

Brighton & Hove Interfaith Contact Group (IFCG)

IFCG website: www.interfaithcontactgroup.com

History and nature

The IFCG was formed over 20 years ago (1997) and has been active under the same name ever since. It is a constituted community group and is affiliated to the Interfaith Network UK. It is run entirely by volunteers, mainly drawn from its Executive Committee, on which all faith groups represented locally are entitled to have 2 members. Current members of the committee include Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, Quaker, Baha'i, and Pagan representatives, as well as one atheist.

Remit

The IFCG is a community of faiths rather than a faith community. It exists to provide a point of contact for the many faith groups in our city and to promote understanding and good relations between people of all faiths and none.

Priorities

IFCG volunteers have commitments within their own faith communities as well as other paid work. Therefore their time is at a premium and we are very careful in setting priorities for how our limited 'volunteer time' will be used. Generally we prioritise in favour of organising and running events rather than attending formal meetings, collecting data or writing lengthy reports, because this gives better value for both time and money. The IFCG concentrates particularly on providing spiritual opportunities for local residents, of all faiths and none, to come together around topics or themes that are of general interest and relevance. The IFCG is not, in itself, a group for social action, as we have no premises of our own and a limited pool of volunteers, many of whom are already fully involved in serving the community from their own places of worship.

Activities

The IFCG organises two annual events that are now established in the City's calendar: the Annual Interfaith Service, which takes place in November around the time of National Interfaith Week, and the IFCG AGM, an open public meeting, with speakers from different faiths, which takes place in the Spring. In addition the IFCG runs a monthly interfaith prayer hour, and an interfaith choir, both open to people of all faiths and none. The IFCG also organises occasional conferences, dialogue meetings and concerts. A film of its 2018 'Angel' Project can be viewed on our HMC website. The IFCG has always benefited from the support of the Mayor's Office, other Council officers working in the 'Communities' sector, the Lord Lieutenant, local MPs, the Police and the Fire & Rescue Service, all of whom have been pleased to attend IFCG events.

Funding/spending

IFCG income comes from individual subscriptions (£15 p.a.), donations and occasional small grants for which we apply from time to time. 100% of our income is spent on events that benefit the community of Brighton & Hove. 0% of our income is spent on administration. We rarely have any venue costs as local faith communities kindly donate the use of their premises. We have no paid staff and our volunteers do not receive any financial remuneration.