

# Annual

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# Report

June 2018

## Report From the Chair for 2017/2018



It has been a very encouraging year for the Faiths Forum, with well attended events and positive interaction between our faiths.

We have been delighted to welcome back Mahendra Dabhi, a founding member and former Chair, back as the Steering Group's Hindu representative.

Just after the 2017 AGM, a Statement from the Forum, condemning the Manchester Arena bombing and exhorting bridge building between communities, was published by the local press.

Shantose Kaur, as Vice Chair, and I made a visit to the Loughborough Faiths Forum. We exchanged ideas about furthering our work and shared insights regarding the promotion of understanding between faiths and cultures. At Loughborough we gained the idea that the Mayor might be the Honorary President of the Forum and we are delighted that the Mayor of Solihull, Cllr Flo Nash, will join us at our AGM as our first Honorary President.

Shantose, Mahendra and I (see left) with Beryl Moppett (not pictured) also attended the West Midlands Mayor's Faith Summit.

Support has been given to two key areas of work in the community. A presentation from the Council's Suicide Prevention Officer, Jo McCullagh, led the Steering Group to agree to assist with an awareness campaign.

Subsequently, Jonathan James of the Counter Terrorism Unit introduced the 'Our Families and Our Future' campaign and, again, the Forum would be a channel for communications into our faith communities.

The highlights of the year have been our two Inter Faith celebration events, both very well attended and ideal for building good relationships between Forum members. They are reported separately here, below and overleaf.

We are now delighted to welcome Alison McGrory to be our speaker at this year's AGM. The quest for Stronger Communities has a close alignment with the goals of the Forum and it gives us an opportunity to explore how the faith communities at the heart of our neighbourhoods can play a part in recognised priorities for social action, through the partnership that our Faith Covenant has established.

Finally, I want to thank the other members of our Steering Group, who have provided excellent support to me once again this year and for the ongoing success that we have enjoyed.

*Pat Wilkinson*

## Marking World Inter Faith Harmony Week with a Quiz Night

On Wednesday 7th February, 58 contestants in 10 teams gathered at the Three Trees Community Centre in Chelmsley Wood, to pit their wits against each other for a World Interfaith Harmony Week Quiz Night.

They tackled a hundred varied questions mixing traditional quiz themes such as history, sports and arts with a smattering of faith based questions all with an international flavour, leaving no continent and no major faith unvisited during two hours of testing challenge, interrupted only by a break for fellowship and a fish'n'chip or veggie burger supper.

The evening concluded with a win for a team that joined the forces of four of the Forum's partners in Solihull Council with two of our Hindu members. As usual, few were in a rush to go home. Conversation continued, more friendships were sealed and folk left with a consensus that 'we must do this again'.



# Inter Faith Week Celebration Concert



Sikh 'Boy Band'



Rass Garba (Hindu) Dance

On Thursday 16th November 2017 over a hundred members of Solihull's different faiths communities gathered at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on Hampton Lane to enjoy an hour and half of music, words, song and dance to celebrate Inter Faith Week. Some items in the varied programme were sacred, others not, but all were reflective of the diverse cultures and traditions of our various faiths.

Instruments less familiar to some but much used in worshipping communities, such as the tabla, a pair of drums, and the dilruba, a stringed instrument which shares some of the characteristics of the sitar, both from the Indian sub-continent, were used for recitals.

The programme intermixed traditional dances from India and Tonga with songs from China, a movement from a Mozart Horn Concerto, a Sikh 'Boy Band' and a very moving rendition of 'Oh My Lord', an Islamic Nasheed variant of Leonard Cohen's tune 'Hallelulah'.

In concluding the evening, special guest, the Mayor of Solihull, Councillor Stuart Davis expressed his appreciation and underlined the importance of celebrating the diversity of faith in the borough before members of audience got to know each other better over light refreshments.

## Steering Group - 2017/2018

The Steering Group members in 2017/2018 were:

Pat Wilkinson (Latter Day Saints, Chair)  
Shantose Kaur (Sikh, Vice Chair)  
Jane Bailey (Ind Christian)  
Martin Beckett (Baha'i)  
Mahendra Dabhi (Hindu)  
Revd Linda Granner (Anglican)  
Azra Hussain (Muslim)  
Beryl Moppett (Anglican)  
Rabbi Yehuda Pink (Jewish)  
and  
Pauline Raponi (Catholic)

and was facilitated by Dave Pinwell of Colebridge Trust.

## Faiths Forum Purpose and Aims

The Forum has the following purpose and aims:

**PURPOSE:** The Forum exists to bring together faith groups who are interested in fostering greater mutual understanding and friendship. The group seeks to promote greater understanding and appreciation amongst local people of the rich diversity of belief and practise within our own community and beyond.

**AIMS:**

- To live peacefully together.
- To involve faith and cultural groups in the civic and public life of the borough.
- To enable the Council, Solihull Partnership and local faith groups to discuss matters of mutual concern or interest.

## Solihull Faiths Forum

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