

Grassroots

... a different point of view



Newsletter Edition 7 – Autumn 2015

Working to build community amongst
Luton's diverse people

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

Autumn

Welcome to the autumn edition of the GRASSROOTS newsletter!

In light of recent discussions about the desperate plight of Syrian Refugees, the GRASSROOTS team have been reflecting on a verse from Matthew (25:40). "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me". This is a good reminder for us all, but particularly for those who are undermining the suffering of so many. May our shared humanity encourage us to save the lives at our doorstep!

KEEP IN TOUCH!

We hope you enjoy our newsletter but there are many other ways you can keep up to date with GRASSROOTS news, upcoming events and more about the work we do. You can contact us via:



www.grassrootsluton.org.uk



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www.facebook.com/grassrootsluton



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If there is something you would like to see in a future newsletter then please let us know!

Archbishop of Canterbury Visit

On Thursday 18th June the Most Revd and Rt Hon Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury joined key faith leaders from across Luton, speaking warmly of Luton's community initiatives to strengthen relationships in Luton and signing both the Luton in Harmony pledge and Britain First community statement.



GRASSROOTS Coordinator David Jonathan meeting the Archbishop of Canterbury

At a separate event at St Mary's Church GRASSROOTS team members were honoured to meet the Archbishop, showing him a display representing the work we do in Luton, and briefly discussing the many challenges we currently encounter.

Picnic in the Park a Huge Success!

More than 200 local residents attended a celebration of the Cohen's Yard Community Inclusion Project on Saturday 25th July at a Picnic in the Park family fun day, led by the Medina Mosque and All Saints Church [as part of Church Related Community Work (CRCW)] supported by Near Neighbours which is based at GRASSROOTS.



Children's entertainers were one of many activities on offer during Picnic in the Park

One of the projects biggest successes this year has included local residents, the Rabia Islamic School and TUI Travel Plc volunteers litter picking, shrub planting and repainting the park's play equipment, reclaiming the park as a local family resource.

Tunisia Killings Minute of Silence

GRASSROOTS team members joined over 150 people from different faiths and cultures for a one minute silence for the victims of the Tunisia Killings held on Friday 3rd July. The Mayor of Luton, Cllr Dave Taylor, offered condolences on behalf of the people of Luton town and then led people into silence, observed all around the UK.



Community leaders gathered for a minute of silence for victims of the Tunisia killings

Zafar Khan, Chair of Luton Council of Faiths then spoke reflecting that "words cannot describe the hurt, pain, anger and frustration that such awful events cause to us all" and highlighted the need to continue carrying flame of hope.

Other GRASSROOTS News

Chaplains Training Day

GRASSROOTS and the Luton Council of Faiths organised a faith and cultural awareness day for Luton and Dunstable Hospital Chaplains on Wednesday 17th June. Around 20 chaplains of Hindu, Muslim and Christian backgrounds joined the day. The day saw a presentation on Cultural Competence and Cultural Humility at Holy Ghost Church, followed by experiential learning visits to different places of worship including the Guru Nanak Sikh Temple on Dallow Road, Islamic Education Centre on Westbourne Road and the Shree Sanatan Seva Samaj Hindu Temple on Hereford Road. Participants enjoyed great hospitality whilst expanding their knowledge with the presentations given.

Britain First Demonstration

Britain First, a splinter of the EDL, held a very unwelcome demonstration in Luton on Saturday 27th June. Britain First have been carrying out paramilitary style 'mosque invasions', including one in Luton, and 'Christian Patrols' around what they claim to be Muslim no-go areas. They also use a lot of Christian language to try and justify what they do, thus prompting Peter Adams, on behalf of Churches Together in Luton, to seek an open dialogue with them. Despite this taking place with a small number of Christian leaders, Britain First unpleasantly went into Bury Park Jamia Mosque and took pictures claiming yet another 'invasion' on a Mosque. On the day of the demonstration they marched on an agreed route and despite counter-demonstrators being present on the day, it went relatively smoothly with a small number of arrests. GRASSROOTS team members and volunteers helped to monitor events on the day.

Eco-Iftar

As Ramadan came to an end for our Muslim neighbours this year, GRASSROOTS and Luton Council of Faiths collaborated with the Luton Branch of Islamic Relief to deliver an Eco-Iftar, an exciting event which was the first of its kind! Local organisations Khayaal Theatre Company and Fairtrade Luton were very instrumental in shaping the event which was held on Sunday 12th July. The event showcased stalls around Fairtrade, Eco-Farming (Willowbrook Farm) and Bee Mercy and even a smoothie bike promoting ethical living. The inter-generational and inter-faith audience of all ages responded rapturously to story-telling before the night ended with the break of fast with delicious food and organic cake for desert.

Catalyst Programme a Great Success

GRASSROOTS hosted Catalyst, a Youth Leadership Training programme, over five dates in August supporting fourteen young people from faith and ethnic backgrounds in achieving Bronze, Silver or Gold awards. Catalyst is a unique accredited leadership course delivered by St Philips Centre in Leicester in partnership with Luton Council of Faiths and GRASSROOTS, and fully funded by the Near Neighbours programme. The 5 days covered a series of soft skills including leadership, decision making, faith and cultural understanding; communication skills and more. Participants also had the privilege of meeting a variety of professionals from many industries including the local Police, Council officers, educationalists, faith leaders and storytellers.

Dates for your Diary

Same Difference at Beech Hill Methodist Church on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month from 12:30-2.30pm including a shared meal. Contact crcwsmls@hotmail.co.uk

United Nations Day on Thu 22nd Oct 2015 from 5pm Flag Hoisting / 5:15pm Refreshments / 6pm Event Start at University of Bedfordshire Postgraduate Centre

Celebration of the Birth of Baha'u'llah and the Bab on Sat 7th Nov 2015 from 2pm to 4pm at St Margaret's Church Centre, Lucas Green, Bramingham Park, Luton.

A Grand Christmas Dinner and Dance on Fri 27th Nov 2015 from 7pm onwards at Holy Ghost Parish Church Hall, Westbourne Road, Luton. Contact crcwsmls@hotmail.co.uk



Hospital Chaplains learning about Islam on their Faith and Cultural Awareness training day



Britain First held a demonstration in the heart of Luton in June



Guests enjoyed storytelling at the Eco-Iftar event held at Luton Carnival Arts



The Catalyst programme has now seen nearly 30 young people completing an Award in Luton



Sr Maire Hayes from GRASSROOTS facilitating a workshop for Catalyst youth