and the guidance of Shoghi Effendi and the Universal House of Justice, striving to ensure that our use of language is accessible to those being communicated with, and so forth. As the community advances, it is anticipated that efforts in this area will continue to develop and expand along a number of fronts.</p>
DUNDEE & SURROUNDING AREAS [SU87]	Summer School	That there is a review of the affordability of places at the Scottish Summer School and to reflect the concept of the redistribution of wealth.	The Regional Council for Scotland will be asked to consider how to make the School as affordable as possible

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EAST KENT [EU13]	Training Institute	As there is a Tutor Encounter organised nationally, it may also be helpful to have the same Encounter for Children's Class teachers. We hope the National Spiritual Assembly may guide us on this matter.	This suggestion was passed to the regional training institute boards for their consideration in light of the conditions and needs in their respective regions.
BELFAST, LISBURN AREA [NU80]	Training Institute	The Unit recommends that the NSA provide accessible guidance for tutors to share and study with their participants of book 3 and 5. This way they would ensure the needs of children are met and the teachers are confident with situations that arise or in any other case know the channels to follow.	It is felt that the materials within Books 3 and 5 are adequate for the training needs of teachers and animators and do not need supplementing in the manner recommended.
NORTHERN IRELAND, WEST [NU78]	Unit Convention - attendance	<p>Convention noted with sadness the extremely poor attendance this year. While they are not the whole story, we know the severe weather conditions have played a part in this as several Friends phoned to say they would not be coming on account of the storms. This is not the first time that adverse weather has directly impacted on Unit Convention attendance since the date was moved to December. Convention therefore RESOLVED that since adverse weather is playing a part in reducing attendance, and since climate change is likely to mean December weather getting worse with time, to ask the National Spiritual Assembly to consider returning the dates for Unit Convention to a less hostile time e.g. October.</p> <p>Convention noted with concern the low percentage of Friends voting in the delegate election this year. The percentage has been declining year by year but this year is marked by a further marked drop and has now fallen to 50%. We appreciate the efforts that have gone into encouraging the Friends to attend and to vote in Unit Convention but feel there is a need for a further development in these to secure increased attendance and</p>	Subject to learning and feedback in light of the new arrangements for unit convention, the National Assembly is minded to experiment with changing the dates to around early October. However, given that the bicentennial celebrations will be happening in October 2017, this change will not be implemented until 2018. The National Assembly will consider, as it always does, how to encourage greater

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<p>CUMBRIA LANCASHIRE [EU72]</p>	<p>Unit Convention</p>	<p>participation. Many Bahá'ís seem unaware of what it is, where it fits into their community life, or why it is relevant to them.</p> <p>Convention therefore RESOLVED to ask the National Assembly to supplement exhortation and the sharing of quotations with measures to educate the Friends about what Unit Convention actually is, its distinctive role, and opportunities it offers to them to enhance their learning and service.</p> <p>We suggest the National Spiritual Assembly consider bringing forward the date of Unit Convention, as adverse weather in December in this part of the country means that friends are often unable to travel, leading to low attendance at Unit Convention. (This year at least 4 voting friends had to cancel their attendance at the last minute due to the weather — this is 50% of the number who managed to come to the meeting.)</p>	<p>participation at the upcoming unit convention.</p>
<p>NORTHAMPTONS HIRE [EU45]</p>	<p>Unit Convention - attendance</p>	<p>We ask that the NSA consider ways of reaching each individual adult believer to emphasise the importance of participating in, and attending Unit Convention, particularly in the coming year when delegates will be electing the National Assembly that will be electing the Universal House of Justice.</p>	
<p>CUMBRIA LANCASHIRE [EU72]</p>	<p>Unit Convention - attendance</p>	<p>The friends appreciated the deepening material the NSA shared in the run-up to Unit Convention 2014, which asked local communities to consult together on the role and necessary qualities of the delegate to National Convention. We suggest the National Spiritual Assembly consider repeating this in subsequent years.</p>	

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WEST KENT & MEDWAY [EU14]	Unit Convention - attendance	It was suggested and approved to compile a survey to be sent to all friends in the unit to try and ascertain what can be done to improve participation, fellowship and attendance, Hugh Hawkins has had previous experience in this field and his expertise should be sort in the compiling of the survey should the recommendation be approved. Hugh expressed the importance of including a SAW with the survey. It was also thought that perhaps this could also be done at a national level.	
WALES, NORTH CENTRAL [WU92]	Unit Convention	Review instructions to the Unit Convention, and clarify where the notes are confusing e.g. the terms “Convention Report Form”, “Convention Report”, and “Report from the Convention”	These comments are appreciated and will be actioned.