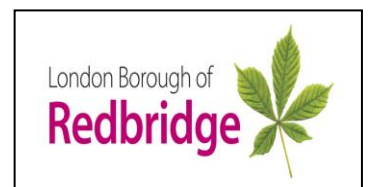




(Registered Charity No 1118675)

# Annual Report

## 2014/2015



## Redbridge Faith Forum

Tel: 0208 708 2478

Email: [Faith.Forum@redbridge.gov.uk](mailto:Faith.Forum@redbridge.gov.uk)

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

Charity number: 1118675

Registered Office:  
Room 76, 3rd Floor  
Ilford Town Hall  
128-142 High Rd  
Ilford IG1 1DD

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2014-15

<b>Name</b>	<b>Faith</b>	<b>MC status</b>	<b>MC office</b>
Carol Khorsandyon	Baha'i	Re- elected Jun 2014	
Rev Hemaratana	Buddhist	Re- elected Jun 2014	
Isuru Perera	Buddhist	Elected Jun 2014	Elected Membership Secretary June 14
Jacquie Grieve	Christian	Re- elected Jun 2014	Re-elected Chair June 14
Phil Butcher	Christian	Re- elected Jun 2014	Re-elected Vice Chair June 14
Rev. Bernardino Mandlate	Christian	Re- elected Jun 2014	
Alok Upadhaya	Hindu	Re-elected Jun 2014	Resigned Nov 2014
Vinaya Sharma	Hindu	Re-elected Jun 2014	
Rabbi Lawrence Becker	Jewish	Re-elected Jun 2014	
Angela Banner	Jewish	Elected Jun 2014	
Ali Qureshi	Muslim	Re-elected Jun 2014	Re-elected Treasurer June 14
Ghazanfer Ali	Muslim	Re-elected Jun 2014	
Mo Dedat	Muslim	Re-elected Jun 2014	Elected Secretary June 14
Harbans Singh Seehra	Sikh	Re-elected Jun 2014	
Mankamal Singh Palray	Sikh	Elected Jun 2014	

### STAFF

Saira Yakub

Harmander Singh (to October 2014)

Karen Kent (from January 2015)

FOREWORD .....	4
1. Introduction .....	5
2. Vision, Mission and Objectives .....	5
2.1 RFF Vision Statement.....	5
2.2 RFF Mission .....	5
2.3 RFF Objectives: .....	5
3. Structure, governance and management .....	6
3.1 How Trustees of RFF are appointed .....	6
3.2 Board of Trustees 2014- 2015 .....	6
3.3 How the Board of Trustees works/functions .....	7
3.4 Staffing .....	7
3.5 Participating in regular volunteering .....	7
3.6 Training.....	7
4. RFF Achievements & Activities 2014 – 2015 .....	7
4.1 Public Forums .....	7
4.2 Interfaith Walk of Peace and Harmony: .....	10
4.3 RFF Interfaith Social Event: .....	11
4.4 Strategic Partnership Working.....	11
4.5 “Towards Dementia Friendly Faith Communities” Programme .....	11
4.7 Women’s Workshops.....	13
4.8 Civic participation & support for faith communities in the local area .....	15
4.9 Consultations .....	15
4.10 Information Sharing and Signposting .....	15
4.11 Signposting and Referrals:.....	16
5. Funding, Membership and Donations.....	16
6. Partnerships and Thanks .....	16
Appendix - Income & Expenditure Summary .....	18

## **FOREWORD**

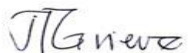
I would like to start this year's report with a huge thank you to all who have contributed in many different ways to Redbridge Faith Forum's (RFF) successful and eventful year. Thanks go to the Trustees for their commitment and for their individual advice and support for many aspects such as the website and data base design preparation and for I.T. support at events. Special thanks go to the staff without whom the forum could not function; involving so many residents of faith (and no faith) in promoting harmony in the community. Staff work tirelessly to ensure the work of RFF is progressed and developed. The volunteers give so much of their time in the office and at events and make a much valued contribution to our work - many grateful thanks to them. Many thanks go to our faith communities who support the work of RFF with such generous in-kind donations. Last but not least thanks go to all our funders in particular Redbridge Council. Our funders demonstrate recognition of the value of the work of RFF through much appreciated grants.

The year 2014 -15 has been one of many challenges. As always seeking funding for the many events and activities has been a challenge. The social and fundraising events have however, been both enjoyable and helped to keep the forum active.

Changes of staff and periods of working with limited staff hours has been a challenge. Nevertheless the situation has been resolved. We look forward to a period of stability where we can continue with a programme of open forums and workshops, embracing a number of issues and concerns raised by our communities. There is as always a plethora of 'behind the scene' activities which are undertaken by our much valued, loyal and committed staff. They have managed again in 2014-15 to squeeze the proverbial quart into the pint pot.

In the writing of the report I have been reminded of the range of interesting topics covered and events that have taken place during the year. The women's workshops have continued successfully and, have led in some cases, to topics for wider discussion through the open meetings. The project 'towards dementia friendly faith communities' not only raised awareness of the subject but led to an open session on services available in Redbridge for those living with dementia and their care givers. The workshops on the Holocaust were sensitive, thought provoking and much appreciated by people of all faiths and none. The annual walk of peace again created opportunity for visits to different places of worship and for people of all faiths (and none) to join in their commitment to harmony in the community.

I commend this report to you. I trust that with your valued support and commitment RFF will continue to develop harmony in our Redbridge community, face the ever present financial challenges successfully and continue to promote "Respect Co-operation and Understanding".



**Chair of Trustees – Redbridge Faith Forum**

## 1. Introduction

The Redbridge Faith Forum (RFF) is a registered charity and an independent organisation whose aims are to:-

- bring together representatives of different faith communities in order to gain mutual understanding and promote social cohesion
- give Faith Communities in Redbridge a collective voice by identifying and addressing issues that affect residents.

RFF was established in December 2003 and became a registered charity (1118675) in 2006. From April 2009 RFF has been one of LBR strategic partners with a focus for *community cohesion issues particularly through bringing faith leaders and communities together*. Redbridge Faith Forum has grown in strength and is recognised as a respected organisation in the borough and beyond. It received the Compact Champions Advancing Equality Award 2012; the activities highlighted in the shortlisted nominations booklet included RFF as one of the shining examples of Compact working which 'makes a real difference to improve outcomes'. Year on year the forum has continued to build: *"A community that respects, tolerates and understands the integrity of each other's beliefs, culture and traditions."* RFF adopted **Respect, Co-operation and Understanding** as its legend.

RFF is the key organisation in Redbridge for promoting inter-faith dialogue and activity across *all* the major local faith communities, the voluntary sector, the Council and its strategic partners. RFF continues to maintain an inter-faith approach to addressing social issues. One of its strengths is its ability to inform relevant Council bodies about the opinions of faith communities and residents, regarding key social issues arising from forums and events. People of no faith are also welcomed to all events and their presence is greatly valued; they contribute to greater understanding, co-operation and respect, across all people in our community

## 2. Vision, Mission and Objectives

### 2.1 RFF Vision Statement

*"Our vision is a plural community in Redbridge that shows mutual understanding and respect for each other's beliefs, culture and traditions, working together for the public good."*

### 2.2 RFF Mission

The Redbridge Faith Forum (RFF) is an independent organisation that gives Faith Communities in Redbridge a collective voice by identifying and addressing issues that affect residents.

It is an organisation that respects and understands the integrity of each other's beliefs, cultures and traditions through promoting the participation of faith communities in the life and culture of the Borough. It promotes interfaith collaboration by working together, and with other agencies, for the common good. The forum provides events and opportunities for representatives of different faith communities to come together to gain mutual understanding, discuss local issues and promote social cohesion.

### 2.3 RFF Objectives:

Redbridge Faith forum will:

- Organise a minimum of two annual open forums to provide opportunities for dialogue and debate.
- Exchange information between faith groups and other partners through RFF e-news (at least 10 monthly circulations per year).
- Work with other organisations and partnerships to strengthen outcomes of its work and events.
- Promote knowledge and mutual understanding and respect of the beliefs and practices of different religious faiths by hosting inter-faith events

- Promote social cohesion between the faith groups in the borough of Redbridge through: a) Exploring the beliefs common to all faith communities to promote religious harmony b) Interfaith-group recreational activities and other projects (funding and personnel permitting)
- Work to ensure faith perspectives are understood by the Strategic Partners.
- Seek funding as an integral part of its existence.
- Review / update policies annually

### **3. Structure, governance and management**

#### **3.1 How Trustees of RFF are appointed**

The Board of Trustees of Redbridge Faith Forum comprises faith practitioners from the main religions represented in the borough. The constitution of Redbridge Faith Forum was amended at the 2014 AGM. It now states that only people, who are representing the views, values and interests of those faith communities as religions defined by the Government and the national interfaith network (IFN), and if they represent an organisation based in Redbridge, will be able to become Trustees of this Charity by right. The number of Trustees from each faith community is expected to be as follows:

- two trustees from each of the 5 major faiths (Christian Jews, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs)
- up to two trustees from each of the smaller faith groups for (Baha'i, Buddhist, Jains and Zoroastrians)

Trustees, meeting in quorum, have the right to make related decisions as follows:

- To increase or vary representation from a particular faith group.
- In the event of a challenge to the right of an organisation to sit on the Board, to determine whether an organisation applying for a seat meets the criteria for admission.
- To determine whether an organisation applying for a seat on the Board of Trustees that does not meet the criteria for admission may be permitted to observer/consultative status in regards to attendance at Trustee meetings.

Nominations for representation from each faith community are submitted in advance of the AGM. Where there are more nominations than places available an election will take place at the AGM.

Where there are midterm resignations substitutes are recruited from the respective faith group.

#### **3.2 Board of Trustees 2014- 2015**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Faith</b>	<b>MC status</b>	<b>MC office</b>
Carol Khorsandyon	Baha'i	Re- elected Jun 2014	
Rev Hemaratana	Buddhist	Re- elected Jun 2014	
Isuru Perera	Buddhist	Elected Jun 2014	Elected Membership Secretary June 14
Jacquie Grieve	Christian	Re- elected Jun 2014	Re-elected Chair June 14
Phil Butcher	Christian	Re- elected Jun 2014	Re-elected Vice Chair June 14
Rev. Bernardino Mandlate	Christian	Re- elected Jun 2014	
Alok Upadhaya	Hindu	Re-elected Jun 2014	Resigned Nov 2014
Vinaya Sharma	Hindu	Re-elected Jun 2014	
Rabbi Lawrence Becker	Jewish	Re-elected Jun 2014	
Angela Banner	Jewish	Elected Jun 2014	
Ali Qureshi	Muslim	Re-elected Jun 2014	Re-elected Treasurer June 14
Ghazanfer Ali	Muslim	Re-elected Jun 2014	
Mo Dedat	Muslim	Re-elected Jun 2014	Elected Secretary June 14
Harbans Singh Seehra	Sikh	Re-elected Jun 2014	
Mankamal Singh Palray	Sikh	Elected Jun 2014	

### **3.3 How the Board of Trustees works/functions**

The Trustees meet regularly during the year to discuss and agree projects, funding and topics for public forums and events, taking note of issues arising from Central and Local Government that are likely to have an impact on Redbridge residents. Individual Trustees fully represent Redbridge Faith Forum through attendance and participation on a range of partnership group boards/committees. They support and attend the range of community functions organised and encourage attendance from their faith communities.

Office-bearers have met between trustee meetings when required to develop proposals. Urgent decision-making authority is delegated to the office bearers. All decisions made are ratified by the full board of trustees.

### **3.4 Staffing**

RFF employs two part-time members of staff. Between them they cover a range of important roles including developing and managing projects, grant applications, fund raising, supporting and monitoring volunteers, ensuring policies are reviewed and updated as well as the substantial amount of administrative tasks and duties. Together, they maintain contacts associated with this successful charity. RFF owes the staff tremendous gratitude for their commitment, loyalty and hard work.

### **3.5 Participating in regular volunteering**

Five volunteers have supported many of the administrative tasks in the office. There are nine additional volunteers who continue to work with RFF in a range of capacities. Volunteers have gained valuable work experience in I.T., Event Management and Administration. Volunteers have developed team skills and they continue to grow in self-esteem and confidence through a range of different administrative tasks as well as preparing and participating at RFF events. Two volunteers have now joined the Board of Trustees of the charity.

The number of hours volunteered by the Trustees and regular volunteers contributes considerably to the successful functioning of the forum. An estimated 4000 hours has been a significant donation in-kind. Sometimes it is difficult to envisage this kindness in monetary value, however if the living wages rate for London currently at £8.55 per hour, was used as a calculation - the total monetary cost would be £34,200. This gives a clear indication that voluntary support greatly enhances the work of RFF. It is with tremendous gratitude that this generous volunteering of time is recognised.

### **3.6 Training**

Some trustees and some staff have participated in training including – Policy & Procedures, Planning a Grant Application, Skilled Interviewer, Restorative Justice, Safeguarding and Energy Audits.

## **4. RFF Achievements & Activities 2014 – 2015**

### **4.1 Public Forums**

#### **Forum 1 “Culture, Tradition and Religion”**

Redbridge Faith Forum hosted an informative and uplifting open forum on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2014 on ‘Culture, Tradition and Religion - Are the boundaries between them blurred?’ The focus for the Public Forum came about from discussion at the Women's Workshops and the confusion that is frequently found in



the media regarding practices being a part of a faith practice when they are more attributable to localised cultural practices. Questions on a variety of topics had been raised in discussion at different events. Some questions were compiled in advice in case participants were constrained to ask in public. The prepared questions fitted in to the general theme of 'Culture, Tradition and Religion - Are the boundaries between them blurred?' which was used as the focus for the evening. The well attended meeting followed on from the RFF AGM with goodly time allowed for all to enjoy tasty refreshments generously supplied by the Sikh Community who hosted the event at Guru Nanak Satsang Karamsar Gurdwara.

The multi-faith panel comprised:

Isuru Perera (IP) - Buddhist representative

Rev Fr. Britto Belevedran (BB) - parish priest from a Catholic church in Walthamstow also the spokesperson for interfaith matters within the RC Diocese of Brentwood

Vinaya Sharma (VS) - Hindu representative

Rabbi Becker (LB) - Rabbi from the Sukkot Shalom Synagogue ~ a member of the Reform Jewish Community, also knowledgeable about the other Jewish denominations

Rukhsana Zafer (RZ) - Head teacher at a local Muslim school

Mankhmal Singh Palray (MSP) - Treasurer at the Singh Sabha London East Gurdwara.



Harmander Singh (HS) introduced the topic with a brief definition of terms and examples from different faiths and cultures. Such examples from the Indian sub-continent of culture include Dance (Bharathnatyam), Architecture (Hoysala or Mughal), Music (Hindustani/Karnatic), Yoga; and of tradition as Hospitality, Arti, Funeral tradition, Rangoli, Henna. The celebration at Christmas is a religious festival across all Christian communities. The current advertisements and materialism around the season are not part of the religion but for many is part of Western culture.



The Panel then answered questions on topics including

Marriage, Consanguinity, Celibacy, Head Covering for Women, Slaughter of Animals, Honour Killing.

The feedback from the floor was very positive and called for more opportunities to help raise awareness of the different faith perspectives but more importantly, the many more similarities and shared understandings. 100% of those attending said that they had

- a) gained more insight into similarities, differences between faith groups
- b) gained more understanding on the line between culture, tradition and religion



- c) felt the Public Forum contributed to people in Redbridge growing in understanding other's beliefs and values.



### Forum 2 - "Caring for those living with dementia and their caregivers"

RFF second Public Forum was an information sharing evening in March 2015 at Fullwell Cross Library to mark International Women's Day. This topic was chosen as a result of feedback received from those who attended one of the 5 sessions held at alternative places of worship on the theme "Towards Dementia Friendly Faith Communities" (see section 4.5). RFF invited local service providers to attend and speak about their work with people with dementia and their care givers. Some funding from the former Area 3, 4 and 6 committees allocated for women's workshops and Women's Day Conference was used to support this event.

Six local voluntary sector organisations accepted the invitation to give a ten minute presentation to the audience and then answer questions on a 1:1 basis and supply appropriate literature/signposting advice plus a seventh organisation provided an information stall.



Presentations were made by:-

- Alzheimer's Society – Ali Anthony & Caroline Wairia
- Age UK – Monique Debsie-Smith
- Redbridge Concern for Mental Health – Regina Byrne
- Sikh Community Care Project - Jasbir Sangar
- Carers Trust EHHR – Claire Taylor
- Redbridge Carers Support Service – Shamshia Ali

All these organisations plus Redbridge Respite Care Association had information stands and spoke on a one-to-one basis to answer individual's questions and provide signposting services during the interval and at the end of the evening.

This Open Forum also provided an opportunity for the audience to hear about the work of the Redbridge Fairness Commission of which Jacquie Grieve, Chair of Redbridge Faith Forum is a Commissioner. This additional presentation was made by Jon Owen & Councillor Farah Hussain introducing the work of the Fairness commission which had been set up to examine and consult on all the council activities and try and ensure cuts are fair.

Many favourable comments were received from both the audience and the presenters about the event and evaluations confirmed that

- ✓ 97% of those attending confirmed they were better informed about services available in Redbridge for people living with dementia
- ✓ 94% of those attending confirmed that were better informed about services available for carers in Redbridge

## **4.2 Interfaith Walk of Peace and Harmony:**

More than 100 people from all faiths joined together for this sixth Redbridge Faith Forum Annual Multi Faith Walk of peace on 19<sup>th</sup> October.



This was an excellent example of community involvement demonstrating commitment to people living peacefully together and contributing to a safer Redbridge. People of all ages including a number of children joined the walk. The children in particular asked thoughtful and pertinent questions at each of the places of worship visited. The Metropolitan Police Borough Commander Sue Williams joined the walk with her daughters. The presence of six local councillors indicated the council's commitment to the event.

An information booklet was given to walkers which included an overview of the faith teaching relevant to each venue visited. It also included a prayer for peace from each of the faiths and a reading on peace that would include people of no faith.

Rabbi Larry Becker set the walkers on their way with a message of peace drawing attention to the fact that peace is not just an absence from war. The group entered the Seventh Day Adventist Church, the former Synagogue in Coventry Road to hear a message of peace from the Christian perspective from Pastor Mburani. From there we processed to the Vihara, to hear a Buddhist chant by Reverend Hemeratana and the Community. One of the younger members of the community then spoke clearly about the teachings and Buddhist life principles. Moving on to the Hindu Temple, Vinaya Sharma welcomed all and gave a comprehensive explanation of Hinduism explaining that peace is an underlying principle of the faith. At the Mosque, the assembled group heard from the local Imam Mohammed Sharif Ali who explained how Islam derives its name from the Arabic word for Peace and completely disowned the actions of those who, in the name of Islam, present a false and distorted viewpoint. All received a goody bag to sustain them on their walk and were invited to for a welcome cup of tea at the Ilford Islamic centre before continuing the walk to be welcomed at the Sikh Gurdwara in the High Road. Mr Harbans Sing Seera gave a most informative talk on Sikhism and the Sikh faith commitment for all to live in harmony.

### 4.3 RFF Interfaith Social Event:



On Tuesday 23rd September 2014, seventy five people- members and friends of Redbridge Faith Forum (RFF) celebrated United Nation Day of Peace by gathering for a dinner party at Saravanaa Bhavan, a vegetarian restaurant in Ilford. This RFF event was a great opportunity to meet old friends and make new ones, to get to know RFF trustees and of course, to support Redbridge Faith Forum. The evening provided an ideal opportunity for guests to sample a delicious array of South Indian delicacies including a wonderful Kulfi (Indian frozen milk sweet) for dessert. Best of all was the convivial atmosphere around the tables, with old friends greeting and catching up with one another and new acquaintances being formed amidst chatter and laughter. A truly warm and convivial atmosphere was the order of the day among the guests of all faith and none. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> September, in that restaurant, diversity ruled and enriched everyone's life, turning this gathering into a lesson in harmonious community living, a fitting celebration for a Peace Day.

### 4.4 Strategic Partnership Working

RFF Trustees or Staff represent the forum at one or more of the following strategic groups:- Redbridge Dementia Partnership Workstream 1, Understanding Redbridge Communities, RCVS Network Meetings, Community Tension Monitoring Group, Redbridge Local Children's Safeguarding Board and Redbridge Compact. RFF contributes and shares information, ensuring greater awareness of topics discussed for faith leaders and representatives. RFF is involved in essential work behind the scenes with faith groups.

### 4.5 "Towards Dementia Friendly Faith Communities" Programme

One thematic focus at the Redbridge Faith Forum's (RFF) Women's Day Conference 2014, was raising awareness about dementia. From this event there was evidence of the need to raise awareness more widely including within and across faith communities. RFF was successful in receiving a grant from the Community Development Fund 2014-15 to run a project entitled 'Towards Dementia Friendly Faith Communities'. The project comprised five dementia awareness raising sessions held at various faith venues in Redbridge over a period of six months to enable those of different faith communities and neighbourhoods to attend at a convenient venue. The sessions were held on:

- 18 September 2014 at St Francis of Assisi Church, Barkingside,
- 7 October 2014 at Ilford Islamic Centre, Ilford,
- 17 November 2014 at Redbridge Jewish Community Centre, Sinclair House, Woodford
- 22 January 2015 at Singh Sabha London East Gurdwara, Seven Kings
- 24 February 2015 at Ilford Hindu Centre, Ilford.

The grant was match funded in kind, in particular by the Alzheimer's Society in the services of a fully trained presenter ~ Alli Anthony. Alli gave very informative talks at all sessions, explaining clearly what

dementia is and how it affects people's lives - both those who live with dementia and their care givers. She explained fully how people with dementia can be helped to "Live Well with Dementia". She also explained how people can become Dementia Friends and Dementia Champions within their communities. The latter involves one day training in order for the participant to become a presenter themselves and thus further the awareness within their faith community. In practice all attending the sessions became dementia friends and at least one person from each faith group took information on becoming a dementia champion.

The hosts at each of the faith venues were generous in welcome and use of their premises. Their generosity is much appreciated. There were people from different faiths present at each of the venues. This was real evidence that people realised that dementia can occur in any, and all faith communities. There was honesty expressed by participants that dementia is frequently seen as a stigma which can lead to denial and in some cases to isolation for those living with the disease.

At most sessions (equipment permitting) there was a power point presentation. This was very supportive particularly where participants had English as an additional language. The screen illustrations helped to focus on the information being given.

At each session the Redbridge 'Information Pack for People with Dementia and their Caregivers' was available and well received. The pack is currently being updated and is available will be available on Redbridge i as well in libraries and medical centres. Alli also recommended texting CONNECT2 on 70660 to request a free 'Staying Connect Kit'.

There were requests at all sessions for information on services and support available in Redbridge. RFF responded to these requests by hosting an information sharing evening on 4<sup>th</sup> March – details of which are given in section 4.1 of this Annual Report (Public Forum 2).

A full report on this project is available on the RFF website [www.redbridgefaithforum.org](http://www.redbridgefaithforum.org) under the category "About Us" - 2014-15 events.

#### **4.6 "Preserving the Memory" Holocaust Awareness Programme**

As part of its normal evaluation process at every event, Redbridge Faith Forum (RFF) asks for suggested topics, themes or issues that participants would wish to have developed at future events. In response to suggestions from previous events, RFF organised a series of three sessions to raise awareness of the Holocaust this year (2015). Funding was mainly provided by the Jewish Joint Burial Society. The purposes of the sessions were:

- to commemorate of Holocaust Memorial Day
- to learn more about the Holocaust itself
- to reflect on the pathway to genocides
- to consider what could be done to prevent genocides occurring
- to seek answers at a personal and community level to help prevent the succession of steps that lead to genocide.

The first two sessions followed the same format. Details of Session 1 are found under section 4.6 of this Annual Report – Session 3 of the Women's Workshops. Session 2 was held at Fullwell Cross Library.

100% of those attending Session 2 thought they had been challenged to consider their attitude and responses. Almost all felt that the sessions contributed to people in Redbridge getting on well together through understanding more. *'It was great to be amongst wide, diverse groups of people'*. Additional comments included: *'it was very helpful to hear participants from different faiths discussing past and*



*current topics relating to genocide (and) persecution'. A number of people commented that this type of workshop would be good to develop with young people: 'more events like this for young people and education venues'. 'This could be developed for schools'.*

The third session of 'Keeping the Memory Alive', was a screening of the film "Besa – the Promise" at Ilford Central Library. The Albanian word 'besa' means 'duty to help people' ~ the film portrayed this in practice. It told the story of the people of Albania, mostly Muslim who protected their Jewish neighbours during the Nazis occupation and not a single Jew was betrayed by its citizens. The film tracked individuals and families who provided help and protection. The makers of the film also traced some of the Jews who had survived because of this protection. It showed clearly the courage and the generosity of so many, and many friendships sustained. One particular family had held onto the precious scriptures of an escaping Jewish family with the promise of returning them at some time in the future. The promise took a long time to fulfil given the anti-religious reign of Communism for fifteen years after the war. There was much emotion when the sacred books were restored to their rightful owner.

Some of the many comments received from the audience are listed below-

*'It was very inspiring film it bring all faith together and help each other.'*

*'Really enjoyed the film. What an uplifting story a positive tale of how people of different faiths and backgrounds can care for each other.'*

*'A humbling experience - a film that gives so much hope that people can stand up to protect others despite differences. Great to see people of different faith present.'*

*'Very powerful, very beautiful should be shown in many places.'*

*'The film should be shown in schools'. '(RFF) Doing very good job with variety of programmes in multi faith'.*

Each of the sessions closed with an invitation to join in with the prayer for an end to violence from the Ethelburga Centre for Reconciliation and Peace. People of all faiths and none were willing to join in spirit if not in prayer. It seemed most fitting for Rabbi Irit Shillor to lead the reading at the last session.

## **4.7 Women's Workshops**

The interfaith women's workshops were established to enable women of all ages and from different faith backgrounds to meet together and discuss topics that really matter to them. Workshops are held in different faith venues and the host community opens the session with a short introduction of some aspect of that faith. They are timed to enable women to meet during the day and encourage those who had not felt able to attend evening meetings. Women attend on their own and in groups and forge new friendships and understanding. The topics for discussion arise from questions and suggestions from the women at the workshops. Three workshops took place in 2014-15 as follows.

### **Workshop 1 – "Faith & Fasting"**



On Thursday 11th September, around twenty women - came together in St Alban's Church, Ilford, for an afternoon of learning and exchange on the topic of faith and fasting. They were sustained with a delicious cream tea. The perspective of the following faiths to the topic of fasting was shared and discussed – Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Sikh, Hindu and Baha'i. The general consensus among everyone who attended the workshop, was that all had learned something of value and had come away with a better understanding of various faiths and cultures

including their own. Many women commented on the atmosphere of friendship and respect for each other.

### Workshop 2 – “Feasts, Festivals and Holy Days”



On 12<sup>th</sup> November the Women's Group met at the Singh Sabha London East Gurdwara, in Seven Kings. Parminder Kaur Kondral and a group of Sikh women gave a warm welcome and introduced the main topic for the session 'Feasts, Festivals and Holy Days ~ *What do we celebrate?*' by telling the group of the main Sikh Festivals. Women from different faiths then spoke with enthusiasm about some of their major faith festivals and celebrations. This addressed many misconceptions about which were the major festivals and what was also a cultural tradition but not necessarily a religious teaching. Our generous hosts

fed us well with pakoras, biscuits and tea as well as inviting all to join them in the langar for a most welcome vegetarian meal.

### Workshop 3 – “Preserving the Memory – what can we learn from the Holocaust?”



On 21<sup>st</sup> January a workshop was held at Sukkat Shalom Reform Synagogue marking the commemoration of Holocaust Memorial Day to learn more about the Holocaust itself, reflect on the pathway to genocides, and to consider what could be done to prevent them occurring.

Mitzy Kalinsky and Sheila Chiat, led the workshop. Sheila gave a clear explanation of the Shoah (the Hebrew term for the Holocaust) reading from a document produced by Yad Vashem. The Shoah was something unprecedented in the ferocity, systematic and wholesale murder in the name

of an ideology. Mitzi who is a cantor at the synagogue sang a song written by someone from the Lodz Ghetto before his deportation. The translation was circulated to all. It was a moving song which left all feeling emotional and near to tears. A circulated, passage by Rabbi Hugo Gryn, who survived Auschwitz, poignantly concluded that one "could live up to three weeks without food ..... almost three days without water; but you cannot live properly for three minutes without hope!" The women worked in pairs to examine gut reactions to sample scenarios (provided by Jacquie Grieve) and discovered that instant reactions frequently show prejudices. The women then considered how their reactions differed, once they had time to examine their prejudiced reactions and recognise them for what they were – this exercise was helpful in considering the question “What Can We Do”. The women readily joined in a prayer which ended 'May I play my part in breaking the cycle of violence by realising that peace begins in me.'

- 75% of those who completed an evaluation said the workshop helped them to understand the Holocaust more fully.
- 75% said they gained more insight or much more insight into why genocides continue to happen.
- Just over 75% felt that the workshop has helped them to think of their own attitude to events in their own life.



## 4.8 Civic participation & support for faith communities in the local area

**Redbridge Green Fair** – RFF had a stall at this event in May 2014 in partnership with Fairtrade - it was a great opportunity to promote our charity and meet many local residents.

**Social Enterprise**: RFF is an associate of the Sophia Hubs group 'Incubators for social enterprise harnessing the wisdom of faith'. RFF's role is one of support through publicity involving the forum's interfaith contacts. Sophia Hubs is aimed at training local people in gaining entrepreneurial skills to set up new social enterprises and businesses.

**Launch of Liberty Credit Union** – a Trustee and a staff member attended this in October 2014.

**Contact with Met Borough Commander** – The Borough Commander supported the RFF Interfaith Walk in October 2014. In February 2015 RFF Trustees accepted an invitation to meet with the Borough Commanderto discuss any areas of concern surrounding community tension in faith communities in Redbridge, shortly after this the Borough Commander did praise the community cohesion work of RFF when addressing a Pensioners Group. In March 2014 RFF publicised and attended the launch of “Ask Me” held at St Albans Church in Ilford.

**Holocaust memorial service** in January 2015: RFF promoted and encouraged representatives of different faith groups to attend. Five RFF Trustees plus several RFF Members attended.

**Buddhist New Year Ceremony** – the Chair, Trustee and Volunteer attended this ceremony in April at Woodbridge High School to celebrate the Buddhist New Year and commemorate the birth, enlightenment and death of the Buddha

**Community Ifta at Ilford Islamic Centre** – Trustees and Members of RFF accepted the invitation of the Ilford Islamic Centre to experience the breaking of the fast during the holy month of Ramadan including a Ramadan reflection at sunset on 23<sup>rd</sup> July. This community event is an annual occasion and helps to reaffirm community cohesion and solidarity during Ramadan.

**Buddhist `New Robe ceremony**: held at Woodbridge School in the autumn was attended by a Trustee and a RFF Member.

**Vigil in remembrance of Magdalena Welna** - this vigil was supported by over a hundred residents in the Valentines area in remembrance of Magdalena who met an untimely death in November 2014. RFF supported this vigil through publicity posters and attendance.

## 4.9 Consultations

RFF has publicised and representatives contributed to consultations – information was circulated to all RFF contacts and publicised in e-news with encouragement to participate when appropriate.

- LBR Corporate Grants Programme
- Housing Allocations Scheme
- Consultation on Care Act
- Consultation on Leisure and Cultural Services
- “Life in Redbridge” Survey.

RFF Chair was invited to join the Fairness Commission set up by the council to engage with Redbridge residents to discuss how funding cuts should be managed to ensure fairness in austerity. The Chair has attended many meetings of the Fairness Commission and many consultative events in her role as a Fairness Commissioner.

## 4.10 Information Sharing and Signposting

**RFF e-news**: Feedback from senior officers and from the voluntary sector indicates the value and high quality of the RFF E-News. RFF produced and circulated 12 e-news bulletins between 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015, to approximately 400 individuals and groups. It provides free advertising/promotional

space for individuals, groups and services from all sectors; this has proved to be an important avenue of sharing interfaith (and none) community information.

#### **4.11 Signposting and Referrals:**

RFF continues to be a point of contact for signposting and referrals for both service users and service providers in Redbridge. Other organisations and council departments make a RFF a point of contact for advice and information regarding faith and faith communities. RFF does its best to accommodate all requests for signposting but is restricted by amount of staff time available.

### **5. Funding, Membership and Donations**

RFF was successful in a limited number of funding applications this year and successfully organised fund raising events. Grants and fundraising enabled continued employment of two valued part time members of staff to organise and promote projects and activities. We are most grateful to all our funders: London Borough of Redbridge: Strategic Partnerships and Community Fund (for work in 2014/15), NHS, LBR Area Committees 3, 5 and 6; Jewish Joint Burial Society and Redbridge Community Fund. We are also grateful to all the faith groups and individuals for their generous donations and in kind support such as the provision of venues, presenters and hospitality. Their continued commitment to interfaith and good community relations is greatly valued. RFF as a charity is increasing the value of its donations through Gift Aid.

**See Appendix for the summary Financial Report 2014/15** (copy of the full Financial Report is available on request)

### **6. Partnerships and Thanks**

Liaising and networking within the voluntary community sector and the statutory sector has steadily increased this year resulting in building stronger links with other organisations. During 2014-15 RFF has enjoyed working with many different organisations and partners. Co-operation with them has been an essential part of our approach to interfaith work and our success. (See table below)

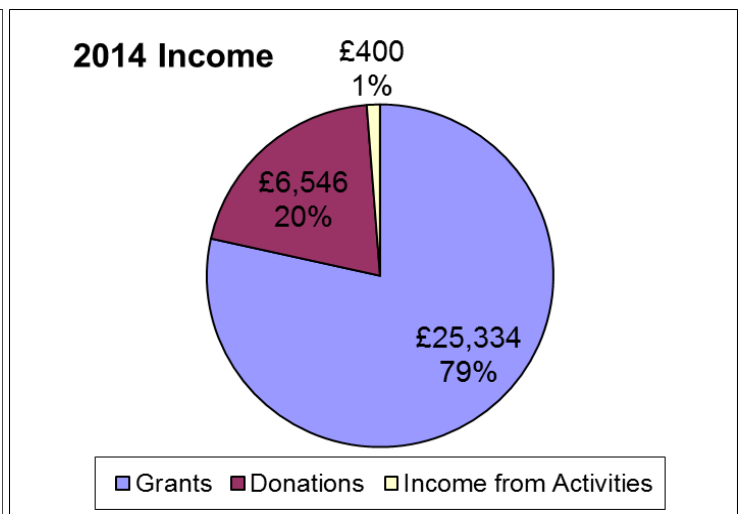
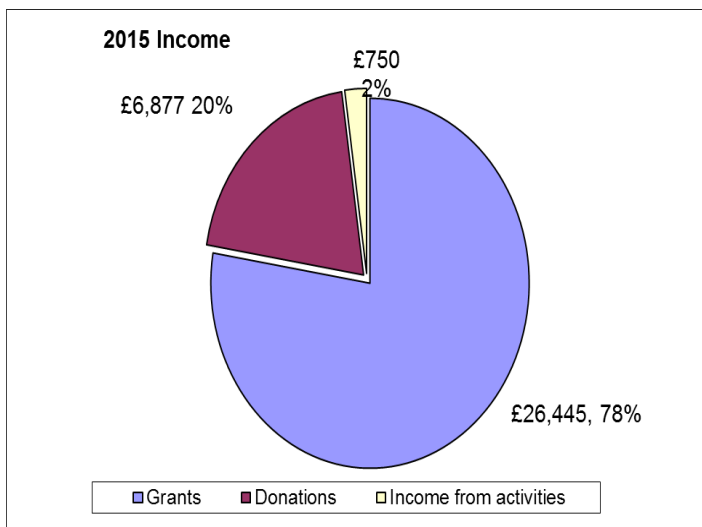
<b>Local VCS organisations</b>	<b>Local faith communities</b>	<b>Local statutory services</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age UK</li> <li>• Alzheimer's Society</li> <li>• Carers Trust EHHR</li> <li>• Concern for Mental Health</li> <li>• Forest Farm Peace Garden</li> <li>• RAMFEL</li> <li>• Redbridge Carers Support Service</li> <li>• Redbridge CVS</li> <li>• Redbridge Children &amp; Young Peoples Network</li> <li>• Redbridge Concern for Mental Health</li> <li>• Redbridge Equalities &amp; Communities Council</li> <li>• Redbridge Respite Service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baha'i faith group</li> <li>• Balfour Road Mosque</li> <li>• Belgrave Road Mosque</li> <li>• FORMO</li> <li>• Gurdwara Singh Sabha London East</li> <li>• Ilford Hindu Centre (VHP)</li> <li>• Ilford Islamic Centre &amp; Mosque</li> <li>• Ilford Town Churches Fellowship</li> <li>• Karamsar Gurdwara, Ilford.</li> <li>• League of British Muslims</li> <li>• Redbridge &amp; Chigwell Muslim Association</li> <li>• Redbridge Buddhist Cultural Centre &amp; Vihara.</li> <li>• Redbridge Jewish Community Centre (JCC)</li> <li>• Salvation Army</li> <li>• South Woodford Islamic Centre (QMT)</li> <li>• St Alban's Church</li> <li>• St John the Baptist (RC) church</li> <li>• St Peter's Paul (RC) Church</li> <li>• Sukkat Shalom Synagogue</li> <li>• The Drive Methodist Church</li> <li>• Town Centre Churches Fellowship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult Social Services</li> <li>• Children's Services - Local Safeguarding Children's Board</li> <li>• LBR Strategic Services and Equalities &amp; Diversity Team</li> <li>• Metropolitan Police Service</li> <li>• Redbridge Safer Neighbourhoods</li> <li>• Redbridge Safer Communities Partnership (RSCP)</li> <li>• Standing Advisory Committee for Religious Education (SACRE)</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sikh Community Care Project</li> <li>• Sikhs In The City</li> <li>• The Healthy Living Project</li> <li>• The Welcome Project</li> <li>• Victim Support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vine United Reformed Church</li> </ul>	
<b>London wide organisations</b>	<b>Other local organisations</b>	<b>National organisations</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• London Boroughs Faiths Network</li> <li>• London Catalyst</li> <li>• Faiths Forum for London</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Tension</li> <li>• Compact</li> <li>• Fairness Commission</li> <li>• Liberty Credit Union</li> <li>• Local Businesses</li> <li>• Local Forums</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UK Interfaith network</li> <li>• Sikh Council UK</li> </ul>

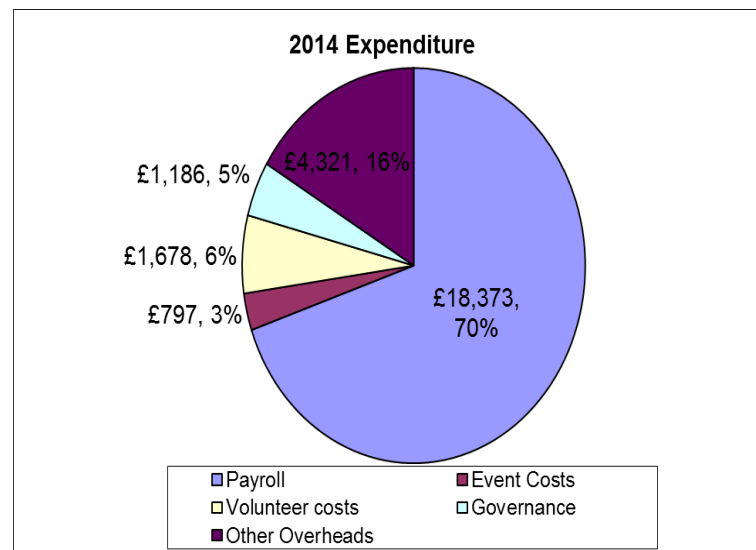
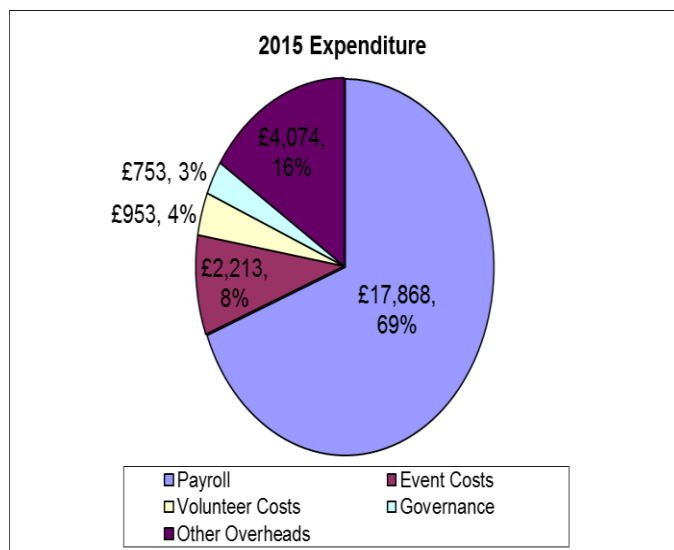
We wish to thank all the different organisations/sectors listed below and apologise if we have missed anyone out – we appreciate every act of support and kindness.

## Appendix - Income & Expenditure Summary

	2015	2014
<b>Income</b>	<b>£34,072</b>	<b>£32,280</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	<b><u>£25,861</u></b>	<b><u>£26,335</u></b>
<b>Surplus</b>	<b><u>£ 8,211</u></b>	<b><u>£ 5,925</u></b>



Income for 2014-15 totalled £34,072 comprised of grant income of £26,445 from London Borough of Redbridge Core Grant, Redbridge Community Fund, Area Committees 3, 5 and 6 and the Jewish Joint Burial Society plus donations of £6,877 and income from activities of £750.



Expenditure in 2014-15 totalled £25861 with payroll costs accounting for £17868 and event costs of £4,074 reflecting the greater number of events held in 2014-15.