

Other Networks

The project also set up:

- A method of forwarding relevant information to faith communities that work with Children and Young People. This is run in cooperation with RCVYS. It may be a basis for a more developed network later. It already has a dedicated area on the website.
- The beginnings of a network of faith communities involved in Environmental Issues. Again this has its own area on the web.

The Workers and the Funding

Reading Faith Forum, received a grant from The Faith Community Capacity Building Fund to do this work. Jan Hearn was the main Networking Contractor, Mohammed Shabir and Nusrat Sultan assisted. David Martin, the director of an international award winning RE video, is the contractor for the RE CD.

To read the full report of the work, previous research or obtain the Directory of faith based communities in Reading, contact the secretary through the website or find information on line there.

Reading Faith Forum

RFF exists to enable faith communities to speak out together, and take action together. The Forum holds regular meetings to which anyone is welcome.

www.readingfaithforum.com

Or via 14 Erleigh Rd Reading RG1 5LH



Discussion at Reading Faith Forum.

Here issues are discussed, projects decided on and statements to the press made.

FAITH FORUM

READING

Joining Up Faith Communities to Serve Reading

RFF Networking Project Report

Summary Version

on building networks so that the Faith Communities of Reading can increase their capacity to serve Reading.



The Need to Join up Different Projects

In 2006, research showed that Faith Communities provide the equivalent of 250-400 full time staff and 80 halls and rooms available for the public. (See www.readingfaithforum.com for more details).

The report also said that because faith communities were rooted in the community they were really in touch with the reality on the ground and the people who might tackle it. On the other hand, this also meant that different faith communities don't always know what others are doing and it can be difficult to be strategic. The aim of this Project is, therefore, to build networks of faith communities that link with secular partners, so they are more aware of what is going on, more able to cooperate and share resources where appropriate.

What the Networking Project has done

Between May 2007 and March 2008 the networking project has:

- Updated and revamped the directory of faith communities in Reading, both in paper and web form. This is a key and much valued resource to let people network with faith communities.
- Established 4 networks of faith communities with actual or potential links to secular groups.
- Created electronic networking facilities on the website to support the networks.
- Ran 2 training events / conferences to support two key networks.
- Researched into Community premises, black majority churches etc.
- Networked directly with others on behalf of the faith communities, e.g. Community Development Forum.

Thus the project has:

- Delivered useful networking, training and research.
- Proved the usefulness of the concept.
- Discovered that some networks need more support than others.

*Training Day and Conference on Managing Community Premises. Autumn 2007
Case study on a Mosque*



*Training Day and Conference on Managing Community Premises. Autumn 2007
Trainer addresses the conference*

Community Premises Network

Faith communities in Reading run at least 45 premises with 80 rooms and halls available to the public. These are used by hundreds of community groups. They are often run by people in their spare time, strongly motivated by faith to serve Reading, but with little training or support.

This Network:

- Ran a training course with 30 present. There was a high class professional trainer provided with help from RVA. There were case studies for various bodies including a Mosque. Feedback was enthusiastic.
- Information has been circulated about available funding.
- The website now supports discussion and information areas.

Faith Communities and State Schools

Apart from the 17 church schools in the Greater Reading area, faith communities are constantly being asked to provide someone to talk about their faith or to host a visit to their place of worship. In East Reading "RE Inspired" provide large teams to 14 schools to deliver the Christian part of the Agreed Syllabus. Elsewhere, help for schools can be more difficult to find.

This network:

- Ran a training and conference day, bringing together all Faiths, representatives of the Reading and Wokingham Education Departments, RE Inspired and Jo Fageant, who wrote the Agreed Syllabus for the Berkshire Local Education Authorities. It learnt about the Agreed Syllabus and problems for schools and faith communities. This group is eager to meet again.
- The website has discussion & information areas for this group.
- The Reading Faith Forum Religious Education CD project has produced a disc with a bank of photographs of local faith communities for use in local schools. The first disc will also include 15 lessons based on these pictures and the Agreed Syllabus. Each lesson has a sound track and lesson notes.
- This work is vital for mutual understanding in our town.