

Grassroots

... a different point of view



Newsletter Edition 8 – Winter 2015

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!

Christmas is about the birth of Jesus, but Christmas should also be about remembering and celebrating the whole life of Jesus. His life was full of drama, action, suspense, thrill, religious controversies and political conspiracies. In his walking and talking Jesus began to transform the thinking of the people he encountered. This so threatened the unjust religious and political establishments of his time that those in power conspired against him, accused him and crucified him. In this Christmas Season may we be transformed by God's actions in our lives, in our Churches, in our communities and in the world God created and loved so much that He gave His only begotten Son. Jesus showed us the way to be human, to stand up for justice, join the struggle of those who are poor and exploited, and stand in solidarity with those who are despised and misunderstood. May we have the courage to follow his way.



Annual Peace Walk 2015

The 19th Annual Peace Walk was held in Lewsey on 26th September 2015. The day showcased a culmination of collaborative work done by Schools (Chantry, St Martin de Porres and Southfield), places of worship (Lewsey Christian Centre, Zakariya Mosque, St Martin de Porres Catholic Church, St Hugh's Anglican Church, Shree Sanatan Seva Samaj Hindu Temple) and the local authority.



School children from Lewsey created beautiful peace artwork for this year's Annual Peace Walk

Highlights of the day included school pupils and faith leaders sharing their journey and experiences of working together over the last 6 months, sandwich boards worn by the children displaying their colourful peace artwork, with further pieces mounted in St Dominic's Square. Adding to the success of the walk were Peace Roses distributed at the Mosque, Peace Balloons released into the air at St Hugh's Church, and the launch of Peace Honey by the Luton Fairtrade Steering Group, with jars featuring artwork by one of the school pupils.

1000th Near Neighbours Grant

Following a very successful workshop on 16th September 2015 where Near Neighbours (NN) Grants Recipients in Luton shared stories from their projects, including what had gone well and the lessons learnt, the Near Neighbours Programme celebrated its national landmark 1000th grant on 27th October 2015, which was given to a project based here in Luton.



Rev David Kesterton and Husna Rasul, project leads for the Peace Garden and Community Allotment Project

The event was attended by many people from Luton's diverse communities, partners and dignitaries from the Department for Communities and Local Government, the NN Directorate and the Bishop of Bedford. The 1000th award winning project is a 'Peace Garden and Community Allotment' initiative by local Christians and Muslims headed by All Saints Parish Church. Project leads, Rev David Kesterton and Husna Rasul, see the initiative as a testament to positive local relationships and a commitment to dedicated community engagement over the coming years.

Other GRASSROOTS News

CAFOD Event on Climate Change (on 13th October 2015)

CAFOD led an event on Climate Change at St John's Catholic Church in Sundon Park. This event was based on Laudato Si, a letter from Pope Francis, speaking of how our Sister Earth is crying out because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. It is a call for all peoples to unitedly commit to caring for the earth and to shift our primary focus from technological advancement to the concerns of real people, particularly the most vulnerable and needy.

Vigil for Peace & Solidarity (on 16th November 2015)

A Vigil for Peace & Solidarity was held at 1:30pm outside Luton Town Hall in response to the horrific attacks in Paris. This was to express our condolences together as a town, to unequivocally condemn together such violence, to proclaim together our commitment to continue working for peace and harmony, and to mutually share and support one another. A joint Press Statement was issued by Luton Borough Council, which Luton Council of Faiths and GRASSROOTS had contributed to. It can be found on GRASSROOTS website (see link below).

Inter Faith Week 2015 (Reception hosted on 22nd November 2015)

Inter Faith week featured various community events including a Robin Hood Feast, a series of interviews on Inspire FM, ending with a reception at Dallow Learning Community Centre, gathering numerous community leaders with a focus on the key message of unity. Young Anna Faisal and Church Related Community Worker Karen Campbell recited beautiful poems, a Fairtrade Diwali Hamper was gifted by the Hindu Community representative to the host, Inspire FM, and guests were also able to try out archery. The event was honoured with special guests from the nearby village of Kimpton and a three course meal was served to all.

Bury Park Beech Hill Council of Churches Christmas Event (on 27th November 2015)

Now in its 6th year, the Church Related Community Work (CRCW) Project hosted another celebratory Christmas Dinner and Dance event in the Holy Ghost Parish Centre, gathering over 100 people from Bury Park Beech Hill Council of Churches and the local community, for an evening of laughter, entertainment and dancing. Entertainment included the Diamond Divas, a dance group with links to All Saints Church, singing by the Zimbabwe Fellowship based in Oakdale Methodist Church, Folk Dancing, plus a specially invited musician from the United Reformed Church in Tottenham.

Ghar se Ghar Trips (Various dates)

The Ghar se Ghar groups from Ashcroft, Beech Hill and Bury Park have been on two trips supported by Near Neighbours. A trip to Stoke Bruerne in Northamptonshire on 22nd September 2015 took in the Waterways Museum, a boat trip and lunch. Then a Faith Tour in Bedford on 24th November 2015 included visits to a Mosque, Church and Gurdwara. A presentation was given at each of the places of worship.

Dates for your Diary

The **Holocaust Memorial Service** will be taking place at Luton Town Hall at 3pm on 24th January 2016

A **National Conference** celebrating the **Near Neighbours Programme** will take place in Leeds on 26th January 2016

Fairtrade Fortnight 2016 will take place from 29th February – 13th March 2016. Keep your eyes peeled for news of events in Luton!

Contact Us Online

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CAFOD's Climate Change campaign asks us to focus on the most vulnerable and needy



The Luton community came together at the Vigil for Peace and Solidarity



Different cultures and faiths came together for the Robin Hood Feast at All Saint's Church



Female community faith leaders from Luton were interviewed as part of Inter Faith Week activities



A Ghar se Ghar trip to Bedford included a trip to a Mosque, Church and a Gurdwara