



## **Responding to Sectarianism**

A report in two parts by Charlie Irvine, Abdul Rahim and Gerry Keegan  
with an introduction by Hugh Donald.

## Introduction

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It has been a unique privilege for Place for Hope to be associated with the Scottish Government's agenda to understand the impact of sectarianism in Scotland, and to explore ways in which this can be addressed. It has been a time of learning for Place for Hope as we have designed the processes for enabling communities to engage in challenging and controversial issues in safe and effective ways. As relationships have been built and the space created for openness and honesty, the stories have been shared.

Community Dialogue has not only been a learning process for ourselves, but also for our participants. It has created the opportunity not only to hear what the other thinks is different, but more importantly why, and the life experiences that have shaped their views.

I would wish to record our thanks to all who have participated, acknowledging both the time they have given and their courage in engaging with the issues. In learning together, I wish to acknowledge the contributions from all those who have engaged in the research, and facilitated the various dialogues across the country. As we have developed the project it has opened up new doors for us with the opportunities to work collaboratively with The Conforti Institute, Faith in Community Scotland, and The Centre for Good Relations. We are immensely grateful to Charlie Irvine for evaluating our work on Community Dialogues, and for crafting the first part of this report, and to Abdul Rahim and Gerry Keegan for leading and writing up our work on the impact of Marches and Parades. Thanks also to our Team members who facilitated the Community Dialogues.

As reflected in our findings, we have been part of permitting a range of voices to be heard and demonstrating ways in which controversial issues can be addressed respectfully. In doing so, our expectation is that the communities with whom we have worked will be equipped and energised to continue the conversations and together practically to demonstrate the ways in which difference is valued and diversity embraced.

**Hugh Donald**  
**Director, Place for Hope**



**Part One**  
**Community Dialogue as a Reponse to Sectarianism**

**By Charlie Irvine**

## Charlie Irvine

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## Abstract

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*“By inviting relative strangers to speak to each other, dialogue inevitably starts with a move from safety to risk.” (Report, p.27)*

Between 2013 and 2015 Place for Hope delivered two projects as part of the Scottish Government’s “Tackling Sectarianism” initiative. At the heart of this work was community dialogue: *“a means to access our thinking while we are thinking” (Report, p.4)*. By the end of both projects Place for Hope had delivered 39 community dialogues across a range of rural and Central Belt locations as well as with national stakeholders and Glasgow Women’s library. All dialogues included participants from both Catholic and Reformed traditions. The projects also incorporated a number of awareness raising events and a study visit to Northern Ireland. Throughout this time Charlie Irvine acted as evaluator. This report sets out his findings, based on observation, interviews and written reports.

The report finds that, despite an almost universal starting point of *“there’s no sectarianism here”*, there remains no shortage of stories describing its impact, both inside and outside Scotland’s Central Belt. Catholics rather than Protestants relate the great majority of incidents, with some Protestants expressing surprise at their neighbours’ experiences. Other findings include the continuing impact of Orange parades; the significance of Catholics’ position within the UK constitution; and active churchgoers criticising and distancing themselves from those who act in a sectarian way. The national stakeholders group contributed the view that large organisations in the public and private sectors could take a lead by using existing equalities legislation to outlaw sectarian practices.

Regarding community dialogue as a process, participants appreciated the opportunity to develop friendships and speak honestly with those from another tradition. This took time and seemed to reflect widespread integration across Scotland’s religious divide which has nonetheless left many significant issues unspoken. Faith schools, sectarian history and genuine religious differences were among novel or taboo topics. The report concludes that community dialogue provides a constructive and humane setting where citizens can address difficult questions without polarising into opposite camps.

## Introduction

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The term “sectarianism” carries particular weight in Scotland. Speaking in 2011 the then Minister for Community Safety, Roseanna Cunningham, linked the term with a range of negative attributes including “*offensive*”, “*vile*”, “*bigotry*”, “*hatred*” and “*violent*”, adding “*we cannot simply shake our heads and say, ‘This is the way it’s always been and the way it always will be.’*”<sup>1</sup> In 2015 sectarianism scholar John Wolffe could speak of “*the rediscovery of sectarianism in Scotland in the early twenty-first century*,” attributing responsibility to James McMillan’s “Scotland’s Shame” lecture in 1999<sup>2</sup> and subsequent government initiatives on “*Tackling Sectarianism*”.<sup>3</sup> The present report comes out of the second of these initiatives, starting in 2012 and running to 2015.

Having passed a law to address “*Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications*”<sup>4</sup> the Scottish Government was clear that it would require more than legislation to deal with the wider issue of sectarianism. In November 2011 it announced “*wide-ranging action to tackle the root causes of sectarianism*.” As part of that initiative, Place for Hope was invited to design and conduct a series of community dialogues with the intention of weighing up their potential in addressing sectarianism. The report on that work was published in June 2013.<sup>5</sup> In the autumn of that year the Scottish Government invited tenders for additional work in tackling sectarianism. Place for Hope’s successful bid proposed expanding and deepening the community dialogue approach over a two year period.

Place for Hope asked me to evaluate both projects. From its inception in September 2012 through to completion in March 2015 I was given access to planning, training and preparation meetings. I attended ten dialogues<sup>6</sup> and four stakeholder meetings.<sup>7</sup> I conducted telephone interviews with eleven individuals who participated in the dialogues. I also accompanied Place for Hope and two other organisations in a study visit to Northern Ireland in March 2014. This report sets out my findings.

It contains the following sections:

1. Brief review of the Scottish Government’s initiative on sectarianism	page 5
2. What is community dialogue?	page 6
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<sup>1</sup> Debate on the Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Bill: Stage 1, 23 June 2011, see <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28862.aspx?r=6576&mode=pdf>

<sup>2</sup> And Tom Devine’s edited collection of the same name; T. M. Devine (Editor) *Scotland’s Shame? Bigotry and Sectarianism in Modern Scotland*. Edinburgh: Mainstream Press, 2000

<sup>3</sup> John Wolffe, ‘Sectarianism’ Presentation to Religion and Security Seminar, New College, Edinburgh, March 19, 2015

<sup>4</sup> The Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communication (Scotland) Act 2012 was enacted on 31 March 2012 – see <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Justice/law/sectarianism-action-1/football-violence/bill>

<sup>5</sup> Charlie Irvine, Responding to Sectarianism: Evaluation Report (2013) Available from <http://www.placeforhope.org.uk/news/article/responding-to-sectarianism-report>

<sup>6</sup> Of which I co-facilitated six in a single central-belt location.

<sup>7</sup> These were gatherings of national ‘stakeholders’ from local and central government, journalism, churches and large public sector organisations. I co-facilitated one.

## 1. The Scottish Government's Initiative on Sectarianism

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A great deal has been written about sectarianism in Scotland.<sup>8</sup> The current initiative followed some particularly disturbing incidents in 2010 and 2011.<sup>9</sup> Faced with criticism that the law is a blunt instrument with which to tackle deep-seated societal issues, the Minister for Community Safety, Roseanna Cunningham, announced the creation of a £3 million fund to help tackle sectarianism. Organisations were invited to bid for funding in 2011 and again in 2013.

Definitions of sectarianism are many and varied. One of the more concise is *“an ideology of conflict rooted in religious differences.”*<sup>10</sup> The charity Nil by Mouth prefers *“Narrow-minded beliefs that lead to prejudice, discrimination, malice and ill-will towards members, or presumed members, of a religious denomination.”*<sup>11</sup> The Scottish Government's Advisory Group on Tackling Sectarianism, in its first report, produced a longer version:

*“Sectarianism in Scotland is a complex of perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, actions and structures, at personal and communal levels, which originate in religious difference and can involve a negative mixing of religion with politics, sporting allegiance and national identifications. It arises from a distorted expression of identity and belonging. It is expressed in destructive patterns of relating which segregate, exclude, discriminate against or are violent towards a specified religious other with significant personal and social consequences.”*<sup>12</sup>

The report also made a number of recommendations including a call for greater leadership from central and local government and the media; for greater responsibility to be exercised by those who organise major public gatherings such as marches and parades and football matches; for further research; and for greater use of the education system in addressing sectarianism. It did not, however, propose further legislation, suggesting instead that the existing equalities and human rights frameworks could be more enthusiastically enforced.<sup>13</sup> It also recommended that the current round of community based activity, of which Place for Hope's work forms part, should be thoroughly evaluated. It is hoped that the present report will contribute to that evaluation.

Place for Hope is an independent charity initially set up by the Church of Scotland Ministries Council in 2009. It has trained both ministers and lay people in facilitation and mediation and is involved in addressing congregational conflict throughout Scotland. It aims to *“support and enable 21st century church, communities and society in Scotland to develop creative, positive and life-giving ways to explore and address our differences.”*<sup>14</sup>

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8 See Devine, 2000, for a wide-ranging collection of perspectives inspired by James McMillan's 1999 speech entitled “Scotland's Shame”. For most recent statistics on religiously aggravated crime see the Scottish Government Report Religiously Aggravated Offending in Scotland, 2013-14, available from <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0045/00452559.pdf>

9 As is often the case. Writing about a previous Scottish Executive Action Plan on Sectarianism, John Flint claimed that: “The manifestation of sectarianism through urban disorder appears to be the primary focus” John Flint, “Governing Sectarianism in Scotland.” Scottish Affairs, no.63, spring 2008

10 Rory Williams and Patricia Walls, “Gone but not gone: Catholic Disadvantage in Scotland” in Devine, 2000, note 2 above

11 “What is sectarianism?” - <http://nilbymouth.org/what-is-sectarianism/> - Last accessed 13/4/13

12 Advisory Group on Tackling Sectarianism in Scotland, Independent Advice to Scottish Ministers and Report on Activity 9 August 2012 – 15 November 2013. Available from <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2013/12/6197/downloads>

13 Ibid, pp.5-9

14 Place for Hope LEAP Report, February 2013

In making the case for funding, it highlighted contradictory anecdotal evidence from its own networks (a) that sectarianism continues to be an issue throughout Scotland and, conversely, (b) that many rural communities believe that *“there is no sectarianism here”*.

While the Scottish Government made clear its desire to “tackle” sectarianism, Place for Hope’s two proposals recognised that we in Scotland are still at an early stage in our understanding of what might be effective. It therefore preferred to use the term “respond to sectarianism”. As well as contributing to our understanding of sectarianism, the projects sought evidence for the usefulness of community dialogue.

## 2. Community Dialogue

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Dialogue is a simple term describing conversation between two people. It has always held attractions for those wishing to address conflict, not least because of its inherent non-violence: when people are talking they are not fighting. Johan Galtung, one of the pioneers of UN peacemaking efforts, talks of the *“duty of dialogue”*<sup>15</sup> as the best response to the human right to life. When a previous Scottish Government sought to address religious difference it published a guide entitled *“Belief in Dialogue.”*<sup>16</sup>

Much of the writing on the subject is North American,<sup>17</sup> with some from Ireland,<sup>18</sup> but little is known about the effectiveness of this approach in Scotland. In 2009 a forum entitled *“Dialogue in Scotland”* attempted to address perceived confusion surrounding the term.<sup>19</sup> The forum identified the following fundamental qualities of dialogue:

- Transparency and disclosure
- Inclusiveness and egalitarian participation
- Quality listening
- Respect and openness
- Search for common ground and exploration of differences
- Balance of advocacy and inquiry.<sup>20</sup>

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15 Johan Galtung, 1999, cited in Amanda E Keller and Kelly K Ryan ‘Definition, Necessity, and Nansen: Efficacy of Dialogue in Peacebuilding’ *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, Vol 25 (4) Summer 2012, p.353

16 The Scottish Working Group on Belief and Relations (2011) *Belief in Dialogue: Religion and Belief Relations, Good Practice Guide* Edinburgh: Scottish Government, available from <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/347464/0115683.pdf>

17 For a summary of recent research see ‘Colloquy on Dialogue Processes’ *Conflict Resolution Quarterly* Vol.29, no.4 and Vol.30, no.1 (2012); see also John Forester, *Dealing With Differences: Dramas of Mediating Public Disputes*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (2009). For a more critical view see Shawn Rosenburg, ‘Rethinking Democratic Deliberation: The Limits and Potential of Citizen Participation’ *Polity*, Vol. 39, no.3 (2007) 335-360

18 Geoffrey Corry, ‘Political Dialogue Workshops: Deepening the Peace Process in Northern Ireland’ *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, Vol.30, no.1 (2012) 53-79

19 Magda Pieczka, Emma Wood and Oliver Escobar *Dialogue in Scotland? A Forum for Practitioners* Edinburgh: Queen Margaret University Working Paper 2, 2010. Available from <http://www.qmu.ac.uk/mcpa/CDial/DialogueForumReport.pdf>

20 *Ibid.* p.4

A key feature of most dialogue processes is the presence of an independent facilitator or facilitators. The forum considered the impact of Scottish culture on the viability of dialogue processes, with speculation about the potentially negative effect of the following: perceived short-term political cycles; outcome-driven organisational culture; and general lack of confidence in citizens' capacity to speak out.<sup>21</sup>

Community dialogue implies having such a conversation within a locality or group. This holds attractions for work in responding to sectarianism where communities are by and large mixed.

People from both sides of the sectarian divide tend to live side by side with those of other faiths and none, particularly outside the Central Belt. An alternative term could have been *"intergroup dialogue"*, defined as *"face-to-face, sustained, facilitated communication undertaken to build relationships and consider difficult issues affecting members of different social identity groups."*<sup>22</sup> Intergroup dialogue, however, takes a more proactive approach towards issues of power and politics, such as: *"Noticing and interrupting expressions of privilege and oppression in the group as they occur, and encouraging participants to do the same."*<sup>23</sup> While community dialogues would also seek to ensure that all voices were heard, the desire not to shape the agenda pointed towards a somewhat less intrusive approach, working with the groups as they were.

One of the core values of community dialogue is *"co-existence"*.<sup>24</sup> Another is the idea of *"encountering the other"*, allowing people to *"speak fully and be listened to whilst creating opportunities for the exploration of each other's ideology, perceptions, attitudes, and sense of history"* leading to the *"full humanization of those we encounter in daily life."*<sup>25</sup> Physicist David Bohm spoke of dialogue as *"a means to access our thinking while we are thinking"*, suspending judgement, not in the sense of giving up our opinions, but in his words: *"I suspended my thoughts from the ceiling like artworks so I could see them more clearly and have others help make sense of them."*<sup>26</sup>

Bohm is also credited with identifying four stages of dialogue:

1. *"Shared Monologues"*, in which group members get used to talking to each other
2. *"Skillful Discussion"*, in which people learn the skills of dialogue
3. *"Reflective Dialogue"*, in which people engage in genuine dialogue
4. *"Generative Dialogue"*, in which *"creative"* dialogue is used to generate new ideas.<sup>27</sup>

Arai's 2015 report on dialogues about the Taiwan Strait highlights another facet of dialogues with his term *"conflict history"*: they are as likely to look backwards as forwards.<sup>28</sup> Noticing that a great deal of conflict work treats the past as no more than background, his approach seeks to bring history into the discussion as a living presence.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid. p.19.20

<sup>22</sup> Ellen K Wayne, "Is It Just Talk? Understanding and Evaluating Intergroup Dialogue" *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, Vol 25, no.4 (2008) 451-478, p.452

<sup>23</sup> Kristin Chung-Mei Lensen, Mark Chesler and Nancy Brown "Practice Note: Responding to Civic Conflict: Developing Intergroup Dialogue Co-Facilitators." *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, Vol.29, no.4 (2012), 421-432, p.425

<sup>24</sup> Keller and Ryan (2012), note 15 above, p.356

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. p.358

<sup>26</sup> David Bohm (1996) cited in Keller and Ryan (2012) p.359

<sup>27</sup> William Isaacs, cited in Kenneth Cloke, *How to Design, Organize, and Conduct Community Dialogues* Mediators Beyond Borders Best Practices Paper, provided to Place for Hope

<sup>28</sup> Tatsushi Arai, 'Engaging Conflict History: Toward an Integrated Method of Conflict Resolution Dialogue and Capacity Building' *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, vol. 32, no. 3, (2015) 277-298

He suggests that dialogue needs to integrate both “*Orthodox history: mainstream history, often built and sustained by a dominant high-power party—a perceived top dog*” and “*Different history: non-mainstream history, often experienced by a low-power party—a perceived underdog*.”<sup>29</sup> This asymmetry of histories resonates powerfully with the Scottish dialogues.<sup>30</sup>

### 3. The Project

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Community dialogue is Place for Hope’s preferred approach in addressing congregational conflict.<sup>31</sup> Its case to the Scottish Government stressed the organisation’s skills and experience in working with large groups and in creating safe spaces for people to speak openly and honestly.

In Phase One it used this approach to explore the impact of sectarianism in three rural and one urban location outside Scotland’s Central Belt. It also convened three dialogues involving national stakeholders (representing public sector organisations as well as central and local government) in Edinburgh. In Phase Two it built on the findings from the Phase One evaluation in three ways:

- 1) Expanding the reach of the dialogues into more challenging areas by adding two Central Belt locations
- 2) Increasing the depth of the dialogues by scheduling six in each area plus another three national stakeholders events
- 3) Using co-facilitators from each faith tradition

Initial selection and training took place in 2012 and I attended one session for facilitators. When asked what they hoped the project would achieve, the answers fell into three categories: breaking down barriers, increasing our understanding of sectarianism and demonstrating the value of dialogue. When asked what their “*inner sceptic*” was saying the answers revealed concerns about: the Scottish Government’s political agenda; whether the people with most to gain from conflict reduction would engage; Place for Hope being too strongly identified with the Church of Scotland; the short timescale; scratching the surface; people not really changing; and “*Are we just stirring it?*” It seems that the facilitators bought into the project goals while at the same time retaining a sense of realism about the magnitude of the task.

The Phase One dialogues took place in four non-Central Belt locations in January and February 2013. The choice of locations needs explanation. It is clear that the most Scots associate sectarianism with the West of Scotland, a largely urban area with a history of heavy industry and large-scale Irish immigration in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. For good and understandable reasons most efforts to address sectarianism have been targeted here. However, Place for Hope’s networks in other parts of Scotland highlighted the possibility of hidden sectarianism: conversely, some suggested that “*there is no sectarianism here*.”<sup>32</sup> Whichever is correct, little was known about the impact of sectarianism outside the Central Belt and Place for Hope’s extensive network of faith communities made it well placed to address these areas.

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid. p.282

<sup>30</sup> See below, pp.28 & 30

<sup>31</sup> Place for Hope Project Report (2013), submitted to the Project Advisory Group and on file with the author

<sup>32</sup> A position eloquently set out in relation to Aberdeen by Scott Styles. See Scott C Styles, “The Non-Sectarian Culture of North-East Scotland” Devine, 2000

Phase Two, running from late 2013 to early 2015, took on board three recommendations from the Phase One report: a) use co-facilitators from each faith tradition; b) go deeper by meeting on more occasions; and c) work in more challenging areas.<sup>33</sup> Place for Hope conducted six dialogues in two Central Belt locations traditionally associated with sectarianism, as well as conducting a further four in each of the South West, North East and West Highlands. Working in partnership with the Conforti Institute, an educational initiative of the Catholic Xavierian missionaries,<sup>34</sup> it recruited three facilitators from the Catholic tradition who worked in the Central Belt and West Highland locations. It also added a further three national stakeholder dialogues and a women-only dialogue co-facilitated with the Glasgow Women's Library. And finally it organised a study visit to Northern Ireland in partnership with Conforti Institute and Faith In Community Scotland, another charity delivering a project funded by Scottish Government.

The facilitators were not local to the area in which they were working. On the other hand the two hosts in each location were local, usually ministers from Catholic and Protestant faith communities. They played an important role in selecting and inviting people to participate in the dialogues.

### Practicalities

The dialogues followed a standard shape:

1. Welcome, meal and introductions
2. Sharing stories/experiences of sectarianism
3. Reflecting on the issues that have arisen
4. Exploring possible ways forward together

Local hotels were chosen as the most neutral venue. Some dialogues took place at lunchtime: others over an evening meal.

### Participants

I observed four community dialogues and facilitated six. I also interviewed eleven participants and a colleague interviewed two more.<sup>35</sup> It is clear that the majority of participants were middle-aged or elderly, with a fairly even gender balance. In the Central Belt a small number of younger people participated. Most professed a religious faith.<sup>36</sup> Some were retired. Some were, or had been, active in public life: teachers, local councillors, the police and those working in healthcare.

## 4. Methodology

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Community dialogues, being unplanned conversations between diverse people, are unpredictable affairs. They are also wide-ranging and densely packed with ideas, debates, themes and arguments. This means that any attempt to report on them is necessarily selective, relying on the researcher's sense of what is significant. Research such as this involves an act of interpretation.

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<sup>33</sup> Irvine (2013) note 5 above, pp. 18-20

<sup>34</sup> See <http://www.confortiinstitute.org>

<sup>35</sup> Who had participated in dialogues I facilitated.

<sup>36</sup> Not exclusively Christian – in one area Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist people participated

The project's goals affected the methods chosen: because it sought both to address sectarianism and to evaluate the suitability of community dialogue,<sup>37</sup> I chose to mix methods, although all would be described as “*qualitative*”.<sup>38</sup> The research data were gathered in five forms:

- a) direct observation and recording of four community dialogues
- b) co-facilitation and recording of a further six dialogues
- c) reports on the other dialogues prepared by the facilitators
- d) eleven interviews with participants in dialogues throughout Scotland
- e) a small number of people returned written answers to the interview questions

In research terms, observation deals with naturally occurring data, while interviews and reports involve people's interpretation of events. By playing the role of co-facilitator I was able to add a further source of data: the facilitator's interventions are themselves acts of interpretation, offered as a real-time response to the unfolding conversation. While less “*objective*” than a conventional researcher, a facilitator participates in dialogue alongside the respondents, asking questions, summarising issues and managing the process. In a sense this blurs the line between researcher and researched. By combining observation, interviewing and facilitation I have sought to bring out as broad a range of perspectives as possible.

The dialogues and interviews were transcribed and their content analysed using a simple coding scheme: each statement from interviews or dialogues was categorised using everyday language (for example, “*Lack of knowledge/ignorance of sectarianism*” or “*Politeness: we don't talk about things like that.*”)<sup>39</sup> The number of occurrences was counted, with new categories continually emerging until all the data had been coded. While all coding schemes are artificial, this has the virtue of identifying which themes occurred most frequently.

## 5. Findings from interviews and observations: what did people think?

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In the following sections I attempt to make sense of what was said. I set out the most frequently occurring themes in dialogues, interviews and facilitators' reports, using examples to illustrate the meaning. It is important to stress that these codes are simply a tool to aid interpretation. Qualitative research is useful precisely because it does not claim to measure precise numbers: rather it provides a glimpse of the way people make sense of the world, in their own words. Participants may say what they think; or they may say what they think the researcher hopes to hear; or they may say what they think the country needs to hear. The latter two are just as useful as the first in understanding a subject like sectarianism where beliefs about what others believe are as important as “*facts*”.

I begin with the ten most frequently occurring themes about sectarianism itself. I then set out additional themes before turning to participants' suggestions for the way forward and comments on the dialogue process itself.

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<sup>37</sup> Both process and outcomes are thus being simultaneously evaluated.

<sup>38</sup> Jane Ritchie and Jane Lewis. *Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers*. London: Sage, 2003.

<sup>39</sup> This approach could be described as “grounded theory”. For an explanation see Ritchie and Lewis (2003) p.201: “*Grounded theory ... involves the generation of analytical categories and their dimensions, and the identification of relationships between them. The process of data collection and conceptualisation continues until categories and relationships are 'saturated', that is new data do not add to the developing theory.*”

## A) Dialogue themes

### i) Anti-Catholicism

Taking the dialogues and interviews together, the commonest form of statement could be termed “*stories of harm against Catholics*”. For example, one (non-Catholic) participant said, “*So where it came up it was Catholics that were being targeted rather than Protestants being targeted by Catholics, seemed to be.*”<sup>40</sup> An interviewee stated, “*People were quite aghast at the sort of things that Catholics had to put up with even in [rural area]*”<sup>41</sup> Another reported, “*I was surprised by the story we were told about the priest going to the meal and becoming the butt of jokes to the whole company.*”<sup>42</sup> It was striking that these comments did not have a mirror image in any of the interviews or dialogue reports: on this small sample there were no voices saying that the problem is anti-Protestantism rather than sectarianism.

This phenomenon was mirrored in the number of participants who claimed never to have encountered sectarianism. Again the sample is small: however, all but one of these was from a Protestant or non-religious background, reinforcing the impression that Scotland’s Catholics do not have the luxury of not noticing sectarianism.

This theme was reinforced by data from Phase Two. Other anecdotes described an array of situations, some from the past, some contemporary, such as: “*When you walk along the street and a young guy, he’s about 28, comes out of that pub that I’m talking about and cries you all the different names that he cries you, get away back to Ireland, you should get away back to Ireland, it’s quite daunting, I mean you’re going along the street with your shopping and about 3 o’clock in the afternoon, nobody should have to put up with that.*”<sup>43</sup> Or: “*having known this man for years and... it came up that I was a Catholic and ever since then he has treated me completely differently ... he’s never set foot back in the house again.*”<sup>44</sup>

This seems to have fuelled a degree of caution among some member of the Catholic community: for example being wary of hanging a Celtic shirt on the washing line because it would mark out the identity of that household,<sup>45</sup> or choosing not to go to certain locations at certain times following football matches: “*there’s certain pubs I wouldn’t go to.*”<sup>46</sup> It highlights the subtle levels of self-censorship that may occur in parts of Scotland where minorities choose not to test the tolerance of the majority.

### ii) Ignorance among those who act in sectarian ways

This generally involved a negative judgement about those displaying sectarian attitudes or causing sectarian violence. Examples include: “*... my opinion, the people that are like that are not practising any religion*”<sup>47</sup> “*maybe they don’t know, maybe they don’t have a clue, maybe they’ve been brought*

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<sup>40</sup> Dumfries and Galloway, female participant (henceforth DG, F)

<sup>41</sup> Interview 5, male participant (henceforth I5, M)

<sup>42</sup> I3, F

<sup>43</sup> West Lothian, female participant (henceforth WL, F)

<sup>44</sup> WL, F

<sup>45</sup> WL, Facilitator’s report

<sup>46</sup> North Lanarkshire, male participant (henceforth NL, M)

<sup>47</sup> DG, M

*up with it all their life and they just think that that's funny and they're not trying to be offensive to you"*<sup>48</sup> *"I don't think those people that sort of carry out the sectarianism are actually church goers, I think they just use it as a sort of label for division"*<sup>49</sup>

This theme links to another (the 9th most frequently occurring), which I describe as "other-ing".<sup>50</sup> It mostly describes remarks that attribute negative acts of sectarianism to "others" in the community.<sup>51</sup> Examples include: *"[town] is a wee hotbed of sectarianism"*<sup>52</sup>; *"if they're being fed bigoted ideas or whatever at home then that's going to be within them"*<sup>53</sup>; *"it isn't either Protestantism or Catholicism that teaches people to go beating each other up."*<sup>54</sup> To be fair to the participants, the goal of the dialogues was to understand sectarianism. If they did not regard themselves as sectarian is it hardly surprising that they puzzled over the behaviour of others. In response to a question about what motivates sectarianism, one participant speculated: *"the tribal, the ownership, the peer pressure... belonging..."*<sup>55</sup> Another spoke of problems for a local manufacturer:

*"after an Old Firm match it was incredible, this is a company working at the margins of profitability and they'll have team leaders that are either Celtic or Rangers supporters, and these are men who wouldn't speak to each other for three days and productivity would actually drop during this time. You realise that your jobs are at stake, the profitability of this company is at stake and you half-wits only speak to each other..."*<sup>56</sup>

This theme recurred in Phase Two, with one participant puzzling over the behaviour of a small group in her town: *"Why are they like that towards Catholics? Why do they hate Catholics? And I say that word hate because of them, hate, that is a strong word to raise, you can dislike or you can disrespect but that word hate, there is a few and I know the few that are like that."*<sup>57</sup>

Some rejected the idea that sectarianism has any roots in the churches: *"this is the annoying part about it, all the publicity, all that happens, all these troubles, they're not Christians"; "it's just the non-Christians who are behaving in a sectarian way."*<sup>58</sup> Another participant expressed scepticism about the Orange Order's claim that they don't sing sectarian songs but merely hire the bands: *"who happen to play tunes that other people have put words to, that other folk might find offensive, so just like you're saying... It's always somebody else."*<sup>59</sup>

### iii) "It's a Central Belt problem"

One of the least surprising threads from Phase One concerned the idea that sectarianism is a more significant problem in the Central Belt, particularly Glasgow, Lanarkshire and Ayrshire. This varied from one rural area to another and in the more remote parts led to a kind of puzzlement: *"we didn't feel sectarianism was a major issue in this part of the world and in some ways we questioned are*

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48 DG, M

49 I8, F

50 This phenomenon was also noted by the facilitator in another dialogue (hereafter D3)

51 John Flint finds a similar tendency on the part of government: *"these problems are attributed to 'the bigoted few' or 'selfish minority'."* Flint, 2008 (Note 5) p.124

52 DG, M

53 DG, F

54 I6, M

55 DG, M

56 DG, M

57 WL, F

58 WL, M

59 NL, F

*we the best area to exemplify that debate*". This same respondent went on to describe inter-denominational cooperation in the area before posing the question: *"Well, if we can do it why can't Glasgow?"*<sup>60</sup>

In the dialogues this theme emerged when people were describing experiences of sectarianism. Many of the stories featured an upbringing or time spent in the West of Scotland. Indeed, one English participant who said he had not encountered sectarianism had experienced a sectarian incident in the time between the first and second dialogues. This occurred on a train near Glasgow and had involved two groups singing rival songs: *"it wasn't light-hearted banter... the other people on the train were horrified, we all wanted to get off."*<sup>61</sup> Another asserted: *"it's just a Glasgow problem."*<sup>62</sup> However, this perception was contradicted by a number of stories of sectarianism in other parts of Scotland.

Phase Two provided a more nuanced picture. In the rural locations further dialogues led groups to conclude that they had exhausted the subject of sectarianism: *"we decided, after we had a couple of sessions, that that was – there was no point in doing any more with the group that we had gathered together."*<sup>63</sup> This group chose to use the final two dialogues to explore local divisions following the Referendum. In a Highland location the facilitators found that Catholic/Protestant sectarianism was of little interest to local people. What did emerge was the following:

- in the Highlands there is not a perceived link between Catholicism and being Irish
- tensions between the Free Church and the Church of Scotland are more significant
- there is a degree of unspoken anti-English feeling
- secularism is a more pressing worry for religious people.<sup>64</sup>

Conversely, Phase Two generated surprising data: significant numbers of participants in the Central Belt reported that sectarianism is no longer a problem. Or, more properly, it is not as bad as it used to be. Again, caution needs to be exercised about the small sample size but the areas chosen were by no means the leafy suburbs, isolated from football and marches. One opening statement from participants captures the sentiment:

*"I don't see the aggression as prevalent as it once was when I was growing up, I just don't see it there and I see kids of all denominations that you know playing happier together than maybe we did at 30 years ago so, for me the issues are there but they're less obvious."*<sup>65</sup>

Another important source of data was a pre-dialogue questionnaire, completed by 64 respondents across all the dialogues. The first question, *"How significant a problem is sectarianism in your area?"* offered a five-point Likert scale where 1 meant *"Not at all significant"* and 5 meant *"Very significant"*. 57% answered 1 or 2, while only 24% answered 4 or 5. When asked about a range of sectarian harms, such as using sectarian language to describe people, sectarian vandalism or sectarian intimidation or harassment, very low numbers thought these were common.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> I11, M

<sup>61</sup> DG, M

<sup>62</sup> DG, F

<sup>63</sup> Dumfries and Galloway, Male

<sup>64</sup> Facilitator's report, Highlands; also confirmed in the facilitator's report from the North East

<sup>65</sup> NL, M

<sup>66</sup> Weight average for *"using sectarian terms to describe people"* = 1.89 (out of 5); for *"sectarian vandalism"* = 1.42; for *"Sectarian intimidation or harassment"* = 1.43. For the full survey results go to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-R9QPF3S/>

#### iv) Other sources of division: Anti-English feeling

Training in facilitating dialogue emphasises values such as empowerment, self-determination and respect for participants. Facilitators follow the conversation as it emerges. So, although the headline for the conversations was sectarianism, other themes emerged in its wake. They can broadly be described as *“other sources of division.”* The most prominent of these were discussions about anti-English feeling. This is a complex issue, overlapping with wider observations about *“incomers”* and their role, particularly in rural Scotland. One respondent (an incomer himself) attempted to characterise the pragmatic approach of the *“originals”*:

*“I think they tend to realise that the community just wouldn’t exist without the incomers”*

*“Is tolerance the right word or is it warmer than that?”*

*“Slightly warmer but not very much.”<sup>67</sup>*

As with sectarianism, much of the discussion featured reporting of other people’s attitudes. For example, two teachers at a local school had been overheard complaining about the appointment of an English person: *“they were furious because they had appointed an English teacher, now what hope have you got?”<sup>68</sup>* Or: *“[area] is very attractive for English people to come and stay which says a lot for Scotland as a place to welcome them – there’s always a core of resentment that the auld enemy is amongst us.”<sup>69</sup>*

Another respondent felt that subtle anti-English discourse occurred even in the dialogue itself, manifested through issues such as jokes about football support, the independence debate and *“how good it would be to be separated from the English!”<sup>70</sup>* This strand links to another concerning the importance of humour in reinforcing sectarianism.<sup>71</sup> The consensus was that it is for the person joked about to judge whether humour is offensive.<sup>72</sup> The theme was reinforced in Phase Two, linked to the rising crescendo of the Referendum debate. In Dumfries and Galloway, closest to the border with England, it was clearly the dominant local concern. For example: *“two elderly people spoke to me in recent weeks saying that they were in shops and they were told, you shouldn’t be here, you’re English.”<sup>73</sup>* That group chose to use the final two dialogues to address ‘post-Referendum healing’, which culminated in a larger gathering involving over thirty people in September 2014.<sup>74</sup>

#### v) The constitution

While the dialogues often touched on local questions, the discussions also threw up issues with significance for both Scotland and the UK as a whole. Particularly striking were conversations about the perceived anti-Catholic bias of the UK constitution. The precise details were elusive. It is widely known that the monarch cannot currently be a Catholic; some believed that the Prime Minister cannot be a Catholic; others that this prohibition extends to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The UK’s constitution is famously unwritten and it is beyond the scope of this report to attempt to set out the precise legal position. It is clear that some haziness exists even at the highest levels of government.<sup>75</sup> Nonetheless it is hard to find the source of the beliefs about the Chancellor.

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<sup>67</sup> I5

<sup>68</sup> DG, F

<sup>69</sup> DG, M

<sup>70</sup> Correspondence with the author

<sup>71</sup> See below at ix

<sup>72</sup> D1 & D2

<sup>73</sup> I11, M

<sup>74</sup> Facilitator’s report, DG

<sup>75</sup> See <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/wintour-and-watt/2010/mar/16/tony-blair-catholic-ambassador-vatican>

Whatever the accuracy of these beliefs, their impact was significant: *"I think it makes you still feel as though you're a second class citizen"*<sup>76</sup>; *"you know we have sectarianism from the Crown: the Queen can marry a Satanist technically but she can't marry a Catholic."*<sup>77</sup> This respondent went further: *"so we're in amongst that sort of bigotry to start with ... We've got a leadership that institutionally allows sectarianism from the very top down and as I say the problem is that Britain hasn't come out of the post-Reformation period."*<sup>78</sup> Other, non-Catholic, participants expressed shock at the situation: *"I never knew that; isn't that awful?"*<sup>79</sup> The report from another dialogue framed the issue as exclusion: Catholics are excluded from key parts of society, including the Royal Family.<sup>80</sup> Phase Two threw up a similar judgement: *"well you can't be a Catholic... being the prime minister... So we're in a society which is sectarian."*<sup>81</sup>

A difficult, related, issue is the possibility of *"perceived slights"*: that is, perceptions of sectarian acts or attitudes which may or may not be accurate (such as the belief that the Chancellor of the Exchequer cannot be a Catholic). It is important to make clear that the term *"perceived slights"* is not intended to mean that these perceptions have no impact. If I believe someone intends to harm me I am liable to feel anxiety or anger. If it turns out that my belief is mistaken I will not instantly shake off these feelings although the person accused of the harm may see themselves as innocent and falsely accused. At the same time the majority community may need to recognise that even actions without sectarian intent can have sectarian impact.<sup>82</sup>

An example of this emerged when the conversation turned to the equally controversial issue of equal marriage. One person stated that the Scottish Government's support for this reform was evidence of a sectarian agenda, as it meant ignoring the views of the Catholic church (and other religious groups). Another interviewee disagreed: *"there was a deference and maybe a sensitivity because these guys have experienced sectarianism but I think it was unsaid, I think it was un-stated, it was hinted at, maybe this isn't sectarianism, having a different view from you."*<sup>83</sup>

All of this highlights a thorny problem for the project and the Scottish Government: sectarianism operates at the level of beliefs or perceptions, rather than simple *"facts"*. If those beliefs and perceptions trigger people's natural defence mechanisms, such as fight or flight, those subsequent actions become more important than the triggering event. One writer on negotiation puts it well: *"If you're seated at the negotiating table in the absolute, unshakable conviction that your counterpart is a stubborn and difficult character, you are likely to act in ways that will trigger and worsen those very behaviors."*<sup>84</sup> In these perceived slights we glimpse the roots of a wariness and lack of trust that can have a corrosive effect in Scottish life.

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76 DG, M

77 I5, M

78 I5, M

79 I2, F

80 Report on dialogues in another rural area (hereafter D4)

81 NL, M

82 A point forcefully made by Williams and Walls who make the comparison with Lord MacPherson's finding of *"institutional racism"* within the Metropolitan Police and state: *"unequal results, disadvantageous to minorities, can be produced by institutional practices which have no discernible discriminatory intention at all."* (Williams and Walls, 1999, Note 2 above, p.234)

83 I4, M

84 David Lax and James Sebenius, 3D Negotiation. Camb, Mass: Harvard Business School Press, (2006) p.81

## vi) Tolerance

A more optimistic theme cropping up in both dialogues and interviews was that of tolerance. This fell into two broad groups: some expressing surprise or even amazement at instances of tolerant behaviour; others calling for tolerance of difference as a defining feature of a mature, self-confident country.

One respondent described his reaction to a participant who visited other denominations for reasons such as liking to hear a female minister or preferring the singing: *"It is surprising, yes, but it was almost like saying to us why would you find that surprising? What's your problem, because it's normal."*<sup>85</sup> Another described encounters with clergy from other denominations: *"we crack jokes and we'll always crack jokes about each other's institutions and that is accepted, although you could say that is a bit sectarianistic, them and us, but on the whole the relationship isn't destroyed by it because we can take it from a banter point of view."*<sup>86</sup> A further expression of surprise concerned football support in an area outside the Central Belt: *"I'd say 75% of the people I know who support Celtic ... here are not even Catholic."*<sup>87</sup>

One passage of dialogue turned to the issue of faith schools. A participant was bemoaning the assumption that the ending of faith schools is necessary to reduce sectarianism: *"You are a Catholic and should be proud to be a Catholic and I'm a Protestant and should be proud to be a Protestant, I shouldn't have to change my tradition if you like just to suit- I don't mean this in a bad way, to suit you ... how do we get past this trying to become an amalgam that suits nobody, you've got to water down yours and I've got to water down mine....?"*  
*"It's called tolerance, isn't it?"*<sup>88</sup>

And later: *"Can I allow you not to want Catholic schools? Of course I can. Can you allow me to want Catholic schools? Of course you can, but it's how do you balance that... Catholic schools are part of the diversity of what we have for education."*<sup>89</sup>

In Phase Two this theme emerged forcefully in the Central Belt dialogues. There were numerous stories of tolerance: friendly, non-discriminatory relationships within families and among friends, neighbours and work colleagues. Participants were keen to describe relationships with people from the 'other' community. Examples include: *"Loads of my pals are Rangers fans, I'm a Celtic fan as well and it doesn't bother me because I don't hang about with them at the football or that but I like them for who they are, so it's not like I'm going to dislike someone because of what team they support, just ... entertainment kind of thing"*<sup>90</sup>; *"One of my sons is a rampant Rangers supporter, totally and absolutely and ... he served mass with his Rangers strip on on many an occasion..."*<sup>91</sup> Apparently, when asked about the songs sung at Ibrox, he replied: *"oh when they sing that bit about getting up to your knees in Fenian blood, or up to your whatever's, what ever it is, I said I just don't sing that bit but I sing the rest of it."*<sup>92</sup>

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85 I1, F

86 I5, M

87 DG, M

88 DG, M

89 DG, M

90 NL, M

91 NL, F

92 NL, F

An important root of this tolerance appears to be the number of “mixed” marriages or partnerships in contemporary Scotland. For further discussion see below at B (i).

### vii) Other sources of division: the secular/faith divide

Place for Hope’s roots in the Church of Scotland and its commitment to recruiting co-hosts from the Catholic church make it unsurprising that many of the participants professed a religious faith. And it perhaps follows that, when asked to discuss issues of division and intolerance in society, some chose to highlight their perception of an increasingly secular society that marginalises Christianity and pays insufficient attention to the views of religious people.<sup>93</sup> Some suggested that this fuelled sectarianism. Others took the opposite view, that this demographic change was tending to unite the churches in the face of external indifference or hostility: *“saying yes we are afraid that we lose all Christian input in the community and that therefore yes we would be willing to work together so long as there was some spiritual Christian input.”*<sup>94</sup> It also had an impact on the debate about faith schools: *“they’re Protestants and their parents send them to Catholic schools purely because they get a good religious education there”*.<sup>95</sup> Some religious people feel under attack: *“it’s not politically correct to down other faiths but it’s alright to kick Christianity because supposedly it’s a Christian country”*.<sup>96</sup>

For two respondents this had a sectarian dimension: *“anything to do with the Catholic Church it goes on for weeks and weeks and weeks and you’ll get Channel 4 doing a special programme on it and that’s sectarianism, coming from the media”*<sup>97</sup>; *“they write like razors to make comments about priests.”*<sup>98</sup> However, one non-religious participant saw the focus on secularism as a reflection of the group’s remoteness from ordinary people: *“most of them were unaware of the issues of sectarianism within their community . . . you can go through your whole life and not encounter any form of sectarianism, one if you’re middle class, two not a football supporter and three, don’t use public transport.”*<sup>99</sup>

This theme was less apparent in the Phase Two dialogues, but did emerge again in the rural areas. It points to a contemporary irony: sectarianism has its origins in religious difference and yet many religious people believe it is no longer anything to do with them. For example: *“It’s just the non Christians who are behaving in a sectarian way.”*<sup>100</sup> The Stakeholder Dialogues also highlighted a view held by some Church leaders that their organisations, beleaguered by declining numbers and scandals, no longer have the power and influence they once held.<sup>101</sup> This casts some doubt on the Scottish Government Advisory Group’s inclusion of churches among the leaders to whom they attribute responsibility for addressing sectarianism.<sup>102</sup>

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93 The number of Scots who do not identify with any religion has increased from 40% in 1999 to 54% in 2013; Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2014, reported at <http://news.scotland.gov.uk/News/Minister-welcomes-sectarianism-re-search-1631.aspx> (Last accessed 30/4/15)

94 I1, F

95 DG, F

96 I2, F

97 I5, M

98 DG, M

99 I9, M

100 WL, M

101 Stakeholder dialogue, 28/2/14

102 Advisory Group Advice to Scottish Ministers, Note 7 above, p.13

### viii) Politeness: “We don’t talk about things like that”

A number of respondents picked up on the idea of politeness. The notion seems to be that these matters are risky and painful and that it may well be easier to avoid them altogether: *“I felt a reluctance to deal with the issue”*<sup>103</sup>; *“one of the people said, oh we’re too polite round here, there’s very much a [local region] attitude that if they suffer, if there’s a mistrust they keep it to themselves.”*<sup>104</sup> Another respondent linked this to debates on tricky subjects such as equal marriage or faith schools: *“folk who are tippy-toeing out of respect and perhaps not pursuing things as vigorously as they might”* and again *“I think there is a kind of tippy-toeing around the whole question of whether separate schools are good or bad.”*<sup>105</sup>

Because there were hints that this politeness was a facet of rural Scotland it seems to link to another theme which I have termed *“subtle sectarianism”*. A longer quote conveys the idea:

*“I would say there was certainly a reluctance to admit that there could be sectarianism up here because we don’t hear of it but it’s done in a very discrete manner, it’s not as blasé as the Central Belt, there’s much more finesse than that and it can be through work practices, promotions and so on.”*<sup>106</sup>

A similar theme emerged in story after story: while not as visible as in the Central Belt, sectarianism does exist elsewhere in Scotland. The tales featured employment, public transport and public life: *“there was a sense of yes it’s under there, it’s something just keeking through the cracks, sort of under it and maybe also too institutionally locked into Scotland’s politics and society.”*<sup>107</sup>

In Phase Two, perhaps because the longer timescale allowed us to go deeper, this politeness seemed to drop away. We began to observe the inverse: *‘insider sectarianism,’* where people within one religious community drop their guard when speaking to each other. For example: *“one of my parishioners says Father I thought the chapel roof was going fall on me; I said ‘sorry’ she said one of the undertakers is my man’s cousin and he’s in the lodge and he came into the chapel today, I was surprised the roof’s still on right.”*<sup>108</sup> Whether there is any harm in this sort of in-group reinforcement is a moot point, as the next section illustrates.

### ix) Humour

In the analysis I separated *“humour as a negative factor”* and *“humour as a positive factor”* (9th and 11th most frequent respectively). Had they been combined *“humour”* would have been the third most common thread. The two facets of humour were clearly evident: its humanising potential (as evidenced by the passage above on cracking jokes about each other’s institutions); and its power to caricature and mock the other. In one powerful passage a priest described attending a sportsman’s dinner in the West of Scotland during which he became the butt of an extended period of joke-telling: *“some of them were funny but a lot of them were just, this whole idea of alter boys and priests and stuff, I found it very offensive.”*<sup>109</sup>

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103 I5, M

104 I6, M

105 I4, M

106 I5, M

107 I4, M

108 NL, M

109 DG, M

This led to speculation about the motives of those telling the jokes:

*“maybe they don’t know, maybe they’ve been brought up with it all their life and they just think that that’s funny and they’re not trying to be offensive to you... you do need to know who these people are and where they came from and what their upbringing was to find out if they’re genuinely sectarian or just stupid.”*<sup>110</sup>

There was considerable effort to distinguish light-hearted banter from *“the vile rhetoric of sectarianism”*.<sup>111</sup> The nature of humour makes this tricky: *“things that can offend that you don’t expect to or which you find funny and part of what you find funny is because you know it’s inappropriate as well.”*<sup>112</sup>

The topic of the *“90 minute bigot”*<sup>113</sup> came up, with one participant describing having chosen to stop going to Old Firm matches because he found himself adopting attitudes that he later viewed with disgust. This led to discussion about *“the line”*: the ever-changing boundary between fun/banter and mockery/derision. No consensus was reached but it is clear that Scotland’s sense of humour is deeply implicated in sectarianism.

Phase two brought glimpses of humour too: *“in the hospital building up to a Rangers Celtic game the banter started on the Monday and it never stopped until the Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday after the game, however one or the other side was smiling.”*<sup>114</sup> Again *“the line”* was evident: *“thinking about Lent there would be lots of digs would be made but it would be done under the guise of being just banter.”*<sup>115</sup>

## **x) Surprise at sectarian acts**

In both dialogues and interviews there were expressions of shock at the existence of sectarianism. These tended to follow stories of harm against Catholics, such as a brick being thrown through the window of a priest’s house, vandalism of a crib, abuse shouted from a car or a tale of prejudice in employment. For example: *“probably quite shocked that from the Roman Catholic perspective folk were speaking about experiences they have had historically and also quite recently of what they would say would be sectarianism and others... had said no there’s no such thing... they were shocked too”*<sup>116</sup>; *“I was kind of surprised at the brutality of that and the lack of subtlety.”* There was also shock at the starting of a new Orange Walk in the previous few years in a county town: a number of participants expressed astonishment at this development and there was some speculation as to why it should have occurred: *“I mean I was absolutely gob-smacked by that, that’s just a little suburb of [county town]... and somehow sectarianism had transported itself there.”*<sup>117</sup>

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110 DG, M

111 DG, M

112 I2, F

113 A term coined by Lawrence MacIntyre, Head of Safety for Rangers FC, in 2007: *“There’s a thing in a football ground called a 90-minute bigot, someone who has got a friend of an opposite religion next door to them. But for that 90 minutes they shout foul religious abuse at each other and we’ve got to handle in the first instance the 90-minute bigot.”* Retrieved from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/4264669.stm> on 10/6/13

114 NL, M

115 NL, F

116 I4, M

117 I3, F

One Catholic respondent described this as his principal finding: *“there seemed to be an ignorance that this actually took place, that was the main theme I think.”*<sup>118</sup> This ties in to other themes: for example, there were 11 instances of *“stories of harm against Catholics”*, 6 of *“experiences of sectarian harm”*, 3 of *“sectarian attitudes”* (all against Catholics) and one instance of *“stories of harm against Protestants”*.

Phase Two’s Central Belt locations highlighted both embarrassment and shock: *“I’m quite angry and I’m embarrassed that you had to go through that”*<sup>119</sup>; *“if you’re a Protestant you’ll not come up against it”*<sup>120</sup>; *“[town] has always been like that towards Catholics, always.”*<sup>121</sup> One facilitator reported that a participant had said *“I’m getting used to my jaw hitting the floor,”*<sup>122</sup> after learning about the link between religious affiliation and political allegiance.

A Catholic respondent stated: *“there seemed to be an ignorance that this actually took place, that was the main theme I think.”*<sup>123</sup> There was an overwhelming sense of one-way traffic in these dialogues. The non-Catholics in rural areas tended to be unaware of the existence of sectarianism in their community. There was more awareness but still significant dismay on the Central Belt. Nonetheless it seemed a powerful facet of the dialogues that those who had experienced sectarian harm were able to speak and be listened to by their neighbours and community.

## B) New themes in Phase Two

### i) There’s no sectarianism here

Given the critique that some of our rural participants lived comfortable lives far from sectarian trouble spots, and the belief that *‘it’s just a West of Scotland problem’*, we had anticipated that the dialogues in the Central Belt would be different. Our assumption was that at least here sectarianism would be acknowledged as a daily, lived experience. This turned out to be wrong.

In both North Lanarkshire and West Lothian participants began the dialogues with statements to the effect that sectarianism was no longer an issue. Things would have been different a generation earlier and there were numerous anecdotes of sectarian harm from people’s early lives, but the initial consensus was that it was a thing of the past and that young people were different: for example, *“as a chaplain now I can see that even more, how young people are more inclusive of everybody”*<sup>124</sup> An English person declared: *“I’ve been in [town] now for eleven years and never heard the name Catholic or Protestant mentioned at all.”*<sup>125</sup>

One explanation proffered was the rise in the number of mixed marriages: e.g. *“I’m a Catholic, he’s not a Catholic, it works well for us, we’ve got three daughters”*<sup>126</sup>; *“I’ve had two lassies married Protestants and we all get on fine, no problems up until now”*<sup>127</sup>; *“I think the number of mixed*

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118 I5, M

119 WL, F

120 WL, F

121 WL, F

122 WL, F

123 I5, M

124 NL, M

125 WL, M

126 NL, F

127 NL, M

*marriages are growing and growing and growing, the majority of my marriages would be mixed because they're meeting people and they're understanding each other.*"<sup>128</sup> Others spoke of changes in the workplace and a daily experience leading to friendly relationships with people from the other faith tradition. Two younger people surprised the group by claiming that they had been going out with each other for a month before they realised one was Catholic and the other Protestant.

However, as the dialogues progressed an increasing number of examples of sectarianism cropped up. This led us to wonder what might be the reasons for the initial assertion that it was a thing of the past. One possible explanation is that all human judgements are relative: compared to a generation ago things are better. Compared to other parts of Scotland they may still be worse. Another hypothesis would be that people are reticent to describe themselves as victims.

In the rural areas we tended to see the opposite. After an initial exchange of quite striking stories, the longer and deeper the dialogues went, the more participants expressed the view that there was little more to be said about sectarianism. They felt they were sheltered from the worst of it and, in one area, maintained that football was the principal vehicle for the continuation of sectarian attitudes.<sup>129</sup> In another area the consensus was that sectarianism was not a problem here: if it exists it exists beyond the church.<sup>130</sup>

## ii) The Orange Order

In contrast to the above paragraph, once participants started exchanging stories a persistent theme was the Orange Order and in particular Orange marches. The Orange Order was widely perceived as a sectarian organisation and its presence a reminder that sectarian attitudes persist. For example: *"I would acknowledge that something happens in there [points to chest] for me when I see an Orange walk, something happens in there, I have a distaste for it, there's a reaction in there"*<sup>131</sup>; *"at an Orange walk where you see these toddlers, I mean it does make my blood curdle, you know that are going along with the banners and it's-, they just don't know what it means."*<sup>132</sup> One participant associated the Orange Order with *"hatred of Catholics"*<sup>133</sup>; another said, *"I remember we used to stay in that block ... and at the end was the sister of the Cardinal, and they used to come along .. and stand at 6 o'clock in the morning outside the house and batter away for quarter of an hour."*<sup>134</sup>

This perception was compounded by events leading up to the Scottish Referendum. The Edinburgh parade by the Orange Order a week before the vote stirred considerable emotion from Catholic participants: *"what really cemented it for me as a Catholic was the fact that the Orange Lodge kinda said to vote no to stop the Papes from getting more benefits. That in an independent Scotland, the Papes were gonna get more benefits"*<sup>135</sup>; *"I was coming back from North Berwick on Saturday seeing all the buses coming back from Edinburgh. I just said to myself, they hate me."*<sup>136</sup> The parade was seen as injecting a note of sectarianism into an otherwise positive debate. Someone thought other aspects of the campaigning had a sectarian dimension: *"I know that people have been out canvassing and leafleting for a yes vote and people coming to their door and says, don't put that*

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128 NL, M

129 North East, facilitator's report

130 South West, facilitator's report

131 NL, F

132 NL, M

133 WL, ?

134 North Lanarkshire, Female (henceforth NL, F)

135 NL, M

136 NL, M

*Catholic rubbish through my door*<sup>137</sup>; *“one guy told me the whole independence Referendum was a republican conspiracy to break up the union. I said, wow (LAUGHS) you know what I mean. Are you serious?... I thought he was winding me up and he wasn’t.”*<sup>138</sup> Another participant related how her father had been pilloried by ‘Yes’ supporters on the way into the polling station for voting ‘No’ while wearing a Celtic top: *“as a Catholic you should be voting yes.”*<sup>139</sup>

A later dialogue was influenced by events in Glasgow the day after the Referendum.<sup>140</sup> Protestant participants were consistently keen to distance themselves from the Orange Order. One said *“I think if there was a time they become less significant but they are still, again, a vehicle or trigger point for sectarianism in Scotland.”*<sup>141</sup> Another seemed indifferent: *“Why are they so significant enough for you guys to hate? Because to me, they’re irrelevant.”*<sup>142</sup> Yet another defended their right to march: *“All they’re doing is marching. They’ll have applied for permission to march, they’ve been granted permission, they’ve followed their own way of thinking, they’ve marched through Edinburgh, there’s been very few arrests and they’ve gone back home and some Catholic priest is angry at them. What have they done wrong?”* Ministers described refusing to conduct funerals for Order members, with one acknowledging: *“a real sadness, for while the organisation I can’t agree with, it’s still the story of someone’s life.”*<sup>143</sup>

### iii) Genuine Religious Differences

*“Generally, Protestants mix only with Protestants and Catholics mix only with Catholics.”*<sup>144</sup>

As the dialogues progressed there was evidence of participants moving beyond politeness and starting to tackle more difficult subjects. Some, such as the impact of the Orange Order or the connection between religion and voting intentions in the Referendum, have already been reported above. A new topic that emerged only after four dialogues was the Eucharist, or communion.

I report an exchange in detail because it illustrates the novelty of these community dialogues. It was clear from people’s reactions that conversations of this depth are not regular events, even among *“mixed”* families or friends. Even quite committed Catholics and Protestants appeared to have little understanding of a core issue and the other’s view on it. The dialogue in question centred on the fact that a non-Catholic may not receive communion from a Catholic priest except in highly exceptional circumstances,<sup>145</sup> while a Catholic would be welcome to take communion in the Church of Scotland (and most churches within the reformed tradition).<sup>146</sup>

The conversation began with sadness: *“in the eyes of the Roman Catholic church, my understanding, OK, is that I’m not accepted.”*<sup>147</sup> This was met with puzzlement: *“you left us... was that not a*

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137 NL, M

138 NL, M

139 WL, F

140 See <http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/george-square-violence-number-arrests-4328468> Last accessed 30/4/15

141 NL, M

142 NL, M

143 Not attributed in order to avoid identifying the individual involved

144 eDiplomat website (“The Global Portal for Diplomats”), ‘Cultural Etiquette’, advice on the Scots: [www.ediplomat.com/np/cultural\\_etiquette/ce\\_gb.htm](http://www.ediplomat.com/np/cultural_etiquette/ce_gb.htm) Accessed 11/10/14

145 See <http://www.catholic.com/tracts/who-can-receive-communion> Last accessed 11/12/14

146 See [http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about\\_us/our\\_faith](http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/about_us/our_faith) Last accessed 11/12/14

147 NL, M

choice?”<sup>148</sup>; “why did you feel that you’re missing something if you don’t believe that that’s what it is?”<sup>149</sup> “I don’t understand why you’d want to get it.”<sup>150</sup> After a period of quite feisty debate a shared sense of wonder began to develop, as the following exchange illustrates:

(M) “I’m curious about that, that if I’m understanding right, what you’re saying is that almost by definition, if somebody wants to take communion, that’s maybe such a core part of being Catholic that...

(F) *But it can’t be the only thing that defines us as Catholics but, you know...*

(M2) *But it’s the main thing.”*

This demonstrates a rare and challenging moment where those from within one tradition speak to those within another. This goes beyond preference. Faith traditions like Catholicism or the Protestant reformed tradition derive from comprehensive worldviews governing such matters as what is sacred and what is real. So when a Catholic asks, “*Why did you want to get it?*” this is not a rhetorical question. From within that tradition it may make no sense to wish to participate in a sacrament in which the body and blood of Christ are present without believing in the doctrine of transubstantiation. And yet from within the reformed tradition, in which communion is “*open to all those who love the Lord Jesus Christ and have made public profession of faith*”<sup>151</sup> it may make little sense to exclude any fellow-Christians.

Beneath all the rhetoric implying that sectarianism is a thing of the past, or propagated by malign others, lie profound differences between Christian traditions. To sweep these under the carpet, or dismiss them as somehow less real because they pertain to matters of religious belief, is to fail to engage with one of the building blocks of Scottish sectarianism. It may be that one of the most useful outcomes from this series of dialogues is the re-invigoration of ecumenical efforts. In the Central Belt locations participants expressed a desire to build on their conversations, both by putting on visible, local events and by maintaining newly forged relationships across the sectarian divide.

## C) Other themes

The dialogues covered a wide range of ideas. Participants wrestled with a hugely varied phenomenon, invisible to some and right in the foreground to others. While beliefs are intangible and subjective, acts of harm like vandalism seem clear and objective. But even here the difficulty remains: can we be sure that a particular act is attributable to sectarianism and not some other cause? Vandalism occurs throughout Scotland, as does violent crime. Discerning motives is a notoriously tricky business.

Other themes to emerge were:

- Football the problem – there was speculation about the role of Glasgow’s Old Firm in transporting sectarian attitudes to other parts of Scotland. One Phase Two participant said that as a Celtic supporter he had experienced hatred in every ground in Scotland.

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<sup>148</sup> NL, M

<sup>149</sup> NL, M

<sup>150</sup> NL, M

<sup>151</sup> See note 122 above

- Faith schools – some voiced the view that the ending of faith schools would reduce sectarianism; others saw them as a symbol of a tolerant and diverse society.
- Age as a factor – there was a strong belief that things used to be worse and that the young are less affected by sectarian attitudes.
- Scotland is not the same as Northern Ireland – while there are some surface similarities the two places are vastly different. One Northern Irish participant commented on how little sectarianism he had encountered in Scotland compared to his homeland, where *“it’s the air they breathe.”*<sup>152</sup>
- Sadness – the facilitators began the dialogues by inviting stories about a personal encounter with sectarianism. These were generally met with sadness at the continuing existence of the phenomenon.
- Local politics (in Phase Two) – when faced with threats to denominational schools, the Catholic community tends to unite in solidarity against what it sees as sectarian intent. This may be perceived by non-Catholics as itself sectarian: *“the two Catholic high schools in the area are getting merged into one high school ... both high schools are fighting to stop this from happening... she heard a conversation going on next to her saying; Anne did you read that in the ... Times, the Catholics get everything, they’re getting a new school now, they get what they want and we get nothing, right... So that is fresh, that is within the last week.”*<sup>153</sup>

Discussion also focussed on the causes of sectarianism. One dialogue speculated about the role of fear, history, football, clannishness or culture before listing the possible benefits of sectarianism for those who practice it: identity, security, a sense of belonging and a way of life.<sup>154</sup> This led to the intriguing question, *“if there was no sectarianism, what would replace it?”*

In one Phase Two dialogue the question was posed: *‘When did sectarianism begin?’* The answers given were:

- At school
- With Irish immigration
- When monks set up Celtic football club
- With fights in the playground

This illustrates another difficulty for those wishing to tackle sectarianism: the lack of a shared understanding of what it is, how it began and why it continues.

## D) The Way Forward

Naturally the Scottish Government is interested in gaining insight from the dialogues about helpful ways to approach sectarianism. Again I have listed the most persistent themes.

### i) More challenging groups

This category emerged in both dialogues and interviews, generally in response to a question about next steps. The response, *“work with more challenging groups”*, contains an affirmation and a challenge: the affirmation that community dialogue was positive and could be used in more fraught/risky settings; the challenge that the present round of dialogues involved civilised, polite

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<sup>152</sup> DG, M

<sup>153</sup> NL, M

<sup>154</sup> DG, This was echoed by dialogue 4, in an urban area, which cited *“fear”* and *“belonging”* as sources of sectarianism

people who are not the target of anti-sectarian work. Examples: *“nobody brought along even anybody from a local Rangers or Celtic supporters club”*<sup>155</sup>; *“maybe we were the wrong people... you maybe wanted people like the ones who vandalised the crib and shouted abuse...”*<sup>156</sup>; *“go and get the person that started the Orange Walk in ... and get him to come.”*<sup>157</sup>

There was, however, a positive dimension to this theme: a clear view that the dialogues had worked well in these relatively safe contexts and that they could be usefully applied in areas where sectarianism is a greater problem. People clearly appreciated the dialogues. They portrayed a process in which those from both sides of the religious divide could discuss difficult issues. The earlier description of sadness (rather than defensiveness) as a response characterises the atmosphere.

*“I think where communities are divided... people begin more and more to live in their bubbles and what dialogue does is take people out of their bubble for a while... so if you did that somewhere edgier it would provide something that isn't there at the moment and that's the space where people can talk and I think in really difficult places that absolutely isn't there.”*<sup>158</sup>

## ii) Education

Some participants saw education as the route to tackling sectarianism.<sup>159</sup> One thought this should go beyond the school system to, for example, short films and stories that shed light on the harm caused by sectarianism. Interestingly two education professionals took the opposite view: *“to cure society's ills is not, should not be, the core business of a school.”*<sup>160</sup>

## iii) Ecumenical Engagement

Several examples were given of the churches working together, which was generally seen as a good thing that is insufficiently noticed by government and society as a whole. Others thought that more joint working would set a good example, particularly where Catholic and Protestant churches combine to tackle social issues. One of the persistent themes from the dialogues and interviews, however, was scepticism about whether sectarianism is actually the church's problem. Religious people were often keen to declare that those who practice sectarian violence or chanting have nothing to do with them.

## iv) “Out-imagine them”

There was discussion about the impossibility of tackling sectarianism using sanctions and prohibitions. One participant said: *“rather than an easy condemnation it seems to me that the church... just saying this is wrong isn't going to change anything... in the end we have to offer a vision of life that's out-imagining the sectarian alternatives.”*<sup>161</sup> This theme reflects the deep-seated ambivalence, described above, about the role of the churches in sectarianism. For some the church is an underused resource and the government should provide more support. For others it should

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155 I9, M

156 I2, F

157 I2, F

158 I3, F

159 I1, I2, I5, I8, D2 & D3

160 I7, M

161 DG, M

stay out of politics. Others again saw the church as one of the strands in the complex phenomenon of contemporary sectarianism. In all of the dialogues and interviews I only encountered one statement by a participant acknowledging his own church's role in maintaining divisions. However, the report from another dialogue contained this insightful statement: *"we should not try to change others - we can only change ourselves."*<sup>162</sup>

## E) Community Dialogue as an Approach

What of community dialogue itself? One of the goals of this project was to evaluate its usefulness in responding to sectarianism. As well as exploring the content (sectarianism) interviewees were asked to reflect on the process (dialogue). Again I list frequently occurring themes. Some relate to the running of the event; others to its benefits.

Environmental factors are clearly important. For dialogue to be effective, people need to be able to communicate without inhibition. Seating, lighting, positioning, timing and location all matter. Gathering round a meal was viewed positively, although it needs to be well managed so as not to eat into the time (so to speak). Holding the dialogues in local hotels as opposed to churches seemed to work well.

At the heart of the dialogues were the facilitators. Participants appreciated a number of things about their approach:

- Providing a discipline – structuring the discussions and ensuring that people got a fair share of the time were particularly mentioned.
- Setting the tone – the facilitators seem to have modelled the values of community dialogue such as non-defensiveness and appreciation for the views of others. For example *"they took the trouble to get to know each individual and to give everyone due recognition and the way they summarised the points was very fair and concise."*<sup>163</sup>
- Silence – it was important, at times, for the facilitators not to speak but rather to listen and witness what had just been said.
- Skill – a number of respondents commented on the unobtrusive skilfulness of the facilitators.

Returning to the idea of the four stages of dialogue, only one group in Phase One reported that it felt it had reached Stage 3, *"Reflective dialogue"*, whereas by the end of Phase Two most felt they had at least touched on Phase 4 *"Generative dialogue"*.<sup>164</sup> New perspectives were forged and new relationships built: *"after these meetings – well, I did before but even more so now – I would say that I respect the Catholic faith"*<sup>165</sup>; *"... he's one of that old type, old time Catholic and he really enjoyed coming here cos I think it opened up his eyes to like both sides"*<sup>166</sup>; *"not all Protestants think the Orange Lodge is a great thing"*<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> DG

<sup>163</sup> I6, M

<sup>164</sup> Note 23 above

<sup>165</sup> NL, F

<sup>166</sup> NL, M

<sup>167</sup> NL, M

I also asked about less helpful features of the dialogues. Some respondents couldn't think of any, but others made the following suggestions for improvement:

- Selection – were the right people present? Some thought not. Some thought this was the responsibility of the hosts.
- Partiality – a small number of comments suggested that a facilitator had revealed their own views. One facilitator questioned the possibility of neutrality.
- Closing down discussion – some found this frustrating, even patronising, highlighting the trickiness of balancing structure with responsiveness.
- Government's agenda – this is not really a criticism of the facilitators, rather a suspicion that the Scottish Government has already *“made up its mind”* about what will come out of the dialogues.

None of the Phase One participants commented on the fact that both facilitators (though not both hosts) were from the same faith tradition. Perhaps this reflects their skill levels, although the comments above suggest these were not uniformly maintained. However, after the Phase One report noted that *“traditional facilitation's presumption of neutrality often allows socially unjust interactions and expressions of power to continue”*<sup>168</sup> the decision was taken in Phase Two to use co-facilitators from each faith community where possible.

Overall there was great appreciation for the facilitators. On occasion I wondered whether a particularly controversial topic might have been explored further: these are matters of judgement. Facilitators are performing a fine balancing act, particularly in a new group: steer into conflict and you risk alienating some of the participants; steer away from conflict and you risk missing the most important parts of the dialogue.

## F) The Stakeholder Dialogues

The Stakeholders Group consisted of representatives of key professions with a national brief in Scotland (police, media, health, education, church, local government, mediation). While not a geographically located *“community”*, this group constituted a community of those with a particular professional view of Scottish public life. It is instructive to describe briefly the themes that emerged from the Stakeholder Dialogues held in Edinburgh.

Three key topics were:

- Education – the issue of faith schools was more divisive, with strongly held positions on both sides. Participants were more likely to view separate schooling as a source of sectarian attitudes. Some were critical of faith schools, but also keen to assert that this was not motivated by sectarianism: rather a desire to *“think critically about our own religious traditions.”*<sup>169</sup>
- Perception/reality – some of these stakeholders voiced the opinion that sectarianism may be less significant than the Scottish Government believes: *“the theatricality and empty pageantry of bigotry creates the perception that this is a major problem.”*<sup>170</sup> From this perspective, the whole publicly funded programme to tackle sectarianism is a mistake in that it risks fuelling, and even reviving, a problem that is fading away of its own accord.

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<sup>168</sup> Lensen et al, (2012) note 23 above, p.427

<sup>169</sup> Stakeholder Dialogue 1 (hereafter SD1)

<sup>170</sup> SD1

- *“The 90-minute bigot”*<sup>171</sup> – football, particularly the Old Firm, cast a stronger shadow over the stakeholder dialogues. There was considerable discussion around the acceptability of singing and chanting sectarian abuse during a football match. One respondent suggested it allowed people to let themselves off the hook: *“his view was, well, he can’t be a bigot because he’s married to a Catholic.”*<sup>172</sup> There was consensus around the idea that football fans are an easy target and can be unfairly scapegoated for sectarianism.
- The importance of public bodies – on the one hand there were some anecdotes relating how sectarianism can affect the service people receive: *“we heard some stories from people saying that relatives in care homes complained of being treated in a sectarian way by the, you know, members of staff.”*<sup>173</sup> At the same time a number of participants asserted that existing equalities legislation gave public sector organisations sufficient mandate to tackle sectarianism via their policies and procedures. Large public organisations could take a lead in, for example, conducting a review of their culture and reinforcing norms against sectarianism.

The stakeholder dialogues were helpful in confirming that sectarianism seems to have a keener, sharper edge in the Central Belt while at the same time demonstrating the potential for dialogue between those with more polarised views.

## G) The Northern Ireland Study Visit (March 2014)

Scottish sectarianism is indelibly associated with its counterpart on the island of Ireland. It is only natural to seek similarities, given the international profile of the Troubles and the interplay between the two places on family, political and religious levels. One way to counteract easy (and lazy) comparisons was to visit Northern Ireland and speak to those with direct experience of anti-sectarian work.

A three-day programme enabled seventeen facilitators from three faith-based organisations (Place for Hope, The Conforti Institute and Faith in Community Scotland) to experience the impact of and response to sectarianism in Northern Ireland. Participants visited a number of anti-sectarianism projects in Belfast, met mediators and others working for inter-community reconciliation and spent a day at the Corrymeela Community on the Antrim Coast. They heard presentations from Duncan Morrow (Director of Community Engagement at University of Ulster) Paul Hutchison (a film-maker and member of the Parades Commission) and Susan McEwen (Development Director at Corrymeela). One facilitator commented: *“It was a full programme of learning which started in the taxi from the airport and finished in the taxi for the return flight.”*

The visit enriched the group’s understanding of the history and impact of intra-Christian sectarianism in the North of Ireland. This, in turn, helped to illuminate the complex interplay between Scottish and Irish sectarianism. Each contributes to and fuels the other, yet each stands alone. Scottish sectarianism has rarely had a deadly impact; housing and marital segregation are much less significant (and dwindling); the pervasive question of identity is much less *“in your face”*; and Scotland is a more secular society, with religion playing a fringe rather than central role in politics. At the same time there are similarities: class is a factor, with poor, working-class communities being seen as perpetrators and victims and many middle-class people saying *“it’s no*

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<sup>171</sup> Note 76, above

<sup>172</sup> I12, M

<sup>173</sup> I12, M

*longer an issue*"; and when asked who is to blame, the majority point to "others".

A striking moment on the visit occurred when the group met a lone protestor at the site of a disputed Orange parade on Crumlin Road.<sup>174</sup> He explained the history of the dispute (from his perspective) claiming: *"we've been marching up this street for hundreds of years and them ones want to stop us."* The fact that the protestor was from Edinburgh came as something of a shock to the Scottish facilitators. It seemed to illustrate the connection between the two places and also highlighted the way in which both sides of the sectarian divide tell stories of victimhood. It begged the question: what narrative enables a man from Edinburgh to feel a sense of ownership and loss regarding 400 yards of Belfast street?

The facilitators also attended a "10 x 9" event in Belfast, in which nine people have ten minutes to tell a story. It was a further reminder of the importance of stories in that city, tragic and comic in equal measure.

There was a sense of healing through laughing, particularly shared laughter. This was reinforced by a visit, the following day, to a small exhibition entitled *"Healing Through Remembering"*.<sup>175</sup> It displays everyday artefacts that became symbolic of the Troubles (such as bin lids that alerted communities to the impending arrival of the police, or milk bottles used in petrol bombs). These and other encounters highlighted the significance of talking about and understanding the past when addressing sectarianism, and underlined the importance of acknowledgement to those who have experienced harm. If we simply say, *"sectarianism is a thing of the past"* and stop talking about it, we risk misunderstanding the present by minimising these people's perspective.

There was a good deal of interaction between practitioners, with mediators and anti-sectarianism workers from Northern Ireland sharing good practice with the group. One thoughtful observation was that there is a place for both *"single identity work"* as well as *"inter-community dialogue"*. The reasons are subtle. Irish facilitators had noticed that single identity participants were much quicker to drop their guard and start talking about deeper issues, with the depth increasing the longer the meetings went on. In mixed groups, by contrast, they noticed an opposite phenomenon: as the meetings continued, people started to develop friendships with those from the *"other side"*. This could actually work against deeper discussion as participants would be reticent about offending their new friends and so tended to avoid difficult subjects. This resonates with some of the Scottish dialogues and underlines the benefit of Conforti Institute's single identity work.<sup>176</sup>

Our Irish counterparts had also noticed the phenomenon of *"asymmetric memory"* whereby communities remember victimhood much longer than they remember acting as perpetrators. Each *"side"* of the conflict can thus accuse the other of selective memory. The majority community can 'move on' and regard the minority community as irrational or silly for preserving the myth of sectarianism. It is therefore crucial to allow stories to be told, even if they appear contradictory, not to establish the truth of one or the other, but to understand how identities are formed and what people fear and are wounded by. By taking the time to listen and honour stories we enable people to make sense of their neighbours' behaviour and attitudes.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-32391654>

<sup>175</sup> <http://www.healingthroughremembering.org>

<sup>176</sup> Conforti Institute, Anti-Sectarianism Project Report, April 2014,

<http://www.confortiinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Conforti-Anti-Sectarian-Project-Report-April-2014.pdf>

<sup>177</sup> For an interesting example see 'Make Sectarianism a History Lesson' at -

<http://www.xchangescotland.org/global-education/make-sectarianism-a-history-lesson/>

Rather than “*tackling*” sectarianism, we might consider “*healing*” as the appropriate verb. It would link the present to the past and so make sense of seemingly irrational behaviour. Further, it would allow victims to feel heard instead of feeling shut up and closed down. One facilitator saw parallels with narrative based work in mental health recovery.<sup>178</sup>

And finally, the visit was a stark reminder of how well Scotland has managed its sectarian heritage. By and large we have patchwork communities where sectarian identity doesn’t affect housing, jobs and, increasingly, marriage. Sectarianism features little in politics outside a small number of local authorities (and this a matter of rumour and speculation). While some lives have been lost, these were not as a result of a sustained campaign of paramilitary violence. Thus the mistrust and intense suspicion of the other that we met in Northern Ireland is much less present in Scotland, meaning that fewer Scots experience the intense levels of emotional arousal that make sectarian actions appear not only logical but essential.

## 6) Conclusion: What have we learned and what needs to happen next?

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Long-term observers of sectarianism in Scotland are unlikely to be surprised by these findings. Most of the themes have emerged before and suggest that erudite commentators and the participants in these dialogues are describing a similar phenomenon. It seems clear that, both within and beyond the Central Belt, sectarianism does exist. It may affect family, employment, public services and public life. Within our small sample it also something of a one-way street: Catholics appeared more likely to be on the receiving end. Protestants tended either to say they had no experience of sectarianism, or to describe events from another place (West of Scotland) or another time (growing up in the 1950s, 60s or 70s). Only one participant acknowledged sectarianism within his own community.<sup>179</sup> However, as a result of the dialogues some wondered whether their actions may unintentionally come across as sectarian to others.

Contemporary depictions of sectarianism ranged from subtle, with finesse, to shocking. Few questioned the assumption that participating in an Orange March was a sectarian act. People puzzled over the contribution of football, the churches, history, the constitution, upbringing, Northern Ireland and local politics. They also debated the controversial topic of faith schools. For some, the ending of separate schools is a good thing, paving the way for a society where children do not learn that another group is different. For others, such opposition to faith schools is evidence of underlying sectarianism, a failure to accept diversity and a multiplicity of faith traditions.

This last observation illustrates the challenge for community dialogue. By inviting relative strangers to speak to each other, dialogue inevitably starts with a move from safety to risk. One scholar talks of “*cautiously entering a field of intellectual land mines, and perhaps spiritual, religious ones too, filled with the unknown and the unknowable.*”<sup>180</sup> If people remain securely in their own faith communities there is little risk of conflict and its frightening relative, violence. Once in dialogue they voice their opinions, even if opposed by, or offensive to, others in the room. Ironically, the more effective the dialogue, the more likely it is that people will reveal these private views. As the dialogues progressed, particularly where five or six took place in the same location, there was a sense of a

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<sup>178</sup> <http://www.scottishrecovery.net>

<sup>179</sup> I1, M

<sup>180</sup> Arai (2015) note 28 above, p.290

deepening of trust and relationship with a corresponding willingness to discuss difficult subjects. The challenge for facilitators is to “*hold*” this tension, allowing participants to notice and even delight in their differences without slipping into debate about which is superior.

If this work is carried out effectively, dialogue can produce something more than the sum of its disparate parts. David Bohm talks of the “*stream of meaning... out of which may emerge some new understanding. It’s something new, which may not have been in the starting point at all... And this shared meaning is the ‘glue’ or ‘cement’ that holds people and societies together.*”<sup>181</sup> And so, throughout this project, facilitators and participants attempted to forge new understandings out of polar positions: on faith schools, on equal marriage, on the role of football, on humour, on the British constitution and even on the meaning of the Eucharist.

Were they successful? Returning to the criteria suggested by facilitators at the start of Phase One,<sup>182</sup> they appear at least partially fulfilled. The first was “*breaking down barriers.*” There is certainly evidence of people from both sides of the sectarian divide spending time with each other and enjoying the process. The second was “*increasing our understanding of sectarianism.*” The findings above contribute a novel perspective, mostly through the eyes of churchgoers. It should provide useful insights for future work.

When it comes to the third criterion, “*demonstrate the value of dialogue*”, one would have to characterise the project as a work in progress. While there were few indications of changed opinions, there was a strong sense of individuals being better able to see things from the perspective of the other group. The “*other*” had become human: “*it really got me [points to gut] to hear you talk about ... the Orange Walk as if they’re coming for you.*”<sup>183</sup> There was also a sense of Arai’s “*different history*”<sup>184</sup> being voiced to those who may not have heard it before.

This raises the interesting challenge of “*asymmetric memory*”<sup>185</sup>: that is to say, the likelihood that in recalling traumatic events the “*victim*” community is more likely to retain and re-tell the stories. This keeps the recollection alive and cements a sense of identity. The “*perpetrator*” community is more likely to move on and forget the actions of previous generations. The net effect is misunderstanding. From the perspective of those unaware of the past, the minority community’s attitudes can appear mystifying. Lacking any historical context their fears and suspicions seem irrational and rooted in the past. From the minority’s point of view the majority can look guilty of denial, an impression perhaps inadvertently reinforced by those asserting that sectarianism no longer exists.

The challenge for Place for Hope and the Scottish Government lies in how to direct future efforts. Is sectarianism a problem? Is it helpful to talk about it? Can it be “*tackled*”? Indeed, can it be “*healed*”?<sup>186</sup> What community dialogue does offer is a process that allows people to connect to one other. This everyday activity may be the most useful response any of us can make to sectarianism. Simply spending time with the “*other*” is not sufficient: in the wrong conditions that can reinforce and entrench deeply held positions. If, however, people feel their views and experience are being

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181 David Bohm, *On Dialogue*. London: Routledge (1996) p.6

182 1) Breaking down barriers, 2) increasing our understanding of sectarianism and 3) demonstrate the value of dialogue. See page 4, above.

183 NL, M

184 Arai, 2015, note 28 above

185 See p.29 above

186 p.29

respected their defensiveness begins to drop and, almost inevitably, they start to become human to each other. We would therefore do well to shift our attention from the outcome (tackling sectarianism) to the process (having a dialogue), because the process itself delivers more of a broader goal: a mature civil society that absorbs and welcomes diverse views.

## Appendix 1 (printed as an A5 flyer)

### The Invitation

#### What is Place for Hope?

Place for Hope supports and enables 21st century church, communities and society in Scotland to develop creative, positive and life-giving ways to explore and address our differences. Our vision is of a culture where differences are acknowledged, and unity in diversity is valued.

#### Who will be there?

Your hosts will be

[names, phone and email addresses]

Your facilitators will be [names]

You will be a group of about 12 people in total, from a range of backgrounds within your local community.

#### What do I need to do now?

If you'd like to take part, and are happy to commit to at least two Community Dialogues, then please confirm this with your host asap. Please also let them know if you have any practical needs, including dietary requirements.

For more information about Place for Hope, visit [www.placeforhope.org.uk](http://www.placeforhope.org.uk) or call 0131 240 2258

## You are invited to a series of two Community Dialogues

exploring responses to sectarianism  
on [date]

at [time] for [meal]

in [venue]

"We should celebrate our diversity;  
we should exult in our differences as making  
not for separation and alienation and  
hostility but for their glorious opposites."  
Archbishop Desmond Tutu

facilitated by  
Place for Hope

as part of the Scottish Governments  
'Tackling Sectarianism' programme



#### Frequently Asked Questions:

**What is a 'Community Dialogue'?** Community Dialogue is a way of getting groups of people together in a safe place to talk about issues that are tricky, or potentially divisive.

**Why focus on sectarianism?** Religious intolerance divides families and communities. Sometimes it's very obvious. Other times it's hidden. The more we can find positive ways to respond, the more peace and well-being we can experience.

#### Who will run the event and who will be there?

The events will be hosted by local people and facilitated by Place for Hope team members not resident in your area. Participants will be members of your local community who are willing to share experiences or understanding of sectarianism.

#### How will I know that the space will be safe?

Confidentiality will be guaranteed. Any reflections or feedback shared after the event will not be attributable to any individuals.

**What will be expected of me?** You are invited to join in with at least two 2.5 hour Community Dialogues over a meal, and to share about your experience or understanding of sectarianism as much as you feel is comfortable.

**Will I have to bring anything?** Please bring with you an object from your faith perspective that relates to your understanding or experience of sectarianism.

#### So what will happen at a Community Dialogue?

Your Community Dialogue will follow a similar pattern to those being hosted in other parts of Scotland at around the same time. You will be invited to a meal where you will have a chance to meet other local people involved and the facilitators. There will be about 12 people in your group, and there will be plenty of time to share any questions that you might have. The format will include:

- o welcome, meal and introductions including a bit about background, timings, and ground rules.
- o sharing stories/experiences of sectarianism
- o reflecting on the issues that have arisen
- o exploring possible ways forward together
- o planning the second Community Dialogue

#### The role of the Scottish Government

The Scottish Government is committed to making Scotland a safer place in which to live and work. Place for Hope, along with a number of other organisations, has been given some funding to explore how Community Dialogues might be a model for responding to sectarianism. The results of this research will be collated by a broad-based evaluation group.

## Appendix 2

### Interview questions for participants

- 1) Why did you attend the community dialogues on sectarianism?
- 2) Name the most important topics that came out of the dialogues for you.
- 3) Did anything that was said in the dialogues surprise you? If so, what was it and in what way did it surprise you?
- 4) What do you think you have learned as a result of the dialogues?
- 5) As a result of the dialogues, has your opinion changed on anything? If so, in what respect?
- 6) Following the dialogues, please describe any ideas you have for dealing with sectarianism. Please comment on the facilitation of the dialogues.
- 7) What did the facilitators say or do that was helpful?
- 8) What did the facilitators say or do that was unhelpful?
- 9) What might be useful in future community dialogues?
- 10) Finally, do you have any other comment to make that would enable Place for Hope and the Scottish Government to learn from your experience as a participant in these community dialogues?





**Part Two**  
**The Impact of Marches and Parades**

**By Abdul Rahim and Gerry Keegan**

## Abdul Rahim

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Abdul is a mediator and facilitator with over nine years of experience of working with complex multi-party, multi-issue dialogue processes within and between local authorities, statutory agencies, the third sector and communities. He is a qualified trainer in Civic Mediation and Peace-building methodologies. Over the last two years Abdul has been working with Place for Hope, developing opportunities for using community dialogue processes to engage communities in discussions about the value and impact of marches and parades.

## Gerry Keegan

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Gerry is a Graduate Member of the British Psychological Society. Prior to winning a Campbell Burns Scholarship to pursue a part-time PhD in law at the University of Strathclyde he was a lecturer, senior lecturer and Assistant Head of Faculty at Kilmarnock College. He concurrently works at Strathclyde as a tutor in psychology and law, and as a student mentor with their Disability Service. His research interests also include law and mediation, and the impact of austerity on mental health. He has published with Hodder and Stoughton, Hodder Gibson and Edinburgh University Press and has written for amongst others The British Psychological Society, The Journal of the Association for the Teaching of Psychology, The International Journal of Stress Management, The Psychology Review, The Herald and The Times Educational Supplement Scotland.

## Abstract

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This research was commissioned by Place for Hope who as a constituent partner with the Voluntary Action Fund were from 2013-2015 engaged in the Scottish Government's 'Tackling Sectarianism' initiative. The overall project on Marches and Parades was split into two phases. The first ascertained the willingness of communities to engage in community dialogues on the subject of marches and parades. The second then saw a series of community dialogues occurring to assess communities' views on the impact and value of marches and parades in Scotland. It was found that different communities have variant levels of desire to participate in such discussions as a consequence of local culture. Partnership working with key bodies already engaged in local communities was found to be essential to access individuals and communities willing to discuss such a sensitive topic. Such generally helps to avoid lack of focus in ensuing dialogues as participant trust is already established. Due to the amount of time necessary for communities to prepare themselves to discuss marches and parades; and to then find time to commit to this, discussions relating to sectarianism are slow and long-term. This should be taken into account when considering similar project timescales. There was a recognition from participant communities that marches and parades, while less frequent in some areas, are part of the fabric of Scottish life. Government and policy makers should establish clear guidelines to resolve concerns such as the monitoring of parades, the expectations and responsibilities of parade organisers, issues related to alcohol, impact on civic life, and perceived victimisation of certain groups such as the Orange Order. Participants suspected a hidden agenda by the Scottish Government around sectarianism and a consequent abrogation of responsibility. The key finding concerned the Grand Orange Lodge of Scotland. Without their direct involvement a significant gap will always remain in effecting discussion and possible change concerning the impact and value of marches and parades in Scotland.

## 1. Introduction

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2013-2014 saw Place for Hope as a constituent partner with VAF (Voluntary Action Fund) begin to engage in a series of community dialogues concerning the Scottish Government's initiative 'Tackling Sectarianism'. This work was extended, again using community dialogues, from 2014-15 to further engage with communities concerning their understanding of the value and impact of marches and parades

The overall 2013-2015 project on Marches and Parades was split into 2 phases – the first was a small piece of research to assess the willingness for communities to engage in community dialogues on the subject of marches and parades. Phase 2 then sought implementation of these research aims with a number of communities in different locations throughout Scotland where the initial interest was shown.

### Phase 1

Aim: The Research Phase set out to determine the level of willingness within local communities affected by marches and parades to engage in community dialogue as a tool for better cooperation and understanding about the value of marches and parades .

To satisfy this outcome, research was planned within 2/3 urban/rural local communities where marches and parades take place.

### Phase 2

On the basis that the above research indicated willingness for local communities to engage in dialogue on marches and parades the subsequent aims, and related activities were then identified:

2

- i) To increase understanding through Community Dialogue of the value and impact of marches/parades amongst local stakeholders .

### Activities:

- To hold meetings with local host representatives of communities to discuss marches and parades in general, and to organise subsequent community dialogues if agreed.
- The aim as proposed was then to hold a minimum of two community dialogues in up to three communities. The cohorts attending would, it was hoped, reflect a variety of views from people who were both directly involved in marches and parades in some way, and also from those who had experienced marches and parades in some capacity.
- To meet with key partners such as the Conforti Institute and Faith in Community Scotland to assess the potential for joint working in community dialogues.
- To hold a set of community dialogues in local communities where interest was shown, these being potentially Kilwinning, North Lanarkshire, Kilmarnock and Glasgow.

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<sup>1</sup> Relates to Outcome 11 of the National Outcome Framework within the Scottish Government's guide to understanding the impact of work to tackle intra-Christian Sectarianism. Outcome 11 - Increasing our understanding of the extent to which communities are prepared to engage in open and frank discussion on sectarianism.

<sup>2</sup> Relates to Outcome 9 of the National Outcome Framework - Increasing our understanding of how sectarianism impacts upon individuals and communities across Scotland

- To meet and assess the scope for community dialogues with pupils from St Roch's Glasgow and one other school.

ii) To increase opportunities for people to express their feelings, opinions and experiences about marches and parades<sup>3</sup>.

**Activities:**

- To hold the second set of community dialogues in those local communities identified above.
- To widen the scope of engagement to participants with different perspectives.
- To encourage interest in community dialogue facilitation training for local community participants.

iii) To increase number of local stakeholders motivated and able to engage in constructive dialogue about the value and impact of marches/parades<sup>4</sup>.

**Activities:**

- To work with partners, support and train local facilitators, enabling opportunities for wider community engagement in cross-community dialogues, and activities related to marches and parades.

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<sup>3</sup> Relates to Outcome 1 & 3 of the National Outcome Framework - (1) People have increased skills in facilitating dialogue (including workers, volunteers, peers and others. (3) Increased opportunities for people to express their feelings, opinions and experiences about sectarianism).

<sup>4</sup> Relates to Outcome 6 of the National Outcome Framework - People and communities are more motivated and able to engage in constructive dialogue around sectarianism.

## 2. Methodology

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### Phase 1 - Research

We carried out the research for phase 1 meeting 30 respondents from local communities of Kilwinning, Caldercruix, and a local 'school community' (St Roch's) in Glasgow.

A mixture of semi-structured interviews and focus groups session were held with a variety of people from the above localities.

In order to gauge initial interest and to promote community dialogues, one of the key parts of our work was to establish an initial and then ongoing relationship with partners such as Faith in Community Scotland and the Conforti Institute, both of whom being involved in the wider work on Sectarianism with Place for Hope.

This was important in order to identify local community contacts that were willing to engage in the research themselves, and with their assistance source and invite others to take part in the research. This was also to subsequently enhance participant engagement in phase 2 community dialogues if appropriate.

### Phase 2 - Community Dialogues

The phase 1 report was completed in May 2014 and this was circulated to key partners and agencies such as Faith in Community Scotland, the Conforti Institute and VAF.

The report was also sent to interviewees so that they could consider the findings and determine how they may wish to engage in Phase 2.

Within this period the aims for phase 2 were refined to reflect what a realistic response would be to phase 1. Links were then re-established with local community contacts to begin phase 2.

During phase 2 of the project we held three community dialogues in Kilwinning; two community dialogues in Kilmarnock (New Farm Loch); and the first community dialogue with the senior office bearers in their official capacity of the Grand Orange Lodge of Scotland.

NB: It should be emphasised that regards the above most in attendance were there in a personal capacity and not on behalf of any respective organisations.

Exceptions to this included police representatives in Kilmarnock and as indicated above, the participants from the Grand Orange Lodge of Scotland.

### The Community Dialogue Process

Through dialogue there is a focus on personal stories, sharing life experiences, deepening learning while listening throughout.

In a Community Dialogue, the aim is to move discussions from 'polite conversation' to 'generative dialogue' where those engaged in the process can together discover and explore positive and creative responses within their local community in understanding marches and parades, and determining appropriate ways to respond.

### 3. Findings

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Findings from the research in Phase 1 helped us to ascertain that there was indeed willingness from people in local communities to engage in the subject of marches and parades:

Evidence: Excerpts from emails:

St Roch's Glasgow: *"Hi [colleague from the Conforti Institute who made the introduction]. I haven't spoken to Abdul but the school are happy for him to meet up with the group who work with [a local youth group] on a Wednesday and also to speak with some of the pupils you worked with before. I think we said about March time."*

Kilwinning: *"My name is [JM], I am vice president at Kilwinning Rotary club and I am writing to invite you to our club to speak to our members on the subject of Sectarianism. [local Roman Catholic Priest] [key contact established through Conforti] of [local parish church] in Kilwinning suggested that you may wish to come and speak to our members"*

Further examples:

In the discussion with pupils from St Roch's the following questions were asked:

**Q: Would you be comfortable meeting people from the Orange Order?**

**1/8 in a show of hands.**

**Q: If they wanted to come and meet you to give their point of view?**

**5/8 in a show of hands.**

**Q: What if schools were brought together to discuss the issue?**

**8/8 in a show of hands**

Whereas with the Kilwinning Rotary Club:

**Q: 'Would you like to be further involved with us in our research?'**

**Unanimous support for Place for Hope to come back.**

***"We would be delighted to participate further."***

However, the level of willingness to engage varied based on the perceptions of participants on whoever else would be involved in any dialogue process

An example being:

*"Not willing [to talk]...lack of trust...they [the Orange Order] don't like the Roman Catholics."* (Male, Catholic, urban/rural)

This related to a personal perception that the Orange Order was unwilling to sincerely engage in community dialogue, and consequently reflected a lack of trust.

## Phase 2 – Community Dialogues

### Participant Profiles During the Community Dialogues

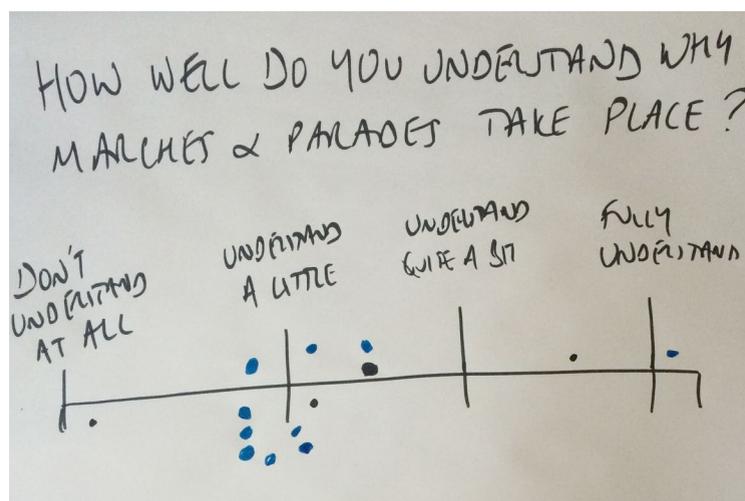
CDs	Age Ranges				Gender		Participant Backgrounds
	16-25	26-40	41-60	60+	M	F	
<b>Kilwinning</b>							Local Authority/Community workers. Local residents incl. retired, Catholic priest
CD1		4	6		4	6	
CD2		4	8	1	7	6	
CD3	1	3	8	1	8	5	
<b>Kilmarnock (New Farm Loch)</b>							Secondary school students, Police, Local Authority/Community workers, teachers, community councillors
CD1	2	6	16	5	23	6	
CD2	4	2	8	6	11	9	Local residents incl. retired. Catholic priest, church elders and church members
<b>Grand Orange Lodge of Scotland</b>							Senior Office Bearers
CD1	0	0	2	1	3	0	

### Kilwinning

In Kilwinning we witnessed a marked energy amongst participants wishing to discuss and share their experiences of marches and parades particularly in an environment that was felt safe for them to do so. Over and above this, participants reported valuing the opportunity to engage with community members with whom they wouldn't normally meet e.g. members of the Orange Order; and in doing so be able to understand more about why marches and parades take place within their community. Below is the summary of our observations for the 1st Community Dialogue.

### Community Dialogue 1 - August 2014.

Participants were first asked a spectrum question, "How well do you understand why marches and parades take place [in Kilwinning]?" by indicating where they place themselves in the following table:



The rationale behind this activity was to ascertain at the outset participants' understanding of marches and parades in Kilwinning.

Four options were available: 'Don't understand at all', 'understand a little', 'understand quite a bit', and 'fully understand'.

Responses are indicated by the blue markers: 'Don't understand at all = 0', Understand a little = 9, Understand quite a bit = 0, Fully understand = 1.

It should be noted that the participant who indicated full understanding was a long-standing member of the Orange Order, and all other participants had no personal connections. It should be further noted that all participants at this stage mainly understood marches and parades in terms of those conducted by the Orange Order; often referred to as 'Orange Walks' during discussions. This activity proved valuable in progressing further discussion around the following:

#### The Orange Order:

Given the theme of the Community Dialogue was about Marches and Parades the Orange Order featured prominently throughout.

Having an Orange Order member in the room, the most pertinent theme to emerge was the acknowledgement that participants knew very little about the Orange Order, and the opportunity to speak and ask questions to someone from the Orange Order directly was found extremely valuable.

Participants appreciated being able to test out their limited knowledge and to try and understand the reasons behind why the Orange Order took part in marches & parades, and why it was important for them.

*"All I know [about the Orange Order] is what I hear in the news, what I read in the papers, and what others tell me about them".* (Male, Catholic).

#### Language used:

Participants did not differentiate between 'marches' and 'parades' (the terms were used interchangeably) nor understood why the Scottish Government chose to use both words to describe something, which for them was the same thing.

*"To us marches and parades are one and the same thing. What is the difference?"* (Female, religion undisclosed)

*"We just knew them as the Orange Walks"* (Female, Protestant)

#### The role of bands in Marches and Parades:

The Orange Order member was very clear that band members in the main were not members of the Orange Order (with some exceptions). They were merely employed by the Orange Order to take part and some did not feel it was right that the Orange Order should be tarnished for the actions (e.g. songs, loud drumming etc.) of bands that took part.

*"Bands are nothing to do with the Orange Order. They are paid individual bodies who may be*

*sympathetic to the Orange Order but are not attached to them*" (Male, Protestant, Orange Order member)

*"I thought the bands were part of the Orange Order, and didn't until now know that they were separate from those who marched"* (Female, Catholic)

#### Generational Changes:

By this participants from both Catholic and Protestant backgrounds referred to when they were young and what they felt were exciting times during the marching season due to the associated colour, music, spectacle, dress, uniform and so on.

Regardless of their background participants shared stories of how they would join in with the parades by walking behind the bands, and sing the songs along with everyone else, not knowing what the songs meant or conveyed.

*"Marches and parades were always going on, and whenever they would go past we would get behind them, even though we didn't know what they were marching for... we were fascinated by the noise and wanted to be part of it"* (Female, Catholic)

*"I liked being part of the group, we knew all the words to the songs, even though we didn't know what was meant behind the words".* (Female, Catholic)

Having now got older and as a result a better sense of the context, participants pointed to a more mature current recognition of how marches can impact on the community. Both for them individually and also for those who may not agree with/ or understand why marches still take place. As commented:

*"I always remember it as being happy; now I have a different sentiment"* (Female, Catholic)

*"If it's a celebration, then the language used in the songs are the things that cause the impact"* (Male, Catholic).

#### A sense of belonging:

It was suggested by a number of participants that a lot of people who join the Orange Order and/or the bands, do so partly as a way of belonging to something seen as valuable and worthwhile.

*"They join these things because it is something to do, and its social, doesn't have to be because of religion".* (Female, Protestant)

#### Policing of marches:

A number of participants raised issues relating to role of the police and monitors during the parades. Pointing to the amount of police numbers present at marches, and suggesting that troubles associated with marches tended to occur at the end of the day [after the formal marches have been completed], participants felt some changes were needed.

*"The troubles happen after the marches. Should the police not be there then, rather than so many being used at the marches?"* (Male, Protestant)

*“We’re all asking why there are so many police at the marches. Because we’re all paying for it!”*  
(Female, Catholic)

*“I once wasn’t allowed to cross through a gap in the parade to get to my house when I really needed to get my baby son home to feed him. I asked the police to help but was made to wait till the parade passed, while my son became more and more distressed. For that reason I have always disliked the parades”* (Male, Catholic)

With regards to the last comment, the member of the Orange Order offered this response:

*“I’m sorry to hear that. It shouldn’t have happened. Where needed, an OO monitor is supposed to help the public cross at the first opportunity, not to keep them waiting. That is a responsibility of Orange Order monitors. The police should have at least directed you to a monitor.”* (Male, Protestant)

### **Kilwinning Community Dialogue 2 - October 2014.**

A further three people (1 m, 2 f) attended this dialogue bringing the overall number of participants to 13. They too were asked to plot (in black) their understanding of Marches and Parades on the chart (see page 42). One indicated no understanding, one ‘a little’ and the third almost ‘full understanding’. Participants were then asked to reflect on the first dialogue. From this can be identified important initial and continuing themes.

The first reflected a lack of knowledge about the Orange Order and also an appreciation that community dialogue has value in that it helps enhance such education and mutual understanding.

*“How little I didn’t know about the Orange Lodge and the Orange Order.”* (Male, Catholic).

*“Some of the peoples’ concerns I was expecting, others not. Glad to help peoples’ understanding of the Orange Order.”* (Male, Protestant, Orange Order member)

*“It was very respectful.”* (Female, Protestant)

*“I was brought up a Catholic but it [the Orange Order] fascinates me as I know nothing about it.”*  
(Female, Catholic)

The facilitators then encouraged audience elaboration on these continuing themes.

On involvement in the Orange Order:

*“My dad joined the Kilwinning Orange Order, and so did I. It’s a family thing. My dad and all of my uncles were in it.”* (Male, Protestant)

On myths:

The bands that parade and the lodges that march aren’t the same. They are two different organisations. The bands are hired by the lodges for each march. One interpretation of this theme is that the marchers and march organisers don’t see themselves directly responsible for the bands performances that can influence those watching.

An unexpected question that was raised by a participant when they asked:

*“What was positive about the Orange Order in 21st Century Scotland?”* (Male, Catholic, Kilwinning).

The member of the Orange Order responded talking about brotherhood, protection of freedoms, support for the Union and the Royal family. He also raised their charity work, which few in the room knew about. When asked why he said:

*“The media won’t print positive stories about the Orange Order.”* (Male, Protestant, Kilwinning).

On significance and impact of the Orange Parade(s) in Kilwinning:

Further elaboration from the August dialogue indicated that in Kilwinning there are three Orange Lodge parades a year. June (Church). June (Demonstration) and October (AGM). Plus another by the Royal Black Perceptory. This society is formed from Orangemen and can be seen as a progression of that Order although they are separate institutions. Anyone wishing to be admitted to the Royal Black Institution must first become a member of an Orange Order Lodge, with many members of both. The Royal Black is often referred to as “the senior of the loyal orders.” ‘Significance’ was evidenced in the following:

*“It’s about history and culture. It’s a tradition.”* (Male, Protestant, Kilwinning)

*“Certain people enjoy it... I love it. You get to meet people.”* (Female, Catholic, Kilwinning)

*“It gives a sense of belonging.”* (Male, Protestant, Kilwinning)

On behaviours:

Discussion on the impact of (Orange Order) Marches and Parades brought up evidence of antagonistic behaviours: One being the tradition of ‘bursting the drum’ outside Roman Catholic Churches. It became clear that this is read by some as ‘celebration’, and ‘offence’ by others. One participant remembers as a child asking her parents:

*“Why are they playing so hard that they’ve just burst their drum outside the Chapel?”* (Female, Catholic, Kilwinning).

She then elaborated that for her and others, age and experience resulted in a realisation that such behaviours are sectarian. In support a participant reflected again as a child in asking her parents *“Why is the band stopping to play beside our car”*. (Female, Protestant, Kilwinning)

The car in question was a green and white Ford Consul. The colour being the same as the strip worn by Glasgow Celtic Football Club that historically is seen by many as ‘Roman Catholic’.

Another example of antagonistic behaviours raised was the singing of the ‘Billy Boys’. Again such moves perception from one of a celebration to one more of offence.

One participant asked rhetorically:

*“Can they not just stop singing about being up to their knees in Fenian blood?”* (Female, Catholic)

Given the public stance taken by the Orange Order in Scotland the recent Referendum on the 18th September came up in the dialogue and the related march held by the Orange Order in Edinburgh to express their position. This was interesting as it allowed Orange Order members in the room to articulate their feelings on how they are perceived by society. There was as a result a very definite sense of victimhood and a *“circling of the wagons”* (Male, Protestant).

Two participants who were members of the Orange Order said that they felt ostracised as an organisation. Despite the fact *“We stand by the Union”* (Female, Protestant)

Further, that they were not wanted by the Better Together campaign, and that *“Alex Salmond doesn't like us anyway.”* (Male, Protestant)

This was in contrast to another participant's comments on the same issue. One indicated their (Orange Order) involvement wasn't raised at all in their discussions in shops and elsewhere *“There was more discussion about the Labour Party”* (Female, Protestant)

Most others saw it as being quite an important intervention that influenced voting intentions *“Imagine relying on the Hun vote”*. (Male, Protestant)

Willingness to continue discussions:

The authors felt participants were moving towards core issues, enabled as a result of the community dialogue process

*“We could have kept going for another hour. A lot of myth-busting.”*(Male, Catholic)

*“I liked the conducive atmosphere that helped discussions.”* (Female, Catholic)

### **Kilwinning Community Dialogue 3 - November 2014.**

A 3rd and final community dialogue took place in Kilwinning to allow participants to further express their opinions and experiences on Marches and Parades. Here, participants identified a number of unanswered questions they wished to explore. These included:

- The relationship between football, sectarianism and Marches and Parades
- Links to poverty and politics
- Positive and negative economic value of Marches and Parades
- Other Marches and Parades in their area e.g. 'Marymass' (a local festival held in Kilwinning in August)
- Addressing and reducing tensions regards Marches and Parades at a micro and macro level, and the role of community leaders regards this
- What can 'others' do? Who are these 'others'?
- What is the future of Marches and Parades?

Acknowledging that there would not be enough time to cover all the above, participants chose to explore if time allowed: poverty and politics; football, sectarianism and Marches and Parades; addressing and reducing tensions and the future of Marches and Parades.

In the course of discussing the above there emerged a cynicism about why the Scottish Government perceive Marches and Parades to be sectarian, and why they were encouraging a bottom-up approach in resolving these issues. Notwithstanding, participants discussed the prevalence of Marches and Parades in the Kilwinning area, and highlighted the following:

#### Poverty and politics:

It was felt by many participants that Marches and Parades strengthen particular kinship patterns in the most poverty stricken areas of Scotland. This was regarded as a significant value of Marches and Parades in light of the circumstances society is currently facing in terms of austerity measures, and the impact this has had on working class communities. The impact of this was a perceived direct link between the working class, poverty and sectarian related issues.

The community highlighted that in the Kilwinning area Orange Walks always happens within working class schemes. This raised the question as to why people participate. One participant commented *“People join without really understanding what its about”* (Male, Catholic)

This matter was exacerbated by their sense that the Orange Order is anachronistic and secretive. As a consequence people don't know what its core values are, and what if anything is behind it. There is a difficulty in identifying common ground.

To tackle this, one participant stated:

*“What we need is education and programmes to build socially cohesive communities”*. (Female, Catholic).

#### Relationship between football, sectarianism and Marches and Parades:

During the 1960s and 70s, the new town of Irvine attracted a substantial *“overspill”* of new residents from Glasgow. Participants felt this has directly influenced groupings around identity ever since. The Glasgow connection may for example explain particular football affiliations in Ayrshire i.e. a greater support for Rangers and Celtic, rather than for nearer local teams i.e. Ayr United and Kilmarnock.

It was suggested this connection has an adverse impact during the marching season. Many who follow the Orange Walks, and in particular band parades were reported to wear football colours connected with one of these Glasgow teams.

In participants' opinion this can crystallise divisions and contribute to misbehaviours that are out-with the control of the march and band organisers.

*“They come and watch, they wear the colours, and they sing the songs. Yet the Orange Order gets the blame”* (male, Protestant)

#### Addressing and reducing tensions:

Yet again, this dialogue emphasised the necessity for meaningful discussions with people from all backgrounds to improve understanding and build respect for all concerned. The role of community leaders was seen as paramount. However, participants stressed again that organisers of Marches and Parades must also be included in such discussions, so that resolution of community concerns can be realised.

The dialogue also highlighted that bias and prejudice is not uni-dimensional. All even in a professional capacity can be influenced by it. The question then arose regards what impact this can have on the role we play, particularly when that role requires working on behalf of the whole community. The question was further extended to others involved in this project i.e. the facilitators, the Advisory Group, and the Scottish Government.

*“What are their motivations behind their involvement? How does this impact on what information is recorded and reported, and what is ignored?”* (Female, Catholic)

During this dialogue there appeared an increased willingness to delve deeper into issues, and also to be a bit more challenging with each other.

This led to an interesting paradox where some suggested that their newly built relationships as a consequence of their participation in the dialogues could be jeopardised i.e. there was a fear that in being completely honest during such frank exchanges, this could cause offence, and damage their newly formed relationships.

Progressing towards cross-community resolution is thus a tricky balancing act regards of which facilitators etc. must be mindful.

Like its predecessors this final dialogue was time-bound. Consequently participants were unable to discuss other pertinent issues that they had identified e.g. ‘the future of Marches and Parades’.

That being said, this dialogue laid the foundations for participants wishing to take part in a larger community event concerning Marches and Parades and also to explore avenues for the wider community to work collectively on tackling sectarianism.

### **Kilwinning - Community Dialogue facilitation training and first community event:**

The 3 Kilwinning dialogues laid the foundations for a legacy event to take place on February 23rd 2015.

Initially it was to be a large open house event with invitations extended to all interested parties including members of the Orange Order.

However, in light of concerns raised at the 3rd dialogue around bias/prejudice [towards the Orange Order in particular], it was felt that a more cautious approach be taken.

This saw a smaller event take place of approximately 30 people. The aims being to create the space for professionals to consider their own views and experiences on sectarianism within their work environments, and assess the impact of this in their engagement with the communities they serve. It was also to discern whether or not there was any mileage in these organisations working better together on these issues.

To assist these processes 7 community leaders in Kilwinning took advantage of a days training provided by Place for Hope in ‘*Community Dialogue Facilitation*’. The feedback from the training was very positive, and consequently these individuals themselves facilitated smaller group discussions during the February 23rd event.

Observations from the event:

- Regards general discussions about participants' experience of sectarianism within their work environments, it was observed that this was largely historical.
- Participants did indicate that while all had a right to march and parade, particular Marches and Parades were more problematic from the point of view of community relations than others.
- A contentious moment emerged when the question about Orange Walks and band parades arose. Participants who had not been part of earlier Community Dialogues shared similar strong views and questions about Orange Walks, as had those who had attended the first Community Dialogues. This highlighted the work still needing to be done in building understanding between those who march and parade, and those who don't.
- Bringing people together in this way allowed the event organisers to float the idea of better cooperation between those groups and organisations that attended. All agreed that this should continue.

## Kilmarnock

The premise for going to Kilmarnock was in order to draw a comparison of contrasting experiences from an area adjacent to Kilwinning that also has had a history of Marches and Parades.

Demographically there are great similarities between the two towns. Both are in Ayrshire 12 miles apart. Although Kilwinning is smaller than Kilmarnock, with populations of 15000 and 45000 respectively, it is interesting to note that both share much in common; as can be seen from this SCROL infographic.



Further, both attracted substantial numbers of newcomers from Glasgow in the 1960s with the building of Irvine New Town and New Farm Loch in Kilmarnock. This influx was primarily to address the Glasgow overspill and provide employment in the heavy engineering industries in these areas, much of which has since disappeared.

What also guided us to Kilmarnock was the continuation of our partnership with Faith In Community Scotland who themselves were engaging with the New Farm Loch community in other projects on sectarianism.

Consequently a great deal of interest was shown by the local hosts to supplement this work. Conversations were then held with facilitators from Place for Hope that subsequently allowed the New Farm Loch Community to talk about this subject.

In the light of our experience of previous Community Dialogues elsewhere it was felt important that this first discussion should create an amicable relationship between participants to then allow deeper exploration in further dialogues.

It was the first time that such a group had come together.

### **Kilmarnock Community Dialogue 1 – New Farm Loch, January 2015.**

#### Interpretations of Marches and Parades:

During the course of the Community Dialogue, participants put a much broader interpretation and perception on Marches and Parades. They did not see them exclusively in terms of Orange Walks.

*“Many marches and parades in this area are not sectarian in nature”* (Female, Protestant)

A great deal of the conversation focussed on the various types of Marches and Parades that do happen in Kilmarnock, from which followed a discussion about their usefulness as a means of expression

*“I’m torn between the freedom to express and protest an opinion vs have they got a place in modern society”* (Female, Muslim)

*“Marches can inflame a situation. Are they the best way to express a view?”* (Female, Catholic)

*“Marches serve common purpose, they unite people and are more likely to lead to celebrations”* (Male, Protestant)

*“Feelings and emotions are fuelled by gatherings”* (Male, Catholic)

#### The prevalence of marches and parades:

What began to emerge from the discussions was a feeling that (Orange) Marches and Parades were less of a problem in the area than previously. It was suggested that the locus and frequency of marches has shifted from the town to outlying areas near Kilmarnock

*“Marches and parades are nowadays taking place in villages and towns such as Dronghan, Dalry,*

*parts of Cumnock, and Kilwinning, rather than in Kilmarnock itself* (Male, Catholic)

Such infrequency appears to have reduced any negative impact that may have been apparent in the past in the town itself.

*“The situation is probably worse in the Glasgow area than here”* (Male, Catholic)

There was however a caveat placed by one participant at this juncture, being that Marches and Parades (Orange Walks) could still have a negative impact on communities, particularly if there was a lack of understanding of why such a parade was taking place:

*“People can still feel intimidated, and perceive a march to be offensive and divisive”* (Male, Catholic)

Celebrating Diversity:

Those attending were proud to acknowledge good community relations in Kilmarnock in general, and New Farm Loch in particular. It became apparent that the reasons for this lie in the work being done in the New Farm Loch area by the churches, schools, the Community Council and East Ayrshire Council in building community capacity and cohesion in a number of related areas i.e. equality, diversity and addressing sectarianism. This has been going on for quite some time.

*“There are closer links now with St Matthews and St Kentigerns”* (Male, Catholic)

*“Bringing people together has allowed us to appreciate diversity and each others unique identity”*  
(Female, Catholic)

*“In New Farm Loch there is evidence of efforts to build unity and diversity in the worshipping communities and in the schools”* (Male, Catholic)

*“We should stop thinking about divisions and focus on what unites us. Common humanity”* (Female, Catholic)

Reflecting on the usefulness of this initial dialogue, participants agreed that a further Community Dialogue should take place to allow a deeper exploration of Marches and Parades.

### **Kilmarnock Community Dialogue 2 – New Farm Loch, March 2015.**

Building on participants’ enthusiasm for further discussion, a 2nd Community Dialogue was arranged.

It should be noted that as with other Community Dialogues, numbers in attendance did vary. This is not indicative of diminishing levels of interest but due to personal commitments affecting peoples’ ability to attend; unforeseen when the date, venue and timing was first arranged.

On the basis of the caveat raised in the 1st Community Dialogues concerning knowledge and understanding of Marches and Parades, the evening commenced with participants being posed a question to consider:

‘What do you know about Marches and Parades?’

Participants were asked to score themselves on one of three dimensions

**0-3 Very Little**

**4-6 Quite a bit**

**7-10 Quite a lot**

Subsequent distribution was as follows:

**0-3 Very Little 11**

**4-6 Quite A Bit 7**

**7-10 Quite A Lot 2**

Each group was then asked to discuss amongst themselves why this might be. Responses to which are indicated below:

**Group 0-3 Very Little 11**

The 11 participants in this group highlighted that Marches and Parades did not form part of their upbringing. It was never discussed at home. It was suggested that this might have been because of a fear of getting involved in something detrimental. It is interesting to note that of the 4 young people present 3 placed themselves in this group.

**4-6 Quite A Bit 7**

The 7 participants here who felt they knew quite a bit about Marches and Parades ascertained this on the basis of such being part of their upbringing and it being discussed at home. Further, they believed that this knowledge and understanding has a lot to do with where you live and to whom you are connected.

Possibly in anticipation of future discussion this group showed quite positive attitudes towards Marches and Parades stressing:

*“People have rights if they are exercised properly” and  
“As long as its peaceful, people have a right to march.”*

**7-10 Quite A Lot 2**

The 2 participants in this group immediately focussed on Orange Walks and their prevalence in Ayrshire. They were a former police officer that had been extensively involved in the policing of Marches and Parades, and an academic who had recently written a dissertation on this subject in Ayrshire. They immediately went to the heart of the matter saying:

*“Orange Walks are dying nowadays, but participants have every right to march if they wish”,*

*“Vast majority of Roman Catholics are not intimidated by it nowadays”*

*‘Legislation has tightened up on the potential for trouble’*

The academic indicated that there were 60 annual Orange Lodge walks and band parades in North Ayrshire alone, and identified those villages and towns near Kilmarnock where such is prevalent (confirming what was alluded to in the 1st Community Dialogue)

Analysis of the above quantitative and qualitative data immediately suggests that in comparison to the 1st Community Dialogue where participants spoke in more general terms about Marches and

Parades, here without prompting all considered Marches and Parades to mean Orange Walks and band parades.

The facilitators deliberately did not specify particular types of Marches and Parades.

To illustrate this point, a participant in the '0-3 group' who felt she knew very little about Marches and Parades discussed her participation in her local church parade. When asked why she had placed herself in this particular group given her active participation in a parade she immediately differentiated between church parades and Orange Walks. So much so that she seemed surprised that they could be considered to be one and the same. This suggests that at an unconscious level people delineate between *'good marches and parades'* and *'bad marches and parades'*.

In an attempt to ascertain on what basis this might be, and why Community Dialogue participants perceive one march to be sectarian and another not was then explored by the following question:

What Makes A March 'Sectarian'?

*"A distinguishing feature of Marches and Parades is what they stand for, and what they symbolise"* (Male, Protestant)

Sectarianism appears to be defined around 'in-group' 'out-group' religious/political affiliations as illustrated by the comments below. Such perceptions by the 'out-group' may be arrived at as a consequence of how they view the purpose of the marchers.

*"If a Christian organization is divisive by excluding others, it is by definition sectarian"* (Male, Protestant)

*"If you analyse the Orange Order Constitution it talks about 'popish' and 'anti-popish' behaviours. This is bigotry in the raw"* (Male, Catholic)

*"Particular marches are defined on the basis of religion. Protestant – the Orange Walk. Roman Catholics – Hibernian"* (Female, Catholic)

*"There has only been one Hibernian March in Edinburgh in recent years and that's more about Republicanism"* (Male, Catholic)

What does not appear to help is when a particular march or parade is perceived as religious and political at one and the same time.

*"The Orange Order in Scotland had 20 000 members ready to go over to help Northern Ireland Orange Order members"* (Male, Catholic)

*"Mainly because it is only one section of society; Not very many, if any Roman Catholics go on Orange Walks or Protestants to a Hibernian Walk".* (Female, Catholic)

*"It's not just an Orange Walk it's what is discussed at the end of it".* (Female, Catholic)

When participants were pressed to explain their view that the basis of sectarianism is religious/political in orientation, facilitators posed a further question given the earlier differentiation made between church and other parades, Being *'Could their own church parades also be perceived as*

*sectarian?’*

Participants cited the local Boys Brigade as an example, which is a uniformed Christian organisation of the Church of Scotland. They acknowledged that in the past membership of the Boys Brigade by Roman Catholic youth was discouraged by the Roman Catholic Church. A suggestion was also made that membership of the Boys Brigade was banned by the ‘Chapel’.

However, participants were at pains to stress that in recent years the Boys Brigade in New Farm Loch has attracted Muslim, Hindu and Roman Catholic members. Inclusion rather than exclusion certainly from the point of view of the New Farm Loch community makes an important contribution as to how sectarianism is defined.

Orange Walks in New Farm Loch:

Given the views of Orange Walks participants were asked to reflect on how they would react should an Orange Walk be arranged in New Farm Loch in the future. Participants stated that as long as the proper procedures were followed and adhered to they would have no issue with this. This was evidenced in their collective unanimous view that it is the right of a person to be able to march, and this should be protected, regardless of whether they agreed or disagreed with who was marching:

*‘Not a problem if it is planned, organised and passes peacefully’* (Male, Catholic)

*‘The key is communication’* (Male, Catholic)

*‘The main positive thing about Orange Walks coming through an area is that it helps sell more beer in pubs...its good for the local economy’* (Male, Protestant)

Banning of marches and parades:

Following on from the above, and using a Likert Scale of Measurement the facilitators asked participants: *‘Should Walks Be Banned?’*

### Responses

Strongly agree	0
Agree	0
Don’t know	0
Disagree	11
Strongly Disagree	9

Consistent with the previous Kilmarnock Community Dialogue, and in line with findings from other dialogues, it is apparent from the above that people do not want to ban Orange Walks and parades. Various reasons for this were stated, such as:

*‘I strongly disagree about banning marches and parades. We have freedom of speech. If you ban one you ban them all. It’s dangerous’* (Male, Catholic)

*‘I think people have an absolute right to march’* (Female, Catholic)

In anticipation of potential community conflict and the desire to reduce potential ill feeling, the

group emphasised that Marches and Parades should be planned, organised, and managed properly. In order to do this, communication between march organisers and other parties is crucial. Other parties for them include the police, the local authority, residents associations, community groups, churches etc.

#### Message to Scottish Government:

As the 2nd Community Dialogue drew to a close participants were asked to reflect on both Community Dialogues that had taken place, and to consider any key messages they would like to pass on to the Scottish Government.

#### The Media:

Participants felt the Scottish media has an important role to play:

*“Frankly there is too much discussion in the media regards sectarianism. Something that doesn’t exist in the vast majority of homes, workplaces, etc. in Scotland”* (Male, Catholic)

*“Sectarianism sells newspapers”* (Female, Protestant)

*‘One of the biggest problems are the newspapers. They keep bringing it up. The Scottish Government should tackle this’* (Male, Protestant)

*‘It is the medias’ obligation to take a more serious approach and think of the consequences before they print’*

From this facilitators took the view that the media should be an important key partner in helping to address sectarianism in Scotland.

Currently they are missing ‘from the room’.

#### Schools:

Participants lauded the good work being done in school around the issue of sectarianism and the broader equality and diversity agenda:

*‘Raising awareness in schools such as the Mark Scott Outward Bound Award is a great initiative to bring to people’s attention’* (Male, Protestant)

*‘Listening to the kids...they don’t want anything to do with it. Changed days since my youth’* (Male, Protestant)

*‘I’ve never seen any sectarianism in school’* (Male, Protestant)

*‘The youngsters from two different schools all got on brilliantly together’* (Male, Protestant)

#### The Orange Order:

It is apparent that the Orange Order themselves have a role to play regards educating others about who they are, why they are and what they are about. Unless involved other people have a very

vague notion of the Orange Order in Scotland. In the facilitator's view a number of participants appreciated the positive contribution they think the Orange Order have made, particularly with regards to history, tradition and culture. A few had heard that the Orange Order support some charities, of which many others were unaware.

None believe that Marches and Parades by the Orange Order should be banned but they would like to know more about them, directly from the Order/Lodges themselves:

*'I'd like to know what the point is of the Orange Order?'* (Female, Catholic)

*"What is good about the Orange Order?"* (Male, Catholic)

Integration:

Participants felt the controversial subject of denominational and non-denominational schools is a factor that needs discussion. This Community Dialogue and previous Community Dialogues indicated that some people believe there is a relationship between our school system and sectarianism:

*'We should have everyone taught in the same school'* (Male, Protestant)

*'Integration defeats sectarianism'* (Male, Protestant)

Both of the above opinions were not exclusive to one person or one dialogue. Participants stressed that whatever the outcome of potential conversations around school integration the current work being done in schools, be they Catholic or non-denominational, needs continued support and resources from the Scottish Government and other key partners.

*'I've never seen sectarianism in my generation. Schools work hard getting us all to get on better together.'* (Male, Protestant)

A visual guide for further dialogue:

As part of a number of events that took place on the day of the 2nd Community Dialogue celebrating Equality and Diversity, the opportunity arose to engage a graphic illustrator to capture the views of participants.

To ensure there is a legacy for the work carried out, the local community intend hanging this in the New Farm Loch community centre as a visual history of the day's events, and also as a focus for informal community conversations in the future.



Early on in the dialogue it became apparent that the Grand Orange Lodge of Scotland had engaged formally with the Scottish Government. Evidence of this can be found in their response to the Advisory Groups Report. It was also indicated that when invited to do so by the likes of the Conforti Institute and the Advisory Board itself they had engaged accordingly.

Despite this, as time wore on they felt they were 'persona non grata' from the Scottish Government's point of view. Anecdotally, for example, the point was raised that they had been told that because of who they are and what they are perceived to be, they wouldn't receive funding for any associated project.

As mentioned earlier we were informed they submitted an application to help fund an education officer but were unsuccessful. On the other hand however, many of the other 44 funded organisations turned to the Grand Orange Lodge of Scotland for their assistance to achieve their own agreed outcomes for their respective (funded) projects.

### **The Approach by Place for Hope:**

In a number of other Community Dialogues held in Kilwinning and Kilmarnock participants often raised the issue that in order to progress meaningful discussion and change it was essential that the Grand Orange Lodge become a key partner.

The authors concurred with this and themselves began to make approaches to the Grand Orange Lodge of Scotland to give them the opportunity to hear what different communities had been saying about Marches and Parades and the Orange Order, and to extend to them the opportunity to share their views on this subject.

Further, our aim was to try and ascertain their cooperation and participation in future meaningful dialogues with other key partners.

Via an introduction from colleagues at the University of Stirling we approached the Executive Officer of the Grand Orange Lodge of Scotland, who was happy to meet with us for an exploratory conversation. At this conversation we apprised him of our work to date on behalf of Place for Hope and the Scottish Government, our methodology and our impartial community dialogue process. The initial meeting allowed the authors to gauge the culture of engagement, and appropriate process that would need to be adopted and respected in any potential work with the Office Bearers of the Grand Orange Lodge of Scotland.

Consequently, a first Community Dialogue was arranged with the 3 senior members of the Grand Orange Lodge of Scotland.

To give participants the opportunity to get a greater sense of our work we also sent them our progress report to the Scottish Government to September 2014.

### **Orange Order Community Dialogue 1 - March 2015.**

A good part of the Community Dialogue was a uni-dimensional question and answer session between the Office Bearers towards the facilitators.

Amongst other things they wished to understand our role, who Place for Hope are, what was Place for Hope's involvement in the project, what other organisations were involved, and questions based on some of the findings in the September 2014 interim report. Examples included:

*“What do we understand by sectarianism?”*

*“What is Sectarian about Orange Parades?”*

*“In the absence of an adequate definition of sectarianism why is sectarianism and only particular marches and parades conflated with one another”*

The remainder of the dialogue focussed on their views regards Marches and Parades, and more broadly their charity work, their good relationships with other stakeholders particularly in Glasgow i.e. Glasgow City Council, Police Scotland and others in the local community e.g. the local Roman Catholic parish priest in Bridgeton.

All agreed that future dialogues would be useful as long as they were meaningful and facilitated in an impartial manner.

The initial lengthy but necessary lead-in sessions were appreciated, and as such they agreed that they would be willing to continue engaging with our work.

Summaries of our observations are as follows.

The sectarianism agenda:

As has been found throughout the project cycle, the Grand Orange Lodge of Scotland like others believe there is a hidden agenda concerning particular types of Marches and Parades. This they feel is unwarranted. When asked the questions about the value they would put on their Marches and Parades they strongly emphasised the notion of *‘tradition’*. One particular comment that was repeated a number of times was *“Civil and religious liberty for all, special privileges for none”*, and as such conflating sectarianism with Orange Walks was an assault on their religious freedom and civil liberties.

The Office Bearers emphasised a distinction between different Orange Institutions, not only within the United Kingdom but also throughout the world. It was explained for example that the Grand Orange Lodge of Scotland of Scotland, the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, and the Grand Orange Lodge of England are separate entities united by common tradition.

Band Parades and Orange Walks:

Of some interest is society's ignorance of Orange Walks and band parades. The authors were informed that while many band parades take place not all them are connected to the Orange Order. Those that do have to fulfil and adhere to certain strict criteria as laid down in Orange Order policies. For example, all bands hired by the Orange Order are on an approved list, and are removed from this approved list if they dress in unsuitable attire, display proscribed flags etc. that are deemed to cause offence.

## Relationships:

The management of Orange Walks particularly in the Glasgow area comes after discussion with key stakeholders concerning the impact of the Walk along the proposed route and potential traffic disruption. There is a recognition by the Orange Order that Orange Walks do have an impact, and should be managed responsibly.

Interestingly on this point, in Community Dialogues to date, participants have highlighted one of the biggest impacts of Marches and Parades as being traffic disruption. The Office Bearers alluded to the fact that many other events and processions take place throughout the year that cause disruptions in their own way.

In the light of this, it is apparent that traffic disruption, pedestrian inconvenience etc. is not exclusive to the Orange Order or band parades. At a psychological level while both genres have an impact one is seen in a negative light while the other is perceived more positively.

## The Orange Order and Civil Society:

Addressing the perception of their organisation in the wider social context, a semantic differential question was asked of them.

This being *“On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being little and 10 a lot, how well is the Orange Order understood within Scottish society?”*

The mean response was 2.

The reason as to why they thought Scottish society has a poor perception of the Orange Order is manifold.

Such includes: an acknowledgement of their historical secrecy, a historical reticence to educate others as to what they are about and negative portrayal in the media. To a certain extent under the current and previous Grand Master they acknowledged this has begun to be addressed.

## Perception or Misperception?

Perceptions or misperceptions by the Orange Order aside, there is merit in considering the impact the unsuccessful funding bid by the Grand Orange Lodge has had on taking forward tackling sectarianism in Scotland. This has influenced behaviours and hurt feelings, and indeed vice versa with all involved. A golden opportunity for mutual respect, mutual understanding and mutual progress through meaningful conversation has been frustrated to this point.

## The Role of the Press: No News Is Good News

In considering the value of Marches and Parades, which is bound up in the Orange Order's *raison d'être* the Office Bearers considered their charity work to be of importance. This they said is something that is never reported in the press, nor indeed other examples of their good works. The only stories found newsworthy by the media are, in their opinion, negative ones regards Marches and Parades. The example given being the serious assault on a 12 -year-old girl at Glasgow Green in July 2014, while watching the Orange Order march, something that they abhor and condemn as much as anyone else.

## Sectarianism, Bigotry or Both?

The Grand Orange Lodge has difficulty in understanding what is meant by sectarianism. This is maybe not surprising, as the Courts have found the same difficulty with those brought before it charged under The Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Act 2012. The most famous case being that before Sheriff Davidson when, in acquitting the accused charged under s1(1), he described the Act as so '*horribly drafted*' that "*(S)omehow the word mince comes to mind.*"

On the other had the Grand Orange Order felt they are able to recognise and condemn bigotry. Common agreement on the meaning of sectarianism, bigotry and indeed both is worthy of further exploration in the eyes of the Grand Orange Lodge of Scotland.

### Next steps:

The office bearers have given their commitment to continue meaningful conversations with a wider group of stakeholders, and more broadly with others on the subject of Marches and Parades. As is our experience with other Community Dialogues, determining a suitable date has proved a practical challenge due to other variables.

It is hoped and anticipated by all concerned that the next community dialogue will be arranged in the very near future.

## 4. Challenges and Changes

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Through the course of our work we have found that community research on marches and parades requires a long lead-in time for relationship and trust building. The intended methodology during phase one was to hold individual semi-structured interviews with community members. This was partially successful but additionally we had to carry out two focus group sessions in order move the research along more quickly. Access to community interviews was ultimately ascertained through community liaison work supported by the Conforti Institute and Faith in Community Scotland. Without the support of these organisations concluding the research in the time available would have been much more challenging.

Such is equally true when identifying local communities willing to engage in community dialogue on the subject of marches and parades. For example, we have maintained regular contact with colleagues at Faith in Community Scotland. Through their extensive work with a community in North Lanarkshire they identified people who are members of the Orange Order and Roman Catholic churches, who were really keen to engage in a dialogue process regarding marches and parades. However due to the agreed 'protocol' amongst these groups they would only become involved once they had agreed confirmation from the local priest to do so. He is seen as the trusted person within the community. The local priest was however heavily overstretched and obtaining his authorisation proved very difficult. Acknowledging the pressures facing local leaders, we did not wish to burden the local priest by adding to his existing workload. As a result we felt alternative opportunities had to be sought, and so once again through relationships already established by Faith in Community Scotland, we amended our timetable and focus to arrange community dialogues in Kilmarnock. Local contacts here had the capacity and were able bring communities together quickly to engage in the subject of sectarianism, and that allowed us to engage in dialogue about marches

and parades.

An important point to raise here concerns our experience working with local key contacts to whom we were introduced by partner organisations, and with whom we spent time to establish positive relationships but who for a variety of reasons were then subsequently not able (see the North Lanarkshire experience above) or in other cases would not support continuing dialogue. This had the effect of adding to the workload in order to establish or re-establish alternative contacts in other communities. For example when seeking to make invitations to a first community dialogue in Kilwinning, we found ourselves being drawn into a personal conflict between our key contact and a local group. The message received was that in order to rely on the continued support of the contact we would not be able to invite people from this particular group. A certain amount of time and effort was then spent in trying to find suitable ways to work around this situation as we did not wish to exclude any individual or group from the opportunity to engage in a community dialogue. The challenge from this lesson is that we can find ourselves caught up in local community politics that often have implications in trying to bring people together into dialogue.

Yet another example of this challenge relates to our engagement and initial intention to work with young people from a school in Glasgow. Following a positive response from the local host (who in this case was a member of staff) we began to engage in email communications to make arrangements for the first community dialogue. Unfortunately, after the initial positive response, subsequently communication stopped. Acknowledging pressures people face in their day-to-day work that we may never be privy to, a decision was made to explore opportunities with other alternative communities of interest.

## 5. Conclusions

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On the basis of our work in this area we conclude that:

1. Different communities have different levels of energy and willingness to engage in a particular subject e.g. the difference between our experiences of working with people in Kilwinning and a community in North-Lanarkshire is quite stark. This may be due to local culture e.g. in this case the former willing to try things and take risks, the latter more reticent and cautious in such engagement. One of the reasons cited in North Lanarkshire was due to a fear of jeopardising long established relationships and good will, which the authors feel should be respected.
2. Partnership working with key bodies already engaged in local communities is essential in order to access individuals in communities willing to discuss topics such as marches and parades that are considered sensitive in nature. Anecdotally colleagues who have been working on projects focused on sectarianism on their own for a considerable length of time have reported that they are still finding that participants were 'circling around the topic' being guarded about focusing on the topic directly. Partnership working generally helps to avoid such lack of focus as participant trust is already established.
3. Notwithstanding the above, a considerable amount of time is necessary for communities to prepare themselves to discuss topics such as marches and parades; and indeed to give up the time necessary to commit to such discussions. As such, discussions on topics relating to sectarianism are slow and long-term, and this should be taken into account when considering similar project

timescales. These timescales require flexibility, as their schedules often do not fit neatly with the lives of individuals and communities who are being asked to engage in a process. Our experience with the community in North Lanarkshire and the subsequent arrangements made in Kilmarnock being good examples of this.

4. In our findings to date there is recognition from communities that Marches and Parades, though they may have diminished in some areas, are still part of the makeup of Scotland. Participants made the point that for them this presents a challenge to Government and policy makers to establish clear guidelines that will help to resolve the most pertinent concerns raised e.g. monitoring of parades, clear expectations of responsibilities on the part of parade organisers, issues related to alcohol, impact on civic life, perceived victimisation of certain groups such as the Orange Order and so on:

*“Orange parades start off with good intentions. As the day goes on, drink becomes involved. It then gets out of hand.”* (Male, Protestant)

*“We recognise alcohol is a problem. It feeds participants behaviours as the day/night goes on.”* (Male, Catholic).

*“People have a right to march, but then it’s the organisers’ responsibility to manage what happens.”* (Male, Catholic).

*“The march organisers have a responsibility for the bands’ behaviours. They pay them.”* (Female, Catholic).

*“As for those who have businesses in the Main Street, should we close [during Parades]? No, we shouldn’t – but some feel they have to”.* (Female, Protestant).

*“Alex Salmond doesn’t like us [the Orange Order] anyway... We are under siege from all sides, in particular from politicians.”* (Male, Protestant).

*“The media won’t print positive stories about the Orange Order”.* (Male, Protestant).

5. There is a clear suspicion on the part of all who have engaged in the dialogues so far of a hidden agenda by the Scottish Government around sectarianism:

*“Are they trying to look for a problem where there isn’t one? What does the SG really want to know by asking for this research to be carried out?”* (Raised by a number of participants both Catholic and Protestant, Male and Female)

*“Are they hoping to find out that we don’t like marches and parades so that they can look to ban them more easily?”* (Female, Catholic)

One particular comment made by a participant, which was agreed by all present highlighted this suspicion:

*“My concern is the Scottish Government hasn’t the bottle to make changes to marches and parades legislation themselves. They are looking for communities to provide the ammunition for them to do so.”* (Female, Catholic).

6. The key message regards effective consensual change regards Marches and Parades is that in relation to the Orange Order we were, and are being told by participants that as facilitators' we are probably talking to the wrong people. In Kilwinning and elsewhere Orange Order members emphasised that they speak in a personal capacity. This is because they said the Orange Order in Scotland is a very top-down, hierarchical, and authoritarian organisation. They have a communications officer who, on the direction of the Grand Master, is the only person able to speak officially on behalf of the organisation, and its constituent parts. There is a crucial need to recognise the role of the Grand Orange Lodge as a key civic institution in relation to our work. Without their direct involvement a significant gap will always remain in effecting discussion and possible change. As such Place for Hope will continue to develop safe spaces for the Orange Order and other key stakeholders to conjoin and collectively engage in meaningful dialogue.

*"If change is to take place, they [the Orange Order] need to be invited to the table, and the government has to be the one that does it"* (Female, Protestant)

## Place for Hope

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Place for Hope accompanies and equips people and faith communities so that all might reach their potential to be peacemakers who navigate conflict well. We are an independent charity offering support to all denominations and faiths.

Our vision is for a world where people embrace the transformational potential of conflict and nurture the art of peacebuilding.

### We aim

- to resource the church and faith communities with peacemakers
- to accompany groups navigating conflict and difficult conversation in our faith communities

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