



One of the privileges of being a CRCWM is having time. Knowing that your post will last at least 5 years, and may be even 10, gives a CRCWM an opportunity to develop

strong working relationships and trust with local people, and to walk with them through journeys of transformation .

I have been in post for 18 months but I find myself serving in a church where I was a member for two years before my official work began. So three years ago I first met and began to work with a group of women, not long arrived in the community, who were seeking opportunities to improve their English, but consistently stymied by the fact that they had young children and were therefore not able to attend English classes.



3 years later, with support from me as a CRCWM, they are a flourishing group of women committed to breaking down barriers of difference, ethnicity, age , culture and religion – whilst at the same time practising their English and growing in confidence.

In March they held an international food tasting event to celebrate International Women's Day and to officially launch their newly constituted women's group. With a beautifully decorated room and tantalising food from Libya, Norway, Eritrea, Pakistan, Iran, Bangladesh and the UK they welcomed visitors from all over the city. Confidently chatting away in English they explained about their food and their women's group with great pride.



Next they are hosting a meeting of local community groups all committed to cleaning up the litter, fly tipping and dog mess in the local area, but historically working separately. In calling all of these different groups together the women wish to demonstrate their commitment to their community and to working across boundaries, whilst working towards improving their environment...as well as improving their English of course!

In recent weeks we in Manchester have seen our city bruised and battered by the terrorist bombing on the Manchester Arena. This has felt personal for all of us, the bomber used to attend our local high school, a colleague lost a close family friend in the attack and the last time I met with the women they were sharing tips on staying safe whilst walking the streets in a hijab (Islamic headscarf).

Groups such as this Women's group can help to shore up the foundations of the cohesive and strong community that we need to combat such hatred and terror. As a CRCWM It is my privilege to walk with these women, supporting them in realising their potential and unleashing their power to improve their own lives and the lives of others around them. They need my support less and less and it is amazing to think that from their tiny mustard seed beginning they have grown and achieved so much. Where will they be in another 3 years?

