



SPRING

Our website and social media are kept up to date with our latest news and events, so please visit us online!



www.grassrootsluton.org.uk

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Welcome to the SPRING edition of the GRASSROOTS newsletter!

Lent is a very special time for Christians - a solemn period in which Christians remember and reflect on the 40 days Jesus spent alone in the wilderness, praying and fasting, and preparing for His future ministry. In contrast, recent weeks have seen the diverse GRASSROOTS team spending time together as we make preparations for our 25th Anniversary Celebration. Whilst we have been reviewing how and why the GRASSROOTS journey began, where we have been, and where we are heading, the period of Lent has been a reminder for GRASSROOTS to prepare now for future years of service to the people of Luton and beyond. We are grateful to those who will join us for our Anniversary Celebration on 22nd March 2018, and we value those who will be thinking of us on that day. We pray that the hope of Easter inspires us all to continue our work for abundance of life for all in our world.

Fairtrade Fortnight

Fairtrade Fortnight, 26th February to 11th March 2018, saw the Luton Fairtrade Steering Group engaged in various activities. Alex Mayer MEP visited GRASSROOTS to sign a letter of concern regarding recent changes to Sainsbury's Fairtrade commitment. Members of the Steering Group hand-delivered the letter to the managers of the two Luton Sainsbury's stores.



Alex Mayer MEP with members of the GRASSROOTS team during Fairtrade Fortnight

The Steering Group also launched a campaign to raise £1000 to buy Fairtrade sugar and rice for the Luton Foodbank. Drawing on this year's Fairtrade Fortnight theme, 'Come On In', the campaign encourages local people and places of worship to 'think globally whilst acting locally'.

RPHT Celebration

Following the recent Near Neighbours *Real People Honest Talk (RPHT)* initiative, successfully enabling several discussion groups across Luton, a special celebration event took place on 28th February 2018. The inspiring evening included a panel of RPHT participants reflecting on the project's impact, and an address by Paul Hackwood, Executive Chair of the Church Urban Fund.



Umera Fatima giving a spoken word performance on 'peace'

The celebration event included a youth focus, with a moving spoken word performance from aspiring artist Umera Fatima, and the presentation of certificates to young people from Stockwood Park Academy by Vinod Tailor, High Sheriff of Bedfordshire, and Cllr Mohammed Ayub, Mayor of Luton.

Precious Pearls

Ghar se Ghar and GRASSROOTS joined forces once again to hold the annual Precious Pearls women's event on Thursday 8th March 2018, celebrating International Women's Day. Adopting the theme 'Women and the Power of Words', the evening included a variety of informative and inspiring talks, conversations and performances, including dance, music and poetry.



Karen Campbell from the GRASSROOTS team giving a talk at Precious Pearls

The evening was rounded off with a delicious array of world foods, while the women - gathered from diverse faith and cultural backgrounds - talked and laughed together. A Fairtrade Stall proved popular, featuring a lovely range of fairly traded goods, all available from GRASSROOTS!

Other GRASSROOTS News



Robin Hood Feast

Shooting Stars Archery Club held its 'Robin Hood Feast' on 8th December 2017, supported by GRASSROOTS. The event included a medieval feast, children's archery taster session, a fun quiz, plus lots of laughter and light-hearted conversations. Shooting Stars is a legacy of the successful town-wide Archery Project coordinated by Luton Council of Faiths (LCoF) which ran for 3 years, ending in January 2017.



People from all backgrounds gathered to share fun, food and laughter at the Robin Hood Feast

Registration and Good Governance Workshop

GRASSROOTS attended an informative workshop alongside members of local faith communities on 24th January 2018, delivered as a collaboration between Luton Council of Faiths, Luton Borough Council and the Charity Commission. The event identified key legislative requirements, examined how they can best be met, and highlighted examples of best practice within charitable organisations.



Charity Commission workshop on legislative requirements for faith and community organisations

Holocaust Memorial Day 2018

A Holocaust Memorial Day event took place on 25th January 2018 at the University of Bedfordshire, in a lecture theatre full of people from Luton's many diverse communities. The event included a performance from the Luton Youth Cantores choir, a drama performance by students from Stopsley High School on the theme of bullying, and a moving speech from Antoinette Mushimiyimana, a survivor of the Tutsi genocide in Rwanda. In addition, Sr Maire Hayes from GRASSROOTS spoke about the 'Eight Stages to Genocide', on what was an extremely thought provoking evening.



Antoinette Mushimiyimana sharing her story of survival at the Holocaust Memorial Day

Lord Bourne visit to GRASSROOTS

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Minister for Faith, visited GRASSROOTS on Thursday 8th February 2018, to find out more about its work and activities in bringing together communities in the town. After a tour of the Peace Garden launched during last year's annual Luton Peace Walk, Lord Bourne met members of GRASSROOTS, Luton Council of Faiths and Near Neighbours, engaging in deep conversations relating to interfaith engagement, climate change, youth empowerment and Fairtrade. In the weeks following his visit, Lord Bourne spoke about the work of GRASSROOTS and its colleagues in the Houses of Parliament!



Lord Bourne on an informative tour of the Peace Garden during his visit to GRASSROOTS

Buy Your Fairtrade Goods at GRASSROOTS!

GRASSROOTS is continuing to stock an exciting range of Fairtrade goods including teas, coffees, honey, food spreads, nuts, dates, candles, gift cards, bags and much more. We can also create tailor-made gift hampers for any occasion. To see what we have available, simply get in touch and visit us in the GRASSROOTS office!



Dates for your Diary

Bahá'í Naw-Rúz (New Year) Celebrations at 6pm on 24th March 2018 at Chaul End Community Centre. Email Richard_g58uk@yahoo.co.uk for more details.

Fairtrade Steering Group Meeting at 09:00 on 26th April 2018 at the GRASSROOTS office in High Town. Email admingrassroots@btconnect.co.uk for more details.

Luton Peace Walk 2018 (Time and Location TBC) on 22nd September 2018. Email info@lutonfaiths.org for more details.



The GRASSROOTS office has an exciting display of Fairtrade goods so please come and see us!