



Inter Faith Network for the UK day event for local inter faith practitioners

A SHORT REPORT

Tuesday 16 October 2018

Kala Sangam Arts Centre, Bradford



About the day



Participants in discussion

On 16 October 2018 practitioners from a wide range of local inter faith groups from different parts of the UK came together in Bradford for a day of learning and sharing held by the Inter Faith Network for the UK (IFN). This followed on from similar events held in Bristol, Coventry, London, Manchester and Sheffield across the previous two years.

The first local inter faith groups began to emerge in the UK back in the 1970s. From a handful of pioneering groups, local inter faith bodies have mushroomed in number to over 250. There are also many types of local initiative which are not 'inter faith organisations' as such, including local multi faith chaplaincies, projects, short term programmes and statutory bodies such as SACREs (Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education).

What are some of the features of the landscape today and some of the challenges and possibilities in working locally for inter faith understanding and cooperation?

IFN has, since it was established in 1987, advocated strongly for the importance of local inter faith activity. This has been a part of its overall pattern of work. Local activity is organically related to the very important work of national faith community bodies and also benefits from the work of national and regional inter faith and educational initiatives of many kinds. Past IFN National Meetings have explored these links and the importance of the role of national faith communities and inter faith initiatives in supporting and encouraging local inter faith activity.

This day event was offered specifically for local inter faith practitioners to share their experiences, and to discuss issues of common interest and concern and for focused learning opportunities drawing on the kinds of questions and issues raised by IFN member local groups at link meetings in the last four years. It was open to all local inter faith groups in the UK and also local inter faith practitioners with a particular interest in the issues working in other contexts. #IFNLocal was used as the Twitter hashtag for the day.

Introduction to the day and Welcome



Emily Tidball, Balu Lad, Mohinder Singh Chana

The day was chaired by Mr Jatinder Singh Birdi, an IFN Co-Chair and also Chair of Warwick District Faiths Forum.

It began with a period of silence to remember in thanks all those in the UK and around the world working for greater inter faith understanding and cooperation.

Participants were welcomed to the day. There was then a special welcome to Bradford and Keighley by Mohinder Singh Chana, Chair, and Balu Lad, Vice-Chair, Bradford Concord Interfaith Society; and Denise Raby, Secretary, Keighley Interfaith Group.

Mr Mohinder Singh Chana welcomed everyone on behalf of Bradford Concord Interfaith Society. He said that although Bradford is not rich financially, it is rich culturally.

Bradford Concord Interfaith Society was established over 35 years ago in 1983. Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship was, in part, the inspiration for setting it up. Local inter faith organisations play a significant role in IFN. In the 1980s there was a lot of buzz about inter faith work. Now, sadly, there are more challenges, such as conflict, difficulties of sustaining economic development, climate change

and, of course, Brexit. Such challenges can only be tackled by working together. Local inter faith organisations provide strong platforms for people to get together.

Mr Balu Lad said Bradford's name is derived from "brad" which means broad, and "ford", the name for a crossing point of a river. So Broadford eventually became Bradford, and was named after the crossing of the Bradford Beck at Church Bank, which was almost in the same spot as the Kala Sangam Arts Centre where the present meeting was being held! As a result of industrial revolution, Bradford had grown from what was a small market town to a booming textile based industrial giant until its decline in the later part of the 20th century. Like some other cities, it is currently facing a number of challenges.

Bradford was involved in some pioneering work. For example in 1904 Bradford became the first local authority in Britain to provide free school meals. In January 1893 a conference in Bradford led to the founding of the Independent Labour Party.

All major faiths are well represented in the city with a number of respective places of worship, as well as people of no particular religion.

Mrs Denise Raby also welcomed everyone to the area on behalf of Keighley Interfaith Group (KIG). The origins of KIG were in 2000 as part of the Millennium celebrations, and it came together as a group after 9/11. It is a small group and sometimes struggles to get people involved.

Keighley, 12 miles down the road from Bradford, is a small town, but is growing at a fast rate, mainly through the addition of Eastern Europeans and refugees. Mrs Raby moved into the area from inner city Birmingham about 5 years ago and one of the first things she noticed about Keighley was its level of segregated communities.



Denise Raby

For a small place it has many big issues to address. So, too, does Bradford. Perhaps they could come together to find solutions for some of these. It is very important to draw everyone together as one community.

She was looking forward to the day, picking up some new ideas for future events, support available, ways to grow and move forward and enjoying the fellowship.



Canon Andrew Pratt



Jatinder Singh Birdi and Bishop Toby Howarth

The importance of local inter faith engagement in our diverse society – Bradford and beyond!

The Rt Revd Dr Toby Howarth, Bishop of Bradford

Dr Howarth said that he was very pleased to be able to attend and to meet such a variety of people at the event. He offered the following points:

- In one way, local inter faith practitioners are the last people who need to hear about the importance of local inter faith engagement, as they are all people committed to local inter faith engagement in different ways!
- However it is very important for local inter faith practitioners to think about what they're doing and why it is so

important. They give significantly of their time and energy.

- Everyone is operating in a new space which comes with challenges.
- There are voices which say that religion is a problem, and that people of different faiths cannot get along, and tend to fight with each other. There was, for instance, an editorial in *The Guardian* the previous day about 'belonging' and 'believing' and the rise of populist parties across Europe. There seems to be a new discourse which allows people to be very rude and hateful towards one another in public. This is thriving on social media. When people's identities are threatened, that sort of talk can increase. It is a very worrying time and there should be cause for concern.
- On the other hand, there are voices which say, "Why bother with inter faith work in an intentional way any longer because people mix already? Young people are mixing at school and work and online and it's no big deal. Inter faith is so

mainstream in Britain that there's no need for inter faith organisations anymore.”

- It is in the space between these two challenges that local inter faith engagement is taking place.
- It is important to engage with the new energy that's coming on board whilst retaining the space for local inter faith groups. Neither should be abandoned. For example, there is a lot of energy coming from Batley and Dewsbury at present from the Jo Cox Foundation. It is easy to think that this is not inter faith but it is about bringing people together and a lot of people involved are people of faith. It is best to get involved with these new initiatives and to rejoice in them, whilst remembering that local inter faith organisations bring a lot of expertise and experience which must not be lost.

Dr Howarth gave three reasons for his continued involvement in local inter faith engagement:

1. Local relationships with people of different faiths are enjoyable and good for me. I learn about myself and my own culture. I am stretched by the experience. My horizons are expanded, and my world, culture and food become so much richer. Of course, a lot of relationships that would be labelled 'inter faith' are simply about neighbours getting on with each other. But even then, when people talk across difference, they use a different part of their brain. Everyone is aware that it is often better to step outside and look at ourselves the way others see us. Many people know the quote attributed to Marshall McLuhan, "We don't know who discovered water but we know it wasn't a fish!"

I am Chair of The Linking Network in Bradford. This brings children from primary schools together to learn more

about one another. This is another example of work that is not related only to inter faith, but it is very powerful and so important for children. More than 17,500 children and young people in over 450 schools are now involved in schools linking. The premise of The Linking Network is based on educational theory that children need to be educated alongside others who are different from them. This is what parents and communities want.

2. It is important that society has strong 'intermediate' groupings to fill in the gap between the individual or family and the state. It is important that the state is not allowed to fill the gap.

I am Chair of the Integration Partnership in Bradford, which has been set up as Bradford is one of the five pilot areas that the Government has chosen for its new Integrated Communities Strategy. They have been running consultations with people in Bradford, Keighley and Shipley to find out what they want. At one point during the Summer one of the Council staff said that I had been there so often I should just have a Council lanyard so I didn't need to keep signing in. In a way that is very nice and friendly and the Council does good work, but, out of principle, I want to sign in as a visitor. It is important that faith communities themselves step up (often into a gap without money or support) and speak for themselves in their own language and are able to be themselves, together, without feeling as though they are having to leave parts of themselves behind. Even local inter faith organisations who receive public funding still strive to be themselves.

3. Just because local inter faith organisations are small and local does not mean that they are not as important as national level engagement.

It is important that national faith leaders meet and engage and it is very good that the Inter Faith Network for the UK provides a space for this. It gives encouragement to the local level.

National level engagement only has credibility if the local level works as well. Local groups often have more freedom to engage. I was at the Hindu mandir on Leeds Road the previous week and was aware of the freedom to have positive Christian Hindu relations there. Those relations are quite difficult nationally because of international pressures. This is the same with many other bilateral and multilateral faith engagements, for example those relating to Israel and Palestine. It is much easier just to 'get on' at local level and can be helpful when national or international pressures force people apart.

Local level engagement is often able to have better representation of women and young people. Bradford is one of the youngest cities in Europe. Yesterday I visited the Encounters exhibition by Nicola Green in London. This was a series of portraits of faith leaders and most of them were men. Local engagement can be different.

The following questions and comments were raised. Dr Howarth's answers are in italics.

- It is interesting to hear of the pressures from national level relating to the Israel-Palestine conflict. Is this something that IFN needs to tackle?
One of the most striking elements of the Israel-Palestine conflict is how it is framed by different people for their own ends. It is important in itself and people from all sides are suffering. It is interesting how people from different faiths are using it in Bradford to further their own agendas. There is an increasing sense from local people that they are not going to be

pushed around by people to use their city and give it a bad name in that sense. There are good Jewish-Muslim relations in Bradford. Rudi Leavor, Chairman of the Bradford Reform Synagogue, and Zulfi Karim, Secretary of the Bradford Council of Mosques, are good friends. When Rudi Leavor is away he leaves Zulfi Karim the keys to the synagogue. There is a Muslim on the council of the Synagogue.

Dr Crabtree said that IFN's focus is on inter faith relations in the UK. It does not tackle international issues. Occasionally IFN's Co-Chairs and the Moderators of IFN's Faith Communities Forum make a statement when an international event has an impact on inter faith relations in the UK. IFN tries to find the right ways to support local inter faith organisations and others in engaging with difficult issues.

- Do you have any thoughts on formal training in dialogue? It is a question that has come up occasionally in our local group. Dialogue plays a central role in the Soka Gakkai tradition of which I am a member.
This is very important. It is one of the areas where inter faith organisations can provide resources but it is wider than inter faith. In Bradford there is work going on to bring together two related organisations: the national Catalyst Network, which brings young people together for residential leadership training including dialogue, and Believing in Bradford, which works through the Lord Mayor's office bringing young people together for residential and then offering them a year of work with the Lord Mayor's office organising, for example, vigils and Remembrance Day events. They are awaiting the outcome of a National Lottery funding bid with which they hope to scale the project up to 6 to 8 events per year. The young people really enjoy them. There is a good story about a church 'bring and share' lunch. A lady brings a beautiful

salad to the lunch but is disappointed that everything else is eaten but not her salad. The problem was that there wasn't a spoon! People in Bradford and Keighley are saying that they want to get involved but don't know how to – they don't have the spoon. That is where organisations can help with training.

Dr Crabtree said that there are various resources for learning about dialogue and, usually, local inter faith organisations have not developed their own. IFN recently published *Let's Talk* which is about the process of dialogue. That drew on members' experiences and reflections. It would be helpful to see even more opportunities for people to learn the skills of dialogue around the UK. There are lots of ways to engage in dialogue. What matters is that people have a chance to learn.

- There is often confusion between relationships between faith communities and relationships between different ethnic groups. This can be challenging for local inter faith organisations. *People have a sense of shifting identities. That is one of the reasons that Believing in Bradford was started. Sometimes there is the misperception that a number of elderly men standing at the front of an event represent faith. That is not true in a place like Bradford which is very young and where some of the most dynamic voices are young women in particular. Some of those young people may feel a strong faith allegiance and others not. Some may be paid workers within a faith community. Some people have jobs such as judges or car salesmen but feel a strong faith identity or a strong cultural / ethnic identity. Neither is more important than the other. Strong religious allegiances are very important, but there is room for everyone to be involved and some of that involves race, ethnicity and culture as well. The dialogue spaces that exist are important but it's also important to be aware that there are those who feel they*

don't fit into those spaces and would still like to be involved in dialogue.

After the Manchester bombing there was a vigil in Bradford Cathedral. Faith leaders stood behind the candles but the event was led by young people from Believing in Bradford who helped to organise it, read the prayers and light the candles. It was as though the elders were standing back and blessing what the young people were doing. That was a very lovely picture.

Dr Crabtree said local inter faith organisations can find it difficult both to reflect the organisation structures of the different faith communities in their areas as well as to engage with local people making valuable contributions to their neighbourhoods who are not part of those formal structures. It is a challenge, to be both 'representative' or 'reflective' of structures and at the same time a vibrant space involving young people and women – particularly if there is little or no financial or in-kind support to help them.

Standing together to tackle prejudice and hatred

Dr Harriet Crabtree OBE, Executive Director, IFN

Dr Crabtree made the following points:

- This week is National Hate Crime Awareness Week. It is a Week that has been running since 2012. It is a sad situation that such a Week is needed. It is sad, too, that Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth, Minister for Faith and Under Secretary of State, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) needs to lead a debate today in the House of Lords on religious intolerance and prejudice, and that the Government is needing to publish a

‘refreshed’ version of the Government’s Hate Crime Action Plan.

- There has been a growth in hate crime and hate incidents in recent years with spikes at particular times such as after terrorist attacks and after such events as the vote on membership of the EU.
- For many people – especially for those who are in some way visibly different from what is perceived as the ‘norm’ – this has become a daily threat and anxiety.
- Antisemitic attacks remain at a high level. The Community Security Trust is a body within the Jewish community that deals with the safety of that community and works with other communities to learn and share expertise. Its report on Antisemitic incidents from January to June 2018 reported a small fall in the number of incidents compared with the same period in 2017, but noted that it was still the second highest ever-recorded in a 6 month period.
- Tell MAMA is a project that enables reporting and analysis of anti-Muslim incidents. Its 2017 annual report, published in July, reported the highest number of anti-Muslim incidents since it began in 2012. The anonymous ‘Punish a Muslim’ letters, for which a man has now been successfully prosecuted, are a high profile example but there are examples day on day. For instance, there was a news story recently on the BBC of a Muslim woman at a demonstration in Newcastle protesting against women’s lack of safety on public transport. Public transport can pose a daily problem for people who are visibly from minority faith communities.
- It is not just Jews and Muslims who suffer. Crimes linked to religious identity, or perceived religious identity, affect other communities. For example, Buddhists, Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, ethnic minority Christians and others also find themselves targeted. Turban-wearing Sikhs are sometimes perceived to be Muslims and attacked on that basis.
- Incidents can take many different forms, from verbal abuse in the street to physical attacks on people or on places of worship such as recently on a gurdwara and mosque in Leeds and a synagogue in Exeter. Similar issues are found in other nations of the UK, as reflected in the attack on a gurdwara in Edinburgh.
- Online abuse is a serious problem. Comments written online, for instance at the end of news articles or below YouTube videos are often appalling.
- Local inter faith organisations and local faith groups can, and do, play a tremendously important role in responding to hate incidents – as they do to terrorist attacks. In all the areas just mentioned, faith communities pulled together to respond. Similarly in Manchester after the Arena attack and in London after the Finsbury Park attack.
- Last year, IFN produced a new expanded edition of *Looking After One Another: The Safety and Security of our Faith Communities*. This was produced with the input of IFN’s member bodies and in partnership with the Crown Prosecution Service, Home Office, MHCLG, National Police Chiefs’ Council and National Fire Chiefs Council. This document is about how people pull together locally to help prevent hate and to deal with it, working alongside the police and other bodies. It underlines the great importance not just of reporting and responding to hate crime but also working to create the networks that can enable quick and strong response and to educate to open people’s minds and counteract prejudice. One of its key points is “Don’t wait for hate”.

- In thinking about your programmes of work for next year, and your possible speakers or partners, you may already have work of this kind factored in. If not, you may wish to consider it.
- As mentioned earlier, the Government is publishing a refreshed version of its Hate Crime Action Plan.
- Prior to leading a debate in the House of Lords today, Lord Bourne wrote in an article in *The House* yesterday. In it he said, “Alongside my fellow peers, I will seek to reassure those religious communities that feel vulnerable or under threat that they are valued and a central part of our national life and that Britain would be much diminished without their contribution. I will reaffirm that this government is unequivocal: there can never be an excuse for hatred towards any religious community. Wherever we find it, we will oppose it and challenge it.”
- Lord Bourne’s position relates to England, but there is an equally strong position being taken within Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.
- The Government’s stand is to be welcomed where it is comprehensive and effective, but very important also is the work of local faith groups and inter faith organisations and all those who work to educate against prejudice.

The following questions and comments were raised. Dr Crabtree’s responses are in italics.

- Legislation to protect people, particularly smaller groups, is important. However, faith communities have resources beyond that. If you respond to hate with repression it does not go away. *Some issues have to be dealt with through the law. It is necessary to be able to prosecute people who commit hate*

crimes, such as smashing bottles over the heads of people they do not believe to properly British, or setting fire to synagogues or gurdwaras. In Guisborough there has been a case of two women who tortured a man for becoming a Muslim convert. In such cases legal response is needed. However, local inter faith organisations and others have a key role to play in providing and supporting religious literacy education. This can be by contributing to the local Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education or inviting speakers to give presentations on faiths. Everyone needs to find the opportunities to teach and to reach out.

- I was in the police for 28 years and once had responsibility across the nation for incidents and crimes of prejudice. Do you not think that the word ‘hate’ has set the bar too high? Most incidents are based on ignorance and prejudice, but hate has now become the language used. If a child in a school says that they don’t like gay people then that becomes a hate crime. It is better to use terminology that de-escalates any situation rather than makes it worse by introducing the language of hate. *This session on the Programme is related to the rise in reporting of hate crime and incidents and that is the reason the language of hate is used. It is indeed not helpful if people jump in and assume in all cases that a person’s motivation is hateful. Disruptive or damaging actions can also be rooted in ignorance and a lack of knowledge of another person’s context. That is true for both religion and non-religious belief. Local inter faith organisations and faith groups have an important role to play in getting across what it means to live, practise and believe as a member of a particular faith.*

Standing together to tackle prejudice and hatred

Mufti Helal Mahmood MBE,
Oldham Interfaith Forum

Mufti Mahmood offered the following points:

- People often frown upon Oldham and make you feel as if you come from a place or an area which is worthless. Being born in Oldham, I am very proud of Oldham as it is a very special place.
- By profession I am a mufti, a religious minister, and also the equivalent to a Christian canon lawyer, dealing with Islamic Shariah law, with a particular focus on Islamic jurisprudence.
- In November 2001, after the 9/11 attack on the twin towers, I flew to Texas in America. My seat was at the back of the plane and so I had to walk the full aisle to reach it. As I walked down the aisle, it seemed as though the other passengers all lowered whatever they were reading and looked at me. I spent the first part of the flight speaking to the lady I was sitting next to, a doctor from India. Halfway through the flight she collapsed. Instead of the other passengers looking at the lady, they all looked at me as if to say 'what have you done to her?'. At the time I was young and didn't understand. When I came back I decided I wanted to make a change.
- The use of language is very important. It is not all about hate – it's often about ignorance. Not everyone on that plane was racist, nor did they hate me. There was, however, a lot of ignorance. That is when I became involved with the Oldham Interfaith Forum. This was an opportunity to be sincere about one's faith and to



Mufti Helal Mahmood

engage with people from other faith backgrounds. The common goal is to make a better humanity.

- One of the reports that was written after the Oldham riots said that a lack of inter faith work was one of the problems in the area. However, intra faith work is also very important. Often people who go to a certain mosque don't integrate with people who go to another mosque.
- In order for any local inter faith organisation to work, it needs to have good buy-in from the local authority, social services, the police and emergency services. It is very good that whenever anything major is planned, such as a drug raid, or a planned council event, they phone Oldham Interfaith Forum to consult them.
- Oldham Council has taken charge of the Linking Project there. The Council contacts Oldham Interfaith Forum to deliver the sessions in schools but when they arrive the teachers and students are all prepared and ready for them. We don't show PowerPoint presentations, rather the Revd Howard Sutcliffe and I just sit together and answer questions about Christianity and Islam. Very good discussions take place. Difficult questions are welcomed. It is very good to find out

what people think of your community. It is through such sessions that ignorance is broken down and people realise they have so much in common.

- When the Paris attacks took place there was a lot of support for the Muslim community in Oldham.
- It is time for people to come out of their comfort zones, face up to the realities and talk to one another from the bottom of their hearts.
- In order for inter faith activity to work, there is a need to be sincere and to say what you mean.

Standing together to tackle prejudice and hatred

Es Rosen, Barnet Multi Faith Forum

Mr Rosen began his presentation with two quotes:

- Too often we give others the power of controlling our emotions. Replace fear, hate and anger with love and you will be free. – Pure Love Quotes
- By its very nature, hate destroys and tears down; by its very nature, Love creates and builds up. – Martin Luther King

He used a PowerPoint presentation, the slides from which are at the end of this note. He offered the following points:

- The London Borough of Barnet is the largest London borough by population, with 391,800 residents in 2017. It is expected to grow to 462,300 by 2032. It is also one of the most diverse communities in Britain in terms of different faith groups with significant populations. Christianity



Amria Khatun and Es Rosen

is the largest group (41.2% in the 2011 Census), followed by No Religion (16.2%), Judaism (15.2%), Islam (10.3%) and Hinduism (6.2%). At the time of the 2011 Census Barnet had the largest Jewish population in the country.

- White British is the largest ethnic group (40.7%), followed by Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) (39.1%), Other White (17.9%), Indian (7.6%), other Asian (7.46%) and Black African (5.79%).
- The BAME population is predicted to rise by 40,000 people by 2032, while the White British population is expected to decrease by 2,000. We know anecdotally that new BAME and other nationality communities coming to the borough organise themselves primarily through faith and voluntary sector groups.
- Though often considered to be a prosperous borough there are significant areas of high deprivation, especially where communities are transient and there are larger number of BAME families. There are increasing numbers of families who are 'working poor', that is in work but not earning enough to pay for essential bills and expenses, spend time with their children or access opportunities that may improve their situation.

- Barnet is experiencing significant and growing challenges: the Community Security Trust (CST) is reporting rising numbers of anti-Semitic attacks, growing numbers of Muslim women are being attacked and verbally assaulted in the streets which may be as a result of movements encouraging acts of hate, particularly since the Brexit decision, like ‘Punish a Muslim Day’ referenced by Tell MAMA, and migrants are feeling isolated and disempowered according to Metropolitan Police reports.
- A *Barnet Times* press report in February 2018 headlined that ‘Barnet Tops anti-Semitic hate crimes count’. It quoted CST which stated that in Barnet in 2017 there were 282 incidents, a rise from 2016’s figure of 265. Across the country there were 1,382 recorded anti-Semitic incidents in 2017 – the highest CST has ever recorded and a 3% increase on 2016’s figure of 1,346. Responding to the report, CST director David Delew said: “Hatred is rising and Jewish people are suffering as a result. This should concern everybody because it shows anger and division threaten all of society.” CST put the rises down to publicity following high-profile allegations of anti-Semitism within the Labour Party and general increases in hate crime. CST reported these factors may have caused higher levels of offending and encouraged more reporting from victims or witnesses of anti-Semitism. The most common type of incident in 2017 according to CST was verbal abuse in public. But incidents ranged from verbal assault in person or on social media to destruction of property and violent attacks.*
- On a Shabbat day in June 2015 a tiny group of Nazi supporters decided to target the Jewish community of Golders Green in Barnet, intending to spread fear and division by planning a march through the area. In response a Golders Green Together campaign initiative was launched by the London Jewish Forum and ‘HOPE not Hate’. Representatives of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the CST, the local Council and, of course, the BMFF came together. They were able to ensure that the police eventually acted to move the march to central London, where it quietly disappeared and the organisers were eventually successfully prosecuted.
- This response was a public statement that the BMFF condemns all acts and expressions of hate related rhetoric and violence which seeks to divide our faiths and our communities. Explicitly we condemn in the strongest terms the recent threats of violence and prejudice directed at British Muslims which undermine everything that it means to be British, and are totally abhorrent. These perverse actions, reinforce the need for all our different communities to come together and find practical ways of showing solidarity and support for one another. The BMFF will therefore continue in all its efforts to build bridges of trust and confidence based on greater understanding and knowledge of each other’s faiths, beliefs and customs and work together to engage in dialogue, events and actions which aims to promote social cohesion, oppose prejudice, injustice, and bigotry.*
- We also raised our voice in unity against those protesting of a new Islamic religious centre, known locally as the Golders Green Hippodrome. It was reported that almost 6,000 people had signed a petition against a formal planning consent. Petitioners claimed the new Islamic religious centre would cause “disruption”, citing traffic and pollution problems. The mosque’s leaders, who experts say have no connection to extremist organisations, extended their hand and opened their doors to the local community.*

- Let us reciprocate their offer of friendship. Let us share bread and build bridges that will stand us in good stead. Because from within this ugly angst we see a silver lining – the chance for faiths to come together and show the doubters what their forebears have known for thousands of years, but what today’s generation seems to have forgotten amid endless reports of terrorism. And we said enough with the protest. Let’s welcome this religious community to the area. To foster good inter-religious relations and promote community cohesion.*
- We, as members of BMFF, look forward to welcoming the clerics of Markaz El Tathgheef El Eslami, the new Islamic Centre at Golders Green Hippodrome, to its inter faith meetings. We unanimously deplored and condemned the hostile and, at times, racist response to the new Islamic Centre's opening. It is our firm conviction that those that attend the Centre are as entitled to suitable and sufficient facilities as are enjoyed by all other faiths in Barnet. Indeed, we are sure the new Islamic community will contribute, with us, to the neighbourhood's character, harmony and safety.*
- At all times of attacks on our way of life we come together to stand together.*
- Following the anonymous, iniquitous, cowardly and appalling letters and tweets published last spring by hate mongers targeting the Muslim community, including the Punish a Muslim Day correspondence, there were united condemnation statements issued and meetings held in the borough at which the BMFF were prominent.
- The BMFF participated during the Passover Festival in a local meeting at the Hendon Mosque where it linked the story of the Exodus from slavery in Egypt with its profound effect on Jewish ethical values with the universal fight for freedom from oppression and cruelty. BMFF reiterated why it is important to stand together with all who are attacked on grounds of the faith and beliefs. An attack on one faith is an attack on all faiths.
- The partnership that BMFF has formed with the statutory sector, in this case Barnet Council, has been reinforced by both signing a ‘Faith Covenant’; - a joint commitment between faith communities and local authorities to a set of principles that guide engagement. Through that arrangement BMFF is seen as the strategic voice of the faith sector in the borough.
- We have brought together the voluntary sector and parts of the business, educational and sporting sectors to search for strategic responses to all issues facing not just hate crime but all aspects of social understanding, cohesion and integration. BMFF has developed a social action strategy to support communities to organise and come together to challenge messages of hate and extremism, and to take action against oppressive, misogynist, racist and anti-British values.*
- Barnet Council passed a motion condemning hate crime and after this said: “After passing a motion by full council in July condemning hate crime, we want to work with our partners to make it easier for incidences to be reported.” It has now set up 7 hate crime reporting centres across Barnet.
- BMFF has real concern about the rise in anti-Semitic hate rhetoric within the Labour Party and the rise in Islamophobic language used by some in the Conservative party - especially the remarks of the former Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson regarding Muslim women wearing burkas. In a recent statement

BMFF said “The Faith communities of Barnet will stand united together to oppose all forms of racial or religious bigotry and maintain our determination to enhance social cohesion and integration. The Forum will continue to promote informed educational dialogue by demonstrating our shared values and mutual respect for all those of different faiths and beliefs.” When the Nazis first came for the Jews no one spoke out. We must speak up for one another.

- It is always worth remembering these quotes with which I began:
 - Too often we give others the power of controlling our emotions. Replace fear, hate and anger with love and you will be free. – Pure Love Quotes
 - By its very nature, hate destroys and tears down; by its very nature, Love

creates and builds up. – Martin Luther King

After Mr Rosen’s presentation, one participant said she had come across a lot of prejudice, for example on public transport against women wearing headscarves. The word ‘hate’ is a strong word that brings negativity. A lack of knowledge is the main problem. The media exacerbates the issue of ‘hate’. People can change their perceptions by gaining greater knowledge of the ‘other’.

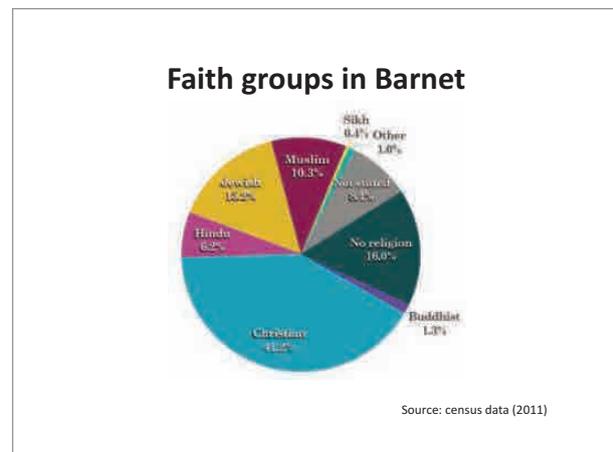
**Due to time pressure the marked passages were not included on the day.*



Too often we give others the power of controlling our emotions.
Replace fear, hate and anger with love and you will be free. – Love Quotes

By its very nature, hate destroys and tears down; by its very nature, Love creates and builds up. – Dr Martin Luther King

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@BMFForum



- ### Brief history of BMFF
- BMFF founded in 2002
 - ToR adopted in 2004
 - New constitution adopted 2014
 - formation of an Executive (to manage business, give direction and organise events)
 - new constitution in-line with the principles/ commitments of the Faith and Society’s template for a covenant
 - Faith Covenant with Barnet Council signed September 9th 2015

- ### BMFF & Faith Covenant
- Barnet Council formally/publicly recognises the Forum as a strategic partner
 - BMFF is the ‘Faith Voice’ and representative of faith organisations in the Borough.
 - The faith communities now have a ‘legitimate’ voice in the Borough,
 - BMFF can promote dialogue between different groups and operate as a strategic partner

What this means in practice..

- We promote the valuable contribution faith groups make to a peaceful, caring and inclusive society
- We are active members of the strategic Community Team and the Resilience Forum
- We attend / participate a variety of civic activities as partners – raising the profile of faith groups
- We are valued as a resource providing services on behalf of Barnet
- We have a development plan aimed at leading and supporting faith and social action projects.
- We celebrate our diversity

Just some of the events we have been doing in recent times

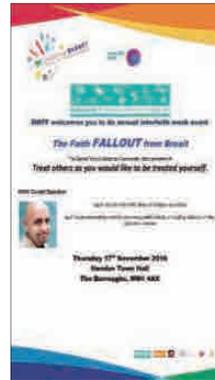


Maccabi GB's leap of faith

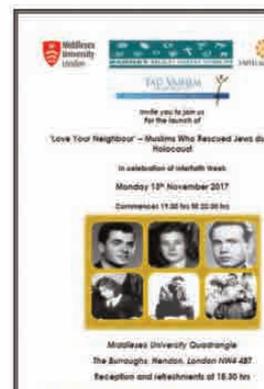
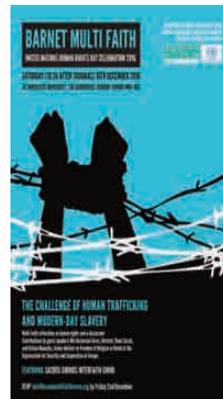
BY A REPORTER

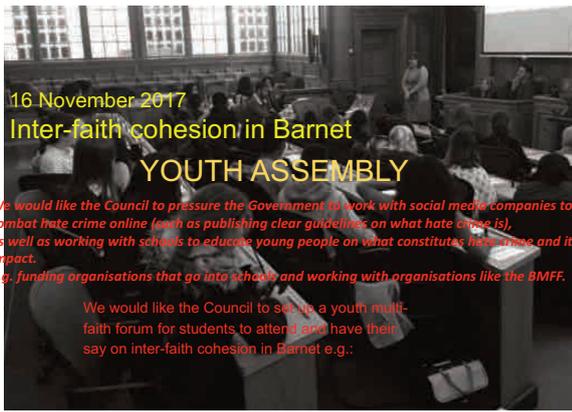
It was a hot day at Saracens Park in London as Maccabi GB's women's football team prepared for their first match against Saracens FC. The team, consisting of players from various backgrounds, were seen in their blue kits, ready for the challenge. The match was held at Saracens Park, a well-known football ground in London. The players were seen in action, running and passing the ball. The atmosphere was one of excitement and anticipation. The match was a significant event for the team, as it marked their first competitive game. The players were seen in their blue kits, and the crowd was cheering them on. The match was a success for the team, as they managed to score several goals. The players were seen in action, and the crowd was cheering them on. The match was a significant event for the team, as it marked their first competitive game. The players were seen in their blue kits, and the crowd was cheering them on.

YOUTH FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT LAUNCHES BARNET 'UNITY OF FAITHS' FESTIVAL



Dr Harriet Crabtree addresses The Barnet Multi Faith Forum. The work of local multi-faith groups like Barnet's is of enormous importance. It helps develop a deeper understanding and co-operation between people of many differing backgrounds and that is becoming more and more important in our increasingly diverse society.

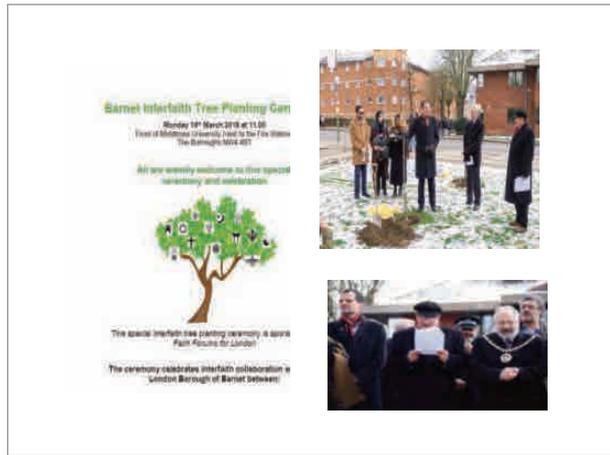




16 November 2017
Inter-faith cohesion in Barnet
YOUTH ASSEMBLY

We would like the Council to pressure the Government to work with social media companies to combat hate crime online (such as publishing clear guidelines on what hate crime is), as well as working with schools to educate young people on what constitutes hate crime and its impact.
 E.g. funding organisations that go into schools and working with organisations like the BMFF.

We would like the Council to set up a youth multi-faith forum for students to attend and have their say on inter-faith cohesion in Barnet e.g.:



Police investigating swastikas daubed at nature walk in Stanmore
 October 15, 2018, 11:16 am

Authorities alerted after Nazi symbols discovered by Israeli visitor while walking along a nature trail on Shabbat. They were daubed on posts signposting walkways along the popular Stanmore Common Nature Trail, reported to both the Metropolitan Police and the Community Security Trust (CST).
 "It's horrible to see this kind of thing in this day and age, but unfortunately it's something we're having to get used to," Mark Gardner, a director at the CST, said. "This was clearly a disgusting thing to find, especially in such an unexpected location."

"I will never forget that the only reason I'm standing here today is because somebody, somewhere stood up for me when it was risky. Stood up when it was hard. Stood up when it wasn't popular. And because that somebody stood up, a few more stood up. And then a few thousand stood up. And then a few million stood up. And standing up, with courage and clear purpose, they somehow managed to change the world."

Barak Obama

BARNET MULTI-FAITH FORUM

Celebrating Inter Faith Week 2018
 Marking diversity in prosperity with diversity

Faith Fair with Social Action Project
 Showcasing the impact of faith based social action in our community
 ALL WELCOME

Helping to make Barnet a better place to live, work, study, play and pray!

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 @BarnetMultiFaithForum
 @BMFForum

Discussion groups

Feedback from discussion groups

Full notes from Discussion Groups are included later in this report. Below are a few key points that were fed back to plenary.

1. Developing local inter faith organisation programmes with impact

Rapporteur: The Revd Gareth Jones (Sheffield Faith Leaders' Group, Sheffield Interfaith and CCJ Sheffield)

- The word 'impact' can have different meanings depending on the context. For example, someone from a faith community that is quite diverse may find it particularly important to have different groupings within each faith represented

at the table. Somebody else from a less diverse context might find that depth of engagement and relationships between the people taking part are more significant.

- Within any context it is very important to have mutual learning. There is a broad range of tools for people to draw on and it is important to make the most of that opportunity.

2: Engaging young people in local inter faith activity

Rapporteur: Ruth Richardson (Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby)

- Two quotes that summed up the group's discussion were: "Be an enquirer with a wandering mind" and "Some minds, my friend, you will never change."



The Revd Gareth Jones



Ruth Richardson

- The following are very important for youth engagement:
 - Social action, because young people want to make the world a better place;
 - Opportunities for developing skills and meeting new people, and, confidence building; and
 - Letting the process be fun.
- It is important to create opportunities for authentic dialogue.

3: Funding resources for local inter faith work

Rapporteur: Patricia Stoaat (Nottingham InterFaith Council)

- Whether an organisation is thinking about financial resources or people as resources, it has to be clear about why it wants them, what they are going to do and, above all, what difference it wants to make. Then the organisation can consider the practicalities.

4: Dialogue about challenging issues

Rapporteur: Hilary Hopwood (East Meets West Lancaster)

- It is better to talk about, rather than avoid, challenging issues.
- Two things need to be in place for this:
 - An environment of trust, which may take a long time to build up.
 - The presence of a facilitator who can model openness, honesty and compassion.

5: Twitter as a tool for local inter faith groups – a practical, hands on ‘how to’ session

Rapporteur: Jay Anderson (Leeds Faiths Forum and Concord Interfaith Fellowship)

- Tweeting can be very helpful.
- However, tweet with care!



Jay Anderson and Chan Parmar



Hilary Hopwood



Discussion group participants

6: Inter Faith Week and others special days/weeks as a platform for developing local inter faith

Rapporteur: Chan Parmar (Bolton Interfaith Council)

- Partnership working can be helpful.
- Sharing good practice is important.
- In addition to Inter Faith Week, other special days and weeks such as Holocaust Memorial Day, International Peace Day and World Interfaith Harmony Week provide good opportunities for bringing people together and creating unity in community.

Local inter faith activity and integration

Amria Khatun, Integration Strategy Lead for the Bradford area, Ministry of Communities, Housing and Local Government (MHCLG)

Amria Khatun used a PowerPoint presentation, the slides from which are at the end of this note.

After her presentation, the following questions and comments were raised. Ms Khatun's answers are in italics.

- Where are you based and when did your appointment come into effect?
I have a base in Leeds. I tend to spend a few days each week working with Bradford Council and then I spend some time in London and some time working from home. I have been in post since 15 May this year. Before that I worked for Bradford Council for 15 years and prior to that I worked in the voluntary sector in Bradford.
- The only direct funding available for faith practitioners at the moment seems to be through Near Neighbours. It would be good to know what is happening within the development of that funding programme to ensure that it is not primarily based on 'neighbourhoods' and becomes broader and addresses the difficulty of getting a local Anglican clergy person to act as a referee for other organisations. Are you able to input that to Government?
I don't have anything to do with the Near Neighbours programme myself but I can certainly feed that back.
- The Government's policy on integration is England focused, with some implications for devolved nations. There are only 5 Integration Areas: Bradford, Blackburn



Amria Khatun

with Darwen, Peterborough, Waltham Forest and Walsall. For groups that are not based in the Integration Areas the relevance of this is the wider points that have been made about the nature of the Integration Strategy. The frustration for many local inter faith organisations is that the Near Neighbours programme, led by the Church of England through the Church Urban Fund, is only available in certain areas and there are only 5 Integration Areas, which in some cases overlap. For those who are not part of any of these areas, it feels like they don't know quite where they are or where funding might be available. 10 years ago there was funding that was open to local inter faith organisations anywhere in the country.

The areas were chosen through an 'opt-in' process. All five areas have challenges and also have some experience and good practice to build on. In terms of funding, the Integrated Communities Innovation Fund, that opened in 2018, was available to all local inter faith organisations. It was obviously important to continue good work not just to begin new projects. In Bradford they have been identifying what

is already being done to address issues and needs and considering how this can be improved and scaled up. They have also been encouraging people to 'go where angels fear to tread' and to have mature conversations about difficult issues, such as residential segregation.

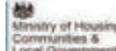
The Amal Foundation has funding available on a rolling basis to increase understanding between Muslim communities and other communities through the arts. The projects have to be in London, Birmingham and/or Bradford or in multiple locations around the UK. amal.org.uk/grants/overview/

The Government has announced that it will be setting up an organisation to distribute funds from Dormant Bank and Building Society Accounts across four years. www.gov.uk/government/news/government-unlocking-330-million-from-dormant-accounts-to-build-a-fairer-society In the meantime there is £1 million available in three areas through the Department for Culture Media and Sport. The funding, interestingly, includes infrastructure support, which can be very valuable to faith and inter faith organisations.



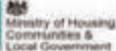

Faith in our Communities
The Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper

Interfaith Network
October 2018




The Green Paper

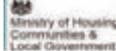
- Whole Government commitment to improve Integration outcomes for all
- Response to Casey but also other evidence e.g. Race disparity audit, Lammy, McGregor Smith.
- Consultation (March to June 18)
- An opportunity to grasp the nettle
- Addressing inequalities and cohesion




Drivers of poor integration

Factors linked to integration/ lack of integration

1. Level and pace of migration
2. School segregation
3. English language proficiency
4. Residential segregation
5. Under and un-employment
6. Personal, religious and cultural values and attitudes
7. Social mixing




Progress to date

- Area based programme established
- Innovation fund launched
- English language co-ordination fund launched
- English Language Fund launched
- Evaluation partners identified
- Joint Home office/MHCLG unit established looking at opportunities/experience on refugee and asylum seeker settlement
- Controlling Migration Fund launched
- COIN (Cohesion and Integration Network)

Does faith have a role in integration?

YES



The Challenge



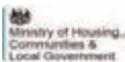
- Britain is a great place to live and is a well-integrated society on the whole. However, we cannot ignore the fact that in **too many parts of our country communities are divided**.
- Few opportunities for people to mix
- Mistrust and misunderstanding to grow,
- Increase in hate crime and division
- Greater disparity in socio-economic outcomes.



The Vision



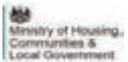
- We define integrated communities as communities where people - whatever their background - live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities.



Key proposals



- Establish a new Innovation Fund
- Develop an area based programme
- Strengthen Leadership
- Supporting the integration of migrants
- Education and young people
- Near Neighbours
- Hate Crime



- Boost English Language
- Residential segregation and building strong community spaces
- Increasing economic opportunity
- Rights and freedoms
- Evaluation to learn and share what works



Contact Details



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What does the future look like for local inter faith engagement?

Before inviting participants to discuss the future for local inter faith engagement, **Mr Birdi** noted that Mr Chan Parmar of Bolton Interfaith Council, would be retiring in January. Mr Parmar had made a considerable contribution to IFN's meetings across the years, often with young people from Bolton. **Dr Crabtree** said that he had given of his time and considerable expertise to IFN and had nurtured a whole generation of young people through the Bolton Interfaith Young Ambassadors Forum.

Thanks were given to Chan Parmar and the meeting showed its appreciation.

Mr Parmar said that inter faith work was very rewarding. He had begun at Bolton Interfaith Council in 2006 in a post that had had only one year's funding and had been there ever since. He had now reached retirement age and would be moving on. He had been privileged to work in inter faith relations, to see so much goodness and to work with so many supportive people. He felt very blessed and fortunate.

Mr Birdi invited participants to think about the main challenges and opportunities for the future and what these might mean for how people develop their local inter faith organisations' work? In discussion the following points were made:

- The one certainty about the future is that it will be uncertain!
- The Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby does a lot of work with marginalised communities, including the Roma community. Many Roma people come from Eastern European countries and the Centre supports them through a project that they established seven years

ago called Roma Community Care. In July the All Party Parliamentary Group for Gypsies, Travellers, Roma and Migration hosted a roundtable to discuss 'Brexit: the Impact on Roma communities in the UK'. The Roma community is the largest ethnic minority in Europe yet sadly has faced persecution and marginalisation throughout history and across Europe until today. The Roma community can present as complex and is by no means homogenous which can make providing support services a challenge. Unfortunately, many Roma living in the UK are living in areas of high deprivation. For anyone interested, there are organisations that help people with EU settlement applications.

- In Leicestershire there is a current conversation around Community Assets. It is important to remember that assets are not just financial, but include people, thoughts and ideas. The Council is sharing asset-based thinking and doing training for community groups so that they are better placed to develop their own activities and work in partnership with others.
- Partnership working is becoming much more important and many agencies are approaching inter faith groups for support.
- One of the considerations in Bolton to overcome funding difficulties is to have a funding base provided by faith communities, like a subscription. Has anyone else explored that and found it viable? It might not provide a lot of funding but it may help and also provide faith communities with a sense of common ownership.

Dr Crabtree offered the following reflections:

- Earlier in the day Bishop Toby Howarth set a broad picture of inter faith



Mohinder Singh Chana, Dr Harriet Crabtree and Balu Lad

engagement, drawing on his Bradford experience. Through the day there have been a number of presentations which have covered many aspects of group's vital work.

- No amount of time, however, can give the time to pick up everything that local inter faith organisations do.
- Local inter faith organisations work with good heart and great energy and commitment, often in contexts with slender resources. They make a big difference to their areas.
- There is often a programme of work but not necessarily a neat schedule, because opportunities, such as a way to work with young people, and challenges, such as the need to respond to an attack, present themselves and people aim to respond. Local inter faith engagement can therefore appear 'untidy' – but that is mainly because it responds to the untidiness of life!
- Most people involved in local inter faith organisations are volunteers.
- Volunteers give of their time and it is possible to do a lot with limited resources. Where there are demands on local inter faith organisations to carry out wide programmes of work, funding is likely to become necessary.
- There has been a focus today on learning, mutual respect, listening well and good dialogue, standing with and making

common cause. These are at the heart of community and are vital to our lives together in our shared society.

Closing words from the Chair

Jatinder Singh Birdi, Co-Chair, IFN

Mr Birdi said that it had been great to hear about all the good work that is being done. He said that:

- Local inter faith work does not make national headlines, and it usually gets limited local coverage. It is done because those involved are committed and believe it to be important work.
- We need to tackle the issues in society rather than hide away from them. It is important to raise awareness and to find solutions. People from different faiths coming together can help to find those solutions. Working with statutory agencies is also beneficial.

Mr Birdi thanked everyone for participating and for their contributions, including speakers, discussion group presenters, facilitators, notetakers and rapporteurs. He also thanked the staff at the Kala Sangam and IFN staff and volunteers.

He thanked all for their work and for sharing their experiences. This work is making a difference. It is making society better.

Discussion Group 1: Developing local inter faith organisation programmes with impact

This discussion group was facilitated by Dr Harriet Crabtree, Executive Director, IFN. It included an opening presentation from Philip Austin, Bolton Interfaith Council.

Background

- Bolton Interfaith Council (BIC) was set up informally initially during the late 1990s.
- I have been involved as a member of BIC for around 9 years. I came across it initially after the 9/11 attack and wanted to get involved because it seemed like a positive response to a worrying situation.
- The local authority has provided funding for a paid worker at BIC for a number of years. The local authority has also provided funding to the Bolton Council of Mosques, Bolton Christian Community Cohesion and Bolton Hindu Forum.
- The paid worker, Mr Chan Parmar, was full time and is currently half time. He is retiring at the end of January. It is not clear whether the local authority will continue to provide funding after December.
- Bolton has a population of around 250,000 people. The three largest faith communities are Christians, Hindus and Muslims. There are formal representatives of these on BIC but also a number of individuals involved.

Aims

- The Aims of BIC are: Advancing public knowledge and mutual understanding of

the teachings, traditions and practices of the different faith communities in the Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council area including an awareness both of their distinctive features and their common ground and to promote good relations between persons of different faiths.

Challenges

- It's important to respond to changes. Part of the challenge within Bolton is its changing community. Across the last 10 years a significant number of people from different parts of Africa and other parts of the world have come to Bolton. Some are asylum-seekers and some are refugees.
- Having a paid worker has enabled BIC to build relationships over time and commit to these. The challenge is to look at what we do with different styles of funding now.
- Another challenge is to broaden the involvement of women and young people which is very important.

Impact

- BIC held an away day for its members a few years ago to talk about strategic outcomes and to look at the impact of its work and how this could be improved. They focused on: greater capacity for working together; greater knowledge; more joined-up thinking; more meaningful relationships; and greater resilience to pressures within communities.
- A key part of BIC's work is the Faith Trail programme. BIC would very much like to continue this but funding is needed. About 4,500 people participated in Faith Trails last year so it has been successful in terms of numbers, but the long-term impact on, for example, schoolchildren, cannot easily be known.

- Some faith communities don't want their children visiting different places of worship, which can be a struggle. Adults and the wider community are part of the challenge. Secondary schools don't participate in faith trails as much as primary schools.
- For a number of years BIC organised the Spirit of Bolton festival in the town square each summer. This was a good celebration bringing together people from different communities, cultures and faiths. It had a good visual impact as a celebration of diversity.
- After the terrorist attack at the Manchester Arena BIC had a presence in the town square and this had been very positive.
- In the previous year, however, when BIC held a Refugee Week event in the town square, while I was reading a prayer linked to Srebrenica, I was heckled by people saying "What about us?". That reflects a changing context of people feeling excluded.
- BIC does not do a lot of long-term dialogue, though it has some open forum sessions. So, BIC's dialogue has breadth, rather than depth.

Questions and Answers

Answers in italics are from Mr Austin.

- Who puts the work together? A participant, attending on behalf of Warwick District Faiths Forum (WDFF), said that members of the Coventry and Warwickshire Safeguarding in Faith Forum (CWSFF), which includes members of WDFF, are professionals in their own field and therefore the work being done relies on a lot of goodwill. Capacity issues have also impacted on attendance of some faith group members and the
- How do you motivate local organisations to be more present? *Money from the local authority represents goodwill and support within civic structures and recognition of inter faith engagement in public life. Bolton CVS is a key partner in providing opportunities for inter faith engagement to be part of the wider voluntary and community sector. BIC has established itself and its work and other bodies are now content to engage with it.*

Inter Faith Network for the UK Day event for local inter faith practitioners 16 October 2018, Bradford

Discussion Group 1: Developing local inter faith organisation programmes with impact

1. Thinking about impact

- > What do we mean by 'impact'?
- > There are lots of good resources easily available on the internet.
- > It's important to think about this at the outset – and also how we will measure this; for examples see: <https://www.smallcharities.org.uk/resources-evaluation-impact/> and <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/practical-support/information/impact>

For successful planning, however, it is very important to be clear what our vision and goals are.

2. Our Vision and our goals

- > What are our founding objectives, our vision and our 'mission'?

Impact calls for regular review of our work.

3. Scoping and Planning

- > What may our vision and goals mean in our current operating environment?
- > Is it time to review what we are doing? What might be involved in that?
- > The importance of planning
- > Scoping - scanning the environment
- > What are local needs?
- > Who else is engaging with similar needs?
- > Considering partnership working on particular strands

The clearer we can be about these things, the more likely our organisation's work is to develop well and have impact.

At the same time, however, there is a need to avoid the pitfall of forever analysing and planning and not have enough time for the actual work!

4. Resources

- > Planning a programme with an eye to resources
- > Human resources
- > Financial and in-kind resources
- > Dangers of being 'funding driven'

Resources are vital to achieving our work – from a free room to funds for a project. Thinking about them creatively and carefully from the outset can help enable work with good impact.

forum is looking at how it can increase its membership.

Having a paid staff member is very helpful and BIC has real concerns about how its work can be done without this. It would be interesting to hear from other organisations who don't have a paid worker.

6. **Encourage young people to get involved in the design of programmes and organisation of activities where they are part of the target audience**
 'Co-design' or 'participatory design' workshops can be a helpful starting point, and many websites exist which explain how to organise these. This NCVO blog: <https://blogs.ncvo.org.uk/2017/03/02/co-design-ensuring-users-needs-are-at-the-heart-of-services/> is a good starting point.
7. **Consider whether your event will be clearly badged as 'inter faith' or not**
 Some activities can be designed to bring people of diverse backgrounds together in ways which encourage positive interaction, but where the main focus is something else (eg social action/ service, sport, music, crafts, a meal etc)
8. **If the focus is dialogue or discussion, it is important to create a 'safe space' where participants feel they can express their views without judgement or attack.**
 This does not mean sticking only to 'safe' issues where there is likely to be agreement. Through the focus group sessions IFN held as part of its programme *Connect: Inter Faith Engagement of Young People*, young people often said that they were most interested in 'big' social justice issues, and also identified issues such as sexuality and gender identity, extremism and radicalisation, free speech and hate etc as topics they wished to explore further.
9. **Are there ways to support or engage with the RE curriculum locally?**
 This might include providing speakers from different faiths/ beliefs, or helping to facilitate visits to places of worship or contact between RE teachers and faith communities. In some areas, local inter faith groups

Dr Crabtree circulated a handout, a copy of which is included in this note. The group worked through the handout and discussion points are included below under each heading.

Thinking about impact

- What do we mean by 'impact'? What are the quantifiers of our work? Some things can be quantified but it is not easy to measure the absence of discord.
- How can we capture impact? How does the world know about us? Telling our stories and looking outwards is important.
- Footfall is one measure of impact. Local inter faith groups are often fragile. It is easy to get inter faith enthusiasts involved but harder to link with local faith communities. In Sheffield more people often come to open day events run by local places of worship than to events run by local inter faith organisations.
- One way of looking at impact is to consider whether anybody would notice



Participants in discussion

if we weren't here. If they wouldn't notice then we're not having an impact.

- Relationships are also a good measure of impact. Small interpersonal relationships can have long term impact but are hard to judge.
- Visibility and reach of events on social media is another measure of impact.
- One way to show impact for North Kirklees Inter Faith Council is to demonstrate breadth of faith community membership, including within particular communities. Getting them together is a start of dialogue.
- It is important to maintain and grow participation in order to have impact. To do this there has to be unconditional positive regard so when people come we are looking at what they bring to the table at a human level, regardless of their religion.
- Impact is when people of all faiths and none want to come to joint events that are held for all.
- County Durham Faiths Network has no funding at all. It is a very small group but is quite diverse. In that context impact is about quality of relationships. County Durham is a huge rural county. There are no non-Christian places of worship in the County. The only formal prayer space available for Muslims is on the university campus. Durham's main problems in this context stem from Far Right groups.
- The Leicestershire Interfaith Forum has long-established good quality relationships. It is now looking to increase its impact by going beyond the relationship stage and inclining towards social action driven by Forum members.
- We need to consider who we are having an impact on. Young people? Disabled

people? Faith communities? Are our own communities following us? Does the general community support us? Does the local authority support us?

- We need to ensure that the combined nature of all our faith communities has an impact on local government practices in public life. We have to have a voice at the table representing multi faith organisations. Barnet Council has made sure that the Faith Covenant with the local authority is the word and Barnet Multi Faith Forum is the voice.
- Coming together because we have a common goal – that is an impact. The common goal of the women from East Meets West Lancaster is to help in providing food for asylum seekers and refugees.

Vision and goals

- Local inter faith organisations' activity can go through different phases and sometimes hit a lull. It is helpful for organisations to revisit their vision and goals periodically, perhaps every 2 to 3 years.

Scoping and planning

- It's important to look to see what other organisations are already doing. That will, of course, keep changing so it's good to check every couple of years. Local inter faith organisations are generally quite flexible and open to exploring which is helpful in terms of having common cause with people rather than just protecting turf.
- Scoping for each organisation will be different depending on each environment. It is amazing what local inter faith organisations do across the country. They all work differently.

- Oldham Inter Faith forum looked at its aims and objectives last year. They are quite broad so even after 15 years they still work. One of the results of looking at the aims and objectives was to create a women's group.
- BIC held a bigger AGM than usual this year in order to sound people out about its work, rather than just speaking about this within the committee.
- There are a number of inter faith groups in Leeds, each with slightly different roles. Leeds Faiths Forum needs to look at what they are each doing.
- North Kirklees Inter Faith Council had a meeting to review its constitution. It has decided what it wants to do so now it needs to do it. It welcomes support from the local authority but wishes to remain independent. It wants to link with people and bring people together.

Partnerships

- Partnership working with appropriate groups can be very important
- Oldham Inter Faith Forum has strong relationships with local statutory agencies. For example, the Police contacted them before a large drug raid recently. It's important to be valued by local agencies. If an organisation is receiving funding from a local authority, they need to see impact.
- CWSFF has decided to link in with the local Family Hubs, which support children and families. They are currently doing a mapping exercise with them. CWSFF members are looking at what places of worship in their own communities are doing to support children and families; and the Family Hubs are looking at links they have made. The mapping will highlight where there

are gaps and CWSFF will then be proactive in approaching those areas.

- A few years ago Keighley Interfaith Group tried to set up a programme with primary schools and were going to set up a chaplaincy in the local sixth form college. It fell through but they plan to try again.

Resources

- Local inter faith organisations are all resourced differently. Finances are important, but it's also important to think about people and gifts in-kind. [Note: A note of the discussion group that took place on funding is included in this report.]
- Near Neighbours has a small funding pot to give grants between £250 and £5,000 in some areas - Bradford, Keighley, Dewsbury, Batley and West Leeds. This could pay towards a worker to build up momentum, to go into places of worship to see who wants to get involved. Some people might not know about the inter faith work that's going on.

Organisational underpinnings

- Although not exciting, organisational underpinnings are very important. For instance, if you have very few staff, you only need one to be ill for the work to be disrupted.
- Local inter faith organisations are under constant pressure to do more. Organisational structures can help with this. It is easy for local inter faith organisations to feel overwhelmed. Take it at a reasonable pace.
- IFN meetings are very helpful and learning points can be taken back to local inter faith organisations from these. People often want a lot from Barnet Multi Faith Forum (BMFF). BMFF has done some restructuring to ensure that there

are enough people to respond. One of the ways they have done this is to have two co-chairs, rather than one chair, and to allocate different responsibilities to different committee members.

Communications

- Local inter faith organisations are so important but they are not always visible because the local press doesn't pick up the stories. It's important to tell our stories. Look at the skills available. For example, if you have powerful speakers in the group, use them. Or, if there are people who are good at social media, use them.
- Oldham Inter Faith Forum does a lot of good work, but its advertising is weak. Ideas are to get places of worship to announce events, to put up posters and to send information to the press.
- Photographs on social media are a brilliant way to send a positive message of people living together well and harmoniously. It sends a counter message to those who are trying to be negative.
- Social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, can be simple to use. [Note: A note of the discussion group that took place on social media is included in this report.]

Discussion Group 2: Engaging young people in local inter faith activity

This discussion group was facilitated by Mr Chan Parmar, Development Officer at the Bolton Interfaith Council which established and supports the Bolton Interfaith Youth Ambassadors Forum. It included an opening presentation by Ms Gabrielle Turner of the University of Sunderland, Sunderland Inter Faith Forum and the University of Sunderland Interfaith Chaplaincy Centre.

Mr Chan Parmar welcomed participants and explained that he has worked with the Bolton Interfaith Council and its Young Ambassadors for 10 to 15 years.

Ms Gabrielle Turner offered her presentation, a summary of which is below:

- I am involved with both the University of Sunderland Interfaith Chaplaincy Centre and the Sunderland Interfaith Forum. The Forum is co-chaired by two leaders, Reverend Chris Howson and Zaf Iqbal, creating events for the community such as family days, forging community togetherness where people feel safe.
- Around 70% of the students at the University of Sunderland are international students, which includes Canadians, Egyptian Christians, and Sikhs.
- I have always had an interest in faith and religions, which stemmed from my primary school days which allowed me to explore my own heritage.
- I attend a church where every Sunday there is a 'feast' service involving a get together where those from all walks of life come together. One of my friends once



Gabrielle Turner and Chan Parmar

said they thought church would be boring, however there are so many fun activities to get involved in throughout the Interfaith Chaplaincy Centre and you don't have to have a particular faith to attend, everyone is welcome.

- My local Sunderland Church and the University of Sunderland Interfaith Chaplaincy Centre is heavily engaged with the refugee community. The majority of their refugees are Iranian and Farsi speakers. I teach them English in a conversation class and that is really valued in the refugee community because many of them can have a sense of fear and anxiety when engaging with others.
- Reverend Chris Howson, the Chaplain at the University of Sunderland, introduced me to the language classes. I feel I can connect on some level because of my own personal experiences of upheaval.
- A key part of engaging with young people is about breaking barriers – including their

preconceptions, which might be putting them off. For example, providing them with lunch and organising fun activities which ensure the experience is not boring.

- It is also important to figure out what people are already doing and try to meet them there. For example, young people spend a lot of their free time watching movies and TV on Netflix. This could be utilised by running film or TV watching clubs which include a social and discussion element. A popular show at the moment is *The Good Place*, which includes within it some quite deep discussion of moral philosophical issues, and watching this could form the basis for an interesting activity.
- Media has a key part to play in how young people perceive religion – you do not have to be a practitioner of a particular faith to feel like you belong, including in inter faith activity.

In discussion after the presentation, the following points were made:

- The community in York is small and it is difficult to get young people involved. When we try to encourage the younger generation along, it is just young Christians who tend to come, via their churches. So there are not really opportunities for them to dialogue with young people of other faiths. The finances and resources of the York Interfaith Group are short to be able to run events and mix different faith communities together.
- It takes time and effort to get young people to a point where they understand different faiths and come together. It involves encouraging and enabling young people to take the responsibility. The Bolton Inter Faith Youth Ambassadors programme is an 'outside of the box' project involving public speaking and teaching. Parental support and backing are crucial to its success.
- Some minds you will never change – there will always be nay-sayers and people that are narrow-minded and do not want to accept people of other faiths and backgrounds.
- In Bolton, 4,771 people visited different places of worship last year and once they arrived at these different places of worship, they realised that there are common, shared values between different communities.
- One problem is that in some communities, women are not involved or allowed to be involved. If children witness their father is involved in faith but their mother is not, it is difficult for them to get involved in inter faith work.

Mr Ashley Beck, Inter Faith Development Officer, IFN, said that across the past year, IFN had been carrying out a programme called 'Connect: Inter faith engagement of

young people.' This had involved wide consultation, including a questionnaire to organisations and focus group sessions across the UK with young people of different faiths. A key output from the programme was a publication, *Connect: A Youth Inter Faith Action Guide*, [of which copies were provided in the session] which was available at www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/connect.

Another key output from the programme was a 'call to action' paper which was put to IFN's 2018 National Meeting. It contained ideas for engaging in inter faith activity with young people. One of the things that young people kept sharing as part of the focus group sessions was their interest in 'big' issues – they would like to change the world for the better, and are likely to be attracted to initiatives which demonstrate they can help to achieve this.

Ms Turner said that it is also important to get young people involved in planning and organising activities, not just in attending them – enabling and encouraging them to take responsibility. Part of this may involve building the skills and confidence of young people. It is important to ask young people what they want to do - and to give them choices about what activities or events they want to engage in. When I was a child, my mother gave me choices and I was never pressured into attending Sunday school.

The handout for this discussion group is at the end of this note.

**Inter Faith Network for the UK
Day event for local inter faith practitioners
16 October 2018, Bradford**

Discussion Group 2

Engaging with young people – some ideas for local inter faith groups

The ideas below draw on learning from IFN's recent programme *Connect: inter faith engagement of young people*. This programme included development of a new edition of *Connect: a youth inter faith action guide* and a Call to Action paper which was discussed at IFN's 2018 National Meeting. They are provided as a starting point for discussion and further development.

- 1. Identify the age range(s) you want to engage**
You may already have this in mind, or you may wish to begin by identifying what you hope to achieve before focusing on how engagement with different age groups might help you accomplish this.
- 2. Develop an active online presence – both website and social media**
Young people spend a significant amount of their time online, and look for information online. The internet can both enable young people to encounter and learn about those of faiths and beliefs different than their own and expose them to extreme or radicalising voices. It is important that those working to promote good relations and with experience in this area develop an online presence and share that experience and 'good news'. This helps increase the availability of positive stories about inter faith engagement and act as a counter-narrative to divisive material.
- 3. Carry out a mini audit of where young people are within your community**
This will likely include schools and might include colleges and universities, youth groups, uniformed youth organisations, places of worship, workplaces, sports clubs, online discussion groups, a local youth council etc.
- 4. Consider how you might find ways to engage young people in those places you have identified**
It can be challenging to encourage people into an entirely new environment, but easier to meet them where they are.
- 5. Are there ways to engage young people in activities you already organise, such as faith walks?**
This will vary depending on some of the factors considered above, such as age groups. Some activities might be adapted slightly and in different ways to be more attractive to parents with young children; school groups; youth groups or groups of older students.

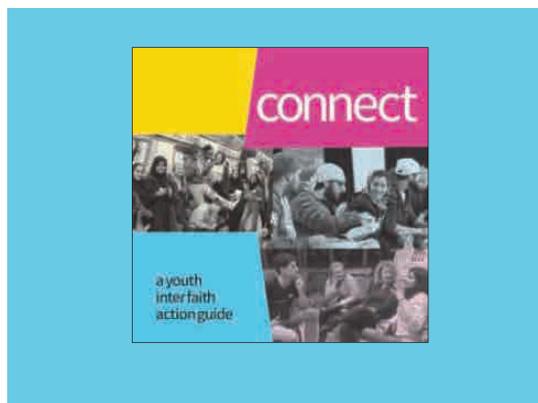
6. Encourage young people to get involved in the design of programmes and organisation of activities where they are part of the target audience
'Co-design' or 'participatory design' workshops can be a helpful starting point, and many websites exist which explain how to organise these. This NCVO blog: <https://blogs.ncvo.org.uk/2017/03/02/co-design-ensuring-users-needs-are-at-the-heart-of-services/> is a good starting point.

7. Consider whether your event will be clearly badged as 'inter faith' or not
Some activities can be designed to bring people of diverse backgrounds together in ways which encourage positive interaction, but where the main focus is something else (eg social action/ service, sport, music, crafts, a meal etc)

8. If the focus is dialogue or discussion, it is important to create a 'safe space' where participants feel they can express their views without judgement or attack.

This does not mean sticking only to 'safe' issues where there is likely to be agreement. Through the focus group sessions IFN held as part of its programme *Connect: Inter Faith Engagement of Young People*, young people often said that they were most interested in 'big' social justice issues, and also identified issues such as sexuality and gender identity, extremism and radicalisation, free speech and hate etc as topics they wished to explore further.

9. Are there ways to support or engage with the RE curriculum locally?
This might include providing speakers from different faiths/ beliefs, or helping to facilitate visits to places of worship or contact between RE teachers and faith communities. In some areas, local inter faith groups



- 1. Identify the age range(s) you want to engage**
- 2. Develop an active online presence – both website and social media**
- 3. Carry out a mini audit of where young people are within your community**
- 4. Consider how you might find ways to engage young people in those places you have identified**

- 5. Are there ways to engage young people in activities you already organise, such as faith walks?**
- 6. Encourage young people to get involved in the design of programmes and organisation of activities where they are part of the target audience**
- 7. Consider whether your event will be clearly badged as 'inter faith' or not**

- 8. If the focus is dialogue or discussion, it is important to create a 'safe space' where participants feel they can express their views without judgement or attack.**
- 9. Are there ways to support or engage with the RE curriculum locally?**



Discussion Group 3: Funding and resources for local inter faith work

This discussion group was led by Mr David Hampshire, Assistant Director, IFN. It looked at different kinds of resources and approaches to increasing funding and resources in a carefully targeted way.

The group worked through a handout, which included the questions and points below.

1. Introduction

Some key questions:

- What do we want to achieve?
- Why?
 - What difference do we want to make?
- What sort of resourcing do we think we need?
 - Have we done an analysis of need?
- What is our time scale?
 - Is this a short term project?
- Sustainability:
 - Is it a short term project or a longer term one that needs pump-priming but will become self-sustaining?
- What sorts of resources may be available?

2. Resources

Different types of resources

- a) Human resources
- b) Financial resources
- c) In-kind resources

3. Project planning

Five stages of project planning:

- a) Identification of need
- b) Assessment of need
- c) Project research and development
- d) Project implementation
- e) Project monitoring, evaluation and succession

4. Thinking about the project plan and the resources needed for each stage

Key question: what kind of resourcing does each of the five stages need?

Remember, not all stages need the same type of resourcing or time.

Two examples of reports on faith based projects and their impacts are:

- Faithfully meeting local need: Exploring partnerships, policy and faith in English faith-based organisations delivering services to the community (www.oasiscollege.org/sites/default/files/files/FMLN_WEB.pdf)
- Public Faith and Finance: Faith responses to the financial crisis (www.publicspirit.org.uk/assets/PubFaithFin-Report-Final.pdf)

5. Two key elements

- a) It is crucial to define the problem being addressed in a way that makes the target audience – whether volunteer, funder, sponsor or donor – feel motivated to want to do something about it.
- b) It is also vital to know and be able to explain what difference the project will make – and how it will be clear whether that is being/has been achieved.

6. Funding our local inter faith work

There are different kinds of funding, some may be more and some may be less appropriate. To be eligible for most types of funding a local inter faith body will need to have basic financial mechanisms: a treasurer, a bank account etc. Financial accountability is important regardless of the origin of the funds.

So the following considerations are important:

- a) If we were given funds do we have everything in place to receive money, use it and account for it, including any required auditing?
- b) Have we calculated the cost of doing that and included it in our bid?

7. Identifying funders

There are a number of online tools such as:

- a) The National Council for Voluntary Organisation's (NCVO) Funding Central, which is free to all charities/groups with a turnover of less than £100,000:
www.fundingcentral.org.uk/default.asp?ncvo-practical-support
- b) The Directory of Social Change (DSC), which does have a subscription cost:
www.dsc.org.uk/funding-websites. Their main fundraising tool is called Funds Online and can be found at:
fundsonline.org.uk

The DSC also produces books with details of funders, which may be available through the local public library.

You can also explore whether there is central or local government grant funding available. The government has a page on applying for community projects: www.gov.uk/apply-funding-community-project

IFN's e-bulletin includes some funding source information. You can subscribe to

it or download it from IFN's website: www.interfaith.org.uk/news/ifn-e-bulletin.

8. Tips on funding applications:

NCVO gives six practical tips on funding applications:

- a) Keep it short and simple
- b) Make it clear and logical
- c) Keep cross references to a minimum
- d) Improve visual appearance by using shorter paragraphs, headings and sub heads and tables
- e) Write for the readers
- f) Tell a story or illustrate a journey

9. Strengthening your application:

- a) Show user involvement:
 - 'don't do things to people' because nothing really changes if you do, ensure that you involve the people your application is meant to benefit
 - 'Involvement' includes involving users in the planning stage

10. Conclusion

- a) Be clear about your aspirations and your needs
- b) Identify the sorts of resources needed and remember that human and in kind resources are important as well as financial ones
- c) Be clear about the change you want to make, basing it on evidence of need and showing how change will be evidenced
- d) Ensure prospective funders will know and understand what difference their contribution will make
- e) Never forget the importance of the work that you are doing!

Discussion Group 4: Dialogue and challenging issues

This discussion group was facilitated by Dr Harriet Crabtree, Executive Director, IFN. It included an opening presentation from Ms Kaneez Khan, Near Neighbours.

Dr Harriet Crabtree welcomed participants.

Ms Kaneez Khan began by showing a short film about the Real People Honest Talk programme. This can be found at www.near-neighbours.org.uk/real-people-honest-talk/. A summary of the points made in her presentation is below.

Real People Honest Talk

- Real People Honest Talk (RPHT) is a programme run by Near Neighbours.
- It was piloted in the Black Country and Luton last year and is now being run in Blackburn and Bradford. I am responsible for delivering the programme in Bradford.
- I am running four of the programmes. Two have already taken place and two will take place in November.
- Near Neighbours provides the venue and refreshments for each programme and also provides a facilitator.
- For each programme there are three sessions of 1.5 to 2 hours. The first session enables people to get to know one another and to open up issues; the second enables deeper discussion of issues; and the third is for creating an action plan for what might be done to address the issues.
- Once all four programmes have taken place they are going to hold a Big Conversation in January at Bradford City Hall. The participants from all the programmes will be invited, together with the local authority.
- The facilitation was vital.
- In the programme in Keighley the first issue that came up was 'grooming'.
- Among other issues that came up were crime, asylum seekers and refugees, domestic violence and drug abuse.
- Everyone came in with their personal 'baggage'. Once people started talking that all went away. Regardless of their different backgrounds and experiences, people showed empathy and sympathy and felt safe enough to share their fears.
- Near Neighbours had a duty of care to these people. After the sessions in Keighley Near Neighbours was asked to take further some of the issues and I will do that by writing to the local MP and project leads. The Big Conversation in January will also be a way to take it further and to share people's stories and views.
- It was brilliant how everyone came together and how people changed their views during the sessions.
- Each person was given a chance to ask a hard question. People listened to the questions and answers. There were not many moments of tension.
- It was very important to create a safe space.
- Participants were invited to choose between gentle questions, such as litter issues, and tough questions, such as grooming – they wanted to talk about the tough ones. So they were mentally prepared to have the difficult conversations.

- It was an honour to be part of the participants' journeys.
- Many of the principles of active listening, building empathy and respect are the 'bread and butter' of inter faith engagement.
- Some of the main principles of RPHT are:
 - Getting a cross section of people
 - Having facilitation that enables structured conversations
 - Freedom from pressure/voluntary participation
 - Enabling different voices to be heard
 - Keeping it fair; keeping it real
 - Encouraging honesty
 - Allowing the 'unpalatable' to be said
 - Acknowledging different viewpoints
 - Enabling active listening
 - Relationality: building empathy and respect
 - Having conversation that is for a purpose
 - Enabling people to take responsibility
 - Engaging people in joint decision making
 - Looking for mutual gain

The following questions and comments were raised. Where answers are given in italics, these are from Ms Khan.

- You said that you had a duty of care to the participants. You said that issues have been raised about, for example, domestic

abuse. Have you involved the Police or are you just telling the local council and MP? *The Project Leads were already aware of some of the issues so they had carried out the appropriate processes with social services and the police. People were also given further information to take away from the event.*

Dr Crabtree noted that local inter faith organisations might have concerns about having a 'duty of care' or responsibility for any next steps of community development linked to dialogues held under their auspices.

- What is the position on privacy and confidentiality in terms of telling people's stories? It is important to be clear on this. *As long as you don't mention names, you can tell anonymised stories if it would help to educate others. You have to be careful*

**Inter Faith Network for the UK
Day event for local inter faith practitioners
16 October 2018, Bradford**

Discussion Group 4: Dialogue about challenging issues

The Inter Faith Network for the UK has produced a variety of resources that provide principles and pointers that direct readers to the basic ground rules of constructive dialogue. One of the earliest of these was IFN's code, *Building Good Relations with People of Different Faiths and Beliefs*, which can be found on our website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/building-good-relations-with-people-of-different-faiths-and-beliefs>.

Helpful considerations

A number of helpful considerations can be made when planning for dialogue on a potentially difficult issue.

1. Topics, participants and format

- > What is the topic of focus?
- > What are the desired outcomes?
- > Who might you involve?
- > Will there be a facilitator – and if so, who might be suitable?
- > Do certain areas need particular care in discussion? If so, how would these be addressed if they were to arise during the dialogue?
- > Is there a need to consult or involve a person or persons who have particular expertise that can be drawn upon in the course of the dialogue?
- > What advance preparation may be needed? For example, will there be useful materials for consultation during the dialogue (Contentious issues are usually complex and sensitive and time and resources are needed to enable participants to engage with historical analysis, issues of language, issues relating to inclusion and exclusion among other things)?

2. Thinking about time

- > How much time is likely to be needed in order to enter into fruitful dialogue? What is it possible to cover in the time available, and what might have to wait for another time?
- > If people do not know each other, will there be time for proper introductions?

3. Thinking about space

- > Is the venue likely to be acceptable to all involved?
- > Is there space for smaller groups to talk amongst themselves, or for participants to sit in a circle if wished?
- > Is there a place within the venue that someone could go to if they felt need for a timeout?

how you describe people so that they cannot be identified.

- Were the groups mixed or separate genders? Do men need to hear women's concerns?
The national targets require a certain number of women and young people to be involved. The group that met in Keighley was mixed. There were also two women-only groups. Some of the men have now asked for a group of their own.
- How did you get people involved and how many were there?
Some had heard about it on Twitter and asked to be involved. Others came from Near Neighbours projects that I already knew. Ideally we wanted a maximum of 24 in each group. Through word of mouth we ended up with 40 but we still managed.

- In Keighley a programme was run by The Revd Dr Jonathan Pritchard called 'Can I just say?' The focus was on talking about 'me' and 'I' and 'this is how I feel' rather than 'your community has done this to me'. It was important to speak from one's own experience rather than accusing others.
- In Sheffield there is a programme called 'Who is your neighbour?' which exists to facilitate difficult conversations. This always starts with unconditional positive regard. Sheffield Interfaith has also used this programme to facilitate some conversations.

Dr Crabtree said that sometimes there are difficult interactions even within local inter faith organisations themselves. This sometimes manifests itself if there are differences over, for example, whether a statement should be made in regard to overseas events, or over particular questions, such as whether conversion is acceptable. As well as issues between faith communities there can be intra faith issues, for example a group defining itself as part of a faith community and that definition being contested by the faith community. Because of these difficulties people perhaps understandably focus on the positive ideas they have in common and sometimes avoid discussing the difficult issues. The question is how to get past this and to engage on difficult issues but without the group being split or falling apart. IFN's booklet, *Let's Talk: Practical pointers for inter faith dialogue*, has a section on 'difficult issues'. www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/lets-talk-practical-pointers-for-inter-faith-dialogue There is a big difference between planned discussions and a topic just coming up.

Dr Crabtree circulated a handout, a copy of which is included in this note. The following points were made in discussion:

4. Other considerations

- Does the dialogue contain an expectation of confidentiality?
- Will the dialogue be subject to the Chatham House Rule, where participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed?
- Will a statement or report be produced at the end – if so, how will it be agreed and cleared?
- If the dialogue was to break down, or there were acrimonious exchanges, what plans are in place to end the dialogue and recover the good relations that might be affected?

The Dialogue Itself

Before the dialogue begins reaffirm that the dialogue is for mutual learning and to enable people to develop their understanding of the viewpoints of others; that it will build on commonalities, but honour difference and thought through disagreement; and that all dialogue will be respectful and open. Ensure that all agree upon:

The principles upon which the dialogue is based

- The ground rules for all to follow
- The boundaries within which the dialogue will take place
- Whether people will speak formally in turn (at least initially) or whether there will be a more free style of conversation from the start (if this has not been agreed prior to the dialogue)?
- The confidentiality or otherwise of discussion; how it will be recorded and that no record of the discussion will be published until it has been agreed by all the participants (or those to whom the task of clearance is delegated)

During the dialogue:

- Avoid assumptions about what is important to others in the dialogue – what might seem a small matter to one person can be a very important to another
- Ensure that issues are considered equitably
- Start and continue from a position of principled and respectful openness to views of others and allow all to express their views

When the dialogue finishes

- If possible, draw out key areas of agreement and points where difference remains. Ensure that all participants are satisfied with the summary
- Make sure that all participants know what is going to happen next

Recognise that the process was about deepening understanding and helping to build better relationships between participants. Seek to ensure that participants leave on good terms.

How difficult issues arise

- Everybody is wrestling with the same questions. Sometimes difficult issues arise by accident. Sometimes conversations around difficult issues are planned. It's important to consider when difficult conversations might arise or be triggered. Local groups become aware of issues in their areas and then consider how to address them.
- Starting a conversation in the first place can be very difficult and it can also be difficult to turn it into a genuine dialogue. Sometimes dialogue can develop without having a particular start or end point.
- An example was given of how at a Christmas celebration at a drop-in centre, the persecution of Christians in Egypt came up. Someone was translating from Arabic to English and it got quite difficult, especially with the language problem.
- A lot of the problem in Keighley is the clash of cultures and a lack of religious literacy. Many people don't want to mix and there is tension. There are many Christian asylum seekers.
- In Lancashire it is difficult to bring people together who are not the usual people who show up for inter faith events. Even then there is a tendency to avoid discussing difficult issues. Prejudice can start at an early age and is picked up from parents. I was teaching a class of thirty 8 year olds about the Muslims who died in the Srebrenica genocide when one child suddenly stood up and celebrated the fact that these had died. There are always tensions about the situation in the Middle East. We are trying to get the local authority involved in religious literacy and Faith Covenants with limited success. They sign the paperwork but actual actions are far away.

How difficult issues are addressed

- How might difficult issues best be addressed - in small dialogue groups, in friendship groups, or in larger conferences?
- Small, carefully contained conversations can work well. With bigger ones it is important that trust has been built in advance
- The skills of facilitators are very important. For example they can help make and hold the space for difficult conversations and, help people not to lose face and get the conversation back on track if it goes off it.
- How we define the question asked matters.
- At what point does the conversation rise above individual conversations and get addressed as a real issue to address?
- It is a judgement call on whether to carry on conversation in a room or to carry it on later.
- The number of people involved affects how an issue is addressed.
- General faith community relations is a very different matter to having a group of willing participants.
- It is good to allow people to say why they have their views.
- In Batley during Inter Faith Week Near Neighbours are holding an event with the council, a local church, a local mosque and schools. The schools have been carefully chosen and the children will be coming with their parents. The participants will be mixed up on different tables and there will be fun activities for Year 5 and Year 6 pupils. It is important that the parents are involved because

- some of the parents are stopping their children going to other places of worship.
- When the English Defence League (EDL) demonstrated in York the local imam invited them in for tea. This may have been in part because he had been involved in York Interfaith previously. There was not a discussion about difficult issues, but it created a climate to enable the imam and other supporters to go out and engage with the EDL. Creating a positive inter faith climate is part of what local inter faith organisations help do.
- There is a need to create the right culture of trust and environment before talking.
- It is important to model honesty, openness and compassion.
- Listen properly, speak courteously and describe people with respect.
- The principle of starting from 'I' rather than an accusing 'you' is important.
- The following three questions might be helpful to consider:
 1. Is a dialogue needed or is there a different approach?
 2. Is there a difficult issue that we may be running away from and, if so, is there a way we can discuss that?
 3. Are there ways that as a local inter faith body we can, either in partnership or alone, enable particular dialogues to happen?

Environment

- Difficult conversations can only happen in an environment that has been created through trust and confidence. Difficult topics should not be considered unless an appropriate environment has been created.
- Teaching and training are different. It is possible to create the right space and atmosphere for conversations by being completely open, honest and authentic. It is best to model good practice, not just encourage it.
- Training yourself to listen is tough and it's important to work at it. Has IFN thought about running sessions to train facilitators?
- A number of IFN's member bodies offer this training, such as the St Ethelburga's Centre for Peace and Reconciliation. IFN tries to highlight the work of its member bodies rather than to duplicate them.

Dr Crabtree said that it had only been possible to scratch the surface of issues during this discussion group. However, a number of useful points had been raised.

- It's better to talk than not to avoid difficult issues.

Discussion Group 5: Twitter as a tool for local inter faith groups

This discussion group was facilitated by Ms Patricia Stoa, Nottingham Inter Faith Council, IFN Trustee and regular tweeter. The opening presentation was by Mr Ashley Beck, Inter Faith Development Officer, IFN.

Ms Patricia Stoa welcomed participants. **Mr Ashley Beck** did a walk-through demonstration of registration, navigation and particular features of Twitter, including setting up a profile, following, 'liking', re-tweeting, posting threads and using 'lists'. This was done mainly in real time on Twitter using a projector. Some slides were

also used, including to demonstrate some aspects of using the Android app, and these are included in this report.

Mr Beck also made the following more general points:

- For an organisation, it makes sense to customise your account by putting your logo as your profile image.
- For larger organisations, there are paid-for tools that enable one of your team members to submit tweets without them being published so that they can be approved or moderated first by another team member. This can be helpful where multiple people need to be able to draft content, but one person retains ultimate responsibility. Smaller organisations usually simply delegate management of social media accounts to one person and agree parameters/ policies about what can be posted.

- IFN had communications and statement making policies long before social media – these are kept up-to-date to include new forms of communication technology, but the principles are very similar.
- One of the challenges with the online world is that you cannot always be sure if the person who is posting is definitely who they say they are. For some users who are either public figures or established organisations, Twitter issues a ‘verified’ badge, a blue tick. This can be helpful if you are trying to work out whether a person or organisation is who they say they are, although not all bona fide organisations (including IFN) have this badge.
- Twitter has limited usefulness for discussions or dialogues, but its format and user base does mean that you can use it to challenge negative narratives by telling a powerful story about, for

example, a positive inter faith experience. That can help alter the overall balance of the discourse toward the positive.

- Even sharing photos of, for example, an imam and rabbi together or leaders from other faiths can challenge a narrative around different religions being unable to mix or work in harmony with each other. Sharing these things helps people to think of positive inter faith engagement as the norm, rather than an exception.
- During Inter Faith Week 2017, there were only around 6000 tweets that mentioned ‘Inter Faith Week’ but between them they reached 13 million users with 20 million impressions. That is fairly remarkable, and a wider potential reach than all of the UK’s daily newspapers combined.

The following points were made in discussion. Responses in italics are from Ashley Beck except where attributed:

General usefulness as a communications tool

- Twitter enables you to communicate with other groups and to promote events.
- Twitter can act as a reminder for meetings and is a useful way of getting updates on what is going on with people.
- It is possible to use a series of linked tweets to tell a story. You can then see these by using the ‘show thread’ link. This can be helpful for sharing a longer message.

Importance of having guidelines for social media use

- It can be helpful for organisations to have a policy on what social media managers should and should not post.
- It is important to differentiate between personal, work and other accounts and

keep the 'voice' distinct for each.

A social media policy should provide guidelines to help ensure the personal opinions of staff, trustees, members and volunteers and not confused with the 'voice' of the organisation.

Twitter processes

- You can have a 'private' account for personal use, where only other users whom you approve can see your posts.
- People and organisations will not trust you if you act poorly on Twitter. It is important to engage in ways which are consistent with your values.
- What is the difference between Facebook and Twitter?

Twitter is short, to the point and immediate – you can easily find posts that are of interest to you and quickly get news out. Facebook is more about connecting with people and organisations you already have a connection with. [Ms Stoa]

- You can find content on Twitter using keywords and hashtags, which function as clickable links. These will show you all the tweets mentioning that hashtag. You can link your tweets to the tweets of other people – it enables people to quickly find things on that topic. Hashtags also allow you to follow news; it is like organising a category as they group the relevant tweets together. To use hashtags, you simply type them in – there is no special coding involved.

For example, people are tweeting from this meeting using the hashtag #IFNlocal – this enables others to find all the related tweets at once.

- You can also message people on Twitter. You can tweet at someone or an

organisation and that would be public or you 'direct message' which is private.

- Organisations can 'tag' your account in their posts, including photos. That means you see their post.
- It is possible to use a series of linked tweets to tell a story. You can then see these by using the 'show thread' link. This can be helpful for sharing a longer message.

Positive and challenging aspects of Twitter

- There is a danger if we end up not communicating with people face-to-face and over the telephone as a result of over use of social media.

It is important to ensure that social media is used as part of a considered approach to communications, rather than as the only method. It should not be seen as a replacement to things like email, newsletters and meetings unless all of those with whom you engage (and wish to engage) agree that this is the best way to communicate with them.

- There are important questions around how to use Twitter to build and strengthen relationships rather than to destroy them. President Trump's use of it is a good example of the latter.
- Things on social media can be taken out of context. There is also a lot of hate speech on Facebook. It can demonstrate the dark side of social media and how things you say can be twisted and misinterpreted.
- One person present had tried to challenge Britain First on Twitter; however all of their followers bombarded him with derogatory tweets.

Twitter



Using the Android app on your smartphone or tablet.



The basic 'home' screen, just like on a desktop version, allows you to see the most recent 'tweets' from accounts you follow.

To add a new tweet, click here

Posting 'tweets'. You only have 280 characters, including spaces!



Type your tweet in the box.

To 'tag' another user, begin with the '@' symbol and follow it with a username, eg '@ifweek' for Inter Faith Week

Adds a photo

Adds a poll question

Adds location

Press to add another tweet as part of a longer 'thread'

Indicates remaining characters (out of 280)

Adding a photo



You can tag other Twitter users in your photo by tapping here. This does **not** count toward your 280 characters!



Retweeting and liking



Reply

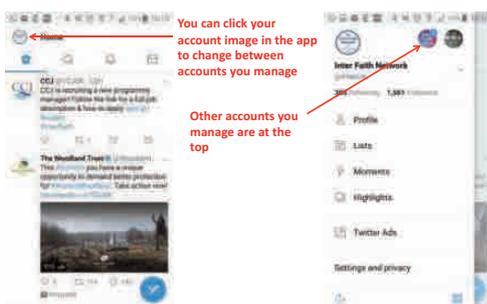
Retweet

Like

Retweeting



Managing multiple accounts from the app

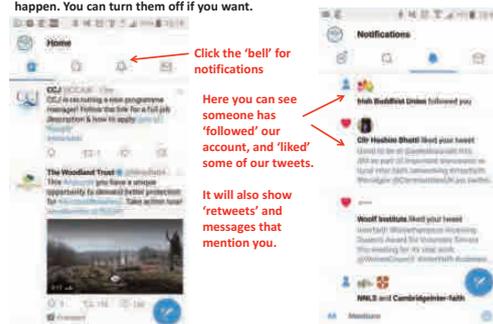


You can click your account image in the app to change between accounts you manage

Other accounts you manage are at the top

Checking notifications.

By default, the Android app will also send you 'push' notifications when things happen. You can turn them off if you want.



Click the 'bell' for notifications

Here you can see someone has 'followed' our account, and 'liked' some of our tweets.

It will also show 'retweets' and messages that mention you.

- Another person had come across a rude message by a young man on Twitter. She tried to challenge his views in a respectful way, and it turned into a respectful exchange where they agreed to disagree. She did this by direct messaging him privately and did not make it public through tweets, and found this created a context where people could engage in a calmer way without feeling they may lose face.
- It can be tempting to challenge offensive posts publicly, but this can be unwise, particularly if it leads to extended exchanges.

IFN does not usually engage publically with offensive posts – most of which are not about IFN. If someone were to complain about, for example, an experience at an IFN event, IFN would try to contact them by direct message or email to engage.

- Leeds Faiths Forum decided to use its social media to challenge the hateful ‘Punish a Muslim Day’ posts by establishing a ‘Love a Muslim Day’, where the community gathered together in support of Muslims. This was very positive.

Discussion Group 6: Inter Faith Week and other special days/ weeks as a platform for developing local inter faith work

This discussion group was facilitated by the Revd Mark Umpleby, North Kirklees Interfaith Council. It included opening presentations from Cynthia Dickinson, Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship and

Wakefield Interfaith Network and Daryoush Mazloum, York Interfaith.

The Revd Mark Umpleby welcomed participants and **Ms Cynthia Dickinson** offered her presentation, a summary of which is below:

Inter Faith Week in Leeds and Wakefield

- As a long established inter faith group with a regular programme of events, Leeds Concord didn’t at first get involved with first Inter Faith Week.
- In 2010, through connections with a museum curator, Concord was offered a space to organise a significant IFW activity in Leeds City Museum. We were invited to hold an exhibition highlighting nine faiths found in and around Leeds. The partnership was able to secure funding that enabled us to include Hindu Classical Dance workshops by South Asian Arts. Schools were invited to visit the exhibition, follow a faith trail quiz and try the classical dancing. The event was an overwhelming success so we decided to repeat it the following year. Unfortunately the second year had less funding and was not so successful. The Concord committee felt that it would be better to offer something different in years to come; an important learning experience.
- The relationship with the Museum proved beneficial for Concord’s Women Peace-ing Together, a multi-faith textile group, whose work was displayed in the museum’s community cabinet celebrating Concord’s 40th anniversary.
- The women’s group also contributed to other community displays in the city centre museum - poppies to commemorate the Battle of the Somme; forget-me-nots to raise awareness of



Cynthia Dickinson and Kaneez Khan



The Revd Mark Umpleby

dementia; and a peace banner for the centenary of the Armistice.

- In 2016 we also developed a relationship with the museum curator at Kirkstall Abbey who invited Concord to help organise an inter faith event, Light for Leeds. There have been two successful events with a third planned for this year to coincide with IFW and the Armistice centenary. Women Peac-ing Together has also contributed to an exhibition in Abbey House Museum during 2017, 'A Woman's Place' celebrating women's suffrage.
- In 2009 there wasn't an inter faith group in Wakefield so I looked at what other groups were doing in Yorkshire and went to Sheffield to observe their inter faith tree planting. This appealed to me as a Pagan and I already had connections in Wakefield that I could draw upon, particularly Tree Wardens. We developed an event for IFW 2010 with a tree planting to involve faith communities in the Wakefield area. My faith community allowed me the use of their bank account to apply for funds to buy a special tree. The presence of the Bishop of Pontefract raised the profile of the event which was attended by members of faith communities and civic

leaders. A giant sequoia was planted on a hill overlooking the city. A hall was booked and refreshments provided followed by readings and music to complete the afternoon.

- As a direct result of the event the Wakefield Interfaith Group was established at the request of the Bishop of Pontefract.
- Tree planting has continued to be a significant feature of the group's IFW, with an event every year since 2010 with the exception of 2014.
- Working with tree wardens and the countryside service we have established a grove of different oaks from around the world with the theme 'It's alright to be different'. The work has extended to schools visited by the tree warden to talk about the project. This has seen a greater involvement from local schools and, through the IFW website, from one school in Bradford.
- Good events are based on three pillars:
 1. good connections;
 2. good management; and
 3. good luck.

Mr Daryoush Mazloum then offered his presentation. A summary of points is below:

Inter Faith Week in York

- Inter faith dialogue in York began in the early 1970s when the Community Relations Council was set up in the wake of the arrival of a group of Ugandan Asians at the invitation of the then Archbishop of York.
- A significant point in our history was the International Year of Peace in 1985. Various interested voluntary groups formed a committee for planning relevant activities to mark the Year of Peace. They attracted the interest and cooperation of York Minster which allowed, for the first time in its history, to have an evening of multi-faith service of words and prayers from different faith traditions to be recited in the main hall which was filled to its maximum capacity. This relationship with the Minster has continued to flourish and it continues to have a key role in York Interfaith (YI) IFW programme.
- It was this strong and historic background that meant YI was ready to embrace IFW and making considerable effort, not only offering its own programme but also asking various faith groups and communities to include an event in our IFW programme, to be published and made open to public.
- Some years we have more events than others, but we try to ensure that within the programme all the mainstream faiths are participating. To do this we have a special planning meeting with our members followed by individual contacts to finalise the arrangements. We then arrange for programmes to be printed and distributed in hard copy and electronically.
- YI has continued to grow and now includes members who are Baha'is, Buddhists, Christian, Hindus, Humanists, Jews, Muslims and Sikhs. There is also an Agnostic involved and for a period of time there was a Pagan member. In creating our programme for IFW we use our established contacts within these faith communities, universities (one of which we assisted to form a faith advisors group attached to its chaplaincy), York Minster and the City of York Council and we draw upon resources we have within our membership.
- The work continues throughout IFW and a small band of our devoted members try to attend as many of the events as possible. Importantly, IFW acts as a focus and spring board for YI's annual programme of events.

In discussion after both presentations, the following points were made:

- The centenary of WW1 and Armistice 100 have provided a particular opportunity for inter faith work, commemoration and celebration. IFW starting on Remembrance Sunday is helpful to local groups wanting to engage. The Royal British Legion is doing a lot of work on the centenary and local inter faith groups can talk to local British Legion groups in their area.
- During IFW, and at other times, it is important to show people that members of different faith communities can be friends. In Batley an Anglican priest and an imam visit together and introduce each other, telling school pupils what the other person like. This shows that their relationship is not simply casual and it has proved to be an important witness to inter faith understanding.
- One participant reported that working with the local 6th Form College is proving to be significant. A programme of events



IFN staff David Hampshire and Jaffor Bhuiya

around tutorial time has proved very successful, enabling students to see the reality of faith in their locality. During the week there is an opportunity for students to see different faith communities working together.

- One group has been working with the local university. Initially few students engaged. The following year they worked with the university but, after consultation, moved the venue to a local wine bar and got an excellent response.
- In one area, there was a Big Iftar event, arranged with the Muslim communities, to remember the life, legacy and message of Jo Cox. The local Rugby Football club had been involved as well. Planning and flexibility are important - the Big Iftar event had catered for 200 and 1,000 turned up!
- One group had decided to have a specifically focussed AGM on the theme of women's inter faith engagement. There was an all-female panel for the event, along with a question time.
- Good connections and building relationships are important as this develops strong partnerships.
- Events are important but the work has to go beyond events.



Dara Lloyd and Sylvia Boyes



Jules Irengé

PROGRAMME FOR THE DAY

- 10.15am** **Registration and refreshments**
- 10.45am** **Chair's welcome, opening of the morning session**
- Jatinder Singh Birdi, Co-Chair Inter Faith Network for the UK (IFN)
- 10.55am** **Welcome to Bradford** from Mohinder Singh Chana, Chair, and Balu Lad, Vice-Chair, Bradford Concord Interfaith Society; and Denise Raby, Secretary, Keighley Interfaith Group.
- 11.00am** **The importance of local inter faith engagement in our diverse society – Bradford and beyond!**
- The Rt Revd Dr Toby Howarth, Bishop of Bradford** offers some opening reflections, rooted in the Bradford context and also drawing on his other experiences at both local and national level, about the importance of local inter faith engagement.
- Q and A**
- 11.20am** **Dialogue on the spot**
- A chance to talk with your neighbours
- 11.30am** **Standing together to tackle prejudice and hatred**
- 13-18 October is National Hate Crime Awareness Week. Through dialogue, educational programmes and acts of witness, local inter faith organisations play an important role in tackling prejudice and hatred.
- Dr Harriet Crabtree OBE, Executive Director, IFN explores some of the ways in which prejudiced and hateful speech and actions are affecting communities and individuals and why local inter faith response is so important.
- Q and A**
- Mufti Helal, Oldham Interfaith Forum, and Es Rosen, Barnet Multi Faith Forum, speak about this vital area of work from the perspectives of their respective Forums and areas.
- Q and A and discussion**

- 12.10pm** **Discussion Groups 1-3**
- 1) Developing local inter faith organisation programmes with impact
 - 2) Engaging young people in local inter faith activity
 - 3) Funding and resources for local inter faith work
- 1.15pm** **Lunch**
- A vegetarian lunch will be provided.
- Prayer room available
- 2.05pm** **Discussion Groups 4-6**
- 4) Dialogue about challenging issues
 - 5) Twitter as a tool for local inter faith groups – a practical hands on ‘how to’ session
 - 6) Inter Faith Week and other special days/weeks as a platform for developing local inter faith work
- 3.10pm** **Feedback of one key point from each discussion group**
- 3.20pm** **Local inter faith activity and integration**
- Amria Khatun, Integration Lead for the Bradford area, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, talks about the significance of local inter faith engagement in the Government’s developing integration strategy.
- Q and A and plenary discussion**
- 3.40pm** **What does the future look like for local inter faith engagement?**
- Discussion**
- What do we think may be the main challenges and opportunities? What might that mean for how we develop our organisations’ work?
- 3.55pm** **Closing reflections from the Chair**
- 4.00pm** **Close**

Support the Inter Faith Network's work to increase inter faith understanding and cooperation

The importance of your support

We need your help to ensure that the Inter Faith Network for the UK's work to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation continues and grows, helping people of all backgrounds to live and work together with mutual respect and shared commitment to the common good.

Please consider making a gift today to support the work of the Inter Faith Network. Gifts at all levels are much valued and make a real difference. You can donate on our website at www.interfaith.org.uk/donate or via PayPal or by sending a cheque to The Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH.

Thank You!

Remembering a family member or friend

From time to time we receive an 'in memoriam' gift after an individual has passed away, funded from a collection following their death or through a donation from their heirs. Such gifts provide a living memorial to a loved one, supporting inter faith understanding in this country – for now and for the future. If you would like to make a gift in memory of a loved one, please get in touch by emailing remember@interfaith.org.uk or call us on 0207 730 0410.

A gift in your will

By leaving a gift in your will to the Inter Faith Network for the UK, you can leave a living inheritance to help deepen and strengthen inter faith understanding and cooperation in this country – for now and for the future. If you are thinking about making a will, the best thing to do is to get in touch with a professional will writer, such as a solicitor or advocate; they can help to ensure it is legally correct and that your wishes are met. If you have already made a will, you can still make an addition or amendment in the form of a codicil. If you would like to pledge a gift, please provide our name and address, along with our registered charity number 1068934.

Please get in touch with us if you have any queries.

You can call us on 020 7730 0410 or contact us at ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

Every gift, however large or small, makes a difference.

The Inter Faith Network for the UK

Inter faith understanding, respect and cooperation is ever more important in the UK today.

The Inter Faith Network for the UK (IFN) links and works with national faith community representative bodies, inter faith organisations, academic and educational organisations with an interest in inter faith relations, as well as with other organisations including Government and other public agencies, to strengthen inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. IFN is unique in its scope and role both within the UK and in Europe. It has been bringing organisations and people together for over 25 years and its work is always evolving to meet fresh needs.

IFN carries out its work of strengthening good inter faith relations through:

- providing advice and support to inter faith organisations around the country to add value to their work
- running a helpline which each year assists hundreds of people with their inter faith projects or issues
- advocating for support of local inter faith groups and national and regional inter faith initiatives
- producing resources, in cooperation with its members, on issues of common concern such as faith based dietary practice
- bringing its member bodies and others together regularly to meet and discuss issues of common concern
- other programmes of work including Faith and Public Life and Inter Faith Week

For more information about IFN, visit www.interfaith.org.uk.

The work of IFN is supported by faith communities, trusts, other donors, and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
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