



Activity sheet

Tolerance and respect for others

Local residents up in arms at Shima plans to build new place of worship on site of old cinema!

Residents in the Faketown district are objecting to plans which have been submitted by the Shima community to build a 'Walhala', the name given to their place of worship. The proposed plans, recently submitted to the council, show that the Walhala would be built on the site of the old Regal cinema which closed in 1994 and was demolished just two years ago.

Adam Bleak, leader of the local residents' action group told us that he and others were fed up of groups like the Shima taking over their area. 'The old cinema has been part of Faketown for over half a century and many of the older residents remember going there as a child and enjoying their favourite films. Now it seems that the council can let anybody buy this land and build whatever they want on it. It's a disgrace. If they want to build a temple or whatever it is, why don't they build it in their own country?'

The Shima community currently meet at the old Scout Hut in Faketown every Tuesday evening and twice at the weekend. Dayta Hummin, leader of the Shima community said, 'Our people are a very respectful and peace-loving community. We meet together two or three times a week to pray and to share a meal. As our community has grown we have found the need to use larger premises and when the old cinema site came up for sale it was the perfect opportunity for us. I can't understand why people are objecting – that piece of land hasn't been used for over twenty years. It is quite unsafe and children playing there at the moment could hurt themselves.'

But Adam Bleak is suspicious of the community as are others in the action group. 'How do we know what they are planning when they meet up?' said Mr Bleak, 'For all we know they could be planning all sorts of things. Before we know it, they'll be taking over local shops and businesses and putting us all out of work.'

The local council has said it is looking at the application from the Shima community and will be making a decision at the next full council meeting in a month's time.

Questions to think about and discuss:

- What are your thoughts about the story?
- Why do you think *some* of the local residents objected to the Shima community building their place of worship (the Walhala)?
- Do you think it was the building that residents objected to or the people themselves? Why?
- Why do you think that Adam Bleak suggested they might be 'planning all sorts of things'? What evidence did he have for that?
- What do we mean by the word prejudice? Do you think the residents mentioned were prejudiced against the Shima community? Why?
- In what other ways can people sometimes be prejudiced?
- How can we help ourselves and each other to avoid being prejudiced?