

Case study scenarios

These scenarios are loosely based on stories that arose in the course of the Bridge Builders Preston Project, or are situations which are plausible given the discussions that emerged.

They are intended to provoke questions and debate, and explorations of situations from the point of view of the different participants in each situation. They can be used individually, or in group discussion. With a bit of imagination in groups that feel confident they could be easily transformed into role plays which could be used for training sessions:

In each case ask yourself the following questions:

- **What are the key issues at stake?**
- **What are the different perspectives that the different protagonists in each case are likely to take and why?**
- **How would you try to come to a negotiated solution to the problem?**

The Equal Opportunities Policy Officer:

A practicing Christian woman working on Equal Opportunities Policy at a senior level in local authority, was invited to a cultural event at community centre attached to a local mosque. When she arrived she was greeted by the male secretary of the mosque and taken to a seat of honour on the stage. She noticed that all the other women at the event were staying in the back room. After the speeches and poetry readings she wanted to go and talk to some of the women but was cornered by two male members of the mosque committee who wanted her advice about applying for a grant to set up a parenting course in their centre.

The Holiday Bible Club:

St. Aggies Church had received a £500 grant for materials for their holiday play scheme in August. A team of students from the University Christian Union had volunteered to help out. On a wet afternoon they had chosen to entertain the 60 children in the hall by showing a Christian video and singing choruses. Unfortunately this was the afternoon a very secular Council employed play scheme co-ordinator chose to visit. She confronted the vicar protesting that this could not be appropriate in a neighbourhood where 40% of the population was Muslim, and she could see at least ten Asian children in the room.

The non-Halal Buffet

Coketown Borough Council had organised a reception for community leaders to celebrate their contribution to the life of the community. At least they had asked the caterers to provide vegetarian snacks and soft drinks as well as the usual municipal fare and free wine. However a rather ancient councillor who represented an outlying rural ward, and had already consumed three glasses of wine, started chatting to one of the local imams. "Do have a piece of this pork pie, its lovely" he said insistently, and from that moment the conversation deteriorated. .. including unhelpful references to Islamic terrorists, and Salman Rushdie.. until a Muslim council officer saw what was going on and tried to rescue the situation..

You can't do that in our church .

Emmanuel Evangelical Church recently received a regeneration board grant of £100k which they used to refurbish their church hall which would be made more widely available for community use and by the local Surestart team for toddler groups and parenting classes. A Surestart worker has asked for a regular booking of the hall so that a group of local mums can do a yoga class with a freelance teacher. The pastor has asked her to wait until the deacons have discussed it and now reports back that they voted unanimously that they could not allow such an anti-Christian activity on the premises. The Surestart worker is mystified and tries to argue the case, threatening that if she reports this to the regeneration board they will ask for the money back.

Officers in a Mess

The Sri Krishna Temple is always a thriving hive of community activity and for years has been doing good work in adult education, advice services and youth club activities. Last year they applied for and were given a large grant to develop a domestic violence service. However since the project started the president of the Temple, who was a chartered accountant, died suddenly, and the person appointed to head up the new service has gone on maternity leave. A lively group of women who have experience in these matters are meeting twice a week and are being helped by the staff of the local women's refuge. However, volunteers on the committee have been unable to keep up with the bookkeeping and record keeping that was required. The grants officer has just made a visit and for the first time in six months has become aware of the difficult situation. He says he has to consider recommending suspension or withdrawal of funding.

Carry on Carolling

The mayor of Coketown who happens to be a Hindu has been criticised in the local Press because he has not been able or willing to arrange the traditional civic Carol service in the Cathedral. He has suggested a multi-faith gathering in late January instead. A flurry of readers letters suggest that since England is a Christian country the council is being anti-Christian in banning the celebration of Christmas. The Dean of the Cathedral when phoned by a local reporter tends to agree saying, "It looks like the Council has mucked things up again, the Carol Service as an act of Christian worship is a vital part of our seasonal celebrations, and we are going to put one on anyway, to which the Mayor and every one else is invited." The next day's headline is "Dean slams council over Carol Service Cock up". A week later the Roman Catholic priest rings the Dean to tell him that the funding bid for a new family support project in the RC church hall has been turned down, and he is sure the case can't have been helped by the Dean's attack on the mayor and Council.

Rights for Whites

The local regeneration partnership last year contributed £100k to a £500k project to build new community facilities next to the Shah Jalal Mosque in Brookdale, on condition that the local college could make use of the facilities three mornings a week for the next two years at an agreed rent. A white neighbour goes to her local councillors surgery complaining that every night 100 children turn up and can be heard noisily "chanting their prayers". Once last summer a cricket ball went through her window and she saw "some Pakki lads running away. As a tax payer why should I pay half a million pounds for them to pray to their foreign gods, if they want to live here they should learn to live like we do". The Councillor who has a tiny majority and an election coming up, listens politely and says that he will see what he can do.

A welcome to All

A committed Christian police officer who has been working in the County Constabulary Minorities Liaison team alongside Muslim colleagues has build up an excellent network of relationships with imams and committee members of several mosques in the town. Chatting with an imam after a meeting he mentions that he will be working at the youth group in his local suburban church that evening. The imam invites him to organise a visit from the church to look round the mosque, meet some of the Muslim community. “We could even arrange a football match between the lads in your youth club and the boys who come to madrassa here,” says the Imam. When the policeman sees his minister at the weekend he passes on the invitation to his home church . “We’ll have to think about that, maybe discuss it at the church Council next month, but I expect some people will be worried that they’ll try to convince our youngsters that the Bible is not true.”

The Missing Letter

The leader of Coketown Council is chatting at a community festival with a vicar who is chair of the management group of the local YMCA. “Actually we’d find it a lot easier to give you money if you could drop the C out of your name”.

“But” says the vicar, “the whole point is we are a Christian organisation, we are known as that for over a century right round the world. It’s not as if we are narrow and just out to convert people. We even have the youth worker from the Coketown Muslim Welfare Association on our management group. Are you going to ask them to take out the M from their name plate too.?”