

IYN – BWY Meeting, 5th September 2009 @ The Parkdale Yoga Centre

Present: Pierre Bibby (CEO BWY), Helen Smith (Chair BWY), Peter Yates (Chair IYN), Keith ap Owen (Liaison IYN), Laura Dicken (Admin IYN).

Summary

Both parties agreed prior to the meeting that we would present our positions in order to arrive at mutual understanding. We would then look for a way forward which would benefit Yoga.

This in fact transpired at the meeting. Discussion was wide-ranging, frank and conducted in a cordial atmosphere.

As well as describing the IYN's history, work and ethos, Pete and Keith emphasised the point that BWY's governing body status had caused on-going and often severe difficulties for non-BWY teachers and TT programmes over the years, as well as causing a rift in the Yoga Community. They were both prepared to regard this as 'the law of unintended consequences', but insisted that those consequences needed to be recognised and addressed. They clarified the IYN position on the existence of a GB for Yoga and on the wider question of regulation. This is as follows: the IYN takes the view that Yoga cannot be regulated without being distorted and truncated and that by no stretch of the imagination does it come within the Sport England remit.

Pierre and Helen described the BWY's ethos, history and current projects. They clarified what they believe the Governing Body status to imply. In this context, Helen pointed out that she had recently published an article stating that the BWY had no desire by virtue of its Governing Body status to dictate who can or cannot teach Yoga in the UK, nor wished to. The aspiration of the BWY is to raise standards of teaching if necessary for the benefit of students and teachers alike. Pierre and Helen pointed out that they saw GB status as conferring a duty to advocate for Yoga and spread its benefits to the wider community.

It was agreed by both parties that there was common ground in that both wanted to see Yoga grow within our culture and for participation to continue to widen. Further, both parties thought that this common ground should be the basis for further discussion. The parties differed, however, on the conditions that Yoga needs to flourish. The IYN takes the view that Yoga needs freedom to grow and develop and should largely avoid the influence of government agencies, feeling that public welfare is adequately protected by the common law. The BWY, while agreeing that Yoga needs to grow and flourish, believes that it is necessary to work with such agencies.

We all agreed that this had been a fruitful meeting.