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## **WOOL, SILK & COTTON – A Calderdale Interfaith Project 2024-2025**

Calderdale Council turned 50 in 2024. To celebrate we were given the opportunity and funding to take part in the Calderdale Year of Culture (CYOC24) from April 2024 to April 2025. We wanted to encourage creativity and activity in Calderdale and share this across the region. We did this by inviting local people of all ethnicities to join in our chosen project of:

### **Wool, Silk & Cotton – We Are Calderdale – An Idea by Councillor Ann Kirkstone, Mayor of Calderdale 2024-2025**

Until the late 1900s the textile industry was the main employer in Calderdale. For hundreds of years it grew and sustained the Calderdale economy, providing an income to many thousands of workers and supplying products for a wide range of purposes, including clothing, upholstery, bedding and carpets.

In the mid-twentieth century this thriving industry attracted many migrants from former British colonies to the area, enriching local culture with their differing cuisines, clothing, music, family customs and faith practices.

Historically wool, silk and cotton were the main fibres used in the textile industry in the area now called Calderdale. Hundreds of mills here transformed these fibres through spinning, dyeing, knitting, weaving and stitching. In some respects the industry had national and international significance. Brighouse was the main centre of silk spinning in England, and some of the leading manufacturers of knitting yarn in the world were based in Halifax.

**Wool, Silk and Cotton's** aims were to celebrate this textile heritage of Calderdale through a community textile art project. In this project individuals and groups were invited and supported (provision of materials and design guidance.)

The theme '**We are Calderdale**' relates to the individual to represent themselves on decorative textile squares (12" Square with a 10" working area within for design) expressing some aspect of their cultural and/or local heritage in the design. (see photo examples). The squares could be knitted, crocheted, embroidered or felted and mainly comprise of wool, silk or cotton.



To pull the banners together we needed an idea of how this would be represented. Two of the themes put forward were to imagine that the squares are windows in a mill or postcards of our area. We used Hainsworth broadcloth for the backing fabric. The blue silk running across all three banners represents the River Calder.

The project was an excellent vehicle for bringing and holding people together. We had approached many local crafting, faith and support groups to invite their participation in the project. Over 50 Squares were produced and towards the end of the year of culture we organised a “Stitching Together” event in the Town Hall with The Mayor, Councillor Ann Kingston, stitching the squares onto the three banners that will now become a lasting shared resource for Calderdale. It will subsequently be exhibited in community centres, schools, libraries and places of worship around the borough as a tangible expression of social cohesion and cultural life.

The textile industry as our ancestors knew it may be in the past but the skills are just as much in evidence and as relevant as they ever were. All of these groups now use their skills mostly for charity work at home and abroad either by raising funds or sending blankets and other work through charitable organisations. Rest assured that the textile industry in our area is still very much alive and may it always remain so.

L A Linehan, Treasurer & Project Co-ordinator

Calderdale Interfaith



### Launch meeting June 2024



### First Work arrives in December



### 'Stitching Together' March 2025





## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

### **WOOL, SILK & COTTON – WE ARE CALDERDALE**

#### **Groups/Individuals Participating/Supporting**

Special thanks go to Councillor Ann Kingstone for this idea and Lynda M (Quaker) who supported me throughout to deliver this project.

|                       |                                                     |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| <b>MH</b>             | <b>CMBC</b>                                         |
| <b>SD &amp; Group</b> | <b>Chatty Crochet</b>                               |
| <b>BH</b>             | <b>Halifax Quilters</b>                             |
| <b>CR</b>             |                                                     |
| <b>DH</b>             |                                                     |
| <b>GW</b>             | <b>Heath URC</b>                                    |
| <b>GE</b>             | <b>St Andrews K &amp; N</b>                         |
| <b>MC</b>             | <b>St Andrews K &amp; N</b>                         |
| <b>JM</b>             |                                                     |
| <b>MD</b>             |                                                     |
| <b>MC</b>             |                                                     |
| <b>NR</b>             | <b>Luddenden WI &amp; Girl Guides, New Hope URC</b> |
| <b>JC</b>             | <b>St Augustines RG</b>                             |
| <b>SHi</b>            | <b>St Augustines CCG/SACRE</b>                      |
| <b>SHa</b>            | <b>St Augustines CCG</b>                            |
| <b>MO</b>             | <b>St Augustines CCG</b>                            |
| <b>SL</b>             | <b>St Augustines CCG</b>                            |
| <b>I &amp; SKH</b>    | <b>St Augustines CCG</b>                            |
| <b>LG</b>             | <b>WoollyArt Club</b>                               |
| <b>SG</b>             | <b>Sikh Faith/Calderdale Interfaith</b>             |
| <b>LM</b>             | <b>Halifax Quakers</b>                              |
| <b>MM</b>             | <b>Halifax Quakers</b>                              |
| <b>BM</b>             |                                                     |



**LAL**                      **Buddhist/Calderdale Interfaith**

**JU**

**MM**

**ST**                      **Buddhist**

**CG**                      **Buddhist**

**AT**

**JR, The Making Mill, Hebden Bridge**

**Hainsworth Broadcloth**

**Faberdashery, Halifax**

**King Cross Library, Staff**

**New Hope URC, NR**

**Halifax Town Hall**

**Halifax Minster, Staff & Volunteers**

**Calderdale MBC**

**Community Foundation**

**Calderdale Interfaith**





