



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

A SHORT REPORT

Monday 19 March 2018

National Council for Voluntary Organisations,
London



About the day



Participants in discussion group

On 19 March 2018 practitioners from a wide range of local inter faith organisations from different parts of the UK came together in London 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 Sheffield, London, Coventry, Bristol and Manchester across the last three 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 and there are also many types of local initiative which are not ‘inter faith organisations’ as such, including bodies such as SACREs and local multi faith chaplaincies as well as projects, initiatives and short term programmes. 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 two years. It was open to all local inter faith groups in the UK and also local



Jatiinder Singh Birdi

Note 1: Speakers' contributions are presented in this report in a bullet list style.

Note 2: IFN's practice in its publications is to use 'inter faith' as two separate words, except where the words are hyphenated or merged into one word in the name of an organisation or title of the project of an organisation.

inter faith practitioners with a particular interest in the issues working in other contexts. #IFNLocal was used as the Twitter hashtag for the day.

The event was chaired by Jatinder Singh Birdi, IFN Co-Chair and himself a local inter faith practitioner.

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.

Mr Birdi welcomed participants and said that inter faith dialogue helped to build upon the recognition of what people had in common and also what people could learn about what was unique. When people discovered insights in other faiths it could stimulate them to examine their own faith and could uncover what was hidden within their own faiths and traditions. The day would be an excellent opportunity to learn about different faiths and practices and he was looking forward to it.

Morning session

Local inter faith organisations and local authorities working in partnership

The Revd Alan Green, Tower Hamlets Inter Faith Forum

The Revd Alan Green offered the following points about Tower Hamlets Inter Faith Forum (THIFF) and its partnership working with the local authority:

- THIFF has been in existence since 2003 and its work has been shaped by the way it was formed and the place it serves.
- Tower Hamlets has been a place of immigration in London since the 16th century when the Huguenots arrived. There was a lot of Jewish immigration in the 19th and early 20th century; and then a large Muslim immigration, mainly

Bangladeshi, from the 1970s. Also, because of the docks and sailors travelling through the area there has always been a large presence of people from other countries that goes back hundreds of years.

- Throughout these times Tower Hamlets has been a crossing place and sometimes a place of conflict or contention. People are rightly proud of the good relations in Tower Hamlets but often underplay the difficulties that have faced the community throughout its history. For example, three Huguenot weavers were hanged outside the pub on the other side of the road from his church because they were 'taking away the locals' jobs' in the 17th century. That attitude has surfaced again and again.
- There are many who want to fragment society and it was out of practical need, rather than philosophical intention, that THIFF was formed.



The Revd Alan Green, Tower Hamlets Inter Faith Forum

- THIFF is open to all. The only rule of membership is mutual respect. All are welcome to join who wish to participate and understand the different religious and belief groups in Tower Hamlets and to ensure that they are working practically within the community.
- THIFF has had a good relationship with Tower Hamlets Council since 2003. Both the Council and the Police were encouraging in THIFF being set up.
- The open membership is part of the reason THIFF does not have a big structure. It has never had any regular funding and has relied on donations from outside bodies when money has been needed for particular projects. That has largely been through the relationship with the Council. The relationship has occasionally been difficult when THIFF has been treated as a 'department' of the Council and the Council has tried to direct its work. This has usually been resolved through dialogue.
- Tower Hamlets remains a very diverse community and residents were proud of that. It is currently 38% Muslim, the largest Muslim presence of any borough in the country. Christians make up about 30% of the borough's population currently. Overall, 72% of residents say that they have a faith. The real growth over the last 20 years has been those of no faith.
- The role of the faith communities in the borough is to carry out their traditional involvement beyond worship and engagement with their own communities in trying to bring healing and justice and aid.
- The borough takes seriously the role of faith communities and wants to engage them. It has been a slow process but over the last two years there has been a service specification to commission an outside body to help THIFF strategise, to assist in administering its work and develop its ability to engage well among its members and more widely.
- In the first instance this was a one year trial and the commission went to Tower Hamlets Council for Voluntary Service. That was a good relationship because they knew the local structure and enabled THIFF to work more closely with other bodies in Tower Hamlets. At the same time there was a lack of understanding about the particular nature of faith communities.
- Last year a three year bid was won by FaithAction working with Coventry University (FA/CU), with which Professor Paul Weller was involved. The contract is £25,000 in each of the three years.
- FA/CU have provided a much firmer understanding of the particular needs of faith communities and their views. It has been a struggle in some aspects because FA/CU have challenged THIFF about the way it thinks about itself and its role in the borough. A formal Theory of Change had been worked through. This looked at goals and delivery. This was eye-opening and very useful.
- THIFF has now put out a manifesto. This aims to give confidence to people beyond faith communities to see how they can engage and not be terrified by religious principles.
- Working with FA/CU has also enabled THIFF to put on a few extra events, publicise its work and bring people together.

The following questions were raised and comments made. Responses from Mr Green are in italics.

- What type of events have been held?
Events have been chosen based on what is important to faith communities and to the borough as a whole. For example, there was an event about anti-social behaviour, which is a large problem in Tower Hamlets. Listening to voices from the local neighbourhoods was important and then together working out what faith communities are doing and how that might engage the wider community. That was very successful. The Police were involved. There was an example of one church just going out and talking to some of the likely culprits. Faith communities are often able to just 'break through' structures to talk to people as human beings. The Police and others found the event very useful. There have also been events on health and on the nature of THIFF itself.

- In Wellingborough they are having difficulties involving Muslims in the local inter faith group. How well do Muslims participate in the inter faith activities of THIFF?
There are usually 1 or 2 Muslims at each meeting but it has been difficult in the last 2 years to maintain an active Muslim presence within THIFF. There are two reasons. Firstly, it's traditionally been more difficult to engage local mosques. There are 50 mosques in the area but they generally tend to understand their role as to protect their culture and religion. Sometimes they come to THIFF in times of need and THIFF tries to help. But they do not see compelling reasons for ongoing engagement. The problem has been compounded by recent cuts in funding, which have led even those mosques who are active to cut back on activities and inter faith activity is one of the areas they have cut. At the end of the day the people at the mosques need to understand why they should be involved and how it can benefit them.

LOCAL INTER FAITH ORGANISATIONS AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

George Ballentyne, Voluntary and Community Sector Engagement Manager, Leicester City Council

Mr Ballentyne made a presentation using PowerPoint and a copy of his slides is at the end of this note. He offered the following reflections about Leicester City Council's engagement with local inter faith initiatives in the city including the longstanding Leicester Council of Faiths (LCoF).

- He is based in the office of Leicester's elected City Mayor. His role is to maintain good relations between the City Council (in general) and the City Mayor (in particular) with the VCS. That includes all the protected characteristics so the team works with groups for: older people, disabled people, those involved with gender reassignment, LGBT communities, race and ethnicity, those involved with marriage and civil partnership issues and pregnancy and maternity issues. [Slide 2]
- The City Mayor, Sir Peter Soulsby, has taken part in public inter faith events. [Slide 3] He is an active member of the Unitarian community.
- There are some 17 inter faith organisations of different kinds in Leicester and the City Council has separate relationships with each of them. Many of them are informal, meeting occasionally. Most are closed membership representative organisations involved in dialogue and functioning by invitation only. The four most prominent groups are LCoF, the St



Ervad Yazad Bhadha, Harrow Interfaith; Andy Sipple, Kettering Interfaith Forum; and George Ballentyne, Leicester City Council

Philip's Centre, Faith Awareness (the inter faith programme of Christians Aware) and the City Mayor's Faith and Communities Forum (CMFCF). [Slide 4]

- The City Council does not have the money to offer financial support to faith communities and inter faith organisations. But it does everything in its power to give them a platform and to get them engaged in policy and strategy.
- He was asked to create the CMFCF when he went to work at the City Council 5 years ago. There was a sense that some of the other local inter faith organisations weren't engaging with all parts of communities. Some active members of communities, for example Ahmadiyyas, Pagans, Druids, Mormons and Chinese Christians, were either not invited to take part or were not welcome to take part. CMFCF enables people to have an unmediated conversation with the City Mayor, members of his Cabinet and senior officers of the City Council. It has

35 members and meets once a quarter. The policy is that each community, regardless of size, has 1 member so everyone has an equal voice.

- LCoF has existed since 1986. Before going to work at Leicester City Council, George was employed, for 7 years, as the only full time staff member at LCoF, in the post of Equality and Diversity Officer. It was a challenging role but very enjoyable with a chance to engage in some excellent activities. LCoF has 8 faith communities in membership. Within most of these members' communities there is representation from a variety of denominations. [Slide 5] Its membership policy has not changed, for example in the way that IFN has reviewed and expanded its membership. The City Council used to fund LCoF at a level of £25,000 per year for about 20 years. His role as the Equality and Diversity Officer was not funded by this. It was self-supported through raising funds and offering services. The City Council does

- not now provide any funding for LCoF. Many of LCoF's events and activities cost nothing. LCoF is a good example of connections being made with potential sponsors particularly within the business world. LCoF's slogan is 'We have faith in Leicester!' [Slide 6] Highcross shopping centre in Leicester has a prayer room, which LCoF helped them to create. The LCoF logo is on the door of this. [Slide 7] Highcross has a great sense of social responsibility and is keen to work with faith communities. It paid for the creation of a large banner about different faiths as part of an Inter Faith Week exhibition held in the shopping centre. This exhibition was put on display for the full week each year from 2009 until 2016. 95 people from different faith communities used to support the exhibition as volunteers on the display, engaging with the public. There were three people from different faiths on the stand at any one time. It was very positive. Highcross stated that the footfall by the exhibition, over the course of the week, was in the region of 250,000 people.
- The St Philip's Centre is an ecumenical centre, rather than an inter faith centre, led by the Church of England. They have had Royal visits! [Slide 18] They also have a very good relationship with the Armed Forces and help to train officers in the Armed Forces in faiths literacy. [Slide 19] The last Inter Faith Week included officers dining in the houses of people from different faith communities.
 - Faith Awareness has an event every Monday evening during term time. These are open to the general public. It also does summer visits to places of worship. [Slide 20 and 21]
 - Slides 22 to 25 show other inter faith activities in Leicester, which are often spontaneous. The Progressive Synagogue takes part in an annual project, providing a homeless shelter with 6 other places of worship between November and February, accommodating up to 30 rough sleepers each night, rotating around the different places of worship. [Slide 24]
 - For the occasion of the re-interment of Richard III (March 2015), he had coordinated the production of written reflections on the meaning, relevance and significance of Richard III to people of 19 different faith and cultural communities, or people identifying with certain protected characteristics – each precisely 350 words long. [Slide 28] On the day Richard III's remains were ceremonially returned to Leicester – with thousands turning out on the streets – two large video screens showed recordings of the reflections being read by members of the respective communities. These statements were all published on the Cathedral's website for several months.
 - There are two particularly interesting statues in Leicester: Richard III, a man of war in battle armour; and Mahatma Gandhi, a man of peace with his dhoti and walking stick. [Slide 29] They tie up opposite ends of the city. It is interesting to consider what they mean and how they are connected. The relationship between them and what this means for the city of Leicester, was explored in a short essay entitled, "A Tale of Two Statues".
- The following questions were raised and comments made. Responses from Mr Ballentyne are in italics.
- There is also a Bishop's Faiths Leaders' Forum in Leicester, though this is more active in some years than others. *Yes – it is one of the 17 organisations mentioned earlier. Its work is to some extent dependent on who is in post as the Bishop of Leicester. It tends to be more active in times of crisis. There is no formal*

relationship between it and the City Council.

- What does Leicester City Council require from the four local inter faith organisations highlighted? Does it require them to fulfil a function? Or to communicate information?
At present, nothing. A VCS strategy is currently being created for the City Council. One of the manifesto commitments from the last election was to see a thriving VCS but the details of this were not outlined.

- There are always excellent photographs of inter faith work in Leicester, often taken by you. Would you like to say something about the significance of photography and social media in the context of local inter faith engagement?

It is absolutely essential. It is very frustrating working with people who say that they 'don't do Facebook'. That is not good enough. 200 newspapers in the last 10 years have closed. How many communities are still putting items in the newspaper classified ads? Social media is absolutely essential – and it must be kept up to date.

LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL & INTER FAITH IN LEICESTER

George Merchant Ballentyne
VCS Engagement Manager



IN CITY MAYOR'S OFFICE

- Maintain good relations between City Council (in general) and City Mayor (in particular) with Voluntary and Community Sector
- Includes communities, groups & organisations identifying with protected characteristic of religion or belief



CITY MAYOR, SIR PETER SOULSBY



INTER FAITH ORGANISATIONS IN LEICESTER

- Leicester Council of Faiths
- St Philips Centre
- Faith Awareness
- City Mayor's Faith & Community Forum



LEICESTER COUNCIL OF FAITHS



LEICESTER COUNCIL OF FAITHS

"We have faith in Leicester!"



LEICESTER COUNCIL OF FAITHS



INTER FAITH WEEK, HIGHCROSS



INTER FAITH WEEK, HIGHCROSS



INTER FAITH WEEK, HIGHCROSS



INTER FAITH WEEK, HIGHCROSS



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INTER FAITH WEEK, HIGHCROSS



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FAITH AWARENESS SUMMER VISITS



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INTER FAITH IN LEICESTER



INTER FAITH IN LEICESTER



INTER FAITH IN LEICESTER



INTER FAITH IN LEICESTER



LEICESTER'S PLACE IN HISTORY





Local inter faith organisations – educating for inter faith understanding

Santosh Kundi, Warwick District Faiths Forum

Mrs Kundi offered the following reflections about how the Warwick District Faiths Forum (WDFF) works to increase religious literacy of public bodies.

Background

- In 2006, WDFF was established. Its mission statement is:
To enrich society and to promote equality and diversity through mutual understanding, co-operation between faith groups and engagement with the wider community.
- Members of WDFF share a vision of living in a society where people from different faiths:

- respect and understand each other's religion, beliefs, cultures and values; and
- co-operate with each other for the betterment of society.

- WDFF is governed by a constitution and has representatives from all the major faiths in the local community, including Christian (various denominations), Sikh, Hindu, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist and Pagan. There is an Executive Committee consisting of 5 people.
- All the work done is on a voluntary basis. Meetings are arranged quarterly at local places of worship or community buildings.
- To assist in achieving its vision, WDFF has done the following since 2006:
 - produced an annual Faiths Calendar – showing major religious festivals;
 - arranged an annual Faiths Trail – visiting places of worship;

- produced a multi-faith display at the annual Leamington Peace Festival, choosing a different topic each year for the displays;
- arranged seminars and conferences on specific current topics and issues;
- provided Faith Awareness training to local and statutory organisations in order to increase religious literacy of these organisations by raising awareness and understanding of different faiths, beliefs, customs and traditions; and
- had representatives on Local Statutory and Voluntary Groups, such as Warwickshire Police Independent Advisory Group, CPS West Midlands Hate Crime Scrutiny Panel, Warwickshire Harmful Practices Group, Warwickshire SACRE, South Warwickshire NHS (SWNHS) Equality and Diversity Group, SWNHS Carers Strategy Group and Warwickshire Prevent Group. Information from these groups is shared with the community.
- Events are free and open to the public to attend. The Faiths Calendars are also given to various Local Statutory Agencies to distribute amongst staff. Warwickshire and West Mercia Police originally had 250 Calendars for 2018 and then asked for an additional 100, due to increased demand from staff. The annual Faiths Trail and conferences arranged are promoted by public bodies through their internal intranets and notice boards.

Faiths Awareness Training

- The Faith Awareness Training normally consists of a half-day session and occasionally, sessions have been held in the morning and afternoon on the same day, as it is difficult for staff to be absent from work for a longer period.



Santosh Kundi, Warwick District Faiths Forum

- The session is divided into 4 or 5 half hour slots, allocated to different faiths. Each person gives a 20 minute presentation about their faith, beliefs, cultures and traditions. This is then followed by a 10 minute question and answer session, when delegates can ask any questions about that faith.
- The training provides an opportunity for people to ask, in a friendly environment, questions to people from different faiths about their beliefs, cultures and traditions.
- This provides a unique opportunity to staff at all levels to develop a broader understanding and knowledge of the different faiths represented in their diverse community. This assists them in fulfilling their duties, by having a better understanding of the beliefs of people from different faiths.

- These sessions have been provided to local authorities, including Warwickshire County Council, Warwick District Council, Stratford upon Avon District Council and North Warwickshire Borough Council.
- At present, all new Police Officer recruits and Police community support officers (PCSOs) in Warwickshire receive a half day training session, when they have people talk to them from the protected characteristics. Members of WDFF do a presentation on “The Faith Religion and Beliefs” as part of this training. This gives trainees the opportunity to ask questions that assist them in doing their job.

Warwickshire SACRE

- Some members of WDFF are also members of Warwickshire SACRE. In September, a new joint Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education (RE) for 2017 to 2022, was launched by Warwickshire SACRE and Coventry SACRE.
- The syllabus originally proposed by RE Today syllabus was amended to include teaching of all the six principal religions to Key Stage 3 and not only to Key Stage 2. This resulted in extra work programmes being written for the additional units by members of Warwickshire and Coventry SACREs.
- Members of both Warwickshire and Coventry SACREs felt that it was vital for children to continue to learn and have an understanding of the six principal religions up to the age of 14.

Religious Education Assemblies

- Members of WDFF are asked to talk about their faith at year assemblies and whole school assemblies.
- Warwickshire SACRE provides details to schools of places of worship to be contacted for school trips and also of individuals who can attend schools to

take an assembly and who can be contacted by the school.

Seminars and Conferences

- The seminars and conferences arranged by the WDFF are supported by local Statutory Agencies, by providing key speakers, displays and being present to talk to people. The aims of the WDFF seminars and conferences are to:
 - raise awareness of the needs of local people with Statutory Agencies and to enable them to involve and to engage with people in respect to key issues in the community;
 - provide the community with an outline of services and support made available to them by Statutory Agencies and the Voluntary Sector;
 - provide an opportunity for members of the community to raise issues and concerns with key service providers; and
 - build confidence in the community.
- WDFF is seen as a key partner by Statutory and Voluntary organisations and the number of people attending and engaging with WDFF has proved that the work and activities of WDFF are strongly supported and greatly appreciated by the community.

In conclusion

- The aim of all events arranged and work done by the WDFF is to increase religious literacy. It is necessary for good links to be made with local statutory agencies, which takes time and has its own challenges, but the benefits can be great.
- Particularly in these current difficult times, it is necessary for everyone to work together for the betterment of society.

- Partnership working by local faith groups with local statutory bodies and also with the Voluntary sector is an important way forward.

The following questions were raised and comments made. Responses from Mrs Kundi are in italics.

- How did you get the Police Independent Advisory Group (IAG) involved with faiths? *There have always been good links with Warwickshire Police and some members of WDFE are involved in running 'faith, religion and belief' training for new Police Officers and PCSOs. This link has also led to members of WDFE being invited to become members of the local IAG, which they accepted. They act as ears and eyes for the issues raised at the meetings.*

Local inter faith groups – educating for inter faith understanding

Ryad Khodabocus, Community Relations Development Officer, Luton Council of Faiths

Mr Ryad Khodabocus offered the following reflections:

- He is the paid worker for Luton Council of Faiths (LCoF). This is his 10th year working for LCoF.
- There is a community development approach to inter faith work in Luton. LCoF is an important partner of Luton Council and has had a historical partnership. He acts as an advisor and liaison supporting the statutory services as and when needs arise.

Video shown of children engaging in inter faith activities at the Irish Cultural Centre in Luton.

- This is one of the schools that has worked with LCoF. It is a private faith-based school although mostly LCoF works with mainstream schools. The activities are part of the syllabus that was created for them. They are learning about Irish culture and learning some Irish phrases, calligraphy and enjoying Irish food.

Video shown of faith leaders' school visit

- Often schools ask for someone to come and talk about one particular faith community. LCoF facilitates that and also goes above and beyond that by running a faith panel as part of the annual Peace Walk. Faith leaders come in as a group for a school visit. They are selected as first having been part of a meeting of LCoF and also for having worked together in projects. This shows the children how local community leaders are working together irrespective of difference and also how they disagree well or that it's ok to disagree while still staying friends. Nine year olds ask challenging questions! It's good for them to see the chemistry between the faith leaders. It is not just about talking to the children, but also learning from them. The visits have been taking place for some time; 2018 will be the 5th year. The programme has grown and now approximately 12–15 schools are visited each year.

- LCoF is an active member of the local SACRE.
- Every year LCoF has a Peace Walk. In previous years this has been called an Inter Faith Walk or a Pilgrimage. There is a whole year of planning for this and schools are very much part of the planning.

Video of artwork shown

LCoF also works with schools to create artwork and on character and value development. Usually 12 schools work together creating inspired artwork. They look at British culture, rather than just British values. The video clip shows a class based on the work of William Morris. It was difficult to get into schools but they work with the teachers and now have a very good relationship with them. Schools come on board when they see you are adding value to their work.

Video of Fairtrade work shown

- Some of LCoF's work with schools is around Fairtrade. Fairtrade is relevant partly to RE and partly to Geography. LCoF explains the concepts. They add value to the syllabus, working alongside teachers, through artwork and roleplay.

Video of Engineering for Peace shown

- When an opportunity arises, LCoF is also involved in inspiring entrepreneurship work with young people. The artwork on the lamp posts for peace project was only supposed to be for 9 months but is now permanent and hasn't been removed after 3 years. The project was about showing how different areas contribute to peace and how a profession like engineering can contribute to peace. A professional engineer came to speak with the kids on the day that the lamp posts were being fixed.

Video shown of bee artwork/Peace Honey

- A few schools worked together to create a series of artwork and one really stood out. That was about bees and human beings and the idea of pollination. They showed the children how their artwork could be turned into labels for local honey jars, called 'Peace Honey' and how a business could be created to sell these. They are trying to be realistic and show



Ryad Khodabocus, Luton Council of Faiths

the children how to add value in the business world and be entrepreneurial.

The following questions were raised and comments made. Responses from Mr Khodabocus are in italics.

- Are the faith representatives who go into schools paid?
No, they are all volunteers. He is the only paid worker. He is paid through Luton Council with funds coming from community funds of London Luton Airport which the local authority owns.
- What is the key to getting into schools?
SACREs are a good way to engage. You have to know your subject and be confident in the value you can bring. LCoF now does multi faith storytelling as well which is very popular. Schools like it when faith communities add value and bring people together.

- Can you speak a little more about LCoF's youth engagement?

The previous weekend, when it was snowing heavily, there had been 8 young people in his office to get involved in a youth panel and the preparations for a big event for 400 people. The involvement of youth and women is very important. LCoF Community Archery was another big programme Inspired by London 2012 and bringing generations and communities across backgrounds together. LCoF has run big conferences in schools where colleges and high schools come together. The students take ownership. Scout groups are also involved. Multiple platforms are used to bring people together.

[A few of the videos shown by Mr Khodabocus can be seen at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/videos-local-day-march-2018>]

Afternoon Session

Feedback from discussion groups

Full points from Discussion Groups are included later in this report. Below are those key points that the Groups chose to feed back to plenary.

1. Working with schools to enhance the learning and inter faith experience of students

Rapporteur: Catherine Martindale

- There is a need to tailor what is said to children, focusing on good interaction.
- Sometimes it takes a long time to get schools on board, but it is worth persevering.



Catherine Martindale, RC Diocese of Arundel

2. Using social media to increase the impact of your local inter faith work

Rapporteur: Pat Wilkinson

- Not having an online social media presence can almost lead to an organisation's extinction!
- Any communications online should have a clarity of purpose.
- There should be clear guidelines as to who can post and what can be posted.
- It's important to try to represent fairly the whole community involved.



Pat Wilkinson, Solihull Faiths Forum



Pat Stevens, Harrow Interfaith

3. Developing successful programmes and widening the circle of engagement

Rapporteur: Pat Stevens

- Organising good events and activities is important but it is also vital to publicise them and communicate with others. Communications include, for example, business cards, leaflets, word of mouth messages, electronic communications, emails, online and websites of local faith communities.
- It is helpful to ensure that an individual or a subcommittee is in charge of communications within the group.
- Passwords should be secure and known to more than one person.
- Websites should be secure and data protection guidelines followed.

4. Initiating new local inter faith bodies and reviewing the work and direction of existing ones in changing times

Rapporteur: Rose Norgate

- We focused on reviewing work as none of those present was involved in initiating a new group.
- It is good to look at the group regularly, and to ask, at least annually, “What are we for?” “What are we supposed to be doing?” “What are we trying to achieve?”
- It is important to plan in a focused way within the resources available. Do not try to be everything to everybody.



Rose Norgate, Waveney Interfaith Circle



Esmond Rosen, Barnet Multi Faith Forum

5. Increasing engagement with and by young people

Rapporteur: Esmond Rosen

- The discussion considered why it is important that young people engage. It is not just important, but essential.
- Young people have energy and enthusiasm. They need a space to engage and to be empowered to do so.
- Social action projects often appeal to young people. This can be physical engagement, doing something practical to change the world.
- The value of going on a journey was also discussed. For example, to Auschwitz, Rwanda or Srebrenica. It is good for young people to be able to do this, to learn from each other and to come back as ambassadors.

6. Partnership working with other bodies, such as local authorities, in pursuit of common aims, such as inter faith understanding, cooperation and integration

Rapporteur: Reynold Rosenberg

- The discussion was around about partnerships and cooperation in the event of hate crime, emergencies and also connecting with schools through SACREs.
- There is a clear need to do this. It's important to build a relationship with the local authority and local SACRE to get them involved where possible. There are many new opportunities so there is no need to be afraid.
- Churches Together groups are often not part of local inter faith organisations, so it can also be worth getting in touch with them.



Reynold Rosenberg, Herts Inter Faith Forum

Inter faith week and other special days and weeks – a platform for cooperation and outreach

Chris Wood, Chair, Norwich InterFaith Link

Mr Chris Wood offered the following reflections on Norwich InterFaith Link's (NIFL) use of Inter Faith Week (IFW) and other special days.

- NIFL has put on a special event for IFW each year. Until about 2010, it was a multi-faith 'service' (not joint 'worship'), in conjunction with the United Nations Association and also commemorating UN Day. The service entailed a series of performances by various faith groups.
- In 2016, NIFL organised a programme of events for IFW for the first time. This was inspired by a young newcomer to the group, Avril Noble. Planning started a little late for the list of events initially proposed but the result was a solidly organised programme of events.
- There was a 'Moving Meal', where the starter, main course and dessert were had at the Orthodox Synagogue, the Ihsan Mosque and the Roman Catholic Cathedral, respectively, with profits going to local social enterprise, The Feed, which trains disadvantaged adults to cook. Other events included a sports evening, hosted by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; and, as a finale, an Inter-Faith Choir, performing in the Anglican Cathedral. These were complemented by open-house events hosted by the Bangladeshi Islamic Centre, the Liberal Jewish Community, the Spiritualist Church and Soka Gakkai International Buddhists. All told, NIFL had a much bigger profile and impact as a result of these.
- The organisation of key parts of the Inter Faith Week programme involved a lot of talking to people, especially in the Chapelfield area of the city centre, where the Roman Catholic Cathedral, a large Methodist Church, the Ihsan Mosque, the Spiritualist Church and the Orthodox Synagogue are all within a short walk of each other. This left a legacy of people talking and the Synagogue went on to invite the Spiritualist congregation (and other inter faith representatives) to a special service in early 2017. This was the first time the two communities had been together formally since 1948, after six years when the Spiritualist Church had provided a home for the Jewish community following the loss of the Synagogue in an air-raid in 1942. It was a real honour to be invited to that event.
- However, the programme of events did take a lot of time and energy to plan and organise and it was not possible to replicate it in 2017.
- In 2017 NIFL had an 'information-based presence' in Norwich's Forum building on the first Sunday of IFW, through the kindness of the Norfolk Baha'i community, which opened up its quarterly booking of the space as an inter faith event. NIFL also organised a discussion meeting, and the Hindu, Muslim and Pagan communities opened up events to the public. So, NIFL had a 'programme', but it did feel like a bit of a let-down after the strong programme in 2016. Realistically, though, there was not the time or energy to do more.
- However good your event(s) is/are, it is also vital to show people what else you're doing and advertise your other activities. The big event in IFW must not be a one-off; everyone should at least be going



Chris Wood, Norwich InterFaith Link

away with a flyer for the next event! Because inter faith engagement is not just about IFW, which is a tool to get more publicity. Local inter faith organisations and others do activities all year and sustaining that programme is more important than just doing something for IFW.

- In terms of timing, NIFL depends on people's energy, time and inclination, and November doesn't, in NIFL's experience, seem to be a very good time of year for that. However, at other times of year NIFL responds to people's and communities' initiatives. As mentioned earlier, NIFL's IFW programmes are bolstered by open days at individual places of worship. It has also particularly worked with the Norfolk Baha'i community in recent years to put on a joint event for World Religion Day in January. These days have drawn very good attendance, celebrating the area's religious diversity. In 2016, NIFL worked with Soka Gakkai International (SGI) to

air that year's SGI 'Proposal for Peace' in Norwich: another well-attended event. It has also traditionally had a presence at Norwich's annual 'Peace Camp'.

- NIFL cannot do all this alone. It benefits from, indeed depends upon, other people's energy and ideas. This means that they and NIFL can do more and reach larger audiences.

The following questions were raised and comments made. Responses from Mr Wood are in italics.

- November is not a good time for Inter Faith Week, especially for schools. Hertsmere Forum of Faiths chose to hold a 'great faiths get together' event for the Great Get Together in June. *Norwich did consider holding an event for the Great Get Together but there were so many other events taking place it decided that it could not add anything.*
- Is NIFL involved with the local authority? *The local authority was not involved in the events. They were arranged by NIFL and local faith communities.*

Dr Crabtree said that IFN had spent a lot of time debating and consulting about when Inter Faith Week should be held before the first Week took place. Scottish Interfaith Week, which began in 2004, was at the time held in the first week of December (currently it is held at the same time as Inter Faith Week). Schools did not feel that earlier in the year was helpful. They understood the difficulties of November but did not think any time during the year would be particularly better. Sometimes it is close to religious festivals, such as Diwali or Eid, but there will never be a perfect date in the inter faith world. IFN's former Director, Brian Pearce, used to joke that inter faith organisers needed an 8th day in the week – so perhaps a 53rd week in the year is needed for Inter Faith Week! IFW is intentionally at the same time as Mitzvah

Day, with that taking place either at the beginning or end of the Week. IFW and Mitzvah Day give strength to each other. Sadaqa Day takes place in March and Sewa Day in the Autumn. IFN has a reciprocal and positive working relationship with those also.

Sometimes people think IFW programmes are only held in large and very diverse cities. Norwich is a very good example of programmes in other areas. Developments in IFW can help the work of bodies year round. Many ideas are already being explored for this year, including activities linked to the commemoration of the end of World War One.

- When IFW first began there was a national event. Will there be one for the 10th year? This would be good publicity.

Dr Crabtree said that the national event did not receive the same kind of publicity as IFN has now gained through social media. Lots of small events seem to get more exposure. The first national event was held jointly with the Government. Consideration is being given to a national event but it will depend on resources.

Responding together to tackle prejudice and hatred

Elliot Steinberg, Policy Officer, Hate Crime, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)

Mr Steinberg said that he had started working at MHCLG a few months previously. Prior to that he worked for the Council of Christians and Jews and Mitzvah Day. His current role is as a Policy Adviser leading on anti-Muslim hatred and also covering hate crime in general, anti-Semitism and Holocaust Memorial Day. His role sits within the Faith and Integration Team which covers inter faith work as well.

He offered the following points about the Hate Crime Action Plan:

- The Government's Hate Crime Action Plan was published in 2016 and it is being refreshed this year, taking into account what has worked well, what has been missed and what can be done in the future. The Plan is about actions to support communities locally in tackling hate crime.
- MHCLG works with the Home Office on leading on the Action Plan, particularly on the prevention of hate crime before it happens, encouraging and increasing reporting of hate crime and improving support for victims. On the prevention of hate crime MHCLG works with organisations such as the Anne Frank Trust and Streetwise, whose programmes focus on combatting all hate crime.
- MHCLG has, with the Police, created True Vision, which is the online portal for reporting hate crime. It is open to anyone who has witnessed a hate incident or been a victim of any kind of hatred – including online – to report this. Although

it is a national portal, the reports are submitted to local police forces. They are then dealt with by the Police.

- MHCLG works alongside community organisations, such as the Community Security Trust and Tell MAMA, to support hate crime victims. Both of those organisations provide support for hate crimes more widely. MHCLG also works with True Vision to provide support.
- The Hate Crime Action Plan is a cross-Government Plan. In addition to the Home Office, MHCLG also works on it with the Government Equalities Office across the 5 strands of hate crime: race, religion, sexuality, gender identity and disability.
- The Plan also includes online hate crime and this has been one of the big success areas. The Cyber Hate Working Group is an international group led by the UK. This has ensured that companies such as Google, Facebook, Twitter and other social media platforms sign up to a code of conduct saying that within 24 hours they will take down offensive content. This is a very big step forward.

He offered the following points about the Integrated Communities Strategy:

- A Green Paper on the Integrated Communities Strategy was published by MHCLG on 14 March. This works alongside the Hate Crime Action Plan but is a much wider strategy. It is about bringing communities together better, building stronger local communities and building a stronger British society.
- The Integration Strategy is England-wide. There will be initial pilots in 5 particular areas: Blackburn with Darwen, Bradford, Peterborough, Waltham Forest and Walsall. These are areas which MHCLG has identified as having particular integration challenges and are working on these in specific ways. MHCLG is taking



Elliot Steinberg, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

the good work they are already doing and boosting these as models of good practice. Other areas of the country will see benefits from this.

- MHCLG will be making sure that the Hate Crime Action Plan really works in these 5 areas and helps tackle hatred and hate crime in all forms. Learning and models from these will then be used to apply strategies across England.
- There are several areas covered in the strategy:
 - increasing funding and opportunities for English language provision;
 - assisting new migrants to ensure that tests to enter the UK are fair and reflect their experiences on arrival and sending support to potential migrants before they arrive;

- promoting mixing and twinning between schools, including faith schools and non-faith schools so that the young people get to know one another and mix socially;
- building stronger public places, such as pubs and parks, that work for the community and feel accessible and inviting;
- promoting a voice for marginalised groups, particularly women and young people, particularly in religious communities, so that they have a place where they are heard; and
- expanding the Strengthening Faith Institutions programme, run through the Faiths Forum for London, that works on safeguarding practices and trying to improve best practice across the country.
- The Green Paper has been published for consultation. [Details of how to respond to this now closed consultation were given.]

The following questions were raised and comments made. Responses from Mr Steinberg are in italics.

- One of the difficulties is that people can attend many English lessons but then don't get a chance to use what they have learned because they are not allowed to work.
MHCLG is working with the Department for Work and Pensions on trying to improve employment for minority communities and to get them into employment, so that people do have the opportunity to use the English they are learning. It is an area of concern that is being considered.
- In light of speaking English, what do you think of the idea that the general British population should speak a second language, particularly in the light of

Brexit?

The question has not come up in the strategy so far but it could be included in a response if the speaker would like to do that. Developing the arrangements for exiting the European Union will be part of the work of many Government Departments for the next year or so. Second language learning could be considered but at the moment the priority is English language learning.

- The English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programme used to be run by local authorities, schools and colleges but this was significantly cut due to funding problems. It is harder to re-establish these programmes under the current climate of funding in the public sector.
The Integration Strategy has a £50 million fund allocated to it. Part of that will go towards English language provision. An Innovation Fund will be created for local people to use for new projects, as well as for older projects such as those which have fallen apart because they now have less support than previously.

Responding together to tackle prejudice and hatred

Sister Elizabeth O'Donohoe,
Islington Faiths Forum

Sister O'Donohoe offered the following reflections on the attack in Finsbury Park in Islington, London in June 2017 and the local response to it:

- On 17 June a Great Get Together event had been held in Muslim Welfare House (MWH), Finsbury Park. The following evening, worshippers coming away from prayer at MWH were attacked when a man drove a van into them. On 19 June there was a remarkable response. In



Sister Elizabeth O'Donohoe, Islington Faiths Forum

Islington links have been very good over a number of years. Because of this it was possible to respond very well. By 9am on 19 June, not only was the world's press outside MWH, but also the local MP, all the Council leaders, many people from Islington Faiths Forum (IFF) and others. It was important to be there to support members of MWH and at the same time to arrange very quickly for the local community to respond as well.

- The response was overwhelming. As well as people of faith, there were people from all walks of life, including schoolchildren, out in Finsbury Park and the surrounding area telling local Muslims that they were saddened that this had happened to them and were there to support them.
- There was a street iftar (Ramadan end of day fast breaking meal) held a couple of days later for 1,000 people in St Thomas' Road near to MWH. The local Shomrim (a Jewish voluntary mobile neighbourhood watch organisation) protected the

Muslims going to prayer for the rest of Ramadan. A local Citizens UK group from Haringey handed out water to people. There was a strong community response.

- One month later she and the Director of MWH, Toufik Kacimi, and Rabbi Hershel Gluck were asked by the BBC Asian Network to take part in a phone-in about the attack and about inter faith life in Finsbury Park. They were asked how this response had been able to take place. They said it was all about the community and faith relations and connections that had been built up beforehand.
- Some members of IFF also work together on the Islington Refugee Welcome and so know one another in other contexts. Most of them try to take part in VisitMyMosque Day. Conversations between Muslim and Christian leaders in Finsbury Park have been taking place for nearly 25 years so they are not strangers.
- Islington borders Haringey and Hackney. She has been working for over 20 years in North London. One of the people who had been of most help during this time was the late Director of the Wightman Road Mosque, Mr Abdool Alli. At his recent funeral his sons and grandsons walked him up the 'Haringey Ladder' (a set of parallel streets in the area). At the Mosque hundreds of people were gathered from all areas of the community, from all faiths, civic leaders, and so forth.
- People have become friends. Friendship and contact is just one way of creating a good basis for inter faith working. It's about knowing one another and knowing what others want and need and when.

The following comments were made after Sister Elizabeth's reflections.

- 5 years ago the mosque in Gillingham in Kent was attacked. Stones were thrown and windows broken. Medway Inter Faith

Action received a lot of communication from various groups in the locality who wanted to send messages of support. A positive response came from it. The mosque was so grateful for the support that it organised an open day for everyone to give thanks.

- Everyone is very grateful to all those who show humanity and help victims in times of crisis.

Closing reflections

Narendra Waghela, IFN Trustee from the local inter faith organisation member body category and member, Leicester Council of Faiths

Firstly, thank you all for having faith in the Creator and braving the weather to attend this event!

Today's event reminds me of an event that took place about 40 years ago. I was contacted by a local radio station in Leicester and asked if I believed in Valentine's Day. I realised I was 'on the air' and my response then was that for us Valentine's Day is not just one day of the year but we love our wives and partners 365 days a year. That also applies to Mother's Day in that we should love and thank our mothers every day and not just remember her and give her flowers on one particular day.

The same goes for this Local Interfaith Practitioners Day and for Inter Faith Week because inter faith work takes place 365 days of the year!

As for today's programme, all the speakers were excellent. For reasons of time I am highlighting only a few:

- The Revd Alan Green mentioned immigration as part of the history of Tower Hamlets, with different communities living together, including Jews, Bangladeshi Muslims and others.
- George Ballentyne offered a very good presentation about Leicester Council of Faiths and the forum set up by Leicester's City Mayor.
- Santosh Kundi spoke interestingly of the work of Warwick District Faiths Forum and hate crime and their vision.

All the workshops were excellent. I have found today's event informative, educational and very positive. I am proud to be associated with the Inter Faith Network for the UK.



Narendra Waghela, Leicester Council of Faiths

Closing reflections

Dr Harriet Crabtree, Executive Director, Inter Faith Network for the UK

Dr Crabtree offered the following reflections:

- We have been very fortunate today in the people who have spoken and contributed.
- Much rests on the shoulders of those working in the local inter faith sphere and you are mostly giving your time as volunteers. But your comments today are a powerful reminder of all the reasons that you and other local inter faith practitioners do this. Partly it is about responding to need, for example responding to hate crime, about which Elliot and Sr Elizabeth spoke so powerfully. However, it is far more than that: it is about sustaining the vital work of helping people get to know one another, learn more about each other and increase religious literacy, and cooperate for the wellbeing of the local community.
- Local inter faith work is a passion for those involved. Sometimes it can be tiring, with hills to climb – and many times when you think you’ve dealt with an issue, such as hate crime, it seems to come back again. People refer to anti-Semitism as a ‘light sleeper’. Religiously linked hate crime across the board is a ‘light sleeper’. That is fed, amongst other things, by distorted interpretations of traditions and exploitation of division and by ignorance. It is vital that there are people like you, and organisations like those that you are linked with, who are part of responding to that, helping people to address their prejudices and grow in understanding and to work through challenging issues. Also important is helping people to find and

explore commonalities such as values that may be shared and also to find the best ways that they can constructively to address genuine areas of disagreement.

- There has been a lot of discussion today about challenges but also about many positive things that are going on. As a participant at a previous IFN day for local inter faith practitioners said, although there is a lot of work to be done, there is also joy in what we do – including through our friendships and common cause with people of other faiths.

Closing words from the Chair

Jatinder Singh Birdi, Co-Chair, Inter Faith Network for the UK

Mr Birdi offered the following reflections:

- I would like to thank all of you for the work that you do. Your work is so vital. It is never insignificant. Doing nothing is easy but doing something is hard.
- Giving up your time because you care is what makes our society better. It is the backbone of our society. We are all working together for the betterment of society and your work is greatly appreciated.

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

Discussion groups

Discussion Group 1: Working with schools to enhance the learning and inter faith experience of students

This discussion group was facilitated by David Hampshire, Assistant Director, IFN, and former teacher and RE Advisor and included an opening presentation from Cynthia Bailey and Cllr Tony Aslam, Wellingborough Inter Faith Group (WIFG).

Mr David Hampshire welcomed those present and invited them to introduce themselves. The discussion group would be exploring how local inter faith bodies do, and can, work with schools and SACREs on supporting religious education in the curriculum. He then introduced Cynthia Bailey and Cllr Tony Aslam of WIFG, who would be talking about the Group's work with primary schools in less diverse areas.

Ms Cynthia Bailey and Cllr Tony Aslam gave a PowerPoint presentation, the slides for which are included at the end of this note. A summary of their points is below:

Historical background

- WIFG was originally run by the Victoria Centre in Wellingborough.
- WIFG moved toward independence in 2008, as this enabled it to raise its own funds and keep its own accounts.
- In 2010–11, when working with primary schools, WIFG members made appliqué bags to fill with resources linked to

different topics. One of the schools suggested that they be thematic, rather than '1 per faith', so they contained items from a range of subjects, such as water, from each faith tradition. Pupils were also able to make their own individual appliqué bags to take home.

- In 2011–12, a youth group made a DVD for WIFG, interviewing local religious leaders.
- In 2013–14, WIFG ran an exhibition of poems for Holocaust Memorial Day, working with a local secondary school.

Practicalities of the primary school workshops

- WIFG now takes the bags of resources along to all the workshops it runs and they are sorted by faith tradition, rather than subject. The resources in them have been paid for with a grant.
- When starting its schools work, WIFG wrote to all of the primary schools in the area, inviting them to come to a meeting to discuss ideas. People from only two schools have come along, but they have decided to do it anyway.
- WIFG has used a 'carousel' style of presentation, where there are different tables, each of which has a person from a faith tradition and artefacts linked to that tradition, and pupils have moved between tables every 15 minutes.
- It is very important for children to meet people from different faiths – this has been found to be much more effective than simply learning about everything from one teacher.



Cynthia Bailey, Wellingborough Inter Faith Group



Cllr Tony Aslam, Wellingborough Inter Faith Group

- At the end of each session, the co-ordinator has summed up, and asked pupils which communities they have learned about. Pupils have then been asked to fill in the 'common values' section of their workbooks. *[Copies of the workbooks were handed round for participants to see. Each 2-page spread includes an example of the 'golden rule' from a different faith tradition, and blank space for notes.]*
- Pupils have also been given stickers containing the religious symbols of the faith traditions in the workbooks and asked to match the symbol to the golden rule example.
- Sessions have usually finished with a story which incorporates a craft activity. For example, the 'blind men and the elephant' story might have been told, and the pupils given an opportunity to decorate an elephant sculpture, which then remained in the classroom.

- Teachers have been given evaluation sheets to complete after the sessions.

Questions and comments from participants follow. Responses from the presenters are in italics.

- Which ages does WIFG primarily work with through its schools work? *Year 6.*
- How are practicalities handled? WIFG and the schools both sign an agreement which sets out who will provide what, and what responsibilities are.
- Is WIFG able to take photos? *WIFG ask the teachers to take photographs and share them with WIFG where appropriate.*
- What does it mean for WIFG to be 'independent'? *WIFG was set up as part of the Victoria Centre, but as it evolved it wished to be able to fundraise separately. It therefore became an independent organisation to achieve this, although*

continues to have strong links with the Victoria Centre.

- Does WIFG work with the local education authority? *No, it works directly with schools. If a school expresses interest in having WIFG run a session, a pre-meeting is held first with the relevant staff members to discuss the necessary learning outcomes and any practicalities. A member of WIFG is also a member of the local SACRE however.*
- Warwick District Faiths Forum is supported and funded by the Warwickshire County Council, but for its schools work it has to follow the curriculum. It also works with the local SACRE to help arrange visits to places of worship and lone child provision.
- Local authorities in some areas cover a very large geographical area, which means SACREs in those areas often have less direct connection to local communities.
- How many schools has WIFG been into?
8.
- Does WIFG try to meet requirements of the Agreed Syllabus? *WIFG aims to meet the learning outcomes agreed with teachers ahead of the sessions. Usually, this includes raising awareness of difference in a fairly un-diverse area of the county, especially in villages. This helps schools to demonstrate things relevant to Ofsted.*
- Are there secondary schools in the area? *There are 4, but WIFG is only working with primary schools. Most local children attend a local primary school, then secondary school, so WIFG is able to reach them through its primary school work.*
- Pupils do not always know where to find out more information about faith communities.

- Warwickshire has a youth SACRE which works with year 8–11 pupils, and has links with the Police.

- Concerns are sometimes raised about teachers with leadership roles who might be perceived as privileging faith or their particular faith within schools.

David Hampshire said that the Government's Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper notes the importance of inter faith activity and of opportunities for school pupils to encounter people of different backgrounds, so it is possible that demand for this kind of activity might increase. He also said that it is clear that local inter faith groups are doing a lot of positive work with limited resources.

Mr Hampshire thanked those present for participating in the discussion.

WELLINGBOROUGH INTER FAITH GROUP

Working with schools to enhance the learning and inter faith experience of students.

FORMATION OF THE ORGANISATION

- The Wellingborough Inter Faith Group was originally run by Victoria Centre in Wellingborough and became one of the first organisations to join the Inter Faith Network when that organisation was formed.
- In 2008 we became independent, having our own terms of reference and bank account, enabling us to apply for funding whilst retaining firm links with the Centre where we hold our meetings.

Summary of work with youth & children

- **2010/11 FAITH RESOURCE BAGS.** We worked in two local primary schools to applique themed canvas bags which we then filled with faith resources for loan from the local library and now use for our school workshops.
- **2011/12 DVD OF INTERVIEWS.** Working with the young people at a Youth Café, we produced a DVD of interviews with faith leaders to go into the bags.
- **2013/14 EXHIBITION OF POEMS.** We worked with Senior Schools to produce an exhibition of their poems for the Holocaust Memorial Day exhibition.
- **2014/15 MULTI FAITH SCHOOLS WORKSHOPS** We ran a pilot workshop during Inter Faith Week in two local Primary Schools involving six faiths represented.
- **2015/16 MULTI FAITH SCHOOLS WORKSHOPS.** We increased the Workshops to four, some having a second visit, and including one for older pupils in a special School.
- **2016/17/18 CONTINUATION OF THE WORKSHOPS.** We increased the Workshops to 5 and now have 11 different schools on the list. 6 of which are village schools with few, if any, minority ethnic children.

Production of themed resource bags

Water, Celebration, Sacred texts, Worship, Creation, Light





9



The children also made individual bags to keep which we filled with goodies for them at the end of the bag making project celebration.



11



12

School Multi-Faith Workshops

We sent a letter out to local Primary Schools inviting them to an evening meeting so we could discuss the idea of the Workshops with them and take on board their comments/ suggestions.

We invited Revd. David Dean, who at that time was working at St Phillips Centre in Leicester, to come and talk about how their workshops in Leicester were run.

The response was poor, only one or two School teachers attended but we were not put off!

13

First faith leaders team

We gathered together a team of people, mainly our own members, who practiced different faiths and who were willing to participate. Six faiths initially– Bahai faith, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism . We have since added Buddhism.



14

The format

We then discussed the format and decided on something different to Leicester's format.

We went for a half-day carousel style presentation. 6 faiths per workshop at separate tables round the room and the children split between them. After the general introduction the children visit the tables in turn. (Average class of around 30 year 6 pupils).

We have specially printed booklets for each child to take notes in. They also stick a small faith symbol on the appropriate page as they go round. Each page contains the faith's Golden Rule.

15

Children engaged



16



17



18



19



20



21



22

Summing up, story and craft work

The coordinator sums up the session during which the children are encouraged to call out things the faiths share, common beliefs and values, and write them on the reserved last page of their booklet.

After a couple of years we added a story and craft work to the sessions as a way of reinforcing the summing up and a chance for the children to relax and chatter to the leaders.

23

We tell one of the following stories at a workshop. Others could be appropriate too.



25

The six blind men and the elephant

The story is told and then each of the six different groups are given a jigsaw piece of the elephant to decorate.

After this the elephant is put together and the school get to keep it.

26



27

Samples from three of the schools



28



29



30

Stone Soup

The story is told and then the children create the vegetables out of paper or card and stick them in and around the stew pot prepared for them.

The school get to keep the picture.

31





Discussion Group 2: Using social media to increase the impact of your local inter faith work and general principles of using this

This discussion group was facilitated by Wendy Smith, Chair, Waltham Forest Faith Communities Forum, and included an opening presentation from Zac Lloyd, Project Assistant, IFN.

Ms Wendy Smith welcomed participants.

Mr Lloyd gave a presentation using PowerPoint slides. Points from his introductory presentation are below:

- Facebook and Twitter in particular are powerful tools for increasing the impact of local inter faith work through social media.

Benefits for local inter faith organisations

Social media:

- helps local inter faith organisations to raise awareness of the important work that they do, usually at little or no cost;

- helps local inter faith organisations to engage with new audiences, including those who have not previously been involved in inter faith work;
- connects a group with local inter faith organisations in other parts of the country, enabling the sharing of good practice;
- helps local inter faith practitioners to keep up to date with relevant developments;
- provides spaces where people can discuss inter faith issues with others;
- allows local inter faith organisations to amplify their message, and to counter hate crime, prejudice and stereotypes;
- enables practitioners to reach large numbers of people with significantly less effort than more traditional forms of media;
- enables connection of people from diverse constituencies across barriers that might otherwise divide them; and
- enables local inter faith organisations to present themselves in a professional way.

Social media is good for:

- sharing your work, including details of meetings, events and new publications or resources;
 - highlighting developments relevant to local faith communities such as new policies or resources;
 - responding to events that may have an impact on inter faith relations in the UK, such as incidents of hate crime locally or terrorist attacks;
 - sharing details of religious festivals, using a calendar such as that provided by the Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education; and
 - highlighting positive examples of inter faith activities, initiatives and encounters in your area.
- Be clear about who your audience is – post carefully, sensitively and selectively, and think about the purpose of all of your content. Stay local, and focus on inter faith activity.
 - Use social media to learn from others – even if you don't create a lot of content yourself, it is a great way to stay up to date and to learn. Make sure you start by following similar bodies to learn from them.
 - Post regularly, but not too often. Maintain a consistent presence, but without posting so often that followers could become bored or irritated.
 - Be an organisation – always use an organisational, rather than a personal account. Do not use personal accounts for the business of the local inter faith organisation.

Good practice for local inter faith organisations

- Make sure that social media posts are always relevant to the mission, vision and values of your organisation. This is a core principle.

Some caveats

- Because local inter faith organisations generally seek to be impartial and to hold in membership people and organisations with a wide range of views, they generally exercise caution about using social media



Wendy Smith, Waltham Forest Faith Communities Forum

for commenting on religious issues, or issues of religious sensitivity, and international issues.

In discussion the following points were made:

Be careful about the diversity of posts and try to balance posts of different faiths.

- It is also important to consider other social media platforms, such as Instagram and Snapchat, as these are becoming ever more popular, particularly among young people.
- The main age group of people using Facebook is 30–60 years old.
- Using new social media platform does not mean abandoning other forms of media. Traditional media, such as leaflets, newsletters and websites can be complementary and help reach different constituencies.
- Facebook is particularly useful for advertising events, providing information such as date, time and participants. Twitter can also do some of these things, but the character limit makes it less effective.
- Tags can be useful to get a lot of people together.
- Facebook is useful for sharing photos. You can email the link of a photo album on Facebook and people can comment on Facebook directly. It is a good way of networking.
- It is important to notice that posts with lots of words are becoming less popular. People tend to read headlines and image-oriented posts. Consider posting 1–4 photos on Facebook and a short comment instead of having a long prose description.
- A Facebook Group is a space where people can share posts and discuss a specific subject, whereas a Facebook page allows the public to get more information about the LIFO.
- Facebook closed groups can be a useful way to set up a more private conversation, such as a bilateral dialogue on a specific issue.
- The content on social media platforms can be moderated. Inappropriate stuff can be removed by the administrator.
- It takes time to respond to comments. If people raise concerns in the comment section on certain issues, it is important to consider carefully how to answer the question.
- Negative comments may appear on social media platforms. When there are offensive and inappropriate comments, administrator may choose to remove them. But you may also want to consider leaving the challenging question there and opening a dialogue.
- If your organisation wants to discuss something sensitive, you may wish to consider setting up a private group on Facebook, which the public cannot see.
- You can set up a public page and group on Facebook. For a Facebook group, people need to apply to enter into the group.
- Twitter Hashtags are useful. You can search terms such as 'Inter Faith'. It is particularly helpful when people are looking for things that are happening. Hashtags can link related posts together. This can engage people to talk about some issue.

- LinkedIn is a form of social media used by professionals for networking and can be a useful way of showing your CV and job searching.
- Posting images and stories that show the multi-faith nature of your organisation helps demonstrate its engagement with diverse communities.
- It is important not to remain dormant for a month as the page can lose attention and lead people to unfollow.
- As well as tweeting about your upcoming events you can tweet about related events and programmes such as Inter Faith Week, Refugee Week and Volunteers' Week.



Using social media to increase the impact of local inter faith work

Zac Lloyd, Project Assistant, IFN
zac.lloyd@interfaith.org.uk

Social media helps you too...

- Tell the world about your work, at no cost*
- Engage new audiences
- Stay in the loop about what is going on
- Bring people together
- Amplify your message, and counter negativity



19 March 2018

@IFNetUK
www.facebook.com/ifnetuk

Why for local inter faith groups?

- Local inter faith activity is often voluntary – social media can provide significant reward for little effort
- LIFOs are connecting people – social media allows people to communicate across barriers
- LIFOs do amazing work, and are a vital resource in their communities. Social media lets you celebrate this
- You can look professional. You can tell the public that you are a serious, important organisation



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How we do it...

Our Vision

Our vision is of a society where there is understanding of the diversity and richness of the faith communities in the UK and the contribution that they make; and where we live and work together with mutual respect and shared commitment to the common good.

Our Mission

Working with faith communities, inter faith organisations, educators and others to increase understanding and cooperation between people of different faiths and to widen public awareness of the distinctive religious traditions in the UK. Working to achieve this through: supporting and encouraging inter faith initiatives and sharing good practice between these; helping create opportunities for mutual learning and tackling prejudice; and offering opportunity for engagement between faith communities and Government and other public agencies on relevant issues.

Our Values

The values which we aspire to reflect in all our work are:

- Service to others
- Integrity
- Accountability
- Trust
- Consultative and cooperative working
- Valuing diversity
- Inclusiveness
- Listening and openness
- Courtesy
- Mutual respect
- Respecting dissent and people's right to express this



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How we do it...

Year-round, IFN uses social media for:

- Sharing our work, including meetings, events and publications



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How we do it...

- Responding to events that impact inter faith relations in the UK



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How we do it...

- Sharing details of religious festivals



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How we do it...

- Highlighting the work of our member bodies



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How we do it...

- Highlighting faith and public life issues



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We do not use social media for...

- Commenting on religious issues
- Discussing international issues, except where they impact inter faith relations in the UK
- Mediating in disputes, or getting involved in arguments

IFN also takes great care to ensure an even balance of faith representation – this is important.

These boundaries are what gives IFN its distinctive role – these are important on social media.

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Some things you can do...

A few small steps can help you and your followers to get the most out of Twitter and Facebook.

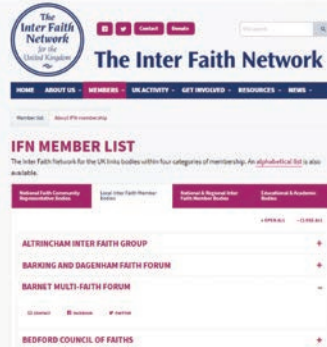
- Use social media to learn from others – it is an effective tool even without creating content yourself!
- Be clear about who your audience is – post carefully, sensitively and selectively, and think about the purpose of all of your content
- Post regularly, but not too often. Maintain a consistent presence, but without boring people
- Be an organisation – use an organisational, rather than a personal account

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<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/members/list>



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Be an organisation – do not conflate organisational and personal activity

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The Inter Faith Network for the United Kingdom

Further resources

There is a lot of good more detailed guidance out there for charities and voluntary organisations on using social media. Here are just a few places to look:

- The Small Charities Coalition has collected a range of detailed guidance at <https://www.smallcharities.org.uk/resources-social-media/>.
- The National Council for Voluntary Organisations has produced guidance on using social media at <https://knowhownonprofit.org/campaigns/communications/social-media>.
- Faith Action has produced some helpful guidance on getting started on Facebook and Twitter. Look here: <http://www.faithaction.net/blog/2017/09/28/getting-started-twitter/> and here: <http://www.faithaction.net/blog/2017/06/15/i-set-facebook-page-faith-group-i/>.

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The Inter Faith Network for the United Kingdom

Discussion Group 3: Developing successful programmes and widening the circle of engagement

This discussion group was facilitated by Dr Harriet Crabtree, Executive Director, IFN. It explored some of the factors that local inter faith bodies have identified as helping their work have impact – and the day to day challenges of sustaining and developing local inter faith initiatives.

There has been, in recent times, a series of spikes in hate crime and divisiveness. The always important work of local inter faith groups is ever more so. Planning for, and implementing, a successful programme is very important to keeping that work going.

An opening presentation from the Revd Anthea Ballam, Brighton and Hove Interfaith Contact Group was not included due to illness of the presenter

‘Success’

Dr Crabtree asked participants what they saw as indicators of success.

Responses included:

- Widening the engagement of people taking part.
- Making the local inter faith organisation known to those who have not heard of it.
- Developing good relationships with the local authority.
- Taking valuable learning back to communities – regardless of whether you are a small or large body.
- Continuing to work together in good relationship for the benefit of the wider community.

Impact, outputs and outcomes

Dr Crabtree said that impact of inter faith initiatives can be hard to measure. There is a need to be clear about how one is measuring ‘impact’ and what the measures are. Does it make a difference to a local community? Does it make a difference to individuals? Has it helped particular faith groups? How can one judge this? Sometimes the impact on people is not immediate or easy to quantify. It can be ‘slow burn’. For example, earlier involvement in York Interfaith Group had been described as having an impact on the imam and local mosque in York and been a factor in the mosque’s inviting members of the English Defence League in for tea when they came to protest outside in 2013.



Harriet Crabtree and Jatinder Singh Birdi

Being clear on ‘outputs’ and ‘outcomes’ is part of measuring whether work is producing the desired results. What is not easy to measure is the ‘volume of the dog that doesn’t bark’, ie the absence of tension and the positive results that may have happened because local inter faith organisations have helped to diffuse tensions or, for example, to increase religious literacy or relationships of trust.

Participants commented that:

- Most have work plans for their organisations which they monitor.
- Press stories validating work can be helpful.
- Outputs can include, for example, publications, meetings and radio interviews. Attendance at meetings can be measured.
- Outcomes – the difference made – is important, not just outputs. Funders are usually interested in both outputs and outcomes.

- The impact of an inter faith group is not about numbers. Knowing the number of people who attended an event does not say anything about its impact. Buying into the corporate ‘metrics’ mentality puts people off community groups and should be challenged, not encouraged.
- It can be important to look at long term outcomes, over 5 year periods for example.
- Success in breaking down misperceptions is one of the things that it is hard to monitor or measure.

Planning

Dr Crabtree said that feedback from groups over the years made it clear that clarity about an organisation’s vision and goals is very important and helps ensure that programmes are not drifting away from core work, for example by focusing on a particular project that comes up to the exclusion or detriment of other work. Successful planning responds to the needs of an area, so scoping and planning are also important. Programmes will vary in different areas depending on what each group thinks is useful in their locality, as

well as on the resources and aims of the group. It is helpful to discuss at the outset how you plan to measure success.

Participants offered the following reflections on what their organisations are aiming to achieve this year:

- Harrow Interfaith is hoping to look beyond faith groups to other groups, such as the local police, and to look at topics such as mental health.
- Waveney Interfaith Circle is aiming to create a relaxed social setting where people can talk freely.
- Welwyn Hatfield Inter Faith Group, which has existed for 14 years, is looking afresh at its programme. It has a good schools programme, but would also like to get more involved with the children from faith communities. A play put on by Grassroots Luton has been booked for a big meeting in June. Those involved in the Group are ageing and there is discussion about this.

- Bexley has had an inter faith organisation for around 15 years. Some periods are busier than others and people come and go. The most successful projects have been with primary and secondary schools. This year the focus will be on food and cookery events.
- Hertsmere Forum of Faiths has found it hard to find suitable meeting places reflecting all the diverse faith communities and so they are now in negotiation with the local authority and hope to be able to meet at a community centre. The Forum will monitor the faith groups who meet there.
- West Suffolk Interfaith and Community Forum is relatively new. It has a contact list of around 150 people and is focusing on putting together a programme that will meet the needs of people's curiosity



DEVELOPING SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMMES AND WIDENING THE CIRCLE OF ENGAGEMENT

Some of the factors that groups have identified as helping their work have impact – and some of the day to day challenges of sustaining and developing local inter faith initiatives.

1. What do we think success looks like and how might we know if we are achieving it?
 - Achievement of our objectives for which we were established
 - Making a difference to:
 - o our local community
 - o individuals
 - o faith groups
 - o schools
 - o others
 - How do we monitor and evaluate our work to gauge success and measure impact?
 - o work plan with out-comes monitoring to see if they have been achieved
 - o considering outcomes
 - o membership
 - o numbers of people coming to meetings
 - o age range involved
 - o resources produced
 - o testimonies of individuals or groups about the way their participation has changed their outlook
 - o Other

Two examples of helpful guidelines on monitoring and evaluation:

Evaluating community projects: a practical guide. Marilyn Taylor, Derrick Purdue, Mandy Wilson and Pete Wilde. Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2005.
<https://www.irf.org.uk/sites/default/files/58854167abd6/files/18>

Monitoring and Evaluation on a Shoestring. Sally Cupitt and Jean Ellis for Charity Evaluation Services, 2011
<http://www.tinebanking.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Monitoring-and-Evaluation-on-a-Shoestring.pdf>

to learn more about different faith communities.

- Medway Inter Faith Action has successfully implemented plans in the past, such as the annual peace walk. It is interested to get new ideas. The Chaplain of Medway Council is involved.
- Norwich InterFaith Link will be focusing on making sure there is a programme and having the time to plan it and carry it out. New ideas are usually considered at its AGM. There are often opportunities to respond to initiatives that are suggested by faith communities, for example, getting involved in the celebrations for World Religion Day led by the Baha'i community and tapping in to their energy.

2. Our Vision and our goals
 - What are our founding objectives, our vision and our mission? clear about these?
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 this?
 - The importance of planning
 - Scoping scanning the environment
 - What are local needs?
 - Who else is engaging with needs?
 - Considering partnership working on particular strands
4. Resources
 - Planning a programme with an eye to resources
 - Human resources
 - Financial and other resources
 - Dangers of being 'funding driven'
5. Maintaining and growing participation
 - Patterns of participation
 - Encouraging participation
 - Dealing with challenges
 - Handling and responding well to change
 - Reaching out to particular groups (younger, older, women, different beliefs)
 - Membership and wider participation/engagement
6. Organisational underpinnings
 - The less visible but crucial underpinnings of successful programmes
 - People
 - Communication making your events known and raising their profile
7. Programmes
 - Building a programme
 - Different activities
 - Targeting different audiences
 - Faith groups
 - Involving civic leaders
 - A distinctive dimension to your programme
 - Special Weeks and Days
 - Partnership working
8. Affirmation and celebration

March 2018

Other keys to success

Other factors discussed as part of developing successful programmes were:

- Working in partnerships with other bodies which can help engage more people and widen the circle of those involved.
- Finding the right venues, which are safe spaces that are affordable and accessible.
- Having solid administration – volunteers and staff all have a role to play and it is important to be clear who does what.
- Handling communications well.

In discussion about communications a number of points were made:

- It is important to have a communications strategy.
- It is helpful to have a designated person, persons or subcommittee to handle communications.
- Output and statements have to be agreed by the organisation.
- One group reported that it has a person who is good at graphic design so she focuses on the communications role and has also created a business card for the group.
- Giving one person responsibility for social media does not take the pressure off, but rather just changes the work, because there is a need to ensure the person stays within the brief and the group's objectives.
- It can be useful to have one person managing all social media accounts – although it is important that the relevant passwords are held by more than one person.
- Tower Hamlets Inter Faith Forum (THIFF) is aiming to ensure that there is an active Muslim membership at its meetings. Another aim is to improve the relationship between THIFF and other statutory bodies. An LGBT group commissioned by the local Council has approached THIFF to consider how best to start a dialogue between faith communities and LGBT groups in the area. There are a number of small pieces of ongoing work that enable THIFF to be prepared to be in solidarity with others when needed. Such relationships take time and cannot be created instantaneously.
- Barnet Multi Faith Forum is planning a tree planting ceremony in partnership with the Faiths Forum for London and the local Council.

- One group reported that it disseminates information mainly through a mailing list.
- Another now has a blog set up by one of its members and that is easy to set up and is a way to reach many people.
- Sending festival greetings can be a good way to Tweet because that creates a lot of tweets, is not too contentious and is a way to be positive and spread information about a community. If doing this, it is important that there is a balance in the faith communities to whom greetings are sent.
- Material on Facebook and Twitter can often be poor and advertising events through social media does not always lead to people turning up.
- Traditional printed material is also important. Leaflets and business cards are a good idea.
- In Norwich they have found that printed material is more useful than social media in attracting people to events.
- Social media is very useful.
- Social media should be used alongside other forms of communication.
- A basic website remains important.
- It's important to ensure proper security for websites and social media platforms.
- It is helpful to review communications every few years.
- Any communications will need to be in line with the new General Data Protection Regulations from May 2018.
- Online communication and emails are no substitute for personal engagement – knocking on doors and talking person to person.

Discussion Group 4: Initiating new local inter faith bodies and reviewing the work and direction of existing ones in changing times

This discussion group was facilitated by Dr Harriet Crabtree, Executive Director, IFN. It included an opening presentation from Miss Jay Anderson of Leeds Faiths Forum about operating in a time of change.

As none of the participants were involved in setting up a group or were part of a group that had been in existence for less than 1 year it was agreed that the focus of the discussion would be on reviewing the work and direction of existing bodies.

Miss Anderson offered her presentation, a summary of which is below:

Jay Anderson

- She had become the Secretary of Leeds Faiths Forum (LFF) 6 weeks ago.
- LFF has been going for 20 years but she and many Board members were not aware of all its history.
- LFF began in 1997/98, as the Leeds Faith Communities Liaison Forum. It has a different but complementary emphasis to Concord Interfaith Fellowship (Leeds) (CIFL).
- CIFL celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2017.
- CIFL is an organisation of individuals interested in their own faith and other people's. Its focus is on improving religious literacy among individuals at grassroots level.



**Jay Anderson, Leeds Faiths Forum and
Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship**

- LFF carries out research and interacts with Government at national and local level and also with 3 universities and NHS Trusts.
- CIFL used to hold one big Inter Faith Week event at the main City Museum. The event then got passed to LFF which moved it to the Merrion Centre. Because of personnel changes within LFF and CIFL the Museum took it over and has relocated it to Kirkstall Abbey, which is where it has been ever since. This year's event will join up with the centenary commemorations for the end of the First World War.
- LFF also run conferences. These have been about women and inter faith involvement (2007), the environment (2009) and health (2011).
- Key figures in Leeds have taken work forward behind the scenes, forming strong and reliable friendships along the way. In the last few years those involved in LFF have been changing. This has been due to retirement or job changes or in a few cases the death of members. The professional working relationships and friendships are perhaps not as strong.
- Society and individual priorities have changed. The politics and economics of the last 20 years has led to individual faith communities tending to look inwards and to focus on their own security and wellbeing perhaps sometimes to the detriment of their wider inter faith and community work.
- The drive to do inter faith work for LFF and CIFL seems to have become responsive rather than proactive. For example most of the statements have been responding to events.
- The sadly frequent terror attacks in the last years have raised a question for LFF – do we put out a statement for every terror
- LFF is an umbrella organisation of faith community bodies in Leeds.
- The original launch of LFF was in 2001. It was around the time of the 9/11 terrorist attack. It was set up as a strategic partnership body/critical friend between faith organisations in Leeds and statutory bodies.
- LFF reflects faith communities in Leeds and includes a City Council representative.
- Work with the City Council led to mutual help and restructuring for LFF, with help from Leeds City Institute to access public funding.
- LFF is the voice of unity for faith organisations when difficult situations arise such as after terror attacks. For example, LFF put out statements after the 7/7 bombings and last year's terror attacks.

attack given the high frequency? Do people stop reading them when there are too many?

- More generally within Leeds, there is a definite interest in inter faith engagement and organisations have caught on and joined in. In the last couple of years, as part of its diversity agenda, Leeds City Council has launched a series of 'Hubs'. These are groups of individuals from the community that each fit a protected characteristic. There is now a Religion and Belief Hub that also liaises with the Council. Like CIFL it has individual membership, not organisational.
- There has been some discussion within LFF about what this means for its own role – a bit of an identity crisis. LFF is seeking to redefine its role and place in this evolving inter faith landscape. Involving the younger generations is an important part of that. Since 2007 there have only been 3 people younger than her on either the LFF or CIFL Board, one of whom is Jaskiran Kaur Mehmi, who is currently assisting on IFN's youth programme.
- In the light of IFN's membership admission policy changes, LFF is looking to broaden representation outside of the nine faiths. LFF has had a Pagan on its Board for more than a decade but in a liaison role between LFF and CIFL rather than in a 'faith representative' category.
- LFF is trying to be more proactive and to generate interest in organisations and faith groups. Social media helps with this and is being used by both LFF and CIFL.

Questions and answers

Answers in italics are from Jay Anderson except where indicated.

- Norwich InterFaith Link began as a membership organisation for individuals and organisations but over the years it has become more about individuals coming together. The development of a reference group (ie, a list of people who can send queries to the right contacts in various faith groups) has been on the agenda for many years, but not yet happened. About 5 years ago the group was in the doldrums, but is steadily improving.

There seem to be waves and dips across the work of inter faith bodies. It is important to stick with it if it seems to be waning.

- There can be tensions where inter faith bodies are consulted by statutory bodies. The groups can find it hard to respond and sometimes there is a feeling that they are being asked to contribute to consultations which are not that valuable and are being traded as a token multi-faith response. There can also be issues when the people fielded to respond find themselves wearing two hats: of the inter faith body and of a particular local faith community.

Wearing different hats is ok so long as you remember which hat you're wearing.

Bearing with consultations can be useful as others may benefit from them. It also puts your face and name out there for when more useful events/consultations are put out.

It's important to know whether a group is able to speak representatively and to have a structure to back that up. Consultation responses or feedback need a person who has been empowered to do that. Requests to respond to consultations can be a big burden on local inter faith groups that were not set up as sounding boards. Dr Crabtree

12 years ago the main focus of the Warwick District Faiths Forum was to learn about each other's faiths. Now the main aim is to make society better. WDFF looks at current

topics, for example health and wellbeing, protecting communities and sustainability of the environment. There will be a conference on the latter in the autumn. Police and statutory bodies consult WDFF when they want to but WDFF drives the agenda. **Jatinder Singh Birdi**

- Are the same people involved in the two Leeds inter faith groups?
Yes in terms of the minority faiths because there are less of them overall.
- If the same people are in different groups, they can become quite dominant. If a new group is set up then people sometimes think there is competition and they become nervous.
When the Council's Religion and Belief Hub began it included all the LFF and LCIFF members and the City Council didn't want that so it became dormant for 18 months or so. When it was relaunched the Council made a concerted effort to ensure that people not involved in LFF and CILF sit as Hub reps.
- Is the LFF review process external or internal?
LFF's review is being carried out internally. The Officers have agreed a process, including an away day and time for strategic planning, to consider membership, age ranges, diversity and where the Forum fits in the landscape.
- It can be helpful to have at least one or two outsiders involved in a review to give other perspectives.
The Vice-Chair has only just been recently appointed and is new to the area, so he will bring a fresh perspective.
- Solihull Faiths Forum (SFF) was set up during the last Labour administration (12 years ago). It functioned well for several years but by the time the participant got involved 5 years ago there was little support from the local council and the Forum's profile and activities had begun

to fade. Since then, with some new faith representatives and the signing of the Faith Covenant with the council, there has been much more engagement with them and a steady increase of awareness and support for the Forum. Solihull is very close to Birmingham, so many people who live in Solihull worship in Birmingham. SFF is looking at ways to grow, strengthen and spread.

Dr Crabtree circulated a handout a copy of which is at the end of this note. This reflected discussion by groups at earlier meetings. She highlighted the following points:

- It is good for a local inter faith body to remind itself of what's been positive.
- Try to get feedback from people locally, find out what they think has worked and what has not.
- It's important to plan for the next phase and to look at the organisation's aims and check that they are still ok and 'fit for purpose'.
- Trying to do too much in an unresourced way, or being unclear about what can be achieved, is unhelpful. It is good to review the position every year. One way to do this might be to carry out a sounding exercise by consulting local places of worship.
- Some groups have ongoing audits, other carry these out formally perhaps once a year or once every few years. However, many groups are not aware of new initiatives in their area, such as informal women's inter faith groups. It is good to look on the internet, to talk to people and to find out.

In general discussion the following points were made and questions considered:

Planning and reviewing work

- Prior to the setting up of Warwick District Faiths Forum (WDFF) two previous forums closed in Warwick and that underlined the need to ensure that WDFF is always responding to local needs and wishes. Each year at its AGM WDFF reviews what has been done in the previous year, where it is at, what it should be doing and how it can improve. One of the issues that has been improved is bringing in external speakers to meetings so that more people are interested to participate.
- Some local inter faith organisations could find the suggested processes on the handout offputting. One participant said that his group might run a mile!
- Perhaps a gentle reflection on reviewing can be taken back to local inter faith groups. It could be an exciting time to look perhaps at new approaches. All groups are different, so different approaches are needed. Sometimes it is good to nudge people.
- It is important not to promise what cannot be delivered. Losing credibility is easy, recovering it is harder.
- It is important to promote our work and to learn from one another. Seeds have to be sown that take time to flourish. It is always good to keep evaluating what a body is doing.

Relationships between groups

- WDFF is in contact with inter faith groups in Rugby, Warwick, Stratford and Nuneaton and they all share what they are doing across the wider network.

- It can be challenging when a new group comes along, for instance when local authorities set up their own body.
- Older local inter faith organisations often try to do everything because they're the only group in town, but that can limit their programme. Under the last Labour administration local inter faith organisations were encouraged, but minority faiths did not have paid staff to take part. In some cases local inter faith organisations found it hard to cope with a huge new agenda and statutory bodies wishing to consult faith communities.
- The presentation on LFF and CIFL had helped one participant to clarify the type of organisation she belongs to.



INITIATING NEW LOCAL INTER FAITH BODIES AND REVIEWING THE WORK AND DIRECTION OF EXISTING ONES IN CHANGING TIMES

1. Setting out

- Why do we think a new initiative is needed?
 - Absence of such a body locally?
 - Expressed wish of local faith communities?
 - Request from other bodies such as local authority?
 - Other?
- Getting people involved
 - What might our pattern of membership or involvement look like?
 - Who may we need to involve early on?
 - Operating in less diverse areas
 - Making contact
 - Other
- Being clear about aims and working methods
 - Agreeing our aims
 - The set up period importance of taking time
 - Agreeing how we work - structure and principles
 - Communications including statements
 - Constitution?
 - Resources
 - Bank account and other practical matters
 - Thinking about a launch and the first year's programme
 - Other
- Should we register as a charity?
- Sustainability - setting a measured and workable pace with realistic objectives.
- Some other issues

The Local Inter Faith Guide, Inter Faith Network for the UK with Inner Cities Religious Council of the then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, second 2005 [about to be updated] <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/interfaith-local-community-cooperation-impact-report-second-edition>

Faiths Working Together Toolkit Near Neighbours and Inter Faith Network, 2015 <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/faiths-working-together-toolkit>

Who is involved

- Not all faith communities want to be part of local inter faith organisations; some have to be encouraged.
- Sometimes there are just members of the public who want to be part of a group.
- If you don't have any Catholics involved in your local inter faith organisation, approach your local Catholic Diocese.
- It is always good to ask, to start connections.

Partnerships

- Partnership working can be very helpful. Statutory agencies will often support voluntary groups because they don't

have their own resources. Looking out for whole community is important.

- Statutory bodies often like visible outcomes, such as training or faith calendars.

Young people and succession

- Members getting older is a concern for many local inter faith organisations. In Welwyn Hatfield Inter Faith Group both the Chair and Vice-Chair are retiring this year. WHIFG will need perhaps to trim its ideas down in the coming year. It is better to do one thing well than to diversify too much.

- Young people are often more able to attend events if they are not during the working day. Evening and weekend events can be helpful. It's also important to think about what times suit families best.

- Medway Inter Faith Action worked in partnership with Medway Youth Parliament for a short while. Some of the young people came to do a presentation for the commemoration of the Holocaust, then after attending one or two meetings they did not, however, come again.

- It is important to change with the times. There are ways to get youth involved and to communicate with them. A group cannot necessarily have everyone on board all the time but they can still engage with people.

- One of the current event's discussion groups is about young people. IFN is currently carrying out a programme of work called 'Connect: inter faith engagement of young people'.

2. Reviewing our work in changing times

a) Importance of review and scoping

- Importance of regular review every ~~year~~ ^{year} plus strategic scoping for the next period
 - Evaluation how our work has developed over the last, eg, 3 years and whether we believe it has been successful
 - Strategic scoping
- How do we monitor and evaluate our work to gauge success and measure impact?
 - work plan with out-puts to see if they have been achieved
 - considering outcomes
 - membership
 - numbers of people coming to meetings
 - age range involved
 - resources produced
 - testimonies of individuals or groups about the way that participation has changed their outlook
 - Other

Two examples of helpful guidelines on monitoring and evaluation:

Evaluating community projects: a practical guide. Marilyn Taylor, Derrick Purdue, Mandy Wilson and Pete Wilde, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2005.
<https://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/default/files/p8854167apdf/files/18>

Monitoring and Evaluation on a Shoestring. Sally Cupitt and Jean Ellis for Charity Evaluation Services, 2011
<http://www.timebanking.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Monitoring-and-Evaluation-on-a-Shoestring.pdf>

b) Planning for the next phase

- What may our vision and goals mean in our current operating environment
- Scoping scanning the environment
 - What are local needs?
 - Who else is engaging with similar needs?
- Developing a work plan
 - Optimistic realism or realistic optimism
 - Measurable
 - Achievable
 - Sustainable
- Considering partnership working on particular strands
- Other

March 2018

Discussion Group 5: Increasing Engagement with and by Young People

This discussion group was facilitated by Ervad Yazad Bhadha, and included a presentation by Frances Hume of Interfaith Scotland.

Ervad Yazad Bhadha welcomed participants, and explained that the workshop was an opportunity to explore different ways in which young people have been involved in inter faith work with local organisations in particular, and how we can continue to involve them.

Ms Frances Hume began with a presentation on the ways that young people have been engaged with Interfaith Scotland. A copy of her PowerPoint presentation slides is at the end of this note.

She began by asking participants 'Why is it important for local inter faith groups to engage with young people?' Their responses are below.

- Young people have different talents, and it is important to communicate with young people to access these talents, and also to empower young people.
- It is usually much older people who run inter faith organisations, and they can be reluctant to pass control to young people. Young people can therefore feel that there is no space for them in these organisations.
- It is important to involve young people especially in secondary schools and beyond.
- Freshness of thought and ideas is important, as well as familiarity with the world of work in the present which is not as it was 10 or 15 years ago. This is something young people have insight into.
- It is important to bridge the generational gap, and inter faith work is something that can do this in an interesting way.
- It is essential to engage young people and harness their enthusiasm as early as possible, and give them an opportunity to express their needs and concerns. Young people want to engage and gain knowledge, but there is a lack of space for them to do this, especially in schools. There has to be collaboration between organisations, clubs, communities, and groups of young people, and we have to facilitate this.
- We can learn so much from young people. They have a strong sense of right and wrong and of how the world works. We should be interested in their views and how they communicate and this will be valuable for all of us and our organisations.
- Young people are the future and it is important to mobilise them. We need to think about how to involve young people in the leadership of local inter faith organisations.
- Engaging young people and hearing their ideas will help us to grow and gain new perspectives, even if we do not agree with everything they have to say.
- IFN has a youth inter faith engagement project, which includes focus groups and social media surveys. It has found that many young people are very idealistic and have goals such as wanting to build better societies and a better world. This should be borne in mind.



Frances Hume, Interfaith Scotland, leading discussion group

Types of activities

Ms Hume went on to speak about activities run by Interfaith Scotland (IFS).

- She had first encountered inter faith youth activities when she was invited to attend an inter faith youth retreat, organised by Interfaith Scotland, on Holy Isle off the island of Arran.
- She had met a group of inspiring young people from different faith backgrounds who were passionate about making a positive difference in their communities. The young people were tasked to create a national youth conference. They picked the theme 'Service above self', and were involved in arranging speakers, planning a workshop and facilitating on the day. The young people formed a steering committee and have organised seven annual national youth conferences, the most recent on the theme of 'Radicalisation and Reconciliation' at the University of St Andrews in partnership with the university's student-led group, the Co-existence Initiative. IFS has found that focusing on a theme is helpful for dialogue.
- IFS has held a variety of fun activities, as this can be a way of getting to know each other through interacting in a way where dialogue comes spontaneously. These have included an inter faith football match, away days and retreats to places of spiritual significance, picnics, dinners, hill walks, visits to places of worship, art, music, dance and film making.
- Young volunteers are also involved in IFS's 'Face to Faith' schools project. They visit schools to talk about their faith from a personal perspective. This can help to bring the faith alive beyond the textbook and challenge some of the negative stereotypes that people hold about religions and religious people. Pupils are given the opportunity to try on religious dress such as hijabs and kippahs. They also enjoy interacting with religious objects.
- In September 2017 Interfaith Scotland in partnership with the Church of Scotland took a group of five Muslim and five Christian young people to Rwanda to look at the role of religious communities in rebuilding after the genocide. This encounter also helped to build bonds of friendship between the young people.
- As part of Scottish Interfaith Week, over the last three years, IFS has run an art competition for young people. In 2017 the challenge set was to 'design an inter faith place of worship for the 21st Century'. The

young people put care and attention into thinking of ways in which a place of worship could meet the needs of people from different faiths, while also having a common space for people to meet such as a community café or garden. IFS also trains Interfaith Week 'Youth Ambassadors' who attend events and blog/tweet about them.

- As part of the Year of Young People, IFS received funding in 2018 to employ a Youth Project Officer. He will be running a Youth Leadership Residential in September for young people aged 16 – 26 from different faiths. It is hoped that young people from the residential will form a National Youth Forum.
- Another recent initiative was the Outside In project funded by Erasmus+. Five young people from Scotland were trained to become trainers equipped to train others to recognise hate speech in youth work settings and to manage and transform it. They have currently trained over 70 youth workers. The project spans five European countries and IFS has been part of the team training as trainers young people from Finland, Portugal, Slovenia and Ireland.
- A second Erasmus youth project that IFS is working on is the 'Inclusive Youth Work Project'. It aims to assist youth workers to be inclusive of people who could potentially be marginalised in youth work settings. 22 youth workers from across Europe joined IFS during Scottish Interfaith Week to learn about religious diversity and inclusive youth work. Youth workers from Scotland have attended training in Slovenia, Portugal and Romania on the other areas of potential marginalisation.
- IFS has been conducting research with university chaplains to find out more about inter faith engagement amongst students and staff and ways that the

organisation could provide more support in this area.

- Another way of including young people in the work of IFS has been including a young person as a youth co-optee on the Board of IFS.

Other examples of activities were given by participants:

- Luton Council of Faiths has used inter faith archery in the past. This encouraged girls and boys to get involved, and people of all ages, including parents and older people. This gave different generations the chance to spend time together and learn something from each other.
- It is useful to link young people with sports. It attracts high participation, and is entertaining for them. It can provide a way for them to want to learn about inter faith work and want to engage.
- National associations like the Football Association and the relevant national Cricket Boards are trying to engage in inter faith sport, and if local groups engaged with them they could take part without having to set up their own events.
- An Inter Faith Week event that IFN held with Sporting Equals at the Leicester Tigers rugby ground last year brought many sporting organisations, faith communities and inter faith organisations together. One important point raised was the need to take into account gender issues with an example given of separate female football teams for those in the Muslim community.
- Inter faith choirs can be a good idea.
- Young people are keen to engage in social action. As mentioned earlier, young people want to change the world. This can be through work with refugees, food banks, and so forth.

- There is a Jewish Way of Life exhibition in London which has a schools programme with volunteers going into schools to hold inter faith days.
- Harrow Interfaith held an art competition called ‘three stories from three faiths’ with students listening to different stories and making art from them. People from other faiths noticed things that people of the faith from which the story came did not. These insights were very interesting.
- One participant had worked with Bosnian refugees after the war. They had set up football teams to occupy their time to prevent them from engaging in criminal behaviour, and it really improved their lives and they spent a lot of their free time with the teams.
- Young people moving on can also be positive, as it creates a new group of people who will go out and change the world in different ways.
- One participant said that when he was younger he was the chair of a youth council. The adults involved hoped it would be a lasting organisation that could be passed on to more young people. But the young people did not want to inherit an organisation. They were interested in working in the moment. If you want to incorporate young people into a structure, you may have difficulty, but if you are just trying to inform them you may have better luck.

Long-term engagement and sustainability

- What are these activities followed up by? What happens to young people who are passionate about and engaged with the dialogue? We have many events, but the question is whether they lead to further activity.
- There are ‘people of the movement’ and ‘people of the moment’. Young people are mainly ‘people of the moment’, and come to certain events and add something interesting, but eventually move on from inter faith engagement.
- If young people do want to engage long-term, then the issue is raised of how to incorporate them structurally into organisations.
- As young people get older they move on and it is hard to sustain engagement. IFS’s National Youth Forum also faces this challenge.
- In general discussion the following points were made:
 - An important question is how to make successful activities. What tools do we need – arts, music, food, etc.? IFS has found that the creativity and arts themes are successful. Next year it plans to use the theme of ‘Connecting the generations’ for SIFW, because its research suggests that people find it difficult to create events that attract people of all ages.
 - Sometimes it can be difficult to get girls involved, particularly in sport, because of the barrier of same sex teams.
 - Young people have an innocence about them and can be very observant and ask genuine questions that adults may not think to ask. The participant had had a young child ask him a question about his faith that he did not know the answer to, and he had to think on the spot to respond to her. Young people always question things which is important.
 - Education Scotland gave IFS an exercise called the ‘5 whys’. This process means that when you set up an activity you should always ask why you are doing all

aspects of it – this will lead to achieving the core goal.

- One participant said that she had attended many 'inter faith' events, but often found there was an emphasis on the Abrahamic faiths with Hindu and other Dharmic faiths underrepresented.

There should be proper multi faith engagement in inter faith activity, including youth inter faith activity.

- Empowering young people and giving them responsibility is important. There has to be faith in young people and they should be trusted.



Increasing engagement with and by young people

Why is it important for local interfaith groups to engage with young people?

Why is interfaith youth work important?

Responding to world events



Overcoming suspicion



Breaking down fear of others and negative stereotypes of other religious traditions

Encountering different faiths



Building friendships



Sharing Common Values



The Golden Rule

"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you"

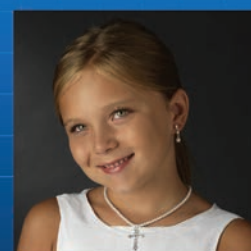
Tackling Social Issues

'Faith In Community Scotland'

Brings together Christian, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh communities to tackle poverty



Religious rights and inclusion



What would make you want to take part in inter faith activity as a young person?



- Opportunities to make a real difference
- Opportunities to learn about relevant and interesting issues
- Opportunities for responsibility



What does interfaith with young people look like?

Types of Interfaith Encounter

- Visits to places of worship
- Sharing meals and informal conversation
- Finding out about each others' beliefs
- Looking at topics, e.g. the Environment
- Exploring faith journeys
- Social action projects
- Walks
- Picnics
- Music nights, art, dance
- Quizzes



Interfaith football match!



Youth Retreats & Away Days



Schools Programme



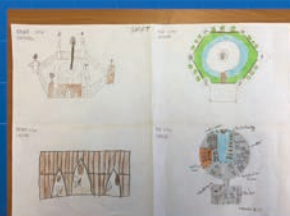
Exploring religious objects



International Youth Leaders Learning Exchange to Rwanda



IFW Art Competition 'Design an interfaith place of worship for the 21st Century'



Radicalisation Reconciliation

Scottish Interfaith Youth Conference

University of St Andrews, Parliament Hall
St Mary's College South Street
Saturday, 21st April
10.45 - 16.30

Lunch and refreshments provided

Meet speakers and students from all backgrounds for thought provoking speeches and discussion on the subject of Radicalisation and Reconciliation.

Free bus provided from Glasgow to St Andrews leaving at 8.45 from George Square. Booking essential.
Financial travel support (up to £10) from other locations.

Book your free ticket at:
<http://interfaithyouthconference.eventbrite.co.uk>



Other Initiatives

- National Youth Forum
- Youth Ambassadors Programme
- Young person on the Board of IFS
- SIFW 'Connecting Generations'
- Universities



Training on Tackling Hate Speech in a Youth Setting

OUTSIDE IN YOUTH TRAINING

Interfaith Scotland

Learning Objectives

- 1) Improve understanding of issues surrounding hate speech, and religious and cultural diversity
- 2) Recognise forms of hate speech and related challenging behaviour
- 3) Learn ways to effectively manage the situation when hate speech occurs
- 4) Explore different approaches to transforming the young person's outlook

Intended Audience

The training is most relevant for those who work regularly with groups of young people, in a professional or voluntary capacity. This includes youth workers, youth leaders in faith communities, teachers and those who work with young offenders.

Free, one-day training courses for youth workers, on how to respond when a young person uses religious or other hate speech.

Using a highly participative, non-formal educational approach, this training aims to equip those working in a youth setting with appropriate tools for tackling hate speech. Participants will explore different issues relating to cultural and religious diversity. They will learn how to recognise hate speech, and how to manage the situation when it occurs. They will also develop tools to support transformation of the beliefs and attitudes that underpin the behaviour.

Dates of public courses

Organisations or individuals can book places on any public session by clicking on a date below:

- Tuesday 27th March
- Thursday 12th April
- Tuesday 18th May
- Thursday 21st Jan
- Tuesday 17th Jul

Each session will run from 0930 to 1630 and most will be held in the Dialogue Room of Interfaith Scotland (address on the left). Tea and coffee will be provided, but delegates will need to arrange their own lunch. There are some options in the area around the office.

To book places, please click on a date above. For other information, or to discuss arranging an in-house session for your staff, please contact Anne Trenchard at anne@interfaithscotland.org or on 01721 429 952. We may use the food organisation to cover our travel and other incidental costs.

Interfaith Scotland
FLEMINGTON HOUSE, 139 FLEMINGTON STREET
GLASGOW, G2 1 4BB
TEL: 0141 554 5579

WWW.INTERFAITHSCOTLAND.ORG

How can local interfaith groups engage with young people?

Discussion Group 6: Partnership working with other bodies, such as local authorities, in pursuit of common aims, such as inter faith understanding, cooperation and integration

This workshop was facilitated by Charanjit AjitSingh, Hounslow Friends of Faith and an introductory presentation was made by Andy Sipple, Kettering Interfaith Forum (KIF).

Mrs Charanjit AjitSingh welcomed participants and introduced the session. She noted that the Inter Faith Network for the UK encourages partnership working between inter faith and faith bodies with other relevant agencies where appropriate and that the group had an opportunity for discussion about how local groups are working – or can work – in partnership with public agencies or other bodies and some of the benefits and also possible risks of that.

Mr Andy Sipple noted the following points in his presentation:

- He had worked in local government before retiring and that had given him a very good insight on how local government works.
- In Northamptonshire there are different levels of local government: County Council, District Councils, Borough Councils (including town councils) and Parish Councils. KIF is working with the Borough Council, although the Fire and Rescue Service is also involved which comes under the County Council. It is expected that the County Council will be split into two unitary authorities which adds a further level of complexity.
- Knowing which layer of local government you want to work with is essential when developing partnerships.
- Religious literacy is needed in the Kettering area. Some examples of this need are as follows. When Sikhs had put in a planning application to build a gurdwara they had received support from a prominent local Hindu. Some response on social media was that Hindus supporting Sikhs was to be expected as Muslims ‘stuck together’. Similarly, a question was asked about why so many Muslims were going to a church on

Sunday morning – in fact the people attending were Roman Catholic Christians from Kerala. Some Christian communities in the town had made comments about the local Muslim association which were simply inaccurate.

- After reading IFN's publication *Looking After One Another: The Safety and Security of our Faith Communities* KIF approached the Mayor of Kettering to discuss the issues facing faith communities and what the response would and should be if there was to be an incident or threat of an incident.
- KIF was established with strong civic links and whilst it is only two years old these links – such as the Deputy Leader of the Council being the Chair and the venue a neutral venue – have proved to be invaluable.
- The Mayor was specifically approached because the post is that of 'first citizen' and not an elected mayor. This removes the political element although it brings a problem of discontinuity as the mayor is only in post for one year. The idea was developed of a protocol between Kettering Borough Council and KIF that would outline what should happen if there were faith based hate incidents and what each of the bodies would do. It was clear that the mayor had already thought about this and was eager to show support for the idea and what it meant in practice. The mayor had already been involved in Holocaust Memorial Day and had supported it as a councillor and so had a good awareness of the issues involved.
- The next stage is to work on a protocol and to put that through the democratic processes of the Borough Council, including the involvement of Democratic Services. It is clear that all of the political groupings on the Council were

supportive of the protocol and there is a clear date for it to be presented to full Council, which is due to happen next month.

- Knowing who to talk to and having worked with them before, as a local authority officer, has proven to be very useful in getting the idea of the protocol off the ground.
- The process has been successful and positive.

In discussion the following points were made:

Police involvement

- What makes things work is the quality of relationships of the people involved. One issue that has arisen in an area of London is that police officers are constantly moving on or being reassigned duties. As there is no effective handover new officers are often not well sighted on issues locally.
- Some local inter faith groups have a seat on the Independent Advisory Group for the local police and this helps them to bring such issues to the table for resolution.
- In Kettering there is clear support from the Chief Constable, who regularly holds meetings with local faith leaders and members of KIF. They are also helped by the strong relationships between the police and the Borough Council, especially when it comes to passing on information.
- Relationships with the police are seen to be highly significant and in some areas the police have offered training, such as Prevent, to local inter faith bodies. This on the whole has been positive despite the reservations of some.

Schools and SACREs

- The County Adviser for RE has been a member of KIF's committee since it was established and schools are on the next agenda for the Forum.
- KIF has looked closely at the Wellingborough model and thinks it could work in Kettering, especially as many schools in the Borough have little, if any, diversity. (The Roman Catholic community has done a survey which showed that the congregation has seventy-five nations represented and that Kettering is becoming more diverse but that this is only in certain areas.)
- The number of academies is growing and there is some concern about what RE they will provide. The RE syllabus is for Northamptonshire, as Kettering Borough Council is not a local education authority and therefore it does not have its own SACRE or Agreed Syllabus Conference.
- SACREs and other parts of the work of local authorities are statutory and they, at times, need to be held to account. Another example of that is the requirement to have a Recovery and Resilience Plan.

Other partners

- There are a number of contexts in which faith communities and inter faith bodies can meet with and support the work of local authorities. The issue is that not all local authorities seem to take their duties to consult and to promote community cohesion seriously.
- Other public bodies that inter faith groups can engage with and contribute to include the local health authority, the clinical commissioning group, and health and wellbeing boards. Health bodies have a duty to consult publically so if local inter faith bodies are not already

engaged with them there is a process to get involved.

- Chaplaincies work well with local inter faith bodies and faith communities more generally as they have the spiritual care of all people at the hospital and need to be sensitive to their needs. Small hospitals have particular issues in accommodating the religious and cultural needs of minorities. An incident was discussed where a young member of a community had died as a result of injuries sustained in an accident. Members from the community had arrived and started a traditional mourning process that had disturbed the staff and other patients. The local inter faith organisation then worked with the hospital, including the chaplain, to look at spaces where such rituals might occur which would not then cause distress to others.
- Local inter faith groups often begin with conversations within local Churches Together groups, who are recognising a need as a result of their interaction with newly established or growing non-Christian communities. This, though, can come at a cost to the relationships between some churches which form part of Churches Together. This had been the situation in Kettering, although since the establishment of the Interfaith Forum no churches have left the Churches Together group.
- Local carers often misunderstand the religious and cultural needs of those who they are caring for. One participant's contribution to a local carers' strategic group had resulted in a very positive relationship.

PROGRAMME FOR THE DAY

- 10.45am** **Registration and refreshments**
- 11.00am** **Opening of the morning session, welcome and setting the context for the day from the Chair, Jatinder Singh Birdi, Co-Chair Inter Faith Network for the UK (IFN)**
- Welcome to Manchester from the Revd Charles Kwaku-Odoi on behalf of the Faith Network 4 Manchester**
- 11.10am** **Local inter faith organisations and local authorities working in partnership**
- Local inter faith organisations are a significant resources for their areas. In this opening session, we hear two reflections about their importance – one from a local inter faith perspective and one from a local authority perspective.
- The Revd Alan Green, Chair, Tower Hamlets Inter Faith Forum**
Alan talks about THIFF's work with Tower Hamlets Council, which has recently funded FaithAction to work with them to develop a new strategy.
- George Ballentyne, Voluntary and Community Sector Engagement Manager, Leicester City Council**
George talks about Leicester City Council's engagement with local inter faith initiatives in the city, including the longstanding Leicester Council of Faiths.
- Q and A and discussion**
- 11.40am** **Dialogue on the spot**
- A chance to talk with your neighbours.
- 11.45am** **Local inter faith groups – educating for inter faith understanding**
- Santosh Kundi, Warwick District Faiths Forum**
Santosh talks about WDFP's work to increase religious literacy of public bodies such as police and local authorities through presentations on different faiths arranged for them by the WDFP.
- Ryad Khodabocus, Luton Council of Faiths**
Ryad talks about Luton Council of Faiths' wide ranging work with schools to enhance the inter faith experience of pupils through such routes as:

- facilitating and coordinating visits by faith leaders to schools to support RE in particular and broader areas of a school's curriculum
- organising visits to places of worship, including training of personnel at local places of worship to be guides
- involving local schools in the annual peace walk

Q and A and discussion

12.15pm

Morning Discussion Groups – Details at end of programme

1. Working with schools to enhance the learning and inter faith experience of students
2. Using social media to increase the impact of your local inter faith work
3. Developing successful programmes and widening the circle of engagement

1.15pm

Lunch

A vegetarian lunch will be provided. (Prayer room available.)

2.00pm

Afternoon Discussion Groups – Details at end of programme

4. Initiating new local inter faith bodies and reviewing the work and direction of existing ones in changing times
5. Increasing engagement with and by young people
6. Partnership working with other bodies, such as local authorities, in pursuit of common aims, such as inter faith understanding, cooperation and integration.

3.00pm

Feedback from discussion groups

3.15pm

Inter Faith Week and other special days and weeks – a platform for cooperation and outreach

Inter Faith Week 2018 takes place from 11–18 November. How do/can groups use IFW programmes and other special Days/Weeks as platforms to increase visibility and engagement and serve their local community?

Chris Wood, Norwich InterFaith Link

Chris talks about how Norwich has marked Inter Faith Week. He reflects on how events marking the Week can forge new connections and lead to new initiatives.

Q and A and discussion

3.30pm	<p>Responding together to tackle prejudice and hatred</p> <p>Elliot Steinberg, Policy Officer, Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government</p> <p>Elliot speaks about the work of the Faith and Integration Team at MHCLG on tackling hatred and tensions and its Hate Crime Action Plan.</p> <p>Sister Elizabeth O'Donohoe, Islington Faiths Forum</p> <p>Islington Faiths Forum responded swiftly following the attack near Finsbury Park Mosque last summer. It was able to do so because of its longstanding local links. Sister Elizabeth reflects on that – and on the importance of establishing and nurturing local links.</p> <p>Q and A and discussion</p>
3.50pm	<p>Closing reflections</p> <p>Narendra Waghela, IFN Trustee from the local inter faith organisation member body category and member, Leicester Council of Faiths</p> <p>Dr Harriet Crabtree OBE, Executive Director, Inter Faith Network</p> <p>Closing words from the Chair</p>
4.00pm	<p>Close</p>

PARTICIPANTS

One or more representatives from the following local inter faith groups and organisations were present at the meeting, together with a small number of other local inter faith practitioners:

Local inter faith groups

Barnet Multi Faith Forum
Bexley Multifaith Forum
Harrow Interfaith
Hertfordshire Inter Faith Forum
Hertsmere Forum of Faiths
Hounslow Friends of Faith
Islington Faiths Forum
Kettering Interfaith Forum
Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship
Leeds Faiths Forum
Leicester Council of Faiths
Luton Council of Faiths
Medway Inter Faith Action
Norwich InterFaith Link
Solihull Faiths Forum
Tower Hamlets Inter Faith Forum
Waltham Forest Faith Communities Forum
Warwick District Faiths Forum
Waveney Interfaith Circle
Wellingborough Inter Faith Group
Welwyn Hatfield Inter Faith Group
West Suffolk Interfaith and Community Forum

Other organisations

Interfaith Scotland
Leicester City Council
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
Roman Catholic Diocese of Arundel and Brighton
Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe

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 JustGiving 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

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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