

Greening Faiths: Toward Sustainable Living Saturday 4 April 2009

There were about 45 people present. Tahira Kulsoom chaired the day and presented the leaflet that the green group of Reading Faith Forum produced. Like the conference itself it is entitled *Greening Faiths: Towards Sustainable Living* consisting of ideas of six major faiths about the environment: Hinduism, Christianity, Buddhism, Sikhism, Judaism and Islam.

There were three presentations, the first was on the science of climate change by Rev Professor Ian James (formerly of the University of Reading's Department of Meteorology). Swami Ambikananda Saraswati, a Hindu monastic, then gave us a Hindu perspective on the environment. Muzammal Hussain, founder of the London Islamic Network for the Environment, emphasised that he was presenting 'an Islamic perspective' rather than 'the Islamic perspective'. Rev Prof Ian James then gave what he emphasized was 'my Christian perspective'. During questions to the panel Swami Ji commented that it is hard enough just to get temple members to sort the recycling. This led to a discussion about faith groups having to pay for their recycling collections and ultimately a petition against this.

Since the conference a short survey was made and the results from 31 responses that 2/3rds of FC have recycle bins. Those that don't have a commercial recycle bin but would prefer a free RBC bin.

After a break there was a session on networks and practicalities, beginning with Ben Burfoot of Reading Borough Council. The Climate Change Strategy will be launched at Forbury Fever on World Environment Day, June 6th. He emphasised the importance of making the response to climate change a positive experience and especially hoped the faith communities could help in this. Muzammal then explained about the [London Islamic Network for the Environment](#) - Joanna Laynesmith gave a brief introduction to [Christian Ecology Link](#), [Operation Noah](#), [A Rocha](#) and [Eco-congregation](#). Finally Paul Harper introduced GREN the Greater Reading Environmental Network. They are primarily a yahoo group for exchanging information, They've put on a [COIN](#) event that led to the foundation of the [Reading Energy Pioneers](#) and they're currently involved in the Local Partnership on Climate Change. They will soon have a website.

Outcomes:

- The conference delegates established both Muslim and Christian Environment groups in Reading which we expect to come together for certain events.
- Clarification of Recycle bins given to faith communities to be raised at next RFF meeting with Michael Coughlin. (June 09)
- "The Age of Stupid" film was shown in the Town Hall in June 2009.
- The leaflet 'Greening Faiths' is available. If you'd like copies contact Jan Hearn at jan@strongertogether.org.uk