

## **WEST YORKSHIRE ECUMENICAL COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2007**

During 2007 West Yorkshire Ecumenical Council was chaired by the Rt Revd. Arthur Roche, Catholic Bishop of Leeds. The Vice Chair was the Revd. Ernie Whalley, Yorkshire Regional Minister for Ministry in the Baptist Church, and the treasurer was Tony Rolfe. Other trustees were Stephen Barnett, Paul Fisher, Gloria Hanley, Jeff King, and Reg Melton.

A Service of Repentance and Reconciliation was held at St Anne's Cathedral, Leeds, 27<sup>th</sup> April. This included the formal induction and welcome of the County Ecumenical Development Officer (CEDO). The newly appointed Revd. Dr. Clive Barrett took up this post in June. He succeeded the Revd. David Rowland who had been acting County Ecumenical Officer and who was thanked for the considerable contribution he had made in that role.

The annual WYEC paper, Unity Post, was published and distributed in January 2007 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 2007 involved preparatory work for the January 2008 edition. Three other newsletters were produced and the profile of WYEC was further raised by the CEDO speaking or preaching for Churches Together groups and Local Ecumenical Partnerships, as well as updating the website.

WYEC church leaders engaged in two tree-planting publicity initiatives, one in support of Christian Aid, and the other to mark the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Charter of Leeds. Church leaders also issued a statement in support of the eirenic spirit of 'A Common Word', an initiative of Islamic scholars to show that Love of God and Love of Neighbour are central to both Christianity and Islam. The Revd. Dr. Elizabeth Smith, replacing the Revd. Michael Townsend as Chair of the Leeds Methodist District, and the Revd. Kenneth Evans, Chair of the Yorkshire Moravian District, both signed the WYEC Church Leaders' Covenant.

Led by the Chair, a group of church leaders took part in a pilgrimage to Rome, building relationships and increasing understanding of each other's traditions.

WYEC church leaders took part in a 24 hour retreat at The Briery, Ilkley. Common issues were explored and particular concern was expressed for the plight of asylum seekers across the county, an issue facing many churches. A presentation on asylum was later made to WYEC Council, showing the desperate circumstances faced by some people fleeing persecution, and the pastoral and practical assistance that is being provided by local churches.

On behalf of WYEC, reviews were conducted on several Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs) and of the Chaplaincy of the Universities in Leeds. There was a gathering at Hipperholme of representatives of LEPs for the purposes of mutual support. A similar gathering was held for representatives of Churches Together groups across Wakefield. Throughout the year, Denominational Ecumenical Officers (DEOs) offered support to LEPs. New

DEOs were appointed by the Wakefield Diocese and the Leeds Methodist District. Potential changes in the ecumenical structures in Bradford were monitored. Relationships were maintained with Churches Together in England, the Churches Regional Commission and Leeds Churches Together in Mission.

The Council received reports on the representation of faith communities on Local Strategic Partnerships, and concerning the Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum. Consideration was also given to the churches' involvement in the faiths' contribution to the West Yorkshire Major Incident Plan.

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

List of 2007 trustees with addresses:

Rt Revd Arthur Roche, 13 North Grange Road, Leeds LS6 2BR.

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

Revd Canon Jeffrey Douglas Wallace King, The Vicarage, Church View, Thorner, Leeds LS14 3ED.

Revd Stephen Barnett, 31 Quarry Hill, Sowerby Bridge, HX6 3BQ

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

The Revd Ernie Whalley, 26 Derwent Drive, Adel, Leeds, LS16 8JD

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