



# Promoting mutual respect and understanding Annual Review 2008/2009

## The Inter Faith Network for the UK

The Inter Faith Network for the UK was founded in 1987 to “advance public knowledge and mutual understanding of the teachings, traditions and practices of the different faith communities in Britain, including an awareness both of their distinctive features and of their common ground” and to promote good relations between people of different faiths in this country.

The Network links over 170 member bodies including: national representative bodies of the Baha’i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Zoroastrian faiths; national, regional, local and other inter faith bodies; and educational and academic bodies with an interest in inter faith relations. It works with its member bodies and other agencies to help make the UK a place marked by mutual understanding and respect between people of different religions where all can practise their faith with integrity. It seeks to increase the opportunities for people of all ages to learn more about the importance of good inter faith relations, within faith communities and in society more widely. It:

- provides a trusted neutral, non-denominational framework for people of different faiths to discuss issues of shared concern, reflecting on both the distinctive aspects and the common ground of their individual traditions
- runs a helpline and publishes resources to help people working to promote good inter faith relations
- links, shares good practice between, and supports with advice and information the growing pattern of inter faith initiatives in the UK at national, regional and local levels
- in cooperation with the Scottish and Welsh national inter faith linking bodies and the English regional faith forums, fosters local inter faith cooperation and offers advice on patterns of local inter faith initiatives suitable to a particular local area as well as helpful contacts
- assists member organisations and other agencies, such as local authorities and other public bodies, to help strengthen their inter faith programmes and good practice
- fosters joint working by the faith communities on social issues
- arranges seminars and conferences and carries out research to pursue particular issues in greater depth, such as building good relations on campus, educating for shared citizenship, and women’s inter faith initiatives

The Inter Faith Network’s way of working is firmly based on the principle that dialogue and cooperation on social action can only prosper if they are rooted in respectful relationships which do not blur or undermine the distinctiveness of different religious traditions. In its work, it proceeds by consensus wherever possible and not making statements on behalf of member bodies except after full consultation.

Further information about the Network can be found on its website: [www.interfaith.org.uk](http://www.interfaith.org.uk) or by writing to its office at 8a Lower Grosvenor Place, London SW1W 0EN or at [ifnet@interfaith.org.uk](mailto:ifnet@interfaith.org.uk)

The Inter Faith Network for the UK closed in 2024, with outward facing operations ceasing in April.

In order to ensure that the material in IFN's publications remained available to the public, to inter faith practitioners, and to scholars after IFN's closure, the copyright status of publications has been changed.

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## Annual Review 2008/2009

*Promoting mutual respect and understanding*

# Contents

Co-Chairs’ message .....	5
Faith communities: working together through the Inter Faith Network .....	7
National and special focus inter faith bodies .....	8
English regional faith forums.....	9
Inter faith interaction at local level .....	10
Educating for inter faith understanding .....	12
Plans for Inter Faith Week .....	13
‘Soundings’ events .....	15
● Bilateral inter faith dialogue in the UK	
● Local Inter Faith Organisations and Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education: Working together for understanding and community cohesion	
2009 National Meeting: Good inter faith relations: The next generation .....	22
Engaging with public policy issues.....	28
Sharing news and good practice between the UK and the wider world .....	31
Informing and advising .....	32
Network membership .....	33
Trustees .....	33
Staff .....	35
Accounts .....	36
Supporters in 2008 .....	38

## Co-Chairs' Message

The Inter Faith Network for the UK continues to play a vital role in helping to increase inter faith understanding and cooperation. Its work, like that of its members, helps to ensure that the religious diversity of our society continues to be a source of mutual strength and enrichment: not a cause of discord or conflict.



*Rt Revd Dr Alastair Redfern and Dr Girdari Lal Bhan,  
Co-Chairs, Inter Faith Network*

The Network links in membership national faith community representative bodies, educational and academic bodies with an interest in inter faith relations, and inter faith bodies at UK, national and local level as well as, more recently, at regional level. This enables a positive cross fertilisation of ideas and sharing of good practice which benefits all. At the 2009 AGM 17 organisations were accepted into membership of the Network, increasing the number of member bodies to 176. This not only shows continued development in the work of the Network itself but is also an indicator of the steady expansion of inter faith activity across the UK.

Each category of Inter Faith Network member body makes its own unique and tremendously important contribution to building good inter faith relations and strengthening civil society in the UK. The Network has continued, during the year, to work with each in support of this, including increasing public awareness of their work so that more people can become actively involved. As part of this, the Network worked with member national and regional inter faith bodies to create *Inter Faith Focus*, a booklet describing the expertise each offers. This complements the 2009 edition of IFN's Inter Faith Directory which lists local inter faith bodies and other inter faith organisations across the UK. Both publications are key tools for increasing involvement in inter faith dialogue and cooperation on social issues.

There has also been a focus this year on helping members develop skills for engaging with the media, helping enable them to put across more effectively the message about the importance of good relations.

2008-09 saw the beginning of the Inter Faith Network's 'Soundings' programme: a series of 'by invitation' consultative meetings and seminars looking at particular issues in the rapidly evolving inter faith landscape. These give an opportunity for participants to talk through some of the major issues directly affecting their organisations and areas of work; to share good practice; and to discuss potentially fruitful areas of cooperation. The events also help to inform the development of the Inter Faith Network's own work. Three Soundings events were held in the course of the year: on bilateral inter faith dialogue; on co-operation

between local inter faith organisations and Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education; and on the engagement of young people in inter faith activity.

Each of the Soundings meetings either focused on, or had a strand related to, young people's involvement in inter faith activity and development of skills for inter faith dialogue and action. This reflected the growing recognition of the importance of involving young people and the commitment to this of the Inter Faith Network and its members.

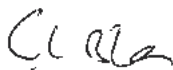
The year also saw continued engagement with 'public square' issues – particularly through the meetings of the Network's Faith Communities Forum which brings together national faith community representative bodies and enables them to consider issues of common concern. The Network continued to engage also with Government, particularly with the Department for Communities and Local Government in following up the recommendations in the Government's document, *Face to Face and Side by Side: A framework for partnership in our multi-faith society* which was published in July 2008 and on which the last Annual Review reported. Discussions included the taking forward of the proposal put forward by IFN's Executive Committee for Inter Faith Week and included by Government as part of the policy implementation of *Face to Face and Side by Side*, on the basis of partnership between IFN, with its member bodies, and CLG. Preparation for the first Inter Faith Week to be held in England and Wales, in November 2009, were a major part of the work of the IFN office during 2008-09.

Because this Review was somewhat delayed due to the impact of other work (in particular preparation for Inter Faith Week), the Co-Chairs' message comes from the Co-Chairs as at 1 January 2010, when Bishop Alastair Redfern took over from Bishop Tom Butler. Bishop Tom Butler's intention to stand down as a Co-Chair of the Network was announced at the 2009 AGM recorded in this Annual Review, where warm tributes were paid to him. The forthcoming Review for 2009-10 will say more about this.

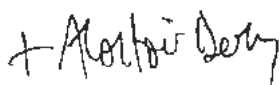
The work could not have been carried out without financial support from national faith communities, trusts, individual donors and the Department for Communities and Local Government and we thank them for their far sighted recognition of the vital importance of the work to develop good inter faith relations in the UK and the resources which they have made available to take this forward.

We would also like to express our thanks to fellow trustees and to pay tribute to the excellent work of the Inter Faith Network's Director and her colleagues which – in a context of ever increasing demand – have helped the Network continue so effectively to support and strengthen inter faith work across the UK.

We would like, too, to express our appreciation of the work of Inter Faith Network member bodies – singly and together strengthening inter faith understanding and cooperation at every level within our society.



Dr Girdari Lal Bhan  
Co-Chair



Rt Revd Dr Alastair Redfern  
Co-Chair



## Faith communities: working together through the Inter Faith Network

The national representative bodies of the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Zoroastrian faith communities share a common commitment to working for the wellbeing of wider society and, as part of this, helping to build good inter faith relations in the UK. One very important way they do this is through working together as members of the Inter Faith Network for the UK and being part of its Faith Communities Forum.

### Discussing issues of common concern

Participation in the Inter Faith Network helps the national faith community representative bodies as they develop their work in the areas of public life and social action. Their representative bodies meet together as the 'Faith Communities Forum' (FCF) of the Network.

Three meetings of the Forum were held during 2008-09, in September, March and July. The first of these discussed a substantial paper dealing with engagement between faith communities and between Government and faith communities. Other topics discussed during the year included reports on meetings of the Government's Faith Communities Council; the publication of the Government's framework document *Face to Face and Side by Side; a framework for partnership in our multi faith society*; the Inter Faith Network's planned series of 'Soundings' events on current inter faith issues; the contribution which faith communities at national and local level could make to the 2009 Inter Faith Week; the Government's proposals for its new Equality Bill, together with developments in the work of the Religion and Belief Consultative Group; the Charity Commission's consultation on the application to religious charities of the 'public benefit' test; and plans for the 2011 Census.

### Media training

Faith communities expressed a wish to gain a better understanding of the media and in particular how it relates to faith and inter faith matters. The Network office, with funding from the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG), organised two separate training days with special emphasis on issues relating to faith

Media training



community bodies and to national inter faith organisations. Both training days were arranged in conjunction with the Media Trust and 24 people from faith community organisations took part in the first of these.

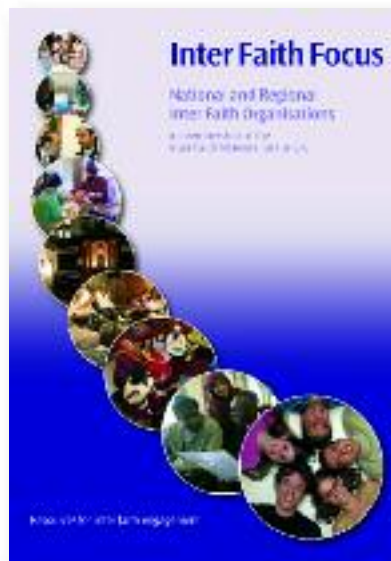
The course content included such topics as 'news awareness' – what makes a story? – with specific issues relating to faith and inter faith groups; proactively identifying and exploiting media opportunities; targeting stories; writing a press release; and how to handle media enquiries and interviews.

## National and special focus inter faith bodies

Among the member bodies of the Inter Faith Network are inter faith organisations whose work is carried out at UK or national level or which, while holding programmes in a more limited geographical area, are used as a resource by people from across the UK.

Keeping national inter faith organisations in touch with each other and raising awareness about their work is an important part of the work of the Network. It organises meetings for their representatives at least once a year. During 2008-09 three meetings were held. As well as the usual sharing news of their work, the bodies discussed how the Network might help raise their profile further and three specific pieces of work were undertaken for this purpose.

Firstly, the Network office organised a media skills training day to help empower members in dealing with the media and to build long term relationships which could help them secure positive coverage in the future. It worked with the Media Trust in devising media training



*Inter Faith Focus  
booklet*

which was specially targeted to the needs of the organisations involved.

Secondly, the Network produced a booklet called *Inter Faith Focus*, highlighting the work of member national and regional inter faith organisations. The booklet was then sent to a wide variety of organisations that might find helpful the services of the national bodies mentioned in it. The booklet explained for both public and voluntary bodies the expertise available from the organisations and in each case described the particular focus of their work.

Both the media training and the publication of the booklet were made possible by project grants from CLG.

Thirdly, preparations were made for a strong platform for national inter faith bodies to highlight their work in the exhibition at the national launch of the Inter Faith Week later in the year.

The booklet can be found on the Network's website ([www.interfaith.org.uk/publications](http://www.interfaith.org.uk/publications)) and hard copies are available from the Network's office.

The Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum, the Scottish Inter Faith Council and the Inter Faith Council for Wales are member bodies of the Inter Faith Network for the UK and there are members of the Network's Executive Committee drawn from all three of them. The Network office liaised with these organisations on a range of items over the year. The usual annual meeting of them was held over, for logistical reasons, until 2009-10 to enable this to be hosted by the Northern Ireland Faith Forum.

## English regional faith forums

By the summer of 2008, regional faith forums were in place or under development in all of England's nine regions. While those in London and in the North East had not yet been formally constituted, the year under review saw them entering the final stages of development. The Inter Faith Network works with the forums both directly and through the English Regional Faith Forums Network (ERFFN).

## What are regional faith forums and why are they important?

Every region of England has had a Regional Economic Strategy, drawn up by the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) in consultation with unelected Regional Assemblies (due to disappear in 2010), and with other partners and stakeholders. Regional faith forums have helped enable faith groups in their region contribute to the development of these strategies, but also to contribute to other policy initiatives at regional level. They have also had a growing role in supporting local inter faith work.

A key development during 2008-9 was the greater push given to the development of the English Regional Faith Forums through the Government's implementation of its strategy in *Face to Face and Side by Side*. This announced that the Government would provide a package of investment and support for the regional forums worth in total £1.89m across the three year period 2008-2011, administered by the Community Development Foundation (CDF) which has also been given a capacity building role in relation to these regional faith forums.



*A meeting of the  
English Regional Faith  
Forums Network*

## The Inter Faith Network and regional faith forums

Since the end of 2006 the Inter Faith Network and the Faith Based Regeneration Network (UK) have jointly serviced a link of the regional faith forums which are recognised by regional governance instruments as the primary forum in their region: the English Regional Faith Forums Network (ERFFN). This met three times during 2008-9 in September, January and May.

The meetings of ERFFN enabled forums to discuss their ongoing work and also their engagement with the Government's capacity building process. Officials from CLG and staff of CDF were invited to joint sessions for discussion of the development of the Government's inter faith strategy.

Also on the agenda was the vital importance of complementary working in the area of support for local inter faith activity. It is particularly important for the work of the regional forums to complement the work of local inter faith bodies. Regional faith forums see themselves as there to 'add value' not to undercut local inter faith work. It is also important for the Inter Faith Network and the regional forums to work in complementary ways in their support for local inter faith work. Working out in greater detail appropriate and complementary relationships between inter faith work at national, regional and local level in England remains a high priority task.

## Inter faith interaction at local level

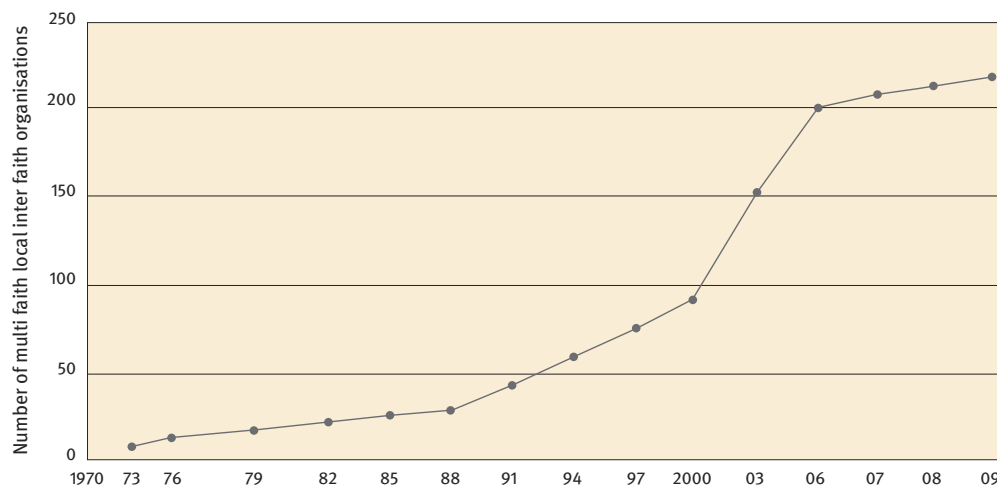
Supporting the strong development of inter faith work at local level is a vital part of the Network's work – both directly and through its work with the Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum, the Inter Faith Council for Wales, Scottish Inter Faith Council and English Regional Faith Forums.

Local inter faith organisations have a tremendously valuable role to play in providing structured contexts in which greater understanding can be developed between people of different faiths and in offering advice on religious issues to the relevant local authority and other public bodies in the area. The personal links which are developed in the course of this work are of great importance and the coming together of people of different



*Local Authority Engagement  
with Faith Groups and Inter  
Faith Organisations*

**Growth of local inter faith activity**



faiths offers an encouragingly practical example of the way in which faith communities can work together within our society.

The Inter Faith Network's website has a 'local inter faith zone' which gives examples of work that local groups are doing and advice on developing programmes. This resource is widely used by local inter faith practitioners. So too are its helpline and advice service and its publication *The Local Inter Faith Guide*. Network staff and trustees also visit local groups and respond to speaking requests. These visits are an important part of keeping the Network office in touch with local developments. Oxford, Sandwell, Harrow and Clapham and Stockwell (London) were just a few of the places Network staff visited during the year.

The Network publishes a directory, *Inter Faith Organisations in the UK*, which lists national, regional and local inter faith bodies around the country. The 2009 edition gave details of 280 local inter faith organisations around the UK, 223 of the local organisations being inter faith groups, councils or forums operating on a multi faith

basis and working with people from all or most of the major faiths in their areas.

As mentioned in the previous Annual Review, during 2008 IFN worked in partnership with the Local Government Association (LGA) on a survey of local authorities in England and Wales, looking at how they are engaging with faith groups and inter faith organisations in their area. The full research report, *Local Authority Engagement with Faith Groups and Inter Faith Organisations*, was published in December 2008 and is available on the LGA website [www.lga.gov.uk](http://www.lga.gov.uk).

## Regional 'Link' meetings

The Network holds, in association with the relevant regional faith forums, 'Link' meetings for organisers of local inter faith groups in the English Regions. The meetings provide an opportunity for organisers to share news and discuss issues of common concern as well as suggestions for running effective and interesting programmes. During the second half of 2008, meetings

were held in July in Nottingham in association with the Faith Forum for the East Midlands and in Peterborough in association with the East of England Faiths Council. In 2009, regional 'link' meetings were put on hold for a year while regional faith forums established their frameworks and links at local level more strongly, on the basis that these meetings would be resumed again in 2010.

A separate gathering for Scottish inter faith groups is held annually in Scotland by the Scottish Inter Faith Council.

## Educating for inter faith understanding

During the year the Inter Faith Network office continued to keep in touch with developments on the educational and academic front through its participation in the Religious Education Council for England and Wales and the Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education, as well as providing advice to the Religion and Society Programme of the Economic and Social Research Council and Arts and Humanities Research Council.

The 'Soundings' event on local inter faith organisations working together with Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACREs) was organised in conjunction with the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (NASACRE) and in consultation with the Religious Education Council for England and Wales and is reported on pages 19 to 21. The 2009 National Meeting reported on pages 22 to 27 focused on the involvement of young people in inter faith activity.

The Network's Director was a member of the Steering Group set up by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, at the request of the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), to review the content of Circular 1/94 relating to Religious Education which has remained in force for the last 15 years as guidance for local authorities, schools and others. This guidance covered both religious education and collective worship but the review dealt only with guidance on religious education. The group was jointly chaired by a DCSF official and Professor Brian Gates, in his capacity as Chair of the Religious Education Council for England and Wales (one of IFN's member bodies). A public consultation was held during the summer of 2009 on a draft of the new guidance.

The Inter Faith Network has had a concern for some time over issues relating to good relations on campus and its work on this was described in the last Annual Review.

The National Union of Students has established a new post of Student Inter Faith Coordinator and the postholder will be developing a broad programme of work relating to good relations on campus. The Network's Director is a member of the national advisory group for this project.

The higher education Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) published, in May, practical guidance for the higher education sector on the issue of clashes in religious holy days and timetabling. Areas covered include understanding religious observance on campus, communication, rights and responsibilities, timetabling issues, staff and work patterns. ECU also plans to work, with partners as appropriate, on a number of other issues and IFN's Director has kept in touch with ECU staff over this work. One of the workshops at the National Meeting focused on campus issues. (See page 25.)



## Plans for Inter Faith Week

During the year under review plans were made for the first national Inter Faith Week in England and Wales to be held from 15 to 21 November 2009, facilitated in partnership by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) and the Inter Faith Network for the UK.

The idea for an Inter Faith Week was put forward by the Inter Faith Network's Executive Committee to the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) in the course of the consultation process leading to the publication, in July 2008, of the Government's document, *Face to Face and Side by Side: A Framework for Partnership in our Multi Faith Society*.

The Government subsequently agreed to the proposal for the Week in 2009 as part of the policy implementation flowing from *Face to Face and Side by Side*. Both CLG and IFN saw the Week as having great potential for helping to highlight and stimulate faith based social action and increasing understanding about and between faiths – and also between those of religious beliefs and those of non religious beliefs. Joint working on Inter Faith Week was also seen as an example of positive engagement between Government and faith communities.

It was agreed at the outset that the 2009 Week in England would be facilitated by the Network, working with its member bodies, in partnership with CLG, in consultation with the Department for Children, Schools and Families, the Local Government Association and the Equality and Human Rights Commission. CLG would also liaise, as appropriate, with other public agencies and help facilitate publicity. It was also intended from the outset that the

Week should not be a 'top down', centrally organised programme and that an attempt would be made to secure maximum involvement from young people. During 2008-9 it was agreed that the Week in Wales would be facilitated by the Inter Faith Council for Wales with support from the Welsh Assembly Government.

The idea for an Inter Faith Week in England and Wales arose in part from the very successful Scottish Inter Faith Week held since 2004. The Scottish experience was extremely helpful in shaping the development of the Week in England and Wales. The Chief Executive Officer of the Scottish Inter Faith Council and one of its Council members are members of the Network's Executive Committee and they had made a presentation about the Scottish Week to the Committee's meeting on 28 January 2008 when the possibility of having a similar Week elsewhere in the UK was being considered. They also spoke to IFN's Faith Communities Forum meeting on 18 March 2009 about the Scottish experience of running such a Week. The 2009 Scottish Inter Faith Week was due to take place from 22 to 29 November.

Consultation by the Network with faith communities and with CLG in the early months of 2009 led to agreement that the Week would include and highlight activities organised by bodies around the country designed to:

- strengthen good inter faith relations at all levels;
- encourage local faith groups and communities to reach out to each other and build stronger bonds of understanding and cooperation;
- increase awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, with a particular focus on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society;
- gain positive profile for inter faith initiatives, locally, regionally and nationally as well as for the overall work of building good inter faith relations;



*Inter Faith Week website and press release*

- increase understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs; and
- encourage the development of new partnerships within local communities and by faith communities with statutory and third sector partners.

An initial news release about the Week was issued by CLG in March, following discussion with the Network office; a dedicated website, [www.interfaithweek.org.uk](http://www.interfaithweek.org.uk) went live at the same time; and a joint leaflet was printed to publicise the Week and its aims.

A Working Group was established with representation from CLG, the Network office, the Department for Children, Schools and Families, the Local Government Association, the Equality and Human Rights Commission and, later, also the Community Development Foundation (CDF). Its role was to advise on the handling of the Week in relation to the constituencies with which its members had formal and practical links and to consult, as necessary, on engagement in the Week of other parts of Government and any other relevant constituencies which might be identified; and to discuss practical aspects of planning for the Week, including the provision of

resource material, the launch event and the handling of queries.

The English regional faith forums played a key role in relation to their respective regions, helping to encourage events and advertise these through their websites.

Plans were put in hand both for a Government funded national launch event at the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre on 12 November, ahead of the Week itself (accompanied by an exhibition of inter faith work of all kinds); and for an event at Lambeth Palace on 16 November bringing together key representatives of faith communities at the beginning of the Week.



## ‘Soundings’ events

At the Inter Faith Network’s 2008 National Meeting a programme called ‘Soundings’ was launched to explore a range of current issues in inter faith relations in the UK – both as a way of informing the Inter Faith Network’s own work and development but also of giving participants an opportunity to talk through some of the issues affecting their organisations directly and to share good practice and discuss potentially fruitful areas of joint work.

### Bilateral Inter Faith Dialogue in the UK

Many areas of the UK are increasingly religiously diverse and work to develop and deepen good inter faith relations grows ever more important. This takes a variety of forms: from informal dialogue to more structured dialogues and projects; and to inter faith encounter in contexts such as chaplaincy, prisons, educational establishments and the media.

Much of the focus in contexts such as Government community cohesion programmes often falls on ‘multilateral’ projects involving all or most of the major faiths. But some of the most in depth inter faith dialogues being carried forward at national and local level in Britain are bilateral ones such as Christian-Jewish; Christian-Muslim; Christian-Hindu; Jewish-Muslim; and Sikh-Christian.

Dialogue between two traditions (occasionally three) enables people to wrestle with difficult aspects of their past shared histories, to explore commonalities and to plan joint projects. The importance of these bilateral dialogues needs to be more widely appreciated and new

dialogues of this kind to be developed between traditions which do not yet have established processes for such engagement. For example, members of the Hindu and Muslim communities are concerned that dialogue between their two traditions should be deepened.

As the first event in the ‘Soundings’ programme, a seminar on Bilateral Dialogue in the UK was held at Lambeth Palace on 30 March, by kind invitation of the Most Rev and Rt Hon Dr Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury.

Participants were welcomed by Rt Rev Dr Tom Butler, Co-Chair of the Network, and the keynote address was given by Dr Williams who reflected on the value of bilateral dialogues in the light of his own involvement in these both nationally and internationally.

The Archbishop’s keynote address was followed by perspectives from three national bilateral dialogues. The first presenter was David Gifford, Chief Executive, Council of Christians and Jews, Britain’s oldest national bilateral dialogue organisation, who reflected on good practice in bilateral dialogue, in the experience of his organisation.

The second presentation was by Shaykh Ibrahim Mogra, Community Affairs Specialist in the Christian-Muslim Forum, who commented on its work in building a bilateral dialogue programme based on common engagement on particular issues and its use of events with particular themes and constituencies. Lastly Dr Girdari Lal Bhan and Rev Robin Thomson of the Hindu Christian Forum described their experience in developing this new initiative at national level and commented on some of the opportunities and challenges which face those setting up new dialogues.

These presentations were followed by discussions in five working groups:

- *What are the ingredients of successful bilateral dialogues? How can existing bilateral bodies offer help/act as resources for new bilateral dialogues?* facilitated by Rev Peter Colwell, Executive Secretary for Church Life and Inter Faith Relations, Churches Together in Britain and Ireland;
- *Developing a strong pattern of bilateral dialogues at national and local level. Are new dialogues needed? What measures can be taken to encourage these? What may be the role of the Inter Faith Network and its member bodies in this?* facilitated by Hon Barnabas Leith, Director, Diplomatic Relations, Baha'i Community of the UK;
- *How do/should bilateral, trilateral and multi lateral initiatives relate to each other, particularly at local level?* facilitated by Yann Lovelock, Inter-Faith Coordinator, Network of Buddhist Organisations and Birmingham Council of Faiths;
- *Particular challenges of sustaining bilateral work, such as funding; continuing to engage relevant communities well; and handling the impact of social and political factors overseas and in the UK* facilitated by Brian Pearce, Adviser, Faith and Public Life, Inter Faith Network;
- *Bilateral dialogue and engagement involving women and young people* facilitated by Chris Farge, Council of Christians and Jews.

Following lunch, brief feedback was given from the working groups. There then followed a presentation on education for dialogue from Dr Ed Kessler of the Woolf Institute of Abrahamic Faiths in Cambridge, who explored the importance of providing training for clergy and lay people in inter faith engagement and for academic as well as grassroots dialogue.

Two presentations were then given on local experience aimed at creating long term relationships of trust and understanding. Sughra Ahmed and Resham Singh Sandhu MBE and Jaspreet Kaur reflected on two bilateral dialogues in Leicester: between Christian and Muslim women and between Christians and Sikhs. Jonny Wineberg and Councillor Afzal Khan CBE of the Manchester Jewish-Muslim Forum talked about its work and lessons that might be learned from this.

Following a period of plenary general discussion, brief observations on some of the issues which had emerged in the course of the day and on gaps and possibilities for future dialogues were offered by Dr Michael Barnes SJ, Heythrop College and Committee for other Faiths of the Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales; Ramesh Pattni, Inter Faith Relations, Hindu Forum of Britain; Ciara Wells, Deputy Director, Cohesion and Faiths Division, Department of Communities and Local Government; and Dr Harriet Crabtree, IFN's Director. Archbishop Rowan Williams and Bishop Tom Butler then offered their own final reflections.

A record of the day's proceedings is available from the IFN office. It is also available on the IFN website: [www.interfaith.org.uk](http://www.interfaith.org.uk).



*Top row from left: David Gifford, Archbishop of Canterbury Dr Rowan Williams and Shaykh Ibrahim Mogra  
Above from left: Dr Girdari Lal Bhan, participants at the seminar at Lambeth Palace, and Rev Robin Thomson  
Far left: Sughra Ahmed, and left Dr Ed Kessler*





*Top row from left: Resham Singh Sandhu, Jaspreet Kaur, Dr Harriet Crabtree and the closing panel, and Dr Michael Barnes SJ*  
*Above from left: Jonny Wineberg, Moulana M Shahid Raza and Dr Natubhai Shah, Ciara Wells, and Cllr Afzal Khan*  
*Far left: Participants at the seminar at Lambeth Palace, and left Ramesh Pattni*

## Local Inter Faith Organisations and Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education: Working together for understanding and community cohesion

The second of the 'Soundings' meetings was held in June 2009 at the Elm Bank Teachers' Centre in Coventry. It was organised by the Inter Faith Network and the National Association of SACREs (NASACRE), in consultation with the Religious Education Council for England and Wales. The Network and NASACRE drew on their respective membership and networks for this seminar, which explored what steps could be taken to increase opportunities for effective joint working between local inter faith bodies and SACREs.

Participants were welcomed to the meeting by Bill Moore, Chair of NASACRE, David Pritchard, Chair of Coventry SACRE, and Mehru Fitter, of the Coventry Multi Faith Forum. Following an introduction to the day's proceedings by Mr Moore and IFN's Director, Dr Harriet Crabtree, talks on the roles and work of SACREs and local inter faith organisations were given, respectively, by Denise Chaplin of NASACRE and Stella Opoku-Owusu of IFN.



*Dr Harriet Crabtree and Bill Moore*



*Stella Opoku-Owusu and Denise Chaplin*

Prior to the event, both organisations had carried out surveys of their member bodies to ascertain the levels of interchange and co-operation between SACREs and local inter faith organisations, and the initial findings from these surveys were presented, followed by an opportunity for questions and open discussion.

Two presentations giving examples of how SACREs and local inter faith groups had worked together on specific local projects were then given by David Raven-Hill of RE and Community Cohesion, Kirklees Learning Service and Fakhara Rehman, of Kirklees Faiths Forum; and Manjit Kaur of Warwickshire SACRE and Rev Gareth Jones of West Midlands Faiths Forum.

Six working groups discussed the following themes:

- *How can local inter faith bodies complement the work of SACREs in relation to the content of the local RE syllabus?* facilitated by Professor Brian Gates, with presenters Jonathan Gurling, Birmingham Faith Leaders' Group; Guy Hordern, Birmingham SACRE; and Yann Lovelock, Birmingham Council of Faiths;
- *Local inter faith bodies and SACREs – working together with and in schools* facilitated by Helen Harrison of



*Rev Gareth Jones and Manjit Kaur*

Lancashire SACRE, with presenter Dr Jane O'Hara of Bath Interfaith Group, Bath and North East Somerset Faith Forum and SACRE;

- *How can local inter faith bodies and SACREs work to ensure that there is good information on religions and about inter faith issues available for use in their local area?* facilitated by Jenny Kartupelis, East of England Faiths Council, with presenter Cynthia Capey, Suffolk Inter Faith Resource and Suffolk SACRE;
- *How can SACREs and local inter faith bodies work well together, beyond the classroom, to engage young people in their areas in inter faith projects and learning?* facilitated by Rev Prebendary Michael Metcalf of NASACRE, with presenters Mohamed Seedat and Rev Canon Stephen Wilson of Faiths United (Tameside) and Tameside SACRE;
- *Inter Faith Week: An opportunity for joint working* facilitated and co-presented by Paresh Solanki of IFN and Warwick Hawkins of CLG;
- *What guidance might helpfully be developed for local authorities and other public agencies on the respective roles of SACREs and local inter faith bodies and the importance of supporting and working well with both?* facilitated by Brian Pearce of IFN, with presenters



*Fakhara Rehman and David Raven-Hill*

Duncan Struthers and Mike Gettleson, of Hillingdon Inter Faith Network and Hillingdon SACRE.

After the Working Groups had reported back to the full meeting, there were short presentations from Tania ap Siôn, Secretary of the Wales Association of SACREs; Sophie Faber of the Cohesion Unit of DCSF; Warwick Hawkins, Head of the Faith Communities Engagement Team, CLG; Ian Hunter Smart, Community Development Officer, Durham County Council and Zahid Jawed, Buckinghamshire SACRE and Wycombe Sharing of Faiths. This was followed by open discussion and reflections from the co-chairs on the day's proceedings and pointers for the next steps on the way forward.

A full report, including analyses of the surveys and a record of the seminar, is available from the Network's office. It is also available on the Network's website: [www.interfaith.org.uk](http://www.interfaith.org.uk)

## **Involvement of young people in inter faith activity**

This 'Soundings' topic was taken as the theme of the Network's 2009 National Meeting, reported in the following pages.





*Closing panel and participants at the seminar in Coventry*

## 2009 National Meeting: 'Good inter faith relations: The next generation'

During the last decade the Inter Faith Network and many of its member bodies have been advocating energetically the increased involvement of young people in inter faith dialogue and in activity which builds inter faith understanding. There is now a widening pattern of inter faith initiatives led by or involving young people and many more opportunities for young people to learn about and become skilled in inter faith dialogue and joint social action.

One of the areas of focus in the 'Soundings' programme, described on page 15 is 'Young people and inter faith relations'. Because of the level of interest in this topic, it was decided that, although this had been the theme of the National Meeting in 2005, it would be good again to dedicate a National Meeting to the theme so that all the Network's member bodies could have a chance to participate in discussion on it. The theme of the 2009 National Meeting held at Leicestershire County Cricket Club on 6 July was therefore 'Good inter faith relations: The next generation' – increasing and strengthening involvement of young people in developing understanding and cooperation between those of different faiths and beliefs.



*Rt Rev Tim Stevens, the Bishop  
of Leicester*

Participants were welcomed to Leicester by Rt Rev Dr Tim Stevens, the Bishop of Leicester, and by Rt Rev Dr Tom Butler and Dr Nawal Prinja, Co-Chairs of the Inter Faith Network.

The opening presentation was made by Cressida Godding of Liverpool Community Spirit, together with Peter

Downey and Maadhav Kothari of the Liverpool Community Spirit Youth Council. They spoke about their work to "unite young people from diverse faith and cultural backgrounds through innovative citizen projects that promote mutual understanding, active citizenship, personal self-esteem and most importantly, friends!". This includes film-making, cultural evenings, visits to places of worship and an 'Elder Buddies' project to break down generational barriers.

The next speakers were Frances Hume, Development and Education Officer of the Scottish Inter Faith Council (SIFC), and Haroon Ahmed of the SIFC Youth Steering Committee. They introduced participants to the work of the Youth Steering Committee, focusing in particular on the annual young people's conference and annual retreat. Further examples of their activities included producing a booklet entitled *The Sacred Earth* with Global Exchange; giving workshops at schools and youth events; hosting inter faith sporting activities; going on a pilgrimage to Israel and Palestine; and contributing their expertise to outside projects, such as healthcare chaplaincy issues.

Professor Brian Gates, Chair of the Religious Education Council of England and Wales, then gave a presentation on the topic of 'Schools and inter faith learning'. He reflected on the work of Standing Advisory Councils on





*Maadhav Kotbati, Cressida Godding and Peter Downey*

With different young people in Liverpool and different diverse communities, young people can feel quite isolated. What Liverpool Community Spirit has done is bring them together and helped break down the barriers of isolation and fear. It has encouraged understanding and a sense of collective identity and ability to see commonalities.

*Peter Downey*



*Frances Hume*



*Haroon Ahmed*

We discovered when we joined the Youth Committee how much responsibility we were given, right from the very start, to choose the theme, get speakers, and get the religious leaders together..... We are working together to create something for the common good and that helps us as well to get to know each other better.

*Frances Hume*



*Professor Brian Gates*

Helping children and young people develop inter faith understanding must come high on the agenda of the Inter Faith Network..... They can help us interpret this wonderful complexifying world, and maybe with us steer it differently and better.

*Brian Gates*

Religious Education (SACREs) and inter faith groups in helping pupils develop inter faith understanding and on the importance of developing relevant materials and resources for the classroom and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for teachers.

There then followed the opportunity for some 'dialogue on the spot' for participants to talk with their neighbours about the themes of the day.

The next presentation on 'Breaking the mould – new styles of inter faith work by and with young people' was given by Rachel Heilbron, Programme Director of the Three Faiths Forum, a national inter faith initiative working principally, but not only, with the Abrahamic faiths. She spoke about its 3FF youth programme which has been developing, across recent years, a range of programmes specially dedicated to increasing young people's inter faith skills and understanding such as: Tools for Trialogue; Encountering Faith; Skills for Dialogue and Communication; and Undergraduate Parliamentors (where undergraduates of different faiths are mentored by MPs and work together on projects).



**We believe that every young person needs to have better skills and greater confidence to be able to engage with anybody, no matter what their faith or belief. We think that skills based approach can help create the leaders of tomorrow.**

*Rachel Heilbron*



**Promoting a sense of faith to live by is an important tenet in our programme. Our aim is to enable girls and young women to fulfil their potential to grow up to be good active citizens and make a difference in the world.**

*Denise King*

After a chance for some discussion in plenary, the final presentation of the morning was given by Denise King, Chief Executive of Girlguiding UK. She showed a short DVD on the work of Girlguiding UK and spoke about the important contribution which youth organisations can make to involving young people in building good inter faith relations. Among the badge syllabuses which the organisation has been running for 100 years are badges on discovering faith and discovering world cultures. This is all part of helping girls and young women become confident 'bridge builders'.

After lunch, participants were invited to take part in one of seven workshops on different aspects of involving young people in inter faith relations. These were:

- *Your team/my team/our team: Sport and youth inter faith understanding* facilitated by Paresch Solanki with presenter Riaz Ravat, St Phillip's Centre, Leicester;
- *Tools for inter faith dialogue with school aged young people* facilitated by Ven Bogoda Seelawimala, Chief Sangha Nayaka of Great Britain and Head of the London Vihara with presenters Rachel Heilbron and Claire Ellis, Three Faiths Forum;
- *Inter faith youth forums, councils and 'ambassador' programmes* facilitated by Dorab Mistry, Zoroastrian



Slides from the presentation by Bolton Interfaith Youth Council's Youth Ambassadors Forum

- Trust Funds of Europe and Vice Chair, Inter Faith Network with presenters Chan Parmar, Bolton Inter Faith Council, and Anam Ahmed, Aamna Alam and Bethany Brooks, Bolton Interfaith Council's Inter Faith Youth Ambassadors Forum;
  - *Inter faith understanding on FE and HE campuses* facilitated by Rev Geoffrey Usher, International Association for Religious Freedom, Sheffield Interfaith and member of the Multifaith Chaplaincy Team at Sheffield Hallam University, with presenter Vic Langer, Head of Political Strategy, National Union of Students (NUS) and responsible for inter faith issues for NUS;
  - *Encouraging faith based bodies to help their young people learn about and become involved in inter faith work* facilitated by Sanjay M Jagatia, Secretary General, National Council of Hindu Temples (UK), with presenter Dr Andrew Smith, Christian Youth Specialist on the Christian Muslim Forum and Leader of Youth Encounter for Scripture Union;
  - *Religious Education and inter faith understanding* facilitated by Dr Harshad Sanghrajka, Institute of Jainology, with presenter Jill Carr, Leicester City Council RE Adviser/SACRE Adviser;
  - *Inter Faith Week* facilitated by Dr Harriet Crabtree, Director, Inter Faith Network, with presenter Christine Abbas, Secretary and Baha'i representative, Inter Faith Council for Wales and participation from Warwick Hawkins, Head of Faith Communities Engagement, CLG.
- Four participants were then invited to give brief reflections on issues arising from the day: Gary Loke, Senior Policy Officer of the higher education Equality Challenge Unit; Tina Mistry, Chair of the Young Zoroastrians; Bhupinder Singh, Secretary of the Inter Faith Youth Trust; and Sughra Ahmed, Policy Researcher at the Islamic Foundation.
- Getting young people involved can be a challenge..... We have to ensure, as people of different faiths, that a strong message is actually going out into the temples, churches, gurdwaras and mosques about the importance of inter faith work.....It is really important work in which young people (and older people!) of all faiths should get involved.
- Bhupinder Singh*
- The Meeting closed with final reflections from the Network's Co-Chairs, Dr Nawal Prinja and Rt Rev Dr Tom Butler.





*Clockwise from top left:*  
 Rt Rev Dr Alastair Redfern,  
 Rev Dr Alan Race and Rev Kevin  
 Tingay;  
 Dr Nawal Prinja, Bhupinder  
 Singh, Gary Loke, Tina Mistry,  
 and Sughra Ahmed;  
 Dr Indarjit Singh;  
 John Murray and Jon Dal Din;  
 Lydia Barlow;  
 Louis Rapaport and Philip  
 Rosenberg





*Clockwise from far left:*

Dorab Mistry, Tina Mistry, Nazreen Avari,  
Sherie Mistry and Jehangir Sarosh;

Lunch by the cricket pitch;

Vinay Shah, Dr Harshad Sanghrajka and  
Dr Ramesh Mehta;

Dr Narayan Rao and Ven Bogoda  
Seelawimala

Jaspal Singh and Shaykh Ibrahim Mogra;

Javid Jalili

*Photos in this section taken by IFN staff and  
Bhupinder Singh*



## Engaging with public policy issues

Good inter faith relations can only flourish where people of different faiths feel valued and active members of society. The Inter Faith Network office has again worked through the year to brief its member bodies on relevant issues to support faith communities' work together in the sphere of shared engagement with public life issues.

The Network has continued to encourage Government and other agencies, at UK, national, regional and local level, to involve the faith communities in discussion about policy and service delivery. In Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, member national linking inter faith bodies have also carried forward this work.

The Network's relationships with Government departments and other public bodies are important in its work of building good inter faith relations. Its main link with the Government has been through the Cohesion and Faiths Division in the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG). It has also been in touch with other Government Departments, including the Department for Children, Schools and Families, the Government Equalities Office and the Ministry of Justice. This section of the Review summarises the main issues with which the Network office has been engaged and with which it has kept its member bodies in touch.

## Faith Communities Consultative Council

A Faith Communities Consultative Council (FCCC) meets quarterly, facilitated by the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Network office is directly represented on this. In the course of 2008-09 the Council met in November, March and July co-chaired by the relevant CLG junior Minister and, in rotation, one of its faith community members. Over the year the matters discussed included updates on the development of CLG's inter faith framework; the Government's Prevent programme; approaches to tackling hate crime; how the economic downturn might affect communities; guidance on pandemic flu; the place of faith communities within the third sector, including measures of support for faith community buildings; a review of the guidance contained in *Faith and Community*; plans for faith literacy training; plans for the Inter Faith Week in 2009; the development of regional faith forums; the Faiths in Action grants programme; the Equality Bill; and a review of the Faith Communities Consultative Council itself.

## Equality and Human Rights Commission and new Equality Bill

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) was set up under the Equality Act 2006 and began its work in the autumn of 2007. The three key 'pillars' of its work are "equality/ discrimination", "human rights" and "good relations" (including good "inter faith" relations). The appointment of its Chair, Trevor Phillips, was renewed in July 2009.

The EHRC, through meetings and online, has held consultations both on its forward strategy and business plan, and the IFN office has engaged with these as one of EHRC's 'stakeholders'.

As mentioned in earlier Annual Reviews, the Religion and Belief Consultative Group (RBCG), whose formation the



Network helped to facilitate, has brought together faith community representative bodies and representatives of the British Humanist Association and the National Secular Society. It held regular meetings with staff of the EHRC. IFN's office has been represented at RBCG's meetings and also at meetings of the Equality and Diversity Forum which brings together representatives from a wide range of organisations with interests in the equality field.

At the end of April 2009, the Government published its Equality Bill. The IFN office has kept its member bodies in touch with developments on the Bill and placed briefing material on it on IFN's website.

In addition to consolidating and harmonising existing legislation, the Bill contained a number of provisions intended to strengthen the law in a number of areas. These included provision for a new general duty on listed public authorities when carrying out their functions to have due regard to: the need to eliminate conduct which the Bill prohibits, [ie to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation]; the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant 'protected characteristic'<sup>1</sup> and those who do not; and the need to foster good relations between people who share a relevant 'protected characteristic' and people who do not (therefore covering good relations between people of different faiths and between people who have a religious faith and those who do not). In May 2009, the Government published a consultation document on what this new public duty should involve in terms of more specific duties.

By the time of the Summer Recess of 2009, the Bill had received a Second Reading in the House of Commons.

## Follow up to *Face to Face* and *Side by Side*

The work of giving effect to the Government's framework document on inter faith activity and faith based social action, *Face to Face and Side by Side: A framework for partnership in our multi faith society*, published in the summer of 2008 (and fully described in last year's Annual Review) has been taken forward by CLG over the last year. IFN and its member bodies have been involved in this process since their input to the consultation helped shaped aspects of the final document and much of its content therefore overlapped with, or is being carried forward through, their independent work programmes.

There have been a significant number of meetings and discussions with CLG, particularly in relation to the capacity building of regional faith forums in England (being undertaken by the Community Development Foundation) and the handling of different organisational interests involved in this process, (including CLG itself, regional Government Offices, IFN, the Faith Based Regeneration Network, Community Development Foundation and the Local Government Association (LGA), as well as the forums themselves). Throughout, the need has been recognised to take account of the interests of faith communities and local inter faith organisations in this process.

The IFN office has continued to make the case for the need for greater resourcing for national faith and inter faith bodies which, alongside IFN and regional faith forums, are of great importance to the work of developing good inter faith relations at grassroots level (the level primarily focused on in *Face to Face and Side by Side*).

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1 The 'protected characteristics' are age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief (including lack of religion or belief); sex [i.e. gender] and sexual orientation

## Work relating to local authorities in England and Wales and their engagement with faith and inter faith issues

As mentioned on page 10, the report of a survey which the Local Government Association carried out in partnership with IFN and with the support of CLG on the engagement of local authorities with inter faith/multi faith issues was published on the LGA's website in December, [www.lga.gov.uk/lga/aio/1297417](http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/aio/1297417). The research showed that the majority of local authorities believe that partnership working with local inter faith organisations helps to ensure that people from different backgrounds can interact positively and contributes to a greater sense of belonging within communities.

The survey was relevant to the work being taken forward by CLG in consultation with IFN and other organisations on the possible revision of *Faith and Community*, which was published in early 2002 by the LGA, with IFN and other partners, as a guide to good practice for local authorities in their dealings with their local faith communities and local inter faith structures.

## 'Public benefit' test for religious charities

Many of IFN's member bodies are charities, or are considering becoming charities. As reported in last year's Annual Review, in January 2008 the Charity Commission published general guidance on the application to charities of the new 'public benefit' provisions included in the Charities Act 2006. In December 2008 it published a range of supplementary guidance on this, following extensive consultation, including guidance on the application of the 'public benefit' test to charities established for the 'advancement of religion'.

IFN's Director attended a meeting in November of a new Advisory Group on Faith established by the Charity Commission which will be meeting from time to time.

## Ministry of Justice project on the 'Governance of Britain'

As reported in last year's Annual Review, in the first months of 2008 IFN's Executive Committee responded to an invitation to provide a short statement on 'values'. This was subsequently placed on the Governance of Britain website at: <http://governance.justice.gov.uk/british>. Following up on its earlier proposal for a 'Bill of Rights and Duties', the Government published a consultative document entitled *"Rights and Responsibilities: developing our constitutional framework."*

## Census 2011

The IFN office has been involved in meetings with the Office for National Statistics about the arrangements for the 2011 Census and has kept its member bodies in touch with developments.

In December 2008 the Government announced, in agreement with the UK's Statistics Authority, that, subject to appropriate legislative approval, a Census of population and housing will be taken in England and Wales on 27 March 2011 (which is a Sunday). Censuses will also be taken on the same day in Scotland and Northern Ireland, subject to separate legislative procedures in the Scottish Parliament and the Northern Ireland Assembly. Throughout the UK it is proposed that a question on religious identity should be asked on a voluntary basis. Its wording will be different in different parts of the UK.

It is proposed that the question on religion to be used in England and Wales should be the same as that used in the 2001 Census except that the relevant tick box would read 'No religion' rather than 'None' and this box would be moved from last to first position. As before, 'tick boxes' for religions would cover Christian, Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and 'Any other religion', with a write-in possibility. Although the possibility of including separate 'tick boxes' for some other religions than those



listed had been discussed with the Office of National Statistics they were unable to do this because of space constraints.

In Northern Ireland the question on religion offers respondents the options of Roman Catholic, Presbyterian Church, Church of Ireland, Methodist Church, 'Other' (with a write-in possibility) and 'None', with separate questions on current 'belonging' and 'upbringing'.

The question which it is planned to use in Scotland includes options of 'None', Church of Scotland, Roman Catholic, Muslim, Buddhist, Sikh, Jewish, Hindu, Pagan and 'Another religion' (with a 'write in' possibility). The separate question on upbringing included in the 2001 Census in Scotland is to be dropped.

## **New BBC 'Standing Conference' on Religion and Belief**

A new Standing Conference on Religion and Belief has been created to liaise with the BBC on matters of common concern to the BBC and religious groups and also humanists. It succeeds the Central Religious Advisory Committee. Members serve on a personal basis. IFN's Director was asked to participate and attended the first meeting on 22 April.

## **Sharing news and good practice between the UK and the wider world**

A number of the Inter Faith Network's member bodies, such as the International Interfaith Centre and UK chapters or branches of international inter faith organisations, have a particular focus on international issues. The focus of the Inter Faith Network's work is on inter faith relations in the

UK. At the same time, it is interested to learn about relevant developments in inter faith work overseas and has a commitment to sharing the experiences of British inter faith work with practitioners in other countries, of whom a number visited the Network office during the year and a number sought advice by email and telephone. The Network also, as the opportunity to do so arises, helps its member bodies make overseas links which can strengthen this mutual learning.

In July 2008, Brian Pearce, the Network's Adviser on Faith and Public Life, attended the World Conference on Dialogue held in Madrid and hosted by the Muslim World League under the auspices of the Kings of Saudi Arabia and of Spain. In early November 2008, he attended a meeting in Paris of Religions for Peace (Europe) which was discussing its structures and future plans for its inter faith work in Europe.

At the end of October, Dr Harriet Crabtree, the Network's Director, spoke, at the invitation of the Canadian Government, at the 13th International Metropolis Conference held in Bonn on 'Public Strategies for Inter Cultural and Inter Faith Dialogue in Pluralistic Societies'. In November, she visited Auschwitz Birkenau, accompanying the Chief Rabbi and other faith leaders, who had been invited by the Archbishop of Canterbury to accompany him as part of a visit arranged by the Holocaust Educational Trust.

## **Global Community Linking Project**

The Network agreed arrangements for it to be a partner in a consortium led by the British Council (the others being the Institute of Community Cohesion and VSO) to carry out a three year project on behalf of the Department for International Development (DfID) to promote the development of 'links' between communities in the UK and overseas. ([www.dfid.gov.uk/Getting-Involved/How-you-can-help/DFID-Community-Linking-Programme](http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Getting-Involved/How-you-can-help/DFID-Community-Linking-Programme))

It is hoped that one of the outcomes of this project will be increased community cohesion in the UK as funded groups will be drawn together in shared learning and support activities. The Network has a special role in relation to the faith community dimension of this, and it is hoped that there will be a benefit in terms of cross-faith understanding and engagement. The first phase of the project includes examining the current linking aspects in the UK with community groups abroad, with the Network office contacting all faith community umbrella bodies to ask them to encourage their members to complete the survey on existing linking as the report will help shape the actual grants programme, due to begin in the summer of 2010.

## Informing and advising

### Enquiries

The Inter Faith Network office provides information and advice to a wide range of organisations and individuals. For some types of enquirers, such as companies and employees, the Network's role is to help make them aware of relevant sources of guidance such as ACAS guidelines on religious identity and the workplace or the Shap calendar of religious festivals. In others, such as assisting the media or central Government, it helps enquirers in making contact with the relevant faith or inter faith bodies. On enquiries from national, regional and local inter faith bodies or from people wishing to develop these, the Network's assistance may be ongoing over a long period.

The organisations using the Information and Advice service during 2008-09 included a wide range of faith communities, inter faith organisations, Government Departments, local authorities, other public bodies, voluntary organisations, schools and educational institutions and the media. English Heritage, the National Police Improvement Agency, Arts Council, BBC,

Forestry Commission and UNESCO are just a few of those who have talked through aspects of their projects with the Network or been put in touch with its members to assist them.

The Inter Faith Network's website at [www.interfaith.org.uk](http://www.interfaith.org.uk) provides information about its work and publications. It also allows the downloading of some of its publications as well as providing links to the internet pages of other projects with which the Network has been involved. The number of visitors to the web site is growing and now averages around 2,500 a month.

### A few of the year's enquiries:

- Our area does not have a local inter faith group yet. Do you have any pointers on how to start setting one up?
- We are hosting an event on 'sacred texts'. How can we get contact details for local faith leaders?
- How can I find out about multi faith peace walks or pilgrimages in different towns and cities around the UK?
- We would like to set up a multi faith centre on our university campus. Can you put us in touch with other places which have done this?
- How might we incorporate learning on inter faith understanding into our youth group's programme?
- We are planning to discuss death and burial practices of different faith communities on our radio programme. How should we approach different faith communities about this?
- We would like people to come and speak to our Year 13 students about their perceptions of faiths other than their own. How can we find speakers?

## Network membership

At the Network's Annual General Meeting, held in Leicester on 6 July, seventeen organisations were accepted into membership:

- Barking and Dagenham Faith Forum
- Buckinghamshire Forum of Faiths
- Muslim-Christian Forum (Bury)
- Cheltenham Inter Faith
- Coexist Foundation
- Coexistence Trust
- Faiths Together in Croydon
- Cumbria Interfaith Forum
- Hampshire Interfaith Network
- Hastings and District Interfaith Forum
- Hull and East Riding Interfaith
- Interfaith Alliance UK
- Inter Faith Isle of Man
- Milton Keynes Council of Faiths
- Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board (MINAB)
- Tony Blair Faith Foundation
- Valleys Faith Forum

The AGM noted that the following organisations have now withdrawn from IFN membership: Arya Pratinidhi Sabha (ceased to operate as a national body); Cleveland and Tees Valley Interfaith Group (has been incorporated into the Middlesbrough Council of Faiths); Derby Open Centre Multi-Faith Group (ceased to operate); Gloucestershire Inter Faith Action (ceased to operate); and the Imams and Mosques Council UK (replaced in Network membership by MINAB).

This brings the total number of Network member bodies at the present time to 176.

The AGM also noted that Blackburn with Darwen Interfaith Council has changed its name to Blackburn with Darwen Interfaith Forum; and that the Multi Faith Centre at the University of Derby has transferred its IFN membership from the 'Educational and Academic' category to the 'Other Inter Faith Organisations' category.

Amended versions of IFN's Memorandum and Articles of Association, which were updated by IFN's solicitors, Bates Wells and Braithwaite, mainly to bring them in line with changes in the Companies Act, were approved by the AGM. The amendments also implemented the changes to these documents agreed at the 2007 AGM following the review of the structures and patterns of Network membership. Copies of the Network's updated Memorandum and Articles were sent to all member bodies and can be made available on request from the IFN office.

## Trustees

At the AGM, Rt Rev Dr Tom Butler was re-elected as a Co-Chair until 31 December 2009. It was agreed that Rt Rev Dr Alastair Redfern, the Bishop of Derby, who had been nominated to take up post in his place from January 2010, should take over from him at that point. Bishop Tom Butler told the AGM that he would be stepping down at the end of 2009 as he would be retiring in the early part of 2010 as the Anglican Bishop of Southwark.

Dr Girdari Lal Bhan was elected for the coming year as Co-Chair in succession to Dr Nawal Prinja. Dr Prinja was stepping down before the end of the three year period for which the Hindu community would be holding the Co-Chair position as his work meant that he would now be abroad more and would not be able to attend to IFN matters as much as he would have wished.



*Dr Nawal Prinja and  
Rt Rev Dr Tom Butler*

Both Rt Rev Dr Tom Butler and Dr Nawal Prinja were thanked for their important contribution to the work of IFN and Dr Manazir Ahsan made a presentation to them on behalf of member bodies.

Dr Manazir Ahsan, Dr Indarjit Singh and Mr Vivian Wineman were re-elected as Vice-Chairs for the coming year. Hon Barnabas Leith of the Baha'i community was elected as Vice-Chair in succession to Mr Dorab Mistry of the Zoroastrian community (in pursuance of the relevant guideline for a Vice-Chair appointment to be drawn in rotation from the smaller communities represented within the Network).

Ms Aviva Dautch and Mrs Regina O'Callaghan both stood down from the Committee and were thanked for the important contribution which they had made.

Monsignor Andrew Faley and Mrs Amy Willshire, both of whom were new to the Committee, and Mr Norman Richardson, who had served as a Committee member some years previously, were elected to serve on the Committee for the coming year.

## Trustees for 2009-10

### Co-Chairs:

- Rt Rev Dr Tom Butler (until December 2009)
- Rt Rev Dr Alastair Redfern (from January 2010)
- Dr Girdari L Bhan

### Vice-Chairs:

- Dr Manazir Ahsan MBE
- Hon Barnabas Leith
- Dr Indarjit Singh CBE
- Mr Vivian Wineman

### Treasurer:

- Mr Ramesh Shah

### Executive Committee:

- Ms Sughra Ahmed
- Rev Peter Colwell
- Mgr Andrew Faley
- Professor Brian Gates
- Mr David Gifford
- Mr Sanjay M Jagatia
- Ms Pramila Kaur
- Mr Ayub Laher
- Mr Shabbir Lakha
- Mr Yann Lovelock
- Ms Jyoti Mehta
- Mr Dorab Mistry
- Mrs Ravinder Kaur Nijjar
- Rev Daniel Otieno-Ndale
- Mr Nitin Palan
- Rabbi Alan Plancey
- Dr Narayan Rao
- Moulana M Shahid Raza OBE
- Mr Norman Richardson MBE
- Imam Dr Abduljalil Sajid
- Ven Bogoda Seelawimala
- Mr Resham Singh Sandhu MBE
- Dr Natubhai Shah

- Mr Jagjiwan Singh
- Mrs Diana Soffa
- Rabbi Jacqueline Tabick
- Canon Guy Wilkinson
- Mrs Amy Willshire

## Staff

Dr Harriet Crabtree has continued in her role as the Network's Director; Paresh Solanki has continued in his role as Assistant Director (Communications and Development); and Brian Pearce has continued in his part time role, on a voluntary basis, as Adviser on Faith and Public Life.

Stella Opoku-Owusu has been promoted to the role of Regional and Local Inter Faith Officer. Ziya Adilov was appointed as Bookkeeper and Administrative Assistant in May.

Hannah Mercer, from the ProspectUs employment agency, continues in her role as PA/Administrator and Bhupinder Singh continues, on a freelance basis, to design and maintain the Network's website. Yi Ling Ong and Elin Henrysson helped as Clerical Assistants in the Network office one day per week.



*Yi Ling Ong*



*Hannah Mercer; Ziya Adilov; Stella Opoku-Owusu  
and Elin Henrysson*

# Statement of Financial Activities

## (Incorporating an Income and Expenditure Account)

For the year ended 31 December 2008

	Note	Restricted £	Unrestricted £	Total 2008 £	Total 2007 £
<b>Incoming Resources</b>	1				
<b>Incoming Resources from generated funds</b>					
Voluntary Income	2	77,850	298,040	375,890	279,393
Investment Income	3	2,774	4,562	7,336	5,083
<b>Incoming resources from charitable activities</b>	4	–	8,680	8,680	16,058
<b>Total incoming resources</b>		<b>80,624</b>	<b>311,282</b>	<b>391,906</b>	<b>300,534</b>
<b>Resources expended</b>					
Cost of Generating Voluntary Income		2,075	11,962	14,037	12,617
<b>Charitable Activities</b>					
Consultation, Information and Advice		45,763	156,423	202,186	127,407
Meetings and Conferences		13,892	64,205	78,097	54,085
Publications		4,821	24,315	29,136	45,167
Research		4,911	25,685	30,596	32,803
Governance Costs		9,162	41,304	50,466	42,003
<b>Total resources expended</b>	8	<b>80,624</b>	<b>323,894</b>	<b>404,518</b>	<b>314,082</b>
<b>Net incoming/(outgoing) resources for the year</b>	5	–	(12,612)	(12,612)	(13,548)
Funds brought forward		–	100,932	100,932	114,480
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		–	<b>88,320</b>	<b>88,320</b>	<b>100,932</b>

All the charitable company's operations are classed as continuing. All the charitable company's recognised gains and losses are shown above. The movement on reserves is shown above.

# Balance Sheets

As at 31 December 2008

	Note	£	2008 £	£	2007 £
<b>Tangible Fixed Assets</b>	10		4,904		7,287
<b>Current Assets</b>					
Debtors and prepayments	11	60,087		27,050	
Cash at bank		166,158		91,905	
		226,245		118,955	
<b>Creditors: amounts due within one year</b>	12	142,829		25,310	
<b>Net Current Assets</b>			83,416		93,645
<b>Net Assets</b>			<b>88,320</b>		<b>100,932</b>
<b>Funds</b>					
Unrestricted Funds			88,320		100,932
<b>Total Funds</b>	13		<b>88,320</b>		<b>100,932</b>

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part VII of the Companies Act 1985 relating to Small Companies.

These Financial Statements were approved by the Executive Committee on 26 June 2009 and signed on their behalf by Mr Ramesh Shah – Treasurer.



## Supporters in 2008

The Inter Faith Network's programme of building good relations between the different faith communities in the UK is funded through support from faith communities, Governments, trusts and individuals supportive of its work, as well as through the subscription fees of its member bodies.

The Trustees of the Network thank most warmly all those who have given financial support during the calendar year 2008 and also those who have given the gift of time to help IFN work for good relations between the faiths in the UK.

### Trusts, Foundations and Companies

- Ardwick Trust
- David Uri Memorial Trust
- ICIC Foundation
- M E Pearce Trust
- Michael and Anna Wix Charitable Trust
- P H Holt Charitable Trust
- Tolkien Trust

### Government Funding

During 2008 the Network received core support from the Department for Communities and Local Government.

### Faith Community Organisations

- BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha
- Baha'i Community of the UK
- Board of Deputies of British Jews
- Community Security Trust

- Church of England
- Free Churches Group
- Islamic Foundation
- Methodist Racial Justice Projects Fund
- Muslim Council of Britain
- Network of Buddhist Organisations (UK)
- Salvation Army
- Sri Lankan Sangha Sabha of GB
- United Reformed Church
- Vishwa Hindu Parishad
- Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe

\*Some contributions to the funding received from member faith communities have come through individual donors and these are included in the list below.

### Other Donors\*

- Amberley Parochial Church Council
- Centre for Christianity and Interreligious Dialogue
- Mrs Elizabeth Crabtree
- Rev Richard Davison
- Mrs Hazel Drake
- Mrs Elizabeth Elton
- Mr J A Ewan
- The late Mr Alan Fair
- Ms Elnora Ferguson
- Rt Rev Graham James
- Dr Dermot Killingley
- Mr M H Oliver
- Mr Harbans Singh Sethi
- Mrs Bhadra Shah
- Mr Vasant Shend'ge
- Ms Clare Salters
- Mr David Stevens
- Mr Rashid Siddiqui
- Rt Rev Roy Williamson
- Rev Canon Michael Wolfe



# Member Organisations of the Inter Faith Network for the UK 2009/10

## Faith Community Representative Bodies

Baha'i Community of the UK  
BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha  
Board of Deputies of British Jews  
British Muslim Forum  
Buddhist Society  
Churches' Agency for Inter Faith Relations in Scotland  
Churches Together in Britain and Ireland  
Churches Together in England  
Committee for Relations with Other Religions, Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales  
Council of African and Afro-Caribbean Churches (UK)  
Friends of the Western Buddhist Order  
Hindu Council (UK)  
Hindu Forum of Britain  
Inter Faith Panel of the Unitarian and Free Christian Churches Faith and Public Issues Commission  
Islamic Cultural Centre  
Jain Samaj Europe  
Jamiat-e-Ulama Britain  
Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board  
Muslim Council of Britain  
National Council of Hindu Temples (UK)  
Network of Buddhist Organisations (UK)  
Network of Sikh Organisations (UK)  
Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations  
Sri Lankan Sangha Sabha of GB  
Vishwa Hindu Parishad (UK)  
World Ahlul-Bayt Islamic League  
World Islamic Mission (UK)  
Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe

## Educational and Academic Bodies

Cambridge Inter-Faith Programme  
Centre for Christianity and Interreligious Dialogue, Heythrop College  
Centre for the Study of Interreligious Relations, University of Birmingham  
Community Religions Project, University of Leeds  
Institute of Jainology  
Islamic Foundation  
National Association of SACREs  
Religious Education Council of England and Wales  
Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education  
Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter  
Woolf Institute of Abrahamic Faiths

## Inter Faith Organisations

Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum  
Scottish Inter Faith Council  
Inter Faith Council for Wales/Cyngor Cyd-Ffydd Cymru  
East of England Faiths Council  
faithnetsouthwest  
Faiths Forum for the East Midlands  
Northwest Forum of Faiths  
South East England Faith Forum  
West Midlands Faiths Forum  
Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum  
Alif Aleph UK  
Christian Muslim Forum  
Christians Aware Interfaith Programme  
Coexist Foundation  
Coexistence Trust  
Council of Christians and Jews

East of England Faiths Agency  
Interfaith Alliance UK  
International Association for Religious Freedom (British Chapter)  
International Interfaith Centre  
Joseph Interfaith Foundation  
London Society of Jews and Christians  
Minorities of Europe Inter Faith Action Programme  
Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby  
Religions for Peace (UK)  
St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace  
St Philip's Centre for Study and Engagement in a Multi Faith Society  
Three Faiths Forum  
Tony Blair Faith Foundation  
United Religions Initiative (UK)  
Westminster Interfaith  
World Congress of Faiths

## Local Inter Faith Groups

Altrincham Inter Faith Group  
Barking and Dagenham Faith Forum  
Barnet Multi-Faith Forum  
Bedford Council of Faiths  
Birmingham Council of Faiths  
Blackburn with Darwen Interfaith Forum  
Blackpool Faith Forum  
Bolton Interfaith Council  
Bradford Concord Interfaith Society  
Bradford District Faiths Forum  
Brent Interfaith  
Brent Multi-Faith Forum  
Brighton and Hove Inter-Faith Contact Group  
Bristol Inter Faith Group  
Bristol Multi-Faith Forum  
Buckinghamshire Forum of Faiths  
Building Bridges in Burnley  
Muslim-Christian Forum (Bury)  
Calderdale Interfaith Council  
Cambridge Inter-Faith Group  
Canterbury and District Inter Faith Action  
Cardiff Interfaith Association  
Cheltenham Inter Faith  
Clapham and Stockwell Faith Forum  
Coventry Multi-Faith Forum  
Crawley Interfaith Network  
Faiths Together in Croydon  
Cumbria Interfaith Forum  
Forum of Faiths for Derby  
Doncaster Interfaith  
Dudley Borough Interfaith Network  
Elmbridge Multi-Faith Forum  
Gateshead Inter Faith Forum  
Greenwich Multi-Faith Forum  
Hampshire Interfaith Network  
Harrow Inter Faith Council  
Hastings and District Interfaith Forum  
Hillingdon Inter Faith Network  
Horsham Interfaith Forum  
Hounslow Friends of Faith  
Huddersfield Inter Faith Council  
Hull and East Riding Interfaith  
Inter Faith Isle of Man  
Interfaith Swansea

Islington Faiths Forum  
Keighley Interfaith Group  
Kingston Inter Faith Forum  
Lancashire Forum of Faiths  
Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship  
Leeds Faiths Forum  
Leicester Council of Faiths  
Lincoln Inter-Faith Forum  
Liverpool Faith Network  
Loughborough Council of Faiths  
Luton Council of Faiths  
Faith Network for Manchester  
Medway Inter Faith Action Forum  
Merseyside Council of Faiths  
Middlesbrough Council of Faiths  
Interfaith MK (Milton Keynes)  
Milton Keynes Council of Faiths  
Moseley Inter Faith Group  
Newcastle Council of Faiths  
Newham Association of Faiths  
Newham Faith Sector Forum  
North Kirklees Inter-Faith Council  
North Staffordshire Forum of Faiths  
Northampton Inter Faith Forum  
Norwich InterFaith Link  
Nottingham Inter Faith Council  
Oldham Inter Faith Forum  
Oxford Round Table of Religions  
Building Bridges Pendle - Interfaith Community Project  
Peterborough Inter-Faith Council  
Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity  
Inter Faith group  
Portsmouth Inter Faith Forum  
Preston Faith Forum  
Reading Inter-Faith Group  
Redbridge Council of Faiths  
Redbridge Faith Forum  
Rochdale Multi Faith Partnership  
Rossendale Faith Partnership  
Rugby Inter Faith Forum  
Sandwell Multi-Faith Network  
Sheffield Interfaith  
South London Inter Faith Group  
Southampton Council of Faiths  
Southwark Multi Faith Forum  
Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource  
Faiths United (Tameside)  
Telford and Wrekin Interfaith Group  
Tower Hamlets Inter Faith Forum  
Valleys Faith Forum  
Waltham Forest Faith Communities Forum  
Wandsworth Multi-Faith Network  
Warrington Council of Faiths  
Watford Inter Faith Association  
Wellingborough Inter Faith Group  
Welwyn Hatfield Interfaith Group  
West Wiltshire Interfaith Group  
Westminster Faith Exchange  
Whalley Range (Manchester) Inter Faith Group  
Windsor and Maidenhead Community Forum  
Wolverhampton Inter Faith Council  
Wycombe Sharing of Faiths

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