

Grassroots

... a different point of view

Newsletter Edition 4 - Winter 2014

Working to build community amongst
Luton's diverse people

In Partnership with Luton Council of Faiths & Ghar se Ghar
(Home to Home)



Welcome to the winter edition of the GRASSROOTS newsletter!

Festive greetings from the GRASSROOTS Team! This is the last newsletter of 2014, a year in which we have been very busy, but also truly blessed to have had many opportunities to continue sharing our work throughout the Luton community and beyond.

We hope you enjoy reading about what we have been doing throughout the Autumn months, and looking in advance to some of our future activities in early 2015. You can also find out more about the new Friends of GRASSROOTS scheme which we hope you will get involved in too.

In the meantime, from all at GRASSROOTS we wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Will you be a Friend of GRASSROOTS?

We would like to invite you to become a Friend of GRASSROOTS. If you would like to add to our ongoing work by volunteering, fundraising or by making a kind donation, please get in touch with us. All contributions, however little or large, in cash or in kind, are not only much appreciated but are also vital in supporting the continuing work that GRASSROOTS does.

As a Friend of GRASSROOTS, you would continue to receive our quarterly newsletter along with our Annual Report and an invitation to a yearly thank you event. For more information please contact Johnny at jgrassroots@btconnect.com

To find out more about how you can contribute to our work please visit us online at www.grassrootsluton.org.uk/get-involved

Neighbourhood Community Workers

The Nehemiah Foundation - a national partner of the Near Neighbours programme - is helping us to appoint THREE Neighbourhood Community Workers to work in the Biscot, High Town and Dallow/Farley areas of Luton. Networks of organisations from these areas, representing different faiths and cultures, have been invited to act as Host Organisations for the community workers. To find out more please visit www.grassrootsluton.org.uk/news-events/nn-vacancies



Community Relations & Issues in Luton

The EDL (English Defence League) gathered in Luton's Park Square on 22nd November 2014 to protest against Islamic extremism. While the EDL presence was quite small, a counter demonstration in the Bury Park area was organised by UAF (Unite Against Fascism) working alongside a group called 'We Are Luton'. Members of GRASSROOTS and Luton Council of Faiths were part of a team of Community Mediators working alongside Bedfordshire Police, Community Chaplains, Pastors and Street Pastors. Although the day passed by peacefully, there is a level of concern and anxiety within the community regarding the distress that such demonstrations cause time and again. In response, GRASSROOTS reaffirms its commitment to working with the many different communities in Luton to promote harmony and facilitate constructive discussion where possible.

Dates for your Diary

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Event on 24th January 2015 from 10am at Holy Ghost Catholic Church

Holocaust Memorial Service on 25th January from 3pm at the Town Hall Council Chamber

Fairtrade Fortnight begins on 23rd February - and our Fairtrade Fortnight event in The Mall will take place on 7th March from 10am

Precious Pearls International Women's Day will be on 5th March - time and place to be confirmed!

Bahá'í Naw-Rúz Public Celebration shall take place on 21st March 2015 from 6pm at Chaul End Centre

Other GRASSROOTS News

Catholic School Chaplaincy & Inter Faith Dialogue

On 15th October 2014, Sr Maire Hayes led a Catholic School Chaplaincy and Inter Faith Dialogue training day. The training aimed to encourage Chaplains of Catholic schools to live out the teachings of Vatican II, acknowledging that we are all God's family and that we have our destiny in God. During the day participants explored how we can all grow distinctively in dialogue with others without needing to feel we must compromise our own identity, faith or culture.

Fairtrade Supporters Conference

The Luton Fairtrade Steering Group, with the support of GRASSROOTS, Luton Council of Faiths and the University of Bedfordshire, hosted the Fairtrade Supporters' Triennial Conference on 18th October 2014. Held at the University, the hugely inspiring day was packed with exciting and inspirational talks, craft activities, and a fair and funky Fairtrade snack cook-in corner. The day also included an art activity using seeds from Fairtrade dates, a buzzing market-place displaying a range of Fairtrade products and a role play performed by children from St Joseph's Catholic Junior School.

Community Archery Games

On 2nd November 2014, the Community Archery Games took place at Luton Sixth Form College involving over 100 people from Luton's diverse communities. The day began with a special training workshop for local Archery Instructors led by Danielle Brown, MBE - double Paralympics Gold Medallist in Archery, Commonwealth Games Gold Medallist and three times World Champion. The event continued with a friendly community archery competition, with proud winners awarded gold, silver and bronze medals.

The Robin Hood Feast

This exciting event took place on 12th November 2014 celebrating a successful year of the Community Archery Project. Organised and supported by Luton Council of Faiths, GRASSROOTS and the Near Neighbours programme, the feast brought together archers and their families from across faiths and cultures for a social evening including traditional games, archery and an educational quiz. Around 60 people took part in the celebration held in the hall of All Saints Church, Bury Park, which had been decorated medieval-style.

A Grand Christmas Dinner and Dance

The Bury Park Beech Hill Council of Churches hosted a Christmas extravaganza on 5th December 2014. Held at the Holy Ghost Catholic Parish Centre, guests enjoyed a 3-course meal, entertainments and a night of dancing, with proceeds from the event supporting the Church Related Community Work (CRCW) project. More than 100 people from across the Council of Churches, plus invited family and friends, donned their finery and gathered for this wonderful occasion, sharing fellowship and strengthening friendship.

Circle Dancing Christmas Special

Ann Hyde led a Circle Dancing Christmas Special at Hockwell Ring Community Centre on 6th December 2014, supported by New Creations. 30 attendees enjoyed dancing to music new and old, with dances including the Nut Cracking Dance from Romania and the Shepherds Dance from France among many others. Participants brought along food to enjoy, encouraging much sharing, conversation and laughter.



Danielle Brown, MBE, receives gifts from the Luton Mayor at the Community Archery Games



Children from St Joseph's Catholic Junior School at the Fairtrade Conference



Community archers enjoy a Medieval banquet at the Robin Hood Feast



A Circle Dancing Christmas Special taking place at Hockwell Ring

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