

Interfaith  
Scotland

MAKING A DIFFERENCE THROUGH DIALOGUE



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Friendship • Cooperation • Dialogue • Respect • Understanding

[www.interfaithscotland.org](http://www.interfaithscotland.org)

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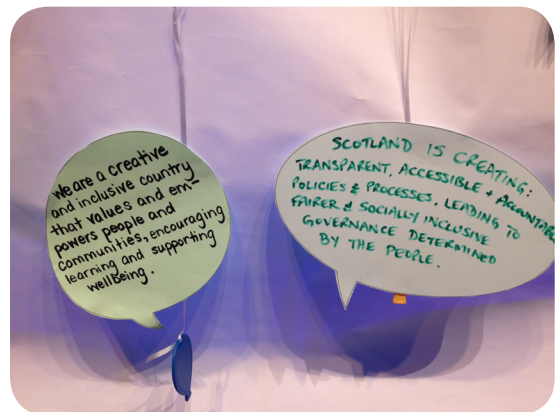


## Values and Visions for the Future of Scotland

In 2013, a number of Interfaith Scotland's meetings have been looking at our 'Values and Visions for the Future of Scotland'. With the Scottish referendum approaching in September 2014, it was felt that it was important to reflect upon what kind of Scotland we would like to live in. Regardless of the outcome of the referendum, many people of all faiths and none are united in a common vision for a Scotland which upholds the values on the Scottish Mace, of wisdom, compassion, justice and integrity.

### So Say Scotland

Interfaith Scotland's Development Officer attended a meeting of people from different walks of life who had been brought together by a movement called 'So Say Scotland', to explore our values and visions for Scotland's future. The event, 'Thinking Together: A Citizen's Assembly', was built on the model of citizen's assemblies that have taken place in Iceland. 240 people gathered to discuss the following questions: 'What values are most important to you for the future of Scotland? How can we make Scotland a better place to be? How do we put our values into action in our personal, family, community and work life?' At the end of the afternoon, participants were asked to create a 20-word vision statement outlining the kind of Scotland that they would like to live in. More information about the So Say Scotland project can be found on their website: [www.sosayscotland.org](http://www.sosayscotland.org)



### Members Meeting

A meeting for members of Interfaith Scotland took place on 5 June at the Low Port Centre in Linlithgow. Rabbi David Rose and Rita Docherty shared their thoughts on the theme of 'Values and Visions for the Future of Scotland' and members then discussed the theme in small groups. Those gathered stated that they appreciated Scotland's commitment to human rights, egalitarianism and freedom of religion and belief. It was felt that Scotland is a self-reflective nation which welcomes people and celebrates diversity. Indeed, it was remarked that people from different ethnic backgrounds often feel very positive about calling themselves 'Scottish'.

Those things that people found difficult about Scottish society included increased individualism and materialism and increased social isolation. Members also expressed concern regarding extreme secularism where people are ridiculed for having a faith. One problem was perceived to be the lack of positive role models of people of faith in the media, particularly young people of faith, and the issue of communicating with young people in general about religion was also raised.





## Women's Dialogue Meetings

This year, instead of holding a national seminar for women of faith, Interfaith Scotland is holding local dialogue afternoons for women in different cities throughout Scotland to explore 'Values and Visions for the Future of Scotland'. The first of these afternoons took place at the Carlton George Hotel in Glasgow on 25 March. A second dialogue afternoon took place on 24 June in Inverness, where 21 women came along to explore the theme over afternoon tea at the Royal Highland Hotel. The discussion was lively and the feedback from the event was very positive:

'It was interesting and very enjoyable to meet new people from different backgrounds and discuss what is important in our own lives, and the values we would like to see encouraged in the wider society, in a comfortable, informal, and relaxed environment'.

'A very positive nourishing experience and a boost for my flagging 'hope for humanity'.

'I thought today was a positive and uplifting session. If groups all over Scotland feel like this then there is HUGE hope for a better, fairer, more equal Scotland'.



## Religious Leaders Meeting

The bi-annual meeting of the religious leaders of Scotland took place on 22 April at Broughton Academy, Edinburgh. Part of their discussion was on the difficulty some religious people have of ensuring that they can have a religious funeral according to their beliefs. The Edinburgh Inter-Faith Association is pioneering the use of a card to indicate people's preferences for funeral arrangements in the way that the Baha'i community do. This led to a general discussion of funeral rites and the prevailing attitudes to death and funerals in society today. The religious leaders were joined by students studying Higher Religious, Moral and Philosophical Studies. The students asked some searching questions – 'what is the meaning of life' and 'are humans as intrinsically evil as they are good'. The responses to this led to a very interesting conversation with thoughtful insights from the leaders and the young people.



## National and International News

### Meeting with the First Minister

Project Manager of Interfaith Glasgow, Rose Drew, along with other delegates, met with First Minister Alex Salmond on 19 June. The group discussed recently published statistics on religiously aggravated offending in Scotland 2012-13. Although hate crimes motivated by prejudice against Islam were up, this rise can be accounted for by the 57 charges brought against participants in a single English/ Scottish Defence League march at the beginning of the year. However it remains crucial to step up efforts to build interfaith bridges, so as to nurture interfaith friendships, tackle prejudice and fear, and show a united front to those who seek to sow seeds of division in our society. The First Minister agreed that interfaith projects have a crucial role to play in this.

### Meeting with Roseanna Cunningham MSP

Roseanna Cunningham MSP met with board members and staff of Interfaith Scotland and Interfaith Glasgow on 12 June. She asked a number of interesting questions to those gathered, including 'How do we as people of faith relate to the secular population?' She highlighted some of the issues facing people of faith in Scotland today: that religion is no longer in the public domain, that at best people are indifferent to religion, and at worst, actively hostile towards it. Members and staff greatly appreciated this dialogue with Ms Cunningham and the opportunity to share openly and candidly on such matters of faith.

### Local Faith Communities Leading the Way

Over the past few months certain British communities have set a new precedent for interfaith understanding and interaction. In March, an Aberdeen Episcopalian Church reached out to the local Muslim community by offering them their church for worship up to five times a day, due to the lack of space in the mosque and many worshippers being forced to worship outside in the cold Scottish weather. Secondly, when an English Defence League protest was organised to be held outside a mosque in Yorkshire in the wake of the Woolwich murder, over 100 supporters of the mosque came out to prepare refreshments for the protestors, to show hospitality and tolerance in the face of anger. Some of the protestors ended up enjoying tea, biscuits, and conversation with those they had come out to protest against, and they even enjoyed a game of football together.

Frances Hume, Development Officer at Interfaith Scotland, said: 'Since coming to work at Interfaith Scotland I have heard it said that the work of interfaith dialogue is merely having 'tea and biscuits', implying that this is not a particularly effective approach for building better understanding and relationships in our community. However, one thing that faiths have in common is a commitment to hospitality towards their neighbours. The actions of the Muslims at the Yorkshire mosque show how the simple act of offering tea and biscuits can diffuse tension and bring people together, creating a positive and welcoming environment for dialogue to take place'.





## Sister Cities Programme – Retreat for Social Justice

The Interfaith Center of New York (ICNY) launched its three year Sister Cities Program in 2009. This initiative aimed to enable delegates from various urban centres of Europe to share good practice in interfaith initiatives and gain first-hand experience of these through international visits. The cities that participated were New York, Glasgow and Barcelona. Glasgow hosted the Sister Cities international exchange in September 2011, welcoming 19 delegates from the ICNY and UNESCO's Centre of Catalonia's Department for Interreligious Dialogue in Barcelona.



In June this year, the ICNY held a follow-up event to the Sister Cities Programme, hosting the 28th Rabbi Marshall T. Meyer Retreat for Social Justice, which aims to deepen interfaith relationships and understanding, and develop learning about social justice issues. The event focused on comparing Community-Police Relations across the cities participating in the programme. Interfaith Scotland member, Dr Salah Beltagui, represented the Glasgow delegation at the event in New York.

The retreat drew on the experiences of the diverse religious leaders and civic officials living in the participating cities, which share similar demographics, security and civil liberty challenges. The event aimed to allow for delegates to learn from real examples of constructive partnerships, including: how local law enforcement engages with religiously-diverse communities across cities; how local diverse religious leaders engage with New York City (NYC) Police; and how to set goals and strategies to improve relationships with local police, based on experiences shared from New York, Glasgow, Barcelona and also Los Angeles. The range of speakers sharing their experiences included: NYPD Community Affairs, Detective Brian Gibson (Police Scotland), Dr Salah Beltagui (Interfaith Scotland), Rosa Negre (Barcelona Police), Shakeel Syed (Los Angeles), and local NYC religious leaders and policy advocates.



The ICNY was delighted to have Dr Salah Beltagui attend as a Glasgow delegate. The audience found his presentation outlining the Scottish context, particularly the diversity training that is provided by Police Scotland, very valuable.



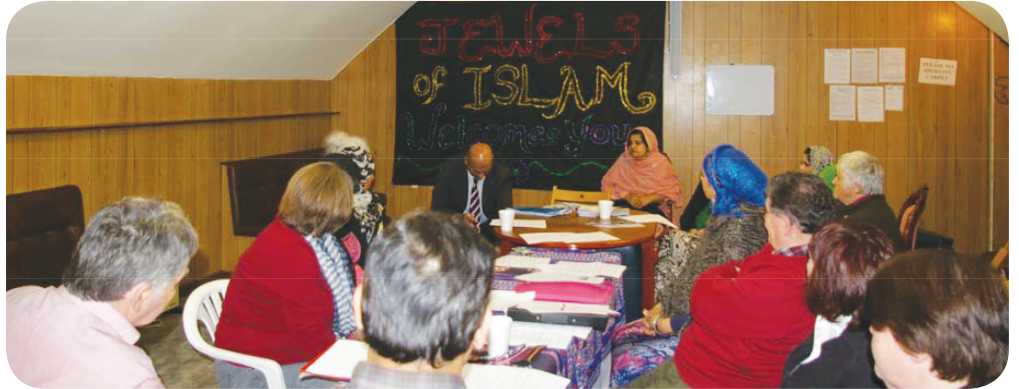


## Local Interfaith Groups News

### Fife Interfaith Group

Fife Interfaith Group (FIG) participated in Fife Diversity Week, which was held from 7 – 14 March, 2013. A 'Walk of Faith' was made by FIG members and fellow 'pilgrims', beginning at the Mormon Church in Kirkcaldy, to St. Marie's Roman Catholic Church, the Mosque, the Episcopal Church of Scotland, and finally ending at the Coptic Church, the only one in Scotland. 'Pilgrims' were welcomed by members of the places of worship, who gave tours and brief presentations outlining their faith, ensuring a welcoming and enjoyable experience for all.

A group of women from St. Marie's Roman Catholic Church made a visit to a local Mosque during Diversity Week, and were thrilled to discover all they had in common with the Muslim women who welcomed them there. This blossomed into a weekly study group at the mosque where each group learnt about each other's faiths. Because of this success, the Muslim women decided to



open their own group to others on a regular basis, holding a monthly Open Day, where any women of faith are welcome to share in their activities. Each month there is a different topic to discuss, such as what wearing the hijab means to the women, marriage, and other topics from the 12 Jewels of Islam. There is then delicious food and a time for socialising, building friendships and informal learning from each other. On Tuesday, 14th May, 2013, a new friendship was deepened when a Fife Interfaith Group general meeting was hosted by the Jewels of Islam Women's Group at the Kirkcaldy Islamic Centre.

The Chair of Fife Interfaith Group, Dr Junaid, is retiring after years of faithful service to the group. The group laid on a farewell picnic, and intends to include a small plaque in the Peace Garden to mark his time with Fife Interfaith Group.

Fife Interfaith Group is delighted to be hosting the Celebration of Scottish Interfaith Week this year, on the theme of 'Values and Visions for the Future of Scotland'. The Celebration will take place in Kirkcaldy on the evening of Tuesday 26 November.



**For more information about the Jewels of Islam group, contact Shazia Ahmed on 07827 324 469.  
For more information about the Fife Interfaith Group, contact Jane Withers on 01592 653 359  
or visit [www.fifeinterfaithgroup.org.uk](http://www.fifeinterfaithgroup.org.uk)**





## Interfaith Glasgow

Interfaith Glasgow hosted its first Networking Seminar at St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art on 11 June. The seminar brought together over 50 delegates from at least 9 different faith communities, as well as organisations concerned with community relations, to reflect collectively on how interfaith dialogue and co-operation could help create a better Glasgow for all. Participants discussed the findings of the recent research on interfaith engagement in Glasgow. A report on the first phase of this research can be downloaded from Interfaith Glasgow's website: [www.interfaithglasgow.org/about](http://www.interfaithglasgow.org/about).



Those gathered were asked to reflect on how their various organisations and faith communities might better connect with one another and add value to each other's work. Discussions were energising, useful connections were made, and practical suggestions were recorded and will be reflected in the planning of Interfaith Glasgow's future work. One project which captured imaginations was the teaming up of Glasgow's Mosques with the Christian charity Lodging House Mission, to distribute meat from the celebration of Eid-UI-Adha to homeless people in Glasgow. Others emphasised the importance of work with schools and youth groups, pointing out the need to bring secular philosophical perspectives into the dialogue.

Participants commented that they were glad to have had the opportunity to meet and share ideas with people of other faiths, to network with other organisations, to find out more about the interfaith and intercultural dialogue and cooperation happening in Glasgow. The event very much confirmed that there is tremendous goodwill in Glasgow, alongside a commitment to taking this work forward. The hope is that Interfaith Glasgow will play a key role in facilitating and supporting this commitment.

In March, Interfaith Glasgow organised a day of BBC visits to three places of worship: Glasgow Hindu Mandir, Glasgow Central Gurdwara, and Garnethill Synagogue. The visits were attended by members of the BBC Scotland Diversity Board and Senior Management Team, and hosted by members of the Hindu, Sikh, and Jewish communities. At each place of worship the host faith communities provided tours, refreshments, and opportunities for conversation with community members, including the Mandir women's group, and Sikh and Jewish young people. The visits were not only an opportunity for the BBC to raise their awareness of religious diversity, but also for faith communities to build links with the BBC and discuss issues of concern, such as how their communities and religious identities are represented in the media. The day was a great success, and feedback from the BBC and the communities who took part was very positive.



Interfaith Glasgow is active on social media and can be followed on twitter @InterfaithGlasg or on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/interfaithglasgow](http://www.facebook.com/interfaithglasgow)



## Edinburgh Women's Interfaith Group

The Edinburgh Women's Interfaith Group (EWIG) organised a summer outing on 2 July to Dunfermline Abbey. A group of 36 women and children from various faith communities participated. The group was given a tour of the Abbey, which is still an active Church of Scotland, by the Abbey's custodian, Mary Welsh. After lunch the group walked to Pittencrieff Park and enjoyed afternoon tea at the Art Deco Pavilion. The journey home was enlivened by some singing. All felt that they had enjoyed their outing with its opportunity to meet with women of other faiths in a relaxed and informal way.

All in all, it was a wonderful and spiritually uplifting day out and EWIG is extremely grateful to the Edinburgh Inter-Faith Association for funding the event. The group meets on the third Wednesday of each month at different venues (faith groups) throughout Edinburgh. More information can be found on the website: [www.edinwig.org.uk](http://www.edinwig.org.uk)



## Dumfries and Galloway: Interfaith Involvement in Spiritual Care

Jan Lethbridge



'About eighteenth months ago, I was invited to join the Spiritual Care Committee of the Dumfries & Galloway NHS Board, to represent interfaith interests. Spiritual Care is now recognised throughout NHS Scotland as being an integral and fundamental component of health and healing, and the Spiritual Care Committee has been asked for their input towards the proposed Sanctuary space for the new hospital in Dumfries, scheduled for completion in 2018.

We have had the opportunity to express our hopes for the facility, and to be imaginative and creative in our ideas for the space. The Sanctuary will need to contain

both group and individual spaces, and be welcoming, comfortable, and acceptable to those of all faiths, as well as those of none. Natural light and inspiring views are also at the top of our 'wish list'. The Sanctuary will not be a church, a mosque, a synagogue, a gurdwara, a temple of any sort - it will be none of these things, but it must have the capacity to be any and all of these things, in the hearts and minds of those using it.

Several local faith groups have been very helpful and forthcoming with their own 'wish lists'. But I would be extremely grateful to hear from anyone at all, regardless of belief, who has either been in a similar situation, or perhaps is familiar with facilities such as hospital or airport 'quiet rooms', and can give useful suggestions. You can contact me, Jan Lethbridge, via email: [lethbridgejb@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:lethbridgejb@yahoo.co.uk)





## Aberdeen Inter Faith Group

Aberdeen's busy spring programme began in March with a talk about Judaism given by Ehud Reiter, a professor at Aberdeen University. He shared some of his extensive knowledge about Judaism, as well as outlining the experience of the small orthodox community in Aberdeen and some of the festivals celebrated. Later in the month, a member of the Aberdeen Inter Faith Group steering committee, Stuart Hannabuss, represented Humanism at an interfaith event held at Portlethen Academy, a High School in Aberdeen. The pupils presented about the faiths they had been researching, and had invited some members of these faiths to come and talk to them that day.

In April, the Grampian Regional Equality Council invited Aberdeen Inter Faith Group to their office to find out more about their 'Advancing Equality' project. They shared their knowledge about the Equality Act and how they are putting this into practice. Those in attendance found it particularly heartening to hear about the Equality Council's engagement with schools to promote issues relating to equality, diversity and human rights.



In May, Reverend Stephen Taylor of St Nicholas Kirk held an interfaith service as part of the Councillors' annual service in Aberdeen. Several faith representatives contributed at this well-attended and enjoyable service of thanksgiving. Near the end of May, Ven Sujana, a Buddhist monk who lives in Aberdeen, gave 'An Introduction to Buddhism' talk, which outlined the main traditions within Buddhism. There was also some very interesting discussion around how people can apply Buddhist insights in their lives.

Aberdeen Inter Faith Group's last spring event was held in June at Albyn School. The Religious Education teacher there, Patricia Findlay, organized an evening for the group around the theme of 'Lessons from Auschwitz'. Some sixth formers from Albyn along with other schools in Aberdeen had been part of this project, which involved meeting a Holocaust survivor, visiting Auschwitz, and participating in an event for Holocaust Memorial Day in January. The students spoke eloquently and movingly about their experiences, and explained that they had made contact with people from countries where genocide has taken place more recently. The students had put great effort into their learning and deservedly won an Anne Frank award.





## Youth News

### James Young High School Visit

On a cold March day, a group of enthusiastic volunteers and Interfaith Scotland's Development Officer, made their way to Livingston to visit James Young High School. The volunteers were welcomed out of the frosty morning with a pleasant lunch and refreshments by senior members of staff. The volunteers presented to sixth year pupils about their 'faith journey': how they came to be of that faith, the main tenets of the faith, and aspects of the faith that mean a lot to them. The presentations were well received by the students, who asked insightful questions, as did some of the staff. The afternoon was rounded off by a panel discussion, and the volunteers were certainly kept on their toes with more challenging questions, for example regarding life after death and proselytizing the faith. All in all, an enjoyable and educational afternoon was had by all, and Interfaith Scotland hopes the pupils found it rewarding as well.



### Baha'i Scottish Summer School

This year, the Baha'i Scottish Summer School was hosted at Kilgraston School, Perthshire, and focused on the subject of 'Transformation'. Interfaith Scotland was invited along to run a Junior Youth Workshop which would give the young people present an insight into interfaith dialogue, including the purpose of dialogue and how to approach it successfully. After an introduction from Maureen Sier outlining the importance of interfaith dialogue in the Baha'i faith, Frances Hume and volunteer Katy Alexander led the group in a number of activities, allowing them to practice important dialogue skills, including active listening without interruption, and sharing opinions and feelings respectfully.

The group enjoyed the opportunity to share their opinions when asked whether they agreed with various statements during the 'Conflict Spectrum' game, including 'non religious people have more fun than religious people'. They also had fun taking on different character perspectives and dressing up during a role play, which saw them using their new dialogue skills as they tried to overcome conflict between two fictional communities living in one town, addressing issues such as the desire of one community to build their own place of worship. All in all, the youth group and the Interfaith Scotland staff thoroughly enjoyed the morning and the variety of activities, and felt it was a valuable workshop to encourage young people to begin thinking about the importance of interfaith dialogue in their everyday lives and in their communities.





## Interfaith Scotland Member Profile

In previous newsletters, members of Interfaith Scotland's youth committee have shared about their experiences of volunteering with Interfaith Scotland and what interfaith dialogue means to them. In this edition, we hear from a member of Interfaith Scotland, Anne Davies.

### Anne Davies

My name is Anne Davies and I live in Edinburgh. I am a member of The Religious Society of Friends, known as Quakers. I was born into a Quaker family in North Yorkshire, and in common with my religious beliefs, I have always had an interest in and respect for other faiths. I was glad therefore to be asked to represent Quakers on the Scottish Inter Faith Council, as it was then called, and I have been a representative for the last six years.

Our Quaker worship is based on silence, which I feel is helpful for interfaith conversations. From the start of my association with the organisation I felt welcomed and included. During my period of attendance we have had several chair people from the Jewish, Muslim and Christian faiths, all of whom have made significant contributions. The members meet three times a year and discussions have included the new constitution and membership structure of Interfaith Scotland, same sex marriage and our values and visions for the future of Scotland.

As a member of Interfaith Scotland, I have had the opportunity to attend a number of interesting meetings. On one memorable occasion, all of the members were invited to Holyrood, where we were introduced to the First Minister. I have also taken part in many key interfaith events, including peace walks to places of worship, the many activities of Interfaith Week, and Sewa day, which is held in October and aims to focus on people volunteering one day's work in order to give back to their community: [www.sewaday.org](http://www.sewaday.org).

Members are often asked for comments on various measures that are to come before the Scottish Parliament. For example, we were approached for our responses to the proposals for the new Religious Education curriculum and school assemblies. I was interested to read that the Minister for Education at Westminster, Mr. Gove, stated that despite the changes in the curriculum and exam structure, 'all state schools... must teach religious education to pupils at every key stage'. We have also been approached for our views on the provision of multi-faith spaces in schools and in the workplace.

In conclusion, I have found my membership stimulating and rewarding. My thanks go to all the members for their friendliness and commitment. Year by year, I am convinced of the importance of measured and forthright interfaith discussion. It is vital in the world in which we live to work with different faiths, accentuating our universal core beliefs for peace and mutual understanding. Let us hope Interfaith Scotland continues to contribute to this aim for the good of humanity, and thus allow us to remain well informed, to participate and interact respectfully and in fellowship.





## A Secular Scotland

Sister Isabel Smyth, Chair of Interfaith Scotland, from her online blog:  
[www.interfaithjourneys.weebly.com](http://www.interfaithjourneys.weebly.com)

A lot has been said recently about a secular Scotland with the suggestion that there is no place for religion apart from the privacy of home and place of worship. In a recent article in a well-known Scottish newspaper, religion is depicted as intolerant and judgemental, excluding and exclusive. No doubt there are religious people like this, because religious people are human, and human beings of any belief and outlook can be judgemental and intolerant, but I know many people of faith who are the very opposite of this. They are men and women who are open and welcoming to all, regardless of their beliefs, committed to social justice, working for the abolition of poverty, offering support and friendship to the lonely, the elderly, the bereaved among other things. At the launch of Refugee Week in June, a refugee spoke movingly about her experience and how helped she had been by the local Church. Where would she and other refugees be if it hadn't been for the door opened to them or the food and clothing provided for them by Churches? Would advocates of a secular Scotland want this kind of good work to cease? Would they be asking faith communities to stop soup kitchens, Churches and places of worship to cease from speaking out on behalf of the poor and marginalised, Church Action on Poverty or Islamic Relief to stop caring?

It is interesting that at the same time as this kind of conversation is going on others, such as those involved in the Postcards from Scotland initiative, are recognising the contribution of religion to health and wellbeing as it gives people meaning and purpose, helps them look outwards towards their neighbour, and gives them a practice to support them in day to day living. I don't know of a religion that does not incorporate the Golden Rule nor see the essence of its faith as service to others. Do the detractors of religion know what actually happens within faith communities? Do they know of the work of interfaith relations that brings together people of different faiths to explore differences as well as commonalities? This kind of activity allows people to move beyond tolerance to respect and appreciation of different beliefs and views.

While I appreciate the contribution of religion to society, I would not want to live in a religious state. I too uphold a secular state, but one in which all views are respected, people are able to speak and contribute to society from their own value base, and all are committed to the common good. A few years ago the Scottish Government published a document called Belief in Dialogue. The purpose was to develop good relations between religion and belief groups in keeping with equality legislation. As the document was being written it became clear that it was not possible to see religion and belief as separate. Everyone has beliefs, some religious and some non-religious. Secularist and humanist beliefs are beliefs in much the same way as religious beliefs are so should they also be relegated to the private and personal sphere? And as it is possible to get fundamental religious people so it is possible to get fundamental secular people. What is the answer? Not to deny anyone the right to express their views but to encourage dialogue between these different views because, as Belief in Dialogue says, dialogue is the building block of a healthy society.

**Note from the Editor – The Belief in Dialogue Document is available on the Interfaith Scotland website at [www.interfaithscotland.org/resources/publications](http://www.interfaithscotland.org/resources/publications)**





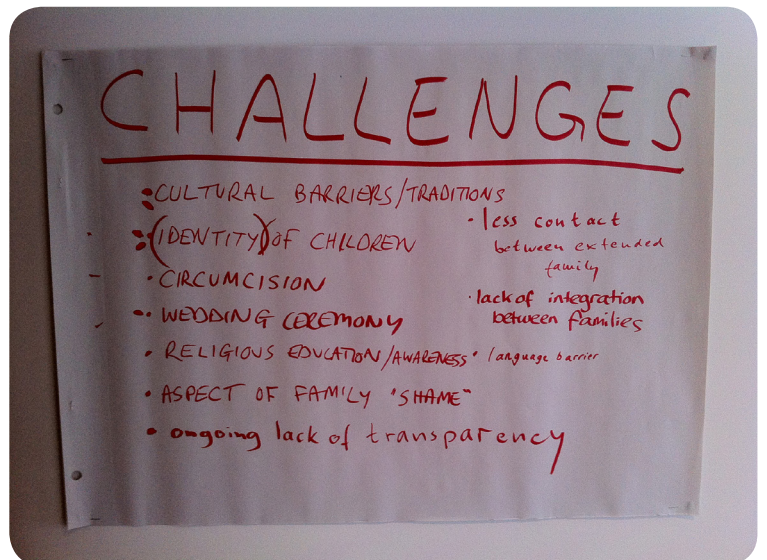
## Muslim Christian Couples Scotland

Muslim Christian Couples Scotland is a support group for anyone involved in, or affected by, a Muslim-Christian relationship. While there is a focus on the specific situation of Muslim-Christian couples, the group is open to other faith combinations, and indeed to couples who feel they have more of an intercultural rather than an interreligious relationship, either because one partner converted, or because they do not feel particularly religious at all.

The group was created in November 2012 as a local branch of the Muslim-Christian and Interfaith Marriage Support Network, based in England. The idea was to establish a forum for people in Scotland to support each other in view of the potential difficulties, and also to celebrate the rewarding aspects, of such a relationship. The main tool for this is a members only Facebook group, where members can post questions and links to any events, organisations and resources they think might be helpful or interesting to others.



Two meetings have been held so far. At the second gathering on 26th May, there was a discussion session on advantages and challenges of an interfaith or cross-cultural relationship. Perhaps not surprisingly, issues revolving around children, their upbringing and identity, emerged as a main area of concern...once the initial hurdle of 'how to get married' was overcome. The group is still relatively small and is looking to reach out to more couples. This is done through the distribution of flyers, and by contacting people and organisations that might be able to spread the word. If you are in an interfaith relationship yourself, or feel you might be able to help us grow, Muslim Christian Couples Scotland would love to hear from you!



**On Facebook: Muslim Christian Couples Scotland**    **By Email: [inter.aleea@gmail.com](mailto:inter.aleea@gmail.com)**





## Holi Celebrations

On 6 April, Maryhill Integration Network was delighted to attend Scotland's first ever outdoor celebration of India's Festival of Colour – Holi. Although rooted in Hindu belief, the event, supported by Forestry Commission Scotland, was an inclusive celebration that engaged communities across Glasgow in Indian culture, traditions and festivities.

Image By Karen Gordon



Hundreds of people of all ages and backgrounds attended the event in Rouken Glen Park, East Renfrewshire, where they were able to take part in various activities such as Dance, Yoga, Rangoli Art Work and Henna Painting. There was also entertainment with live Dhol Music, Singing and Story-Telling. The outdoor venue was ideal, helping to bring communities together, and also encouraging the use of woodlands and forest areas by the community for celebrations and gatherings.



Image By Hassan Nezamian

Feedback from one event participant showed the impact of the event: 'I enjoyed the whole event. I was doing Rangoli (colour pattern) and dancing and having a ride on a rickshaw. That reminded me of my childhood in India. I've been 37 years in the UK and never had this kind of fun, happiness and excitement...'

The finale of Holi was a huge colour fight, which saw participants throw rainbow coloured powder over each other, symbolising the throwing off of winter and rejoicing in the colours and liveliness of Spring. Those leaving the event looked very different from the way they arrived, much more colourful and all with happy faces. The sharing in the celebration of Holi was a great way to inspire communities to learn more about other cultures, festivals and celebrations.



Image By Francesca Morrison



Image By Karen Gordon





## Upcoming Events

### Members Dialogue Meeting at the Just Festival

Members of Interfaith Scotland are invited to attend a formal members meeting at St John's Hall, Princes Street, Edinburgh on 26 August from 4.30 – 5.30pm. After the meeting, Interfaith Scotland's Chair, Sister Isabel Smyth, will be speaking at the Just Festival's interfaith conversation entitled 'More tea, Imam?' from 6 – 7.30pm at the same venue.

The Just Festival (formerly the Festival of Spirituality and Peace) will take place in Edinburgh from 2 - 26 August. More information can be found at: [www.justjust.org](http://www.justjust.org)

### Annual Networking Seminar for Local Interfaith Groups

The Annual Networking Seminar will take place on Thursday 29 August at the hall of Pollokshields Church of Scotland, 525 Shields Road, Glasgow from 11am – 5pm. The day will include a tour of the new purpose-built Sikh Gurdwara on Albert Drive.

### Annual General Meeting of Interfaith Scotland

The AGM will take place on 8 October at Linlithgow Burgh Halls, The Cross, Linlithgow, starting with refreshments at 6pm.

### Religious Leaders Meeting

The next meeting of the religious leaders of Scotland will take place on 30 October in Edinburgh.

### Scottish Interfaith Week

Scottish Interfaith Week will take place from 24th November – 1st December. The theme of the week in 2013 is 'Values and Visions for the Future of Scotland'.

Interfaith Scotland's Celebration of Scottish Interfaith Week will be held on the evening of 26th November in Kirkcaldy.

Interfaith Glasgow will be organising a family-friendly event for Scottish Interfaith Week at St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art on the afternoon of Sunday 1st December. A group of volunteers will soon be recruited to help organise this event. If you are interested in getting involved email: [magdalen.lambkin@interfaithglasgow.org](mailto:magdalen.lambkin@interfaithglasgow.org)

### Holocaust Memorial Day

Interfaith Scotland's Holocaust Memorial Day event will take place on Monday 27th January in Stirling on the theme of 'Journeys'.



## Our New Website

Interfaith Scotland is delighted to announce the arrival of its new website. The site is (we hope!) more attractive, up-to-date and easier to navigate for the casual and committed user alike. We encourage you to contact our web master, Frances Hume, with any stories that you would like to appear on the site: [frances@interfaithscotland.org](mailto:frances@interfaithscotland.org). Each local interfaith group has its own dedicated page on the website, and it would be great to see these pages full of new stories and pictures on a regular basis.

## About Interfaith Scotland

The aim of Interfaith Scotland is to provide a forum for people from different religions to dialogue with one another on matters of religious, national and civic importance, to support a wider interfaith dialogue with other religion and belief groups as appropriate, to support educational activities in connection with interfaith dialogue, to encourage civic engagement by religious communities in Scotland and to support religious equality.

Interfaith Scotland runs dialogue events for young people, women, faith communities, religious leaders, members of Interfaith Scotland and local interfaith groups. We run interfaith workshops in schools and produce interfaith publications and resources. We provide on-going support to local interfaith groups. We give public presentations, seminars and training on interfaith and faith awareness. We promote and encourage participation in Scottish Interfaith Week. We host a national event during Scottish Interfaith Week and the national Holocaust Memorial Day event in Scotland.

## Get in touch

Interfaith Scotland publishes a newsletter two to three times a year, in order to let people know about all the varied interfaith initiatives happening in Scotland. We would welcome short articles for inclusion in future newsletters. Contact the office at:

**Interfaith Scotland, 523 Shields Road, Glasgow, G41 2RF, telephone us on 0141 420 6982 or email Frances Hume: [frances@interfaithscotland.org](mailto:frances@interfaithscotland.org).**

We would also encourage you to 'like' our Interfaith Scotland Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/interfaithscotland](http://www.facebook.com/interfaithscotland) and follow us on twitter @InterfaithScot to keep up to date with all our news.



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**[www.interfaithscotland.org](http://www.interfaithscotland.org)**