WEST YORKSHIRE ECUMENICAL COUNCIL
ANNUAL REPORT 2009

During 2009 West Yorkshire Ecumenical Council (WYEC) was chaired by Pastor Gloria Hanley, Chair of the West Yorkshire African Caribbean Council of Churches. The Vice Chair was the Revd. Peter Whittaker, Chair of West Yorkshire Methodist District. The treasurer was Tony Rolfe. Other trustees were the Revd. Glenn Coggins, the Revd. Paul Fisher, the Revd. Graham Kidman and Major Reg Melton. The Revd. Dr. Clive Barrett was the County Ecumenical Development Officer (CEDO).

On Ash Wednesday, 25th February 2009, at Oxford Place Methodist Centre, Leeds, WYEC senior church leaders issued a public statement expressing concern for the plight of people who were burdened by debt, addressing issues of loan sharks and affirming the pastoral care provided by the churches for people with debt problems.

Senior church leaders also issued a public statement on their concern at the rise of political extremism, not least in Yorkshire, urging people to 'Use Your Cross' and to vote in the elections for the European Parliament.

WYEC had, and continues to have, a concern for the well-being of people seeking sanctuary (asylum) in the UK. In June, a delegation of WYEC senior church leaders met with officials at the Home Office in London, following which a channel of communication has opened between senior church leaders and UK Border Agency staff in Leeds. In December, a specially designed International Carol Service was held in Bradford Cathedral, in solidarity with people seeking sanctuary in the UK, and with their support groups. There was also a Bradford Cathedral service for racial justice, in September.

WYEC senior church leaders took part in a 24 hour retreat at The Briery, Ilkley. Common issues were explored and particular concern was expressed over the contrast between the values seen in much public political debate and the generosity shown in the voluntary work of local churches in community. A future public statement of senior church leaders would be prepared on this for 2010.

The full WYEC Council of senior church leaders and denominational ecumenical officers (DEOs) met twice during the year, at the Moravian Settlement, Fulneck and at the Blackley Centre, Huddersfield.

Relationships were maintained with Churches Together in England, the Churches Regional Commission and Leeds Churches Together in Mission. WYEC offered support to those involved in establishing a new network, Churches for Bradford. There was a gathering for representatives of Churches Together groups across Bradford.

There was a similar gathering in Rodley (Leeds) of representatives of Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs) for the purposes of mutual support.

Throughout the year, DEOs offered support to LEPs, and, with the CEDO, received training on the implementation of new constitutions for Single Congregation LEPs. DEOs met together on four occasions. There were WYEC reviews of individual LEPs, and WYEC also oversaw the institution of a new legal status for the Universities in Leeds Chaplaincy Trust.

The annual WYEC paper, Unity Post, was published and distributed in January 2009 for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. WYEC is grateful for the support given with this by the Catholic Diocese of Leeds. The later months of 2009 involved preparatory work for the January 2010 edition. The WYEC website was maintained, and two other newsletters were produced. The profile of WYEC and its work for Christian unity was further raised by the CEDO speaking, preaching, leading worship and providing spiritual support for Churches Together groups, LEPs, and other churches and groups, including members of the chaplaincy team at HMYOI Wetherby.

The Council and the CEDO were ably served by the Administrative Assistant, Joyce Blakey.

List of 2009 trustees with addresses:

The Revd. Glenn Coggins, The Vicarage, Church Lane, East Ardsley, Wakefield, WF3 2LJ

The Revd Paul Frederick Fisher, St Joseph's Presbytery, 25 Naylor Street, Batley Carr, Dewsbury, WF13 2DF

Pastor Gloria Hanley, 15 Allerton Grange Rise, Leeds, LS17 6LJ

The Revd Graham Kidman, 39 Gargrave Road, Skipton, BD23 1PU

Major Reginald John Melton, 6 Hilton Road, Shipley, BD18 2AN

The Revd Peter Whittaker, 19 Wentworth Court, Brighouse, HD6 3XD