

A Truly Inspiring Week of Interfaith Activities-

Week of 12- 19 Nov. 2017

As many of you know, just over a week ago was the national interfaith week of activities held throughout UK to bring communities together through numerous events and projects. I understand almost 675 events were held in the country- which is incredible and shows the real goodness of people from right across all walks of life who share and celebrate diversity as well as many other values we have in common of kindness, compassion and tolerance which allows us to work collectively for peace, harmony, tolerance and mutual respect for all people regardless of any outer differences.

Reflecting back, our week was truly inspiring for many good reasons which is good for our town. The "Open Day "was visited by number of people which included some new arrivals from various parts of the world who had been in Bolton less than two months- that is positive for new people to see that we are welcoming and the openness which exists. The second event with 120 students from Bolton Muslim Girls' School visiting a Hindu Temple, a Church and at the end gave a wonderful presentation about impact of "hate crime" on individuals and communities. The students had clearly worked hard to create an amazing banner and art work. The events which followed "Unity in the Community" – a celebration of Eid, Diwali and Advent, as well as the "Passport To Faiths and Food share " with 104 children from 10 diverse schools taking part in learning basics of 8 major faiths and also sharing food. Somehow young children are unbelievably inspirational and hence that is reassuring for the future.

Final event was "No Place for Hatred- in our Community"- an issue which is a challenge to all decent people. The event was well supported by excellent speakers from community and presentation by young ambassadors which had comments from many prominent people, groups and in particular schools.

For me the most positive part was the support from faith group partners, Emmanuel Church, Victoria Hall, Zakariyya Mosque, Swaminarayan Mandir, ACIS, Building Bridges -Tonge Moor, City of Sanctuary, Destitution Project, Asian Elders, GM Police, Bolton Wanderers Community Trust, Bolton CVS, Bolton at Home, 12 schools, Faith Network For Manchester, interfaith Network

UK, Interfaith Youth Trust, Mayor & Mayoress, Bolton Council, Greater Manchester Police, Bolton Halwa Centre and many volunteers who gave up their time to support the events. Once again the generosity shown by Carrs Pasties and John Bates from market with fruits for almost 150 people is to be totally appreciated and valued.

The events locally and nationally shows the strength of “partnership working” which is critical and is embedded in the strength of interfaith work with a positive attitude of many like minded people who contribute so much towards peace, harmony and respect for all mankind.

We know, we need to do a lot more to change many minds who carry wrong perceptions which has impact upon individuals and communities. Hence the projects like faith trails, young ambassadors and networking events have immense value for community cohesion.

On behalf of Bolton Interfaith Council, I wish to thank everyone who supported the national interfaith week as well as ongoing support for our work.

Kind regards in peace – Chan Parmar for Bolton Interfaith Council 24/11/17