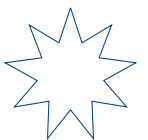




The Inter Faith Network for the UK

2002-2003 ANNUAL REVIEW





The Inter Faith Network for the UK

2002-2003 ANNUAL REVIEW

The Inter Faith Network for the UK
8A Lower Grosvenor Place
London SW1W 0EN
Tel: 020 7931 7766
Fax: 020 7931 7722
Email: ifnet@interfaith.org.uk
Web: www.interfaith.org.uk

The Network is a registered charity No. 1068934 and
a company limited by guarantee No. 3443823 registered in England.

Photographs in this review may not be reproduced without prior written permission.
Unless otherwise stated all photographs taken by Network staff.

The Inter Faith Network for the UK

The Inter Faith Network for the UK was founded in 1987 to link inter faith activity and to develop good relations between people of different faiths in this country. Its members include the representative bodies of the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Zoroastrian faiths; national and local inter faith organisations; and educational and academic bodies specialising in inter faith relations. It is run by Trustees of all the faiths whose representative bodies it links.

With its member bodies, the Network works 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 persons of different religious faiths'. It does this by:

- Holding meetings of its member bodies where social and religious questions of concern to the different faith communities can be examined together
- Setting up multi faith working groups, seminars and conferences to pursue particular issues in greater depth
- Proceeding by consensus wherever possible and not making statements on behalf of member bodies except after full consultation
- Fostering inter faith co-operation on social issues
- Running an information and advice service
- Publishing materials to help people working in the religious and inter faith sectors
- In consultation with member bodies, helping to provide contacts and participants for inter faith events and projects and for television and radio programmes

Further information about the Inter Faith Network can be found on its website: www.interfaith.org.uk or by writing to the Network office.

Contents

Message from the Co-Chairs	1
Time to Talk: Faiths at the Table of Dialogue	3
Faith Communities Consultative Forum	7
Network national meetings	8
Survey of local inter faith activity across the UK	9
Local inter faith meetings	13
Inter faith work with young people	14
Faith communities and public life	15
Information and advice	18
New office premises	19
Officers and Executive Committee	20
Accounts	22
Supporters	24
Member organisations	26

Message from the Co-Chairs of the Inter Faith Network



Mrs Rosalind Preston OBE
and Rt Rev Dr Tom Butler

The Inter Faith Network's work of promoting positive inter faith relations in the UK is carried out in partnership with its member bodies and others. This year, has been, above all, a year of cooperation – a year when the Network has worked with various partners on a range of projects and publications designed to increase community cohesion and to help build a multi faith society where all can practise their faith with integrity and live in harmony and mutual respect.

During March to July this year, the Network's major project was a survey of local inter faith activity across the UK. This was made possible by a welcome grant from the 'community cohesion' budget of the Home Office and by the practical assistance of many organisations who contributed to the project. In the fifteen years since the Network was established, there has been a rapid increase and diversification of local inter faith activity. This survey has helped provide a detailed map of this new

landscape. The information gathered by the project will be of immense value to all those involved in the vital work of building strong inter faith relations at a local level and the structures needed to support them.

The Network was actively involved in the production of

Guidance on Community Cohesion which was published at the end of 2002. This guidance for local authorities and other public bodies included clear pointers about the vital importance of promoting good inter faith relations locally as part of the work to develop community cohesion. The Network's inclusion alongside the Local Government Association, the Home Office, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Commission for Racial Equality indicates the recognition which is now given to the importance of inter faith work (and of the Network) within public life. Over the last twelve months, the Network has also taken part in the Home Office's review of patterns of consultation of faith communities by central Government and their representation at national events. This review provides an important opportunity to strengthen and develop the role of faith communities in public life.

It is important for the Network to maintain a proper balance in its own work between the public life agenda and the agenda of

developing deeper relationships of mutual trust and understanding between different faiths. The establishment, this year, within the Network, of a Faith Communities Consultative Forum (as part of the developing pattern of separate meetings for different categories of Network member bodies) is a step of considerable potential significance for the future development of relations between Britain's main faith communities. The Forum will provide an opportunity to deepen these relationships and to bring together those working on a variety of policy issues on behalf of these communities.

These opportunities for discussion between faith communities are particularly important – the more so at present because of the impact which recent events in the Middle East, in Gujarat and elsewhere have had on faith relations here in the UK. As the poet John Donne wrote, 'No man is an island'. The web of personal and community relationships that exist across our inter-dependent and interconnected world mean that we are all affected by such events and must all wrestle with their consequences for our shared lives here.

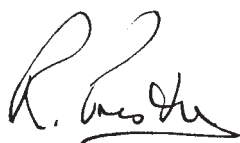
At the Network's national meeting in July, there was optimism about the future but also a recognition of the need to deepen the dialogue between faith communities, tackling what are often uncomfortable burdens of historical misunderstanding and mistrust. Speakers and participants underlined the need both to strengthen multilateral dialogue (involving all the major faiths) and to encourage the development of dialogues between particular individual faith

communities where these are not yet happening in any depth.

The year also saw the start of a new project, in association with *respect* and with the involvement of the National Youth Agency, to produce an inter faith action guide for young people. Through this we hope that more young people will be encouraged to become involved in inter faith activity.

Last year's review mentioned that the Network might need to find fresh premises for its offices and this has proved to be the case. We are delighted that it has been possible to find a new base in a convenient location on the Grosvenor Estate near Victoria Station which offers room for some expansion in the Network's activities. This is being made possible as a result of a generous donation from the Westminster Foundation, which is linked to the Estate, to reduce the annual cost of our lease. Everyone who has been involved in moving their office knows what a time consuming and difficult upheaval this can be and we are grateful to the Network's staff for coping with such good humour with this as well as their usual workload.

Moves also bring with them additional costs and this has been, for the Network, a matter of some anxiety. The task of ensuring that the Network has sufficient financial resources to continue its work of promoting good inter faith relations in the UK is a never-ending one. We are enormously grateful to all those who have helped with its funding over the past year and hope that we shall be able to secure the funds that we need for the coming year and beyond.



Mrs Rosalind Preston OBE



Rt Rev Dr Tom Butler

Time to Talk: Faiths at the Table of Dialogue

The Inter Faith Network's National Meeting and AGM was held at the Techno Centre, University of Coventry on 3 July. Its theme was *Time to Talk: Faiths at the Table of Dialogue in Today's UK*.

Across the last fifteen years in the UK there has been steady progress towards greater cooperation between different faiths on the 'public life' agenda. It is now the norm, rather than the exception, for representatives of different faiths to sit at the consultation table offering their advice or support on issues such as community cohesion, neighbourhood renewal or health policies. There is, increasingly, sharing between faiths of 'know how' and ideas for social action projects and, in some cases, cooperation between faiths on particular projects.

Joint involvement in public life and social issues is one of the vital dimensions of creating good inter faith relations. However, alongside this there remains the crucial – and ever more significant – task of enabling the members of our respective faith communities to address centuries old histories of misunderstanding, misrepresentation and prejudice. Discussion between faiths – 'dialogue' as it is often called – is sometimes dismissed as 'just talking'. But talking and listening is becoming daily more important. Social cooperation alone does not overcome inherited myths and prejudices about other faiths or untangle skeins of suspicion and fear.

At a time when developments abroad have contributed to growing levels of antagonism, and in some cases have led to attacks on places of worship and individuals, and when extreme right wing organisations are



Revd Jonathan Gorsky of the Council of Christians and Jews speaking at the National Meeting

Dialogue, in short, is as diverse as the people who participate in it... At its greatest, it is the most profound form of speaking to each other that we have, but the finest gift that it offers is that it develops in all of us the capacity to listen and to hear each other. In a world of conflict this is very precious indeed.

REVD JONATHAN GORSKY, COUNCIL OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS



Student contributors from the Blue Coat School with teacher Gyll Brown



Shigeyuki Wada and Ms Sarita Cargas of the International Interfaith Centre

We have so much in common and I find this the most reassuring aspect of the Forum. In addition to this, we have learned a great deal about each other, often in response to simple questions... It has also made me personally look into my own faith from a different perspective because I need to study and prepare myself before I present this to the other members and as I study I am myself able to learn more about my own faith.

KULDIP SINGH, HITCHIN SIKH-CHRISTIAN FORUM

exploiting potent and unpleasant images of particular religions to sow hatred and distrust, it was timely to focus on this theme of dialogue at the 2003 National Meeting and to address the questions:

- Why is talking together – and listening to one another – so important?
- Who is talking with whom?
- How are prejudice and misunderstanding between faiths being tackled?
- What developments are taking place in inter religious dialogue here in the UK?
- What are the urgent questions on today's agenda for inter faith dialogue?
- How can we, as members of our various historic faiths, enable the various vital dialogues to deepen and grow?

The first speaker was the Network's Deputy Director, Dr Harriet Crabtree. She gave a preliminary report on some of the findings of the local inter faith 'mapping' project of which there is an account later in this Review. The many inter faith groups and dialogues about which the project gathered information each have their own special contribution to make to the work of deepening dialogue and creating trust.

Bi-lateral inter faith initiatives bring together people of two specific faiths to discuss in depth issues common to the communities. They enable in depth discussion of shared histories and particular issues. Presentations on bilateral initiatives were given by Revd Jonathan Gorsky of the Council of Christians and Jews and Kuldip Singh and Revd Pamela Wise, Co-Chairs of the Hitchin Sikh-Christian Forum.

Dr Ataullah Siddiqui, Head of the Inter Faith Unit of the Islamic Foundation, Bimal

Krishna das, Secretary to the National Council of Hindu Temples, and Revd Canon Dr Michael Ipgrave, Secretary to the Churches' Commission on Inter Faith Relations spoke about their faiths' attitude to, and involvement in, inter faith dialogue.

Ashmi Gangani, Kiran Banga and Sophia Ayres, students from the Blue Coat School in Coventry, spoke about their experience of inter faith encounter and their awareness of the importance of good inter faith relations for the society in which they are growing up. They underlined the importance for them of faiths coming to understand each other better.

Following five workshops on a variety of topics, a panel in the final plenary session included contributions from Jehangir Sarosh, Moderator of World Conference on Religion and Peace (Europe) and member of the Zoroastrian community; Maureen Sier, member of the Baha'i community and Development Officer of the Scottish Inter Faith Council; Paul Seto,

Director of the Buddhist Society and Inter Faith Co-ordinator for the Network of Buddhist Organisations; and Rt Revd Charles Henderson, formerly Chair of the Committee for Other Faiths of the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales. A Jain invitee was unable to attend. Closing reflections were offered by John Battle MP, the Prime Minister's adviser on inter faith issues.

The record of the National Meeting is available from the Network Office price £3.80 inc. p and p.

There are several religious conflicts going on in the world. I believe this is because religions are dwelling too much on their differences and failing to acknowledge their similarities. All religions have the same basic moral code and I believe that until different religions take a step back to understand each, religious conflicts will go on.

ASHMI GANGANI, STUDENT BLUE COAT SCHOOL, COVENTRY



Carol Hayden and Priti Merai of the Bolton Interfaith Council

The task of all of us, indeed our duty, is to value our religion and to use it to promote and uplift human life at all levels, to promote good fellowship, and to try and enable all peoples to live together in peace.

RT REVD CHARLES HENDERSON



Des McCabe of the Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum and Network Vice-Chair, Jagjivan Singh



Executive Committee member, Rabbi Alan Plancey and Eileen Fry of the Multi Faith Centre at the University of Derby

If my neighbour is somebody of a different faith to me, then loving that neighbour means respecting and taking seriously his or her religious beliefs and practices. I cannot love my neighbour while disparaging what it is they believe and the way that they live their lives in spiritual terms.

REVD CANON DR MICHAEL IPGRAVE

Bilateral, tri-lateral and multi-lateral discussions... each have their distinctive value and can reinforce each other.

MRS ROSALIND PRESTON OBE

The most important element in inter faith dialogue is faith: there is no inter faith without faith.

DR ATAULLAH SIDDIQUI, ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



Dr Ataulлах Siddiqui of the Islamic Foundation and Ganesh Lal of the South London Inter Faith Group

PICTURES ON PAGES 4-6 BY SARAH THORLEY

Faith Communities Consultative Forum

An important development this year has been the establishment within the Network of a Faith Communities Consultative Forum (FCCF). It emerged from the category meetings of faith community representative bodies in Network membership, which were initiated in early 2002, and which recommended that a Faith Communities Consultative Forum should be formally established. At its meeting of 17 February this year, the Network's Executive Committee formally agreed this step and the terms of reference for the new Forum. The Forum had its first official meeting on 3 April.

The Forum will provide a structured opportunity for regular discussion between member faith communities at a national level on issues of common concern to them, for example in relation to Government policy proposals. Informed by discussion together, faith communities will, as now, put forward their views individually and on their own terms whether to Government or more generally. The Forum will not issue statements on behalf of the faith communities collectively or take policy decisions on their behalf. Its meetings will, however, provide valuable opportunities for member faith communities to become aware of the attitudes of other communities to current issues and the reasons for their views. This might have an additional practical advantage in facilitating the formation of informal coalitions between different faith communities on particular issues.

It has been agreed that, given the potentially wide-ranging agenda of the Forum, faith communities will be represented, where

they so wish, by those from within their community with specialist knowledge of the particular issues under discussion. This will enhance the value of meetings of the Forum and will facilitate the making of links between those dealing with a particular issue on behalf of their community.

While the focus of a good deal of the Forum's agenda will be on relations with the Government at Westminster, representatives from the Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum, the Scottish Inter Faith Council, and the Inter Faith Council for Wales will be entitled to attend Forum meetings

The faith community category meeting on 12 December heard from Ms. Cathy Rees of the Department of Trade and Industry about the latest stages in the Government's consultation on the implementation of the European Directive on discrimination in employment and training, on grounds including religion and belief. The Forum meeting in April heard a report on the first meeting of the Working Group on the Home Office review of arrangements for consultation by central Government of faith communities and their representation at national events. It also discussed recent developments in the handling of the 'equality and diversity' agenda. Presentations were made to it by Mr Derek Taylor-Thompson of the Churches' Main Committee and Ms Rachel Lampard of the Churches' RADAR Group on the work of these two Church bodies and the possibilities of developing ways of sharing their work with other faith communities.

Network national meetings

National Inter Faith Organisations

The third annual meeting of national inter faith organisations in membership of the Network was held on 25 February. These meetings provide a valuable opportunity for national inter faith organisations to exchange news of their work and to share plans for future developments. This makes it easier for them to work in complementary and cooperative ways.

Participants heard from a Home Office official about plans for the Home Office review of arrangements for consultation of faith communities by central Government. Presentations were also made to the meeting about the local inter faith mapping project on which the Network was about to begin work and the project to create an inter faith action guide for young people. The afternoon session had a special focus on the work of national inter faith organisations with young people.

Educational and Academic Bodies

Representatives of educational and academic bodies in membership of the Network met together on 8 April. This was the first time that a separate meeting had been held for representatives of this category of Network member body. In addition to an exchange of views, there was a review of the work which the Network could usefully undertake on educational and academic issues and of possible additions to Network membership in this category. It is hoped to initiate further developments in this field in the coming year.

This meeting noted that the Government was still considering the preliminary report by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority on its feasibility study into the establishment of a national non-statutory framework for Religious Education. The Network office together with other Network member bodies have contributed to this review. It is now apparent that the Government is considering the QCA study in the context of a more wide-ranging review of policy on Religious Education and related matters.

Survey of local inter faith activity across the UK

The UK is now one of the most religiously diverse areas of Europe in terms of the number of its faith communities. Relations between people of different faiths here are therefore of increasing importance and nowhere more so than at local level.

The local inter faith picture is a rapidly evolving one. In March of this year, the Inter Faith Network was very pleased to receive from the Home Office' community cohesion budget support towards a project, which the Network has for some while wished to carry out, to survey local inter faith activity and to collect and share examples of good practice. This project took place between March and July and its findings will provide valuable information to assist all those working to extend and deepen inter faith activity at local level.

As part of the research, questionnaires were sent to all known local inter faith groups and councils and to local authorities in England and Wales (with the assistance of the Local Government Association) as well as in multi faith areas of Scotland. Question sheets were also sent to faith community personnel with responsibility for or particular knowledge about inter faith issues; Councils of Voluntary Service; Race Equality Councils; One World Week Groups; and Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education. These various sources of information together helped provide a map of the various initiatives and also valuable information about particular projects. Nearly 850 replies were sent in response to the survey questionnaires (a 55% response rate) and the Network is very grateful indeed to

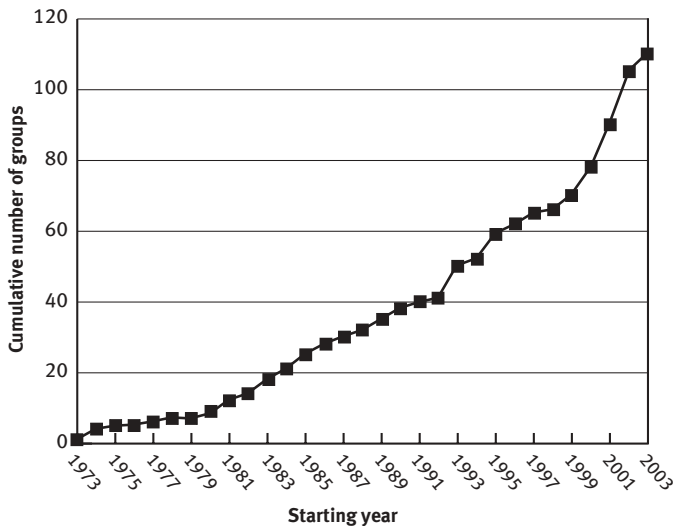
the many people who provided extensive and helpful information for the project. Complementary copies of the report are being sent to all respondents and the LGA is circulating copies to all local authorities in England and Wales.

Local inter faith bodies play a key role in bringing people of different faiths together to increase trust, mutual understanding and respect; help defuse inter-community tensions when these arise; build community cohesion; provide advice and information on religious issues; foster cooperation on local issues; and work jointly on social and educational projects. For this reason, a particular focus for the survey was multi faith local inter faith bodies involving the various faiths in their area. The questionnaire which was sent to such bodies sought detailed information about their work, including examples of successful events and projects. Another special focus of the survey was how local authorities are working with inter faith structures and the relevant questionnaire asked detailed questions about such matters as funding of local inter faith work.



The first two outcomes of the project are a good practice booklet *Partnership for the Common Good: Inter Faith Structures* (published in association with the

GROWTH OF LOCAL INTER FAITH ACTIVITY



Based on questionnaire returns for the Local Inter Faith Mapping Project

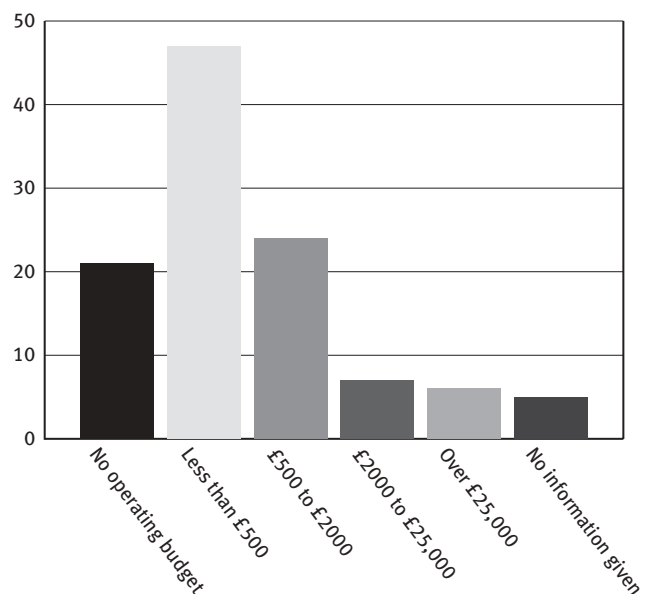
Local Government Association, the Home Office and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister) and a report, *Local Inter Faith Activity in the UK: A Survey*. The project report contains numerous examples of local inter faith work and concludes with suggestions of ways in which local inter faith activity can be developed and made more effective. A geographical listing of regional and local inter faith structures is planned for the near future.

Some of the findings of the survey

- There are now over 130 multi faith local inter faith bodies in the UK, as well as bi-lateral and tri-lateral groups and branches of organisations such as the Council of Christians and Jews and the Three Faiths Forum.

- Of the 110 local inter faith bodies which replied to the project by questionnaire, 43% have come into existence since the start of 2000.
- Factors contributing to this high level of local inter faith activity include: the increasing religious diversity of the UK; the inter faith work of faith communities and inter faith organisations; increasing interest on the part of UK government, the Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly, representative bodies in Northern Ireland and local government; the example and encouragement offered by high profile examples of inter faith cooperation and inclusion such as faith involvement in the Golden Jubilee celebrations; the impact of social factors in the UK and of overseas events (particularly, the events of 11 September and the impact of military action in Afghanistan and Iraq).

ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET



Activities carried out by local inter faith bodies	Groups	%
Multi faith dialogue	90	82
Promoting harmonious race relations	87	79
Discussion meetings on religious topics	86	78
Discussion meetings on social topics	73	66
Inter faith awareness raising	69	63
Assisting in multi faith civic ceremonies	66	60
Social gatherings	66	60
Shared prayer/worship	63	57
Shared meals	58	53
Acting as a consultative forum on local issues for local govt	57	52
Educational events exhibitions	55	50
Multi faith pilgrimages/peace walks	53	48
Providing advice/assistance to public bodies	53	48
Making statements on current issues	49	45
Sending representatives to serve on local govt strategic initiatives	48	44
Sending speakers to schools	37	34
Involvement in regeneration/neighbourhood renewal work	36	33
Events for young people	26	24
Bilateral dialogue	25	23
Diversity training	20	18
Trilateral dialogue	17	16
Women's meetings	13	12
Environmental projects	8	7

- Budgets ranged between a nominal '£0' (19%) and over £25,000 (5%), with 46% of local inter faith bodies operating on less than £500 a year. For most bodies, donations and membership fees are the chief source of funding but other sources such as local authority grants, Community Empowerment Fund and Neighbourhood Renewal Fund support are also important to a significant number.
- Only a quarter of responding inter faith bodies have offices and 90 of the 110 (82%) have no paid staff at all. Most run through the energy and commitment of volunteers.
- Inter faith activity is also going on in many other contexts such as chaplaincies in hospitals, prisons, institutions of higher education; neighbourhood



Members of Bolton Interfaith Council with the Mayor of Bolton, an example of a local inter faith body which has been developing good civic links

renewal and regeneration projects; policing; asylum seeker and refugee projects; schools and youth organisations; education centres; inter faith events and special occasions; bilateral and trilateral dialogues between particular faiths; initiatives run through particular programmes; and initiatives involving places of worship of different faiths.

- Local authorities are increasingly seeking ways to work in partnership with faith communities and inter faith structures and to seek their input on policies and initiatives.
- Particularly significant factors in this increased level of involvement have been the statutory duty placed on local authorities to develop a Community Strategy and the establishment of Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) in most local authorities. In the context of both community strategies and development

of LSPs, consultable faith frameworks are proving highly desirable and, where no frameworks yet exist, new multi faith forums are coming into existence to serve the need. The broader community cohesion agenda is also significant.

- 44% of authorities in England and Wales now have an officer responsible for liaison with faith groups and/or for faith issues.
- 13% of local authorities indicate current support of a local inter faith group or council or multi faith forum. Grants for 'one off' events are most common, although 6% note grants for core work and grants for projects. A number of others provide staff support, free use of venues, mailing facilities and other forms of 'in kind' assistance. In a few cases, a local inter faith forum is fully serviced by the local authority.

Local inter faith meetings

- Regional inter faith structures have come into existence in the East, South East, South West and West Midlands and, at the time the survey was being completed, were under discussion in the East Midlands and Yorkshire and Humber. A regional inter faith structure is imminent in the North West.
- There are capacity issues for both local and regional inter faith bodies. Many can find it difficult to respond as they would wish to consultation opportunities due to lack of staff and inadequate funding. Increased funding for them could make a significant difference to their impact.
- The agendas of local inter faith groups and councils and of local authorities and LSPs overlap to some degree but they are distinct. The dimension of explicitly religious dialogue is sometimes downplayed in multi faith forums with a primary agenda of consultation and social action. In partnership working, there needs to be sensitivity to the differing needs of the different types of body involved.

The Network holds 'link' meetings, on a regular basis, in different regions of England to bring together representatives of local inter faith initiatives in a particular region, whether they are in membership of the Network or not. A meeting for local inter faith initiatives in the North East of England was held in Newcastle on 28 October. However, due to the office move and the work needed to complete the local inter faith mapping project, link meetings were not held during the first half of 2003.

There is a need to review, in the light of the findings of the mapping project, what form these meetings should take in the future and whether they should expand to involve a wider range of participants.

On 27 April the Scottish Inter Faith Council held a meeting in Dundee, at which the Director of the Network was one of the speakers, for local inter faith initiatives in Scotland to exchange news and views and discuss ways in which the Council can encourage local inter faith developments there.

Copies of *Partnership for the Common Good: inter faith structures and local government* are available free of charge from the Network Office. Please send an A4 stamped addressed envelope. *Local Inter Faith Activity in the UK: A Survey* is available at £8.95 including postage and packing.

Inter faith work with young people

A new project

Young people are our future inter faith bridge builders. In April the Network began work on a project, in association with respect (an initiative of TimeBank with the Prince's Trust) and with the involvement of the National Youth Agency, to publish in Spring 2004 a guide on inter faith activity for young people. Young people from a range of different faiths are offering advice on the project and have been suggesting ideas and features that could be featured. Some of their early thoughts:

Let's focus on what we share in common.

We should include some information about our faiths and especially what they say about working with people of other faiths.

Team sports and overseas travel are always a good way to get to know others and it would be good to arrange these for young people of different faiths.



More young people's inter faith forums?

Last year's Annual Review reported on the Network's involvement in the Golden Jubilee celebrations including its work on the Young People's Faith Forum, held at St. James' Palace in June. Since then, there have been discussions involving the Home Office, the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (NASACRE) and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority on how best to build on the success of this event by encouraging the holding of inter faith forums for young people around the country. NASACRE hopes to secure funding to take this forward.

Focus on the Commonwealth

Partly inspired by the Golden Jubilee youth forum, the Royal Commonwealth Society held a Young People's Faith Forum in March, assisted by the Home Office and the Inter Faith Network. It took place on the day following the annual Commonwealth Observance in Westminster Abbey, which was attended by the young people taking part in the forum and the speaker at it was His Excellency Don McKinnon, Secretary General of the Commonwealth.

The Network office took part in subsequent discussions about how to build on this event, holding meetings for young people around Britain ahead of the Meeting of Commonwealth Heads of Governments in Nigeria at the end of the year.

Members of the Project Advisory Group,
Carmel Heaney and Basma Elshayyal

Faith communities and public life

From its outset, the Inter Faith Network has seen the promotion of the involvement of the UK's different faith communities in public life as a major aspect of its work. There has been substantial progress in this in the last ten to fifteen years.

Home Office Review

The Home Office has initiated a review of arrangements for consultation by central Government of faith communities and their representation at national events. The plan is to produce a report with recommendations by the end of 2003. The Review implements a proposal by the Lambeth Group (which dealt with the religious aspects of the Millennium celebrations and on which the Network was represented) in its final report of autumn 2000 and the subsequent commitment on this in the Labour Party's manifesto at the General Election of 2001.

The first meeting of the Steering Group for the Review took place on 30 June and was chaired by Ms Fiona Mactaggart MP, newly appointed Home Office Minister for Race Equality, Community Policy and Civic Renewal. The Steering Group includes representatives at both Ministerial and official level of a number of Government Departments as well as of faith communities. The Group has been set up to oversee the Working Group on the project, which began its work earlier in the year. The Director is a member of the Working Group and of the Panel of Advisers to the Steering Group and a number of members of the Network's Executive Committee are involved in the Working and Steering Groups.

This Review is the first major project of the new Faith Communities Unit which has been set up in the Home Office, taking over work on faith community issues previously undertaken by staff of the Race Equality Unit (REU). The unit is located within a new Directorate alongside the REU and the Community Cohesion Unit.

Community Cohesion

The Network's Annual Review for 2001–03 highlighted developments in the 'community cohesion' agenda, following the disturbances in the Summer of 2001 in some of Northern England's towns and cities and the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 in the United States and developments flowing from them. 'Community Cohesion: A New Agenda For Inter Faith Relations?' was the theme of the Network's National Meeting in 2002.

The Network was invited to join with the Local Government Association, the Home Office, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, and the Commission for Racial Equality in drawing up guidelines for local authorities and other local public agencies to help them review their existing policies and practices to contribute to more cohesive communities.

Guidance on Community Cohesion was published by the Local Government Association in association with the Home Office, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, the Commission for Racial Equality and the Network and was launched at a conference at Local Government House in London on



Equality and diversity issues

The Network has had on its agenda for some years the wide-ranging issue of religious discrimination. By the end of 2003, legislation will have come into effect to deal with discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief in the field of employment and training, giving effect to the European Directive adopted in December 2000 on discrimination in employment on a variety of grounds. Throughout the consultation period, the Network office has been involved in continuing discussions with the Department of Trade and Industry and other Government Departments and, as this process has evolved, has kept its member bodies in touch with it and drawn their attention to opportunities to contribute their views and concerns.

11 December by Home Office Minister Beverly Hughes MP. Other speakers at the launch included the Director of the Network.

The *Guidance* includes specific reference to recognising the contribution faith communities can make in public life at the local level and suggests that local authorities should explore the potential of forming a forum of faiths and supporting the public celebration of religious festivals. The document can be downloaded from www.communitycohesion.gov.uk.

The Network's Director is a member of the Steering Group of the Safe Communities Initiative recently launched by the Commission for Racial Equality which is exploring ways to resolve community conflicts and disputes at a local level and promote positive relationships.

The Director has represented the Network at meetings of the Equality and Diversity Forum in which it has 'observer' status. The Forum brings together a range of voluntary organisations with an interest in the different 'strands' of discrimination covered by the Directive, together with representatives of the Commission for Racial Equality, the Equal Opportunities Commission, and the Disability Rights Commission.

It has been particularly valuable to be able to share in the Forum perspectives on the Government's proposal for setting up a single equality body to cover all the different discrimination strands of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation. The Government is still considering its next steps in the light of responses to its consultation document on this published in October 2002. It appears that most responses to the document express support in principle for the proposal to set

up a single equality body, but there are a substantial number of reservations and a wide range of issues remain to be resolved. The Network has been able to keep its member bodies closely in touch with developments and also to arrange for briefings by Government officials at the newly instituted regular meetings of faith community representative bodies in membership of the Network.

Religious Offences

In the anti-terrorism legislation, which the Government introduced into Parliament in the autumn of 2001, there was initially provision for the creation of a new offence of incitement to religious hatred (matching the existing legislation against incitement to racial hatred). This provision was dropped from the legislation in the face of opposition in the House of Lords. Subsequently, Lord Avebury introduced a Bill creating a new offence of incitement to religious hatred and also abolishing existing legislation on religious offences, notably the blasphemy law. The Bill was referred to a Select Committee of the House of Lords to consider a report on the law reporting to religious offences generally. The Network's Director gave oral evidence to the Select Committee at one of its initial hearings. The Committee's report, together with the records of the oral and written evidence it received, was published in June.

In its report, the Committee analyses the issues involved but makes no firm recommendations, leaving it to Parliament to decide how it wants to proceed. The Network will be considering how these issues can best be taken forward in light of the Committee's report.

2001 Census

The Network played an important role in discussions leading up to the inclusion in the 2001 Census of a question on religious identity. In the course of this year statistics have become available from the Census results. This material includes data at local level relating to religion and cross referenced to other data covering, for example, age and ethnicity. The Network office has made sure that its member bodies are aware of this valuable new information resource. It has also been involved in the last few months in discussions with the Office on National Statistics on plans for reports on religion, which are due to be published in the coming year, bringing together the Census data and statistical material from other survey sources.

Information and advice

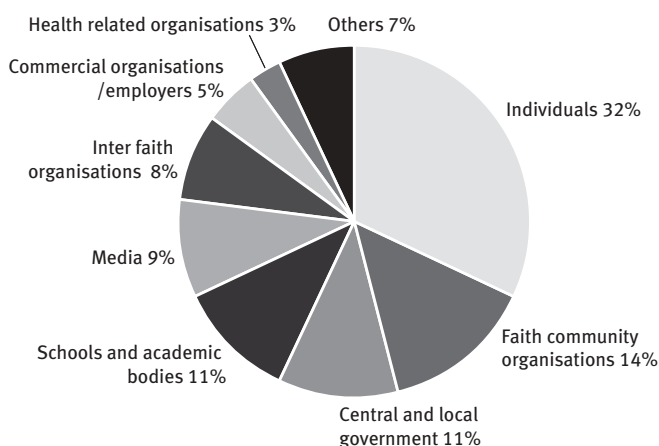
Network web site

The Network's website provides information about the work of the Network and its 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 over 800 a month. www.interfaith.org.uk

Enquiries

The Network office provides information and advice to a wide range of organisations and individuals. The organisations using this service during 2002–03 included Government Departments, local authorities, other public bodies, voluntary organisations, educational institutions and the media. The chart below shows a breakdown of the types of enquiries received over the past year:

TYPES OF ENQUIRIES IN 2002–03



Some examples of this year's enquiries:

We are looking to set up a multi faith resource centre for schools. Can you offer any help or advice?

LOCAL AUTHORITY, YORKSHIRE

Is there a Jewish/Muslim dialogue group in NW London?

INDIVIDUAL ENQUIRER, LONDON

We are organising a multi faith induction day for staff. Are there any guidelines available for this?

LOCAL AUTHORITY, LONDON

Do you know about any guidance for local authorities dealing with faith communities?

CHURCH ORGANISATION, SCOTLAND

Is there an inter faith group in Exeter?

INDIVIDUAL ENQUIRER, SOUTH WEST

We are hoping to set up a series of inter faith meetings in our local area. Can you offer any assistance?

BAHA'I YOUTH COMMITTEE, SOUTH EAST

I am doing an article on inter faith issues on university campuses. Can you offer any examples of good practice?

JOURNALIST FOR A STUDENT MAGAZINE, LONDON

New office premises

Where can I obtain figures relating to religion from the Census?

COLLEGE LECTURER, SOUTH EAST

We hope to be able to employ an inter faith development worker. Can you put us in touch with other groups who employ such workers?

INTER FAITH GROUP, YORKSHIRE

Can you provide a list of faith community newspapers which carry recruitment advertising?

EMPLOYMENT CONSULTANCY, SOUTH EAST

We want to prepare a booklet looking at child protection issues in different faith communities. Can you provide contacts in different communities?

CHARITABLE ORGANISATION, EAST MIDLANDS

I am working on a research project looking at the integration of Muslims into British society. Can you suggest any people who could comment on this?

STUDENT, WALES

Newsletter

The Network's newsletter, *Inter Faith Update*, is published three times a year and is distributed to subscribers, member bodies and supporters of the Network.

The Network moved offices in early June. It had to leave 5–7 Tavistock Place, where it had been based since early 1989, in the light of the new owner's plans for the building. When it seemed possible there would be a need to move a year ago, the Network office contacted, among others, the Grosvenor Estate, which sometimes has offices available to charities, but none were vacant. Many months of hunting for suitable premises followed: all of them were expensive or far out from the centre of town or too cramped. Then, two days after the Network received formal notice this March to leave Tavistock Place, a telephone call came from the Grosvenor Estate out of the blue asking if the Network was still searching for new premises! As a result, we find ourselves installed at 8A Lower Grosvenor Place which is five minutes walk from Victoria station.

The Network will be receiving grants from the Westminster Foundation, the charitable arm of the Grosvenor Estate, during the period of its 3 year lease, to offset the level of the commercial rent. So the net cost is the same as it would have had to pay for less central and smaller premises elsewhere. The Network has much more space now than at Tavistock Place, including a meeting room, so while the new offices require some refurbishment they offer a welcome potential for further development of the Network's activities.

The search for new premises was a time consuming and anxious one and it is very welcome indeed that this, and the move itself, are now over.

Officers and Executive Committee for 2003–04

At the 2003 AGM held in Coventry on 3 July, the following were elected to serve as the Network's Officers for 2003–04:

Co-Chairs: Rt Revd Tom Butler, Bishop of Southwark; Mrs Rosalind Preston OBE
Vice-Chairs: Dr Manazir Ahsan MBE; Dr Natubhai Shah; Mr Jagjiwan Singh.
Treasurer: Mr Ramesh Shah.

Hon Barnabas Leith stood down, having completed his one year term of office as a Vice-Chair on behalf of the Baha'i community and Dr Natubhai Shah was elected as a Vice Chair on behalf of the Jain community.



New Executive Committee member Rt Rev Kevin McDonald speaking at the National Meeting



New Executive Committee member Resham Singh Sandhu MBE with Rev Canon Dr Michael Ipgrave

The following were elected to serve as other members of the Executive Committee for 2003–04:

Dr Fatma Amer
Mrs Saraswati Dave
Dr Elizabeth Harris
Rev Canon Dr Michael Ipgrave
Mr Ayub Laher
Mr Shabbir Lakha
Hon Barnabas Leith
Rt Rev Kevin McDonald
Mr Abdul Rauf Mirza
Mr Neville Nagler
Mrs Ravinder Kaur Nijjar
Mr Nitin Palan
Rabbi Alan Plancey
Rev Simon Reynolds
Shaunaka Rishi das
Imam Dr Abduljalil Sajid
Mr Resham Singh Sandhu MBE
Mr Jehangir Sarosh
Mr Alan Schwartz MBE
Mr Paul Seto
Ms Priti Shah
Mr Om Parkash Sharma MBE



Rosalind Preston making a presentation to Rt Rev Charles Henderson on his retirement from the Executive Committee

Sister Margaret Shepherd nds
 Dr Indarjit Singh OBE
 Sister Isabel Smyth
 Rabbi Jacqueline Tabick
 Most Ven Dr Medagama Vajiragnana
 Miss Gillian Wood

Mr Jaswant Singh Heera, Rt Rev Charles Henderson and Mr Ramesh Kallidai, who stood down at the AGM, were thanked for their contribution to the work of the Network. A special presentation was made to Bishop Charles who had been a member of the Committee since the earliest days of the Network.

In September Dr V P Narayan Rao was co-opted as a member of the Executive Committee, filling the vacancy left after the AGM in July.

All the Network's Officers and other Executive Committee members serve as Charity Trustees and Company Directors of the Inter Faith Network for the UK.

New Member Bodies 2003

At the 2003 AGM, an application for membership was accepted from Nelson and Brierfield Building Bridges. It was also noted that the Sikh Missionary Society (UK) had withdrawn from Network membership and that the Huddersfield Interfaith Council had taken over the membership of the Kirklees and Calderdale Inter Faith Fellowship.

Network's Treasurer

Thanks were recorded at the AGM to Ramesh Shah for his much appreciated voluntary work as Network Treasurer.

Network staff

During 2002-03 Brian Pearce continued to serve as Director of the Network, Harriet Crabtree as the Deputy Director, Bhupinder Singh as Information Officer and Clare Lyons as Administrative Assistant. The Network also employed two part-time Clerical Assistants, Gaylina Ngyuen and Carol Reid

The Inter Faith Network for the United Kingdom

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

Year ended 31 December 2002

	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total	Total
	2002	2002	2002	2001
	£	£	£	£
Incoming Resources				
Grants and Donations	–	112,631	112,631	156,103
Membership Fees	–	4,215	4,215	4,110
Publication Sales	–	2,398	2,398	1,812
Income from Multifaith Directory	–	9,463	9,463	925
Intangible Income	–	35,250	35,250	33,895
Bank Interest and Other Income	–	2,191	2,191	2,923
Total Incoming Resources	–	166,148	166,148	199,768
<i>Direct Charitable Expenditure</i>				
Core Work, Including General Information and Advice Service	205	113,434	113,639	96,764
Local Inter Faith Programme	–	13,719	13,719	14,917
Multi-Faith Directory Project	–	1,492	1,492	10,148
Education Projects	–	1,905	1,905	12,629
Golden Jubilee Project	–	12,520	12,520	1,452
	<u>205</u>	<u>143,070</u>	<u>143,275</u>	<u>135,910</u>
<i>Other Expenditure</i>				
Fundraising and Publicity	–	4,804	4,804	5,011
Management and Administration	–	26,206	26,206	24,496
Database Project	–	–	–	2,890
Total Resources Expended	205	174,080	174,285	168,307
Net (Outgoing)/Incoming Resources	(205)	(7,932)	(8,137)	31,461
Funds at 1 January	205	55,988	56,193	24,732
Funds at 31 December	–	48,056	48,056	56,193

All the charity's operations are classed as continuing. Movements on reserves and all recognised gains or losses are shown above.

The Inter Faith Network for the United Kingdom
BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2002

	2002		2001	
	£	£	£	£
Tangible Fixed Assets		3,522		2,988
Current Assets				
Debtors and Prepayments	1,376		1,068	
Cash at Bank and In Hand	47,526		55,446	
	<u>48,902</u>		<u>56,514</u>	
Creditors: Amounts Falling due Within One Year	(4,368)		(3,309)	
Net Current Assets		<u>44,534</u>		<u>53,205</u>
Net Assets		<u>48,056</u>		<u>56,193</u>
Funds				
Restricted Funds		–		205
Unrestricted Funds		48,056		55,988
Total Funds		<u>48,056</u>		<u>56,193</u>

These financial statements were approved by the Executive Committee on 1 July 2003 and signed on their behalf by Mr Ramesh Shah, Treasurer

Copies of the full accounts, including the Notes to the Financial Statements, audited by the MAP Partnership, are available on request from the Network office.

Supporters in 2002

The Inter Faith Network's programme of building good relations between the different faith communities in the UK is funded through grants and donations from trusts, organisations and individuals supportive of its work, including its member faith communities, as well as through the subscription fees of its member bodies. The Network is also currently receiving a Home Office grant.

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

The following trusts, organisations and individuals helped support the Network financially during the calendar year 2002:

Trusts and Organisations

The Calpe Trust
ICIC Foundation
Home Office
The M E Pearce Trust
The Tilda Foundation
The Tolkien Trust
West London Synagogue Charitable Fund

Funding from Member Faith Communities

The Network's member faith communities provide funding towards the Network's budget on a structured basis, with contributions varying in amount with some reference to the relative sizes of the different communities. Contributions received during 2002 (and therefore included in the 2002 accounts) have varied from community to community. In some cases they have included

donations from individuals, who are in the list below of that category of donor. Donations were received on behalf of member faith communities from the following organisations and trusts:

The Archbishop of Canterbury's Charitable Trust
Baha'i Community of the United Kingdom
The Baptist Union of Great Britain
Church of England
Church of Scotland
Church in Wales
Churches' Commission for Inter-Faith Relations
The East London Mosque
Free Churches Council
Hindu Council (UK)
Islamic Welfare Trust
Independent Methodists
Institute of Jainology
Jain Academy
Jain Samaj Europe
Jain Samaj (Manchester)
Jain Vishva Bharati
The Lutheran Council of GB
Mayfair Islamic Centre
Methodist Church in Ireland
The Methodist Church Multi-Racial
Projects Fund
Moravian Church
Navnat Vanik Association of the UK
Network of Sikh Organisations (UK)
Presbyterian Church of Wales
Reform Synagogues of Great Britain
Religious Society of Friends
Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales
Salvation Army
Scottish Episcopal
Swaminarayan Hindu Mission
The United Reformed Church
Western Ch'an Fellowship
Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe

Individual Donors

Mr Anil and Dr Santosh Bhanot
Mr Rajinder Singh Bhasin
Ven John Blackburn
His Honour Jonathan Crabtree
Rt Rev Charles J Henderson
Mr William Hopkinson
Mr Tom Gulliver
Professor Ursula King
Mr Mahendra Mehta
Mr Neville Nagler
Miss Beryl Pearce
Mr Paul Seto
Mr Ramesh Shah
Mr David Stevens
Mr John Woodcock

The Inter Faith Network is also grateful for donations during 2002 from the following organisations and individuals:

Mr Basheer Ahmad, Sri Akhandadhi das, Mrs Kamlesh Bahl CBE, Mrs Lorna Barbour,
Mr Chris and Mrs Mary Bullard, Mr John Carver, Rev Stephen Coles, Dr Martin Conway,
Rt Rev Kenneth Cragg, Mr Michael Davis, Rev Richard Davison, Dr Barry Durrant, Mrs
Elizabeth Elton, Rev Freda Evans, Mrs Lalage Fair, Mrs Pam Fawcett, Mrs Eileen Forrester,
Ms Eileen Francis, A C Fyvie, Mr John Gamlin, A C Gilpin, Dr Hugh Goddard, Ms Dina Gold,
Mr Rawdon Goodier, Mrs Agnes Grunwald-Spier, Ms Jessamine Hoskins, Professor John Hull,
Mr Kersey Jasavala, Mrs J M Johnson, Rev Molly Kenyon, Mr H S Klug, Mr Roger Lake,
Rev Canon Dr Christopher Lamb, Luton Council of Faiths, Rev Anne McClelland, Mrs Jan
Mughrabi, Mrs Carolyn Neogi, Mrs Jenny Nicholson, Rev W Roy Pape, Ms Mary Pimm,
Canon Michael Ratcliffe, Mr Robin Richardson, Rev Prebendary David Roberts, Mr Aubrey
Rose, St Thomas' Huddersfield, Mrs Joyce Sabour, Mr Harbans Singh Sethi, Sheffield Interfaith,
Rev Canon Ivor Smith-Cameron, Southampton Council of Faiths, Ms Sarah Thorley, Mrs Iris
Tute, Rev Geoffrey R Usher, Dr Pauline Webb, Miss Kathleen Whittle, Rt Rev Roy Williamson.

Member organisations of the Inter Faith Network for the UK 2003–04

Faith community representative bodies

Afro West Indian United Council of Churches
 Arya Pratinidhi Sabha (UK)
 Baha'i Community of the United Kingdom
 Board of Deputies of British Jews
 Buddhist Society
 Churches Agency for Inter Faith Relations in Scotland
 Churches' Commission for Inter-Faith Relations
 Council of African and Afro-Caribbean Churches (UK)
 Friends of the Western Buddhist Order
 Hindu Council (UK)
 Imams and Mosques Council (UK)
 Islamic Cultural Centre
 Jain Samaj Europe
 Jamiat-e-Ulama Britain (Association of Muslim Scholars)
 Muslim Council of Britain
 National Council of Hindu Temples
 Network of Buddhist Organisations (UK)
 Network of Sikh Organisations (UK)
 Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations
 Roman Catholic Committee for Other Faiths, Bishops' Conference of England and Wales
 Sri Lankan Sangha Sabha of G.B
 Swaminarayan Hindu Mission
 Unitarian and Free Christian Churches Interfaith Subcommittee
 Vishwa Hindu Parishad (UK)
 World Ahl Ul-Bayt Islamic League
 World Islamic Mission (UK)
 Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe

Inter faith organisations

Inter Faith Council for Wales
 Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum
 Scottish Inter Faith Council*

 Calamus Foundation
 Christians Aware Interfaith Programme
 Council of Christians and Jews Interfaith Foundation
 International Association for Religious Freedom (British Chapter)
 International Interfaith Centre
 London Society of Jews and Christians
 Maimonides Foundation
 Three Faiths Forum
 United Religions Initiative (Britain and Ireland)
 Westminster Interfaith
 World Conference on Religion and Peace (UK Chapter)
 World Congress of Faiths

Local inter faith groups

Bedford Council of Faiths
 Birmingham Council of Faiths
 Blackburn with Darwen Interfaith Council
 Bolton Interfaith Council
 Bradford Concord Interfaith Society
 Brent Inter Faith
 Brighton and Hove Inter Faith Contact Group
 Bristol Inter Faith Group
 Cambridge Inter-Faith Group
 Cardiff Interfaith Association
 Cleveland Interfaith Group
 Coventry Inter Faith Group
 Derby Open Centre Multi-Faith Group
 Dudley Council of Faiths
 Gloucestershire Inter Faith Action
 Harrow Inter Faith Council
 Interfaith MK (Milton Keynes)
 Huddersfield Interfaith Council

Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship
 Leeds Faith Communities Liaison Forum
 Leicester Council of Faiths
 Loughborough Council of Faiths
 Luton Council of Faiths
 Manchester Interfaith Forum
 Merseyside Council of Faiths
 Merseyside Inter-Faith Group
 Nelson and Brierfield Building Bridges
 Newham Association of Faiths
 Nottingham Inter-Faith Council
 Oxford Round Table of Religions
 Peterborough Inter-Faith Council
 Reading Inter-Faith Group
 Redbridge Council of Faiths
 Richmond Interfaith Group
 Rochdale Interfaith Action
 Sheffield Interfaith
 South London Inter Faith Group
 Southampton Council of Faiths
 Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource
 Tyne and Wear Racial Equality Council Inter Faith Panel
 Watford Inter Faith Association
 Wellingborough Multi-Faith Group
 Whalley Range Inter Faith Group
 Wolverhampton Inter-Faith Group
 Wycombe Sharing of Faiths

Educational and academic bodies

Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations
 Community Religions Project
 Institute of Jainology
 Islamic Foundation
 Multi Faith Centre at the University of Derby
 National Association of SACRE's
 Religious Education Council for England and Wales
 Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education
 Study Centre for Christian-Jewish Relations (Sisters of Sion)

* links faith community, inter faith and educational bodies in Scotland

**The Inter Faith Network for the United Kingdom
promotes understanding and respect between
the faith communities in the UK**

**We are working towards a Britain in which people
of different faiths can draw on their spiritual
heritage, with integrity, to help create a society
rooted in shared values and characterised by
mutual respect and understanding.**