

# *CAFAS Update No. 82*

*15 June 2015*

*Council for Academic Freedom & Academic Standards*

*Website: [www.cafas.org.uk](http://www.cafas.org.uk)*

*AGM & Meeting:*

*Saturday 27 June 2015*

*AGM 2.00 pm, Meeting 2.30pm*

*Room 253*

*Birkbeck College*

*Malet Street*

*London WC1*

*Underground: Goodge Street, Euston Square, Euston, Russell Square, Holborn*

## **AGENDA for AGM**

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the last AGM
3. Possible changes to the legal status of Cafas (see Eric Barendt's Note following the Agenda)
4. Election Of Officers and of the Committee

## **NOTE**

It has recently been suggested that it would be advantageous for CAFAS to change its legal status to a limited company to be registered at Company House, and also to become a legal charity under the supervision of the Charity Commission. There are significant advantages to both these changes from the present informal structure under which we are in law an unincorporated association, without, as I understand it, charitable status. But there is some paperwork to be done for both these changes, and we would come under greater legal obligations, e.g. A duty to submit annual reports and accounts to the Charity Commission.

I am sure that these changes, or either one of them,

should only be made after a full discussion at the AGM and after members have had an opportunity to express their views.

**Eric Barendt, co -Chair**

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## **London Metropolitan University: striking for education, against redundancy**

### **Reports from the UCU**

Many thanks for the excellent solidarity we received with regards to yesterday's [4 June 2015] highly successful strike action at London Met - see report below.

We will be meeting a panel of Governors to discuss the dispute next Wednesday and would appreciate you letting them know you support us in demanding an immediate halt to all compulsory redundancies. To that end, we would be grateful if you would circulate

the following suggested tweet to all of your members and ask them to individually send it as well as sign our petition if they haven't already done so:

@londonmetuni Dear Governor please help #londonmet to survive and grow - stop compulsory redundancies now! #handsofflondonmet <http://www.ucu.org.uk/stophelondonmetcuts>

In solidarity,  
Mark Campbell, London Met UCU (Chair)

Our second day of strike action, jointly with UNISON this time, was a great success, with pickets and supporters at both campuses. Many thanks, especially, are due to our colleagues in UNISON, whose strike action with us yesterday brought to a standstill the university's switchboard system. We understand that this is the first time in 27 years that the switchboard has been closed down through industrial action, which just goes to show the depth of opposition to the Vice-Chancellor's planned draconian cuts. The university didn't admit the cause publicly, of course, as this linked university tweet shows: <https://twitter.com/londonmetuni/status/606397708933447680>



London Met Strikers, 4 June 2015; sent by Mark Campbell

We received a lot of support from other colleges via social media and some colleges sent supporters in person, including Birkbeck, LSE and City & Islington. Further Education colleges, from where London Met draws many applicants, are themselves being hit by huge budget cuts and consequent attempts to make staff redundant. Check out some of our strike day photos on our blog at: <https://uculondonmet.wordpress.com/2015/06/04/london-met-ucu-and-unison-day-of-joint-strike-action/> We were delighted and privileged to receive support from [striking workers from the National Gallery](#), who have now taken 34 days of strike action this year in opposition to the privatisation of customer-facing staff. We were addressed by Candy

Udwin, the PCS union rep who has been sacked simply for attempting to find out how much the Gallery is paying for private security in its Sainsbury Wing. The No-Privatisation campaigners have publicised London Met's dispute on their Facebook page and at last weekend's rally in Trafalgar Square. We invite colleagues to show solidarity and sign the [petition opposing privatisation of the National Gallery](#) and the [petition to reinstate Candy Udwin](#).

Finally, check out [this link to Mark Campbell's address to the rally](#) outside the former Women's Library, as a reminder of what we are fighting for.

In solidarity,  
The UCU Coordinating Committee.

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## Chomsky: How America's Great University System Is Being Destroyed

By [Noam Chomsky](#) [1] / [CounterPunch](#) [2]  
February 28, 2014

*The following is an edited transcript of remarks given by Noam Chomsky via Skype on 4 February 2014 to a gathering of members and allies of the [Adjunct Faculty Association of the United Steelworkers](#) [3] in Pittsburgh, PA. The transcript was prepared by Robin J. Sowards and edited by Prof. Chomsky.*

**The link to this article is**

<http://www.alternet.org/corporate-accountability-and-workplace/chomsky-how-americas-great-university-system-getting>

**Noam Chomsky is a professor of linguistics and philosophy at MIT. He is a CAFAS Patron.**

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## Why I Like the English Bishop

**Dr. Amir Ali Majid, Bar-at-Law**

I was born in Pakistan – a lovely country nice and gracious to vulnerable children. However, for my adult life I am grateful to the UK – developing into a

full man, competent legal professional and thoroughly upright human being despite my blindness.

It never ceases to amaze me that some indomitable spirits flourish amongst rotten States. Chechens found a Russian lady caring about them deeply. She was Anna Politkovskaya who has been described by the Western media as “brave beyond belief.” Informed observers know very well that Putin’s ferocious leadership in Russia is guilty of heinous violations of basic human rights of despicable variety. The Chechen region is neglected by many due to political expediency. The brutal Russian forces are a menace to any journalist. But Anna Politkovskaya remained unfazed by it. She investigated the controversies where mothers were trying to find their sons’ corpses in military morgues; where mangled bodies lay unnamed and unclaimed - the result of the Russian army’s unique mixture of callousness and incompetence. She talked to Chechens whose friends and relatives had disappeared into the notorious “filtration camps” to suffer torture, mutilation, rape and death.

Mr Putin’s regime was utterly brutal and corrupt, she would say in her soft, matter-of-fact voice. He represented to her the worst demons of the Soviet past, revived in modern form. Her raw courage was found by the sinister forces of Russia too good to be tolerated. Thus she was made to pay with her life. Ms Politkovskaya suffered death threats aplenty. On more than one occasion, Russian Special Forces threatened to rape and kill her, leaving her body in a ditch. On 7 October 2006, when President Vladimir Putin was celebrating his birthday, she was murdered at the age of 48. As it is recorded in a documentary film released this year, remarkably she knew about this and had said, “It is miracle that I am alive.”

You will be a fool of first water to believe that all Jews are the same. The good Jews living in Israel have not let their spirits be dominated by the dark forces. For instance, Prof. Gerald Halper, nominee for the Nobel Prize, who formed the Israeli Committee against Home Demolition in the occupied territory of Palestine, referring to the destruction of 18,000 buildings, robustly says, “It represents probably over 200,000 Palestinians made homeless over 40 years in a slow, relentless policy of deliberate displacement and “Judaisation” of East Jerusalem and Area C of the West Bank. This is a humanitarian crisis far outreaching earthquakes or mudslides which hit the headlines. And the world looks on. This is not news, it is cliché and history. We will be lucky if we can get any media or press to attend.

On 15 March 2007 in its London circular this “Jewish” body said, “This week has seen the release of the United Nations report on the International Convention on All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD). But despite the report, Israel continued its brazen destruction of the rule of International Law. The ICAHD, as I said created by a Jewish angel (Prof Jeff Halper), was more organised than many Islamic slow-

moving bodies, some of them taking lead from the action of the Committee, expressed its outrage on this policy of house demolitions and made it the main topic of the ICAHD UK 2007 AGM – its declared aim was to find the method “how to approach MPs and other people of influence about the urgent need to pressurize Israel to stop these unlawful acts.”

If States like India had not acquired them, Pakistan had no reason to get nuclear bombs. Many good people are against them. For instance, on 14 March 2007 British MPs voted against the UK retaining them by replacing “Trident” submarine system.

I attended an “Eid Milan” party in the Assembly Hall of the London Borough of Waltham Forest. You may ask “Eid Milan” party and in an official venue of London? Yes indeed; it was arranged by Dr Liaqat Ali who has been elected the Lord Mayor of this premier borough thanks to the unadulterated candour of the English Councillors who are only fidel to merit and the consideration “who will do best for the people” (of course, not applicable to all politicians, British or from elsewhere).

Mayor Liaqat Ali, he would be gracious enough to forgive me for saying this, with political foresight did not miss the cosmopolitan occasion of celebrating the Christmas vacation. On 22 December 2007 (with a lot of expense involving to bring artists from India and Pakistan) the Waltham Forest Assembly Hall became abuzz with this festive function, adorned with the beautifully dressed ladies threatening masculine hearts with their provocative dresses belonging to numerous exotic cultures. The English guests had a good reason to turn up.

Like in many events of this kind, many good Pakistanis, one after another, came to the microphone and told their extraordinary story of success in this society which has progressed by sticking exclusively to merit. Another Lord Mayor of London municipal authority explained how he became such a salient elected leader in the UK. Then Lord Nazir Ahmed of Rotherham stood up and in his unconcealed enthusiasm told how he became member of the Upper House of the British Legislature. Then the host Lord Mayor, Dr Liaqat Ali, wrapped up this long line of migrants who were pulled into glittering grandeur by this society.

I was pleased that I was not called to the stage. Mayor Liaqat Ali, without telling my story only mentioned my name. He did not know the freshest story – a Pakistani lovely uneducated woman who was bringing colour to my attendance of this function with her delight-spreading oriental perfume (I mean that even now) turned to me and in all her innocence asked me, “Who shaves you? You are shaven well.”

The begging bowl in the hands of a Lahori blind beggar was so beautiful and had such a classical look that my British wife had said that “I would have asked you to get it if it was available in the shops.” So, if I was called to the stage, I had the most impressive

story of this society who might have been deemed even foolish, rather than slave of merit, if I had told the audience that insofar as the UK is concerned I was made here, qualifying as a barrister and becoming p/t Immigration Judge (a capacity in which by now I have written at least three thousand seven hundred judgments and at least one thousand times cancelled Deportation Orders made by the British Home Secretary). Should I say “fortunately” since my speech would have been in English my uneducated lady questioner would have been in no danger of being embarrassed.

The Right Rev Dr Michael Nazir Ali is the Church of England's only Asian bishop who was born and raised in Pakistan to a Catholic-convert Father. He later changed to the Anglican Church and became the youngest bishop in the world at his consecration in 1994. When informed commentators observe about the exceptional fair-mindedness of the British they mention his meteoric rise – since 1999 he has been a member of the House of Lords, the first Asian religious leader to sit in the Upper House of this foreign country. He could have been in the queue in 22 December 2007 Waltham Forest Assembly Hall function to tell how well he has done in the UK. However, like Dr Condoleezza Rice, US Secretary of State, who has 4 Honorary Doctorates and, other than English, speaks Russian, French and Spanish, and who is using her intellectual abilities to spread malice in the world efficiently, Dr Nazir Ali is doing the same and he would not be invited to such a function.

Bishop Nazir Ali was in the news in the second week of January 2008; unfortunately, with a prejudiced statement whereby he said the Islam was a “highly organised theology” and was posing a religious threat to the UK. Whilst the generous-hearted Englishmen have allowed Muslims to broadcast azan from the minarets of some mosques, Bishop Nazir Ali had made the anti-Islam pronouncement by saying that Muslims had dominated some areas of Britain in such a manner that Christians were deterred from going there. This outrageous comment received condemnation from all sections of this society including the leaders of governing and opposition parties. Sheikh Imam Ibrahim Mogra, who runs interfaith programmes with Christian clergy, said he was very disappointed by the bishop's decision to criticise the call to prayer. “I cannot understand why a man of faith would have a problem with God's name being called out in an increasingly non-religious society – it's beyond belief,” he said, “We've had church bells ringing in our country for centuries and yet the character of our country is not really Christian, we are a predominantly non-religious society.”

It surrounds me with a grave cloud of thick disappointment when I come across Pakistanis like Dr Nazir Ali. On 1 April 2004 I gave a lecture in Lahore High Court. The topic itself fully displayed my disappointment – “Claiming Asylum Abroad, Auctioning Pakistani Honour Cheap.” In recent years

some Pakistani-born local politicians have been disgracing their land of birth by vote rigging (a totally offensive thing to do in the cradle of democracy). Next time I intend to talk on “Dishonouring Pakistan Abroad Should be a Crime.”

Dr Nazir Ali was given the unbelievable confidence of standing as a candidate for the post of the Archbishop of the UK. Remarkably, he wished to become the top spiritual leader of this fair land, of course, supported by some white Islamophobic and illiberal elements. I am glad that he did not succeed. Instead, Dr Rowan Williams became the Archbishop of Canterbury, leader of the entire Anglican Church. He is known to be held in great affection and warmth and many eminent individuals admire him for his humane views on a variety of issues. For instance, the Bishop of Hulme, Rev. Stephen Lowe, was reported by BBC assessing him thus, “We have probably one of the greatest and the brightest archbishops of Canterbury we have had for many a long day. “The most prestigious teaching in my academic career has been the LLM course on “Legal Issues of Airline Liability” (LIAL). It put my employer (London Metropolitan University) third in the UK to deal with aviation matters, the other two being University of London and Aberdeen University. However being the LIAL subject leader did not give me enough duties to justify my academic post. So it would be fair to say that most of my teaching was in the field of Constitutional and Administrative Law. It would be fair to say that almost every year I had 100 LLB students undertaking these subjects. Constitutional Law often justified the reference to those who were shaping the Constitution Conventions. They definitely included the Prime Minister of the time and the relevant Secretaries of State.

I was active in teaching Constitutional and Administrative Law in PM Margaret Thatcher's era. I may be forgiven for saying something cynical with my tongue firmly in my cheek that I used to tell my Constitutional Law students – one positive thing about Mrs Thatcher is that she has given a “total freedom of expression” to the true devotees of this precept. I used to tell the story of an Englishman in Cheltenham. This elderly man was openly annoyed by the election of a black person as a Conservative candidate in a safe Conservative seat where he duly stood and lost. I think to please the sensation-seeking audience occasionally the BBC indulges in remarkable freedom of information. This elderly Englishman's remark, I heard with my own ears, was broadcast by the BBC - “Could they only find a nigger candidate?”

When disgusted by the horrendous circumstances of the Iraqi Christian refugees who were forced to leave their homes, along with millions of other Iraqis to neighbouring countries, seen by him directly during his visit to Syria last October, Dr Williams highlighted the problem of an almost unprecedented scale created by the war in Iraq. In this perspective a person who had opposed the invasion of Iraq from the

outset, criticised the neoconservatives of the Bush administration hawks advocating further illegal and patently tragic wars. He said, "When people talk about further destabilisation of the region - and you read some American political advisers speaking of action against Syria and Iran - I can only say that I regard that as criminal, ignorant and potentially murderous folly." With touching candour, he further said, "We do hear talk from some quarters of action against Syria and Iran. I can't understand what planet such persons are living on, when you see the conditions that are already there."

Earlier in a letter to the Independent on Sunday newspaper, signed by Rabbi Tony Bayfield, head of Reform Judaism in Britain; Lord Harries, the former Anglican Bishop of Oxford; and Imam Abdul Jalil Sajid of the Brighton Islamic Mission, had opined that there is "no justification in International Law for attacking Iran militarily and the use of force is not an option at this juncture."

Three former high-ranking US military officers - retired Lt. Gen. Robert G. Gard, a senior military fellow at the Centre for Arms Control and Non-proliferation in Washington; retired Marine Gen. Joseph P. Hoar, former head of U.S. Central Command; and Vice Admiral Jack Shanahan, former director of the Centre for Defense Information - had jointly in an open letter dated 4 February 2007 opposed any attack on Iran because it was trying to acquire nuclear weapons. They said Britain "has a vital role to play in securing a renewed diplomatic push" and urged the UK Prime Minister to make it clear that he would oppose any military attack on Iran. The officers said an attack "would have disastrous consequences for security in the region, coalition forces in Iraq and would further exacerbate regional and global tensions."

Among Church of England bishops, only the Rt Rev Michael Nazir Ali, the Bishop of Rochester, has spoken in support of the military action. He annoyed all right-thinking persons by expressing the opinion that in some circumstances a pre-emptive nuclear strike against Iran might be justified if it developed nuclear weapons.

This kind of remark coming from a Bishop is appalling when one notices that the radiation of nuclear weapons will not discriminate women, children, sick or elderly, from fit combatants. Mr Simon Barrow, co-director of the British Christian think-tank Ekklesia, said that most Christians would regard him as "profoundly mistaken" in his view that the pre-emptive use of nuclear weapons can be justified on theological grounds.

In April, 2014 I heard a programme dedicated to Christians. It was called "Sunday" and usually not the routine listening for Muslims. I find this programme, along with other spiritual/religious broadcasts, uplifting because it is pleasing to observe that every religion adheres to good principles. Listening to this Sunday programme the Christian presenter, I should

say most progressively, mentioned the survey conducted by a Christian enterprise which revealed that Muslims in the month of Ramzan are more giving than devotees of any other religion particularly those who adhere to Christianity.

Making sure that Christians influence the outcome of the impending elections the Protestant clergy in February 2014, particularly highlighting the deep problem of contradiction in the attitudes of a society "which celebrates equality in principle yet treats some people, especially the poor and vulnerable as unwanted, unvalued and unnoticed," asked Christians to exercise their right of vote to influence the election of the next British Government. Bishop Wilson also supported this idea in his broadcast in "Today" programme (BBC Radio 4, 8.50 AM, 17 February 2015).

I have a dilemma. Should I prefer the opinion of Dr Nazir Ali, a man who shares his land of birth with me, or follow the line of thought of Dr Rowan Williams. The answer is clear, "I Love the English Bishop" for his axiomatically virtuous views pure of any theological dogma.

One has to take the trouble to read the play called "The Waves" by the famous British author Virginia Woolf (25 January 1882 – 28 March 1941) to understand what this author means by the phrase "Wave." In her play she makes it clear that human beings are like waves and they come up in the river and disappear; some with their long lasting impact left behind. Thus, if Christians of colour in the UK were represented by a liberal Archbishop like Desmond Mpilo Tutu (born 7 October 1931) then the title of this article would have been radically different because unlike Right Rev Dr Michael Nazir Ali the discussion would have been on a "Super Wave" of the contemporary world.

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A brief view of the current political-economic context for the above items can be found on

**Karl Marx Was Right**

Posted on May 31, 2015

By **Chris Hedges**

<http://www.truthdig.com/report/category/hedges:>

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**For an item on counter-terrorism legislation (Royal Assent 12 Feb 2015) and the UK universities see:**

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-31086694>

**Defending-Academic-Freedom  
JISCMail List**

Members are urged to join – go to [www.cafas.org.uk](http://www.cafas.org.uk) and open the link – to contribute to the discussions and to assist others.

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# NOTICES

## AGM & Meeting

Saturday 27 June 2015

AGM 2.00 -2.30 pm, Meeting 2.30-4.30  
Room 253  
Birkbeck College, Malet Street, London.

### Agenda for Ordinary Meeting

1. Attendance & Apologies
  2. Minutes & Matters arising
  3. Academic Freedom
  4. Casework
  5. AOB
- Pre-meeting from 1.30pm. All welcome.

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## CONSTITUTION

CAFAS' aims are outlined on the membership form. The full constitution can be obtained from the Secretary or [www.cafas.net](http://www.cafas.net). CAFAS was founded in February 1994. It depends on subscriptions and an active membership. It meets in March/April, July and September/October.

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## Committee

### Co-Chairs:

#### John Fernandes

76 Bois Hall Rd, Addlestone Surrey KT15 2J  
[johnfernandes500@gmail.com](mailto:johnfernandes500@gmail.com)

#### Professor Eric Barendt

74, Upper Park Road,  
London NW3 2UX  
020 7586 9930; [e.barendt@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:e.barendt@ucl.ac.uk)

### Secretary:

#### Membership Secretary & Treasurer:

#### Kirit Patel

19 Greenhill Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 1LD  
[kiritone@live.co.uk](mailto:kiritone@live.co.uk), Tel: 02084115534

### Casework Coordinator:

#### Colwyn Williamson

83 Fairwater Grove West, Llandaff, Cardiff CF5 2JN  
029 20195020; m: 07970 838 276  
[cafascoordinator@gmail.com](mailto:cafascoordinator@gmail.com)

### Cafas Update Compilers:

#### Patrick Brady

3 Ingleby Way, Chislehurst BR7 6DD  
0208 467 2549; [patrick.brady28@gmail.com](mailto:patrick.brady28@gmail.com)

#### Geraldine Thorpe

7 Benn Street, London E9 5SU  
0208 986 3004; [thorpegm@gmail.com](mailto:thorpegm@gmail.com)

### David Regan Appeal Coordinator:

#### Dr Janet Collett

Undercliffe House, Malling St, Lewes, East Sussex,  
BN7 2RB; Tel: 01273 473 717  
[janet.collett@gmail.com](mailto:janet.collett@gmail.com)

### Students' Complaints:

#### Ben Cosin

3 Halliday Drive DEAL Kent CT14 7AX  
01304 361074 [Brcosin1926@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Brcosin1926@yahoo.co.uk)

#### John Fernandes

76 Bois Hall Rd, Addlestone Surrey KT15 2JN  
[johnfernandes500@gmail.com](mailto:johnfernandes500@gmail.com)

### Website

#### Ian Hewitt, Rashid Mehmood

### Cafas Legal Advisors

#### Professor Eric Barendt

74, Upper Park Road,  
London NW3 2UX  
020 7586 9930; [e.barendt@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:e.barendt@ucl.ac.uk)

#### Dr Amir Majid

32 Forest Drive West, London E11 1LA  
0208 556 1990, [drmajid47@googlemail.com](mailto:drmajid47@googlemail.com)

### Health & Safety

#### Ian Hewitt

[Ian.Hewitt@phonecoop.coop](mailto:Ian.Hewitt@phonecoop.coop)

### Founding Members

#### Michael Cohen

#### Colwyn Williamson

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## DO YOU BELIEVE

- That academic standards have been dumbed down throughout the higher and further education sector?
- That this decline has been accompanied by the escalating rhetoric of 'excellence' and 'world-class'?
- That the number of contact hours between teachers and students, which the Dearing Report described as a proper measure of the quality of education, has been reduced across the board?
- That there are all sorts of pressures on examiners to pass candidates who would previously have failed?
- That it is far easier to obtain Firsts and Upper Seconds than it used to be?
- That practices which used to be treated as academically unacceptable, or even as cheating, are now widely regarded as normal and inevitable.
- That the effect of the RAE and other pressures on academics is to increase the quantity of research, not the quality, and to restrict innovative and critical thought?
- That there are pressures, often of a commercial nature, to avoid certain areas of research, or to falsify results or to distort their conclusions and significance?
- That, despite lip-service to the importance of teaching, universities and colleges take little account of this in career advancement?
- That academic values have been largely displaced by market values?
- That the stated 'mission' of universities to serve the community has been abandoned in favour of commercial priorities?
- That education in the UK no longer has the status of a right bringing social benefits, but is instead treated as a

commodity to be bought and sold?

- That discrimination against women and ethnic minorities is still rife in the employment and promotion practices of tertiary education, despite the multicultural community it is supposed to serve?
- That the work of the union in fighting discrimination and victimisation can usefully be supplemented by specialised advice and support from an organization which focuses on issues of academic freedom and standards?

**If you believe that many or most of these propositions are true, you ought to be a CAFAS member and your UCU branch ought to affiliate.**

**Membership Secretary & Treasurer: Kirit Patel, Tel: 02084115534, [kiritone@live.co.uk](mailto:kiritone@live.co.uk)**

**If you would like a speaker from CAFAS to address a branch meeting, contact: Colwyn Williamson, 07970 838 276 [cafascoordinator@gmail.com](mailto:cafascoordinator@gmail.com)**

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## **Have you paid your SUBSCRIPTION?**

Please send your cheque or standing order to the Membership Secretary, Kirit Patel, 19 Greenhill Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 1LD  
[kiritone@live.co.uk](mailto:kiritone@live.co.uk), Tel: 02084115534

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**Next deadline: 4 September 2015**

**Please send letters, news items and articles to:  
Pat Brady [patrick.brady28@gmail.com](mailto:patrick.brady28@gmail.com) &  
Geraldine Thorpe [thorpegm@gmail.com](mailto:thorpegm@gmail.com)  
You can also send us items at any time for earlier  
publication on the website.**

**CAFAS Update seeks to provide an open forum for  
opinion and discussion.  
Items do not necessarily reflect the views of the  
Council.**