

Ipswich Faith and Community Forum

Chair's Report for AGM 19th November 2019

In last years report I indicated that it was proving difficult to maintain momentum within the forum. In particular our programme of talks was not attracting a significant number of members or visitors.

A decision made then was to suspend the monthly talks and instead focus on finding ways of establishing relationships between various groups by initiating visits.

Since the last AGM the trustees have formally met in December, January, February, July and October with a special brainstorming session held in April.

Key activities have been

*Holocaust Memorial Day. Again we took the lead on this and the event on 25th January was better attended than ever. As well as presentations this included a display in the foyer of University of Suffolk.

* Food and Faith Cookbook: The idea here has been to produce a simple cookbook based upon dishes that are representative of or popular within various cultural or faith groups. This project is ongoing.

*The Annual Faiths lecture was "The Search for Religious Tolerance: A Sikh View". This was presented on 26th March.

* Two visits to place of worship took place – to the Ipswich Mosque and the Sikh Gurdwara and several trustees took part in the Tuesday Takeover on Radio Suffolk.

* One aim had been to get stories of peoples lives – what is it like to be a member of that community and find out what it is like to be a part of that community living in Ipswich. We wrote to a number of community groups to see if they were interested in getting involved.

* We met with members of the Kurdish community to understand the issues around their bid to convert the Mulberry Tree into a community centre.

* The directory of Faiths and Community Groups was completed in August and published on the website. This covers the greater Ipswich area.

* Mayor's Celebration of Community. We have started discussions with the Mayor's office to see if we can restart this event or something similar.

* Attended the Suffolk Hate Crime Forum.

* IFCF was represented at the Suffolk Remembrance Sunday event in Christchurch Park.

The big question - "What are we (IFCF) for?" was raised many times at trustee meetings as we are acutely aware that our role is not clear. We had a special April meeting to brainstorm this and clarify what our role should be. Are we trying to be a "Social Service Lite" or are we something more 'spiritual' or what? One major difficulty was that we risked duplicating

what other groups were already doing. If we were to be useful we had to 'find the gaps', and this is something which has proved to be challenging.

Future activities scheduled:

Interfaith Shabbat on 23rd November

HMD – This will be on 27th January 2020.

Annual Faith lecture on 18th March 2010. This will be presented by Dr Ed Kessler from the Woolf Institute.

The Trustees would like to thank Tower House, EEFA and the Bond St. Mosque for providing facilities for meetings during the year.

Signed.....

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