



NEWS RELEASE

19 March 2010

National Inter Faith Week

An Inter Faith Week will take place across England and Wales from Sunday 21 to Saturday 27 November 2010.

The 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.

This will be the second time that such a Week has taken place in England and Wales. It builds on the very successful pattern of events held last November which ranged from social action events, to discussions and dialogues, inter faith football matches, meals, inter faith walks and pilgrimages, festivals and celebrations, tree plantings, exhibitions, concerts, film festivals, activities in schools and in FE and HE and other institutions.

Minister for Cohesion Shahid Malik said "The 2009 Week was a big success. It raised the profile of faith communities and their contribution to society, increased inter faith engagement and understanding and helped people of religious and non-religious beliefs get into dialogue. I am delighted that there will be a similar Week in 2010."

Co-Chairs of the Inter Faith Network for the UK, Rt Revd Dr Alastair Redfern and Dr Girdari Lal Bhan, said "Inter Faith Week offers a tremendous opportunity for shared learning, making new connections and deepening inter faith understanding." It is hoped that faith communities across the country will take part, alongside schools, colleges, universities, local authorities, health care organisations, and many others.

The Week is being led by the Inter Faith Network for the UK, working with its member bodies, in consultation with the Department for Communities and Local Government and also with the Department for Children, Schools and Families, the Local Government Association and the Equality and Human Rights Commission. Regional Faith Forums in England will again play a key role in supporting and making known the pattern of events in their regions. In Wales, the lead on the Week is being taken by the Inter Faith Council for Wales in consultation with relevant statutory and other bodies.

Notes for Editors:

1. Press queries: Tel 020 7931 7766 ifnet@interfaith.org.uk
2. For enquiries about Inter Faith Week, email: enquiries@interfaithweek.org.uk
3. The Inter Faith Week website www.interfaithweek.org.uk will be further developed across the coming weeks to provide additional resources (including a report on last year's Week) and event and project ideas.
4. The Inter Faith Network for the UK www.interfaith.org.uk was founded in 1987 to 'advance public knowledge and mutual understanding of the teachings, traditions and practices of the different faith communities in Britain' and to promote good relations between people of different faiths in the UK. IFN links over 170 member bodies including: national representative bodies of the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, and Zoroastrian faiths; national, regional, local and other inter faith bodies; and academic institutions and educational bodies concerned with inter faith issues.
5. Information about the Inter Faith Council for Wales can be found at: www.interfaithwales.org/
6. Contact details for English Regional Faith Forums can be found at:
East of England: www.eefaithscouncil.org.uk
East Midlands: www.ffem.org.uk
London: www.londoncivicforum.org.uk (Faiths Forum for London)
North East: www.nerfn.org
North West: www.faithnorthwest.org.uk
South East: www.se-faithforum.net
South West: www.faithnetsouthwest.org.uk
West Midlands: www.wmfaithsforum.org.uk
Yorkshire and Humber: www.yorkshireandhumberfaiths.org.uk
7. Scottish Inter Faith Week will be taking place from 28 November to 5 December. (See www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org/22.html) This Week is now in its seventh year.
8. The possibility of participation in Inter Faith Week is under consideration in Northern Ireland.
9. A relevant source of funding for local Week linked events and projects in England is the Faiths in Action Fund of Communities and Local Government. Faith, inter faith and other voluntary and community sector groups and organisations working at local level in England can apply for grants for up to £6,000 from this programme which is administered by the Community Development Foundation (CDF). Further information on Faiths in Action can be found at www.cdf.org.uk/web/guest/faiths-in-action or by telephoning 01223 406553 or emailing fundingadmin@cdf.org.uk.