



Oldham Pledge to Peace Forum - Annual Report Sept. 2017 – Sept. 2018

Key Achievements in the Year

- 50 organisations have now signed the Pledge to Peace and have full or associated membership of the Oldham Pledge to Peace Forum. .
- 25 of these are academies, colleges and schools in Oldham.
- Peace book section established for children and young people in Oldham Library.
- Unique partnership for peace signed with Wahat al Salam / Neve Shalom (Oasis of Peace) in Israel/Palestine.
- Ss Aidan's and Oswald's Primary School now working in partnership with the Primary School there.
- An online repository of peace education materials created accessible to all Oldham schools.

Highlights (Sept. 2017 - Sept. 2018)

September 2017 –

On the UN International Day of Peace on 21 September, our twenty-fifth school Hulme Grammar School signs the Pledge. We also unveil a Peace Pole at Crompton House School and host a peace day lecture with distinguished guest speaker Vijay Mehta who signs the Pledge to Peace on behalf of Uniting for Peace;

On the 22 September, we host our fourth Peace Day Celebration Event at Oldham Library and Gallery Oldham. This includes the launch of an exciting new peace book collection for children and teenagers, performances by St Joseph's school choir and the Uke2 ukulele band, and the signing of the Pledge by the LGBT Out and About Over 50's group.

Forum Secretary Richard Outram begins his Peace Studies degree at the University of Bradford, recognised by many as the world's foremost institution in this academic subject.

October 2017 -

The Mayor and Mayoress of Oldham Cllr and Mrs Shadab Qumer host a visit by Dr Nava Sonnenschein from the School of Peace in Neve Shalom – Wahat al Salam (the Oasis of Peace) in Israel / Palestine and at a historic event held in the Council Chamber, the Oldham Pledge to Peace Forum becomes the first international organisation to sign a partnership for peace with this inspiring village, and with the UK Friends group.

November 2017 -

St Paul's Primary School, Royton – the first in Oldham to sign the Pledge – holds a special peace flag ceremony to celebrate the sixth anniversary of the Pledge to Peace and the Mayor unveils a new sensory peace garden. Amongst the guests, in addition to the Mayor and Mayoress, is the former Head-teacher Mrs. Joanne Caine.

At a gala fundraising dinner held in Dorking, Surrey by our colleagues in Peace Partners, Chairperson of Peace Talks Oldham, Maria Ellis presents a cheque for £400 to The Prem Rawat Foundation to support the work of Mr Rawat's Food for People programme. Maria raised the money through a sponsored slim with the support of Slimming World.

December 2017 -

Maria meets 'Hayley'. An event is organised by our friends in Greater Manchester and District CND on 2 Dec to celebrate the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the International Campaign for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons (ICAN). Here, actor Julie Hesmondhalgh, best known for her role as Hayley Cropper in Coronation Street, reads a poem of her own composition – The A to Z of Peace. At Maria's request, Julie sends Maria a copy to feature in our newsletter!

On 10 Dec - the day of the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony - Richard Outram finishes a 25 mile walk from his home through a blizzard to the University of Bradford. It is 20 years to the day since the International Campaign to Ban Landmines won the Nobel Prize and the walk raises £1300 for the landmine action charity, the Mines Advisory Group

Books about the life and message of Mr Prem Rawat, Ambassador to the Pledge to Peace, are presented on the following day by Maria Ellis to the Commonweal Collection at the University of Bradford.

Jan. 2018 -

In a very moving, but simple, ceremony, the Mayor of Oldham, Cllr Shadab Qumer, joined staff and students in the grounds of Hulme Grammar School to plant a tree in memory of Anne Frank and other child victims on Friday 26 January Holocaust Memorial Day. Maria and Richard represented the Forum.

February 2018 –

With the kind assistance of Nicola Malone, Deputy Head-teacher at Burnley Brow School, we are able to create an on-line repository of all of our peace education materials making them available to all Oldham schools through the First Class computer system.

Maria meets MEP Julie Ward and her office team in the Mayor's Parlour to talk about the possibility of future co-operation on peace issues post-Brexit.

March 2018 –

On 8 March, Maria and Richard attend the London book launch of 'CND at 60' with General Secretary Kate Hudson, and on the 10 March attend the Uniting for Peace Conference with Vijay Mehta and Jeremy Gilley, founder of Peace One Day. Various delegates are presented with copies of books about the life and message of Prem Rawat by Maria.

On 23 March, Richard attends the Mayors for Peace seminar at Leeds Town Hall where Shadow Peace Minister Fabian Hamilton MP and ICAN Director Dr. Rebecca Johnson outline an ambition plan to make the nuclear weapons ban treaty international law within 1000 days (i.e. by the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 2020).

April 2018 -

On 27 April, Maria Ellis attends a performance of the Heartstone Odyssey at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester. This piece about challenging xenophobia has involved the pupils of several of Oldham's Pledge to Peace schools.

May 2018 -

Following several Skype calls, a partnership is established between the pupils of Year 4 at Ss Aidan and Oswald's RC Primary School – one of our Pledge schools – and the pupils of Year 4 at the primary school in Neve Shalom – Wahat al-Salam. The children begin exchanging messages of friendship and photos of where they live. The Israeli Ministry of Education expresses its interest in finding out more about our work for peace in Oldham.

On 9 May, seventeen walkers participated in the second 'Walk at One as One' event held in Dunwood Park, Shaw to celebrate World Labyrinth Day. This was organised by Carol Hughes, Secretary of the Friends of Dunwood Park, and attended by Cllr Angie Farrell-Cheeseman, Shaw and Crompton Parish Council Peace Champion.

On 15 May - International Conscientious Objectors' Day - Forum Secretary Richard Outram added a personal plea to the many messages sent to the President of South Korea, President Moon Jae-in, asking him to release conscientious objectors in that country and allow them to carry out civilian, rather than military, service. As a result in part of international pressure, the President has recently announced that a civilian service option will be introduced, but the campaign continues to free the prisoners.

On 26 May, Maria and Richard participated in the Meditation for Peace event held in Manchester Cathedral. Maria spoke to the attendees about the life and message of Mr Prem Rawat and read a poem of her own composition, The Voyage, about the self-discovery of inner-peace.

June 2018 -

Maria and Richard encounter the giant CND symbol in All Saints Park, Manchester as part of its national 'Now More than Ever' tour to mark the 60th anniversary of the organisation.

On 19 June, Maria and Richard speak at the Hope 2 Festival held at Hope University in Liverpool. Richard talks about the work for peace in Oldham schools whilst Maria talks about the life and message of Prem Rawat, and presents books to the University library and to the Archbishop Desmond Tutu Centre for Peace. .

On 22 June, Maria and Richard attend the Waves of Change event, hosted by our colleagues in Peace Partners, as part of the Croydon Festival of Peace. Richard speaks again about the work for peace in our borough's schools and Maria presents books to several of the delegates. Discussions are held with activists from Croydon and Dorchester about approaching their local authorities to sign the Pledge to Peace.

On 28 June, Ss Aidan's and Oswald's RC Primary School hosts its Annual Peace Day in remembrance of two teachers who died in service. Maria runs some craft workshops with the children, and later Maria and Richard, join the new Mayor and Mayoress Cllr and Mrs. Javid Iqbal, and Council Peace Champion Cllr Derek Heffernan in speaking to the assembly. Richard gives the children some paper peace cranes made by children in Hiroshima and....

July 2018 -

A few days later goes back to the school to collect 1,000 paper peace cranes that the school children have made. Some of these cranes are kindly delivered in person, with a letter from the children of the school and Cllr Heffernan, to the Mayor of Hiroshima's office by Rachel Melly, who works for Yorkshire CND and who happens to be visiting friends in that city.

We receive a request from the Swiss Peace Office in Basel to reproduce the poster from our 2015 Annual Peace Day celebration event for their event in the city this year. Of course, in the spirit of international co-operation we agree.

A new Oldham Peace and Justice Group is formed and Maria and Richard attend the first meeting as observers. A week later, the group stages a demonstration and marches to the Ferranti factory in Waterhead to protest against its ownership by Elbit Industries, Israel's biggest armaments manufacturer.

August 2018 -

The paper peace cranes and letters sent from Ss Aidan's and Oswald's School to Hiroshima are displayed in the Memorial Garden for the 6 August commemoration event.

September 2018 –

The Forum is supporting the following events to mark the UN International Day of Peace:

- Friday 21 September - The raising of our Peace and Respect Flag at the Oldham Council Civic Centre. Signings by two new schools of the Pledge of Peace. The unveiling of a new peace sculpture in Dunwood Park, Shaw.
- Friday 22 September – The Fifth Oldham Peace Day celebration event at Oldham Library.



Oldham Pledge to Peace Forum - Action Plan Sept. 2018 – Sept. 2019

Theme	Action	By
Developing International links	Establish further school links with Italy and Israel	Autumn 2018
	Explore possible visits to Israel and the European Parliament	Spring 2019
	Look to develop further international links with other Pledge signatories and with the Pledge to Peace Secretariat	Ongoing
Making Peace More Visible	Create a peace 'garden' at Dunwood Park	Autumn 2018
	Create a Pledge to Peace certificate for display by signatories	Autumn 2018
	Promote the on-line peace education materials to schools	Autumn 2018
	Establish an Oldham Peace Trail	Spring 2019
	Establish a memorial to Conscientious Objectors and pacifists in the town centre	Spring 2019
	Name a Failsworth street after W E Burns	Spring 2019
	Establish a display in the new Museum	Summer 2019
	Establish peace poles and peace walks in more of the Borough's major parks	Summer 2019
	Create web content on peace in the borough for inclusion on the Council's website	Summer 2019
	Events or activities, with partners, including: 5 November – The Hiroshima Peace Legacy Ambassadors 28 November – Anniversary of the Pledge to Peace 10 December – Human Rights Day / Prem Rawat's Birthday 15 January – Oldham Pledge to Peace Forum 3 rd anniversary 27 January – Holocaust Memorial Day 10 May – World Labyrinth Day 15 May – Conscientious Objectors Day 29 May – UN Peacekeepers Day 6 + 9 August – Hiroshima and Nagasaki Memorial Days 21 September – UN International Day of Peace	Various dates
Publicising the Work of the Forum	Deposit complete sets of Oldham Peace Times with Commonweal Library, Oldham Local Studies Centre, Working Class Movement Library and People's History Museum	Winter 2019
	Review format and frequency of publication of Oldham Peace Times	Winter 2019
	Continue to publish articles to Facebook	Ongoing
	Send in Annual Report to Percorsi	Sept. 2019
	Ensure P2P signatories are correctly identified on Percorsi map	Sept. 2019