

So Lets Talk.....

An evening of dialogue on Thursday September 15th saw 70 people visiting Fenton Street Mosque and over a 100 people attending the first of the district's Diversity Dialogues run by local charity NCBI Lancashire and hosted by the Sultan of Lancaster Food Court and Art Gallery in Lancaster.

The evening opened with two songs by local singing group, Dot Crotchet and the Raging Harmonies. One song commemorated a massacre in Serbia, a stark reminder of the effects of a divided community.

The subject of the dialogue "Does Community Cohesion require assimilation? How can we preserve cultural identities and still belong" featured five speakers, Kusminder Chahal, a well known researcher on race issues; Usman Munshi, the founder of the Sultan Gallery; County Councillor Liz Scott; Khaldoun Jayousi, a local businessman and City Councillor Gina Dowding.

The history of race relations was traced in this country, the role white people must play, personal stories were shared of experiences of racism and notions of tolerance, flexibility and acceptance were referred to as the way forward for communities to thrive together.

As one member of the audience said at the end of the event, "Nature created diversity, people do not need to assimilate. What we do need is strong leadership, the building of bridges across difference and dialogue, dialogue, dialogue!"