

# Annual Report 2006/07



## An Overview

2006/07 has been another busy year with Interfaith Council (IFC) members working hard to consolidate the position and effectiveness of the Council.

During the year the IFC has drawn up a 3 year strategy for future work, the first year of which is 2006/7 and is reported on in detail later in this report.

IFC members feel that progress has been made and good foundations laid for the future work of the Interfaith Council including seeking charitable status.

This opportunity is taken to express thanks to the Chief Officer and Staff of the Community and Voluntary Service (CVS) for all their work in the support of the Interfaith Council, which has been very effective.

Members of the Interfaith Council would also like to express their sincere and grateful thanks to Mrs Rosalind Davies who, as a member of Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council Policy Department, has previously worked effectively and patiently facilitating the work of the Interfaith Council. This has been very much appreciated.

None of this would be possible without the close and friendly cooperation of the representatives of the main faith communities within the Borough that make up the Interfaith Council. The work of the representatives and those that have been willing to take on an Officer role for the Interfaith Council during the last year is much appreciated.

Joginder Singh Bhamra (Chair) & Derek Estill (Vice Chair)  
Blackburn with Darwen Interfaith Council



## Aims of Blackburn with Darwen Interfaith Council

- 1) **Harmony, Trust and Shared Respect:**  
To work together to foster understanding and cooperation between the faith communities in Blackburn with Darwen.
- 2) **Engagement, Participation and Commitment:**  
To increase understanding of the positive role that the faith communities can play in society.
- 3) **Community Cohesion:**  
To improve the quality of life of local people by working together on agreed projects in order to demonstrate our commitment to working in partnership between people of different faiths.

## Interfaith Council Membership 2006/07

Officers	Members	Faith
Chair	Joginder Singh Bhamra	Sikh Faith
Vice Chair	Derek Estill	Christian Faith
Treasurer	Madhubala Pandya	Hindu Faith
Secretary	Salim Mulla	Muslim Faith
	Adiccabandhu Casey	Buddhist Faith
	Canon Chris Chivers	Christian Faith
	Father Francis Parkinson	Christian Faith
	Very Rev Christopher Armstrong	Christian Faith
	Ashok Chudasama	Hindu Faith
	Ashwin Kara	Hindu Faith
	Ashok Dayal	Hindu Faith
	Renee Black	Jewish Faith
	Harry Swalbe	Jewish Faith
	Anjum Anwar MBE	Muslim Faith
	Mohammed Khaliq	Muslim Faith
	Moulana Nasrullah Anwar	Muslim Faith
	Charan Singh Bamrah	Sikh Faith
Co-opted non voting member/Faith Rep on the LSP	Rev Geoff Townsend	Christian Faith
Co-opted non voting member/Interfaith Officer for Churches Together in Lancs.	Rev Dale Barton	Christian Faith



### Interfaith Council Support Officer – Sadiq Patel

Sadiq Patel, the Faith and Cohesion Development Officer for the Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) in Blackburn with Darwen has since February 2006 been supporting and facilitating the work of the Interfaith Council (IFC).

He would like to take this opportunity to express his grateful thanks for the support he has received from both IFC members and his CVS colleagues in carrying out this work.

Please contact me if you want to learn more about the work of the Interfaith Council.

**(Please refer to back page)**

## Development Session July 2006



The members of the Interfaith Council met to agree on an Action Plan and discussed how this could be implemented. The positive outcomes that followed are outlined on the following pages.

## Publicity Materials

In partnership with BWD Services, the CVS marketing and design company, a wide range of publicity materials have recently been developed for the Interfaith Council. These include:

- The development of a new logo for the Interfaith Council
- The production of a range of leaflets, business cards and stationery
- A new website – [www.bwdifc.org](http://www.bwdifc.org)
- New email address – [info@interfaithcouncil.org](mailto:info@interfaithcouncil.org)
- Posters to raise the awareness of the diverse faiths in the Borough
- Pop-Up information stands



Many faith posters have been displayed outside the Town Hall



## Public Involvement

The Interfaith Council has convened public sessions both to allow the introduction of the principles of different faiths to the public and to discuss faith issues in the news.

**Faith 2 Faith** – These events gave a brief introduction to the faiths of the Borough, taking place at lunch times over several weeks. The events were held at the Cathedral and hosted by Canon Chris Chivers and Anjum Anwar MBE. IFC members discussing their faiths included Amrit Kaur Bhamra (Sikhism), Renee Black (Judaism), Adiccabandhu (Buddhism) and Ashok Chudasama (Hinduism).



Images from the Faith 2 Faith events at Blackburn Cathedral

**To Veil or Not to Veil** - In response to the debate around Muslim women wearing the veil, the Interfaith Council, in partnership with Blackburn Cathedral, hosted a public meeting to discuss the varying opinions on the issue.



The veil issue is discussed at the Cathedral

## Meet Your Neighbour

Four faith events across the Borough under the theme of 'Meet Your Neighbour' have been held.

### Meet Your Neighbour – St Jude's Church

At the first of our Meet Your Neighbour events, the Rev Carl Schaeffer discussed Christianity at St. Jude's Anglican Church. The event was well received, with over 70 delegates present, from many faiths. *"It has been a very positive experience to share time together and reach a broader understanding of various faiths"*



### Meet Your Neighbour – Darwen Central United Reformed Church

The 2nd Event was held at Central URC in Darwen. The Rev Sarah Moore opened discussion about refugees and asylum seeking and faiths in the town. The event featured refugees and asylum seekers' personal stories and highlighted the work of the church historically in providing help for them. *"Opened my eyes to the bravery of people to take the first step on a difficult journey to 'freedom'"*



## Meet Your Neighbour - Leamington Road Baptist Church

The 3rd Faith Event focussed on Hinduism and was presented by Blackburn Hindu Centre. 74 people attended this event, featuring traditional food and dancing. *"I was a member of this congregation some 20 years ago... when it was extremely conservative and narrow in its thinking ... to have hosted an evening/event such as this then would have been inconceivable ... My ...HOW THINGS HAVE CHANGED!!"*



## Meet Your Neighbour – St Peter's Catholic Club



# Remembering

A key element of the Interfaith Council's work relates to our civic duty as faith communities to remember those who have fought and died in wars and conflicts. As part of this, the IFC participated in Remembrance Sunday commemorations.



A wreath is laid on behalf of the IFC at Corporation Park

The Interfaith Council also play a vital part in remembering the suffering of communities on the grounds of religion. As part of this, Holocaust Memorial Day, remembering the atrocities committed against the Jews and others, is a key date in the IFC calendar.



A holocaust survivor meets with representatives of the Borough Council and the IFC



## **Inspirational Women Project**

The Inspirational Women Project is a new initiative aimed at helping women to engage in an inter-faith dialogue. Two events have already taken place, one at St.Silas' Parish Hall and the other at Audley Community Centre. The events featured inspirational women's voices from other areas and enabled women to share good practice and experiences.

The ultimate aim of the project will be the setting up of an Interfaith Women's Network. For more information on this project please contact Val Edge on 01254 665258 or Anjum Anwar on 01254 692289.



Guests and speakers at Audley Community Centre

## Next Steps for 2007/08

Highlighted below are some of the initiatives and projects that are going to be part of the coming year's programme:

- Remembrance Sunday & Holocaust Memorial Day
- Arrange future Faith Events
- An anti-secularisation/pro-religious publicity campaign
- Young People's Interfaith Forum
- Youth conference on creating a society based on respect rather than tolerance
- Interfaith football competition and athletic events for younger people
- Arranging a Jewish Passover Meal for people to witness and participate
- Twinning local places of worship
- Continue the planning of an Interfaith Sculpture

Additionally, £18,900 from the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund has been awarded for: -

- **Community Engagement** – this will support the costs of bringing people of different faiths together to plan for and host Borough wide 'Getting to know you events' (open days & interfaith dialogues at different places of worship) and neighbourhood level 'meet your neighbour' events, which will focus on particular areas where people who may be living 'parallel' lives.
- **Youth Engagement** – this will support the costs of undertaking tours to places of worship; project work with young people, producing a DVD and hosting a conference.



Young Hindu dancers at  
Leamington Road Baptist Church

## Representation

Continue to represent faith issues on the following bodies:

- Local Strategic Partnership Board
- Community Network Board
- Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Board

- People & Communities Forum

Look to expand the IFC's representation across the Borough.

# **Blackburn with Darwen Interfaith Council**

## **Accounts for 2006/07**

**Income and Expenditure 1<sup>st</sup> July 2005 to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2007.**

### **Income**

	<b>£</b>
Balance brought forward	709.73
Bank interest received	0.67
Grant Funding:	
BwD Community Network	3534.00
Community Development Foundation	8750.00

**Total funds available    12,995.40**

### **Expenditure**

Interfaith Network	35.00
Remembrance Sunday wreath	16.50
Donation Holocaust Memorial	20.00
Committee expenses	28.23

**Total expenditure                    99.73**

**Balance at Bank                    £12,895.67**

Madhubala Pandya  
Treasurer

Independent Examination by

Graham Jones

Business Manager  
Bootstrap Enterprises

13<sup>th</sup> March 2007



**During 2006/07 the work of the IFC was funded by:**

- Improving Reach Grant (Capacity builders)
- Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund (Home Office)
- Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
- Blackburn with Darwen Community Network Grant

The Interfaith Council would like to thank all our funders for their support over the year.

For more information or to become involved with the work of The Interfaith Council, please contact:

Sadiq Patel

Faith and Cohesion Development Officer

Community and Voluntary Service

31 Victoria Street, Blackburn. BB1 6DN

Phone 01254 660186

Email [info@interfaithcouncil.org](mailto:info@interfaithcouncil.org) or [sadiq@bwdcomnet.org.uk](mailto:sadiq@bwdcomnet.org.uk)

Visit the IFC website at [www.bwdifc.org](http://www.bwdifc.org)

