**SHARING LOCAL INTER FAITH EXPERIENCE AND GOOD PRACTICE**

**AN EVENT TO MARK INTER FAITH WEEK**

**The All Party Parliamentary Interfaith Group**

**with the Inter Faith Network for the UK**

**Tuesday 15 November 2016, Houses of Parliament**

**BACKGROUND**

This is the report of a meeting held by the All Party Parliamentary Interfaith Group with the Inter Faith Network for the UK as part of marking Inter Faith Week 2016. Presentations, in the form provided by contributors, are included, together with a summary of discussion through Q and A.

Inter faith engagement at local level is increasingly important. It is of many kinds: from one off initiatives to organisations which work across the years to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation in their areas. Discussion at this event highlighted the work of local inter faith bodies, with three examples of very different groups which are working with people of many backgrounds on issues from youth, to refugee support, hate crime and mental health, as well as increasing religious literacy.

The meeting was opened by the Chairs of the All Party Parliamentary Interfaith Group, Lord Harries of Pentregarth and Sir Peter Bottomley, with a welcome to all present and an invitation to Inter Faith Network for the UK Co-Chair, Mr Jatinder Singh Birdi, to offer some opening words.

**INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK AND INTER FAITH WEEK**

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

IFN is very pleased to be asked by the All Party Parliamentary Interfaith Group to assist with this evening’s special Inter Faith Week event.

Inter Faith Week was established by the Inter Faith Network for the UK in 2009, in partnership in its first year with the Department for Communities and Local Government.  It built on the pioneering work of Interfaith Scotland with Scottish Interfaith Week. It is IFN’s largest programme.  Interfaith Council for Wales and the Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum play an important role within their respective nations.

Inter Faith Week has grown year by year and this year has seen an amazing proliferation of events. Twitter is buzzing and our Facebook page is showing all sorts of new people getting interested and connected.  At the end of the Week we will be launching a special new resource to help people getting interested for the first time: *Inter Faith Learning, Dialogue and Cooperation: Next Steps*.

One of the chief reasons for starting the Inter Faith Week programme was to respond to the wish of local inter faith initiatives to gain higher profile for their activity and get more people involved.  I am pleased to say that in surveys each year we find that there is a real feeling that there has been this impact.

Supporting, encouraging and advocating for local inter faith groups and initiatives is a key part of the work of the Inter Faith Network.  We do this not just through Inter Faith Week but year round.

We were asked to assist in finding three groups for this evening whose work would illustrate the vital importance and also the diversity of local work around the UK.   There are, of course, many others which could have presented.  Excellent work goes on in so many areas – for example my own of Warwick, where I am the Chair of the Warwick District Faith Forum.

Local inter faith engagement and the development of positive neighbourly bonds and constructive multi faith work on social issues is vital for the development of our society.

**Faith Network for Manchester**

**Rabbi Warren Elf and the Revd Andy Williams**

**Rabbi Warren Elf**

The Faith Network for Manchester (FN4M) was established through Manchester City Council and its Community Network for Manchester in March 2004.

In April 2004, as a member of Manchester Reform Synagogue, I went along to its first meeting, as I was very interested in interfaith dialogue. Those at the meeting comprised a very small, well-meaning group of lovely people, although I felt that they were very disorganised.

To coincide with International Refugee Week that year, in June, an interfaith seminar was arranged. It was a very successful evening. Gradually the organising committee became more efficient.

We then followed this first seminar with other seminars and conferences on different themes, including Building Bridges, Gambling (as a faith response to the proposal to open a supercasino in Belle Vue, Manchester), the Environment and on gangs and gun and knife crime.

Initially FN4M received a £2500 annual grant which quickly rose to £8500, because of the good work we were doing, and then to £18,000 to support our work. We then felt that we needed our own base and were able to open the Manchester Multifaith Centre, renting space to the north of the city centre.

When Manchester City Council restructured their funding and work with the voluntary sector in 2013, we received an Equalities Grant of £25,000 per year for three years. This was then extended by another year.

Our main work included bimonthly interfaith dialogues and regular conferences, which have developed into our annual conference held in Inter Faith Week, in conjunction with the Greater Manchester Interfaith Network. We have also publicised all of the Inter Faith Week events held in Greater Manchester that we have been told about.

**The Revd Andy Williams**

‘We refuse to be enemies. Spread Hummus not Hate’, say the banners on the picture on the cover of the latest annual report of FN4M. Behind the banners were students of all faiths in Manchester.

As a Christian and Baptist minister I worked from 1998 as minister of Sion Baptist Church in the town centre of Burnley in Lancashire. So I was there at the time of the 2001 riots, or disturbances. My response was to be one the founders of the inter faith project Building Bridges in Burnley, then the Burnley and Pendle Faith Centre for young people and the community, in partnership with Lancashire County Council and the Building Schools for the Future Programme. Building Bridges was also supported by the Near Neighbours programme. These experiences led me to become Chair of the national Inter Faith Working Group of the Baptist Union of Great Britain.

In 2013 I became half-time Community Development Worker for Faith Network for Manchester, delivering a number of projects around the city:

* Our ‘In Your Faith’ project for teenagers provides engaging, interactive speakers of any, or all, of the faiths in Manchester for schools, sixth forms and colleges. Our sessions break down barriers and myths that teenagers may believe as facts, enabling them to meet and question a person who lives by that faith. Wherever possible they engage with speakers from different faiths and see that people of various faiths are friends who want to work together. What difference does this make? At the end of each session we ask pupils to rate how positive their attitude was to other faiths before and after the session. The average increase is from 7.4 to 8.7 but the average hides more dramatic positive changes in attitude for some teenagers.
* In our ‘Women of Faith’ project, our Muslim and Christian peer workers run events to bring women of all faiths together to share activities that include dialogues, coffee mornings, world drumming workshops (curiously popular) and faith tours of places of prayer and worship. This project is now working to establish four neighbourhood Women of Faith groups across the city.
* Our ‘Peace Mala’ project provides participants from age 5 to age 90 with the opportunity to make a peace mala or bracelet where each bead threaded represents a different faith or spiritual tradition. As each is threaded the words of the Golden Rule in that faith are spoken, the equivalent of ‘treat others as you would like to be treated.’ Making the mala is a commitment to make the effort to live in peace with others.
* In our ‘Dialogue’ project we hold inter faith dialogues on a wide range of topics including, Faith in Fasting, Faith in the Environment, Faith in Education and Faith and Hate Crime.
* Finally, our research project report published in June made a range of recommendations for understanding needs and improving services for minority communities in Manchester.

All this involvement led me to serve as a Trustee of the Inter Faith Network over the last year and play a small part in planning for this Inter Faith Week.

**Rabbi Elf**

Our latest project, funded by the Home Office, is setting out to organise student interfaith dialogues. This is largely in response to problems, prejudice, bullying, intimidation and violence in universities and colleges, especially with regard to anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.

We have devised a series of four interfaith dialogues, involving at least five student societies, involving a preparatory workshop with each society, leading to an interfaith dialogue, followed by a debriefing workshop, again with each society separately.

The themes of the dialogues are, provisionally, Shared Values, Celebrating Diversity, Social Action and Preventing Extremism or Standing Up for One Another.

We have made contact and are working with the Student Union Community Officer at the University of Manchester and the launch event is taking place on 7th December.

We are hoping to run the programme at Manchester Metropolitan University, either with the Humanities Department or the Student union, or both. We have also been asked to run a similar, but adapted, programme at Manchester College on two campuses.

**The Revd Andy Williams**

So what? What difference does good local inter faith work make? Isn’t it just the small number of usual suspects from each community that get involved? Certainly not in the schools work. In the last year we engaged over 1600 teenagers in 6 of Manchester’s largest secondary schools. Our email network has over 600 members across Great Manchester. Even when participants at events are the usual suspects, through press releases, the media and social networks, many more people see or read about what has been done. They see that some people are doing inter faith work and celebrating diversity and they approve of it or are challenged by it, even if they don’t participate. I believe this positively impacts personal attitudes and the atmosphere in communities. We may only be able to light candles in the darkness, but people and communities see the candles and the light they give. They make a valuable difference.

**Q and A**

* The World Congress of Faiths tried to arrange a student seminar about faith but it had to be cancelled because not many people wanted to participate.  It seems as though workshops and panel discussions do not always appeal to students.  What is your experience?

*We are very aware that we have to work with student societies to find a way of engaging with them. The fact that we have been in touch with the Students Union is making things move, but we know that we have to be adaptable.*

* It would be useful to have a clear definition of what Islamophobia is and what freedom of speech is. Where are the red lines? What is your experience of tackling hate crime?

*There was an incident in Manchester where a Jewish teenager was attacked at a station. One of the schools that we work with contacted us about that to say that they were concerned about some of the students’ attitudes towards the attack. They invited us in to do a programme with a Jewish speaker and Muslim speaker and this enabled a big change of perspective among some students.*

* How do we get even younger people involved in having a greater understanding of each other’s faiths? Is there a proposal to modify the work going on at universities to go into schools?

*We do run an ‘In Good Faith’ project in conjunction with the local SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education) that goes into schools. This works particularly with pupils aged 14-19. At this stage young people take their experiences into adulthood.*

* How did you make contact with these schools? Was this done through the SACRE?

*We have links to the SACRE, but when we began some work had been done on ‘In Your Faith’. It was a case of contacting each school and trying to find a way in, often through the head of RE. Some schools are starting to do ‘Spiritual Awareness Days’ and are looking for speakers to come in and talk about different faith perspectives.*

* Do you have a good pool of speakers for schools?

*We have speakers from 9 or 10 faith traditions.*

* Are all faith communities in Manchester involved in this inter faith work? And are they involved as institutions or as individuals?

*The executive of FN4M is open to nine main faiths, though not every faith is represented all of the time per se. We would have five or six faiths represented at all times. All faith communities in Manchester do, however, regularly receive our mailings and so we try to stay in touch with everyone that way.*

**Redbridge Faiths Forum**

**Ms Jacquie Grieve and Ms Vinaya Sharma**

*(In response to an initial point of clarification re ‘where Redbridge is’: Redbridge is London Borough in the east of London. It is one of the boroughs that was created in the 1960s; historically most of the borough came under Essex. Today there are those who prefer to be thought of as being in the county of Essex and those who prefer being part of London).*

**Ms Jacquie Grieve**

Redbridge Faith Forum is a multi-faith charity working to promote social cohesion through bringing people of all faiths together to ‘understand, respect, co-operate’. Established in 2003, it received charity status in 2006.

Our logo ‘respect, cooperation, understanding’ underpins our work, direction and focus. All events, activities and projects aim at increasing understanding of each other’s beliefs and cultures, looking for commonalities, recognising and respecting difference and cooperating (not just tolerating).

We organise a wide range of activities as well as projects or workshops requested by members and attendees and on local or national priorities. For example, as part of the national and local focus on dementia, we worked with Redbridge Social Services and the Alzheimer’s Society on dementia awareness workshops, and becoming a dementia friend. These were held at different faith centres and well attended by a mix of faiths (or no faith). For the work on dementia we were shortlisted for a Compact Award for Diversity this year. We were awarded a Compact Award for Diversity in 2012 for work on ‘Vulnerable Adults’.

RFF has been positively supported by Redbridge Council, becoming one of its Strategic Partners for Community Cohesion ~ *people getting on well together*; receiving grants for core costs to support this work. This enables us to employ two part time members of staff, without whom we could not undertake the range and breadth of activity. It also provides us with accommodation – a real boon but one which may be reviewed! Without this grant we would not be able to function as we do. We have currently applied to be the strategic partner for religion and belief supporting people with faith and no-faith. Although we get a grant for core costs from Redbridge we still need to raise other funds to develop work outside the agreed actions with the local authority. We have been successful in applying for other grants (so far!) and do our own fund raising through organising meals (often well subsidised by faith communities), and other social activities such as quizzes and a multi cultural musical event.

Our Board of Trustees includes up to two faith representatives from seven faiths. People of all faiths and none are invited to all events. An e-news circulation of 700+ individuals and groups, also included on our website, informs people of the Forum events, gives update of current religious festivals, publicises meetings and events for other community and voluntary groups as requested; and provides information on Local Authority consultations.

A number of trustees sit on other boards by request ~ such as Redbridge Dementia Partnership, Community Tension Monitoring Group, Safer Neighbourhood Board, MOPAC and, more recently, the Council’s Fairness Commission. Through these boards RFF members are able to contribute faith perspectives to policy, and development plans and generally raise the profile of faith issues. The Council values and respects the work, breadth of faith representation, commitment and participation of the Faith Forum. Individual councillors attend a range of events.

I now hand over to Vinaya to describe how one faith community, the Hindu Community, works with RFF. In doing this she will illustrate a selection of RFF’s range of activities and events and illustrate the way her own and other faith communities further inter faith understanding respect and cooperation.

**Ms Vinaya Sharma**

Thank you, Jacquie, for an excellent summary. I shall be talking very briefly on how faith communities engage with the work of the RFF, and specifically from the Hindu perspective. A few examples of our projects will illustrate enhancement of understanding concepts from different faiths leading to community cohesion.

Multi-faith Walk

Every year RFF organises a ‘themed’ multi-faith walk. This involves people of all ages, all backgrounds, every/any or/no faith walking together from one place of worship to the next, eg from Buddhist to Hindu to Muslim and Jewish together in the Mosque (as the Synagogue is slightly away from Central Ilford), and finishing at the Gurdwara, where we usually have a lovely ‘*Langar*’ meal! At each venue, the faith’s perspective on the themed topic is explained. Feedback from walkers encapsulates the significance of these annual Multi-faith Walks.

At the Hindu temple, we are encouraging our youngsters to give presentations reflecting Hindu concepts on topics especially close to their heart and on topics that they relate to, for example, the environment, water conservation and even peace. An example of an issue discussed is: “‘Culture, Tradition and Religion - Are the boundaries between them blurred?’ This topic promoted understanding about issues such as the meaning of *Namaste* and cleared some misconceptions such as that Hindus believe in many gods when in reality they believe in One God –pluralist tradition vs monotheistic. Other misunderstandings cleared have been about the hereditary caste system; cyclical concept of time; concept of peace in the elements such as the oceans and forests, not only in the world but also in the Universe; and the concept of *Sewa* to *all living beings* (*Sarve*) including not only humans but all animals, and plants. Similarly, other faiths clarified their concepts to dispel misunderstanding.

Sharing a meal with all faiths coming together for fundraising

The significance of this is enormous. We all have our favourite quotes about “families who eat together….”. This is a powerful event where community comes together, works together to raise funds for RFF, and then lives together in peace and harmony. It is one of the best ways to break barriers and brings lasting community cohesion.

Feedback

Feedback from participants is vital to inform RFF what impact its activities have. Do they make a difference? Our feedback has been very positive and we think that our work does bring the communities together and create cohesion. Here are some comments on the Hindu community’s input into RFF:

* 72% non-Hindus participants “*we have learnt something new about Hindu faith”* and 80% said “*...the workshop contributed to people in Redbridge getting on together”*
* “*Faith is a powerful witness to the world and walking together as multi-faith people can only encourage peace and unity among all mankind*.”
* *“Involvement of youngsters excellent” “Rabbi and Imam standing together very moving”*
* *“An excellent inter faith event where all faiths came together to host and promote the message of peace”*
* *“I liked the fact that every religion could all discuss something on the same topic. It brings us all together”*
* *“Lovely to see people of faith fellowshipping together”*
* *“Wonderful meal! Great company! Good to be one community.”*

Thank you for listening.

**Q and A**

* Are you able to influence Local Authority agendas on diversity and English as a second language?

*Redbridge has several community monitoring groups and a pool of people who can speak a number of languages. We have provided a number of workshops to help service providers engage better with people that speak English as a second language. Some faiths groups followed up some of these workshops with faith-specific sessions, for example the Sikh Women’s Alliance.*

* Do you find that there are any cultural and religious differences between different faiths in terms of how they try to help people suffering with dementia?

*A number of communities have said that there is quite a lot of stigma attached to dementia. In some cases people have been kept at home rather than being taken to a place of worship. What people have found from attending our workshops was that they understood that there should not be a stigma attached to dementia.*

* I am interested in your walks around places of worship. Does this have an impact beyond the narrow confines of workshops and seminars etc?

*We have been doing these walks for a number of years, and the walk has grown year on year, with over 100 people attending most recently. Many faith communities are very welcoming for people to come to them, but not so good at going out to others. The walk is changing this in Redbridge and encouraging people to at least visit one or two other places of worship. A number of people have written reports on the walk.*

*Previously there was a fear of visiting places of worship – but people are now realising that temples, mosques and gurdwaras are nice places to be and that they can feel comfortable in them.*

Local inter faith groups carry out an increasingly wide spectrum of activities from dialogue to social action. Visiting places of worship remains very important. When I first came to work for the Inter Faith Network back in the 90s I remember the late Rabbi Hugo Gryn, who was one of our first Co-Chairs, saying to me once that in his pre-war childhood in what was then part of Czechoslovakia, Christians almost never went into synagogues nor Jews into churches. He felt very deeply that this contributed to a dangerously unhelpful ignorance and lack of connection. He believed that it was immensely important that people learnt about other religions and also went physically into their spaces of worship. Redbridge is one of the important examples of local groups that give people an opportunity for this learning and experience. It is not just about setting foot in the temples or the churches or just walking a walk together, it is about making sure that people feel comfortable coming back and that these places are part of the normal landscape, and that they would feel sad if anything happened to them. [A comment from the Executive Director of the Inter Faith Network for the UK, Dr Harriet Crabtree].

**INTERFAITH GLASGOW**

**Mr Mohamed Omar and Ms Lynnda Wardle**

**Ms Lynnda Wardle**

Interfaith Glasgow (IG) is a new charity building friendship between different faith and belief traditions (including humanist and atheist) in Glasgow. Interfaith Glasgow was launched as an independent charity during Scottish Interfaith Week at the Glasgow City Council Chambers.

Glasgow has a long history of interfaith work which was initially led by a committed group of volunteers, starting in the 1970s. Later this developed into the national body for inter faith work: Interfaith Scotland, the national body for inter faith work. However, it was always felt that Glasgow, as Scotland’s most religiously and culturally diverse city, needed its own interfaith organisation.

IG was set up initially as a project of Interfaith Scotland in 2012. In May 2016 we became an independent charity and we are now continuing and developing our work as an independent organisation.

**What do we do?**

IG aims to promote and facilitate constructive engagement between people of diverse faiths and beliefs — religious and non-religious — so as to help create a better-connected, safer, and more harmonious city for all.

**How do we do this?**

When we were initially set up, we did a scoping exercise with local faith communities to find out what people wanted and needed from an inter faith organisation. This speaks to how inter faith work has always been done in Glasgow – grassroots, and about finding out what the community wants and needs. Three things came out of this consultation:

**Friendship building:** People wanted to make friendships across different faiths. This included Festivals Exchange events, where faith communities invite others in to celebrate key festivals with them, and Women’s Refugee Events.

**Cooperation:** We needed to work together as faith communities and with agencies in the city to address issues of social justice. This led to the formation of projects such as the Weekend Club, the Food Justice Project and our hate crime awareness work.

**Dialogue:** Our strapline is ‘flourishing through dialogue’ and this goes to the heart of everything that we do. This is expressed through our Interfaith Week programme and our ‘scriptural reasoning’ sessions. This year Scottish Interfaith Week’s theme was ‘Religion and the Media’ and so our work for it focused on that.

All our work fits into one or more than one of these three strands.

**Funding:** We are fortunate to receive core funding from the Scottish Government; through a diversity funding stream called the Voluntary Action Fund. The Scottish Government are committed to inter faith work. They are an innovative funder - their motto being ’more than just money’ and they provide ongoing development support to funded projects to support them to evaluate, share knowledge and grow their work.

**Mr Mohamed Omar**

I lead the cooperation strand of Interfaith Glasgow’s work, and focus on the Weekend Club. The Weekend Club is a project designed to combat social isolation among asylum seekers, refugees, migrants and other people new to the city. From an inter faith perspective, we thought we could work together to address this issue.

We have recruited volunteers from different religious communities to address specific needs in our city. There was enthusiasm throughout the city for this new project. Volunteers are of different ages and backgrounds. Since 2015, we have held 12 different events. This year we have attracted over 300 asylum seekers, refugees and migrants to our events from 17 different nationalities. We hold educational and cultural events, and help participants learn about Scotland and the history of migration in Scotland. The Weekend Club receives funding from small grant applications. We work with very limited resources. This project is being replicated in Edinburgh by Faith Action for Refugees.

**Q and A**

* What is the relationship between Protestants and Roman Catholics like in the city?

*Things are a lot more positive than they were historically. One of the hate crime awareness aspects of our work is with anti-sectarian projects across the city. The Old Firm [Celtic and Rangers], for example, has a big impact on the city when there is a game going on. It is a lot better than it used to be, and lots of projects are specifically addressing the issues.*

* One of the things that has come out is the way in which doing things together actually creates new rhythms and bonds and movements between people.
* In Lincoln we do multi faith walks with the inter faith group. Recently we did a peace walk, and as a City Council we have tried to enable these walks, sometimes with over 200 people attending. How are local authorities in Scotland engaging?

*We have always had a very good relationship with Glasgow City Council. There are some sources of funding that we can access. The Council is generally very supportive of our work. They are interested in trying to involve themselves more with inter faith bodies and local faith communities, especially when a coordinated response is required to a specific incident.*

*With regard to the refugee crisis, the Scottish Government has established a forum where local authorities come together to share experience and good practice.*

* You mention migrant communities - are migrant communities spread throughout Glasgow, and is it easy for your group to get to know a wide range of communities?

*There are roughly 20,000 refugees in the city of Glasgow, and this has gone up since the beginning of the current refugee crisis. From the perspective of the Weekend Club, it is easy to gain access to refugees and asylum seekers.*

**General questions**

* Do you have a membership of the people that participate in your work? And how do you promote your work?

*Interfaith Glasgow doesn’t have a membership list. For the Weekend Club, we hand out flyers.*

*Redbridge Faiths Forum has a mailing list of around 700 people. We also place large posters in places of worship and libraries about our events.*

*Faiths Network 4 Manchester has a membership list. We are using social media. We also try to engage new faith communities by holding events at a range of places of worship. An iftar meal at a mosque with the Jewish community particularly invited is a good example.*

* Post-Brexit, in the communities that you have been working with, has the mood changed, and has there been an increase in hate crime as a result?

*In Redbridge there has been a rise in attacks on mosques and a rise in Islamophobia and anti-Semitism. We have contact with the police and try to inform them of these things when necessary.*

*In Manchester we encourage people to talk to each other, and we are going to have a specific dialogue on the post-Brexit landscape.*

*There was definitely a swift fallout from the referendum vote; in Glasgow Eastern European communities suffered particularly from this. We are trying to support people to report incidents like this.*

* I am a representative of one of the smaller faith groups, Spiritualists. We find that there is considerable antagonism still directed towards our tradition. I wondered if any of your groups include Spiritualist groups in your circulations? What advice would you give to Spiritualist groups who still have problems with local inter faith groups?

*Interfaith Glasgow does not, to our knowledge, have any Spiritualists on its mailing list. As an inter faith organisation we need to be more aware of smaller faith groups and invites them to make themselves known and come and talk to us and be part of what we do.*

*There is a spiritualist church in Redbridge, but RFF has never engaged with Spiritualists. We have not been good at contacting them, but we would also welcome involvement.*

**CLOSING REFLECTIONS**

**Lord Harries of Pentregarth**

At the height of tension during the first Iraq War, when I was the Bishop of Oxford, we held a peace march from the local synagogue, with a prayer, to the University Church, with a prayer there, ending up at the mosque where there was also a prayer and hospitality. We had several hundred people in attendance, all carrying white balloons through the centre of Oxford. It was extremely powerful and led to some very good pictures in the local press. I wonder if, in these turbulent times, something very visual would be a helpful way to address incidents of hate.

**Sir Peter Bottomley MP**

Everyone that has been here has gained a great deal from it. The resources of the All Party Parliamentary Interfaith Group are limited, but it would be excellent if an email could go round so that those that were not here can gain from the discussion.

When I got to university I lived with someone who said it was the first time in his life that he had been able to live with someone that wasn’t a Roman Catholic: I was an Anglican. He had been forbidden by his Bishop from taking up a place at a non-Roman Catholic school where he had won a scholarship. A Ugandan Asian family came to share our house in the 1970s – their children are having very different experiences from those who might have been there a generation or two before, so there has been a great deal of change for the better.

When I was first an MP in Eltham, South London, we used to have an annual parade and ecumenical service in the open air. Faith groups were all together. When I became an MP down in Worthing, I organised, with all the faith groups I could find, a supper, where everyone read something from another faith tradition. At things like Holocaust Memorial Day, we invite all the faith groups we know of to come and participate. Nothing is a substitute for the kind of work in Glasgow, in Redbridge and in Manchester about which we have been hearing, but things are happening more generally. So long as we are all willing to speak up and stand alongside other people, I think we can make the Inter Faith Network feel that all of their efforts are worthwhile.

**Annex A**

**SHARING LOCAL INTER FAITH EXPERIENCE AND GOOD PRACTICE**

**AN EVENT TO MARK INTER FAITH WEEK**

**The All Party Parliamentary Interfaith Group**

**with the Inter Faith Network for the UK**

**Tuesday 15 November, 6pm in Room 3A**

Inter faith engagement at local level is increasingly important. It is of many kinds: from one off initiatives to organisations which work across the years to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation in their areas. This discussion highlights the work of local inter faith bodies, with three examples of very different groups which are working with people of many backgrounds on issues from youth, to refugee support, hate crime and mental health, as well as increasing religious literacy.

6.00 Welcome – Sir Peter Bottomley MP and Lord Harries of Pentregarth, Chairs, All Party Parliamentary Interfaith Group

The increasing significance of local inter faith engagement – Mr Jatinder Singh Birdi, Inter Faith Network Co-Chair and Chair of the Warwick District Faiths Forum

6.10 Faith Network 4 Manchester - Rabbi Warren Elf and the Revd Andy Williams

Q and A

6.25 Redbridge Faith Forum (London) – Ms Jacquie Grieve and Ms Vinaya Sharma

Q and A

6.40 Interfaith Glasgow – Mr Mohamed Omar and Ms Lynnda Wardle

Q and A

6.55 Conversation in plenary about:

* How we can strengthen local inter faith engagement in local communities across the UK
* What kinds of work help combat ignorance and prejudice and foster joint working and friendly relations?
* What helps people of different faiths – and none – to live together well and contribute together to the wellbeing of their local community?

7.10 Closing reflections

**Annex B**

**Participants**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Lord Harries of Pentregarth | All Party Parliamentary Interfaith Group |
| Sir Peter Bottomley | All Party Parliamentary Interfaith Group |
| Lord Maclennan of Rogart | House of Lords |
| Lord Mackay of Clashfern | House of Lords |
| Baroness Neuberger | APPG on Faith and Society |
| Lord Sheikh | House of Lords |
| Lord Shutt of Greetland | House of Lords |
| Lord Steel of Aikwood | House of Lords |
| Lord Sutherland of Houndwood | House of Lords |
| Rt Hon Stephen Timms | APPG on Faith and Society |
| Mr Mike Gapes MP | MP for Ilford South |
| Mr Jatinder Singh Birdi | IFN Co-Chair / Warwick District Faiths Forum |
| Ms Jacquie Grieve | Redbridge Faith Forum |
| Ms Vinaya Sharma | Redbridge Faith Forum |
| Rabbi Warren Elf | Faith Network for Manchester |
| The Revd Andy Williams | Faith Network for Manchester |
| Ms Lynnda Wardle | Interfaith Glasgow |
| Mr Mohamed Omar | Interfaith Glasgow |
| Mr Anthony Silkoff | Board of Deputies of British Jews |
| Mr Nicholas Read | Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints |
| The Most Revd Fr Olu Abiola | Council of African and Afro-Caribbean Churches (UK) |
| Ms Marie van der Zyl | IFN Trustee / Board of Deputies of British Jews |
| Mr Mike Stygal | IFN Trustee / Pagan Federation |
| Mr Pejman Khojasteh | International Association for Religious Freedom (British Chapter) |
| Mrs Mehri Niknam | Joseph Interfaith Foundation |
| Ms Rosie Parker | Religions for Peace (UK) |
| Minister David Hopkins | IFN Trustee / Spiritualists’ National Union |
| Prof Harbhajan Singh | Thamesmead Interfaith Forum |
| Mr Ajit Singh | World Congress of Faiths |
| Mr Nitin Palan | IFN Trustee / BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha |
| Debbie Brenner | Hounslow Friends of Faith |
| Ms Wendy Smith | Waltham Forest Faith Communities Forum |
| Mr Iyadh Daoud | Crawley Interfaith Network |
| Mr Manjit Singh Bhogal | IFN Trustee / Dudley Borough Interfaith Network |
| Ms Jaskiran Kaur Mehmi | Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship |
| Mr Garry Shore | Woking People of Faith |
| Cllr Hanif Khan | Hounslow Friends of Faith |
| Cllr Rosanne Kirk | Lincoln Inter Faith Forum |
| Mr David Shreeve | Archbishops’ Council of the Church of England |
|  |  |
| In attendance |  |
| Miss Juwayriyah Badrudin | Inter Faith Network office |
| Mr Ashley Beck | Inter Faith Network office |
| Mrs Hannah Cassidy | Inter Faith Network office |
| Dr Harriet Crabtree | Inter Faith Network office |
| Mr Zac Lloyd | Inter Faith Network office |

The Inter Faith Network for the UK

2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH

[www.interfaith.org.uk](http://www.interfaith.org.uk)

Company limited by guarantee no 3443823. Registered in England.

Registered charity no 1068934.