

# Faith & Cohesion

A Faiths Together in Croydon Report

March 2008

WE DON'T  
ALWAYS HAVE  
TO AGREE

BUT WE  
STILL RESPECT  
& LISTEN TO  
EACH OTHER



## **Acknowledgements**

Contributions to this report and the evening were many and varied. We thank all those giving time, energy, money, ideas and enthusiasm before, during and after this important event.

We want to make special mention of our Faiths Together Steering Group Members for making it happen. Our sincere thanks also go to: our fantastic speakers Cllr Steve O'Connell and the Chief Executive of Croydon Council, Jon Rouse; the Corporate Equalities and Cohesion Unit at Croydon Council; Jury's Inn Hotel Croydon; Croydon Community Network (through Croydon Voluntary Action) and the Community Development Foundation for providing the monies to make this happen; to Jo Gough for putting together the report and finally to amazing contributions for all those taking part.

Thank you   Thank you   Thank you   Thank you   Thank you   Thank you

## Contents

Purpose & Scope	5
Background	6 – 8
Attendance	9
Programme	10
Speakers	11 – 12
Rev Barry Goodwin	11
Cllr Steve O’Connell	11
Jon Rouse	11-12
Getting Involved	13 - 15
Steering Group Review	16
Conclusions	17 – 20
Action Plan	18 – 19
Charter	20
Recommendations	21
Contact Details	22

## **1. Purpose and Scope**

This report provides a comprehensive record of the Faiths Together in Croydon (FTiC) event, 'Faith & Cohesion', held on 27 November 2007 at Jury's Inn Hotel, Croydon.

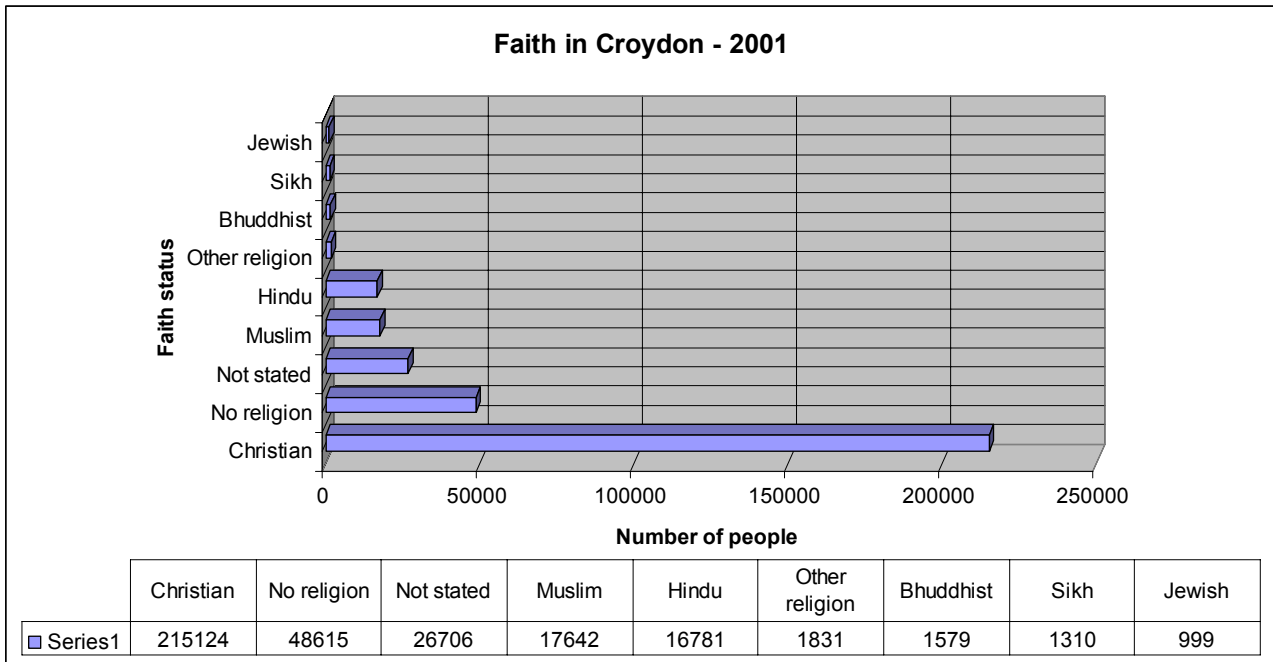
The main substance of the report will focus on the activities of the day including summaries of speeches and group work activities. It will also provide an analysis of findings leading to recommendations for future action. Appendices provide a full record of contributions and are circulated separately to this report.

The report serves as both a record of the success of the day and also as a tool to influence future planning of inter-faith activity to support the community cohesion agenda in Croydon. Further it provides direction and action for the ongoing development of a strong and sustainable Inter-faith forum (Faiths Together in Croydon) in Croydon.

## 2. Background

Croydon has a long and powerful history of faith-based community action and a vibrant faith-based community sector acting to tackle inequalities and to support community cohesion across and within faiths as well as working with those without faith.

77% of the Croydon population completing the 2001 Census stated they had a faith, with 66% claiming to be Christian, 5% Muslim and 5% Hindu. 15% claimed to have no religion.



Croydon ranks in the top 15 London Boroughs for numbers of Christians, Hindus and other religions as defined by the 2001 Census. See below:

Christian			
London Borough	Number	Percentage	Ranking
Havering	170725	76.1	1
Bexley	159234	72.9	2
Bromley	212871	72.0	3
Sutton	126663	70.5	4
Barking and Dagenham	113111	69.0	5
Richmond upon Thames	113444	65.8	6
<b>Croydon</b>	<b>215124</b>	<b>65.1</b>	<b>7</b>
Kingston upon Thames	95110	64.6	8
Hillingdon	155775	64.1	9
Hammersmith and Fulham	105169	63.6	10

Merton	119002	63.3	11
Enfield	172836	63.2	12
Kensington and Chelsea	98466	62.0	13
Wandsworth	160946	61.8	14
Southwark	150781	61.6	15
Hindu			
London	Number	Percentage	Ranking
Harrow	40548	19.6	1
Brent	45228	17.2	2
Redbridge	18661	7.8	3
Ealing	23384	7.8	4
Hounslow	16064	7.6	5
Newham	16901	6.9	6
Barnet	21011	6.7	7
<b>Croydon</b>	<b>16781</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>8</b>
Merton	8736	4.6	9
Hillingdon	11197	4.6	10
Kingston upon Thames	5343	3.6	11
Enfield	9176	3.4	12
Wandsworth	5929	2.3	13
Sutton	3726	2.1	14
Haringey	4432	2.0	15
Other religion			
London	Value	Percentage	Ranking
Harrow	4208	2.0	1
Brent	2977	1.1	2
Barnet	3215	1.0	3
City of London	52	0.7	4
Enfield	1702	0.6	5
Camden	1161	0.6	6
Hackney	1148	0.6	8
Kensington and Chelsea	904	0.6	7
Hounslow	1182	0.6	9
<b>Croydon</b>	<b>1831</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>10</b>
Haringey	1135	0.5	11
Westminster	945	0.5	12
Lambeth	1241	0.5	13
Lewisham	1135	0.5	14
Redbridge	1038	0.4	15

Faiths Together in Croydon (FTiC) began in 2003 with a series of newsletters and meetings bringing people of different faith communities together to share news and insights on different topics.

In 2004 Croydon Voluntary Action (CVA) secured £6,874 from Government Office for London's Community Empowerment Programme to support the development and sustainability of an inter-faith forum in the borough. A place was secured for this forum at the most senior partnership table in the borough, the Croydon Strategic Partnership.

At the end of 2005 FTiC successfully applied for a 'Faith Capacity Builders Fund' grant from the Community Development Foundation bringing new energy to this vision. This funding allowed FTiC to map faith communities in Croydon and conduct two consultation events to inform the development of this new forum.

The first event held at Croydon Town Hall on 9 November 2006 discussed the findings of the mapping exercise and sought the views of Croydon's faith communities on how FTiC can be resourced and maintained.

The second event on 28 February 2007 reflected on the findings of the first consultation and considered how Faiths Together in Croydon might be further enriched by the active involvement and participation of young people in the borough and how the forum might seek their views on how faith communities can work together.

This report focuses predominantly on the FTiC event on the 27 November 2007 which examined Faith and Cohesion and sought to direct a FTiC work-plan for the 2008/09 coming year.



### 3. Attendance

137 people were invited with 72 individuals (53%) attending of which 61 (85%) identified as faith and/or community groups as listed:

#### Organisations

CRERC	St Peter's Church
Sabrang Ladies Group	St Matthews Church
Asian Resource Centre of Croydon	Ignite Skills CIC
Gethsemane Pentecostal Church	Indian Cultural Centre
St. Mary's RC Church	CHANA
Croydon Jubilee Church	St. Andrew's RC Church
Croydon Quakers	Love Croydon
Crystal Palace Community Church	Christ Church
Ahanadiyya Muslim Association	Churches Together in Coulsdon
Anglican Borough Dean	RC Dean of Croydon
Purley Baptist Church	Addiscombe Parish Church
Place of Refuge	St Peter's Church
All Saints Church	Women's International Peace Organisation
Mighty Men of Valour	Downsview Methodist Church
St Matthews Church	MMK Foundation – Inter faith Group
Unification Family Church	Hindu Council UK
CofE Diocese of Southwark	CCPCC
Science of the Soul	Religious Consultant to Croydon Schools
Croydon Tabernacle	St Mary Magdalene Addiscombe
Family Federation	Chaplaincy- Bethlem Royal Hospital
United Reformed	Boston Road Baptist Church
CofE – West Wickham	Croydon Inter-faith Group (Buddhists)
Diocese of Southwark	Gethsemane Pentecostal Church
Ethnic Minority Business Federation	St Francis Church
Sikh Gurdwara	St Mildred's Church
Holy Family Sanderstead	St. Paul's Church
St. Marks Church – South Norwood	Nichiren Daishonin Soka Gakki Buddhist

In addition the following organisations attended and contributed to the event:

- ◇ Croydon Council (Officers and Councillors)
- ◇ Croydon Met. Police and Safer Croydon Partnership Members
- ◇ SENSE
- ◇ South Norwood Neighbourhood Partnership
- ◇ Co-operative Funeral Care
- ◇ Croydon Voluntary Action

## 4. The Programme




**FAITHS TOGETHER IN CROYDON**

Tuesday 27<sup>TH</sup> November 2007, 6:00pm – 8:30pm

Venue:  
Jury's Inn Croydon, Wellesley Road, Croydon, Surrey CR0 9XY

AGENDA

<u>Time</u>	
6:00 – 6:30	Registration and Refreshments
6:30 – 6:40	Welcome Barry Goodwin
6:40 – 6:50	Introduction Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Safety and Cohesion Cllr. Steve O'Connell
6:50 – 7:10	Croydon Context Croydon Council, Chief Executive Jon Rouse
7:10 – 7:20	Introduction to group discussion Barry Goodwin
7:20 – 8:00	Group Discussion
8:00 – 8:20	Feedback
8:20 – 8:30	Next Steps and Close

Supported by **CROYDON COUNCIL** and  **croydonvoluntaryaction**

## 5. The Speakers

### 5.1 Rev Barry Goodwin



Rev Barry Goodwin from Faiths Together in Croydon (FTiC) and the Diocese of Southwark hosted the event and welcomed all participants to the 3<sup>rd</sup> full meeting of Faiths Together in Croydon.

Barry welcomed the guest speakers and gave a short history of FTiC.

### 5.2 Councillor Steve O'Connell, Deputy Leader of Croydon Council and Cabinet Lead for Safety and Cohesion

Cllr O'Connell reaffirmed his and the Council's commitment to supporting inter-faith activity in the borough.



In his capacity as Cabinet Lead for Safety and Cohesion he introduced the new Equality and Cohesion Unit and the plans to launch a themed partnership focusing on equality and cohesion.

Steve welcomed the opportunity to engage with those with a faith and confirmed a desire to have an ongoing dialogue with Faiths Together in Croydon.

### 5.3 Jon Rouse, Chief Executive of Croydon Council



Jon used an ancient story from the Old Testament, which can also be found in the Qur'an to talk about a cultural exchange between the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon. To read the full version of Jon's speech please see Appendix 1 or go to:

[www.faithstogetherincroydon.co.uk](http://www.faithstogetherincroydon.co.uk).

Jon used the story to draw out lessons for life in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Croydon about how we might think about community cohesion and the role of faith.

These lessons were:

- The importance of being willing to take risks, not only understand and absorb each others' cultures, but also to go into other territory that takes us out of our comfort zones.
- To share the riches of our faiths and be generous in sharing them.
- Don't avoid hard questions. Not necessary to dilute beliefs or views just to make the other people feel comfortable.
- Bring openness and honesty as this will add depth to any exchange.
- Be vigilant and be prepared to meet the changes or challenges which ensure people do not use faith for inappropriate means. Our faith communities must be at the forefront of identifying and confronting dangerous radicalism whatever its source or roots.
- We can return to our cultures whilst being enriched by the culture of others.



## **6. Getting Involved**

FTiC takes an inclusive and participatory approach towards decision-making in planning its activities and deciding on priorities. To this end part of the November 2007 event was dedicated to a small group work exercise designed to enable each and every participant to get involved in discussions and to influence the way forward.

### **6.1 The Process**

A group exercise took place during one 40 minute time slot. 5 separate groups were guided by a facilitator through the same themed discussion on: 'An Inter-Faith vision for a Cohesive Croydon'. Participants were encouraged to comment on the draft vision from Croydon Council and to agree how FTiC could contribute to this vision.

Each group focused on 1 or 2 of the 5 principles listed below each starting at a different point on the list to give broad coverage:

1. Everyone has a shared sense of belonging;
2. Our differences are valued;
3. Everyone can exercise their rights and recognises their responsibilities;
4. Everyone has similar opportunities and life chances;
5. Our diversity is promoted as strength.

Participants were encouraged to share their views and to prioritise action using post-it notes with the following question in mind:

Do you agree with these principles?

How do you / Faiths Together in Croydon / Croydon Strategic Partnership achieve these principles?

Having discussed the main issues each group prioritised three action points which were recorded and presented to the full audience.

## 6.2 Group Work Analysis

The following analysis provides a summary of findings with a focus on action planning alongside recognising shared strength of feeling.

The ideas, comments, and suggestions from the event can be divided into 3 themes:



1. Principles of working together or a Croydon Charter for inter-faith work
2. Project proposals
3. Action for partners (Council, Police, Health etc)

A summary of the priority suggestions are as follows (a full account of all contributions is available in Appendix 2 and at [www.faithstogetherincroydon.gov.uk](http://www.faithstogetherincroydon.gov.uk))

### 6.2.1 Principles of working together or a Croydon Charter for inter-faith work

- Each group's own traditions need to be maintained and consideration should be given to each other's own faiths and views
- Address feelings of fear between strangers by respecting and valuing each other
- Need to look at the myths about young people and different behaviours particularly Muslim and African-Caribbean youth. Eg. Al-Khair school could look at challenges faced by Muslim youth.

### 6.2.2 Project Proposals

- Start projects for young people to find out about the values and discipline of different cultural groups.
- Multi faith action and projects together eg for homeless or youth or environmental - gardens, this might engage some of those who do not want to come to meetings and talk.
- Faith Communities could promote English lessons and extra support given to bi-lingual children

### 6.2.3 Action for partners (Council, Croydon Voluntary Action, Police, Health etc)

- Officers/local workers should be encouraged to live in the area, spend more time with places of worship
- More volunteer schemes and more publicity of these within the faith communities, schools, youth groups
- Opportunities should be provided for people to contact/talk to the council. These could be volunteers from the faith communities.
- Youth, particularly males, need safe male adult role models, Secondary schools could link with Primary pupils.



## 7. Steering Group Review

To aid the future planning and development of FTiC, the steering group reviewed the event at its January 2008 meeting. Steering group members recognised the following strengths:

- ◇ The event was well attended with good contributions
- ◇ People from different groups came together to share ideas and pursue common goals
- ◇ This event started the ball rolling creating an impetus for further inter-faith work
- ◇ Steering group members took an active role in designing the event and facilitating at the event
- ◇ The inspirational speech from the Chief Executive was a good starting point for the discussions
- ◇ There is general support for the cohesion principles outlined
- ◇ The Council have committed to support inter-faith activity



Also the following areas for improvement:

- ◇ The representation across Croydon faiths could be improved but FTiC has made a good start
- ◇ Volunteer-led management of FTiC is difficult to sustain with such a large remit to take on
- ◇ Sustainable funding is not yet secured



## 8. Conclusions

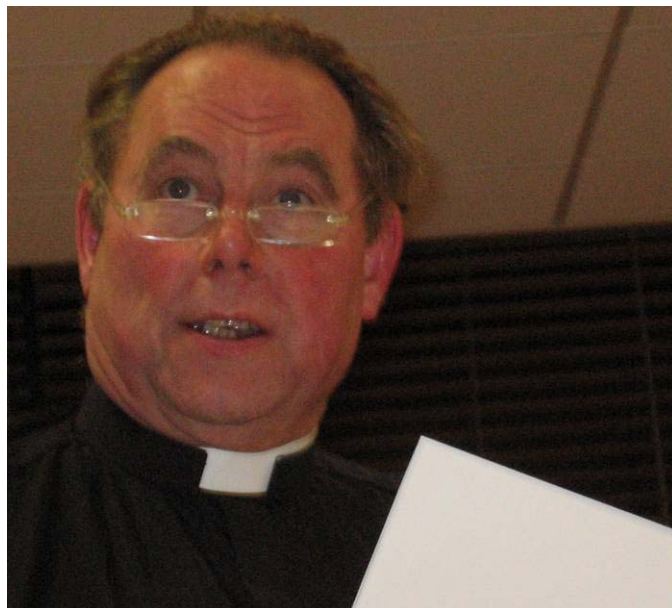
### 8.1 General Conclusions

Feedback points to the success of the event building on the foundations of previous FTiC activity. FTiC Steering Group members are looking to reactivate inter-faith activity and sustain new approaches across the borough.

This event marks the start of an exciting new era of faith involvement in Croydon decision-making.

The above contributions and ideas can be divided into 3 themes (see 6.):

1. Principles of working together or a Croydon Charter for inter-faith work
2. Project proposals
3. Action for partners (Council, Police, Health etc)



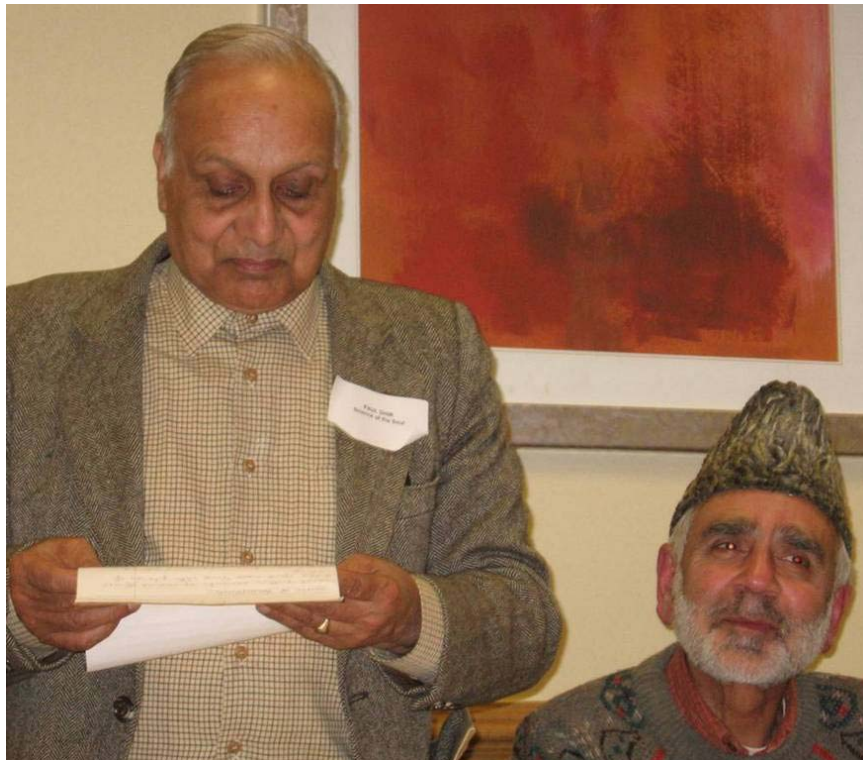
The recommendations under each theme form the basis of both the action plan and the draft charter outlined in the following pages.

## 8.2 Faiths Together in Croydon (FTiC) Action Plan 2008/9

Taking from the contributions from all three FTiC in Croydon events we outline below a plan for action of the coming year. As is the case with all action plans it requires both commitment and resource to be successful.

<i>What we want to Achieve (Aims)</i>	<i>The Activity (Output)</i>	<i>The Results (Outcome)</i>	<i>Who? (Lead)</i>	<i>When?</i>
1. Improved inter-faith dialogue in Croydon	Secure funding for Faiths Together in Croydon (FTiC)	Greater awareness of the practice of different faiths leading to closer working relationships and improved wellbeing for Croydon people	CVA / FTiC	March 08
	4 inter-faith events (1 for & with young people)			Quarterly
	6 inter-faith steering group meetings			Every 2 months
	A membership of 150			March 09
	2 inter-faith projects as agreed by members			March 09
	All major faiths signed to an Inter-faith Charter for Croydon			March 09
2. More shared celebrations of faith and culture	6 faith based celebrations a year	Increased knowledge of diverse faith and culture in the borough leading to increased dialogue	FTiC	Every 2 months
	4 inter-faith outreach activities to Croydon Community events (including Croydon Summer Festival)			
3. Increased opportunities for people of faith to work together and with others to improve Croydon for Croydon people	Organise 2 campaigns on issues of common concern	Bring about both greater awareness and positive change to improve life in the borough	FTiC	March 09
	Organise 2 inter-faith projects (as 1. above)			March 09

4. A louder and more co-ordinated voice for people of faith in local and national decision-making	Elect FTiC representatives onto the Croydon Strategic Partnership and Themed Partnerships	Faith concerns affect local and national policy and influence decision-making	FTiC	
	2 co-ordinated responses to local policy and planning		FTiC	
	1 co-ordinated response to a national issue		FTiC	
	Open dialogue between faith leaders and local statutory and business leaders		Council, Police, Health, Business etc partners in Croydon with FTiC	



### 8.3 A Draft Charter for Working across Faiths in Croydon

Drawing on the shared views of the 72 people in attendance at this event we outline below the start of our thinking on a Charter for Croydon.

#### Faiths Together in Croydon Inter-Faith Charter (Draft 1)

I ..... (name)

Of.....(Faith Organisation / other organisation)

on ..... (date)

promise to:

- Take action together with other faiths to tackle social problems
- Work together with other faiths to try to resolve common problems
- Work with young people to share the values of different faith and cultural groups
- Recognise our differences without diluting our values and views
- Learn about Croydon's faiths by celebrating diversity
- Address feelings of fear between strangers by respecting each other
- Challenge attitudes and behaviours that lead to hostility and division
- Make time to talk to key decision-makers (Council, Police, Health etc) to raise issues of concern

Signed .....

Witness .....

## 9. The Recommendations

The Faiths Together in Croydon Steering Group commends to you the following recommendations:

1. FTiC members endorse this report and use it to develop FTiC
2. FTiC members work to the above 2008/09 action plan
3. FTiC develops a Charter for inter-faith activity supporting community cohesion
4. Croydon Council, Croydon Primary Care Trust, Croydon Police and other key statutory and business partners commit to the active involvement of faith groups in policy and planning through FTiC
5. Croydon Voluntary Action (CVA) commits to work with FTiC to secure ongoing resources to support inter-faith activity as part of the wider Croydon Community Network.
6. FTiC nominates representatives to take the collective views of the forum through the Croydon Strategic Partnership structure.



## 10. Contact Details

For further information about this report or Faiths Together in Croydon (FTiC) please visit our website: [www.faithstogetherincroydon.co.uk](http://www.faithstogetherincroydon.co.uk)

Or contact:

Rev Dr Barry Goodwin

Social Responsibility (Parish Development) Adviser

Diocese of Southwark

St Matthew's House

100 George Street

Croydon

CR0 1PJ

Tel: 020 8256 9637

Fax: 020 8256 9631

Email: [barry.goodwin@southwark.anglican.org](mailto:barry.goodwin@southwark.anglican.org)





**FAITHS TOGETHER IN CROYDON**  
**[www.faithstogetherincroydon.co.uk](http://www.faithstogetherincroydon.co.uk)**

