

WALSALL KOBAR FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION

Walsall Kobar Friendship Association was formed in 2007 with the aim of developing friendship and twinning links between Walsall and Kobar, a small town north of Ramallah in the Palestinian West Bank. We strive to enable individuals and groups to develop awareness and learn from each other's experiences and promote public understanding and support of the humanitarian issues relevant to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

We are members of a national twinning network and since 2007 numerous visits have been organised to and from Kobar. We arrange a programme of cultural events, public meetings and ongoing fundraising activities. The money raised helps to underpin our work, fund travel costs of visitors to Walsall and we also sell craft goods to support a women's cooperative in Kobar. Activities over the last year include:

Overview of our work in 2014

January 2014

- Annual General Meeting held at Palfrey Community Centre with a discussion about the situation in Palestine.

February 2014

- Website update.
- Facebook update.

March 2014

- The craft stall was taken to Walsall New Art Gallery's Salaam Festival to celebrate International Women's Day.

April 2014

- The film 'The Great Book Robbery' was shown at the Palfrey Community Centre.

May 2014

- The craft stall was taken to Caldmore Festival.

June 2014

- Sponsored Walk for Palestine on footpaths around Walsall.
- The film 'The Lemon Tree' was shown at the Aina Centre.
- The craft stall was taken to a Syrian support event.

July 2014

- The craft stall was taken to a Women's event at Aisha Mosque.

September 2014

- Garden Party with visiting speakers held at the Aina Centre.

November 2014

- Members attended the national lobby of Parliament for Palestine.
- Members attended the National Twinning Conference and AGM. The Walsall Kobar panel had been incorporated into the national banner. Tony was voted onto the national twinning committee.

December 2014

- End of year celebratory meal

In addition during 2014 members supported

- Palestine solidarity events in Stourbridge, Stafford, Leek, Wolverhampton and Birmingham
- vigils in the centre of Walsall in support of Gaza whilst it was being attacked during the summer
- the national demonstration in London in support of Gaza
- the protest outside the Elbit Drone Factory in Shenstone
- the regional Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) meetings
- the Palestine Question Time at Walsall Council House in December. Speakers were Kamel Hawwash (vice president of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign), Haim Bresheeth (Israeli film director and academic) and Mariam Khan (Birmingham Councillor).

For the future we will continue our regular programme, build on our links with Walsall Schools and host a group of 8 visitors from Kobar to Walsall including head teachers and pupils from Kobar Girls and Kobar Boys schools.

To find out more about what we do, about how to go on the mailing, to become a member and if you choose, get involved in the work of WKFA go to:

www.walsallkobar.org.uk or email the secretary on walsall.kobar@gmail.com