

STOCKPORT PEACE FORUM REPORT

For AGM at 7pm on Thursday 28 September 2006

Stockport Peace Forum continues to hold monthly meeting and the committee of seven meets every eight to ten weeks to arrange these. There are now 18 'paid-up' members of SPF, the increase partly due to a more organised approach to mailing the 33 supporters without email. About 130 people are emailed regularly about SPF meetings and related events. The attendance of meetings has varied from about 8 to over 20.

14th September 2005: Sara Saigol, an active Muslim community worker, spoke on '**Lessons learnt from 7/7**' and the way forward in developing further understanding and harmony between communities.

19th October: Stuart Kemp talked about the **Non-Proliferation Treaty** and the obligations of both nuclear and non-nuclear states under this.

14th November: In a joint meeting with Stockport UNA Dr Kevin Anderson, from the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research at Manchester University, explained the current research on **climate change and its social impact**, and responded to the many questions which followed.

4th December: **Peace Party**. This was not attended by many people and needs to be reviewed.

7th December: A local solicitor spoke about the proposed **anti-terrorism legislation** and how this is failing to establish the right balance between the interests of security and civil liberty.

1st February 2006: Vigil, with new banners and 100 candles to mark the **death of the 100th British soldier** in Iraq. Write up and photos in the local newspaper.

10th February: Nahella Ashraf reported on the **International Peace Conference** which took place in Manchester at the end of last year.

21st February: Yvonne Ridley, known for entering **Afghanistan** during the Taliban's rule, spoke about her personal knowledge of the country, the experiences of its people and the current situation there.

9th March: Following on from November's meeting, a second joint UNA/SPF meeting on **Climate Change**, at which Darren Pegram, Sustainability Manager, discussed Stockport Council's plans and responsibilities.

22nd March: Dick Withecombe, who has experience of the situation in Oldham and other areas, talked on '**Countering Racism in Stockport**'. All local councillors were invited to the meeting and a report of the discussion and decisions was widely circulated. Working jointly with other organisations a successful leaf-letting campaign was organised in Manor ward, where a BNP candidate was standing in the local elections.

27th April: Jenny Clegg updated us on the recent social, political and economic changes in **China**.

1st June: Rae Street spoke about **Britain's Nuclear Threat**, covering nuclear power, convoys and Faslane.

28th June: Sana Dabbagh, a Palestinian, provided a personal perspective of the **situation in Palestine**, including the election of Hamas and the West's reaction to this.

25th July: **Open CND meeting** at which Cath Bann (CND development worker) and Mike Hindley (ex MEP) showed a film on **Faslane** nuclear base, and talked about supporting CND and the Faslane blockade.

5th August: **Special Peace Stall and Vigil for Hiroshima**.

The weekly vigils on the War Memorial step, which had started at the invasion of Iraq, were discontinued on 16th November 2005. However SPF/Marple CND Peace Stall in Stockport continues most Saturdays.

A joint UNA/SPF letter was sent to the four local MP's asking their views on the government's reluctance to support a cease fire **in Lebanon**. Replies were received from each.

SPF worked closely with the newly formed (ad hoc) Stockport Stop the War group in the build-up to the National Demo in Manchester on 23rd September 2006.

SPF has also had a presence beyond Stockport - at New Mills 'One World Festival' and with our distinctive banner on many National demonstrations.