



Briefing paper

Date: 6th October 2016

No.7

Subject: Progress with development of the UK and Ireland Chapter and special joint events held with Pledge to Peace and ICAN / Peace Boat

1. Introduction

This report by the Chapter Secretary, Sean Morris, provides an overview of progress with the UK and Ireland Mayors, Provosts and Leaders for Peace Chapter since it was established in 2015. This includes a business meeting in February 2016 and two special events in September 2016 and October 2016. The September event was held on the International Day for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons and was the culmination of Oldham Peace Week, at which Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council formally joined Mayors for Peace at a special ceremony. The October event included a special joint meeting with the Japanese Peace Boat group, including a number of 'hibakuska' or survivors of the August 1945 atomic bombings.

2. Creation and development of the UK and Ireland Mayors for Peace Chapter

The development of national / cross-national chapters of Mayors for Peace was agreed by the 2013 Executive and General Conference of Mayors for Peace held in Hiroshima. The aim of the Chapter is to create a stronger and deeper local organisation in parallel with the global Mayors for Peace organisation, increasing financial, member and officer capacity in general.

Following Manchester City Council agreeing to Hiroshima's request to be a 'Lead City' (in addition to its role as a Vice President attending board meetings) of the Mayors for Peace, a number of meetings were held with UK and Irish members of Mayors for Peace to consider the development of a chapter. Members agreed that the former Working Group should be reconstituted as the UK and Ireland Mayors, Provosts and Leaders for Peace Chapter with Manchester City Council providing Secretariat support and political leadership for it.

At its business meeting on the 5th February 2016 it was agreed that Manchester City Council should process voluntary invoices to all UK and Ireland members and encourage Councils to nominate representatives to Chapter meeting. Due to additional staffing capacity provided to the Secretariat, all members received a detailed letter with their voluntary invoice and information on the October meeting noted in section 5 below. The response back has been a little disappointing. This appears to be partially due to the ceremonial non-political role of most Mayors in comparison to the executive role of Council Leaders, and the letters falling between the two offices. The Secretariat will follow up these letters to encourage increased commitment over the autumn.

The events noted below in Oldham and London attracted a number of new Mayors and senior councillors from member and non-member authorities. Similar events will be sought later in 2016 and 2017 to encourage interest and promote the work of Mayors for Peace. The Secretariat has also contacted the Hiroshima International Secretariat to encourage consideration of an Executive Advisor to help develop Chapters and raise new forms of finance to give them the opportunity to develop more dynamic structures with a website and useful initiatives.

THE UK & IRELAND CHAPTER OF MAYORS FOR PEACE

3. Future plans for the Chapter

The Chapter has a core of Councils that are interested in its work and have supported its development, either by attending Chapter meetings or special events.

The key now is to increase support from other Chapter members where there has not been significant interest in recent years, along with looking to recruit new members.

Ways this can be achieved include:

- A further business meeting of the Chapter to be held in Manchester Town Hall on Friday 3rd February 2017.
- The development of a Chapter website to provide a public platform of its work programme and links with the International organisation. Funding for this is being sought.
- The development of an annual Mayors, Provosts and Leaders for Peace Flag Day to encourage members to fly a Mayors for Peace flag on an agreed day – probably International Peace Day – accompanied by a Mayors for Peace Conference. This is being considered for September 2017, to directly follow on from the International Executive and General Conference taking place in August 2017.
- Cross-party recruitment letters sent to Councils in England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland encouraging membership.
- The development of an annual Mayors for Peace lecture in November 2017.
- Support for peace education tools – such as town and city peace trails (see <http://discoverpeace.eu>), the receipt of ginkgo peace seeds from Hiroshima, the use of an A-bomb and other exhibitions, such as the 'Making Peace' exhibition (see <http://www.makingpeace.org>).
- To look to hold or support special events to promote the work of Mayors for Peace like the two noted below. Cooperation with like-minded groups will assist the development of such meetings.
- To talk to officers, members and groups who develop the annual Holocaust Memorial events, Remembrance Sunday events and local anniversary events to encourage links with Mayors for Peace. First World War centenary events will be continuing over the next couple of years and, where relevant, support with Mayors for Peace could be promoted.

The Secretariat would be delighted to hear from any member wishing to promote the Mayors for Peace in their locality – please email s.morris4@manchester.gov.uk or ring 00 44 (0)161 234 3244 if you are.

4. Special ceremony for the International Day for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, Oldham Civic Centre, 26th September

The first of two special events which celebrated and promoted the work of Mayors for Peace was held in Oldham Civic Centre in late September. This event also allowed the consideration of how Councils can actively support local events and initiatives promoting community cohesion, diversity and tolerance.

Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council is the first Council in the UK and Ireland to have signed and joined the 'Pledge to Peace' initiative (<http://www.pledgetopeace.eu>). Originating from a special ceremony in the European Parliament in 2011, this Italian-based organisation encourages Councils, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and business organisations to work together to promote peace, tolerance, diversity and community cohesion at the local level. The declaration of intent of supporting bodies is used to encourage specific projects and actions that are aimed at promoting peace in its most universal meaning, based on the significance of each individual person. It is inspired by the universal ideals of human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity enshrined in the preamble of the "Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union" and confirmed by the Nizza Declaration in 2000 and the Lisbon Treaty in 2009. The initiative is though completely separate from the EU, with its International Secretariat based in Sicily.

As part of its membership to 'Pledge to Peace' a local forum was established in Oldham and it has held three annual 'Peace Weeks' along with a number of other events at schools, community buildings and parks. Along with the Council, a wide range of local peace,

humanitarian and community organisations have joined the local forum. Links with the Warrington Peace Centre have also been established.

Oldham's Peace Week 2016 commenced on International Peace Day, September 21st, 2016. It included the re-dedication of Oldham's Peace Garden and the start of a project to look to designate a number of parks in the borough as 'peace parks'. Readings were also held at the Central Library, where a 'peace' section has been established. A number of school and cross-community receptions were also held.

To culminate the week, a special ceremony was held on the International Day for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons in Oldham Civic Centre. At the ceremony, the Mayor of Oldham, Councillor Derek Heffernan, formally signed the Council's membership form to join Mayors for Peace. The Deputy Lord Mayor of Manchester welcomed Oldham joining Mayors for Peace and encouraged the other Mayors attending the meeting to also consider joining in the near future. The Chapter Secretary provided a presentation on the work of Mayors for Peace. An overview of Pledge to Peace was also provided by Richard Outram of Oldham Council. Three local groups also formally signed the pledge to join the local forum. The event ended with letters from the Mayor of Oldham to the Mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki being presented to the Honorary Consul of Japan in the UK, Peter Heginbotham.

VIP attendees to the event included the Mayor of Oldham and the Deputy Lord Mayor of Manchester, as well as the Mayors of Rochdale, Bolton, Bury and Tameside, the Deputy Leader of Stockport and an Executive Member from Trafford Council. The Chapter Secretary thanks the Mayor of Oldham for hosting the event and allowing full promotion of Mayors for Peace and the Pledge to Peace. Photos from the event are attached as Appendix 1.

5. Mayors for Peace joint symposium with ICAN-UK and the Japanese Peace Boat organisation, London Friends Meeting House, 3rd October

The second event was a joint symposium between Mayors for Peace, the UK branch of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN-UK, <http://www.icanw.org>) and the Japanese NGO Peace Boat (<http://www.peaceboat.org>).

Peace Boat was established in Japan in 1983. It uses a chartered cruise ship to travel twice annually around the world promoting issues of peace, justice, solidarity and cooperation. The ship docks at ports all around the world on a structured programme where volunteers on the ship interact with local groups on specific issues.

The Peace Boat is guided by six key principles:

- Cooperation and solidarity – by understanding that the problems faced by communities can be tackled by cooperation and solidarity progress in order for positive social action.
- Work centred on the civil society movement – Peace Boat seeks to work with individuals and groups that mobilise people towards progressive social action.
- Financial self-sustainability – only by having financial autonomy can groups retain their independence. Peace Boat funds itself through individuals paying the costs to join its voyages.
- Participatory and horizontal working system – Peace Boat sees a horizontal, open, democratic and inclusive working system as a key factor for successfully facing the new challenges of the world.
- Support and promotion of volunteerism – Peace Boat believe that the mobilization of volunteers is one of the key elements in building a broader social movement. Its Japan-based volunteer schemes engage hundreds of people each year in Peace Boat activities, with work done credited against the costs of joining a voyage. Through these volunteer schemes, Peace Boat seeks to make its voyages accessible to people from all walks of life and strengthen activity in civil society.
- Independent of political or religious affiliation – Peace Boat is completely independent from any political party or religious movement.

Over its 33 year history, Peace Boat has organised voyages based around a wide range of issues. 8 of its voyages have directly engaged on the nuclear weapons issue as 'Global

Voyages for a Nuclear Weapons Free World'. This 9th voyage started in Japan in April and will continue until the end of November 2016. It docked in Tilbury on October 3rd for a two day event in London.

The joint symposium with Peace Boat and Mayors for Peace and ICAN-UK was also supported by a wide range of organisations, including Quaker Peace and Social Witness (who hosted the meeting in the London Friends Meeting House), Religions for Peace, Medact, the Acronym Institute, NFLA and CND.

Five 'hibakusha' (survivors of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki), all officially designated by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs as "Special Communicators for a World without Nuclear Weapons" took part in the joint symposium on the 3rd October or the Parliamentary reception on the 4th October. The symposium was jointly chaired by Councillor Grace Fletcher-Hackwood (Manchester City Council) and Caroline Russell AM (a member of the Greater London Assembly and an Islington councillor).

Guiding the discussion with two of the hibakusha was Dr Rebecca Johnson of the Acronym Institute and ICAN-UK. Mr Joji Fukahori from Nagasaki was 14 years old at the time of the atomic bombing of his city. His house was just 600 metres from the hypocentre of the bomb, but on August 9th he was working at a munitions factory 3.3 kms from the hypocentre. Although he was not directly injured, his mother, two younger brothers and a sister, who had been at home at the time, were all killed, and he talked movingly about finding the bodies of his family. He went back into the city and saw all the horrors of the bombing, as well as being exposed to radiation. He told the audience that he did not speak of his experiences for many years, but began to feel the need and started activities to share his testimony in 2009. He is also a peace guide with the Nagasaki Foundation for the Promotion of Peace.

Mariko Higashino from Hiroshima is a second generation hibakusha. Her mother, who was 17 in August 1945, experienced the bombing at home 3 kms from the hypocenter. Mariko's grandmother (then 42) was a nurse at the Funairi Hospital, 1.8 kms from the hypocentre. She was badly injured and burned by the bombing. After many years of not talking about the attack, Mariko's mother told of the horrifying experience of the bombing on her and her grandmother. Wanting to share this experience more widely, Mariko went on a formal course in 2015 organised by the City of Hiroshima. As those who directly experienced the bombing are growing elderly and many are dying, Mariko noted that her firm wish was to convey to the world, as a second generation survivor, in her own words of the suffering of the hibakusha, to prevent such an attack from ever occurring again.

The symposium also heard a short presentation from the investigative journalist Rob Edwards, on a report he has drafted for ICAN-UK on the risks and dangers of nuclear weapon convoys, which go on a regular basis from the Atomic Weapons Establishments at Aldermaston and Burghfield by road up to the Trident naval bases of Coulport and Faslane on the west coast of Scotland. The ICAN-UK report highlighted the accidents that have occurred with such road convoys in previous years, and the real risks and hazards in the event of a more serious accident or a malicious incident. Case studies of five sites where the convoy often goes past – Birmingham, Newcastle, Preston, Wetherby and Glasgow – highlighted the huge numbers of people that could be affected by such an incident. A real concern for local authorities is that they are not informed when such convoys pass through their area. The report can be found at: http://nukesofhazard.qn.apc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/NoH_Report_Final.pdf

The Chapter Secretary concluded the event by informing the Mayors and senior councillors attending the event of the work of Mayors for Peace and encouraged them to consider joining the organisation.

The Peace Boat also attended a special reception in the Houses of Parliament in a House of Lords Committee Room. It was chaired by Lord Laird and organised in cooperation with Roger Prentis of the Foundation for International Collaboration. At this special event, a third hibakusha, Mr Takaaki Morikawa, speaking in fluent English, talked of his experience in Hiroshima. Mr Morikawa was exposed to radiation through 'black rain' that came down shortly

after the bomb, and through ingesting radioactive contamination in food and drink following the bombings. Although he had been originally living just 300 metres from the hypocenter at the time, he had been evacuated to Yahata Village five months before the atomic bombing. He had pneumonia at the time, and was in hospital 10 kms from the hypocenter and therefore able to avoid experiencing the bombing directly. His exposure to radiation has led though to subsequent health problems later in life. He also did not talk of what he had seen at the time, but feels it is now so important to let as many people know of the damage of nuclear weapons and the need to find solutions to fully disarm them.

The delegation finished their short visit to the UK with a school visit to an academy school in Lambeth.

The Peace Boat is now going on from London to a number of special events including:

- *Reykjavik (October 11th – 13th)* - events commemorating the 30th anniversary of the historic US-USSR summit, where US President Reagan and USSR President Gorbachev came close to agreeing to the “total abolition of nuclear weapons.”
- *New York, United States (October 21st – 22nd)* – the delegation will make a call to the 1st Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, appealing for the commencement of negotiations for a treaty banning nuclear weapons.
- *Havana, Cuba (October 26th – 27th)* – the delegation will celebrate the decision of Cuba and the United States to restore diplomatic relations in July, and are making an appeal for the importance of international cooperation and peace.

The visit was an excellent opportunity to promote the work of all the groups involved in it to a wider audience. Peace Boat will also be in London again on October 1st 2017 and in Edinburgh on October 3rd 2017. The Chapter Secretariat will look to engage with the group again to organise relevant events in 2017.

6. Chapter Plans for 2017 – Executive and General Conference of Mayors for Peace

As noted above, the next meeting of the Mayors, Provosts and Leaders for Peace Chapter will be in Manchester Town Hall on the 3rd February 2017. A Mayors for Peace involvement in the Peace Boat events in London and Edinburgh on October 1st – 3rd 2017 will also be investigated.

There are three other international events in 2017 that Chapter members should be aware of and may like to attend:

- In late April / early May 2017 the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty Preparatory Conference will take place at the United Nations offices in Geneva, Switzerland. It is likely that an Executive Board meeting of Mayors for Peace will take place.
- In August 7th – 9th the Executive and General Conference of Mayors for Peace will take place in Nagasaki, Japan and will straddle the Hiroshima Peace Ceremony on the 6th August and conclude with the Nagasaki Peace Ceremony on the 9th August. Manchester City Council plans to attend the Executive Conference. The General Conference is open to all UK and Ireland members of Mayors for Peace.
- At some point in summer 2017 the Mayors for Peace UK and Ireland Chapter will cooperate with the Norwegian group, Bike for Peace. This group has undertaken bike tours promoting peace, tolerance and understanding in over 120 countries since 1978. In 2013 an ‘Around the World for Peace’ cycle tour commenced in Manchester, with legs in Coventry and London in collaboration between Mayors for Peace and Bike for Peace. In 2014 a tour around Scotland also took place and included stops in Edinburgh, Fife, Dundee, Perth, Stirling, a visit to the Faslane Peace Camp, Paisley and Glasgow. The 2017 tour plans to travel from Manchester to Liverpool and then on to Ireland with stops across the island and stops to the likes of Dublin, Belfast and the City of Derry. The Chapter Secretary will provide further details and seek members to take part in the tour as details are clarified.

7. Conclusions and recommendations

The UK and Ireland Mayors, Provosts and Leaders for Peace Chapter is beginning now to develop further and widen its programme from not just looking at the nuclear weapons issue

but to a wider area of peace issues. It wants very much to represent its members undertaking excellent work in these areas and also encourage cooperation and solidarity between them and with Mayors for Peace members across Europe and the rest of the world.

The two recent events are excellent examples of the type of event which Mayors for Peace wants to promote in the UK and Ireland. It encourages other members to consider holding such events and would like to see new members also come out of them.

It also recommends the following in order to deepen membership:

- Existing members need to consider nominating a representative to attend the two or three Chapter meetings which take place each year.
- Existing members are encouraged to process a voluntary invoice in order to increase the financial capacity of the Chapter and let it develop a website and a Flag Day.
- Mayors and senior councillors who attended recent meetings are encouraged to join the Mayors for Peace.
- Cooperation with peace, faith and humanitarian groups was strongly evident in these two events, and needs to be encouraged to assist with the development of the Chapter.
- Further events are being planned in 2017, and Mayors for Peace members are encouraged to participate in them, and consider organising relevant local events.

This report will be sent to Mayors, Provosts and Leaders of all UK and Ireland member authorities, and to the Mayors and Leaders that participated in recent events. It should be disseminated to Lead Members responsible for international activity and to Mayors / Provost offices and International Relations Officers of member authorities.

Photos from the special Greater Manchester ceremony to celebrate Oldham Council joining Mayors for Peace



Mayors and senior councillors from across Greater Manchester together to celebrate Oldham's involvement with Mayors for Peace and Pledge to Peace



The Mayor of Oldham, Councillor Derek Heffernan with the signed copy of the Mayors for Peace membership form

Photos from the Peace Boat symposium with Mayors for Peace / ICAN-UK and its visit to Parliament



Above: Nagasaki hibakuska speaks out
Left: Opening panel discussion of symposium



Rob Edwards talks about his nuclear convoys report for ICAN-UK



A UN disarmament poster at the symposium meeting



A number of London Mayors (of Hackney, Haringey and Enfield) with the Peace Boat delegation at the joint symposium with Mayors for Peace



Peace Boat delegation with Lord Laird and Roger Prentis outside the Houses of Parliament in Westminster (source Dev Barot, RDP International)