



Footsteps
Faiths for a Low Carbon Future



Ashden
Climate Solutions in Action

PRESS RELEASE

Birmingham faith groups launch community-led climate action project

A new collaboration between Muslim Bahu Trust, Birmingham Council of Faiths' Footsteps and climate solutions charity Ashden, will receive £200,000 over three years from Esmée Fairbairn Foundation to build the capacity of Birmingham faith groups to engage in community led climate action in disadvantaged areas of the city, and to share the learning widely.

The Birmingham Faith Climate Action Partnership will link the role that many places of worship play in their local communities with the need to take urgent action to address the environmental and climate crisis we face. The collaboration will build on the key roles that Birmingham faith communities played during the Covid pandemic and lockdown as vaccination and food distribution centres. It will also build on the way in which care for the natural environment and fellow human beings are central to many faith beliefs.

This new project will be working with and supporting community-led climate action and environmental projects that respond to local needs and concerns involving energy saving measures for homes, connecting communities to the natural environment, sustainable travel, and food. It will be seeking to empower local communities to make change and aim to contribute to shifting power to communities.

Kamran Shezad, Bahu Trust, said: "The grant will be a game-changer for faith group climate and environmental action in Birmingham. It is a unique collaboration which brings together the Bahu Trust's experience of climate action in disadvantaged areas of Birmingham and Footsteps' record of delivering interfaith activities, with Ashden's experience and ability to share experience across the UK."

Ruth Tetlow, BCF Footsteps' President, added: "The Partnership is a natural next step in Footsteps' work to bring faith groups in Birmingham together, to respond to the challenge of moving to a low carbon future following the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement."

Dr Peter Rookes, Birmingham Council of Faiths, commented, "Birmingham has a strong tradition of the faith communities working together when faced by crises to build stronger, more inclusive communities. The project and Esmée funding provide a major opportunity to enable Birmingham's faith communities take effective climate action and then share learning across the UK."

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation is one of the UK's largest independent funders. Founded in 1961 by Ian Fairbairn and named after his wife who was killed in World War II, the grant is part of the Foundation's Creative, Confident Communities work to strengthen the bonds in communities and help local people to build vibrant, confident places where they can fulfil their creative, human, and economic potential.

For more information: <https://footstepsbcf.org.uk/bifcap/>

Notes for editors

1. **Press contacts:** Bahu Trust, [Kamran Shezad, Executive Director, kamranshezad@bahustrust.org, Tel: 0121 440 4096]; Footsteps, [Chris Martin, Footsteps Secretary, chrismartin2@btinternet.com, Tel: 0121 475 2088]
2. **Bahu Trust** <https://bahustrust.org/environment> has education and spirituality in a British context as its core Muslim ethos with environmental and climate action as important areas of its sustainability work. The Bahu Trust provides training to help Imams and faith leaders motivate congregations to live more climate friendly lives and to preserve the natural environment. The Bahu Trust also works with local authority and UN agencies to influence policy and motions on climate and environmental matters.

3. **BCF Footsteps – Faiths for a Low Carbon future** <https://footstepsbcf.org.uk/>
is part of Birmingham Council of Faiths (BCF). It was formed in 2015 following the Paris Climate Agreement to bring together faith groups in Birmingham, to respond to the challenge of moving to a low carbon future. Footsteps represented Birmingham faith communities on the Birmingham City Council's Route to Zero Taskforce following the Council Declaring a climate emergency in 2019. Subsequently Footsteps has been part of the Birmingham Faith Covenant Partnership.
4. **About Ashden** <https://ashden.org/>
Ashden is a charity that focuses on supporting and scaling up low carbon innovation and nature-based solutions. Through its Sustainable Towns and Cities programme it works with local authorities, retrofit agencies and others to turn climate ambition into climate action in the UK – lowering emissions and protecting nature while creating co-benefits including better health, new jobs, social equality, decent housing and resilient communities.