

# Truby's Garden Tea Room



18 February 2017 – Truby's Garden Tea Room took over the Guildhall. Originally set up in November 2014, Truby's Garden Tea Room raised almost £10,000 at Islamic Centre in Coffee Hall, before moving to Guildhall in the back of the Church of Christ the Cornerstone and becoming a true interfaith community café, seeking to build and foster positive relationships between the local Muslim and the wider communities.



Over the past few years, this group of volunteers have been raising awareness (and funds) for local causes, including the homeless, settling refugees in MK and enhancing volunteering opportunities. This time, funds were being collected for "[Naomi House and Jack's Place](#)", a hospice dedicated to children and young adults.

This group, led by Muslim women, are here to promote conversation and exchange between communities, particularly at a time when the news seems to be full of horror stories about what is happening in the Middle-East. While this is a Muslim initiative; it is held in a Christian church and the key message is that all are welcome.



The basic idea is to come together by inviting people to come and "break bread" together. Of course, this being today in the West, no one really wants bread, so it has been replaced with tea and delicious freshly baked cakes provided by both volunteers as well as professionals (such as "[Yummy Bakes](#)").

Also available are hot meals provided by professional catering service such as "[Meals by Malik](#)", celebrating the combined heritage of British Muslim volunteers.

By offering this service to the wider community, Kurshida and her team hope to counter-act some of the misconceptions about their faith and community. They do understand today that the people coming are largely those who are already happy to have their prejudices and misconceptions challenged, but are hoping that, after visiting, people will talk about it and invite more people who would not necessarily come by themselves.

Of course, a lot of work is required to make something like this work, and the team is very busy not only on the day itself, but also in bringing together the number of volunteers necessary to make all this work.



One of the volunteers told me that the key to this organisation was to remove the veil of unfamiliarity by getting

conversations going; this is particularly effective when all the tables are taken and people need to be seated with others they have never met. It was certainly encouraging to see such a great mix of people of all ages, colours and creeds coming together in a friendly atmosphere.



I, for one, am certainly looking forward to the next event.

Peter Leeson

