

IFW NEWS

Interfaith Wolverhampton



More than 250 faith groups are featured on a new online faith map of Wolverhampton at bit.ly/wtonfaithmap



Interfaith Wolverhampton aims to work with the diverse communities living in and around Wolverhampton in order to foster and nurture mutual understanding and appreciation between the different faiths. It seeks to arrange, encourage and support dialogue between those of different faiths and no faith, communities and agencies so as to contribute to an inclusive environment of mutual respect and harmony.

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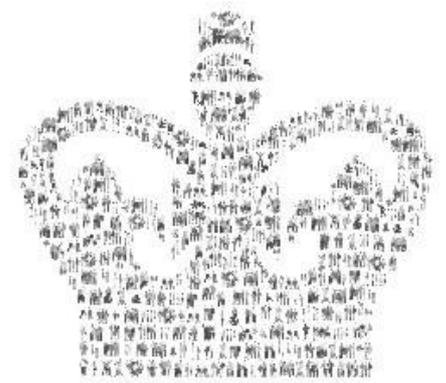
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**The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service**

The MBE for volunteer groups

Sorry no Editorial this issue - We have a vacancy for a Newsletter Editor

Reminder - Members' subscriptions are due from 1st April for 2019-2020 membership. If yours is overdue, please send your renewal as soon as possible.

IFW, 24 School Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 4LF.
Phone: 01902 – 427601
Email: admin@ifwton.org.uk
Website: ifwton.org.uk

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The office is most likely to be staffed between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.
(Best to phone before you visit). Closed on Mondays.

Peace Vigil for New Zealand Atrocity

Wolverhampton InterFaith with the help of Wolverhampton City Council organised a vigil for the victims of the New Zealand attack. This was held outside at Peace Green, Dunstall, at 5 pm on Friday 15th March, 2019. The aims were to promote the ideas of community cohesion, peace and fellowship, at this particularly difficult time. The event was hastily but very effectively put together by Councillor Obaida Ahmed and InterFaith Wolverhampton to honour the victims of attacks. It was felt that this would be an apt location and time to allow for public sharing of grief and for them to pay respects.



Over 250 people assembled, and the event was hosted by Yusuf Shafi - Interfaith Vice Chair. One minute's silence was also held for the victims, but at the end of the event rather than the start as organisers felt we must first vocalise our condemnation and then be silent in remembrance.

Local political and Faith dignitaries spoke about their condemnation and provided encouraging words for attendees around how we must bridge the differences and perceived animosities between communities. Reflections were made by a number of speakers on austerity and media portrayal of Islam, and the role these have played in creating disharmony between host communities and minorities. The concepts of hate and love were discussed by a number of Faith leaders.

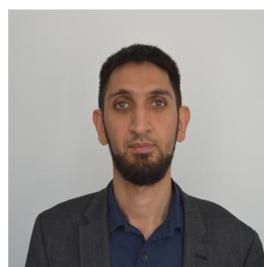
Eleanor Smith MP made an impassioned speech in which she commented "We will not allow these people to separate us, we will stand together with all those who suffered in New Zealand. An attack on any one community or any one place of worship, whatever the faith, is an attack on all".

Pat Mc Fadden MP, and Faith leaders from the Methodist Church, Anglican Church, Council of Sikh Temples Wolverhampton, all members of the Council of Mosques Wolverhampton, and Councillor Obaida Ahmed, contributed with their speeches and reflections of the horrific events in New Zealand.

Councillor Ahmed - St Peter's ward - commented, "We were keen to hold this vigil soon and within the community most affected and in fear of this terrorism. The local park in St. Peter's ward was chosen and where better than a place named Peace Green. Hopefully this will help with the healing process for individuals and prevent any ideas of retaliatory actions by some of our disaffected youth".

Yusuf Shafi made the closing comments and summarised the main speeches at the event. In particular, the role of Wolverhampton InterFaith was highlighted as being a force for harmony and tolerance and dialogue between people of different Faiths in the City. The message of forgiveness and community spirit was again reiterated to help attendees to gain closure on the news of these horrific events.

The Express and Star covered the event in the evening's online bulletin.



Dr. Yusuf Shafi
Vice Chair – InterFaith Wolverhampton

Interfaith Wolverhampton and The Way Youth Zone – Celebrating festivals from around the World

The Way – Wolverhampton Youth Zone - is a purpose-built youth centre based in Wolverhampton city centre, open 7-days-a-week, that attracts more than 1000 young people (aged 8 -19, and up to 25 with disabilities) every week. It was created due to the lack of opportunities for young people in Wolverhampton following the closure of more than 30 youth facilities around the city. Annual membership is just £5 and entry each evening is just 50p which includes all the activities on offer, from rock-climbing, sports, arts, music, cooking and much more. Members can just chill out in the fabulous Rec Zone if they prefer.

90.6% of the members are from Wolverhampton and 56% of those come from the BAME community. The Way does not favour or promote any particular religion but is truly a multi-cultural and multi-faith organisation.



Representatives from Interfaith recently visited The Way to meet some of the young people and to give them the opportunity to learn some new culinary skills. The samosas they made were great!

This inspired Richard Ralph, the Grants & Trusts Manager at The Way, and Parveen

Brigue to plan how Interfaith and The Way could work together.

Richard has successfully gained funding for The Way from The National Lottery Community Fund - Awards for All England, to run a project called “The Way Around The World”, that will enable representatives from Interfaith to visit The Way to celebrate and discuss cultural and religious festivals from all around the World.

Young people will learn about the origins of the specific festival or event and learn cooking skills, play sports and participate in arts from that part of the World.

Over the next 12 months, young people at The Way will create their own Interfaith Calendar as they learn about the festivals. The aim of the project is for young people to learn more about other cultures and religions, to encourage more integration and social harmony.

If you are interested in joining in the fun, drop into The Way for more information or check their website www.thewayyouthzone.org .



Remembering Sehdev Bismal

The funeral of our friend Sehdev Bismal on Monday July 15th was a wonderful and deeply moving event. Speakers included Anuraj Bismal, Kaie Bismal (pictured right with Sehdev), Babita and Vineet Bismal, and Opinderjit Takhar, Bishop Clive, Ruth Wilson, Erik Pearse, and Barbara Gwinnett.

Erik Pearse spoke as follows:

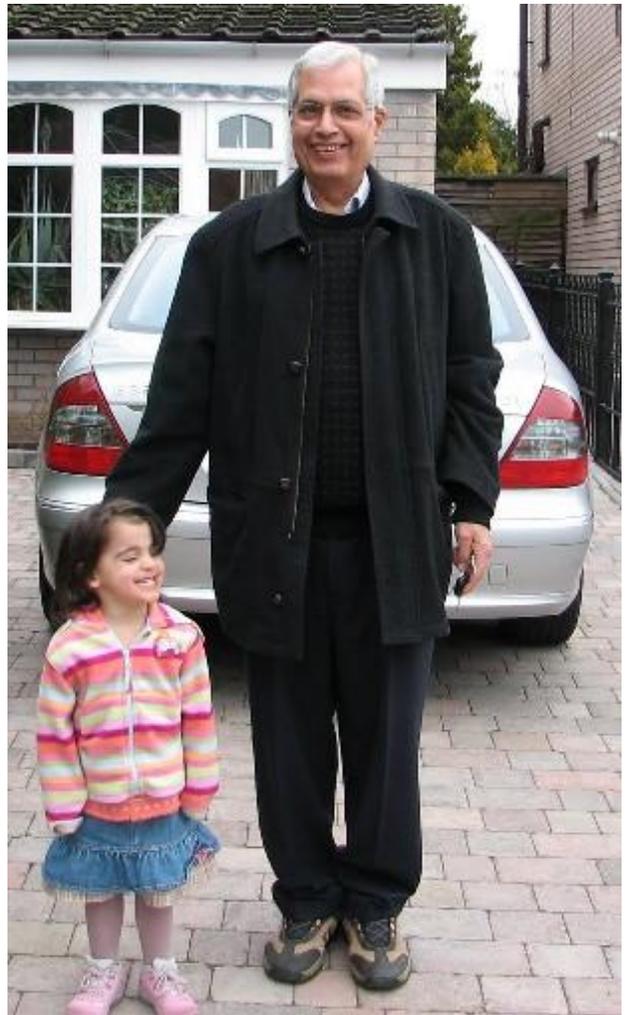
"I came to know Sehdev through Interfaith. He first became involved in what was then called the Wolverhampton Inter-Faith Group in the late '80's, following a series of meetings between Interfaith and the LEA's Multi-cultural Education Service where Sehdev worked alongside Harun Rashid, a founder member of Interfaith and still currently its vice-President.

Sehdev soon became a leading and key member of Interfaith, holding in succession the positions of vice-chair, chair for 6 years, President and latterly vice-President.

I had the privilege of working closely alongside him when he was chair. He used to invite the Officers to his home for the monthly meetings we held and we were regaled with wonderful Indian dishes cooked by his delightful wife Rajinder. The two of them made us so welcome – those occasions, apart from being very fruitful and productive from a work point of view, were among the highlights of the month. When Rajinder sadly passed away, Sehdev nevertheless continued regularly to extend his hospitality to us and I learned, to my surprise I must shamefully confess, what an excellent cook he was.

Sehdev had a great vocation as a writer, as any of you who have read his two books – *Dream Interrupted* and *Broken Hearts* – will readily acknowledge. For ten years, until last year, he edited the quarterly *Interfaith newsletter*, a task for which he was admirably qualified. He undertook it with his customary professionalism, dedication, thoughtfulness and commitment and the collection will remain a lasting memorial of what Interfaith achieved during those years. This will no doubt be complemented by his very well-written and researched booklet '*Building Bridges not walls*' to commemorate Interfaith Wolverhampton's 40th anniversary in 2014.

Sehdev was more than just a colleague; he was a real and gracious friend. I treasured the many occasions on which I visited him and was warmly received and the discussions we held on literature



and other matters; he was very wise and his judgement was so very sound.

I extend my profound condolences to his children and grandchildren and also to Harbhaja, his very devoted sister-in-law. I will greatly miss his friendship but have no doubt that he is resting in peace, welcomed, in my Christian understanding, by God in heaven".



Erik Pearse

New Online Faith Map of Wolverhampton

More than 250 faith groups are featured on a new online faith map of Wolverhampton at bit.ly/wtonfaithmap. The map highlights the rich diversity of faith groups worshipping in, and serving, local communities. It has evolved from work with local faith groups that has been initiated, supported and funded by Wolverhampton Safeguarding Boards, and undertaken by Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council and Interfaith Wolverhampton.



Even though over 250 faith groups are already on the map, it is possible that some of have been missed off. So, if you know of a faith group that is not on the map please email WVSC's Faith Engagement worker Pavitter Mainn at pmainn@wolverhamptonvsc.org.uk, or by phoning or texting Pav on 07538 105780.

The new Faith map will be located on Wolverhampton Information Network where each faith group can also create their own record to further highlight the wonderful work their organisation is doing. Any faith group interested in creating their own record on Wolverhampton Information Network should contact Kuldip Khela on 01902 553413 or E-mail: Kuldip.Khela@wolverhampton.gov.uk.

Linda Sanders, Independent chair of Wolverhampton Safeguarding Boards, said: "We are really pleased to be launching this exciting new resource".

"It is one of the fruits of our safeguarding work with the amazing array of faith groups in the city, which we carry out in partnership with Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council, which is an active and valued member of the Safeguarding Boards, and Interfaith Wolverhampton".

"This map will provide an exciting and invaluable resource for everyone living, working in, or visiting the city, by providing information in one place about places where they can worship, take part in activities, volunteer, or find support".

Parveen Brigue, Chairperson of Interfaith Wolverhampton, added: "The online faith map has developed from our joint 'Safeguarding In Faith' initiative with WVSC and Wolverhampton Safeguarding Boards".

"Not only has this initiative resulted in this invaluable map of faith groups in the city, but it has also provided a range of direct support to more than 261 volunteers from 50 different faith groups, including safeguarding training, safeguarding policy development, and increased use of DBS checking and other safer recruitment processes".

"Most recently, with the support of Wolverhampton Safeguarding Boards, we are recruiting members of local faith groups to a pool of volunteer trainers, to support the roll-out of safeguarding training to even more faith groups across the city".



Interfaith Mental Health Conference 2018



Last year's Interfaith Conference was on Mental Health from faith perspectives. Mental Health comes in many forms - Mental health describes a level of psychological well-being, or an absence of a mental disorder. Mental health refers to our cognitive, and/or emotional well-being – it is all about how we think, feel and behave. There are different types of mental health problems, some of which are common, such as depression and anxiety disorders, and some not so common, such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.

Why is it important to have good mental health?

People who have good mental health are more resilient and more able to cope with external pressures put on them. They also tend to be less prone to illness. Finding a balance is therefore important and also identifying any problems and seeking help where necessary.

How do I improve mental health?

Top tips:

1. Ensure you have a good work/life balance. Make sure you go home from work on time and do not spend all your time working.
2. Take control and be clear with yourself and others about your responsibilities and expectations at home and at work.
3. Exercise to help release hormones such as endorphins which make you feel good. For example, you could go for a walk at lunchtime.
4. Eat and drink healthily. Find a balance that works for you and stick to it.
5. Communicate and connect with others. A problem shared is a problem halved.
6. Work smarter but not harder. Work on time management and strategies to help you to be more efficient. Try setting targets and sticking to them.
7. Be positive. At the end of each day think of three things that have been good and worked for you, or for which you have been grateful.

8. Accept things you cannot change, and work on those you can. This will help you to concentrate on the things you do have control over.
9. Challenge yourself. Take up a new hobby or pastime or do some studying. Set yourself a small but achievable goal.
10. Have some quality 'me' time. Find some time for yourself every day - this could be reading a book or going for a walk.

At the conference we had the Mayor, councillor Phil Page, Member of Parliament Pat McFadden, chief executive of Black Country Partnership Trust Mrs Leslie Writtle, who was our main speaker, and Interfaith Paton Dr Sharma. Our other speakers were from different faiths - Sikhism, Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim and Christian.

We also had a Head Start Speaker and Young Ambassadors who were amazing. We also had Compton Care and Wolverhampton Council .

I would also like to thank the principal of the Royal School for letting us use the school for our conference. I want to thank all of my speakers, and Head Start who provided us with the funding. The conference was a great success - it was featured in the Express & Star and on Media Head Start
<https://www.headstartonline.co.uk/news/interfaith-conference2018> .

Cllr Jasbinder Dehar

Diary of Events

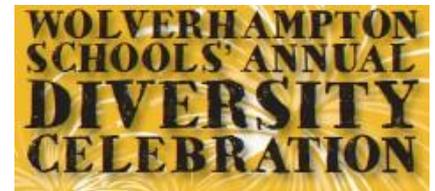
October

- 6th (Sunday) Sewa Day Sewa is a Sanskrit word and is embedded in the Dharmic traditions of ancient India. It means to sacrifice your time and resources for the benefit of others without wanting anything in return. <https://www.sewaday.org/about-us/>
- 13th - 20th Week of Prayer for World Peace Annual inter-faith week focussing on the need for justice, peace and reconciliation. <http://www.weekofprayerforworldpeace.com> .
- 15th (Tuesday) Bring and Share Lunch 12.45 - 2.00, "Darlington Street Methodist Centre", 24 School Street, WV1 4LF. Speaker: Jeremy Watson will talk about the Wolverhampton Night Shelter for the homeless.
- 21st to 28th One World Week One World Week is a Development Education Charity. An opportunity for people from diverse backgrounds to come together to learn about global justice, to spread that learning, and to use it to take action for justice locally and globally. <https://www.oneworldweek.org> .



November

- 4th (Monday) "Our City - Shining Bright" 5.45 p.m. (to about 8 p.m.) Wolverhampton Schools' Annual Diversity Celebration at Aldersley Leisure Centre. "We expect around 600 children and young people from 20 schools to be performing". Come and support them - Invitation Letter (RSVP) available at http://ifwton.org.uk/DiversityCelebration2019_Invite.pdf .
- 10th to 17th National Inter Faith Week <https://www.interfaithweek.org/> .
- Date to be confirmed Proposed Interfaith Conference on Suicide and Self-Harm Chancellor's Hall, University of Wolverhampton, Wulfruna Street, Wolverhampton City Centre.
- 19th (Tuesday) Bring and Share Lunch 12.45 - 2.00, "Darlington Street Methodist Centre", 24 School Street, WV1 4LF. Speaker: Phil Adeogun of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.



December

- 17th (Tuesday) Christmas Bring and Share Lunch 12.45 - 2.00, "Darlington Street Methodist Centre", 24 School Street, WV1 4LF. (No Speaker).

January 2020

- 21st (Tuesday) Bring and Share Lunch 12.45 - 2.00, "Darlington Street Methodist Centre", 24 School Street, WV1 4LF. Speaker: Navi Aulkh.

For up-to-date details, see the Interfaith Wolverhampton website: <http://ifwton.org.uk/diary.html>