

## Wellingborough Inter Faith Group Committee 2015-16

### Committee to Sept 2015:

Chair Aidan Matthews  
Secretary Cynthia Bailey  
Treasurer Mridula Dhall  
Member Nigel Bibbings  
Member Om Dhall  
Member Shashi Dholakia  
Member Jennifer Dixon

### Committee from Sept 2015:

Chair Shashi Dholakia  
Vice Chair Jenny Dixon  
Secretary Cynthia Bailey.  
Treasurer Mridula Dhall  
Member Nigel Bibbings  
Member Aidan Matthews  
Member Tony Aslam

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## Aims and Objectives

Wellingborough Inter Faith group aims to provide an opportunity for people of differing faiths, beliefs and cultures to:

- Meet together regularly.
- Engage in dialogue.
- Participate together in special events/projects.
- Increase understanding of, and gain respect for, each other's beliefs.
- Increase understanding between faiths and the wider society.
- Interact with other Inter Faith groups at local, regional and national level.

### Affiliated to:

Victoria Centre, Wellingborough. Charity No. 278215  
The Inter Faith Network for the UK. Charity No. 1068934

For further info. contact the Secretary:

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## Chairman's Report

The Interfaith Group in Wellingborough has been running for many years.

This Group builds friendship, good will and understanding between people of different faiths and beliefs. This is achieved by having dialogue and action.

It was originally seen as important for building good interfaith relations and promoting cross-faith co-operations. In the present climate it is becoming increasingly important to the well-being of our society as a whole.

In the coming year a special strand of our work will be "Learning Together". On the agenda will be discussion about "religious literacy". How do we, as people of different faiths and beliefs in this country gain understanding of each other's most deeply held beliefs and understanding of the stories and practices that shape our lives.

When our website is up and running we will be putting up a series of short briefings and reflections about different aspects of learning from and about different faith in context of Religious Education in schools.

During the year our progress has been steady. We have carried on with our monthly meeting with our members.

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## Treasurer's Report

We started the financial year in April 2015 with a balance of just £577.72. We were, therefore, most grateful when Cllr Bhupendra Patel granted us £1600.00 from his NCC 'Empowering Councillors and Communities Scheme' budget and the Borough Council £458.00 from their 'Small Community Grants for Projects' budget, together enabling us to go ahead with our work for the year. We later received a generous donation of £400.00 from Scott Bader towards our work in general which has meant that we could end the financial year with a much healthy balance of £1413.93. I would like to thank Cynthia for her hard work in seeking funding for us and the funders for their positive response.

You will see in the Accounts that our main expenditure for the year is threefold - the cost of room hire for meetings; our Insurance and the cost of the school workshops, all of which we work hard to keep to a minimum. I would like at this point to thank Mr Kunal Thakrar for his independent examination of the accounts which he very graciously did for us on a voluntary basis.

We are now well into the new financial year and have been successful in an application to Northampton Community Foundation for some funding to enable us to continue our work. We still hope to attract extra financial support so that we can continue to grow our organisation.

Mridula Dhall

7.

## Multi faith Workshops.

### Extracts of feedback from teachers and children.

The faith representatives were first class, both in their knowledge and their manner with the children.

Your approach to our visually-impaired child was refreshingly inclusive.

The booklets are a valuable reminder for the children and can be referred to long after you have left us.

The variety of 7 faiths helped the children understand the relationship between the religions.

We were impressed with the whole set-up and delighted to recommend such a valuable lesson in life to other schools.

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Thank you, it was so much fun to do all the activities and I liked the story of the elephant and shouting out the words!

I learnt lots of common values, I liked respect, unity and forgiveness. I wish you can come back again.

I learnt about the different symbols and what they mean.

I liked the Uni-tea on the Bahai table.

Sikh table was amazing because of the model, it looked really fantastic and golden.

I enjoyed wearing the Hindu (*wedding*) hat.

Special Christianity, wonderful Buddhism!

Islamic faith was interesting about the Quran and writing right to left.

I enjoyed the craft making the elephant which is now on display outside the staff room, everyone loves it.

I liked moving around the room to the different tables.

There is lots to learn about Judaism, I liked the scarf with the knots.

- Regular Monthly Committee Meetings
- School Workshops
- More active in publishing our activities
- Website will be up and running soon

During the year I went to Birmingham with Bhupendra Mistry, who was recently co-opted onto our Committee, to see their work on Multi Faith. I am pleased to have David and Patricia Earl from that group as our guest speakers this evening. I look forward to hearing from them, to listen to a great work done by them in Birmingham.

I would like to thank all our funders who have helped us to carry out our work in the community.

My thanks go to the committee for their hard work and support this year. Thanks particularly, Cynthia Bailey our Secretary, who has been a pillar of strength to this group for many years. And to Nigel Bibbings, who is leaving the area. We will miss you Nigel.

Lastly, on a personal note since we are all absolutely committed to Inter Faith ideals so it is a pleasure to be the Chair but a change is well over due with regard to membership and I personally canvassed hard, but unsuccessfully, to find new and young members willing to join us. I am very grateful for all the support I have had over the year and will certainly continue my involvement.

Shashi Dholakia

## Secretary's Report

The twelve months to March 2016, which our accounts refer to, was a good year all told, particularly with our School Workshops which we increased to four this year, visiting three village Primary Schools: Mears Ashby, Bozeat and Little Harrowden plus a workshop at Friars Academy, a school for special needs pupils in Wellingborough. We had faith representatives from either six or seven different faiths at each of the schools for the half day workshops and received excellent feedback and enthusiasm from both pupils and staff at all the Schools. The importance of this work, as the Chair indicated, cannot be underestimated in a world where race and religious discrimination and hate crimes are never far away from the headlines.

Our programme during the year was varied and interesting and included two visits to places of worship, The Baps Swaminarayan Mandir in Mill Road in April and the Society of Friends (Quakers) in John Street in November.

Our indoor meetings included talks on the beliefs of Druids and Pagans, the work of Northampton Faith Forum and one on the Bahai Faith. Discussion topics included Religion and Child Rearing, Light and Darkness, Forms of Meditation and Forgiving and Forgetting.

Membership stands at 31, a little lower than the previous year, so we are conscious this is something we need to build up again.

I would like to thank our members for their loyalty, and anyone else who has supported us financially or in a practical way, not least the staff of Victoria Centre; we could not do our work without them.

This current year we plan to launch our well overdue website and thanks go to Adam Humphrey for his voluntary help in setting this up for us.

Lastly, if you have ideas for meetings, projects or anything else, the Committee would be pleased to hear from you. We are a small group trying our best to do a pretty big job, so we are always open to fresh ideas, new members and general support.

Cynthia Bailey

