

# Faith in Manchester

The Voice of FN4M: the Faith Network for Manchester

Autumn 2009

Issue 004

## Environment tops Faith Agenda

**FN4M are showing they are serious about the environment with an exciting allotment project up and running and a major conference in the offing.**

At the Faith in Community allotment up at Debdale Park, people on Probation help our volunteer supervisor, Elaine Gray, alongside local people and members of various faith groups, including FN4M, FYM, Faiths 4 Change and Bilal Mosque, to grow fruit and vegetables for a Probation run Luncheon Club that helps feed vulnerable people in East Manchester.

An amazing range of vegetables and fruit is grown at the allotment. For those wishing to know more about the food produced and discover how Elaine, her husband David, and their volunteers are preparing for next year, as well as the part faith plays in their work, there is an open day between 2pm and 5pm on Thursday 8th October. Anyone wishing to attend can email David on [david@fn4m.org](mailto:david@fn4m.org) or ring him on 07927 734 419.

### Chickens for Life

The allotment is also opening up a new initiative to return the skills of poultry care to the inner city in partnership with the Battery hen Welfare Trust. The aim is to enable ex-battery chickens to enjoy a quality life while providing fresh eggs to help communities get through the recession.

"The Faiths bring ethical principles into areas where society generally is failing," says David. "The principles of greed that saw chickens as an economic unit have proved cruel and unhealthy to livestock and people alike. This scheme will promote sharing to the mutual benefit of the chickens and their human hosts. We have 37 families and 2 schools signed up for workshops in poultry care that will include how to make fox-

proof chicken housing from recycled materials.

"When they are fully ready to receive them, the chickens will move from their recovery pen on the Faith in Community allotment to schools and homes. We will develop a network of mutual interest that will teach children to nurture but also basic business skills as they learn to use their mathematical abilities to offset food costs against egg production."

Once the poultry scheme is underway, there are plans to tackle bee-keeping. Anyone who wishes to know more can contact David via [www.creoginity.com](http://www.creoginity.com) or email him at [david@fn4m.org](mailto:david@fn4m.org).

### Conference

FN4M are also in the process of planning our *Faith and the Environment* Conference, which will be held on the evening of Monday 16th November. The Conference is supported by grants from Awards for All, CN4M and, through our partners, The Muslim Jewish Forum, through the Department for Communities and Local Government's Faith in Action Fund.

This will be an opportunity for people of faith



**Students from KD Muslim Grammar School enjoy a well earned meal after a days work on the Faith in Community Allotment.**

to discuss fundamental issues facing our planet, and how we can act locally, alongside our friends from EN4M (Environment Network 4 Manchester) and others. For details, email us at [mail@fn4m.org](mailto:mail@fn4m.org) or visit [www.fn4m.org](http://www.fn4m.org).

## New Report shows Faith Contribution

**FN4M was represented at the Northwest Forum of Faiths at Ambleside on 23<sup>rd</sup> September where Monsignor John Devine presented the new report, *Faith in England's Northwest*.**

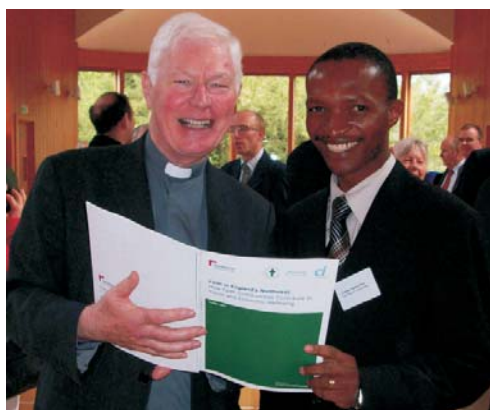
Subtitled *How Faith Communities Contribute to Social and Economic Wellbeing*, the report highlights the significant contribution by faith communities to the Northwest in fostering social and economic wellbeing. The research was commissioned as a result of the increased focus on the Third Sector delivery of public services and community development which has resulted in the role of faith groups becoming more prominent in the national public policy and service delivery agenda.

There were 12 comprehensive case studies

involving faith projects, which highlighted the extensive and diverse social action faith groups undertake in the Northwest. The projects within Manchester involved are The Catholic Children's Society (Christian), Faith4Change (Christian & Multi-faith), Manchester Jewish Museum (Jewish), Markazi Jamia Masjid Khizra: Al Hilali Community Project (Muslim), Rainbow Haven (Christian) and St Luke's: The Art Project (Christian).

Key themes that emerged from the 12 different faith projects are that they respond to clear need;

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**John Devine and FN4M's Charles Kwaku-Odoi**



# Conversations

## Politics and Religion are a stimulating mix for young people

The first Co-exist event for over a year was held at Urbis in September and saw young people from as far afield as Chorley and Huddersfield, together with a good cohort from Manchester, discussing issues that affected them in Britain today.

Faith Youth Manchester (FYM), FN4M's youth section, teamed up with Love Music, Hate Racism for the event, which was also a stepping stone to planning a larger happening for Interfaith Week.

Jamil Keating and Max Brophy were the young people who helped organise and lead the event. Both got involved with Love Music, Hate Racism earlier this year and the link up with FYM was a logical connection, facilitated by FN4M Secretary, David Gray. The event was part-funded by FN4M's Awards for All grant.

The discussions focused on religion and politics with a wide range of issues covered including free speech, sub-culture and identity, protesting, challenging Fascism, discipline and safety. Participants expressed a strong desire for future ventures and several will be involved in planning the next joint venture at the beginning of Interfaith Week in November.

To get involved with the November event or FYM in general, email [jonny@fn4m.org](mailto:jonny@fn4m.org), visit Faith Youth Manchester on Facebook or phone/text Max on 07517 888724.



Max Brophy (foreground) leads a Conversation supported by FN4M Secretary David Gray

## Telling Tales



During Refugee Week, three members of FN4M - Zahid, Asia and David - visited schools and libraries across Manchester telling stories in English and Urdu.

They used magic and drama to engage the children in sharing the telling of stories from different faith and cultural backgrounds. FN4M is developing its capacity to work in schools to promote interfaith and community cohesion with funding from Awards for All and Faiths in Action.

Our approach also tackles issues of bullying and uses local history to show how areas of Manchester prospered when people of different

backgrounds cooperated for the good of all.

In the **picture above**, our Franciscan tertiary secretary can be seen with children from Woodheys Primary School in Trafford following an assembly in which he spoke about St. Francis meeting with the Sultan and the Pope in an effort to build bridges between Islam and Christendom. To arrange an FN4M visit to your school or youth group, email us at [mail@fn4m.org](mailto:mail@fn4m.org)

## FYM helps Develop Youth IAG

Three members of FYM, Jamil, Sam and Liam, were recently invited to work with our FN4M secretary to help Greater Manchester Police Authority in setting up a Youth Independent Advisory Group to act as critical friends to GMP on issues of policing that directly affect young people.

Whilst the starting point for the Police was knife-enabled crime, due to funding coming from a Home Office source around this issue, they accepted our advice that it was wrong to form an IAG for young people on a single issue.

The young people involved decided not to become Youth IAG members. However, they worked closely with GMP and GMPA on the recruitment and selection of young members and helped with an introductory day at Hough End.

The lads are no strangers to promoting the well-being of young people across Manchester. Jamil was a key organiser of the recent FYM Co-exist Conversations event and appeared as Romeo in a production of Romeo and Juliet aimed at helping young people explore issues of gang membership. He also appeared with Liam in a version of The Little Shop of Horrors at Trinity High and all three lads are involved in gig nights promoting awareness or raising funds around issues affecting the Manchester area.

# A Week to Find Faith

The week from the 15<sup>th</sup> November until the 21<sup>st</sup> November 2009 will mark the first Inter Faith Week in England and Wales, starting with a national event on the 12<sup>th</sup> of November in London.

Faith communities and other organisations are encouraged to organise their own events during the Week and contribute to the initiative in this way. The main aims of the Week are

- to strengthen good inter faith relations at all levels;
- to increase awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, in particular celebrating and building on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society; and
- to increase understanding between people of religious and non-religious belief.

Inter Faith Week was announced in the government document *Face to Face and Side by Side: a framework for partnership in our multi-faith society* (CLG 2008). The document emerged from recommendations by the Commission for Community Cohesion and Integration in its report *Our Shared Future. Face to Face and Side by Side* places a specific emphasis on the importance of interfaith activities to promote greater community cohesion. In this regard, the document recommends the establishment of an interfaith group in every locality and urges a stronger engagement by local authorities with faith communities through these groups.

It comes as no surprise, therefore, that local Inter Faith groups are especially encouraged to participate in the Week, showcase their activities and highlight the valuable contributions they have made and are making in their given locality.

The Week is not limited to inter faith groups. Organisations from the educational, statutory, voluntary and other sectors are encouraged to contribute to the Week, by either supporting those events taking place or by organising their own events. In order ensure the success of Inter Faith Week, Regional Faith Forums have been asked by the UK Inter Faith Network, which facilitates the Week, to coordinate the initiative in their respective regions.

In the North West this falls to us at the North West Forum of Faiths. We will promote the activities on our website and will be directly involved in some sub regional events. As regional

Inter Faith Development Officer, I would like to ask anyone undertaking activities during the Week to inform me in order for the events to be placed on our website. This will allow us to promote the activities through out the North West, sign- post people to events in their locality, and create a North West wide picture of inter faith activity during the week.

As part of Inter Faith Week in Greater Manchester, the North West Forum of Faiths, in partnership with the Greater Manchester Faith and Community Leaders Group, will host a Greater Manchester event on the 16<sup>th</sup> of November at Manchester Town Hall. The event will serve as a networking opportunity and showcase to statutory bodies and other partners the contributions faith communities and interfaith bodies have made through out the sub region.

The same evening, we will be supporting the FN4M *Faith and the Environment* event at the MERCI. There will also be activities in Bolton, Oldham, Trafford, Stockport and Tameside as well as other localities, the details of which are soon to follow on our website, [www.faithnorthwest.org.uk](http://www.faithnorthwest.org.uk).

The Forum is a body of 24 individuals representing the nine major world faiths from every part of the region, which aims to ensure that, alongside other stakeholders, faith communities have regional voice. The Forum responds to public policy context on the regional level and seeks to influence the decision making process.

With recent funding from CLG, as part of Face to Face and Side by Side, the Forum decided to expand its work and to offer infra structure support to local inter faith groups by employing an Inter Faith Development Officer. The Officer's remit is to support local inter faith groups; assist with the setting up of such groups where they do not yet exist and advise statutory bodies on their faith engagement.

For questions or information regarding Inter Faith Week or any other matters mentioned above please contact Carlo Schröder, Inter Faith Development Officer, North West Forum of Faiths T: 01925 400139, M: 07824 605210, E: [carlo.schroder@nwda.co.uk](mailto:carlo.schroder@nwda.co.uk).

## From the Chair



Sally Thomas: our adventurous new leader

**Having been appointed Chair of FN4M at this year's AGM I've been asked to introduce myself and say a little about how FN4M is evolving.**

Before that I'd like to express the thanks and appreciation of all FN4M to Revd. Daniel Burton who has been our Chair since 2006 and has steered us towards the developments now in process. Daniel has stepped down in preparation for a well earned sabbatical and we wish him every blessing as he begins his travels in Nigeria.

I'm Sally Thomas and a minister of the United Reformed Church. I have been in Manchester for nearly 3 years as facilitator to a new initiative called the Inner Manchester Mission Network which is a network of 15 churches round the city rims of Salford and Manchester. One of the core aims of this network is developing the engagement of those churches with their communities to be effective in transformation and change for the common good.

Developing relationships with other faith groups and engaging in the democratic processes are vital elements of this so one of the first things I did when I moved to Manchester was become part of FN4M. My background is in interfaith and community ministry and I am so pleased to now be working with a team of colleagues with expertise and commitment to raise the profile of the faith agenda within decision making bodies both to ensure that faith communities are fully engaged, active stakeholders and to create opportunities for developing this effectively.

FN4M is in an exciting stage of development. As well as continuing our regular activities and two annual conferences, we now have funding to facilitate monthly dialogue meetings and are about to develop a role in schools through the PSCE curriculum, plus youth and community groups looking at integration and citizenship. Our longer term aspiration is to establish a multi-faith centre as a resource for the city

We're 'growing up' and plans for the future will lead us towards playing a fuller role and offering expertise and resources across the voluntary and statutory sector. The core steering group is small but everyone is committed to working for FN4M to fulfil its potential. I feel privileged to be part of such a dedicated, faithful and friendly team.



**Participants at the first monthly interfaith dialogue event - a joint initiative of FN4M and the Muslim Jewish Forum funded by the CLG's Faiths in Action**

# Faith Network 4 Manchester



FREE training for anyone working in the Third Sector particularly in the Faith or interfaith arenas

## Programming and Action Planning

A training session to help your organisation successfully and creatively plan your activities, programmes and events.

**Monday 19th October 6pm to 9.30pm**

Shakespeare House, 165 Kingsbrook Road  
Fallowfield, Manchester M16 8NR

For any member of staff, management committee or volunteer involved in planning within your organisation

A buffet, sandwich snack and drinks will be available

## Fundraising for your Organisation

A training session to help your organisation maximise its chances of eliciting support from grant making bodies.

**Monday 26th October 6pm to 9.30pm**

Shakespeare House, 165 Kingsbrook Road  
Fallowfield, Manchester M16 8NR

For any member of staff, management committee or volunteer involved in fundraising within your organisation

A buffet, sandwich snack and drinks will be available



Contact [charles@fn4m.org](mailto:charles@fn4m.org) or visit [www.fn4m.org](http://www.fn4m.org) for more information



## Faith Contribution

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emphasise human flourishing; exemplify the importance of committed individuals; and demonstrate the potential for constructive relationships with public agencies as both partners and service deliverers.

Importantly, the research also confirmed that most faith groups are rooted in their local communities and provide a level of continuity and sustained support that is hard for other voluntary organisations to match. Their central role within communities has proven to generate local trust, commitment and financial in-kind resources.

Some of the challenges faced by faith groups were identified as capacity, resources, governance and management of volunteers and of immense importance; the lack of universal recognition across government departments and agencies. It was noted that relationships are weak where there are concerns about the motivations of faith groups and where faith groups are forced to compromise in a partnership or contractual relationship.

The report concludes that faith organisations represent a powerful community resource with a deep reach into communities, particularly to the most marginalised groups. Public bodies need to recognise these immense contributions and recognise us as legitimate partners. Faith groups can capitalise on the reputation of working successfully with public bodies, being seen as credible and valued partners who can develop constructive and long-lasting working relationships.

The report can be downloaded from [www.faithnorthwest.org](http://www.faithnorthwest.org) and [www.nwda.co.uk](http://www.nwda.co.uk).

## Faith and the Environment

Date: 16<sup>th</sup> November, 2009

Time: 1800-2100hrs

Venue: MERCi, Bridge 5-Mill, 22a Beswick St  
Ancoats, Manchester M4 7HR  
(Manchester's First Environmentally Friendly Building)

**Free Refreshments available!!!**

For further info please email [warren@fn4m.org](mailto:warren@fn4m.org)  
or [charles@fn4m.org](mailto:charles@fn4m.org) or call 07915 411076

**Faith Network 4 Manchester**



## Coming attractions

Sunday 18 October 2.30pm to 5.30pm

**Muslim Jewish Forum 5th Anniversary Party**

Sunday 15 November 12.30pm to 4.00pm

**Faith Youth Manchester Co-exist Conference**

Monday 16 November 6.00pm to 9.00pm

**FN4M Faith and the Environment Conference**

Thursday 19 November 7.00pm

**Hindu Jewish Association Seminar Inter-Faith and Inner-Faith**

Sunday 29 November 2.00pm to 4.00pm

**FN4M Monthly Interfaith Dialogue Event**

See [www.fn4m.org](http://www.fn4m.org) for full details of all upcoming events

## Faith Network 4 Manchester

