

WEST YORKSHIRE ECUMENICAL COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2008

During 2008 West Yorkshire Ecumenical Council (WYEC) was chaired by the Revd. Ernie Whalley, Regional Minister for Ministry of the Yorkshire Baptist Association. The Vice Chair was Pastor Gloria Hanley, Chair of the West Yorkshire African Caribbean Council of Churches. The treasurer was Tony Rolfe. Other trustees were the Revd. Stephen Barnett, the Revd. Paul Fisher, Major Reg Melton, and the Revd. Canon Jeff King who retired during the year to be replaced by the Revd. Glenn Coggins. The Revd. Dr. Clive Barrett was the County Ecumenical Development Officer (CEDO).

Mindful of the pastoral demands being made on local churches across the region by asylum seekers, and of the desperate stories being told by refugees and those seeking asylum, the leaders of WYEC's constituent churches made a public statement in support of asylum seekers on Ash Wednesday, 25th February, at New North Road Baptist Church, Huddersfield. In December, a specially designed carol service was held for asylum seekers and their supporters in Bradford Cathedral. Three months earlier, support had been given for a Racial Justice service, also in Bradford Cathedral.

In the autumn, WYEC organised regional launches in Leeds and Bradford for a report published by Churches Together in England on the impact on communities of guns and drugs and knives. Representatives of the police, magistrates and voluntary groups debated the churches' role in tackling violence in communities.

The annual WYEC paper, Unity Post, was published and distributed in January 2008 for the centenary 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 2008 involved preparatory work for the January 2009 edition. Two 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 maintaining the website.

On behalf of WYEC, reviews were conducted on several Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs). There were gatherings in West Bretton (Wakefield) and Burmantofts (Leeds) of representatives of LEPs for the purposes of mutual support. A similar gathering was held for representatives of Churches Together groups across Calderdale. Throughout the year, Denominational Ecumenical Officers (DEOs) offered support to LEPs. A new DEO was appointed by the Diocese of Ripon and Leeds, and an additional DEO was appointed by the Leeds Methodist District. The team-working of the DEOs was facilitated by holding a 24 hour residential meeting at Holy Rood House, Thirsk.

The Revd. Kevin Watson, replacing the Revd. Arnold Harrison as Chair of the Yorkshire Synod of the United Reformed Church, duly signed the WYEC Church Leaders' Covenant.

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 people facing increased levels of debt as a result of the financial crisis. A presentation on debt and the Christian tradition on usury was later made to WYEC Council.

The full WYEC Council of church leaders and DEOs met twice during the year, at the New Testament Church of God, Leeds and at Hollin House, the home of the Bishop of Ripon and Leeds. 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. A presentation was made to Council by the Revd. Dr. David Cornick, newly appointed General Secretary of Churches Together in England.

The CEDO offered spiritual support for those engaged in ecumenical endeavours through the leading of a quiet day for the officers of Christians Learning Across Yorkshire and in the conducting of public worship for a number of churches across the region.

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

List of 2008 trustees with addresses:

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

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

The 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

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