

**SHEFFIELD FAITHS FORUM
ANNUAL REVIEW – DVD 2011**

Transcripts from a short film produced by Matt Robson, Chair of the Faiths Forum.

2 Interviews with Vibha Shanbhag, Hindu Samaj, Burngreave Community Centre and Reverend Phillip Borkett, Highfield Trinity Methodist Church, Sharrow.

Interview: Vibha Shanbhag

My name is Vibha Shanbhag and I work for the Hindu Samaj Community Centre and I am an executive member. We do a lot of activities to keep our Hindu community together here. We try and involve other community people to come and join our community centre. We introduce our faith to our younger generation and we meet here every Monday to do the prayers and share food.

Since I joined the Faith Forum I did a couple of courses, which I enjoyed. The first one “How Your City Works” and the second one was “Faith Community Development”. I enjoyed both of them. The second one I particularly enjoyed because I met a lot of different faith people. For so many years I only did the bringing up of the children and was not looking outside at what was happening but once I realised I wanted to do something else. I found this faith course very interesting. I used to go the City Council every meeting and found it very interesting and the more I came to know how it works from the top to the bottom, like steps and how the branches are.

I think it has changed in a way for the good because of the Faith Forum. I got more involved in different things and came to know about more different religions and am surprised even now how many different community groups and religions there are in Sheffield.

Interview: Rev. Phillip Borkett

My name is Philip Borkett, the minister at Highfield Methodist Church and I am responsible for this congregation. It's very much working with my congregation to extend the work of this church into the wider community here in this Sharrow/Highfield area.

We've been working with the Faith Forum and others for a while to help us think about the community that we live in. Now we are a much more diverse community and a high proportion of people who have come to live in this area are from other parts of Asia and elsewhere. Increasingly, we have Muslim sisters and brothers on our doorstep and for a while we have been thinking how do we get to know these people of faith who are our neighbours? It's not always that easy. Our members were trying to find a way of really getting that conversation going and we became in touch with the Faith Forum and discovered that's what they are there for. We are thrilled that the Forum has helped us to make a relationship with a Mosque nearby, so that we have begun to make friendships and connections with other people of faith in this community.

The best thing I can do is quote from one of my member's (one of the ladies in my congregation) who was invited to come along to the first meeting that we had and she said to me that *"I wasn't quite sure how that was going to work out really as this is something we've never done before"*. But she was saying just recently that *"Wow, I have made some friends."* So I think there is a couple of things that we want to do is to keep the friendship going of meeting each other and possibly sharing some food. We want to reflect a bit more on those things that we have in common in our faith traditions. We all know the things that divide us because the press like to tell us about that but there are lots of things that we have in common and we want to explore some of those things; our faith traditions. But the third thing importantly is also how do we relate to our communities? We are living in a society where people think faith is a bad thing and we believe and our friends at Usmania believe faith is a good thing. And its how do we show the wider world it's a good thing and how do we use the premises we've been given to benefit the wider community.

I think that the Faith Forum has had a significant impact personally on my ministry. I have always been interested in how do we relate to people of other faiths but I've never quite known how to do it. I've read the books and had conversations with people but the Faith Forum has really opened up my eyes about how to have those conversations and given me a bit of confidence that you can have conversations with people and that you can have safe conversations because we have different perspectives. We can have agreements and disagreements in a safe place and I think the Faith Forum has provided those safe places for us to have those conversations.