

## Faith Network News

November 2006



### ***Growing the Faiths Forum event***

Thank you to all who came along to the Faith Network event at Sheffield Hallam University on 2 November – we had a really informative evening with excellent contributions from our guest speaker and from ‘the floor’. Bookings for the event were up 25% on 2005 and six of the seven world religions present in Sheffield were represented on the delegate list.

The event began with a presentation from Revd David Randolph-Horn who, as secretary of Leeds Faiths Forum, was able to provide an insight in to how their Faiths Forum has grown and had an impact in our neighbouring city. David responded to questions about gender issues, representation and accountability, and identifying community tensions.

OFFER’s Faith Network Development Worker, Tim Wright, then delivered an update on how Sheffield Faiths Forum had been progressing and its plans for the future. Delegates raised questions about the definition of ‘faith’, the Forum’s attitude to all forms of discrimination, links to smaller faith groups, and links to Sheffield City Council.

The evening concluded with delegates participating in a consultation exercise over what the work priorities of the Forum should be. There was a good response, showing strong support for working in local neighbourhoods, working with Asylum Seeker campaigns eg City of Sanctuary, and working against racism and discrimination.

Overall, feedback from the event has been excellent. Delegates stated that it provided a good chance to catch up with developments on the Faiths Forum and network with other faith groups in the city. A special word of thanks must go to Ian Maher and Sheffield Hallam University Multifaith Chaplaincy for their assistance in organising the event. A full report on the event including Tim’s presentation can be downloaded from the OFFER website, [www.offer.org.uk](http://www.offer.org.uk) or you can use the following direct link <http://www.offer.org.uk/content.php?c=66>

### ***Sheffield Faiths Forum Consultation (see blue sheets)***

As part of the establishment of the Faiths Forum we would like faith groups throughout the city to contribute to prioritising it’s future work – this will expand on the feedback we received at the ‘Growing the Faiths Forum’ event. It is important that Sheffield’s faith communities ‘set the agenda’ for the Faiths Forum, in order that:

- it addresses issues that are relevant and important to people of faith in Sheffield
- the full diversity of faith traditions in the city is reflected, and
- the Faiths Forum is accountable to local faith communities.

We would like to identify practical areas of work where the Forum can realistically make an impact on the life of the city. The results of the consultation will be used by the Faiths Forum in setting its work plan in the New Year.

A copy of the consultation document is included in this mailing (along with a Freepost envelope) for you to complete and return. We would very much appreciate your input – the deadline for returns is 31 January 2007.

If you would like further copies of the consultation document, they can be downloaded from the OFFER website (see link above) or call the OFFER office (0114 2750462) for a hard copy.

### ***Recruiting on to the Faiths Forum (see pink sheet)***

The recruitment process to take up seats on the Faiths Forum is now open. Application packs are available from OFFER for any faith groups in Sheffield. We are looking for volunteers who can link back to the whole of their faith communities, rather than 'official representatives', so that the Forum can listen to and speak with local neighbourhoods. Applicants will need to demonstrate that they are:

- knowledgeable of their faith and influential within their faith community
- committed to working with and respecting people of other faiths, and
- engaged in the life of their city and able to contribute to its regeneration.

Seats on the Faiths Forum are allocated across the faith traditions present in Sheffield.

Please see the enclosed flyer for further details on how you can apply.

### ***Launch of Sheffield Faiths Forum***

The launch event for the fully up and running Faiths Forum has been pencilled in for the afternoon of Sunday 11 March 2007. This will be a time for real celebration and will mark the start of new opportunities for faith communities to engage in the life of the city. Everyone will be most welcome to attend – booking details will be sent out nearer the time.

### ***Contact us:***

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