

# The COL Recorder

Connecting leaders within the Black Community

Issue 5, June 2018

## The 5<sup>th</sup> COL Leadership Conference



### 1. The Collaboration

On Saturday, 16 June, in the Central Hall Westminster, the fifth assembly of leaders of groups serving the Black community in the UK met to share the impact of a year of working on an agreed priority for the community. These delegates collectively are known as the Council of Leaders within the Black Community (or the COL).

The event was the 5<sup>th</sup> COL Leadership Conference which was chaired, for the first time, by Cynthia Eubanks, OBE the Honorary President of the COL.

The event was attended by leaders of 6 groups actively serving the Black community. The delegates were keen to share the impacts of the work undertaken across the last 12 months, which was about building community and cultural esteem; and engage in a process for selecting the next priority to address in the forthcoming 12 months.

### 2. The Trinity for 2018/19

The COL delegates once again confirmed a team of three from its leaders to serve on The Trinity which is comprised of an Executive Director and two Deputies, which ensures continuity between Leadership Conferences.

**Angela Clarke**, one of the COL Deputy Directors was confirmed as the fifth Executive Director, succeeding Paul Riddell who spearheaded the Trinity for the last 12 months in his own unique way. We thank him for his service to the COL.

Angela's contact number is **07985 445 279**, and her email address is [angelaclarkema@gmail.com](mailto:angelaclarkema@gmail.com). She is the National Director of RAFFA a national charity involved in projects in the UK and overseas. She is joined by two Deputy Directors – **Donna Sinclair** and **Tony Tiyou**.

Donna Sinclair is a serving member of the Trinity; her contact number is **07538 684 499**, and her email address is [d.sinclair@options4change.org.uk](mailto:d.sinclair@options4change.org.uk). She is the Founder & CEO of Options4Change, a south London charity which gives advice and support to low income families.

Tony Tiyou is the newest member of the Trinity. His contact number is **07910 947 735**, and his email address is [tonytiyou@hotmail.com](mailto:tonytiyou@hotmail.com). He is the Representation Programme Director, with Reach Society, an award winning social enterprise which

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inspires young people to develop their potential. He is also the Managing Director of a renewable business, RiA.

Delegates were reminded that the main function of The Trinity is to provide connectivity between this leadership conference and the next one, 12 months from now. The Trinity would also provide a reliable source of the main points of agreement in the conference, for all groups, namely those who participated on the day and the others who were absent.

The Trinity is also tasked with ensuring that the next Leadership Conference provides members of the COL with the opportunity to showcase the contributions of their groups to the agreed priority, and the space to debate and select the next priority for the forthcoming year. Plus address other relevant matters identified for consideration.

### 3. The Priority for 2018/19 – Political Challenges

The new priority is about accessing political structures (locally, nationally and in the voluntary sector) to influence decisions that impact the life quality of people in our community.

This priority was selected from the list of 9 core areas (as listed in the COL's declaration of service document) by the group of leaders.

There was the strong feeling that the assault by the conservative government on the children of the Windrush generation who failed to become registered British citizens was wrong; but also it was an indication that the Black community had stopped monitoring political matters that were designed to be hostile and undermining. The delegates felt that it was necessary to learn from this oversight and put systems, processes and structures in place to provide early warning of any future threats to the community.

Once again, all of the delegates or leaders present were urged to take this priority back to their leadership teams for consideration and action. Each member of the COL is expected to take its own decisions on the practical implementation of this priority in their spheres of influence such as with parents, young people, other groups, church communities, trade union groups, local and national representatives (such as councillors or MPs) etc.

The COL believes that concerted action over 12 months by all groups to assert the chosen priority will make a bigger impact than the alternative. In addition, the learning by these groups will provide the COL with significant understanding of viable and workable methods for the protection of the Black community; and gain a deeper grasp of what we need to do in order to take more responsibility for our affairs, and for shaping our destiny.

### 4. The Magnificent Seven

So which groups took the decision to collaborate over the next 12 months? The Magnificent seven in the 2018 leadership conference were: **Enfield Caribbean Association, Family & Relationship Crisis Centre, London Black Teachers Network, Options4Change, RAFFA, Reach Society, and Urban Synergy.** Absent COL members were also expected to take action to implement the chosen priority for 2018/19.

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Over the last 12 months, no group has formally withdrawn from the COL collaboration, but disappointingly a few did not send any delegates to this year's Leadership Conference which meant that they took no part in the strategic process.

The delegates were also delighted to hear from Neil Flannigan, MBE, and erstwhile President of WASP (West Indian Armed Service Personnel) who shared his experiences since WW2, and echoed the importance of the Black community taking full responsibility for its affairs.

### **5. Building Community & Cultural Esteem**

Delegates received reports from 7 of the 9 groups, slightly fewer than 80%, who agreed to take action in response to the 2017 priority; they were: Family & Relationship Crisis Centre, Enfield Caribbean Association, London Black Teachers Network, Options4Change, RAFFA, Reach Society, and Urban Synergy.

Each group reported on their project to build community and cultural esteem. Delegates were informed and inspired by the scope and impact of these projects which collectively impacted more than 4,500 young people and adults. Delegates congratulated everyone for their innovation and proactivity. They also noted that this was the largest number of groups providing feedback, which was both impressive and insightful.

### **6. Windrush Arrival / MBC Origin and Stephen Lawrence Day**

Delegates also discussed 2 items which were deemed to be of strategic importance to our community, the modern Black community (or MBC). They were the Stephen Lawrence Commemoration Day - the 22 April 2019 - that was recently announced by the Theresa May, PM; and the other was the idea of the community recognising 22 June as the symbolic start of the modern Black community (or MBC) in the UK.

On the former item, it was recognised that the SL commemoration day would become significant over time, and the COL should consider how it would like to support it given that the Stephen Lawrence Trust will be leading this item.

On the latter item, the idea of encouraging our community to remember the symbolic start of the MBC by discussing the date – 22 June 1948 - with family members, over a meal, on the first Sunday after that date was seen as an easy way of helping our young people to understand their story in the UK. Delegates quickly grasped the benefits of this action and agreed to take it on board. Everyone was asked to spread word of this idea via their families, networks and faith groups.

The new Trinity was asked to review these ideas with a view to deciding how to proactively help to build awareness through COL members and the wider community.