

Visit by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth Government Minister for Faith – 21st December 2017

On Thursday 21st December 2017, Fr Vissarion, the President of the Community Michael Papadopoulos, Vice President George Antoniou, as well as members of the Church Committee and the Philoptohos were very pleased to receive a visit from Lord Nicholas Bourne of Aberystwyth, who is the Government Minister for Faith, together with his entourage of four assistants.

This event follows on from the visit of Mr Philip Davies, who is a policy adviser in the Faith Engagement Team at the Department for Communities and Local Government, on the 24th November 2017, who felt that Lord Bourne would like to come and visit the Greek Orthodox Church and Community in Margate as he is always interested in understanding more about smaller faith communities, particularly those outside London.

Fr Vissarion and Mr Papadopoulos introduced Lord Bourne to the key members of the Community who were present at this event. This included the founder and first Chairman of the Community, Mr. Kyriacos G. Koureas, who also had an opportunity to discuss with Lord Bourne the founding of the Church in 1964 whilst wearing his Ecclesiastical Cross, awarded by the then Patriarch Athinagoras.

Other key members of the Community were also introduced, including Ladies from the Philoptohos, without whom the delicious refreshments and kourabiedes would not have been made possible. An impromptu chant by Fr Vissarion and Mr Papadopoulos with a verse from the Nativity took place, which was both mesmerising and enjoyable by all in attendance.



Fr Vissarion and Mr Papadopoulos were able address all of the questions that Lord Bourne raised, and showed him around the Church and the School, where the new Church and Community website (www.gocmargate.org) was being displayed on the School's computers.

Whilst enjoying a cup of tea and a kourabie, Lord Bourne took the opportunity to address those gathered so that he could express his sincerest thanks for the visit and for the delightful refreshments! He was very impressed by what he saw, and was equally pleased that there was a flourishing Greek and Cypriot community in Margate that interacted so well with the local community. Lord Bourne finished by wishing everybody within the Greek Community a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



In reply, Mr. Papadopoulos thanked Lord Bourne for making the trip to Margate, and said that it was the Community's absolute pleasure to facilitate the tour of the Greek Orthodox Church and School of Margate. Felicitations for the Festive Season were returned to Lord Bourne and his entourage.

Report by: Tim Jackson