



Newsletters of the Inter Faith Network for the UK

1996–2024

1996–1999

Newsletters of the Inter Faith Network for the UK

Inter Faith Update

*Newsletter of
The Inter Faith Network for the UK*

Issue 1, May 1996

The Newsletter

Over 70 organisations with a commitment to helping build good relationships between Britain's different religions are now linked through The Inter Faith Network. Informally the Network also keeps many other organisations and individuals in touch.

Many of you have asked if it would be possible to have a newsletter which lets you know about developments at the Network, in each other's inter faith programmes, and more widely on the UK inter faith front. We plan to issue a simple and economical newsletter on these lines three times a year.

The newsletter will evolve to respond to your comments and suggestions for improvement. We look forward to hearing from you.

Harriet Crabtree

Contributions

We welcome updates and diary dates about members' work or events with an inter faith dimension. Contributions to be considered for the next issue can be sent to:

The Inter Faith Network for the UK
5/7 Tavistock Place
London WC1H 9SN
Tel 0171 388 0008 Fax 0171 387 7968

(Registered Charity 296773)

National Issue Updates

Collective Worship in Schools

Since 1944 the law has required state schools to provide collective worship for pupils and the Education Reform Act of 1988 added some complex provisions about collective worship. There has been considerable unease about the effect of these recent provisions, particularly about the way they have been interpreted by the Department for Education and Employment in its guidance to local authorities and to schools.

The Network has joined together with two other "umbrella" bodies, the Religious Education Council, and the National Association of SACRE's (Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education) to sponsor a consultative project on the complex and sensitive issues surrounding collective worship in schools.

The first stage of the joint project has been to bring together views and suggestions which have emerged from recent debate within faith communities, teachers' unions, and educational organisations. The resulting material will provide background for stage two: a series of consultative conferences beginning this Autumn, exploring:

- * Whether or not a broad consensus can be established on what, if any, kind of provision for collective worship might be educationally appropriate for state schools in our society.
- * What changes, if any, to the present framework of law and Government guidance would be required to implement any proposed change.

The Inter Faith Network

The Inter Faith Network was founded in 1987. It works alongside its member organisations to increase mutual understanding and respect between the faith communities of the world religions represented in the UK today. It also works more widely within society to promote an appreciation of the importance of religious identity and inter faith understanding. To carry out these aims, the Network:

- Links member organisations including: representative bodies from Britain's nine major faith communities; national inter faith organisations; local inter faith groups; academic institutions and bodies concerned with multi faith education
- Acts as a central information and contact point for people wanting information or advice on inter faith affairs, or faith community contacts
- Provides a national forum for multi faith discussion of key issues
- Fosters local inter faith initiatives and organises meetings around Britain to bring together those working on inter faith issues
- Publishes materials to assist inter faith work around Britain
- Organises seminars on specific topics, such as religious identity and the law

NETWORK OFFICERS AND STAFF 1995-96

Co-chairs: Rt Revd Roy Williamson; Mr Om Parkash Sharma. Vice Chairs: Dr. Mughram Al-Ghamdi; Mrs Ivy Guttridge MBE; Mrs Rosalind Preston OBE; Mr Indarjit Singh. Treasurer: Mr Ramesh Shah
Director: Mr Brian Pearce
Deputy Director: Dr Harriet Crabtree
Administrative Assistant: Mrs Harsha Shah

Diary Dates

Thursday 4 July, Inter Faith Network AGM and Summer National Meeting in Peterborough. The topic for the national meeting is "Britain's Faith Communities: Equal Citizens?" and speakers will include Mr Sukhdev Sharma, Executive Director of the Commission for Racial Equality. Open to representatives of IFNET member organisations. Details from the Network Office (0171 388 0008).

Monday 18 November at 5.45pm. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Most Revd Dr George Carey, will give the Sir Francis Younghusband Memorial Lecture, "How far can we travel together - facing the real issues of inter faith dialogue". The event is to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the World Congress of Faiths (admission by ticket only). Tickets and venue details available from the World Congress of Faiths, 2 Market St, Oxford OX1 3EF.

Saturdays from May 25 onwards at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in London, a series of talks on the Upanishads at 5.30 at the Bhavan, 4a Castletown Road, London W1. For more information, call 0171 381 3086.

Saturday 8 June Westminster Interfaith's Annual Multifaith Pilgrimage. This year's route includes ten places of worship in Acton, Ealing and Southall as well as a stop at the Ealing Town Hall where the Mayor will welcome pilgrims. Further details from Brother Daniel Faivre on 0181 843 0690.

This brief diary lists events with a specifically inter faith content which are of general interest. Events with a more local concern are already listed in the useful World Congress of Faiths publication *One Family Newsletter*. For information about *One Family*, and how to advertise both local and national events in it, contact: Mrs Jean Potter of WCF at 1 Ivy Lane, Teignmouth, Devon TQ14 8BT.

Religious Discrimination

For some time there has been debate about whether fresh legislation is needed to protect religious, as well as racial, identity against discrimination and abuse. Most recently this debate has been taking place in the context of the Inner Cities Religious Council working group on religious discrimination (with both Network and Commission for Racial Equality participation).

The CRE has now set up a special project team which is reviewing the evidence relating to cases of discrimination and analysing the options for possible legislation. The Commission held a meeting with faith community representatives in March to outline the planned work of the team. The Network will be focusing in part on these questions in its Summer National Meeting on 4 July, "Britain's Faith Communities: Equal Citizens?" at which Sukhdev Sharma, Executive Director of the CRE will speak.

Counting Up

The next national Census is not due to be held until 2001. But already preparations for it are well under way and the timescale for agreeing on questions to be tested prior to final decisions on the content of the census is now surprisingly short.

One of the issues which is being examined is whether a question should be included on the census form about religious identity, perhaps in addition to the question about ethnic identity which was included for the first time in the 1991 census. The significance of religious identity in terms of meeting people's needs for public services and in other ways is being increasingly recognised.

The Board of Deputies of British Jews brought this particular issue to the attention of the Network's Executive Committee last Autumn, and the Network has been working with the Office of National Statistics and the Inner Cities Religious Council to ensure that the matter of a possible question on religious

identity is properly examined and that all major faith communities have an opportunity to participate in the consultative process on this. A decision on whether to pursue the possibility of a "religious" question will be taken within the next few months.

Counting Down

Those countries, including Britain, which have been shaped primarily by the Christian tradition, follow a calendar dated from the year in which Jesus is traditionally believed to have been born. Counting by this calendar, it is now only four years away from the second "millennium" (or period of a thousand years) from his birth.

The Churches in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland have been considering how they should mark this event from a Christian perspective. In England, the Churches have also pressed the Government to recognize that the more general millennium celebrations need to have some spiritual and moral dimension. They have begun consultation with other faith communities about how the wider pattern of national and local celebrations and projects marking this significant date in the calendar, which is used by all of us for our public life together, can reflect and embrace the different facets of our society, including its religious diversity. Several members of the Network's Executive Committee, as well as Brian Pearce, were present at the initial consultation meeting in February chaired by the Anglican Bishop of Maidstone, Rt Revd Gavin Reid.

The Millennium Commission has substantial funds from the National Lottery at its disposal. It is responsible for overseeing the national exhibition now planned to be sited at Greenwich in London close to the 0° meridian. It will also be funding a wide range of capital and other projects.

Brian Pearce met in March with the Chief Executive of the Commission, Jennifer Page, to discuss its plans and funding schemes. The Commission's capital grants are only relevant for major projects since the minimum grant is

normally £100,000 which must be matched by an equivalent amount from other sources.

However, the Commission is also entering into partnership with other grant making bodies, including voluntary sector organisations, to promote schemes to provide individuals with training and other opportunities to widen their experiences in ways which will be helpful to the community. It will fund up to 90% of these schemes with individual grants of £2,000 upwards. The Commission will also contribute towards an organisation's running costs for an approved scheme. Any organisation interested in finding out more about the Commission's funding schemes can contact them at 2 Little Smith Street, London, SW1P 3DH (Tel: 0171-340-2001).

The use of lottery money, even via the Millennium Commission, is controversial and there are divided views among and within Britain's faith communities about whether or not it is appropriate to use funds from this source. The Network hopes to provide an opportunity to discuss the ethics of lottery funding at an event later this year.

It may be that changing 1 to 2 at the start of the year on the calendars on our walls has little practical impact. But there is a general feeling that it will involve a symbolic turning of a large new page and a time for even more reflection and even more significant commitments for the future. So we need to be thinking in good time as a society about our "New Millennium's Resolutions"!

Christian Interfaith Practitioners' Association Launched

Last Autumn a new organisation was formed called the Christian Interfaith Practitioners' Association (CIPA). It developed, in part, out of the Association for Ministerial Training in a Multi Faith Society, and held its first meeting and AGM at Swanwick this April (at which Harriet Crabtree was a speaker, together with Michael Barnes and Paul Weller). It aims to link people working formally or informally on

behalf of the churches in inter faith contexts and to offer a support structure and a place to reflect on such issues as training needs and theological questions.

Revd Dr Christopher Lamb of the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland's Commission for Inter Faith Relations is a consultant to CIPA. The Secretary is Revd Andrew Wakefield and the Convenor is Revd Molly Kenyon. More information is available from Revd Wakefield at 47 Wilton Grove, Wimbledon, London, SW19 3QU.

Inter Faith Link Meetings

The Inter Faith Network held its North East England regional link meeting for inter faith organisers on 24 February in Leeds and its North West England link on 14 March in Blackburn. Participants brought news about their local initiatives:

North East England Link News

Bradford Concord Inter-Faith Society was represented at the meeting by Mr Bob Exon and Mr Mohinder Singh Chana. It is based at the Bradford Inter Faith Centre which helps with its mailing and hosts the annual programme of monthly meetings. In recent years, a multi faith walk has become a fixture in Concord's calendar and this takes place at the time of the Bradford Festival. Concord is working on a constitution for the group and has also been thinking about the question of whether or not Bradford needs a representative "council of faiths" to deal with public city issues.

Sheffield Interfaith was represented by Dr Debjani Chatterjee, Revd Sandra Howes, and Ms Shelley Littlefield. The group recently launched a newsletter and sponsors talks, events, and visits to places of worship. This year around 70 people attended its third annual conference which was on the theme of "Human Rights from a Spiritual Perspective".

Cleveland Interfaith Group was represented by Revd Richard Davison. Shortly after the link meeting, on 23 March they held a major meeting in Middlesbrough on social issues and how faith groups relate to each other in Cleveland. Brian Pearce and Mohinder Singh Channa (Bradford Concord) and Ishtiaq Ahmed (Director of Bradford REC) were the speakers and nearly 100 people came. CIG secured a grant of £500 from the Local Authority for the meeting.

Harrogate Inter Faith Group was represented by Ms Catherine Margham. Recently they have been approached by a link group for local teachers to give school presentations. They have also done a joint peace celebration event with the local UN group.

Kirklees and Calderdale Inter Faith Fellowship was represented by Mr Ranjit Singh Gill and Mrs Nancy Solomons. Last year the group organised a multi faith walk, which went well. They also organised their annual event at the Town Hall in connection with One World Week.

Leeds Concord Inter-Faith Fellowship was represented by Dr Peter Bell, Ms Dorte Haarhaus, Mr Manu Kokardia, and Dr Muhammad Turabi. Concord has been running a series of inter faith talks with people of different faiths offering personal reflections on such topics as prayer, scripture, and the understanding of the divine in different religions. It also has a programme of events particularly for women and has now added a well attended series for young people called "Young People Talking" which there are plans to develop into a conference called "Young People Speaking: Approaching the Millennium".

Concord has been developing a link with the Chaplaincy at Leeds University which is hoping to set up a student inter faith forum. The group also hosts a programme for A level students visiting Leeds from Torquay and arranges visits for them to local faith communities and places of worship. Leeds is also one of the local inter faith groups which has a developing link with its local Council of Christians and Jews.

Newcastle and Durham. Revd John Grice represented the North Eastern Network for Inter Faith Dialogue and the Tyne and Wear Racial Equality Council Inter Faith Panel. Among the initiatives he described was a Christian-Muslim meeting set up last year by Revd Andy Lie of the Diocese of Newcastle which was attended, among others, by Canon Dr Philip Lewis from Bradford and by Fuad Nadhi, Editor of Q News. A Christian-Jewish meeting is now planned which will involve visits to share the Shabbat meal in Jewish homes. Revd Grice is also involved in the Tyne and Wear Race Equality Inter Faith Panel which has representatives from the different faith communities and continues to hold occasional meetings. He mentioned, in particular, its "inter faith families" series where they visit members from different faiths at home and experience their faith as lived in the family environment, usually on a Sunday evening. A **Gateshead Inter Faith Forum** has also been established recently.

Shortly after the North East Link, Brian Pearce and Harriet Crabtree visited a number of inter faith practitioners from different faith communities in Durham, Newcastle, Gateshead and Middlesbrough to talk about developments in that area.

North West England Link News

Blackburn: was represented by Revd Colin Albin, Mr Abdul Hamid Qureshi, and Moulana Rafiq Ismail Patel.

Moulana Patel is a full time imam at the Troy Street mosque. He graduated around a year ago at the age of 21 from the Dar al-Ulum at Dewsbury. At that time he hoped to pursue further studies in Madina or at Al-Azar, but local people persuaded him to stay put! In addition to his duties in the community, Moulana Patel edits Unity/Al-Ittihaad. This is the magazine of the organisation Unity, which is made up of around twelve young Muslim scholars and religious personnel. It is mainly based in Blackburn but also has branches in Bolton and Preston. Unity focuses particularly on modern issues, morals, and etiquette.

Revd Colin Albin is the Bishop's Adviser on Inter-Faith Relations, for the Anglican Diocese of Blackburn and Mr Qureshi is Director of the Lancashire Council of Mosques (as well as a member of the Network's Executive Committee). They told the meeting about their work and, in particular about an important recent initiative, about which we asked for the special report on the opposite page.

The Preston Inter Faith Forum was represented by Ms Joy Sabour and Revd Peter Thomas. The forum is about three and a half years old and meets at the University. During the past winter period meetings have focused on how the different faiths in Preston regard the family. The last meeting was at the Gujarat Hindu Centre, and the next one will be at a Muslim venue.

Mr Suleman Kazi reported on the inter faith dimensions of his work in Preston where he is a development officer for the Lancashire Council of Mosques. This includes talking to the many groups and individuals who want to know more about the mosque and about Muslim life.

Mr Navekar and Mr Limbachia came from the Gujarat Hindu Society which has been established in Preston for 25 years and is well known across Britain. Mr Navekar sees inter faith matters as very important but warns that in that, as in most things, people often tend to want to leave things to the leaders. His hope is that it may be possible to interest a wider range of people. Mr Limbachia stressed the fact that relations between faith communities in Preston tend to be good anyway.

Accrington was represented by Father David Lyons who is working to increase local Christian-Muslim conversation and understanding. There has in the past been a dialogue forum but this rather fizzled out and he hopes people may be drawn back in through a well planned shared social or sporting event.

Revd Ron Lewis retired from his work as a United Reformed Church minister in Blackburn six months ago and has been taking a brief break from inter faith work. He is presently

arranging a **Christian/Jewish/Muslim "trialogue" for the URC in Upholland.**

Pendle Inter Faith Group was represented by its facilitator Revd Sally Thomas and by Revd Noble Samuel. They report that the picture in Nelson is quite positive in many ways. The group has been in existence for just over two years and meets four times a year. They have been well supported by the local REC which has helped ensure wide representation (although less from the Muslim community than they hoped). Revd Thomas commented that group members have all become far more aware than they were in the beginning of the fact that every faith community contains a number of denominations or strands (sometimes not totally approving of each other).

Nelson has a sizeable Asian Christian population. Presbyterian minister Revd Samuel explained that his ministry involves, among other things, working with this part of Nelson's Christian community. He commented on the fact that there have not always been good relations between Asian Christians and Asian Muslims in the area. He hopes that mosques will join churches in trying to build bridges between communities.

Kendal Inter Faith Group was represented by Revd Brenda Willis (who is also the United Reformed Church's representative on the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland's Commission for Inter Faith Relations). The presence of the nearby Buddhist Manjushri Institute has generated increased inter faith interest locally.

The Merseyside Inter Faith Group was represented by Dr Khan, who is also President of the local branch of the UK Islamic Mission. He and Canon Michael Wolfe have spent the last couple of years successfully regenerating the group. The City itself is very cosmopolitan and has a wide range of faith traditions and they hope to involve more people from all of them. At recent meetings, Hindus have presented on the origins of Hinduism and Muslims on awareness of Islam.

Special Report: Building Good Relations Between Christians and Muslims in Lancashire

The Lancashire Council of Mosques represents 50 mosques and madrassas in Lancashire and runs a project called the "Lancashire Muslim Community Development Project." One area of its work is to develop better understanding and good relationships within the wider community. The Church of England is also keen to develop understanding and tolerance between Islam and Christianity on a local level.

From this common foundation the LCM and the C of E (Blackburn Diocese) initiated a forum for discussing issues of mutual concern. It has met for the last five years and is chaired by the Bishop of Blackburn, the Rt Revd Alan Chesters. The members are honorary officers of the Lancashire Council of Mosques and Anglican clergy from various parts of Lancashire (which essentially covers the same geographical area as the Blackburn Diocese). The forum meets twice a year.

As a result of the growth of confidence and trust within this forum, it was decided that a number of joint projects could be tackled. Therefore, over the last eighteen months, various activities have taken place which have brought a wide range of Muslims and Christians together. The first activity which took place was a visit of Muslims to Blackburn Cathedral. Then, a large number of Christians attended a local mosque. Participants thoroughly enjoyed these events, which provided learning opportunities as well as the chance to talk freely with people of another faith. It has been generally agreed that such activities should continue on an ongoing basis.

The most recent and ambitious project, was a community relations initiative called "Building Bridges in Lancashire". Its three objectives were:-

1. To build mutual trust and understanding between Muslims and Christians;
2. To help forge links between people and organisations from the various communities of Lancashire;
3. To create an opportunity whereby various individuals, organisations and statutory bodies could form relationships, through which different community relations projects may develop.

The project team was led by Revd Colin Albin, Bishop's Adviser on Inter Faith Relations, and Mr Abdul Hamid Qureshi, Director of Lancashire Council of Mosques. They worked closely together to establish a regular consultation process to enable the Forum to organise an event this March which brought together over 150 people including leaders of the mosques and madrassas (evening schools) in Lancashire, leaders of the Church of England (Blackburn Diocese), leaders and chief executives of local council, mayors and mayoresses of the different boroughs, MPs and European MEPs.

The Bishop of Blackburn and Mr Rafique Malik, the Director of the Blackburn Community Relations Executive addressed the meeting and it was then opened for participant comments. Some excellent points were made, not least those concerning the special needs of young people and learning to live together in a multi-faith society. Afterwards, a substantial dinner was provided with a choice of foods traditional to the communities involved. The programme ended with a vote of thanks offered by both the Bishop of Blackburn and Mr Maulana Sidat, Chairman of the Lancashire Council of Mosques.

A significant amount of positive feedback and appreciation has been expressed by those who were present and the forum has decided to establish the event on an annual basis. To a very large extent, the project's objectives have been achieved and the unique initiative has demonstrated that there is great potential for future developments in Lancashire. Plans for meetings in the near future are already under way, including one this May where faith community leaders and local community leaders will explore possible projects centring on the needs of young people. *(Report based on information provided by the project leaders)*

Two other people passed their news on to the Network for inclusion at the NW link meeting. Revd Robert Lawrence reports from **Bury** that he hopes to develop links with the Muslim community as well as to interest members of other faiths in coming together to explore common concerns. The tradition of an annual mayoral inter faith breakfast for leaders of different faiths continues, and councillors working on it hope to involve young people in a similar event in the near future. Stanley Hope reports from **Rochdale Interfaith Action** that in December, RIA joined the local Quaker group in a candlelight vigil in the town centre to draw attention to the situation in former Yugoslavia. They helped to collect money and goods to send by road, to be shared with people of all religions. In January, RIA sent a letter to their MP about the Asylum and Immigration Bill.

Membership Updates

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan (Institute of Indian Culture) in London has recently hosted a series of talks by its Director Dr Shastry on prayers, mythology, philosophy, messages and stories in the Rig Veda, as part of its ongoing programme to promote inter faith dialogues and mutual awareness between the various faiths in London.

The Calamus Foundation, which promotes good relations between Christians, Muslims and Jews, held a series of talks in February and March on the theme of Forgiveness and Reconciliation: A Muslim-Christian Dialogue. Talks focused on such issues as "Peace and Reconciliation: the case of Bosnia" and "Forgiveness and tolerance in a pluralist society."

Cardiff Interfaith and the Cardiff United Nations Association co-sponsored a meeting on 22 February at which the former Somali ambassador to the U.S and to Nigeria, Dr Yusuf Omar Al-Azhari, spoke on "Accountability - How to be Responsible for One's Own Nation". A former political prisoner in his own country, Dr Al-Azhari is among those who work in exile to further the peace and reconciliation process in Somalia. This was followed by a series of talks to sixth formers on "the path to reconciliation".

Coventry Interfaith Group members went on 18 April to meet with the Leamington inter faith group at the premises of SATKAAR, an elderly Asian women's group based in Leamington. A film about SATKAAR was followed by a talk by Mr Desai about his practical inter faith work in hospital.

International Association for Religious Freedom (British Chapter) staff member Helen Wuscher spoke on 31 March to the Annual Meeting of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches about the IARF Congress to be held in Korea this summer.

The Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum hosted a special exhibition and discussion of Baha'i artist George Fleming's 30 oil paintings depicting the world's great religions in symbolic and historical representation. Speakers at the 12 March event in Lisburn were the Lord Mayor of Lisburn; Dr Mamoun Mobayed (Chairman of the Forum); George Fleming; and Revd Maurice Ryan (of the Forum). The exhibition is now on tour in the province.

Wolverhampton Inter Faith Group held its Annual Prayer for Peace in January at St Peter's Church. Around 100 came, including many young people. The theme was "the Vision of Peace". Young people gave presentations and read about peace from their particular holy books or prayed in the style and language of their faith tradition. A booklet of prayers and readings was produced (£1 from WIFG, 43 Princess St, Wolverhampton, WV1 1HD).

Network Funding: We have just heard that one of our major supporters since the start, has made a fresh three year grant at an increased level. This is a Trust whose usual policy is not to renew grants over a long period to the same organisations but in the Network's case they have re-affirmed the importance of inter faith work with this grant and with a letter of warm encouragement. We welcome members' suggestions for any trusts and individuals who may be willing to support the Network's inter faith programme and projects.

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The newsletter is one of the ways of sharing news about developments at the Network, in each other's inter faith programmes, and more widely on the UK inter faith front.

Thank you for the positive comments and suggestions we had after the first issue.

Harriet Crabtree

Contributions

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The Inter Faith Network for the UK
5/7 Tavistock Place
London WC1H 9SN

Tel 0171 388 0008
Fax 0171 387 7968

Rabbi Hugo Gryn 1930-1996

As many of you will know, Rabbi Hugo Gryn died on 18 August at the age of 66. There has been an outpouring of tributes from the many people who will miss him deeply.

After surviving the concentration camps of the Nazi Holocaust, he went on to become a much loved and respected rabbi, and a tireless fighter for racial justice and for better inter community relations. In the last few years, millions of people across the country came to know him through his contributions to the Radio 4 programme *The Moral Maze*.

Hugo was one of the earliest pioneers of inter faith dialogue and cooperation in this country. He was closely involved in the work of several of our member organisations. And he was, of course, involved from the earliest days in the planning of The Inter Faith Network itself. He served as Co-Chair from its establishment in the Spring of 1987 up to the Summer of 1994.

Rt Revd Jim Thompson, Bishop of Bath and Wells, served with Hugo as Network Co-Chair from 1987 to 1992 and shares some of his memories of him on page 3.

The Inter Faith Network

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Vice Chairs: Dr. Manazir Ahsan; Mrs Ivy Gutridge MBE; Mrs Rosalind Preston OBE; Mr Indarjit Singh OBE; Treasurer: Mr Ramesh Shah

Director: Mr Brian Pearce
Deputy Director: Dr Harriet Crabtree
Administrative Assistant: Mrs Harsha Shah

Diary Dates

Saturday 5 October , 10.30am - 5pm IARF British Chapter, "Sharing Experiences from Korea". Glasgow Unitarian Church. **Saturday 12 October 1996, 10.30am - 5pm IARF British Chapter, "Sharing Experiences from Korea",** Richmond and Putney Unitarian Church, Surrey. Slides and possibly video. Tea and coffee provided but participants should bring own lunch. Conference fee of £4 or £2 for concessions. Further details from Mr Peter Sampson (01524 66559) or Rev Geoff Usher (0114 2767114).

10-13 October, the World Conference on Religion and Peace European Assembly at Dobogoko near Budapest will focus on "Religions for a Just Economic Order". Further details from Mr Jehangir Sarosh (01923 211168).

Wednesday 16 October at 7.30pm, Preston Inter Faith Forum will be hosting their third consecutive annual multi faith event linked to the Week of Prayer for World Peace at St Peter's Arts Centre, University of Central Lancashire. Further details from Ms Joy Sabour (01772 733 294).

Saturday 19 October from 10am, Coventry Inter Faith Group Peace Walk for anyone interested in peace and inter faith issues. Meet at Coventry Cathedral's Chapel of Unity and go on to visit the gurdwara, mosque, and temple. Further information from Revd Supriyo Mukherjee (01203 688264).

Tuesday 22 October 7.15pm at Gloucester Cathedral and Wednesday 23 October 7.15pm. at the Pittville Pump Rooms in Cheltenham, **Gloucester Inter Faith Action "Pageant"**. Tickets £3 or £1.50 for under 15s from Mr J. Absalom, 139 Dean's Way, Kingsholm, Gloucester GL1 2QB (01452 538309).

Sunday 29 October at 3pm, Cardiff Inter Faith Group will be hosting an inter faith celebration with music, dancing, and poetry at the Temple of Peace, Cathays Park, Cardiff. The guest speaker will be actress and broadcaster Anand Jasani. Refreshments afterwards. More information from Mrs Lorraine Khan (01222 756303).

Sunday 17 November 2-3pm, Prayerful Reunion at Westminster Cathedral in London. A multi faith event hosted by His Eminence Cardinal Basil Hume OSB to mark the tenth anniversary of the multi faith meeting in Assisi when His Holiness Pope John Paul II met with leaders of the major faiths to pray and fast for peace. Texts will be read by representatives of the different traditions. An opportunity for people of faith to join together in a prayerful gathering for thanksgiving and for reflection on their role as generators and preservers of peace in our communities and our world. Further information from Brother Daniel at Westminster Interfaith (0181 843 0690).

Monday 18 November at 5.45pm, Lambeth Palace in London. 1996 Sir Francis Younghusband Memorial Lecture. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Most Revd Dr

George Carey is the speaker. Admission by ticket only, available from: World Congress of Faiths, 2 Market Street, Oxford, OX1 3EF.

December 14 1996 - January 10 1997. A grand tour of the main cultural and archaeological and artistic sites of Buddhist India will be led by Dr John Crook, Ch'an Lineage Holder, Ch'uan Teng Chien Ti. The two halves of the trip may be undertaken separately. Details from John Crook, Winterhead Hill Farm, Shipham, Avon, BS25 1RS, Fax/Phone: 01934 842231.

Saturday 15 February 1997, 10.30 am - 4pm "Wealth and Poverty in the World's Religions" - Speakers from different religions talk about the religious attitude towards poverty and how we should respond to it. 26 Russell Square London WC1. Further information from Marie Singha (0171 631 6640). Organised jointly by Birkbeck Centre for Extra Mural Studies and the World Congress of Faiths.

Suffolk Inter Faith Resource Autumn Programme includes 10 events with talks on topics as varied as "Green Burials" and "Devotional Hinduism and the Theory of Karma, Birth, Death and Salvation". For more details of the programme and of the annual Israel Study Tour, contact the Administrator, Deborah Hargreave on 01473 233447.

This brief diary lists events with a specifically inter faith content which are of general interest to people beyond the local area. Events with a more local concern are already listed in the useful World Congress of Faiths publication *One Family Newsletter*. For information about *One Family*, and how to advertise both local and national events in it, contact: Mrs Jean Potter of WCF at 1 Ivy Lane, Teignmouth, Devon TQ14 8BT.

The Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education Multi Faith Calendar 1996-97

Shap was set up in 1969 to encourage the study and teaching of world religions. Each year Shap produces a journal focusing on a particular theme of relevance to religious education: this year's is "Exploring Conflict and Reconciliation". The journal has just been published along with the latest issue of the invaluable Shap Calendar of Religious Festivals, covering August 1996 to December 1997. Copies of the Journal cost £6 and of the Calendar £3.50 (or £8 for both) from: The Shap Working Party, c/o The National Society's RE Centre, 36 Causton Street, London SW1P 4AU. (0171-932-1194).

Bishop Jim Thompson pays tribute to Rabbi Hugo Gryn

Bishop Jim writes: "To spend time with Hugo was to have a sense of hope and light, even where things looked dark and impossible. He triumphed in the strength of God - not only over Auschwitz but over racism, anti-Semitism and conflicts.

Although we were Co-chairs of the Network, in its early years Hugo carried with Brian Pearce the major weight of the work. I remember so many times in our work together in the Inter Faith Network, when potential conflict clouded minds, out of the mist would come one of Hugo's quite complicated stories and the laughter somehow healed the sore place and the human loving and trusting was restored.

Talking with Hugo was always fun and illuminating. I remember in Coventry Cathedral, in dialogue with him, learning the importance of reparation in any creed of forgiveness. I feel he was a rabbi to us all - marvellous in the pulpit - hardly taller than the pile of books he had brought with him - producing for Christians and for others, new and old, earthly and heavenly insights from God's word. To share the Passover with Hugo, Jackie and their family is something we shall never forget. As the great stories were told, as they included us with love and affection, we were moved by the way in which the ancient and the modern came together in a family and the sacred meal.

The trouble is that when someone has meant so much to us, a beloved person, a beloved voice, bringing sanity and light invisible to our lostness and our struggle to find the truth - we feel such a loss as though the world was darker, the laughter less loving, the good wisdom more fragile. But as we face into this real erosion of our will, I can just hear that familiar voice saying in my ear "There was a rabbi once..." and I can't help but smile and hope, and love the Lord who gave him to us."

May his memory be a blessing.

National Updates

Religious Discrimination

Earlier this year the Commission for Racial Equality set up a special project team to collect evidence of discrimination relating to religious identity and to analyse the options for possible legislation. As reported in May's *Inter Faith Update*, the Commission met with faith community representatives in March to outline the planned work of the team.

The CRE team's work is now under way after some delay caused by the illness of team leader, Mr Khurshid Drabu. The Network office has been keeping in close touch. A series of regional consultative conferences will take place in the coming months in the Midlands, the North of England, London, Scotland and Wales.

The team has also prepared a leaflet, to be published shortly in a number of languages, dealing with cases where religious discrimination might constitute indirect racial discrimination and therefore fall within the scope of the Race Relations Act 1976. For further information contact Mr Khurshid Drabu, Commission for Racial Equality, Elliot House, 10-12 Allington Street, London SW1E 5EH.

The Inner Cities Religious Council will be publishing, at the end of October, a general booklet on ways in which people who find themselves suffering discrimination on grounds of religious identity can seek redress. For information, contact Revd David Horn at the Department of the Environment, 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 3EB.

The 1996 Asylum and Immigration Act

On 24 July Parliament passed the Asylum and Immigration Act. Many organisations had expressed their dismay at the Bill as it was going through Parliament. The Network's AGM in July, responding to a suggestion by the

Birmingham Council of Faiths and the Board of Deputies of British Jews, unanimously passed a resolution expressing the strongest possible concern at important aspects of the Bill. Copies of the resolution were sent to the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for Social Services and replies defending the provisions of the proposed legislation were subsequently received.

Lobbying by the many concerned organisations and individuals did lead to some small but useful changes to the proposed legislation. The Act, nevertheless, removes entitlement to benefits from any asylum seeker who applies for refugee status in-country and any asylum seeker who exercises their right of appeal against a refusal of refugee status.

Information on the exact provisions of the Act and on the changes that were achieved through lobbying can be obtained from *The Refugee Council at 3 Bondway, London SW8 1SJ*.

The new regulations are causing serious hardship for many genuine asylum seekers in the UK. The Refugee Council estimates that at least 10,000 people have no access to benefits and many are facing homelessness and destitution.

There is a serious need for:

- donations of money, no matter how small
- donations of clothing, food and toiletries
- use of premises for storage and distribution of donations
- volunteer help in London and in other areas of the country.

If you or your faith community or inter faith organisation thinks it might be able to help, contact Anne Thomas at the Refugee Council for further information or contacts in your part of the country (0171 582 6922).

Two other useful contacts are: *Faith Asylum Refuge, 33 Seymour Place, London W1H 6AT, tel 0171 723 4404* (where people of many faiths work together on asylum issues in the Greater London area); *Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (0171 252 8706)*.

On refugees and asylum, see also the item on Tinsley House, near Gatwick under "East and West Sussex" on p7.

Hospital and Prison Chaplaincy and Civic Religion

On 9 September, members of Britain's faith communities joined the Archbishop of Canterbury, Most Revd Dr George Carey, at Lambeth Palace to discuss the recently published report "The Church of England and Other Faiths". The meeting was arranged in consultation with the Network.

The report was the result of two years of intensive research by Professor James Beckford and Dr Sophie Gilliat at the Department of Sociology of Warwick University.

The project was funded by the Leverhulme Trust with additional support from the Church of England. It looked in detail at existing arrangements for the spiritual care of hospital patients and prison inmates of different faiths and how civic religious events are arranged. In particular it looked at the extent to which the Anglican clergy are presently called on to facilitate participation of other faith personnel and how they and other faith personnel feel about the arrangements. The report analyses questionnaire data and site visits to show both the positive and negative aspects of the present situation.

Several of the participants at the Lambeth meeting were men and women with many years of experience in the fields covered by the research. There was a cautious welcome for the report as a first step in the process needed to move towards a situation where there is more adequate involvement of all the faiths in these sectors of our public life, and appropriate funding. Participants spoke of a "partnership" of faiths working together to ensure this.

The Inter Faith Consultative Group, chaired by Rt Revd John Austin, Bishop of Aston, will be taking forward work on the report for the Church of England. Further information can be

obtained from Revd Canon Dr Christopher Lamb at Church House, Great Smith St, London SW1P 3NZ (0171 222 9011).

For further information on the report itself, contact Professor Beckford, Dept. of Sociology, Warwick University, Coventry CV4 7AL.

Census 2001

In May we reported that discussions were taking place about a possible question on religious identity which might be included in the 2001 national Census.

In early August the Office of National Statistics made it known that they had decided that a question on religious identity was not a priority and so would not be included in the trial forms being designed for testing in the near future. They based this conclusion on consultation with Government Departments, local authorities and other public bodies.

Faith community representatives at the meeting where this decision was reported expressed considerable disappointment. They believe that if a question about ethnic identity is included (as it was for the first time in 1991) the data from it will be of significantly less value if it is not accompanied by a question on religious identity.

Representatives find it difficult to understand how the providers of public and other services will be able ensure that they are meeting the needs of different faith communities if they do not have access to accurate information about numbers and geographical distribution. They are now taking up the matter at Ministerial level.

C of E launches document on church premises and other faiths

In July, the Church of England published a report, "Communities and Buildings: Church of England Premises and Other Faiths". It was produced for the General Synod of the Church

of England (its governing body) by the C of E's Board of Mission Inter Faith Consultative Group.

Revd Canon Dr Christopher Lamb, who is the Secretary to IFCOG and a Network Executive Committee member, reports that Synod agreed that the document "provides the proper framework for all policy-making about the use of church buildings by people of other faiths and the disposal of church buildings to people of other faiths".

The report covers the use of church buildings by people of other faiths and the possible disposal of redundant church buildings to people of other faiths. It gives guidance to Church of England parishes which are wrestling with these issues. Other faith communities will also find it helpful to be aware of the guidelines offered in the report. It costs £5.00 including postage from Church House Bookshop, 31 Great Smith St, London SW1P 3BN.

Network Updates

New members for the Network

At this Summer's AGM in Peterborough on 4 July, applications for membership of the Network were accepted from:

The Network of Buddhist Organisations (UK)
- a new linking body bringing together around 40 Buddhist organisations and groups within this country. Membership by the NBO will provide us with a wider range of links within the Buddhist community.

Network of Sikh Organisations (UK)
The NSO (UK), was launched at a conference held in London in Summer 1995. It has over 40 member organisations and becomes a member of the Inter Faith Network in place of the Sikh Council for Inter-Faith Relations (which is now a member of the NSO).

Jamiat-ul-Ulama Britain (Association of Muslim Scholars).

This Muslim body draws its membership primarily from within the Deobandi movement.

Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource.

This local inter faith group is based at the inter faith centre at Suffolk College in Ipswich and brings together members of faith communities living in Suffolk.

National Association of Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education.

NASACRE is an "umbrella" body to which local SACRE's throughout England belong.

And a new Vice Chair

At the AGM in July, Dr Manazir Ahsan was elected as a Vice-Chair of the Network. He is the Director General of the Islamic Foundation and has been a member of the Network's Executive Committee since 1992. He has a long standing commitment to building good inter faith relations in the UK and abroad and has participated in a number of Jewish-Christian-Muslim dialogues and spoken widely on inter faith issues.

Dr Ahsan is, by training, a historian of the Middle East and among his publications are Social Life Under the Abbasids; Muslim Festivals; The Qur'an: Basic Teachings; and Sacrilege Versus Civility: Muslim Perspectives on the Satanic Verses Affair. He is also the editor of Muslim World Book Review and of Encounters: Journal of Inter-Cultural Perspectives.

Dr Ahsan takes over from Dr Mughram Al-Ghamdi who was until recently Director General of the Islamic Cultural Centre at Regent's Park and has now moved to become High Master of the King Fahad Academy.

Dr Mughram Al Ghamdi served as a Vice Chair for the Network since its founding in 1987 and consistently offered both valuable support and wise advice.

Regional link meetings

The Inter Faith Network organises "link" meetings around the country for inter faith organisers. These meetings offer a chance to share news and ideas and learn from each other's successes as well as discussing the challenges facing the various groups and initiatives.

There have been two links since the last news letter. These were the Southern Counties meeting in Crawley on 20 June and the South West meeting which took place in Bristol on 13 July.

The Southern Counties Link

East and West Sussex.

Revd Canon Michael Butler and Dr Peter Bishop told the meeting about inter faith relations in the Brighton and Hove areas. Dr Bishop explained his background as an academic who has worked both in Brighton and Bristol and has now retired back to Hayward's Heath. Dr Bishop is very much involved in the local Council of Christians and Jews branch in Hove and hopes other links may be developed which can encompass the Muslim community in the area.

Canon Butler reported on inter faith developments in the Anglican Diocese of Chichester where he is the inter faith contact person and has a remit to try and take inter faith matters forward on a more thorough footing within the Diocese. In his view, inter faith relations are very important in areas such as Sussex where there are relatively few ethnic and religious minority members and something of a history of xenophobic and even fascist movements (as well as left wing and "alternative" movements). Brighton is the only town in the Diocese which has a significantly mixed population.

Canon Butler also talked about Tinsley House, near Gatwick, where there are many refugees to whom he would like to see local faith communities offering supportive contact (alongside Roman Catholics from Surrey who are already very much involved).

Mrs Queenie Hopcroft and Mrs Margery Gopel contributed news of Crawley in West Sussex. It has no inter faith group as such, but it has lively interaction between the faiths, particularly on social issues where the local Racial Equality Council is

involved. Mrs Hopcroft spoke of an inter faith service for peace which was held at Worth Abbey.

Guildford

Revd Andrew Facey explained that he had recently become the inter faith adviser for the Anglican Diocese of Guildford, as well as becoming an incumbent after four years as a priest in the diocese. Amid the general chaos of house moving and new job, he is grappling with the question of what shape inter faith work might take in a relatively mono-cultural area such as his own, where Woking is the only significantly multi faith town.

Midhurst

Revd Chris Boxley of Midhurst Grammar described a convention he had organised for 17-19 year olds. It was designed to allow young people of many different backgrounds to meet and learn about each other's lives and traditions.

Portsmouth

Revd Canon David Partridge spoke of the inter faith situation in the Diocese of Portsmouth. He described attitudes as seeming rather defensive and inward looking, despite the best efforts of a number of individuals and the good work of the Portsmouth Racial Equality Council. On the horizon, however, is a large One World inter faith worship event and this may lead to more interest.

Rochester and Canterbury

Mr Ken Knight told the meeting about his work with the Anglican Diocese of Rochester's Council for Mission and Unity which has an inter faith committee which has been more active in the last two years than for some while. The Diocese has a very diverse population, but some areas, such as Rochester itself, are more multi faith than others.

The DCMU has arranged a number of events designed to give information about the various faiths, with speakers from the faiths, but the only ones that have been well attended have been those geared specifically to the clergy. The committee plans shortly to produce a series of brochures on the various faiths and how Christians can build bridges of understanding with other communities.

Mr Knight also described the activities of the Medway Inter Faith Group which is running visits to different faiths' places of worship and rotating its meeting venue between these. Around 10-20 people come regularly to meetings. He mentioned that two years ago, another local initiative was launched as the "West Kent Inter Faith Group". Its focus is on shared exploration of key religious themes with particular

reference to the scriptures of the various traditions.

Southampton

SIFL was represented by Mrs Sumaya Wallaya and Mr Abdul Azim Mochtar. Mrs Wallaya explained that Southampton is a very multi cultural city with a substantial Asian community and many different faiths. Inter faith work has gone on at various points in past years, but mainly on an individual basis.

More recently Mrs Wallaya has worked with Revd Stephen Barton and others to create a more structured body. This was launched in March this year as Southampton Inter Faith Link. Nearly 300 people of all faiths came to the launch which was also attended by the Lady Mayor.

SIFL links the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, and Sikh communities. Its meetings are relatively informal and happen every other month and so far are well attended. The Link's aims are to build bridges of understanding and friendship between the different faith communities and also to ensure the availability locally of accurate information about the faiths.

One of their first areas of work has been looking at the needs of hospital patients of different faiths. They held an event focusing on this which was well attended by health professionals.

The links are as important as the events. Most recently, a local rabbi responded to Muslim concern over the anti Muslim leaflets purportedly sent by Kahane followers (but widely thought to be a pernicious hoax), by offering to facilitate a meeting between Jewish and Muslim leaders.

Although it was decided by the Muslims that this would not be necessary there is relief that the kind of links are being made that will allow communities to meet more easily to resolve any problems that may arise, and also to work together on issues of common concern.

Woking

Mr John Carver talked about the local inter faith group which used to be coordinated by Mr Brian Reep and which Mr Carver is now helping facilitate. The group continues to meet on an occasional basis and many of the same people come year after year, but Mr Carver detects a general lack of wider interest and enthusiasm.

Mr Carver is at present working on a One World Week event which he hopes will generate fresh interest.

South West Link

Bristol

Bristol Inter Faith Group is now in its sixth year. Individual membership cost £3.50 and corporate membership £25. Mrs June Ridd reported that there is good multi-faith representation on the Committee but less multi-faith participation in events. There can be a tendency for people of particular faith communities to attend meetings only when the speaker or agenda is of a particular interest to them.

The Group's last AGM with Jorgen Nielsen, Director of the Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian Muslim Relations, Selly Oak was, however, most successful with good attendance from across communities.

There is quite a contrast between attendance at the group's regular meetings and the attendance of several hundred people at a social event organised by the Group in April under the auspices of the Lord Mayor. For its next round of meetings, the group is taking "Religion and "Society" as its theme.

Upheaval in the government structure in the Bristol area has made it difficult to establish effective communication at local authority level but the Group is consulted, for example, by hospital chaplains and teachers.

Exeter

Exeter Inter Faith Group was represented by Mr David Potter, Mrs Jean Potter and Ms Gail Bradley. Mr David Potter explained that Exeter Inter Faith Group originally started as a University venture launched by Ms Sandy Martin and Ms Helen Fry. The student base gave it a floating population and therefore a lack of continuity. For a time the group seemed to be moribund, but it then became more focused on local residents and gained support from Revd Martyn Goss, the Anglican Diocesan Inter Faith Officer.

The group has about 30 members on its mailing list and notices about the meeting circulate more widely. It is a very informal one which usually meets at neutral venues such as the Devon and Exeter Institution. Alongside the group there is an active Council of Christians and Jews branch.

Ms Gail Bradley spoke about her work in the Probation Department linked to Exeter Prison and the inter faith work she has been involved in together with the Prison Chaplains there.

Gloucestershire

Gloucestershire Inter Faith Action was represented by Revd Captain Alan Fitch. GIFA covers a large catchment area and, over time, has absorbed some other small local inter faith groups. It has nearly 90 individual members and 14 corporate faith group members including the Anglican Diocese of Gloucester and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Clifton. The local Chinese and Japanese Associations are also involved.

GIFA has an office which is open in the mornings and often also the afternoon. This has become a focal point for the group's activities. The office team are paid for partly by the Gloucester Anglican Diocese, and partly by the Sunni Muslim community. The telephone line is funded by the Shi'a Muslim community and the Secretary of the group, Mr Musa, is a Shi'a Muslim. A new computer has been provided by the Baha'i community. So it is a multi-faith co-operative venture.

The Association meets in different parts of the county including Gloucester, Cheltenham and more rural venues. Attendance ranges from 30 or so up to 120-150. A good deal of work is done with schools to help coordinate visits to local faith community centres and to keep the flow of these to a manageable level. As part of this process an attempt is made to ensure schools prepare their schools properly for the visits beforehand and the Association arranges visits to schools to help with this and to provide relevant literature and texts.

A newsletter is produced every six or eight weeks. The Association has also been helping newly formed groups in Hereford and in Worcester. There are plans for a major inter faith event in Gloucester and Cheltenham in the Autumn (see Diary Listings).

Swindon

Mr Vernon Griffiths presented a report from his wife, Margaret Griffiths, Secretary of the Swindon Inter Faith Group who was not able to be present. Swindon is a somewhat isolated urban area but with significant minority communities. The group has been going well recently. Sometimes meetings take the form of shared meals followed by discussion, sometimes visits.

Sometimes the group is involved in action over local issues, such as discussion about the provision of appropriate prayer facilities at a planned new hospital. They have helped in the preparation of booklets for advising staff on faith community needs at local hospitals.

Torbay

Torbay Inter Faith Forum was represented by Ms Heather Savini. The forum was launched 15 years or so ago on the initiative of a local Unitarian Minister, and a Baha'i. There were meetings for about ten years and the group was an active one with visiting speakers and the organising of an annual Day of Prayer for Peace in the local Quaker Meeting House. During One World Week an international event used to be mounted at South Devon Technical College.

Over time a pattern developed, however, of members of the Forum going to the meetings of the Exeter Inter Faith Group and the local Torbay Group had in consequence rather crumbled away. However, there are now discussions about the possibility of re-launching the Forum.

There are clearly questions here about the extent to which a group maintains its own identity, becomes a "satellite" of a nearby larger group or becomes absorbed by it.

West Somerset.

Mr John Gamlin reported that West Somerset Inter Faith Group presently has nearly 30 members. Most are Christians. The group produces a regular newsletter for its members. Although the area is not very religiously diverse, the group feel it is important to influence attitudes and calling the group "inter faith" helps do this. The group does not meet the current criteria for membership of the Network but Mr Gamlin noted the support and help which the group had received from the Network, despite this.

Over the last year, WSIFG has held four meetings with visiting speakers. Since the group operates quite some way away from multi faith areas, members need to travel to visit other faith communities and places of worship. Over the last year four visits have been arranged to religious centres in other areas.

Rev Kevin Tingay spoke about his inter faith work in the area as Inter Faith Adviser in the Anglican Diocese of Bath and Wells and mentioned the work of the Bath Inter Faith Group. Within the Christian Churches in this relatively rural area, a great deal of effort goes into maintaining churches with small congregations. There can be a feeling that inter faith issues are irrelevant to their problems and to the pattern of local society. However, he has tried to stimulate interest in inter faith issues and, for example, a group meets regularly at his house for discussion meetings. In rural areas inter faith work is very much the role of the "leaven".

"We don't live in a multi faith area - how can we be 'inter faith'?"

During the general discussion at the South West and Southern counties links, participants talked about many aspects of local inter faith work, especially about the challenges of deciding what is right for each group's particular area and whether their town might benefit from having a "council of faiths" of some kind, on which the area's main faith communities are represented.

The Southern and South Western counties of England are less religiously diverse than some parts of the UK. So, not surprisingly, an issue which came up more strongly than usual in these two links was what it means to work for inter faith understanding and friendship in a relatively "un-multi faith" area.

4 suggestions from the link discussions:

1. If your group is in a relatively un-diverse area, invite speakers from more multi faith areas.
2. If you live in a multi faith area, consider setting up a special link with a group in a less diverse area.
3. Arrange occasional visits to places of worship in other parts of the country.
4. Think about an annual exchange visit with a group from an area with a different religious make up to your own. It could involve an overnight stay with each other's families.

The Network will shortly be sending all groups a list of inter faith contacts in different parts of the country to help make getting in touch with each other easier.

Special Feature: Focus on Faiths in Ireland

Ireland is mainly Christian, but it is more religiously diverse than many people realise.

Revd Maurice Ryan is a Senior Lecturer in the Religious Studies Department at Stranmillis College, Belfast and Secretary of the Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum. He has recently published an illustrated book *Another Ireland: An Introduction to Ireland's Ethnic-Religious Minority Communities* (Stranmillis College, 1996).

Inter Faith Activity has been arranged in the North for a number of years through the Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum which became a Network member in 1994. Maurice Ryan's book was inspired by his involvement with the Forum since it began in 1993.

In *Another Ireland*, he writes, "In celebration of the first World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893...the year 1993 was designated a 'Year of Inter-Religious Understanding and Co-operation'. Coinciding with this centenary, and after extensive discussions with interested parties, including the ethnic/religious minority communities and the Irish Council of Churches, the Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum was formed in May 1993, with the essential purpose of promoting friendship and mutual understanding across the spectrum of religious life in the province.

Drawing its membership from the Jewish, Hindu, Muslim, Chinese, Buddhist, Baha'i and Sikh communities as well as the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches, the Forum has enjoyed remarkable success as a pioneering inter-faith association, with a current membership of around 50 people, many of whom occupy positions of leadership within their own traditions. While Forum members are not official delegates of their respective communities, they represent that body of opinion within their communities which is supportive of the Association's constitutional aim, which is: to provide a Forum where:-

a) Adherents of different faiths can meet to share and foster mutual understanding of each other's beliefs and practices; and b) The special problems of religious and ethnic minorities can be articulated, and solutions recommended."

For more information or to explore arranging an exchange of speakers with the Forum, you can contact Revd Ryan at The Religious Studies Department, Stranmillis College, Stranmillis road, Belfast, BT9 5DY or the Forum's Chairman Dr Mamoun Mobayed, The Islamic Centre, 38 Wellington Park, Belfast, BT9 6DN.

The book is an introduction to the history, organisation, and activity of Ireland's ethnic and religious minorities in the North and South and draws on information supplied by members of all the communities it covers as well as on his own extensive research.

Revd Ryan has sent us this summary of key facts which may be of interest to Network members:

Faiths in Ireland

Baha'is formed their first local spiritual Assembly in Dublin in 1948, and an Assembly in Belfast in 1950 with their first national Spiritual Assembly in 1972. The community has expanded steadily since the 1970s with current membership in the Republic around 300 and just over 300 in Northern Ireland in 14 local assemblies.

Buddhists in Ireland now number around 1,000. There are about a dozen Buddhist Centres and Meditation Groups of various traditions around the country from Dublin to Cork to Limerick to Cavan to N. Ireland. The earliest and most active centre is Samyedzong in Dublin which was founded in 1977.

Christians from the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches make up the majority of the religious population.

Hindus in the Republic number around 900 and a further 800 in the North. The Northern Ireland Hindu Cultural Centre and Temple opened in 1979. There are three Hare Krishna communities in Ireland at Dunmurry near Belfast, at Hare Krishna Island in Country Fermanagh, and in Dublin, with a total of around 100 members.

Jains are few in the Republic or the North.

Jewish communal life in Ireland goes back to the seventeenth century and by the end of the nineteenth century a sizeable community was established in Dublin with smaller groups in Cork, Limerick, Waterford, Derry/Londonderry, Lurgan, and Belfast. Population reached a peak in the 1950s. Today, there are under 1,000 Jews in the Republic and about 250 active members in the North. The four main synagogues are now in Dublin (3) and Belfast (1).

Muslims began arriving in Ireland in the 1950s. There are now over 6,000 in the Republic with a further 1,500 in the North. The Islamic Foundation of Ireland was set up in the early 1970s and in 1990 the Muslim National School opened. A Dublin mosque was established in 1983 and a mosque and community centre in Belfast in the early 80s. A magnificent new purpose built mosque was opened earlier this year in Dublin.

Sikhs have been resident in Ireland since the 1920s but no formal community was established until 1985/6. Population is now around 250 in the South and 50 in the North. A Gurdwara was opened in Dublin in 1986 and one in Derry/Londonderry in 1990 connected to the Northern Ireland Sikh Association.

Zoroastrians are few in either the Republic or the North.

Updates from member organisations

The Board of Deputies of British Jews reports that it has worked with prominent members of the Hindu community to launch a new **UK Indian-Jewish Association** to further understanding and friendship. The Association's Council held its first meeting on 11 July to confirm a provisional constitution and approve a programme of cultural and educational events. Pranal Sheth CBE and Aubrey Rose CBE were elected as joint Chairs and Jayanti Patel and John Levy as joint Secretaries. Further information from Mr Sheth (0181 952 2413) or Mr Rose (0181 449 2166).

Derby University's Religious Resource and Research Centre has launched a new postgraduate programme in Pastoral Studies, complementing the existing programme in Religious Pluralism. It looks at pastoral counselling in a plural context and it is for all those involved with and interested in issues of pastoral care, including those in religious leadership roles with pastoral responsibilities and those in secular care organisations who wish to take account of the religious needs of individuals and communities with whom they work. Available from September 1996 on a full or part time basis. Details from Paul Weller (01332 622222 ext. 2102).

Leicester Council of Faiths reports that there has been continued progress this year in the relationship of the Council with Leicester City Council. Following a long series of discussions, Mrs Angela Berryman was appointed in September 1995 to the part-time post of Inter-Faith Worker. In June 1996 her post was made full-time and upgraded to that of Policy Officer (Faiths). An advisory group including four representatives of the Leicester Council of Faiths has been set up to advise on her work programme. It is anticipated that her appointment will lead to a raising of the profile of faith issues as a distinct from cultural issues within the City Council. Her role will be of particular importance in the lead up to the establishment of a unitary authority in Leicester and the transfer of a number of key functions that affect faith communities from the City Council

International Association for Religious Freedom, Triennial Congress met in early August in Iksan City Korea. The theme was "Spirituality - Responsibility - Co-operation: Challenging Our Religious Communities". Members of several dozen religious traditions and groups from around the world attended

and reflected on ways to work together to create a just, free, peaceful and sustainable earth community.

The Maha Bodhi Society reports that the Venerable Dr Vajiragnana, Sangha Nayaka of Great Britain and Abbot of the London Buddhist Vihara, recently attended a six day inter-religious exchange between Buddhists and Catholics on Spiritual Life in Buddhism and Christianity. It was called the "Gethsemane Encounter" and was sponsored by Monastic Inter Religious Dialogue and took place at the Gethsemane Monastery, Louisville, USA.

This meeting of Buddhists and Christians from many parts of the world was convened and attended by the Dalai Lama. "The exchanges were thought provoking and full of both love (metta) and humour, none were aimed at conversion but at enriching their own knowledge, not only of the different beliefs, but of their own beliefs as well. The brotherly and sisterly friendliness meant that REAL dialogue was possible with everyone experiencing a great easiness for open discussion."

Suffolk Inter Faith Resource, which became a member of the Network at this Summer's AGM has now had a full year in its new self-contained premises at Bolton Lane in Ipswich. A Sri Chinmoy peace garden at the side of the building was opened on 18 June with local sponsorship and planters and seats made by students at the college.

SIFRE now has members of 10 religious traditions who are able to go out and speak as tutors. In July a SIFRE inter faith women's forum had its first meeting and it is hoped that this will meet each month. SIFRE has published two books, *Faiths in Focus in Ipswich and Suffolk* and *Finding Our Way and Sharing Our Stories*. More details about SIFRE's programme and publications can be obtained from Cynthia Capey at SIFRE, Inter-Faith Centre, Suffolk College Annexe, Bolton Lane, Ipswich, IP4 2BT.

Other News

The Metropolitan Borough of Bury has set up a small committee to consider future possible development of inter faith activities in the area.

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Tel 0171 388 0008 Fax 0171 387 7968

Inter Faith Update

Newsletter of

The Inter Faith Network for the UK

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The Network's Tenth Year

1997 is The Inter Faith Network's Tenth Anniversary. The Network was set up in 1987 to link and work alongside its member organisations to increase mutual understanding and respect between the faith communities of the world religions represented in the UK today and also to work more widely to promote an appreciation within society of the importance of religious identity and inter faith understanding.

Back in 1987 there was no formal mechanism to bring together representatives of the major faith communities; nor was there a central point where information about inter faith issues and faith communities in the country could easily be obtained. Now these things seem a natural part of the religious scene in the UK and the Network and its member bodies have played a major part in the change.

There is still a long way to go, but now's the time to celebrate the work we have all done and make even more people aware how important it is to make sure that Britain becomes an example of the best kind of inter faith life where members of each faith can practise it with integrity and draw on its resources to help make together a reality of our shared citizenship. We hope events will be planned country-wide during the whole of the Anniversary year to celebrate the positive developments in inter faith relations which have taken place during the past decade, and the pivotal role the Network and its member bodies have played in these.

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Tel 0171 388 0008 Fax 0171 387 7968

The Quest for Common Values

The last few months have seen renewed expressions of concern about the moral climate of our society.

There has been increasing discussion about whether there is, or can be, a clear and widely accepted set of common values sufficient to provide a secure moral foundation for our society.

Some have expressed fears that the development in Britain of a more diverse and plural society has contributed to fragmentation and incoherence in the moral sphere.

The Network has for some time had a concern for the issue of values in a multi faith society and has developed useful links with those working in the field of values. It was therefore able, in December, to make a particular and practical contribution to the values debate. It did this by bringing together a number of those involved in current and prospective "values" initiatives to explore the relationship between these and to discuss underlying issues, including questions of process and methodology, as well as to exchange experience and ideas.

Chief Rabbi opens Network's values seminar

Chief Rabbi Dr Jonathan Sacks' Reith Lectures in 1990 gave considerable initial impetus to the values debate. Dr Sacks gave the opening presentation at the Network arranged seminar on "The Quest for Common Values" which took place on 10 December, at Barnard's Inn in London, by kind invitation of Gresham College.

(cont. p3)

Values Cont. from p.1

The Network's seminar brought together 35 speakers and participants from faith community, education, and a range of other backgrounds to hear about each other's initiatives and to explore such questions as:

- Is the quest for common values a necessary and valid one or is it misconceived?
- How far within a plural society can we establish a shared understanding of the nature of values and morality?
- What kind of process is likely to be the most effective and acceptable means of establishing the substance of common moral ground for society in today's Britain?

The Chief Rabbi was followed by some of the other key contributors to the present debate on values: Professor Bhikhu Parekh of the University of Hull (whose newly completed book on cultural pluralism covers the debate on common values in a number of countries); Rt. Revd. Gavin Reid, the Anglican Bishop of Maidstone (Chair of the Archbishops' Millennium Advisory Group and a Deputy Moderator of a working party of Churches Together in England which has proposed a wide ranging debate on "common values" linked to the Millennium); Dr Nicholas Tate of the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (which has convened a "National Forum for Values in Education and the Community" whose conclusions had just been published at the time of the seminar); and Ms Monica Taylor, who is Chair of the newly formed Values Education Council.

The formal presentations were interspersed with questions and discussion and the final part of the afternoon was given over to shared reflections on the issues that had arisen during the day. A full report on the day is planned for publication in late February.

National Updates

Religious Discrimination

Last year the Commission for Racial Equality set up a special project team to collect evidence of discrimination relating to religious identity and to analyse the options for possible legislation. The Project Team is organising a series of consultative conferences to take place in different parts of Britain. The first two were held in Central London on 12 December and in Bradford on 18 December. Further meetings are planned for the early months of this year in Birmingham, Glasgow, East London, Leicester and Manchester.

The Network office is in touch with the CRE's Project Team and hopes that there will be more substantive discussion soon with faith community national bodies on the results of the team's work on evaluating various options for fresh legislation.

Information on the CRE's leaflet on religious discrimination and on forthcoming regional conferences can be obtained from Mr Khurshid Drabu, CRE, Elliot House, 10-12 Allington Street, London SW1E 5EH.

The Inner Cities Religious Council published, at the end of October, a general booklet on ways in which people who feel they are suffering discrimination on grounds of religious identity can seek redress. For information, contact Revd David Horn at the Department of the Environment, Inner Cities Religious Council, Floor 4/K10, Eland House, Bressenden Place, London, SW1E 5DU (Tel 0171 890 3704).

Census 2001

In September we reported that the Office of National Statistics had made it known in August that it had been decided that a question on religious identity did not have sufficient priority for the 2001 national Census, and so would not be included in the testing programme for this. Faith community representatives argued forcefully against this decision.

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- worked to ensure a place for Britain's major faith communities in our public life
- promoted the development of local inter faith structures
- widened the circle of people in each faith community committed to building good relations between the faiths
- ensured the availability of accurate information about the faiths and inter faith activity
- raised the public profile of inter faith issues
- assisted other organisations committed to working for a harmonious multi faith society

OFFICERS AND STAFF 1996-97

Co-Chairs: Rt Revd Roy Williamson; Mr Om Parkash Sharma; Vice Chairs: Dr. Manazir Ahsan; Mrs Ivy Guttridge MBE; Mrs Rosalind Preston OBE; Mr Indarjit Singh OBE; Treasurer: Mr Ramesh Shah

Diary Dates

This brief diary lists events with a specifically inter faith content which are of general interest to people beyond the local area. Events with a more local concern are already listed in the useful World Congress of Faiths publication *One Family Newsletter*. For information about *One Family*, and how to advertise both local and national events in it, contact: Mrs Jean Potter of WCF at 1 Ivy Lane, Teignmouth, Devon TQ14 8BT.

Thursday 23 January, Oxford 7.00 pm. International Interfaith Centre Lecture with Westminster College. "The Attitude of Muslim Mystics toward Unity of Faiths". Professor Nagah El-Ghonimy, Al-Azhar University, Cairo and Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, Selly Oak. At Westminster College, Oxford. Further information from the IIC (01865 202745).

Thursday 6 February 7.30, Friends' Meeting House, Bournemouth. Brian Pearce joins the new grouping "Unity in Diversity" to talk about the inter faith scene in Britain and the work of the Network. Further information from Mr Lee Nelson, Flat 13, 36 Manor, Flat 13, Manor Road, Bournemouth, Dorset, BH1 3EZ.

Sunday 9 February, London. A multi faith mini pilgrimage in central London is being organised by Westminster Interfaith. Further details from Alfred Agius, 37 Curtis Drive, Acton, London, W3 6YL.

Saturday 15 February 1997, 10.30 am - 4pm, London. "Wealth and Poverty in the World's Religions" - Speakers include Dr Zaki Badawi, Catherine Shelley, and Most Venerable M. Vajiragnana. Centre for Extra Mural Studies, 26 Russell Square London WC1. Further information from Marie Singha (0171 631 6640). Organised jointly by Birkbeck Centre for Extra Mural Studies and the World Congress of Faiths.

Friday 28 February to 2 March, London. Conference with Lama Gangchen on Inner and Outer World Peace. Details to be announced. More information from Roy Watkins (01229 586959).

Wednesday 5 March, 7 pm, Edinburgh. "Is Paganism a Religion?". A meeting sponsored by Unitarians in Edinburgh and by the Pagan Federation (Scotland) which will be an opportunity for Edinburgh's faith communities to ask questions or raise concerns. St Mark's Unitarian Church, Castle Terrace (off Lothian Road), Edinburgh. Further details from Dr James Russell (0131 539 1583).

10-17 March, Germany. 24th International Student Conference of Jews, Christians and Muslims organised by the Standing Conference of Jews, Christians and Muslims in Europe. This year's theme is "Tradition and Change: Identity and Visions of the Future." There will be a special focus on the responsibility of people of faith in a pluralist society. Further information from Irit Burkeman, Leo Baeck College, 80 East End Road, London N3 2SY (0181 349 4525).

Sunday 23 March - Tuesday 25 April International Interfaith Centre, Oxford. Conference on "The Place of Dialogue in Halting and Healing Conflict", focusing especially on Ireland and Bosnia. Further details from the International Interfaith Centre, 2 Market St Oxford OX1 3EF.

26-30 March, Stourbridge. Inter Faith Mindfulness Retreat led by Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh, Author of *Living Buddha, Living Christ*. Venue: Old Swinford Hospital School, Stourbridge, West Midlands. More information from Venetia Harrowes (0117 973 8323).

Saturday 7 June, London, Westminster Interfaith's Annual Interfaith Pilgrimage. It will be linked this year to The Inter Faith Network's Tenth Anniversary. Further information from Brother Daniel Faivre, 2 Church Avenue, Southall, Middlesex, UN2 4DH (0181 843 0690).

Following discussion on the issue at the Network's Committee's meeting on 15 October, the Network's Director wrote to the Office for National Statistics setting out the views which had been expressed on this and on the way a question on religious identity might be framed.

When the ONS announced the arrangements for the testing programme on 8 November, it emerged that a question on religious identity would now, after all, be among those tested (although so far the ONS have not given the precise details of the test question).

Inclusion of a question in the testing process does not mean the question will necessarily be included in the actual Census. Those who wish to ensure that it is, will need to establish fully, during 1997, the "user case" for its inclusion.

Further discussion between ONS and faith community representatives is expected shortly.

National RE Festival

This year, for the first time, there will be a special national event focusing on Religious Education.

The National RE Festival is a week long celebration of RE in schools. It will take place in primary and secondary schools throughout the UK from 6-10 October 1997. Several areas are already planning major events, including Winchester, Chichester, Scotland, Devon, East London and Jersey.

Festival organisers and sponsors hope it will encourage schools, local communities and faith communities to promote greater involvement and co-operation in delivering high quality RE and to develop lasting relationships that will benefit both the school and the local community.

For a copy of the Festival newsletter or for more information, please send a postcard to: Savita Ayling, Director, The National Religious Education Festival, PO Box 12981, London E1 9UH. She can also be contacted by phone at 0181 923 8383 and fax at 0181 923 8844.

Millennium Awards for Primary School RE Teachers

The Farmington Institute have recently announced a new award scheme which gives teachers a term for study and research at a number of designated colleges and universities. College fees and replacement teacher costs are both covered. Twenty five awards will be offered each year. Director Martin Roberts writes, "We are particularly keen that all major faiths and all denominations are well represented amongst the recipients of these awards."

Brochures about the awards are available from The Farmington Institute Millennium Awards, Harris Manchester College, Mansfield Road, Oxford OX1 3TD. Tel 01865 271965.

European Year Against Racism

1997 is the European Year Against Racism. It will be launched at a Conference, hosted jointly by the Dutch Presidency of the Union and the European Commission, on 30-31 January 1997 in The Hague, Netherlands. Pdraig Flynn of the European Commission writes,

"The European Year marks the first time that concrete action has been undertaken by the Community institutions to combat racism in partnership with the Member States, putting into practice values which are fundamental to the concept of European democracy. It will contribute to the efforts of those who are actively involved in this area. It will encourage cooperation and partnership, promote visibility at European level and build upon, develop and exchange the experiences of all partners at local, regional and national levels. "

A meeting was held on 2 December at the Home Office arranged by the Community Relations Unit to discuss plans for the year in the UK. A range of bodies were represented, including The Inter Faith Network.

Further information about the Year can be obtained from Caroline Rowe, Community Relations Unit, Home Office, Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AT Tel 0171 273 3047.

Prime Minister Visits The Jain Centre, Leicester

On 1 November Prime Minister John Major visited the Jain Centre in Leicester. He was welcomed by Dr. L. M. Singhvi (High Commissioner for India), Dr Natubhai Shah (Trustee Chairman and founder of the Centre), Dr Ramesh Mehta (President, Jain Samaj Europe), the Lord Mayor, Councillor Culdipp Batty, and Lady Mayor Mrs Bhupinder Batty, and other Trustees and dignitaries as well as around 200 invited guests. The Prime Minister took part in the arti and went on a guided tour of the Centre and its museum.

Mr Major saw the renowned temple with its beautiful carvings, its statues of tirthankaras which Jains venerate as role models, and its stained glass windows showing the life of Mahavira, founder of Jainism. 254,000 hours of work went into creating and erecting the temple. He learned that Leicester City Council had been most supportive in the process and that the Centre is open to all, regardless of creed.

Mr Major was told about the Jain community in Britain and about the key beliefs and values of Jainism. He was especially appreciative of the value Jains put on tolerance. While at the Centre, he heard of Dr Shah's hope that a Jain temple can also be established in London. The Prime Minister was presented with a statue of Mahavira as a symbol of justice and affection to all living beings, introspection and nobility, and non-violence, non-attachment, tolerance and equanimity.

Other Updates from around the country

Prayerful Reunion 10 years on from Assisi

On Sunday 17 November Westminster Cathedral was the scene of one of the largest inter faith gatherings which has taken place in Britain. A capacity congregation of people of different faiths joined Roman Catholic Christians to mark the 1986 meeting at Assisi, where His Holiness Pope John Paul II met with leaders of the major faiths to pray and fast for peace.

The congregation came in from cold and rain to be greeted at the door by children who gave them small twigs of olive - signs of peace. They joined in prayerful reunion to give thanks for the peace work of the last ten years and to reflect on the role of the faiths in generating and preserving peace in our communities and world.

Revd Michael Barnes SJ opened the service and

shared messages from those who could not be present.

Lamps were lit by Rt Revd Brian Masters, Bishop of Edmonton on behalf of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Most Revd Dr George Carey; Mrs Kesang Y. Takla, on behalf of His Holiness the Dalai Lama; HE Cardinal Vlk, Primate of the Czech Republic; Revd Dr Kathleen Richardson, Moderator of the Free Church Federal Council; and Mr William Rutherford, representing the Corrymeela Community. Readings on peace and reconciliation were given by Lord Runcie; Swami Dayatmananda; Ven Dr Medagama Vajiragnana; Rabbi Jaqueline Tabick; and Shaikh Dr Zaki Badawi.

Coventry Peace Walk

Coventry Inter Faith Group held a peace walk on 19 October to show that peoples of different faiths can work together for peace. It began at Coventry Cathedral's Chapel of Unity and went on to the Masjid-e-Zeenat-ul-Islam, the Shree Krishna Temple and the Guru Nanak Parkash Gurdwara where a meal was shared. At each place, the participants prayed for peace.

Gloucestershire Inter Faith Action "People's Pageant"

On 22 and 23 October Gloucester Cathedral and the Pittville Pump Room in Cheltenham were the venues for a special pageant organised by Gloucestershire Inter Faith Action. Around a thousand participants and audience members were involved in the event which was designed to attract new members to GIFA and to draw attention to One World Week. The local paper reported the event very fully and it was filmed by North South Productions for Channel 4 who plan to screen it in April 1997.

The entertainments included silver bands; morris dancers; clog dancers; Scots, Irish, Indian and African dancers; and music from Jewish and Afro-Caribbean choirs among others. There was also an ongoing commentary about each religion and readings from sacred texts in the appropriate context. Civic leaders enjoyed it so much that they have asked for a future repeat.

Jim Absalom of GIFA worked for twelve months writing and organising the pageant. "It is the first of its size anywhere in the country and hopefully got its message over", he said. All the participants, including other members of the GIFA Executive Committee, were volunteers. The script of the pageant is available for other interested inter faith groups from Mr J.H. Absalom (Tel 01452 538309).

Christian-Muslim Dialogue

There are a growing number of dialogue groups spanning particular faiths. One of the earliest to develop a regular programme of talks and meetings was the Christian-Muslim dialogue group in Leicester which came into existence in 1985. It grew out of contact between Revd Gordon Sealy, then a student at the Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim relations at Birmingham, and Dr Ataullah Siddiqui, who was working in the Inter Faith Unit of the Islamic Foundation in Leicester.

When founding member Revd Sealy retired in October, the group paid tribute to him at his last meeting for his unwavering support for the

cause of Christian-Muslim understanding.

The group's aim has been to create a forum where Christians and Muslims can hear speakers on particular topics and meet and exchange ideas and discuss various issues openly and in a friendly atmosphere. Among those who have participated and benefited to date have been A level and university students. Dr Siddiqui says,

"Maybe the most important witness the group has made is to show that Christians and Muslims can meet together, can think together, talk and laugh together without compromising their most cherished beliefs and yet ...connect in a way that could reduce our prejudices and ignorance."

For more information about the group and the topics it has discussed in the past, contact Dr Ataullah Siddiqui at the Islamic Foundation (Tel 01530 244944/5).

Inter-Religious Social Action in Leeds Project

A two year research project exploring the relationship between faith communities and social action in Leeds was set up at the Department of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Leeds, in October 1996. The project researches:

- the involvement of faith community members in social action in Leeds
- the role that faith plays in motivating people to contribute to the city
- how each faith community maintains its individual identity while working with different faith communities
- the potential for future inter-religious social action projects in Leeds and the ways in which such projects could be supported.

The project would be glad to hear of any inter faith social projects in Leeds or in other areas of the country: Stacey Burlet and Helen Reid at the Inter -Religious Social Action Project, Department of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Leeds, Woodhouse Lane, Leeds LS2 9JP. Tel 0113 233 36611 fax 0113 233 3654.

Jewish-Indian Association visits Neasden Mandir

The Board of Deputies of British Jews reports that the Jewish-Indian Association which it helped launch (see Issue 2) recently visited the Shri Swaminaryan Mandir in Neasden, London. The visit was designed to give Jewish members of the Association an insight into Hinduism and a chance to socialise with Hindu members.

Exhibition on Jewish Customs and Beliefs

The Board of Deputies recently co-sponsored an exhibition on Jewish life with the Borough of Richmond on Thames's Education Department. It took place in Twickenham in late November and early December at the Curriculum and Teachers' Centre and focused on Jewish customs and beliefs. The aim was to foster understanding and good will between different faith groups and to educate in an enjoyable way. 20 members of the local Jewish community acted as stewards and guides.

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and Jain Organisations UK Celebrate the Spirit of Universal Forgiveness

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and Jain Organisations UK organised a joint function on 25 September, to celebrate the spirit of Samvatsari-Kshmaapanaa, Universal Forgiveness, in the presence of the High Commissioner for India, Dr. L. M. Singhvi, leaders of the major faiths, and members of the sponsoring bodies. Dr Natubhai Shah welcomed the gathering and spoke of the meaning of the Jain holy period of Paryushana and the role of Ksamaapanaa. Other speakers and officiants included Dr Nandakumara of the Bhavan; Professor B. Hegde; Most Ven. Pandith Vajiragnana, Revd Canon Dr Christopher Lamb; Shamsuddin I. Agha; Rabbi Albert Friedlander; and devotional singer Kokilaben Shah.

Islamic Foundation Seminar on Islam and Religious Pluralism

The Islamic Foundation held a consultative seminar on Sunday 17 November on "Islam and Religious Pluralism". Professor Mahmoud

Ayoub of Temple University (USA) presented his views to an invited audience. The first half of the seminar involved discussion of the Quranic position on other faiths with especial reference to certain Quranic verses and their meanings and relevance to the contemporary pluralist world. Professor Ayoub gave examples from history of how other faiths have addressed this issue and what lessons Muslims can learn from their experience. The seminar also tackled issues related to new religious movements, especially those established after the advent of the Prophet Muhammad, and dealt briefly with issues of secularism, conversion and human rights particularly as they touch on Muslims in the West.

The seminar was the fourth in a series at which the major Muslim denominations in the UK were represented (one of which took place at the Al-Khoei Foundation and another at the Muslim College in London). It is intended to publish the proceedings in *Encounters: Journal of Inter-Cultural Perspectives* in 1997. Further information from Dr Ataulloh Siddiqui (Tel 01530 244944/5).

Maimonides Foundation Launch Celebration

The Foundation held a dinner in central London in September to celebrate its launch and to demonstrate goodwill and understanding especially between Jews and Muslims at a time of heightened sensitivity. Participants included Rt Hon Jeremy Hanley MP, Hon Greville Janner QC MP, Dr David Khalili, Dr Richard Stone, Dr Zaki Badawi, Rabbi Abraham Levy, Rabbi Rodney Mariner, India High Commissioner Dr Singhvi, Sir Sigmund Sternberg, and the Ambassadors of Bahrain, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco, as well as members of the British Jewish and Muslim communities.

Northern Ireland Inter Faith "House Meetings"

The Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum has been holding a series of "house meetings" between Baha'is and Anglicans and between Krishnans and Roman Catholics. In each case, a

small number of people from two religious traditions meet informally in a number of homes. The idea is to encourage closer in depth contact between people representing the various traditions within the local community. These meetings continue into 1997 alongside the regular quarterly meetings of the Forum.

Inter Faith Activity in Suffolk

Suffolk Inter Faith Resource multi faith tutor teams have just completed two 10 week WEA courses in Capel St Mary and Sudbury on the world faiths seen through the experiences of local adherents. Details on forthcoming courses from Deborah Hargreave (Tel 01473 233447).

An inter-faith women's group now meets monthly in Ipswich at the inter-faith centre. Participants, who at the moment include Christians, Muslims and Sikhs, share experiences of bringing up families and talk about their values, spirituality and religious practices.

In November, Christian and Sikh members went by minibus to Southall and Hounslow to share in the celebrations at the gurdwaras there for Guru Nanak's birthday, to visit the Sikh Missionary Society to buy resources, and to go on a shared shopping spree! Cynthia Capey writes, "This outing was a wonderful way of strengthening our developing friendships. Other trips are planned."

Searching for a Just Economic Order: WCRP at Dobogoko

Representatives of various religious communities from 22 European countries attended the European Assembly of the World Conference on Religion and Peace from 10-13 October in Dobogoko, Hungary. They discussed the theme of "Religions for a Just Economic Order" and planned for further work on such questions as how to bring about a more just economic order in Europe and how to introduce a stronger ethical basis into the economy. Given the location, particular attention was paid to the both the economic and inter religious situation in Hungary. The next planned WCRP project at European

level is an interreligious event in Sarajevo. Further information about both the Dobogoko conference and about planning for the Sarajevo event from: Mr Jehangir Sarosh of WCRP (tel 01923 211168).

Inter Faith Initiative launched in Bournemouth

An inter faith initiative, "Unity in Diversity" has begun in Bournemouth. The first two meetings in November and December have been well attended according to organiser Lee Nelson. The group intends to continue meeting on the first Thursday of every month at the Friends' Meeting House in Bournemouth. See details under Diary Dates.

Brent Inter Faith Council

An inter faith council is emerging in the London Borough of Brent. Further information from Revd Fergus Capie (tel 0181 968 3898).

Congratulations to Dr Paul Weller

Paul Weller, who worked some years ago as The Inter Faith Network's Resource Officer, and is the Editor of *Religions in the UK: a Multi Faith Directory* has been appointed Head of Religious Studies at Derby and received his doctorate in December from the University of Leeds.

The Newsletter

The Inter Faith Network now links 80 organisations with a commitment to helping build good relationships between Britain's different faith communities. This newsletter is one of the ways of sharing news about developments at the Network, in each other's inter faith programmes, and more widely on the UK inter faith front.

The next issue is scheduled for May 1997 and contributions to be considered for it can be sent on the enclosed form by 15 April to:

Dr Harriet Crabtree, The Inter Faith Network for the UK, 5/7 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9SN (Tel 0171 388 0008 Fax 0171 387 7968)

Inter Faith Update

Newsletter of

The Inter Faith Network for the UK

Issue 4, May 1997

New Government New Community?

This issue goes to press as the General Election brings in a new Labour Government with a commanding majority.

The coming weeks and months will make clear the implications of this momentous political shift and Britain's faith communities will have their own agendas to pursue with the new Government. What will its position be on requests for legislative protection against religious discrimination? Will it favour the inclusion of a question on religious identity in the 2001 Census? How will it respond to concerns over the current requirements on collective worship in schools? What role will the Inner Cities Religious Council have in future?

Looking beyond such specifically religious questions, the chance lies ahead to encourage the new Government to work with all of us to help build a renewed sense of community and purpose within our national life and to find ways to seek shared values and put these into action together.

Inter Faith Update is published by
The Inter Faith Network for the UK
(Reg. Char. 296773)
5/7 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9SN
Tel 0171 388 0008
Fax 0171 387 7968

Shaping the agenda for the coming months and years

Some of Britain's faith communities contributed significantly to the political debate during the General Election period.

The UK Action Committee for Islamic Affairs, for example, launched a document in February called "Elections 1997 and British Muslims - for a fair and caring society".

Linked to the election campaign, Britain's Churches published a document dealing with issues of racial justice and also published a major report on work and unemployment which argued that all the main political parties should give greater attention to the needs of the poor and disadvantaged.

There are varying views about the relationship between religious conviction and the political process. But it is certainly true that in recent years there has been a fuller participation by a wider range of faith communities in our public life and they will be as interested as every other group to discover the consequences for them of the way the Britain voted on 1 May.

Iqbal Sacranie of UKACIA comments: "The message needs to be got across to new members of Parliament and to the Government that faith communities have an important part to play in society nationally and locally and have much to offer - especially when they work in partnership - when it comes to responding to such issues as crime, homelessness, and unemployment as well as the broader issue of values and morality".

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Mrs Jean Potter of WCF at 1 Ivy Lane, Teignmouth, Devon TQ14 8BT.

Tuesday 6 May, Ipswich. "Jews in Europe", the last of a Spring term series on "Searching for Identity in the New Europe". 7.30pm, Student Services Classroom at University College, Suffolk, Rope Walk, Ipswich. Further information from Deborah Hargreave, Suffolk Inter Faith Resource, tel 01473 233447.

Saturday 10 May - Sunday 11 May, Glasgow. St Mungo's Museum is hosting members of the Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Christian communities in an event called "Meet your Neighbour" designed to give the people of Glasgow a chance to meet with and talk to people from different faiths and come to know and understand each other better. 10am-4pm on Saturday and 12.30-4pm on Sunday. Organised in conjunction with the Churches Agency for Interfaith Relations. Further information from Sister Isabel Smyth, tel 0141 339 8174.

Tuesday 13 May, London. World Congress of Faiths annual Younghusband Lecture by Rabbi Jonathan Magonet, "The Task of Rabbinic Training in the New Europe". 6.30pm at The Royal Scottish Corporation, 37 King St, London WC2. WCF AGM at 5.30pm. Further information from WCF 01865 202751.

Tuesday 27 May, Ipswich. "Radical Theologies in Conversation". Open lecture on radical contemporary thinkers from different faiths by Revd David Hart, Chaplain of Loughborough University. 7pm Suffolk Inter-Faith Centre, Bolton Lane, Ipswich IP4 2BT. Further information from Deborah Hargreaves, tel 01473 233447.

Wednesday 28 May, Walthamstow. Waltham Forest All Faiths Group event, "Islam and its Relations with Other Faiths". Representatives of seven local mosques. 7.30pm at the Council Chamber, Walthamstow Town Hall, Forest Road, Walthamstow, London E17. Further information from Tracey Fletcher, tel 0181 520 0931.

Thursdays 29 May and 5, 12, 19 and 26 June, Southall. Series of talks on "Bridge Building across Race, Faith and Culture" with speakers of different faiths. 6.15 (snacks) and 7pm speaker at 6 Osterley Park Road, Southall, Middlesex UB2 4BL. £2.50 per session or £12.50 for the course. Further information from Sister Karuna Margaret Nourse, tel 0181 571 1833.

Sunday 1 June, West Bromwich. "Inter-Faith as it was, Inter-Faith as it is, and Inter-Faith for the Future". West Midlands Inter Faith Conference marking the Tenth Anniversary of the Inter Faith Network. At Churchfields High School, West Bromwich. Further information from Wolverhampton Inter-Faith Group, tel 01902 27601.

Saturday 7 June, London, Westminster Interfaith's Annual Interfaith Pilgrimage. It will be linked this year to The Inter Faith Network's Tenth Anniversary. Further information from Brother Daniel Faivre, 2 Church Avenue, Southall, Middlesex, UN2 4DH tel 0181 843 0690.

Wednesday 11 June, Edinburgh. Annual General Meeting of the Edinburgh Inter Faith Association which is celebrating its tenth anniversary this Autumn. 7.30pm at St Mark's Church, Castle Terrace, Edinburgh. Further details, tel 0131 539 1583.

Saturday 5 July, London. World Congress of Faiths garden party and tour of Westminster Abbey. St. Catherine's Gardens, Westminster Abbey, London SW1. Celebrating the Inter Faith Network's Tenth Anniversary. 12.30 lunch; 1.30 tour of abbey; 3.00 evensong. Cost of lunch £14. Book through WCF, 2 Market St, Oxford, OX1 3EF.

Friday 1 August - Monday 3 August, 1997, Netherlands. "A Soul for Europe - a Challenge for Changing Religions". International Association for Religious Freedom European conference focusing on European integration and the role of religious communities. Further information from IARF, 2 Market Street, Oxford OX11 3EF.

National Updates

Consultation on collective worship in schools

The consultative project on collective worship in schools which is being jointly sponsored by the Religious Education Council and the National Association of SACRE's and the Network is moving ahead. The first conference was held on 25 February and the next will take place on 20 May. People attending the conferences as representatives of their organisations are to be invited to consult their constituencies on a draft document between the May conference and the final conference due to be held in September. Further information from the office of The Inter Faith Network.

The BBC goes Multifaith!

David Craig writes:

With the recent restructuring of the BBC, the religious broadcasting unit of the World Service based at Bush House has been designated the BBC's Multifaith Bureau. While it is now part of the Religious Broadcasting Department in Manchester, it will, under the direction of David Craig, continue to make programmes for the World Service audience but in addition it will be seeking to find ways in which the concerns and

practices of all the world's religious traditions can be more widely reflected across the range of BBC programmes.

We shall be offering ideas for programmes on BBC2 and BBC1 as well as the domestic radio networks, and by identifying potential contributors and arranging training days for them, we hope that the representation of religious contributions to existing programme strands like Thought for the Day, Pause for Thought and Prayer for the Day can be broadened. We shall also be exploring the possibility of co-producing material with other units like Education and Afro-Caribbean, and contributing ideas to other programme series.

As part of the Corporation's recently published commitment to its viewers and listeners, the Multifaith Bureau will further develop relations with organisations and individuals within the faith communities as well as student groups, academic and media ginger groups, and film makers. It will act as a focal point for suggestions, complaints and concerns from those faith communities about their representation and coverage within programming.

I very much hope that, later in the year we shall be able to arrange one major multi religious event where perhaps it will be possible to address the suspicions and fear with which so many religious organisations and communities regard the media.

I would personally welcome any suggestions for contributors from all the religious traditions as in addition to contributors to major network programmes, we are hoping to develop resources for local radio contributions.

David Craig can be contacted at: BBC Multifaith Bureau, Box 76 Bush House, London WC2B 4PH.

Religion question possible for the 2001 Census - piloting to take place this summer

The Office for National Statistics convened a

further consultative meeting on 11 March on the possible inclusion of a question on religious identity in the 2001 census.

At the meeting the ONS gave further details of the arrangements for the pilot testing of a census question this summer in a number of different areas. The test question is to be framed in terms of "belonging" rather than "believing" or "practising". It is: "Do you belong to a religious group?" with boxes for reply marked "No, Christian [without specifying denomination], Buddhist, Hindu, Islam/Muslim, Jewish, Sikh and Any Other Religion." At the meeting on 11 March representations were made by those present from smaller faith communities over the absence of any specific categories for them.

Discussion focused mainly on the need to construct a detailed case outlining the benefits of including a question on religious identity in the 2001 Census itself. A working group was established for this purpose and meetings were held on 2 and 7 April from which a draft document has emerged which will be the subject of further consultation.

Millennium Planning

Among the groups working on Millennium issues is the Lambeth Millennium Consultation Group which encompasses key representatives from the Churches and a number of other faiths as well as representatives from such bodies as the Millennium Commission and the Millennium Unit of the Department of National Heritage. The Network's representative on this group is its Deputy Director Harriet Crabtree. A number of other Executive Committee members are also involved on behalf of their faith communities.

The Lambeth meetings are a forum for discussion of issues relating to planned projects and events. One project presently in process is the production of a brief set of guidelines highlighting the need for sensitivity and awareness when planning any multi faith Millennium related events.

Scottish Inter Faith Consultative Group

A very successful initial meeting of the new Scottish Inter Faith Consultative Group took place on 23 February at St. Mungo's Museum in Glasgow. The SIFCG brings together representatives of those Scottish bodies which are already in membership of the Network, and of other Network member bodies which are UK wide and therefore have membership in Scotland. A press release was issued after the meeting to draw to the attention of the Scottish media the establishment of this Group as a focal point for handling inter faith concerns in Scotland.

The theme of the meeting was "Values in Education and the Community", (which linked with the Network's seminar in December). It was an opportunity to take stock of current developments on this front in Scotland.

Multi Faith/Inter Faith Campus Spaces

The student population of Britain is becoming increasingly diverse and a number of universities are looking at how to respond to the needs of students of various faith traditions.

Two projects that have recently come to our attention are at the University of Derby and the University of Hertfordshire. At the University of Derby, a multi faith design group have worked for four years on the conception of a university multi faith centre. The brief they came up with is for a building which provides for worship for all faiths and denominations; meditation areas; meeting rooms, social spaces and office accommodation.

Winners of the limited design competition were Waites Architecture. Partner David Waites said in an interview with *Building Design* (March 14 1997), "We approached it on an atmospheric level and used different textures of light. The building has an amoebic form with spaces which flow into each other. We see it as a village of spaces." He described it as a building designed to link all faiths without alienating or promoting any and without displaying icons or symbols of faith through form or fabric. A funding drive will shortly be under way.

Meanwhile at the University of Hertfordshire, a campaign has been launched to establish an inter faith centre on the Hatfield campus. The design takes advantage of the designated site on a wooded promontory overlooking the University and situated at the axis of roads linking student accommodation with lecture rooms, laboratories, and Student Union facilities. The geometry of the building with a circular, earth-roofed rotunda or worship area linked to a rectangular library, coffee-bar and offices gives the appearance from above of a KEY: which will be the building's name. £500,000 is now being sought to create the centre and consultations are taking place to discover how such a Centre can best be used to continue and develop existing work already undertaken by the Chaplain, Equal Opportunities Officer, academics, counsellor and others in the field of inter faith dialogue and multi-cultural understanding. Similar institutions with related experience are invited to share their ideas with The Chaplain, Revd. William Taylor, University of Hertfordshire, College Lane, Hatfield, Herts AL10 9AB.

Launch of new edition of *Religions in the UK: A Multi Faith Directory*

The second edition of *Religions in the UK: A Multi Faith Directory* will be published next month and publicly launched at the University of Derby on Thursday 29 May with a special lecture by David Craig, Head of the BBC's Multifaith Bureau.

The project to gather the information for the new edition began in 1993. The Directory is a joint publication of the University of Derby and The Inter Faith Network. It contains listings for places of worship and religious organisations of all faith communities, as well as information resources for those wanting to know more about the faiths or about inter faith activity. It costs £33.00 including postage and packing with discounts available for bulk orders.

Further information about the launch or about ordering the publication from Dr Paul Weller at the University of Derby on 01332 622222 ext. 1044.

1997 Christian Inter Faith Practitioners Association Conference

CIPA held its annual conference at Swanwick in Derbyshire from April 9-11. The theme was "Believing and Belonging in a Multi Faith Society". Revd Martin Forward of Wesley House Cambridge addressed the question "Who says who we are?" David Craig of the BBC unfolded plans for its new Multi Faith Bureau, and Dr Kim Knott of the University of Leeds gave examples of ways in which faith communities are changing, particularly as a result of the experiences of young people. Participants shared experiences, questions and dilemmas which face them in local inter faith situation. As all attending were of Christian background, simple prayers and worship were shared. Next year's CIPA conference will be 5-7 May in Swanwick. Further information on CIPA, which is for any Christian actively engaged in inter faith issues, from Molly Kenyon, Touchstone, 32 Merton Road, Bradford BD7 1RE.

Rabbi Gryn Scholarship Appeal

An appeal has been launched to commemorate the remarkable life of Rabbi Hugo Gryn with an endowed two year scholarship at Atlantic College where 16-19 year olds from around the world come to live and study together in cooperation. Their backgrounds are as diverse as Africa and Asia, refugee camps and inner cities, as well as the more affluent societies of North America and Western Europe. The College has always insisted that students be admitted on merit and not according to ability to pay. For this reason it is very much dependent on sponsorship, grants and individual donations.

Hugo was a governor of the College for many years, seeing in it a commitment to the spread of the ideals to which his experiences at Auschwitz had left him absolutely committed: anti-racist, inter ethnic and inter faith understanding. If you or your organisation would like to make a donation, cheques can be made payable to Atlantic College (Rabbi Gryn appeal) and sent to Atlantic College Development Office, Lynton House, Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9LT. Further information from 0171 388 4009.

Scouting in today's multi faith Britain

Among the participants who came to the Network's Midlands inter faith link meeting in April was the East Midlands Community Development Officer of the Scout Association, Amit Popat.

He described the efforts which the Association is making to draw into the movement people from different cultural and faith community backgrounds. He explained that traditionally, the Scouts have come from a white Christian background so there is a need to provide guidance and information for Scout leaders on different cultures and faiths. A series of leaflets is being prepared for this purpose. Also, it is necessary to make clear to those in other communities and with other cultural backgrounds that the Scout movement welcomes their membership and is sensitive to their beliefs and needs.

Internationally, Scouting is already multi cultural and multi faith as is evident at International Jamborees. The variety within scouting in this country is growing too. It is planned to hold a "Day of Faith and Culture" in Leicester during 1998 which would give an opportunity to present these developments in scouting to a wider audience.

We contacted The Scout Association to find out more about their multi faith work. Community Relations Officer Emma Donaldson writes:

The Scout Association is not a religious organisation but its aims include the spiritual development of young people and its members promise to do their duty to their God (the word God can be replaced by "Allah", "my Dharma" or other wording as appropriate to suit the faith or religion of the individual concerned).

The Association is the largest multi faith, multi cultural, co-educational youth organisation in the United Kingdom, and is part of a worldwide movement which unites over 25 million people

in 218 countries. A Scout's right to practise their religious belief is part of the Association's equal opportunities policy.

As Scouting is open to all young people, the Association provides resources and training materials to support the diversity of religious belief practised in the UK:

Faith Communities in Scouting: a range of fact sheets for Leaders who work with young people of different faiths. Fact sheets are so far available on the Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Rastafari and Sikh communities.

God are you still in there? : an activity pack for the spiritual development of 6-20 year olds. It gives information on six world faiths and shows how a youth programme can help or is already helping young people discover the five aspects of spiritual development: tolerance, team work, self-discipline, awareness of the world around us, and faith in God. More information on spiritual development in Scouting is also given in *Educational Objectives of the Scout Movement*.

Passport for Europe is a programme resource for 16-22 year old Scouts and Guides throughout Europe. It encourages young people to look at six topics: exploration and discovery, quality of life; culture; democracy; solidarity; and career and social skills. Faith is an important part of this "journey of exploration". For example, young people are asked to explore values in their own religion, compare them with similar values in at least two other religions, and to discuss with a group of their peers why their set of values is important.

For further information, please contact Community Development, The Scout Association, Baden-Powell House, Queen's Gate, London SW7 5JS 0171 584 7030.

Regional Inter Faith Link Meetings

The Network holds periodic link meetings for those involved in local inter faith initiatives around the country. The meetings allow a chance to exchange news, swap ideas and discuss some of the challenges involved in setting up and maintaining successful local inter faith initiatives.

Greater London

The Greater London regional link meeting was held on 15 February at Connaught Hall in central London.

Brent Inter Faith Council and the Diocese of Willesden. Revd Fergus Capie reported on the Brent Inter Faith Council which has now been meeting for 16 months, thus far at different venues of the three Abrahamic faiths. There is much goodwill and energy from participants of all the major faith groups. The Council has looked at such issues as RE and refugees and is presently focusing on the pattern of civic religion in the borough and how this compares to elsewhere. They are looking, for example, at what shape a service might take for a mayor who is from a community other than Christian.

The Council has chosen, thus far, not to spend too much time thinking about who and what it is. However, it is now beginning to reflect on exactly what role it wants to play and what sorts of local partnerships it wants to build.

Croydon Inter Faith Group. There have been a number of inter faith initiatives in Croydon over the years. Lynne Sedgmore and Jag Kharbanda reported that the present group was launched in September 1995 and builds on earlier work. It has had 9 meetings so far, including dialogues and meetings for worship, and has a core membership of around 50 people, including Christians, Hindus, Jains, Muslims and Sikhs among others. The group has clear aims and objectives but no formal constitution. It has had good support from other South London groups and, recently, backing from the Mayor.

Harrow Inter Faith Council. Mary Hale reported that the Harrow group has been going for about 12 years and has involvement from Baha'is, Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jews, Muslims, Rastafarians, Sikhs, and Zoroastrians. It has recently acquired the remains of a lease on a small church hall on Stanmore Common and hopes this will provide a place of meeting for it and for some of the smaller faith communities locally who do not have their own place of worship.

The group is about to consider how its structure and aims are to develop in the coming years. This year started with a good meeting at which Dr Sophie Gilliat came to speak about "sacred space". The next meeting will be focusing on sacred space in offices, hospitals, and other public places.

Lambeth Multi Faith Action Group. Jaffar Al-Bassam and Sister Maureen Henderson explained that the group was formed just over three years ago after an Inner Cities Religious Council meeting in South East London. Christians, Jews and Muslims have been the main attenders. It is quite small but has met regularly every two months and both the local Liberal Synagogue and the Islamic Centre have made premises available for this. The group has financed any activities by passing the hat around.

The Group has two main activities a year: a One World Week event in Autumn and a seminar in the Summer. Recently they have created an exhibition about the group with a panel about each of the faiths which has been displayed in the local library and have produced a leaflet about the group and a faith community contact list.

Middlesex Centre for Inter Faith Dialogue. Revd Martin Eggleton described the work of the Centre which had emerged in 1994 at Middlesex University. It started as an academic project with a conference on "Faiths in Britain" and a further one on "Faiths in the Environment". It has since looked at a number of themes. Since it got going, the Centre has worked hard to involve the University's students in its work. It is

presently setting up a "Journey 2,000" student group where students of different faiths will look at what these have to offer for our vision of the future. The Centre is also working on building links with local faith groups and he has managed to secure a small grant for a student to research a basis for this. A trust is also helping them develop a series of seminars on faiths in education.

Newham, Redbridge, Waltham Forest, and the Diocese of Chelmsford. Anne Davison, the Inter Faith Adviser for the Anglican Diocese of Chelmsford, reported on her own work and on the three inter faith groups in her area who had not been able to attend the link meeting. She goes to the groups' meetings when possible and channels enquiries to the appropriate group.

Newham Association of Faiths has now got an office and this year got its charitable status. Brian Pearce added that there had been around 60 people at Newham's last AGM which he had attended. Waltham Forest All Faiths Group has been serviced to date by the YMCA there, but the future is unclear at the moment despite some enthusiastic involvement. Redbridge Council of Faiths has been continuing to work with the local branch of the Council of Christians and Jews on occasional joint activities.

The Chelmsford Diocese has been looking at a possible youth exchange project for Christians, Jews and Muslims in Israel/Palestine and the London area. The first exchange is planned for 1998.

Richmond Inter Faith Fellowship. Cleone Rear reported that at present, Baha'is, Buddhists, Christians, Sikhs, and Unitarians are actively involved. They have meetings monthly and also go on visits to places of worship. Each summer they have a service specifically for women. In the Autumn they have a United Nations service which is held at a different church venue each year.

South London Inter Faith Group. Adrian Arnold reported that this has now been going for about 20 years, with varying levels of success and involvement. It presently has about 120

paid up members and has links with around 30 faith community leaders. There is good attendance at meetings, which have looked at topics as varied as fundamentalism, religious discrimination, and scriptures in the different traditions. There are also visits to places of worship. They are presently reflecting on the question of how far a millennial celebration can be inter faith, in the context of local boroughs considering how to mark the Millennium.

Tower Hamlets Association of Faiths/One for Life. Father Joe Colella explained that One for Life ("because we are one in our concern for life") is the name that has emerged for the inter faith process that started in 1994-5 during a period of conflict over the then newly elected fascist councillor in Tower Hamlets. Initially there was talk of the founding of a multi faith Gandhian ashram as a resource and as kind of living symbol of harmony on one of the most deprived estates in the area, but the property they had hoped to get escaped them and it was also realised that there were some difficulties attached to linking the initiative to one specific figure in this way.

None the less, there was much interest in the idea and support, especially from the local Churches Together. An association of faiths emerged in Tower Hamlets and has been meeting once a month. There is still the hope of a small inter faith community being founded in the area and a resource centre being set up. The Council has expressed interest in the project and representatives of it went with members of the association on a specially organised trip to Bradford to see the inter faith education centre there and discuss inter faith relations in that City. However, budget cuts meant that no actual financial support has yet come for the project.

Westminster Interfaith. Alfred Agius explained that Westminster Interfaith is an agency of the Westminster Diocese of the Roman Catholic Church but is multi faith in its involvement. It presently has a team of 4: Brother Daniel Faivre (who looks after West London); Sister Elizabeth O'Donohoe (whose focus is the North of London); Brother David (East End) and Alfred Agius (Central London).

They produce a newsletter and respond to requests for help both in London and further afield and also arrange an annual multi faith London pilgrimage (this year on 7 June and linked to the Network's Tenth Anniversary) as well as smaller pilgrimages in particular areas of London. The most recent pilgrimage was particularly good because they went to places where congregations were actually at prayer and spoke with them afterwards. Westminster Interfaith is presently planning more work with young people, including a residential for 24 young people of different faiths at Sobell House in London.

Wimbledon Inter Faith Group. Daud Hamid, who represents the Wimbledon Mosque on the inter faith group, reported on its activities. The co-ordinators are presently Baha'i, Christian (C of E and Catholic), Jewish and Muslim. The new chair is Baha'i member John Elderton. They arrange four meetings a year, which are well attended, and visit places of worship. At their meetings they have looked at such themes as "peace" and "creation and the environment". Recently they were involved with a special tree planting ceremony in the borough.

Midlands Link

The Midlands regional link was held on 15 April 1997 at the Moat Community College in Leicester by kind permission of the College.

Leicester. Mrs Angela Berryman, who works for Leicester City Council in a recently created post with responsibility for faith community affairs, reported on short term plans to open a "drop-in" centre in Bishop Street with a specifically multi faith dimension to it. An office for the Leicester Council of Faiths might be based there. This would offer resources and information.

For the longer term a preferred site has been identified for a new multi faith centre to house a faith history centre for Leicester. This would be funded from a variety of sources. It is currently not intended that the centre should be a place of worship but rather an information centre disseminating knowledge and experience and

providing resources.

Revd Canon Michael Ipgrave said that the Leicester Council of Faiths is very much involved in this project although the local authority was the lead on it. Naturally, changes in the local authority structure in Leicester, with the creation of a unitary authority for the City of Leicester, will affect some structural aspects of the relationship between the local authority and the Council of Faiths.

The Council of Faiths sees itself as having two key tasks. The first is to improve communication and understanding between the different faith communities at a representative level and the second is to increase grassroots involvement. The Council normally meets in its representative mode in Committee and also has a number of open meetings in the course of the year. It will be holding a seminar on collective worship in May, with Dilip Kadodwala, Chair of the National Association of SACRE's, as one of the key speakers.

Alongside the Leicester Council of Faiths, there also exists a Leicester Inter Faith Council (formerly the Leicester Inter Faith Group). The two inter faith structures have somewhat different perspectives and have kept their separate identities. According to Revd Ipgrave, the Leicester Inter Faith Council is based on individual membership and emphasises development of inter faith relations at a personal level and the Leicester Council of Faiths sees itself as a more "representative" body concerned with relationships at a community level.

Coventry. Revd Supriyo Mukherjee reported on the Coventry Inter Faith Group which has been in existence for many years. Its membership has been mainly Christian and has been trying to broaden its agenda and draw in more members of other faiths.

He has also launched, with the involvement with the Bishop of Coventry, a Coventry Inter Faith Forum which comes together at a more representative level bringing in people from the

different faith communities in Coventry. He has also been trying to initiate inter faith activity elsewhere in the Anglican Diocese of Coventry (to which he is inter faith adviser) including Nuneaton and Rugby. A local group has been revived in Leamington.

Mr Deo Meghan said that the Coventry Inter Faith Group has focused on various common themes, such as joy and peace. It holds an annual picnic and an annual inter faith peace walk. Usually about 12 people go on this but in 1996 there had been 50, a sign of increasing involvement in inter faith activity. Other faith communities have been pleased to be involved in consultation on the requirements to be borne in mind in appointing a new Anglican Bishop of Coventry.

Loughborough. Revd David Paterson said that the Loughborough Inter Faith Group has been meeting at monthly intervals for about 16 years at over a dozen different venues. It involves Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Muslims, Raj Yoga and Sikhs. There has been a pattern in Loughborough of multi faith One World Week events and of multi faith pilgrimages around the main centres and invitations to one another's festivals.

It was against this background that about four years ago the Loughborough Council of Faiths came into existence. Its work has been encouraged by the new local authority and it is tackling issues relating to the public life together in Loughborough of the different faith communities, for example securing a better multi faith coverage on Radio Leicester and more appropriate facilities at local hospitals. The development of inter faith relations in Loughborough is helped by the fact that a number of Councillors are involved with the different faith communities.

Mr Bakhtawel Nagra said that the foundations for good inter faith relations had been laid early on in the life of the newer communities in Loughborough. Both the Sikh community and the Hindu community had initially been given facilities at David Paterson's church before

moving on to their own premises. The work of the Inter Faith Group had been the context out of which the local Council of Faiths had grown.

South Warwickshire. Rosemary Harley said that the inter faith group based in Leamington had recently been revived. Meetings of the South Warwickshire Inter Faith Group take place in people's houses but the next one will be held at the local Hindu temple. Meetings have been held on the theme of peace, refugees and the work of the local SACRE. She recognises the importance of personal contact with people in the different faith communities to encourage them to become involved in the work of the group.

Birmingham. There are at present two inter faith organisations in Birmingham - the Birmingham Council of Faiths and the Birmingham Fellowship of Faiths - and discussions are in progress about the future relationship between them.

Christine Harries said that the Birmingham Fellowship of Faiths was formed in 1981. It has met roughly five times a year and shares in the festivals of different communities, discusses the fundamentals of different faiths and explores specific issues such as the position of women in different faith communities. Attendance at its meetings has sometimes been relatively small. It has recently proved more difficult to involve people from a variety of faith communities in the Fellowship's planning group. It had therefore been suggested, following an event at the Serbian Orthodox Church to give thanks to the end of the Bosnian war, that a series of visits to different faith communities might be arranged with each community deciding on the topic of interest to them to be the theme of the meeting. The possibility was put to the Birmingham Council of Faiths (previously the Birmingham Inter Faith Council) that it might wish to join in promoting this series of meetings.

So far, the Fellowship of Faiths has operated on a more personal basis whereas the BIFC/BCF is more concerned with establishing a framework

to link different communities and their leaders on a representational basis. After some discussion it now looks as though there might be agreement between the Fellowship of Faiths and the Birmingham Council of Faiths to arrange in effect a merger between the two bodies. This would guarantee the continuation of the kind of programme which the Fellowship of Faiths has been mounting, but as part of the pattern of activities of the Birmingham Council of Faiths. At present the Fellowship of Faiths has only 20 subscribing members although there are about 100 people on its mailing list and posters advertising its meetings are more widely distributed. The Sikh community has offered to host the planned series of new meetings.

Sister Sujata said that seven different faith communities are represented on the Birmingham Council of Faiths. Each community is asked to bring members to meetings. The Council has been working to establish a framework for common action by the faith communities on matters of mutual concern. A new Chair is elected each year. The link with the Fellowship of Faiths could provide a way of diversifying a pattern of the Council's activities. It is hoped soon to be able to secure funding to appoint a paid Co-ordinator of the Council's work.

Wolverhampton. Mrs Ivy Gutridge said that the Wolverhampton Inter Faith Group had found that it is important to leave room in their forward programme of events for reactive work in response to developments in the course of the year. She mentioned the care with which new developments had been planned. For example, the annual prayers for peace held at St. Peter's Church had been preceded by a conference to explore the difficult issues relating to multi faith worship and prayer and to work out ways of organising the event which would be acceptable to the different communities. It has found that one useful way of publicising its meetings is through the mailing service which goes to local schools and carries news of its events free of charge. Other possibilities included displaying posters in local libraries.

The group's Executive Committee meets in one

another's homes which helps to build links between their wider families. The regular multi faith pilgrimage will this year be taking place in Walsall as a way of trying to encourage multi faith activity there.

The Chief Executive of the local authority is very well disposed towards the work of the Group and has provided helpful advice. At the same time, it has been hit by funding difficulties and still does not have for the longer term financial security.

Other Regional Updates

The London Buddhist Vihara

The Most Venerable Medagama Vajiragnana represented the Buddhist faith in a day school organised by Birkbeck College, University of London and the World Congress of Faiths on 15 February. The theme was "Wealth and Poverty in the World's Religions". He was also invited by Revd Francis Makambwe to talk on the Buddhist life to PCC Committee in the Christian Parish of Hatcham in New Cross on 28 February. He writes, "Rev Makambwe opened the proceedings with a short prayer, followed by a brief but concise history of Buddhist teaching. Many and varied questions were answered in friendly and sympathetic manner, which led to a very relaxed atmosphere, encouraging more open discussion regarding the differences between the two religions. This seemed to illustrate the similarities as well as the differences and the Buddhist practice of not denigrating any belief was well appreciated."

Hyndburn. The recently created Hyndburn Inter-Faith Forum held a large scale public event on the theme "Creating Community" on 14 March. It took place at Accrington Town Hall and brought together over a hundred people from the various faith and ethnic communities in Hyndburn and Rossendale. Speakers included local MP Greg Pope; Rt Revd Martyn Jarrett, Bishop of Burnley; and Mr Hamid Qureshi, Secretary of the Lancashire Council of Mosques. The event was closed with some words from Councillor Mirza Yousaf, Mayor of Hyndburn. The Inter Faith Forum plans to meet

quarterly. Further information from Revd David Lyon, St Peter's Vicarage, 151 Willows Lane, Accrington, Lancs BB5 OLN.

Ipswich. A "Celebration of Community" event was arranged by the Mayor and local communities in Ipswich in March. The religious part of the celebration took part at St Pancras Roman Catholic Church with each faith community contributing a song or reading and at which the Suffolk Inter Faith Resource team read from "Building Good Relations with People of Different Faiths and Beliefs". There was also a concert at the Corn Exchange as part of the celebration.

Edinburgh. An informal educational meeting took place on March 5 between the Pagan Federation (Scotland) and others who wanted to explore the nature of Paganism and how far it can be classified as a religion. The opportunity for this discussion, which was arranged by James Russell and John Macintyre, was welcomed by those present.

Luton. Luton Interfaith Forum (LIF) held its inaugural meeting on 20 February 1997 after a careful survey over three months in late 1996. Seven faith communities are involved: Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Zoroastrian.

Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum held an event focusing on "Buddhism East and West" in March to introduce members to aspects of Buddhism Japan and Sri Lanka and related developments in the UK. There were presentations by Revd Ganshin Rock, a Buddhist Priest involved in inter faith relations through the inter faith group which meets at Donnington Grove in Berkshire and Dr Elizabeth Harris, Buddhism specialist and Secretary for Inter Faith Relations for the Methodist Church in Britain.

Wolverhampton. On 26 January the Wolverhampton Inter Faith Group held its annual prayer for peace at St Peter's Collegiate Church, using the One World Theme for the year: Living on the Edge. Songs and presentations from children were interspersed

with musical contributions, readings from the Jewish and Muslim scriptures, a Christian Hymn and prayers from the Buddhist, Jain, Hindu and Narankari Traditions. On 19 April WIFG held a half day conference on "Moral Values: Moral Choices" in association with Wolverhampton LEA. More information from WIFG Office and Resource Centre, 43 Princess Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1HD.

Leicester Council of Faiths are hoping to appoint, from 1 August 1997, a full-time worker to develop this inter faith organisation's infrastructure, and to establish a drop-in at a city centre location. Administrative and secretarial ability are essential, and awareness of faith communities. For further information, please contact: Canon Michael Ipgrave (0116 254 9658 / 262 2628) or Mrs Angela Berryman (0116 252 6093).

The Newsletter

The Inter Faith Network links 80 organisations with a commitment to helping build good relationships between Britain's different faith communities.

This newsletter is one of the ways of sharing news about developments at the Network, in each other's inter faith programmes, and more widely on the UK inter faith front.

Thank you to those who contributed to this issue. The next issue is scheduled for September 1997 and contributions for consideration can be sent on the enclosed form by 1 September to:

Dr Harriet Crabtree

The Inter Faith Network for the UK
5/7 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9SN

(Tel 0171 388 0008 Fax 0171 387 7968)

Inter Faith Update

*Newsletter of
The Inter Faith Network for the UK*

*Issue 5,
September 1997*

Remembering Diana Princess of Wales

The untimely death of Diana Princess of Wales, in the company of Dodi Al-Fayed and their driver, in Paris early on 31 August has left millions grieving across the world. Since her funeral at Westminster Abbey was not formally a state occasion, the usual arrangements for formal representation by leaders of the different faiths did not apply, but the UK's major faith communities have marked her passing in their own ways. One of the largest spontaneous gatherings was of the Asian community in Southall where Christians, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, among others, paid their respects.

Inter faith responses across the country took various forms. For example, in Bradford, former Mayor Muhammad Ajeeb, REC Director Ishtiaq Ahmed and David Fitch of the Bradford Interfaith Education Centre arranged for key members of all Bradford's faith communities to come on Saturday to watch the funeral at the Centre and to mark the minute's silence together. Bradford Cathedral's Provost was among those who came and he invited all those present to a special service of remembrance in the Cathedral the following day. In Birmingham a commemoration took place in Centenary Square on the Sunday, at which different religious leaders spoke, including Network Co-Chair and President of the Hindu Council for the UK, Mr Om Parkash Sharma who paid tribute to "a unique, charming, compassionate, caring and exceptionally gifted lady...always ready to help the less fortunate, throughout the world regardless of race or creed."

In Wales, the Princess' death was marked in a number of ways, including a special Radio Wales broadcast by Annand Jasani on 5 September with Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh participants including an on air vigil and prayers and contributions about death and bereavement from different traditions.

The Princess was clearly appreciated by a wide spectrum of people, as shown by the messages from people of all faiths and many nations attached to the flowers left by crowds at the Royal Palaces in the last week. The charitable work which she supported crossed all boundaries and this will continue to be supported in her name by the Trust set up in the days following her death.

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Remembering Diana Princess of Wales

The untimely death of Diana Princess of Wales, in the company of Dodi Al-Fayed and their driver, in Paris early on 31 August has left millions grieving across the world. Since her funeral at Westminster Abbey was not formally a state occasion, the usual arrangements for formal representation by leaders of the different faiths did not apply, but the UK's major faith communities have marked her passing in their own ways. One of the largest spontaneous gatherings was of the Asian community in Southall where Christians, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, among others, paid their respects.

Inter faith responses across the country took various forms. For example, in Bradford, former Mayor Muhammad Ajeeb, REC Director Ishtiaq Ahmed and David Fitch of the Bradford Interfaith Education Centre arranged for key members of all Bradford's faith communities to come on Saturday to watch the funeral at the Centre and to mark the minute's silence together. Bradford Cathedral's Provost was among those who came and he invited all those present to a special service of remembrance in the Cathedral the following day. In Birmingham a commemoration took place in Centenary Square on the Sunday, at which different religious leaders spoke, including Network Co-Chair and President of the Hindu Council for the UK, Mr Om Parkash Sharma who paid tribute to "a unique, charming, compassionate, caring and exceptionally gifted lady...always ready to help the less fortunate, throughout the world regardless of race or creed."

In Wales, the Princess' death was marked in a number of ways, including a special Radio Wales broadcast by Annand Jasani on 5 September with Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh participants including an on air vigil and prayers and contributions about death and bereavement from different traditions.

The Princess was clearly appreciated by a wide spectrum of people, as shown by the messages from people of all faiths and many nations attached to the flowers left by crowds at the Royal Palaces in the last week. The charitable work which she supported crossed all boundaries and this will continue to be supported in her name by the Trust set up in the days following her death.

Diary Dates

This brief diary lists primarily UK events. Events with a more local concern and international events are also listed in the useful World Congress of Faiths publication *One Family Newsletter*. For information about *One Family*, and how to advertise both local and national events in it, contact: Mrs Jean Potter of WCF at 1 Ivy Lane, Teignmouth, Devon TQ14 8BT.

The *Inter Faith Update* diary section lists events as far into the future as contributors offer them. In most cases, local groups welcome visitors from further afield and will be glad to try and help facilitate visits from local inter faith groups from other parts of the country if they have advance warning.

2-28 September, Leicester at New Walk Museum, New Walk Leicester. Monday to Saturday 10am to 5.30pm and Sunday 2pm to 5.50pm. Anne Frank: A History for Today, The Anne Frank Educational Trust UK Exhibition. Arranged by Leicester City Council; Leicester Council of Faiths; Leicester Hebrew Congregation; Leicester Progressive Jewish Congregation; Stanley Burton Centre for Holocaust Studies; and Leicester University. Further information from Andrew Goodliffe, Tel 0116 254 6868.

16 September, Bradford. "Beyond Bradford: Our European Interfaith Links". 7.30pm at the Interfaith Education Centre, Listerhills Road, Bradford 7. For further information, Tel 01274 731674.

17 September, High Wycombe, at Oakley Hall, Castle St. at 7.30pm. "Cross Cultural Communication", a talk and discussion facilitated by Dr Elizabeth Harris, Methodist Church Officer for Relationships with Other Faiths. Further information from Anne Bowker, Tel 01494 564445

23 September, South London. "Islam and Western Prejudices" at 165 Upper Tooting Road. A question, answer and suggestion session, chaired by Brian Pearce, arranged by South London Inter Faith Group to further inter faith understanding. Maulana Sikander Khan, Maulana Ihsaan Abraham and Sister Alvi (Deputy Principal of the Balham Prep School attached to the mosque) will respond to questions and points of view of participants. Further details from Adrian Arnold, Tel 0181 788 6151.

25 September, Birmingham. AGM of the Birmingham Council of Faiths. 7.30pm at the Birmingham City Council House. Participants to include Lord Mayor Mrs Sybil Spence. Main speaker is Hindu member Rajan Soni. Further information from Sister Sujata, Tel 0121 515 2341.

25 September - 25 October 25, Southall, Middlesex. Series of five events on "Passing on our Faiths" by representatives from Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism and members of their families. Five Thursdays running at 6 Osterley Park, Southall. Sessions begin with snacks at 6.25pm, presentations at 7.00pm and

end at 8.30pm. Further information from Sister Karuna Margaret Nourse, Tel 0181 571 1833.

5 October, Edinburgh. Inter-Faith Pilgrimage, linked to the National RE Festival. Further information Further information from Ms Jodi Higgs, Tel 0131 332 7987 or Radha or Louisa Gupta, Tel 0131 229 7222.

12 October, Cardiff. A Peace Walk to explore the spirit of community in this multi faith city, arranged for the National RE Festival. Further information from Mrs Lorraine Khan, Tel 01222 756303.

12 October, Edinburgh. "Living in Harmony". Special Edinburgh Interfaith Association 10th Anniversary celebration from 2.00pm to 5.00pm at The City Chambers, Royal Mile, Edinburgh. Welcome from the Lord Provost and speakers to include Professor Yasir Suleiman; Neelam Bakshi; and Professor David Kerr. Further information from Ms Jodi Higgs, Tel 0131 332 7987.

15 October, Bradford. "Working 'religiously' with children: questions and values". 7.30pm at the Interfaith Education Centre, Listerhills Road, Bradford 7. For further information, Tel 01274 731674.

15-25 October, Leicester. Faith in Leicester Exhibition arranged by Leicester Council of Faiths; Leicester Cathedral; National RE Festival; and Local Schools and Faith Communities. "Faith in Leicester will provide an opportunity to experience the spiritual variety of the city and county today." Free admission. Further information from Revd Canon Michael Iprgrave, Tel 0116 254 9658.

22 October, Oxford. "Many faiths in search of one world". A multi faith presentation at the Oxford Round Table of Religions. 7.00 pm at the Friends Meeting House, 43 St Giles, Oxford. Further information from Rami Ahluwalia, Tel 01865 51242 or Penelope Johnstone, Tel 01865 514123.

29 October, West Croydon. Joint South London Inter Faith Group and Croydon Interfaith Group meeting. "Spirituality and Ecology". Satish Kumar will speak on this topic at the Jain Temple, 1 Campbell Road, West Croydon. Further information from Adrian Arnold, Tel 0181 7888 6151.

10 November, Bradford. "An Interfaith Dialogue: Muslim and Christian misconceptions about each other". 7.30pm at the Interfaith Education Centre, Listerhills Road, Bradford 7. For further information, Tel 01274 731674.

8 December, London. A Celebration in Memory of Rabbi Hugo Gryn. A concert at the Barbican Hall at 8.00pm. Programme to include works by Schubert, Mozart, Janacek, Smetana, and a new work "Prayer before Sleep" written for the occasion by Robert Saxton. Artists taking place include Imogen Cooper, Raphael Wallfisch; members of the Amadeus Quartet; and Maureen Lipman. Tickets £15; £25; £35 available from Ruth Silver, Ashton House, 52 Welbeck St, London W1M 8NH. All proceeds to the Hugo Gryn Memorial Trust.

Mother Teresa

The death of Mother Teresa of Calcutta less than a week after that of the Princess of Wales has also occasioned much sadness among many of different faith communities. Information about commemorative services for Mother Teresa is only just beginning to come in.

Network News

Consultation on Collective Worship in Schools

As part of the present consultative project on collective worship in schools, being jointly sponsored by the Religious Education Council for England and Wales, the National Association of SACREs and the Network, a wide-ranging consultation exercise has been launched to seek the views of many different educational and faith community organisations.

After the first two conferences held on 25 February and 20 May, it was decided to postpone the conference originally due to be held in September until December in order to allow time for this wider consultation exercise before the final conference draws together the conclusions of the consultation as a whole.

In answering a Question in the House of Lords in early July, the Minister of State at the Department for Education and Employment, Baroness Blackstone, referred to the consultation exercise and said that "the Government will look carefully at any recommendations" that its final report contains.

Values discussion at Lambeth Palace

In May, the Network helped to arrange what has now become a regular event: the annual inter faith meeting at Lambeth where representatives of the various faith communities meet with the Archbishop of Canterbury, Most Revd Dr George Carey to discuss issues of common concern.

The focus of the meeting on 21 May at Lambeth Palace was how dialogue about values and public life may best be carried forward in the coming years, especially in relation to the Millennium.

Participants discussed a number of issues ranging from the way that cultural diversity can be threatened by the monoculture of the popular media to the problems of drug related crime, to the threat of religious discrimination.

They emphasized the centrality of morality to a good society and the vital role which education can play in teaching moral principles. The home, the community and the school have a shared task in this respect. They recognised, however, that it is a complex matter to find ways of using education in multi faith, multi cultural classrooms to transmit moral values.

There was general agreement that it will be valuable to explore ways of developing the moral dialogue within society, particularly in connection with the Millennium which, although marking a key date for Christians, can also be an opportunity for reflection across society about the role of faith in our lives and ways to work towards greater understanding and discovery of values people may share, rooted in their particular religious traditions.

Network Publishes Report on Quest for Common Values Seminar

In June, the Network published a report of the Quest for Common Values Seminar which it held in December at Barnard's Inn, London. The report includes key points from the discussion and the texts of speakers Chief Rabbi Dr Jonathan Sacks; Professor Bhikhu Parekh; Rt. Revd Gavin Reid; Dr Nicholas Tate; and Ms Monica Taylor, Chair of the Values Education Council. It is available from the Network at £3.95 plus £1.05 for postage and packing.

New edition of *Religions in the UK* launched

On 29 May, the University of Derby and the Network launched the revised and expanded second edition of *Religions in the UK: A Multi Faith Directory*. David Craig, Head of the BBC's new Multifaith Bureau, gave a special lecture to mark the event at the University. The launch was attended by people from a wide range of educational and faith organisations.

The second edition, like the first, has been warmly welcomed by the faith communities and professionals in many fields. On the horizon is a new electronic inter faith resource, *MultifaithNet*, which is being created at the University of Derby. It will be an electronic gateway and signpost to resources on the Internet with a focus on religious and inter faith activity. A demonstration version of MultifaithNet was shown at the launch. The project was begun formally at the University in January with Klaus Stoll as "Webmaster" supported by Kai Stecher. The demonstration version

can be visited at <http://www.multifaithnet.org/> and it is intended to have a formal launch of the service in late 1997 or early 1998.

Network National Meeting in Birmingham Looks at Faith Community Inter Faith Strategies

The Inter Faith Network held its Annual General Meeting in Birmingham on 23 June at the City Council House. A special exhibition was created to mark the fact that this is the Network's Tenth Anniversary. Alongside the Network's own exhibition stand, member bodies put up pictures and sample resources giving an idea of their own inter faith work.

The Lord Mayor of Birmingham, Councillor Sybil Spence welcomed the gathering to Birmingham. She congratulated The Inter Faith Network on its ten years of inter faith activity and said how much she welcomed such meetings of people of different faiths to discuss living and working together to tackle their common concerns.

Mr Om Parkash Sharma, Network Co-Chair, welcomed participants to the meeting and invited those present to join in a short period of silence, each praying or meditating in accordance with their own tradition. He asked the meeting in particular to call to mind during the silence the work and life of the late Rabbi Hugo Gryn, one of the Network's founder Co-Chairs, who had died the previous August, a few weeks after the Network's 1996 National Meeting.

The theme of the main meeting was how faith communities can develop appropriate inter faith strategies. Mr Indarjit Singh, Director of the Network of Sikh

Organisations (UK) and a Vice-Chair of the Network, surveyed inter faith relations in Britain and discussed the need for faith communities to develop inter faith strategies.

Mr Singh highlighted a number of important questions:

"Some of the questions we need to be asking ourselves as faith communities as we consider how to develop our inter faith strategies are:

- *Have we developed a sufficiently clear understanding of the basis within our own traditions for inter faith dialogue in theological and social terms?*
- *Are we ensuring that the religious leadership of our communities are adequately trained in inter faith issues and are ready to face the challenges of life together in a religious plural society?*
- *How can we make the most effective use of the organisational frameworks which the Network and other inter faith organisations provide at a national and local level? In particular, are we doing enough to ensure that we faith communities give whole hearted support to the work of local councils of faiths?*
- *As well as being involved in multilateral inter faith initiatives, do we need to establish new frameworks to address particular significant bilateral relationships where a damaging legacy from the past needs to be tackled?*
- *Do we adequately monitor and challenge material being produced from within our own community which is derogatory of other faiths as well as looking out for material produced by others which denigrates our faith?*
- *How can we draw in a wider range of people from our community at all levels into inter faith activity?*
- *What materials do we need to produce to help members of our faith communities reflect on their relationships with those*

who belong to other religious traditions?

- *How best can we share the experience of those in our communities actually engaged in inter faith work?"*

Revd Canon Dr Christopher Lamb, Secretary to the Churches' Commission on Inter Faith Relations and responsible for inter faith relations within Church of England and a member of the Network Executive Committee; and Dr Elizabeth Harris, the Secretary for Inter Faith Relations of the Methodist Church looked at the changing attitudes to inter faith relations among the Christian Churches in Britain.

After a break for vegetarian lunch, Dr Ataullah Siddiqui of the Islamic Foundation in Leicester and Mr Abdul Hamid Qureshi, Director of the Lancashire Council of Mosques and a member of the Network's Executive Committee offered their reflections on the participation of the Muslim community in inter faith activity at both national and local level. Then small discussion groups looked at number of different aspects of the meeting's theme. The meeting concluded with an "Open Forum" session and some closing reflections from the afternoon's Chair, Bishop Roy Williamson. A full report on the day is available from The Inter Faith Network at £1.75 plus 75 pence for postage and packing.

The AGM was held after the National Meeting. At it, applications for membership of the Network were accepted from: The Churches' Agency for Inter Faith Relations in Scotland; Hindu Council of the UK; Sri Lankan Sangha Sabha of Great Britain; Sheffield Interfaith; and Wycombe Sharing of Faiths. The current Co-Chairs, Vice-Chairs and Treasurer were re-elected. In addition to existing Committee members who were reelected, the following were

elected as new members of the Committee to take the places of retiring Committee members : Mr Hugh Adamson, Mr Paul Seto and Sister Isabel Smyth.

A resolution was adopted empowering the Executive Committee to proceed with the necessary steps for the incorporation of the Network as a charitable company.

National Updates

Census 2001

A working group on the religious identity question has been meeting under the auspices of the Office for National Statistics. During April and May it produced a draft statement of the case for including a question on religious identity in the Census. The paper was reviewed at a series of meetings in June attended by representatives of local authorities and government departments.

During June, questions which might be used in the 2001 census were piloted in different parts of the country. They included one on religious identity. The report of the outcome of these tests should be available shortly.

A further meeting will take place later this autumn, bringing together the results of the consultations and of the pilot testing programme.

Religious Discrimination

A series of regional consultative meetings organised by the Commission for Racial Equality's Special Project Team on Religious Discrimination is due to conclude with a meeting in Cardiff at the end of

September. Plans are in hand for an Autumn meeting between the CRE and faith community national bodies to review the outcome of these consultations and to hear about the other work which the Project Team has been doing.

It is not yet clear what position the new Government will take on the case for fresh legislation to protect religious identity, although the Lord Chancellor announced this summer that the Government intends to proceed with the incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law. This Convention contains Articles dealing in general terms with religious as well as other forms of discrimination and with freedom of religious belief and expression.

Inner Cities Religious Council

The new Government has made clear its commitment to continuing the work of the Inner Cities Religious Council. Its new co-chairs are Ms Hilary Armstrong (Minister of State) and Ms Angela Eagle (Parliamentary Under Secretary) of the new Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions. The Prime Minister sent a personal message of good wishes to the Council when it held its first meeting after the General Election on 9 July.

Lambeth Reception for Sheik of Al-Azhar

On 19 May, The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey held a reception at Lambeth Palace for Dr Tantawi, Sheikh of Al-Azhar, who was visiting from Cairo. It was attended by Muslim and Christian leaders and also by a number of diplomats and journalists. At

the event the Archbishop stressed the great importance of working to develop greater understanding between Christians and Muslims.

Patents on Life?

Proposals have recently been discussed in the European Parliament for the legal protection of "biotechnological invention". The Commission's draft proposals did not in practice make anything patentable which is not already patentable under current UK law. UK law, unlike that of some other member states, already seeks a balance between research, industry and ethical issues. The proposals were produced by the European Commission as a measure to harmonise laws in the Member States of the Union in this field.

The European proposals still have to pass through further stages. Proposals as amended by the Parliament will be considered by a Working Party as the next stage before revised proposals are submitted to the European Parliament.

The Gaia Foundation, 18 Well Walk, Hampstead, London, NW3 1LD, has been particularly active in lobbying against the proposals on the grounds that the proposals confuse the distinction between invention and discovery and incorporate insufficient safeguards.

The Department of Trade and Industry responds by pointing out that patents in the biotechnological field, as in others, is a means of enabling those engaged in expensive research to recover their costs. A patent only gives its holder the right to prevent others for a limited period of time from using an invention. It does not give the holder any positive authorization to use the invention and the patent holder must

comply with all other legislation and regulations, for example laws concerning health, animal welfare and the environment in the making of an invention and its exploitation.

The Department argues that patent rights are granted in recognition of human ingenuity and it is this ingenuity which is protectable and not living things themselves. Discoveries, such as recognition that a particular gene exists in nature, and not inventions are not patentable. However, inventions which comprise a technical intervention such as by isolating a gene and identifying a use for genetic material may be subject to patent rights. The Commission's proposal specifies that the human body and its elements in their natural state shall not be patentable.

Particularly in the wake of recent developments on the "cloning" of sheep, this is an area where very sensitive issues arise and a number of religious organisations have been expressing their concern. If you want further details about the current proposals and the present position, you can contact the Gaia Foundation or Dr N R Curtis, The Patent Office, Cardiff Road, Newport, South Wales, NP9 1RH.

National Religious Education Festival 6-10 October

Over 10,000 schools are gearing up to take part in the first ever National RE Festival. Many have been working with local faith communities and places of worship to create events to celebrate RE. Details of some of the events taking place around the UK can be found in the Festival's newsletter, free from its office: Tel 0181 923 8383 or fax 0181 923 8844.

European Ecumenical Assembly at Graz hears voice of grassroots multi faith Britain

Nine members of the Birmingham Council of Faiths and participants from Bradford and from the new Luton Interfaith Forum travelled to Graz in Austria at the end of June to attend the second European Ecumenical Assembly of Christian Churches. They had been inspired to attend by Kairos UK who had organised a party of people from Britain whose voices would not otherwise be heard at the Assembly. Happily they were also able to represent the Inter Faith Network which had been asked to contribute to one of the sub-themes of the conference, "establishing a dialogue with religions and cultures". The multi faith team which gave a workshop on six principles of interfaith dialogue included Mr Sajad Mohammed; Ms Ramona Kauth; Mr Rajinder Kumar; Mr Ranjit S Wahiwala; Mr Jalal Uddin; Sr Sujata; Mrs Ruth Tetlow; Revd Richard Tetlow; Mr Peyman Pezeshki of Birmingham; Mr Shanthi Hettiarachchi and Mr Gandhi from Luton; and Rev Carole Ellefsen from Bradford. Birmingham Council members write of their experiences at the 10,000 strong Assembly in their group report :

"On arrival, we quickly found that we were unique among all the participants in coming as a multifaith group. We were highly visible and attracted a lot of (not unwelcome) attention from both participants and the media, not least because of Mr Wahiwala's turban! We were interviewed by media from Italy and Hungary and photographed on numerous occasions. We were able to demonstrate a multifaith community in action, by meeting frequently as a group and taking care to co-ordinate our participation in the events of the Assembly....In a gathering where people of cultures other than "white Christian" tended to be seen as outsiders, we were proud to be able to bring from Birmingham our own experience of inclusive multicultural living together.

The working document of the conference reflected the experience of many other European countries in that it referred only to Judaism and Islam in the section on other faiths. Without our presence and that of Mr Gandhi, there would have been hardly any recognition of the Baha'i faith, Buddhism, Hinduism or Sikhism.

...We were asked to speak, both on behalf of The Inter Faith Network for the UK and about our own experience. We were able to speak from a wide range of grass roots experience...[and] benefited from the fact that most members of the group had known each other and worked together for many years....Rajinder Kumar noted 'We were commended that our work was pioneering and way ahead of the rest of Europe in terms of interfaith dialogue' As participants, rather than delegates, we were not officially part of the Working Groups. However..[we] were able to make a substantial contribution with the support of several of the delegates present. Our main concern was to strengthen the recommendations in line with the principles of The Inter Faith Network for the UK, so that the needs of all faith communities in Europe receive proper attention in a society in which we are all truly equal citizens."

Full report available from Mrs Ruth Tetlow, Tel 0121 456 5839.

Regional Updates

Birmingham.

A course entitled "Women of Faith: Challenged by the Millennium" was run at the College of the Ascension in Birmingham by Christians Aware Faith Awareness Programme on 7 June.

Blackburn.

A special Christian-Muslim event was held in Blackburn Cathedral on 13 June. Rt Revd Alan Chesters, Anglican Bishop of Blackburn and Dr Rahim Khan opened the programme and Father Michael Barnes SJ and Dr Ataullah Siddiqui spoke on aspects of the dialogue.

Prayers and open forum discussion were followed by a shared meal and a vote of thanks.

The meeting was arranged by Mr A Hamid Qureshi of the Lancashire Council of Mosques and Revd Colin Albin, Bishop's Adviser on Inter-Faith Relations to build on the very successful Christian-Muslim meeting in Blackburn last March. They hope the series of events of the "Building Bridges" programme will continue because "Peace in the world at large begins with peace in local communities".

Colchester.

The Baha'is of Colchester held their 3rd Annual Inter-Faith Celebration on 5 June at the Mayor's Parlour in Colchester Town Hall.

The event sought to demonstrate the oneness of humanity through celebration. Several faith communities contributed, with testimonials on "Love and Fellowship", and there was music from the children of the various faith traditions. The event was

arranged by Angela Tideswell with the support of the Mayoress, Councillor Jenny Stevens.

Glasgow.

On 10 & 11 May, at St Mungo's Museum in Glasgow, people from the seven main local faith communities - Baha'i; Buddhist; Christian; Hindu; Jewish; Muslim; and Sikh - gathered to meet with and talk to members of the public.

The "Meet your Neighbour" gathering was organised by the Churches Agency for Inter-Faith Relations in Scotland, to stimulate interest in inter faith matters in the Christian community.

At the same time, the event has given new impetus to the multi faith Glasgow Sharing of Faiths group. Further information from Sister Isabel Smyth (Tel 0141 339 8174).

Leicester.

A full time administrator was appointed at the beginning of August for the Leicester Council of Faiths. There is now an office and welcome centre open at Pilgrim House, 10 Bishop Street, Leicester LE1 6AF. Further information from Andrew Goodliffe (0116 254 6868).

A course entitled "Responses to the Changing Face of India" was run in Leicester by Christians Aware on 22 June.

London.

A multi faith pilgrimage took place in South London on 12 July. It took in the local Swaminarayan Hindu Temple, Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches, the South London Liberal Synagogue and Shi'a and Sunni Muslim centres. It was organised by the South London Inter Faith Group. A report on the day is available from Eric Bramsted (Tel 0181 542 9618).

Oxford

On 13 July a Summer Garden Party and Multi-Cultural Concert took place at the Friends Meeting House in Oxford with the help of the Society of Friends.

Each faith group represented in ORTR took part in a programme which included dance, poetry and song. It was attended by ORTR members and their friends and contacts. The Guest of Honour was Rev Marcus Braybrooke.

The event was organised by ORTR to help increase awareness of their existence, raise funds and to provide an opportunity for informal meeting and enjoyment.

Southall, Middlesex.

Christians Aware Faith Awareness Programme sponsored five Thursday evening events in May and June on "Building Bridges Across Race, Faith and Culture" which looked at issues of prejudice and discrimination experienced between Christian and Jew, Black and White, Irish and British, and Muslim and Christian people.

CAFA was also involved in a "Day of Mindfulness" led by Val Philpott of the UK Community of Interbeing, arranged in response to the growing interest in meditation in different faith traditions, particularly in the wake of the recent visit to England of Vietnamese Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh.

Westminster Inter Faith.

The Twelfth London Multi Faith Pilgrimage took place on 7 June. It was arranged by Westminster Inter Faith, with the support of the London Borough of Greenwich Multi-Faith Forum. Its purpose was to promote peace and racial harmony. It also celebrated the 10th anniversary of the foundation of The Inter Faith Network

for the UK.

Representatives of the different faith communities visited various places of worship in Greenwich, Woolwich, the Plumstead area and the Isle of Dogs. Participants included religious leaders and faith community members, the Mayor and Mayoress of the London Borough of Greenwich and Inter Faith Network staff.

From 1 September, the Director of Westminster Interfaith will be Mr Alfred Agius who has been their Central London Area coordinator since May 1996. Westminster Interfaith is the inter faith programme of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Westminster. Although its main area of work is that diocese, it is known throughout the UK for its annual multi faith pilgrimage and its liturgical resources for prayer and meditation in multi faith contexts.

Alfred Agius has the tough task of replacing the irreplaceable: the energetic, creative and cheerfully unstoppable Brother Daniel Faivre who will leave the Westminster Interfaith team at the end of the year.

To be kept in touch with Westminster Interfaith, contact the newsletter Editor, Dr Tony McCaffry at St Mary's University College (Tel 0181 240 4196).

West Midlands celebration of Network's 10th Anniversary.

On 1 June around 50 people from the West Midlands met at Churchfields High School in West Bromwich for a celebration of the Tenth Anniversary of The Inter Faith Network. The theme was "Inter Faith as it was; as it is; and for the future".

Chairs of the first two sessions were Rt Revd Michael Bourke and Mr Jaswant Singh Sohal and speakers in the first two sessions were Revd Canon and Mrs Pat Hooker and Mr Brian Pearce and Mr Om Parkash Sharma.

The third session included contributions from Mr Harun Rashid, Mr Len Brades and Mr T R Bhardwaj and young people from various faith communities. The host at the venue was Headteacher Mr Edwin Smith. A report on the day is available from Mrs Ivy Gutridge (Tel 01902 341948)

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

If your city, town or county has held any multi-faith service or event of commemoration or thanksgiving for the late Princess of Wales, The Network would be very glad to be sent details and a copy of any service sheet.

We also welcome copies of any materials relating to civic multi faith events relating to other moments of local or national significance. Your materials can help provide a useful resource for future enquirers looking for appropriate ways to develop ways of acknowledging key events together in ways which both respect the integrity of our individual traditions and our shared concerns.

Please send any materials to Harriet Crabtree at the Network.

LONDON YOUTH MATTERS

Millennium Project Officer

c£22,000 per annum Initially for 1 Year

Help put young people on the map in 2000.

Duties include: preparation of a feasibility study outlining voluntary youth organisations' Millennium proposals; establishment of a Fund Raising Committee; development of strategies to use the year 2000 to raise awareness of issues affecting young people. *Organising events, knowledge of the youth service, experience of project management and ability to communicate at a senior management level are all essential requirements.*

The closing date for completed applications is 17 October 1997.

Interviews will be held on 29 October 1997.

Administrative Assistant

(to work with the Millennium Project Officer)

17.5 hours per week c£13,000 per annum (pro rata)

Initially for 1 Year

Duties include: word processing (Word Perfect for Windows); minute taking; record keeping; general office duties.

The closing date for completed applications is 17 October 1997. Interviews will be held during November 1997.



Application packs for both posts are available from: London Youth Matters, Pastures Youth Centre, Davies Lane, London E11 3DR.

Network Anniversary Celebration Event and Tenth Year Appeal

Plans are well in hand for the Network celebration event at Lincoln's Inn in London in late November, to mark the Tenth Anniversary of the Network. We hope that many organisations and individuals will respond to the fundraising appeal which is linked to it.

The Celebration Committee, chaired by Mrs Rosalind Preston, aims to raise enough funds not only to cover the cost of the event itself but also to make a substantial contribution to the resources available for the Network to maintain and develop for the future the vital work of building good relations between the faith communities of the United Kingdom.

All donations for the fund are most welcome: large or small. We have already had a very positive response from a number of individuals and faith community bodies.

If you or your organisation would like to make a donation to help the Network's work to build strong inter faith relations in Britain, you are invited to send this to the Celebration Committee at the Network address: 5/7 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9SN.

The next issue of *Inter Faith Update* is scheduled for January 1998 and contributions for consideration can be sent on the enclosed form by 15 December to Dr Harriet Crabtree at The Inter Faith Network for the UK (Reg. Char. 296773) 5/7 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9SN Tel 0171 388 0008 Fax 0171 387 7968

The Inter Faith Network

works to combat inter religious prejudice and intolerance and to help make Britain a country marked by mutual understanding and respect between religions.

In its first ten years, together with its member bodies, it has:

- encouraged and assisted members of Britain's nine major faith communities to meet and to explore the positive resources in their own religious traditions for building good inter faith relations
- worked to ensure a place for Britain's major faith communities in our public life
- promoted the development of local inter faith structures
- widened the circle of people in each faith community committed to building good relations between the faiths
- ensured the availability of accurate information about the faiths and inter faith activity
- raised the public profile of inter faith issues
- assisted other organisations committed to working for a harmonious multi faith society

OFFICERS AND STAFF 1996-97

Co-Chairs: Rt Revd Roy Williamson; Mr Om Parkash Sharma; Vice Chairs: Dr. Manazir Ahsan; Mrs Ivy Gutridge MBE; Mrs Rosalind Preston OBE; Mr Indarjit Singh OBE; Treasurer: Mr Ramesh Shah

Inter Faith Update

Newsletter of
The Inter Faith Network for the UK

Issue 6,
January 1998

The Inter Faith Network celebrates its tenth anniversary

On 30 November a celebration event attended by nearly 300 guests from all Britain's major faith communities took place in the Great Hall at Lincoln's Inn to mark the Tenth Anniversary of the Inter Faith Network. The programme was compered by Mrs Rosalind Preston OBE and speakers included the Archbishop of Canterbury, Most Revd and Rt Hon Dr George Carey, and Hilary Armstrong MP, Minister for Local Government and Housing and Co-Chair of the Inner Cities Religious Council, as well as the Chairs, Vice Chairs and Director of the Network.

There was a particular focus on youth. Young people of the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Zoroastrian communities spoke of their experiences of tolerance and intolerance growing up in Britain today and of the importance of working to bring about good inter faith relations. Music for the event was also provided by young people: Anne Waldeck from the Jewish community played the violin, and from the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan came a performance on mridangam and veena from Mr Prasanna and Mr Hari.

The event was generously sponsored by Rt Revd Jonathan Bailey, Bishop of Derby; Rt Revd Richard Chartres, Bishop of London; Most Revd and Rt Hon David Hope KCVO, Archbishop of York; Mr Manubhai Madhvani; Rt Revd David Sheppard, former Bishop of Liverpool; Sir Sigmund Sternberg KCSG; Rt Revd Keith Sutton, Bishop of Lichfield; Rt Revd Roy Williamson, Bishop of Southwark; and the UK Action Committee for Islamic Affairs. Many others of all faiths made significant donations toward the event and towards the work of the Network.

Remembering some of the highlights of the Network's first 10 years

1987 The Network is founded with 60 member organisations following two years of consultations. Bishop Jim Thompson and the late Rabbi Hugo Gryn are its founder Co-Chairs, with Vice Chairs Dr Mughram Al-Ghamdi, Mr Om Parkash Sharma, and Mr Indarjit Singh. Mr Brian Pearce becomes its first Director. The Network holds its first national meeting on "Tolerance and Acceptance in a Religiously Plural Society."

1988 The Network opens an office in central London. It holds two national meetings focusing on Faith Communities and the Media and on "The Concept of Inter Faith Dialogue" and initiates a regular series of regional "link" meetings for local inter faith organisers around Britain.

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Diary Dates

This brief diary lists primarily UK inter faith events. Events are listed as far into the future as contributors offer them.

International as well as UK inter faith events are regularly listed in the useful World Congress of Faiths' publication *One Family Newsletter* (contact Mrs Jean Potter at 1 Ivy Lane, Teignmouth, Devon TQ14 8BT).

In most cases, local groups welcome visitors from further afield and will be glad to try to help facilitate visits from groups and individuals from other parts of the country if they have advance warning.

Saturday 24 January and Sunday 22 February, London. "Whither the Church and Synagogue? How do we develop as Communities?". Two days arranged by the Sternberg Centre for Judaism and St Martin-in-the-Fields in conjunction with the Council of Christians and Jews.

Day 1 "Handing on the faith to the next generation", 24 January 10.45am to 3.00pm at West London Synagogue, London W1. Day 2 "Renewing the Covenant with God and each other", 22 February 9.30am to 2.00pm at St Martin-in-the-Fields, London WC2. Both visits include a light lunch, afternoon tea and coffee. Inclusive fee for both days £13. For one day £7. Further information and to book, contact The Council of Christians and Jews, Drayton House, 30 Gordon Street, London WC1H 0AN, tel 0171 388 3322.

Sunday 25 January, Wolverhampton. "Prayer for Peace". Members of all faiths and local schools among the participants. Welcome from Rector of Wolverhampton. 2.30pm for 3.00pm start from St Peter's Church. Further information from Mrs Ivy Gutridge MBE, Wolverhampton Inter Faith Group, tel: 01902-427601.

Thursday 12 February, Leamington Spa. South Warwickshire Interfaith presents "The Rewards and Difficulties of Being a Methodist Minister". Talks and questions led by Rev Michael Saunders at Dale Street Church, Dale Street, Leamington Spa. Contact: Mrs Rosemary Harley, tel: 01926-613402.

Saturday 14 February, London. "True to Ourselves; Open to Others?" How do we meet the challenge of faiths different from our own? Must we claim that we alone possess the truth? Or can we believe that other religions also witness to the truth? Speakers: Michael Barnes SJ and others. 10.30am-4.00pm, Centre for Extra Mural Studies, 26 Russell Square, London, WC1. Contact: Carole Walker, tel: 0171-631-6674.

Wednesday 11 March, Derby. Launch of "Multifaithnet", The University of Derby's Internet gateway to electronic resources on world religions and inter faith dialogue. 6.00-7.00pm at the University of Derby's Keddestone Road campus. Request for an invitation to: Mrs Eileen Fry, University of Derby, tel: 01332-622222 ext 2102.

Saturday 14 March, Edinburgh. "Meet Your Neighbour". Songs, dances, music, refreshments, stalls for associated faiths. No talks. Bring your children. Come and go any time. 2.00-5.00pm Leith Town Hall, Edinburgh. Contact: Edinburgh Inter Faith Association, tel: 0131-539-1583.

Friday 17 April, Leamington Spa. Visit to the local gurdwara. Contact: Mrs Rosemary Harley, South Warwickshire Interfaith. Tel: 01926-613402. (Please bring a head covering and be prepared to remove your shoes.)

Saturday 9 May, West Quantoxhead. 12.45pm Amitabha Buddhist Centre. Joint event with Dorset, Exeter, Taunton and Bristol Inter Faith Groups. Lunch (vegetarian, £2) followed by an afternoon programme including a tour of St. Audries House and grounds. Contact: Hon Sec. John Gamlin, West Somerset Inter Faith Group, tel: 01598-741377 or Chairman: George Punnett, tel: 01643-704738.

Sunday 28 June, Bradford. Bradford Concord Interfaith Society 5th Annual Walk for Peace, visiting various places of worship in Bradford. For further information, tel 01274 731674.

Thursday 16 July, Minehead. 7.30pm Friends Meeting House, Minehead. "The Zoroastrian Faith", Mrs. Tehmi Pomeroy. Contact: Hon Sec. John Gamlin, West Somerset Inter Faith Group, tel: 01598-741377 or Chairman: George Punnett, tel: 01643-704738.

Religion and Innovation. The British Association for the Study of Religions conference, in association with the International Association for the History of Religions, will take place from September 14 to September 17 at the University of Wales, Lampeter.

The theme is innovation within religions and also the response of religions to innovations across the spectrum of modern life. Further details from Peggy Morgan, Westminster College, Oxford OX2 9AT.

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National Updates

Marking the Millennium in a Multi Faith Context

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport will shortly publish a brief document, *Marking the Millennium in a Multi-Faith Context*, prepared for it by the Churches and Other Faiths sub-group of its Millennium Co-ordinating Group, in association with the Inter Faith Network.

The document is designed for use in multi faith contexts, and will give guidance to local authorities and other organisations planning Millennium celebrations. It will encourage careful event planning which recognises that the Millennium marks a key event in Christian history and that, at the same time, in our multi faith society, there will also be shared celebrations of the year 2000. In the words of the document, it will be "an opportunity for people of all faiths to draw on the spiritual heritages of their own traditions to think together about the values that underpin our society and to reflect on the future of our society and our environment for ourselves, our children and generations to come."

The document will look at a number of issues. The question, in particular, of whether and how members of different faiths can share in common meditation, reflection or worship is a complex one. The guidelines will reflect this and will set out a range of options for bringing people together in ways which are inclusive, while sensitive to the integrity of the beliefs of participants.

Copies of the guidelines will be available free from the Millennium Unit of the Department for Culture Media and Sport, 2-4 Cockspur Street, London SW1Y 5DH or from The Inter Faith Network 5-7 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9SN (please send a stamped addressed A4 envelope).

And also on the Millennium

The Churches and Other Faiths sub-group of the Millennium Co-ordinating Group met in September and November to discuss a range of issues, including the handling of religious aspects of the Millennium Experience at Greenwich. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport is co-ordinating the Government's interests in the Millennium. Its Millennium Unit is advising both the Secretary of State, the Rt Hon Chris Smith MP, and Peter Mandelson MP, Minister without Portfolio, who holds responsibility for the Millennium Experience.

The Network Office is represented on the Churches and Other Faiths sub-group by Harriet Crabtree.

Census 2001: a religious question?

There have been continuing discussions on whether or not a question on religious identity should be included in the 2001 Census and, if so, in what terms. The results of the pilot testing of census questions in June 1997 have not yet been made public. There have, however, been further discussions between the Office for National Statistics, potential users of information derived from a religious question and faith community representatives. It is hoped that a firm decision on whether or not to include a question on religion in the 2001 Census will be taken later this year.

Collective worship in schools in England and Wales

During 1996 and 1997, the Religious Education Council for England and Wales, the National Association of SACRE's and the Inter Faith Network have been co-sponsoring a joint consultation on collective worship in schools in England and Wales.

On 11 December the third and final conference of the consultation took place in London. The conference had before it the results of a postal consultation carried out in advance which

canvassed a wide range of organisations represented at the conferences about possible options for the future of collective worship. A report on the consultation as a whole is now being prepared.

Three Faiths Forum

The Three Faiths Forum was founded in January 1997 as a result of an initiative by Sir Sigmund Sternberg and Sheikh Dr Zaki Badawi to promote dialogue between Jews, Christians and Muslims.

The Forum held a consultative conference in December 1997 at which speakers included Dr Ali El Samman, Chairman of Interfaith Dialogue of the Egyptian High Council for Islamic Affairs, Dr Richard Stone, Chair of the Jewish Council on Racial Equality, Ms Helen Seaford, Director of the Runnymede Trust's Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain, Mr D. C. Varness, Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Rev Marcus Braybrooke, Rabbi Dr Norman Solomon and Mr Clifford Longley. The conference discussed the issues which need to be tackled in a Jewish-Christian-Muslim dialogue and ways in which the Forum might best carry forward its work. For further information about the activities of the Forum, contact its Co-ordinator Mr Sidney Shipton at Star House, 104 Grafton Road, London NW5 4BD, tel 0171 485 2538.

World Congress of Faiths publishes prayer resource book

In November the World Congress of Faiths published *All in Good Faith*. In this resource book, spiritual teachers from all faiths write about the place of prayer in their tradition and their attitude to praying with members of other faiths. Also included is a selection of services and a wide ranging anthology from the scriptures of the world on such themes as: freedom, justice, healing, peace, and the environment. The book is available from: World Congress of Faiths, 2, Market Street, Oxford, OX1 3EF. Price: £7.99 + £1.60pp.

Focus on Roman Catholic Inter Faith Initiatives

Rt Revd Charles Henderson is one of the Network's longest serving Executive Committee members. Bishop Charles is one of the key figures in the Roman Catholic Church's work of building good relations with other faith communities in this country, which is overseen by the Roman Catholic Committee for Other Faiths of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

In addition to his national role, Bishop Charles has local responsibilities in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Southwark. On 10 October he helped put inter faith issues higher on the local agenda by hosting a meeting on "Promoting Inter Faith Responsibility" for Deans of the Archdiocese who have coordinating responsibility for groups of 6-10 parishes. The idea was to share experiences of inter faith involvement, to raise awareness, and to take new information back to the parishes.

The meeting was also to mark the tenth anniversary of the Inter Faith Network and Brian Pearce and Harriet Crabtree gave a joint presentation on the history and role of the Inter Faith Network and the importance in Britain today of dialogue on the basis of faith. Bishop Henderson stressed the Catholic Church's teaching on matters of inter-faith, the need to proclaim this teaching and the enrichment that flows from fulfilling it. He encouraged the Deans to use their Deanery conferences to inform the priests and engage their ministry in this important area of the life of the Church.

On 17 December, Catholics and many of other faiths came together at Campion House in Osterley to thank Brother Daniel Faivre for his many years of inter faith work in Southall and more widely through his publications on inter faith issues.

Islam in Europe

A Joint Consultation on "Cultural Pluralism and Religion in Europe: the contribution of Islam

and Christianity to the Future" took place from 18-22 October, organised jointly by the Islamic Foundation, Leicestershire, UK and the Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations (CSIC), Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham, UK. The consultation was attended by 26 academics, media personnel and activists from Christian and Muslim backgrounds from the UK, France, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Sweden and Italy.

There were six main themes of discussion. The first was the issue of religious pluralism and citizenship. A paper on this topic was given by Professor Jaques Waardenburg from the University of Lausanne, Switzerland. It focused on questions of who is a citizen and what pluralism means in the religious context and looked at how religious communities should interact with each other and the need and importance of inter-faith dialogue. The respondent was Muhammad Aman Hobohm, a retired diplomat from Germany, who highlighted some of the actual problems faced by Muslims living in Europe *vis-à-vis* citizenship, equality, and acceptance, citing especially his experiences from Germany.

In the second session Dr Tariq Ramadan from the University of Fribourg, Switzerland presented a paper on the subject of European Islamic thought towards the 21st century. The respondent was Professor Christian Troll from Rome, Italy. The paper looked at the opportunities and challenges facing Muslims now settled in Western Europe: how Islamic thought in Europe is facing up to the challenges of modernity and what changes are taking place within the framework of contemporary Muslim ideas. It also looked at the joint responsibilities that Muslims and the European society have to face their common challenges.

Dr Jocelyn Cesari from the University of Marseilles, France, presented the third paper on the issue of Muslim representation in a European political context and this was responded to by Sharon Imtiyaz from the Selly Oak Colleges. The paper described the challenges of Muslim representation within Europe, the issues of Muslim identity and the

expression and perception of Islam within different European countries.

As there is so much focus on the issue of Islamic fundamentalism, in the fourth session of the consultation Professor Jørgen Nielsen, Director of the CSIC, Selly Oak Colleges looked at the notion of fundamentalism, its origin and the use of the term in relation to Islam. He also explained how the label of fundamentalism overshadows the moderate, sensible debate that most Muslims are engaged in. The respondent was Dr Manazir Ahsan, Director of the Islamic Foundation who drew attention to the practical problems faced by Muslims in attaining their rights and recognition as a result of the label of fundamentalism.

In the fifth session, the consultation took a wider look at the Muslim world and Europe and tackled the issue of Muslims, Europe and international relations. This session was presented by Professor Khurshid Ahmad, Chairman of the Islamic Foundation and was responded to by Professor Nielsen. The presentation was a wide ranging one covering the historical background to the relationship between Islam and Europe, the long presence of Muslims in Europe and the effects of international events on the relationship between Islam and the Muslim world on the one hand and on the other, the European states and vice versa.

The consultation was aimed at creating a platform for discussion of ideas about the presence of both religious communities in a predominantly secular Europe and the contribution that they can together make to the future of European society. The final session therefore focused on the way ahead. It is planned that the project will continue, mainly through writing and perhaps some meetings to explore the ideas further. In future there will be an emphasis on the themes of social justice, human dignity and civic duties. The participants and the organiser wish to express their gratitude to the European Commission for their support on this project.

Based on a report from Dr Ataullah Siddiqui

Request for information about planning for hospital patients of varying faiths

Swindon Interfaith Group has been involved for some time with local hospitals, trying to ensure that patients of minority faiths have the facilities they need. A new hospital is now planned under the "private finance initiative" and the group is involved in the consultation process. They would welcome contact with any other groups involved in the same process. Contact Mrs Margaret Griffiths, Secretary, tel 01793 534923.

Regional Updates

Link meeting news

The Inter Faith Network's Eastern area link meeting for local inter faith organisers took place on 14 October at the Friends Meeting House in Hartingdon Grove Cambridge.

Cambridge. Mr John Betteridge reported that the Cambridge Inter-Faith Group continues to distribute a quarterly newsletter and to hold meetings monthly and to attract around 12 people per meeting from its mailing list of around 40. The membership represents quite a cross section of the town's faiths but the most active support is from the Baha'is at present.

Professor S. A. Ashraf and Dr S. A. Mabud reported on the work of The Islamic Academy, Cambridge. Dr Mabud reported that the Academy had arranged a very successful exhibition about Islam for the recent National RE Festival. It had taken place in one of the Cambridge University examination halls. The purpose of the exhibition had been to present an accurate picture of Islam and to give teachers more resources for teaching Islam. Ten school groups came over the three days of the exhibition with some returning for a second

and visits. They meet sometimes at Friends House and sometimes at other faith community centres. The programme for the current six months is on the theme of "Living out one's faith today". The most encouraging aspect of their work is the friendships which are beginning to develop between people from different faith communities.

The group is working hard at establishing stronger links with the Hindu and Muslim communities. Mr Tony McNeile said that the main thrust of their work is to promote better understanding: the more we know of others the less suspicious we are of them. He hoped that different faith communities are now recognising the importance of promoting good relations both within their own communities and with others.

Bury

Mrs Phyllis Vallon described the work of the Bury Inter Faith Council. Annual events are arranged under the auspices of the Mayor of Bury, using the Town Hall. The number of people wanting to be involved has now grown to the point where the Forum is considering setting up sub-groups. She was encouraged by the news of Jewish involvement in inter faith activity elsewhere in the North West. The Presidents of the Greater Manchester Jewish Representative Council have been much involved in the work of the Bury Inter Faith Council. The JRC sends speakers on Judaism to visit other organisations. The Bury Inter Faith Council planning group meets about five times a year and has established excellent working relationships among its members. The previous evening their main annual event had focused on 'Death and Life Hereafter'. Between 70-80 people had been present with speakers from the Christian, Hindu, Jewish and Muslim faiths. The meeting (also attended by Brian Pearce and Harriet Crabtree) had been very successful.

Hyndburn and Pendle

Rev Sally Thomas reported on the launching of the Hyndburn Inter Faith Forum at a well supported event in March. Rev David Lyon, a local Anglican vicar, had been heavily involved in planning and arranging this, following contact between him and Mr Abdul Hamid Qureshi at

the Network 'link' meeting in Blackburn in March 1996. The launch meeting took place on the premises of the Hyndburn Borough Council. The Forum subsequently organised a public meeting addressed by candidates at the time of the General Election.

The Pendle Inter Faith Group has been active and holds about four meetings a year. There has been variable attendance but there is a mailing list of some 75 people and it is hoped to expand the range of those involved in the group's activities. A Steering Group has been formed to promote a new community project in Nelson and Bradfield. The Kashmir issue has been attracting a good deal of attention locally because of the Kashmiri background of many people now living in Pendle. The local authority has arranged a meeting to address the issue.

Brian Pearce commented that it is important for all inter faith organisations to take into account the impact of overseas events on inter faith relations in this country. Rev Ron Lewis referred to the role of the URC churches in arranging tri-lateral Jewish-Christian-Muslim meetings in the area.

Lancashire Council of Mosques

Mr Talha Wadee, who has recently been appointed Director of the Lancashire Council of Mosques, said that there are 47 mosques in Lancashire. His Council receives funding from the Lancashire County Council. His predecessor, Mr Abdul Hamid Qureshi, a member of the Network's Executive Committee, was heavily involved in inter faith activity and as his successor he hopes to continue this work. He mentioned the major event which took place in June in the Anglican Cathedral in Blackburn organised by Mr Hamid Qureshi and Rev Colin Albin, the adviser on inter faith relations to the Bishop of Blackburn. There had been keynote speakers from the Christian and Muslim community and local MEP's and MP's had been invited. He also referred to the way in which the death of Princess Diana had brought all sections of the community together in the sharing of their grief.

visit. Connected with the exhibition were three lectures by an Islamic expert and two Muslim lecturers at the University and one Christian lecturer.

Norwich. Mrs Rosemary Pickering gave a short update on the initiative to begin some form of inter faith structure in the city. She has been in touch with the Suffolk Inter Faith Resource in Ipswich to develop links and learn from their experiences. Mrs Marian Agombar, who is based at the Keswick Hall RE Centre and also is the Anglican Diocesan Inter Faith Adviser, shared news of the impact of the new Agreed Syllabus for Norfolk which has focused more attention on the different faiths and led to schools requesting speakers of various faiths. Particularly of note was a special day arranged for GCSE students last Autumn with workshops on the different faiths. The small group who arranged that day decided to carry on meeting as a group after the event and had a meeting last month to discuss future plans. It is possible that this educational initiative may develop as a useful and genuinely multi-faith resource for the city alongside other developing initiatives. Peter and Sylvia Dadd also represented Norwich at the meeting.

Peterborough Inter-Faith Council was represented by Mr Paul Brocklehurst. He explained that it was formed in 1978 and is one of the oldest such councils in the country. It presently has about 45 members with one or two of all the main faiths in the area. The city is predominantly Christian but has a sizeable Muslim population as well as members of other faiths. There are two Sunni mosques and one Shi'a mosque as well as a Hindu temple. The city has a very small Jewish population, but members of it are active on the inter faith front, as are Baha'is and Brahma Kumaris.

The Peterborough Inter-Faith Council has about 3 open meetings a year, which have recently focused on such issues as women and spirituality and medical ethics. Once a year they have an inter faith service at the Cathedral where the faiths contribute in ways appropriate to their traditions. This is a high point of the year, with good attendance.

Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource was represented by Mrs Cynthia Capey, Ms Deborah Hargreaves, Ms Elahe Mojdehi, and Mr Bart Seaton. The Resource Centre has been going for 3 years as a registered charity and is continuing to do well. It built upon a longer tradition of annual events for the faiths run by the Mayor. Its primary work is as an educational resource, developing materials for use in schools, including a new video, "Faiths in Focus in Ipswich", made by their Vice Chair and a teacher friend which explores all the local faith communities. SIFRE has tutors from a number of faiths who can work with schools on projects. It has just completed a very successful week of events linked to the National RE Festival. The week began with a "drop-in" for teachers with an opportunity to meet the tutors of different faiths. Religious "town trails" were organised as well as more extended visits for teachers to some of the local places of worship.

The Resource Centre now also does some training for external organisations such as the local Social Services. It has been working, with local faith communities, on the draft of a handbook for the local hospital covering beliefs, practices and dietary and modesty requirements of the various faiths in the locality. The handbook will feature locally taken photographs.

As well as the education dimension, the Centre has opportunities for inter faith encounter and friendship. They have a multi-faith women's group which has been on a number of outings, including, for example, to the Chelsea Flower Show earlier this year. For the Millennium, SIFRE has plans for a special pageant showing the long religious history of the town.

The Inter Faith Network held its North West region link meeting at the Friends Meeting House in Bolton on 30 October.

Bolton

Mrs Gill Atkinson said that the Bolton Inter Faith group had been formed about four years ago. Their programme consists mainly of talks

Liverpool

Some years ago the Merseyside Inter Faith group was temporarily in abeyance. It has now been rejuvenated. In Liverpool there is one Hindu temple and one mosque but no Sikh gurdwara. Dr Khan and Canon Michael Wolfe of the Anglican Liverpool Cathedral have helped to arrange a series of meetings in the centres of the different faith communities. This is helping to promote more mutual understanding between people of different faiths and personal friendships has also been developing. Mr Choudhury and Mr Shah Nawaz endorsed Dr Khan's encouraging report of developments in Liverpool.

Dr Khan referred to the long standing ecumenical links between Roman Catholics and Anglicans in Liverpool. Some three years ago a series of Christian-Jewish-Muslim meetings began. The Merseyside Inter Faith Group formed some years previously holds about nine meetings a year. Last month about 250 people came to the Pakistan Centre for a meeting focusing on reconciliation in reparation of actions carried out by Christians during the Crusades. During the Autumn three young women from the United States are visiting Merseyside to study the origins of the slave trade and have made contact with the group.

Manchester. Rev Robert Boulter inherited the role of organiser of the Manchester Inter Faith Group some ten years previously from the Sacred Trinity RE Centre, which has recently had to close for lack of funds. He explained that the Manchester Inter Faith Group now tends to focus mainly on work in the Whalley Range area.

The group organises a programme of visits to places of worship and of speakers and receives many requests for information and advice on inter faith matters. Students from the local universities and colleges of higher education go on organised visits to his church to discuss issues concerned with inter faith relations. At present there is a feasibility study on the possibility of establishing an inter faith centre. The group at present does not have a formal committee structure or any publications. Mr

Choudhury said that the group is still doing useful work in maintaining informal links between communities. When the group was based at Sacred Trinity Centre there was the advantage that a full time member of its staff could take on responsibility for maintaining and organising the formal arrangements for the Group.

Canon Albert Radcliffe, of the Anglican Cathedral in Manchester, spoke about the work of the Manchester Council of Christians and Jews. There are some 30,000 Jewish people in the Greater Manchester area and the local CCJ Branch is a strong one. They hold a 'Friendship Week' each year which begins and ends in two synagogues, one Reform and one Orthodox.

Brian Pearce mentioned that the Anglican Bishop of Manchester, Christopher Mayfield, had held a meeting during May with other faith community leaders to discuss the way forward on multi faith links.

Rev Jay Kothare has recently arrived in the Manchester area as adviser to the Anglican Bishop on community relations and inter faith work. He regretted the absence of representatives of other faith communities at his induction at his new church. For him, inter faith work has a predominantly inter-racial dimension to it. His experience of inter faith activity in London had been that it risked becoming a mere talking shop without an adequate focus on issues of racial and social justice.

Ms Maureen Stirzaker of the Manchester College of Arts and Technology explained that it is one of the largest further education colleges in the country with three different campuses. It has a multi faith chaplaincy and on Wednesday lunchtimes, for example, Buddhists, Christians and Muslims can all be found worshipping in different rooms in the college. Students from different faiths do meet together for discussions on particular issues. There is, however, a gap in inter faith activity in the central Manchester area which it would be good to fill and there is the need for better networking among those involved in inter faith activity in the Greater Manchester area.

Preston

Mrs Joy Sabour said that inter faith activity in Preston was at a slightly low ebb although the Preston Inter Faith Forum has held some good meetings. She hoped that ways would be found to strengthen inter faith work in Preston.

Rochdale

Mr Stanley Hope described the work of Rochdale Inter Faith Action. Rochdale Inter Faith Action was formed in 1986, with encouragement from the local Methodist Superintendent. The group has met regularly on a monthly basis with a primary focus on racial justice. For eleven years they have brought together Christians and Muslims at Christmas time to celebrate the birth of Jesus from the different perspectives of the two traditions.

Within the last year the Methodist building in which the group was based has been closed. They are now based in the offices of the local Racial Equality Council.

Rochdale IFA has paid regular visits to mosques and to a synagogue. In the course of the last year the group organised a visit to the Jewish Museum in Manchester and has also visited the Buddhist centre in Todmorden and were surprised by the large number of people who came to that meeting. Plans are being made for a visit to a Hindu centre.

Round ups from other parts of the country

Edinburgh

A conference titled "Living in Harmony" was organised by Edinburgh Inter-Faith Association in October 1997 to celebrate the Tenth Anniversary of the EIFA. Contributions were made by speakers from Muslim, Christian and Hindu faiths and the Lord Provost of Edinburgh.

On 2 November, Edinburgh Hindu Mandir and Cultural Centre invited people of all faiths and the Edinburgh Inter-Faith Association to share in their Diwali celebrations.

Leicester

From 14-31 October a major exhibition took place in Leicester, opened by the Archbishop of Canterbury. It was designed to show Leicester and Leicestershire as a place where people from many faiths live and learn together.

The exhibition was arranged and sponsored by a group representing a partnership between Leicester Cathedral, Leicester Council of Faiths, The National RE Festival and city schools. It was organised as part of Leicester Cathedral's 70th anniversary year celebrations - to show what the ministry of a Cathedral can mean in welcoming people at the heart of a multi-faith city and also to coincide with the National RE Festival - contributions from schools in RE were a major part of the exhibition. The exhibition was in five sections: meeting in faith; houses of faith; living faith; faith in nature; this is our faith.

Linked to the exhibition was an evening at which people shared their stories of faith from different backgrounds. The Exhibition began with a preview evening at which the A & BC Theatre Company performed sketches from different faiths - educational and humorous at once.

The main participants at the event were people from different faith communities in the city - especially those involved in the Leicester Council of Faiths; children and teachers from city schools, who contributed material and visited the exhibition; about 1,500 visitors who saw the exhibition.

Based on report from Canon Michael Ipgrave.

Luton

On 21 September the recently formed Luton Interfaith Forum held a meeting on "Building Plural Communities" to share experiences of living in Luton and to discuss issues of importance from the point of view of its communities. The aims outlined for the meeting may be of interest to readers as an example of how new groups seek to establish a secure ground for their future inter faith work. These aims were outlined by the organisers in the

programme for the meeting as follows:

*Each person will gain a deeper understanding of other members of the Forum and of their own attitudes to those of different faith communities.

*Each person will have had the opportunity to share their own experience and be heard by others in the Forum.

*Each person will have gained a greater awareness of the joys and misunderstandings within Luton as a multi-cultural and multi-faith community. A better understanding of history will enable a more appropriate response to the present.

*Each person will have been enriched by sharing in a multi-faith learning experience.

*The Forum will have been able to clarify issues which are of greatest concern to members.

*The Forum will begin to identify ways in which it will address these issues.

Luton Interfaith Forum held an interfaith pilgrimage on 18 October as part of One World Week to witness to Luton's diversity and solidarity. Around 100 pilgrims of 8 faiths visited a gurdwara, a synagogue, a mosque and a church.

Wolverhampton

Wolverhampton Inter Faith Group's "Inter Faith Pilgrimage Tour" in October 1997 visited 3 places of worship in Wolverhampton and Walsall.

WIFG held its annual "Winter Party" on 6 December 1997 in the Shree Krishna Mandir community room. This was a family occasion where all could enjoy listening to music and singing from a variety of Asian traditions and then sharing a special meal with participants bringing dishes. Prior to the entertainment, a visit was made to the Hindu Temple. This event was organised by WIFG and Hindu WIFG members and friends.

Earlier this Autumn, Bishop Michael Bourke delivered a consultation to the WIFG on the theme of "Initial Exploration into Multifaith/Racial Participation with Government (D of E) and Future Work" and how to advise Government departments to involve faith communities.

Special Offer from Shap

The Shap Journal 1997/1998, "Who am I? The Search for Individual and Group Identity"

- articles, book reviews, resources
- with contributions from teachers, educationalists, members of the faith communities
- information, comment, inspiration

Copies available for the special price of £5 including postage and packing from Lorraine McColl, Shap, 36 Causton St, London SW1P 4AU. Cheques to "Shap Working Party".

Highlights of the Network's first ten years continued from p12

1996 The Network's newsletter *Inter Faith Update* is launched. The National Meeting, "Britain's Faith Communities: Equal Citizens?", takes up the question of how to respond to religious discrimination and to encourage good practice among service providers. The Network brings together key voices in the debate about what values should underpin our increasingly diverse society in a seminar on "The Quest for Common Values" which is opened by Dr Jonathan Sacks, Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth.

1997 An expanded and revised edition of *Religions in the UK: a Multi Faith Directory* is published. The National Meeting at Birmingham focuses on how faith communities can develop their inter faith strategies. A tenth anniversary exhibition is held in conjunction with the meeting to highlight the inter faith work of the Network and its member bodies. The Network's code on *Building Good Relations* is reprinted in 40,000 packs going to schools across the country as part of the National RE Festival. The Network celebrates the first ten years with a special event at Lincoln's Inn. Events to mark the anniversary and raise awareness about the importance of building good inter faith relations are also held by member bodies around the country.

Inter Faith Update

*Newsletter of
The Inter Faith Network for the UK*

*Issue 7,
May 1998*

Collective worship in schools - new report published

For some time there has been unease about the current requirements governing collective worship in maintained schools. In 1995 the Religious Education Council for England and Wales, the National Association of SACRE's and The Inter Faith Network, with the support of the All Saints Trust, commissioned a research report which was published in December 1996. It traced developments in the principles and practice of collective worship since 1944; the range of current views on this important aspect of the community life of schools and set out the key issues which have emerged in recent years.

During 1997 three one day consultative conferences were held under the auspices of these three co-sponsoring organisations, funded by the All Saints and St. Gabriel's Trusts. The conferences were chaired by Professor Desmond Rea, Chairman of the Northern Ireland Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment.

The purpose of the conferences was to explore how far broad agreement could be reached on the character of, and provision for, collective worship which would be educationally appropriate and practicable and to consider what changes, if any, to the present statutory framework might be required. They were attended by representatives of different faith communities and a variety of educational interests.

The report on this consultative process, *Collective Worship Reviewed*, was published on 13 February. It provides a record of the conferences and contains the text of key documents prepared in the course of the consultative process. By the end of the third and final conference no consensus had been reached although there was general agreement that the consultative process as a whole had been a valuable one in exploring the issues involved.

Before the first conference a wide range of organisations was invited to offer any preliminary views about collective worship. Between the second and third conferences there was a further consultation, inviting reactions to three broad options. These were:

Option 1: a "new way forward" based on a statutory requirement for regular assemblies of a spiritual and moral character, with the present requirements for collective worship being withdrawn

Option 2: maintenance of the present requirements either entirely or substantially in their present form

Option 3: withdrawal of the present requirements without replacement

The majority of those who responded to the consultation favoured Option 1. However, many respondents had queries about the details of this option and wanted further discussion on how it would operate in practice.

Cont. on p.3

Diary Dates

This brief diary lists primarily UK inter faith events which are open to the public. Events are listed as far into the future as contributors offer them. In most cases, local groups welcome visitors from further afield and will be glad to try to help facilitate visits from groups and individuals from other parts of the country if they have advance warning. International as well as UK inter faith events are regularly listed in the useful World Congress of Faiths' publication *One Family Newsletter* (contact Mrs Jean Potter at 1 Ivy Lane, Teignmouth, Devon TQ14 8BT).

10 May, Sheffield. Annual Conference of Sheffield Interfaith at Sheffield Hallam University. Further information from Sandra Howes, Tel 0114 253213.

14 May, Edinburgh. The Edinburgh Synagogue Male Voice Choir and Greenbank Parish Church Choir together at Synagogue Hall, 4 Salisbury Road, Edinburgh. Further details from Edinburgh Interfaith Association, Tel 0131 539 1583.

16 May, London (visit to Sikh temple by Basingstoke Association of Faiths and Cultures) with presentation on Sikh festivals. Further details from Pali Singh, Tel 01256 355138 or Mrs Hainsworth Fadaei, Tel 01256 350187.

16 May, London. South London Inter Faith Group and Greenwich Multi-Faith Forum joint meeting on "Faith Communities Combatting Racial Hatred". At St Patrick's Church Hall, Hector Street, Plumstead from 10.30 to 4.00. Further information from Adrian Arnold, 0181 788 6151.

17 May, Bromley, Kent. "The Jews of Eastern Europe", talk by Professor John Klier, Head of Hebrew-Jewish Studies, University College London. 7.15 refreshments, 7.45, lecture. At the Bromley and District Reform Synagogue, 29 Highland Road, Bromley BR1 4AD. Further information from Mrs Goodman, Tel 0181 460 5460.

18 May, Bradford. Bradford Concord Interfaith Society, An Evening with Buddhist Friends: an introduction to Buddhist teachings and practices. Further information from Bob Exon, Tel 01274 410841.

4 June, Minehead, West Somerset Interfaith Group meeting: "Inter faith work in prisons", talk by Gail Bradley, Probation Officer and Revd David Hastings, Chaplain to Exeter prisons. Further details from John Gamlin, Tel 01598 741377.

Five talks, 4, 11, 18, 25 June and 1 July, Southall, Middlesex, members of the Jain, Zoroastrian, Christian Orthodox and Unitarian traditions introduce their faiths and talk about what their faith means to them. Arrival 6.15 with snacks, sessions run 7.00 to 8.30pm. Further information from Sister Karuna Margaret Nourse, Christians Aware, 6 Osterley Park Road, Southall, Middx, UB2 4BL, Tel 0181 571 1833.

6 June, Harrow and Brent (London) , Westminster Interfaith's 13th annual inter faith Pilgrimage. Starts 9am from Harrow Central Mosque in Station Road Harrow and ends at approximately 8pm at the Kingsbury Buddhist Temple in Kingsbury Road. Further information from Sister Elizabeth, Tel 0181 570 5285 or Alfred Agius, Tel 0181 570 8639.

6-7 June, Glasgow. "Meet your neighbour" weekend arranged by the Churches Agency for Inter Faith Relations in Scotland and St Mungo's Museum. Saturday 10-4 and Sunday 12-4, with musical events on the hour and half hour. At St Mungo's Museum. Further information from Sister Isabel Smyth, Tel 0141 339 8174.

7 June, London. "Learning from another Tradition" - A group of Roman Catholic and Anglican Christians from Hemel Hempstead will meet Buddhists for mutual understanding. Main participants Fr Roger Kirmich, Margaret Slynn and Most Ven Dr Vajiragnana. At the London Buddhist Vihara, The Avenue, Chiswick, London W4 1UD. Further information from Margaret Slynn, Tel 01442 269440.

Friday 12 June 5pm - Sunday 14 June 3.00 pm. **Liverpool,** World Congress of Faiths/Merseyside Interfaith Group weekend in Liverpool learning about the faiths in the City with local hosts who will entertain guests in their homes. Includes a presentation at the Anglican cathedral about the history of faith groups in Liverpool, plus a tour of the city. Further information from Canon Michael Wolfe, 23 Hunters Lane, Wavertree, Liverpool, L15 8HL, Tel 0151 733 1541.

21 June, Brent, London. Brian Pearce will speak about the Inter Faith Network at the

Interfaith Centre, St Anne's and St Andrew's, 125 Salusbury Road, London NW6 6RG. Further information from Annette Franco, World Congress of Faiths, Tel 0181 960 1829.

28 June, Bradford. Annual Walk for Friendship, taking in various places of worship. Further information, Tel 01274 731674.

30 June, Derby. A talk on healing from a Christian Science perspective by Ann Jesper. 7.30 talk. 8.30 bring and share food. At the Open Centre, 43 Peartree Road, Derby. Further details from Janine Shrigley, Tel 01332 360737.

1 July, Glasgow. Glasgow Sharing of Faiths meeting on "Story and World Faiths", 7.30 at 13 Woodland Drive, Glasgow G4. Further information from Sister Isabel Smyth, Tel 0141 339 8174.

11 July, London. South London Inter-Faith Group inter-faith walk in Tooting. Further information from Adrian Arnold, Tel 0181 788 6151.

13 July, London. Inter Faith Network AGM and National Meeting for Network member bodies on the topic "Millennium". Further details from the Network, Tel 0171 388 0008.

16 July, Minehead, "The Zoroastrian Religion", talk by Mrs Tehmi Pomeroy. Further details from John Gamlin of West Somerset Inter Faith Group, Tel 01598 741377.

13 October, Basingstoke. "Hindu festivals and their meaning", talk followed by AGM of Basingstoke Association of Faiths and Cultures, 7.00 at Committee Room 2, Deanes, BDBC Civic Offices, London Road.

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National Updates

Collective worship cont.

The third and final conference in December had before it a paper which addressed in greater detail the issues which had been raised in the consultation about Option 1, exploring the possibilities for new arrangements to take the place of the present requirements. This paper is included in the published report.

It is possible that if more time had been available a greater degree of consensus would have emerged from the consultative process. The published report recommended that the Department for Education and Employment should establish a Governmental review of collective worship, building on the results of the three conferences. But it became clear soon after the publication of the report that the Government did not intend to pursue this suggestion, at least at present.

In the absence of any Government-led review discussions have been taking place about the best way to carry the debate forward. The National Association for Head Teachers held a seminar in February at which a wide range of organisations were represented and the Religious Education Council for England and Wales and the Executive Committee of The Inter Faith Network will also be discussing possible future action soon.

There seems to be an emerging consensus that it would be helpful to carry forward any further discussion of the collective worship issue in two stages. The first would be to seek changes to the present DfEE Circular on this (which would not require amending legislation). The second would be to press the case for legislation to amend the 1988 Act itself. What is certain is that concerns about the present requirements still remain and that the issues involved will continue to be a focus for debate.

Copies of "Collective Worship Reviewed" can be obtained from CEM, Royal Buildings, Victoria Street, Derby, DE1 1GW for £8.50 (inclusive of postage and packing).

Millennium

Every discussion of how to mark the year 2000 is a discussion of many things simultaneously. It is a discussion about whether anniversaries and special dates have any meaning. Some of us always try and avoid them or forget them; others become obsessed by them and most at least have some urge to mark them. It is also a discussion about what the meaning and significance of the date is. What does 2000 mean to Christians and to others? And how should the anniversary or the entry to a new millennium be marked?

An enormous amount of Christian committee time has been spent thinking about how to usher in 2000, which is understood as the 2000th birthday or anniversary of Jesus Christ and seen by the Churches as an opportunity to highlight the central aspects of Christian belief and faith.

But of course it is not just Christians who will be marking the year 2000 in the national calendar. Britain is an increasingly religiously diverse country. In consequence the meaning of the Millennium for other faiths is now being given serious consideration by those organising public events marking the year 2000.

As reported in the last issue, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, in association with the Network, has published a short set of guidelines, *Marking the Millennium in a Multi-Faith Context*, which addresses some of these issues and gives suggestions to event planners for ways to take forward inclusive event planning. The text was created by the "Lambeth Group" over a series of meetings during 1997.

Marking the Millennium seeks to balance recognition of the distinctive significance for Christians of the Millennium, as an anniversary of the birth of Jesus, with the need for an inclusive approach to national and local community celebrations. There will need to be a good deal of careful planning to explore how this balance can best be reflected in practice in different local situations.

The Network is among those bodies represented on the "Lambeth Group" or "Churches and Other Faiths Subgroup of the Government's Millennium Co-ordinating Group". This has an advisory role to the Department for Culture Media and Sport (the Government's lead agency on the Millennium) and to the Millennium Commission and the New Millennium Experience Company. The Royal Household is also represented on the Subgroup, which is co-chaired by Revd Canon Colin Fletcher and Mr David Chesterton (DCMS).

On the Lambeth Group are members of the Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh communities. Other communities have been invited to give input through the Network and a number have done so.

Mr Peter Mandelson, Minister without Portfolio, was present at the last meeting of the Lambeth Group on 23 February and responded to questions on the Greenwich Dome (for which he carries responsibility). The group also discussed a range of issues including the Churches' plans for distribution of candles across the country for use at midnight on 31 December 1999 with a special Millennium affirmation; the pattern of national Christian services which would be held to mark the event on Sunday 2 January; a possible multi-faith event on 3 January; the forthcoming launch of the Millennium Festival awards scheme and problems that lottery money might cause for some groups who might wish to apply.

A small group within the Lambeth Group were delegated last Autumn to take forward with NMEC detailed discussion about the contents of the "Spirit Zone" in the Greenwich Dome. This met on 25 March to discuss a paper that had been drafted as a brief for the designers, following earlier discussion. There was extensive discussion and a way forward was found to both highlight the Christian story, given the significance of the date in the Christian calendar and in this country's history, and reflect the importance of other faiths in contemporary Britain. Following the meeting, further consultation took place and this stage of the process is now nearing completion.

During February, March and April, the Millennium Unit of the DCMS and the Local Government Association, Scottish Office, Welsh Office and Northern Ireland Office held eight regional conferences aimed mainly at local government audiences to publicise the DCMS' vision for the Millennium and the National Programme of Millennium celebrations being worked up by the Millennium Commission and the New Millennium Experience Company. The conferences were also a way to disseminate good practice to events organisers and to gauge the extent of Millennium planning by local authorities to date.

The Network worked with faith community bodies to suggest speakers from other faiths for each conference as the afternoon sessions had a short slot for the Churches and one "other faith" speaker who spoke on behalf of all faiths except the Christian community. This gave an opportunity to highlight the document *Marking the Millennium in a Multi Faith Context* and to draw key points to the attention of the delegates so that they realised the importance of being inclusive in their Millennium event planning. All 2,500 delegates from across the UK received a pack which included this document.

The Millennium Commission has now launched the Millennium Festival awards scheme for events and projects linked to 2000 at local level. Some non-lottery money is involved, but this will not be ring-fenced to be available only to those who have conscientious objections to lottery funding. Also, since this part of the Festival funding will be coming from commercial sponsors, the availability of this money will also be dependent on the sponsors' willingness to sponsor a given project.

Millennium Festival grants are at two different levels (£5,000 or below and above £5,000) and the criteria for application are being published early in May. The telephone number for enquiries is 0870 600 2000.

The Network's National Meeting in July will be taking the Millennium as its theme. Issues

being looked at will include: What is the significance of the year 2000 for Christians? What may be the significance of the year, if any, for people of other faith traditions? Are there important anniversary years coming up in the calendars of other faith traditions? The shape of national and regional events being planned to mark the year and the possible role in these of faith communities and inter faith groups and organisations; and the work of the Lambeth Group. For further details of this meeting, please contact the Network office.

Higher education and student religious identity

On 23 March a 4 month research project on "Higher Education and Student Religious Identity" was launched. It is based in the Sociology Department at the University of Exeter and is being carried forward in co-operation with the Inter Faith Network. The Network is the primary funder of the work through grants it has secured specifically for this purpose.

The researcher on the project is Dr Sophie Gilliat, who worked with Professor Jim Beckford on the two year Warwick University project which looked at chaplaincy in hospitals and prisons. The project's steering committee includes Dr Grace Davie (University of Exeter); Indarjit Singh and Harriet Crabtree (on behalf of the Network) Revd Paul Brice (Secretary for Higher Education Chaplaincy of the Church of England) and Rashid Siddiqi (adviser over many years to the Muslim students at Leicester University).

Since the 1960s there has been a steady growth in the religious diversity of the United Kingdom. Institutions of Higher Education reflect this increasing diversity in their student population and are perhaps even more diverse than the UK in general because of the large numbers of students of different faiths from overseas. This increasing diversity has prompted reflection by

some institutions on the best ways to ensure good relationships between the faiths on campus. In this context, there is a need for information to be gathered about how institutions are responding so that there can be sharing of good practice and a chance for further reflection on the implications of the multi faith campus. The outcome of the Exeter project will be a report giving an overview of the pattern of provision by institutions of higher education for their religiously diverse student bodies. A summary of this will be circulated to all the institutions of higher education.

The project will gather information on: university/college policies on student religious identity (covering such matters as provision for worship and dietary needs and respectful interaction between religious groups); how institutions are developing structures for relating to the various religious groups on campus; provision of worship facilities; how chaplaincy arrangements are being developed in multi-faith contexts to respond to the pastoral needs of students of the various faiths; the emergence of inter faith organisations on campus; and how faith communities are developing national structures to respond to the religious needs of their students.

A questionnaire has been piloted and circulated to each institution of higher education in the UK. On the basis of the responses, four institutions will be chosen for more detailed study with interviews of chaplains, other faith advisors and religious professionals, administrative personnel, the Student Unions and as many student religious organisations as possible. The researcher is also making direct contact with national student religious bodies and with any "chaplaincy" bodies for faiths other than Christianity. Prospectuses and web pages are being surveyed to find out whether the mission statements of institutions reflect an awareness of the importance of religious identity.

If readers have information which they wish to contribute, Dr Sophie Gilliat can be reached on telephone/fax 01503 263711 from 18 May or E-mailed at Sophie.Gilliat@btinternet.com.

Crime and Disorder Bill

For some time the question of whether there should be new legislative protection relating to the religious, as distinct from racial, identity of individuals, possibly paralleling the provisions in the Race Relations Act 1976, has been on the Network's agenda. The Race Relations Act contains provisions making it illegal to discriminate in employment and in the provision of a variety of services and also made it an offence to stir up racial hatred. It has been argued that there might be difficulties in defining "religion" in the context of parallel provisions. In response it has been pointed out that there are equal difficulties in the definition of "race".

The Crime and Disorder Bill which is now entering its Committee stage in the House of Commons, (having passed through all its stages in the House of Lords), contains provisions for heavier penalties for crimes of violence and damage which are "racially aggravated". A number of organisations are co-operating to lobby for amendment of the key provisions of the bill in order to extend them to cover violence or damage directed against members of a "religious" group as well as of "racial" groups. A leaflet giving details of the campaign is available from the 1990 Trust, Southbank Technopark, 90 London Road, London, SE1 6LN or from the Network office.

Census 2001

At a meeting on 23 April the Office of National Statistics reported on further developments on the possibility of including a question on religious identity in the 2001 census. The programme of testing of possible census questions carried out during 1997 (and subsequent small scale testing of a variant question on religious identity) has shown that respondents are quite willing to answer such a question and found little difficulty in doing so. However, the case for including the question in the 2001 census, given the competition for space on the census form, is still under consideration.

A consultative White Paper is now due to be published this autumn with a view to final proposals being tabled for approval by Parliament towards the end of 1999. If the White Paper does not recommend the inclusion of a question on religious identity it will therefore be possible for all those organisations which wish to do so to press Ministers to reconsider the case for this before the final proposals are put to Parliament.

Human Rights Bill

The Human Rights Bill, which is at present before the House of Commons (having passed through its various stages in the House of Lords), has as its central purpose the incorporation into UK law of the European Convention on Human Rights.

The Churches have been concerned about possible effects of the legislation, including the possibility of it being used as a vehicle for individuals to challenge decisions of the Churches not to solemnise proposed marriages to which they have doctrinal objections. This has a particular relevance to the clergy of the Church of England and the Church in Wales who are required to perform marriages for people from within their parish if asked by them to do so. However there are other areas of concern which may be of relevance to all faith communities, particularly relating to employment practices in schools and religious charities.

Amendments put forward from the back benches were passed in the House of Lords on 5 February to deal with these points and cover not only the Christian Churches but also "other principal religious traditions". The amendments were passed despite the Government's opposition to them on the grounds they were unnecessary in the light of the assurances given about the effect of the bill. It is not clear what position the Government will take on these amendments when the Bill is considered in the Committee stage in the House of Commons in the near future. There have been further

meetings between the Government and representatives of the Churches on this issue.

Muslim Council of Britain elects working committee

Delegates from over 250 Muslim organisations from across the UK met at Brent Town Hall in London on 1 March and elected the Muslim Council of Britain's first Central Working Committee. Mr Iqbal Sacranie was elected as its Secretary General. Muslim youth, Muslim women and persons from a variety of religious and professional backgrounds are among those now on the committee. The Network's Muslim Vice-Chair, Dr Manazir Ahsan, is a member.

A keynote address was given by Dr Tariq Modood on "The British Muslim community today and social trends". From an inter-faith point of view, it is interesting to note that one of the aims of the Council, which was founded in November 1997, is to "actively promote social interaction with wider society and work towards establishing a society that is based on morality, pure faith and the common good." Further information about MCB from Zeeshan Khan, Tel 0181 903 9024.

Protest about Channel 4 cartoon life of the Prophet

Channel 4's cartoon life of the Prophet Muhammad shown in December and again in March has caused controversy. UKACIA saw the film before it was screened and pointed out inaccuracies and unacceptable unhistorical embellishments, as well as making the objection that the medium of cartoon was unsuitable for the sensitive subject. Some, but not all, of the changes which UKACIA wanted were made before the March showing. Since there are possible plans to screen it again UKACIA is in discussion with Channel 4 about the matter. Further information from Iqbal Sacranie, Tel 0181 974 2780.

New BBC religious affairs correspondent

Emily Buchanan has been appointed as the BBC's new Religious Affairs Correspondent. She has been with the BBC since 1982 and most recently worked as a correspondent for the Developing World as part of the BBC's Foreign Affairs Unit. She took up her post at the beginning of March.

Launch of MultiFaithNet

On 11 March, the University of Derby launched MultiFaithNet: its new Internet gateway to electronic resources on world religions and inter faith dialogue. It is being developed with the assistance of a panel of consultants drawn from the religious traditions it covers and from academics with expertise in these traditions.

There are vast and growing amounts of Internet material on religion which can be of use for study and for dialogue. MFN will provide regularly updated subscription access to these resources with "signposts" to help users which give an idea of the types of material and their origin. *Religions in the UK: A Multi-Faith Directory* will be available on-line to subscribers.

Subscribers also get regularly updated relevant news from the print, broadcast and electronic media, as well as news posted to MFN by faith communities and inter-faith groups. MFN will also host home pages from the world religious traditions and of multi-faith and inter-faith organisations and initiatives.

To find out more about these and other services available either free or on subscription, contact Dr Paul Weller at the University of Derby, Mickleover, Derby DE3 5GX, or EMail P.G.Weller@derby.ac.uk.

Faith communities and social work

A symposium, "Faith Communities and Social Work: Shifting Identities and Changing Realities" took place on 24 March in London. It was organised by the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work and the Inner Cities Religious Council.

CCETSW have also published a book on themes linked to the Symposium, *Visions of Reality: Religion and Ethnicity in Social Work*, edited by Naina Patel, Don Naik and Beth Humphries. Available from CCTESW, Derbyshire House, St Chad's Street, London WC1H 8AD, Tel 0171 278 2455.

Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain

The Runnymede Trust has established a Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain under the Chairmanship of Sir John Burgh. The Commission is looking at Britain now and how it will develop over the next twenty years and in particular at the implications of Britain's increasingly diverse society. They have asked for any initial submissions to be made to them by 30 June and as background to this have issued a short booklet about the ground which they hope to cover in their work.

The Commission intends to complete its report by the end of 1999. The Network Office is in touch with the Commission's staff and have had some discussions on the relevance of religious faith and identity to the issues with which they are dealing.

Booklets about the Commission are available from: The Runnymede Trust, 133 Aldersgate Street, London EC1A 4JA, Tel 0171 600 9666.

Sir Sigmund Sternberg awarded Templeton Prize

Sir Sigmund Sternberg was recently awarded the highly prestigious Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion, with a £750,000 award. It is given each year to a living person who has demonstrated "extraordinary originality in advancing humankind's understanding of God and spirituality". Sir Sigmund is well known to many in the field of inter faith relations, with long standing involvement in such organisations as the International Council of Christians and Jews and, more recently, the Three Faiths Forum. He is also known for his founding of the Sternberg Centre of Judaism in London.

Council of Christians and Jews appointment

The Council has announced the appointment as Director from 1 January 1999 of Sister Margaret Shepherd, who presently serves as its Deputy Director. Sister Margaret is a Catholic Nun who belongs to the Sisters of Sion. She is the first woman and the first Roman Catholic to be appointed to the post. She has worked for many years in the area of Jewish-Christian dialogue and her appointment has been widely welcomed.

Armagh conference on religion, community and conflict

The Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum and the International Interfaith Centre (Oxford) were among the organisers of a conference in Armagh in February on "Religion, Community and Conflict" which was arranged to help peace-makers, community-relations workers and members of faith communities in Northern Ireland explore the religious dimensions of conflict and the contributions faith communities

can make to resolving conflict. Other co-ordinating organisations included Action for Peoples in Conflict; Armagh City and District Partnership; Armagh City Council; the Irish School of Ecumenics; and World Conference on Religions and Peace.

Speakers from South Africa, Sri Lanka and the Middle East, who are actively working for peace in their own communities, joined representatives of churches, minority faiths and progressive community organisations from Northern Ireland for two days of dialogue. A full report on the conference has been prepared by Revd Maurice Ryan and is available from the IIC (Tel 01865 202745). In his report he writes,

"One of the most helpful features of this conference was the sense of realism and concern, which pervaded the two days of reflection and debate, to face squarely the paradoxes and contradictions endemic within cultural and religious conflict situations. Eminent speakers and widely representative delegates were concerned to 'tell it like it is', refusing to blur distinctions or gloss over differences, while at the same time strenuously seeking positive pathways to reconciliation."

A Millennium Invocation: Universal Love

On 18 April 1999, a special event is due to take place at Friends House London celebrating the theme of universal love. Nine faiths will work together to present an evening of song, drama, dance and poetic invocation in-the-round to launch a national initiative to encourage inter faith groups to take up the theme of "universal love" in their own millennium events.

A booklet of guidelines is to be published containing suggestions, ideas and quotations on the theme of universal love as a resource for these occasions. All faiths are invited to join in this venture. For further information, write to Margot Tennyson, Abbeyfield, 15 Wellfield Avenue, London N10 2EA.

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Network Link News

Among Network member bodies are 36 local inter faith groups, associations and councils. The Network is also in touch informally with about another 40 local initiatives. It holds regional link meetings for members and others involved in inter faith work.

Link Meeting in Luton

The Southeast (North) Region link meeting for inter faith organisers took place in Luton on 19 March. It was kindly hosted by Luton Inter Faith Forum at the "Grass Roots" Centre at the Industrial College. The meeting began with a news round up from those present on recent developments in their areas and concluded with a short discussion session focusing on plans for the year 2000.

Luton Inter Faith Forum. Zafar Khan and Shanthy Hettiarachchi welcomed participants on behalf of the Forum and Grassroots and reported on the launch of the Luton Inter Faith Forum in July 1997. They described the faith make up of Luton and said those involved in the Forum have links within their own faith communities as well as with other relevant structures such as the local SACRE.

The Luton Inter Faith Forum has had an encouraging start and has established good working relationships with the Luton Borough Council and the Mayor of Luton attended its launch last year. Members of the Forum have been helped by visits to the Leicester Council of Faiths and the Islamic Foundation and also by their contact with the Birmingham Council of Faiths, Westminster Interfaith and the Wolverhampton Inter Faith Group.

In October an inter faith pilgrimage was organised with visits to four different places of worship. This helped create an awareness of the Forum and served as a public witness to the diversity of faith within Luton. Proposals have been made to the Sacred Land Project to nominate an area of Luton as "A Culturally and

Religiously Diverse Village in the Contemporary History of Britain."

Wycombe Sharing of Faiths. Anne Bowker and Akhtar Hussain reported that there has recently been a joint meeting between Wycombe Sharing of Faiths and the Reading Inter Faith Group. Members found it interesting to learn of the different contexts out of which the two groups had grown.

The Reading group had developed out of an educational context and therefore had an interest in sharing knowledge of different faith traditions. The Wycombe Sharing of Faiths group grew out of a response to disturbances in High Wycombe and was formed in the early 1980s as a joint initiative between a local Anglican clergyman and the local mosque. The group has normally met in a Methodist church hall or at an Anglican church or in members' homes. There have also been meetings at the local mosque.

Some 12% of the population in High Wycombe are Muslim and the group would like to increase participation from this community. The WSF group is mainly made up from individuals with an interest in coming together to share their faiths, rather than of formal "representatives" of the faith communities. The agenda of the group is dictated primarily by the interests of its members. However, the local Council now organise an annual meeting for faith community representatives.

Bedford Council of Faiths: Revd Nicholas Elder talked about the different faith groups in Bedford and explained that a previous Bedford local inter faith group had been in existence for a number of years. This had focused primarily on personal sharing, but a growing feeling that a more representative body was needed which could provide a point of reference for the local authority and other public bodies in the area led to the formation last year of the Bedford Council of Faiths. This held its first AGM on 3 February this year and formally adopted a constitution, modelled on that of the Leicester Council of Faiths, and elected council members.

The BCF has a core of community representatives. It also has as associate members individuals who are interested in its work. The Council of Faiths will be holding open meetings. Its membership at present includes Baha'is, Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. The shift to a more "public" role has been marked by a change of venue to the local Racial Equality Council offices with which good links have been established. This means that the meetings are taking place on "neutral" territory without a "host"/"guest" situation. It is hoped that the local authority will use the new Council of Faiths in a consultative role and it may be that the Council of Faiths can secure some limited funding.

Aylesbury Revd Peter Atkinson said that roughly 8% of Aylesbury's population come from an ethnic minority background and most of these are Muslim. He is a member of an Anglican team ministry in Aylesbury which has the responsibility for developing relations with the local mosque. This is progressing well, with the help of Imam Dayan from the mosque. Revd Atkinson is also a member of the local Racial Equality Council and chairs the Aylesbury police advisory group and these links are helpful from an inter faith perspective. There is at present no structured inter faith organisation in Aylesbury, but it would be helpful to develop one which could focus on matters of common concern to the various faith communities.

Hitchin: Kay Petrie talked about the arrival of the local Sikh community in Hitchin some years ago. She was drawn into links with the community as a result of her work in the local library which led to personal friendships. Events and exhibitions were mounted at the library and the Sikh community acquired a local church hall which became their gurdwara.

While there is no structured inter faith group in Hitchin, links between the Churches and the Sikh community are good. A crucial aspect of inter faith relations is the development of personal friendships and in Hitchin this has ensured that there are good links between the

communities. At the time of One World Week, Churches Together in Hitchin regularly organise a visit to different places of worship which ends up in the gurdwara where splendid hospitality is always provided. A visit was arranged recently to the Swaminarayan Hindu temple in Neasden which made a big impact on participants.

Watford Inter Faith Association. Sally Spear explained that the Watford Inter Faith Association holds occasional meetings during the year. The Association has done good work in building links between the different communities in Watford but would like to find ways to increase commitment to and involvement in its work.

Other Regional Inter Faith News

Basingstoke: Basingstoke Association of Faiths and Cultures held a talk in January on the United Nations and its achievements, in the context of reflection on global interdependence and how we can work better together. It was held at the Civic Offices and the Major, Councillors and Council Officers attended as well as Daniel Wheatley (Education Officer of the One World Trust), composer Michael Desousa and BAFC members. In February the Association held a meeting on religious attitudes to justice and mercy and also a pot luck dinner linked to celebration of the Baha'i festival days of Ayyam-i-Ha which precede the fasting month of Ala.

Edinburgh: The Edinburgh Inter Faith Association arranged a "meet your neighbour" event at Leith Town Hall on 14 March where 140 people from eight faith communities came together in an informal setting with songs, dances, music, children's stories and stalls.

London: Friends Meeting House Muswell Hill held a meeting on 18 March on "Deepening our Worship" as part of a series of meetings to "discover what we can learn through experience

about other spiritual practices, meditation techniques and contemplation exercises..." with participants Most Ven. Pandit Vajiragnana, Head of the London Buddhist Vihara, Robert MacPhail of the Vihara and Margot Tennyson and Alec Davidson of the Muswell Hill meeting.

Newcastle: On 14 February Rt Revd Martin Wharton was enthroned as the new Bishop of Newcastle. Members and leaders of the major faith communities were present and welcomed the Bishop at one point in the service. The Bishop then publicly endorsed the "Many faiths, one people" declaration which was first drawn up by the churches and faith leaders in 1992. Further information from Mr Andy Lie, Tel 0191 2732110.

Reading : Hugh Boulter, of the Reading Inter Faith Group, has published a paper in the Occasional Papers Series of the Religious Experience Research Centre on "Religious Experience in the Inter-Faith Context". £2.50 inc post and packing from the Centre at Westminster College, Oxford OX2 9AT.

Suffolk Inter Faith Resource have published an *Inter-Faith Handbook for Community Use*, giving guidelines on diet, festivals and practices of local faith/cultural groups. £2.50 from SIFRE, Bolton Lane, Ipswich IP4 2BT.

Tower Hamlets Conference

A conference on "Faith Communities and the Regeneration of Tower Hamlets" was held on 21 April at the Town Hall. It was facilitated by One for Life with the cooperation of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. The following account is based on material supplied by Revd John Webber.

One for Life is an informal, ever changing and developing, network of people in Tower Hamlets that for the last five years has encouraged programmes of multi-faith cooperation. It has worked with the Borough Council before in arranging a joint visit to Bradford, to see the multi-faith work there, especially in resourcing religious education. The Tower Hamlets conference drew on this

link, with a Bradford speaker joining speakers from the Borough.

The focus of the conference was the specific contribution of people of faith to the overall regeneration of community in Tower Hamlets. The planning group brought together people from all the major faith communities there, and Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jews, Muslims and Sikhs were all well represented on the day itself. A variety of concrete examples of such contributions, both in Tower Hamlets and Bradford, were presented in the morning. Afternoon workshops included ones on youth, the provision of worship and community space, health, and women's issues.

Lunch was provided by the Gurdwara in the best tradition of Sikh hospitality, and it was perhaps over lunch that the most important work of the day was done, as people across the faith divides made new friendships, planned joint alliances and learnt the simple lesson, as one delegate put it, of how much they enjoyed each other's company. Some of the workshop participants decided to form continuing working groups. There is a possibility that a long held dream of establishing a small multi-faith centre will, at last, come to something. There was a strong feeling that the conference should be the beginning, not the end of a process.

The conference was held against the background of increasing communal tension and violence in the run up to local elections in which the National Front and the British National Party have conducted a very aggressive campaign. The conference endorsed an appeal for tolerance and understanding - and the wise use of the ballot - that had received the support of all the major centres of worship in the Borough. The motto for that appeal could serve for the conference as well: Celebrating the Difference.

The next issue of *Inter Faith Update* is scheduled for September 1998 and contributions can be sent on the enclosed form by 28 August to Dr Harriet Crabtree at The Inter Faith Network for the UK (Reg. Char. 296773) 5/7 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9SN, tel 0171 388 0008 Fax 0171 387 7968.

Inter Faith Update

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Network National Meeting: Millennium

The theme of this year's Network National Meeting was "Millennium". Participants heard about the plans for the involvement of the Christian Churches and other faith communities in its celebration. Held on 13 July at the National Council for Voluntary Organisations in London's Kings Cross, the speakers included those who are playing key roles in the process from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), the New Millennium Experience Company, which is responsible for the building of the Millennium Dome at Greenwich, in addition to faith community representatives.

Network Co-Chair Bishop Roy Williamson welcomed participants to the meeting and invited those present to join in a short period of silence, calling to mind the recent tragic deaths in Northern Ireland of three young children in an arson attack on their home.

The Inter Faith Network for the United Kingdom promotes understanding and respect between the faith communities in the UK.

We are working towards a Britain in which people of different faiths can draw on their own spiritual heritage, with integrity, to help create a society rooted in shared values and characterised by mutual respect and understanding.

The morning session started with a talk on "Calendars and Festivals – their Importance in our Lives" by Ms Shahin Bekhradnia of the Zoroastrian Community and the World Congress of Faiths. She explored the different calendars and festivals of the faith communities and their significance to our lives.

The second speaker was Revd Donald Elliott of the United Reformed Church, Convenor of the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland's Four Nations Millennium Consultative Group. He spoke on "2000: A Date with Special Significance for Christians" and outlined the substantial plans of the British Churches for marking the Millennium as an important celebration of the birth of Jesus.

Ms Clare Pillman, Head of the Millennium Unit of the DCMS rounded off the morning session with her talk on "2000: A Date in the National Calendar". She spoke of the Government's response to the general interest in the Millennium and its intention that as many people as possible throughout the UK participate in, benefit from and *enjoy* the Millennium celebrations. The Government wants the celebrations to leave a tangible legacy for the people of Britain and to ensure awareness and appreciation of the value of the Millennium programme both at home and abroad.

After a break for lunch, Bishop Roy Williamson introduced Revd Canon Colin Fletcher, Chaplain to the Archbishop of Canterbury and Co-Chair

of the "Lambeth Group". He spoke about the purpose, function and progress of the Lambeth Group or, to give its full title, "the Churches and Other Faiths sub-group of the Millennium Coordinating Group of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport".

This was followed by perspectives on the work of the Lambeth Group by four of its other members: Mr Deepak Naik, Public Relations Officer of the National Council of Hindu Temples; Mr Indarjit Singh OBE, Director of the Network of Sikh Organisations (UK) and Vice-Chair, Inter Faith Network; Mr Neville Nagler, Director General of the Board of Deputies of British Jews; and Mr Iqbal Sacranie, Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain

The meeting was then joined by Miss Jennifer Page CBE, Chief Executive of the New Millennium Experience Company, which carries responsibility for the Millennium Dome at Greenwich. She gave an enthusiastic overview of the technological and creative challenge of this giant project, explaining the role and shape of the "Spirit Zone" within it.

After a brief period of questions to her, there followed an Open Forum with a panel comprising all the afternoon speakers together with Mr Warwick Hawkins of DCMS and Dr Harriet Crabtree, Deputy Director of The Inter Faith Network, who has represented the Network office on the Lambeth Group.

The full report of the proceedings of the meeting is available from the Network office at £2.75 plus 75p for postage and packing.

Network AGM

The Network AGM followed the National Meeting. At it applications for membership of the Network were accepted from: Loughborough Council of Faiths; Christians Aware Interfaith Programme; and the Scottish Joint Committee on Religious and Moral Education.

Network Farewell to Vice-Chair Mrs Ivy Guttridge MBE

A warm appreciation was offered at the AGM of the work of Mrs Ivy Guttridge MBE, who retired as a Network Vice-Chair with a special link to local inter faith work earlier in the year due to health reasons.

She had held this position since 1992. A leading Methodist layperson involved in inter faith work for many years, she had also served on the Network's Executive Committee since its founding in 1987. Her work with Wolverhampton Inter Faith Group was, and continues to be, an inspiration to many. Her contribution to the Inter Faith Network has been enormous. In recognition of this, a presentation book has been given to her on behalf of the Network and all its members with heartfelt good wishes for improved health and for her continued involvement with inter faith work.

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National Updates

Crime and Disorder Act

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 came into force on 31 July. Part of this Act provides for heavier penalties for crimes of violence and damage which are "racially aggravated". While the Bill was before Parliament a number of organisations co-operated to lobby for amendments to extend these provisions to cover violence or damage directed at members of a "religious" group as well as a "racial" group. The Network's Executive Committee offered their support for this. The Government rejected these amendments when they were debated in the House of Commons. Instead it tabled its own designed to ensure, that where there may be a religious element to a crime, if the hostility can be shown to be even partially racially motivated, then it will be covered by the provisions on racial aggravation.

Human Rights Bill

Following exchanges with the Churches and other faith groups, the Government brought forward fresh proposals in June, to deal with the concerns, in particular relating to the employment practices of schools and religious charities. The amendments made earlier to the Bill in the House of Lords were removed and the Government's amendments were substituted. New provisions were also added to the School Standards and Framework Bill, which is now an Act, to deal with concerns over employment practices in "denominational" schools.

The amendments to the Human Rights Bill require the courts to pay particular regard in relevant cases to "the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion" guaranteed by the European Convention of Human Rights when exercised by a religious organisation. The Bill is expected to receive the Royal Assent later this autumn.

Lambeth Palace Inter Faith Meeting

The Archbishop of Canterbury hosted an inter faith meeting at Lambeth Palace on 9 June, entitled "Looking Backward, Looking Forward". It focused on the experiences of different communities in settling in Britain and their hopes for the future. Leaders of the faith communities attended along with representatives from student religious organisations.

The Archbishop opened the meeting by reflecting on the changes which have taken place since the Second World War in the pattern of faith communities present in Britain. Participants agreed that there have been significant steps forward towards improved co-operation, such as the discussions on a religious identity question in the 2001 census and the creation of a "model" RE syllabus. Several examples were also raised which showed a shift in attitude such as the Government funding of two Muslim schools and the success of the campaign to keep the Bhaktivedanta Manor Hindu temple open.

Events marking the 50th Anniversary of the arrival of migrants from the Caribbean on board the "Windrush" were mentioned and it was pointed out how the British Churches at that time did not welcome the new arrivals and thus contributed to the impetus to establish Black majority Churches. The Archbishop regretted the cold welcome by the existing Churches, but added, "the development of Black led Churches has been a great blessing, adding richness to the life of the British Churches and of our society".

Several other concerns were also raised such as the effect of the prevalent drug culture in British society and how media coverage sometimes seems to misrepresent faith traditions. It was suggested that faith communities should take a more proactive stance, maybe by training faith community representatives appearing on radio and television and also looking into the

possibility of faith communities producing their own programmes with the introduction of digital TV.

The progress in inter faith co-operation was recognised, but it was noted that there remains a long way to go in creating the right attitudes, especially among those who still view inter faith work with suspicion. The meeting ended with a reaffirmation of the importance of inter faith work for our society.

Inter Faith in Schools

This autumn the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority is beginning, alongside its review of the National Curriculum, a review of the current guidance to local authorities on religious education syllabuses. This will provide an opportunity to consider how far these pay adequate attention to inter faith issues, which are of growing importance in British society.

The Network has commissioned Mr Lat Blaylock, Executive Officer of the Professional Council for Religious Education, to undertake a short survey of the extent to which current religious syllabuses include a component on inter faith relations, supplementing this by consultation, mostly by telephone, with advisers in a number of local education authorities. It is intended to use this survey as a contribution to the QCA Review.

Anglican Bishops discuss Inter Faith issues

The Lambeth Conference of the world-wide Anglican Communion, which was held recently at Canterbury, adopted a number of resolutions on inter faith relations. The Conference made a call to all faith communities to acknowledge their responsibility to mobilise spiritual, moral and material resources to promote and protect, as absolute rights, each person's freedom of thought, conscience and religion. One of the key Resolutions of the Conference was that

Christians, while remaining committed to mission and proclamation of the Christian Gospel should not "proselytise", i.e. target specific groups or individuals and should not offer "material inducements" or put undue pressure on anyone to convert.

The Conference further resolved that the approach of Christians to people of other faiths needs to be marked by: a commitment towards working towards genuinely open and loving human relationships; exploration of common ground and differences between the faiths; action with all those in conflict and a desire to both listen to people of all faiths and to express their own beliefs.

The full text of the Conference resolutions is available from the Anglican Communion Office, Partnership House, 157 Waterloo Road, London SE1 8UT Tel: 0171 620 1110. Further information is also available at the web site: <http://www.lambethconference.org>.

New Jewish-Muslim Student Inter Faith Initiative

The formation of the *Calamus-Maimonides Student Forum* was announced in July. The forum will provide a channel for students to meet and co-operate on an individual basis over a broad range of issues which affect both communities. The aims of the forum are: to foster and encourage links between Muslim and Jewish students; to unite Muslim and Jewish students through educational, cultural and social activities and to provide a safe environment within which the students can explore and expand both their similarities and their differences. For further information please contact the Maimonides Foundation, 38 Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BU Tel: 0171 222 1992.

CRE's Personal Responsibility Campaign

The Commission for Racial Equality is launching a major campaign on the theme of personal responsibility. It forms part of the public education programme entitled "Uniting Britain". Other strands of the campaign have included "All Different, All Equal" and "Kick Racism out of Football".

The campaign is designed to encourage individuals to take personal responsibility for challenging racism. Its message is that everyone must help in the fight against racism, not just the ethnic minorities or relevant authorities. Two leaflets will be widely distributed along with other materials offering advice on what you can do if you witness discrimination and also a simple guide for the victims of discrimination about their rights. Copies of the leaflets are available from: The Information Section Commission for Racial Equality, Elliot House, 10/12 Allington Street, London SW1E 5EH Tel: 0171 932-5437

Religious Advisers meet Service Chiefs

The September issue of the Ministry of Defence journal, Focus reports that senior officers from the Armed Forces met with the newly appointed Religious Advisers of Other Faiths at the Armed Forces Chaplaincy Centre at Netheravon recently.

The five religious advisors have been appointed as part of the of the Armed Forces drive towards equal opportunities. Their roles will include advising on matters such as codes of conduct, religious needs and dress. The five advisers are: Mr Ronald Maddox (Buddhist); Mr Deepak Naik (Hindu); Rev Malcolm Weisman (Jewish); Mr Iqbal Sacranie (Muslim) and Mr Indarjit Singh (Sikh).

New Cambridge Centre

The Centre for Jewish-Christian Relations has been established in Cambridge. The Centre will offer the first Masters degree in Jewish Christian Relations in the UK as well as a certificate and diploma. A two week summer course is planned for July 1999 as are other seminars and conferences. Courses in the curriculum will include topics ranging from languages courses in Hebrew and Greek and Jewish Christian relations in history and in the 20th Century to Biblical interpretation. For more information contact: Edward Kessler at The Centre for Jewish Christian Relations, Wesley House, Jesus Lane, Cambridge CB5 8BJ Tel: 01223 462668

Patents Directive adopted

In *Inter Faith Update* Issue 5 (September 1997), we reported that proposals were being discussed in the European Parliament for the legal protection of "biotechnological inventions". Several religious organisations expressed concern about various aspects of the directive and the Gaia Foundation was very active in lobbying against the proposals. After much consultation the Directive has now been adopted without significant changes and is now part of European Community law.

Advertisers warned not to mock religion

The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) has been receiving several complaints about advertisements that seem to trivialise or mock religion. Complaints have been upheld against companies such as International Paper UK, Diesel Jeans and Stella Artois. As reported in *The Times* (12 August), the ASA's August report suggests that advertisers strike a balance between creativity and sensitivity. Advertisers should exercise restraint as using religious references can often cause offence. In a recent survey 78% of those questioned agreed that disrespectful references to any religion should not be allowed.

Jewish-Muslim Business Forum launched

The Alif-Aleph Foundation aimed at bringing together Jewish and Muslim business leaders was launched at the annual dinner of the Mainonides Foundation held at the Victoria and Albert Museum in June. Over three hundred prominent members of the respective communities gathered to celebrate the launch.

Sir Sigmund Sternberg honoured

The Board of Deputies of British Jews has awarded its first Community Service Award to Sir Sigmund Sternberg. At a Gala Dinner of the Board held at the Great Hall, Lincoln's Inn in London, the medal was presented by Home Secretary, Jack Straw MP, who praised Sir Sigmund's wide ranging work in the inter faith field.

The Network's New Information Officer

Brian Pearce writes: The Network has a new member of staff. He is Bhupinder Singh who has been appointed as its Information Officer. The post was advertised through member bodies and in the national press and a large number of high quality applications were received. A selection panel interviewed shortlisted candidates.

Bhupinder, who is aged 28, is actively involved in a number of Sikh organisations and is the leader of a Scout group. He is the editor of a newsletter, *Sikh Spirit*, and has considerable knowledge of computers. Recently, he was invited to Buckingham Palace to attend a reception given for young achievers. He is strongly committed to building good inter faith relations and we have been delighted to welcome him in the Network office. One of his responsibilities is to work on *Inter faith Update*, so please keep him supplied with information for it.

Study shows religion is good for you

The CNN web site reports on an American study has linked good health with religion. The study of 4,000 people aged over 65 found those who participated in religious activities were 40 percent less likely to have high blood pressure, which can increase the risk of heart disease. Research has shown that religious people are less depressed and have healthier immune systems than the non-religious. See the full report at the web site, <http://www.cnn.com/HEALTH>

Resources

Religious Festivals Calendar

The 1998/99 edition of the Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education, calendar of religious festivals will shortly be available at £4.25 inc p&p contact Shap c/o The National Society's RE Centre, 36 Causton Street, London SW1P 4AU Tel: 0171 932 1194

RMEP has published a revised and updated edition of the Shap illustrated book, *Festivals in World Religions*. Priced at £19.95 plus £1.50 p&p ISBN 1 85175 156 4

Faith Full Young London?

Multi-faith work with young Londoners. A 28 page report by Simon Abbott. Priced at £5 available from London Youth Matters, Pastures Youth Centre, Davies Lane, London E11 3DR. Tel: 0181 558 1233

Focus on Scotland

Network Executive Committee member Sister Isabel Smyth is Secretary of the Churches Agency for Inter Faith Relations in Scotland, and Secretary of the Scottish Inter Faith Consultative Group. She is also involved in Glasgow Sharing of Faiths. This piece is drawn from information provided by her.

Scotland is at an interesting point in its history. After 300 years of being controlled by Westminster we are about to have our own Parliament once more. There is a certain amount of optimism in the country that Scotland can evolve a society that is just and equitable and give voice to its ordinary citizens as well as to the poor and the marginalised. This sense of optimism is also felt among people of faith and there is a desire that the multi-faith nature of Scottish society should be taken seriously.

The Scottish Inter Faith Consultative Group

The Scottish Inter Faith Consultative Group came into being in 1996. It is made up of representatives of those Scottish bodies which are already in membership of the UK Network and of those UK-wide Network member bodies with members in Scotland, supplemented by other invitees to ensure a properly balanced representation of the different faith communities and of other organisations with an interest in inter faith relations.

SIFCG has now been in existence for two years. It has already made an impact. It has established good relations with the section of the Scottish Office with responsibility for church-state relations, including all faith communities. Its submission to the Scottish Office on the Scottish Parliament in June of this year received coverage in a national newspaper.

SIFCG sees a clear need for a shift in consciousness within government to acknowledge the fact that Scotland is a multi faith society where Christianity is one part of a spectrum of religious beliefs. The submission suggested that:

- the new Parliament should appoint someone to liaise with religious faiths - perhaps a Minister for Religious Affairs, or a committee within the Parliament that meets with the different religious communities.
- the new Parliament should draw up a mission statement, showing its commitment to religious equality and to ensuring that all faiths have appropriate and equal access to services.
- there should be no religious discrimination in the new Scotland and this should be incorporated into the law

It will be important that these ideas are taken forward by the new Parliament.

One of the challenges facing us here is that unfortunately there is no one in Scotland formally employed to deal with inter faith work. This means that anything that happens is dependent on volunteers. The Scottish Inter Faith Consultative Group believes that the Millennium is an opportune moment to rectify this so it is seeking funding for a worker and is negotiating with Glasgow Museums for office space. This would be a great step forward for inter faith relations in Scotland.

Inter faith organisations and groups in Scotland

There are, of course, a number of other inter faith initiatives in Scotland such as the Glasgow and Edinburgh branches of the Council of Christians and Jews and the Christian/Muslim Forum. The latter is particularly keen to find out about those areas in the world where tension

between the two faiths seems to contribute to violence and conflict.

There are local inter faith groups in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow. The Edinburgh group is currently the most active with a well designed programme of monthly events. Its annual pilgrimage, which takes people to the places of worship of the faith communities in the city, has become well established and now attracts over a hundred people. Each year it has a dinner and reception hosted by the City Council. The focus of discussion at this year's event is to be Islamophobia.

The Glasgow Sharing of Faiths group is the oldest inter faith group in Scotland. This year it is planning a pilgrimage around places of worship in the west end of the city to coincide with One World Week and hopes that this might become a regular feature there. In the course of September the Hindu community in Glasgow are organising a dialogue event for young people and during Lama Ringu Tulku's visit to Glasgow at about the same time the Buddhists are arranging a public Christian/Buddhist dialogue.

The Aberdeen group have regular monthly meetings to which the public are invited. The Dundee group has plans to mount a "Meet Your Neighbour" event this autumn which will encourage members of the public to meet members of the different faith communities there. It is modelled on a very successful earlier event in Glasgow organised by the Churches Agency for Interfaith Relations. It was originally a Christian initiative but was taken up more widely, with the Asian community radio station in Glasgow including discussion programmes on various world religions during June this year.

So often for those of us engaged in inter faith work the road seems long and we don't seem to be getting anywhere fast but reviewing some of the developments in Scotland shows that sometimes seeds do bear fruit and awareness of inter faith issues does grow.

Requests and Enquiries

Inter Faith in Cyberspace

Increasingly, strange looking abbreviations that signal the announcement of Internet sites and Email are appearing on almost every piece of literature that arrives at the Network office. Determined not to be left behind, the Network has now started printing its Email address on all new publications! For those of you who have also joined this revolution you can contact us at: ifnet.uk@btinternet.com with your comments and inquiries.

Faith communities and inter faith organisations are also using the Internet as an opportunity to reach a greater audience and, as the world becomes a smaller place, the need for co-operation between people of different backgrounds increases. If you have come across an interesting Internet web site related to faith or inter faith matters please do let us know.

Millennium Events

With so many religious and inter faith organisations planning events for the Millennium year, the Network office is planning to keep a calendar of events and festivals to help avoid too many clashes. So if you are involved in planning any events or if you hear about events in your area please do let us know.

National Council for Voluntary Youth Service

The National Council for Voluntary Youth Service is interested in developing contact with organisations that work with young people from minority ethnic and religious groups. The NCVYS brief is to provide support to voluntary organisations working with young people. This is done in a variety of ways and includes the provision of networks, information, advice, models of good practice and personal developmental support.

NCVYS is an umbrella organisation representing the work of the voluntary youth services in England to Government and other appropriate bodies. It has existed for over sixty years as the only independent national organisation, which represents and supports the interest of voluntary organisations working with young people and volunteers. It co-ordinates and supports 500,000 paid and voluntary workers who provide direct support to approximately five million people through its members. NCVYS offers a range of support to youth organisations including communicating with the Government at local and national level, parliamentary briefings, reports, organising meetings, conferences, networking opportunities and advice on crucial issues such as child protection, funding and training.

NCVYS works with a range of organisations such as the National Council for Voluntary Organisations and the National Youth Agency. The diversity and strength of the NCVYS's work is reflected in its membership, which includes organisations such as Save The Children, Fairbridge, Youth Clubs UK and Centrepoint. For more information please contact Kam Dhenjan, NCVYS, The Peel Centre, Percy Circus, London. Tel: 0171-833-3003.

Regional Updates

Luton: The Luton Interfaith Forum held an evening of learning on Sikhism at Guru Nanak Gurdwara on 25 April, and an evening of Learning on Judaism at Luton Synagogue on 12 May.

West of England: More than 70 members of five interfaith groups joined together in May to visit the Amitabha Buddhist Centre at West Quantoxhead, near Minehead. They came from Bristol, West Somerset, Bournemouth (Dorset), Taunton and Exeter. Together they learned more about Buddhism and sought to improve links between the groups.

Gloucester: On 19 April people of several different faiths gathered in Gloucester Cathedral in a Multi-Faith Celebration organised by Gloucestershire Inter Faith Action and the Race Equality Council for Gloucestershire. Faith groups gave presentations that expressed their solidarity against racism, with hymns and prayers suitable for a multi-faith event.

Loughborough: The Council of Faiths celebrated three years since its launch by joining the Inter Faith Network. At their AGM on 25 June, members of several different faiths were present to hear the Mayor of Charnwood; David Paterson, chair of the Council of Faiths; and Dr N S Saundh of the Sikh community speak on "The Place of Religions in the Health of the Community", the text of which is available from Daphne Beale, Loughborough Council of Faiths Tel: 01509-261688.

London: A course of five talks and discussions entitled "Widening Our Horizons" were held through June and July by Christians Aware in Southall. Dr N K Shah (Jain), Sr. Andree Meylan & Vivien Wright (Christian Orthodox), Mr Rustom Bhedwar (Zoroastrian), Mrs Jessamine Hopkins (Unitarian) and Zaudi Burton (Rastafarian) gave an introduction to their respective faiths beliefs and practices.

London: The World Congress of Faiths held their AGM at the Royal Scottish Corporation, Covent Garden in July, where Rev Marcus Braybrooke was elected as the Acting Chairman. This was followed by the Sir Francis Younghusband Memorial Lecture given by Bishop Bill Swing of the United Religious Initiative.

Leicester: In August, the Islamic Foundation hosted a seminar entitled "The New Constitutional Changes in Sudan and their implications for Muslims and Christians" presented by Prof. Zakaria Bashir, Vice Chancellor of the University of Juba (Southern Sudan).

Edinburgh: From 17-21 August at St. Giles Cathedral in the heart of the Edinburgh Festival, the Edinburgh Interfaith Association helped to

organise a time of rest and silence for people from different faiths. Members of various communities were involved in planning, facilitating and contributing ideas for meditation and reflection.

Leicester: Francis Cardinal Arinze of the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue spent a day in Leicester at the request of the City Council. After a busy day of worship in the morning and a reception hosted by the mayor after lunch, the evening's programme was organised by the Leicester Council of Faiths at which the Cardinal Arinze gave a lecture entitled "Believers Walking Together into the Third Millennium". He emphasised the challenges involved in inter-religious dialogue, the responsibilities that faced members of all faiths in the contemporary world and the fruits that would be borne from mutual co-operation.

Diary Dates

This brief diary lists primarily UK inter faith events which are open to the public. Events are listed as far into the future as contributors offer them. In most cases, local groups welcome visitors from further afield and will be glad to try to facilitate visits from groups and individuals from other parts of the country if they have advance warning. International as well as UK inter faith events are regularly listed in the useful World Congress of Faiths' publication *One Family Newsletter* (contact: Mrs Jean Potter at 1 Ivy Lane, Teignmouth, Devon TQ14 8BT).

27 September, Cardiff. A City Walk from the Church of St Nicholas, Greek St. through Butetown to the Lightship in Cardiff Bay starting at 1pm. Organised by Cardiff Interfaith Association. Contact Lorraine Khan Tel: 01222 756303.

29 September, Bradford. Talk by Dr Shabbir Akhtar: "Is Islam compatible with the principles of Interfaith encounter and dialogue?" at the Interfaith Education Centre, Listerhills Road,

Bradford BD7 1HD at 7.30pm. Contact Bradford Concord Interfaith Society Tel: 01274 731674 .

1, 8, 15, 22 October, Southall, Middlesex. Representatives from the Buddhist, Jewish, Hindu, Sikh and Baha'i faiths will talk about their festivals and celebrations. Further information from Sister Karuna Margaret Nourse, Christians Aware, 6 Osterley Park Road, Southall, Middx, UB2 4BL Tel 0181 571 1833.

4 October, Edinburgh. Interfaith pilgrimage by foot/bus/bike or car visiting three of the faith communities. Starting point is Inverleith Park at 1pm. Contact Brother Kentigern, Edinburgh Interfaith Association Tel: 0131 228 3077.

7 October, Leicester. A one day seminar entitled "People of faith in Britain – Today and Tomorrow" at the Islamic Foundation, Markfield Conference Centre, Leicester, from 10am-4.15pm. Dr Ataullah Siddiqui and Dr Christopher Lamb will give short presentations. Cost is £10 for waged, £5 for unwaged, includes refreshments and lunch. Contact Ataullah Siddiqui Tel: 01530 244944 or Colin Chapman Tel: 0117 968 2803.

10 October, Oldham. The International Association of Religious Freedom presents their Autumn seminar entitled "Shaping The Landscape of Our Values and Beliefs" at Oldham Unitarian Chapel, King St. Oldham, from 10.30am to 4pm. Contact Clarice Nuttall Tel 0161 624 6484.

11-18 October, Week of Prayer for World Peace. Details from Trudie Charles, Toc H, Davenant Centre, 179 Whitechapel Road, London E1 1DN Tel: 0171 247 5110.

11 October, Edinburgh. Day conference on Islamophobia at the City Chamber, High Street, Edinburgh from 2-5pm. Main Speaker is Prof. Zaki Badawi. Contact Brother Kentigern, Edinburgh Interfaith Association Tel: 0131 228 3077.

13 October, Loughborough. Pilgrimage of Prayer for Peace and Justice at 6pm, details from David Paterson, Loughborough Council of Faiths Tel: 01509-263047.

13 October, Basingstoke. "Hindu festivals and their meaning", talk followed by the AGM of Basingstoke Association of Faiths and Cultures, at 7.00pm at Committee Room 2, Deanes, BDBC Civic Offices, London Road.

15 October, Liverpool. Meeting of the United Nations Association (Liverpool) and the Merseyside Inter-Faith Group. "Conflict resolution and the work of meditation" at the Baha'i Centre, 3 Langdale Rd. Wavertree, Liverpool at 7.45pm. Contact Dr Ahmed Khan Tel: 0151 733 2940 or Canon Michael Wolfe Tel: 0151 733 1541.

17 October, Wolverhampton. Conference on Faith, Dialogue and Peace at Colton Hill School, Wolverhampton. Contact Wolverhampton Interfaith Group Tel: 01902 427601.

17 October, Birmingham. One day course on *Women of Faith* from 9.30am-4.30pm at the United College of the Ascension, Selly Oak, Birmingham. Fee £7 (£4 for unwaged). Details from: United College of the Ascension, Weoley Park Road, Birmingham B29 6RD Tel: 0121 472 1667.

18 – 25 October, One World Week. *Shaping our landscapes.* Information from P O Box 2555, Reading, Berks RG1 4XW.

18 October, Brighton. One World Week/United Nations Association inter faith service at Brighthelm, North Road, Brighton at 3pm. Contact: Brighton & Hove Inter-Faith Contact Group Tel: 01273 722438 or email: p.sharrock@mistral.co.uk

18/19 October, London. "Working together to change things – A living faith map of this part of London". A 2 day exhibition at the Inter Faith Centre, 125 Salisbury Road, London NW6. Contact Brent Inter Faith Tel: 0171 625 7470 or 0171 372 6864.

19 October, Cheltenham. The annual Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education RE Unit lecture will be held at the Tiered Lecture Theatre, Elwes Building, Park Campus, Cheltenham. Prof. Robert Jackson will speak on "An interpretative Approach to Religious Education". Starts at 7.30pm. Contact Patricia Downes RE Unit Park Campus Tel: 01245 532747.

20 October, Brighton. An inter-faith evening of inspired and devotional poetry, music and dance at St. Peter's Parish Church Hall, York Place, Brighton. Limited number of tickets available at £3 from P O Box 2882, Brighton BN1 1PU (cheques payable to IFCG – enclose SAE). Contact: Michael Butler 01273 421021.

20 October, Derby. "How can and do we worship together? How far does inter-faith dialogue lead to inter-faith worship?" Meeting led by Canon Geoffrey Marshall at The Open Centre, 43 Peartree Road, Derby DE23 6PZ at 7.15pm. Bring and share food. Contact: Janine Shrigley Tel 01332 360737.

23 October, West Somerset. AGM of the West Somerset Inter-Faith Group with Rt Revd Jim Thompson as Guest Speaker. Contact George Punnett Tel: 01643 704738.

25 October, Cardiff. An interfaith celebration at the end of One World Week at the Temple of Peace, Cathays Park, Cardiff at 3pm. A musical celebration of different cultures followed by shared tea. Guest speaker, Mary Lean, a journalist who writes on environment and development issues. Contact: Lorraine Khan Tel 01222 756303.

28 October, Harrow, Middlesex. Harrow Inter Faith Council are organising a trip to the Jain Temple in Leicester. Contact Mary Hale 0181 907 9803 or Phiroza Gan 0181 864 8403.

1, 8, 15, 22, 29 November, London. Series of 5 talks on "Spirituality in Some of the World Religions", all at 3pm at the Inter Faith Centre, 125 Salisbury Road, London NW6. Contact Brent Inter Faith Tel: 0171 625 7470 or 0171 372 6864.

10 November, Liverpool. Meeting of the Merseyside Inter-Faith Group. Canon Noel Vincent of Liverpool Anglican Cathedral will speak of his experience in religious broadcasting at 7.45pm, Harold House, Dunbabin Rd, Liverpool, Contact: Dr Ahmed Khan Tel: 0151 733 2940 or Canon Michael Wolfe Tel: 0151 733 1541.

18 November, London. The Centre for Jewish-Christian Relations will be holding their first Hugo Gryn Memorial Lecture at 7.30pm at Leo Baeck College, London. Edward Kessler will speak on "Jewish-Christian Relations – The Next Generation". Contact the Centre on Tel: 01223 462668.

19 November, Harrow, Middlesex. "Planning for the Millennium" at Norbury First & Middle School, Welldon Crescent, Harrow at 8pm. Members of all faith communities are invited. Contact: Phiroza Gan 0181 864 8403.

20 November, Chiswick, London. Talk on the Zoroastrian faith at the Chiswick Buddhist Vihara, The Avenue, Bedford Park, London W4. Contact Jessamin Hoskins, Richmond Interfaith Group Tel: 0181 892 6373.

26 November, Beaminster. AGM of the One World Fellowship with Brian Pearce, Director of the Inter Faith Network as the invited speaker. Contact John Eedle Tel: 01308 862773.

8 December, Liverpool. Talk on "Human Rights in a multi-faith world" at Kilimatinde House, Rose Lane, Mosely Hill, Liverpool, 7.45pm. Organised by the Merseyside Inter-Faith Group. Contact: Dr Ahmed Khan Tel: 0151 733 2940 or Canon Michael Wolfe Tel: 0151 733 1541.

9 January 1999, Oxford. The Alister Hardy Society presents a one day seminar including a talk by Marcus Braybrooke on "*Religious Experience in Interfaith Fellowship*" at Room C2, Westminster College, Oxford from 10.30am to 4pm. Cost £5 (members of AHS free).

14 January 1999, Harrow, Middlesex. Harrow Inter Faith Council counts down to the

Millennium and AGM at Harrow Civic Centre 7.30-9.30pm. Contact: Phiroza Gan Tel: 0181 864 8403.

18 February 1999, London. Talk by Prof. Bhikhu Parekh of the University of Hull in the "Faith in Higher Education" series at The Centre for Inter-Faith Dialogue, Middlesex University. Contact Christopher Lamb Tel: 0181 362 5000.

Millennium Diary Dates

As noted on page 7 the Network office is compiling a diary of events with an inter faith dimension related to the Millennium year. Please let us know of your planned events and celebrations.

18 April 1999, London, A Millennium Invocation: Universal Love. An evening of song, drama, dance and poetic invocation. All faiths are invited to join in this venture. For further information, write to Margot Tennyson, Abbeyfield, 15 Wellfield Avenue, London N10 2EA

22 September 1999, International Day of Freedom from Debt. Contact: Jubilee 2000 Coalition, PO Box 100 London SE1 7RT Tel: 0171 401 9999 E-mail: mail@jubilee2000uk.org

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Bhupinder Singh, Information Officer,
The Inter Faith Network
5/7 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9SN
Tel: 0171 388 0888 Fax: 0171 387 7968
Email: ifnet.uk@btinternet.com

2000–2009

Newsletters of the Inter Faith Network for the UK



INTER FAITH

UPDATE

Spring 2000 Issue 12

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Faiths at heart of UK Millennium Celebrations

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The year 2000 in the Christian and UK national calendars was entered in a spirit of remarkable inter faith cooperation. Leaders of all the major faiths were present at various events over the First Weekend, such as the Millennium Awards and the Dome opening ceremony on New Year's Eve; and as honoured guests at the Christian services at St Paul's Cathedral, London, St Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh, the Tabernacl in Cardiff and the Waterfront Hall in Belfast.

Shared Act of Reflection and Commitment

On Monday 3 January 2000 a remarkable gathering took place at the Royal Gallery of the House of Lords. Representatives of the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim,

Sikh and Zoroastrian communities of the UK joined in a shared act of reflection and commitment in the presence of Their Royal Highnesses The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester.

This unprecedented event was opened by Rt Hon Chris Smith MP, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, whose Department hosted it as part of the official First Weekend Millennium celebrations. It was drawn to a close with an address by Rt Hon Tony Blair MP, Prime Minister, who attended together with his wife Cherie and son Euan. Highlights of the event were broadcast by the BBC in a special half hour programme immediately after the event.

The Shared Act of Reflection and Commitment was the first such event hosted by any UK Government and Prime Minister Tony Blair was its closing

(Continued on pages 2 & 3)

Research into religious discrimination

An interim report on research into religious discrimination commissioned by the Home Office was published on 31 January. The report, compiled by the project team based at the University of Derby, is based on a literature review and initial consultation with relevant organisations and agencies. The report reviews the relationship between religion, ethnicity and social policy; deals with the history of the religious discrimination issue; considers the way religious identity is dealt with at present within UK law and offers a survey of overseas practice. It also sketches the religious landscape of the UK, discusses whether religious identity should be

seen as a 'private' or 'public' matter; and reviews possible policy options.

In its work leading to its final report the project team will be circulating a structured questionnaire to a sample of local, regional and national religious organisations, holding formal consultative meetings and engaging in local fieldwork in Blackburn, Cardiff, Leicester and Newham. The final report is due in September 2000.

New email

Please note the Network's new email address:

ifnet@

interfaith.org.uk



NETWORK NEWS

Executive Committee Members

The Anglican Bishop of Southwark, Rt Revd Dr Tom Butler succeeded Rt Revd Roy Williamson as a Co-Chair of the Network on 4 January. He has a keen interest in developing better inter faith relations in this country. He serves on the Inner Cities Religious Council and was involved with the work of the Leicester Council of Faiths while he was Bishop of Leicester. He sits as a member of the House of Lords.

Revd Simon Reynolds, Minister of the Calvary Church of God in Christ in Tottenham, London was co-

opted as a member of the Network's Executive Committee in September representing the black majority Christian Churches.

Network Volunteer

The Network was fortunate to have the assistance of William Hopkinson as a volunteer during November and December. He had recently graduated from the University of Nottingham. The Network is grateful to him for his help during a particularly busy period. We wish him well as he begins his career with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Participants at the Shared Act of Reflection and Commitment

- Mrs Joan Bowers, Baha'i, Chester
- The Rt Revd John Cairns, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland
- The Most Revd and Rt Hon Dr George Carey, Archbishop of Canterbury
- Miss Yasmin Esmail, Muslim, Bradford
- Dr Branwen Griffiths, Mahayana Buddhist, Bristol
- Children from Hallfield Junior School, Bayswater, London
- Mr John Harte (Catholic), N. Ireland
- Millennium Youth Council
- Mrs Sali Wyn & Miss Gwenllian Llyr Islwyn, Churches Together in Wales, Swansea
- Miss Claire Jackson (Presbyterian), Northern Ireland
- Millennium Youth Council
- Mr Rohinton Munshi, Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe, London
- Mrs Ravinder Kaur Nijjar, Sikh, Glasgow
- Miss Mithila Ramakrishnan and Mr Nelson Nirupan Thevasagayam, Hindu musicians from the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, London
- Moulana M. Shahid Raza, Leicester Central Mosque and Imams and Mosques Council (UK)
- Baroness the Revd Dr Kathleen Richardson, Moderator of the Churches Commission for Inter Faith Relations
- Professor Jonathan Sacks, Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth
- Mr Iqbal Sacranie, Secretary General, Muslim Council of Britain
- Dr Sapna Shah, Jain, Harrow
- Mr Om Parkash Sharma, President of the National Council of Hindu Temples
- Mrs Ranju, Misses Bhavini and Neha Shukla, Hindu, Newcastle-upon-Tyne
- Kol Simcha: an Octet of Jewish singers led by Ms Viv Bellos
- Mr Indarjit Singh, Director, Network of Sikh Organisations
- Mr Patrick Spence, New Testament Church of God, Birmingham
- Mr Manil Subasinghe, Theravada Buddhist, London
- Miss Anne Waldek, Progressive Jewish Movement, Manchester

The Inter Faith Network for the UK

The Inter Faith Network was founded in 1987. It works with its member bodies to promote good relations between the major faith communities, to combat inter religious prejudice and intolerance and to help make the UK a country marked by mutual understanding and respect between religions where all can practise their faith with integrity.

The Network:

- Provides information on faith communities and on inter faith affairs
- Advises on multi faith projects and inter faith issues
- Publishes materials to aide work in the religious and inter faith sectors
- Fosters inter faith co-operation on social issues
- Holds regular meetings where social and religious questions of concern to the different faith communities can be examined together
- Links 86 member organisations including: representative bodies from the different faith communities; inter faith organisations; local inter faith groups; academic institutions and bodies concerned with multi faith education.

Inter Faith Update is the newsletter of the Inter Faith Network for the UK. It keeps a wide range of organisations and individuals interested in developing good inter faith relations in touch with UK events and projects with a significant inter faith component.

For publications which contain in depth articles on inter faith topics, relevant book reviews or items related to individual faith

communities ask the Network office for details.

Please send any contribution of articles and diary dates for consideration for inclusion in the next issue by **19 May** to:

Bhupinder Singh,
Information Officer,
The Inter Faith Network
5/7 Tavistock Place,
London WC1H 9SN

(Continued from page 1)

speaker. He called for the new millennium to be “an age of faith”. He also spoke about the importance of values central to various faiths, such as justice, mutual respect, compassion and community and stressed the importance of tolerance and education in a multi-cultural society.

The programme for the event was structured around a number of these values, which are of particular significance as we look to our future together. The separate and distinct faiths have different understandings of many aspects of life and, indeed, of the basis of inter faith co-operation. Yet, as members of these faiths affirmed at the event, they also enshrine common values which can form a solid basis for shared life and citizenship.

Values highlighted at the event

“Community” embraces many strands: home, family, relationships and links between the generations. It also includes the faith community itself which helps shape the beliefs and practices of its followers.

“Caring and compassion” are two linked values which encapsulate the ideals and virtues which help make life good. They refer to the kindness that binds us together and the selfless ways in which this kindness is exercised by many.

“Justice” includes many elements - from the importance of just laws, and respect for them, to broader questions of social and economic justice.

“Respect” is present in all relationships based on trust, and implies a due recognition of the dignity of persons and of the importance of other creatures and of our beautiful, fragile planet.

Each value highlighted was introduced by speakers

from the faiths who included leaders and lay members of different ages. Over 40 leading men and women from the nine faiths led all present in an “act of commitment” to mark the beginning of the year 2000 in the national calendar. This had been developed over the preceding months with the involvement of all these faiths.

Planning for the event was a major enterprise involving officials of DCMS, the Inter Faith Network, and two planning groups including representatives of all the nine faiths. Advice on a programme and a guest list covering the nine faiths and the four nations of the UK was given by the faith community organisations. Representatives on the group included Hon Barnabas Leith (Baha’i); Mr Paul Seto (Network of Buddhist Organisations); Revd Michael Ipgrave (Churches Together in Britain and Ireland CCIFR); Mr Om Parkash Sharma (National Council of Hindu Temples); Dr Natubhai Shah (Jain Samaj Europe); Dr Manazir Ahsan (Islamic Foundation); Mr Indarjit Singh (Network of Sikh Organisations); and Mr Jehangir Sarosh (Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe).

An Act of Commitment

In a world scarred by the evils of war, racism, injustice and poverty, we offer this joint Act of Commitment as we look to our shared future.

*We commit ourselves,
as people of many faiths,
to work together
for the common good,
uniting to build a better society,
grounded in values and ideals we share:*

*community,
personal integrity,
a sense of right and wrong,
learning, wisdom and love of truth,*

*care and compassion,
justice and peace,
respect for one another,
for the earth and its creatures.*

*We commit ourselves,
in a spirit of friendship and co-operation,
to work together
alongside all who share our values and ideals,
to help bring about a better world
now and for generations to come.*

This text may be reproduced and used for other events, but please credit its source.

Copies of the full length video of the event provided by the BBC are available from the Network office at **£4.50** (including p + p). It is also planned to publish a transcript of the presentations in due course.

NATIONAL UPDATES

Faith Zone at Millennium Dome

The Dome at Greenwich has now opened. Among its “zones” is Faith Zone. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, described it as “magnificent” following his visit and his praise has been echoed by leaders of other denominations and faiths.

Faith Zone’s simple but beautiful canopied arched structure, designed by Eva Jiricna Architects, stretches above an exciting exhibition reflecting religious faith in the UK today. Text, video and image evoke 2000 years of Christianity and its impact on this country and its people. Tall glass pillars highlight life points common to all faiths, such as the birth of a child, marriage, the farewell at death. Photographs were specially commissioned for these and show the life points as they are experienced in the Baha’i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Zoroastrian traditions. On each pillar all faiths are represented but one is given primacy. Many organisations and individuals from each faith community helped to find the photograph locations and shape the accompanying text for these inspiring columns. Close by is an exhibition of the calendars of the different faiths, highlighting their festivals.

Other contents of Faith Zone also find a balance between honouring and illustrating the significance of the Christian tradition in the history and life of this country while at the same time taking account of the significance of other faith communities in UK life today. These include sections reflecting on conflict and co-operation and an area where visitors can reflect on the fundamental question “How shall I live?” and leave for posterity a note of their own Millennium hopes.

At the heart of the zone is a contemplation space which features a light installation by one of America’s best known light sculptors, James Turrell. It is called Night Rain and its gauze clad interior changes through a spectrum from pink to blue to white, given a sense of looking beyond the enclosure into unlimited space. At the end of the Zone is a celebration of the varied faith landscape as images from the zone are mixed with the reflections of visitors to form a crowd of “companions” with whom the journey continues beyond the zone and into the future.

Faith Zone’s sponsors include the Hinduja

Foundation, the Laing Family Trusts, the Jerusalem Trust and a group of other Christian charitable trusts, and others. Its contents were developed by Words and Ideas and realised by Jasper Jacobs Associates, in close consultation with the Lambeth Group. The Lambeth Group was also involved in the discussions about the shared prayer space at the Dome and the Muslim prayer space just outside it which has been sponsored by members from within that community. A number of special events related to particular faith communities are planned at the Dome, details will be released as they are confirmed.

For Dome tickets or information ring 0870 606 2000 The Dome has excellent transport links and is fully accessible to disabled visitors.

Faith in a reformed second chamber

The Royal Commission on the Reform of the House of Lords published its report *A House for the Future* on 20 January. At present 26 Archbishops and senior Bishops of the Church of England sit as members of the House of Lords. The Commission suggests that religious representation in a reformed second chamber should be broadened to embrace other Christian denominations in all parts of the UK and other faith communities. It proposes that there should be 26 representatives of the Christian Churches, including 21 for those in England of which 16 should be assigned to the C of E and 5 to members of other Christian denominations. The remaining 5 places for members of Christian denominations should be for representatives from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. It recommends that “at any one time” there should be “at least 5” members selected to represent other faiths but it does not specify from which faiths these representatives should be drawn.

The report recommends that a reformed second chamber should include a majority of members appointed by a new independent Appointments Commission with a minority of “regional” members elected under one of the three “electoral systems” offered in the report. It proposes that the Appointments Commission should have the ultimate responsibility for appointing individuals to fill the places allocated to English Churches, other than the Church of England, and those



allocated to Churches in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and to other faith communities.

The report considers problems which might be encountered in deciding which individuals should represent particular faith communities, including the Christian Churches. The Commission recommends that both elected and appointed members should serve fixed (but renewable) terms of 15 years. While recommending that members should be able to retire before their term of office is completed, the report does not consider the situation in which an appointed representative of a faith community ceases to be an appropriate "representative" of that community.

In view of the mixed reception given so far to the Commission's proposals as a whole, it is not yet clear what action will be taken on them. Some faith communities have already expressed concern that internal difficulties could arise from any process of nominating single individuals to represent them.

Jubilee 2000

The Chancellor of the Exchequer announced on 22 December that Britain would cancel 100% of bilateral debts owed to it by some of the poorest nations of the world, on condition that the resources released will be spent on poverty alleviation. About 25 countries are expected to benefit by the end of 2000. The Jubilee 2000 Coalition, which includes a number of faith community organisations, has been campaigning for the last few years for the year 2000, to be the year for debt cancellation for the world's poorest nations. Many of these currently spend more money on servicing their debts to industrialised nations than they do on health, education or alleviating poverty. Many high profile personalities have joined the campaign, the fruits of which are beginning to be seen. The British Government's move follows a similar pledge made by President Clinton on behalf of the United States Government in September 1999.

The Jubilee 2000 campaign continues to persuade other countries to follow suit and pressing for a review of the situation of other countries which have not been offered debt cancellation. Further information about the campaign can be seen at the web site www.jubilee2000uk.org.

Religious question in 2001 Census

Legislation required to enable a question on religious identity to be included in the 2001 Census

in England and Wales has been introduced in the House of Lords by Lord Weatherill as a Government supported Private Member's Bill. This received an unopposed Second Reading on 27 January, although questions were raised about the failure of the proposed census question to list different Christian denominations.

The Scottish Executive has decided against including a question on religious identity in the Census in Scotland, but representations are being made about this decision.

Changing world economics

The 1999 International Interfaith Centre Lecture in association with the World Faiths Development Dialogue was held at Mansfield College, Oxford on 14 October. Andrew Rogerson, the World Bank representative in the UK, spoke about the lessons the World Bank had learned as it tries to fulfil its goal of poverty eradication. He said that they have discovered that technical and financial solutions are not enough and a holistic approach that takes into account cultural values is required. In this context, he argued that dialogue between faith groups and the World Bank has become necessary and welcomed the World Faiths Development Dialogue as a sincere attempt to build such dialogue.

Wendy Tyndale of the World Faiths Development Dialogue raised a challenge to the faith communities in her closing remarks. She asked if they have anything to offer to the people of industrialised countries for whom she thought consumerism has replaced God. She said that it was difficult to take a stand, but that the way ahead was to look for practical "value-based" solutions.

Scottish Inter Faith Council

The new Scottish Inter Faith Council was launched at St Mungo's Museum, Glasgow on 10 October. The launch was attended by Patricia Ferguson MSP, Depute Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament, and also by members of the Inter Faith Council and faith communities in Scotland.

On 19 January the Scottish Inter Faith Council's Chairman, Rawdon Goodier, was given the welcome opportunity of saying a few words about the new Council at a well attended reception hosted by the Rt Revd John Cairns, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, for members of the Scottish Parliament and representatives of faith communities in Scotland. Several members of the Scottish Inter Faith Council attended and were pleased to hear the encouraging addresses given by the Moderator, Sir David Steel

(Presiding Officer of the Parliament) and Donald Dewar (First Minister).

The Scottish Executive is to set up an investigation into religious discrimination in Scotland. In particular discrimination against Catholics, Muslims and others will be investigated by an "equalities unit", which will be set up with the help of the Commission for Racial Equality and the Scottish Inter Faith Council.

Inter Faith Council for Wales

A new framework for inter faith relations in Wales has been launched. For further details contact: Lorraine Khan, 9 Cherry Tree Close, Lisvane, Cardiff CF4 5TE Email lkhan1@aol.com

Northern Ireland Inter Faith Calendar

The Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum has produced a multi-faith calendar for 2000 with dates for Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Chinese, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh festivals. Each month features a different religion or tradition. It is available from: The Secretary, Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum, Stranmills University College, Stranmills Road, Belfast BT9 5DY Tel: 01232 384328 email: n.richardson@stran-ni.ac.uk

Changes at CCJ

The Council of Christians and Jews has recently moved from its offices to new premises at Camelford House, 87-89 Albert Embankment, London.

A new post of Associate President has been created to be nominated by the Progressive Jewish movement. Rabbi Dr Albert Friedlander, Emeritus Rabbi of the Westminster Synagogue and Dean of Leo Baeck College, has taken up the appointment.

Three Faiths Medical Group

A group of Christian, Jewish and Muslim doctors came together at Westminster Cathedral on 13 October under the auspices of the Three Faiths Forum. Mgr Vladimir Felzman, who convened the meeting referred to possible areas of dialogue including the response to suffering, coping with failure and death, genetic engineering, euthanasia, mental health and religion and technology.

New Year Honours

A number of people who have had an impact on inter faith relations in the UK were honoured in the Queen's New Year Honours list. Adam Hafejee Patel, President, Lancashire Council of Mosques and Vice President, Blackburn Community Relations Council becomes a Peer. A CBE was awarded to Bashir Ahmed Maan, for services to race relations and to the community in Scotland. OBE's were awarded to the following: Professor Eileen Barker, for services to INFORM; Revd Canon Colin Fletcher, Co-Chairman, Lambeth Group, for services to the Millennium Celebrations; Revd Alan Greenbat, for services to interfaith dialogue and to Young People; Brian Pearce, Director of the Inter Faith Network, for services to inter faith Relations and to the Millennium Celebrations; Clare Pillman, head of the Millennium Unit at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and a Co-Chair of the Lambeth Group and Rt Rev Gavin Reid, Chairman, Archbishops' Millennium Advisory Group, for services to the Millennium Celebrations. MBE's were awarded to: Revd Stephen Lynas both for services to the Millennium Celebrations; Paul Mendel, formerly Director of the Council of Christians and Jews, for services to ecumenicalism; and Deepak Naik, for services to the Churches and Other Faiths Millennium Group and to Community Relations.

New WCRP Europe President

The European Governing Board of the World Conference on Religion and Peace, which met in Amman in November, elected Jehangir Sarosh of the Zoroastrian community President of WCRP Europe. He is Chair of WCRP UK and a member of the Inter Faith Network Executive Committee.

New Centre at Selly Oak

A Centre for the Study of Christianity and Asian Religions is to be set up as part of the University of Birmingham at Selly Oak. Its aim is to promote mutual understanding, dialogue and respect between Christianity and Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Jainism. The Centre will be launched on 5 May 2000 and is seeking to establish courses and projects that are of use and interest to those communities. Working with other centres in Selly Oak, such as the Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, a new MA/M.Phil programme entitled 'Interreligious Relations' is proposed for September, 2000. For more



information please contact: Dr David Cheetham,
 Graduate Institute for Theology and Religion,
 University of Birmingham, Elmfield House, Bristol
 Road, Birmingham B29 6LQ
 Email: d.cheetham@sellyoak.ac.uk

Chair in Interfaith Studies

In September the Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, based at the University of Birmingham, signed an agreement with UNESCO to establish a UNESCO Chair in Interfaith Studies at the University. The establishment comes after a successful UNESCO programme called “Routes of Faith”, which concluded that a network of academic chairs should be established. The other chairs will be established in Tunis, Troyes (in France) and Bishkek (in Kyrgyzstan).

Professor of Inter-Religious Relations

Dr Paul Weller of the University of Derby Religious Resource and Research Centre was made a Professor of Inter-Religious Relations in the autumn. This is the first such professorship in the UK.

Seminar on Karma

The International Interfaith Centre held a one day seminar, “Karma: Individual and Collective Responsibilities” at Somerville College, Oxford on 21 January. The meaning, purpose and laws of karma were examined from the perspectives of different faiths. The first session, chaired by Rt Revd Richard Harries, Anglican Bishop of Oxford, heard from Vinod Kapashi (Jain), Saraswati Dave (Hindu), Gopinder Kaur (Sikh) and Paul Trafford (Buddhist) who explained the importance of karma in their individual faiths. The second session heard from Ibrahim Mogra (Muslim), Ian Markham (Christian) and Vivienne Cato (Jewish) and considered if there was an equivalent or comparative concept in these faiths.

Network web site

www.interfaith.org

The Inter Faith Network for the UK’s official web site. Online information about the work of the Network. Regularly updated.

Network Contacts

Contacts for Member Organisations of the Network. Updated list of contacts for all the Network’s member bodies Price 50p

National Inter Faith Organisations. A booklet listing inter faith organisations, some of which offer individual membership. Price 30p

Available from the Network Office.

Inter faith profile

Wolverhampton Inter-Faith Group recently celebrated its 25th anniversary. We thought this would be a good time to ask a few questions of its current Chairman, Sehdev Bismal.

Q *How did you first become involved with the work of the Wolverhampton Inter-Faith Group?*

In 1987 a series of meetings was set up between the Inter-Faith Group and the Local Education Authority to explore possible collaborative projects. As Co-ordinator of the LEA's Multi-cultural Education Service, I represented the Education Department at those meetings. The dialogue that ensued on multi-cultural, multi-faith matters got me interested in the activities of the Group. I found my conversations with Ivy Gutridge and Tim Fyffe, representatives of the Inter-Faith Group so resonant that I decided to join the Group. Our collaborative planning resulted in the production of several resources on various minority ethnic communities.

Q *What do you see as the main achievements of the Group?*

Q I think the biggest achievement is our successful contribution to the formation of a truly multi-cultural society in Wolverhampton. It is widely recognised that the Wolverhampton Inter-Faith Group has made a major contribution to ensuring community understanding and positive relationships. People of different beliefs, faiths and cultures live in this town where to be different is something readily accepted and sometimes appreciated. Communities are working together in a constructive dialogue to put into action many of the values shared between different faiths. Diversity is celebrated as a matter of routine and there is a genuine desire for harmony and peace.

The Inter-faith Group has raised its voice against injustice, be it in India, Pakistan, in this country or anywhere else. We have always made our feelings known whenever we have across minority ethnic communities under oppression. Whether it was the turban issue in schools, when pupils were not allowed to wear a turban, or the current climate of suspicion surrounding issues to do with Muslims, or the demolition of the Ayodhya mosque, we have consistently raised our voice and counselled against prejudice and injustice.

I must also mention the substantial resources the Group has produced to promote inter-faith understanding. We have produced a directory of places of worship which is widely used and a photographic exhibition, *Ways of Worship* which illustrates the rich diversity of faiths in Wolverhampton.

Q *Do you feel that public bodies (such as the local*

authority) value the work of the Group?

Most definitely yes! The collaboration between the local authority and the Inter-Faith Group is still continuing. The directory of Places of Worship was a joint project with the local education authority. **Q** We contributed to the Agreed Syllabus in R.E which the local education authority produced for use in schools. I think local politicians of all parties have a high regard for the work of the Group and our members are regularly consulted on a number of issues affecting our multi-faith society. We also have on-going links with the police, probation service and the local National Health Service Trust.

Q *In which direction does the Group plan to develop in the coming years?*

The nature of British society has changed enormously in recent times. We are of the view that the Inter-Faith Group has to change the focus of its activities to reflect a society which is now irrevocably multi-faith, multi-cultural in nature. It is very important for us to involve as many people as possible, not to preach only to the converted but also to encourage more and more people to seek ways in which they can meet and engage in a dialogue with people from different faiths. And our aim is to encourage more participation by young people. I think a lot needs to be done to engage them because without their active involvement walking into a hopeful future together will remain a dream.

Q *What do you find the most interesting about inter-faith dialogue?*

The most interesting thing about inter-faith dialogue is that it doesn't dilute your own faith. Since I joined the Inter-Faith Group, I feel I have a better grasp of Hinduism, my own faith. I think I have become more receptive to other people when they are talking of their beliefs. Another interesting thing that I have noticed is the vast number of values we share with each other. For example, the value of respect for other people and the environment, the values of family, care and love and the value of justice. There is so much in common between faiths that sometimes we forget to highlight it, at times we dwell too much on differences!

REGIONAL UPDATES

Blackburn with Darwen

The Blackburn with Darwen Interfaith Council was launched on 7 November. Over 60 people representing Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh faiths in the Borough attended the event where Councillor Malcolm Doherty, leader of Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, launched the new initiative.

The aim of the Interfaith Council is for its members to work together to overcome ignorance and encourage understanding between the different faith groups living in the Borough. It also aims to increase understanding of the positive role religion can to play in many people's lives and to help improve the quality of life for local people by working together on projects to develop a strong community spirit.

Other speakers at the launch event were Revd David Rayner of the Inner Cities Religious Council, Ishwar Taylor, President of the Gujarat Hindu Society, Abdul Hamid Qureshi for the Muslim community, Rt Revd Alan Chesters, the Anglican Bishop of Blackburn representing the Christian community and Mrs Charan Bhamra for the local Sikh community.

Regional Roundup

Birmingham. Members of the Birmingham Council of Faiths celebrated its 25th anniversary on 28 November. Members and guests of the different faith communities attended and contributed music, dance, readings and food. The party, held at the Ladywood Community Centre, was addressed by Edward Peters of the Clean Slate campaign.

Bradford. The Faith to Faith Project based at the Touchstone centre in Bradford published, in December, a report of a project that researched the potential for local churches to become involved in multi-faith initiatives. Researchers Gail Patrick and Helen Reid interviewed a number of people from churches in the Great Horton and Lidget Green areas of Bradford. During the interviews, people explored many ideas for multi-faith initiatives, which the report divides into six broad categories: faith, dialogue, education, social, youth affairs and social action activities.

Derby. The University of Derby launched a fundraising campaign to raise funds to build and open the planned Multi-Faith Centre in 2001. Representatives of various local and national faith communities joined members of the University, voluntary sector and the Derby City Council at the

launch. The campaign was simultaneously launched on the internet with a special live presentation. Further information can be obtained at the web site: <http://www.multifaithnet.org> or the University Tel: 01332 622222

London. A multi-faith festival was held on 6 November at the Dominion Centre in Southall. It was organised by London Youth Matters in association with a number of local youth organisations. Over 300 people took part in various arts workshops which were followed by performances of music, dance and poetry. During the workshops young people were able to investigate the origins of various arts from different cultures and their meaning and effects on particular faiths and cultures.

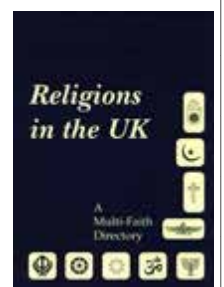
London. The South London Inter Faith Group held a Celebration of Lights at St Matthew's Church in Brixton on 27 November. Members of the local Jewish, Hindu and Christian communities lit lights of Hanukkah, Diwali and Advent, with short explanations of each festival.

Manchester. Friendship weeks organised by the Manchester branch of the Council of Christians and Jews took place between 6 and 21 November. They are a regular annual feature, bringing the Jewish and Christian communities together. A series of meetings, lectures, concerts and religious services at locations around the city were held including Dr Alan Unterman speaking on "Belief in God: Problem or Solution" and musical performances by Chetham's School of Music and the King David High School. A civic service was also held at the

Manchester Synagogue. Millennium Celebrations

There have been a number of local inter faith celebrations for the new Millennium. "Marking the Millennium in Brent", an event involving Brent Churches 2000, Brent Council and Brent Inter Faith was held on 23 November. Speakers included the Deputy Mayor of Brent. The event also included a series of short presentations by young people of different faith communities, sharing their

Religions in the UK: A Multi-Faith Directory, now available at a **25% discount**. £25 inc. p&p. Order from: Religious Resource and Research Centre, University of Derby, Mickleover, Derby DE3 5GX



views on faith in the future. The London Sevashram Sangha hosted a Millennium celebration on 2 January at the SKLP Community Centre in Northolt. Among the speakers at the event were Most Venerable Vajiragnana (Buddhist), Dr Natubhai Shah (Jain), Jaspal Singh Bambhra (Sikh) and Swami Nirliptananda (Hindu). "Eternal Love: The Spirit of the Millennium", an inter faith celebration was held at the Friends Meeting House in Finchley on 16 January.

INTERNATIONAL UPDATES

Vatican assembly

200 delegates from around the world gathered in Vatican City from 24-29 October for an Interreligious Assembly held under the auspices of the Central Committee for the Great Jubilee and the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. At the concluding celebration in St Peter's Square, six participants, including Brian Pearce, Director of the Inter Faith Network, delivered short messages. Pope John Paul II delivered an address in English in which he said, "Religion and Peace go together: to wage war in the name of religion is a blatant contradiction... The task before us is to promote a culture of dialogue." The closing ceremony was also attended by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and was broadcast live on Italian television.

WCRP Assembly in Jordan

The Seventh Assembly of the World Conference on Religion and Peace took place from 25-29 November in Amman, Jordan. The theme of the assembly was Global Action for Common Living. Delegates and participants of fifteen religious traditions from seventy countries gathered to commit themselves to join together for common living and to build a global culture of peace. A number of resolutions were made including commitments to common humanity, security, interdependence, comprehensive education for peace and to a common future.

Third World Parliament of Religions

The third World Parliament of Religions took place in Cape Town, South Africa from 1-8 December. Almost 7,000 participants from around the world including the UK and from many different religions gathered at sites in and around the University of Cape Town. Over 800 lectures, dialogues, presentations and workshops on various topics ranging from the response to conflict to the environment were held over the 8 day convention. "A Call to our Guiding Institutions" was prepared by participants and organisations and individuals were encouraged to make pledges of "Gifts of Service to the World".

The Local INTER FAITH GUIDE

Faith Community Co-operation in Action

The Local Inter Faith Guide offers advice and information; on setting up and running an inter faith council or group; ideas for successful events; and answers to common dilemmas and questions.

Published by the Inter Faith Network in association with the Inner Cities Religious Council, 1999

Special offer for readers of Inter Faith Update

£4-00 inc. p&p
(usually £6.20 inc. p&p)

Also available:

Local Inter Faith Groups and Councils of Faith.

A booklet listing over seventy local inter faith initiatives across the UK Price 50p

Orders to the Network office.

DIARY DATES

Local inter faith events

Please send details of any up-coming events for inclusion. We can only list a selection due to space constraints. Events are also listed in the One Family Newsletter from the WCF, 2 Market Street, Oxford OX1 3EF

16 February, Bradford Concord Interfaith Society. “Fundamentalism in Different Faith Traditions”, panel discussion. 7.30pm at the Interfaith Education Centre, Listerhills Road, Bradford, Tel: 01274 731674

19 February, Ipswich, Suffolk Inter Faith Resource. “The Heart of Buddhism”, 10.30am-3.30pm at Ipswich Buddhist Centre Contact Cynthia Capey Tel 01473 343661

19 February, Southall, Christians Aware. “A New Day Dawning: Recollections and Reflections on the Parliament of World Religions in South Africa” by Gwyneth Little. 10am-4pm at 6 Osterley Park Road, Southall. Contact Karuna Margaret Nourse Tel 020 8571 1833

21 February, Leicester, Christians Aware Inter Faith Programme. “Hindus in Inter Faith Dialogue”, talk by T V Morjaria, begins at 7pm at Christ Church, Clarendon Park, Leicester. Contact Tel: 0116 254 0770

23 February, Godalming. “The Dawn of Peace”, commemoration of World Religion Day at the Unitarian Chapel, Meadow, Godalming, near Guildford. Contact Carolyn Neogi Tel 01483 415773

28 February, Brixton, South London Inter Faith Group. Talk by Steve Miller on the multi-faith dimension of Jubilee 2000 at 7.15pm at the Brixton Sheltered Street Scheme, 2b Saltoun Road, London SW2. Contact Tel: 0181 674 5447

28 February, Hampstead Interfaith Group. Talk by Rabbi Helen Freeman of the West London Synagogue, 8pm at 63b Belsize Park Gardens, London NW3 4JN. Contact Eva Tucker at above address.

29 February, Derby Open Centre Multi-Faith Group. “The World of Faiths”, Rev David Hart, 7.15pm at The Open Centre, 43 Pear Tree Road, Derby. Contact Janine Shrigley Tel: 01332 360737

27 February, Brighton & Hove Inter-Faith Contact Group. AGM and talk, “Passion for Tolerance” by Rev Dr Peter Bishop. 3pm at Ralli Hall, 57 Denmark Villas, Hove. Contact Tel: 01273 722438

29 February, Cambridge Inter-Faith Group. “The Role of Saints, Gurus and Prophets in the view of the various Religions”, discussion, 8pm Wesley Church, King Street, Cambridge. Contact Tel 01223 510442

4 March, Beaminster One World Fellowship. “A Celebration of the Millennium” at St Mary’s Church. Contact Colin Smith Tel: 01308 862440

4 March, Reading, “Love’s Journey, the story of Jalaluddin Rumi”, a semi-staged evocation of the life and work of the 13th century Sufi poet. Tickets £10/£6, 7.45pm at Douai Abbey, Upper Woolhampton. Tel: 0118 971 5271

7 March, Ipswich, Suffolk Inter Faith Resource. 3 Short Talks on Mahashivrati (Hindu), Ash Wednesday (Christian), Eid-ul-Adha (Muslim), 7.30pm at Suffolk College, Rope Walk Ipswich Contact Tel 01473 343661

11 March, London, Southwark Cathedral day of learning for Christians – readings from Scriptures of different faiths from 9.30am-1pm. Contact Bruce Saunders 020 7403 8686

14 March, Bradford Concord Interfaith Society. “Glimpses of a Jewel– Stories from Various Faith Traditions” by Jenny Litaba. 7.30pm at the Interfaith Education Centre, Listerhills Road. Tel: 01274 731674

18 March, Ipswich, Suffolk Inter Faith Resource. The Festival of Jamshedi Noruz. Learn about the Zoroastrian New Year, customs and food, 10am-12.30pm at Suffolk College, Rope Walk Ipswich Contact Tel 01473 343661

28 March, Hampstead Interfaith Group. A Jain point of view, Vinod Kapashi of the Mahaviri Foundation, Contact Eva Tucker, 63b Belsize Park Gardens, London NW3 4JN

5 April, London Society of Jews and Christians. “Different Interpretations of the Same Texts”, with Prof Rabbi J Magonet and Rev Dr J Bowden. 6.30pm at the Liberal Jewish Synagogue, 28 St John’s Wood Road, London NW8 Tel: 020 8286 5181

11 May, West Somerset Inter Faith Group. “Christianity and Hinduism in India”, talk by Rev Kevin Tingay, 7.30pm, Friends Meeting House, Minehead. Contact Jenny Gowden Tel: 01643 707551

15 May, Bradford Concord Interfaith Society. Pauline Stefanuti Memorial Lecture, “Twin Perspectives: Religious and Cultural”, by Amrit and Rabindra Kaur Singh. 7.30pm at the Interfaith Education Centre, Listerhills Road, Bradford, Tel: 01274 731674

3 June, Westminster Interfaith Annual Multi Faith pilgrimage. Details to be released closer to the date. Contact Alfred Agius 020 7377 1545

10 June, West Somerset Inter Faith Group. Visit to Lee Abbey in Lynton, N Devon. Contact Jenny Gowden Tel: 01643 707551

14 June, Bradford Concord Interfaith Society. “Lonely Man of Faith: Tradition in an Untraditional Age”, J A Cadranell, 7.30pm at the Interfaith Education Centre, Listerhills Road, Bradford, Tel: 01274 731674

24 June, Bradford Concord Interfaith Society 7th annual multi-faith walk for friendship, as part of the Bradford Festival. Tel: 01274 731674

8-14 September, Scotland, Pilgrims Crossing, a planned pilgrimage between St Andrews and Edinburgh. Contact Rodney Matthews Tel 01786 823588

Diary dates

(continued from p.11)

Seminars, courses, exhibitions and conferences

Suffolk Inter Faith Resource in conjunction with Suffolk College is running a series of short courses. Introduction to Buddhism; Introduction to Islam; New Testament Greek; An Introduction to Hebrew. Contact Suffolk College Leisure Learning Tel: 01473 343666

Certificate in Interfaith Relations. A series of courses being run at the United College of the Ascension and Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre in Birmingham. Contact Ruth Tetlow Tel: 0121 472 1667

11-13 February, London. Weekend Seminar "Amos: Asked to Leave Quietly" - open to young people 18-24, Contact Jane Clements, Council of Christians and Jews Tel: 020 7820 0090

12-13 February, London. Religion in the Next Century. A conference featuring contributions by Revd Dr R Boeke, Rt Revd H Montefiore, Rabia L Evans, S S Attariwala, S Hanson, Rev M Braybrooke, Prof D Cohn-Sherboc, Dr Z Badawi, V Kapashi, Rabbi J Tabick. Faculty of Continuing Education, Birkbeck College, 26 Russell Sq, London WC1. Contact 01865 202751 or 020 7631 6674

15 March, Luton. Ten week seminar and discussion course entitled Religion and Culture, Dialogue and Conflict. Organised by the Luton Interfaith Forum in association with the University of Luton. Fee £15 contact Shanthi Hettiararachchi, Tel 01582 416946

25-26 March, Cambridge. Family, Education and Religious Values, a seminar at Homerton College, Cambridge. Contact Tel: 01223 332888

25 March, Oxford. Alister Hardy Society; 11am "Spirituality and the Arts" by Dr E Robinson, 2pm "Religious Experience in Hinduism and Sikhism" by Dr S Firth; 5pm "Rudolf Otto and the Expression of the divine in Indian Art" by C Aslett, at Westminster College, Oxford. Tel: 01684 772417 email: plants@johnrankin.demon.co.uk

27-29 March, Cambridge. "To Catch the Bird of Heaven", a conference of the Centre for Inter Faith Dialogue at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. Cost £194. Contact The Centre for Inter Faith Dialogue, Middlesex University, White Hart Lane, London N17 8HR

27 March-3 April Bendorf, Germany. International Student Conference of Jews, Christians and Muslims, "Questions to the Millennium, 5760, 2000, 1420". Fee £190/80 Contact Irit Burkeman, Leo Baeck College Tel: 020 8349 4525

8-9 April, Oxford. International Interfaith Centre Annual Conference, "Education for Peaceful Living" at Harris Manchester College, Oxford. Fee £45/40. Contact Tel: 01865 202745

2 May, Coventry. "How do we find out what's going on in collective worship?", talk by Richard Cheetham, 6pm, room WE116/117, Graduate Studies Building, Westwood Campus, University of Warwick. Contact Dr Eleanor Nesbit Tel: 024 7652 2579

5 May, Birmingham. Launch of the Centre for the Study of Christianity and Asian Religions featuring an - open forum about inter-faith issues concerning Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs, Jains and Christians. 7.30pm at Selly Oak Colleges, University of Birmingham. Contact David Cheetham Tel: 0121 472 4321

26-28 May and 23-25 June, Bedford. Buddhist/Christian weekends reflecting on the teachings of Eckhart. Contact Retreat Secretary, Priory of Our Lady of Peace, Turvey Abbey, Turvey, Bedford MK43 8DE Tel: 01234 881432

29 June, Oxford. J Estlin Carpenter Centenary Lectures by Martin Palmer and Acharya Srivatsi Goswami at Manchester College Oxford, 11am-4.30pm. Contact the Hibbert Trust 01225 442095

3-6 July, Seville, Spain. International Council of Christians and Jews Conference, "Enhancing Identity through Encounter". Contact Ruth Weyl, 20 Sentis Ct, Carew Road, Northwood HA6 3NG

Subscribing to Inter Faith Update

The newsletter is published three times a year and is available by subscription at £7.50 per year.

To subscribe simply send your name and address along with a cheque payable to "The Inter Faith Network" to the address below.

Support the work of the Inter Faith Network

The Inter Faith Network promotes understanding and respect between the faith communities in the UK. If you would like to make a contribution to help support this work please write to its Director:

Mr Brian Pearce
The Inter Faith Network
5-7 Tavistock Place
London WC1H 9SN
Tel: 020 7388 0008

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INTER FAITH

UPDATE

Summer 2000 Issue 13

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Royal visit to inter faith centre

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HRH the Prince of Wales visited the London Inter Faith Centre in Queen's Park, London on 10 May. He was greeted by around 300 school children and presented with flowers by 9 year old Yasmine Afnan of the Baha'i community. The Prince met people of many faiths together with tutors and students of the Certificate in Inter Faith Relations, which is run at the Centre by its Director, Revd Fergus Capie. The Centre is home to a range of local initiatives: Brent Inter Faith; West London Three Faiths Forum; the Willesden branch of the Council of Christians and Jews; and London Ecumenical Inter Faith.

Members of these and other groups joined the Prince at an informal reception where Seeta Lakhani, 15, from the Hindu community played a musical interlude on the santoor. The

Prince also met representatives of various national inter faith initiatives including the Inter Faith Network, Inner Cities Religious Council, World Congress of Faiths and Churches' Commission on Inter Faith Relations. Before leaving, the Prince said that he was encouraged by the work of the Centre and by meeting so many who are working towards better inter faith relations. He said, "We need to remember that what unites us is greater than what divides us." The visit followed the Prince's tour of the nearby Islamia School, the first voluntary aided Muslim school in Britain, where he joined the school for an assembly.

Greater London Assembly to consult faith communities

London elected its new Mayor and Assembly on 4 May. Under the terms of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 the new Authority is obliged to consider consulting with "bodies which represent the interests of different religious groups in Greater London". London's faith communities have been asked to nominate a representative to take a place on the

Board of the London Development Agency and faith community leaders are currently in discussions about forming a London-wide faith communities forum or other such structure, which could be available for consultation by the Authority.

The Inter Faith Network for the UK

The Inter Faith Network was founded in 1987. It works with its member bodies to promote good relations between the major faith communities, to combat inter religious prejudice and intolerance and to help make the UK a country marked by mutual understanding and respect between religions where all can practise their faith with integrity.

The Network:

- Provides information on faith communities and on inter faith affairs
- Advises on multi faith projects and inter faith issues
- Publishes materials to aid work in the religious and inter faith sectors
- Fosters inter faith co-operation on social issues
- Holds regular meetings where social and religious questions of concern to the different faith communities can be examined together
- Links 86 member organisations including: representative bodies from the different faith communities; inter faith organisations; local inter faith groups; academic institutions and bodies concerned with multi faith education.

Inter Faith Update is the newsletter of the Inter Faith Network for the UK. It keeps a wide range of organisations and individuals interested in developing good inter faith relations in touch with UK events and projects with a significant inter faith component.

For publications which contain in depth articles on inter faith topics, relevant book reviews or items related to individual faith communities ask the Network office for details.

Please send any contribution of articles and diary dates for consideration for inclusion in the Autumn/Winter issue by **16 October** to:

Bhupinder Singh,
Information Officer,
The Inter Faith Network
5/7 Tavistock Place, Tel: 020 7388 0008
London WC1H 9SN Fax: 020 7387 7968

Email: ifnet@interfaith.org.uk

NETWORK NEWS

Make your donation go further

A very welcome change to the tax relief system on donations to charities in this years budget has made it easier for individuals and companies to make tax-efficient donations to charities, such as the Network. The new Scheme removes the minimum donation amount for Gift Aid. So that the Network can now claim tax relief on all donations made by individual tax payers.

Further good news for donors to the Network, including Trusts, is that for every pledge up to an agreed "challenge" level to make donation in each of the three years 2000 to 2002 a major trust will add 33% to the value of the pledge.

For more information about making a donation towards the work of the Network please contact the Network Office Tel: 020 7388 0008.

Network's Director awarded the Interfaith Gold Medallion

At a ceremony held on 29 February at the Board of Deputies of British Jews, Brian Pearce, Director of the Inter Faith Network was presented with the Interfaith Gold Medallion. The Medallion, which is awarded by the International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCJ), was presented by HE Archbishop Gregorios of the Greek Orthodox Church in Britain. Speakers at the ceremony, which was attended by representatives of various faith communities, included Eldred Tabachnick QC, President of the Board of Deputies and Sir Sigmund Sternberg, Patron of the ICCJ.

Video available

Shared Act of Reflection and Commitment by the Faith Communities of the UK. Full length video of the Millennium First Weekend Event on 3 January recorded by the BBC **Price £4.50**

Special Offer

Quest for Common Values. Report of a Network seminar looking at whether there are values which can provide a secure moral foundation for a multi faith society. **Price £2.00** (was £3.95)

Both available from the Network Office.

NATIONAL UPDATES

Keeping places of worship secure

The National Churchwatch conference on 15-16 May in Liverpool launched a new Home Office funded initiative to improve the security of places of worship and religious personnel. In 1999 police forces in England and Wales recorded over 18,000 crimes against places of worship. National Churchwatch, which will work with places of worship from all religions, aims to enable police forces, local authorities and religious organisations to work together to bring about a real and lasting reduction in crime against places of worship. Over the next 18 months it plans to offer every area of the UK the chance to begin their own local Churchwatch initiative. A video and booklet, which will be sent to crime prevention officers in each police force and to local religious leaders, have been produced to show the benefits of the scheme. Among those appearing in the video are Revd Harry Ross, an Anglican vicar, Dr Shiv Pande of the Hindu Community and Mr David Coleman of the Jewish Community.

Pilot schemes run by Churchwatch in Coventry and Bath and Wells have already claimed around a 60 per cent reduction in crime relating to places of worship. The schemes have shown that if sensible security procedures are adopted alongside the installation of suitable security equipment then places of worship do not have to be locked shut at all times. In his message of support to National Churchwatch the Home Secretary wrote, "Watch schemes are a good example of communities getting together to prevent crime. I am therefore pleased to see the establishment of National Churchwatch. I am sure that it will make a significant contribution to the drive towards safer communities. After all, places of worship are so often at the heart of communities."

More information can be obtained about the National Churchwatch Scheme from:
Nick Tolson,
National Churchwatch Co-ordinator,
7, Vicars Close, Wells, Somerset BA5 2UH
Tel : 07931 353395
E-mail: nicktolson@nationalchurchwatch.com

Census question in doubt for England and Wales

Issue 12 of Inter Faith Update reported that the legislation required to enable a question on religious identity to be included in the 2001 Census in England and Wales had progressed through the House of Lords. However, the Private Member's Bill piloted there by Lord Weatherill and presented to the Commons by Mr Jonathan Sayeed, a Conservative back bench MP, has failed to receive a Second Reading. Representations have been made to Ministers by the 2001 Census Religious Affiliation Group about the need to provide Government time for the Bill.

Meanwhile, the Scottish Executive announced its decision to include a question on religious identity in the 2001 Census in Scotland. This follows representations by faith communities against the Executive's earlier decision not to include one. The proposed question will ask, "What religion, religious denomination or body do you belong to?" The proposed categories of response are: none; Church of Scotland; Roman Catholic; other Christian; Buddhist; Hindu; Muslim; Jewish; Sikh; other. The question will also ask in which religion people were brought up.

The necessary enabling legislation has already been debated and enacted by the Scottish Parliament.

Multi faith perspectives on human organ donation

On 20 March, 275 delegates and participants met at the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television in Bradford to discuss religious and ethical issues relating to organ transplantation. The conference was organised by the Bradford Hospitals and Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trusts with support from the Department of Health (DoH) and drew a wide attendance including religious delegates, patient groups, community health councils, health professionals and managers and representatives from the DoH.

A welcome was given by the Rt Revd David Smith, Anglican Bishop of Bradford. The opening address was delivered by Lord Hunt, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Health (Lords), who drew attention to the developing national crisis in transplantation in which more than 5000 patients in the UK are awaiting life saving organs. Unfortunately there is a growing gap between supply and demand of organs. During the main part



of the day the conference heard from; Sheikh Dr Zaki Badawi (Muslim); Professor David Katz (Jewish); Rt Revd Michael Nazir-Ali and Father John Wilson (Christian); Dr B Bhala (Hindu); Dr Jasdev Singh Rai (Sikh); and the Most Ven P Piyatissa (Buddhist) who gave individual commentaries from their faith perspectives.

Though each speaker gave a differing emphasis, the overwhelming impression was of general agreement between the faiths. For all, the donation of an organ was to be welcomed but was only acceptable within an ethical framework of respectful human dignity. Speakers explained that resistance to organ donation reflects cultural sensitivity rather than any religious code. This resistance can only be overcome by continuing education. One example of this is the fatwa issued in 1995 by the Muslim Law (Shariah) Council which formally removed any religious objection to donation. Living donation of a kidney was seen as a positive act of altruism when freely given without payment or coercion.

There was a firmly expressed belief that religious organisations should be more pro-active in encouraging organ donation, and in helping to dispel myths and misconceptions. The challenge for all is to cascade this consensus into the wider community.

(Report by Dr R F Jeffrey, Consultant Nephrologist, Bradford Hospitals NHS Trust)

Hugo Gryn Fellowship in Religious Tolerance

The Hugo Gryn Fellowship in Religious Tolerance is being set up at the Centre for Jewish-Christian Relations in Cambridge to examine the concept of religious tolerance through lectures, research and dialogue. The Fellowship will serve as a living monument to the late Rabbi Hugo Gryn (a previous Co-Chair of the Inter Faith Network) who did so much to champion this cause. A new Fellow will be appointed each year so that this field can be explored in a variety of ways. The Fellowship was launched at a fundraising dinner at Middle Temple Hall on 28 March. Among the special guests at the evening were Jackie Gryn, Lord Woolf, Master of the Rolls, and HRH Prince Hassan of Jordan.

Faith in the Dome

Faith is being celebrated at the Dome with performances and events by different faith communities. The Jain community held a celebration of Mahavir Jayanti (the birth celebration

of Lord Mahavir) on 16 April. 150 school children performed a 30 minute dance drama depicting the life of Lord Mahavir four times during the day.

This was the first religious event of this scale within the Dome. Celebrations from other communities are planned later this summer and autumn, including a celebration of the Christian festival of Pentecost on 11 June; a Jewish community day on 9 July as part of the Jewish Music Festival; Hindu celebrations of Diwali; and a Sikh Celebration of Vaisakhi.

An inter faith pilgrimage from Greenwich Park to the Millennium Dome is being organised by the Greenwich Multi-Faith Forum on 18 September (see diary dates).

New Archbishop of Westminster installed

The new Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, Rt Revd Cormac Murphy O'Connor, was installed on 22 March as successor in this post to the late Cardinal Basil Hume. At a ceremony at Westminster Cathedral, the Archbishop told the congregation he was optimistic about the future of the Catholic Church. He also called on Catholics to work towards ecumenical goals, although he was aware of the obstacles and difficulties on the road to Christian unity. The Archbishop's appointment has been welcomed by the Anglican Church and by other faiths and denominations.

The new Archbishop has also accepted an invitation to be a patron of Westminster Interfaith.

MCB elects new Secretary General

Yousuf Bhailok was elected as the new Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain at its Annual General Meeting on 13 May. He is from Preston and has many years experience in community work with a special interest in education. Speaking after his election at the meeting in Brent Town Hall, London, he said that Muslims have an important role in building a better Britain for all its citizens. The outgoing Secretary General, Iqbal Sacranie, who has served the maximum two years in that position said, "We are still at a stage where we feel like clamouring for due rights when our heritage tells us that we should rather be engaged in helping to contribute to the fund of what is right in society". The MCB now has over 300 affiliated organisations.

Centenary for Religious Freedom

The International Association for Religious Freedom celebrates its centenary on 25 May. Originally founded as the “International Council of Unitarian and Other Liberal Religious Thinkers and Workers” in 1900 in Boston, USA, it held its first congress in London in 1901. Its aim of resisting intolerance remains as relevant today as when it first began. Its members, from more than thirty countries on four continents, now include Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Humanists, Jews, Shintoists, Sikhs, Unitarians, Universalists, and members of indigenous communities.

New Centre launched at Selly Oak

The Centre for the Study of Asian Religions and Christianity was launched on 5 May. The Centre is part of the Department of Theology and Religion on the Selly Oak campus of the University of Birmingham. Its purpose is to study and research the relations and encounter between Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism and Sikhism. It will contribute to MA and MPhil courses in Interreligious Relations in co-operation with the other Centres in the Department of Theology. As well as organising international and local conferences, the Centre aims to work with the faith communities concerned and will offer courses and projects that are supported by them.

For more information contact Dr David Cheetham
Tel: 0121 415 2413 email
d.cheetham@bham.ac.uk

National Millennium Faith Experience

“Life Force”: the National Millennium Faith Experience is due to open in Bradford this June. The £5 million visitor attraction is located in Forster Square close to Bradford Cathedral. It will use state of the art audio-visual techniques to enable visitors to experience life-cycle events of members of six different faiths - Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh. The centre will feature three attractions; *Labyrinth* in which visitors will travel through the lives of “virtual” characters; the *Observatory* which will examine how faith has inspired various

personalities; and *Digital City* which will allow visitors to leave a taped record of their thoughts and beliefs. The Centre also features a Millennium Restaurant, which will serve a variety of foods associated with religious festivals of different faiths. Further information is available at the web site: www.lifeforce.org.uk.

Faith in Guiding

A seminar took place on 23 May at the Headquarters of the Guide Association. Its focus was on faith and Guiding and it looked at possible ways to develop work in this area. For further information contact Ysanne Rickards Tel: 020 8870 9946 or email: byrickards@btinternet.com

News from inter faith organisations

The Council of Christians and Jews

The young leadership section of the CCJ held a weekend study event on social justice from 10-14 February. It was held in London at the convent of Our Lady of Sion with sessions at West London Synagogue and St Martin-in-the Field. The weekend explored the theme using the biblical prophet Amos. The students and young people that took part looked at concepts that unite the two faiths as well as those features that distinguish them.

The International Interfaith Centre

The IIC held its Annual Conference entitled “Interfaith Contributions to Education for Peaceful Living” at Harris Manchester College, Oxford on 8 and 9 April. Participants came from Israel/Palestine, Northern Ireland, India, Germany, South Africa, Canada, Netherlands, Philippines, Chile, Kosovo, Switzerland, USA and the UK. The Centre also held its Annual Interview, “Creating a Culture of Peace in the Middle East” on 22 May at

Advertisement

Office Coordinator/Administrator

The International Association for Religious Freedom has a full time vacancy for an office coordinator/administrator. Sympathy for the cause is essential, as is an aptitude for making things work behind the scenes as part of a small team. Salary scale starts at £16,500 according to experience. Write: IARF, 2 Market Street, Oxford OX1 3EF email: iarf@interfaith-center.org or fax 01865-202746 for more details. Completed applications by 9 June.



Mansfield College, Oxford with Prof Dr Ossama El-Kaffash from Egypt, interviewed by Elaine Kaye and Rabbi Dr Ron Kronish from Israel, interviewed by Marcus Braybrooke.

The Maimonides Foundation

The Maimonides Foundation, in association with Palestinian and Israeli students at the London School of Economics held an open meeting on 15 May, "Exile and Hope: Jerusalem, Culture and Identity in Israeli and Palestinian Discourse". Dr Ahmad Samih Khalidi, former advisor to the Palestinian delegation at Washington and Taba 1991-1993 and Dr Emanuele Ottolenghi, both of St Anthony's College, Oxford led the productive discussion which, although emotional at times, was conducted with an atmosphere of respect.

The Three Faiths Forum

The Three Faiths Forum Parliamentary Group was launched on 21 February at the House of Commons. Lord Weatherill and Ivor Caplin MP are joint Chairmen with Lord Archer of Sandwell as Secretary. Mohammed Sarwar MP and Rudi Vis MP are also on the steering committee, which in due course hopes to secure recognition as an All Party Parliamentary Group. Speaking at the launch, Lord Weatherill said it was important that members of both Houses of Parliament had a meeting place where they could explore their differences of faith as well as what they held in common.

The World Congress of Faiths'

The WCF annual Sir Francis Younghusband Memorial Lecture was given on 2 May in London, by Dr Mato Zovkic, Vicar General of Sarajevo on the topic "Christians and Muslims in Multi-religious Europe in the New Millennium". This was followed by responses from Professor Abdul Ali Hamid of the Muslim College, London and from Professor Jorgen Nielsen of the Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, Birmingham. The event was co-sponsored by the World Conference on Religions and Peace.

Scottish Update

Glasgow. An inter faith festival is being held at the St Mungo's Museum of Religious Life and Art from 1-4 June. Activities over the weekend include story telling from different faith traditions and art, craft and drama workshops. A tranquillity zone has been set up by the Baha'i community for use as a contemplation/quiet space. The weekend, which incorporates the annual "Meet Your Neighbour" event, ends with a children's multi cultural event.

The festival is being supported by Glasgow City Council, the Churches' Agency for Inter Faith Relations in Scotland, the Glasgow Sharing of Faiths Group and the Glasgow Council of Christians and Jews.

Edinburgh. "Creative living together in a multi-faith world" was an event and exhibition organised by the University of Edinburgh in association with the Edinburgh Interfaith Association to celebrate the year 2000. It was held on 31 January at the Playfair Library of the University of Edinburgh and speakers from several different faiths included: Rt.Rev. Munawar Rumalshah, the Anglican Bishop of Peshawar in Pakistan, Dr Mona Siddiqui (Muslim) and Mr Rawdon Goodier (Buddhist). Presentations of music, drama and readings were made by members of the local faith communities.

Inter faith profile

Rosalind Preston OBE is a prominent member of the Jewish community and is a long standing member of the Network's Executive Committee. She is currently one of its Vice-Chairs.

Q How did you first get involved with inter faith dialogue?

I have been involved in some form of dialogue as long as I can remember. From the age of nine I attended a Church of England boarding school and, having had a strong traditional Jewish upbringing, I often found myself explaining my religion and way of life. I also learnt a great deal about Christianity. Later in life, especially when I started working on international projects, I came into contact with many people of different faiths and my interest in dialogue developed through these contacts.

Q You told organisers of the Self-Portrait Zone in the Millennium Dome that the Inter Faith Network, in your view, represents what is best about British Society. What do you feel have been the main achievements of the Network?

The Inter Faith Network has given minority faiths a dignified and effective voice on the national scene. It has also provided small community groups with a comfortable framework in which to meet, discuss issues of mutual concern and form links of friendship and understanding.

The Network has provided a platform on which to discuss and debate civic rather than theological issues, and, in this regard, has provided an opportunity for peoples of different faiths, including Christians, to learn from each other in the best British traditions of tolerance, respect, and civility.

The various major events that the Network has organised have shown, on a very practical level, how faith communities can now work together.

Q Can you tell us a little about your work in promoting the role of women within religious communities?

I realised many years ago when I first began attending United Nations conferences, that women from a vast range of different cultures, traditions and faiths share many common experiences. Women from both developed and developing countries face similar challenges and struggles in their daily lives as they attempt to build families, create harmonious communities and fulfil their own potential within a religious framework.

When I was President of the National Council of Women GB from 1988 to 1990 my work involved furthering equal rights in education, employment and health, all of which highlighted the additional

problems faced by women and girls in certain faith traditions.

Many women world-wide continue to experience degrees of inequality in their religious traditions, including my own, where I am hoping to see Orthodox Jewish law re-interpreted on the vital matter of divorce. Similar challenges have faced women of other faiths, such as the struggle for ordination in the Church of England.

As well as being Vice Chair of the Network, you are also joint Honorary Secretary of the Council of Christians and Jews. In what ways do bilateral and multi-lateral inter faith initiatives complement each other?

Q One is a natural extension of the other. Jews and Christians share a long and at times painful history and dialogue through the CCJ has helped to overcome the memories and experiences of past tragic episodes. The relationship which now exists between our two faiths has changed so much that it is almost miraculous.

The CCJ has shown that certain specific issues are best discussed bilaterally, as other faith communities are now recognising, and this then enables many communities to enter into multi-lateral encounters and programmes with a clearer understanding of each other's perspectives.

Q In what ways do you see the work of inter faith organisations developing in the coming years?

By nature I am an optimist, but here I sound a note of deep concern. If the work of the inter faith movement does not strengthen and flourish at grass-roots level we may not see further progress made. The concept of inter faith dialogue between families, neighbours and communities becoming an every day reality will depend on a vast increase in both human and financial resources and national will.

Q The question remains; how can we encourage more people to come and work with us? We must find the answer as the benefits to each faith community, and to the wider society, will continue to be enormous.

Web update

This new feature lists web sites that may be of interest to readers:

In this issue we feature a selection of sites of international inter faith organisations, in future issues we will look at other categories of web sites relevant to inter faith issues.

International Interfaith Centre

<http://www.interfaith-center.org>

The IIC was set up in 1993 by the International Association for Religious Freedom, World Congress of Faiths and Westminster College, Oxford. The site reports on the Centre's regular seminars and conferences looking at inter faith issues on the international scene.

World Conference on Religion and Peace

<http://www.wcrp.org>

An extensive site which explains the various projects and the background of the WCRP. Also carries news about recent events in areas of the world where WCRP is particularly active such as Kosovo and Sierra Leone.

World Faiths Development Dialogue

<http://www.wfdd.org.uk>

The World Faiths Development Dialogue is a dialogue between people of the world's religious or spiritual communities and the World Bank, on the subject of poverty and development. This site introduces the work of the organisation and provides online versions of its reports and bulletins. There is also a news section and a discussion forum.

United Religions Initiative

<http://www.uri.org>

A comprehensive web site which gives an

overview of the United Religions Initiative as well as brief information and links to information about the various faiths that are linked by URI.

Council for the Parliament of World's Religions

<http://www.cpwr.org>

The Council organised the recent Parliament of the World's Religions in Cape Town, South Africa, which followed on from the Parliaments held in 1893 and 1993 in Chicago. The site describes in detail the Cape Town meetings as well as the Gifts of Service and Call to Institutions initiatives which lead on from the Parliament.

Network web site

www.interfaith.org.uk

The Inter Faith Network for the UK's official web site. Online information about the work of the Network.

Network Contacts

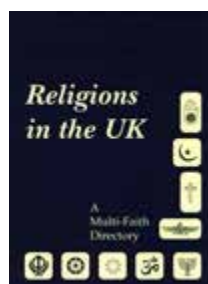
Contacts for Member Organisations of the Network. Updated list of contacts for all the Network's member bodies Price 50p

National Inter Faith Organisations. A booklet listing inter faith organisations, most of which offer individual membership. Price 30p

Local Inter Faith Groups and Councils of Faith. A booklet listing over seventy local inter faith initiatives across the UK Price 50p

Available from the Network Office.

Religions in the UK: A Multi-Faith Directory, now available at a **25% discount**. £25 inc. p&p. Order from: Religious Resource and Research Centre, University of Derby, Mickleover, Derby DE3 5GX





REGIONAL UPDATES

East Midlands Regional Link Meeting

A regional link meeting for the East Midlands was held on 2 March hosted by the Leicester Council of Faiths at their Welcome Centre. Each of the groups represented offered a summary of news from their area.

Derby Open Centre Multi-Faith Group. The Open Centre is now a limited company. It is a very busy place which is widely used for meetings (including those of the Multi-Faith Group and of the local SACRE). It provides a lunch on the first Monday of every month and this leads to many new people becoming aware of the Centre and of activities that happen there. The Multi-Faith Group suspended its work for a while due to budget problems but now new volunteers want to try to get it going again.

Leicester Council of Faiths began in 1984. It is one of the more firmly established councils of faith in the UK and is regularly contacted by people from other towns and cities for advice on inter faith issues. It has representation from all the major faiths and produces a newsletter three times a year. The LCF has organised seminars, lectures, essay competitions and other events and projects. LCF volunteers are also involved with the new Health and Faith Forum and the local SACRE. The new Welcome Centre has been the focus of much of its recent work. It is currently looking for a new part-time administrator to develop the Centre's work which includes arranging visits to different places of worship. Members also hope to build up a library which can be used as a resource for local people interested in inter faith and faith specific issues. A major current issue for the LCF is whether significant monies will be forthcoming from Leicester City Council. This is at present uncertain and general budget cuts may affect the situation.

Loughborough Council of Faiths has a good working relationship with Charnwood Borough Council and is pleased that the Council is now doing a good job of marking in a public way the festivals of the different faiths. The LoCF is developing a pattern of open meetings to draw in more participants. The Mayor attended their last committee meeting. Some meetings focus on special topics, for example a recent one on genetic engineering. A multi-faith fair is planned with involvement from local schools. In Loughborough there is a plan to put up a stone circle in Stableford Park which will reflect the unity of the different faiths.

The Nottingham Inter-Faith Council has been running for 20 years, having begun originally in the context of a Christian ecumenical initiative. The present Secretary of the Inter-Faith Council worked in education for many years and has organised a number of events for teachers linked to the different faiths in the area. Nottingham City Council received a Millennium Festival awards grant on the basis that their programme would include an inter faith dimension and are keen to take this forward in partnership with the Churches and with the Nottingham Inter-Faith Council. This link is particularly important to the City Council since it does not have formal links with the faith communities' places of worship and would like to see these developed. A number of activities are planned including an inter faith pilgrimage in which the Mayor will take part.

University of Derby. Three projects are presently in progress there. *MultiFaithNet* is an on-line resource for those who want information on a range of aspects of religion. The electronic version of the multi faith directory *Religions in the UK* is available as part of the package to which users can subscribe. Secondly, the University is also carrying out a research project on religious discrimination for the Home Office. Four site visits are part of the research and the locations selected for these are Blackburn, Cardiff, Leicester and the London Borough of Newham. The third project is the planned Multi Faith Centre which will be a resource for the University, for the region and beyond. Fundraising for this is well under way with half a million pounds already raised. The Centre will be run by a steering committee which will include members of the different faiths and will be chaired by the Anglican Bishop of Derby.

Wellingborough Multi-Faith Group meets once a month at the Victoria Centre. The last few years have been relatively quiet but starting last Autumn the Group has been running a series of talks on different faiths and hopes this will increase interest in their work. The Group has a distinctly "personal" feel; there is no steering committee as such and most of the work is carried forward by the organiser.

The East Midlands Regional Assembly

The meeting went on to discuss the new East Midlands Regional Assembly and the nature of faith community input to this. Raj Kumar Bali and Revd Keith Orford, the two faith representatives on the East Midlands Assembly, presented a general overview of the work of the Assembly and their role within it.

The Government's policy is to devolve government activity to the regions in England. These "regions" have been in existence for some time and are highly

significant in terms of European funding. Regional offices were set up 8 years ago and have now been strengthened with the transfer of a number of functions to them. As part of this process a Regional Development Agencies and Regional Assemblies have been created.

The Regional Assembly is a voluntary body and its members are put forward from a variety of sectors including business, health, environment and the voluntary sector. They are not elected but nominated. In the East Midlands Assembly the faith communities have been able to secure two of the places in their own right. Both of these members see themselves as representing the faith communities of the East Midlands as a whole rather than just their own communities.

Regional Roundup

Coventry. The Coventry Multi-Faith Forum, which has now become a charitable company, has been offered a room for use as a multi-faith centre, in Coventry City Council's proposed Millennium Building. Currently members of the group are raising funds for the purchase of equipment and furniture for the centre.

Leeds Concord Inter-Faith Fellowship held a memorial lecture and dinner on 7 March in honour of Dr Peter Bell, the founder and long time chair of the group. The guest speaker was Revd Inderjit Bhogal, President-Elect of the Methodist Conference. Over 100 guests gathered in the Farthings restaurant at Thomas Danby College where its catering students prepared the meal.

Leicester. On 23 February the Lord Mayor of Leicester inaugurated a new multi-faith prayer room at Leicester Royal Infirmary. The Chairman of the NHS Trust acknowledged the contribution of Leicester Council of Faiths to the setting up of the room. Among other speakers at the inauguration were S. Faiyazuddin Ahmad and TV Morjaria, President and Chairman respectively of Leicester Council of Faiths and the Anglican Bishop of Leicester, Rt Revd Timothy Stevens.

London. The Anglican Southwark Diocesan Board for Church in Society Inter Faith Group hosted a "A World of Faith" forum on 11 March at Southwark Cathedral. The occasion was introduced by Canon Michael Ipgrave and provided an opportunity to listen to readings from the scriptures from the Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh faiths, which were read simultaneously in different locations in the Cathedral.

London. As we go to press preparations are in full

swing for the 15th London Multifaith Pilgrimage for Peace on 3 June. Organised by Westminster Interfaith, this year's pilgrimage is the most ambitious yet. Walkers will gather at seven different starting points all over London visiting several different places of worship before coming together at the Battersea Peace Pagoda for the final leg of the pilgrimage to Westminster Cathedral. Details from: Alfred Agius Tel: 020 8570 8639

Manchester. On 3 May the first formal meeting of the Manchester Interfaith Forum took place and an Executive Committee was appointed from among the various faith communities across Manchester to plan and develop the work of this new city-wide body. The new forum wants to encourage and nurture links between faith communities and bodies in the Manchester area. Links have already been established with departments within Manchester City Council.

Tyne & Wear. A series of Millennium lectures were organised by the North East Churches in association with the Universities of Northumbria and Sunderland. The first set of four lectures were held in February in Newcastle and explored the history of Christianity in different parts of the world especially the Commonwealth. Lectures included Dr Eamon Duffy and Revd David Thompson. The second set of lectures held in May in Sunderland looked at the Church and Other Faiths. Lecturers from other faiths included Rabbi Dr Norman Solomon and Dr Jabal Buaben. The final set of lectures will be held in October in Durham and will look at the Church and Society.

DIARY DATES

Local inter faith events

Please send details of any up-coming events for inclusion. We can only list a selection due to space constraints. For details of other events do contact the relevant local groups direct. Events are also listed in the One Family Newsletter from the WCF, 2 Market Street, Oxford OX1

5-30 June, Wellingborough. The Jewish Way of Life exhibition is presently at the Wellingborough Professional Development Centre, 86 Stanley Road, Wellingborough. It is open from 9.30-3.30 Monday-Friday. Contact: Samantha Blendis Tel: 020 7543 5400

8 June, Brighton & Hove Inter-Faith Contact Group. "Belief in Miracles" will be addressed by speakers from three different faiths followed by a general discussion. 7.30pm at Chapel Royal, North Street, Brighton. Contact Tel: 01273 722438

10 June, Cambridge Inter-Faith Group. Excursion to the Multi-Faith Centre Project at University of Derby together with the Bedford Council of Faiths. Limited places. Contact: Ralph Nimman Tel: 01223 510 442

10 June, West Somerset Inter Faith Group. Visit to Lee Abbey in Lynton, N Devon. Contact Jenny Gowden Tel: 01643 707551

14 June, Bradford Concord Interfaith Society. Talk on "The Lonely Man of Faith: Tradition in an Untraditional Age" by J A Cadranel. 7.30pm at the Interfaith Education Centre, Listerhills Road, Bradford. Contact Tel: 01274 731674

22 June, Beaminster One World Fellowship. "The Baha'i Faith's Emergence as a Global Religion" by Dr Augusto Lopez-Claros, former Professor of Economics at the University of Chile. Contact Roger Lake, The Laurels, 8 Whitcombe Road, Dorset, DT8 3NE

24 June, Bradford. The 7th Annual Multi-Faith Walk for Friendship. Contact Bradford Concord Interfaith Society Tel: 01274 731674

2 July, South London Inter Faith Group. Visit to St George's Hospital Chaplaincy. 3.30pm. Contact: Sarah Thorley Tel: 020 8674 5447

4 July, Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship. Summer party at the Thomas Danby College, Leeds. Contact Frank Watkinson Tel: 0113 262 4708

5 July, Wolverhampton Inter-Faith Group. A summer garden party. Contact WIFG Tel: 01902 427601 email ifofficer@aol.com

6 July, Bristol Inter Faith Group. "Spiritual journeys – an exploration through life of religious questions and decisions" with Mrs Kathy Berry, Mrs Shahina Johnson and Mrs Suaad Walker. 7.30pm at the Liberal and Progressive Synagogue, Bannerman Road, Easton. Contact

Anula Beckett Tel: 0117 9640595

9 July, Bolton Interfaith Council. Mayor-making ceremony at Bolton Parish Church at 10.30am. Members of the Interfaith Council will be taking a key role in this ceremony. Contact Gill Atkinson Tel: 01204 669109

23 July, Merseyside Interfaith Group. An Evening with Jewish Friends, Eve of Sabbath Prayers and an "Ask the Rabbi" session. 8pm at the Progressive Synagogue, Church Road, Wavertree. Contact Dr Ahmad Khan Tel: 0151 733 2940 or Canon Michael Wolfe Tel: 0151 733 1541

4 September, Gloucestershire Inter Faith Action. Discussion on racism, social exclusion and poverty. 7.30pm at Barton & Tredworth Community Resource Project, Conduit Street, Gloucester. Contact Tel: 01452 530337 or e-mail: gifa@cableinet.co.uk

16 September, Greenwich Multi-Faith Forum. Inter faith pilgrimage from Greenwich Park to the Millennium Dome. Pam Rhodes from Songs of Praise will be compering the gathering at the Dome. Contact Augusta Gibrill Tel: 020 8855 4688

8-14 September, Scotland, Pilgrims Crossing, a planned pilgrimage between St Andrews and Edinburgh. Contact Rodney Matthews Tel 01786 823588

Sacred Voices Millennium Music Village

28 June-16 July London. This years festival will feature 150 international vocalists from 12 countries joining 300 top singers from London's diverse faith communities. The festival aims to encourage dialogue, understanding and respect between peoples of different faith backgrounds. Most event are free.

Festival Weekends: Regent's Park 1 & 2 July 12.30-8.30 pm; Richmond Riverside 8 & 9 July 1-8 pm; Greenwich Park 15 & 16 July 12.30-8.30pm

Programme for Schools: Imperial War Museum 28 June - 14 July (pre-booking required)

Lunchtime Festival Club: The October Gallery 28 June-14 July 12-3pm (Tue-Fri). Talks; concerts; international food; voice healing workshops.

Evening Concerts: Union Chapel; The Roundhouse; October Gallery; St John's Wood Synagogue; Egyptian Cultural Centre; Nehru Centre; Yaa Asantewaa; Africa Centre; Noor Jehan Centre; Brady Centre; George Tomlinson School

Festival Hotline: 020 7456 0404
email: musicvil@dircon.co.uk

Diary dates

(continued from p.11)

Seminars, courses, exhibitions and conferences

10 June, Birmingham. Interfaith Seminar, "Perceptions of Divinity" at Guru Nanak Nishkaam Sewak Jatha, 18-20 Soho Road, Birmingham 9.30am-4pm. Contact Tel: 0121 554 7107 or email: gschandani@hotmail.com

19 June, London. Council of Christians and Jews one-day conference on "Perspectives on Israel". At the Methodist International Centre from 10.30am-4pm. Cost £12. Contact Mrs Beryl Norman Tel: 020 8673 9134

22 June, London. "Religious faith and social renewal" conference featuring the Chief Rabbi, Frank Field MP, Angela Sarkis and Rumman Ahmed. Cost £25/£16 contact Tel: 07931 836796

23-25 June, Bedford. Buddhist/Christian weekends reflecting on the teachings of Eckhart. Contact Retreat Secretary, Priory of Our Lady of Peace, Turvey Abbey, Turvey, Bedford MK43 8DE Tel: 01234 881432

25 June –7 July, Cambridge, Centre for Jewish-Christian Relations Summer School 2000 at Wesley House, Cambridge. "Jewish and Christian Responses to the Holocaust". Contact: Lucia Faltin-Aitken Tel: 01223 741038

27-29 June, Birmingham. United College of the Ascension and Christians Aware course on "Jesus and Buddha –

drawing closer?" Led by Dr Elizabeth Harris and Ms Ramona Kauth. Cost £65/£30. Contact Rev Canon Dr Andrew Wingate Tel: 0121 472 1667

29 June, Oxford. J Estlin Carpenter Centenary Lectures by Martin Palmer and Acharya Srivatsi Goswami on Western and Indian perspectives of comparative religion. Manchester College Oxford, 11am-4.30pm. Contact the Hibbert Trust 01225 442095

3-6 July, Seville, Spain. International Council of Christians and Jews Conference, "Enhancing Identity through Encounter". Contact Ruth Weyl, 20 Sentis Ct, Carew Road, Northwood HA6 3NG

6-9 July, Windsor, St Catherine's Conference in association with The Altajir World of Islam Trust and the Commonwealth Foundation. "Christians and Muslims in the Commonwealth: a Dynamic Role in the Future. Cost £200-00. Contact: Dr Geoffrey Williams Tel: 01784 432 316 email: geoffreywilliams@cumberlandlodge.ac.uk

7-8 July, Cambridge, University of Cambridge Faculty of Divinity and Dharam Hinduja Institute of Indic Research summer conference. "Devotion in the Indian Tradition" at the Divinity School, Cambridge, Cost: £22/18 for 2 days. Contact: Mrs H Johnson Tel: 01223 339559 email: hej22@cam.ac.uk

28-30 July, Leicester, World Congress of Faiths retreat "The mystic in all of us". Led by Canon Michael Ipgrave and Revd Richard Boeke at Launde Abbey. Cost £85. Contact Tel: 01865 202746

10-16 August, Coventry 2000: "Values have no boundaries – Action for the Millennium" conference for young people organised by Minorities of Europe. Contact Deepak Naik Tel: 07932 065453

21 September, Oxford. "Jewish and Palestinian Co-existence: the Example of Open House, Israel" with Yehezkel Landau and Michael Fanous. Contact IIC Tel 01865 202745, e-mail: iic@interfaith-center.org

11 October, Oxford. A one day seminar at Somerville College, Oxford. IIC in cooperation with the Religious Experience Research Centre. "What are spiritual/religious experiences?" Contact IIC Tel 01865 202745, e-mail: iic@interfaith-center.org

22 Jan- 10 Feb 2001 World Congress of Faiths, visit to India led by Marcus and Mary Braybrooke. Contact Tel: 01865 343215

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The Inter Faith Network promotes understanding and respect between the faith communities in the UK. If you would like to make a contribution to help support this work please write to its Director:

Brian Pearce
The Inter Faith Network
5-7 Tavistock Place
London WC1H 9SN
Tel: 020 7388 0008

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INTER FAITH

UPDATE

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Local government and inter faith co-operation

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Inter faith co-operation, local government and the regions: councils of faith as a resource for the 21st Century. This conference was held in Birmingham on 12 June by the Inter Faith Network in association with the Inner Cities Religious Council of the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions and with support from the Active Community Unit of the Home Office. The conference built upon last year's publication of *The Local Inter Faith Guide*, about the setting up and running of local inter faith initiatives.

The 120 participants included representatives from faith communities, including national leaders and members of local faith communities actively involved in creating local inter faith structures in multi-faith towns and cities; local authority officers involved in regeneration programmes; and civil

servants from Government Departments with a special interest in the issues (DETR; Home Office; Active Community Unit; and the Social Exclusion Unit).

The conference looked at:

- how local government and faith communities can work together to ensure the development of inter faith structures which can promote harmonious and co-operative relationships and provide a reliable pattern of contacts for consultation and partnership
- how faith communities can play an appropriate role in relation to the work of local authorities, regional structures, other public bodies and services, as well as regeneration initiatives such as the New Deal for Communities (NDC)
- some of the challenges which face faith communities and inter faith

continued on page 2

Subscribing to Inter Faith Update

The newsletter is published three times a year and is available by subscription at £7.50 per year.

To subscribe simply send your name and address with a cheque payable to "The Inter Faith Network" to:

The Inter Faith Network
5-7 Tavistock Place
London WC1H 9SN

Faith question for census

Issue 13 of *Inter Faith Update* reported that the necessary legislation to enable a question on religious identity to be included in the 2001 Census in Scotland had been enacted by the Scottish Parliament, but that a Private Member's Bill to enable a question to be included in the Census in England and Wales was failing to make progress in the House of Commons, having passed through the House of Lords. Following intense lobbying by faith communities, the Government provided time of its own

for the Bill to be debated and the legislation received the Royal Assent on 28 July. No amending legislation was needed in Northern Ireland where a question on religious identity has been asked in previous Censuses.

So in the 2001 Census a question on religious identity will be asked throughout the UK, although its wording will differ from country to country.



Some key points of the Local Inter Faith Conference

- Faith communities and inter faith organisations have great potential to contribute to the “social inclusion” agenda.
- The prevailing culture can be resistant to faith community involvement in local and national life. Work to tackle ignorance and prejudice about religion is crucial, as is tackling racism.
- There is an increasing desire on the part of central and local Government to bring faith communities into a structured process of consultation.
- There are many different areas of local government policy where the input of faith community and inter faith organisations can be given.
- Local faith community and inter faith organisations rely heavily on the work of volunteers. This is a tremendous strength. It is also a reason why it can be difficult for them to put forward, at short notice, appropriate individuals to give input on their behalf to projects and policies.
- Faith communities and inter faith organisations need to be well informed and prepared if they are to play a significant role in public life. Lack of funding and appropriate infra structures can be a problem.

(Continued from page 1)

organisations in multi faith towns and cities as they seek to develop representative and adequately serviced responses to invitations to contribute to the formation and implementation of public policy

The Conference was Co-chaired by Brian Pearce and Revd Alan Greenbat. The morning session included presentations from Angela Sarkis, Chief Executive of the Church Urban Fund and adviser to the Government’s Social Exclusion Unit and Howard Simmons, Director for Cultural and Community Investment, London Borough of Hounslow and adviser to the Local Government Association on community issues.

Angela Sarkis spoke of her belief that faith communities have a significant role to play in all aspects of British life and about how public bodies are now beginning to seek to work with faith communities, especially at the local level. Howard Simmons set out the ways in which faith groups can get involved with local government and of the current requirements for local government to consult their local communities.

Harriet Crabtree and Bhupinder Singh, of the Network office, gave an overview of different types of local inter faith organisations. This was followed by presentations from three local initiatives all at different stages of development: Wolverhampton Inter-Faith Group, one of the oldest inter faith initiatives in the UK; Coventry Multi-Faith Forum, which has evolved alongside the Coventry Inter Faith

The Inter Faith Network for the UK

The Inter Faith Network was founded in 1987. It works with its member bodies to promote good relations between the faith communities in the UK, to combat inter religious prejudice and intolerance and to help make the UK a country marked by mutual understanding and respect between religions where all can practise their faith with integrity.

The Network:

- Provides information on faith communities and on inter faith affairs
- Advises on multi faith projects and inter faith issues
- Publishes materials to aid work in the religious and inter faith sectors
- Fosters inter faith co-operation on social issues
- Holds regular meetings where social and religious questions of concern to the different faith communities can be examined together
- Links 89 member organisations including: representative bodies from the different faith communities; inter faith organisations; local inter faith groups; academic institutions and bodies concerned with multi faith education.

Inter Faith Update is the newsletter of the Inter Faith Network for the UK. It keeps a wide range of organisations and individuals interested in developing good inter faith relations in the UK in touch with UK events and projects with a significant inter faith component.

For publications which contain in depth articles on inter faith topics, relevant book reviews or items related to

individual faith communities ask the Network office for details.

Please send any contribution of articles and diary dates for consideration for inclusion in the next issue by 26 January 2001 to:

Bhupinder Singh,
Information Officer,



Group, and is working in partnership with Coventry City Council; and Blackburn with Darwen Interfaith Council, which is a new group and which has had strong backing from the local authority right from the outset.

The afternoon session heard from Jane Slowey of Birmingham Voluntary Services Council on good management of voluntary organisations; Maheeb Ladha, Chief Executive's Office, Leicester City Council, who gave a local government perspective on supporting local inter faith structures; and Heather Swailes of the Allen Lane Foundation who spoke about funding from Trusts.

Participants then contributed to five workshop sessions which looked at topics ranging from, working towards and maintaining a "representative" council to partnership between local government and councils of faiths".

The final plenary included a presentation from David Rayner, Secretary of the ICRC.

The report of the conference is available from the Network Office priced £4.75 including p&p.

NATIONAL UPDATES

Vatican document stirs debate

In early September the Vatican published a declaration on the Catholic faith entitled *Dominus Iesus* which included statements about the status of other Christian Churches and of other faiths from the perspective of the Roman Catholic Church. Pope John Paul II and Cardinal Ratzinger have underlined the fact that the document only defines existing Catholic doctrine. However, some of the phrases in the document, highlighted in media reports, have caused controversy and critical comment. The text of the full document can be found on the Vatican website: <http://www.vatican.va>.

The Committee for Other Faiths of the Roman Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales have indicated that later this autumn they will be issuing comments on the text and reactions to it.

Human rights and religious

discrimination

The Human Rights Act 1998 came into force on 2 October 2000. It incorporates within UK law the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights which the UK Government signed in 1951. This means that UK citizens will be able to enforce these rights in UK courts instead of having to take their case to the European Court of Human Rights.

The Act makes it unlawful for public authorities, including private bodies when carrying out public functions, to act in a manner which is incompatible with the Convention rights. These rights include "the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion," including freedom [for the individual] to change his or her religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his or her religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance." The freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs is "subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of public safety, for the protection of public order, health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others." Section 13 of the Human Rights Act says that "if a court's determination of any question arising under this Act might affect the exercise by a religious organisation (itself or its members collectively) of the Convention right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, it must have particular regard to the importance of that right."

The provisions of the Human Rights Act could be very significant for individuals and organisations with a religious identity. However, a good deal of caution is being shown in offering advice on the Act's precise impact. This may not be clear until a number of legal cases have been brought under it. Nevertheless, its enactment might well have an immediate effect on those anxious to avoid falling foul of its provisions.

So far as religious discrimination is concerned, it is important to note that while it will be illegal for public authorities to act in a way which is incompatible with the Convention rights, private and voluntary sector organisations are covered by it only if they are carrying out "public functions". An example would be a voluntary organisation that carries out a public function for central or local government, such as running residential homes under contract. The Human Rights Unit at the Home Office is available to give advice on the implications of the legislation.



During October there will be a meeting of the European Community Council of Ministers to consider further a draft Directive which is designed to give protection against discrimination in employment and occupation and covers various forms of discrimination: sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. Following their adoption by the Council of Ministers, Directives must be given effect within a specified period in the national legislation of member countries which can apply their provisions in ways which are appropriate to their different circumstances.

While there has in general been a welcome for the measure's intention to combat discrimination on religious grounds, faith communities have been concerned that its provisions might affect the freedom of religious organisations, including schools, to discriminate in their own employment practices in favour of members of their own faith in order to maintain their ethos. However, a Ministerial assurance has been given in the House of Lords that the Government will seek to ensure that the Directive protects the legitimate rights of religious organisations.

A third development relating to religious discrimination will be submission to the Home Office by the University of Derby's project team of its final report on its research on religious discrimination in general.

So the picture of current and prospective developments in this field is a complex one. The Network will be keeping its member organisations in touch with developments and will report on them in *Inter Faith Update*.

The future of multi-ethnic Britain

The Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain, which was set up in 1998 by The Runnymede Trust, published its report, *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain* on 11 October, as *Inter Faith Update* was going to print. The 400 page report makes over 130 recommendations "to the government in Cardiff, Holyrood and Westminster" and to other public authorities in a number of categories ranging from education and employment to health and policing. The section on "Religion and Belief" makes the following recommendations:

- In all faith communities there should be closer connections between anti-racism and work to improve inter faith relations.

- Legislation should be introduced prohibiting direct and indirect discrimination on grounds of religion or belief.
- A statement of general principles should be drawn up on reasonable accommodation in relation to religious and cultural diversity in the workplace and in schools, and case-study examples of good practice should be provided.
- A study should be made of police responses to hate crimes containing a religious component.
- A commission on the role of religion in the public life of a multi-faith society should be set up to make recommendations on legal and constitutional matters.

Further information is available at the website: <http://www.runnymedetrust.org.uk>. The full report (RRP £10.99) is available from Profile books Tel: 020 7404 3001, email: corinne.anyika@profilebooks.co.uk

Faith community support for the International Criminal Court

A delegation of faith community representatives met with Foreign Office officials on 26 May to press for the early ratification of the International Criminal Court treaty by the UK government. In August the text of a draft Bill for this purpose was published and faith communities have offered comments on this.

The treaty to create the Court was originally agreed at an intergovernmental conference in Rome in 1998. Out of the 120 governments who voted to create the court, 98 have signed the treaty and to date, 13 have ratified it into their national legislation. The new court will have the capacity to indict and try individuals all over the world that have been charged with having committed the crimes of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. It will also have the power of redress to compensate victims of such serious crimes.

First Muslim state secondary school

The Secretary of State for Education, Rt Hon David Blunkett MP announced on 6 October that the Feversham Girl's School in Bradford is to

receive more than £5 million to finance a switch from the independent sector to voluntary-aided status. The school, which is run by the Muslim Association of Bradford, currently has just over 200 pupils. It hopes to increase numbers to about 580 girls with a move to the buildings of a former Roman Catholic School. Feversham follows the Islamia primary school in London and the Al Furqan primary in Birmingham into the state system. Since 1997 one Greek Orthodox, five Jewish, one Seventh Day Adventist and two Sikh schools have also been given voluntary-aided status.

Sacred voices sacred spaces

The Sacred Voices Millennium Music Village Festival took place from 28 June to 16 July in various venues around London. The festival featured an array of religious singers from different faiths and countries as far apart as the Balkans, India, Jamaica and South Africa. Several UK based artists also performed at the three major weekend music festivals. In addition to the music festival a conference and series of workshops were held on "The Healing Power of Sound and Music" and a series of talks were held about peace in the various faith traditions. Over 1,700 school children took part in the schools programme which included workshops on peace and healing.

Sacred Spaces was the theme of a photographic exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum which brought together photographs taken by members of different faiths of their communities. It is proposed to make this exhibition available for display by local communities around the country. For details please contact: Ethne Nightingale, Education Department, Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington, London SW7 2RL.

Religious events at the Dome

The Millennium Dome hosted a Day of Jewish Culture on 16 July as part of the International Jewish Music Festival. Over 500 singers and dancers entertained visitors. As well as music, song and drama there was an exhibition of sculptures and poetry recitals by Jewish artists.

14 August saw the launch of the UK branch of United Religions Initiative (URI) in the Our Town Story area of the Dome. The Rt Revd William Swing, Anglican Bishop of California and the initiator of URI International joined leaders of several faiths who signed the URI Charter. Members from different faith community

and inter faith organisations from around the country were in the audience. They were joined by a delegation of young people from across Europe who were taking part in the Coventry 2000: Values Have No Boundaries Conference organised by Minorities of Europe.

About 8,000 members of the Hindu community were present at the Dome on the following day, 15 August to celebrate Raksha Bandan. Four cultural presentations by Hindu groups from around the country took place on the Our Town Story stage. Visitors to the Dome were offered a Rakhi and were also treated to performances by a Hindu community band in the Main Square just outside the Dome.

The Baha'i community is holding a celebration of the Birthday of the Báb at the Dome on 21 October.

Network web site

www.interfaith.org.uk

The Inter Faith Network for the UK's official web site. Online information about the work of the Network.

Network Contacts

Contacts for Member Organisations of the Network. Updated list of contacts for all the Network's member bodies Price 50p

National Inter Faith Organisations. A booklet listing inter faith organisations, most of which offer individual membership. Price 30p

Local Inter Faith Groups and Councils of Faith. A booklet listing over seventy local inter faith initiatives across the UK Price 50p

Video available

Shared Act of Reflection and Commitment by the Faith Communities of the UK. Full length video of the Millennium First Weekend Event on 3 January recorded by the BBC **Price £4.50**

Available from the Network Office.

NETWORK NEWS

Inter Faith Relations in the UK: the Next Decade

The 2000 AGM and National Meeting of the Inter Faith Network took place on 4 July at Rosebery House in London. It was chaired by Dr Manazir Ahsan and Rt Revd Tom Butler. The theme of the National Meeting was “Inter Faith Relations in the UK: the Next Decade” and the day was designed to allow a chance to reflect on the future developments which need to be encouraged in the inter faith field and the contribution which member organisations and the Network itself can make to these.

Back in 1987, when the Network was founded, the significance of the faith dimension of relations between different communities was often ignored or challenged and many people were wary of inter faith encounter. There are still sceptics and even those who are hostile, but the importance of good inter faith relations is now much more widely accepted, both within faith communities themselves and by wider society. The Government has also become more aware of the significance of faith identity, and faith communities have developed ways of working together in their dealings with Government. One example is the success in persuading the Government to include a question on religion in the 2001 Census. Another is the readiness of the new Scottish Parliament to listen to the newly formed Scottish Inter Faith Council. The Shared Act of Reflection and Commitment by the faith communities of the UK, which was held in the Houses of Parliament as part of the First Weekend celebrations of the new Millennium in many ways symbolised the progress which has been made in recent years, but on which there is now a need to build.

There were opening presentations on ways ahead by Brian Pearce, Network Director; Iqbal Sacranie of the UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs and Muslim Council of Britain; and young Jain doctor Sapna Shah. In the discussions that followed, participants tackled such topics as how the inter faith situation has changed in recent years; the new challenges for organisations in the inter faith field; possible dangers to be faced and pitfalls to be avoided; and new initiatives which might need to be taken. Representatives from each of the four categories of Network membership (national faith community; national inter faith; local inter faith; and educational and academic) met separately during the afternoon.

see back page for details on ordering the report

Web update

We continue our Web update series listing web sites that may be of interest to readers.

In this issue we list web sites of some of the Network's faith community representative member bodies:

Baha'i Community of the United Kingdom

<http://www.bahai.org.uk>

Board of Deputies of British Jews

<http://www.bod.org.uk>

Buddhist Society

<http://www.buddsoc.org.uk>

Muslim Council of Britain

<http://www.mcb.org.uk>

Swaminarayan Hindu Mission

Inter faith profile

Most Venerable Pandith Dr Medagama Vajiragnana, was elected as a Vice-Chair of the Network at its recent AGM. The following is a short interview conducted by Bhupinder Singh.

Q What does your work as a leader of the Sri Lankan Buddhist community in this country involve?

My position as Sangha Nayake of Great Britain is primarily one of being a central focus for the Sri Lankan Sangha (i.e. monks) resident here or visiting. As the years proceed, many more monks are arriving in this country and new viharas (monastic temples) are being set up. Buddhist monks have great independence from each other. Monks are not tied to any centre or organised community and can move between temples whenever it is agreeable to both sides. Each monk has to observe the same 227 monastic rules, but he is respected as an individual endeavouring to succeed in his spiritual quest. Hence, the Sangha Nayake takes an attitude more of a father figure than a disciplinarian.

I am also Abbot of the London Buddhist Vihara and my role here is one of taking care of the religious needs of the Buddhist laity of any nationality. However, we find that most traditionally Buddhist countries now have their own centres here, hence the London Buddhist Vihara is mainly catering for British and Sri Lankan devotees. We also find a need to help the Sri Lankans to keep in touch with their national identity by teaching children their native tongue and organising cultural events.

Q What is your understanding of the need for inter faith dialogue?

On my arrival in England in 1967, I found great ignorance among most people concerning "imported" religions. The "Abrahamic" religions were well established here and their differences tolerated, but there was great suspicion regarding those religions coming from the Indian continent and the Far East.

My understanding of the need for inter faith dialogue is that it reduces the fear and suspicion so prevalent among many. It attempts to build bridges of understanding so that all can follow their respective religious preference without fear of discrimination or incrimination by their neighbours or work-mates.

For me, the need for inter faith dialogue is in no way connected with any force of "blending". As a Buddhist, I stand firm on the principle that no compromise should be allowed to influence any person to overlook certain parts of their belief for the sake of politeness. For example, a number of times I have refused to sit on a platform when the topic for discussion is "We all believe in the same God", as my tradition is non-theistic.

Respect for the individual's religious choice is paramount. Buddhism and "dogma" are not compatible, and neither is any form of condemnation for another's choice of belief.

Q How did you first get involved with inter faith dialogue?

Harmony without any religious intolerance is an established part of Sri Lanka's history and culture. There are four main religions thriving there - Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity and Islam. Whilst in Sri Lanka I was the secretary of the "United Religious Organisation" (URO), a worthy group of religious leaders doing great work in the island. Very early after my return to Britain in 1985, Brian Pearce and Rabbi Hugo Gryn approached me to discuss the formation of the Inter Faith Network for the UK. Immediately, I agreed to do what I could to aid them in this fine proposal. My enthusiasm is still as great as ever.

Q You have been a member of the Network's Executive Committee since it was founded, what do you think have been its main achievements?

Having been involved since the very beginning, I feel the Network's main achievements are exactly in line with its original objectives, as I understand them:-

- To bring together like-minded groups of individuals who wish to break the barriers of fear, suspicion, and ignorance among people with different religious beliefs
- To enable fast and genuine dialogue to take place between religious leaders across the entire religious spectrum in the country
- To instigate a forum to discuss pertinent problems currently present in society, with each religious view being aired


This country is a multi-cultural one and the religious views of each group must be represented and respected (though not necessarily agreed with). Inter faith dialogue is only healthy when carried out intelligently in a well organised manner. The Inter Faith Network succeeds in doing this.

Inter Faith Profile continued...

Q In what ways do you see inter faith work developing in the coming years?

The achievements to date may be great, but there is still much to do in achieving certain parts of the Network's aims. Only the other year I personally witnessed nuns objecting with banners outside Westminster Cathedral when a multi-faith programme was held there. Great fear is still present, much of it deep-seated so that it may well take a generation to clear. Grudging tolerance is not

enough, it still leaves unhealthy attitudes undercover!

 I recommend that in the coming years the work of the Inter Faith Network UK furthers even more intensively the cause of understanding and harmony between followers of different beliefs.

Network News cont..

Farewell To Harsha

Executive Committee members joined the staff in expressing their gratitude to Harsha Shah, who left the Network at the end of August after almost seven years as its administrative assistant.

New member bodies

At the Network's Annual General Meeting on 4 July applications for membership of the Network were accepted from: The Muslim Council of Britain; The Unitarian and Free Christian Churches Inter Faith Sub-committee; The International Interfaith Centre, Oxford; The Scottish Inter Faith Council; Bolton Inter Faith Council; and Luton Council of Faiths.

New Vice-chair

Most Ven Dr M Vagiragnana of the Sri Lankan Sangha Sabha GB was elected to serve as a Vice Chair of the Network.

MBE for Network Co-chair

Dr Manazir Ahsan was appointed an MBE in the Queen's Birthday honours list for services to the Millennium celebrations.

Brian Pearce receives Papal Knighthood

Network Director Brian Pearce was presented with his appointment as a Knight of the Papal Order of St Gregory (KSG) by Most Revd Michael Bowen, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Southwark, at a small reception at his house in July. Those who spoke at the event included Rt Revd Charles Henderson and Sir Sigmund Sternberg KCSG.

RECENT CONFERENCES

Valuing Faith: a multi-faith conference

On 11 September a multi-faith conference, funded by the Millennium Festival Trust, took place at Bradford College in partnership with Bradford's Q21 Centre. Participants from many faith backgrounds came together to discuss such issues as: the role of women; funding and faith communities; inter-personal skills in faith settings; managing volunteers; the impact of the Internet; faiths in schools; and faith and the media. Workshops to enable sharing of good practice were a key part of the day.

The conference was the first major initiative of Q21 (whose name comes out of the phrase "questions for the 21st century"). It was founded in 1995, by a small group of people from a variety of backgrounds, to renovate the derelict Victorian schoolhouse building next to Bradford's Interfaith Education Centre in the Listerhills district of the inner-city to become the home of a centre. This will: promote knowledge and understanding of the religions and denominations of the world; promote intercultural learning and community development; facilitate inter-community liaison in various parts of the Bradford district; and promote dialogue between Bradfordians and people from other areas of the UK and other countries, with a focus on inter faith and inter cultural issues.

For further information about the Centre or about the conference, contact David Fitch, Interfaith Education Centre, Listerhills Road, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD7 1HD.

Faith makes communities work

This is the title of a report produced as a result of a two-year project by the Shaftesbury Society in association with the DETR (Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions). The research found that faith based community projects frequently struggle to find the funding they require, working out of premises which need upgrading. However, they can expand their resources through the significant commitment of a volunteer base and goodwill within the community. The report, written from a multi-faith perspective, covers topics ranging from motivating volunteers and working with other faiths, to accessing funding and overcoming discrimination.

The first of two one day conferences based on the research on the theme of Faith and Community Development took place at Goldsmiths' College, London on 12 September. A range of practitioner materials were also launched at the London gathering where the keynote presentation was from Rt Hon Hilary Armstrong MP, Minister for Local Government and the Regions. Other speakers included: Angela Sarkis, Church Urban Fund; Fran Becket, Shaftesbury Society; Ram Gidoomal, South Asian Development Partnership; and David Rayner, Inner Cities Religious Council.

Further information can be found at the web site: www.faithandcommunity.org.uk or from the Shaftesbury Society Tel: 020 8239 5555.

Inter faith seminar at Birmingham Gurdwara

An inter faith seminar was held at Guru Nanak Niskam Sewak Jatha Gurdwara in Birmingham on 10 June. Bhai Mohinder Singh, Chairman of the Gurdwara, gave an opening address. Speakers at the seminar talked about their faith's perceptions of divinity. The speakers included: Rt Revd John Austin, (Anglican Bishop of Aston); Dr Jabal Buaben (Muslim); Mr Phramaha Laow Panyasiri (Buddhist); Mrs Sharada Sugirthrajah (Hindu); and Dr Natubhai Shah (Jain). An exhibition of the different faiths was on display and delegates were taken on a tour of the Gurdwara. The afternoon session then heard from Dr David Cheetham speaking about inter faith work in Birmingham; Dr P Kumar on "total surrender"; Dr Owen Cole on the future of inter faith work; and Professor John Hull on education for the new generation.

Buddhist Christian Network opens inter faith centre

The newly formed Buddhist-Christian Network aims to promote friendship and mutual trust between followers of these two faiths, but also welcomes anyone interested in meditation and the contemplative journey. The Network has recently established an inter faith centre, which includes a

meditation room and library/meeting room. For more information on the Network and its centre please contact Elizabeth West, The Interfaith Centre, 43 Bramley Road, London N14 4HD, email: ewest@onetel.net.uk

SCOTTISH UPDATE

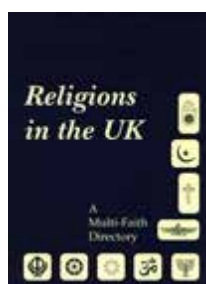
Meetings with the Scottish Parliament

Members of the Scottish Inter Faith Council (SIFC), now a Network member body, met with Jim Wallace MSP, the Deputy First Minister of the Scottish Parliament, on 31 May. Donald Dewar MSP, the First Minister, was due to be present, but was prevented by illness. The meeting, which will be an annual event, discussed issues of mutual concern to the faith communities and Scottish Parliament. Since then SIFC representatives have met again with Mr Wallace to discuss the newly published White Paper on Family Law in Scotland.

Holy Isle Inter Faith Centre

On 16 September members of the Scottish Inter Faith Council were invited to Holy Isle, the Buddhist owned island off the Isle of Arran, to mark the opening of the new inter faith centre there. During the day Lama Yeshe, the leader of the Buddhist community based on the island led the visiting group to a cave where the group sat in silent meditation. It is said that a 6th Century Celtic saint named Molaisa lived as a hermit on the island for eight years and regularly meditated in the cave. The visitors were also able to drink from the well from which Saint Molaisa used to drink. The group then returned to the inter faith centre to talk about the future of Holy Isle as a resource for all faiths. Some of the participants stayed on the island for a week's inter faith retreat.

Religions in the UK: A Multi-Faith Directory, now available at a **25% discount**. £25 inc. p&p. Order from: Religious Resource and Research Centre, University of Derby, Mick-leover, Derby DE3 5GX



REGIONAL UPDATES

Bedford. Bedford Council of Faiths held an event called “Food for Festivals” on 12 August at the Bedford Quaker Meeting House. Members from Baha’i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu and Muslim faiths shared food and explained its religious significance for them.

Gloucester. Gloucestershire Inter Faith Action helped to organise an inter faith marquee at Gloucester’s Millennium Festival held at The Park from 22 to 23 July. The marquee, which was funded by the City Council, was decorated with posters and artefacts from several faiths and visitors were greeted by members of the faiths at various stalls.

Leicester. The Inter Faith Sensory Garden was officially opened on 17 June. The Chairman and representatives of Leicester Council of Faiths were among those who gave blessings at the opening of the garden which is in the grounds of Glenfield Hospital for people with learning disabilities.

London. Westminster Interfaith held its fifteenth London Multifaith Pilgrimage for Peace on 3 June. This year’s event had five different start points: North, South, East, West and Central London. The five separate groups converged at the Battersea Peace Pagoda, visiting different places of worship along each of their routes. All the groups then made their way to Westminster Cathedral. After a short prayer by the tomb of Cardinal Hume, the pilgrims gathered in the Cathedral Hall where short presentations were made by people of a number of different faiths.

The Greenwich Multi-Faith Pilgrimage took place on 9 September. Over 100 people made the walk from Greenwich Park to the Millennium Dome, where they were joined by a further 100 for a meal provided by the Ramgarhia Sikh Gurdwara and presentations from seven different faiths. Also in Greenwich, the Mayor opened a multi-faith exhibition on 28 September at the Borough Museum which is open until 27 October.

Luton. The Luton Council of Faiths was formally launched on 6 July at the University of Luton. Previously known as Luton Inter Faith Forum, the new organisation has adopted a formal constitution and is aiming to develop its relationship with the local education authority. A range of presentations were made by different faith communities and by local schools. Speeches were given by the local MP, the Mayor of Luton, personnel from the local authority; the education authority; the University of Luton; and several inter faith organisations.

Wolverhampton. During the summer an RE

teacher joined Wolverhampton Inter-Faith Group for a week to produce a work pack for children visiting places of worship. WIFG also launched its “Meeting in the Millennium” (MIM) project at the annual Wolverhampton Town Show on 8 July. The launch was attended by the Mayor of Wolverhampton, and leading representatives from the town’s different faith communities. The project aims to encourage local faith communities to meet together to build trust and understanding. There was a joint Act of Commitment, using the text from the Millennium shared faith communities event in the House of Lords on 3 January. The words had been inscribed in a book, which was signed by those present and which is now being taken around to various places of worship and community centres in the town so that others may also sign it.

INTERNATIONAL UPDATE

Religious leaders meet at United Nations

At the end of August a Millennium World Peace Summit took place at the United Nations in New York. It brought together many religious and spiritual leaders from around the world. Among these were a number of representatives of faith communities and inter faith organisations in the UK. There was controversy over the absence of an invitation to the Dalai Lama, believed to be the result of pressure from the Chinese Government. Those present endorsed a document entitled “Commitment to Global Peace” which condemns all violence committed in the name of religion. In his address to the gathering in the UN General Assembly Hall UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said that “religion can be a realm of extraordinary power”. He went on to say, “Religious practices and beliefs are among the phenomena that define us as human”, but noted that “the practice of religion can also have its dark side”. He invited those present “to look within and to consider what they can do to promote justice, equality, reconciliation and peace.....[and] to set an example of inter faith dialogue and co-operation.”

DIARY DATES

Local inter faith events

Space only allows us to list only one event per organisation. For details of other events contact the relevant local groups. Events are also listed in the One Family Newsletter available from the World Congress of Faiths, 2 Market Street, Oxford OX1 3EF

Until 27 October Greenwich, Multi-Faith Millennium Exhibition at the Borough Museum, Plumstead High Street. Contact: Revd Anthony Plummer Tel: 020 8854 0960 or Beverley Buford Tel: 020 8855 3240

15-22 October, Week of Prayer for World Peace. A service will be held on 18 October at St George-the-Martyr, Borough High Street, London SE1, 6pm. For details of other events taking place please contact: Revd Sidney Hinkes Tel: 01666 825249

16 October – 4 December, Leicester. Series of talks on Monday evenings organised by Faith Awareness/Christians Aware on “People of Faith and Conflict Resolution”. Contact Tel: 0116 254 0770 email: barbarabutler@christiansaware.co.uk

17 October, Hampstead Inter Faith Group. “Faith and the Environment” talk by John Smith of ICOREC. 7.30pm at 63b Belsize Park Gardens, London NW3 4JN. Write for more information.

22 October, Belfast. The Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum in association with the John Main Seminar. An Inter Faith Celebration of Peace in St Anne’s Anglican Cathedral, 3.30-4.30pm. Contact Tel: 028 9061 2637

22-29 October, One World Week. 22nd annual programme of education and action on global justice. Information from: OWW PO Box 2555 Reading RG1 4XW Tel: 0118 939 4933

23 October, Exeter Inter-Faith Group. “My View of Buddhism” by Stephen Bachelor. 7.30pm at the University Catholic Chaplaincy, Glenthorn Road, Exeter. Contact Tel: 01626 773856

29 October, Edinburgh Interfaith Association. “Making Sense of Suffering”, a chance to see the video of inter faith dialogue on this topic followed by discussion and refreshments. Contact Tel: 0131 343 6893 email: jvickers@idzero.co.uk

31 October, Liverpool. Merseyside Inter-Faith Group and the Liverpool CCJ welcome the Archbishop of Liverpool, Most Revd Patrick Kelly, to speak on Roman Catholic relations with other faiths at Hope University College. Contact Tel: 0151 733 1541

31 October, Cambridge Inter Faith Group. 8pm panel discussion on “Sin in Religion” at Wesley Church, Kings Street. Contact Ralf Nimmann Tel: 01223 510442 email: interfaith@rainbownet.fsnet.co.uk

2 November, Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship.

Discussion Evening, “Women and Religion”, introduced by Ruth Sterne. 7.30pm at the Meeting Room, Holy Trinity Church, Boar Lane, Leeds. Contact Tel: 0113 262 4708

2 November, Bristol Inter Faith Group. Civic Inter Faith Celebration, “Faith and Citizenship” by kind invitation of the Lord Mayor of Bristol. 7pm at the Conference Hall, Council House, College Green, Bristol. Contact Tel: 01454 313042

2, 9, 16, 23 November, Southall. Series of talks on Peace, Reconciliation and the World’s Religions, organised by Faith Awareness/Christians Aware. Each talk starts at 6.30pm for 7 pm at 208, Botwell Lane, Hayes. Contact Tel: 020 8651 3478

5 November, Guildford and Godalming United Nations Association Annual Interfaith Service. 3pm at St Nicholas Church Annexe, Guildford. Contact email: neogifamily@aol.com

8 November, London WCF (London Programme). Lecture, “The Mystic in All of Us” by Peggy Morgan at the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University, 65 Pound Lane, London NW10. Contact Annette Franco Tel: 020 8960 1829

8 November, Bolton Interfaith Council, “Life after Death”, three short talks from a Hindu, Christian and Muslim perspective. 7.30pm at the Friends Meeting House, Silverwell Street, Bolton. Contact Tel: 01204 669109

16 November, London, the World Conference on Religion and Peace celebrates its 30th anniversary. 8pm at the London Inter Faith Centre, 125 Salusbury Road, London NW6. Contact Barnabas Leith Tel: 020 7584 2566

20 November, Bradford Concord Interfaith Society. “Building Interfaith Relationships in Thornbury” by Revd Solomon Joseph. 7.30pm at the Interfaith Education Centre, Listerhills Road, Bradford. Contact Tel: 01274 731674

7 December, Brighton and Hove Interfaith Contact Group. “Walking the Paths to Truth”, 7.30pm at the Baha’i Centre, 19 Stanford Avenue, Brighton. Contact: Tel: 01273 722438

Diary dates

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Seminars, courses, exhibitions and conferences

14 October, London. World Congress of Faiths (London Programme). Seminar on Interfaith Imperatives for the 21st Century with Revd Marcus Braybrooke at 1/6 Essex Street, London WC2 10am-4.30pm. Cost £5. Contact Annette Franco Tel: 020 8960 1829

18 October, London. Panel discussion on “the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain” featuring Yasmin Alibhai-Brown, Stuart Hall and Lord Parekh. Hosted by the Institute for Jewish Policy Research, 6.30pm at Chatham House, London. Contact Tel: 020 7935 8266 email: jpr@jpr.org.uk

19 October, Peterborough. “The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain” discussion with members of the Commission. Contact: Harmesh Lakhampaul, Peterborough Racial Equality Council, 32 Russell Street, Peterborough PE1 2BQ Tel: 01733 554630

25 October – 22 November, London. Series of five lectures held every Wednesday at 6.45pm at the School of Oriental and African Studies, entitled “Interrelations between Jewish and Muslim Identity”. Sponsored by The Leo Baeck College and Maimonides Foundation in association with SOAS. Contact Tel: 020 8349 5600

18 November, London. “Hospitality and Interfaith: Places and Times for Dialogue” led by Michael Barnes, 11am-4pm at Heythrop College, Kensington Square, London W8. Cost £5 (suggested) contact tel: 020 8570 8639 email: aagius@aol.com

6 December, London. Institute for Jewish Policy Research lecture, “The Future of Religion in the Divided World” by Rt Revd Richard Harries, Bishop of Oxford. 6.30pm at Chatham House, 10 St James’s Square, London. Contact Tel: 020 7935 8266 email: jpr@jpr.org.uk

12-15 January 2001, Florida, USA. World Congress of Faiths/International Association for Religious Freedom Conference, “Religions in Dialogue: from Conflict to Trust”. Contact Tel: 01865 202751

22 Jan- 10 Feb 2001, World Congress of Faiths, Visit to India led by Revd Marcus and Mary Braybrooke. Contact Tel: 01865 343215

11 February 2001, Edinburgh Interfaith Association annual conference, “Science and Religion”, featuring Dr Ruth Clayton from Edinburgh University talking on responsibility in relation to genetics. Contact Tel: 0131 343 6893 email: jviskerx@idzero.co.uk

Support the work of the Inter Faith Network

The Inter Faith Network promotes understanding and respect between the faith communities in the UK. If you would like to make a contribution to help support this work please write to its Director:

Brian Pearce
The Inter Faith Network
5-7 Tavistock Place
London WC1H 9SN

Tel: 020 7388 0008

New Publications

Inter faith Co-operation, Local Government and the Regions: Councils of Faiths as a Resource for the 21st Century

Report on the June 2000 conference held in association with the Inner Cities Religious Council. ISBN 1 902906 05 5

Price **£4.75** inc. p&p.

Inter Faith Relations in the UK: The Next Decade

2000 National Meeting Report, examining how inter faith relations need to be developed in the coming years

ISBN 1 902906 04 7 Price **£3.75** inc p&p.

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INTER FAITH

UPDATE

Spring 2001 Issue 15

ISSN 1466-2000

Holocaust Memorial Day

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A national commemoration of Holocaust Memorial Day was held on 27 January at Westminster Central Hall. It was attended by HRH The Prince of Wales, as well as by political and religious leaders and 1500 guests from around the UK, including Holocaust survivors.

The National Ceremony was broadcast live on BBC2 and Radio 4. It featured a programme of readings, poetry, music and video clips. Survivors of the Holocaust and the Bosnian, Cambodian and Rwandan atrocities and a number of celebrities such as Sir Bob Geldof and Sir Trevor McDonald gave presentations.

During his address, the Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth, Dr Jonathan Sacks, said that: "We must never forget that God has given us many faiths, many races but only one world

in which to live together. May we recognise His image in those who are not in our image, and may the memory of those who died teach us to sanctify life."

The event ended with a Statement of Commitment being made and the lighting of candles on the stage.

A few invitees chose not to attend the event. Among these were representatives of the Muslim Council of Britain. In a press release Yousuf Bhailok, its Secretary General, explained that whilst the MCB fully condemns the Nazi Holocaust and is "at one with fellow members of the British Jewish Community in their pains and anguish over this savage and shameful event in recent history", they had "reservations about the actual ceremony, which excluded the ongoing genocides in occupied Palestinian territories and in Jammu and Kashmir and elsewhere."

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Subscribing to Inter Faith Update

The newsletter is published three times a year and is available by subscription at £7.50 per year.

To subscribe simply send your name and address with a cheque payable to "The Inter Faith Network" to:

The Inter Faith Network
5-7 Tavistock Place
London WC1H 9SN

Faiths respond to earthquake

The earthquake which happened on 26 January in Gujarat bringing death and devastation to thousands has triggered responses from many faith community and inter faith organisations around the UK.

The Disasters Emergency Committee, a coalition of several well known charities as well as many faith community aid agencies and places of worship have launched appeals and are delivering aid to those affected by the quake.

Several communities have also held

events to remember those affected by the quake. For example in Leicester, on 6 February, representatives from the Council of Faiths joined staff and pupils of the Rushey Mead Secondary School in organising an act of remembrance. Representatives of eight faiths presented prayers from their traditions and joined pupils in lighting candles. The event was broadcast on BBC local radio.



(Continued from page 1)

The memorial day was initiated following consultation carried out by the UK Government, which is a founding member of the Intergovernmental Task Force for Holocaust Education. Several other European countries including Germany, Italy and Sweden have held similar commemorations.

The commemorations aim to raise awareness and understanding of the events of the Holocaust and other more recent atrocities such as those in Bosnia, Cambodia and Rwanda. The aim is to ensure that they are neither forgotten nor repeated in any part of the world.

Local commemorations also took place in many locations around the country, many of them linked with projects that school children had been doing in the run up to the day. The Government has produced an education pack, entitled "Holocaust Memorial Day, Remembering Genocides: Lessons for the Future", which gives ideas for lesson plans and assemblies for children from primary through to sixth form level. The pack is also supported by the web site: www.holocaustmemorialday.gov.uk. It is planned to develop the pack and supporting materials which are designed to help children understand the value of diversity and tolerance.

NATIONAL UPDATE

Religious leaders unite over human cloning

A joint letter from eleven religious leaders of different faiths was sent to members of the House of Lords requesting that further consideration be given before a vote relating to the legalisation of partial cloning of human cells, allowing scientists to extend the types of research on early-stage embryos.

The letter, circulated to Peers on 15 January, argued that such a sensitive matter should not be rushed through Parliament, but be referred to a Select Committee and further research carried out before any decision is made. However, after the debate on 22 January, the House voted in favour of the new regulations and agreed to set up a committee that would look at the issues in more detail whilst not delaying research. The changes clear the way for researchers to clone the genetic material of humans to derive special cells that can be used to fight a range of degenerative diseases.

This is one of the first times that so many religious leaders have co-operated on such a morally sensitive issue. The letter was signed by the Anglican Archbishops of Canterbury and York; the Catholic Archbishops of Westminster and Glasgow; Dr Zaki Badawi, President of the

(Continued on page 3)

The Inter Faith Network for the UK

The Inter Faith Network was founded in 1987. It works with its member bodies to promote good relations between the faith communities in the UK, to combat inter religious prejudice and intolerance and to help make the UK a country marked by mutual understanding and respect between religions where all can practise their faith with integrity.

- The Network:
- Provides information on faith communities and on inter faith affairs
 - Advises on multi faith projects and inter faith issues
 - Publishes materials to aid work in the religious and inter faith sectors
 - Fosters inter faith co-operation on social issues
 - Holds regular meetings where social and religious questions of concern to the different faith communities can be examined together
 - Links 89 member organisations including: representative bodies from the different faith communities; inter faith organisations; local inter faith groups; educational and academic bodies.

Inter Faith Update is the newsletter of the Inter Faith Network for the UK. It keeps a wide range of organisations and individuals interested in developing good inter faith relations in the UK in touch with UK events and projects with a significant inter faith component.

For publications which contain in depth articles on inter faith topics, relevant book reviews or items related to

individual faith communities ask the Network office for details.

Please send any contribution of articles and diary dates for consideration for inclusion in the next issue by 22 May 2001 to:

Bhupinder Singh,
Information Officer,

(Continued from page 2)

Muslim College; Chief Rabbi Dr Jonathan Sacks; Indarjit Singh, Director of the Network of Sikh Organisations; Greek Orthodox Archbishop Gregorios; Rev David Coffey, General Secretary of the Baptist Union; Rev Anthony Burnham, Moderator of the Free Churches Council; and Rev Joel Edwards, General Secretary of the Evangelical Alliance.

Remembering together

For the first time national representatives of the Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh faiths joined Christian and Jewish representatives in the official group headed by H M the Queen at the Cenotaph in Whitehall for the annual act of remembrance for those who gave their lives in the two World Wars. The changes were introduced by the Home Office and the Royal British Legion who organise the event, to make the annual event more inclusive. In an interview with the BBC, Om Parkash Sharma, President of the National Council of Hindu Temples and a Network Vice-Chair, said: "It is a good thing that the Government has finally recognised the role of our community and the other faiths in war time... The Commonwealth countries played a great role in the wars and the memory of those people should be honoured."

Census 2001

In the Census taking place on Sunday 29 April a question about religious identity will for the first time be asked throughout the UK. The question will, however, be in differing forms in different parts of the UK. Unlike other questions on the census form answering it will be voluntary. A number of faith community organisations are briefing their members to ensure that they answer the question so that the Census will provide accurate data on the number of people in their communities.

Conservative Party Faiths Conference

The Conservative Party held a one-day conference on the role of faith communities in British society on 26 October at the Emanuel Centre in London. Its leader, Rt Hon William Hague MP, made the opening presentation. Terry

Pendergast, Chief Executive of Catholic Marriage Care and Iqbal Sacranie, Chairman of Muslim Aid, spoke on family life. Rumman Ahmed, Community Relations Advisor to the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and Rabbi Naftali Brawer, member of the Chief Rabbi's cabinet, spoke about faith-based social action. Mark Sturge, General Director of the African and Caribbean Evangelical Alliance and Professor Harminder Singh, President of the WCRP UK and Ireland Chapter, spoke about religious education and "free" and "partner" schools. Peter Kerridge, of Premier Radio and Nitin Palan, of the Swaminarayan Hindu Mandir spoke about freedom of religious broadcasting.

Islamic Awareness Week

On 6 November, the Islamic Society of Britain launched its annual Islamic Awareness Week. This was its seventh year and it achieved a higher profile than previously. The aim of the week was to eradicate the stereotypes and misconceptions of Islam and to create more understanding and build stronger links between the various communities as well as organisations and agencies across the country. The launch event was held in the House of Commons, hosted by Mohammed Sarwar MP. A video message from the Prime Minister was shown and speakers at the event included the Home Secretary, Rt Hon Jack Straw MP, Conservative leader, Rt Hon William Hague MP and Liberal Democrat Home Office spokesman, Simon Hughes MP.

United Religions Initiative receives lottery funding

The United Religions Initiative – UK, the UK branch of a new international inter faith initiative, was launched in August 2000 at the Millennium Dome. It has been awarded a grant of just over £250,000, payable over three years, by the National Lottery Charities Board. Plans are now going ahead to establish an office, employ a development manager and a development worker, publish a magazine, create a website, and launch a programme of events focusing on five themes: encouraging youth involvement in inter-faith, which will include an annual 5 day residential inter-faith camp for 40 young people and a Youth Initiative Award scheme; working with faith communities in the context of urban regeneration; inter-faith workshops that explore one's own sense of the spiritual through aspects of art; examining ways in which global awareness and responsibility can be raised through the experience of local diverse cultures; and exploring

(Continued on page 4)



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the concept of sacred space in a pluralist society. The group needs to raise a further £67,000 over three years to fulfil its obligation to the Charities Board.

URI-UK Seek to appoint immediately a Manager working out of either Manchester or Coventry **20 hours a week - £13,350 a year** to initiate and develop its work Full details and application form: URI-UK, Eskdale Vicarage, Boot, Cumbria CA19 1TF.

Inter Faith Medallion Awarded

Bishop Charles Henderson, Auxiliary Bishop of Southwark and Chair of the Roman Catholic Committee for Other Faiths of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales was presented with the Interfaith Gold Medallion by Sir Sigmund Sternberg KCSG in a ceremony at the Sternberg Centre in North London on 22 January. Bishop Henderson received the award for his contribution towards developing understanding and good relations between the Jewish and Catholic communities as Chairman of the Committee for Catholic/Jewish Relations since 1992. He has also been an Executive Committee member of the Inter Faith Network since its founding in 1987.

Spiritual Well-Being

'Spiritual Well-Being: Policy and Practice' was published in January by Bradford Social Services in conjunction with Bradford Community Health NHS Trust and Bradford Inter Faith Education Centre. The guidebook is written for staff working with adults with learning disabilities and/or mental health problems from the Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh faiths. The Guide costs £11.25 including postage and packing and is available from: Bradford Inter Faith Education Centre, Listerhills Road, Bradford BD7 1HD.

Insiders or Outsiders?

The new Professor of Inter Religious Relations at the University of Derby, Paul Weller, delivered his inaugural lecture, entitled, "Insiders or Outsiders? Religion(s), State(s) and Society: Propositions for Europe" on 8 November at the University of Derby.

Religions in the UK

The third edition of Religions in the UK, published by the University of Derby in association with the Inter Faith Network is under production and will be published later this year. The listings of religious organisations and places of worship are currently being updated. The University would like to hear about any recently formed organisations or others which may have been omitted from the previous edition. Contact: Mrs Eileen Fry Tel: 01332 592026 email: e.fry@derby.ac.uk.

Northern Ireland Multi Faith Celebration

A multi faith celebration was held following the John Main International Seminar on 22 October. Almost 200 participants from seven different faith communities attended the event at St Anne's Anglican Cathedral in Belfast organised by the Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum. This was the first such celebration to be held in Northern Ireland and was linked to the visit to the Province of HH The Dalai Lama. Speakers were from a variety of faiths and presentations included music, song and readings from the scriptures from representatives of the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh faiths. The annual John Main Seminar preceding the event was organised by the World Community for Christian Meditation.

Mansion House dinner for faiths

On Wednesday 11 October 2000 the Lord Mayor of London hosted the bi-annual dinner for "the Archbishops and Bishops of the Anglican Communion at Home and Overseas". For the first time leading representatives of other faiths joined the Bishops and their wives in the Egyptian Room at Mansion House for the dinner.

Ministers of Religion for Parliament?

The Government has introduced a Bill into Parliament to allow members of the clergy and ministers of other faiths to stand for election to

the House of Commons. The Bill, if passed, will repeal Acts of Parliament from the early 1800's which disqualified former and serving clergy from standing for election.

Shap Award

The Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education has presented its annual award to Dr Eleanor Nesbitt and Gopinder Kaur for co-writing 'Guru Nanak', published by the Religious and Moral Education Press, for 'making an outstanding contribution to the teaching of World Religions'. The award was presented at a ceremony held on 18 December in Birmingham and included a presentation given by the co-authors.

The book has as its focus the founder of the Sikh faith and also explores how factors such as community, society, history and culture can contribute to our understanding of a religious tradition. Dr Nesbitt teaches in the Religions and Education Research Unit at the University of Warwick and Gopinder Kaur works for the cross-cultural publisher, Barefoot Books and is a co-editor of the Sikh Bulletin.

Religion in Higher Education

Religion in Higher Education: the Politics of the Multi-Faith Campus by Sophie Gilliat-Ray was published by Ashgate in December 2000. It examines the increased religious diversity in the institutions of Higher Education in the UK. The book is based upon research commissioned by the Inter Faith Network in 1998. A summary of the research, Higher Education and Student Religious Identity, was published in 1999 by the University of Exeter in association with the Network. The new book offers a wider theoretical and historical discussion about religion in higher education.

Professor Ninian Smart

Professor Ninian Smart, died aged 73 on 29 January 2001 in Lancaster. He was a pioneer in the field of Religious Studies and multi faith Religious Education. He was a Professor of Religious Studies for over four decades first at the University of Lancaster and then at the University of California, Santa Barbara, USA. In 1969 he became a founding Co-Chair of the Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education. He was the author of more than 30 books and also played a leading role in the production of the BBC television series exploring world religions, The Long Search, originally shown in 1977.

Network web site

www.interfaith.org.uk

The Inter Faith Network for the UK's official web site. Online information about the work of the Network.

Network Contacts

Contacts for Member Organisations of the Network. Updated list of contacts for all the Network's member bodies Price 50p

National Inter Faith Organisations. A booklet listing inter faith organisations, most of which offer individual membership. Price 30p

Local Inter Faith Groups and Councils of Faith. A booklet listing over seventy local inter faith initiatives across the UK Price 50p

Video

Shared Act of Reflection and Commitment by the Faith Communities of the UK. Full length video of the Millennium First Weekend Event on 3 January recorded by the BBC **Price £4.50**

Available from the Network Office.

Inter faith profile

Sister Isabel Smyth is the Secretary of both the Scottish Inter Faith Council and the Churches Agency for Inter Faith Relations in Scotland and is also a Network Executive Committee member.

Can you tell us a little about your religious background

I was brought up as a Catholic. My family were Catholic, I went to Catholic schools and trained as a Catholic teacher. I knew very little apart from the Catholic community which provided me with a religious, social and professional life. I entered a Catholic convent, the Sisters of Notre Dame de Mamur, and for much of my life have been involved in training teachers for the Catholic school system in Scotland. All this made me a very unlikely candidate for inter faith work.!

How did you first get interested in inter faith work?

When I was a young Sister I went to Lancaster University to do a degree in Education and Religious Studies. For the first time in my life I lived in a secular environment and was exposed to the beliefs of faiths other than Christianity. I loved it, though my studies did challenge my own faith. It also helped me see how narrow a perspective I had had on life. My time at Lancaster gave me a new understanding of my own faith as well as of other faiths. After Lancaster I returned to Scotland to be responsible for the World Religions element of the new B. Ed Degree in Secondary Education. I was determined not to limit my experience to the Catholic community and I became involved in the International Flat in Glasgow where an inter faith group met regularly. I became involved and have been involved in inter faith work ever since.

You were involved, at the outset, with the discussions leading up to the formation of the Scottish Inter Faith Council (SIFC). What were the main reasons for setting up the organisation?

There had been various attempts to set up some kind of national networking meetings in Scotland but the motivation and energy for the Scottish Inter Faith Council came from the setting up of the new Scottish Parliament. There was a real sense in Scotland of a new beginning and a desire to weave a new Scottish identity which recognised plurality and difference. The Scottish Parliament gave faith communities an opportunity to work together for a just and peaceful society. The members of the consultative group that set up the inter faith council felt that this was an opportune moment for faith communities to show solidarity and to make their voice heard in civic society.

What do you feel have been the main achievements of the SIFC to date?

It may be too soon to talk about achievements but we have been used by the Scottish Executive as a way of getting in touch with faith communities and there is a very strong sense in the Executive that all of its work must be multi-faith. In our own small way we have been able to keep that vision alive at meetings and discussions we have attended. Without any effort on our part, an annual meeting has been set up with the First Minister of the Scottish Parliament. We have already had one such meeting and look forward to the next one with Henry McLeish in May. This is the first time that Ministers have formally recognised the multi faith nature of Scottish society. Traditionally, the Secretary of State met with Church leaders and the annual meeting with the SIFC now gives members of the various faith communities in Scotland an opportunity to discuss matters of common concern and interest.

What are the main challenges for the SIFC? And how do you think they can be overcome?

It has had a good beginning but it needs resources if it is to fulfil its potential. We are very grateful to Glasgow City Council for providing an office in the St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art. This museum is one of only two museums in Europe which are specifically committed to religion. The mission statement of the museum fits in with the aims of the SIFC and we work together very well in providing a space for inter faith activity.

At the moment we are having to clarify certain policies - about membership, about representation and about making public statements. Because the number of faith groups that are members of the council is fairly small, it is important to communicate to all faith communities something of the work of the Council and encourage greater participation. We do recognise that we cannot speak on behalf of faith communities but we do want to encourage communities to be aware of national developments and participate in the democratic process. Only time will tell if the Council is to be as effective in Scotland as the Network has been in the UK overall.

The Inter Faith Network for the UK

Secretary/Administrative Assistant

We seek to appoint an efficient and responsible person, sympathetic to the Network's aims, to provide general office support as a committed member of our small team. Essential: 50+ wpm audio/copy typing; good administrative, written and spoken communication skills; clear and diplomatic phone manner; knowledge of Microsoft Office; numeracy; flexibility; and capacity to handle varied and challenging work.

Inclusive salary of £14,500 - £16,500.

Further details and application form from:

The Inter Faith Network,
5-7 Tavistock Place,
London WC1H 9SN.

Tel: 020 7388 0008

Email: ifnet@interfaith.org.uk

closing date for applications is 22 February.

The Inner Cities Religious Council

The Inner Cities Religious Council (ICRC) is chaired by a Government Minister and enables representatives of the Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities to work with the Government on inner city regeneration and neighbourhood renewal.

Currently vacancies exist for Muslim and Sikh members of the ICRC. Members are unpaid, but travel costs can be reimbursed.

Over the next two years further vacancies will become available for all faiths represented on the Council as part of a general renewal of membership.

For further information call: 020 7944 3703

Email: icrc@detr.gov.uk

Web site: <http://www.regeneration.detr.gov.uk/inform.htm>

Web update

We continue our Web update series listing web sites that may be of interest to readers.

In this issue we list some sites run by inter faith groups and councils around the country.

Scottish Inter Faith Council

<http://www.scottishinterfaith.org>

Brighton and Hove Inter Faith Contact Group

<http://www.brighton.co.uk/commune/ifcg/>

Cambridge Inter-Faith Group

<http://www.cam.net.uk./home/aaa315/interfaith/>

Leicester Council of Faiths

<http://homepages.webleicester.co.uk/lco.faiths/>

Suffolk Inter Faith Resource

<http://www.sifre.org.uk/>

Westminster Interfaith

<http://www.westminster-interfaith.org.uk>

REGIONAL UPDATE

North West Link Meeting

The North West Regional link meeting organised by the Inter Faith Network took place on 17 January at the Methodist Central Hall in Manchester. Participants from inter faith initiatives across the region attended and shared news from their groups.

Blackburn

The Blackburn with Darwen Interfaith Council was launched in November 1999 and the Council has held several successful events throughout 2000. The Council has a committee made up of 20 members (5 Christian, 5 Muslim, 4 Sikh, 4 Hindu, 1 Jew and 1 Zoroastrian). Mr Fawad Bhatti is the Development/Support Officer, whose appointment was made possible by a successful bid for Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) funding. The Interfaith Council is organising an inter faith ceremony to mark Holocaust Memorial Day in association with the Borough Council. A regular series of meetings with guest speakers is being planned.

Bolton

Tony McNeile of the Bolton Interfaith Council reported that the Council was set up about eight years ago and last year adopted a constitution and became a member of the Inter Faith Network. The Council's meetings normally focus on practical issues such as death rituals of the different faiths or education. The meetings are popular among teachers. The Council also arranges visits to different places of worship and has had some contact with local services and authorities such as the fire service who recently contacted the group with an enquiry relating to recruitment of Muslims.

A lunch time meeting is planned with shared food from different traditions as a way of learning about each others faiths. Each year a "Civic Sunday" event is held by the local authority. The group is now exploring with the local authority ways to make the annual Remembrance Sunday ceremony more inclusive.

Bury

The Bury Inter-Faith Council, represented by Mr and Mrs Trivedi, was formed about 12 years ago when the then Mayor of Bury organised an inter faith breakfast meeting. There are now two evening meetings a year hosted by the Mayor at

which representatives from different faiths are invited to speak on a common topic. Smaller occasional meetings are also held.

Manchester

The Manchester area has two inter faith groups: the long established Manchester Inter Faith Group, which works in the South of the city, and the newly formed Manchester Interfaith Forum, which aims for a city-wide involvement. The Forum, which was established in early 2000, was represented by Henry Guterman, Charanjit Singh Heera, Hamid Hussain, Leslie Levy, Revd Jennifer McKenzie and Dr Valerie Roebuck.

The new initiative is supported by the Anglican Bishop of Manchester and by leading members of Manchester's other denominations and faith communities. The Forum holds regular meetings and organises visits to different places of worship. Upcoming events include a visit to a Sikh Gurdwara, the group's AGM and a social gathering. Henry Guterman reported that Holocaust Memorial Day was going to be commemorated in Manchester with a vigil in the peace gardens followed by a commemorative event in the Town Hall.

Merseyside

Canon Michael Wolfe, Brenda Fraser and Alison Hughes represented the Merseyside Inter-Faith Group, which was established about 15 years ago with the motto of "Listening, Learning, Liking". The group meets each month at different faith venues with 30 to 80 people attending each meeting. Sometimes the meetings are held in association with the local branches of the Council for Christians and Jews and United Nations Association.

The Group links interested individuals from the different faiths. A new Council of Faiths, which plans to link formally representative bodies of the area's faith communities, is being established alongside the existing initiative, with its support. The Merseyside Council of Faiths will be launched in May 2001 and aims to forge links with civic authorities

Pendle

Building Bridges, the Pendle Interfaith Group, has been working in the Nelson area for over 10 years. The aim of the group is to work towards harmony between the different faith communities through greater understanding of the religions. Damian Duggan, who has just been appointed as a Co-ordinator for Building Bridges, reported that SRB funding had been secured for his post. The group plans to hold six to eight meetings this year.

Preston

Revd Peter Thomas spoke about the Preston Inter Faith Forum, which is based in the Chaplaincy Centre of the University of Central Lancashire. One World Week organised an inter faith walk in Preston on 22 October last year, during which 17 participants visited four places of worship.

Rochdale

Rochdale Interfaith Action was established in 1986 and grew out of the background of the local Racial Equality Council. There have been several successful Christian/Muslim events such as celebrations to mark Christmas and Eid-ul-Fitr. The Group is also planning an event for Racial Justice Sunday.

Salford.

The newly appointed Enterprise Adviser for Salford Community Ventures, Adrian Ogle, introduced their work which includes helping to set up community groups and ventures/businesses in the area.

Regional News

Mgr John Devine, the Development Officer for the Churches in the North West, reported on his work based at the North West Development Agency. The Regional Assembly for the North West is keen on setting up a network of contacts in faith communities and inter faith initiatives, but so far has been unable to set up meetings of the relevant groups.

Revd Dale Barton reported on the setting up of the **Lancashire Forum of Faiths**, which has been in existence since September 1999. This is sponsored by Lancashire County Council and aims to promote good inter faith relations in the county.

Other News

United Religions Initiative – UK is a national initiative which has recently been awarded lottery funding for a three year programme of work (see article on page 3). Heather Wells reported on its plans to open an office which will be located in Manchester or Coventry and to hold a North West conference in the near future.

An account of the work of the Hibbert Trust was given by Eileen Forrester. The Trust was founded in the 18th century and organises an annual lecture series named after Eslin Carpenter. Famous lecturers in the past have included Rabindranath Tagore and Sri Ramakrishna. This year the theme of the lectures will be Religion and the Environment. The Trust distributes a small amount of funding each year.

Regional Roundup

Blackburn

Blackburn Cathedral was the venue for a meeting of the Blackburn with Darwen Interfaith Council on 13 October. The special guest for the evening was Revd Inderjit Bhogal, President of the Methodist Conference for 2000-2001. He spoke about his involvement with other inter faith groups around the country and in particular with the Wolverhampton Inter-Faith Group and went on to speak about his background and his commitment to religious freedom in the UK.

Redbridge

A seminar called “Culture of Peace” was held by the Redbridge Council of Faiths on 24 September to highlight the common bond of peace amongst all faiths. Speakers at the event in Manor Park, London included Revd. Mark Judge (Anglican Christian), Dr Navid Khan (Ahmadiyya community) and Patrick Hanley (RE teacher and Adviser to Newham for RE school curriculum) who presented their own experience, writings and stories from the scriptures to a multi-faith audience of 80.

Sheffield

The European Day of Remembrance for Road Victims, was commemorated at Upper Chapel in Sheffield on 19 November. It was hosted by the Chapel’s Unitarian congregation, Sheffield Inter Faith and Sheffield Council of Churches and was led by representatives of all three groups. The service included an opportunity for those that had lost loved ones in road accidents to write the names of those who have died on oak-leaf cards, which were fixed on a display board, and to speak briefly about their loss, to light candles of remembrance, and to share in quiet reflection.

Bristol

“Faith and Citizenship”, was the title of this year’s annual civic celebration held at the Council House on 2 November. The Mayor of Bristol attended the celebration along with representatives from different religious groups: Baha’i, Buddhist, Muslim, Shri Chinmoy, Sikh, Unitarian and United Reform Church.

Leicester



The faith communities of Leicester working with the Diocesan Board of Mission and Social Responsibility came together to brighten up the holiday season for 360 asylum seekers housed in a hotel in central Leicester. Toiletries, stationery, toys and clothing were collected from the communities and volunteers spent a full day wrapping the presents. These were then presented as Christmas and Eid gifts at the hotel when the Bishop of Leicester, Rt Revd Timothy Stevens, representing all the faiths went to greet the asylum seekers on Christmas Day.

Multi faith walks in Coventry and Luton

Coventry Inter Faith Group and Coventry Multi-Faith Forum held their annual Peace Walk on 7 October. About 100 people took part and visited the Cathedral, a mosque, a Hindu temple and a gurdwara.

The Luton annual Inter Faith Pilgrimage was held on 28 October. Its aim was to raise awareness of Luton's diversity and to create a space for people to make new connections with people who are of different faiths. Those taking part visited a Sikh gurdwara, a Methodist church and the Central Mosque in Luton.

INTERNATIONAL UPDATE

IARF European Conference

The International Association of Religious Freedom held a European conference "Liberal Religion and IARF at a Crossroads" from 25-29 October at Scharbeutz in Northern Germany. The conference also included a Young Adults Programme. Participants from all over Europe discussed the future of religious freedom in Europe as well as the direction that IARF should take. The conference ended with the European commemoration of the centenary of IARF when 100 candles were lit.

WCRP celebrates 30 years.

The World Conference on Religion and Peace held its European Assembly in Rovereto, Italy from 26 to 29 October. The meeting was hosted by the "Campana dei Caduti" Foundation and Trento Diocese. The Conference, entitled "Turning the Page: Religions in Europe Co-operating for Peace", began with a prayer for peace event at the Campana del Caduti, which is a large "peace bell" made of canon balls found in

the area after World War One.

The World Conference on Religion and Peace (UK and Ireland Chapter) celebrated the 30th anniversary of WCRP on 16 November at the London Inter Faith Centre. A short video was shown about the history of WCRP as well as musical performances. The anniversary was also commemorated on 28 November in Kyoto, Japan, where WCRP was originally founded.

International Interfaith Centre

If you want information about international inter faith issues and events you can contact:

International Interfaith Centre
2 Market Street
Oxford
OX1 3EF

Tel: 01865 202 745
Email: iic@interfaith-center.org

DIARY DATES

Local inter faith events

Space only allows one event per organisation to be listed. For details of other events contact the relevant local groups. Events are also listed in the One Family Newsletter available from the World Congress of Faiths, 2 Market Street, Oxford OX1 3EF.

12 February Exeter Inter-Faith Group. Talk on Sikhism given by Mr Daler Singh. 7.30pm at the University Catholic Chaplaincy, Glenthorn Road, Exeter. Contact Tel: 01626 773856

14 February, Council of Christians and Jews. Rabbi Alan Plancey from the Chief Rabbi's board for Christian Jewish relations will speak at South London Synagogue. 8.15pm (7.45pm for refreshments) Leigham Court Road, Streatham. Contact Tel: 020 8675 2810

15 February Liverpool. Merseyside Inter-Faith Group. Visit to the RE Resource Center at Shorefields School. 4pm at Shorefields School, Dingle Vale, Liverpool. Contact Tel: 0151 733 1541

18 February, Brighton and Hove Interfaith Contact Group. "Morality in Today's Society" by Mrs Elaine Yourtchi", following the Group's AGM at 3pm at the Friends Meeting House, Ship Street, Brighton. Contact: Tel: 01273 722438

22 February Edinburgh Inter Faith Association 'Inter Faith Dialogue' by Rev Malcolm Weisman OBE. 7.30 pm at Synagogue Hall, 4 Salisbury Road, Edinburgh Contact Rose Orgel, Tel: 0131 337 5474

27 February Cambridge Inter-Faith Group. "Fasting in religion" - panel discussion with Larry Navon (Beth Shalom), John Butt (Cambridge University Muslim Chaplaincy), Bishop Lynwal Williams (Bibleway Church) and Virginia Barnes, (South Cambridge Baha'i Group). 8pm, Upper Room Wesley Church, entrance King Street, Cambridge. Contact Tel: 01223 510442
email: interfaith@rainbownet.fsnet.co.uk

27 February Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship "The Future of Racial Equality", talk by Mr Arfan Hanif, Head of the Race section at Leeds City Council. 7.30pm, the Beech Room, Thomas Danby College, Roundhay Road, Leeds
Contact Tel: 0113 262 4708

11 March, Ipswich. "Civic Celebration of Community" in association with Suffolk Inter Faith Resource at Methodist Church, Museum Street, Ipswich. Contact: Tel: 01473 233447
email: c.capey@sifre.org.uk

17 March, Bristol Inter Faith Group . Visit to Liberal and Progressive Synagogue, Bannerman Road Easton ,Bristol at 11am for a Sabbath Service. Contact Eve McHugh 0117 987 9880

19 March, Hampstead Inter Faith Group. Talk by Raheem Khan of the Muslim Council of Britain on "Points of Contact: Muslims, Christians and Jews". 8pm at 63b Belsize Park Gardens, London NW3 4JN. Write for more information.

22 March Beaminster One World Fellowship. Talk by Admiral Robin Mussen on "Enhancing International Harmony – the role of the Royal College of Defence Studies". 7.30pm at the Strode Room, Beaminster, contact Tel: 01308 862773

10 May Minehead. West Somerset Interfaith Group. Talk on Women in Islamic Society by Dr Mohammed Saiad. 7.30pm, Friends Meeting House, Minehead. Contact: Jenny Growden Tel: 01643 707551

7 July South London Inter Faith Group. Annual Inter Faith Walk, this year through Camberwell and Peckham. Details to be confirmed. Contact Tel: 020 8542 9618.

Volunteers' Week

The Volunteers' Week initiative began in 1986. The "week" runs from 1-7 June every year. In the UK last year over 17,000 organisations participated. This year, as part of the United Nations International Year of Volunteers 2001, the Week will be have an even bigger profile.

Faith community and inter faith organisations rely upon the work of many volunteers and this is a time to recognise their important contribution.

Volunteers' Week celebrates the contribution volunteers make to the community and provides an opportunity for organisations to recognise, reward and recruit their volunteers. In the UK free certificates are produced, along with a range of other merchandise, such as thank you cards. Activities range from Volunteer Fairs to tea parties to sponsored bike rides to theme nights.

For more information and a free guide to taking part in Volunteers' Week please contact: The National Centre for Volunteering, Regent's Wharf, 8 All Saints Street, London N1 9RL Tel: 020 7520 8932

Diary dates

(continued from p.11)

Seminars, courses, exhibitions and conferences

February to May, Luton Council of Faiths and University of Luton, Interfaith Studies Module. Contact Shanthi Hettiarachchi for details Tel: 01582 416946

20, 27 February to 6, 13 March, Colchester. Series of lectures on Gender and Sexuality in different faiths. Centre for Theology and Society, University of Essex. Contact Tel:01473 233447 Email: d.capey@sifre.org.uk

5 March, 2 April, 30 April 21 May, 2 July, Hendon, London. Series of lectures about the Holocaust and the Christian World. Each lecture starts at 7.30pm and costs £5. At the Spiro Ark, Middlesex University, The Burroughs, Hendon. Contact Nitza Spiro Tel: 020 8201 7172 Email: Spiroark@aol.com

14-15 March, Birmingham. "Prospects for Inter-Religious Dialogue". A conference jointly held by University of Birmingham and the World Congress of Faiths. Speakers will include: Leonard Swindler, Andrew Kirk, Neal Robinson, Mary Grey, Ram-Prasad, Elizabeth Harris and John Hick. Registration fee of £25. Contact detail: Dr. David Cheetham, Tel: 0121 415 2413, e-mail: d.cheetham@bham.ac.uk

16-18 March, Oxford. International Interfaith Centre conference, "From Conflict to Trust" at Harris Manchester College, Oxford. Contact Tel: 01865 202745 email: iic@interfaith-center.org.uk

21 March, London. Alister Hardy Society London Group 'Spiritual Awareness in a Quantum Universe' by Professor Chris Clarke at 3pm at St. Mary Abbots

Church Hall, Vicarage Gate, London, W8 Contact John Franklin, Tel: 020 8858 4750, e-mail: johnfranklin35@hotmail.com

28 March, London Society of Jews and Christians. Talk by Rt Revd Dr John Sentamu, "Ethnic Minority Communities in Civil Society and the Role of Religion" at the Liberal Jewish Synagogue, 28 St John's Wood Road, London NW8. Contact Tel: 020 7229 8845

1 May, London World Congress of Faiths Annual Younghusband Lecture, "Buddhism and Social Justice" by Professor Rita Gross (University of Wisconsin, USA) 6.30-8pm, Dr Williams Library, 14 Gordon Square, London W1. Contact Tel: 01403-257801 e-mail: r.boeke@virgin.net

Support the work of the Inter Faith Network

The Inter Faith Network promotes understanding and respect between the faith communities in the UK. If you would like to make a contribution to help support this work please write to:

Brian Pearce
Director
The Inter Faith Network for the UK
5-7 Tavistock Place
London WC1H 9SN

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INTER FAITH

UPDATE

Summer 2001 Issue 16

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Inter faith issues in religious education

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A seminar on Inter Faith Issues and the RE Curriculum was held by the Inter Faith Network with the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (NASACRE) on Monday 4 June at the newly opened Southwark Cathedral Conference Centre. Baroness Uddin, who spoke about the importance of educating for mutual respect and tolerance, gave the opening address.

In welcoming participants, Brian Pearce, Director of the Network, distinguished between multi-faith RE, involving the study of individual religious traditions; the thematic treatment of specific topics across traditions, eg the role within them of scripture; and addressing more specifically inter faith issues, including relationships between different faith communities, both historically and in Britain's now more religiously diverse society. Clearly all

three of these strands could contribute to the development of mutual understanding.

The 70 participants from across the UK heard from two key speakers; John Keast, Principal Manager for RE, Citizenship and PSHE at the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority; and Lat Blaylock, Executive Officer of the Professional Council for Religious Education.

In his presentation John Keast mentioned the references in the QCA's guidance on RE, published last year, to addressing inter faith issues, the scope for doing so within GCSE Religious Studies syllabuses and the relevance of these issues to the new requirements for Citizenship education. He set out the kind of inter faith issues which might be addressed and said: "Inter faith issues mean learning to respect each other through tolerance, listening and dialogue; realising that there is

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The newsletter is published three times a year and is available by subscription at £7.50 per year.

To subscribe simply send your name and address with a cheque payable to "The Inter Faith Network" to:

The Inter Faith Network
5-7 Tavistock Place
London WC1H 9SN

Good practice guidance for local authorities

The Local Government Association has embarked on producing a set of good practice guidelines for local authorities. The guidelines will be published in association with the Inter Faith Network; Inner Cities Religious Council (ICRC); and the Active Community Unit of the Home Office. They will review ways in which local authorities can work constructively with local faith communities and local inter faith structures. This project is a follow up to the successful conference on *Inter Faith Co-operation, Local Government and the Regions*

organised jointly by the Network and the ICRC in Birmingham in summer 2000.

The first of three consultation meetings to discuss the draft document was held in Manchester on 13 June. There will be further meetings in Leicester and London. These meetings are being supplemented by the use of email consultation through an initiative of the Community Development Foundation.



(Continued from page 1)

no alternative but to build on our commonality and face our differences"... "We need to realise that multi-faith and inter faith does not have to mean the absence of values or be regarded as value neutral or relativist. It is not the negation of the value of belief, identity and culture, the things that make us what we are and give our lives meaning. It is the precondition of being able to value these things together in a plural society and allowing them to flourish for the good of us all. This ideal offers a vision and ambition to strive for in RE."

Lat Blaylock in his presentation explored in more detail how inter faith issues might be tackled in the classroom and offered some specific examples of good practice, also drawing attention to the units on inter faith issues included in the new QCA schemes of work. He pointed out that while agreed RE syllabuses include many good examples of statements of intent to promote tolerance, sensitivity and respect, only a few include provision directly to address questions of the relationship between different faith communities. He stressed the need for research into the effects of RE on relations between communities and an understanding of our plural society and underlined the importance of promoting and encouraging best

Panel 1

Indarjit Singh, Network of Sikh Organisations
Kusum Trikha, OFSTED Inspector
Beth Stockley, Advisory Teacher for Religious Education
Zennia Esterson, Board of Deputies of British Jews

Panel 2

Barbara Wintersgill, Her Majesty's Inspector
Harun Rashid, Senior Education Manager,
Wolverhampton
Gillian Wood, Free Church Education Officer

practice, empowering teachers with ideas, resources and opportunities. He offered some practical suggestions for taking this forward. In closing, he suggested that there is now a need for "a religious education which is bold enough to move on up to explore these big inter faith questions."

Two panels of speakers supplemented these presentations by offering perspectives from different interest groups; faith communities; education authorities; OFSTED and SACREs.

The seminar was generously supported by grants from the Edward Cadbury Charitable Trust and the Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education. A full report of the seminar is being prepared for publication.

The seminar explored in small discussion groups a range of different topics:

Inter faith issues and the curriculum - do SACREs have a special contribution to make?

Inter faith issues with younger pupils

What would does good practice look like at key stages 3 and 4, including GCSE short courses?

Resources for teaching inter faith issues

What is the role of the teacher in teaching inter faith issues?

The Inter Faith Network for the UK

The Inter Faith Network was founded in 1987. It works with its member bodies to promote good relations between the faith communities in the UK, to combat inter religious prejudice and intolerance and to help make the UK a country marked by mutual understanding and respect between religions where all can practise their faith with integrity.

The Network:

- Provides information on faith communities and on inter faith affairs
- Advises on multi faith projects and inter faith issues
- Publishes materials to aid work in the religious and inter faith sectors
- Fosters inter faith co-operation on social issues
- Holds regular meetings where social and religious questions of concern to the different faith communities can be examined together
- Links 89 member organisations including: representative bodies from the different faith communities; inter faith organisations; local inter faith groups; educational and academic bodies

NATIONAL UPDATE

Prime Minister endorses review of consultation and representation of faith communities

The Government is to review the arrangements for its consultation of faith communities and for their representation at national events. The Prime Minister, Tony Blair, made the first public announcement of the review in his speech to the Christian Socialist Movement (CSM) conference on 29 March and said that the review has his full backing. The review is in line with a recommendation made by the Millennium "Lambeth Group" at its final meeting last autumn.

The conference saw the launch of the CSM's report *Faith in Politics*. Rev David Haslam, its Chair, gave a particular welcome to members of other faith communities who had been specifically invited to attend it. The conference was held at the Methodist Central Hall in Westminster and included contributions from Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh speakers. Graham Dale, Director of the CSM, commented that "faith communities are an integral part of our neighbourhoods. They are part of the 24/7 society - present 24 hours a day, 7 days a week - after the social workers and local government officers have gone home - listening to the heartbeat of the community - and after listening acting on their behalf."

One of the keynote addresses came from Indarjit Singh of the Network of Sikh Organisations. He said that "in recent years co-operation between different faith leaders has been truly phenomenal" and praised the work of the Inter Faith Network in encouraging "dialogue that recognises that different religions are not barriers between people, but gateways to a fuller understanding and enrichment of life".

In his address to the conference Tony Blair acknowledged that "our major faith traditions, all of them more historic and deeply rooted than any political party or ideology, play a fundamental role in supporting and propagating values which bind us together as a nation". He then went on to outline how his Government wanted to work with the faith communities for the common good.

The *Faith in Politics* report is based on a series of

interviews with faith community representatives in which they were asked for their views on how far the Government had reflected, or not, their community's principles and priorities in its policies and performance since 1997. Findings included a commitment to the political process as a means to build a good society; that while the Government was willing to talk and work with faith communities this process now had to go deeper; and that poverty, both at home and abroad, and the protection of family life were key concerns to all faith communities. The report is available from CSM, Westminster Central Hall, London, SW1H 9NH, price £5.

Oldham faith communities give united anti-racism message

Disturbances in past weeks in Oldham, Leeds and Bradford have underlined for faith communities there the importance of their efforts to work together in tackling racism and social problems in these areas.

The most serious riots were in Oldham. Over 150 people, including religious leaders, politicians and those involved in race relations work, attended a meeting on 30 May organised by Oldham United Against Racism. Alama Naqshbandi, Rabbi Dr Brian Fox and Rt Revd Michael Lewis, the Anglican Bishop of Middleton, expressed their determination to oppose racism. The Bishop said afterwards "There was solidarity between the religious leaders and politicians of goodwill, though feelings were running strongly. We all tried to speak from the heart".

Tension is still high in the area and concerns have been expressed at the number of votes cast for British National Party candidates who stood in the two Oldham constituencies in the recent General Election.

Reports on religious discrimination

In February the Home Office published the reports of two research projects on religious discrimination in England and Wales. These are: the final report by the University of Derby project team (reported on in the summer 2000 issue of *Inter Faith Update*); and a report by the Faculty of Public Law at the University of Cambridge. The reports are available at the Home Office web site



at: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/horspubs1.html>

The interim report by the University of Derby team was based primarily on a literature review and initial consultation with relevant organisations. The final report produced by the project team reports the findings of its research based primarily on interviews and discussions held in Blackburn, Cardiff, Leicester and the London Borough of Newham, together with replies to a postal questionnaire. The fieldwork and questionnaire responses report that Muslim, Hindu and Sikh communities, in particular, are concerned with religious discrimination. This was expressed both in terms of organisational policy or practice and the attitudes and behaviour of individuals. The survey also shows that ignorance and indifference to religion are of widespread concern among all faith groups.

With the adoption of the European Directive on Discrimination in Employment and Occupation at the end of last year, the Government is now required to legislate against religious discrimination in employment by the end of 2003. The Cambridge report offers an examination of the main options available to policy makers and legislators for tackling religious discrimination in employment or more widely.

Following publication of these two reports, the Home Office, at the request of the Network, arranged an initial meeting in March with faith community representatives. Further consultations on the religious discrimination issue are likely to follow soon.

Inter faith organisations meet

A meeting of national inter faith organisations was held in February in London. Representatives of the following organisations met to share information about the work of their organisations: Christians Aware Interfaith Programme; Council of Christians and Jews; Interfaith Foundation; Inter Faith Network for the UK; International Association for Religious Freedom; International Interfaith Centre; London Society of Jews and Christians; Maimonides Foundation; Minorities of Europe; Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum; Three Faiths Forum; United Religions Initiative UK; Westminster Interfaith; World Conference on Religion and Peace; and the World Congress of Faiths.

It was agreed to arrange a further meeting for the organisations to explore the scope for making their work more complementary, avoiding unintentional overlap and exploring possible areas of co-operation.

A meeting of international inter faith organisations was held in Oxford from 18-20 March, hosted by the International Interfaith Centre. It was decided to maintain a continuing informal link between them.

Faith Communities and Community Safety

The National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NACRO) is seeking the assistance of faith communities in compiling a briefing on Faith Communities and Community Safety. NACRO is the largest national crime reduction charity in England and Wales, working with ex-offenders, victims and people seeking to reduce and prevent crime. Statutory Crime and Disorder partnerships, which must be set up by local authorities under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, are required to involve faith communities and to address their needs and priorities. Currently, only a few partnerships have developed faith-community led groups, many of these are only consulting with a single faith community. In compiling this initial briefing NACRO aims to provide guidance to these partnerships on how best to work with faith communities. For further information please call: 020 7501 0565.

Spirit of Friendship

The Spirit of Friendship Festival will run from 11 March to 10 August 2002. It is being arranged by the organisers of the 17th Commonwealth Games being held in Manchester from 25 July – 4 August 2002.

The Festival will encompass four key elements:

- Sport** - The Games themselves will involve over 5,000 people;
- Education** - Each school in the UK will be asked to take part through education packs and activities;
- Culture and the arts** - Multi-cultural celebrations will be held throughout the country;
- Community and Jubilee celebrations** - The Festival coincides with the Queen's Golden Jubilee.

The festival could be an ideal opportunity for faith community groups and inter faith initiatives to



work with other community organisations to organise events or celebrations. The festival organisers can be contacted for more information about how to get involved, by telephone, 0161 240 2165, by email, festival@manchester2002.co.uk or on the web, www.commonwealthgames.com.

Target 2015

The Government's Target 2015 programme, aimed at reducing world poverty, is working with faith community groups to increase awareness and understanding of international development issues. The Department for International Development has so far produced information packs in association with Christian Aid and CAFOD and is in the process of preparing information packs in association with UK Jewish Aid and International Development and with Muslim Aid. Further information is available from DFID, tel: 0845 300 4100.

A new GCSE education pack, *Reacting to Poverty*, was launched on 23 May by Islamic Relief at the Greycoat Hospital School in London. For more information call: 0870 444 3135 or see the website: www.islamic-relief.com.

Jewish/Muslim football teams play at Arsenal

Highbury football stadium is playing host to a Jewish/Muslim football tournament organised by the Maimonides Foundation. Now in its third year, the project brings together Jewish and Muslim young people. Arsenal coaches will train thirty people so that they in turn can coach up to 150 children, playing together every Sunday in June. The final will be a mixed match at the stadium on 1 July. The children, aged between 9 and 12, are based at a Jewish community centre in Edgware and an Islamic centre in Ilford.

New Archbishop of Westminster greets faith communities

Cardinal Murphy O'Connor, Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, hosted a reception for representatives of the different faith communities on 1 April at Archbishop's House in London. In his address he stated that he wishes, like his predecessors, to give a high priority to inter faith dialogue. He highlighted three areas of common concern for different faiths: the dignity of the

human person, the importance of the family and the thirst for spirituality.

Flying into a multi-faith prayer room

Birmingham International Airport is the latest public building to open a dedicated multi-faith prayer room. The room aims to meet the spiritual needs of those who need a place to pray and is open to people of all religions. A light burns permanently in the room and labelled cupboards provide items used in prayer by people of different faiths.

Network web site
www.interfaith.org.uk

The Inter Faith Network for the UK's web site where you can find out more about the work of the Network.

Inter faith profile

Network Executive Committee member Hon Barnabas Leith answers some questions about the Bahá'í community and inter faith relations in the UK.

Q What does your role as Secretary General of the Bahá'í Community UK involve?

The Secretary General is an elected officer of the National Spiritual Assembly, the Bahá'í community's governing council. I work full time in this role and am supported by eight staff in our national office in Rutland Gate. It's a challenging and interesting job. Today, for instance, I've worked on a lease for offices for one of our international Bahá'í agencies; been consulted about the next edition of UK Bahá'í Review; met a visitor from the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa, Israel; created a list of Bahá'ís who want to be part of a new national network of faith-based regeneration and community development workers; and have dealt with several phone calls, email and staff requests for advice or decisions. And that's just the morning's work!

I have a regular programme throughout the year of meeting and briefing MPs and Lords about the work of the Bahá'í community. There are two issues I generally talk to them about: one is the persecution of the Bahá'ís in various countries, particularly Iran; the other is the work that our newly launched Institute for Social Cohesion is doing. We also have an excellent working relationship with the Foreign Office. The Bahá'í National Assembly meets eleven weekends a year and an important part of my job is to prepare the necessary papers and to write the minutes. As the UK Bahá'í community's principal external representative I also attend events such as the Queen Mother's hundredth birthday service in St Paul's Cathedral.

The Bahá'í Community has just celebrated the opening of the Bahá'í Gardens on Mount Carmel, Haifa, Israel. Can you explain their significance?

Q Bahá'u'lláh, founder of the Bahá'í Faith, visited Mount Carmel a number of times in the latter years of the nineteenth century. He instructed that the remains of his prophetic forerunner, the Báb, who had been martyred in 1850, should be laid to rest in a shrine on the mountain. The golden domed shrine that houses the Báb's remains, a well known feature of Haifa, was completed in the 1950s.

The gardens and terraces, completed with the support of Bahá'í communities all over the world, are like the setting of a diamond, intended to show the jewel that is the shrine to its best effect. On 22 May, more than 3000 members of the Bahá'í faith,

representing around 200 countries, joined with approximately 1000 other guests, at the foot of the mountain to witness the opening of the Terraces.

The Bahá'í faith is relatively less well known in the UK. Does this bring particular challenges for adherents?

When I became a Bahá'í in the mid-1960s very few people had heard of our community. The usual response when I said I was a Bahá'í was a blank look. Recognition has improved greatly since then. It's amazing, for example, how many people have visited one or other of our Bahá'í houses of worship, particularly the Lotus Temple in Delhi.

One of the greatest challenges for Bahá'ís has been to persuade people that the Bahá'í faith is a "proper" religion with "proper" religious teachings, practices and requirements for life, such as the recognition that Bahá'ís wish to refrain from work on their holy days. The work of inter faith organizations such as the Inter Faith Network has contributed greatly to a growing recognition that religion plays a central role in the lives of millions.

What do you feel is the contribution that the Bahá'í faith has brought to inter faith dialogue?

A commitment to building inter faith relations and developing dialogue is built into the foundations of our community. This, of course, motivates Bahá'ís all over the world to participate in all kinds of inter faith initiatives.

Q How do you see inter faith initiatives developing in the coming years?

I get quite excited when I think about the possibilities in the UK, which is home to some really solid inter faith work, not least by the Network. There's one development that I think promises a lot for the future, and that is the increasing ability of people representing different faith communities to sit down together, aware of what is shared and what is distinctive about their faiths, and plan social action that is for the good of all. An example is the Multi Faith Joint National Consultation on Hospital Chaplaincies. This kind of joint action for the common good brings the spiritual and moral resources of the faith communities to bear on genuine social needs. As Bahá'ís would say, we can multiply our powers to



achieve good things through unity in diversity of action.

Global Ethic Foundation Exhibition

Professor Hans Kung spoke on 17 May at the opening of a new travelling exhibition, *World Religions – Universal Peace – Global Ethic* hosted by German Ambassador Dr von Ploetz at the German Embassy in London. The exhibition panels and accompanying brochures are based on his writings and highlight, from his perspective, the ethical commandments of Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Chinese religion. The exhibition is sponsored by the Weisfeld Foundation and is available for display in other venues.

Scottish bid for the Parliament of World Religions

After having been inspired by the 1999 Parliament of the World's Religions which took place in South Africa, a small team has formed to establish the Council for the Parliament of the World's Religions Scotland (CPWRS) in order to bid for the 2004 Parliament to be held in Scotland. Several faith community and inter faith organisations have been approached to participate in the setting up of the organisation and in preparing the bid. For more information you can contact Neil Walker by email at njwalk99@hotmail.com.

REGIONAL UPDATE

West Midlands Link Meeting

The West Midlands Regional Link Meeting was hosted by the Wolverhampton Inter-Faith Group at their Inter Faith Centre on 26 April. The following is a summary of the reports presented from the initiatives represented at the Meeting.

Wolverhampton Inter-Faith Group

The Group was recently given a grant from Wolverhampton City Council to refurbish its Inter Faith Centre. The Group is one of the oldest established inter faith groups in the UK. Its current activities include: running the inter faith centre; work with schools and Wolverhampton SACRE; arranging the inter faith component of the annual peace service; and work with public services such as the local NHS Trust and the Police.

The Group has also produced a photographic exhibition and a directory of Wolverhampton's faith communities. They have been asked by Wolverhampton City Council to put together the inter faith component of an exhibition for schools. The Group has also recently put in a bid, which is part of a regeneration budget, to establish an RE resource centre.

The Group is well supported by the local faith communities. On a recent visit to the area Rt Hon Clare Short, the Secretary of State for International Development, visited the Inter Faith Centre and spoke about the important role of faith communities in the local community.

Dudley Council of Faiths

The Council had been an active one in the past but over the last few years the membership has dwindled. However, having been stimulated by the Inter Faith Network / Inner Cities Religious Council conference in Birmingham in June 2000, the current committee plan to re-launch the Group. They are looking to set up a new committee and a seminar for up to 200 people is being planned for the autumn. The Council of Faiths has the use of a resource centre run by the Dudley Racial Equality Council.

Birmingham Council of Faiths

The Council was established in 1974 and now has representatives of nine different faith communities in membership. One of the main achievements of the Council has been the recognition of the different faiths by the local authority. While in the past faith did not have a place in civic occasions, the City Council now actively celebrates festivals of different faiths. The Council hopes to receive some local authority funding in the near future.

The Council's ongoing work includes co-operation with the chaplaincy team at University College Hospital and Birmingham SACRE. The Council assists in arranging

school visits to places of worship. Council members have taken part in exchange visits to other European cities such as Graz in Austria (as invited guests of the Council of European Churches) and Brussels to visit the European Commission. The Council has also been host to other groups who are interested in building inter faith initiatives in their countries, recently from Ireland and Denmark.

Catholic Committee on Other Faiths

The Catholic Church is working on an ecumenical basis with other denominations in the West Midlands to build better relations with people of other faiths. Recent activities have included working with the local authority on a civic event which included contributions from different faiths. Chris Hewer, the inter faith adviser to the Anglican Bishop of Aston, has helped to set up a local Christian/Muslim dialogue.

There has been a healthy dialogue between the Catholic group and Sikhs at the Guru Nanak Nishkam Sevak Jatha Gurdwara. A group from the Gurdwara visited Rome last year and were received by the Pope. Links are also developing with other Sikh gurdwaras and also within the Buddhist community.

Birmingham City Council

Deepak Naik explained that he is working on a research project for the City Council looking at ways the local authority can best consult and work with local faith communities. The present research has involved interviewing a wide range of people and organisations, including public services such as the police and local health trusts, to ask in what ways they would like to be able to consult with faith communities.

Hereford

Rev Gerald Restall, the Inter Faith Adviser to the Anglican Bishop of Hereford, presented news from Hereford, a relatively mono-faith area. There is an active branch of the Council for Christians and Jews. He helps to produce a quarterly bulletin on inter faith issues designed for Church of England members. He has been involved with a series of study days entitled *Our Neighbours Faith*. Although they have not had large attendances, they have been appreciated by those attending them. He runs a lay training course and, after requests for an inter faith module for the course, is currently preparing for this. Recently he has been approached by local police requesting contacts with faith communities in the area.

Sandwell

Rev Jon Gurling of the Sandwell Churches Link project said that the Inter Faith Network/Inner Cities Religious Council conference held in Birmingham in June 2000 was attended by a representative of Sandwell Borough Council, who has since been keen for the local authority to forge links with local faith communities.

Coventry

It was reported that the Phoenix Project, a redevelopment project in Coventry City Centre, was on track. The Coventry Inter Faith Forum is being given space in the

development in the City Centre to establish an inter faith resource centre.

West Midlands Churches Forum

Rev Mark Fisher reported on the founding of the Forum, which aims to relate to the newly established West Midlands Regional Development Agency and the Assembly linked to it.

Discussion on regionalisation issues

The Anglican Bishop of Wolverhampton has a seat on the Black Country Consortium (BCC) but makes it clear that he sees himself representing the interests of all faith communities in the area rather than just his own. The BCC is linked to the West Midlands Development Agency, Advantage West Midlands. Currently there is only one reserved place on the West Midlands Regional Assembly for the voluntary sector as a whole. Advantage West Midlands has argued that it is too complex to offer a "faiths" seat, but has now agreed to include one place in an enlarged Chamber next year. The question of how this one seat is to be filled remains. It is hoped that Advantage West Midlands will fund research into the best way for the faiths to be represented. There is likely to be a conference for faith communities next spring with a view to addressing this issue. This seems to be a problematic issue in most of the English regions, partly because of the lack of existing regional faith structures. In many ways the opportunities for faith communities to be involved with Government at national, regional and local level are outstripping their capacity to respond effectively to these.

South East Link Meeting

The South East (North) Regional Link Meeting organised by the Inter Faith Network was held on 15 May at The Friends Meeting House, Bedford. Participants from inter faith initiatives from across the region attended and shared news from their groups and heard reports from groups which could not be represented on this occasion.

Aylesbury

Revd Peter Atkinson sees his work as a Team Missioner as an opportunity for inter faith encounter and has built up a good relationship with the imam of the local mosque, who has visited his church on several occasions. He reported an interesting development in Aylesbury where the Mayor this year is a Muslim and has appointed an imam jointly with the local Anglican rector as Mayor's Chaplains.

Bedford Council of Faiths

The Council holds its meetings in different venues, with the next one being hosted by the local gurdwara. Last autumn a series of six fortnightly meetings was held. Each meeting discussed a specific topic, common to different faiths, such as marriage. It is hoped to repeat this successful series this autumn.

The Council also organises an annual pilgrimage around



different places of worship in Bedford. This year the Mayor of Bedford invited the Council to help to organise a multi-faith dimension to the civic service.

Luton Council of Faiths

The Council changed its name from the Luton Inter Faith Forum last July. The Committee, which includes representatives of all the major communities in the area, meets bi-monthly. It has good relations with the local authority and other local service providers. The local authority has now agreed to fund 50% of the staff costs of a part-time Community Faiths Worker for the Council. The Council chose not to ask for more than this proportion of the cost of the post in order to retain its independence, but now faces the task of raising the balance of the funding required for it. They have secretarial support from the Grassroots Centre, which is a Christian based initiative, and is also supported by several places of worship. Meetings of the Council take place in a variety of faith community venues.

The Luton Council of Faiths has been working informally with the University of Luton for some time. This year the inter faith module, that they have jointly developed, will be an official course of study at the University. Each year since 1997 the Council has been working with the Mayor's office on arranging a multi-faith dimension to the annual civic service. The Council sees as one of its roles promoting Luton as a multi-cultural town and this characteristic is often emphasised in the weekly religious programme on the local radio station.

Interfaith Milton Keynes

An inter faith discussion group has been meeting in Milton Keynes for over 20 years, but it has become more active recently. Members of the Group regularly contribute to a column in a local Sunday newspaper. The Group is asked to organise an inter faith dimension to the annual civic service, and has also been invited to organise multi-faith dedications at the opening of a new office building and also a new theatre in Milton Keynes. The Group works with local schools to arrange visits from speakers of different faiths, and was invited by the local authority to help in setting up the local SACRE when Milton Keynes became a unitary authority and assumed responsibility for education.

Reading Inter Faith Group

The Group provides assistance in organising an inter faith dimension to the annual civic service and also arranges occasional lectures. A recent one was given by Peggy Morgan of the Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education.

Watford Inter Faith Group

Last year the Group held a series of three evening events entitled *The Beauty of Holiness*. Each evening included presentations from three different faith communities. This series is being followed up this summer with the theme being *The Music of Holiness*. The Group visited a Shavuot service at the Radlett and

Bushey Reform Synagogue and would take part in the Westminster Interfaith pilgrimage on 2 June. Future plans of the Group include organising an event during the Week of Prayer for World Peace in October and assisting with a Holocaust Memorial Day event in January 2002.

Wycombe Sharing of Faiths

The group has a mailing list of about 60 people, with a "core" group of about 20 active members. They have a new Muslim member of their committee, who was also standing as a Parliamentary candidate in the General Election, which has led to some interesting discussions. The group has a regular programme of activities. In March a member of the South Buckinghamshire Jewish Group gave a talk about the Jewish tradition of Passover (Pesach). During May members of the group visited the Nipponzai Myohoji Buddhist Community in Milton Keynes and a tea party is planned for July. The group will be holding its annual meeting in September.

Regionalisation Issues

Further discussion touched upon the setting up of a Faiths Forum for the South East, which is holding a meeting in Central London on 12 September. This Forum was launched about two years ago as a means for faith communities to interact with the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) and Regional Assembly. A representative of the Forum has a seat on the Assembly and meetings of the Forum give faith communities an opportunity to raise concerns and provide feedback into the Assembly. Initially the Forum met as frequently as once every quarter, but the meetings have now become less regular. Participants expressed a concern that there is very little input to the Forum from faith communities other than the Christian Churches. It is hoped that the September meeting will encourage a wider participation in its work.

Regional Round Up

Bath

At the turn of the year, the Mayor of Bath has traditionally called fellow citizens to pray for the city in the New Year. For many years, this Call has been marked by an ecumenical Christian service with a speaker. During late 1997, the Mayor asked for the Call in 1998 to be an inter faith event. Bath Interfaith Group helped to prepare an act of worship, at which Rev Marcus Braybrooke spoke. Her successor felt that this pattern should be repeated and invited Dr Zaki Badawi to speak the following year. The headline in the local evening paper, implying that a Muslim was to lead the Call, produced the largest and most contentious correspondence ever.

Following the controversy of the 1999 event the Call to Prayer in 2000 was Christian in character. However, in 2001, there have been two events: a Christian service held on 3 January; and a Multi-faith event on Sunday 21 January. This event featured a series of readings by representatives of different faith communities and the main address was given by Sir Sigmund Sternberg.

Bradford

An inter-religious day conference, *Faith and Community in a Multi-faith Society*, was held on 28 April at the Thornbury Centre in Bradford. The conference followed a series of four meetings which had taken place from November 2000 to April 2001 exploring in turn Islam, Sikhism, Hinduism and Christianity. Speakers at the conference included: Rt Revd David Smith, Bishop of Bradford; Ayub Laher, Vice President of the Bradford Council of Mosques and speakers from the Hindu and Sikh communities of Bradford

Eastern England

Suffolk Inter Faith Resource was host to a meeting of faith community organisations in the East of England on 13 June to discuss how they can relate to the East of England Regional Development Agency. It was decided to establish an East of England Faiths Agency, which will have its inaugural meeting later this year.

Gloucestershire

Gloucestershire Inter Faith Action (GIFA) has produced a set of A3 posters designed for use in schools. These were displayed at a SACRE training day organised by Gloucestershire SACRE. Speakers at the event included Bill Gent from Redbridge Local Education Authority and Lat Blaylock of the Professional Council for RE. GIFA followed this up with an open meeting on "RE in Schools" on 24 May.

Westminster Interfaith in Luton and Hertfordshire

Westminster Interfaith held their 16th annual *Multi-faith Pilgrimage for Peace* on 2 June. This year as the places being visited were further apart, three coaches and a mini-bus were hired to ferry the pilgrims between Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh places of worship in Luton, St Albans, Great Gaddesden, Bushey and Aldenham. About 130 pilgrims took part, with several others joining while the pilgrims passed through their towns.

Manchester

Manchester Interfaith Forum held its first AGM on 10 May. The well attended meeting was followed by a presentation by Craig Russell from the United Religions Initiative.

North Kent

The North Kent Council for Interfaith Relations held a third birthday celebration and their annual meeting on 31 May at the North West Kent College in Gravesend. After a buffet lunch prepared by students of the College, Malcolm Bell, Principal of the College, welcomed guests to the meeting. Rev Malcolm Cooper presented a report on the work of the Council over the last three years. Brian Pearce, Director of the Inter Faith Network, gave his reflections on current inter faith work in the UK and on the role of local initiatives.

This was followed by a discussion in particular about the setting up of Regional Development Assemblies and the role that faith communities can play in this process.

Peterborough

The inaugural meeting of the Peterborough Faiths Forum, sponsored by the Peterborough Inter-Faith Council and arranged by Rev Lesley Mathias, took place on 27 February 2001 at the Central Library in Peterborough. This was attended by representatives of the different faith communities (Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh) and representatives of statutory and voluntary organisations, including the Chief Executive of the City Council. The aim of the Forum is to provide a meeting ground for the local authority, police and social services to engage with faith concerns.

DIARY DATES

Local inter faith events

Space only allows one event per organisation to be listed. For details of other events contact the relevant local groups. Events are also listed in the One Family Newsletter available from the World Congress of Faiths, 2 Market Street, Oxford OX1 3EF.

21 June Southall. Christians Aware Interfaith Programme. Salema Ahmed will be speaking about the Muslim perspective on "Food and Fasting". 7 pm at 6 Osterley Park Road, Southall. Contact email: joybarrow@aol.com

28 June Coventry Inter Faith Group. Multi-Faith prayers to mark Refugee Week. 7.30pm at the Indian Community Centre, Foleshill. Contact Tel: 024 7668 8264

1 July, Birmingham Council of Faiths. "Who is my neighbour?", an inter faith discussion 2.00 pm, Dhammatalaka Peace Pagoda, Osler Street, Birmingham Contact Tel: 0121 694 6206, email: birmingham_council_of_faiths@hotmail.com

3 July, Bristol Inter Faith Group. "From Laity to Leader", speakers include Pastor Renford Brown (New Testament, Church of God), Fr Michael Healey (St Bonaventures Roman Catholic Church), Rev Audrey Standhaft (East Bristol Methodist Circuit). 7.30 pm, Redland Friends Meeting, Hampton Road, Redland. Contact June Ridd Tel: 01452 313042

7 July South London Inter Faith Group. Annual Inter Faith Walk, this year through Camberwell and Peckham. Contact Tel: 020 8542 9618.

10 July Bath Inter Faith Group. Malcolm Stonestreet, Chair of URI-UK, will be speaking about the organisation. 7.30pm at the Girl Guide HQ, 1 Laura Place. Contact Tel: 01225-422252

14-21 July, London Inter Faith Centre. "Youth Inter Faith Pilgrimage from South East England to South West Scotland", for 18 to 25 year olds from different religions, visiting a variety of faith communities en route. Contact: Gillian Jones, London Inter Faith Centre, 125 Salusbury Road, London NW6 6RG

24 July Newham Inter-Faith Group and Redbrige Council of Faiths. Multi-Faith Pilgrimage. Contact Tel: 020 8478 6451 or 020 8558 6575

25 July, Edinburgh Interfaith Association. Victor Spence and Rev Professor Frank Whaling will be speaking about the bid for Scotland to host the 2004 Parliament of the World's Religions. 7.30pm at St Mark's Unitarian Church. Contact Andrew Hill Tel: 0131 667 4360

28 July, Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource will be talking about its work at an Inter-Faith Evening which it is

hosting for the Methodist Conference in Ipswich and at which Revd Kenneth Cracknell will be speaking on "Multi-Faith Britain – Renewing Our Theology". Contact Cynthia Capey, Tel: 01473 343661, E-mail: c.capey@sifre.org.uk

29 July, Allanton Sanctuary, Dumfries "The 3rd Annual World Peace Prayer Ceremony". Further details available from Allanton Sanctuary, Auldgirth, Dumfries, DG2 0RY. Contact Tel: 01387 740642

25 September, Merseyside Inter-Faith Group. "Heartstone" anti-racist exhibition, talk and dance by Sitakumari. 7.30pm at the Anglican Cathedral, Liverpool. Contact: Tel: 0151 733 1541

7 October, Liverpool. Inter-Faith celebration to mark the beginning of the National Centre of Volunteering Conference in association with Merseyside Inter-Faith group. Contact Tel: 0151 733 1541

14-21 October, Week of Prayer for World Peace. A week of inter faith prayer leading into One World Week. To order leaflets and posters contact Mrs Trudie Charles, Tel: 0117 942 3454.

21 October, Interfaith Gathering and Peace Awards, Wembley. 3.00 pm, The Wembley Progressive Synagogue, 324 Preston Road, Wembley. The Peace Awards will be presented in memory of Canon Gordon Wilson, Organising Secretary of WPWP 1974 to 1991. If you are an individual, a part of a group or a member of an organisation working for peace between peoples and this award would help you in this work, please send details to Mr Om Parkash Sharma MBE Tel: 01902 334 331.

Video

Shared Act of Reflection and Commitment by the Faith Communities of the UK. Full length video of the Millennium First Weekend Event on 3 January 2000 recorded by the BBC
Price £4.50 inc. p&p

Available from the Network Office.

Diary dates

(continued from p.11)

Seminars, courses, exhibitions and conferences

18 June, London. "A Port City on the Shore of Eternity", one day conference about Jerusalem, organised by the Council of Christians and Jews at Camelford House, Albert Embankment. Contact Mrs Beryl Norman Tel: 020 8673 9134

30 June, London. *Family: Values, Children, Parenthood and Society: Muslim and Christian perspectives.* Organised by the Islamic Centre of England. Featuring presentations from Dr Abdul Mabud (Islamic Academy) and Revd Fegus Capie (London Inter Faith Centre). 10.30am – 6.30pm at ICEL 140 Maida Vale, London W9. Free, but please confirm your place by tel: 020 7604 3777

5-7 August, Leicester. "The Future of Multi-Faith Britain", a conference organised by the World Congress of Faiths, IARF and Leicester Council of Faiths. Speakers include Sarah Tinker, David Hart and Robin Richardson. Includes visits to Hindu, Sikh and other faith centres in Leicester and coincides with the Global Ethic exhibition in Leicester. Registration £49 + £110 for room and board. Contact: World Congress of Faiths, Tel: 01865 202751, email: WorldconFaiths@aol.com

7-9 September, Bath. Residential course on "Interfaith Prayers for World Peace", to be held at The Ammerdown Centre. Theological and practical issues will be discussed and participants will then be invited to plan an interfaith time of prayer for peace. Speakers will include: Rev Marcus Braybrooke, Mrs Amira Shamma Abdin, Ven Geshe Gedun Tharchin and Dr Michael Hooker. Cost £75 (includes all meals, accommodation and tuition). Contact Judith Raby, Tel: 01761 433709, email: centre@ammerdown.freeserve.co.uk

22-28 September, Isle of Iona. "Crossroads- A Meeting Place: a Week of Buddhist-Christian Dialogue". Organised by Samye Ling Tibetan Monastery and the Scottish Inter Faith Council. Contact: McLeod Centre Booking Secretary, The Abbey, Isle of Iona Argyll PA67 6SN

28 January – 3 February 2002, Punjab, India. World Congress of Faiths Conference at the Punjab University, Patiala followed by a visit to Sikh holy places. Cost £150 plus travel costs. Contact Rev Marcus Braybrooke Tel: 01865 343215, email: MarcusBray@aol.com

Inter Faith Update is the newsletter of the Inter Faith Network for the UK. It keeps a wide range of organisations and individuals interested in developing good inter faith relations in the UK in touch with UK events and projects with a significant inter faith component.

For publications which contain in depth articles on inter faith topics, relevant book reviews or items related to individual faith communities ask the Network office for details.

Please send any contribution of articles and diary dates for consideration for inclusion in the next issue **by 22 September 2001** to:

Bhupinder Singh,
Information Officer,
The Inter Faith Network
5/7 Tavistock Place, Tel: 020 7388 0008
London WC1H 9SN Fax: 020 7387 7968

Email: ifnet@interfaith.org.uk
Website: www.interfaith.org.uk

Some Network Publications

Inter Faith Issues and Religious Education

A report prepared for the Network by Lat Blaylock, Executive Officer of the Professional Council for Religious Education examining the study of inter faith issues in schools. Published 1999. Price £2.00 plus 75p p&P – **£2.75.**

Inter faith Co-operation, Local Government and the Regions: Councils of Faiths as a Resource for the 21st Century

Report on the June 2000 conference held in association with the Inner Cities Religious Council. ISBN 1 902906 05 5
Price £3.50 plus £1.25 p&p – **£4.75**

Inter Faith Relations in the UK:

The Next Decade

2000 National Meeting Report, examining how inter faith relations need to be developed in the coming years
ISBN 1 902906 04 7
Price £2.50 plus 75p p&p – **£3.25.**

Publications can be ordered from the Network Office. Cheques are payable to "the Inter Faith



INTER FAITH

UPDATE

Autumn/Winter 2001 Issue 17

ISSN 1466-2000

Faiths condemn 11 September terrorist attacks

Inside this issue:

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On 11 September the twin towers of the World Trade Centre in New York collapsed after two hi-jacked commercial aircraft were flown headlong into them. Two further planes were crashed in Washington DC and in Pennsylvania, the first of these hitting the Pentagon. Messages of condolence for the victims, their families and the American people as a whole were sent from around the world.

The UK's faith communities have been united in their condemnation of these terrorist attacks in the USA. On the day after them the Archbishop of Canterbury issued a joint statement with Sheikh Dr Zaki Badawi, Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor, Archbishop of Westminster, and Professor Jonathan Sacks, the Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth, at Lambeth Palace. The statement said that, "as Christian, Jewish and Muslim religious leaders, we believe that it is vital amid so much anguish and suffering to nourish all that we hold in common and to resist all that would drive us apart". Statements from many other religious leaders and groups followed swiftly.

Political response

Soon after the tragedy, news started to emerge of attacks on and harassment of Muslims and members of other Middle Eastern and Asian communities in this country. In response, the Home Secretary, Rt Hon David Blunkett MP, issued a statement on 12 September in which he said, "It would be wholly

wrong if anyone in the UK or elsewhere were to stigmatise the Muslim or any other community of faith in this country."

The Prime Minister stressed in his press statement of 12 September and again in his address to the special meeting of the House of Commons on 14 September, that "It is terrorism that is the enemy and not Islam". At a meeting with senior Muslim leaders on 27 September he said, "Our fight is not with Islam or indeed with the people of Afghanistan. Our fight is with those who planned these terrible atrocities and those who harbour them".

Services of remembrance

A national day of mourning for those who had died in the attacks on 11 September was held on 14 September. Throughout the UK and elsewhere in Europe, people observed a three minute silence at 11.00 am. Leaders of Britain's faith communities were invited to a National Service of Remembrance held at St Paul's Cathedral in London. Similar events took place around the country in places of worship, community centres and town halls, many of which involved people from different faiths. In some places these were the first occasions on which a multi faith event had ever been held.

Backlash

In the days following the events of 11 September over a hundred incidents

Religions in the UK: Directory 2001/2003

The third edition of this comprehensive directory of the faith communities of the UK is now available from:

The Multifaith Centre
at the University of
Derby

Tel: 01332 591285
e.fry@derby.ac.uk

Price: £29.50 inc p&p



(Continued from page 1)

involving harassment and attacks on individuals and places of worship were reported. These were mainly directed at Muslims and mosques, but there were a number involving Sikhs and a Hindu place of worship was also attacked. Many people in these communities felt more insecure about going about their daily routines and some organisations issued advice on how the risk of attack could be reduced. Muslim women wearing hijab have faced particular problems. In two of the worst of the physical attacks an Afghan taxi driver was left paralysed after being set upon in west London and a Muslim woman in Swindon was attacked with a baseball bat. Mosques in several places including Belfast, Bolton, Edinburgh, South London and Manchester were the target of attacks.

Reports of verbal abuse and offensive phone and email messages were also widespread. However, Muslim organisations reported that they had also received many positive, supportive messages. *The Muslim News* noted on 25 September that amid the backlash of attacks and verbal abuse, there had been many supportive words and actions, including teachers giving extra support to Muslim children and university staff offering accommodation to Muslim students who felt threatened.

In many parts of the country, new inter faith conversations began overnight as local places of worship moved swiftly to send messages of solidarity to their nearest mosques.

Police forces around the country called meetings for local faith communities to reassure them that those committing offences against them would be dealt with severely. In many places, in particular near mosques, extra police were deployed. By mid October the number of incidents being reported had dropped

significantly.

Extension of the law on incitement to cover religious hatred

The Home Secretary announced on 3 October his intention that the law should be extended to cover incitement to religious, as well as racial, hatred. Consideration will also be given to the creation of a new category of “religiously aggravated offences” to complement that of racially aggravated offences already covered by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Speaking at the Labour Party Conference, he said, “I am ... determined to ensure that religion is not used to divide and fragment communities in this country in this difficult time. That is why I will toughen up our incitement laws to ensure attention-seekers and extremists cannot abuse our rights of free speech to stir up tensions in our cities and towns”. On 15 October Parliament was told that the maximum penalty for both religious and racial incitement offences is to be increased from two to seven years.

Network response

A letter was sent on 18 September to Network member bodies and a range of other organisations about the situation, which asked if there were particular steps they wished the Network to take.

The Executive Committee of the Inter Faith Network met on 1 October. It remembered in silence all those who had died in, or had been bereaved through, the tragic events of 11 September and all those suffering in the aftermath. A press release was issued and also a longer document entitled *Reflections on Recent*

The Inter Faith Network for the UK

The Inter Faith Network was founded in 1987. It works with its member bodies to promote good relations between the faith communities in the UK, to combat inter religious prejudice and intolerance and to help make the UK a country marked by mutual understanding and respect between religions where all can practise their faith with integrity. The Network:

- Provides information on faith communities and on inter faith affairs
- Advises on multi faith projects and inter faith issues
- Publishes materials to aid work in the religious and inter faith sectors
- Fosters inter faith co-operation on social issues
- Holds regular meetings where social and religious questions of concern to the different faith communities can be examined together
- Links 92 member organisations including: representative bodies from the different faith communities; inter faith organisations; local inter faith groups; educational and academic bodies

THE INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK

PRESS RELEASE ON 1 OCTOBER 2001

“At today’s meeting of the Executive Committee of the Inter Faith Network, members of the Baha’i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Zoroastrian faiths remembered in silence all those who had died in, or had been bereaved through, the tragic events of 11 September and all those suffering in the aftermath.

The meeting was chaired by Network Co-Chairs, Rt Revd Tom Butler and Mrs Rosalind Preston, and also attended by the Network’s Vice-Chairs, Dr Manazir Ahsan, Mrs Saraswati Dave, Mr Jehangir Sarosh and Mr Jagjiwan Singh. They said, “In our United Kingdom, a small minority may try to spread disharmony. But an overwhelming majority believe in the common good and the virtues of tolerance, respect and peaceful co-existence. Together, drawing on the strength our individual faiths offer us, and in co-operation with others, we are building our shared future on a firm foundation. Out of tragedy we must find opportunity for new good”.

Some of the comments on recent events have suggested that religion is a cause of them. In the view of the Network’s Committee, we are not dealing in the present context with an inherent conflict between religions. In the last three weeks, however, in this country as well as elsewhere it has been a situation in which, because of ignorance and racist malice, some Muslims, Sikhs and others are being scapegoated because of their religion or their appearance. There have also been attacks on

a number of places of worship. We deplore all harassment and attacks and we ask people of every faith and none to reach out the hand of friendship to one another at this time and to consider whether there are ways that they can offer to help make good the damage to the places of worship.

We are heartened by the strong commitment of local faith communities and others across our country to working together to help overcome the problems of their local areas and to stand firm against those who seek to undermine the harmony of our society. Britain is now a multi cultural, multi racial and multi faith society, with many dimensions to its diversity. We can rightly celebrate this as a source of richness which provides us with resources which help us to understand both ourselves and our world and to deal with its problems. The clear commitment, evident again in recent weeks, of the political and religious leaders of this country to endorse the need to respect this diversity, while seeking unity within it, is much to be welcomed.”

Events. These can be found at the Network’s web site: www.interfaith.org.uk.

National day of prayer

On 2 October the Archbishop of Canterbury and other Church leaders launched an “Invitation to Prayer”. People of all Christian denominations as well as those of other faiths were encouraged to pray for peace, justice and reconciliation between peoples and faiths on Friday 5 October.

Concern over military action

Military action by US armed forces, with UK assistance, began in Afghanistan on 7 October. Faith communities have expressed great concern about the situation there. Although different views have been expressed about the

appropriateness of this retaliatory action, there is a general concern about its humanitarian effects.

On 8 October the Prime Minister met leading members of the Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh communities at 10 Downing Street to discuss the events of 11 September and their aftermath. Among the religious leaders at the meeting were the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Liverpool, the Chief Rabbi, the General Secretary of the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), the President of the National Council of Hindu Temples and the Director of the Network of Sikh Organisations.

Although it had been hoped to hold the meeting earlier, it took place the day after the start of the military action. Several of those present at the



meeting expressed anxiety over this development.

A number of religious organisations issued statements and open letters following the start of military action. The MCB expressed 'grave concern' over the military strikes on 7 September and stressed that the humanitarian needs of the people of Afghanistan must be the foremost concern. They also urged "British Muslims to act with utmost patience and not let themselves be provoked". A number of Church leaders of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) wrote to the Prime Minister on 9 October. The letter stressed the need for justice, not revenge, to be at the root of the response and expressed anxiety about the loss of civilian life and the plight of refugees.

There is also a strong awareness among the different communities of the need to deal with the underlying causes of poverty and injustice in which the roots of terrorism can lie.

Inter faith response to the 11 September attacks

The Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum held its regular meeting on 12 September, with Jonathan Gorsky of the Council of Christians and Jews as the invited speaker. The topic of the meeting was changed to respond to the events of the previous day and all present expressed their condemnation of the attacks and their concerns for the future.

The Moderator of the Church in Scotland, Rt Rev James Miller invited representatives of several faith communities to join him on 2 October for the launch in Scotland of the Invitation to Prayer initiative.

The Inter Faith Council for Wales/Cyngor Cyd-Ffydd Cymru in association with the Commission for Racial Equality, Wales/Comisiwn Cydraddoldeb Hiliol, Cymru organised an event at the Temple of Peace in Cardiff on 19 September. The keynote speaker was Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas, the President of the Inter Faith Council. The meeting was introduced by Dr Mashuq Ally, Chairman of the Council. Representatives of the Baha'i, Christian, Hindu, Jewish and Muslim faiths also contributed to the event.

Welsh First Minister Rhodri Morgan met with faith community representatives on 4 October to address the issue of attacks on Muslim and other communities following the terrorist attacks in the USA. He also announced proposals to set up a forum for contact between the Welsh Assembly

and the faith communities of Wales.

The Three Faiths Forum held a special meeting on 24 September in London. Invited guests included senior diplomats from a number of countries as well as representatives from the Board of Deputies of British Jews, Muslim Council of Britain and inter faith organisations. The meeting began with a non-denominational prayer offered by the Archbishop of Thyateira and Great Britain.

Local inter faith responses

Many local inter faith initiatives were taken to respond quickly to the attacks in the USA and were able to bring together people of different faiths to offer prayers for the victims of the attacks and to reflect on the aftermath. The links between communities which have been established over recent years proved to be of great value at this difficult time.

Just a few of the many events are listed below:

- ❑ The Christian and Muslim Co-Chairs of North Kirklees Interfaith Council issued a joint statement on 13 September calling upon "Christians and Muslims, together with people of all faiths and of no faith to stand together as people of peace."
- ❑ Bolton Interfaith Council helped to arrange a memorial service at Bolton Town Hall. Speakers included the Mayor of Bolton, Uttambhai Mistry of the Hindu community and Rt Rev David Gillet, the Anglican Bishop of Bolton. Readings and prayers from the Christian, Hindu and Muslim faiths were said.
- ❑ Members of Loughborough Council of Faiths joined the Mayor and Mayoress of Charnwood and others at an event held at Loughborough Mosque on 18 September.
- ❑ An inter faith service was held at the West London Synagogue on 21 September. The congregation, which included the Lord Mayor of Westminster heard readings from representatives of the Buddhist, Christian, Jewish and Muslim faiths.
- ❑ Cambridge Inter-Faith Group arranged a visit to the evening prayer at Cambridge Mosque on 21 September.
- ❑ Members of Luton Council of Faiths helped to organise an event of remembrance at Luton Town Hall on 23 September.
- ❑ On 30 September members of the Muslim community in Manchester held a fund raising



meal in aid of the victims of the US terrorist attacks. Invited guests included local councillors, Christian leaders and representation from the Manchester Interfaith Forum. Earlier in the week a mosque in Manchester had been damaged and there was a significant response of help and solidarity from other faith communities including offers of accommodation if required.

- ❑ The London Civic Forum in association with the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) organised an event, Standing Together Against Intolerance, at the Westminster Central Hall on 3 October. Speakers included Mahmud Al-Rashid of the MCB; Rt Revd and Rt Hon Richard Chartres, Bishop of London and Atma Singh, the Mayor's Adviser on Asian Affairs. A statement was read by representatives of different faiths who invited others to sign the statement to show their support.
- ❑ In an event organised by East Renfrewshire Council, religious and community leaders from Glasgow's different faith communities planted a tree in memory of those who died in the US terrorist attack
- ❑ Brent Inter Faith held a peace vigil at the London Inter Faith Centre on 6 October. This was followed by visits to local places of worship.
- ❑ Leeds Faith Communities Liaison Panel and Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship organised a gathering for peace and justice at Victoria Gardens on 12 October. Leaders of seven faith communities led the prayers and readings.
- ❑ 400 people attended a gathering at Ealing Town Hall, London on 14 October. Father Michael Barnes of Heythrop College and Abdullah Trevathan, Headteacher of the Islamia Primary School in Brent, hosted the event which was also attended by the Mayor of Ealing and local MP's.

NETWORK NEWS

The Network's Annual General Meeting took place on 2 July at Birmingham City Council House. At the meeting the following organisations were accepted into membership of the Network:

Inter Faith Organisations Category:

The Interfaith Foundation

United Religions Initiative (Britain and Ireland)

Local Inter Faith Groups:

South London Inter Faith Group

Watford Inter Faith Association

Election of Officers and Executive Committee members

At the AGM, Dr Manazir Ahsan MBE, of the Muslim community stepped down from the position of Co-Chair, but remains a Vice-Chair of the Network. In his place Rosalind Preston OBE of the Jewish Community was elected to serve as Co-Chair alongside Rt Revd Dr Tom Butler. Three new Vice-Chairs were elected: Saraswati Dave of the Hindu community; Jehangir Sarosh of the Zoroastrian community; and Jagjivan Singh of the Sikh community to take the place of Om Parkash Sharma MBE, Indarjit Singh OBE and Most Ven Dr M Vajiragnana, who all remain as Executive Committee members.

The following were elected to serve on the Executive Committee for the first time:

Ravinder Kaur Nijjar, from the Sikh community in Scotland
 Shaunaka Rishi das, from the Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum
 Imam Dr Abduljalil Sajid of the Brighton and Hove Inter-Faith Contact Group
 Alan Schwartz of the Cardiff Interfaith Association

Bimal Krishna das, Secretary of the National Council of Hindu Temples was subsequently co-opted to fill a vacancy for a Hindu member of the Committee.

Thanks for their services were expressed to the following members who stepped down at the meeting from membership of the Committee: Bhupinder Kaur Bagga; Angela Jagger; Saroj Lal; Jean Potter; and Moulana Shahid Raza.

Four workshop sessions took place on: faith-based social initiatives in the UK; faith-based overseas aid work; the community of living beings: service to animals in the natural world; and serving the community through one's profession.

The final plenary session was chaired by Rosalind Preston. Sarah Lindsell, Director of the Catholic Agency for Social Concerns, spoke about the factors which needed to be taken into account by a faith community organisation in considering whether to seek government funding for its work.

A full record of the meeting is available from the Network Office priced £2.50 plus £1.25 postage and packing.

Faith and service to the community

The 2001 National Meeting of the Inter Faith Network took place on 2 July 2001 at the Birmingham City Council House, following the AGM. Its theme was *Faith and Service to the Community*. Bishop Tom Butler, Network Co-Chair, introducing the meeting, emphasised the important role of faith communities in service to others and the value of different faiths working co-operatively on projects.

Rosalind Preston, newly elected Network Co-Chair and Chair of Nightingale, a major residential home for members of the Jewish community, and Mental Health Manager for the Harrow and Hillingdon Community Health Trust, spoke from a Jewish perspective about volunteering in this country.

Ravinder Singh, a founder member of the Sikh organisation Khalsa Aid explained how this new organisation was founded and described the international aid work which they have undertaken in places such as Gujarat, Kosovo and Turkey. Priyya Lukka, a Hindu researcher at the Institute for Volunteering, offered insights from her exploration of the links between faith and volunteering.

NATIONAL UPDATE

Initiatives to tackle causes of Summer disturbances

The disturbances in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham this summer have been followed by various attempts to understand the background and the causes of these. On 10 July the Home Secretary, Rt Hon David Blunkett MP, set out details of an inter-departmental Ministerial group, chaired by Rt Hon John Denham MP, the Minister of State for Crime Reduction, Policing and Community Safety, to look at how the risk of future disorder can be minimised. In his statement to the House of Commons he said, "Solutions to the problems manifested in Oldham, Burnley and Bradford have to be found at a local level. But there is still a role for Government to help local communities and pull together information." The Ministerial group will look at what practical help the Government can give to local communities and is encouraging and supporting local councils to look pro-actively at the relationships between various communities in their areas.

The Bradford Race Review, chaired by Lord Ouseley, the former Chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality, was published on 12 July. Although it was commissioned before the disturbances took place, many of its recommendations are very relevant to the issues involved.

In Burnley, links between Christian and Muslim leaders have been strengthened and a joint statement was issued on 25 June by the Anglican Diocese of Burnley and the Lancashire Council of

Mosques expressing their concern over the disturbances and their commitment to living and working together for the common good of the whole community. The statement condemned the violence and called upon the people of Lancashire to help build bridges across differences and celebrate the diversity of race and religion. It was signed by Rt Rev John Goddard, Bishop of Burnley and Moulana Ahmed Sidat, Chairman of Lancashire Council of Mosques.

Steps also being taken to establish an inter faith forum in Oldham.

Churches launch discussion on religious discrimination

The launch of a new discussion document *Religious Discrimination: a Christian Response* took place at Church House, London on 10 September. This follows the Home Office commissioned research project by the University of Derby into religious discrimination and is designed to make Christians aware of the issues surrounding religious discrimination. The event was chaired by Baroness Richardson, the Moderator of the Churches' Commission on Inter Faith Relations. Revd Canon Dr Michael Iprgrave introduced the report and Lord Janner and Lord Dholakia offered their reflections on it.

*The document is priced at £5.95 (plus £2 postage and packing) and is available from CTBI Publications tel 020 7898 1300
web: www.chbookshop.co.uk.*

Inter faith exhibition in Northern Ireland

The *In Good Faith: Religions in Northern Ireland* exhibition was launched on 11 October at a special event held in the Throne Room of Hillsborough Castle. The exhibition provides an illustrated account of the many different faiths in Northern Ireland: Baha'i; Buddhist; Chinese; Christian; Hindu; Jewish; Muslim; and Sikh. The exhibition is an initiative of the Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum and is supported by Diversity 21 and the BBC and co-funded by an EU Special Support Programme. The exhibition will travel to various locations around Northern Ireland. Further information is available from Jane Campbell at Diversity 21 Tel: 028 9025 8885 or e-mail: diversity21@nics.gov.uk

Faiths forums established in the English regions

The process of establishing regional governmental structures in England with the setting up of Regional Development Agencies and Regional Chambers has encouraged the setting up of new regionally based multi-faith bodies. One such body, the South East Faiths Forum, met on 12 September in Westminster Central Hall in London to discuss issues of common concern to the faith communities in the region. The meeting was chaired by Revd David Grimwood, currently a member of the Regional Assembly as a representative from the faith communities. Similar bodies have also been established in the East of England, the East Midlands and the South West.

Review of coroner services

The Home Office has appointed a group to review coroner services. It includes among its members Mrs Elizabeth Hodder, Equal Opportunities Commissioner, and Mr Iqbal Sacranie, former Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain. The Review would be pleased to hear from representative groups of faith communities and of bereaved families. It is considering, among other matters, the most effective arrangements following a death, including proposals for a system of medical examiners and the issue of post mortems. The group hopes to receive comments by the end of 2001. They can be sent to: The Review of Coroner Services, 100 Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5HP.

Conference on the future of multi ethnic Britain

The World Congress of Faiths and the British Chapter of the International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF) and the Leicester Council of Faiths hosted a conference on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain. This took its title from a report by a Commission chaired by Lord Bhikhu Parekh and set up by the Runnymede Trust. The conference took place at the University of Leicester from 5-7 August and was attended by eighty delegates from different faiths. Speakers included: Robin Richardson, the editor of the Runnymede Report; Judge Mota Singh;

Inter Faith Issues and the RE Curriculum

The report of the Seminar held on 4 June by the Inter Faith Network in association with the National Association of SACREs will be available from the Network office next month.

Inter faith profile

Mrs Ravinder Kaur Nijjar was elected as an Executive Committee member at the July AGM. She is also a member of the Executive Committee of the Scottish Inter Faith Council.

Q How did you first get involved with inter faith dialogue?

I became involved with the Glasgow Sharing of Faiths group about 6 years ago and met people from different faiths and found that we had common interests that we wanted to share together. I was then encouraged to join other initiatives by Sister Isabel Smyth (another member of the Network's Executive Committee). Now I am on the committees of several organisations including the Scottish Inter Faith Council and the Council for a Parliament of World Religions in Scotland. I was the co-ordinator of the Glasgow Sikh community's celebration of the 300th anniversary of the Khalsa in 1999. In this capacity I felt it important to work with other organisations and faith communities.

As a teacher and a member of the Scottish Joint Committee for Religious and Moral Education you have an interest in Religious Education. In

Q what ways would you like to see RE develop in the future?

I would like to see more time being spent on the teaching of RE, because it is fundamental that children are aware that while the world is made up of different peoples, we all belong to a common humanity. Children should have a basic knowledge of all the major faiths, because education alleviates ignorance and it is ignorance, which leads to wrong attitudes, which in turn leads to hatred.

Schools have a role to play in building self-esteem and confidence in children by looking at the complex cultural, religious and civic identities that children come with. It is vital that they work towards developing the unique identity of each child and that they teach them to be good citizens who know the difference between right and wrong.

I have embarked on a Masters of Education degree programme in Religious Education at the University of Glasgow and hope that I can contribute personally to the development of the teaching of RE.

How do you think awareness of inter faith issues can be raised among local communities?

It is important for each faith community to recognise its role in conveying the basic beliefs of its own faith to its members. All faiths share important values such as peace, tolerance, respect

Q and justice. Working with these values, faith communities should aim to build bridges with the wider community, finding shared ground from which they can work to build a better future. Events such as the 300th Anniversary of the Khalsa gave people a good opportunity to learn about the Sikh faith and culture. Inter faith events such as "Meet your Neighbour", held every year at St Mungo's Museum in Glasgow, help improve inter faith understanding.

How do you see inter faith initiatives developing in the coming years?

At the moment only a relatively small number of people are involved in inter faith dialogue. I would like to see the time when the person in the street is aware of the importance of inter faith issues and is motivated to make contact and work with people of other faiths to build a better society. In the current climate inter faith understanding is of the utmost importance for world peace.

Initiatives such as the "Time for Reflection" in the Scottish Parliament, which has contributions from different faith groups and which I will be leading at the end of October, are very positive and bode well for good inter faith relations in the future.

Network web site

www.interfaith.org.uk

The Inter Faith Network for the UK's web site where you can find out more about the work of the Network.

Network Publications

The Inter Faith Network publishes a range of resources from *the Local Inter Faith Guide* to meeting reports. Please contact Network office for a full publications list

and Ishtiaq Ahmed, of the Bradford Council of Mosques. Delegates also visited a gurdwara, a mosque; and a mandir and viewed the Global Ethic Exhibition which was on display in Leicester during the conference.

Education White Paper

On 5 September the Government published the White Paper, *Schools: Achieving Success*, setting out its proposals for future developments in schools in the light of its consultations on a Green paper issued in February. Its comments on faith-based schools follow closely those in the Green Paper. It says: "We wish to welcome faith schools, with their distinctive ethos and character, into the maintained sector where there is clear local agreement." It goes on to say: "We want faith schools that come into the maintained sector to add to the inclusiveness and diversity of the school system and to be ready to work with non-denominational schools and those of other faiths." The Government is consulting widely and is also inviting responses to the proposals until 7 November 2001. The full text of the White Paper can be accessed at the web site: www.dfes.gov.uk/achievinguccess

Inter faith encounter in education

The Interfaith Foundation hosted a seminar on 19 September examining the importance of inter faith encounter in education. Participants included HRH Princess Badiya of Jordan, Zaheer Kazmi, Dr Edward Kessler and Jessica de Rothschild.

Religions in the UK directory

The third edition of the *Religions in the UK* directory has now been published. The Directory includes an updated listing of places of worship and organisations of the UK's different faith communities. It can be ordered from: The Multifaith Centre, University of Derby, Kedleston Road, Derby DE22 1GB
Tel: 01332 591285 email: e.fry@derby.ac.uk.
Price: £29.50 inc. p&p. Cheques are payable to "The Multi-Faith Centre"

Community forum

As part of the Government's 'National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal', the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU) is looking to recruit twenty individuals to be members of a new 'Community Forum'. Members of the Forum will work with the NRU to: provide a community perspective on Government programmes; generate ideas; and act

as ambassadors for neighbourhood renewal. More information and applications forms are available from John Smith, SPA, PO Box 31007, London SW1W 9WX Tel: 020 7235 7676 email: john.smith@SPA-uk.com

Experience Corps

The Experience Corps (EC) is a new Government initiative that has been established with a remit to contribute to the Government's aim of getting more people involved in volunteering activities by 2004. It will be launched later this year and will encourage people aged 50-65 years to get involved in volunteering. It will do this primarily through a marketing campaign and by putting interested individuals in touch with local projects. EC would like to hear from organisations that would like to involve more volunteers in their work. Programmes should demonstrate imagination and innovation and be open to working collaboratively with other organisations. Information packs are available by writing to: Experience Corps, Elizabeth House, York Way, London SE1, or by visiting the web site: www.experiencecorps.co.uk

Visit to Corrymeela in Northern Ireland

During August, twenty four young Christians, Hindus and Muslims from Blackburn with Darwen visited the Corrymeela Community in Northern Ireland. Corrymeela is a Christian community where Catholics and Protestants can reconcile their differences in a peaceful environment. The visit was a good opportunity for the participants to discuss issues related to divided communities in different situations and contexts.

Several discussions were organised with both Catholic and Protestant guest speakers who spoke about growing up in Northern Ireland. One of the speakers, a member of the Hong Kong Chinese community, talked about his experiences, being a Catholic as well as Asian.

The trip was arranged by Blackburn with Darwen Interfaith Council and the Regeneration Department of the local authority. Mrs Madhubala Pandya, the Interfaith Council's Vice-Chair, Rev Dale Barton, Interfaith Council member and Mr Fawad Bhatti, Interfaith Development Officer accompanied the group and helped to organise an evening of prayer from the Christian, Hindu and Muslim faiths. This was shared with other groups at

Corrymeela and held in the Community's place of worship the "Croi".

REGIONAL UPDATE

A selection of recent events:

Cardiff Interfaith Association organised two meetings at Cardiff United Synagogue in August and September. "Life is what you make it" was addressed by Jewish and Baha'i speakers, while Christian, Jewish and Sikh speakers addressed the topic, "Children are what you teach them".

Gloucestershire Inter Faith Action helped to organise a cultural fair at Gloucestershire Royal Hospital on 13 July. Staff and patients took part in the event as well as participants from local faith communities.

Hounslow Friends of Faith, a new inter faith initiative, held a walk of peace and friendship on 10 June. Members of different faiths visited places of worship situated in a triangular route round Hounslow. Places visited included the Jamia Mosque and Islamic Centre, Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha and Holy Trinity Church.

Luton. A new booklet, *A Common Thread* has been published by the Christian-Muslim Dialogue Forum in Luton. It was launched at an event organised by the **Luton Council of Faiths** at Luton Town Hall on 5 July. The Forum was set up in 1996 and has met over 15 times during the last three years. Each of the three articles in the booklet are jointly written and examine key concepts such as salvation and mission in the two faiths. To order the booklet contact: Shanthi Hettiarachchi Tel: 01582 416946.

Manchester Interfaith Forum. An event was held on 4 September at the Unitarian Chapel to explore faith issues surrounding asylum and refugees. Tony Lloyd MP, offered a government perspective and speakers from Manchester's faith communities shared their views on the topic.

Norwich Interfaith Link organised an event on 16 August looking at issues relating to refugees and asylum seekers in the area. Alison Howard, Social Responsibility Officer of the Anglican Diocese of Norwich, shared her experiences from the drop-in centre that she runs in Great Yarmouth.

Plymouth Religious and Cultural Centre was officially opened on 20 September. The Centre,

which is supported by Plymouth City Council, has the backing of members of Plymouth's faith communities and has emerged from work by the Plymouth Inter Faith Group. The Centre aims to promote a forum for inter faith dialogue and to provide support and resources for the teaching of RE in local schools. The Centre can be contacted by writing to: Plymouth Religious and Cultural Resource Centre, 3a Watts Road, St Judes, Plymouth PL4 8SE.

Totnes Inter Faith Forum. The Forum's first meeting was held on 6 September at the Friends Meeting House, Totnes. Members from different faith communities and those of no formal faith attended and heard Bob Watkins speak about the Baha'i faith.



DIARY DATES

Local inter faith events

Space only allows one event per organisation to be listed. For details of other events contact the relevant local groups. Events are also listed in the One Family Newsletter available from the World Congress of Faiths, 2 Market Street, Oxford OX1 3EF.

24 October, Peterborough Inter-Faith Council.

“United Nations Day Service: Children of the World Unite” Peterborough Cathedral, 7.30pm. Contact Tel: 01780 762686

24 October, World Congress of Faiths. UN Day Programme, Essex Hall, 1-6 Essex St. Strand, London WC2 6pm. Guest speaker: Jim Kenney, Director of the Council for Parliament of the World’s Religion. Contact Tel: 01865 202 751 email: r.boeke@virgin.net

24 October, Swindon Interfaith Group. One World Week Celebration. 7.30pm at the Pilgrim Centre, Regent Circus, Swindon. Contact: Margaret Griffiths. Tel: 01793 534 923

24 October, Norwich Interfaith Link. “Rites of Passage”. Different faith perspectives on death and dying. 7pm at St Mary Magdalene Church Hall, Silver Road. Contact Lyn Cashley Tel: 01603 630857

25 October and 1 November, Southall, West London. Faith Awareness Programme series of talks on Spiritual Journeys. 6.30pm for 7pm at 6 Osterley Park Road, Southall. Contact Faith Awareness, 208 Botwell Lane, Hayes UB3 2AJ or email: joybarrow@aol.com

25 October, Merseyside Inter-Faith Group. “A Celebration of Guru Nanak’s Life and Teachings” 7.45pm at the Sikh Gurdwara, Wellington Avenue, Wavertree. Contact Canon Michael Wolfe Tel: 0151 733 1541

25 October, Beaminster One World Fellowship. “Humanism”, a talk by John Eedle. 7.30pm at the Strode Room in Beaminster. Contact: Roger Lake Tel: 01308 862470

27 October, Luton Council of Faiths. Inter faith pilgrimage and community exhibition at Bury Park Community Resource Centre from 2.30 to 8pm. Contact Shanthi Hettiarachchi Tel: 01582 416946

29 October, Bristol Inter Faith Group. Civic Interfaith Celebration. 7.15pm at the Conference Hall, The Council House, College Green, Bristol. Contact June Ridd if you would like an invitation Tel: 01454 313042

3 November, Richmond Interfaith Group in association with the Richmond and Twickenham branch of the United Nations Association. A celebration of friendships across faiths and cultures. 3pm at the Richmond and Putney Unitarian Church, Ormond Road, Richmond. Contact: Rev Jo-Ann Lane

Tel: 020 8332 9675

6 November, Bolton Interfaith Council. Visit to Beaconsfield Mosque with a talk about Ramadan and Eid. Contact Rev Tony McNeile Tel: 01204 528633 email: tony.mcneile@virgin.net

7 November, Brighton & Hove Interfaith Contact Group. Dialogue meeting, 6pm at the Unitarian Hall, New Road, Brighton, on the theme of “Divali. Let the Light Shine Through.” Guest speaker: Dr Miliad Jani of the Hindu faith and speakers from other faiths. Contact Tel: 07971 861972

12 November, Hendon, London. Meeting on inter faith perspectives of the criminal justice system organised by the Churches Criminal Justice Forum. For more information please contact: Mrs Jane Howarth tel: 01245 360457 email: howarth@mjstreet.freemove.co.uk

3 December Exeter Inter Faith Group. Social gathering to mark Eid-ul-Fitr, Hannukah and Christmas. 7.30pm at the Catholic Chaplaincy rooms, University of Essex. Contact Tel: 01884 33533

10 December, Belfast. Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum and Amnesty International host a multi-faith event to mark Human Rights Day. 7pm at Queens University. Contact Maurice Ryan Tel: 028 9061 2637

13 December, WCF London Programme. Talk by Seeta Lakhani on her experiences as a young Hindu in London. 7.30pm at the London Inter Faith Centre, 125 Salusbury Road London NW6 Contact Rabbi Jackie Tabick Tel: 020 8959 3129 jtabick@lineone.net

23 January Cardiff Interfaith Association. Talk by Sheikh Saeed on Muslims in the UK. 7.30pm at Cardiff Mosque. Contact Tel: 029 2075 7761

2 February Sheffield Interfaith and IARF (British Chapter). “Multi-Faith Future” seminar to be held at the Sikh Gurdwara, Sheffield from 10am –4.15 pm. Contact: Rev Geoffrey Usher Tel: 0114 276 7114

Diary dates: seminars, courses, exhibitions and conferences

From 1 October, Derby. A series of 12 lectures on “Encountering Buddhism” organised by the Multifaith Centre at the University of Derby. 7pm each Monday at the Kedleston Road campus. Contact Tel: 01332 591285

29 October, Glasgow. Opening of the Global Ethic Foundation Exhibition at St Mungo’s Museum, 2 Castle Street, Glasgow. The exhibition will run until 5 December. Contact Tel: 0141 553 2557. **30 October,** Professor Hans Kung of the Global Ethic Foundation will give an open lecture at Bute Hall, University of Glasgow. Contact: Professor John Richie Tel: 0141 339 8855

1 November, London, ‘Faiths and Finance’ a seminar looking at the role of faith communities in regeneration and development. Organised by the Employment Forum (UK). 9.30 am – 4 pm. London Central Mosque & Islamic Cultural Centre, 146 Park Road, London. Cost: £20 Further details contact: Chris Beales: 07957 135593

14, 21, 28 November and 5, 12 December, London. 8th Jewish-Muslim Annual Lecture Series. The Maimonides Foundation and Leo Baeck College in association with the School of Oriental and African Studies and the Muslim College. Lectures start at 6.45pm in Room G3 of SOAS. For details contact: Mehri Niknam, Leo Baeck College Tel: 020 8349 5600

18 November, Oxford. Interfaith Music Gala hosted by the International Interfaith Centre at the Jacqueline du Pre Music Building, Oxford. Cost £7/£4. Contact: IIC 2 Market Street, Oxford Tel: 01865 202745

24 November, London. The INFORM winter seminar, “New Religious Movements and Parenting”. 9.15 – 5pm at the London School of Economics. Fee: £30/£10 in advance. Contact: Tel 020 7955 7654 email: inform@lse.ac.uk

28 January – 3 February, Punjab, India. World Congress of Faiths and the Encyclopaedia of Sikhism present a conference on “The Contribution of Inter Faith Work to Social Harmony and Peace” at the Punjab University, Patiala. To be followed by a visit to Sikh holy places. Cost £150 plus travel costs. Contact Rev Marcus Braybrooke Tel: 01865 343215, email: MarcusBray@aol.com

12-14 April, Bury St Edmunds. “Understanding our Common Roots”, a weekend for those concerned with Christian-Muslim relations. Led by Sheikh Dr Zaki Badawi and Dr Philip Lewis. To be held at Hengrave Hall, Bury St Edmunds, fee £85.00. Contact: Hengrave Hall Tel: 01284 701561

28 July – 2 August, Budapest, Hungary. 31st World Congress of the International Association for Religious Freedom. “Religious Freedom: Europe’s Story for

Today’s World”. Special guest speaker Prof Abdelfattah Amor, the UN Special Rapporteur on Religious Intolerance. Young adult programme from 26-28 July. Contact Tel: 01865 202744 email: hq@iarf.net web: www.conferences.hu/iarf2002

Inter Faith Update is the newsletter of the Inter Faith Network for the UK. It keeps a wide range of organisations and individuals interested in developing good inter faith relations in the UK in touch with UK events and projects with a significant inter faith component.

Please send any contribution of articles and diary dates for consideration for inclusion in the next issue **by 22 January 2002** to:

Bhupinder Singh,
Information Officer,
The Inter Faith Network
5/7 Tavistock Place,
London
WC1H 9SN

Tel: 020 7388 0008 Fax: 020 7387 7968
Email: ifnet@interfaith.org.uk
Website: www.interfaith.org.uk

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INTER FAITH

UPDATE

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Faith and Community

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Faith and Community: A Good Practice Guide for Local Authorities was launched on 4 February at Local Government House in London. This new publication encourages local authorities to take a positive approach in their relationships with faith communities in their area and also to support the development of local inter faith structures.

It is published by the Local Government Association (LGA) in association with the Inter Faith Network, the Inner Cities Religious Council (ICRC) - based in the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions (DTLR) - and the Active Community Unit of the Home Office.

The Guide promotes examples of good practice. Among those highlighted are the work of the Community Relations Section in Kensington and Chelsea; the South Meadow Lane Community Project run by the Gujarat Hindu

Society in Preston; the Churches Link Project in Sandwell; and local inter faith initiatives such as the work of Wolverhampton Inter-Faith Group. It clears up some common misconceptions on the part of both faith groups and local authorities such as confusion over funding eligibility and over planning permission.

Cllr Joe Abrams from the LGA's Equalities Executive said, in launching the Guide, "as leaders in their local areas, councils have a unique role to play in encouraging and facilitating good relationships with and between different faith groups". Sally Keeble MP, Ministerial Chair of the ICRC in the DTLR, said that faith communities need to be able to make the best use of their energies in the wider community, and this is why the guidance issued today by the LGA is important. She read out a message from the Prime Minister (reproduced above).

continued on page 2

Prime Minister's reception for faith communities

The Prime Minister hosted a reception for faith community representatives at 10 Downing Street on 17 January. Guests included HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan, the Archbishop of Canterbury and a number of leading members of faith communities from around the UK. In his brief informal address the Prime Minister said that this was the first such inter faith gathering at Number 10. He thanked all those who have been involved over

recent years in working towards better inter faith understanding. Also present at the reception were Christian and Muslim scholars who were taking part in an international seminar on Christian/Muslim relations being hosted by the Archbishop of Canterbury at Lambeth Palace from 17 to 18 January.

Religions in the UK: Directory 2001/2003

The third edition of this comprehensive Shap Award winning directory of the faith communities of the UK is now available from:

The Multifaith Centre
at the University of
Derby

Tel: 01332 591285
e.fry@derby.ac.uk

Price: £29.50 inc p&p



Message from the Prime Minister for the launch of Faith and Community.

It gives me great pleasure to send a message of support on the launch of *Faith and Community*. Recent events mean that the guidance is very timely, but it is the outcome of work that has been in progress for several years.

The Inner Cities Religious Council and the Inter Faith Network for the UK explored the role of faith community involvement in public life in publishing *The*

Local Inter Faith Guide and in a national conference. I welcome the Local Government Association's willingness to take this forward in partnership with them and the Active Community Unite at the Home Office.

I am sure that local authorities, other public agencies and faith communities themselves will find this practical guide an invaluable resource. It will help to capture the distinctive contribution that faith communities can make to the drive for better places for everyone in our richly diverse society.

(Faith and community...continued from page 1)

Home Office Minister, Angela Eagle MP said that at the national level the Home Office is undertaking a review to make sure it can develop and maintain good links with faith communities across the country. Indarjit Singh, Director of the Network of Sikh Organisations and member of both the ICRC and the Executive Committee of the Inter Faith Network also welcomed the timely publication of the guide and said that attitudes have certainly moved on since the first time he contacted a local authority with a view to working in partnership, but received a very negative response.

An interview with Cllr Chris Clarke Chair of the Local Government Association's Social Inclusion Executive appears on page 7. The Guide is being sent to each local authority in England and Wales by the LGA and is also available to download from the LGA web site: www.lga.gov.uk

Representatives of faith community member bodies of the Network met on 9 January in London to discuss a range of issues. These included the reports on last summer's disturbances in the north of England, repercussions of the terrorist attacks of 11 September and the subsequent military action in Afghanistan. Concern was also expressed about the tension between India and Pakistan and the effect of this on communities here in the UK. Participants discussed practical steps that their organisations could take to tackle some of the current concerns and ways in which representative faith bodies can contribute to inter faith relations. The meeting concluded with a discussion about the planned Home Office review of the pattern of Government consultation with faith communities and ways in which the faith communities might strengthen consultative relationships between themselves. This meeting was one in a series being held for the different categories of Network member bodies.

NETWORK NEWS

Meeting of faith community representative bodies

NATIONAL UPDATE

Holocaust Memorial Day

The Inter Faith Network for the UK

The Inter Faith Network was founded in 1987. It works with its member bodies to promote good relations between the faith communities in the UK, to combat inter religious prejudice and intolerance and to help make the UK a country marked by mutual understanding and respect between religions where all can practise their faith with integrity. The Network:

- Provides information on faith communities and on inter faith affairs
- Advises on multi faith projects and inter faith issues
- Publishes materials to aid work in the religious and inter faith sectors
- Fosters inter faith co-operation on social issues
- Holds regular meetings where social and religious questions of concern to the different faith communities can be examined together
- Links over 90 member organisations including: representative bodies from the different faith communities; inter faith organisations; local inter faith groups; educational and academic bodies



The UK commemoration of Holocaust Memorial Day 2002 took place, in the presence of HRH the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester, at the Bridgewater Hall in Manchester on 27 January, 77 years to the day after the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp. It was attended by the Home Secretary, Rt Hon David Blunkett MP, Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP, Rt Hon Charles Kennedy MP, Holocaust survivors (whose testimonies formed part of the programme), and political, religious and community leaders from around the country. Contributions highlighted both the tragedy of the events of the Holocaust and other genocides and also the challenges of prejudice and discrimination in 21st century Britain. The Home Secretary said, "Saying 'it must never happen again' can only be fulfilled if we will it. It means understanding that we share common values, that building a cohesive and civilised society is the business of us all. What we do affects what others do to us, and how others behave remains our business in the twenty-first century." Councillor Imam Rizvi, Lead Member for Race Issues for Manchester City Council, said: "By learning the lessons of the Holocaust we can achieve something positive from the legacy of such terrible suffering and injustice. We have a duty to teach our young people about the events of the Holocaust and their relevance to modern atrocities. Encouraging a culture of tolerance and acceptance of others in our children is the best hope our society has of ensuring a peaceful future."

National events were also held in Wales at Cardiff City Hall; in Scotland at Glasgow's Royal Concert Hall; and in Northern Ireland at the Waterfront Hall in Belfast, where guests included Holocaust survivors from the Republic of Ireland.

Many local multi faith events took place to mark Holocaust Memorial Day around the UK. These included among others: a civic commemoration at Bolton Town Hall; a commemoration at the Princess Theatre in Port Talbot, Wales; and an event organised by Leicester City Council together with Leicester Council of Faiths at the New Walk Museum.

Golden Jubilee

2002 is the Golden Jubilee year of HM The Queen. Many events will be taking place this year to celebrate the role that she has played in the affairs of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth over the last 50 years and to look forward to the next period of her reign.

June will be the focus of a number of special events to mark the Jubilee. These include concerts at Buckingham Palace; beacon-lighting and fireworks; and a Jubilee Festival in London. The Jubilee Festival along the Mall will reflect the Jubilee themes of celebration, service and community involvement. It will be designed to involve people of all ages and from all walks of life, and will reflect the face of our country and the Commonwealth today. Events planned for succeeding weeks include a multi-faith reception at Buckingham Palace, hosted by The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh.

Further information, including the outline programme of the Queen's regional visits, can be found on the official website: www.goldenjubilee.gov.uk. A toolkit for planning events for the Golden Jubilee may be downloaded from the site. The Golden Jubilee Office would be pleased to receive information about any events which faith communities and inter faith bodies may be planning to mark the Jubilee. Details should be e-mailed to warwick.hawkins@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk.

Reports on disturbances

A number of reports have been published examining the reasons behind the disturbances in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham during the summer of 2001 and looking to find ways to improve community cohesion. In these reports the Government has called for a widespread and open debate about identity, shared values and common citizenship.

An Inter-Ministerial Public Order and Community Cohesion (POCC) team, chaired by Home Office Minister John Denham MP, published its report, *Building Cohesive Communities*, on 11 December. The report's main recommendation is that community cohesion needs to be made a central aim of Government. It says, "We recognise that in many areas affected by disorder or community tensions, there is little interchange between members of different racial, cultural and religious communities and that proactive measures will have to be taken to promote dialogue and understanding. We also take on board the need to generate a widespread and open debate about identity, shared values, and common citizenship as part of the process of building cohesive communities." The report highlights initiatives which have already been implemented, including the allocation of extra money for summer activities for young people.

An extended Bank Holiday weekend from 1 - 4



Also published on 11 December was the report of the independent Community Cohesion Review Team set up by the Home Secretary and chaired by Ted Cantle, Associate Director of the Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government. The team was asked to obtain the views of local communities, including young people, local authorities, voluntary and faith organisations and to identify good practice. In order to do this the team visited Bradford, Oldham, Burnley, Leicester, Southall and Birmingham.

The Cantle report makes almost seventy recommendations on a wide range of matters under the headings of: Peoples and Values; Political and Community Leadership; Integration and Segregation; Younger People; Education; Community Organisations; Disadvantaged and Disaffected Communities; and the Press and Media. Among the initiatives which could play a role in promoting social cohesion in local communities, the report also mentions "inter faith groups" and the "development of youth inter faith networks".

Both the Denham and Cantle reports have a strong focus on the way in which different communities within our society relate to one another, including implicitly, and sometimes, explicitly, relations between different faith groups.

The reports can be downloaded from the Home Office web site: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk>

Separate independent reports have also been prepared on the disturbances in Burnley and Oldham. The report on Burnley can be found at www.burnleytaskforce.org.uk or can be ordered by telephoning 01282 425011. The Oldham report can be found at www.oldhamir.org.uk or can be ordered by telephoning 0161 952 4325. This summer the report of a Review Team chaired by Lord Ouseley, former Chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality, on the situation in Bradford was published. This can be found at www.racereview.org.uk or can be ordered from Bradford Vision on 01274 722 675.

Religious Discrimination in Employment

The European Council of Ministers adopted a Directive last October to provide protection against discrimination in employment and occupation on grounds of sexual orientation, religion and belief, disability or age. The UK Government is required to give effect to this in UK law by 2 December 2003 in relation to sexual orientation and religion or belief and by 2

December 2006 in relation to disability and age. Also last year, the European Council of Ministers adopted a Directive which outlaws unfair discrimination in areas such as education and goods and services, as well as employment and training, on grounds of race.

On 13 December the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), which carries responsibility for the implementation of both of these Directives, published a consultative document entitled *Towards Equality and Diversity*. The document sets out the Government's broad approach to implementing the Directives.

The Government is proposing that religion or belief should not be defined in the new legislation, but that this should be left to be determined by case law arising from cases brought before Employment Tribunals and the Courts. There are provisions in the Employment Directive which allow "Churches and other religious or belief organisations" to discriminate in their employment practices where there is "a genuine occupational requirement" or where to do so is necessary to enable them to preserve their "ethos". Again, the Government proposes that on all these matters there should be provisions in general terms rather than strict definitions, leaving it to Employment Tribunals and the Courts to judge whether the required circumstances arise in a particular case.

The consultation document says that the Government believes that "in the longer term, there are arguments in favour of a single statutory Commission offering integrated advice, guidance and support on equality matters". Great Britain already has a Commission for Racial Equality, a Disability Rights Commission and an Equal Opportunities Commission, but there is no body charged at present with issues relating to age, religion/belief and sexual orientation.

The text of the full document, along with a questionnaire, can be accessed at the DTI web site: <http://www.dti.gov.uk/er/equality>. Individuals and organisations have until 29 March to offer their comments on the document to the DTI.

Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act

The Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act completed its passage through Parliament on 13 December. It contains provisions to impose heavier penalties for crimes of violence and damage if they are motivated by religious hostility. This is an extension of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 which related to "racially aggravated" offences. The Act also includes provision to allow the police

to require the removal of face coverings for identification purposes.

During the Bill's passage there was much debate about a proposal to make it an offence in England and Wales (since Scotland and Northern Ireland legislate separately on these matters) to incite hatred against members of a religious group, defined by reference to religious belief or the lack of it. This provision was dropped by the Government following strong opposition to it in the House of Lords.

Target 2015 – faith and international development

The Department for International Development, in partnership with Muslim and Sikh organisations, recently launched two new booklets aimed at raising awareness in these communities about the *Target 2015* campaign to half world poverty by the year 2015. The Rt Hon Clare Short MP, Secretary of State for International Development, joined both launch events which were held at Portcullis House in London. The Sikh community booklet was launched on 10 December in association with the Network of Sikh Organisations and the Muslim publication, launched on 16 January, was a shared initiative between DFID and the Muslim Council of Britain, Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid.

The booklets join those published already in partnership with Christian and Jewish organisations including: Christian Aid, CAFOD and UK Jewish Aid and International Development (J-AID). A further booklet is planned in partnership with Hindu organisations.

Archbishop of Canterbury

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey has announced that he is to retire from office in the autumn. Following the announcement several leaders of different faiths sent messages of good will praising the Archbishop's work in particular in the field of inter faith relations.

In recent weeks the Archbishop has been involved in a number of inter faith initiatives. On 17 and 18 January he hosted an international seminar of Christian and Muslim scholars at Lambeth Palace.

Inter Faith Issues and the RE

Curriculum The report of a seminar held on 4 June by the Inter Faith Network in association with the National Association of SACREs. **£5.95 plus £1.25 p&p**

HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal of Jordan and Prime Minister, Tony Blair, along with the Archbishop, addressed the opening session of the seminar, entitled "Building Bridges: Overcoming Obstacles in Christian-Muslim Relations".

On 20 January the Archbishop flew to Alexandria in Egypt where he chaired a gathering of senior Christian, Jewish and Muslim leaders from the Middle East to explore the potential of religious communities in promoting a cessation of violence and the resumption of the Middle East peace process. The conference was co-hosted by the Grand Imam of al-Azhar al-Sharif, Dr Mohamed Sayed Tantawy, the most senior Islamic figure in Egypt. The Grand Imam then visited London to sign, on 30 January at Lambeth Palace, a joint accord to promote dialogue between Christians and Muslims.

Pope John Paul II's inter faith day of prayer

Pope John Paul II invited senior religious leaders from around the world to Assisi to take part in a day of prayer for peace on 24 January. The religious leaders from the UK included Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, Rt Rev John Miller, Moderator of the Church of Scotland, Rabbi Alan Plancey, representative of the Chief Rabbi and Bhai Mohinder Singh of the Guru Nanak Nishkam Sevak Jatha.

On the same day events were held around the UK in communion with the gathering in Assisi. Westminster Interfaith arranged a multi faith gathering at Heythrop college in London in communion with the prayer meeting in Assisi. Representatives of the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Zoroastrian traditions offered contributions and lit lamps, led by the Rt Rev James O'Brien representing Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor.

In Glasgow, leaders of Christian Churches made their own pilgrimage for peace visiting the mandir, mosque, synagogue and gurdwara. At each place of worship a candle was presented and the prayer of St Francis of Assisi was recited. Each host community then prayed or recited from their scriptures.

Third edition of Religions in the UK launched

Religions in the UK: Directory 2001-03 was officially launched at an event on the evening of 29

November at the University of Derby. It is published by the Multi Faith Centre at the University of Derby in association with the Inter Faith Network. Professor Jonathan Powers, Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Multi-Faith Centre, introduced the evening and gave some background to the Centre which is being established with the help of funding from the Millennium Commission. Peggy Morgan then gave a lecture on "Challenges Facing Inter Faith Dialogue in the UK".

Places of Worship Grant Scheme

In his 2001 Budget, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced extra assistance for repairs to listed buildings which are used as places of worship. DCMS has implemented this initiative by the introduction of the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme launched on 4 December by the Minister for the Arts, Baroness Blackstone, at Christ Church in Spitalfields, London. It is an interim grant scheme which returns, in grant aid, the difference between 5% and the actual amount spent on VAT on eligible repairs to listed places of worship.

The scheme has been widely welcomed by owners of listed places of worship, as it represents significant additional new funds for these buildings - initial estimates are up to £30 million per year. There is no cap on the scheme; all listed places of worship that meet the criteria, and apply, can receive a grant.

Application forms and further information can be obtained from the website: www.lpwscheme.org.uk; or by calling Tel: 0845 601 5945

Twinning places of worship

The Three Faiths Forum is promoting an initiative to "twin" places of worship. Sir Sigmund Sternberg, co-founder of the Forum said that the scheme would help faith communities "to reach out in a respectful and welcoming way in the hope of creating true dialogue and establishing a real sense of brotherhood". The proposal has also been welcomed by Sheikh Dr Zaki Badawi, Principal of the Muslim College commented that twinning of places of worship "will enhance harmony and peace between different communities." For further information email: sidney@sternberg-foundation.co.uk.

Directory honoured

The Directory project has been awarded the 4th Annual Shap Award by the Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education for a significant contribution to education and the study of religion. The award was presented at a ceremony in Birmingham in December by Libushka Smart in honour of her late husband Professor Ninian Smart who was a founder of the Shap Working Party and for many years, until his death in 2001, its President.

Inter faith profile

Cllr Chris Clarke is a member of Somerset County Council and Chairs the Local Government Association's Social Inclusion Executive. We took the opportunity to ask him a few questions relating to the LGA and the publication of *Faith and Community: A Good Practice Guide for Local Authorities*.

Q What is the role of the LGA and of the Social Inclusion Executive within this?

The Local Government Association was formed in 1997 because of the need for one strong voice to present the case for local government. As the national voice for local communities the LGA speaks for nearly 500 local authorities in England and Wales representing over 50 million people.

The Social Inclusion Executive's 14 members represent a cross section of types of authority – London borough, district council, county council, metropolitan council and so on – and all four of the main political parties. Our remit is to contribute to the achievement of the Association's overall policy priorities and objectives and to decide on the operational and policy objectives for the social inclusion policy area.

Do you think there has been a shift in attitude towards faith communities by local authorities over the last few years?

Q Yes. A number of developments have helped local authorities to think again about faith communities, such as the increasing onus to find ways of communicating with and consulting all their customers/service users and residents. Many have developed social inclusion strategies too, playing a leading role in joint working with other agencies. Sadly, people from faith communities have all too often been identified as having difficulty in engaging with consultation processes – and yet also to be in particular need of help.

Most recently the Local Government Act 2000 placed a new statutory duty on councils to prepare a community strategy to promote or improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area. Many authorities had already started to draw together key stakeholders to develop a vision for the area. An understanding of the needs and aspirations of all the sections and interest groups – and the contribution they can make – is key.

Why are these new guidelines so important?

Some local authorities have a very good relationship with their local faith groups and communities but this is not widely known about. The LGA agreed that others could benefit from advice on various aspects of the relationship, the sensitivities that need to be taken into account and practical steps to be taken.

What role do you think local authorities have in encouraging local inter faith co-operation?

As community leader, charged with preparing a community strategy in consultation with local people and groups, the authority has considerable interest in bringing together all the stakeholders in the area. As well as making this task easier, there will be longer term benefits to the creation of some kind of structure for helping dialogue between faith communities and local government and between the various faiths.

Starting off may not mean a huge financial outlay – a few small informal meetings might help with getting to know relevant people and organisations. On the other hand, in some authorities an officer has been appointed to oversee the relationship with faith communities. Clearly in areas of the greatest diversity this will be very helpful in encouraging the continuation of inter faith co-operation.

What positive outcomes would you like to see coming from the partnership between local authorities and faith communities?

In localities all over the country we would like to see local authorities and faith communities both benefiting from closer engagement. Faith communities can make a considerable contribution by encouraging active citizenship, providing social care and helping social cohesion and this could be enhanced if local authorities were to do more to recognise and support this aspect of their activities. The local authority that has a good relationship with the faith groups and organisations in its area has taken an important step towards fulfilling its role as community leader. *Faith and Community* will help those yet to start and that will be a really positive outcome.

Yours faithfully

The “Yours Faithfully” training programme devised by the Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum has provided religious diversity training to over 120 organisations since June 2001. The programme was initially funded by the Community Relations Council to develop a course for trainers. Since Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 placed a statutory duty upon all public sector bodies to provide training in religious diversity, demand for the courses has been very high, so Forum members have been providing training courses for a wide range of organisations such as labour relations agencies and the police. Further information from Des McCabe Tel: 028 3025 0399 email: equalitytraining@aol.com.

Towards multi faith RE in Northern Ireland

Members of the Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum met on 18 December with Martin McGuinness the Education Minister of the Northern Ireland Assembly to explore ways in which a more balanced RE curriculum including teaching about minority faiths can be introduced in Northern Ireland. Current legislation looks towards the Christian Churches to maintain the RE Curriculum. It is unlikely to be changed and therefore closer co-operation between the churches and other faiths to provide a multi faith curriculum would appear to be the best way to move towards providing a broader curriculum.

White paper on changes to registration of births, marriages and deaths

The Government has recently published its proposals for changes to the registration of births, marriages and deaths. Its White Paper on this – *Civil Registration Vital Change* – can be purchased from the Stationery Office or be downloaded from www.official-documents.co.uk (document 5355).

The proposals, which follow a consultative review, include a change from a system based on the authorisation of religious places of worship for the celebration of marriages to a system based on the appointment of celebrants who would be responsible for the solemnisation of either religious or civil marriages.

REGIONAL UPDATES

Regional Roundup

News of a selection of inter faith activities from around the country.

Brighton and Hove Inter Faith Contact Group celebrated the UN Year of Dialogue between Civilisations on 21 October at St John the Baptist Church in Hove. This event was held in partnership with the local branch of the United Nations Association and brought together members of several local faith communities who each contributed a statement of their belief in the importance of dialogue.

Croydon’s Hindu community banded together and donated £501 towards the much-needed restoration of the Croydon Parish Church. A cheque was presented by Nitin Mehta from the Young Indian Vegetarians. He said “Croydon Parish Church is part of our heritage in this town. It is a beautiful church, a place of worship and abode of God.”

Hounslow Friends of Faith, in the London Borough of Hounslow, organised an event at Heston School on 27 October, with representatives from local faith groups including Baha’is, Brahma Kumaris, Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jews, Muslims and Sikhs as part of *One World Week*. The celebration included presentations of dance, singing and music from different groups and concluded with a candle lighting ceremony.

Leeds. Rt Rev John Packer the Anglican Bishop of Ripon and Leeds hosted a dinner on 23 January at which representatives of faith communities in Leeds discussed future co-operation between the communities. The dinner was arranged with the assistance of Leeds Faith Communities Liaison Forum.

Leicester. Canon Andrew Wingate, Director of Training for the Anglican Diocese of Leicester, and Imam Ibrahim Mogra, of the Masjid Umar mosque have been holding regular meetings with both Christians and Muslims for the last 18 months. The events of 11 September have given added impetus to the meetings and a joint collection in places of

Network web site
www.interfaith.org.uk

Network Publications

The Inter Faith Network publishes a range of resources from *The Local Inter Faith Guide* to meeting reports. Please contact the Network office for a full publications list



worship in Leicester raised over £5,000 for Save the Children's work in Afghanistan. During Ramadan about 20 Christians observed a day of fasting and joined Muslim friends at the mosque in the evening to break the fast together. It is planned that Muslims will join the Christians in similarly observing a fast on Ash Wednesday.

Peterborough Inter-Faith Council organised an event on 13 January celebrating recent festivals in the Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh traditions. The event was attended by representatives of all the faiths who each gave a short presentation introducing the festivals.

Richmond Inter-Faith Group, jointly with the Twickenham and Richmond branch of the United Nations Association, organised a celebration of friendship across faiths and cultures on Saturday 3 October 2001 at the Unitarian Church in Richmond. Participants included Buddhists, Baha'is, Brahma Kumaris, Christians, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs.

South London Inter Faith Group held prayers for world peace at St Matthew's Church in Brixton on 11 November in response to the events of 11 September. Prayers for peace and forgiveness and for all those bereaved were offered by members of different faith communities including the Rt Rev Dr Tom Butler, the Anglican Bishop of Southwark, a Hindu priest and a Muslim Imam.

South West England Link Meeting

A Network link meeting for inter faith initiatives in the South West Region was held on 12 January in Taunton. Each initiative presented a short report on its recent activities:

Bath Inter Faith Group

The Group has a subscribing membership of around 21 members with about 50 people on the overall mailing list. It provides information about other local groups such as those in Bristol and Frome, as well as holding its own meetings almost every month. It helps to arrange an annual multi faith event hosted by the Mayor of Bath. It has also now established a link with the Imam of a local Mosque and hopes to involve more Muslims in its activities. It is planning to hold an event in the Autumn on the theme of "Sacred Space", in association with the United Religions Initiative.

Bristol Inter Faith Group

The Group had an event planned for 11 September which turned into an opportunity for those attending to reflect on the terrible events of that day. The Group's Committee met with Muslim colleagues in the following week and produced an agreed Press Release, responding to the terrorist attacks. There have been no major incidents in Bristol of harassment against

minority communities following the 11 September attacks.

Each October the Group assists in arranging the Civic Inter Faith Celebration, hosted by the Mayor. The 2001 celebration was very well attended, perhaps influenced by the events of 11 September. The Group visited the newly refurbished gurdwara and held a social event in December; is planning to mark Holocaust Memorial Day; and will be holding an event around the time of Eid-ul-Adha. Professor Tariq Modood of the University of Bristol will speak in April on "Our Future as a Multi-faith Society". In May, June and July three events will be centred on young people, speaking about their experiences growing up in three faith communities in Bristol. The Group also receives a number of enquiries from local public bodies such as Health Authorities and police.

Exeter Inter Faith Group

The Group originated in the University of Exeter and events are often held there. In December it held a social gathering to celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr, Hanukah and Christmas. For the rest of the academic year the theme of the Group's meetings will be education and inter faith Dialogue and it plans to have speakers from different faiths talking about their perspectives on the topic.

Frome Inter Faith Group

The Group was established about four years ago and has about 20 members made up of Christians (mostly Quakers), Buddhists and Pagans. The Group arranges discussions, events with speakers and visits to places of worship. The Group has few Church or civic connections, but is working on raising its profile.

Plymouth Religious and Cultural Resource Centre

The Plymouth Inter Faith Group was re-established about four years ago. It has good support from two local Bishops and leaders of other faith communities. Financial assistance has been received from Plymouth City Council to establish a resource centre which was officially opened on 20 September 2001. The centre is a charitable trust and is now engaged in seeking long term financial support. A programme of inter faith events is held at the centre and a range of services are provided for schools and other organisations, such as loan of artefacts and a service to arrange faith speakers.

Swindon Inter Faith Group

The Group has been established for about eleven years and meets about four or five times a year. Rather than invited speakers it usually has discussions on particular topics so that all those present can contribute. The Group's secretary is often contacted by local statutory authorities with enquiries about the local faith communities. For example, she has worked with the Chaplain of a new hospital and advised the police about the establishment of a prayer room.

Some members of the Group are on the local SACRE and have been involved in changing the Agreed Syllabus for RE for Swindon. The one in use was originally bought from a neighbouring SACRE in a mainly white area. It was felt to be unsatisfactory in Swindon which is more ethnically mixed.

Following the attacks of 11 September a meeting was held with Dr Iftikar Malik as a speaker which attracted over 150 people. A collection of £375 was made for the Edhi Foundation for work with refugees on the Afghan/Pakistani border. It is hoped to have some more intensive dialogue with local Muslims; the Group secretary has been making enquiries about a suitable format.

Taunton Inter Faith Group

The Group meets monthly. During the year four to five speakers are invited to talk on a selected subject. Other sessions are taken up with general discussion on a chosen topic and relevant quotations from various faiths are sent to members in advance of the meetings. The Group has also assisted in the running of a series of evening classes at the Somerset College of Arts and Technology featuring speakers of different faiths.

Torbay Interfaith Forum

The Forum was re-started about two years ago, having originally been established in the early 1980's. The Forum meets every two months and often focuses on education related issues as three members of the group are on the local SACRE and several RE teachers also regularly attend meetings. A multi faith celebration is planned for 20 January. At this the Act of Commitment which was used at the faith communities Millennium event in the House of Lords in January 2000 will be read by participants.

Totnes Inter Faith Group

This new group, which meets once a month in the Quaker House Totnes, has been active for five months. Twenty one people attended the last meeting from a variety of backgrounds. These included a police officer who said he would encourage members of the police to attend its meetings as this would broaden their understanding of social and religious understanding.

West Somerset Inter Faith Group

The Group is run on an informal basis but has a committee and about 45 members. It often arranges visits to different places of worship. For example, it visited the Sikh gurdwara in Bristol last year and was able later to invite a group from the gurdwara to a social event held at the home of a member of the Group. It is currently planning a visit to the mosque in Exeter. It has initiated a competition for pupils at a local school about "Tolerance and Respect for People of Other Faiths". Children are invited to produce a piece of art or poetry on this theme which will be judged by members of the Group, which will provide cash prizes to the best entries.

Anglican Diocese of Bath and Wells

Rev Kevin Tingay is inter faith adviser in the Anglican Diocese of Bath and Wells. He maintains links with inter faith groups in the area and is Secretary of the South West Council of Faiths. Many local parishes have contacted the Diocese asking about Islam and looking for a speaker who can talk to local people about the faith. He is on a committee which is looking at racial justice issues. The South West region has a proportionately high incidence of racially motivated crime.

The South West region has a significant presence of followers of Pagan traditions and New Age spiritualities. Some have hesitations about dialogue with such groups while others are keen to proceed and the issues involved need careful exploration.

South West Council of Faiths

Revd Heather Pencavel, who is a member of the South West Council of Faiths and the faith communities representative on the South West Regional Assembly, explained the development in England of the Regional Development Agencies (RDA) and Assemblies over the last three years. Members of the RDA's are appointed by central and local Government. The Regional Assemblies, in effect, scrutinize the work of the RDA's. The South West Assembly is made up of 117 people: 81 appointed by the local authorities of the region; and the remainder representatives from Social and Economic Partners, such as employers, trade unions, health authorities and the voluntary sector. There is one seat reserved for the faith communities. In order to nominate a person to the Assembly the faith communities had to establish a regional forum which could put forward a representative.

The South West Council of Faiths was set up to represent the faith communities of the region and to relate to the Regional Assembly, but Revd Pencavel commented that as most faith communities do not have regional structures of their own it is very difficult for the Council to be truly representative of the region's faith communities and it is even more difficult for one person to represent on the Assembly the views of all the faith communities. The Council of Faiths is currently seeking to establish clear channels of communication with people of all faiths in the Region. So far the South West Council of Faiths has been involved with three major regional consultations on sustainable development; regional accountability; and a review of cultural concerns.



DIARY DATES

Local inter faith events

Space only allows one entry per organisation to be listed. For details of other events contact the relevant local groups. Events are also listed in the One Family Newsletter available from the World Congress of Faiths, 2 Market Street, Oxford OX1 3EF.

14, 21, 28 February and 7, 14 March, Faith Awareness, Southall. Series of talks on the theme "The Modern Multifaith Society and the Contribution of the Faith Communities," starting with Robin Richardson, Editor, *The Parekh Report: The Future of Multi-Faith Britain*, on 14 February, with perspectives from different faiths at further meetings. 7-8.30pm at 6 Osterley Park Road, Southall. Contact: Joy Barrow Tel: 020 8561 3023 E-mail: JoyBarrow@aol.com

19 February, Hampstead Interfaith Group. Talk on "Inter Faith Relations in Britain – Future Prospects" by Brian Pearce. 8pm at 63b Belsize Park Gardens, London NW3 4JN. For further information write to Eva Tucker at the above address

19 February, Coventry. "The Contours of Religious Education" lecture by Andrew Wright. Part of the Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit programme. 6pm in room WE117, the Graduate Studies Building, Westwood site, University of Warwick. Contact Tel: 024 7652 2579 email: s.a.dowse@warwick.ac.uk

20 February, Bradford Concord Interfaith Society. Meeting on the theme 'Rites of Passage – Part 2'. Panel discussion. 7.30pm at the Interfaith Education Centre, Listerhills Road, Bradford BD7 1HD. Contact Tel: 01274 731674

26 February, Cambridge Inter-Faith Group. Discussion "Understanding the Relationship between Politics and Faith". 8pm in the Upper Room, Wesley Church, Cambridge (rear entrance King St). Contact: Ralph Nimmann Tel: 01223 510442

28 February, London Inter Faith Centre. Visit to the Holocaust Exhibition at the Imperial War Museum. Meet at LIFC at 10.30am. Contact Mrs Gillian Jones Tel: 020 7604 3053

28 February Beaminster One World Fellowship. "The Gentle Heart of Islam" talk by Dr Basheer. 7.30pm at the Strode Room, Beaminster, Dorset. Contact: Colin Smith Tel: 01308 862440

4 March, Nelson, Lancashire. Building Bridges meeting on the theme of 'Sacrifice and Suffering' to be held at 19 Market Square. Contact Tel: 01282 719303.

4 March, Bristol Inter Faith Group. 'Eid ul Adha – The Feast of Sacrifice'. Christian, Jewish and Muslim speakers will offer their perspectives. 7.30pm at The Unitarian Meeting, Surrey Lodge, Brunswick Square. Contact Frances Long Tel: 0117 924 3576, or June Ridd Tel 01454 313042

6 March, Brighton and Hove Inter Faith Group. A talk by historian Dr Robin Mowat on the theme of dialogue: "Faith in the Future - A Historian's View". 6pm at the Meeting House, University of Sussex, Falmer Brighton. Contact: David Young Tel: 01273 558619 E-mail: DavidSYoung@aol.com

16 March, South London Inter Faith Group. "Exploring Islam" - a visit to Balham Mosque including teaching, attendance at evening prayers and meeting with Muslim members of the community. 2.00-7.30pm at Balham Mosque, 47a Balham High Road, London SW12. Contact: Eric Bramsted Tel: 020 8542 9618 or Sarah Thorley Tel: 020 8674 5447

14 April, West Somerset Interfaith Group. Visit to the Ramgharia Sikh Gurdwara, Bristol, starting at 11.30am. Contact Jenny Growden Tel: 01643 707551

7 April, Peterborough Inter-Faith Council. AGM to be held at 3pm at the Multicultural Centre, Cromwell Road, Peterborough. Contact: Anne Emery Tel: 01780 762686

11 April, London Interfaith Centre. A talk by 19 year old Roni Tabick on the theme of "Faith in London – Young People Speak Out". 7.30 for 8pm at the London Interfaith Centre, 125 Salisbury Road, London. Contact: Rabbi Jackie Tabick Tel: 020 8959 3129

10 May, London. Religion and Human Rights (Part of the Horizon Public Lecture Series) at Birkbeck College, University of London 6.30pm-8.30pm. £5. Details from: Vicky Mohammed Tel: 020 7631 6604

12 May Glasgow Sharing of Faiths annual pilgrimage. Contact Isabel Smyth Tel: 0141 553 2557 email: sifc@freeuk.com

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Diary dates: Courses, exhibitions, conferences and seminars

11 February – 1 March Northern Ireland. “In Good Faith” exhibition by Diversity 21 in association with the Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum at the Visitors Centre, The Queen’s University, Belfast. For details of this and other venues contact Diversity 21 on Tel 028 9025 8885.

11 February, 18 March and 18 April, University of Derby. ‘Encountering Sikhism’ a course of lectures followed by a celebration of the Festival of Vaisakhi (18 April). Lectures Mondays at 7pm. Contact: the Multi-Faith Centre Office, University of Derby, Kedleston Road, Derby DE22 1GB. Tel: 01332 591285 E-mail: e.fry@derby.ac.uk

3 March Glasgow. Study day on Hinduism including a visit to a mandir at the Lauriston Centre for Contemporary Belief and Action. Contact Isabel Smyth Tel: 0141 553 2557 email: sifc@freeuk.com

6-7 April 2002, Oxford. “Religious Freedom”. The International Interfaith Centre’s 9th Annual Conference. 11am Saturday to 4pm Sunday, Harris Manchester College, Oxford. Registration required. Contact Tel: 01865 202745. E-mail: iic@interfaith-centre.org. www.interfaith-center.org

12-14 April 2002, Bury St Edmunds. “Understanding our Common Roots”, a weekend for those concerned with Christian-Muslim relations. Led by Sheikh Dr Zaki Badawi and Canon Dr Philip Lewis. To be held at Hengrave Hall, Bury St Edmunds, fee £85.00. Contact: Hengrave Hall Tel: 01284 701561 email: programme@hengravehallcentre.org.uk

6-16 May, Visit to Rome, Italy led by Rev Malcolm Stonestreet, Chair of URI UK, with opportunities to meet with inter faith groups and faith representatives. Cost £895 inclusive of accommodation, meals and flights. Contact: Rev Malcolm Stonestreet, Eskdale Vicarage, Boot, Cumbria CA19 1TF. Email: m@mconf.edi.co.uk

15-16 June, British Museum, London The Combermere Weekend School, “World Religions, World Art” jointly sponsored by the World Congress of Faiths and the British Museum, £48. Details from: Vicky Mohammed Tel: 020 7631 6604

14-21 July Leicester. “Beyond Labels” conference for 250 young people from the UK and Europe. Organised by Minorities of Europe. Contact Deepak Naik Tel: 07932 065453 email: deepak@гнаik.freeseve.co.uk

27 July – 3 August, Oxford. International Conference on “An Inter Faith Perspective on Globalisation” at Plater College, Oxford. Convenor, Dr Kamran Mofid. Contact Susan Leask Tel: 01865 740503 email: s.leask@plater.ac.uk

28 July – 2 August 2002, Budapest, Hungary. 31st World Congress of the International Association for Religious Freedom. “Religious Freedom: Europe’s Story for Today’s World”. Special guest speaker Prof Abdelfattah Amor, the UN Special Rapporteur on Religious Intolerance. Young adult programme from 26 -28 July. Contact Tel: 01865 202744 email: hq@iarf.net web: www.conferences.hu/iarf2002

9-11 September 2002, London. British Association for the Study of Religions Annual Conference on the theme of “Religion and the State”. Department of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Surrey, Roehampton, London SW15 5SL. Contact: Dr Marion Bowman, Religious Studies Department, The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes MK7 6AA. E-mail: M.I.Bowman@open.ac.uk

Inter Faith Update is the newsletter of the Inter Faith Network for the UK. It keeps a wide range of organisations and individuals interested in developing good inter faith relations in the UK in touch with UK events and projects with a significant inter faith component.

Please send any contribution of articles and diary dates for consideration for inclusion in the next issue **by 22 May 2002** to:

Bhupinder Singh,
Information Officer,
The Inter Faith Network
5/7 Tavistock Place,
London
WC1H 9SN

Tel: 020 7388 0008
Fax: 020 7387 7968
Email: ifnet@interfaith.org.uk
Website: www.interfaith.org.uk

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INTER FAITH

UPDATE

Summer 2002 Issue 19

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Golden Jubilee Young People's Faith Forum

Inside this special Golden Jubilee issue

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On 10 June 80 young people of different faiths from around the UK came together at St James' Palace for a very special event: The Golden Jubilee Young People's Faith Forum. The main theme of the day was "Faith and Service to the Community". The Forum was chaired by James Naughtie of the BBC and Network Co-Chairs Rosalind Preston and Bishop Tom Butler were among the speakers. Participants included 64 lower-sixth formers from schools nominated by LEAs across England, as well as pupils from independent and faith schools and from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. 16 young people aged between 19 and 24, nominated directly by the faith communities, also played a role in the event, with one of each faith giving a

short presentation in the morning on growing up as a young person of faith in 21st century Britain and on how their faith encourages service to the community. Participants also heard from Priya Lukka from the Institute for Volunteering Research, Andy Ball from the De Paul Trust, and Khalid Al-Mulad from Islamic Relief.

The day's topics were explored in more depth by the young people in two syndicate discussions facilitated by a specially picked team of RE teachers led by Lat Blaylock of the Professional Council for Religious Education. At the end of the afternoon The Prince of Wales met each one of the young participants and facilitators all of whom then went on to join 700 people of

continued on page 2

Royal reception for faith communities

HM The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh hosted a reception for representatives of different faiths at Buckingham Palace on 10 June. This was the first time that such a gathering had taken place at the Palace. Around 700 people including members of the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Zoroastrian faiths from all parts of the UK were invited to the reception. Among those present were the 80 young people who had taken part in the Golden Jubilee Young People's Faith Forum earlier in the day. Several other members of the Royal Family attended the event, including the Prince of Wales and the Earl and Countess of

Wessex, who made their way around the several rooms open to the guests, meeting and talking with many of them.

Leaders of each of the nine faith communities invited to the Palace gathered on the stage of the Ballroom to present a collective message of Loyal Greetings to The Queen. The Archbishop of Canterbury read out the message on their behalf and presented it to The Queen. It is reproduced on page 3.

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5-7 Tavistock Place

Message of support to the participants of the Golden Jubilee Young People's Faith Forum from Her Majesty The Queen

Today's Forum brings together eighty young people of faith from across the United Kingdom in this special event to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of my Accession to the Throne.

I am pleased that you are exploring the practical dimensions of faith and service to the community, which is one of the central themes of the Golden Jubilee celebrations. Through this kind of dialogue, respect and understanding between different faiths can continue to grow.

I hope that you will learn much about each other's religious traditions. Your discussions today will signal to others the great importance of co-operation between people of different faiths.

I send my good wishes and encouragement to you all.

(Faith Forum...continued from page 1)

different faiths at the special reception at Buckingham Palace, hosted by The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh.

The event was organised for the Golden Jubilee celebrations by the Golden Jubilee Office on behalf of Buckingham Palace with the assistance of the Inter Faith Network for the UK, and in consultation with Government Departments and the faith communities. On the evening before the Forum the young people had the chance to meet Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, the Rt Hon Tessa Jowell MP, and some of the faith community leaders who had been consulted in planning the event.

In place of *Inter Faith Update's* usual interview this issue features responses from the 9 young presenters to questions about the future of inter faith relations in the UK (see page 6).

For further information or to order a copy of the report on the day, which will be available in September, contact the Golden Jubilee Office or Harriet Crabtree at the Inter Faith Network.

NETWORK NEWS

National inter faith organisations meeting

A second meeting of representatives of national inter faith organisations in membership of the Network took place on 27 February, the first having been held in February 2001.

Representatives from twelve organisations considered the scope for co-operation between their organisations and strategies for handling overlap in their work and also looked at the relationships between national and local inter faith bodies. Participants also discussed the impact of the events of 11 September and of the summer disturbances in northern towns on inter faith relations in the UK and how their organisations had responded to these. It was agreed that the meeting had been helpful and that a further meeting of the organisations should be held in the autumn.

Faith community representative bodies meeting

A meeting of faith community representative bodies in membership of the Network was held on 29 May at the National Council for Voluntary Organisations. It followed their earlier meeting on 9 January (reported in *Inter Faith Update: Issue 18*).

The meeting's main focus was on the Government's consultative document *Towards Equality and Diversity* published last autumn (also reported in *Inter Faith Update: Issue 18*) set out proposals for implementing the European Directive on discrimination in employment, which covers discrimination on grounds of religion or belief. Cathy Rees of the Department of Trade and Industry gave the meeting an update on the responses received during the consultation period and explained how the Government now planned to proceed.

On 15 May Ms Barbara Roche MP, the Cabinet Office Minister responsible for co-ordinating equalities issues across Government had announced

Message on behalf of the faith communities of the United Kingdom to Her Majesty the Queen on the occasion of her Golden Jubilee

Your Majesty,

On behalf of the faith communities of the United Kingdom gathered here, we present our Loyal Greetings to Your Majesty on the occasion of your Golden Jubilee. We look back with profound appreciation on your fifty years of service to the nation and we look forward to the next period of your reign. We honour your steadfast commitment to your Christian faith and to ensuring that people of all our faiths are valued contributors to life in the United Kingdom and in the Commonwealth.

We pledge in a spirit of friendship and co-operation to pursue increased understanding between our communities. We are united in our desire to work together for the common good in ways which reflect the shared values which we affirmed at the outset of this new Millennium: community; personal integrity; the sense of right and wrong; learning, wisdom and love of truth; care and compassion; justice and peace; respect for one another and for the earth and its creatures.

its intention to examine the feasibility of a single equality body spanning the fields of religion and belief as well as race, gender, disability, sexual orientation and age. The new project will consider relevant policy developments including the creation of interim arrangements to provide advice, guidance and support to individuals, employers and interested organisations on the operation of the new legislative framework as this relates to religion or belief, sexual orientation and age. There are currently no institutional arrangements dealing with these (unlike race and disability). The meeting on 29 May provided an opportunity to discuss this development as well.

Neil Frater of the Home Office added an overview of the position which has been reached on religious discrimination issues more generally, some of them identified in the reports of the recent University of Derby research project. He also spoke about the Home Office's planned review of patterns consultation of faith communities by central Government and their representation at national events which is likely to begin in the near future.

It is planned to hold a further meeting in the autumn of faith community representative bodies to consider the possibility of holding more regular meetings of this kind to provide, in effect, a faith communities consultative forum, in which matters of common concern can be discussed.

NATIONAL UPDATES

Jubilee services and visits

Representatives of different faith communities in the UK attended the national Service of Celebration and Thanksgiving to mark the Queen's Golden Jubilee held at St Paul's Cathedral on 4 June. They joined over 2,000 other invited guests in the Cathedral. Representatives of different faith communities were also invited as special guests to church services attended by HM The Queen in Northern Ireland on 14 May, in Scotland on 23 May and in Wales on 11 June. Similar services of thanksgiving were held across the UK during the Jubilee weekend and the days following.

The Queen visited a Hindu mandir in the UK for the first time on 6 June, when she visited the Murugan Mandir in north London. The continuing Golden Jubilee regional tours will also include the first visits by The Queen to a mosque and a gurdwara in the UK. She will visit the Scunthorpe Islamic Centre and Mosque on 31 July and the Guru Nanak Gurdwara in Leicester on 1 August. She will also visit the Manchester Jewish Museum on 24 July.

The Earl and Countess of Wessex attended a service at the St John's Wood Synagogue in London on 9 June and will attend a Zoroastrian thanksgiving service in North London on 26 June and visit the Jain Temple in Leicester on 3 September. The Princess Royal will visit the London Buddhist Vihara on 10 July and The Duke of York is to attend a Baha'i reception in Central London on 11 July.

A press release from Buckingham Palace said "the purpose of the visits is to indicate respect for the diversity of faiths, to support inter-faith dialogue and to show that non-Christian, as well as Christian, communities are central to



contemporary Britain".

Queen launches Golden Jubilee Award

HM The Queen launched The Queen's Golden Jubilee Award for voluntary service by groups in the community on 30 April. The award will recognise achievements by groups of people who volunteer their time to enhance and improve the quality of life for others in the community. Nomination forms are available by contacting 0845 000 2002 or by email: gaward@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk. Closing date for nominations for 2002 is 30 September.

The Prince of Wales launches Respect initiative

The Prince of Wales joined leaders from the UK's major faith communities on 29 April in Birmingham to unveil a two-year initiative called "Respect". This joint initiative of the Prince's Trust and Timebank aims to encourage young people of different faiths to do voluntary work for another faith community, thus helping to build understanding and tolerance between communities. The idea was originally floated as a fitting way to commemorate the start of the new Millennium, however the project has now come to fruition, being taken forward by these two organisations. Respect intends to work with faith groups, youth groups, schools and sports clubs throughout the UK and will target schools and sports bodies, encouraging them to support Respect. It will promote the idea of giving time and will provide ideas and information on ways of doing this in local communities. The initiative forms a part of the Golden Jubilee celebrations.

To find out more or to volunteer your time or suggest a project that volunteers could do together contact "Respect" at Timebank on Telephone: 0845 601 4008 or visit the web site: www.timebank.org.uk/respect.

Incitement to religious hatred and the blasphemy laws

A House of Lords Select Committee on Religious Offences has been appointed to consider and report on the law relating to religious offences. It will look at whether existing religious offences (notably blasphemy) should be amended or abolished and whether a

new offence of incitement to religious hatred should be created. The Select Committee was set up following the introduction, in January, of a Bill into the House of Lords by Lord Avebury to make it an offence in England and Wales to incite hatred against members of a religious group. These provisions in the Bill (which will not now be taken further formally in the present session of Parliament) were along the lines of those dropped by the Government from the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Bill because of opposition in the House of Lords when that Bill was before Parliament last autumn.

The Select Committee will consider evidence over the next few weeks, and produce a report for the next Parliamentary Session. The Committee will be prepared to consider written evidence which reaches it before the end of July. Further information is available on the House of Lords web site: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld/ldselinf.htm>. Enquiries can also be addressed to the Committee Clerk, Ian Mackley (Tel: 020 7219 5208 or email reloff@parliament.uk).

Ministers meet faith community representatives about India/Pakistan tension

The Home Secretary, Rt Hon David Blunkett MP met with representatives of the Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities on 29 May to discuss the effect on community relations in the UK of the current tension between India and Pakistan. The following day the Foreign Secretary, Rt Hon Jack Straw MP, called representatives and Parliamentarians from the three communities to brief them following his visit to India and Pakistan. He said after the meeting that he was: "heartened by their [the faith communities] support for the international effort to try to avert conflict between India and Pakistan, and by their determination to ensure that if conflict does start it is not allowed to spread to the communities in the UK".

Birmingham: A More Inclusive City

On 23 May Regeneration Minister, Ms Sally Keeble MP, launched *A More Inclusive City: Birmingham and its Faith Communities*, a report which calls for a new community forum for Birmingham, providing people of all faiths in Birmingham with a platform to make their views heard by local agencies and the City Council. Speaking at the launch, held at the Guru Nanak Nishkam Sevak Jatha Gurdwara in Birmingham, Ms Keeble said: "Birmingham's faith communities

have helped create community cohesion. This report shows how a Faith Forum can take this important work forward". Birmingham City Council's Cllr Muhammad Afzal, said that religion occupied a very important place in the lives of many communities and a faith forum would help forge links between the Council and the faith communities. A range of other speakers, including Brian Pearce of the Inter Faith Network, also spoke at the launch, welcoming the findings of the report.

Faith in Scouting

The Scout Association has launched details of its new programme and has identified "Faith and Belief" as one of six key areas of a young person's development. The Association, which currently has over 400,000 young people in membership has written to faith communities requesting their help in promoting scouting among their communities.

Queen's birthday honours for inter faith activists

The Queen's birthday honours list was announced on 15 June and included an OBE for The Most Reverend Oluwole Abiola for services to Inter-Faith Relations and an MBE for Resham Singh Sandhu, Chairman of Leicester Council of Faiths, for services to Community Life. Father Abiola served as a member of the Executive Committee of the Inter Faith Network from its inception until 2000.

Unity in Diversity

A group of young people from Glasgow's different faith communities is helping to update the Glasgow Open Museum's Unity in Diversity exhibition. Unity in Diversity is one of many exhibitions that are available from the museum for display in various community venues in Glasgow. It is a collection of artefacts and pictures providing information about the different faith communities in Glasgow. New exhibits, including a web site based project supporting the exhibition, are being added with the support of the Scottish Inter Faith Council. During their research the young people have been visiting one another's places of worship and also learning about web design. The exhibition will be re-launched later this year.

Diamond School Award

The Council of Christians and Jews Diamond School Award was launched as part of the CCJ's 60th anniversary celebrations. The award, which is open to all secondary schools, aims to encourage schools to promote understanding and positive interaction between different communities. Schools will be invited to prepare a 'poster' (A2 size) displaying the work of the school in promoting good relations between different groups within their community. The finalists will be invited to a presentation at Lambeth Palace. Contact Jane Clements at the CCJ Tel: 020 7820 0090 or email: jane@ccj.org.uk for more information and application forms.

Recent publications

Inter Faith Issues and the RE

Curriculum The report of a seminar held by the Inter Faith Network in association with the National Association of SACRES.

£5.95 plus £1.25 p&p

Faith and Service to the Community

Report on the 2001 Network National Meeting.

£2.75 plus 75 p p&p

Available from the Network office:

The Inter Faith Network

5-7 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9SN

Inter Faith Profile: The future of inter faith dialogue

The Golden Jubilee Young People's Faith Forum held at St James's Palace on 10 June (see page 1) included presentations by nine of the older participants on their experiences as young people of faith growing up in the UK. After the Forum we took the opportunity to ask each of the presenters about their **hopes for the future of inter faith understanding in the UK and if their perception of inter faith dialogue had changed after attending the Forum**. Excerpts from their responses follow:

Ruth Cohen, Jewish participant from London

"I think that there is room for dialogue between particular faiths, for example Jews and Muslims, in order to increase understanding about the current situation in the Middle East. There is also a lot of scope for more people to realise how much those with a faith background have in common, for example their common values and goals for society. I would like to see inter faith understanding reaching more young people through the school system, so that inaccurate stereotypes can be broken down and respect built up, leading to a more tolerant and peaceful society.

I had never really been involved in inter-faith dialogue before attending the Forum. I did learn a lot about other faiths and have been inspired to find out more."

Viren Mehta, Jain participant from Manchester

"My hopes for the future are for a peaceful society that is proud of its faith diversity and able to use this diversity to strengthen the community rather than divide it. The realisation of these hopes depends on ensuring that there is good quality teaching of religious education in the UK.

The inter faith forum has given me a fascinating and thoroughly rewarding insight into how young people of all the major UK faiths feel about issues that affect 21st century Britain. It has also taught me that open and frank discussion of faith issues can be achieved without descent into argument and dispute. Different faiths have a lot to learn from each other."

Dr Munveen Kaur Dhariwal, Sikh participant from Leicester

"I think inter faith understanding is crucial to the successful continued development of the UK into a multi faith, multi cultural country. My hopes are that we, in the UK, can reach a stage whereby we

all realise and accept that people of all different faiths exist, but are not inferior or superior, simply different. I hope we can teach each other, and learn to respect the fact that there are others who may follow a different religion or hold different beliefs. I hope it will be possible to come to a point where each person is able happily to follow their faith in the way they choose, without it being an issue. I think the key words for the future are tolerance, acceptance and respect.

The Forum has made me realise that there are people who assign significant importance to inter faith development. It is easy to believe that people are beginning to let go of their faiths in order to integrate into UK society, but the Forum was a fantastic reminder of who we are, what we stand for and what we want for our country. My perception of inter faith dialogue has been drastically altered into a very positive one. It is important to communicate, and I think we all did so with energy and dedication."

Mohammed Naveed, Muslim participant from Halifax

"I hope that there will be more opportunities for dialogue, especially at the local level. Maybe schools and places of worship could host such events. It is important for young children to make contact with people of other faiths and where there are "mono-faith" schools, they should be encouraged to arrange exchange days with more mixed schools.

The Forum was a good opportunity to meet people of different faiths, especially faiths that I'd only read about. It was interesting to listen to people of other faiths expressing their views and to deal with their perception of your faith. I realised that although people of faith have many things in common, this does not undermine or dilute each person's commitment to their particular faith. You can be different, but still be genuine and show real understanding and respect for others."

Danielle Pee, Baha'i participant from Bristol

"My hope for the future is that all people gain a greater awareness as only through education can our ignorance and prejudice be cured.

As a Baha'i I have always been aware of inter faith dialogue, since we are encouraged to consort with people of all religions in fellowship and friendliness, being present at the inter faith forum translated that intellectual knowledge into something more real and spiritual."

Views of participants of the Young People's Faith Forum

Gaurav Prinja, Hindu participant from Cambridge

"I hope that all the faiths can co-exist and get along the way we participants did over the two days. With all of us being of different faiths I was concerned that there was the potential for unpleasantness. However, my mind was quickly put to rest. I was very pleased with the way that despite the difference in our spiritual beliefs, the strength of the commonly held humanitarian aspects of all of our faiths was more than enough for us all to be friends and work together. I only hope that it is people with a tolerant outlook who are able to flourish and influence the thoughts of the coming generations, rather than those who seek to create divisions between people in the name of religion.

I am definitely much more optimistic about inter faith relations, and I can only hope that more events like the forum take place and that the kind of people willing to come to them with an open mind and a desire to co-operate will grow in number."

Farmeen Sorab, Zoroastrian participant from London

"I hope that inter faith knowledge and understanding will increase significantly in the years to come. With high profile events such as the one which took place at St James's Palace, this will definitely be achieved. I hope that through word of mouth and the media inter faith work is promoted, which will in turn lead to better understanding and tolerance of different faiths.

I feel that the forum provided a great opportunity to discuss delicate matters in a very easy, open and friendly way. I feel that by discussing these issues people have been educated on issues which they knew little about (although may have thought they did). This breaks down prejudice and ignorance.

I did feel that inter faith dialogue would prove to be difficult, but this forum proved that this was most definitely not the case."

Manil Subesinghe, Buddhist participant from London

"I feel the future holds much promise. The ease with which we all seemed to get on was encouraging to say the least. We had all shared

similar experiences so far throughout our young lives. With all that we share in common and the mutual respect we have for each other's religious backgrounds, I hope we can build on this unique occasion and continue to move forward in building solid inter faith relationships.

The Forum has shown me that there is enthusiasm for more inter faith dialogue. People are willing to hear each other out and take in what others have to say."

Meryl Walters, Christian participant from Aberystwyth, Wales

"I would hope that different faith communities will continue to communicate, listen and share views, with the aim of trying to understand one another better. However, differences between every faith community clearly do exist, and as a Christian I'd consider it very important that the distinctiveness of Christianity should not be eroded in any inter-faith dialogue.

Attending the forum helped me to see that as a Christian, I am in a much better place to respond to people of other religions once I have listened to them and sought to understand what they believe and why."

Network Website:
www.interfaith.org.uk

REGIONAL UPDATES

Bedford Council of Faiths annual inter faith pilgrimage took place on 8 April, visiting a Roman Catholic church, mosque and a gurdwara. The walk brought together a number of people from different faiths in Bedford. At each place of worship there were prayers and readings from different faiths.

Cardiff Interfaith Association held a meeting on 21 May featuring speakers from the Baha'i, Hindu and Jewish faiths who addressed the topic, "Is peace a requirement for the advancement of mankind?". Following the three presentations there was open discussion. The meeting, which took place at the United Reformed Church in Cardiff, was one in a series of meetings being organised by the Interfaith Association.

East of England Faiths Agency, which has recently been established to link faith community and inter faith organisations in the East of England Region, held a meeting at Bhaktivedanta Manor in Hertfordshire on 14 May. Following the meeting a tour of the Centre at the Manor took place and members of the Agency attended the *arti* ceremony followed by a shared tea provided by the community there.

Leeds. The multi-faith partnership, Faiths Together in Leeds 11, has been awarded £292,000 from the Community Fund. This is in addition to over £700,000 of funding received from the Single Regeneration Budget. The award is to help fund the Parents' Resource Centre in Beeston, a part of Leeds that has been identified as a regeneration area. The project is a unique partnership between local Christian and Muslim organisations and will involve the transformation of a parish hall into a community facility which will provide support to parents and a range activities for all members of the local community.

Sheffield Interfaith in association with the International Association for Religious Freedom (British Chapter) hosted a conference entitled "Multi-Faith Future..." at the Sikh Gurdwara in Sheffield on 2 February. Ishtiaq Ahmed, of the Bradford Council of Mosques spoke about "Lessons from Bradford" and other speakers included PC Tim Walls and Sgt Mohammed Rauf of the Black Police Association. A second conference on the issue of faith based schools was held on 12 March at Sheffield Hallam University. Speakers included Marylin Mason, Education Officer of the British Humanist Association and Cath Platt, Secretary of Sheffield Interfaith and Headteacher of a Jewish supplementary school.

South London Inter Faith Group organised a tour of Brixton Prison on 14 May, visiting two wings and meeting with prisoners. The Chaplain General of the Prison Service, Revd William Noblett spoke about the development of multi faith chaplaincy in the prison service. The groups also heard from Christian, Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist and Jewish prison chaplains and also from the prisoners themselves.

Westminster Interfaith held their seventeenth annual multi-faith pilgrimage for peace on 8 June. Participants gathered at three different starting points; at Finsbury Park to visit the Sukhavati Amida Buddhist House; at Holloway Road to visit the North London Buddhist Centre; and at Turnham Green to visit the London Buddhist Vihara in

Chiswick. All the "pilgrims" then travelled to Wesley's Chapel in East London and walked through Brick Lane to visit St Anne's RC Church, where lunch was served in the hall. Next stop was the East London Mosque followed by a visit to St Dunstan and All Saints C of E Church. The final leg took the "pilgrims" to the Gurdwara Sikh Sangat in Bow.

London Link Meeting

The Inter Faith Network London Link Meeting was held on 5 March at the National Institute of Social Work. A selection of news given by participants representing inter faith initiatives in Greater London follows. Full meeting notes can be obtained from the Network office.

Brent Inter Faith

Two members were invited to the civic service hosted by the Mayor of Brent last autumn. A Peace Vigil was held in October as a response to 11 September, which was followed by the annual pilgrimage of faith. The Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), being set up by Brent Council is seeking the views of local faith communities.

Croydon

Some useful links with Croydon Council have been made and it is hoped that Croydon Inter Faith Group can be revived. The South London Inter Faith Group's annual pilgrimage will be held in Croydon this summer.

East London

There is no formal inter faith group in the inner East London area, but often temporary alliances are forged for specific tasks. The Canary Wharf Multi Faith Prayer Room is a good example of co-operation between the Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh communities, in conjunction with the business community.

Hampstead Interfaith Group

The Group is an informal one, which is run from the home of the convenor. Meetings are held eight times a year with an average attendance of 20 people per meeting. The October meeting, when the topic of discussion was links between Islam, Christianity and Judaism from a Muslim point of view, attracted about 40 people.

Harrow Inter Faith Council

The Council links both organisational and individual members. It arranges two major events each year: a meeting with the Mayor of Harrow and an annual lecture for Harrow SACRE. The local MP expressed an interest in the work of the Council and last year invited members of it to a meeting at the House of Commons. They held an exhibition in 2000 and are now working on producing a web site based on this. They also try to support other local groups, such as the Kenton Inter Faith Group.

Hounslow

A new inter faith initiative has been established in Hounslow, the Hounslow Friends in Faith.

Kingsbury

Following the terrorist attacks of 11 September the Christian Borough Deans issued a statement in conjunction with local Muslim leaders which was picked up by the local press and in October a Christian/Muslim dialogue meeting was held at the London Inter Faith Centre. A working party has been set up and has worked with Brent SACRE on producing materials for use in



schools. The Christian/Muslim group hopes to link neighbouring churches with mosques so that it is easier for local people of the two faiths to meet one another.

Lambeth Multi-Faith Action Group

The Group developed following an Inner Cities Religious Council conference held in South East London in October 1993. Meetings are held every six to eight weeks and two major events are held each year. It is hoped to arrange a meeting in the next few months with Lambeth Council and the faith communities in the Borough.

North London

A Christian/Muslim dialogue group in Finsbury Park has been meeting for about 12 years, and has facilitated contact with the Muslim community at the Finsbury Park Mosque, a focus of controversy recently.

Redbridge Council of Faiths

The Council was established in 1976 and links people of 11 different faiths in the area. A number of members of the Group are also on the local SACRE. The Group arranges visits to different places of worship. Last summer they held a successful pilgrimage which visited a church, gurdwara, mosque and temple. After 11 September members of the Group and members of Newham Association of Faiths met at a local mosque and joined in a celebration of Eid.

South London Inter Faith Group

The Group has been established for almost 25 years and has about 200 members on its mailing list, although attendance at meetings averages 30 to 40. The Group publishes a newsletter and aims to have members of the major faith communities in South London represented on their committee.

Westminster Interfaith

Westminster Interfaith has recently moved its offices to Kensington. Since 11 September, there has been a marked increase in subscriptions to their newsletter. They held an inter faith day of prayer on 24 January, the same day as the gathering of religious leaders convened by the Pope in Assisi, Italy. They were planning an event for April demonstrating how different faiths use music, poetry and dance in prayer. The organisation is probably best known for its annual Pilgrimage for Peace (see page 8).

London Civic Forum

The Forum was launched in September 2000 to work alongside the Mayor and Greater London Assembly. It links different sectors and communities, including faith communities. Currently there are about 900 member organisations, 170 of which are faith groups. Forum membership is split into five electoral colleges one of which is for faith communities. The faith community college collates the views of London's faith communities and feeds them into the GLA and other public bodies. The Forum is also encouraging local authorities to work with faith groups and hopes that many of London's local authorities will make a pledge to follow through on the *Faith and Community* guidelines published in February by the Local Government Association.

Representatives of two London local authorities also attended the link meeting:

Mr Andy Thomas, Faith and Social Action Officer at Lewisham Council, said that his role is to engage with the community aspects of faith groups rather than with their religious practice. The Council has felt it important to develop links and partnerships with local faith communities. Over the last two and a half years there has been a high level of interest from faith groups. Consultation meetings held by the Council are now open to faith groups where they have contributed on topics such as: teenage pregnancy, youth, education and race equality. The Council has also established a "Faith in Lewisham Fund" totalling £50,000 per year, which offers grant funding to local faith community projects.

Mr Harmander Singh, a Corporate Strategy Officer for the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, commented on the growing realisation of the contribution which faith groups make to society. Voluntary organisations, many of which are faith based are working in areas where other initiatives have failed to make a difference. He welcomed the LGA guidelines on *Faith and Community* and said that the Faith Practitioners Regeneration Network, of which he is a member, intends to take forward the guidelines and examine how local authorities across the country take up this guidance.

Yorkshire and the Humber regional link meeting

The Network's Yorkshire and the Humber regional link meeting took place on 17 April at the Friends' Meeting House in Leeds. A selection of news given by participants representing inter faith initiatives in the region follows. Full meeting notes can be obtained from the Network office.

Bradford

Bradford Concord Interfaith Association arranges monthly meetings and an annual Walk for Friendship. This year the walk took place on Saturday 15 June, starting at the Interfaith Education Centre. They will also be holding a Queen's Jubilee celebration evening hosted by the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress at Bradford City Hall. The Anglican Bishop of Bradford has meetings every six weeks or so with other faith leaders and this has been very important in developing and maintaining relations between them.

A Bradford participant noted the need to address the root causes of the problems which gave rise to last summer's disturbances, including problems of economic deprivation as a result of the collapse of traditional industries and the dropping out of young people of different communities from the educational system.

The local SACRE is very active and has a very good locally agreed syllabus, which has been widely copied by other educational authorities. Bradford Council have produced, in consultation with faith groups, a guide to diversity in Bradford. There have been various suburban initiatives in Bradford, such as one in Thornbury where there has been a programme of visits where people of different faiths visit each other's places of worship and learn about each other.

Doncaster Inter Faith Network

The Doncaster Inter Faith Network was established on



25 February after an open meeting of faith community organisations which was organised by Doncaster Racial Equality Council and the Ethnic Minority Regeneration Partnership. The group has met twice since then and is currently planning an event to mark the anniversary of the 11 September terrorist attacks in the US.

Kingston Upon Hull Inter Faith Forum

The Forum has four meetings a year. Traditionally these have been very academic, but they are discussing how this may be changed. The local authority has regular meetings for faith and cultural groups which is chaired by one of its officers. The Forum is hoping to work closely with the Council and possibly apply to it for funding.

Kirklees, Calderdale and Wakefield

Post 11 September there has been a reawakening in the Huddersfield area of the realisation of the need for an inter faith group. The Sikh mayor arranged a special inter faith celebration as part of his year, attended by 400 people. It is hoped that a new Huddersfield inter faith group may emerge.

North Kirklees Inter Faith Council has established a small planning group and holds a number of meetings. They have a meeting coming up with Ann Taylor, MP for Dewsbury, and other speakers and a meeting on health issues is planned for September. The hospital in Dewsbury has a multi-faith chaplaincy. In Halifax there is a council led initiative where they have tried to expand the local Churches' group to have an inter faith dimension.

In Wakefield, following meetings with the local council and the Wakefield Mosques' Committee, the Wakefield Christian-Muslim group will be re-launched in a few weeks' time.

Leeds

Membership of the Leeds Concord Inter Faith Association is primarily on a fellowship basis and complements the work of the Leeds Faith Communities Liaison Forum which has more of a public representative role. Concord now has a website. They continue to organise an annual inter faith peace service. The strength of Concord is the personal relationships between the people of different faiths.

The Council of the Leeds Faith Communities Liaison Forum was launched in March 2001. It comprises representatives of the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh faiths. Leeds City Council is represented by a Councillor. The Forum is concerned with dialogue as it relates to public issues. It has a strong commitment to regeneration and faith based social action. In October a vigil was held in the wake of the events of 11 September. The Forum has a seat on the Leeds Initiative, Neighbourhoods and Community Strategy Group (the LSP). A social dinner and three training conferences have been held. John Battle MP has been very supportive of the Forum.

Rotherham.

In the autumn of last year Rotherham Parish Church hosted an exhibition of Islamic Art, which was planned prior to the terrorist attacks of 11 September. In the week following 11 September an inter faith gathering was held at the church to remember those who lost their lives in these. Last November at a meeting of the Anglican Diocesan Synod the impact of the terrorist attacks was discussed and

a local imam, Imam Mohammed Ishmail, was invited to address the meeting. Following a visit made by the Anglican Bishop of Sheffield last year to the Atfulina Islamic School in Gaza the Diocese has been raising money for the school and several local Muslims have also joined this fundraising effort.

Sheffield Interfaith

Sheffield Interfaith was founded in 1993. It has 91 members, but the Group is concerned at the under-representation of Muslims among the membership and building bridges with Muslims is seen as a priority. SI holds 6 meetings a year, including visits to places of worship. Recently they held a meeting on the topic of faith schools. SI gets a lot of enquiries, many of which they are now able to direct to their website which has a number of useful links. They have assisted BBC Sheffield in finding minority faith representatives to help monitor the religious content of their programmes.

York Inter Faith Group

The Group has been going for a number of years but has little contact with faith groups other than Christian and Baha'i. The current year's programme lists 15 meetings. Around 20 to 30 people come to each meeting but half of these are different every time depending on who the speaker is. They are presently looking at ways to try and get people from different faiths to speak about the inter faith experience from their own religious perspective.

DIARY DATES

Local inter faith events

Space only allows one event per organisation to be listed. For details of other events contact the relevant local groups. Events are also listed in the One Family Newsletter available from the World Congress of Faiths, 2 Market Street, Oxford OX1 3EF.

20, 27 June, 4 and 11 July Southall, London. Visits to different places of worship in Southall. All visits begin between 6.45pm and 7.30pm. For details contact: Faith Awareness, 34 Shorediche Close, Ickenham UB10 8EB or email: JoyBarrow@aol.com

25 June, Cambridge Inter-Faith Group. Presentation and discussion on “Chanting – a devotional practice” 8pm, Wesley Church, Cambridge. Contact Ralph Nimmann Tel: 01223 510442 email: interfaith@rainbownet.fsnet.co.uk

3 July, Nelson. Building Bridges – Pendle Interfaith Group. “Spiritual Practices in our religious traditions”. Contact Tel: 01282 719 303 E-mail: BuildABridgeNow@aol.com.

6 July, Birmingham Council of Faiths. An inter faith peace march setting off from the Greek Orthodox Cathedral on Summer Hill at 8.45am, passing through various places of worship. Finishing at the Birmingham Buddhist Centre about 5.15pm. Contact Sr Anne Buckeridge Tel: 0121 554 3156

6 July, South London Inter Faith Group. Inter faith walk around Croydon, starting at the Croydon Buddhist Centre on the High Street at 9.30am, visiting various places of worship and ending at St Michael and All Angels Anglican Church. Contact: John and Tina Beckett Tel: 020 8654 2095

16 July, Cardiff Interfaith Association. “To see ourselves as others see us”— Dr Christine Trevett, Head of Religious Studies at the University of Cardiff at the United Reformed Church, Windsor Place, Cardiff. Contact Alan Schwartz 029 2075 0990 email: schwartz@otago.co.uk

5 August, London Inter Faith Centre. “Understanding Islam”, the first of a series of meetings on the theme “Understanding Religion in a Secular World“. 6.30pm at the London Inter Faith Centre, 125 Salusbury Road, London NW6 near Queen’s Park tube station. Contact Gillian Jones Tel: 020 7604 3053

12 September, Sheffield Interfaith. Meeting on “Being Healed” at 7.30pm at the Christian Science Reading Room, Townhead Street, Sheffield. Contact Sheila Hayes Tel: 0114 266 0655

28 September, Bath Inter Faith Group in association with United Religions Initiative. Day conference on “Sacred Spaces” with speakers including Dr Zaki Badawi and Martin Palmer. Cost: £12/£6. At the Guildhall in Bath. Contact Jane Aldred tel: 01225 475291 email: jane.aldred@iplbath.com

13-20 October Week of Prayer for World Peace. Information and leaflets are available from Rev Sidney Hinkes tel: 01666 825249

16 October, Norwich. Collective Sound, concert of Jewish and Christian Sacred Music at Norwich Cathedral in celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Council of Christians and Jews. Tickets from £6 to £18. Contact CCJ Tel 020 7820 0090 Email: ccjrelations@ccj.org.uk

20 October, Neasden, London. An inter faith gathering to mark the end of the Week of Prayer for World Peace. 3pm at the Swaminarayan Mandir, Neasden, 105-19 Brentfield Road, Neasden, NW10. Contact Rev Sidney Hinkes tel: 01666 825249

The Inter Faith Network for the UK

The Inter Faith Network was founded in 1987. It works with its member bodies to promote good relations between the faith communities in the UK, to combat inter religious prejudice and intolerance and to help make the UK a country marked by mutual understanding and respect between religions where all can practise their faith with integrity. The Network:

- Provides information on faith communities and on inter faith affairs
- Advises on multi faith projects and inter faith issues
- Publishes materials to aid work in the religious and inter faith sectors
- Fosters inter faith co-operation on social issues
- Holds regular meetings where social and religious questions of concern to the different faith communities can be examined together
- Links over 90 member organisations including: representative bodies from the different faith communities; inter faith organisations; local inter faith groups; educational and academic bodies

Diary dates:**Courses, exhibitions, conferences and seminars**

18-20 June, Birmingham. 'Faith and Liberation: Faiths and Justice'. Conference featuring speakers from Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish and Sikh faiths. Co-chaired by Dr Elizabeth Harris and Revd Dr Israel Selvanayagam. Part of the United College of Ascension Encounter and Exchange Programme. Cost £65/£30 Tel: 0121 415 6810

28 June to 6 August, Council of Christian and Jews. Calling anyone between the ages of 18 – 30 who is in sympathy with the aims of the CCJ (not restricted to Jews and Christians) for a trip to the Czech Republic to help restore a Jewish cemetery. Please contact Gemma Abbs (max 15 people) Tel: 020 7820 0090 or E-mail: gemma@ccj.org.uk

13 July, Leeds. Faith Community Policy Forum – "Citizenship, Democracy and Political Engagement" Speakers include John Battle MP and Selina Ullah of the Uniting Britain Trust. Chaired by David Haslam and Richard Stone. 10am-4pm at Leeds University Student Union. Cost £10/£5. To register please contact the Christian Socialist Movement Tel: 020 7233 3736, email: graham@christiansocialist.org.uk

14-21 July Leicester. "Beyond Labels". Conference for 250 young people from the UK and Europe. Organised by Minorities of Europe. Contact Deepak Naik Tel: 07932 065453 email: deepak@gnaik.freemove.co.uk

15 July, York. "Family Visiting – New Directions" conference publicising and encouraging the involvement of faith communities in family visiting schemes. Keynote speaker, Beverley Hughes MP. Organised by Women's Estate Policy Unit, HM Prison Service and Churches' Criminal Justice Forum. From 10.30am to 4pm at HM Prison, Askham Grange near York. Cost £10 Tel: 020 7901 4878

27 July – 3 August, Oxford. International Conference on "An Inter Faith Perspective on Globalisation" at Plater College, Oxford. Convenor, Dr Kamran Mofid. Contact Susan Leask Tel: 01865 740503 email: s.leask@plater.ac.uk

28 July – 2 August 2002, Budapest, Hungary. 31st World Congress of the International Association for Religious Freedom. "Religious Freedom: Europe's Story for Today's World". Special guest speaker Prof Abdelfattah Amor, the UN Special Rapporteur on Religious Intolerance. Young adult programme from 26-28 July. Contact Tel: 01865 202744 email: hq@iarf.net web: www.conferences.hu/iarf2002

9 – 20 September, International Interfaith Centre. A Forum followed by a Dialogue Tour on "Religion, Community and Conflict" organised in co-operation with Hope Flowers School, Betlehem and Interfaith Encounter Association, Jerusalem. Contact Tel: 01865 202 745.

26 June to 14 July London. Diaspora Music Village

The 18th Music Village festival presents musicians from around the World whose music is a blend of different cultures due to the movement of people. Free festival weekends:

29 and 30 June Kew Gardens

6 and 7 July Regents Park

13 and 14 July Greenwich Park

For a full list of events contact: Tel:020 7456 0404 or

9-11 September 2002, London. British Association for the Study of Religions Annual Conference on the theme of "Religion and the State". Department of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Surrey, Roehampton, London SW15 5SL. Contact: Dr Marion Bowman, Religious Studies Department, The Open University, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes MK7 6AA. E-mail: M.I.Bowman@open.ac.uk

Inter Faith Update is the newsletter of the Inter Faith Network for the UK. It keeps a wide range of organisations and individuals interested in developing good inter faith relations in the UK in touch with UK events and projects with a significant inter faith component.

Please send any contribution of articles and diary dates for consideration for inclusion in the next issue **by 20 September 2002** to:

Bhupinder Singh,
Information Officer,
The Inter Faith Network
5/7 Tavistock Place,
London
WC1H 9SN

Tel: 020 7388 0008

Fax: 020 7388 7124

Email: ifnet@interfaith.org.uk

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INTER FAITH

UPDATE

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Community cohesion: a new agenda for inter faith relations?

Inside this issue

Network News	2	Last summer's disturbances in some of northern England's towns and cities have underlined the importance of work to increase connections between communities, including the different faiths. This is a key part of what has come to be known as the "community cohesion" agenda. The Network's 2002 National Meeting which took place on 15 July in London focused on community cohesion and discussed whether this concept suggested a new agenda for inter faith relations. The meeting provided a valuable opportunity to explore the contribution which faith communities and inter faith organisations at a national and local level can make to the community
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cohesion agenda, as well as to explore some of the pitfalls to be avoided.

Alan Smith, Team Leader at the Community Cohesion Unit of the Home Office set out the Government's current agenda on community cohesion, which he stressed was a developing policy area. He said that community cohesion is about understanding and responding to the requirements of community and that the Government has made the community cohesion agenda a high priority.

Turning to what faith communities can do to contribute to this agenda he said that there are now many opportunities

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Bhupinder Singh
Inter Faith Network
5-7 Tavistock Place
London WC1H 9SN

Remembering 11 September

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Around the country, events and services were held to remember the nearly 3,000 people who died one year ago, on 11 September, in the attacks on the Twin Towers of the World Trade Centre in New York and other sites in the USA.

Across the UK a minute's silence was held at 1.46 (the time that American Airlines Flight 111 crashed into the North Tower).

A memorial service was held at St Paul's in the presence of HRH The Prince of Wales, who was accompanied by Prince Harry. The Prime Minister and other senior members of the Government and faith leaders were also present together with the US Ambassador William S Farish.

The service was led by Canon Stephen

Oliver and the address was given by Rt Revd Richard Chartres, Bishop of London.

Scottish faith leaders gathered on 12 September at Scottish Churches House in Dunblane to commit themselves to work together, in prayer and common action, for peace. They also committed themselves to continuing to meet to explore ways of building increased trust between the faith communities of Scotland as a contribution to global society which reflected the values inscribed on the Mace of the Scottish Parliament: wisdom, justice, compassion and integrity.

Just a few of the other commemorative events held around the UK were:

Belfast. Christian, Jewish and Muslim

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(Community cohesion...continued from page 1)

for faith communities to get involved especially at the local level through Local Strategic Partnerships.

Councillor Laura Willoughby of the Equalities Executive of the Local Government Association offered an overview of the LGA's work, and that of local authorities, in taking forward the approach set out in *Faith and Community* and described the aims and content of the LGA's guidance on community cohesion, of which a consultative draft was published in May.

In response Indarjit Singh, of the Network of Sikh Organisations and the Inner Cities Religious Council, stressed that the Government, local government and bodies like the Commission for Racial Equality, should be wary of over ambitious, all encompassing schemes and that he hoped they would increase their support for the many, often grass-roots, faith-based and other initiatives with a proven record in combating prejudice and working for greater communal harmony.

Charu Ainscough, of the Gujarat Hindu Centre, Preston and Equal Opportunities Officer (Race) at Lancashire County Council examined the impact of the community cohesion agenda on faith communities and the response that needs to be made at a local level. She gave examples of grass roots projects which offered differing strategies to contribute to community cohesion, including the developing role of women.

Rev Philip Sumner, Chair, Oldham Inter Faith Forum and Basit Shah, Vice-Chair Oldham Inter Faith Forum discussed the new Forum that has been set up in the wake of the disturbances in Oldham last summer.

Alan Schwartz, Inter Faith Council for Wales/ Cyngor Cyd-Ffydd Cymru talked about the Council which has come into being following an initiative by the First Minister of the Welsh National Assembly in the aftermath of the events of 11 September last year.

In the final session Rev Baroness Kathleen Richardson of Calow, Moderator of the Churches' Commission on Inter Faith Relations, offered her closing reflections on the day's discussions.

Delegates also took part in one of four workshops

with the following themes:

- Government and faith communities - partners working towards greater community cohesion
- Local inter faith councils and groups and community cohesion

- Inter faith education and community cohesion
- Young people and the inter faith dimension of community cohesion

A full report of the meeting is available from the Network office priced £3.00 plus p&p.

NETWORK NEWS

New member bodies

The Network AGM for 2002 was held on 15 July following the National Meeting. At the meeting the newly formed Inter Faith Council for Wales was accepted into membership of the Network, together with six local inter faith initiatives: Blackburn with Darwen Inter Faith Council; Leeds Faith Community Liaison Forum; Manchester Inter Faith Forum; Merseyside Council of Faiths; Interfaith MK (Milton Keynes) and Southampton Council of Faiths. The transfer of Network membership from the University of Derby's Religious Resource and Research Centre to the University's Multi Faith Centre (which has taken over responsibility for the publication of *Religions in the UK*) was also agreed. The Network now has 97 member bodies.

Executive Committee changes

At the 2002 AGM Hon Barnabas Leith of the Baha'i community was elected to serve as a Vice-Chair, in succession to Mr Jehangir Sarosh, who remains a member of the Committee. The following were elected to serve as new members of the Committee for 2002-03: Dr Elizabeth Harris; Mr Ramesh Kallidai; Mr Shabbir Lakha; Mr Abdur Rauf Mustafai; and Ms Priti Shah. Bimal Krishna das (co-opted to the Committee in September 2001) and Mr Bipin Mehta (elected in June 1998) were warmly thanked for their service to the Committee as they stood down from membership of the Committee.

Remembering 11 September (continued from page 1)

participants discussed international issues in the wake of 11 September 2001 during an evening discussion, "Shalom/Inshallah", organised by Rev Ken Newell at the Fitzroy Presbyterian Church.

Bolton. A service was held in Victoria Square in the town centre, conducted by the Anglican Bishop of Bolton, Rt Rev David Gillett, and the Chair of the Bolton and Rochdale Methodist Circuit, Rev Keith Garner, with contributions from the Hindu and Muslim communities.

Cardiff. The City and County Councils held a memorial service on 11 September at the Church in Wales Parish Church at Cardiff, St John.

Chelmsford. An Act of Remembrance and Vigil for Peace took place in the town centre on 11 September. The Mayor and other civic officers were joined by leaders from seven faith communities.

Dudley. A multi faith act of remembrance took place at the Merry Hill Shopping Centre.

Edinburgh. On 15 September Edinburgh Inter-Faith Association held a conference, "Re-envisioning interfaith post 11 September 2001".

Ipswich. In Ipswich, on 11 September, an evening of personal reflection with readings, music and dance with contributions from people of all ages and many faiths, "On the Wings of Peace", took place at the Corn Exchange. It was organised by Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource.

Leeds. The Faith Communities Liaison Forum worked with Radio Leeds on an hour-long special programme, broadcast on 8 September, with reflections on how the events of 11 September and subsequent months had affected their lives. There were contributions from children, men and women from six faith communities, including scholars and leaders. The edited programme went out to an audience across West Yorkshire

Liverpool. A commemorative event, organised by the City of Liverpool and Habitat for Humanity, took place at Pier Head on 11 September. It was attended by the Lord Mayor, representatives of the emergency services and young people from all the faiths in Liverpool.

London

An inter faith meeting took place at St Andrew's Church in Streatham on 11 September. Christian, Jewish and Muslims representatives worked together to give a message of peace and co-operation between all communities.

At London Central Mosque on 11 September, the

Islamic Society of Britain and Young Muslims UK hosted a commemoration event to remember those who had died in the USA on 11 September and others who have died since.

Members of the Muslim Police Association and the Jewish Police Association along with Sikh, Christian, Greek and Black Police Associations, laid a wreath with word "Peace" on it outside the US Embassy in London to remember the victims of the World Trade Centre Attacks.

On 11 September, an all day memorial vigil took place at the London Inter Faith Centre. There were brief readings from different traditions and scriptures and a lighted candle shone to the memory of those who had lost their lives. Silent thought and prayer were offered for a better world, and for all those whose decisions and actions may help that world to come.

A multi faith peace service took place at West London Synagogue on 11 September.

On 9,10 and 11 September at the Royal Opera House, with an evening of live music and poetry, the Oxford Research Group, launched "Peace Direct" to explore how people are transforming terror into hope and power.

Brent Inter Faith organised a multi faith workshop on Religion and Intolerance at the London Inter Faith Centre on 13 October. People of all religious traditions and none were invited to examine the roots of religious violence and to suggest possible inter faith solutions to the problems of religious intolerance and violence.

Nottingham. Special prayers for peace were said at "A Gathering of People of Faith Uniting in Peace and Reconciliation" at St Barnabas' Catholic Cathedral in Nottingham on 11 September.

Sheffield. An ecumenical service took place at Sheffield Cathedral followed by an inter faith civic "time of remembrance" at the Peace Gardens.



NATIONAL UPDATE

Anxiety over Iraq

Concern over the possibility of military action against Iraq has led some faith community organisations to urge caution on the Government. On 10 October the Church of England House of Bishops said that conclusive evidence was lacking to justify military action at that time and that force must only be considered as a last resort and with the UN's endorsement.

The Muslim Council of Britain issued a press release on 15 October recording its opposition to war against Iraq while noting that the aggressive regime of Saddam Hussain is a tragedy for the Iraqi people.

At a local level, faith leaders in Leicester issued a statement following a meeting held at the invitation of Rt Rev Tim Stevens, Anglican Bishop of Leicester, expressing concern about possible military action against Iraq and in particular the possible participation of British forces in this.

Golden Jubilee Young People's Faith Forum

Following the Golden Jubilee Young People's Faith Forum on 10 June (covered in *Inter Faith Update 19*), discussions are in progress between the Golden Jubilee Office, Department for Education and Skills, Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, Home Office, Inter Faith Network, National Association of SACRE's and respect to discuss ways of building on this event such as encouraging the holding of other youth forums around the UK.

The full and summary reports on the Youth Forum will be available next month. For further information or to order a copy of the report contact Warwick Hawkins on Tel 020 7 020 7411 5581 or email: Warwick.Hawkins@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Royal visits to faith communities

The following Royal visits have taken place as

part of the Golden Jubilee celebrations: The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh visited the Manchester Jewish Museum on 24 July; and the Scunthorpe Islamic Centre and Mosque on 31 July. The Queen visited the Guru Nanak Gurdwara in Leicester on 1 August. Other members of the Royal family also visited places of worship of the Baha'i, Buddhist, Jain and Zoroastrian faiths on behalf of The Queen. The Princess Royal visited the London Buddhist Vihara on 10 July; the Duke of York attended a Baha'i reception in Central London on 11 July; the Earl and Countess of Wessex attended a Zoroastrian thanksgiving service in North London on 26 June and visited the Jain Temple in Leicester on 3 September.

Religious discrimination and a single equality body

Towards Equality and Diversity, published last autumn by the Government, set out proposals for implementing the European Directive on discrimination in employment, including discrimination on grounds of religion or belief. The Government has been considering the responses which it has received to this document and it is expected that before the end of the year it will be publishing draft regulations to give effect to the Directive in UK legislation and proposals on the provision of guidance to those who will be affected by it.

As reported in *Inter Faith Update 19*, Barbara Roche MP, the Minister responsible for co-ordinating equalities issues across Government, announced in May the Government's intention to examine the feasibility of a single equality body which would span the new fields of religion or belief, sexual orientation and age as well as race, gender and disability. A number of consultations, meetings and seminars have been held to discuss this idea and the Government is expected to bring forward its conclusions on this by the turn of the year.

Whatever view the Government reaches, it will be important for there to be adequate arrangements in place, if necessary on an interim basis pending the creation of a single equality body, to provide advice, guidance and support to individuals, employers and interested organisations on the operation of the new legislative framework as this relates to religion or belief, sexual orientation and in due course age, since there are currently no institutional arrangements dealing with these, unlike race and disability. Legislation to give effect

to the Directives's provisions on religion and belief and sexual orientation has to be in place before the end of 2003 and for age before the end of 2004.

LGA guidance on community cohesion

Work has been in progress on revising the draft guidance on community cohesion being prepared by the Local Government Association (see lead report on Network's National Meeting) in the light of the comments received by it on the draft made available in May and further conversations with interested organisations. The final revised guidance is due to be launched on 11 December.

The blasphemy laws and incitement to religious hatred

Inter Faith Update 19 reported on the setting up of a House of Lords Select Committee to consider and report on the law relating to religious offences. The Select Committee will look at whether existing religious offences (notably blasphemy) should be amended or abolished and whether a new offence of incitement to religious hatred should be created.

The Committee has received a good deal of written evidence and is now hearing oral evidence from a number of organisations and individuals. Hearings are likely to continue up until the end of the this year with a report being published in the early months of next year.

2001 Census results

The Registrar General for England and Wales announced on 30 September the first set of results from the 2001 Census which show that the population of the United Kingdom on 29 April 2001 was 58,789,194. A breakdown of the population in each local authority is also available on the Census web site at: www.statistics.gov.uk/census.

The next set of Census results is scheduled for release on 13 February 2003. This is due to include more detailed statistics, including by religion, both overall and by local authority area.

Government initiatives to help the voluntary and community sector

A pilot web site has been launched giving information about grants for voluntary and community sector organisations available from various Government Departments including the Home Office, Department for Education and Skills, and the Department of Health. The site is the first stage of a larger project to develop an online source of information relating to grants that are available from Government to the Sector. The web site can be accessed at: www.volcomgrants.gov.uk

The Treasury published on 10 September a report on the cross cutting review of the role of the voluntary and community sector in service delivery. Described as a blueprint to transform the way Government and the voluntary and community sectors work together, it is backed by £93 million of Government funding. This funding is in addition to the £125 million Futurebuilders Investment Fund which has been set up to help the sector in its public service work. The report can be accessed on the internet at: www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/mediastore/otherfiles/cross_cut_vol02.pdf or be obtained by calling the Public Inquiry Unit at the Treasury Tel: 020 7270 4558.

Review of charity law

Wide ranging changes in the law and regulation of charities have been proposed in a consultation document published by the Government towards the end of September and available at www.strategy.gov.uk/2002/charity/report/index.htm. The proposals will be of interest to faith community and inter faith organisations. The deadline for responses to the consultation is 31 December and these need to be sent to the Strategy Unit, Home Office (Charities Project), Admiralty Arch, The Mall, London SW1A 2WH or emailed to piuvolsect@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk

The document proposes that in the future there should be a clearer focus on charities as providing a public benefit. Under its proposals, a charity would be redefined as an organisation which has one or more of the following ten purposes: the

prevention and relief of poverty; social and community advancement; the advancement of education, religion, health, amateur sport, or environmental protection and improvement; the promotion of human rights, conflict resolution and reconciliation; and “other purposes beneficial to the community”. The review proposes that for the purposes of defining “religion” the current interpretation should be widened to cover not only “monotheistic faiths like Christianity and Islam” (which case law has tended to interpret “religion” to mean) but also what the review describes as “faiths that are multi-deity (such as Hinduism) or non-deity (such as some types of Buddhism)”.

The review argues that charities should have greater freedom to trade without having to establish separate trading subsidiaries and also that they should have greater freedom to campaign for social change. It wants to see charities providing the public with better information about their work and also developing a self regulatory initiative to promote good practice in fundraising.

The document proposes a number of changes to give charities greater flexibility, together with the introduction of new forms of incorporation which are more suited to charities. The consultation document also proposes changes in registration requirements, removing the exemption which many Christian bodies at present have from needing to register as charities (so called “exempt charities” which receive all the benefits of charitable status) and moving to a situation where the Charity Commission undertakes ongoing checks to ensure that charities are operating to the public benefit. While it is proposed to remove the automatic presumption that religious organisations provide a public benefit, the document says that it is not the aim to force religious organisations “to undertake community activities such as social services for older people or the sick, although many of course already do.” It recognises that “religious practice tends generally to contribute to the social and moral welfare of adherents”, and it is not proposed to change the principle that “celebration of a religious rite which is open to the public should be regarded as providing public benefit”.

Coroners and death certification

There are two public enquiries running concurrently which could have a bearing on the arrangements for the certification of deaths and for post-mortems.

The Review of Coroner Services was set up in the summer of 2001 to review and report on the death certification and investigation processes in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It is expected to report in March 2003 and released a consultation document in August on which it has invited views by 22 November. The enquiry is proposing changes to the coroners service. It recognises the concerns of particular faith communities over the treatment of bodies and the time scale for burial or cremation. The consultation document can be found at the Review’s website www.coronersreview.org.uk or a copy can be obtained from its office (Tel: 020 7664 8895).

The inquiry set up to review issues arising from the case of Dr Harold Shipman, convicted of murdering a number of his patients, is due to publish in late October its discussion paper on an alternative system of death certification with requests for comment by 25 November. It will be available on its website www.theshipmaninquiry.org.uk or a copy can be obtained from the inquiry’s office (Tel: 0161 237 2435/6).

Launch of the Faith-Based Regeneration Network

The Faith-Based Regeneration Network was launched at the Faith in Regeneration conference which took place at the Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre in North Kensington, London on 30 September. The conference began with readings from eight different faith traditions followed by a keynote address by David Rayner, Secretary of the Inner Cities Religious Council and Head of the Community Participation Branch in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. Participants attended workshop sessions during the day dealing with topics such as Building Cohesive Communities and Capacity Building. The FBRN is run by a steering group made up of a number of professionals from different faith communities who are actively involved with regeneration projects around the country.

Directory of faiths in Camden

Camden Council in London, one of the 19 local authorities which have appointed an officer with special responsibility for faith issues, has published *Neighbours: A Directory of Faith Communities in Camden*. It lists all the places of worship and faith

Inter faith profile

Dr Natubhai Shah of the Jain Community has been a Network Executive Committee member since the Network was set up in 1987. He has also written several books about Jainism and is actively involved with a variety of inter faith initiatives.

How did you first get involved with inter faith dialogue?



In about 1978, while I was the Founder President of Jain Samaj Europe in Leicester, I was asked to deliver a lecture about Jainism to a World Congress of Faiths event, after which I became involved with a number of inter faith organisations. When Leicester Council of Faiths was established in 1982 I was a founder member. A few years later I met Brian Pearce who discussed with me the idea of setting up what became the Inter Faith Network for the UK which was then being planned. When it was established in 1987 Jain Samaj Europe was one of its first member bodies and I became an Executive Committee member, a position I have held since then. During 1999-2000 I also served as a Vice-Chair of the Network.

The Jain faith is relatively less well known in the UK than those with larger communities. Does this bring particular challenges for adherents?



Although Jains have a distinctive philosophy, way of life, rituals and festivals, we have had a problem of identity. In the past, when Jainism was less well known, to avoid complications the majority of Jains often used to refer to their faith as Hindu (Jain), particularly in health, education and other institutional situations. So there has been a need to educate our own community to state their faith as Jain and at the same time to emphasise that we believe in non-violence and reverence for all life. As time has passed, and especially after the establishment of the Jain Centre and Temple in Leicester, more people have become aware of Jainism. However, Jains still do face challenges in obtaining suitable foods to meet their particular dietary requirements and many also face challenges in observing the sacred days when they may be required to fast.

Is there a “Jain perspective” on relations between different faiths?

The Jain belief in *anekantavada* or relative pluralism has made us tolerant towards other faiths and our belief in non-violence, forgiveness



and other ethical values have won respect from others. Our motto “live and help to live” has been very helpful in building good relations between people of other faiths. Jains respect the faiths of others and believe in equality of all souls and equal opportunities for all to practice their own faith.

What do you think have been the most important developments in inter faith relations over the last two decades?

The inter faith movement has helped to increase awareness and knowledge about the different faiths and also to increase understanding between them. The joint approach by different faiths to government and other institutions has helped to put faiths on the map and all have benefited. In Leicester, because of inter faith co-operation, the Jain community has been able to develop extremely good relations with Leicester City Council, Leicestershire County Council and with the local media.

What are your hopes for inter faith relations in the UK in the coming years?

I would like to see all faiths have adequate places of worship. It may be that faith communities which have larger premises could share their use with other faith communities.

I hope that we can continue to work together effectively to promote the common themes of the different faiths such as non-violence, forgiveness, pluralism, compassion and highlight them to the media, government and also to the general public, thus raising the profile of faith communities in the public eye.

Network Website:
www.interfaith.org.uk

community centres in the borough and includes information about the communities in Camden. The aim of the Directory is to help to build bridges between the Council and the faith communities in the area. It was launched at an inter faith event hosted by the Leader of Camden Council at Camden Town Hall on 10 October. Producing such a directory or carrying out a “mapping” exercise is one of the recommendations of the *Faith and Community* guidelines published by the Local Government Association earlier this year in association with the Network. Further information can be obtained from Nina Rahel at nina.rahel@camden.gov.uk.

Building on Faith

The Church Urban Fund launched a new publication, *Building on Faith*, at a conference in London on 25 September. The morning session of the conference was chaired by Hon Barnabas Leith of the Baha’i community. Participants heard from John Battle, MP for Leeds West and Doreen Finneron, co-editor of *Building on Faith*. The publication examines the role that faith community buildings can play in helping to build a sense of community regeneration. The report and accompanying video are available from the Church Urban Fund, 1 Millbank, London SW1P 3JZ Tel: 020 7898-1647.

The West and Islam in the media

The Muslim Council of Britain hosted a symposium on 20 June at the Islamic Cultural Centre in London on “The West and Islam in the Media” aimed at furthering cultural ties between Britain and the Islamic World. Speakers included Mr Mike O’Brien MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Dr Khalid Al-Ankary, Minister of Higher Education, Saudi Arabia and Dr Ahmed Al-Dubayan, Director General of the Islamic Cultural Centre.

Religious perspectives on organ donation

A national project, based in Bradford and funded by UK Transplant, has been set up to produce educational material about organ donation and the perspectives on this of the UK’s major religions. The aim is to educate health care professionals and the general public about religious opinions on this important issue. For more information contact Rachel Howitt on tel: 01274 365952 or email: rachel.howitt@bradfordhospitals.nhs.uk

Faiths for peace

A multi faith reception hosted by the Muslim Council of Britain was held at the Commonwealth Institute in London on 25 June to urge peace in the Indian subcontinent. Lord Filkin, Minister at the Home Office, attended the event alongside leading figures from the Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities. Speakers at the event included Iqbal Sacranie, Om Parkash Sharma and Indarjit Singh.

Friends in Faith

The Oxford Diocesan Committee for Inter Faith Concerns has published a resource book, *Friends in Faith*, featuring examples of inter faith good practice in the Thames Valley. Edited by Hugh Boulter of the Reading Inter Faith group, it contains articles written by people of different faiths, many of whom are actively involved with local inter faith groups in the South East. It is available priced £5.00 from: The Board of Social Responsibility, Diocesan Church House, North Hinksey, Oxford OX2 0NB.

REGIONAL UPDATE

Local Roundup

Bradford Concord Interfaith Society held their annual multi faith Walk for Friendship on 15 June. It started from the Bradford Interfaith Education Centre where the Group were sent off by the Lord Mayor of Bradford. They visited the Ahl-e-Hadith Mosque, the Columba Community House (where there were also presentations about the Baha’i and Sikh faiths), the Sai Baba Centre and ended at the New Testament Church of God.

The Glasgow Forum of Faiths was launched at Glasgow City Chambers on 23 September. Representatives from the faith communities of Glasgow signed a declaration promising to work together for justice and mutual understanding. The Forum is supported by Glasgow City Council which has also pledged to fund inter faith initiatives among the faith communities. The Forum will meet once or twice a year with City Councillors to discuss issues of common concern.

Interfaith MK (Milton Keynes) organised an event at the Milton Keynes Quaker Centre on 15 October entitled Faiths Unite for Peace 2002. It was held during the Week of Prayer for World Peace and participants joined together to read a prayer for peace. Representatives of different faith communities then made short presentations from their faith traditions.



Luton. On 9 June Dr Mohammed Elsmary, President of the Canadian Islamic Congress spoke about spirituality from an Islamic perspective at an event held at Luton Town Hall. On 3 July Professor P D Premasini, Head of the Department of Buddhist Studies at the University of Perademiya, Sri Lanka addressed the topic “Buddhism and Violence – Training Emotions” at the Friends House, Luton. Luton Council of Faiths helped to arrange these two events.

The Richmond Interfaith Group in association with Hounslow Friends of Faith organised an event on 25 July exploring beliefs about evil and forgiveness at the Richmond and Putney Unitarian Church. Members of both groups heard from Moulana Shahid Raza of the Muslim College, Rabbi David Rose of the Richmond Synagogue and Dr Elizabeth Harris, the Secretary for Inter Faith of the Methodist Church.

Wales. The Afon Taf High School in Merthyr Tydfil, Wales has established a “House of Religions”, a multi-sensory centre for learning about aspects of six major world religions. It consists of a Buddhist garden and Jewish kitchen and representations of a Christian church; Muslim mosque; Hindu mandir; and Sikh gurdwara. The project has been supported by a number of local businesses and organisations and faith communities were consulted on the design of the centre. The Welsh Secondary School Association has recognised the educational value of the House by presenting the Religious Studies Department with a special award.

South East Regional Link Meeting

The South East Regional Link Meeting was held on Wednesday 19 June 2002 in London. After a brief update on the work of the Network representatives of each initiative present described the recent work of their groups:

North Kent Council for Interfaith Relations

The initiative grew out of an Inner Cities Religious Council (ICRC) conference which took place in the area some years ago. The members have taken an activist position within the wider community, particularly relating to the decision making processes involved in the redevelopment of North Kent. They recently met with the concept architect working on the plan to build 30,000 homes in Kent Thameside and felt that it was very positive that developers were beginning to seek an inter faith perspective on their work. One of their major

achievements recently is their “Working Party on Health” which developed a set of guidelines on spiritual care in hospitals. They also have a very active Women’s Multi Faith Forum.

Medway Inter Faith Action

The group is involved along with the local Ethnic Forum and Racial Equality Council in providing input to the authorities working on regeneration strategies that are aiming to rebuild local industry and develop the Medway towns. Recently Meridian Television published the “Cultural Diversity Guide” which is a valuable resource to raise inter faith awareness.

Oxford Round Table of Religions

The group is re-forming after having been largely inactive for a number of years. It now consists of 15 -20 people who meet in order to build good relations and trust. Members are keen to receive guidance/ideas from other local inter faith groups. The Round Table hopes to get a grant from Oxford Council and to take on a more active role in the community in 2003. It held a joint meeting with the International Interfaith Centre last year.

International Interfaith Centre (IIC), Oxford

On a local level, the Centre recently responded to tension between Jewish and Muslim communities in Oxford by organising an event at which an Orthodox Jew and a Palestinian Muslim from the Middle East spoke. The IIC organise regular conferences and seminars and also produce their own newsletter. Ongoing IIC projects include: the implementation of an “e-learning” course about inter faith issues (in association with the International Association for Religious Freedom); the launch of the Oxford Centre for Inter Faith Studies in Jan/Feb 2003; a “youth conflict transformation programme” with the Corrymeela community in Northern Ireland; a conference on religion, community and conflict; and an inter faith video series.

Brighton and Hove Inter Faith Contact Group

The Group has meetings four times a year and it also organises two fixed public meetings along a theme (such as United Nation Sunday which attracts between 150 to 300 people). It organises visits to places of worship; publishes internal and public directories (with the public directory available on their website); publishes a newsletter three times a year; and has produced a “Many Faiths, One People” statement signed by representatives of different faith communities in the area.

Surrey Inter Faith Friendship Group

This is largely an informal group, which organises



events with a keynote speaker, such as on United Nations day or during One World Week, to which local dignitaries are invited.

Inter Faith MK (Milton Keynes)

The Group was founded in 1996 and currently has around 80 members and friends. Most faith groups are represented. They have monthly meetings and have an active role in civic ceremonies, and also work with the local authority. Other activities include: work on the local radio programme "Faith in Milton Keynes"; contributing to a book entitled "The Development of Ecumenism in Milton Keynes"; the annual inter faith service in the local Quaker Centre; a monthly newsletter; a website (www.mkweb.co.uk/ religion); and have a monthly column in a local newspaper along the lines of *Thought for the Day* on Radio 4. As a new city, Milton Keynes offers many opportunities for faith communities to get involved in its development. For example, planners are looking to develop the city centre to provide facilities for the not for profit sector and the idea of an inter faith centre has been proposed by members of the Group.

News from groups unable to send a representative

Wycombe Sharing of Faiths reported that since the events of 11 September there had been increased interest in inter faith activities and members have had various opportunities to involve themselves in local projects. The group held an evening of prayer and has been involved with the organising of an evening with the Mayor to remember victims of violence. Members of Sharing of Faiths have also been attending the District Council's Community Relations Forum.

INTERNATIONAL UPDATE

IARF World Congress

The 31st World Congress of the International Association for Religious Freedom took place in Budapest from 28 July to 2 August. Its theme was "Religious Freedom: Europe's Story for Today's World". There were lectures on teaching tolerance, on a voluntary code of conduct for faith traditions which IARF is debating, using information technology for religious freedom, inter faith encounter and designing programmes that work. Each had associated workshops designed to encourage practical programmes in local communities. The inter faith lecture was given by Dr Harriet Crabtree of the Inter Faith Network and the inter faith section of the conference was organised for IARF by Sandy and Jael Bharat of the International Interfaith Centre in Oxford. For further information see <http://www.iarf-religiousfreedom.net/congress.html>.

DIARY DATES

Local inter faith events

Space only allows one event per organisation to be listed. For details of other events contact the relevant local groups. Events are also listed in the *One Family Newsletter* available from the *World Congress of Faiths*, 2 Market Street, Oxford OX1 3EF.

27 October, Kensington, London 2.30-4.30pm
Celebrating Differences organised by Westminster Interfaith at The Faulkner Hall, 23 Kensington Square. Contact Alfred Agius on Tel: 020 7361 4740 or email AAgius@aol.com.

27 October, Guildford, Surrey 3pm The Guildford and Godalming United Nations Association annual inter faith commemoration of United Nations Day at St Nicolas Church Annexe, Millmead, Guildford. Contact Dr Bibhas Neogi Tel: 01483 415773.

29 October, London, Hampstead Interfaith Group, 8pm Shusha Guppy, writer, will give a presentation on *Reconciliation: a Muslim Perspective* at 63B Belsize Park Gardens, NW3.

29 October, Ipswich, Suffolk Inter Faith Resource, 7pm. AGM, followed by a talk by Dr Atul Shah, Editor of *Jain Spirit*, on *respect*, the TimeBank/Prince's Trust initiative, that encourages young people to give time to those of different faiths. All welcome. Contact 01473 233447 or email office@sifre.org.uk.

31 October, Southall, Faith Awareness, 7-8pm
From Darkness to Light, talk by Harjinder Singh Khalsa from the Singh Sabha Gurdwara in Hounslow at 6 Osterley Park Road, Southall, with tea and coffee from 6pm. Contact Joy Barrow on 01895 621789 or email JoyBarrow@aol.com.

3 November, Southall, 2-4pm Every first Sunday of each month until June 2003, an inter faith meeting with introduction from an invited speaker will be held at De Nobili House, 6 Osterley Park Road, Southall. Contact Michael Barnes on 020 8571 1833 or m.barnes@heythrop.ac.uk.

4 November, Leith, Edinburgh Interfaith Association, 7.30pm. Diwali Celebrations at the Hindu Mandir and Cultural Centre, St Andrew's Place, Leith. Contact Rev Andrew Hill (Secretary) Tel 0131 667 4360 or andrew@unitarian.ednet.co.uk.

10 November, Brixton, South London Inter Faith Group 5-6.30pm. A time for reflection and prayer for world peace. Participants are encouraged to bring a short reading or prayer to be read out, and/or a picture to add to a collage. At St Matthew's Church, Brixton. Contact Sarah Thorley Tel: 020 8674 5447.

12 November, Liverpool, Merseyside Council of Faiths and Merseyside Inter Faith Group. Rabbi Lionel Cofnas will be presenting an evening on the Jewish faith at the Childwall Synagogue, Dunbabin Road. Contact Canon Michael Wolfe Tel 0151 7331541 or Bishop Rupert Hoare Tel 0151 702 7220.

21 November, Bradford Concord Interfaith Society, 7pm. Visit to the Guru Gobind Singh Gurdwara, which has recently been extended and renovated. For further details contact Tel 01274 731674.

9 December, Gloucester, Gloucestershire Inter Faith Action, 7.30pm Winter Festivities at Apna Ghar, 35 Bishopstone Road, Gloucester. Refreshments will be shared, please bring along a vegetarian dish. Contact GIFA Tel 01452 530337.

10 December, Cambridge Inter Faith Group, 8-9.45pm. Light in the World's Religions, a seasonal celebration. Bring along readings/music and food to share. Held at the Octagon Room, Wesley Church. Contact Tel 01223 741719 or email interfaith@home.cam.net.uk.

The Inter Faith Network for the UK

The Inter Faith Network was founded in 1987. It works with its member bodies to promote good relations between the faith communities in the UK, to combat inter religious prejudice and intolerance and to help make the UK a country marked by mutual understanding and respect between religions where all can practise their faith with integrity. The Network:

- Provides information on faith communities and on inter faith affairs
- Advises on multi faith projects and inter faith issues
- Publishes materials to aid work in the religious and inter faith sectors
- Fosters inter faith co-operation on social issues
- Holds regular meetings where social and religious questions of concern to the different faith communities can be examined together
- Links 97 member organisations including: representative bodies from the different faith communities; inter faith organisations; local inter faith groups; educational and academic bodies

Diary dates:

Courses, exhibitions, conferences and seminars

25-26 October, London *Transforming Communities- New Directions in Christian Social Action*. A conference hosted by the Christian Socialist Movement at Toynbee Hall. Speakers will include John Battle MP, Sheikh Zaki Badawi and the Rt Revd Dr John Sentamu. For more information contact the Appeals Department at Toynbee Hall on 020 7247 6943 or register at www.toynbeehall.org.uk/confsems.htm

29 October, Regent's Park, London, 11.30am *YES*, the Youth 'Etc' Section of the Council of Christians and Jews. Visit to the Islamic Cultural Centre with a talk by Dr Fatma Amer. Contact Gemma Abbs on 020 7820 0090 or email gemma@ccj.org.uk.

30 October, West Kensington, London 2-5pm Jim McManus of the NACRO Crime and Social Policy Section will be giving a presentation on *Faith Communities and Community Safety*. Held at the Bhavan Centre, entry is free and refreshments provided. Contact Jane Howarth on 01245 360457 or email howarth@mjstreet.freemove.co.uk.

4-10 November. Islam Awareness Week. A range of events are taking place across the country. For more information contact the Islamic Society of Britain, ISB London, 36 Edinburgh Road, Plaistow, London E13 9HS or email: admin@iaw.org.uk

5-7 November, Selly Oak, Birmingham. Two day conference, *Reading the Bible in a multi-faith context* at the United College of the Ascension, Birmingham. Rates £65 residential/£30 non residential. Contact the College on 0121 415 6810 or email j.marks@bham.ac.uk.

11 November, House of Lords, London 10am-1pm The International Interfaith Centre hosts a discussion on Faith Schools and Social Cohesion, chaired by the Bishop of Oxford and speakers to include Ted Cantle, Jonathan Wittenburg and Baroness Ashton. For more details please contact the Centre on 01865 202745 or iic@interfaith-center.org.

12 November, Temple Balsall, Solihull The Leveson Centre for the study of Ageing, Spirituality and Social Policy are holding a seminar on Culture, Faith and Old Age designed to raise awareness of issues concerned with age and ethnicity. Cost is £30 including refreshments and a sandwich lunch. Contact the Centre on 01564 730249 or email James.W.Woodward@btinternet.com.

30 November, Derby A Zoroastrian Educational Day will be held at the Multi Faith Centre at the University of Derby as part of Interfaith Awareness and Education for both Zoroastrians and others. For more details contact Burjor Avari on 0161 247 1023 or email b.avarim@mmu.ac.uk.

Advance Notice

20-22 July 2003, Leicester. World Congress of Faiths conference on *The Future of Multi Faith Britain* at the University of Leicester. For more information Contact: World Congress of Faiths, 2 Market Street, Oxford OX1 3EF

Young people and inter faith activity

"Respect" is a national TimeBank initiative, with the Prince's Trust. Its objective is to inspire and engage people of different faiths and none to give time to one another to encourage tolerance and understanding. It would like, for its website, to hear about inter faith events aimed at young people. You can email Carmel Heaney, Project Manager, at: c.heaney@timebank.org.uk

Inter Faith Update is the newsletter of the Inter Faith Network for the UK. It keeps a wide range of organisations and individuals interested in developing good inter faith relations in the UK in touch with UK events and projects with a significant inter faith component.

Please send any contribution of articles and diary dates for consideration for inclusion in the next issue **by 24 January 2003** to:

Bhupinder Singh,
Information Officer,
The Inter Faith Network
5/7 Tavistock Place,
London
WC1H 9SN

Tel: 020 7388 0008
Fax: 020 7388 7124
Email: ifnet@interfaith.org.uk

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INTER FAITH

UPDATE

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Religion counts

Census results relating to religious identity in the UK were released on 13 February.

The 2001 Census included a question on religion which was answered by over 92% of people. In the UK as a whole, more than 76% of people recorded a religious affiliation; 23% in total recorded "none" or declined to answer the question.

There are separate figures for Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jews, Muslims and Sikhs. In Northern Ireland and Scotland (but not in England and Wales) there are separate figures for different Christian denominations. No

separate "boxes" were included in the Census form for a number of other religious groups, including Baha'is, Jains and Zoroastrians. However, there was an opportunity for people to write in their religious identity if it was not listed on the form. In processing the Census data, these and other groups have been given codes within the "other" category so that figures can be produced for them separately. However, these figures will not become available until the summer.

The Office for National Statistics is planning to produce, later this year, a report on religion which will draw on the Census data, as well as material from

(Continued on page 3)

Faith responses to the situation over Iraq

Faith communities in the UK have responded with concern over the prospect of military action in Iraq. Several faith communities have expressed their views in written statements and members of different faith communities took part in the demonstrations in London and Glasgow on 15 February against possible war.

The Muslim Council of Britain wrote to the Prime Minister on 13 January urging him to find a way to avert a war. The Church of England's House of Bishops issued a second statement on 14 January urging the Government to work within the framework of the United Nations and not to take military action before the UN weapons inspectors complete their work.

Religious leaders in Scotland issued a joint statement at their meeting on 16

January (see page 4) and on 20 February the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, and the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor issued a joint statement. This said that "it is vital that all sides in this crisis engage through the United Nations fully and urgently in a process, including continued weapons inspections, that could and should render the trauma and tragedy of war unnecessary".

A number of local inter faith organisations have also issued statements. The Executive of the Birmingham Council of Faiths wrote to the Prime Minister on 2 February voicing their concern over the threatened war with Iraq and the

continued on page 2

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Bhupinder Singh
Inter Faith Network
5-7 Tavistock Place
London WC1H 9SN



NETWORK NEWS

Faith Communities Consultative Forum established

Faith community representative bodies in membership of the Network met on 12 December for their third meeting in 2002. They recommended that a Faith Communities Consultative Forum should now be formally established. At its meeting on 17 February the Network's Executive Committee agreed this step and terms of reference for the new Forum. The Forum will provide an opportunity for member faith communities collectively to discuss together issues of common concern.

The meeting on 12 December also heard from Ms Cathy Rees of the Department of Trade and Industry on the latest stages in the Government's consultation on the implementation on the European Directive on discrimination in the employment which includes discrimination on the grounds of religion and belief and future institutional arrangements in the equality field.

New part time staff

Ms Gaylina Nguyen and Ms Carol Reid, students at the University of Westminster and University College, London respectively, started work in the autumn at the Network office as part-time clerical assistants working one day and half a day respectively.

NATIONAL UPDATE

(Iraq... continued from page 1)

following day a meeting of Birmingham's faith leaders was held at Birmingham Peace Gardens where a declaration was signed urging that the Government should allow the work of the UN weapons inspectors to run its course.

The North Kirklees Inter-Faith Council issued a seven point declaration. Co-Chair of the Council, Kaushar Tai, said that it showed that people are absolutely committed to remaining united within the local community, no matter what happens on the world stage. Religious leaders in Newcastle issued a joint statement on 5 February saying that they "are determined to maintain the excellent inter-faith relations that this city is known for and wish the UK Government to know this will be more difficult if agreed international procedures are not followed in initiating any attack."

Faith leaders to welcome new Archbishop of Canterbury

Most Rev Dr Rowan Williams was confirmed in his appointment as Archbishop of Canterbury on 2 December at St Paul's Cathedral. He will be formally enthroned in Canterbury Cathedral on 27 February in a ceremony at which other faith communities will be officially represented.

Holocaust Memorial Day

On 27 January "Children and the Holocaust", the third national Holocaust Memorial Day event, took place at the Usher Hall in Edinburgh. Speakers included the Home Secretary, Rt Hon David Blunkett MP and Dr Jonathan Sacks, Chief

The Inter Faith Network for the UK

The Inter Faith Network was founded in 1987. It works with its member bodies to promote good relations between the faith communities in the UK, to combat inter religious prejudice and intolerance and to help make the UK a country marked by mutual understanding and respect between religions where all can practise their faith with integrity. The Network:

- Provides information on faith communities and on inter faith affairs
- Advises on multi faith projects and inter faith issues
- Publishes materials to aid work in the religious and inter faith sectors
- Fosters inter faith co-operation on social issues
- Holds regular meetings where social and religious questions of concern to the different faith communities can be examined together
- Links 97 member organisations including: representative bodies from the different faith communities; inter faith organisations; local inter faith groups; educational and academic bodies

(Religion Counts ...continued from page 1)

Religion	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland	UK Total	UK %
Buddhist	139,046	6,830	5,407	533	151,816	0.3
Christian	35,251,244	3,294,545	2,087,242	1,446,386	42,079,417	71.6
Hindu	546,982	5,564	5,439	825	558,810	1.0
Jewish	257,671	6,448	2,256	365	266,740	0.5
Muslim	1,524,887	42,557	21,739	1,943	1,591,126	2.7
Sikh	327,343	6,572	2,015	219	336,149	0.6
Other religions	143,811	26,974	6,909	1,143	178,837	0.3
Total: all religions	38,190,984	3,389,490	2,131,007	1,451,414	45,162,895	76.8
No religion	7,171,332	1,394,460	537,935	*	9,103,727	15.5
Not Stated	3,776,515	278,061	234,143	*	4,288,719	7.3
All no religion/not stated	10,947,847	1,672,521	772,078	233,853	13,626,299	23.2

* Note: In Northern Ireland separate statistics for those of no religion and not stated are not available

Figured derived from Census 2001 information from the Office for National Statistics, the General Register Office for Scotland and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency.

other sources, in order to provide an authoritative and comprehensive statistical overview of religious identity in this country.

It was back in the mid 1990's that the Inter Faith Network and the Inner Cities Religious Council facilitated conversations between what is now the Office for National Statistics and faith community organisations about the case for a Census question on religious identity. In Scotland the issue was one for the Scottish Parliament.

At times it seemed that the question's inclusion would not be accepted for England and Wales, particularly when it became apparent that new Westminster legislation was required to authorise it there.

However, a strong co-operative effort across the different faith communities was eventually successful, even if the final question was not framed precisely as faith communities had hoped. Nonetheless, the data which is now available across the UK will be of great importance in helping authorities responsible, at a national and local level, for the delivery of public services to make sure that the needs of different faith communities are more adequately met. The full results not only at national level but also by local authority area can be viewed or downloaded from the internet at www.statistics.gov.uk or can be purchased from the Stationary Office at £75 Telephone: 0870 600 5522 to order a copy.

Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth, as well as young people from Edinburgh who had recently visited Auschwitz-Birkenau.

The core of the evening's programme was the testament of children and young people, telling of their witness to Nazi occupation, of the persecution, the ghettos, the cattle trucks and the Nazi death camps. The many groups who suffered Nazi persecution were remembered: Jews, Jehovah's Witnesses, Gypsies, Poles, Slavs, disabled people, homosexuals, political opponents and others. Events in other countries such as the former Yugoslavia, Armenia and Rwanda were also reflected in the programme.

More than 200 HMD events took place around Britain. For example in Wales, a memorial event was held on 28 January at the Temple of Peace in Port Talbot where as part of the service children from each of seven different faith communities each lit a candle on a giant menorah. The event was attended by First Minister Rt Hon Rhodri Morgan AM, who gave the closing speech.



"Holocaust Memorial Day is a very important day for the whole nation. It enables us both as individuals and as a society to reflect on the Holocaust and its contemporary relevance for us. With its theme of "children", tonight's event reminds us of our responsibility to educate particularly our young people about the Holocaust and other more recent atrocities that remind us of what can happen if we do not continue to be vigilant in preventing the spread of racism and intolerance."

Rt Hon David Blunkett MP

A list of many of the HMD events held around the country can be found at the Holocaust Memorial Day web site:
www.holocaustmemorialday.gov.uk

Community Cohesion Guidance launched

The Home Office Minister with responsibility for community cohesion, Beverley Hughes MP, launched *Guidance on Community Cohesion* at a conference at Local Government House on 11 December.

The guidance, which has been jointly published by the Local Government Association, the Home Office, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, the Commission for Racial Equality and the Inter Faith Network, provides advice on ways local authorities and other local agencies can review their existing policies and practices to contribute to more cohesive communities. It includes specific reference to recognising faith communities in public life at the local level and suggests local authorities explore the potential of forming a forum of faiths and supporting the public celebration of religious festivals.

Other speakers at the launch included Cllr Laura Willoughby, Chair of the LGA Equalities Executive, Beverley Bernard, Acting Chair of the Commission for Racial Equality, Ted Cantle, Chair of the Government appointed Community Cohesion Panel and Brian Pearce, Director of the Inter Faith Network.

The Guidance document can be downloaded from www.communitycohesion.gov.uk and a limited number of copies are available from the Network Office.

Scotland's religious leaders

meet

Religious leaders of different faiths in Scotland met at Glasgow's Central Mosque on 16 January. They reflected together on the place of prayer in their lives and also expressed concern over the impending threat of war in Iraq. Faith community representatives associated themselves with a statement which was sent to the Prime Minister urging the Westminster Government to work for a peaceful solution to the situation in Iraq and the Middle East. A further meeting of the religious leaders is planned for August in the new inter faith centre at the Samye Ling Tibetan Buddhist Monastery on Holy Island off the coast of Arran.

Young person's advisory forum meets in Stormont

The Children and Young Person's Advisory Forum has been created by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland. Its role will be to inform the Assembly on the development of policies that have a particular impact on children. The sixty members of the Forum met for the first time in the Senate Chamber at Stormont on 16 November, a few days after the suspension of the Northern Ireland Assembly. The day long meeting heard from young people and was facilitated by youth workers who ensured that there were opportunities for lively activities as well as serious discussion. In addition to young Christians from both Catholic and Protestant communities, Forum members include young Baha'is, Hindus and Muslims. Since November there have been two further Forum meetings and some members of the Forum have been chosen to sit on a selection panel that will appoint the new Children's Commissioner in Northern Ireland.

respect launched in Northern Ireland and Scotland

The *respect* campaign had its launches in Scotland and Northern Ireland on 29 October and 11 December respectively. *respect* is a TimeBank initiative with the Prince's Trust to encourage young people to volunteer for each other's communities. The Scottish launch took place in Edinburgh and was attended by Professor Jonathan Sacks, Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth. The launch event in Northern Ireland was held in association with the



Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum. Nina Wadia of the comedy programme *Goodness Gracious Me* spoke at the event about respect, saying that respect is like clothing: nobody actually notices until you are not wearing any! She also spoke briefly about her own faith, being a member of one of the smaller minority faiths, Zoroastrianism.

Jewish employment handbooks launched

Barbara Roche MP, Deputy Minister for Women and Minister for Social Exclusion spoke at the launch of two new employment handbooks published by the Board of Deputies of British Jews on 11 December. The handbooks, one a guide for employers, *Employing Jews*, and the other a guide for Jewish employees, explain the nature of Jewish requirements such as *Shabbat*, Jewish festivals, clothing and food. Representatives of other faiths attended the launch along with leading members of the Board of Deputies. Copies can be obtained from the Board of Deputies of British Jews Tel: 020 7543 5400.

United Religions meeting

The United Religions Initiative UK held its second annual residential meeting at Luther King House in Manchester between 30 October and 1 November. The meeting included discussion of URI's work, highlighting plans for a possible peace centre and for a photographic exhibition about "the mix of spiritual experience, mainstream faiths, and indigenous religious traditions that serve this nation" (called "Spirit of the Nation") and youth work; sacred readings; and presentations, including one from Harriet Crabtree, Deputy Director of the Network on inter faith activity in the UK. For further information about "Spirit of the Nation" or about other aspects of URI's work, contact: info@uri.org.uk.

Jewish-Muslim Lecture Series

The Maimonides Foundation, in association with Leo Baeck College and the School of African and Oriental Studies (SOAS) held their annual Jewish-Muslim Lecture Series last autumn, "Perceiving the Other: Myths and Realities: an exploration of how Jews and Muslims perceive each other in the UK". The series which ran on Wednesdays in November and December at the

Brunei Gallery at SOAS in London explored topics including the media; religious leadership; the legal system and the judiciary; and academia. Each week one Jewish and one Muslim speaker addressed the audience. Speakers included: Jonathan Freedland of the Guardian, Roger Hardy of the BBC, Fuad Nahdi of Q News, Shaheed Fatima, Jonathan Arkush, Khawor Qureshi, Dr Gregg Stern and Sayyed Nadeem Kazmi of the Al-Khoei Foundation.

Week of Prayer for World Peace

The annual gathering held by the national committee of the Week of Prayer for World Peace was held on 20 October at the Shree Swaminarayan Mandir in Neasden, London. Attenders were welcomed by the spiritual leader of the Temple, Atmaswarup Swami and also addressed by Om Parkash Sharma, Chair of the Week of Prayer for World Peace. The event focussed around five affirmations from the faith communities: respect for the Earth; human worth; justice, peace and reconciliation; love; and the human family. Representatives of faith communities carried lights in procession and each read a passage from their scriptures on the theme of peace. Also, the Gordon Wilson Peace Award was presented by Mrs Jean Wilson to the charity, Medical Aid for Iraqi Children. It was accepted by the Chair of the Charity, Mrs Mazin Al-Daftari.

RESOURCES

Alma Royalton-Kisch Trust

The Alma Royalton-Kisch Trust is the only UK charitable trust dedicated solely to supporting inter faith educational work with young people and children. The Trust was originally established in 1994 as the ARK Trust and worked primarily with London Youth Matters. However in 2001 it was set up as an independent charity. It is a small trust, with most of its grants being for between £500 and £1,000. However, it has helped a number of projects, with a preference for projects which involve young people up to the age of 25 in planning, running and evaluating a project. Further information and grant application forms are available from Gillian Reed, Hon Secretary, Kisch Trust, 98C Northchurch Road, London N1 3NY or email: gillian@islington2k.freemove.co.uk

Interreligious Insight launched

A new inter faith journal, *Interreligious Insight*, was launched at St Martin in the Fields in London on 8 January. It is published by the World Congress of Faiths, Common Ground and the Interreligious Engagement Project, Chicago, USA. The journal will be published four times a year and is the successor to *World Faiths Encounter*, which has been published by the World Congress of Faiths for many years. It features articles, comment and reviews of interest to those interested in dialogue and engagement at all levels. The launch was attended by a number of representatives of different faiths and was addressed by members of the WCF's Executive Committee: Rev Alan Race (the new journal's editor), Rabbi Jackie Tabick; Prof Gwen Griffith- Dickson, Mr Jay Lakhani and Imam Dr Abduljalil Sajid. For further information see the web site: www.interreligiousinsight.org. To subscribe send a cheque payable to: "Interreligious Insight" to Interreligious Insight, c/o World Congress of Faiths, 2 Market Street, Oxford, OX1 3EF. Subscriptions are £24 for individuals and £40 for institutions.

New resources launched in Northern Ireland

The Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum launched two new booklets, *A Handbook of Faiths* and *Check-Up*, and an inter faith calendar on 11 December. The *Handbook of Faiths* is a guide to the different religions in Northern Ireland, while *Check-Up* is a guide about different faiths relevant for health professionals. The 2003 multi faith calendar features the dates of festivals and holy days of different faiths. All three publications have been supported by the Community Relations Council and the EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation.

The *Handbook of Faiths* and *Check-Up* are priced at £3 each and are available from Des McCabe, 37 Church Street, Warrenpoint Co Down BT34 3HN, email: equalitytraining@aol.com. To order the multi faith calendar contact Norman Richardson, email: n.richardson@stran.ac.uk.

Faith and Friendship: In memory of David Bowen

A memorial book containing poems, memories, photographs and essays from 33 contributors has been compiled in memory of Dr David Bowen, who was well known to students, Christian congregations and inter faith activists in the Bradford area and taught for many years at Bradford College. The book is available priced £6.35 inc. postage and packing from the Interfaith

Education Centre, Listerhills Road, Bradford BD7 1HS email: interfaith@educationbradford.com
Tel. 01274 731674. Cheques are payable to the "Interfaith Education Centre".

New Network Publication Community Cohesion: A New Agenda for Inter Faith Relations?

Report on the 2002 Network National Meeting. Now available priced £3 plus 80p postage and packing. To order please send a cheque payable to the "Inter Faith Network" to:

The Inter Faith Network
5-7 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9SN

Inter faith profile

Dr Elizabeth Harris is the Secretary for Inter Faith Relations for the Methodist Church in Britain, one of the Free Christian Churches in membership of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. She is also an honorary lecturer at the University of Birmingham and was elected as a member of the Executive Committee of the Inter Faith Network in July 2002.

Q What is your role as the Secretary for Inter Faith Relations for the Methodist Church and how does this fit in with ecumenical work with other Christian denominations?

Anything concerning relations with other faiths comes to my desk. This can include questions on inter faith marriages, government policy on religion, the use of church premises by people of other faiths, or tensions between faiths in other parts of the world. I see the job as having an internal and an external face. The internal face involves educating Methodists about other faiths, helping them to build friendships with people of other faiths, also helping them to think through the theological issues connected with inter faith relations. The external face of the job involves keeping in touch with inter faith bodies and other faith communities, and building relationships with them.

In all this, ecumenical working among Christians is absolutely essential. We should not do separately, what we can do together. Therefore, I am involved with a number of bodies, for example the Churches' Commission for Inter Faith Relations, the United Reformed Church Inter Faith Relations Committee and Westminster Interfaith, a Roman Catholic organisation.

Q How did you first get involved with inter faith dialogue?

In the 1970s while I was a young teacher in Jamaica I came across the Rastafarians and this was my first real encounter with people of another 'faith'. I was fascinated and learnt as much as I could about their tradition. More generally, it was my interest in inter-cultural understanding that led me to inter faith relations. I went to Jamaica because I was interested in other cultures. Then on returning to Britain I eventually started working for an ecumenical Christian organization, Christians Abroad. My job there was to help people understand what entering another culture means or involves. While I was in this job I became involved in the new Harrow Inter Faith Group. By that time, the challenge of crossing faith barriers had become as, if not more, important than

crossing cultural barriers.

Q You have a particular interest in Christian-Buddhist relations. What do you feel is the importance of this particular dialogue?

My interest in Buddhism began in 1984 when I went on a short visit to Sri Lanka. I then went again specifically to study Buddhism and stayed 7 ½ years! Buddhist-Christian dialogue excites and challenges me. There are so many differences between the two religions but also so many touching points. I believe differences can be creative. Christians, and indeed people from other religions too, can learn a lot from Buddhism and hopefully the process can be two-way.

Q Is there a particular contribution of women to inter faith dialogue?

There is as much variety in the women involved in inter faith dialogue as there is amongst the men! I wouldn't like to make a watertight distinction between women and men in inter faith dialogue but I would like to see a change in the processes of representation. So often at inter faith meetings women are far out numbered by men. Everything that can be done should be done to create a better gender balance at the different levels at which inter faith dialogue and encounter takes place.

Q What are your hopes for inter faith relations in the UK in the coming years?

One hope I have for the Christian Church is that it will realise that it cannot theologise without taking into account the insights of other faiths. At a practical level I hope there will be much more friendship across faiths in future and that this friendship will help to reduce tensions in our society. We must also learn to stand together to oppose violence and anything that dehumanises. I believe we are entering a critical period in our national and global histories when people who can build bridges of understanding between faiths are increasingly important.

REGIONAL UPDATE

Aberdeen

The Aberdeen Inter Faith Group held a workshop in the autumn in association with the Scottish Inter Faith Council to discuss the debate on the reform of education which is a current concern of the Scottish Parliament. A summary of the opinions expressed was submitted to the Parliamentary Committee on Education Reform which is due to report on its findings shortly.

Brighton

Ms Barbara Roche MP, Minister of State for Social Exclusion visited the Brighton and Hove Inter-Faith Contact Group on 15 January. The visit took place at the Unitarian Church in Brighton. The Minister discussed the Government's consultation document on implementing the European Directive on discrimination in employment, including discrimination on the grounds of religion and belief with members of the Group.

Brixton, London

On Remembrance Sunday on 10 November about 60 members and guests of the South London Inter Faith Group gathered at St Matthew's Church in Brixton for a *Time of Reflection and Prayers for World Peace*. Members of six different religions took part in the event. As the event was held during Ramadan some of the participants joined with Muslim colleagues in breaking their fast.

Cardiff

Over 100 members from nine faith communities came together in County Hall in Cardiff Bay at a reception hosted by the Lord Mayor of Cardiff, Cllr Russell Goodway, on 3 December. The meeting was called for the formal signature of a common statement, "Many Faiths, One People", pledging the commitment of the faith communities to live in together in peace and goodwill. The event was organised with the assistance of the Cardiff Interfaith Association. Speaking at the event, Dr Hoshi Kalami, a member of the Association's Executive Committee, said that he believed that the promulgation of an agreed document was a signal that beliefs were not essentially the cause of conflict and that understanding could bring about peaceful coexistence. The Lord Mayor spoke of the pivotal role of religion in Cardiff. The statement was signed by representatives of all the faiths present.

Huddersfield

The Interfaith Council for Huddersfield was launched on 4 February at the Methodist Mission, Huddersfield, by representatives from the Baha'i, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh faiths. The Mayor of Kirklees, Cllr Margaret Bates,

attended the launch and joined in a plea for community harmony and understanding. The Council plans to hold monthly meetings at each faith's place of worship and is keen to emphasise the role of education in creating harmony. It will be arranging speakers from different faiths for local schools.

Leeds

The Leeds Faith Community Liaison Forum and the Leeds Black and Ethnic Minority Strategy Group co-hosted the launch of the Community Cohesion plan for Leeds on 28 November at the Playhouse in Leeds. Speakers included Ted Cantle, Home Office Adviser on Community Cohesion, Shahid Malik, Regeneration Consultant, and Cllr Keith Wakefield, Deputy Leader of Leeds City Council.

A report on *Religious Literacy*, produced by the Regional Assembly and the Churches Regional Commission and written by Dr Kim Knott of the University of Leeds and Rev David Randolph-Horn was distributed at the event. This is a guide aimed at officials wishing to understand and work with faith communities and will be of interest to all those involved in inter faith work. It is available from Mary White at the Churches Regional Commission for Yorkshire and the Humber Tel: 0113 244 3413.

The draft Community Cohesion Action plan was presented by the Leeds Initiative, the Local Strategic Partnership. As the meeting was held during Ramadan, participants then went to the Grand Mosque to join in the breaking of the fast.

London Interfaith Centre

London Interfaith Centre hosted an event, *Peace Impossible? Israel/Palestine Today* in association with the World Conference on Religion and Peace (UK) and the West London Three Faiths Forum on 14 October. The event focussed on the potential contributions of the Christian, Jewish and Muslim communities to resolving the problems of the Middle East. It was addressed by Sidney Shipton, Rev Marcus Braybrooke and Sheik Dr Zaki Badawi. On the previous day, 13 October, the Centre was host to an event organised by Brent Interfaith, *Religion and Intolerance*. Participants discussed the meaning of terms that are often used in the media such as 'extremist', 'fundamentalist' and 'fanatic'. Representatives of the Baha'i, Brahma Kumaris, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh faiths spoke about these concepts from their faith perspectives.

Luton

The Luton Council of Faiths held their 6th annual Interfaith Pilgrimage on 2 November. About 100 people from different faiths took part in the walk which visited the Holy Ghost Catholic Church, the



Central Mosque, Medina Masjid and the Guru Nanak Gurdwara. Participants were joined by the Mayor of Luton, the two local MP's and local councillors. On 30 January the Council of Faiths held a farewell event for Shanthi Hettiarachchi who is leaving Luton after 6 years of working on inter faith relations. He has been a key figure in the development of the Luton Council of Faiths.

Peterborough

Peterborough Cathedral was the venue for a United Nations day commemoration entitled, *Building Peace in Our World*. This took place on 16 October and was organised by the Peterborough Inter Faith Council. Children from the Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh faiths were the main participants.

Richmond

The Richmond Inter Faith Group and the Twickenham and Richmond branch of the United Nations Association held a celebration of peace across faiths and cultures on 3 November at Richmond and Putney Unitarian Church. Cllr Douglas Orchard, Mayor of Richmond, and Dr Jenny Tonge, MP for Richmond Park, joined people from several different faiths at the event.

Suffolk

Suffolk Inter Faith Resource (SIFRE) moved premises on 6 January. The new SIFRE Centre, located within the grounds of Suffolk College, has a dedicated library with SIFRE's 2,500 books. The Centre also has a reception area, office and a classroom. The Centre is open on week days from 9am-4.30pm and will be officially opened on 17 March.

Three Counties Interfaith Network

A network of inter faith initiatives in Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire was established on 19 December. The new "sub-regional" structure links the following local interfaith initiatives: Bedford Council of Faiths; Hitchin Sikh-Christian Dialogue Forum; Interfaith MK (Milton Keynes); Luton Council of Faiths; Watford Association of Faiths; Wycombe Sharing of Faiths; and also three new initiatives being developed in Aylesbury, Stevenage and St Albans and Harpenden.

Network North East Regional "Link" Meeting

The North East Regional "Link" Meeting was held on 28 October at the Newcastle Civic Centre. The meeting was arranged and hosted for the Inter Faith Network by the Tyne and Wear

Racial Equality Council Inter Faith Panel.

The following reports were presented on recent local inter faith activity in the region:

Tyne and Wear Racial Equality Council Inter Faith Panel

The Inter Faith Panel was set up in 1974 and is chaired by the Anglican Bishop of Newcastle. It meets regularly to discuss issues that affect the local area. The Panel is able to meet at short notice in times of crisis, for example following the terrorist attacks in the USA on 11 September 2001, after which the Panel helped to organise a meeting at Newcastle Mosque where leaders of different faiths came together. In October *The Journal*, a Tyneside local paper, published a 16 page supplement entitled 'Living Together'. The Panel hopes that such a supplement can be published quarterly, highlighting the good work being undertaken to build good relations between communities in the area. The Panel has a good relationship with Newcastle University and regularly organises events marking festivals of different faiths there. The Panel also has a good relationship with Newcastle City Council and often meets with Councillors to discuss issues of common concern, including regeneration issues.

Gateshead Interfaith Forum

A group of people from different faiths in Gateshead originally came together in the early 1980's, but the Gateshead Interfaith Forum was not formally set up until the early 1990's. One of its most successful projects has been to produce a video for schools in association with the Ethnic Minority Forum, about the lives of people of different faiths and communities in Gateshead. The Forum helped to organise a number of events such as a "Service of Solidarity" following 11 September 2001 and a Christmas/Eid event for children. Recently the Forum was asked to assist in organising an inter faith event to mark the opening of the new Gateshead Millennium Bridge. The Forum also took part in meetings with Northern Arts on the bid for Newcastle Gateshead to be chosen as the European Capital of Culture 2008. The Forum is also working with the Positive Images project which is a three year project with funding from the Home Office Connecting Communities initiative which aims to celebrate diversity in the city by producing an audio CD and video for free distribution primarily to schools. The CD and video are in the final stages of production and feature the stories of people from several communities including refugee and faith communities in the North East. It is hoped that these will help to breakdown stereotypes.

Cleveland Interfaith Group

The Group has about 50 members, including Baha'is, Christians, Hindus and Muslims. In general the membership is in the over 55 age bracket, with some interest from the under 25's. The Group holds monthly meetings with attendance of up to 25 at each meeting. Last year they held two larger meetings, one following September 11, and another looking at the issue of asylum seekers and refugees. A pilgrimage visiting different places of worship was held around the time of the Queen's Golden Jubilee. Many of their events attract people from neighbouring towns and cities so the Group usually consults with other organisations before setting dates for events. In general, race relations in the Middlesborough area are good. The Annual Mela, which attracts in the region of 60,000 people, is a good example of how different communities in the area can work together. However, tension has been raised in recent months with increased activity by far right organisations.

Inter Faith Activity at the North East Regional level

There is one place for faith communities on the Regional Assembly. This is currently shared between Rev Nicholas Coulton (an Anglican) and Hari Shukla (a Hindu).

Newcastle/Gateshead Bid for European Capital of Culture 2008

Newcastle and Gatehead was one of six shortlisted bids to become the European Capital of Culture 2008 (for which Liverpool has now been selected). The bid, co-ordinated by Northern Arts was discussed with a wide variety of organisations including faith groups. The process highlighted the value of cultural activities and new avenues of funding for cultural activities are being opened up as a result.

INTERNATIONAL UPDATE

WCRP European Council of Religious Leaders inaugurated

Senior religious leaders from across Europe came together in November to establish the World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP) European Council of Religious Leaders (ECRL), which is the first multi-religious structure of senior religious leaders in Europe. The inaugural meeting was held in Oslo, Norway on 11 and 12 November. The Co-Moderators of the ECRL are: Cardinal Danneels, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Mechelen-Brussels; Bishop

Gunnar Stålsett, the Bishop of Oslo, Church of Norway; Grand Rabbi René Sirat, the Vice-President of the Conference of European Rabbis; Metropolitan Kirill of the Russian Orthodox Church; Dr. Mustafa Ceric, the Grand Mufti of Bosnia Herzegovina; and Mr Jehangir Sarosh, of the UK Zoroastrian community and Moderator of WCRP Europe. Other founding members of the Council include: Metropolitan Ambrosios, Greek Orthodox Church; Metropolitan Daniel, Romanian Orthodox Church; Professor Jonathan Sacks, Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth; and Bhai Sahib Bhai Mohinder Singh of the Guru Nanak Nishkam Sevak Jatha UK.

The 30 member Council committed itself to working to end conflicts, to reaffirming the religious rejection of terror and to promoting justice and peaceful coexistence among the diversity of peoples, religions and traditions in Europe. The Council agreed a statement, *Standing Together for Peace* which can be found at the WCRP web site: www.wcrp.org (click on worldwide affiliates).

DIARY DATES

Local inter faith events

Space only allows one event per organisation to be listed. For details of other events contact the relevant local groups. Events are also listed in the One Family Newsletter available from the World Congress of Faiths, 2 Market Street, Oxford OX1 3EF.

23 February, Brighton and Hove Inter Faith Contact Group. AGM and talk on "Zoroastrianism: A Vanishing Faith?" talk by Farrokh Vajifdar at the Brighthelm Church and Community Centre. Contact Imam Sajid on 01273 722438 or email: sajid@imamsajid.com.

3 March, Suffolk Inter Faith Resource (SIFRE). Lecture by Professor David Ford at the Bowthorpe Centre, Norwich, on Inter Faith Theology. For more details contact SIFRE on 01473 233447 or centre@sifre.org.uk.

6 March, Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship. A meeting to explore different faith approaches to conflict. Contact Robin Fishwick for more details by email: secretary@concord-leeds.org.uk.

12 March, London. Discussion on the theme of peace within different faith traditions with Rev Megumi Hirota and Rev Canon Dr Michael Igrave. Organised by WCRP (UK) at the London Inter Faith Centre, 125 Salusbury Road, Queen's Park from 4-6pm. Contact the Centre on 020 7604 3053 or email info@londoninterfaith.org.uk.

13 March, London. Rev Marcus Braybrooke will be speaking about his new books at the London Inter Faith Centre, 125 Salusbury Road, Queen's Park. Contact Rabbi Jacqueline Tabick for more details on 020 7959 3129 or email jtabick@lineone.net.

18 March, Bradford Concord Interfaith Society. "Steps of Faith"- the Society will be visiting Columba House at 7.30pm. For more details phone 01274 731 674.

20 March, London Society of Jews and Christians. A meeting on "The Christian Doctrine of the Just War" with Sir Hugh Beech and Professor Lawrence Freedman at The Liberal Jewish Synagogue, St John's Wood Road NW8. For more details contact Gillian Comins on Tel: 020 7278 4734.

25 March, Hampstead Inter Faith Group. Visit to the London Interfaith Centre where the Group will meet Rev Fergus Capie, its Director. Contact Eva Tucker for more information by writing to 63b Belsize Park Gardens, London NW3 4JN

3 April, Leeds Faith Communities Liaison Forum. Discussion on "Faith Communities and Mental Health" at the Becklin Centre, St James' Hospital at 6.30pm for 7pm start. For more information contact David Randolph-Horn on Tel: 0113 245 4700 or email: drh@lci.yks.com.

6 April, Peterborough Inter Faith Council. The Council hold their AGM and Jenny Kartoupelis of the East of England Churches Network will be speaking on the role of faith communities in local government. St Mary's Church Hall, Boongate for a 3pm start. For more details call Anne Emery on 01780 762 686.

28 April, Bristol Inter Faith Group. An evening on "The Dignity of Difference", exploring Rabbi Dr Jonathan Sack's new book at Bristol and West Progressive Synagogue, beginning at 7.15pm with a brief AGM. For more details contact June Ridd on Tel: 01454 313042.

7 June, London. Westminster Interfaith will be holding their 18th Annual Multifaith Pilgrimage in the Southall/Hounslow area. Contact Alfred Agius for details on Tel: 020 7361 4740

20 June, Nelson, Lancashire. Building Bridges host a conference on a social inclusion PSHE KS2 programme entitled "Many Communities - One World: Turning seeming weaknesses and threats into strengths and opportunities". Contact Building Bridges on 01282 719303 or email BuildABridgeNow@aol.com.

19 July, South London Inter Faith Group. Annual inter faith walk around Wimbledon visiting a Roman Catholic Church, Buddhist Temple, Reform Synagogue, United Reformed Church and Hindu Temple. The walk begins at 9am although participants are welcome to join at any point. Contact Eric Bramsted on Tel: 020 8542 9618 for more details.

Advance Notice:

19-26 October, One World Week. 2003 marks the 25 anniversary of One World Week, and the theme will be "Moving Stories". For further information and resources contact the OWW office on 0118 939 4933 or email enquiries@oneworldweek.org.

Network Website:
www.interfaith.org.uk

Diary dates: Courses, exhibitions, conferences and seminars

Until 27 April, Glasgow. Photographic Exhibition by Rachel Morton, "One Island, Many Faiths: The Experience of Religion in Britain" at St Mungo's Museum, Glasgow. Admission: free. Contact St Mungo's Museum on Tel: 0141 553 2557.

February-April, Derby. Each Monday the Multi Faith Centre at the University of Derby hold sessions with speakers as part of its "Encountering Islam" programme costing £3.00/£2.00 per session. Contact Tel: 01332 591285 or email e.fry@derby.ac.uk.

11 March, London. Professor Eileen Barker lectures on "Why, For God's Sake?" looking at people's reactions to other religions and the issues they raise. 6pm at the London School of Economics, free and open to all. Contact Tel: 020 7955 6043 or email: events@lse.ac.uk.

13 March, London. YES, the Youth Section of the Council of Christians and Jews, host a talk by Zaki Nuseibeh on "Jerusalem; city of three faiths-challenge and hope" at Highland Road Synagogue, Bromley. Contact Gemma on 020 7820 0090 or email: gemma@ccj.org.uk.

15 March, London. A seminar entitled "Faith schools: racist or antiracist?" is being held jointly by ARTEN, NAME, NATFHE and NUT at 27 Britannia Street, WC1, costing £30.00/£20.00 including vegetarian buffet lunch. Call 020 7520 3225 for further information.

1-4 April, Birmingham. The United College of the Ascension are holding a four day course entitled "Christian Ministry alongside Muslim Communities" combining speakers with visits to provide first hand experience of the issues involved. All meals provided. Fees are £150 (residential)/£100(non residential). Call 0121 415 6810 or email: united-college-of-the-ascension@bham.ac.uk.

11-13 April, Leeds. The Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education host a conference at the University of Leeds on the "Philosophy of Religion: Developing a World Perspective" for teachers of Philosophy of Religion at AS/A level. For more details contact Mary Hayward at m.hayward@leeds.ac.uk.

6 May, St Albans. As part of the Shur Spring Semester programme at Leo Baeck College, Rabbi Paul Glantz will talk about "The Menorah and other forms of dedication" at St Albans Masorti Synagogue. Every Tuesday from 11.15am-12.45pm, costing £6 per session.

13-20 June, Bath. The CCJ Summer School at the Ammerdown Centre begins with a weekend entitled "Praying with the Psalmists" followed by 16-20 June when the theme is "Isaiah of the Exile". Contact the Course Secretary at the Ammerdown Centre on 01761 433709.

29 June-2 July, Utrecht, Holland. The International Council of Christians and Jews are hosting an event entitled "Imagining the Other- Jews, Christian and Muslims in modernity". Contact Ruth Weyl on 01923 821430 or on ruth.weyl@onet.co.uk.

14-17 July, Newport, Wales. Conference, entitled "Yr Ysbryd" ("The Spirit") is jointly organised by the Board of Mission of the Church of England and the Churches Commission on Inter Faith Relations, in partnership with Churches Together in Wales, to help Christians facing questions through encounters with people of different faiths. Contact Pat Cutting on pat.cutting@c-of-e.org.uk.

20-22 July 2003, Leicester. World Congress of

Inter Faith Update is the newsletter of the Inter Faith Network for the UK. It keeps a wide range of organisations and individuals interested in developing good inter faith relations in the UK in touch with UK events and projects with a significant inter faith component.

Please send any contribution of articles and diary dates for consideration for inclusion in the next issue **by 23 May 2003** to:

Bhupinder Singh,
Information Officer,
The Inter Faith Network
5/7 Tavistock Place,
London
WC1H 9SN
Tel: 020 7388 0008
Fax: 020 7388 7124
Email: ifnet@interfaith.org.uk

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INTER FAITH

UPDATE

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Time to Talk: the Network National Meeting

The Inter Faith Network's National Meeting and AGM was held at the Techno Centre, University of Coventry on 3 July. Its theme was *Time To Talk: Faiths At The Table Of Dialogue In Today's UK*.

Across the last fifteen years there has been steady progress towards greater cooperation between different faiths on the "public life" agenda in the UK. It is now the norm, rather than the exception, for representatives of different faiths to sit around the consultation table offering their advice or support on issues such as community

cohesion, neighbourhood renewal or health policies. This joint involvement in public life and social issues is one of the vital dimensions of creating good inter faith relations.

Alongside this however, there remains the crucial – and ever more significant – task of enabling the members of our respective faith communities to address centuries old histories of misunderstanding, misrepresentation and prejudice. Social cooperation alone does not overcome inherited myths and prejudices about other faiths or untangle

(Continued on page 2)

The Network has moved!

As many readers will have learned already, the Inter Faith Network has moved its office. We were very sorry to have to leave 5-7 Tavistock Place where it had been based since early 1989, but the new owner's plans for the building meant we had to go.

When it seemed possible that we would need to move urgently a year ago, we contacted, among others, the Grosvenor Estate, as we understood that they sometimes have offices available to charities, but none were vacant. Two days after we received the formal notice this March to leave Tavistock Place we received a telephone call from them out of the blue asking if the Network was still searching for new premises!

We shall be receiving grants from the Westminster Foundation, the charitable arm of the Grosvenor Estate, during the period of our lease, to offset the level of

the commercial rent so that the net cost is not much more than we would have had to pay for less central and smaller premises elsewhere. We have much more space now than we had at Tavistock Place, including a meeting room, so while our new offices (which are five minutes walk from Victoria station) require some refurbishment they offer a welcome potential for further development of the Network's activities.

The search for new premises has been a time consuming and anxious one and we are glad that this, and the move itself, are now over. We are sorry for the resulting delay in the production of this issue of Inter Faith Update.

Subscribing to Inter Faith Update

This newsletter is published three times a year and is available by subscription at £7.50 per year.

To subscribe, send your name and address with a cheque payable to "The Inter Faith Network" to:

Bhupinder Singh
Inter Faith Network
8A Lower Grosvenor
Place,
London SW1W 0EN



NETWORK NEWS

skeins of suspicion and fear. At a time when developments abroad have contributed to growing levels of antagonism and in some cases have led to attacks on places of worship and individuals, and at a time when extreme right wing organisations are exploiting potent and unpleasant images of particular religions to sow hatred and distrust, it was timely to focus on this theme at the 2003 National Meeting.

The first speaker was the Network’s Deputy Director, Dr Harriet Crabtree, who offered a preliminary report on its local inter faith “mapping” project (see page 4). This report was followed by presentations on bi-lateral initiatives, which bring together people of two specific faiths to discuss in depth issues common to the communities, by Revd Jonathan Gorsky of the Council of Christians and Jews and Kuldip Singh and Revd Pamela Wise, Co-Chairs of the Hitchin Sikh-Christian Forum. Dr Ataullah Siddiqui, Head of the Inter Faith Unit of the Islamic Foundation, then reflected on the various dialogues in which members of the UK’s Muslim community are now involved and students from the Blue Coat School in Coventry spoke about their experience of inter faith encounter and the importance for them of faiths coming to understand each other better.

The afternoon session heard from Bimal Krishna das, Secretary to the National Council of Hindu Temples and Revd Canon Dr Michael Iprgrave, Secretary to the Churches’ Commission on Inter Faith Relations who spoke about their faiths’ attitude to and involvement in inter faith dialogue. Following five workshop sessions, delegates reconvened to hear from panel members Jehangir Sarosh, Moderator of World Conference on Religion and Peace (Europe) and member of the Zoroastrian community; Maureen Sier, member of the Baha’i community and Development Officer of the Scottish Inter Faith Council; Paul Seto, Director of the Buddhist Society and Inter Faith

“The key word in dialogue is not talking, but listening.”

Revd Jonathan Gorsky of the Council of Christians and Jews

“Dialogue is not simply about talking with members of other faiths, but also having a firm conviction that our spiritual values have something to offer to the whole of society, not just to ourselves. We enter into dialogue, taking our spiritual values with us, so that we can together contribute to the benefit of the whole community.”

Dr Ataullah Siddiqui, Head of the Inter Faith Unit of the Islamic Foundation

Co-ordinator for the Network of Buddhist Organisations; and Rt Revd Charles Henderson, formerly Chair of the Committee for Other Faiths of the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales.

A presentation was made to Bishop Charles to mark his significant contribution to the work of the Network from its initial formation and to wish him well in his retirement.

Closing reflections were offered by John Battle MP, the Prime Minister’s adviser on inter faith issues.

A full report of the day will be available from the Network Office in due course.

Local inter faith mapping project

The Network is currently undertaking a project

The Inter Faith Network for the UK

The Inter Faith Network was founded in 1987. It works with its member bodies to promote good relations between the faith communities in the UK, to combat inter religious prejudice and intolerance and to help make the UK a country marked by mutual understanding and respect between religions where all can practise their faith with integrity. The Network:

- Provides information on faith communities and on inter faith affairs
- Advises on multi faith projects and inter faith issues
- Publishes materials to aid work in the religious and inter faith sectors
- Fosters inter faith co-operation on social issues
- Holds regular meetings where social and religious questions of concern to the different faith communities can be examined together
- Links 97 member organisations including: representative bodies from the different faith communities; inter faith organisations; local inter faith groups; educational and academic bodies

funded by the Home Office Community Cohesion Unit to map local inter faith activity across the UK and to identify examples of good practice. The project has involved the sending of large numbers of questionnaires to local inter faith initiatives, local authorities, SACREs, CVSs and RECs and to individuals in faith communities deeply involved in inter faith work. Early findings from this research project have found a significant increase in local inter faith activity over the last few years. Materials from this major project will be published in the coming months.

First meeting of the Faith Communities Consultative Forum

The first meeting of the newly established Faith Communities Consultative Forum was held at the Senate House, University of London on 3 April. The Forum has been established within the framework of the Network and has evolved from meetings of faith community representative bodies in Network membership.

The Forum heard a report on the first meeting of the Working Group of the Home Office review on arrangements for consultation by central Government of faith communities and their representation at national events. It also discussed recent developments in the handling of the current "equality and diversity" agenda. Presentations were made to it by Mr Derek Taylor-Thompson of the Churches Main Committee and Ms Rachel Lampard of the Churches RADAR Group on the work of these two Church bodies and the possibilities of developing ways of sharing their work with other faith communities.

Other Network meetings

A meeting of representatives of national inter faith organisations in membership of the Network was held at in London on 25 February. The meeting heard about plans for the then impending Home Office review on arrangements for consultation by central Government of faith communities and also about the local inter faith mapping project on

which the Network was about to begin work. The afternoon session focussed on inter faith work with young people.

A meeting of representatives of educational and academic bodies in membership of the Network was held in London on 8 April. This was the first time that a separate meeting had been held for representatives of this category of Network member body. In addition to an exchange of news, there was a review of the work which the Network could usefully undertake in relation to educational and academic issues and of possible additions to Network membership in this category.

Inter faith guide for young people

The Network is undertaking a project in association with *respect* (an initiative of TimeBank with the Prince's Trust), to publish a guide on inter faith activity for young people. The Network Office is seeking ideas and case studies that could be featured in the guide. If you would like to suggest any projects that you know about or suggest any ideas for inter faith work involving young people then please contact: Bhupinder Singh at the Network office on 020 7931 7766 or email: ifnet@interfaith.org.uk

Network Report

Community Cohesion: A New Agenda for Inter Faith Relations?

The report on the 2002 Network National Meeting is available priced £3 plus 80p postage and packing. To order please send a cheque payable to the "Inter Faith Network" to:

The Inter Faith Network
8A Lower Grosvenor Place, London SW1W 0EN



NATIONAL UPDATE

Select Committee on Religious Offences in England and Wales

When the Anti-Terrorism Bill was being debated in Parliament in the autumn of 2001, the Government included in it provisions to create a new offence of incitement to religious hatred. However, these provisions were defeated in the House of Lords and were dropped by the Government in order to secure passage of that legislation.

Subsequently, Lord Avebury introduced a Religious Offences Bill in the House of Lords which included provisions to abolish the offence of blasphemy as well as introducing a new offence of incitement to religious hatred. The Bill was given a Second Reading on 30 January 2002 and was then referred to an ad hoc Select Committee of the House of Lords to consider in greater depth the issues raised by it.

The Committee received a considerable amount of both oral and written evidence. Its report, published on 10 June, contains a detailed analysis of the law relating to religious offences. It examines old common law offences, including blasphemy and considers whether there is a case for repealing them, leaving them unchanged, or modernising them.

The Committee recognises that creating an offence of incitement to religious hatred, analogous to the existing offence of incitement to racial hatred, would remedy the anomaly that some religions receive protection under race relations legislation while others do not, and would discourage extremists from using the pretext of religion to pursue a racist agenda. But the Committee expresses concern about both the potential threat to freedom of expression and the risk that the standards of proof would need to be so demanding under the proposed legislation as to make it a difficult offence to prosecute.

Viscount Colville of Culross who chaired the inquiry, said, "After extensive public consultation we have analysed the merits of all the options, but feel it is up to Parliament as a whole to decide how it wants to proceed. Religions play a vital role in our society and there should be a degree of protection equally available to all faiths, but there is no consensus among us on the precise form that that protection might take."

The Report of the Committee is published in

Volume I (HL paper 95-I); the oral evidence in Volume II (HL paper 95- II); and the written evidence in Volume III (HL paper 95- III). The material can also be found on the House of Lords website www.parliament.uk.

Policy on Racist and Religious Crime

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) published its Policy on Racist and Religious Crime on 14 July. The policy was formulated after consultation with groups including those representing minority ethnic and faith communities. In its statement the CPS gives a commitment to prosecute racist and religious crime fairly, firmly and robustly.

The policy addresses the issue of accepting pleas and makes it clear that the CPS will not reduce the seriousness of an offence by accepting a guilty plea to an offence which is not racially or religiously aggravated when there is evidence available to prove either a racist or religious motive, or that the offence was accompanied by a demonstration of hostility on racial or religious grounds.

Attorney General, Lord Goldsmith QC, speaking at the launch of the policy said "A racially or religiously motivated attack is an attack on the whole community. This policy sends a clear message to perpetrators that they will not get away with threatening, violent or abusive behaviour".

The CPS would welcome comments on its statement, which can be found at the web site: <http://www.cps.gov.uk/Home/CPSPublications/Scheme/racerel.htm> or call the CPS on 020 7796 8000 for more information.

Representatives from community and faith groups have contributed to a training course for prosecutors and caseworkers to help improve their knowledge and understanding of racist and religious crime. Since the law against religiously aggravated offences came into force the CPS has received 40 such cases from the Police. Many of these are still going through the courts and so far there have been 11 convictions.

New Faith Communities Unit at the Home Office

A new Faith Communities Unit has been set up at the Home Office. It takes over work on faith community issues previously undertaken by staff of the Race Equality Unit (REU) and will be located within a new Directorate alongside the REU and the



Community Cohesion Unit.

The first major project of the Unit is to take forward the Government's review of the patterns of representation and consultation with the faith communities. The first meeting of the Steering Group for the review took place on 30 June and was chaired by Fiona Mactaggart MP, newly appointed Home Office Minister for Race Equality, Community Policy and Civic Renewal. The Steering Group includes representatives of a number of Government Departments and faith communities. The Group has been set up to oversee the Working Group for the project, which has already been carrying out preliminary work, and to consider the most effective means of achieving greater involvement of the faith communities in policy-making and delivery across Whitehall. The Group is due to agree a report and recommendations by the end of December 2003.

As a result of the Ministerial re-shuffle in June, Lord Filkin, the Home Office Minister previously responsible for faith community issues has moved to the new Department of Constitutional Affairs and the Inner Cities Religious Council has a new Chair, Yvette Cooper MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in place of Tony McNulty MP who has moved to the Department of Transport.

Inter faith honours

A number of people involved with inter faith work around the country received honours in the Queen's Birthday Honours list. Maqsood Ahmed, Muslim Adviser to the Home Office, was awarded an OBE; Sehdev Bismal, Chair of Wolverhampton Inter-Faith Group an MBE for services to community relations; Nemu Chandaria an OBE for services to the Jain Community; Venerable Ajahn Khema Dhammo an OBE for services to prison chaplaincy; the Venerable Galayaye Piyadassi an MBE for services to community relations in North London; Mohammed Rissaluddin of the Calamus Foundation an MBE for services to inter faith relations; and Alan Schwartz, a Network Executive Committee member and member of the Inter Faith Council for Wales was awarded an MBE for services to inter faith relations and to the Jewish community in South Wales.

Multi-Faith Group for Healthcare Chaplaincy

The Multi-Faith Group for Healthcare Chaplaincy (MFGHC) was launched on 25 June at Portcullis House in London. Speaking at the launch were Rev Edward Lewis, Chief Officer of the MFGHC, Sarah Mullally, the Chief Nursing Officer at the Department of Health (DoH) and Hon Barnabas Leith, the Chairman of the Group. The launch was also attended by representatives of different faith communities.

The Group seeks to build on the work of the Multi-Faith Joint National Working Party which issued its draft guidance, "NHS Chaplaincy: Meeting the Religious and Spiritual needs of Patients and Staff" on the same day. The draft guidance is available at the website: www.doh.gov.uk/chaplain or can be obtained by contacting the DoH on Tel: 0113 254 6106. Comments on the draft guidance are requested by 26 August.

The object of the MFGHC is the advancement of multi-faith healthcare chaplaincy in England and Wales. It seeks to further this object by facilitating a common understanding and support for healthcare chaplaincy amongst faith groups, chaplaincy bodies and users. The Group also seeks to advise the DoH on chaplaincy issues. Further information about the Group is available on its web site: www.mfghc.com.

Archbishop's inter faith lecture

On 11 June, at the University of Birmingham, Dr Rowan Williams gave his first lecture on inter faith relations since becoming Archbishop of Canterbury. In his address, "Christian Theology and Other Faiths", Dr Williams called for a clearer appreciation and understanding of "the very significant disagreements about the kind of universe we inhabit". He said "Once we are clearer about the nature and scope of religious disagreement, we are actually more, rather than less, likely to develop a respectful and collaborative practice in inter-faith relations."

The text of the lecture is available at the Archbishop's web site: www.archbishopofcanterbury.org.

On 24 March the new Archbishop held an evening reception at Lambeth Palace for faith community representatives, at which he said that he hoped to carry forward the good work of his predecessor, Dr George Carey, in building good

relations between different faith communities.

Equality and Diversity issues

As reported in earlier issues of *Inter Faith Update*, in December 2000 a European Directive was adopted relating to discrimination on a variety of grounds (including religion or belief) in the field of employment and training. Following a major consultation exercise by the Department of Trade and Industry, including the publication of two consultative documents, regulations to implement the Directive in relation to race, religion or belief and sexual orientation were approved by both Houses of Parliament in June and will take effect at the end of this year.

The Government made changes to the earlier drafts of the regulations in response to representations which it received about the way in which the legislation relating to religion or belief on the one hand and sexual orientation on the other could interact in their impact on faith community organisations. The text of the regulations can be found on the website: www.dti.gov.uk/er/equality/eeregs.htm

The Government is still considering its next steps following consultation on *Equality and Diversity: Making it happen*, published in October last year which set out options for a new “single equality body” covering all six strands of discrimination dealt with by the European Directive (age, disability, gender, race, religion and belief and sexual orientation). It appears that most responses to the document expressed support in principle for the proposal to set up a single equality body but there were a substantial number of reservations about it and a wide range of issues remain to be resolved. At one stage it had been thought that the Government would be publishing its further proposals this summer but it will not now do so before the autumn. Ms Jacqui Smith is the new Minister responsible for work on this issue, having taken it over from Ms Barbara Roche when she left Ministerial office.

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) has been preparing draft guidance for employers and others on the operation of the new regulations. The current draft of this, including material on the needs of employees of different faiths, is currently on the ACAS website, www.acas.gov.uk. ACAS will be glad to receive by 22 September any comments or suggestions on this draft material. Further information is also available by contacting ACAS on tel: 020 7210 3670.

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) is also inviting bids to support capacity building in organisations which play a role in meeting the demand from employees/individuals for information advice and guidance. Funding is currently available for activity up to and including 31 March 2004 and the DTI is inviting organisations to submit proposals by 22 August by email to debra.humphries@dti.gsi.gov.uk. A total of £625,000 is available in the current financial year. Full details of this grant programme can be found on the DTI website: www.dti.gov.uk/er/equality.

Faith Communities Toolkit launched

A Jobcentre Plus Faith Communities Toolkit for the East of England, London and South East Regions was launched in London on 5 June following successful pilots in Tower Hamlets and Luton. The toolkit has been developed through consultation with faith communities and Jobcentre Plus staff and is part of work to develop partnerships with a wide range of organisations and groups that represent Jobcentre Plus customers and delivery partners.

The toolkit highlights how Jobcentre Plus districts and faith communities can benefit from forming partnerships and also includes background information on religions and beliefs plus ideas for closer working with faith communities. Introduction of the toolkit will involve awareness training and visits to faith communities for Jobcentre Plus staff.

Faith communities in any of these three Regions who want to discuss closer working with Jobcentre Plus should contact the Business Development Manager in their Jobcentre Plus District. Details of Jobcentre Plus offices can be found at: www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk.

Further consultation on marriage ceremonies

The General Register Office published a consultation document *Civil Registration: Delivering Vital Change* on 10 July seeking views on the proposals for changes to the legislation relating to the Civil Registration Service in England and Wales. Of particular interest are the proposed changes to the way marriages are



registered. The previous consultation *Civil Registration: Vital Change* published in January 2002 outlined a celebrant system of marriage under which local authorities would appoint civil celebrants and religious celebrants would be appointed by the religious body or denomination to which they belonged, rather than requiring places of marriage to be registered.

The current proposals aim to “level the field” in terms of marriages ceremonies. Currently the Church of England, the Church in Wales, the Jewish community and the Religious Society of Friends are exempt from including prescribed words of declaration and contract in their marriage ceremonies. The proposal is to remove the requirement for the bride and groom to say prescribed words of declaration and contract. Instead all marriage ceremonies, regardless of the rites and ceremonies used, will need to include a declaration by the couple that they accept each other as husband and wife and a declaration by the celebrant that the couple are now husband and wife.

The consultation document is available on the internet free of charge at: www.statistics.gov.uk/registration or for £10.00 from the Office for National Statistics, Tel: 0151 471 4514. The closing date for responses to the consultation is 24 October.

Guidelines for advertisers

The Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP) issued a new Help Note for advertisers in April on “Religious Offence”, warning them to be careful about offending religious sensitivities. The note was issued in response to research carried out during 2002 by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) on what constitutes serious offence in non-broadcast advertising. The ASA administers the CAP Code to ensure that advertisements are legal, decent, honest and truthful.

The Help Note warns advertisers against linking religion to sex or nudity and using religion to advertise inappropriate products and makes a distinction between light-hearted depictions of religion and disrespectful ones. The guidance also reminds marketers to take into account whether or not advertisements are likely to appear close to places of worship. Those that make religious references or show nudity are more likely to cause offence on posters at sensitive locations.

Promotion of religious harmony now charitable

Following lengthy exchanges on an application for

charitable status from the Three Faiths Forum, the Charity Commission has accepted the promotion of religious harmony for the benefit of the public as a charitable purpose. The new category joins existing categories such as the promotion of racial harmony. It is hoped that this change will make it easier for inter faith organisations to register as charities.

The Commissioners said that the promotion of religious harmony and tolerance could result in tangible benefits of reduction in conflict and crime and that understanding the religious beliefs of others leads to more appropriate provision of services both in the public and the private sphere. The new purpose is not restricted to promoting harmony between religions that are recognised by charity law, but also embraces “beliefs” as defined in human rights case law. It also includes the promotion of harmony between believers and non-believers.

All charities must be able to demonstrate benefit to the public resulting from their purposes and activities. Organisations promoting religious harmony are charitable not because they are promoting individual religious belief or advancing education in those beliefs, but because they are actively promoting harmony and the lessening of conflict between people from differing religions or belief systems. The Charity Commission will accordingly consider applications from organisations established for such purposes for registration as a charity.

Positive Contacts between British Muslims and Jews

An interim report of a research project by Alif-Aleph UK, a group of British Muslims and British Jews, was launched at the Moses Room, House of Lords on 2 July. The report entitled, 'Positive Contact between British Muslims and British Jews: A Model of Good Practice for all British Communities', was the culmination of research conducted over several months by two recent post-graduates, Mohammed Nisar and Fiona Hurst, and supervised by Dr Keith Kahn-Harris, an independent research consultant. The launch was hosted by Lord Ahmed and Lord Haskel - a Muslim and a Jewish peer - and was chaired by Dr Richard Stone and Sayyed Nadeem Kazmi who originally conceived the project. The report aimed to reveal the extent to which Muslims and Jews across the UK were overcoming the political divisions caused by the Israel/Palestine conflict.

Football tournament for young Jews and Muslims

The Maimonides Foundation, a joint Jewish-Muslim organisation, recently held its third annual Inter Faith Football Programme at Arsenal Football Club in London, with over 150 Jewish and Muslim children aged 9-12 taking part. This culminated in a finale on Sunday 13 July with Arsenal's Egyptian-born goal-keeper, Rami Shaaban, handing out certificates to all the participants. Shaaban said "As a Muslim, I love the idea that kids of different religions are being encouraged to share and play together."

During March the Foundation also organised an exchange programme for fifth and sixth formers from the Brondesbury College for Boys and the Immanuel College for Boys, Muslim and Jewish schools respectively. The exchange formed part of the Foundation's educational programme to foster cordial relations between the Jewish and Muslim communities.

Experience Corps launches Seva booklets

The Experience Corps is an organisation set up to encourage those aged over 50 years of age to volunteer to help their communities. It launched, at the House of Commons on 5 March, two booklets entitled "Seva", which means "selfless service". The two booklets aimed at the Hindu and Sikh communities respectively have been translated into several Indian languages and are being distributed through mandirs, gurdwaras and community centres around the country. For more information contact the Experience Corps on Tel: 020 7981 2500.

Making Dialogue Make a Difference

The Further Dialogue Working Group of the Council for Christians and Jews (CCJ) held a day seminar on 23 June on *Making Dialogue Make a Difference: How and Why?* The day was chaired by Revd Canon Dr Michael Igrave, who also chairs the working group. Speakers included Revd Jonathan Gorsky, Rabbi Rachel Montagu and Abigail Wood of the CCJ, Sheikh Ibrahim Mogra of the Muslim Council of Britain and Bhupinder Singh of the Inter Faith Network who all spoke about different aspects of dialogue. The main afternoon presentation was made by Fr Michael Barnes SJ.

Having Faith in the Commonwealth

The Royal Commonwealth Society held a Young People's Faith Forum on 11 March, the day following the annual Commonwealth Day observance which took place at Westminster Abbey in the presence of HM The Queen. The Forum was a follow up to the successful Golden Jubilee Young People's Faith Forum which took place last year at St James's Palace. Young people from around the UK and some from

Commonwealth countries gathered at the Royal Commonwealth Society in London for the morning session where they heard about recent events celebrating faith in the UK and about examples of faiths working together. The afternoon session took place in Westminster Abbey where the group heard from HE the Rt Hon Don McKinnon, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, who spoke about making the Commonwealth work for its people.

Throughout the day separate workshop sessions were held so that the participants could discuss what it means to be a young person of faith growing up in the Commonwealth. For the final session participants were joined by a number of faith community representatives and also had the opportunity to meet Lord Filkin, the then Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Race Equality and Community Policy in the Home Office.

A report of the day is available by sending a large stamped self-addressed envelope to: Margaret Onokpasah, Royal Commonwealth Society, 18 Northumberland Ave, London WC2N 5BJ Tel: 020 7930 6733 email: margaret.onokpasah@rcsint.org.

Further Census data released

The Office for National Statistics, the General Register Office for Scotland and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency have released further data relating to religion and belief from the 2001 Census. Various data sets cross-referencing the results of different Census questions have been made available on their respective web sites (see below) including age/religious identity and ethnicity/religious identity.

Key statistics for local authorities have also been released which break the census data down to individual ward level. So a very detailed "map" of

(Continued on page 10)

INTER FAITH PROFILE

Dr Fatma Amer works for the London Central Mosque and the Islamic Cultural Centre and is a member of the Network's Executive Committee.

Q How did you first get involved with inter faith dialogue?

I cannot really pinpoint a specific time or event. "Interfaith dialogue" is a concept that has always been a part of my life. I grew up in Alexandria in Egypt. It is one of Egypt's most cosmopolitan cities, encompassing a huge spectrum of different races and faiths. All of life's events were shared: routine and special; mundane and extraordinary. From school to home, weddings and other events were all attended by everyone, regardless of their faith or ethnic background. Places of worship were open to all. I still have vivid memories of the many happy occasions I attended in the Cathedral there.

After arriving in Britain, I became more involved in my children's wider lives – school, neighbours, friends and so on. There was a natural continuation which led in turn to other activities such as involvement in local and national interfaith activities. Now, in my capacity in charge of Inter Faith Relations at the London Central Mosque and the Islamic Cultural Centre, I feel privileged to be able to serve on a variety of bodies and organisations which promote good inter faith relations in our society here.

What does your role at the Islamic Cultural Centre involve?

Q The London Central Mosque and Islamic Cultural Centre is one of the largest established Islamic institutions in the UK. It is, therefore, a main point of reference for enquiries and research regarding various aspects of Islam. Issues related either to education or interfaith issues feature prominently on the list of activities here. I have responsibilities for activities within the Muslim community such as adult education, children's activities, cultural initiatives, certificated courses, supplementary education and liaison with other Islamic centres and also activities involving wider society, including being a point of reference and consultancy for educational bodies, government departments and co-operation with inter faith bodies.

What do you think is the importance of dialogue between young people of different faiths?

I sincerely believe that dialogue is one of the most crucial foundations of society, in terms of respecting, understanding and truly empathising with others, thus providing the basis of good citizenship. It also highlights the danger and undesirability of viewing opinions which differ from yours as "the other", undermining the underlying humanity and brotherhood of man. But dialogue is also about the critical importance of maintaining and preserving one's own integrity of identity. Furthermore, inter faith dialogue reinstates the

importance of the element of "faith" as being indispensable to both individual and community life – combating the increase in secularization, commercialization and relativism as well as the marginalisation of spirituality.

What role should faith communities play in the teaching of religious education in schools?

Ensuring individuals are nurtured in their own faith is primarily the responsibility of their own community. When reflecting on the role of religious education in schools, I find it imperative to highlight the important

Q role of the SACREs. These are pioneering examples of how professionals and faith communities may work together positively and proactively for the common good. Schools should also avail themselves of the remarkable wealth of experience, resources and diversity available within each faith community, for example through visits, dialogue with professionals and other resources. A dynamic sense of "belonging" through increased involvement and participation may be created in this manner, empowering and engaging all faith communities.

What do you feel are the main challenges for inter faith relations in the UK? And how do you think they can be overcome?

I feel that it is appropriate to mention that although there are many challenges, it is hopefully possible to overcome these with patience, continued application and the introduction of laws that ensure the implementation of social justice. I believe that the media should shoulder much of the responsibility in this matter, as what it portrays naturally becomes part and parcel of society's perceptions.

Q One often comes across the careless attitude of those who have no confidence at all in the purpose of dialogue. Education is a crucial element. Unease will always remain until due recognition is given to the fact that no man is an island; and that the entire globe has shrunk to an extent that what happens locally anywhere has an immediate impact on the international scene. Thus, it is essential to inculcate respect, dignity and an attitude of reciprocal empathy in the future citizens of the world in order that they may truly shoulder this great responsibility; and not to swell the ranks of those who merely pay lip service to noble inter faith ideals without implementing them.

(Commonwealth... continued from page 8)

the religious landscape of the UK is now available.

The published data offer a variety of interesting facts about the make up of the faith communities in the UK. For example, while the population as a whole has a slightly higher proportion of women than men, the Hindu and Muslim communities and those of no religion show a higher proportion of men. The detailed age profiles of different faith communities show that there is a higher proportion of young people among Muslims and Sikhs, while Buddhists and Christians have a higher proportion of older people.

Data is also available on the country of birth of adherents of different faiths in England and Wales. The proportion of people born in the UK are: Buddhist 46.05%; Christian 93.77%; Hindu 37.49%; Jewish 83.21%; Muslim 46.44%; and Sikh 56.05%.

The "ethnicity and religion" tables provide detailed information about the ethnic make up of the faith communities. The figures for England and Wales show that 36 million people, nearly 70% of the population, described themselves as White Christian. Among other faiths the largest groups were Pakistani Muslims (658,000) and Indian Hindus (467,000) followed by Indian Sikhs (301,000), Bangladeshi Muslims (260,000) and White Jews (252,000). The Indian group was religiously diverse. 45% of Indians were Hindu, 29% Sikh and a further 13% Muslim. By contrast, the Pakistani and Bangladeshi groups were more homogeneous with Muslims accounting for 92% of each of them. Some faith communities were concentrated in particular ethnic groups. For example, 91% of Sikhs were of Indian ethnic origin and 97% of Jews described their ethnicity as White. Other faiths showed more variation, for example, significant proportions of Buddhists were found in White, Chinese, Other Asian and Other Ethnic groups.

Data in relation to religions which were not listed in the Census question on religion (including Baha'is, Jains and Zoroastrians) is not yet available for England and Wales and Scotland. However, it is expected that from the autumn it will be possible to request commissioned tables from the Office of National Statistics (ONS). The ONS will also publish a brief summary of the findings of the data in relation to religion in a *Focus on Religion* report to be published this autumn. This will be followed next year by a more detailed report. It has not yet been decided whether these reports will pull together data from all four nations making up the UK or only relate to England and Wales.

The Census data for England and Wales is available on the Office for National Statistics web site: www.statistics.gov.uk; for Scotland at the General Register Office for Scotland web site: www.scrol.gov.uk; and for Northern Ireland at the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency web site: www.nisra.gov.uk.

Guidance for publishers of educational resources

The Religious Education Council issued a leaflet in May providing guidance to publishers of religious educational resources. The guidance has been issued in order to assist in the provision of good quality Religious Education; to facilitate the accurate presentation of beliefs and practices in textbooks and other resources; and to foster better understanding of religious beliefs and practices. Copies of the guidance can be obtained by sending an email request to: woodg@methodhistchurch.org.uk or from the web site: www.religioueducationcouncil.org.

Week of Prayer for World Peace

The Week of Prayer for World Peace runs this year from 12 to 19 October. An inter faith gathering for prayer will be held at the Hounslow mosque on 19 October.

The Week was originally inaugurated on 19 October 1974 in Westminster Abbey at a service at which the sermon was preached by the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Michael Ramsey. Under the leadership of Dr. Edward Carpenter, the observance became an inter-faith project. He strongly believed that "prayer for world peace has to be offered by the world's faiths".

Each year, the WPWP committee produces a leaflet of prayers for peace drawn from the major religious traditions of the world. At the present time, the committee and the sponsoring body include adherents of the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Zoroastrian religions, and prayers and readings from all these faiths are included in the current prayer leaflet. A leaflet for use in schools is produced as well. At the annual inter-faith gathering, members of all the faiths are invited to take part and contribute from their own faith resources.

Participation in the work of the Week of Prayer for World Peace is invited from peace groups and faith communities, by providing material for the prayer



Stanley Hope

We have learned with sadness of the death in March of Stanley Hope. He was one of the early pioneers of inter faith work and helped found Rochdale Inter Faith Action. He was also actively involved with Rochdale Racial Equality Council and the Star Youth Club and worked on inter faith activities with the Iona Community.

At his funeral Razzak Ahmed, who had worked closely with him for over 30 years, said that Stanley had a deep understanding of the issues affecting ordinary members of the Asian community and how immigration and nationality laws were affecting them. He was a people's person, always out and about meeting people.

leaflet, by nominating people to serve on the committee or as sponsors, by taking part in the annual gathering for prayer, by organizing a local observance, and/or by ordering Week of Prayer for World Peace prayer leaflets from 23 St. Andrew's Road, Bristol BS6 5EG, tel. 0117 942 3454

New Centre for Dialogue and Encounter

The new home for the Centre for Dialogue and Encounter run by the Sisters of Sion provides a setting for the study of faiths, especially the Christian and Jewish traditions and relationship, and a venue for growth in mutual understanding between people of all faiths and cultures. The facilities include a Conference Area accommodating up to 100, available on a daily basis for interfaith meetings, conferences, seminars, courses and quiet days. Contact: Sr Tessa Hughes Tel: 020 7313 8286.

The Christian-Jewish Library and Resources area is available by appointment, for students, teachers and others who wish to consult their specialist collection of books and archives. Contact: Sr Clare Jardine or Sr Mary Kelly, Tel: 020 7727 3597.

REGIONAL UPDATE

Scottish 'Link' Meeting

Over forty participants from four of the local inter faith groups of Scotland gathered in Dundee on 27 April. The meeting was organised by the Scottish Inter Faith Council and was co-hosted by Dundee Inter Faith Association.

The meeting commenced with a welcome from Rosemary Eddy on behalf of Dundee Inter Faith Association who was followed by Ravinder Kaur Nijjar, Convener of the Scottish Inter Faith Council conveying the greetings of the Council to those present.

Sister Isabel Smyth, General Secretary of the Scottish Inter Faith Council gave a brief historical overview of the Scottish Inter Faith Council and its work and Brian Pearce, Director of the Inter Faith Network, spoke about current patterns of local inter faith activity across the UK and the project to "map" this that the Network is undertaking with funding from the Home Office.

Each of the local inter faith groups then provided a brief round up on their recent and future work. Edinburgh Inter Faith Association reported on its annual inter faith pilgrimage and the many conferences and dialogue meetings it had hosted over the years. Aberdeen Inter Faith Group shared examples of meetings they had hosted such as their 'celebration of faiths' meeting held in 2002. They will be celebrating their 10th Anniversary to be held in collaboration with the City Council in October. The Glasgow Sharing of Faiths Group used a computer presentation which included natural images overlain with quotes from participants at their regular meetings. Dundee Inter Faith Association reported on their highly successful 'shared meal' and spoke of the current programme of meetings which focus on the 'spiritual journeys' of members of different 'faith communities' in Dundee. Although Shetland Inter Faith Group could not be present they sent a report on their regular prayer, meditation and reflection meetings, where prayers and readings from the world's religions and faith traditions are shared, complemented with pieces of reflective music.

Multi faith pilgrimages

A number of multi faith pilgrimages have taken place over the last few months. The 18th annual

Westminster Interfaith Walk for Peace took place on 7 June in Southall and Hounslow in west London. Bradford Concord Interfaith Society held their 10th Annual Walk for Friendship on 14 June. Redbridge Council of Faiths organised a pilgrimage on 6 July and the South London Inter Faith Group in association with the Wimbledon Inter Faith Group held a pilgrimage in Wimbledon on 19 July.

Report highlights work of faith communities in East of England

A six month research project carried out for the East of England Faiths Leadership Conference has found that faith communities carry out social work worth millions of pounds. The *Faith in Action* report was launched by John Battle MP at the Hindu temple and community centre in Luton on 15 May. The report focuses on the activities of faith communities in Luton and Peterborough and profiles a number of places of worship, showing the extent of the contribution of these to their local community. The report is available to download from the internet at www.eeflc.org.uk or contact: EEFLC, Unit 37, St John's Innovation Centre, Cowley Road, Cambridge, CB4 0WS Tel: 01223 421606.

West Midlands Regional Faiths Forum launched

The West Midlands Regional Faith Forum was launched on 17 June in Birmingham. The Forum is an independent body aiming to provide a "meeting place" for the voices of the diversity of faith groups in the Region. The Forum has received funding from the West Midlands Regional Strategic Empowerment Fund, Advantage West Midlands and the West Midlands Regional Assembly.

It has been endorsed by leading figures from different faith communities and aims to:

- Explore issues around faith and regeneration
- Celebrate approaches within faith communities who promote social cohesion
- Promote the participation of faith communities in the life of the region

Speaking at the launch event, Dagmar Waller, Policy Officer for the West Midlands Regional Assembly said: "Faith has a unique offering to make in that it brings a spiritual, moral and ethical dimension to the table - taking a holistic approach to tackling the problems of today's society."

For further information about the work of the Forum contact Dagmar Waller, email: d.waller@wmra.gov.uk or Tel: 0121 678 1054

Local Roundup

Accrington

Blackburn with Darwen Interfaith Council arranged a series of talks called "Learning about the faiths next door" throughout May at St John's with St Augustine's School in Accrington. Each Wednesday evening from 7-28 May a different speaker from the Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and Jewish faiths introduced their religion. The series of talks were designed to combat myths and stereotypes being spread by far-right activists in the area.

Beaminster

The Beaminster One World Fellowship organised a talk and discussion on Asylum Seekers – a Challenge to our Humanity on 24 April. Cilla Lynch, a social worker gave the main presentation in which she highlighted that asylum seekers are keen to make a positive contribution to the multi-ethnic culture of the UK.

Bradford

Bradford Concord Interfaith Society and Leeds Faith Communities Liaison Forum hosted an event on 10 April at the Bradford Interfaith Education Centre to strengthen links between the two initiatives. Rev David Randolph-Horn spoke about the work of the Leeds Forum, in particular with its local authority and other public bodies.

Bristol

Bristol Inter Faith Group hosted an event at the Unitarian Meeting House on 28 April to discuss Dr Jonathan Sacks's book on "The Dignity of Difference". The book was introduced by Michael Romain of the Bristol and West Progressive Synagogue as a Jewish contribution to current inter faith dialogue. Jutta Mueller-Schnurr (German



Lutheran Pastor) and Suaad Walker of the Muslim Cultural Society also offered their perspectives on it.

Croydon

The South London Inter Faith Group arranged a visit to the Nanak Sikh Community Centre and Gurdwara in Croydon on 10 May. About 30 members of the group attended, including Christians and Muslims of whom many had not previously been to a gurdwara.

Derby

Researchers at the University of Derby are undertaking a project examining religious group participation, inter faith infrastructure and capacity-building in Derby. The project aims to identify the most appropriate way for religious groups to be represented on the Derby City Partnership (LSP) and to explore the potential for religious group participation in developments such as the Cultural City and City of Learning initiatives. Members of faith communities and the wider public are invited to contribute to the project by submitting their views. Contact: Religious Group Participation Project, School of Education, Human Sciences and Law, University of Derby, Kedleston Road, Derby DE22 1GB.

Glasgow

The Edinburgh International Centre for World Spiritualities held a conference on Sikh spirituality on 24 May at the Central Gurdwara Singh Sabha in Glasgow. About 200 delegates attended from all over Scotland and from other parts of the UK. The conference was part of a series on the world's spiritual traditions. Previous conferences in the series have included a conference on Baha'i spirituality and on Hindu spirituality held in 2002. The next conference is planned for March 2004 and will focus on Middle Eastern Spirituality and Peace. Further conferences in the series will look at Islamic, Jewish and Christian spiritualities.

London

Brent Inter Faith hosted an inter faith evening music at the London Inter Faith Centre on 17 June. Musicians of eight different faiths made short presentations of devotional and classical music from their traditions.

Manchester

Manchester Interfaith Forum hosted, on 2 July, an event called "The Ambivalence of the Sacred: What Role for Religions in Peacemaking". A talk was given by Dr Philip Lewis of the University of Bradford followed by workshop sessions.

Suffolk

Suffolk Inter Faith Resource held a conference in association with Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Learning and Skills Council and Suffolk Constabulary on "Questions of Identity, Faith and Culture" on 2 April at the Ipswich School. The day was designed to enable people working in public services to meet representatives of faith communities in Suffolk. About 150 people attended of whom half were representing different faith communities and half came from a range of services, including social services; police; judiciary; and health services.

Watford

Watford Inter-Faith Association hosted a lecture by Eddy Canfor-Dumas on "The War Habit and How to Break it" following their AGM on 6 February at the Multi-racial Community Centre in Watford.

Wolverhampton

Wolverhampton Inter Faith group in association with the Satsang Association (UK) organised a day conference on 26 April at Colton Hills School. The main speaker was Sister Ishpriya, from India who spoke about the Hindu Scripture, the Isa Upanishad. Participants from different faiths then discussed the Scripture from their faith perspectives.

INTERNATIONAL UPDATE

Global Inter Faith Survey

The International Interfaith Centre is undertaking a global research project to identify faith and interfaith issues around the world and to help organisations address relevant concerns. Copies of the survey form may be requested from: IIC, 2 Market Street, Oxford OX1 3ET or it can be completed online at: www.interfaith-center.org/rccresearch.htm.

Inter faith gathering at European Capital of Culture

A Europe-wide inter faith gathering took place from 5-9 July in Graz, Austria, the European Capital of Culture for 2003. Several UK inter faith initiatives were represented at the conference, including the Inner Cities Religious Council (ICRC), the Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum and the Leicester Council of Faiths. The Secretary of the ICRC, David Rayner made a presentation at the opening plenary session and ran workshops on inter faith forums. The general impression of the delegates from the UK was that inter faith work here is in advance of other European countries.

The conference, which was held in conjunction with the European Conference of the World Conference on Religion and Peace was the culmination of Project Interfaith Europe. This was initiated at a preliminary conference which took place in Graz in 2001. The Project was the first undertaking of its kind to invite urban politicians and representatives of different religions from all over Europe. The project's goals are:

- to examine the day-to-day lives of members of different religious communities, especially minority groups, in European cities;
- to develop guidelines and suggestions, including models of good practice, based on experience with interreligious dialogue
- to publish them on the Internet in the form of a continuously expandable manual of interreligious cooperation.

DIARY DATES

Local inter faith events

Space only allows one event per organisation to be listed. For details of other events contact the relevant local groups. Events are also listed in the *One Family Newsletter* available from the *World Congress of Faiths*, 2 Market Street, Oxford OX1 3EF.

24 August Edinburgh. The Scottish Inter Faith Council. Launch of a new booklet about the faith communities in Scotland at the Rainy Hall, New College, Edinburgh from 5.30-7.00pm. Contact Tel: 0141 429 4012

8 September, Birmingham Council of Faiths AGM taking place at the Birmingham and Midland Institute, Margaret Street. To be chaired by the Lord Mayor of Birmingham, Cllr John Alden. For more information please call the Birmingham Council of Faiths office on 0121 694 6206 or email birmingham_council_of_faiths@hotmail.com.

8-26 September, Suffolk "Faces of Suffolk" is a touring photographic exhibition which portrays the diversity of the county in a presentation of professional and amateur photographs. From 8-26 September it will be at the Forefront Gallery, Suffolk College, Ipswich and at various other venues until May 2004. For more details contact Gita Banerji at Suffolk Inter Faith Resource on 01473 343661 or at www.sifre.org.uk.

7 September National. European Day of Jewish Culture and Heritage. Open days and special events at synagogues and Jewish centres across the UK. Contact B'nai B'rith UK on Tel: 020 7387 5278 for more information or visit www.jewishheritage.org

10 September, Swindon Inter Faith Group. Discussion on Meditation led by members of the Group. 7.30pm at the Pilgrim Centre, Swindon. Contact Margaret Griffiths Tel: 01793 534923.

14 September Racial Justice Sunday 2003. An information leaflet is available from Churches' Commission for Racial Justice, CTBI, Inter-Church House, 35-41 Lower Marsh, London SE1 7SA. Tel: 020 7523 2121 email: ccrj@ctbi.org.uk

12-19 October, Week of Prayer for World Peace. Information and leaflets available from Trudie Charles on Tel 0117 942 3454. An inter faith gathering to mark the end of the week will be held at the Hounslow Jamia Masjid (Mosque), Wellington Road South, Hounslow, Middx on 19 October at 3pm.

15 October, Interfaith MK. Annual Interfaith Service to be held at the Quaker Centre, Milton Keynes. Contact Zvi Friedman for more information on 01908 560714 or email hzfriedman@aol.com

17 October, Sheffield Interfaith. Annual Interfaith Worship Event, 3pm at Friends Meeting House, 10 St James Street, Sheffield. For more information contact Robert Beard on 0114 255 8037 or email rbeard@simunye.co.uk.

19-26 October One World Week, Moving Stories. Contact Tel: 0118 939 4933 or email: enquiries@oneworldweek.org. Cardiff Interfaith Association are holding a seminar and forum at City United Reformed Church on 30 October. Contact Alan Schwartz for more details on aschwartz@otago.co.uk.

26 October, Cambridge Inter-Faith Group. A Celebration of Community is taking place from 3-4pm at the Unitarian Church. All religious and spiritual groups around Cambridge are invited to attend and actively participate in this event. Contact Rev Andrew Brown on 01223 576 952 or email andrew_james.brown@virgin.net.

26 October, Brighton and Hove Inter Faith Contact Group. UN Inter faith celebration on the theme of "Fresh water" with contributions from different faith communities. The celebration takes place at 3pm at the Quaker Centre, Ship Street, Brighton. For more information please contact Imam Sajid on 01273 722438 or email sajid@imamsajid.com.

11 November, Cardiff Interfaith Association. A seminar entitled "Visions of Peace" will be held at the Temple of Peace at the Cardiff City Council building. For more information please email Alan Schwartz at aschwartz@otago.co.uk.

15 November, Croydon Conference on "Servetus-450 years: Freedom of Science and religion" to be held at Croydon Unitarian Church from 10am-4pm. Sponsored by International Association for Religious Freedom (British Chapter), World Congress of Faiths and Unitarian Interfaith Committee. Speakers include Elizabeth Birtles, Marcus Braybrooke and Andrew Hill. £5 donation at the door, contact Richard Boeke for more details on r.boeke@virgin.net.

Network Website:
www.interfaith.org.uk

Diary dates: Courses, exhibitions, conferences and seminars

15-17 August, Radstock near Bath. Islamic and Hindu Insights on Peace-Making conference at the Ammerdown Conference and Retreat Centre led by Ajit Popat and Bahnoon Karim Agnew. Cost £85 inc meals and accommodation. Contact Tel: 01761 433707 or email: centre@ammerdown.org

4-5 September, Derby. "Promoting Positive Social Cohesion" – 2nd National Colloquium, sponsored by the Institute for Social Cohesion, the Baha'i Community of the UK, the Multi Faith Centre at the University of Derby and the Home Office to be held at the University of Derby. Cost £100 including accommodation and meals/£65 excluding accommodation. Contact the Institute for Social Cohesion Tel: 020 7590 8792 or email: social.cohesion@bahai.org.uk

7-9 September, Cambridge. The Centre for Jewish-Christian Relations "Telling Tales" Conference at Selwyn College, Cambridge. Residential Rate £205/ Non Residential £115. Contact Tel: 01223 741048 email: enquiries@cjcr.cam.ac.uk

8-10 September, Birmingham. Conference on The Place of Humans in the Universe: World Faiths Perspectives being held at the University of Birmingham, Selly Oak. Organised by the Science and Religion Forum in association with the Department of Theology and School of Education, University of Birmingham. Conference fee £155 inc. accommodation and meals, generous bursaries are available. Plus an evening programme on 9 September "How should science affect the teaching of religious education?" Contact Phil Edwards Tel: 0161 762 5219

20 September, Oxford. Following the Annual Meeting of international interfaith organisations, members of the public are invited to discuss inter faith issues with representatives and to hear about the Parliament of the World's Religions in Barcelona in 2004. For more information contact the International Interfaith Centre on 01865 202745 or email iic@interfaith-center.org.

7-9 November, Birmingham. As part of the United College of the Ascension's Encounter and Reflection Programme, the College hosts "The Life We Share" which aims to explore the uses of a new study pack to help Christians gain an understanding of five of Britain's major faiths. Speaker is Dr Elizabeth Harris. Residential fee £90/Non residential £50, contact the College for further details on 0121 415 6810 or email j.marks@bham.ac.uk.

13 November, London. "A Breath of Life", a conference on spirituality and mental health at ORT House Conference Centre, London NW1, organised by the National Institute for Mental Health in England. Fee: £229.13/£135.13 (free spaces for service users

and carers). Contact Pavillion on Tel: 0870 161 3505 or email: info@pavpub.com.

15 November, London. The INFORM winter seminar, "Joining New Religions: Conversion or Coercion?" at the London School of Economics. Cost £30. Contact INFORM on Tel: 020 7955 7654 or email: inform@lse.ac.uk

November- December, London. The Maimonides Foundation annual Jewish-Muslim lecture series taking place at the School for Oriental and African Studies, University of London. Open to students and the general public. For further details contact the Maimonides Foundation on 020 7518 8282 or www.maimonides-foundation.org.

7-13 July 2004, Barcelona, Spain. Council for a Parliament of World Religions. Further information on advance booking at reduced rates is available from: CPWR, P O Box 1630, Chicago, Illinois 60690-1630, USA Tel: 00 1 312 629 2990 email: info@cpwr.org or web: www.cpwr.org

Inter Faith Update is the newsletter of the Inter Faith Network for the UK. It keeps a wide range of organisations and individuals interested in developing good inter faith relations in the UK in touch with UK events and projects with a significant inter faith component.

Please send any contribution of articles and diary dates for consideration for inclusion in the next issue **by 30 September 2003** to:

Bhupinder Singh,
Information Officer,
The Inter Faith Network
8A Lower Grosvenor Place,
London
SW1W 0EN

Tel: 020 7931 7766

Fax: 020 7931 7722

Email: ifnet@interfaith.org.uk

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INTER FAITH

UPDATE

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New report shows rapid rise in local inter faith activity

The Inter Faith Network for the UK has published a major new report: *Local Inter Faith Activity in the UK: A Survey*. The report contains the findings of a six month project recently carried out by the Network with support from a grant by the Community Cohesion Unit of the Home Office. Partners in the project were the Home Office, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Local Government Association.

Rt Revd Tom Butler, Bishop of Southwark and Network Co-Chair said, "This report makes a major contribution to deepening inter faith understanding and cooperation in Britain. It highlights a wealth of

positive inter faith initiatives which are contributing to community cohesion and helping ensure that faith unites and does not divide."

These publications drew on information received for the local inter faith mapping project. The project received a wealth of information from those working with commitment and dedication in various sectors to increase inter faith understanding: local inter faith bodies; faith communities; local authorities; CVSs; RECs SACRES; One World Groups and others.

In the 2001 Census over 76.8% of people in the UK identified themselves

(Continued on page 2)

Subscribing to Inter Faith Update

This newsletter is published three times a year and is available by subscription at £7.50 per year.

To subscribe, send your name and address with a cheque payable to "The Inter Faith Network" to:

Inter Faith Network
8A Lower Grosvenor
Place, London
SW1W 0EN

Further 2001 Census results

Census data from those respondents who wrote in a religious affiliation after marking the "other" box on the Census form are now available from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) for England and Wales and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). The figures for Scotland are not yet separately available. Figures for the number of adherents in England, Wales and Northern Ireland of other member faiths which are linked by the Inter Faith Network are: Baha'is, 4,890; Jains, 15132; Zoroastrians, 3,751.

The figures for these smaller religious groupings may be affected by the fact that 19,431 people ticked the "other" box, but did not "write in" any particular religious affiliation.

Tables showing the complete listing of responses are available from ONS Customer Services on Tel: 01329 813800 and for Northern Ireland from the NISRA web site: www.nisra.gov.uk.

Figures for the number of Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jews, Muslims and Sikhs were released earlier, see *Inter Faith Update* issue 21.



NETWORK NEWS

(...continued from page 1)

with a specific religion. The majority of people in Britain are Christian but there are also over 1.5 million Muslims, half a million Hindus and sizeable communities of Sikhs, Jews and Buddhists as well as of smaller faiths such as the Baha'is, Jains and Zoroastrians.

The fact that so many people of different faiths live in today's UK means that inter faith dialogue is of increasing importance. The report looks at how Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Jews, Buddhists, Jains, Zoroastrians, Baha'is and others are working together to increase inter faith understanding in Britain. It covers the spectrum of local inter faith activity in the UK but has a special focus on local inter faith groups and councils and on how local authorities are working in partnership with these to improve community cohesion.

Local inter faith groups and councils of faiths are important forums for leaders and members of different religions to come together to discuss issues of common concern, to learn more about one another's faith and to co-operate in giving advice on religious issues to local public service providers. They also ensure that key members of the different faiths in a locality meet regularly for routine matters or special functions. These personal links are crucial to ensure rapid and effective response if problems occur such as attacks on places of worship or tension between different communities.

In recent times, local inter faith bodies have had a particularly important role to play in responding to tensions in multi faith towns and cities arising from the impact of overseas events on communities in the UK – notably the impact of the terrorist attacks in the USA of 11 September 2001, military action in Afghanistan, war in Iraq, as well as events more generally in India, in the Middle East, and elsewhere.

The project found that there are now nearly 140 inter faith and multi faith local bodies in the UK. 43% of these have come into existence since the start of 2000. Despite the importance

of inter faith work, the study found that it is significantly under-funded. 82% of local inter faith bodies have no paid staff and most bodies have very small budgets for their important activities.

The report also looks at how local authorities are working to ensure that faith communities can give input to strategic initiatives. It found that 44% of authorities in England and Wales now have an officer responsible for liaison with faith groups and/or for faith issues. Local authorities are also increasingly recognising the contribution that inter faith bodies can make to community cohesion and 13% of local authorities indicate current support of a local inter faith group or council or multi faith forum.

At the same time as the publication of this report, the Inter Faith Network also published a good practice booklet, *Partnership for the Common Good: Inter Faith Structures and Local Government*. This was published in association with the Local Government Association, the Home Office and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and gives guidance for local authorities working to support or set up local inter faith or multi faith structures, bearing particularly in mind the need to ensure the appropriate involvement of faith communities in the context of initiatives such as development of community strategies or the work of Local Strategic Partnerships.

Complimentary copies of the report and good practice booklet were sent to the over 800 respondents who had sent in information for the project.

Copies of *Local Inter Faith Activity in the UK: A Survey* are available from the Network office, priced £8.95 including postage and packing.

The good practice booklet *Partnership for the Common Good* can be found on the Network's website: www.interfaith.org.uk or single copies can be obtained by sending an A4 stamped addressed envelope to the Network office (34 pence second class or 42 pence first class).

NATIONAL UPDATE

Equality and Diversity update

As reported in the previous issue of *Inter Faith Update*, regulations to implement, in relation to race, religion or belief and sexual orientation, the European Directive of December 2000 which covers discrimination on a variety of grounds in the field of employment and training, were approved by both Houses of Parliament in June. They are due to come into effect on 2 December. A legal action is in progress to seek a judicial review of the regulations relating to sexual orientation as these relate to the employment practice of religious organisations.

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) has finalised its guidance for employers and others on the operation of the new regulations, having consulted widely on drafts of this material. The final version is now available on the ACAS website, www.acas.org.uk, and will shortly be published in booklet form. For further information contact ACAS Equality Direct on 08456 003 444.

The Government has been considering for some time the responses which it received to its consultation on *Equality and Diversity: Making it Happen*, published in October 2002, which set out options for a new “single equality body” covering all six strands of discrimination dealt with by the European Directive (age, disability, gender, race, religion and belief and sexual orientation). In a statement to the House of Commons on 30 October, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and Minister for Women, Rt Hon Patricia Hewitt MP, set out the Government’s proposals for establishing a “Commission for Equality and Human Rights”. She said that “the Government has concluded that a single body represents the best option for realising its vision of a fairer, more inclusive and prosperous Britain”.

The sixth report of the Joint [i.e. both House of Commons and House of Lords] Committee on Human Rights, published earlier this year, called for integrated institutional support for human rights and equality and the Government’s statement says that it has been decided “that the new body’s remit should cover the promotion of human rights together with its equality responsibilities”.

The new Commission will, the statement says, “promote an inclusive agenda, underlining the importance of equality for all in society, as well as working to combat discrimination affecting specific groups. It will promote equal opportunities for all and tackle barriers to participation. It will play a key role in building a new, inclusive sense of British citizenship and identity in which shared values of respect, fair treatment and equal dignity are recognised as underpinning a cohesive, prosperous society. It will promote a culture of respect for human rights, especially in the delivery of public services.”

The functions proposed for the new body, as set out in the statement, include “promoting community cohesion through providing support to local initiatives to promote dialogue and understanding between different communities and groups”. Clearly this could have a bearing on the future handling of inter faith relations as part of the broader community cohesion agenda.

The Government plans to publish a White Paper next spring setting out its more detailed proposals for the new Commission. The Government is setting up a “task force” to help prepare these. The statement says that “late 2006” is the earliest that the new body can be established.

The full text of the Secretary of State’s statement can be found at:
www.publications.parliament.uk

The **2002-2003 Annual Review** of the Inter Faith Network for the UK is now available to download from the Network’s web site at: www.interfaith.org.uk

Go ahead for national framework for RE

The Secretary of State for Education and Skills, Rt Hon Charles Clarke MP, has asked the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority to begin work on the development of a national non-statutory framework for Religious Education.

In England and Wales, the RE Curriculum in most schools is set (within current legal requirements) by the relevant local education authority through its Agreed Syllabus Conference and subject to advice by its Standing Advisory Council for RE (SACRE). In aided and foundation schools of a religious character the RE curriculum is set by the faith community in question.

The Secretary of State's initiative follows a period of reflection and consultation on the report produced by the QCA (and published earlier this year) on the feasibility of a framework of this kind, for which there has been substantial support from RE professionals and faith communities. A national framework would reflect current best practice in RE. Earlier this year a number of Churches suggested going beyond this to produce a statutory national syllabus for RE. This has been a more contentious proposal, particularly because of the value which many place on the involvement in syllabus determination of local SACREs.

Against this background, the Secretary of State has concluded as a result of his consultation that the most sensible way forward is to ask the QCA to begin work to develop a national framework, leaving open the possibility that it might, at a later stage, become statutory, but only following further discussion and consultation.

The Secretary of State has also asked officials of the Department for Education and Skills to explore ways in which the existing requirements for collective worship in schools can be clarified, emphasising in particular the existing scope for flexibility in their application. The possibility of changes in the legal requirements for collective worship may be considered at a later stage.

Local Government and Faith Communities

On 14 October, a seminar was held by the Local Government Association (LGA) in London that brought together local authorities and representatives from the Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh communities. The seminar, *Local Government and Faith Communities*, was chaired by Cllr Sir Jeremy Beecham, Chairman of the LGA and Cllr Clare Whelan, Vice-Chair of the LGA's Equalities Executive. It examined some of the issues that are of most concern to faith groups in their dealings with local councils and looked at ways in which local government might involve faith communities more closely in local decision making.

Speakers at the seminar included; Fiona Mactaggart MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Home Office; Brian Pearce, Director of the Inter Faith Network; Jenny Bond of Churches Together in England; Unaiza Malik of the Muslim Council of Britain; Simon Morris of Jewish Care; Sudarshan Bhatia of the National Council of Hindu Temples; and Dr Indarjit Singh of the Network of Sikh Organisations.

Good practice case studies from two authorities which have been engaging with faith groups to the benefit of the wider community were also described by Joe Ahmed-Dobson of the London Borough of Southwark; and Rumman Ahmed of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

The eighty delegates, including local authority officers and faith community representatives, discussed the best ways for faith groups to understand the workings of local authorities and vice versa. It was noted that there is a varied pattern of involvement of faith groups within Local Strategic Partnerships across the country. Other points of discussion included the advantages to local authorities of appointing officers with a faith community liaison brief; and the funding problems of local faith groups.

House of Lords: Latest Proposals

Following its failure to secure consensus in Parliament on a more radical reform of the House of Lords (as demonstrated by a series of votes in February 2003), the Government published a consultation paper in September with its new proposals, which are limited to removing the remaining hereditary peers and putting the Appointments Commission on a statutory basis. Under its proposals, the Commission will in future determine the number and timing of appointments to be made in the House of Lords; select independent members entirely; and oversee party nominations, including vetting them on propriety grounds.

The report of the Royal Commission on Reform of the House of Lords of January 2000 contained recommendations to broaden religious representation in a revised Second Chamber in order to embrace other Christian denominations as well as the Church of England (currently represented by 26 archbishops and bishops), and also other faith communities. It recommended that there should be 26 members “representing the various Christian denominations throughout the UK” and in addition “at any one time at least 5 members... specifically selected to be broadly representative of the different non-Christian faith communities.”

In its White Paper of November 2001, responding to the Royal Commission’s recommendations, the Government did not accept its proposal for formal representation for other denominations and religions, on the basis that the practical obstacles were simply too great “since other denominations and faiths do not have a hierarchical structure which would readily deliver identifiable representatives”. It also noted that there were “many more denominations and faiths than could be accommodated within the overall numbers of faith representatives proposed” by the Royal Commission. The Government said, however, that it believed “that leaders of other denominations and faiths had a significant contribution to make to the Second Chamber” and that “it would expect the Appointments

Bishop Jim Thompson Mourned

It is with deep regret that we record the death of Bishop Jim Thompson, who retired as Anglican Bishop of Bath and Wells in 2001.

Bishop Jim, together with the late Rabbi Hugo Gryn, became a Co-Chair of the Inter Faith Network when this was established in May 1987, their having chaired a series of consultative conferences before this. At the time, Bishop Jim was Moderator of the then British Council of Churches’ Committee on Relations with People of Other Faiths and Bishop of Stepney in east London. Through his broadcasting, particularly on BBC Radio 4’s thought for the Day, he was known to millions. He will be sadly missed.

Commission to reflect this in its recommendations” and proposed in this context that the Church of England’s representation should in future be reduced from 26 to 16.

In its more modest proposals published this September, the Government notes its earlier proposal for reducing the size of the Church of England’s representation in the House of Lords, but points out that “this would have been in the context of a much more fundamental reform than is being proposed at this stage, and probably in the context of a smaller House”. The Government is therefore not now proposing any reduction in the size of the Church of England’s representation. It suggests that the separate issue of how to increase the representation for other Christian denominations and for other faiths is a matter to which the Appointments Commission could be asked to give consideration. It proposes that faith representation “should be one of a range of measures against which the Appointments Commission should assess the suitability of potential independent members” to ensure that “the House of Lords should better reflect the make up of UK society.”

“Constitutional Reform: Next Steps for the House of Lords” can be found at the web site: www.dca.gov.uk/consult/holref.

FCO Multi Faith Week

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) hosted a Multi Faith Week from 7 to 11 October at its Whitehall headquarters. The aim of the week was to help engage with faith communities on foreign policy and to build a better relationship between those communities and the FCO. Events included a multi faith music evening on 7 October and a seminar *Domestic Echoes of Foreign Policy* on 8 October which was opened by the Foreign Secretary, Rt Hon Jack Straw MP.

The Multi Faith Week culminated in a family friendly Faith and Culture Day held at the FCO in Whitehall on 11 October which was open to the public. The day included food from different cultures; music including *bhangra*, gospel choirs, *qawwalis*; and art exhibitions, stalls, a bazaar and various other activities. Several faith community organisations had stands at the Faith and Culture Day, as did the Inter Faith Network.

Home Secretary visits Southall and York

The Home Secretary, Rt Hon David Blunkett MP, visited the Ram Mandir in Southall on 4 September. The Mandir, one of the oldest in the country, has been working to expand its activities in the community over the last few years. After the formal presentations, Mr Blunkett was introduced to several guests, including members of the Mandir and representatives of local Buddhist, Christian, Muslim and Sikh organisations.

The Home Secretary delivered the Heslington Lecture at York University on 30 October 2003. He spoke on the theme *One Nation, Many Faiths - Unity and Diversity in Multi-Faith Britain*. In the lecture he highlighted the role of faith in people's lives and said that faith is vital to community cohesion and race relations. He encouraged faith communities to take part in the political process, saying "They have an important role not just in

building strong communities, but in building active communities... Any government which is interested in connecting with, mobilising, and empowering communities is going to be interested in engaging with faith communities."

The full text of the speech is available at the Home Office website:
www.homeoffice.gov.uk.

Colloquium on social cohesion

The second annual Colloquium on Social Cohesion was held at the University of Derby on 4 and 5 September. The colloquium looked at promoting positive social cohesion and attempted to identify a number of indicators that might measure or quantify social cohesion. One of the workshops held across the two days focused on religion and belief and included an evening visit to a local Sikh gurdwara. The event was organised by the Institute for Social Cohesion of the Baha'i Community of the UK; the Multi Faith Centre at the University of Derby; and the Home Office Community Cohesion Unit. A final report of the Colloquium will be presented to Parliament in 2004.

Faith and Voluntary Action

On 16 September the Institute for Volunteering Research launched a report written by Priya Lukka and Michael Locke with Andri Soteri-Proctor on *Faith and Voluntary Action: Community, Values and Resources*. The report explores how people in different faith communities take part in "volunteering"; what motivates them to volunteer; how their volunteering is organised; how their activities are resourced; and the relationship between faith communities and other local networks.

The report shows that faith communities carry out a wide variety of voluntary activities, and that the communities depend on voluntary action. It notes that communities organise themselves in a variety of ways. The report highlights the interest that Government and other public bodies are taking in the activities of faith communities and the contribution these can make to their local communities in tackling social exclusion. It also notes, however, that public agencies need to do more to inform faith communities about sources of external support available.

The full report is available from the Institute for Volunteering Research priced £12.50 including postage and packing. Tel: 020 7520 8900, email: instvolres@aol.com.

Guide to faith communities in Scotland

The Scottish Inter Faith Council launched “A Guide to Faith Communities in Scotland” at an event hosted by the Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament, George Reid MSP, at Rany Hall in Edinburgh on 24 September. The booklet provides an introduction to each of the major faiths represented in Scotland and also provides information on inter faith initiatives in Scotland. The guide is available from the Scottish Inter Faith Council, St Francis' Centre, 405 Cumberland Street, Glasgow G5 0SE or email: admin@interfaithscotland.org.

Meeting the religious and spiritual needs of NHS patients and staff

On 5 November at St Bartholomew's Hospital in London the Department of Health's Chief Nursing Officer, Sarah Mullally, launched two new guidance documents to help NHS chaplaincy services to reflect the religious diversity of patients and staff, *Meeting the Religious and Spiritual Needs of Patients and*

Staff and Caring for the Spirit: a Strategy for the Chaplaincy and Spiritual Healthcare Workforce.

The Department of Health worked with NHS Chaplains and the Multi-Faith Group for Healthcare Chaplaincy in compiling *Meeting the Religious and Spiritual Needs of Patients and Staff*. It offers guidance to NHS Trusts about providing fair and respectful spiritual care for hospital communities, while also recognising the needs of those of no particular faith. Since the introduction of the Human Rights Act 2000, NHS Trusts are increasingly working with different faith communities to provide representatives of different faiths to visit hospitals and to provide worship spaces for different communities within the healthcare population. The document can be downloaded from the web site: www.doh.gov.uk/chaplain or telephone: 08101 555 455 for a copy.

The second document launched at the event was *Caring for the Spirit: a Strategy for the Chaplaincy and Spiritual Healthcare Workforce*, published by the South Yorkshire Workforce Development Confederation. It is a good practice guide aimed at NHS Chaplains working in multi faith settings. It is available to download at the web site: www.sywdc.nhs.uk.

Archbishop visits Leicester Mandir

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Rt Rev Dr Rowan Williams, visited the Shree Sanatan Mandir in Leicester on 4 November. He met with representatives of a number of Hindu organisations and also guests from different faith communities. In his address he said: “Leicester is something of a beacon in the way it is a model of understanding and a model of engagement. You are fortunate to live in a city where the diversity of all human life is all around”. Other speakers included Ramanbhai Barber, President of the Mandir; Resham Singh Sandhu of the Leicester Council of Faiths; and the Bishop of Leicester, Rt Rev Tim Stevens.

Inter faith in a global age

The International Interfaith Centre hosted a meeting from 20-21 September at Harris Manchester College in Oxford for representatives of the 14 interfaith organisations which make up the International Interfaith Network. On 20 September there was an open afternoon for invitees to meet representatives of the organisations. There was also a presentation by the Council of the Parliament of the World's Religions about the up-coming international conference to be held in Barcelona, Spain from 7-13 July 2004.

Merchant Navy Memorial Day

The Merchant Navy held an inter faith memorial event to mark Merchant Navy Day on 7 September. The event, held at the Tower Hill Memorial in London, included readings and prayers from the different faiths represented. It was led by Rev Dr Davis Craig of the Mission to Seafarers; Rev Malcolm Wiseman, Senior Jewish Chaplain for the Forces; Dr Indarjit Singh, Network of Sikh Organisations; Imam Abdurrahman Al-Shayyal from Durham; and Mr Ron Maddox, Buddhist adviser to the Armed Forces.

Marking the Pope's silver jubilee

Celebrations have been held at the Vatican and around the world to mark the 25th anniversary of the election as Pope of John Paul II who has been personally committed to building good relations with other faith communities. The Papal Nuncio, His Excellency Archbishop Pablo Puente hosted a reception in London on 9 October, which was attended by Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor and as in previous receptions, representatives of other Churches and also of other faith communities.

Inter faith honours

On 14 November the Archbishop of Canterbury received one of the top honours of the Catholic Church for developing and encouraging dialogue between Protestants and Catholics. Dr Rowan Williams is the first Archbishop of Canterbury to be made Knight Grand Cross - the highest grade - of the Royal Order of Francis I. Lady Thatcher was made a Dame Grand Cross for her work in inter faith dialogue.

Foreign Office Minister, Baroness Symons, presented the Sternberg Foundation's Annual Interfaith Medallion Award to Canon Andrew White of the International Centre of Reconciliation at Coventry Cathedral at a ceremony at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on 10 November.

World Congress of Faiths retreat

The World Congress of Faiths held an inter faith retreat from 9-10 September at Fintry House in Surrey. This gave the opportunity for members to reflect on their inter faith work and to look to the future expressing their hopes and desires for a peaceful future. The next retreat will be held from 22-24 July 2004.

Inter faith youth retreat

An inter faith retreat was held from 19-21 September. Thirty-six young people from Baha'i, Brahma Kumari, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, and Sikh faiths attended. The organising team consisted of people from seven different faiths and the retreat had the backing of *respect*, a Timebank initiative with the Prince's Trust and was held at the Brahma Kumaris Global Retreat Centre in Nuneham Courtney, Oxfordshire.

Focus on women's inter faith initiatives

The official launch of the Women's Interfaith Network (WIN) took place on 9 September, at the Royal College of Physicians, in the form of a seminar attended by 160 women from the major religions. The new organisation (which is a separate initiative from the Inter Faith Network) began as a result of a personal initiative by Lady Gilda Levy and Mrs Pinky Lilani to bring women of different faiths together to help combat the stereotypes prevalent in society, especially after the terrorist attacks of September 11 2001.

Speakers at the launch seminar, who included Priya Nair Radhakrishnan, Eve Pollard and Cherie Booth addressed various topics, including the feelings of younger people towards organised religion, the power of the media and the problems of stereotyping. In the afternoon the participants split into workshops and discussed issues which had arisen from the morning session, as well as their own personal concerns and what they felt that WIN could offer them. There was also discussion about the possibility of women starting local groups or helping with WIN in some way. Further information about the Women's Interfaith Network and transcripts of the speeches are available at www.wominet.co.uk.

Women of Faith met in London on 4 November to discuss issues including the role of women in conflict resolution and the impact of war and armed conflict on women and families. The Group is a partner body to the Women's National Commission, which arose out of initial discussions at the United Nations session of the Commission on the Status of Women in New York.

Local Inter Faith Activity in the UK : A Survey (see page 1) features information on a number of women's inter faith dialogue initiatives around the country. For example, a Christian-Muslim Women's Group has been meeting since May 2002 in Leicester; the Daughters of Abraham (London) – a group of Muslim and Jewish women have been meeting regularly for the last six years under the auspices of the Maimonides Foundation; Bradford Interfaith Women for Peace has been meeting monthly for some years; the Thames Gateway Women's Multi Faith Forum has been running in North Kent; and a women's inter faith forum is under discussion in Oldham.

REGIONAL UPDATE

Survey of local religious communities in the North West Region

On 11 November the launch took place on a ferry on the River Mersey in Liverpool of a major report looking at the contribution made to the life of the North West Region by the faith communities: *Faith in the England's Northwest: The Contribution made by Faith Communities to Civil Society in the Region*.

Speakers included the report's author, Monsignor John Devine (Churches' Officer for the North West); Steven Broomhead, Chief Executive of the Northwest Development Agency; Rt Revd James Jones, Bishop of Liverpool; and Dr Khalid Anees of the Muslim Council of Britain. The work for the report was undertaken with the support of the Northwest Development Agency and the Economic and Social Partners Group on the North West Regional Assembly.

The Report contains statistics on the many ways that faith communities are contributing to the life of the North West Region. It looks at how faith groups are serving their neighbourhoods and contributing to culture, education, health, the environment and sport. It also looks at how religious buildings are being used as neighbourhood resources and at issues of funding and use of volunteers.

As part of the project which led to the report, a database has been compiled of all places of worship in the region. This enabled report questionnaires to go to every place of worship of the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Zoroastrian communities in the North West. It is intended to develop, in the near future, a North West Regional Inter Faith Forum.

For further information about the report or regional inter faith work in the North West, contact: Monsignor John Devine by email: John.Devine@nwda.co.uk or on Tel: 01925 400100.

North East directory launched

A new directory *Ethnicity in the North East - An Overview* was launched on 9 October at Newcastle Football Club, with a cultural jamboree featuring dance, music, drama and food from around the world. The directory provides regional information on ethnic minority communities, including facts on religious and cultural diversity and contacts details for community leaders and projects. The directory is the result of a partnership between the Government Office for the North East, the Regional Assembly, One NorthEast, Culture North East, and the Home Office. Speaking at the launch, Veena Soni of the Government Office for the North East said: "This event has been a feast of music, dance, food and drama, highlighting the influence and wealth that so many cultures bring to life in our region". Copies of the directory are available from Veena Soni, Government Office for the North East, Wellbar House, Gallowgate, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 4TD.

Local Roundup

Cardiff

The second annual "United by Lights" event took place at Canton Uniting Church on 22 November. The 250 participants representing six different faith communities enjoyed a meal of Asian and Welsh food provided by the Hindu community. Speakers at the event included Alan Schwartz, who spoke about the work of the Inter Faith Council for Wales. Presentations were followed by performances of song, music and verse from different communities.

London

Barnet. On 16 September the London Borough of Barnet held a conference "Faith in Communities". The Leader of the Council, Councillor Victor Lyon, welcomed local faith leaders, clerics, cabinet members, local councillors and visitors from other parts of the country to the conference. The conference was chaired by Councillor Aba Dunner, Secretary General for the Conference of European Rabbis, and the keynote speaker was Imam Dr Abduljalil Sajid of the Muslim Council for Religious and

Racial Harmony who spoke about the role and importance of inter faith work. Officers leading on Barnet Council's major regeneration discussed how faith communities will help to shape major planning and regeneration schemes in the future and workshops in the afternoon focused on the role of faith groups in the rebuilding and regeneration agenda. Following the conference, consideration is being given to establishing a body to link the faiths in Barnet.

Kensington. The Forum of Faiths in Kensington and Chelsea was officially launched at a reception hosted by the Mayor of Kensington and Chelsea, Cllr Christopher Buckmaster on 9 October 2003 at Kensington Town Hall. The reception was attended by representatives of local faith communities, the leader of the Council, Council Officers and the MP for Kensington and Chelsea. The launch was accompanied by an exhibition on the theme of "Serving the Community", which showed examples of the work that faith communities do in the Borough. For further information contact: Dr Dahbi Skali, Community Relations Section, Tel: 020 7598 4633.

Southwark. The Southwark Multi-Faith Forum was launched at the Damilola Taylor Centre in Peckham on 3 September. The launch event featured performances by Christian gospel singers and Islamic *nasheed* singers and featured a key note address by Simon Hughes, MP for North Southwark and Bermondsey. The event was sponsored by the Metropolitan Police, Southwark Council and the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund.

The main objectives of the Southwark Multi-Faith Forum are to promote better relations between different faith communities; to support religious organisation in the Borough getting involved with projects to improve the quality of life for Southwark residents; and to elect a faith representative to Southwark Alliance, the Local Strategic Partnership. For further information contact the Forum Co-ordinator, Joe Ahmed-Dobson on tel: 020 7525 0510 or email: joe.ahmed-dobson@southwark.gov.uk.

Westminster. Over 200 representatives of different faiths met at the Maria Assumpta Centre, in Kensington Square on 16 November to share and celebrate the ways in which their

(Continued on page 12)

Inter faith profile

Inter Faith Activity in the UK: A Survey highlights the work of local inter faith bodies. This issues Inter Faith Profile is of Zvi Friedman of Interfaith MK (Milton Keynes) who is a long term local inter faith practitioner.

How did you first become involved with the work of Inter Faith MK?

Interfaith MK grew out of a discussion group which formed in Milton Keynes in about 1980. I was a member of the original group. Later, particularly when Rev Murdoch MacKenzie arrived as our second Ecumenical Moderator within the Christian Churches, his encouragement led to the group becoming more formalised and visible - moving from a discussion group to one that supported a greater role for inter faith work in the life of the new city. When I retired from full-time work in 1997 I took on the role of secretary and convenor of IFMK.

What do you see as the main achievements of Interfaith MK?

Chiefly, to ensure that the minority faith communities are visible within the wider community and contribute to the life of the wider community, in particular by regular participation in events such as the Civic Service and the Peace Pagoda anniversary. We have also had a significant role on the Milton Keynes SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education), especially in producing the recent Agreed Syllabus. The Group also contributes a *Faith Matters* column to the local Sunday newspaper to which people of different faiths contribute in rotation. I believe that we have raised the spiritual profile within Milton Keynes.

Is work with the media important for local inter faith bodies?

With few exceptions, we have welcomed the attention of the media, both local newspapers and the local BBC radio station, Three Counties Radio. Along with inter faith groups from the other two counties (Bedfordshire and

Hertfordshire) we have a regular monthly radio slot. It's been our position that publicity for inter faith work should be encouraged, despite the frequent difficulty of drawing a line between religious and political matters. It's important, of course, to find articulate representatives.

How does your faith inform your work in the inter faith field?

My faith tells me to 'welcome the stranger' - a general encouragement to be sympathetic towards those who genuinely seek a better life in the UK. I've usually found that being a Jew is an advantage in the inter faith field because Jews have been through the process of adaptation to British society that now faces many other minority communities. As a child, I had personal experience of this process and I believe that Jews have, in general, adapted successfully and therefore we have some understanding of the process and the problems.

How do you see the work of local inter faith groups developing in the future?

Our experience in Interfaith MK has been that the statutory authorities (local government, police, NHS, schools and others), while consulting directly with faith communities, also find it helpful to have an inter faith organisation as a bridge into the needs and customs of the different faith groups. Given the resurgence of religion as a badge of identity in some communities, this role must increase.

So far we have received no funding from statutory bodies and have operated due to the generosity of a local supporter. However, it seems inevitable that inter faith bodies will have to become closer to statutory authorities, and those authorities will need to budget for some support for inter faith work.

Visit The Inter Faith Network's web site at: www.interfaith.org.uk

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various religions hand on their faith and traditions to younger members. Organised by Westminster Interfaith, an agency of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Westminster, the event attracted people from Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Zoroastrian faiths. The event was part of Westminster Interfaith's "Celebrating Differences" series and was subtitled "Bringing up our Young People in the Faith".

Nelson

As a contribution to "One World Week", Nelson and Brierfield Building Bridges organised a display of collages produced by local school children on the Week's key themes of diversity and poverty. After a launch in Brierfield Peace Garden, the display traveled around various schools and libraries in Pendle. Participants included the staff and pupils from local schools, Pendle Borough Council, the Mayor of Pendle and the Mayor of Brierfield. It was arranged by Building Bridges in conjunction with Pendle Borough Council and Lancashire Children's Fund.

Sheffield

An Inter faith service to commemorate Hiroshima Day was held at the Peace Gardens in Sheffield in August. It was attended by representatives from the Baha'i, Muslim, Pagan, Jewish, Unitarian, Quaker, Brahma Kumari and Buddhist communities. Sheffield Peace Forum organised the event and Sheffield Interfaith arranged the service. Sheffield Interfaith also ran a stall at the Abbeyfield Multicultural Festival held in July at Abbeyfield Park. The festival was organised by Green City Action and contributions ranged from music and dancing to stalls and workshops run by a wide range of political, ecological and community welfare groups.

Watford

The Watford Inter-Faith Association (WIFA), in association with other community groups, organised a "community cultural arena" to illustrate communities working together at Watford's Rainbow Festival in Cassiobury Park in July. A range of religious and cultural groups were brought together in two large performance and exhibition tents. In September, WIFA hosted a meeting of the

Three Counties Interfaith Network at Watford Town Hall, bringing together inter faith groups from Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire. The main speaker was John Battle MP.

INTERNATIONAL UPDATE

Rome meeting of Ministers discusses inter faith dialogue

A conference of Ministers of the Interior of EU Member and Accession States took place in Rome on 30 and 31 October at the invitation of the Italian Presidency of the European Union. Its theme was "Inter faith dialogue as a social cohesion factor in Europe and as an instrument of peace in the Mediterranean area".

The Home Office Minister for race equality, community policy and civil renewal, Fiona Mactaggart MP, reported on the pattern of inter faith dialogue and cooperation in the UK and also on the dialogue between faiths and government at both national and local level. The Minister stressed the involvement of all the UK's major faiths in these twin dialogues and underlined the importance of this to community cohesion. In a separate presentation, the Rt Revd Christopher Herbert, Bishop of St Albans and Chair of the Council of Christians and Jews, representing the Anglican Church, spoke of the great importance of inter faith dialogue and of the lessons that can be learned from the longstanding dialogue between Jews and Christians. He stressed that dialogue between all faiths lies at the heart of Europe's future.

Second meeting of the European Council of Religious Leaders

Members of the European Council of Religious Leaders (ECRL), met in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina from 30 September to 1 October and signed a commitment to multi-religious cooperation for peace and justice in Europe and in



the world. In the statement they called upon the Inter-Governmental Conference meeting in Rome, to ensure legal mechanisms in the European Constitution for open, transparent and regular dialogue between the EU and European religious organizations.

Participants at the meeting from the UK included Bhai Sahib Bhai Mohinder Singh, Chairman of the Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha; Mr. Jehangir Sarosh, Moderator of WCRP Europe; and Shaykh Ibrahim Mogra of the Muslim Council of Britain.

United Kingdom - Sierra Leone Concordat

The World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP) UK Chapter signed a Concordat with the Sierra Leone Chapter of Religions for Peace on 17 November. The two organisations aim to work together for the purpose of friendship; shared development and mutual support in their work towards securing sustainable peace in Africa and Europe. The Concordat was signed at the London Inter Faith Centre by Dr Pauline Webb and Rev Fergus Capie for WCRP (UK) and at the West African Peace Forum in Freetown, Sierra Leone by Bishop J C Humper and Alimany P Koroma on behalf of the Sierra Leone Chapter.

RESOURCES

New pictorial calendar from Shap

The listing of religious festivals and holy days published each year by the Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education is widely used in the educational field and in many other sectors of British life. In addition to the popular wallchart and booklet explaining the festivals of the different faiths the Working Party has now also published a pictorial wall calendar for 2004 on the theme of religious festivals. A photograph depicting a different faith community is featured for each month of the calendar. Both calendars are available from: Shap Working Party, P O Box 38580, London SW1P 3XF. The pictorial calendar is

priced £6.50, while the Shap Calendar (wallchart and booklet) is £5.20. Full details are available on the new Shap website: www.shap.org.

Activities guidelines for Holocaust Memorial Day

The theme for Holocaust Memorial Day 2004 is "From the Holocaust to Rwanda: Lessons Learned and Lessons Still to Learn". A set of local activities guidelines have been released for organisers of local events. These can be downloaded from the web site: www.holocaustmemorialday.gov.uk or obtained by contacting tel: 0870 240 1180. Organisers of events marking the day can also list details of their events at the web site. The National Holocaust Memorial Day event for 2004 will be hosted by Belfast City Council on 27 January at the Waterfront Hall, Belfast.

Building E-Bridges

A new resource book for teachers, *Building E-Bridges* (ISBN 1-904024-54-8), by Julia Ipgrave was published in October by Christian Education Publications. It sets out a model for inter faith dialogue by email that can be adapted by any school. The book costs £8.00 and is available from RE Today Services. Email sales@retoday.org.uk for further information or ring 0121 472 4242.

The Long Dark Shadow

Plymouth Religious and Cultural Resource Centre has published a booklet and CD "*The Long Dark Shadow*". These tell the story of Peter Lee, a second generation Holocaust survivor. Available for a suggested donation of £10.00 from the Centre. For further details email prcrc@plymouth.gov.uk or ring 01752 254 438.

SCM inter faith feature

The Autumn 2003 edition of *Movement*, the magazine of the Student Christian Movement, contains a special feature, "Many voices: living and working together in a multi-faith world" with contributions from members of different faiths. Further information from scm@movement.org.uk or call 0121 471 2404.

Special offer on selected Inter Faith Network Publications
10% off all pre-paid orders for these Network Publications

Time to Talk: Faiths at the Table of Dialogue in Today's UK Report of the 2003 National Meeting, looking at the importance of dialogue between the faith communities in the UK.
 ISBN 1 902906 09 8 Price: £3.00

Community Cohesion: A New Agenda for Inter Faith Relations? Report of the 2002 National Meeting, exploring the role of faith in the community cohesion agenda.
 ISBN 1 902906 08 X. Price: £3.00

Faith and Service to the Community 2001 National Meeting Report, looking at the role of faith in community service projects.
 ISBN 1 902906 07 1. Price: £2.75

Inter Faith Co-operation, Local Government and the Regions: Councils of Faith as a Resource for the 21st Century Report on the June 2000 conference held in association with the Inner Cities Religious Council. Published 2000
 ISBN 1 902906 05 5. Price: £3.50.

Inter Faith Issues and the RE Curriculum Report on the June 2001 seminar held in association with the National Association of SACREs. Examining issues and practicalities of introducing inter faith issues into the curriculum. Published 2001 ISBN 1 902906 06 3 Price £5.95

The Quest for Common Values
 Report of a seminar looking at initiatives aiming to find shared values to provide a secure moral foundation for a multi faith society
 Published 1997 ISBN 0 9517432 7 9
 Special Price £2.00

Religions in the UK Directory 2001-2003

A comprehensive directory providing an introduction to the faith communities in the UK, complete with listings of local places of worship and faith organisations. Edited by Professor Paul Weller and published by the Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby in association with the Inter Faith Network.

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DIARY DATES

Local inter faith events

Space only allows one event per organisation to be listed. For details of other events contact the relevant local groups. Local inter faith events are also listed in the One Family Newsletter available from the World Congress of Faiths, c/o London Inter Faith Centre, 125 Salisbury Road, London NW6 6RG

6 December, Oxford. International Interfaith Centre. Launch of Directory of Faith Communities in Oxford and an exhibition photos and writings from the Centre's "Through Another's Eyes" project. 2.00pm-6.00pm at Oxford Town Hall. Contact: Tel: 01865 202745 or email: iic@interfaith-center.org

9 December, Hampstead Interfaith Group is hosting a lecture by Dr Zaki Badawi, Principal of the Muslim College, on the "Principles and Practice of Sharia Law" at 8pm, Hampstead Interfaith Group. Contact Eva Tucker at 63b Belsize Park Gardens, London NW3 4JN.

13 December Nelson and Brierfield Building Bridges. Members of faith communities in Pendle are hosting an Eid-Christmas party at 6.30pm in the Brierfield Community Centre, Nelson, Lancashire. Please phone to confirm venue. Contact Damian Duggan, Tel: 01282 719303.

15 December, Bristol Inter Faith Group is holding a Midwinter Circle, with stories, poetry and music as an inter faith celebration at 7.30pm, Bristol Unitarian Meeting, Surrey Lodge, Brunswick Square, Bristol. Contact Tel: 01454 313042 or 0117 9636171.

31 December, Bradford Concord Interfaith Society. Vigil for Peace from 12 noon – 1pm at Columba House, 163 Horton Grange Road, Bradford BD7 2BN. Shared reflections and readings will be followed by a shared lunch. Contact Tel: 01274 731674.

13 January, Merseyside Inter-Faith Group. Week of Prayer event, "The World Uniting in Prayer", with members of the Liverpool Focolare, at 7.45pm in the Focolare Centre, 9 Lance Lane, Wavertree (rear entrance). Further details from Canon Michael Wolfe on Tel: 0151 733 1541.

15 January, Kenton Inter Faith Discussion Group. Talk on "Peace in the Middle East" by Rev Fergus O'Connor. 7.45pm at the Mothers Room, All Saints Church, Kenton Road, Harrow. Contact: Sister Elisabeth on Tel: 020 7272 8048

18 January, Birmingham Council of Faiths. Medical Ethics Panel. Discussion of medical ethics from the point of view of different faiths at Graham Street Gurdwara (Jewellery Quarter). 1.00pm for a meal and tour of the building before the panel. Contact Ann and Yann Lovelock on 0121 449 6402.

1 February, Southall, London. Dialogues at De Nobili will be hosting Monawar Hussain speaking on "Living with Diversity". 2.30-4.3pm at 6 Osterley Park Road, Southall. Contact Tel: 020 8571 1833.

8 February, Bath Interfaith Group is hosting the Mayor's Multi-faith Event at 3.00pm, The Guildhall, Bath. Further details from Shelagh James on Tel: 01225 422252.

29 February, Friends of Westminster Interfaith are arranging a visit to Neasden Temple in London. Further details from Westminster Interfaith on Tel: 020 7361 4740.

16 March, Huddersfield Interfaith Council is holding an Interfaith Celebration of Faith and Culture at 7.00pm. Further details from Rev Mel Garside on Tel: 01484 424669.

The Inter Faith Network for the UK

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Diary dates:**Courses, exhibitions, conferences and seminars**

11 December, World Congress of Faiths. Event to mark Human Rights Day, 1pm, Unitarian House, 1-6 Essex Street, Strand, London, WC2. Contact World Congress of Faiths, Tel: 01932 855400.

December-March, Glasgow. St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art is holding a series of free seminars called "Faith to Faith" exploring different faith traditions. 13 December-Discovering Pagan traditions; 24 January-Discovering Chinese faiths; 28 February-Discovering Scottish folklore; and 27 March-Discovering African religions. All from 2-4 pm. To book call 0141 553 2557.

15 December, London. Council of Christians and Jews. "Islam and Dialogue" panel discussion at 2.30pm-4.00pm (tea at 2pm). Panellists will include Imam Ibrahim Mogra. £7.50 CCJ members, £10 non-members. Payment by cheque of credit card to CCJ, 5th Floor, Camelford House, 89 Albert Embankment London SE1 7TP or contact: Rachel@ccj.org.uk

21 January, London Inter Faith Centre. Lecture on "New Religious Movements" by Dr Eileen Barker OBE, Professor of Sociology, London School of Economics. At 7.30pm, the London Inter Faith Centre, 125 Salisbury Road, NW6 6RG. Contact tel: 020 7604 3053 or email: info@londoninterfaith.org.uk

27 January, Holocaust Memorial Day. For a listing of events contact telephone: 0870 240 1180 or see www.holocaustmemorialday.gov.uk

31 January, 10.30am – 3.00pm and 22 February, 9.45am-2.15pm, London. Council of Christians and Jews. "Questioning Identity? Our Response in a Difficult World". Rabbi Helen Freeman and Rev Liz Griffiths. 31 January - West London Synagogue, 34 Upper Berkeley St., London W1; 22 February – St Martins in the Fields, Trafalgar Sq. Both days: £14/£7.50 concession; one day: £8/£4.50. Contact: cjrelations@ccj.org.uk or see www.ccj.org.uk

26 February, Birmingham. The Centre for the Study of Global Ethics and the World Faiths Development Dialogue. Lecture on "Faith in the Global Economic Order-Response of Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists and Christians" by Dr Vineeta Shanker of the World Faiths Development Dialogue. 4.30pm, Centre for the Study of Global

Ethics, University of Birmingham. Contact Maggie Clay on Tel: 0121 415 8352 or email: wfdd@btinternet.com

27 February – 7 March, The Edinburgh International Centre for World Spiritualities and other organisations. Series of events on the subject of Middle Eastern spirituality and peace. A conference on the main theme will be held on 4 March; a one day workshop on 5 March; an Interfaith Spiritual Retreat from 5-7 March; and a Middle Eastern themed One World Peace and Justice Concert on 6 March. Contact Neill Walker on Tel: 0131 331 4469 or email: njwalk1300@hotmail.com

7-13 July 2004, Barcelona, Spain. Council for a Parliament of World Religions. Further information is available from: CPWR, P O Box 1630, Chicago, Illinois 60690-1630, USA Tel: 00 1 312 629 2990 email: info@cpwr.org

Inter Faith Update is the newsletter of the Inter Faith Network for the UK. It keeps a wide range of organisations and individuals interested in developing good inter faith relations in the UK in touch with UK events and projects with a significant inter faith component.

Please send any items and diary dates for consideration for inclusion in the next issue by **30 January 2004** to:

Bhupinder Singh,
Information Officer,
The Inter Faith Network
8A Lower Grosvenor Place
London SW1 W 0EN

Tel: 020 7931 7766
Fax: 020 7931 7722
Email: ifnet@interfaith.org.uk
Website: www.interfaith.org.uk

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INTER FAITH

UPDATE

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UK faiths criticise French ban on religious symbols in schools

UK faith communities have expressed concern over the passing of a law by the French Government on 10 February banning the wearing of religious clothing and symbols in state schools. The ban has been under consideration for some time.

Representatives of the Muslim and Sikh communities have made their strong views against the ban clear at meetings with French officials in Paris and in London at the French Embassy, highlighting how their communities will be affected by the ban. There have been demonstrations against it in

London outside the French Embassy and in Paris.

In recent weeks several faith leaders including the Archbishop of Canterbury have made statements urging the French Government to re-consider the ban.

Speaking at a reception hosted by the Muslim community in December Home Office Minister Fiona Mactaggart said, "Britishness today is not homogeneous. It is evolving and is as rich as the different people in Britain. British Muslims have consistently shown how it

(Continued on page 3)

Subscribing to Inter Faith Update

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Home Office Review Report Completed

As reported in Issue 22 of *Inter Faith Update*, the new Faith Communities Unit set up in the Home Office has been taking forward the Government's review of the patterns of its consultation with faith communities and their representation at national events. The Steering Group for the Review, chaired by the Home Office Minister, Ms Fiona Mactaggart, approved the terms of its report at its fourth meeting on 2 February. There have been eight meetings of the Working Group. Both of these two Groups included representatives of Government Departments and of faith communities.

The report will review existing arrangements for consultation between individual Government Departments and faith communities and set out "good practice" guidelines on this; make recommendations to faith communities on how to make the consultation process with central Government more effective; look at consultation by central Government at regional and local level; review arrangements for the representation of faith communities at national events; and consider the adequacy of existing central machinery for consultation between Government and faith communities. It is anticipated that the report will be published towards the end of March.



NETWORK NEWS

Meeting Of Faith Communities Consultative Forum

Issue 22 of *Inter Faith Update* reported the first meeting of the Faith Communities Consultative Forum established within the framework of the Network. This has evolved from earlier meetings of faith community representative bodies in Network membership.

At a meeting of the Forum in London on 1 December, Ms Fiona Mactaggart, the Home Office Minister with responsibility for faith community matters, offered her reflections on the Home Office Review of the Government's engagement with faith communities. She said that "the development of a closer relationship between central Government and faith communities has been a learning experience for both sides. The Government wants to have a closer engagement with faith communities which bring together large numbers of citizens who have an important contribution to make to society". She said that the setting up within the Home Office of a Faith Communities Unit, taken together with the recent Review, were designed to help this process. She added that "the Government expects the views of faith communities to be expressed with candour. Consultation does not always lead to agreement and there will be disagreement from time to time between Government and faith communities on some issues. It is quite right for these disagreements to be clearly expressed,

whether from the perspective of faith communities or of the Government. Effective consultation machinery needs to make people feel safe in expressing their views robustly to one another." She emphasised the need for mechanisms whereby the voices of women and of young people in faith communities can be heard better. She spoke of the joy of representing, as MP for Slough, a richly diverse local community and said that her practical experience as MP for this constituency had underlined for her the importance of personal encounter and action at a local level and informed the way she was approaching her work as a Minister.

The meeting also heard a presentation from Debbie Gupta of the Women and Equality Unit in the Department for Trade and Industry on the process for drawing up the Government's White Paper on the proposed Commission for Equality and Human Rights, and considered the report published last June by the House of Lords Select Committee on Religious Offences and the Home Office's response to this, which had just been published.

More on these issues will be found on page 6.

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NATIONAL UPDATE

(Continued from page 1)

is possible to be British, Muslim and proud. There has been a long running controversy in France both within the state education system and nationally about symbols and the role of faith in a secular society. This is a debate we had a long time ago, and with our very different traditions and with sensitivity displayed by all faiths, we have been able to find within our own culture a way of celebrating diversity without controversy."

In a written statement in February, Foreign Office Minister Mike O'Brien said "In Britain we are comfortable with the expression of religion. Integration does not require assimilation."

The Network's National Meeting in London on 28 June will have as its theme "Inter faith relations: the UK in Europe".

In England and Wales school governing bodies are responsible for deciding on policy on school uniforms. But the advice of the Department for Education and Skills to school governors is that it is not appropriate "that any pupil should be disciplined for non-compliance with a school uniform policy which results from them having to adhere to a particular cultural, race or religious dress code."

There have been two cases in separate schools in Luton this year over items of clothing worn by Muslim students being banned by the head teachers concerned. In one case, involving the *hijab* (headscarf), the ban was quickly reversed by the school's governors. The other case, involving the *jilbab* (ankle length robe) is to be the subject of a court hearing.

Visit The Inter Faith Network's web site at: www.interfaith.org.uk

Holocaust Memorial Day

Northern Ireland hosted the UK's 4th Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) Commemoration which took place at Belfast's Waterfront Hall on 27 January. As 2004 is the 10th anniversary of the genocide in Rwanda which resulted in the deaths of up to a million people, the HMD theme for 2004 was 'From the Holocaust to Rwanda; lessons learned, lessons still to learn'.

HMD events took place around the country and many of these involved different faith groups. Some had active involvement from local inter faith organisations. For example, a service hosted by Rochester Cathedral was held in conjunction with the town's inter faith group and in Leicester the Mayor attended a multi cultural evening organised by the Leicester Council of Faiths. Among religious events with an HMD theme was BBC R4's Sunday Worship programme on 28 February which came from the West London Synagogue where Rabbi Mark Winer shared his pulpit with the Anglican Bishop of London, Richard Chartres.

Details of the national commemoration and many local events can be found on the official HMD website: <http://www.holocaustmemorialday.gov.uk>

CCJ Statement

The Joint Presidents of the Council of Christians and Jews issued a statement on 27 January, Holocaust Memorial Day, condemning anti-Semitism and the "politics of hate" in all its forms. In the statement, they note that the good relations between Britain's Christian and Jewish leaders have helped set the tone for tolerance and respectful diversity more widely. Their statement celebrates the contribution of the international Jewish community to "the conversation of mankind" and speaks of the calling of Jews and

Christians, as well as other faith communities, to work towards achieving dignity and respect for all people. The Presidents note, however, a resurgence in Europe and around the world of attacks on Jewish people, and call on others to join their pledge not to permit anti-Semitism to “stain our continent’s future as it has our past”. This involves the rejection of all forms of racism, prejudice and xenophobia as well as “the misuse of religion and religious language” in political argument. The statement also includes the expression of a deep longing for justice, peace and reconciliation in the Holy Land. For the full text see <http://www.ccj.org.uk>.

Figures released some days later by the Jewish Community Security Trust showed that 2003 saw the second highest annual figure for anti-Semitic incidents in Britain since records began in 1984. For 2003 the number of incidents was 375, up by 7% on the previous year, which was itself 15% higher than in 2001.

The Passion of the Christ

A private screening of *The Passion of the Christ*, a controversial new film directed by Mel Gibson took place some days before its general release begins on 1 March. The portrayal of the Jewish authorities of Jesus’ time in the film has caused deep disquiet among members of the Jewish community. It has prompted fears that decades of inter faith work aimed at countering anti-Judaism will be undermined. Some Christians have welcomed the film although others have criticised it for drawing on dubious non-Biblical sources.

Attacks on places of worship

Attacks on churches, gurdwaras, mosques, synagogues and temples have occurred in a number of areas in the last few months. Among these was an attack on the Sri Ram Mandir in Wembley on 25 October, the day of Diwali, when a young intruder grabbed the microphone

and began abusing Hindu beliefs and deities. The other intruder lifted the consecrated statue of Ram and threw it to the ground, breaking its arm. The perpetrators, who claimed to be acting in the name of a Christian group, were arrested and charged but were in one case only fined £400 and in the other jailed for 4 months. The Hindu-Christian Forum issued a statement at the start of January deploring this situation, affirming respect for each other’s faith, and asking the Government to provide full protection to places of worship and to amend the law so that people who carry out such acts can be more adequately punished.

The Director of Public Prosecutions, Ken Macdonald QC, met with members of the local Hindu community after the court case was concluded to discuss the basis for the charges the prosecution had opted to pursue. Following a meeting between the Director of Public Prosecutions, some of the CPS’ policy staff and representatives from the Hindu community the CPS has agreed to hold twice-yearly discussions with them and to appoint an independent Hindu adviser to the London Criminal Justice Board.

CPS consults on racist and religiously motivated crime

Issue 22 of *Inter Faith Update* reported on the new policy statement on racist and religiously motivated crime by the Crown Prosecution Service. People from minority ethnic communities and faith communities across the North West region were consulted about racist and religiously motivated crime at a conference hosted by the Crown Prosecution Service on 10 January. The five CPS North West Areas (Cheshire, Merseyside, Greater Manchester, Lancashire and Cumbria) issued an open invitation to minority ethnic and faith communities in their areas to come along to the event to find out about the prosecution of these crimes and to give their opinions on the new policy.

The CPS policy document can be found at <http://www.cps.gov.uk/home/PressArchive/121-03.htm>.



The latest CPS Racist Incident Monitoring Scheme Report (RIMS) is due to be published in the next two months. For the first time this annual report will include a section on religiously aggravated offences (based on finalised cases completed between 14 December 2001, when the new offences were introduced, and 31 March 2003). Cases completed from 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004 will be covered in a report later in the year and will cover the same twelve month reporting period.

CRE's Safe Communities Initiative

A leaflet is now available from the Commission for Racial Equality describing its Safe Communities Initiative launched last year. The text of the leaflet can be found on the CRE's website at www.cre.gov.uk.

The aim of the initiative is to provide information and advice on promoting good community relations and to help prevent and resolve disputes or tensions as early as possible. It will draw on successful work that is being done in this field; identify the most effective community relations projects and promote their approaches as widely as possible; and serve as a source of expertise and knowledge for all communities and for local and national organisations working for them. One of the CRE's aims in setting up the initiative is to encourage people to acknowledge, discuss and appreciate their differences and to prevent relations between communities and individuals being harmed by ignorance, prejudice or fear. Further information is available from Dal Babu at the CRE on 020 7939 0115.

CRE Appointments

At the end of January the Commission for Racial Equality appointed Mohammed Aziz, of the Muslim community, and Julia Chain, of the Jewish community, as part time Commissioners.

The CRE have also just announced the appointment of their first Senior Policy Officer for Religion and Belief, Priya Lukka, who will be familiar to many in the inter faith world for her previous work on faith and volunteering.

New measures to prevent workplace discrimination

As foreshadowed in earlier issues of *Inter Faith Update*, new legislation to prevent discrimination in the workplace on grounds of sexual orientation or of religion or belief have come into force. The Sexual Orientation regulations came into force in Great Britain on 1 December and the Religion or Belief regulations on 2 December. They apply to all employers and businesses whatever their size and whether in the public or private sector. The regulations cover recruitment, terms and conditions, pay, promotion, transfers and dismissals and apply across Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales). Legislation outlawing discrimination on grounds of religion has been in existence in Northern Ireland for some years.

The Regulations implement the relevant strands of the European Employment Directive adopted in late 2000 outlawing discrimination on grounds of race, gender, sexual orientation, religion or belief, disability and age in employment and vocational training. Amendments to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 implementing the Directive are due to come into force in October 2004 and new legislation outlawing discrimination on age grounds by the end of 2006.

Jacqui Smith, Deputy Minister for Women and Equality said: "We have long had laws to prevent discrimination in the workplace against women and on grounds of race – these new measures bring about much wider equality. For the very first time we are making discrimination unlawful on grounds of sexual orientation and religion or belief, in workplaces in England, Scotland and Wales. Unfair discrimination in employment must not be tolerated. People should not be denied jobs, suffer victimisation or harassment, because of prejudice."

Planning for new Commission for Equality and Human Rights

A “task force” was established in December to advise the Government on the creation of the proposed new Commission for Equality and Human Rights. Chaired by Jacqui Smith, Deputy Minister for Women and Equality, it will help draw up detailed proposals for inclusion in the consultative White Paper which the Government plans to publish in April.

Three members (sharing two seats) have a particular interest in faith community concerns. They are Mohammed Aziz, of the British Muslim Research Centre; Rev John Kennedy, Co-ordinating Secretary for Church and Society at Churches Together in Britain and Ireland; and Brian Pearce, Director of the Inter Faith Network. The Executive Director of the British Humanist Association, Hanne Stinson, is also a member of the “task force.” A full list of its members can be found at www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk.

Papers circulated to the members of the Task Force for discussion are available in advance of its meetings and notes of its meetings and other material flowing from them are also available on the same website. It is therefore possible for a much wider range of organisations and individuals to keep in touch with the proceedings of the “task force” and, if they so wish, to contact its members about its work or to approach the Department for Trade and Industry direct.

Select Committee on Religious Offences in England and Wales

As reported in Issue 22 of *Inter Faith Update*, the report of the House of Lords Select Committee on Religious Offences in England and Wales was published in June last year. It contained a detailed analysis of the current law relating to religious offences. It

examined the case for introducing a new offence of incitement to religious hatred; reviewed old common law offences, including blasphemy, and various statutory provisions, including the Ecclesiastical Courts Jurisdiction Act of 1860 and considered whether there is a case for repealing these, leaving them unchanged or modernising them.

In December the Home Office gave their response to the Select Committee’s report. This confirms that the Government remains sympathetic to the idea of legislating to create a new offence of incitement to religious hatred, as it tried to do in the context of the Anti-Terrorism Bill in the autumn of 2001 (from which it was dropped following opposition in the House of Lords). It says that it has no immediate plans to reintroduce the proposal but will consider doing so if an opportunity arises for doing so. Meanwhile, it will listen carefully to any further debates on this subject.

On the blasphemy law the Government’s position is that it wants to listen to the arguments (on what the Select Committee’s report shows is a rather difficult and contested issue). The Home Secretary has made it clear that he personally does not favour the extension of the law on blasphemy to other faiths and is attracted by the idea of repealing it but sees a need for a full debate to inform the way forward. The Select Committee says in its report that it is doubtful whether a prosecution brought under the present blasphemy law would now be successful, because there could be an objection to this on human rights grounds, on the basis that the blasphemy law is a discriminatory piece of legislation since it only protects the beliefs of the Church of England (and those of other Churches and other faiths only insofar as these overlap with them). Therefore, the existing law may be symbolic rather than having any practical force. Even so, some attach importance to this.

The Government endorses the report’s view that “those of religious faith deserve the best protection the law will allow, including protection for their places and rites of religious observance” but comments that it is unclear whether the Ecclesiastical Courts Jurisdiction Act in practice addresses conduct not covered by other criminal offences. It says that if the

opportunity arises for reform of the law in the areas covered by the report it will look carefully at the case for retaining or updating the Act. The full text of the Home Office's response can be found at www.official-documents.co.uk/document/cm60/6091/6091.pdf.

The Select Committee's report and the Government's response to it were discussed at the meeting of the Network's Faith Communities Consultative Forum on 1 December (see page 2) and subsequently at a further ad hoc meeting on 4 February arranged by the Network to enable representatives of faith community organisations to discuss further their position on the issues covered in the report. These meetings showed considerable support for early legislation on incitement to religious hatred, although views on the blasphemy law were more varied.

A debate in the House of Lords on the Select Committee's report and the Government's response to it is awaited.

Commission on Urban Life and Faith

The Church of England has set up a Commission on Urban Life and Faith, to look into the state of urban life in England and to see what progress Church and state are making in improving life in the cities; to mark the changes made by de-industrialisation, population movement and globalisation; to reflect on the challenge God is making to the Church and the nation; and to offer a new vision of the Church in the city. The Commission will also be seeking to "demonstrate the effectiveness of the Churches' and other faiths' work in deeply disadvantaged areas.". The Commission is chaired by Baroness Rev Kathleen Richardson, of the Methodist Church and Moderator of the Churches' Commission for Inter Faith Relations. It includes representatives of other Christian denominations and also has a Muslim member. The appointment of a Jewish member is awaited. Further information is available by sending an email to: culs@c-of-e.org.uk

National Non-Statutory Framework for RE

As reported in Issue 23 of *Inter Faith Update*, Charles Clarke, the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, has asked the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority to develop a national non-statutory framework for Religious Education in England. A Steering Group and a Writing Group for this exercise have been established and it is anticipated that a consultative draft of the framework document will be published this spring.

Organ donation and religious perspectives

UK Transplant, an agency of the NHS, has recently published a new leaflet, *Organ Donation and Religious Perspectives*, which offers a brief guide to religious viewpoints regarding organ donation in Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism. The leaflet is being distributed through transplant co-ordinators in hospitals around the country and is also available by contacting orders@uktransplant.nhs.uk. Further information is available at the web site: www.uktransplant.org.uk.

The Three Faiths Forum Medical Group met on 12 February to hear and discuss a talk on organ transplantation from Dr David Jones, Senior Lecturer in Bioethics, School of Theology, Philosophy and History, St Mary's College. Further information from The Three Faiths Forum: www.threefaithsforum.org.uk.

Faiths take part in "Big Conversation"

Over 120 representatives from different faith groups took part in an event in Westminster as part of the Labour Party's "Big Conversation" on 5 February. The event was hosted by Health

Secretary, Dr John Reid MP. Discussion focused on how best the Government can work with faith communities to develop policy and build cohesive communities.

Lambeth Palace hosts publication launch

A reception was held by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, at Lambeth Palace on 4 February. This was linked to the publication of *Scriptures in Dialogue* which is the record of three days of dialogue between 25 leading Christian and Muslim scholars which took place at the invitation of the Archbishop in Qatar in April 2003. The book is edited by Rev Canon Dr Michael Ipgrave and includes the text of a major lecture on inter faith relations given by the Archbishop at the University of Birmingham shortly after the Qatar event. Priced £12.95, the report is produced by Church House Publishing. For further information, email publishing@c-of-e.org.

First Scottish Inter Faith Youth Conference

The first Scottish Inter Faith Youth Conference was held at St. Mungo's Museum of Religious Life and Art in Glasgow on 4 December. The conference had been planned by a steering group of young people from diverse faith communities and the Scottish Inter Faith Council. Opening the conference were the Convenor of the Scottish Inter Faith Council, Ravinder Kaur Nijjar, Shereen Nanjiani TV presenter for 'Scotland Today' and Deputy Lord Provost of Glasgow, Baillie Christine Divine.

The conference offered workshops, meditation, panel presentations, exhibitions and lots of time for dialogue. The 80 or so young people who attended had a great time exploring 'How young people can contribute to Scotland's future'. The steering committee for the conference consisted of young people from the Buddhist, Baha'i, Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Jain, Hindu, Sikh, Brahma Kumaris and Rastafarian faiths and the

experience of working together has helped build bonds of friendship and a commitment to future inter faith projects, demonstrating that unity in diversity is possible between religions.

St Martin-in-the-Fields inter faith reception

An inter faith reception at the House of Lords, in support of a major building project at St Martin-in-the-Fields Church, was held on 28 January. It was hosted by the Anglican Bishop of London, Richard Chartres. The church, adjacent to Trafalgar Square, is one of London's best known and has a long tradition of service to the homeless and disadvantaged. It also has a significant place in the history of inter faith relations in this country, having helped start the multi faith Commonwealth Day Observance and continues to host dialogue events. More details of the project are available at: www.stmartin-in-the-fields.org

Faiths discuss regeneration

On 26 February a conference, "Regenerating Communities Through Faith" was held in Preston. The conference was organised by the Faith Based Regeneration Network UK in conjunction with the Gujarat Hindu Society and the Preston Faith Forum. The conference's aims were to enable local faith-based organisations to network with each other and with policy-makers and to influence and shape policies for faith based regeneration. Further information is available by contacting Dr Doreen Finneron, email: fbrnuk@aol.com.

Inter faith debate on restoring faith in politics

The Christian Socialist Movement and Making Votes Count held a meeting, "Restoring Faith in Politics" at the House of Commons on 23

February. The meeting was chaired by Chris Bryant MP and speakers included Beth Breeze of the Social Market Foundation, Sher Khan from the Muslim Council of Britain, and Jonathan Gorsky of the Council of Christians and Jews. Further information from paul@christiansocialist.org.uk

Pilot Project in Leeds on Local Consultation

As part of the recently completed Home Office review of patterns of engagement between the Government and faith communities in England, a pilot project was commissioned to explore the effectiveness of various mechanisms for consulting faith communities at a local level. Leeds Faith Communities Liaison Forum was invited to take the lead in conducting this pilot consultation, which had as its focus the role which faith groups can play in supporting offenders on their discharge from prison and the views of faith communities on sentencing regimes. It was conducted on behalf of the Forum by a project team based in the School of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Leeds.

The completed report of the project will shortly be available from the Faith Communities Unit in the Home Office. Copies may be ordered from: Warwick.Hawkins@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk.

Lord Mayor hosts multi-faith dinner at Mansion House

On 10 February the Lord Mayor of London, Alderman Robert Finch, hosted the bi-annual dinner for the Archbishops and Bishops of the Anglican Communion at Home and Overseas". As on previous occasions, representatives of different faith communities in the UK were also invited to attend.

International Interfaith Centre celebrates 10 years of work

The International Interfaith Centre (IIC) celebrated its 10th Anniversary on 6 December with an Interfaith Afternoon at Oxford Town Hall. The event included the launch of the IIC's Directory of Faith Communities in Oxford, an Interfaith Forum addressing local issues of mutual concern within a framework of international and national agendas, a youth interfaith photography exhibition entitled "Through Another's Eyes", as well as music from local musicians and birthday refreshments. For the full report, see www.interfaith-center.org/anniversary.htm (Oxford Projects pdf file).

Baha'i inter faith panel and reception

The Office of External Affairs of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is sponsored an inter faith panel discussion and reception, on "Reconciling to our Creator by Reconciling to our Neighbour". It was held at the time of the visit of Shayk Ali N'Daw of the International Sufi School. The panel included representatives of the Baha'i faith, Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. The event took place at the National Baha'i Centre in London.

WCRP discuss "Cultures for Peace"

The UK chapter of the World Conference on Religion and Peace held a meeting on "Cultures for Peace" at the London Inter Faith Centre on 12 November. This followed an earlier meeting on the same theme last March. The aim of both meetings was to explore what different religions have to say about peace and how this can be applied to the contemporary situation.

Honours and awards

On 13 October the French Ambassador, on behalf of the President of France, presented Sir Sigmund Sternberg with the Order of the Officier de la Legion d'Honneur. The award was in honour of Sir Sigmund's achievements within the British Jewish community and his inter faith work.

Canon Andrew White has received the annual Sternberg Interfaith Award for his work as the Co-Director of the International Centre of Reconciliation at Coventry Cathedral. The award was presented by Foreign Office Minister of State, Baroness Symons, on 9 November at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

In the New Year's Honours list Sidney Shipton of the Three Faiths Forum received an OBE for services to the Jewish community and inter faith relations; and Rabbi Dr Jonathan Romain received an MBE for services to community relations in Maidenhead.

Dr Indarjit Singh received a second honorary doctorate in February when Leicester University conferred on him the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws.

REGIONAL UPDATE

East of England Faiths Council launched

The East of England Faiths Council (EEFC) was launched at an event at Peterborough Town Hall on 4 December. Guests were welcomed by Gillian Beasley, Chief Executive of Peterborough City Council, who hosted the event. Zia-ul Hussain, a Co-Chair of EEFC and Chair of Peterborough Inter Faith Council then explained how the Council emerged from the East of England Faiths Leadership Conference, before introducing John Battle MP who gave the keynote speech. The EEFC has been set up to raise awareness of faith communities and to build good relations between the faiths of the Region. It relates to the East of England Development Agency and has a "seat" on the Regional Assembly.

The EEFC also launched a regional faiths calendar listing religious festivals of different faiths for the year 2004. This is currently available at the web site: www.eefaithscouncil.org.uk and will soon be made available in a printed form.

Birmingham

On 26 February Birmingham City Council held a Faith Round Table Discussion, "Working Together to Address Issue of Faith and Religion in Building Cohesive Communities in Birmingham". The event was chaired by Wendy Momen of the Baha'i community. Harriet Crabtree, Deputy Director of the Inter Faith Network, gave a presentation on the findings of the Network's recent survey of local inter faith activity in the UK. Further information is available by contacting email: equalities@birmingham.gov.uk.

Calderdale

Calderdale Interfaith Council was officially launched on 3 December at the Town Hall Halifax. The launch was entitled "A Celebration of Faiths in Calderdale". The evening was introduced by the Mayor and guest speakers included, Anglican Bishop of Pontefract Tony Robinson; Venerable Samten Kelsang; and Maulana Chishti. Further information from sail.suleman@calderdale.gov.uk

Derby

Work has begun on the new Multi Faith Centre at the University of Derby. The planning for this project began in 1991, with advice and support from members of the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh traditions. On 22 December, 14 local children from these seven faiths gathered at the site of the new Centre to help lay its foundation stone. Further information from Eileen Fry, e.fry@derby.ac.uk

Inter faith profile

Sister Margaret Shepherd nds is the Director of the Council of Christian and Jews (CCJ) and is an Executive Committee member of the Inter Faith Network.

How did you first get involved with Jewish Christian dialogue?

I belong to the Sisters of Zion, a Roman Catholic Congregation which has the specific task/charism of fostering good relations between Christians and Jews and reminding the Church of its origins and unique links with Judaism. In 1977 I had the opportunity of studying rabbinics for three years at the Leo Baeck College in London, which trains men and women for the progressive rabbinate. This, for me, was my first in-depth encounter with the Jewish community. I went on to help run the Sisters of Zion Study Centre for Christian Jewish Relations (now known as Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter) in Central London and from there joined the Council of Christians and Jews, first as Education Officer and now as Director.

How do you see CCJ's role in the wider context of multi-faith dialogue in the UK?

CCJ has now had 62 years of experience in the unique dialogue between Jews and Christians to offer as an example of "dialogue in depth" and our special gift to the wider encounter and dialogue between all faiths. Additionally, at this point in time - after 9/11 and the war in Iraq - we feel it is particularly important to extend our role in a specifically bilateral way with the Muslim community, so we are supporting and engaging in Christian - Muslim and, likewise, in Jewish - Muslim dialogues. We initiated a special CCJ working party three years ago for those of various faiths involved in inter faith work to explore the concept and value of inter faith dialogue and to support each other in this work. Members of the group have found this helpful and the group has initiated study days for others concerning these matters.

CCJ has an active young people's programme. How do you see this work developing in the future?

The CCJ young people's section, YES! runs a *Faithshare* programme on university campuses to encourage dialogue and understanding. In the future this work will need to become increasingly localised and grass-roots led, to really capture people's imaginations and encourage them to get involved. The ideal situation would be if no formal dialogue was necessary because schools and society were so good at encouraging encounter of the other and celebration of difference. In reality though I suspect that our work will be needed for many more generations to continue to push these issues and challenge prejudice, racism and anti semitism.

What are your hopes for the future for inter faith work in the UK generally?

I hope that we shall go from strength to strength, becoming ever more a source of mutual encouragement, friendship and support, as we deepen our knowledge of, respect for and trust in each other. I also hope that we can work closely together on matters which concern us all as citizens of the UK and as members of God's family.

Media and a multi faith society

A conference looking at the contribution the media can make to good community relations is being organised by the Media Trust in association with the Inter Faith Network for the UK and *respect* on 31 March in London. For further information contact Harriet Crabtree at the Network Office for details.

Horsham

A new forum has been established to enable the different faith groups in Horsham in Surrey to talk together and also to help others learn about the faiths. It has been running for about a year and will be meeting at the end of February to formalise its aims. Further information from Richard Boeke, email: r.boeke@virgin.net or Tel 01403 257801.

Leeds

Baha'i, Christian, Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh leaders were invited in January to BHH Synagogue in Leeds to be present at a Shabbat service and bar-mitzvah. The invitation was extended through the Leeds Faith Community Liaison Forum which had arranged last year for representatives of the various faiths to attend the Grand Mosque during Ramadan.

Leicester

A Faiths Regeneration Network was launched in Leicester on 9 December. Nearly 70 faith representatives attended from many traditions and representatives from statutory service providers were also present. The event was chaired by the Archdeacon of Leicester, the Ven. Richard Atkinson. Further information from Riaz Ravat, Regeneration Development Officer, tel 0116 248 7424, riaz.ravat@leccofe.org

London

Moral Maze

The World Congress of Faiths London Programme held a "Moral Maze" inter faith panel discussion on the theme "Religious Prejudice: A Challenge to Interfaith Relations" on 19 February at the London Inter-Faith Centre.

South London RE discussion

An informal discussion about Religious Education policy took place at the Risaala School Tooting, London on Sunday 25 January. The event was organised by South

London Inter Faith Group. It was chaired by Brian Pearce, Director of the Inter Faith Network, and included contributions from Firdos Qazi, the school's head teacher, and Sarah Thorley, a teacher and RE adviser to Lambeth schools. A debate followed on the issues surrounding the Government's proposals for a national framework for RE and on the teaching of RE in faith schools.

Women's inter faith meeting

The Reform Synagogues Guild held an inter faith meeting called Building Bridges on 25 February at the West London Synagogue to explore how women of different faiths live in the UK today.

Barking

The East London Three Faiths Forum held a meeting at the Barking mosque with the theme "Does Christianity have a future in Britain?". Rev Robert Hampson, Barrister Abdul Rahaman Jaffrey and Rabbi David Hulbert spoke at the meeting.

Barnet

Barnet's Inter Faith Network Steering Group held its first meeting on 11 February. Further information from Chris Henshaw at chris.henshaw@barnet.gov.uk or tel 020 8359 7261.

Brent

The eighth meeting of the "Interfaith Call for World Peace" in the London Borough of Brent was held at the Sri Saddhatisa International Buddhist Centre on 28 December. The event involved Venerable Galayaye Piyaddisi, the head of SSIBC, and participants of other faiths.

Wandsworth

On 28 January the Wandsworth Faith Communities Group held an event on the theme of family life. The group was established in 2002. It is chaired by Council Leader Edward Lister and includes representatives from the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh communities. Further information from Amanda McDonnell, tel 020 8871 6182 amcdonnell@wandsworth.gov.uk.

On 23 February, a Wandsworth Multi-Faith Network was launched at Wandsworth Town Hall by the Community Empowerment Fund Network. 60 people attended from many faiths and a steering group was formed to take the work forward. Further information from Catriona Robertson, tel 020 8674 4610.

Westminster

Westminster Faith Exchange an initiative of Westminster City Council brought together young people from seven different faiths who developed an interfaith event called Faith Links. The performance event, featuring music, drama, video clips and readings, took place at the Salvation Army's Regent Hall on Oxford Street, London on 25 February. The event was supported by the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Alma Royalton Kisch Trust.

Nottingham

Last year Nottingham Inter Faith Council received funding from the Community Learning Chest to set up an exhibition about faiths in Nottingham. It includes professionally produced panels about nine local faiths and the inter faith group itself, and there is a linked leaflet pack about the faiths. The exhibition was displayed in Nottingham Central Library for four weeks in October and November, and is now touring schools and community venues. Further information is available on the Inter Faith Council's web site: www.interfaithnottm.org.uk.

Sheffield

A tree planting took place on 30 November at Abbeyfield Park as part of National Tree Week. It was arranged by South Yorkshire Forest with help and support from Sheffield Interfaith. An inter faith service was held to dedicate the tree and there was a discussion of the significance of trees for different faiths. Baha'i, Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Pagan and Quaker participants were involved. Further information about the project is available from lynnrisha@fsmail.net

INTERNATIONAL UPDATE**Most Venerable Vajiragnana Celebrates 75 years**

A celebration of Network Executive Committee Member, Most Venerable Dr Vajiragnana's, 75th birthday was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 12 February. It was attended by the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka and over 1000 guests. Paul Seto of the Network of Buddhist Organisations (UK) made a presentation on inter faith activities and the many Buddhist communities in the UK.

International conference on Christian-Muslim regeneration initiatives

Faith Regen UK, in association with Philadelphia Cathedral and the Islamic Society of North America, held a conference entitled *Building Positive Inclusive Communities through Housing and Regeneration* at Philadelphia Cathedral in the USA from 17-19 February. Speakers from the UK included Stephen Timms, Minister for State at the Department of Trade and Industry, Rev Chris Beales, Director of the Employment Forum UK, and Saif Ahmed, Chief Executive of Faith Regen UK. Over a hundred delegates discussed the role faith communities can play in regeneration and social and economic development and heard accounts from a number of case studies from both the UK and USA.

Dr Michael Hooker

It is with deep regret that we record the death of Dr Michael Hooker in Brighton on 26 January.

Michael was the driving force behind the Donnington Grove Inter Faith programme for many years and more recently set up the Newton Inter Faith Group, based in Battersea, London. He will be sadly missed.

Special offer on selected Inter Faith Network Publications

Time to Talk: Faiths at the Table of Dialogue in Today's UK Report of the 2003 National Meeting, looking at the importance of dialogue between the faith communities in the UK.
ISBN 1 902906 09 8 **Special Price: £2.00**

Community Cohesion: A New Agenda for Inter Faith Relations? Report of the 2002 National Meeting, exploring the role of faith in the community cohesion agenda.
ISBN 1 902906 08 X. **Special Price: £2.00**

Faith and Service to the Community 2001 National Meeting Report, looking at the role of faith in community service projects.
ISBN 1 902906 07 1. **Special Price: £2.00**

Inter Faith Issues and the RE Curriculum Report on the June 2001 seminar held in association with the National Association of SACREs. Examining issues and practicalities of introducing inter faith issues into the curriculum. Published 2001 ISBN 1 902906 06 3
Special Price £4.50

Local Inter Faith Activity in the UK: A Survey
The number of local inter faith initiatives in the UK is increasing rapidly. 43% of local inter faith bodies have come into existence since the beginning of 2000. This report details the findings of a six month survey in 2003 which mapped the changing landscape of local inter faith activity around the UK.
ISBN 1 902906 11 X. **Price £8.95**

Religions in the UK Directory 2001-2003

A comprehensive directory providing an introduction to the faith communities in the UK, complete with listings of local places of worship and faith organisations. Edited by Professor Paul Weller and published by the Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby in association with the Inter Faith Network.

Now over 30% off £20.00 inc postage and packing (usually 29.50).

To order, please send cheques payable to: "The Multi-Faith Centre" to:

The Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby, Kedleston Road,
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DIARY DATES

Local inter faith events

Space only allows one event per organisation to be listed. For details of other events contact the relevant local groups. Local inter faith events are also listed in the One Family Newsletter available from the World Congress of Faiths, c/o London Inter Faith Centre, 125 Salisbury Road, London NW6 6RG

9 March, Bedford Council of Faiths. Inter-Faith Game Evening, playing "Diversity". 7.30 at the Quaker Meeting House, 5 Lansdowne Road, Bedford, MK40 2BY. Further information, tel 01234 307281.

9 March, Huddersfield Interfaith Council. "Inter Faith Day" at Huddersfield Town Hall. Further information from Rev Mel Garside, tel 01484 424669.

11 March, Nelson and Brierfield Building Bridges, Rabbi Reuven Silverman will be giving the second talk in a series of six meetings on "The Value of Human Life from the Point of View of Four Major World Faiths". 7pm Nelson library, Nelson. Further information from Building Bridges, tel 01282 719303.

11 March, London. The Women's Interfaith Network will be holding a meeting in central London to discuss the formation of local inter faith groups for women, and how WIN can help and facilitate such groups. For further information contact gilda.levy@wominet.co.uk or see www.wominet.co.uk

18 March, Brighton and Hove Inter Faith Contact Group. "Pardon and Peace – the Only Way", talk by the Very Revd Nicholas Frayling. 7.30 at the Chapel Royal, North Street, Brighton. Further information from tel: 01273 722438.

18 March and 25 March, Edinburgh Inter-Faith Association. "Sikhism: Past, Present and Future". Talk by Balwant Singh Saggu of Glasgow's Sikh community. 7-9 pm at St George's West Church, 58 Shandwick Place. Further Information from tel: 0131 667 4360.

25 March, Manor Park, London. East London Three Faiths Forum discussion, "Is the West Right to Fear Islam?" at the Froud Centre Romford Road, E12. Further information from tel: 020 7485 2538

26 March Dundee Inter Faith Group. First of a series of three meetings on the theme of Faith and Family. Further information tel: 01382 667119.

27 March, Horsham Inter Faith Group. "Baha'i Faith and Emerging World Civilisation", talk by Dr Farhang Tahzib, Director of Public Health in the NHS. Further information from Richard Boeke email: r.boeke@virgin.net or tel 01403 257801

30 March, Merseyside Council of Faiths. "Prayer in the Hindu Tradition", a talk by Dr Ajit Kumar. 7.45, Hindu Centre and Temple, Edge Lane, Liverpool. Further information tel: 0151 733 1541.

23 April, Cardiff Interfaith Association. Visit to the new Cyncoed Synagogue. Further information from Alan Schwartz, tel 029 2075 0990.

27 April, Bristol, "An Understanding of Jihad", talk by Qari Abdulmajeed, Director of the Islamic Information Centre. 7.15 at the Unitarian Bristol Meeting, Surrey Lodge, Brunswick Square, Bristol 1. Further information, tel 0117 9020037 or 01454 313042.

27 April, Hampstead Interfaith Group, "The Sikh Way of Life", Dr Indarjit Singh. 8pm, 63b Belsize Park Gardens, London NW3. Further information from Eva Tucker at this address.

4 May, Brent Inter Faith, "Music from the Faiths", an evening of music from many of the world religious traditions. 7.30 at the London Inter Faith Centre, 125 Salisbury Road, London NW6 6RG. Further information, tel 020 7604 3053.

8 May, Bristol Inter Faith Group and Bath Inter Faith Group, day event hosted by the Ammerdown Centre, Radstock, Somerset, "Ways to Peace through Dialogue". Further information from: Shelagh James, 01225 422252.

16 May Edinburgh. Local Inter Faith Groups Annual Networking Conference for Scotland at the Edinburgh Synagogue. Further information from the Scottish Inter Faith Council on tel: 0141 429 4012

28 May, Cambridge Inter Faith Group, "The Root of All Evil: how money is regarded in all our faiths". An open discussion. 7.45 for 8 pm, Unitarian Hall, Victoria. Further information from Ralph Nimmann Tel: 01223 510442.

30 May, Altrincham Interfaith Group. Interfaith picnic at a local park. Venue tbc. Further information from Alf Keeling, tel 0161 912 5230 alf@akeeling.freeseve.co.uk.

5 June, Westminster Interfaith annual multi faith pilgrimage. This year the pilgrimage will be in the North East London area and will be led by Sister Elizabeth. Further information from Alfred Agius, Aagius@aolcom or tel 020 7361 4740.

11 June, Bradford. 11th Annual Bradford Concord Interfaith Society Multi Faith Walk for Friendship. Further information, tel 01274 731674.

Diary dates: Courses, exhibitions, conferences and seminars

27 February- 7 March, Edinburgh 1st Annual Festival of Middle Eastern Spirituality and Peace. Featuring on 4 March a Conference on Middle Eastern Spirituality, 9.30 to 5.30, Quaker Meeting House, 7 Victoria Terrace. Conference registration fee £20 (£10 concessions). Further information from Neill Walker, jnwalk1300@hotmail.com or tel 0131 3314469.

10 March, London. "Challenging Islamophobia". One day conference at the Brady Centre, 192-196 Hanbury Street, London E1 5HU. Further information, tel 020 7247 1414.

22 March, London. Council of Christians and Jews. The Passion of Christ. Study and discussion day on issues raised by the Mel Gibson film. 10.15-3.30 Camelford House, 89 Albert Embankment, London SW1. £10 for CCJ members and £15 for non members. Advance reservation required. Further information, tel 010 7820 0090 or email cjrelations@ccj.org.uk

23-25 March, Oxford. World Congress of Faiths, Pre-Parliament event for people planning on attending the Parliament of World Religions in Barcelona. Being held at the Global Retreat Centre, Nuneham Courtney. Cost £50, room and board. Further information from Richard Boeke email: r.boeke@virgin.net or tel 01403 257801

25 March, London. Faith Based Regeneration Network. National conference "Tools for Regeneration". For regeneration practitioners of the different faiths to come together and learn from each other's experiences. 10.30 to 3.15 at the Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre, 244 Acklam Road, London W10. Cost £150 for statutory and national voluntary organisations and £50 for all others. Further information from Dr Doreen Finneron at fbrnuk@aol.com or tel 020 88947 6160.

4 April, London. Zoroastrian Education Day. Park Crescent Conference Centre, Gulbenkian Room, International Students House, 229 Great Portland Street, London W1. Further information from Burjor Avari, tel 0161 445 7554 or Farrokh Vajifdar, tel 020 8878 4810.

25 April, London. James Allison, Catholic theologian, will be giving the fourth talk in a series of six meetings on "Exploring Spirituality". Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter, 34 Chepstow Villas, London W11 2QZ. Further information, tel 020 7727 3597 or 020 7313 8286.

3-9 May, Amerdown, Bath Art and Spirituality Network. "Exploring creation" – experiencing creation and contemplating the creator at the Amerdown Retreat Centre near Bath. Cost £370 including accommodation, food and art materials. Further information from Adam Boulter, adam.boulter@virgin.net tel 07957 286360

5 May London. World Congress of Faiths. Annual Sir Francis Younghusband lecture, "From the Holy Mountain" and illustrated talk by William Dalrymple to be held at the Liberal Jewish Synagogue, 28 St John's Wood Road, London NW8, 7pm. Cost £5.00. Preceded by the World Congress of Faiths AGM Further information from Richard Boeke email: r.boeke@virgin.net or tel 01403 257801

15 May, London. "How Dangerous are the New Religions?". Day seminar to be held by INFORM at the London School of Economics. £35 (£30 if advance booked). Further information from inform@lse.ac.uk tel 020 7955 7654

Inter Faith Update is the newsletter of the Inter Faith Network for the UK. It keeps a wide range of organisations and individuals interested in developing good inter faith relations in the UK in touch with UK events and projects with a significant inter faith component.

Please send any items and diary dates for consideration for inclusion in the next issue **by 28 May** to:

Bhupinder Singh,
Information Officer,
The Inter Faith Network
8A Lower Grosvenor Place
London SW1 W 0EN

Tel: 020 7931 7766
Fax: 020 7931 7722
Email: ifnet@interfaith.org.uk
Website: www.interfaith.org.uk

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INTER FAITH

UPDATE

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Connect: Different Faiths Shared Values

Work on the guide has been a major aspect of the work of the Network office over recent months. The overall project was managed by Bhupinder Singh. The guide was written by Harriet Crabtree and Bhupinder Singh with the assistance of an advisory group of young people from different faiths and staff from the partner organisations. Network Executive Committee members and member bodies contributed their comments on successive drafts.

The guide is being distributed through youth organisations, educational bodies and faith communities. Copies are also

(Continued on page 2)

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Barcelona Parliament of the World's Religions

The Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions held its 2004 Parliament in Barcelona, Spain from 7-13 July. Entitled, *Pathways to Peace: the Wisdom of Listening, the Power of Commitment*, the conference attracted nearly 7,000 people from all over the world representing many different faiths and beliefs.

The event was held in association with the City of Barcelona, and formed part of the six month long Universal Forum of Cultures being held there. Participants at the conference included many members of faith communities and inter faith organisations from the UK. A delegation of young people

from the UK and other countries attended on behalf of Minorities of Europe.

There were over 400 programmes ranging from lectures, panel discussions and film documentaries to symposia dealing with topics such as inter faith education and the future of religion, the role of the media and the concerns of different communities.

The Parliament was preceded from 5-7 July by an Assembly of religious leaders, key inter faith activists and young people at the Benedictine Monastery at Montserrat, north east of Barcelona.



NETWORK NEWS

(...continued from page 1)

being sent by the Local Government Association to all local authorities in England and Wales. Bulk copies for further distribution are available from the Inter Faith Network office. Contact Bhupinder Singh for further details.

Single copies are available free of charge from the Network office by sending an A5 sized addressed envelope with 35 pence postage. The guide can also be downloaded free from the Network's web site: www.interfaith.org.uk

Network membership passes 100

The Network's Annual General Meeting, held on 28 June, accepted into membership the following organisations: Alif-Aleph UK; Burnley Building Bridges; Canterbury and District Inter Faith Action; the Centre for Jewish-Christian Relations; Lancashire Council of Faiths; Medway Inter Faith Action; Northampton Inter Faith Forum; North Kirklees Inter Faith Council; North Staffordshire Forum of Faiths; and the Oldham Inter Faith Forum. Rochdale Multi Faith Partnership becomes a member body in place of Rochdale Interfaith Action and Gateshead Inter Faith Forum and the Newcastle Council of Faiths become members in place of the Tyne and Wear Racial Equality Council Inter Faith Panel. The Afro-West Indian United Council of Churches, the Calamus Foundation and the Richmond Interfaith Group have ceased to be members as they are no longer active organisations.

Following these changes, the Network now has 105 member organisations.

Changes in Executive Committee membership

At the Network's AGM Rosalind Preston stepped down from the position of Co-Chair, having served her three year term in this post, but remains on the Committee as a Vice-Chair.

Jagjivan Singh was elected to serve alongside Rt Rev Dr Tom Butler as Co-Chair of the Network. Jehangir Sarosh and Om Parkash Sharma were elected as Vice Chairs and Dr Natubhai Shah stepped down following his term as a Vice Chair but remains on the Committee. The following new members were elected to serve as on the Executive Committee for 2004-05: Phil Henry, Regina O'Callaghan, Dr Nawal Prinja, Janet Scott and Ven Pandit Wiloye Wimplajothi.

The following stepped down from the Committee and were very warmly thanked for their service on the Executive: Saraswati Dave; Simon Reynolds; Shaunaka Rishi das; Paul Seto; Most Ven Dr Medagama Vajiragnana; and Gillian Wood. Dr Vajiragnana had served as a committee member since the Network was founded in 1987.

National inter faith organisations meet

The annual meeting of the Network's national inter faith organisation member bodies was held in London on 22 April. Each of the organisations provided a roundup of their recent activities and future plans and they then discussed the changing context for their work in recent years. Among the issues discussed was that of how to expand membership and increase the level of engagement of people from different faiths in inter faith activity at grassroots level.

Network office intern

Miriam Feldmann from the Orthodox Jewish Community is working at the Network office as an intern for three weeks during the summer. She is currently studying Theology at Cambridge University, where she set up a Muslim-Jewish Women's Dialogue Group, one of the case studies featured in the *Connect* guide (see page 1).



Network National Meeting: Europe and inter faith relations

The Network's National Meeting was held at Ironmongers' Hall in London on 28 June. The topic was the increasing impact membership of the European Union is having on faith communities and the inter faith agenda in the UK.

The day began with an overview of European institutions from Jackie Gower of the University of Kent's Jean Monnet Centre for Europe. Mike O'Brien MP, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, then spoke on, "Why Europe Matters" and highlighted the contribution multi faith Britain, with its generally strong inter faith relations, can make to an increasingly diverse Europe. He said "The challenge we face today is to work towards tolerance and mutual respect between faith communities and a basic understanding that people can agree to disagree but still work together." He went on to say, "The Government recognises that working with faith communities is an essential part of our outreach to the whole of British society".

On the European Constitution Mike O'Brien said, "The new EU Constitutional Treaty clearly states that religion remains a matter for member states. It makes clear that the Union respects equally the status of religious and secular organisations. It emphasises, also, the importance of an open and regular dialogue between such organisations and the European Union. The new Treaty reiterates freedom of worship. We believe that it is crucial that the EU respects this freedom."

The morning session continued with an account from Ravinder Kaur Nijjar of the visit of representatives from Scotland's faith communities to Brussels; a presentation from Mohammed Aziz about the European institutions and directives aimed at tackling racism and religious discrimination; and a report from Peter Smith from the Local Government Association on how the LGA has been sharing UK good practice on local authority engagement with inter faith issues with local authorities in other EU member states.

The afternoon session heard from representatives of four organisations which have been actively involved with work in Europe: Jehangir Sarosh of the World Conference of Religions for Peace Europe; Win Burton of the Soul for Europe initiative; Sidney Shipton of the Three Faiths Forum; and Deepak Naik of Minorities of Europe. Delegates then joined small group discussions on five related themes. The meeting was rounded off by a closing presentation from Professor Paul Weller of the University of Derby who reflected on the challenges and possibilities that lie ahead for faith and inter faith bodies in a changing Europe.

A full report of the meeting will be available from the Network office in the autumn.

Faith Communities Consultative Forum

A meeting of the Faith Communities Consultative Forum was held at the National Council for Voluntary Organisations in London on 1 June. Representatives of the Network's member faith community representative bodies considered the Home Office's report, *Working Together: Co-operation between Government and Faith Communities* and the Government's White Paper setting out its proposals for the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights: *Fairness for All: A New Commission for Equality and Human Rights*. They also discussed ways to take forward issues related to the report of the House of Lords Select Committee on Religious Offences.

The meeting noted the Home Office consultation document, *Strength in Diversity: towards a Community Cohesion and Race Equality Strategy*. There was discussion on recent faith community representation on the provisions in the European Constitution relating to religion and to faith communities and of the desirability of setting up a multi-faith media group to look at media issues. The meeting also discussed possible responses to the BBC charter review which runs until the end of 2006 and the Office for Communications (Ofcom) review of public service television broadcasting.

The Media and a Multi Faith Society

The Media Trust, in association with the Inter Faith Network and *respect* (an initiative of TimeBank and the Prince's Trust), held a conference on the Media and a Multi Faith Society at Regent's College in London on 31 March. The UK has become one of the most religiously diverse countries in Europe and there is, increasingly, a recognition of the importance of shaping a cohesive society in which people of different faiths live together in a spirit of cooperation, mutual respect and understanding. The media have a highly significant contribution to make to this through coverage of religious and of inter faith issues and the conference looked at different aspects of this.

Fiona Mactaggart MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary for Race Equality, Community Policy, and Civil Renewal at the Home Office, in her speech to the delegates, urged faith communities and the media to work together to communicate how the different faiths contribute to creating an integrated multi faith society. The chair of the morning session, Bishop Tom Butler said, "People of different faiths in the UK have much to contribute to our shared national life. As we become an increasingly diverse society it is vital that different groups relate to each other with tolerance and respect. But it is not just a matter of people of different faiths getting on well and working on shared projects - this has to be seen and heard to be done. Media coverage which contributes to greater mutual understanding and which celebrates the positive stories of cooperation has a key role to play in this."

Other speakers at the conference reinforced this theme of co-operation. They included: broadcaster and producer Roger Bolton; Dr Indarjit Singh, Director of the Network of Sikh Organisations; Alex Brummer, City Editor, Daily Mail and contributor, Jewish Chronicle; Hazel Baird, from the Commission for Racial Equality; Simon Cohen, freelance writer and Director of Tolerance Ltd (who also assisted in the planning and organising of the conference); Dr Salah Beltagui, Glasgow Muslim community and Scottish Interfaith Council; Hari Shukla, Chair of the Inter Faith Sub Committee Tyne and Wear Racial Equality Council; Carmel Heaney, Project Manager of Respect; and Nick Carter, Editor of the Leicester Mercury. The afternoon session was chaired by Caroline Diehl, Chief Executive of the Media Trust.

NATIONAL UPDATE

Working Together: Co-operation between Government and Faith Communities

The Home Office launched, on 29 March, *Working Together: Co-operation between Government and Faith Communities*. This is the report of the Steering Group of the review of the patterns of central government consultation with faith communities and their representation at national events. The Steering Group was chaired by Home Office Minister, Ms Fiona Mactaggart and included representatives of faith communities and Government Departments. The report is available to download from www.homeoffice.gov.uk

Tools for Regeneration

Yvette Cooper MP, the Ministerial Chair of the Inner Cities Religious Council (ICRC) in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), launched *Tools for Regeneration: A Holistic Approach for Faith Communities* at the Faith Based Regeneration Network UK (FbRN) conference held at the Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre in London on 25 March.

In her keynote address, the Minister highlighted the earlier publication of *Faith and Community* by the Local Government Association in association with the Inter Faith Network and the ICRC as having signalled to local authorities the importance of engaging with faith communities. She announced a Special Grants Programme for 2004-5 from the ODPM. This will be for voluntary and community groups involving people in delivering renewal and regeneration. The Faith Based Regeneration Network is one of the first recipients of a grant under this programme.

The *Tools for Regeneration* toolkit includes a step-by-step guide to setting up and managing community organisations and to community development and capacity building in faith based organisations. Copies of the toolkit can be ordered from the FbRN on Tel: 020 8947 6160 or visit their web site: www.fbrn.org.uk.



Cultural Diversity Network seminar on multi-cultural faith programmes

On 8 July, the Cultural Diversity Network held a seminar in Manchester on multi-cultural faith programmes. The seminar was led by the BBC's Religion and Ethics Department and was designed to seek the views of programme makers, contributors and opinion leaders on how broadcasters should be taking forward their coverage of multi-faith stories and issues.

Home Office consultation on community cohesion and race equality strategy

The Home Office published last month a consultative document entitled, *Strength in Diversity: Towards a Community Cohesion and Race Equality Strategy*. The document provides a framework for a wide ranging consultation exercise that the Home Office is undertaking to inform the development of the community cohesion and race equality strategy which it plans to announce in the autumn. It sets out issues and challenges which need to be addressed and poses a series of questions with which it wants people to engage.

The Home Office is holding a series of consultation events to discuss the document, including workshops and events for public sector audiences and regional events, involving local public services, voluntary and community organisations and members of the public. Faith community representatives are being invited to some of these events. The Home Office is also asking "those in positions of responsibility and leadership" to promote and lead the debate across their networks and organisations.

The consultation document comes with a "toolkit" for organising and facilitating consultation events. The Home Office has also published a separate booklet designed to engage young people in the consultation process. All three of these documents can be downloaded from www.homeoffice.gov.uk.

Government White Paper on the proposed Commission for Equality and Human Rights

A White Paper, *Fairness For All: A New Commission for Equality and Human Rights*, was published by the Department for Trade and Industry on 12 May, in association with the Department for Constitutional Affairs, the Department for Education and Skills, the Department for Work and Pensions and the Home Office. The White Paper (and the accompanying response form) can be downloaded from www.dti.gov.uk/access/equalitywhitepaper.pdf. The deadline for comment on the White Paper is 6 August.

The White Paper confirms that, in line with the Government's statement to Parliament at the end of October last year, (reported in an earlier issue of *Inter Faith Update*), the CEHR will be responsible for challenging discrimination across society and for the promotion of human rights. It will also have responsibility for promoting good relations between different communities. It is intended that the CEHR will bring together the work of the existing equality bodies, the Commission for Racial Equality, the Disability Rights Commission, and the Equal Opportunities Commission. It will also take on responsibilities arising from the new legislation (giving effect to the European Directive of December 2003) outlawing work place discrimination on grounds of religion or belief, sexual orientation and age.

The White Paper sets out in detail the proposed functions, powers and governance arrangements for the CEHR and outlines the way in which it will be expected to carry out its duties, in particular in supporting "key customers". It describes the regional arrangements planned for the new body and the way in which it will fit into the patterns of devolution in Scotland and Wales. Its proposals take account of the work of the 'task force' set up to advise the Government, as described in the last issue of *Inter Faith Update*.

Legislation will be needed to set up the new body and the White Paper says the launch date will not take place before the end of 2006 at the earliest. The Government is setting up a 'transition group' to oversee and manage the process of introducing the new institutional arrangements and the merging of the existing Commissions into the new CEHR

Legislation on incitement to religious hatred

On 7 July the Home Secretary, David Blunkett, announced that the Government intends to introduce legislation into Parliament to create a new offence of incitement to religious hatred "as soon as the legislative opportunity arises". He was speaking at a seminar on Challenges for Race Equality and Community Cohesion in the 21st Century held by the Institute of Public Policy Research. His wide-ranging speech is available to download from www.homeoffice.gov.uk.

Home Office Citizenship Survey

In May the Home Office published a report, *Religion in England and Wales: Findings from the 2001 Home Office Citizenship Survey*. The Citizenship Survey is carried out every two years in England and Wales. It has a 10,000 nationally representative sample and a 5,000 minority ethnic booster sample. Areas covered by the Survey include volunteering, civic participation, race relations, and faith.

The new report looks at the profile of respondents affiliated to the major faith communities in England and Wales in terms of key demographic factors such as sex, age, educational attainment and employment status. Specifically it seeks to identify the types of people who are likely to have a religious affiliation. It examines the extent to which religion is important to the respondents' self-identity compared to other personal characteristics and looks at the extent to which support from employers is translated into practice, by allowing time to be taken off work for religious festivities and providing prayer facilities at work. The Report is available for downloading at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/horspubs1.html

English test for ministers of religion

On 22 July the Home Office announced new measures to ensure overseas ministers of religion coming to the UK have the skills needed for ministry in a diverse and cohesive society. The move, that will affect ministers from all faiths, including imams, priests and granthis, means that those entering the UK for the purposes of ministry must have a basic grasp of English (level four of the International English Testing System). It is also proposed to raise the requirement to level six - a competent writer and speaker of English - in two years time. The Home Secretary, David Blunkett said, "We have consulted and listened to faith groups and are encouraged that many faith representatives recognise the need for ministers to speak for the communities they represent and in particular to communicate effectively with the younger generation."

Draft Charities Bill

The Home Office published a draft Charities Bill on 27 May. The proposed changes include broadening the definition of a charity and provide for 11 charitable purposes which include, among others, the advancement of religion; the advancement of citizenship or community development; and the advancement of human rights, conflict resolution or reconciliation. Other proposed changes include new powers for the Charity Commission; new regulations for face-to-face fundraising; and the introduction of a new framework for charities. A Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament has been set up to take written and oral evidence from interested parties and will publish a report on its findings in September.

A meeting for faith community representatives was convened by Hays Macintyre in association with Conference of Religious, on 12 July at Vaughan House in London to discuss the impact on them of the proposals. The main point discussed was the proposed removal of the presumption that religious charities, by definition, are of public benefit. Under the proposals this privilege would be removed for religious organisations and they would be subject to a universal public benefit test in the same way as for other organisations applying for charitable status.



National RE Framework

It is expected that the new national non-statutory framework for Religious Education in England will be published later this summer.

As reported in earlier issues of *Inter Faith Update*, in October 2003 Charles Clarke, the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, asked the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority to develop such a framework to provide a model for use by Local Education Authorities, SACREs and others. A Steering Group and a Writing Group were formed to help prepare a draft of this. They included representatives of “faith and belief communities” and professional associations for Religious Education, as well as representatives of the QCA and DfES.

In April this year the QCA issued, with the endorsement of the Secretary of State, a draft document as a basis for wider consultation. The draft included material about the purposes of RE, its place in the broader school curriculum, programmes of study for the Foundation Stage, Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 and for 14-19 year olds and also attainment targets. It included a number of references to the importance of dealing with inter faith issues in Religious Education as well as studying different religious traditions. The QCA said that: “The aim is to raise standards and achievements in Religious Education by improving teaching and learning; to support pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; and to develop the contribution of Religious Education to inclusion”.

Responses to the consultation were requested by early July and have since then been receiving consideration prior to the publication of the final text of the framework document. Proposed changes to the text were discussed at a meeting of the Steering Group on 9 July.

Community Newswire launched

On 17 June the Home Secretary, David Blunkett, launched the Community Newswire service from the Press Association (PA) in association with the Media Trust. The service aims to expand the media exposure of community and voluntary

organisations and will provide a voice to many groups who currently have little contact with the media by delivering their news stories to national and local media. A team of journalists at the Press Association will select and write stories daily from news releases submitted by community organisations. About twenty stories a day will then be made available through the PA newswire and also on PA websites.

Stories and photographs can be submitted through the Community Newswire web site at: www.communitynewswire.org or by contacting Dominic O'Reilly, Community Newswire Manager, by email: communitynewswire@mediatrust.org or Tel: 020 7874 7606.

Community organisations can also seek advice from media professionals through the Media Trust. For more information go to their web site: www.mediatrust.org. The service has been made possible by a Home Office Active Communities Unit grant.

Forum of Muslims and Christians proposed

The Archbishop of Canterbury’s Christian-Muslim initiative published its report on 7 July. The initiative was set up in 2001, under the previous Archbishop, Dr George Carey. It has involved “listening” visits by a small group of Christians and Muslims to Blackburn, Nelson, Bradford, Leicester, London, Birmingham and Oldham. In all they met with over five hundred individuals and organisations in both communities. Many who took part were clear that Christians and Muslims need to develop a new vision for understanding and partnership.

The Bishop of Aston, Rt Rev John Austin, who chaired the group which produced the report, commented: “The people we met were genuinely enthusiastic in their conviction that a national organisation enabling Muslims and Christians to work together was necessary, timely and increasingly urgent. They were glad that the Archbishop of Canterbury had taken this initiative. It is our unanimous recommendation that a Forum of Muslims and Christians be created.”

The next stage of the process is that a group of Muslims and Christians chaired by the Bishop of Bolton, the Rt Rev David Gillett, will work on the implementation of the proposals made in this report.

Faiths unite to campaign against the BNP

Faith organisations joined trades unions, community groups and thousands of individuals to campaign against the British National Party (BNP) in the run up to the local elections on 10 June. In Leeds they formed Leeds Unity Against Racism and Facism as part of a national network of campaign groups. The group met in Millennium Square in Leeds for the launch of Rainbow Ribbons, multi-coloured lapel ribbons symbolising unity between different faith and ethnic communities.

In Manchester a meeting of the City's faith leaders was hosted by the Bishop of Manchester Rt Rev Nigel McCulloch at his home on 3 June, where the Bishop said, "There is one God, one creation, and one human race. Therefore we cannot support any party promoting division and the scapegoating of others."

In Portsmouth Christian, Muslim and Jewish leaders joined MPs and trade unions in issuing a statement against the BNP. It declares: "We jointly call upon the people of Portsmouth and the South East Region not to vote for the British National Party and to decisively reject them at the ballot box".

Security of places of worship

On 18 May the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, hosted a seminar on issues relating to the security of faith communities. Dr Williams convened the meeting in the wake of conversations with religious leaders deeply concerned by recent incidents which had left members of their communities feeling under threat.

The seminar, 'Looking after each other: the security of our faith communities', at Lambeth Palace brought together some 30 representatives from a range of faith communities, agencies and organisations in England. Participants explored the challenges they faced and ways in which they could work together to increase a shared sense of security among all communities.

Attacks on places of worship continue to be a major source of concern for faith communities (see the earlier report in Issue 24 of *Inter Faith Update*). Synagogues in South Tottenham and Hendon in North London suffered extensive attacks in late June and graffiti saying "BNP" was daubed on Birmingham's Central Mosque in a racist attack in late May.

Daniel Pearl Dialogue for Muslim-Jewish Understanding

On 23 June Baroness Uddin, Lord Carey and Lord Haskel hosted the launch of the Daniel Pearl Dialogue for Muslim-Jewish Understanding at the Moses Room in the House of Lords. The dialogue has been set up by Dr Akbar Ahmed and Dr Judea Pearl, the father of Daniel Pearl, the American Journalist murdered in Iraq. The launch was held in association with Q News magazine.

Alif-Aleph launch manifesto

On 24 June, Mike O'Brien MP, Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs hosted the launch of Alif-Aleph UK's manifesto for promoting understanding between British Muslims and Jews, at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Co-Chairs of the joint Jewish-Muslim organisation, Richard Stone, chairman of the Jewish Council for Racial Equality and Maqsood Ahmad, Director of Diversity for the National Probation Service also addressed the audience of over 200 people.

UNICEF Inter Faith Action

UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund, is launching a national inter faith appeal seeking the help of faith communities and inter faith groups to raise funds for its work. The national appeal follows a successful appeal in Birmingham last year where faith leaders joined together to launch an appeal to help the children of Iraq. That appeal was a joint call for peace to

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Inter faith profile

John Battle is MP for Leeds West and the Prime Minister's "Envoy to the Faith Communities"

Q How does your personal faith inform your work?

Faith is not just a private matter. It should be engaged with the public realm at every level. I don't accept a split between the personal and political. The core of my faith commitment, as a Roman Catholic Christian, is a commitment to the inclusion of the poor and to social justice. This belief informs my politics at local, national and international levels.

Q What has your role as "faith envoy" involved?

I was appointed to this role in 2000 and my job is to talk with all the different faith communities in Britain at all levels to see what can be done to draw the best from them so as to find solutions to the challenges we face, rather than dismissing these communities or blaming them as the cause of problems. We are trying to establish a new, fruitful and dynamic relationship between a state that listens and takes faith communities seriously, and faith communities which are able to be true to their role and to challenge and nudge the state to do more. We are trying to see if we can get real partnership between faith communities and government.

Q What do you see as the contribution faith communities can make to British society?

To understand how significant the value of the faith communities' contribution is to society, imagine if they were to completely withdraw their commitment to social provision. I believe whole communities would collapse.

Faith communities have much to contribute. They are often located alongside people in poorer neighbourhoods and so they are present in all our communities. If the faith communities combine their energies they could make an even larger impact on the future development of the community.

Q How did you first become aware of inter faith activity here in the UK?

From my experience in my own neighbourhood in Leeds, where we have people of every major faith tradition in the UK. We have a history of over 30 years of working together, 30 years of cooperating and 30 years of struggling together.

Q What are your hopes for the future of inter faith work in the UK?

I think that faith communities will provide the challenge to the developing culture of fear, helping all people in society develop a renewed sense of hope in each other. Inter faith initiatives that bring people of different faiths together to engage with each other and to cooperate on issues of mutual concern will play an increasingly important role at every level.

I hope that young people will become increasingly involved in inter faith bridge building. I very much welcome resources like the Network's excellent new guide, *Connect: Different Faiths Shared Values*, which can help them do this.

Holocaust Memorial Day Local Activities Pack

The theme for Holocaust Memorial Day 2005 is "Survivors, Liberators and Rebuilding Lives". The national ceremony will be held on 27 January 2005 in London. It marks the 60th anniversary of the liberation of the concentration camps.

A local activities pack is being developed to help those wanting to organise events. The pack will be available from September on the web site: www.holocaustmemorialday.gov.uk or it can be obtained by telephoning: 0870 240 1180.

It is with deep regret that we record the deaths of Ivy Gutridge and Rabbi Dr Albert Friedlander.

Ivy Gutridge

Ivy Gutridge passed away in Wolverhampton on 19 June, aged 81, after many years of illness. Ivy was a Methodist Christian who played a key role in widening awareness in this country of the importance of inter faith work. She was a pioneer in local inter faith activity in the UK and worked tirelessly for the Wolverhampton Inter Faith Group as its Secretary for over twenty years. She was awarded an MBE for her work in 1994.

Ivy served as a member of the Network's Executive Committee from its founding in 1987 and served as a Vice-Chair from 1992 until 1997 when she stood down from the Committee due to ill health. In his words for her obituary, Brian Pearce said "The Inter Faith Network owes a particular debt of gratitude to Ivy. She lives on through the inter faith work across the country of which she was a vital inspiration". Her life and work were remembered with gratitude at the Network's National Meeting on 28 June.

Rabbi Dr Albert Friedlander

Rabbi Dr Albert Friedlander passed away on 8 July in London. He was a key leader of Reform Judaism in the UK and the first Joint President of the Council of Christians and Jews from the Progressive Jewish movement. He was Dean of the Leo Baeck College in London and Rabbi Emeritus of the Westminster Synagogue.

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prevail, to allow health and education systems to be restored and to provide access to safe water and food. Over £28,000 was raised with donations from all the faiths represented. For further information about UNICEF's project contact UNICEF on tel: 0870 606 3377 or email: helpdesk@unicef.org.uk

Big Listen

The Big Listen takes place from 25 to 31 October. It is part of a campaign sponsored by BT to raise awareness and ensure that the UK is listening to young people's voices. It will be raising money for Childline, the children's free advice helpline. There are a number of ways that faith communities and inter faith groups can get involved with the campaign, such

as arranging talks or events on the theme of listening or helping to raise money for the charity. For more information see the web site: www.biglisten.co.uk or contact Deb Ain Tel: 020 7462 7634 or email: deb.ain@cc-plc.com.

Religious dress and religious freedom

The International Association for Religious Freedom (British Chapter) held a seminar on 14 April at University College, Chester examining issues surrounding dress code and religious freedom, as a response to the recent French legislation on religious clothing. The main speaker was Rev Jopie Boeke, a Council member of IARF and President of the International Association of Liberal Women.

On 15 June the High Court ruled that Shabina Begum, a fifteen year old pupil at Denbigh High School in Luton, could not attend school wearing a jilbab, a full length Islamic style gown. The school's uniform policy, which was framed after consultation with local communities, includes provision for the wearing of the hijab headcovering and salvaar kameez.

Honours for inter faith activists

The Queen's Birthday Honours list published in June included honours related to inter faith work for the following: an OBE for Sara Joseph for services to inter faith dialogue and women's rights; an OBE for Rabbi Dr David Goldberg for services to inter faith relations; and an MBE to Jalal Uddin, a long standing member of the Birmingham Council of Faiths, for services to community relations in the West Midlands.

Jewish-Muslim relations post

On 21 April the Chief Rabbi's Office announced the creation of a new portfolio in the Chief Rabbi's Cabinet covering Jewish-Muslim relations. Rabbi Naftali Brawer of Northwood Synagogue will take the post. Chief Rabbi Dr Jonathan Sacks said, "This appointment marks the priority we give to good Jewish-Muslim relations. We value the importance of the relationship and believe it is the task of religious leaders to show a lead in this area."



Dalai Lama's Scotland visit

Members of the Glasgow Forum of Faiths met with His Holiness the Dalai Lama in a meeting at the Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre on 30 May. His Holiness spoke of the importance of inter faith work and the need to recognise that there were good and bad people in all religions, indeed in all walks of life and that no religion had a monopoly on goodness.

The Edinburgh Inter Faith Group helped to organise the Dalai Lama's trip to Edinburgh and assisted in organising his visit to the Scottish Parliament on 2 June. He then went on to Dunfermline on 3 June where had meetings with religious leaders of Scotland and with hundreds of school children.

Three Faiths Forum meeting with MCB

A joint meeting of the Three Faiths Forum and the Muslim Council of Britain was held on 19 April at the St Ethelburga's Centre for Peace and Reconciliation in London. The meeting was aimed at cementing relations between the communities and encouraging a stand against islamophobia and anti-semitism.

On 11 June Three Faiths Forum members met with an Egyptian delegation led by Mufti Professor Ali Gomaa Mohamed Abdel Wahab, and Professor Gaafar Abdel Salam, of the Islamic Universities League to discuss how Islam was taught in schools and to consider the employment situation of Muslims in the UK. On 12 May Forum members met with a delegation from Iran led by Mahmood Mohammadi Araqi, President of the Islamic Culture and Relations Organisation.

Religious Tolerance in Britain

Religious Tolerance in Britain was the theme of a one day conference held on 20 April at the Museum in Docklands. The Conference was organised by the East London Mosque and London Muslim Centre and sponsored by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Muslim-Jewish football programme

The Maimonides Foundation held their annual Muslim-Jewish football programme on Sundays from 4-18 July at Arsenal's Highbury football stadium. Over 100 children aged 9-12 from 20 different groups took part, training together and playing in mixed faith teams. Mehri Niknam, Executive Director of the Foundation, said, "The aim of the tournament is to encourage the children to play as a member of a mixed faith team and to take back their positive experiences to their other friends"

Women's Inter Faith Meeting

On 11 March forty five women from many different faiths gathered at the House of Commons. The main aim of the meeting, organised by the Women's Interfaith Network, was to promote the formation of local inter faith discussion groups for women, initially in the London area. Some of the women present were already involved with inter faith work and described how this was managed in their own areas. For further information see: www.wominet.co.uk

Religion and belief training

Diversiton, the training wing of the Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum, launched a CD-Rom based training package in May. The company was set up by the Forum last year to develop training resources for employers in the run up to the introduction of the Employment Regulations (Religion and Belief) December 2003. The resources were developed in association with representatives of different faith communities and with funding from the Department of Trade and Industry. The company also offers training courses in cities around the UK and in-house training for larger employers. The web site www.diversiton.com, includes freely accessible resources on religion and belief issues including festival dates and good practice checklists. More information about ordering the products or training is available on the web site or by calling 028 4175 4777.

Directory of Hindu Temples

The National Council of Hindu Temples (UK) has compiled a directory which contains information on 141 Hindu temples in the UK. The highest concentration of temples is in London where there are 32. The Directory was launched on 17 July at Shree Sanatan temple in Leicester. Copies are available from the National Council of Hindu Temples for £10.00. Contact Tel: 01923 856269 or email: bimal.krsna.bcs@pamho.net

Course for Muslim Chaplains

Markfield Institute for Higher Education, a subsidiary of the Islamic Foundation, has introduced a course for the training of Muslim chaplains, to meet the growing need for Muslim chaplains in further education, the health service, prisons and the police and armed forces. The theoretical part of the course includes introductions to chaplaincy work and to the different fields where chaplains work and Islamic perspectives on common issues and also a module on inter faith relations. The practical part of the course involves a placement practice in a hospital, prison or in higher education.

Anglo-Sikh Heritage Trail launched

On 2 July, Home Office Minister, Fiona Mactaggart MP, launched the Anglo-Sikh Heritage Trail at an event held at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea. The Trail celebrates Anglo-Sikh heritage by helping to build links between institutions and communities. The Trail is a project of the Maharajah Duleep Singh Centenary Trust and has been supported by a number of organisations including English Heritage. Harbinder Singh Rana of the Trust said, "Despite Sikhs' high visibility, what remains unknown about the community is the long and remarkable history which connects Sikhs to Britain". Information about the Trail can be found at the web site: www.asht.info.

New Director at IIC

Sarita Cargas has been appointed Director of the International Interfaith Centre at Oxford following the retirement of Sandy Bharat in March. Sandy was one of the IIC's longest serving officers and helped to make the Centre a hub of the world-wide inter faith movement. Jael Bharat also left the IIC in March. Working on behalf of IIC he developed several local inter faith activities in Oxford.

WCF Younghusband Lecture

On 5 May William Dalrymple gave the annual Younghusband lecture of the World Congress of Faiths at the Liberal Jewish Synagogue in London. He spoke about his journey through the Middle East in 1994 and the changes that have taken place since then in particular to the Christianity Orthodox communities.

People on the move

Rev Canon Dr Michael Igrave is to be the new Archdeacon of Southwark. Michael is currently the Secretary to the Churches' Commission on Inter Faith Relations. Neville Nagler, Director General of the Board of Deputies has announced that he is to retire from the Board in the autumn. Both Michael and Neville will remain as Network Executive Committee members. Paul Seto of the Network of Buddhist Organisations, is moving to Australia and will be working with Buddhist organisations there. Gillian Wood has retired from the Free Churches Council and the RE Council for England and Wales.

Cardinal Bea Memorial Lecture

The Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter hosted the Cardinal Bea Memorial Lecture on 12 May in London. Peter Stanford and Rabbi Tony Bayfield explored the significance of Pope John Paul II's contribution to Catholic-Jewish relations.



Focolare conference

The Focolare Movement held a day conference at Westminster Central Hall in London on 19 June. The Movement, which has Christian roots, works for unity in all spheres of life and brings together people from different faiths and those of no formal faith who share the aim of building a more united world. The founder of the movement, Chiara Lubich, gave a presentation entitled “What future for a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi-faith society?”. She explained how the Focolare Movement has built bonds of fraternity with groups from other faiths such as Buddhists of the Rissho Kosei-kai and the American Muslim Society.

Other panel members at the event included Baroness Kathleen Richardson, Dr Zaki Badawi and Bhai Mohinder Singh. Chiara Lubich’s full speech is available at the web site: www.folocare.org.uk.

Young Commonwealth

The Commonwealth Secretariat hosted the 2004 Youth Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) on 9 March at Marlborough House, London. 100 young people aged between 14 and 24 from different Commonwealth countries role played being Commonwealth diplomats for the day. They were joined by Julian Robert Hunte, President of the United Nations General Assembly and Don McKinnon, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth.

Spiritual Elders meet Emerging Visionaries

The United Religions Initiative UK is organising a series of meetings to promote relationships and the exploring of values between the generations, bringing together young people and experienced religious practitioners for the opportunity to have conversations spanning faiths and generations. The series follows a successful launch event held at the Houses of Parliament in London in 2003. Meetings are planned for Manchester, Newcastle and London (see back page for dates). Contact URI UK for more details, Tel: 01768 777 671 or email info@uri.org.uk

Regional Update

Leicester “embraces the present and plans the future”

A report, “Embracing the Present and Planning the Future”, celebrating the social contribution made by the faith communities to the life of Leicester, was launched at the Shree Prajapati Association in Leicester on 2 July. The research for the report, undertaken by Riaz Ravat for the Leicester Faiths Regeneration Project, found that over 240 groups across 14 faiths operate social projects in Leicester. This is over half of all faith groups in the city. Among the speakers at the launch were Rt Rev Tim Stevens, Bishop of Leicester and Resham Singh Sandhu, Chair of Leicester Council of Faiths. The research was sponsored by the Anglican Diocese of Leicester, Leicester Council of Faiths and Voluntary Action Leicester. The report is available from the Leicester Faiths Regeneration project, c/o Diocese of Leicester, St Martin’s East, Leicester LE1 5FX, priced £4.99. Further information from Riaz.Ravat@LecCofE.org

Establishing a faith forum for Sussex

Over 60 representatives of different faiths and religions are being drawn into work to establish a faith forum which is being set up in Sussex. The initiative is being promoted by East and West County Councils together with Brighton and Hove City Council. An initial conference was held at Falmer on 18 March and the input from that conference is now being used to help the future development of the Forum. One aim of the Forum will be to attempt to draw together work in 15 Local Authority areas – the county councils, city council and the district and boroughs – to improve contact with faith communities and to allow their voices to be heard. For further information contact ianpchisnall@aol.com or Joanna.Hill@eastsussex.gov.uk.

Local Roundup

Altrincham

The Altrincham Interfaith Group held a family weekend from 30-31 May. The weekend included a picnic in the grounds of Tatton Hall in Cheshire and St Peter's Assembly Rooms, in Hale, an exhibition of religious arts and crafts provided by the local Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh communities.

Bedford

Bedford Council of Faiths held an inter faith game evening at the Quaker Meeting House in Bedford on 9 March. Members of the group played the Diversity game produced by Suffolk Inter Faith Resource. The evening was organised to explore the possibilities of the using the game in different settings and to learn more about the attitudes and reactions of the players of different faiths to the situations and questions described in the game.

Bolton

Bolton Interfaith Council arranged a presentation to members of the Bolton Local Strategic Partnership Steering Group and local Councillors at Bolton Town Hall on 24 March to explain the work of the Interfaith Council.

Bradford

Bradford Concord Interfaith Society organised a joint event with Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship entitled "The Pleasures and Problems of Inter Faith Dialogue" on 28 April at Thomas Danby College in Bradford. Over forty participants from seven faith traditions heard from a panel of 4 speakers from the Baha'i, Christian, Pagan and Sikh faiths.

Liverpool

The Big Faith Festival was held on 17 June at Hope University in Liverpool. Organised by Rotunda Community College, over 150 students performed at the event featuring multi-cultural entertainment from Indian music and African drumming to a Gospel Choir.

London

Brent

Over 100 people gathered in Brent Town Hall for the official launch of the Brent Multi Faith Forum on 4 May. At the launch Rev Steve Nolan presented the findings of a research project into barriers to participation and highlighted the fact that Brent's faith communities employ nearly 30 staff supported by over 180 volunteers for community activities but only 11% of these projects are publicly funded. Aisha Khan, Chair of the Multi Faith Forum, outlined plans for future work of the Forum. The Forum is also seeking representation on the Local Strategic Partnership, Partners for Brent.

Croydon

A Faith Audit of North West Croydon was launched by Croydon Council on 16 July at the North West Croydon regeneration conference. The audit, carried out by Penny Smith, found that there were 136 worshipping groups in North West Croydon using 84 places of worship and numerous other venues such as community halls. She also found that there were 146 community activities being carried out by these groups, most of them, voluntary activities open to people of all faiths.

Hampstead

The Hampstead Inter Faith Group held a meeting featuring many of the speakers who have spoken to the group over the last ten years. The event marked the retirement of Eva Tucker who has held group meetings in her home since 1995. She presented a short report on the ten years of the group and was warmly thanked by the many who came.

Harrow

Harrow Inter Faith Council held the Harrow Inter Faith Festival at various venues in Harrow between 27 June and 4 July. A linked exhibition of Faith in Harrow, including projects by Harrow school children, was displayed all week at the Harrow Museum and Heritage Centre. The festival closed with an open air event at St George's Shopping Centre on 4 July.

Westminster

Westminster Faith Exchange held Faith Links, a youth event, on 25 February at the Salvation Army's Regent Hall on Oxford Street, London. The event featured young people from seven different faiths performing poetry, song, dance from each of their own faith traditions to portray the circle of life from birth, coming of age, marriage and death and the afterlife. The evening culminated in a joint finale. The group hopes to organise further events in the future.

Peterborough

Members of the Peterborough Inter-Faith Council were invited by the youth group at the Husaini Islamic Centre, a Shi'a Muslim Centre in Peterborough, to attend a film about the Prophet and a talk and dinner on the occasion of the Anniversary of the Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) on 5 May.

Salford

Salford Faith Network held a seminar on 1 July featuring presentations from Godfrey Stadlen, head of the Faith Community Unit in the Home Office, who spoke about the Home Office's report, *Working Together: Co-operation between Government and the Faith Communities*; and John Battle MP, the Prime Minister's faith envoy, who spoke about the importance of people of faith becoming involved in their local communities. This was the first major event organised by the Network and over 80 people attended.

DIARY DATES

Local inter faith events

Space only permits one event to be listed for each organisation. For details of other events contact the relevant local groups. Local inter faith events are also listed in the One Family Newsletter available from the World Congress of Faiths, c/o London Inter Faith Centre, 125 Salisbury Road, London NW6 6RG.

1- 30 July, Croydon Inter Faith Network. Celebrating Faith in Croydon Exhibition at Croydon Clock Tower, Katherine Street. For further information contact email: selina_c82@hotmail.com.

31 July Horsham Inter Faith Council. Richard Boeke speaking about the Parliament of the World's Religions at 1pm at the Unitarian Church Hall. Contact Richard Boeke Tel: 01403 257801 or email: r.boeke@virgin.net

16 August, London Inter Faith Centre. Christians and Muslims: Conflict and Clash or Co-operative co-existence? Speakers include Prof Jamal Badawi and Rev Canon Christopher Lamb. 7.30pm, Contact Tel: 020 7604 3053 or email: info@londoninterfaith.org.uk

17 August, Minehead, West Somerset Interfaith Group. Talk on the Rediscovery of Christian Meditation by Leslie Glaze at the Friends Meeting House, Bancks Street, Minehead. Contact Joop van Montfoort Tel: 01643 8762736

5 September, European Day of Jewish Culture and Heritage. Events around the UK organised by B'nai B'rith UK will include open days at synagogues and exhibitions at the Ben Uri Art Gallery, the British Library and the Jewish Museums in Camden, Finchley and Manchester. For information please contact Hayley Symons, Tel: 020 7387 5278 or email: heritage@bbuk.org

12 September, Bedford Council of Faiths. Showing of the film, Mistaken Identity, on the Sikh community in the USA following the September 11 attacks, followed by a talk on the issues raised by the film. 4pm at St Mary's Church Hall, Goldington. Contact Tel: 01234 307281 or email: bcof@24hrs-a-day.org

20 September to 2 October, Southampton Council of Faiths. Fragments of Another Life. Exhibition of photographs by Rhanda Klenansky of refugees and their possessions on arrival in the UK - venue St. Mary's Church Southampton City Centre. Further information from Ian Johnson email rectory@ic24.net.

23 September, Beaminster One World Fellowship. What makes sacred places sacred? Talk by Peter Knight of the Dorset Earth Mysteries Group. 7.30 pm in the Strode Room, Beaminster. Contact Colin Smith Tel: 01308 862440.

24 September, Coventry Inter Faith Group. Discussion on bereavement from different faith perspectives. 63 Blackwell Road, Foleshill, Coventry. Contact Rev Jean Clark Tel: 024 7644 2400.

28 September, Nelson and Brierfield Building Bridges Interfaith Project. The Value of Human Life from the point of view of Islam. 7pm at the Wilson Room, Town Hall, Nelson. Contact Building Bridges Tel: 01282 719303

17-24 October Week of Prayer for World Peace. For details of events during the week and to purchase copies of the leaflet for distribution contact: Trudie Charles, Tel: 0117 942 3454. The week will include two special gatherings: 17 October at Westminster Abbey and 24 October at Singh Sabha Gurdwara, Havelock Road, Southall.

17-24 October One World Week. This year's theme is "Your Move". For details and or order an Action Kit please contact: One World Week Tel: 0118 939 4933 or visit their web site: www.oneworldweek.org

21-28 November, Scotland. Multi Faith Week. Hosted by the Scottish Inter Faith Council, Religious Leaders of Scotland and the Scottish Executive. Inter faith events will be held around Scotland culminating in a national inter faith youth conference on 28 November. Contact the Scottish Inter Faith Council for details: Tel: 0141 429 4012 or email: admin@interfaithscotland.org.

The Inter Faith Network for the UK

The Inter Faith Network was founded in 1987. It works with its member bodies to promote good relations between the faith communities in the UK, to combat inter religious prejudice and intolerance and to help make the UK a country marked by mutual understanding and respect between religions where all can practise their faith with integrity. The Network:

- Provides information on faith communities and on inter faith affairs
- Advises on multi faith projects and inter faith issues
- Publishes materials to aid work in the religious and inter faith sectors
- Fosters inter faith co-operation on social issues
- Holds regular meetings where social and religious questions of concern to the different faith communities can be examined together

Diary dates:**Courses, exhibitions, conferences and seminars**

22-24 July, Fintry, World Congress of Faiths. Responses to Barcelona: 2004 Parliament of World Religions to be held at Fintry House, Brook, South of Godalming (see www.shrineofwisdom.org for more information). Cost: £80 for registration, room and board (£90 after 1 July). Cheques to Richard Boeke, WCF Secretary, 16 St. Mary's Garden's, Horsham RH12 1JP

28 July, London, Institute for Volunteering Research are hosting a seminar to discuss current research into the relationships between faith communities and civic renewal and regeneration. 12.30pm – 4pm at the University of East London, Docklands Campus. Contact Sharon Le-Gall to reserve a place. Tel: 020 7520 8987

26 July-4 August, YES! Youth Section of the Council of Christians and Jews. Tour of Poland including a Jewish cemetery clearing project in Krakow. Aimed at participants aged 18-30, all faiths are welcome. Further information: Debbie Young telephone: 020 7820 0090 or email yes@ccj.org.uk

15-22 August, Three Faiths Summer School at the Ammerdown Centre. This year's theme is ecology and the environment. The cost of the week is £270 full board (vegetarian food will be served throughout the week). A limited number of bursaries are available. Further information from The Booking Secretary, The Ammerdown Centre, Ammerdown Park, Radstock, Somerset BA3 5SW Tel:01761 433709, email centre@ammerdown.org

2 October, Croydon, International Association for Religious Freedom (British Chapter). Seminar on the Employment Regulations (Religion and Belief). Barristers, Paul Cadney and Angus Halden will discuss the new regulations. From 10am – 4.15pm at Croydon Unitarian Church. Contact Roderick Ramage Tel: 01785 223030 or email: roderick@copehale.net

6 October, Manchester Town Hall and 7 October Newcastle Civic Hall. Spiritual Elders meet Emerging Visionaries event organised by the United Religions Initiative UK. Contact URI, Tel: 01768 777 671 or email info@uri.org.uk for details of these and other events planned in other cities.

13 November, Croydon, World Congress of Faiths, IARF (British Chapter) and the Unitarian Interfaith Panel. Fideology 2004 – the study and practice of faith as trust. From 10am-4pm at Croydon Unitarian Church. Contact Richard Boeke Tel: 01403 257801 or email r.boeke@virgin.net

5 March 2005, Birmingham, Encounter and Reflection Programme. Women of Faith: Transforming Conflict. One day workshop offering practical skills and methods for dealing with conflict drawing on resources of different faiths. Cost £20 at the United College of the Ascension, Selly Oak. Contact Joan Marks Tel: 0121 415 6810 or email: j.marks@bham.ac.uk.

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Please send any items and diary dates for consideration for inclusion in the next issue **by 4 October** to:

The Newsletter Editor
The Inter Faith Network
8A Lower Grosvenor Place
London SW1 W 0EN

Tel: 020 7931 7766
Fax: 020 7931 7722
Email: ifnet@interfaith.org.uk
website: www.interfaith.org.uk

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INTER FAITH

UPDATE

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Community cohesion action guide launched

Practical advice to local authorities on how they can build communities which value people's differences was launched on 2 November by the Local Government Association at a Home Office Community Cohesion: Action and Learning Summit in London. Produced in partnership with the Audit Commission, Commission for Racial Equality, Home Office, Improvement and Development Agency, Inter Faith Network, and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, *Community Cohesion – An Action Guide* provides local councils with up to date advice on how to develop cohesive communities.

The guidance aims to help local authorities build on work already being done to tackle community cohesion issues. It covers issues including working with black and ethnic minority communities; faith communities; older people; and

children and young people. The guide also explores how community cohesion can be integrated into the delivery of all services, and offers advice on dealing with conflicts that arise. It includes numerous case studies highlighting examples of good practice from local councils and helpful signposts to further information.

Included in the guide is a chapter on working with faith communities which highlights the important role faith communities and inter faith bodies can play in increasing community cohesion. Case studies about inter faith projects appear both in this chapter and in other sections dealing with such topics as education and culture and sport. The guide can be downloaded from www.lga.gov.uk/documents/publication/communitycohesionguide.pdf

(continued on page 4)

Subscribing to Inter Faith Update

This newsletter is published three times a year and is available by subscription at £7.50 per year.

To subscribe, send your name and address with a cheque payable to "The Inter Faith Network" to:

Inter Faith Update Subscriptions,
Inter Faith Network,
8A Lower Grosvenor Place,
London SW1W 0EN

New legislation on religious discrimination

Following the European Directive adopted in 2000 and the subsequent Westminster legislation which came into effect in December 2003 (as reported in *Inter Faith Update* Issue 24) discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief in employment and vocational training is now unlawful.

At the Labour Party Conference in September the Prime Minister

announced that the Government now intends to legislate further on religious discrimination. The Home Office issued an accompanying press release announcing the intention to end discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief in the provision of goods, facilities, services and premises.

(continued on page 3)

NETWORK NEWS

Thank you, Bhupinder

Bhupinder Singh, sadly for the Network, left in mid October to help run his family's hotel business. He has been with us for over six years and brought considerable gifts to the Network's work. We would like to take this opportunity to put on record the gratitude of office colleagues and Trustees for all he has done for the Network, including editing the Network's newsletter.

Supporting the Network

In the last year, the Network has faced an increasing challenge in raising the money necessary to continue its work. As readers may know, the Network is supported by a mixture of Trust grants, Government funding, structured faith community support, membership fees and the kind donations of individuals. We are currently working hard to secure the funding necessary for next year and beyond. If you are not already a donor and would like to support the work of the Network in building good inter faith relations in the UK, you may like to make use of the donation form enclosed with this issue.

Network publishes new directory of inter faith organisations

Over 200 organisations are now working to promote good inter faith relations at UK-wide, national, regional and local level. The Network has published a directory which gives contact details for these bodies and includes brief descriptions of their work.

This new publication is a significant new resource for all those engaged in the work of developing mutual respect and understanding between the faith communities of the UK.

Inter Faith Organisations in the UK: A Directory is £6.50 (inc. £1.55 postage and handling).

To order a copy of the directory, please send a cheque for this amount, payable to The Inter Faith Network, to: Ms Gaylina Nguyen, The Inter Faith Network, 8A Lower Grosvenor Place, London SW1W 0EN.

The Inter Faith Network

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- provides information on faith communities and on inter faith matters
- advises on multi faith projects and inter faith issues
- publishes materials to aid work in the religious and inter faith sectors
- fosters inter faith co-operation on social issues
- holds regular meetings where social and religious questions of concern to the different faith communities can be examined together
- links 105 member organisations including: representative bodies from the different faith communities; national and local inter faith organisations; and educational and academic bodies.

Inter Faith Update

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Please send any items and diary dates for consideration for inclusion in the next issue by 30 January 2005 to: The Newsletter Editor, Inter Faith Network, 8A Lower Grosvenor Place, London SW1W 0EN or email to harriet.crabtree@interfaith.org marking your email 'newsletter'.

NATIONAL UPDATE

Launch of national framework for Religious Education in England

The first non-statutory national framework for Religious Education in England was launched at an event in London on 28 October. Speaking at the launch, Charles Clarke, Secretary of State for Education and Skills, said “Religious education can transform pupils’ assessment of themselves and others, and their understanding of the wider world. I see it as vital in widening inclusion, understanding diversity and promoting tolerance... I support the development of materials that can be used with the framework... Faith groups must seize this opportunity to develop their own resources that enhance understanding of their faith, and their response to world issues...”

Earlier issues of *Inter Faith Update* have reported on progress with the preparation of the framework, which has been developed by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, in partnership with the Department for Education and Skills, representatives of faith and belief organisations, and RE professional groups, over a consultation period lasting some 18 months. The framework is non-statutory because the responsibility for determining an RE syllabus rests with the relevant local education authority, assisted by a syllabus conference which draws on the membership of the local Standing Advisory Committee on Religious Education (SACRE).

The document sets out the national expectations for teaching and learning in RE to ensure that all pupils benefit from consistently high quality RE teaching. It provides guidance on how RE can be taught, so that pupils not only learn about religion, but learn from it. It sets out ways that pupils can develop their knowledge, understanding and skills and suggests the levels of attainment that they should achieve.

The framework emphasises the contribution which RE can make to promoting an awareness among pupils of religious diversity and makes specific mention of the need to explore inter faith issues. At the launch Ken Boston, Chief Executive of QCA, said “[This framework] has an essential contribution to make to the inclusion agenda, particularly in prompting respect and sensitivity to the beliefs and values of others. [It]

highlights the importance of RE in combating prejudice and discrimination. A fundamental purpose of the framework is to develop themes of respect and inclusion... The framework promotes awareness of how inter faith co-operation can support the pursuit of the common good.”

Copies of the framework document can be ordered from QCA Publications, PO Box 29, Norwich, NR3 1GN (Tel: 08700 606015) or can be downloaded at www.qca.org.uk/re/.

New legislation on religious discrimination

(...continued from page 1)

The statement by the Home Office said that the provisions in the new legislation would ban *direct* discrimination where a person, on grounds of religion or belief, is treated less favourably than another; *indirect* discrimination where a provision, criterion or practice has the effect of putting people of a particular religious belief at a disadvantage which cannot be justified; and *victimisation* where someone is treated less favourably than others because, for example, they have complained of discrimination or have assisted someone else in a complaint. There are plans for some exemptions, for example, to allow faith-based schools to continue to discriminate in favour of that faith in selection policy; to allow faith-based charities to discriminate in favour of that faith in the provision of services on the grounds of religion or belief; and to permit action required to safeguard national security.

There is speculation that provisions along these lines will now be included in legislation to set up the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights, and that this will be introduced in the new Parliamentary session. Whether this is the case will become clear from the Queen’s Speech at the opening of the new Parliamentary session on 23 November, which will outline the Government’s legislative programme for this.

**The Inter Faith Network’s
website:
www.interfaith.org.uk**

The new Commission for Equality and Human Rights

The Government has been considering the responses which it has received to its White Paper *Fairness for All: A New Commission for Equality and Human Rights*, published in May (on which see the last issue of *Inter Faith Update*) and there have been further consultations over the last two months. The Commission for Racial Equality has expressed its opposition to the proposals in the White Paper and it is widely expected that, while the new Commission will carry responsibility for dealing with issues of religion and belief from the outset, the merger of the existing Commissions (the CRE, the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Disability Rights Commission) will be a phased process. However, the Government has yet to publish its plans in the light of the responses it has received to *Fairness for All*.

Incitement to religious hatred

In early July (see the last issue of *Inter Faith Update*) the Home Secretary, David Blunkett, announced that the Government intended to introduce legislation into Parliament to create a new offence of incitement to religious hatred "as soon as the legislative opportunity arises". The Home Office has recently been conducting detailed consultations on the proposed legislation and it is widely anticipated that the Government will also introduce this in the new session of Parliament beginning at the end of November.

Focus on Religion

Focus on Religion, published by the Office of National Statistics on 11 October, draws on the 2001 Census data and other Government surveys to give detailed profiles of the different faith groups in the UK. It charts the distribution of members of different faiths, for example noting that 56% of the Jewish population and 52% of the Hindu population in Great Britain lived in London and 31% of the Sikh community in the West Midlands at the time of the Census. People in the North East and North West were most likely to describe themselves as Christians, with London having the lowest number of people self-defining as Christian (58%).

Focus on Religion looks also at other aspects of life. For example, it shows that the Muslim population is the youngest of the faith community populations, with 34% under 16 years of age. It also has the highest unemployment rate (14% compared to 4% for Christians). In Northern Ireland, Catholic men have a 9% unemployment rate compared to 5% for Protestant men. The link between faith and ethnicity is explored, with Buddhism emerging as the most ethnically diverse faith community (White, 38%; Chinese, 25%; Asian, 10%; Mixed ethnic background, 3%; Black, 1%; Other, 24%). Sikhs emerge as most likely to be from an Indian ethnic background and also as the Asian background faith community population most likely to have been born in the UK (56%). The report also looks at such issues as family life, with, for example, Hindus and Sikhs emerging as the least likely to be separated, divorced or remarried. The full report can be downloaded from www.statistics.gov.uk/focuson/religion.

Community cohesion action guide launched

(...continued from page 1)

Speakers at the Action and Learning Summit included Fiona Mactaggart, Home Office Minister for Race Equality, Community Policy and Civil Renewal; Cllr David Rogers, Chair of the LGA's Community Well-being Board; and Alan Riddell, Director of Operations of the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. The Summit had a particular focus on the Community Cohesion Pathfinder Programme. Further information about this can be found at www.communitycohesion.gov.uk.

Charities Bill

As reported in issue 25 of *Inter Faith Update*, the Home Office published a draft Charities Bill in May. A Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament was set up to take written and oral evidence from interested parties and it published a report on its findings on 30 September.

Of particular concern to many religious bodies has been the proposed removal of the presumption that religious charities are, by

definition, 'of public benefit'. Under the Government's proposals this presumption would be removed for religious organisations and they would be subject to a universal public benefit test which would apply to all charities. However, according to the Joint Parliamentary Committee's report on the Bill, the Home Office and the Charity Commission have now agreed that the criteria for assessing public benefit should be decided on a case by case basis with different standards for different charitable purposes. Religious charities will only have to demonstrate that their work is for the benefit of the public, or for a sufficient section of it.

There have also been concerns among some faith communities about the way that 'religion' is defined in the Bill. The Joint Committee recommends that the Bill include a definition of 'religion' which would allow 'non-deity and multi-deity' groups to satisfy the definition of 'religion' for charitable purposes. It also wants to see added to the existing list of charitable purposes 'the promotion of religious harmony, racial harmony, and equality and diversity'.

Gambling Bill passes second reading

On 1 November, the Gambling Bill received its second reading in the House of Commons. It proposes, among other things, that the opening of regional "super-casinos" be allowed. The bill was passed with a government majority of 74. During the debate, the Culture Secretary, Tessa Jowell, accepted that passions were running high and said she would give every consideration to suggestions intended genuinely to improve the Bill. The proposals will now be scrutinised by a committee of MPs.

A number of concerns had been expressed in the run up to the vote by faith bodies and others who are concerned that some of the measures may lead to a spread in the problem of gambling among vulnerable people. The Methodist Church, for example, working with the Salvation Army and other Churches, while welcoming parts of the Bill which offer greater protections for children and young people, expressed deep concern that these protections will, in its view, be wholly undermined by the proposals massively to increase the availability of the harder or more addictive forms of gambling. See the briefing material in the "What's New" section on www.methodist.org.uk/

A copy of the Bill and further information is available at:
www.culture.gov.uk/gambling_and_racing/gambling_bill/default.htm

Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)

From 1 October 2004, disabled people have new rights of access of goods, services, facilities and premises. The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) gives disabled people rights in the way they receive goods, services or facilities.

Businesses and organisations, such as shops, restaurants, leisure centres, are defined in the Act as 'service providers'.

'Service providers' also include places of worship, so churches, synagogues, gurdwaras, mandirs, mosques and viharas now need, like other service providers, to take 'reasonable' steps to tackle physical features that act as a barrier to disabled people to access services. This will vary from case to case but may mean removing, altering or providing a reasonable means of avoiding, physical features of a building which make access impossible or unreasonably difficult for disabled people. Examples include:

- putting in a ramp to replace steps
- providing larger, well defined signs for people with a visual impairment
- improving access to toilet or washing facilities

Even before 1 October, service providers have needed to change the way they deliver their services if they are difficult for disabled people to use. Since 2 December 1996 it has been against the law for service providers to treat people less favourably because of their disability. Since 1 October 1999 service providers have had to make "reasonable adjustments" for disabled people, such as giving extra help or changing the way they provide their services. The new Act, which came into force this month, adds to these earlier provisions.

The Disability Rights Commission has produced a new Code of Practice for service providers about the DDA. It will be taken into account by the courts where relevant and it guides disabled people and service providers on how reasonable adjustments should be made. It is available on the Disability Rights Commission website at: www.drc-gb.org

Media and a Multi-Faith Society

The Media Trust, in association with the Inter Faith Network and respect (an initiative of TimeBank and the Prince's Trust), held a conference on "The Media and a Multi Faith Society" at Regent's College in London on 31 March (see Issue 25) The report on this conference is now available from the Media Trust: maureenb@mediatrust.org.

Following a suggestion made at the conference, discussions have begun, under the auspices of the Churches' Media Council and the Inter Faith Network, to discuss the formation of an inter faith media group.

New Multi-Faith Centre at Derby opens its doors

On 11 September the Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby opened its doors to the communities of Derby and the surrounding areas with an event to mark the completion of the new building. This was attended by over 400 people.

The Centre provides space for the University's ecumenical chaplaincy and the local faith advisers to the University. There are three rooms where events, open to all, will take place to promote both inter faith dialogue and an understanding of the different faith traditions. As well as the three main rooms there is a Reading Room and a Meditation Room which contains a series of steps ascending towards a narrowing point and lit by tiny blue lights at the side. It is a place for personal prayer, meditation and quiet reflection open to the University staff and students and the local community.

To find out more about the Centre and the events please contact the Centre office on 01332 591285 or email mfc@derby.ac.uk or visit the website www.multifaithnet.org

Moves on inter faith front

Revd Canon Dr Michael Ipgrave moved, at the end of October, from his post as Inter Faith Relations Adviser to the Archbishops' Council of the Church of England and from the additional post for which he was seconded, Secretary to the Churches Commission for Inter Faith Relations

of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CCIFR). He moves to become Archdeacon of Southwark in the Anglican Diocese of Southwark. Revd Guy Wilkinson will be the acting Inter Faiths Relations Adviser to the Archbishops Council of the Church of England for the coming period. The CCIFR role will be shared, on an interim basis, by Revd Dr Elizabeth Harris and Revd Peter Colwell.

Sikhs celebrate 400th anniversary of first reading of the Guru Granth Sahib

On 26 September, the Prince of Wales joined 5,000 Sikhs at an event organised by the Network of Sikh Organisations at London's Royal Albert Hall to mark the 400th anniversary of the first reading of the Guru Granth Sahib Verses. Among other speakers were Chief Rabbi Dr Jonathan Sacks; the Bishop of London, the Rt Rev and Rt Hon Richard Chartres; the Director of the Network of Sikh Organisations, Dr Indarjit Singh; the Chair of the Commission for Racial Equality, Trevor Phillips; the Leader of the Conservative Party, Rt Hon Michael Howard MP; and Simon Hughes MP of the Liberal Democrats. The Prime Minister sent a video message as the event coincided with the Labour Party conference. The programme included shabads (verses) from local Sikh musicians as well as a performance by the Dya Singh Group from Australia.

On 15 October, The Queen and Prince Philip visited the Sri Guru Singh Sabha in London. It was her first visit to a gurdwara in London. While at the gurdwara, she visited an exhibition marking the 400th anniversary of the Guru Granth Sahib.

Diwali celebrations

A drizzly evening did not deter a large crowd from gathering in Trafalgar Square, London, on 7 November to celebrate Diwali. The event was organised by the Diwali in London Committee. It was launched by the Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, and the Indian Minister of Tourism, Renuka Chowdhury. Other speakers included representatives of the Sikh community and of the Inter Faith Network. The crowd enjoyed music played by a Gujarati bagpipe band and other

singers and entertainers.

A Diwali event is also planned for the evening of 10 November, organised by the Hindu Forum of Britain, in the Members' Dining Room in the House of Commons, which will be transformed with traditional Hindu decorations. There are due to be speakers at the event from all the main political parties.

These events in London form part of a wide ranging pattern of Diwali celebrations across the UK, many of which have guests invited from other faith communities.

Scottish inter faith seminar for women

In August the Scottish Inter Faith Council hosted a seminar for women of nine different faith traditions from across Scotland: "Faith, Family and the Future". It took place at the St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art in Glasgow and was opened with an address from the Lord Provost of Glasgow and a welcome from the Convener of the Scottish Inter Faith Council. The day included inter faith discussion groups, workshops, story telling and banner making.

Meeting of religious leaders in Scotland

The religious leaders of Scotland came together on 6 September for their twice yearly meeting. They supported the idea of St Andrew's Day being made a national holiday and also endorsed a plan that the last week of November be a national inter faith week in Scotland. They met with the Scottish Inter Faith Council Youth Steering Group and agreed to lead a workshop for this at the close of Inter Faith Week. The leaders also agreed to visit one another's places of worship during this week.

Health on the Agenda

Faith Regen UK and the National Health Service University held a conference on 23 September to raise awareness of the role of faith communities within health care, with presentations from speakers from the Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh communities. Anil Bhanot, General Secretary of Hindu Council UK, was among the

speakers and, noting particular health concerns of members of his community, said "We are all aware of these problems but what is needed is an education campaign just targeted for the Asian population." Further information from Jennifer Ballinger jennifer@faithregen.org

Jewish community discusses inter faith work

On 8 September the Board of Deputies of British Jews joined with Jewish leaders and around 20 organisations involved in inter faith activity at a national or local level to discuss how better to coordinate and inform each other about the range and variety of inter faith initiatives in which the Jewish community is involved.

Three Faiths Forum in Wales

On 11 October an inaugural meeting was held in Cardiff of the Three Faiths Forum in Wales/Fforwm y Tair Ffydd yng Nghymru. It was held in association with the Welsh Centre for International Affairs and chaired by Lord Elis-Thomas, Presiding Officer of the National Assembly of Wales. Speakers included Rev Dr Marcus Braybrooke, Imam Mohamed Ovaisi and Sidney Shipton, Coordinator of the Three Faiths Forum.

New youth inter faith project with global focus

The Diversity and Dialogue Project is an inter faith project working with young people in the UK and inviting them to look outward beyond their own communities. Through its workshops and practical projects it will be encouraging them to learn about global issues and work together constructively for a better world. The project began in September and will run for two years. It is funded by the Department for International Development and led by Save the Children working in partnership with a range of humanitarian organisations. Project workers are based in Leeds, London, and Manchester. For information about its programme or to become involved, contact Becky Hatch at r.hatch@savethechildren.org.uk

One World Week

17–24 October was One World Week. Around the UK, many groups and organisations held events in their local area to raise awareness about injustice, poverty and degradation here and around the world and ways to end such problems; and to celebrate the good aspects of being part of one diverse yet interconnected world.

One World Week (OWW) is supported and sponsored by the members of the Churches World Development Network but people of many faiths take part in OWW events, often through their local inter faith groups. For example, as part of this year's One World Week, an inter faith service was organised by Canterbury and District Inter Faith Action in a former Dominican priory; Sheffield Interfaith held a multi-faith service at the Quaker Meeting House; and Hounslow Friends of Faith held a conference at the Civic Centre.

The Keighley Inter Faith Group worked with Peace Direct on a OWW linked event: 'Moves to bring peace to the UK – Lucknow Dialogues'. Jagdish Gandhi from Lucknow's City Montessori School and colleagues from Lucknow spoke. CMS was heavily involved in calming tensions that arose between Muslims and Hindus as a consequence of the Ayodhya Mosque in 1992. The experience of organisations working for good inter faith relations in Keighley/the UK and in Lucknow/India and their role in peace building was discussed at the meeting. 'Lucknow Dialogues' were also held in Bradford, London, Loughborough, Newcastle, and Slough.

Building Bridges Interfaith Community Project worked on series of OWW events, including a display celebrating the diversity of Pendle which included stories of local people, their background and how they came to be a 'Pendle Person'. This was launched with an event in Christ Church, Nelson on 18 October in partnership with Pendle Borough Council before touring during the week to Brierfield, Colne and Barnoldswick.

One World Week is a development education programme, established in 1978, currently under the auspices of the World Development Movement Trust. Further information about it can be found at: www.oneworldweek.org/ Peace Direct was founded in 2002 to promote nonviolence by: directly supporting groups in conflict areas, by linking them with UK groups and developing a strategic grants programme; and raising the profile of non-violent conflict

resolution among the public – to show how peaceful solutions can work, do work and where they work. Further information about Peace Direct and the Lucknow dialogues can be found at www.peacedirect.org

National Mosque Open Day

The second UK National Mosque Open Day, organised by UK Islamic Mission, took place on 3 October. The aim was to build bridges between different ethnic and faith communities. Further information at www.ukim.org. Mosques across the country opened their doors to the public and civic visits took place in a number of cities. For example, Lord Mayor of Newcastle, Councillor George Douglas and the Leader of Newcastle City Council, Councillor Peter Arnold visited the Bilal Jamia Mosque on Elswick Road to find out more about the mosque and its role in the community.

60:10 Joint visit of Muslims and Jews to Auschwitz and Bosnia planned

The Diverse Trust is planning a joint trip by a group of Jews and Muslims to Auschwitz and Bosnia next year as part of a project to promote mutual understanding. This is part of the 60–10 project, the name of which highlights the fact that it is 60 years since the liberation of the death camps and 10 years since the massacre of Muslims in Bosnia.

Fiyaz Mughal, one of the Trust's officers, said: "One of the key reasons for starting this project was to try to get both communities to understand the real social and cultural commonalities between them. In today's world, it is essential that we promote this common understanding and learn that if anti-Semitism and Islamophobia are allowed to continue the lessons of Auschwitz and Srebrenica will never have been learned." The journey is, however, only possible if full funding is found for it by early next year. Further information from the Diverse Trust, admin@diversetrust.org or see www.diversetrust.org.

Rabbi Tony Bayfield becomes a CCJ joint President

In October, Rabbi Tony Bayfield, the Executive Director of the Reform Synagogues of Great Britain, became a joint President of the Council of Christians and Jews in succession to the late Rabbi Albert Friedlander, who was the first Progressive Jewish leader to be appointed to this post.

Centre for Jewish-Christian Relations

The Centre for Jewish-Christian Relations, Cambridge, has recently won a grant for a research programme which will look at the interaction between Jewish and Christian biblical commentators in the formative period of both religions. Evidence of an exegetical encounter will be presented in the form of a traditional rabbinic Bible, known as Mikra'ot G'dolot (Great Bible). This presents the biblical text, surrounded by Aramaic translations and numerous rabbinic commentators. The Exegetical Encounter between Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity will follow a similar format, presenting commentaries both from early Christian and rabbinic commentators on a verse-by-verse basis, beginning with the book of Genesis. For this, two post-doctoral researchers (in Patristics and Rabbinics respectively) will examine the interpretations of Genesis in the formative period of both religions – the first six centuries CE. In showing the influence of the Christian and Jewish traditions upon each other across the centuries, the project will contribute to promoting inter faith understanding.

faithandfood.com

A new website, www.faithandfood.com, was launched during British Food Fortnight on 20 September 2004, with an inter faith lunch in the Jubilee Room at the House of Commons, provided by Govinda's Pure Vegetarian Restaurant. Keith Vaz MP and Tolerance Ltd (owners of [faithandfood.com](http://www.faithandfood.com)) played host to members of a number of the major faiths in the UK, including Sheikh Dr Zaki Badawi, Rabbi Lionel Blue, Dr Atul Shah and Dr Indarjit Singh,

as well as key figures in the food industry.

Alexia Robinson, organiser of British Food Fortnight, said: "Food is a great vehicle for understanding different cultures and religions. So much of our knowledge of different peoples comes from food. Few of us have travelled to China or India yet a Chinese or Indian take-away is part of our lives. It is fitting that religious leaders have chosen British Food Fortnight, which takes place during this country's traditional harvest festival celebrations, as a time to discuss food as a means of achieving greater understanding between the faiths."

Faithandfood.com is about both education and inter faith eating. The website's faithandfood Fact Files are designed to educate the public about the dietary practices and beliefs of the UK's diverse faith communities. The directory of registered food outlets shows people of different faiths where they can eat in London. Further information from Simon Cohen at simon@tolerancelimited.com.

9/11

A number of events took place in different parts of the UK around the time of the anniversary of the terrorist attacks of 11 September. For example, Bolton Interfaith Council hosted a discussion on 14 September on the issue of terrorism. The discussion was led by Dr Mahmood Chandia, the Executive Director of Lancashire Council of Mosques, who stressed that "terrorism has no religion" and has no place in Islam. He also talked about how the British National Party is distorting passages taken from Islamic scripture.

In London, the Maimonides Foundation, in association with Third World Solidarity, hosted a seminar at the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Town Hall on 9 September. The speakers included political figures as well as members of the three Abrahamic faiths, on "The Imperative for Dialogue after 9/11". The seminar was attended by delegates from inter faith and faith bodies as well as grass roots members and religious leaders of the Abrahamic faiths and representatives of Middle Eastern and American embassies.

In Cambridge, the Cambridge Inter-Faith Group arranged a visit on 11 September to the local mosque to build up fellowship with the Muslim community of Cambridge.

Jain and Christian leaders bless charity cyclists

Rt Revd Richard Chartres, Bishop of London, and Her Holiness Acharya Chandanaji of Veerayatan of the Jain tradition participated in a joint ceremony of blessing at St Paul's Cathedral for 125 cyclists, including 80 children, who set off on 21 July for a fund raising ride to Paris. The ride was organised by Veerayatan and Cycling for Children (c4c) and raised over £100,000 for children's charities.

Week of Prayer for World Peace

The Week of Prayer for World Peace took place from 17–24 October. On 17 October a service was held at Westminster Abbey to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the inauguration of the Week of Prayer for World

Peace. The preacher was the Revd Dr Marcus Braybrooke, President of the World Congress of Faiths. The Abbey's Peace Flame was lit throughout the Week of Prayer. Later in the week a gathering to pray for peace took place at Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Southall, London. This was linked to the celebration of the 400th anniversary of the first opening of the Guru Granth Sahib.

Northern Ireland Diversiton Project

Diversiton, the training wing of the Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum, has recently published a Religion and Belief training package including information and training materials on religion and belief issues for employers and individuals. Further information is available from www.diversiton.com

INTER FAITH PROFILE

Deepa Mashru is a member of the Hindu community. She is 17 years old and lives in Leicester.

You were part of a group of young people from Leicester who went to the World Parliament of Religions in Barcelona this summer. Tell us about the experience.

It was a great privilege to attend the World Parliament of Religions in Barcelona which met in July. Hajar, Anu, Milli, Georg, Maryem, Preet, Sumaiya, Rumena and myself, Deepa, were nine students from Leicester chosen and sponsored to attend a conference which attracted over seven thousand people.

We went with Radio Leicester's "BBC Youth Extra" inter faith youth broadcasting group. Armed with minidisks, notepads and our BBC passes we met, interviewed and challenged some of the world's top religious leaders! Often the encounters were completely by chance; my random meeting with a Wiccan over breakfast one morning was as unexpected as Georg sheltering with renowned theologian Hans Kung in the rain.

Did it change your views of the importance of inter faith dialogue?

The event highlighted the need for inter faith dialogue in an increasingly diverse world, especially between young people. Barcelona was a great start. People weren't afraid of differences between faiths, and realised the benefits of breaking down religious barriers and working together to solve major world issues, such as international debt and religiously motivated violence.

What have you done since you returned?

We returned enthused, inspired and eager to share our unique experiences with others. On 11 October, a Civic Reception was held at the Town Hall in our honour and we made a presentation to the Lord Mayor of Leicester, Councillors and other distinguished guests. It seemed natural to continue what had begun in Spain by setting up an 'inter faith youth group', the first of its kind in Leicester.

What will the Inter Faith Youth Group do?

We hope it will enable young people to express themselves freely and learn about different faiths, while developing their media skills. Our first task is to produce an exhibition and a radio feature which will reflect the World Parliament through the eyes of young journalists of different faiths and motivate others to join us!

What are your hopes for inter faith relations in the UK in the coming years?

Personally, I would like to see young people actively involved in improving relations between the faiths. Whether this happens through dialogue, dance, drama or sport is not as important as people uniting, regardless of what religious background they come from. The World Parliament has definitely inspired us, and I hope that our work will encourage others.

Note: "BBC Youth Extra" was featured in the youth action guide, Connect: Different Faiths Shared Values published this summer by the Inter Faith Network in association with TimeBank and the National Youth Agency. For further information see www.interfaith.org.uk

REGIONAL UPDATE

Bedford

On 12 September, Bedford Council of Faiths hosted a showing of the film 'Mistaken Identity' which showed how Sikhs in the USA were victimised after 11 September 2001 and how this prompted a journalist to publicise the Sikh contribution to the USA since the 1880s. A discussion with its producer/director Vinanti Sarkar and Dr Savi Arora, who offered a UK perspective, then took place.

Bristol

The University of West England Chaplaincy in collaboration with the University of Bristol Chaplaincy, United Healthcare Trust – Department of Spiritual Care, and the North Bristol NHS Trust Chaplaincy have recently published an updated version of their booklet *Faith in the City*. It is a 62 page, pocket-sized directory of places of worship and inter faith bodies, student religious groups and relevant chaplaincy and health bodies. Further information from chaplaincy@uwe.ac.uk

Cambridgeshire

32 young participants of different faiths from across Cambridgeshire (Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh) took part in a young people's faith forum in Cambridge in early October. The Forum, which took its inspiration from the Golden Jubilee Young People's Faith Forum, was organised by Cambridgeshire's RE Adviser, a SACRE member and representatives from the Cambridgeshire Race Equality and Diversity Service. Further information is available from Dr Sarah Smalley at sarah.smalley@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Elmbridge

About 230 Bahá'ís, Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jains, Jews, Muslims, Zoroastrians and others came to the Joyce Grenfell Centre at Claremont School for the inaugural get-together of the Elmbridge Multi-Faith Forum on 17 September. This included cultural performances and food and presentations from the Forum's Chairman Dr Nabil Mustapha and its Secretary, Geoff Morris. The Mayor of Elmbridge, Councillor Martin Schofield, Mr Ian Taylor MP and Mr Philip Hammond MP were welcomed to the event.

Leeds

On 20 October, Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship held their annual inter faith peace service at the Friends Meeting House. During the service, different faith communities in Leeds lit candles for peace and justice around the world.

Leicester

Two free 'Discover Leicester Faiths' tours were held at the end of August by Leicester Shire Promotions, in partnership with the Leicester Council of Faiths and the Diocese of Leicester. The open top bus tours were organised as part of Leicester Expo 04 and provided many people with the chance to learn more about the major faiths of the city. The route went past: Bishop Street Methodist Church; Jain Centre Europe; St. Nicholas' Church; Guru Nanak Gurdwara (Holy Bones); National Spiritualist Church; St. Margaret's Church; Leicestershire Brahma Samaj; Shreeji Haveli; Masjid-E-Hussein; Shree Swaminarayan Temple; Masjid Ul-Imam-Il Bukhari; Shri Guru Dashmesh Sahib Gurdwara; and Shree Sanatan Mandir. Experts provided a commentary about the faiths as each of their venues were passed.

Intercultural leadership school seminars in Leicester and Bradford

Leicester held its first Inter Cultural Leadership School (ICLS) seminar at Hothorpe Hall conference centre in late September. The aim was to help build a new generation of leaders for Leicester who can generate mutual respect, peaceful contacts, real understanding and long-term co-operation among those who belong to the different cultures, religions or traditions that make up its community. It was supported by Leicester Council of Faiths, the Islamic Foundation, The Community Relations Initiative, the Anglican Diocese of Leicester, and Community and Economic Development Action (CEDAC). Funding also came from the European Union through funding for the ICLS 'CODE' programme which is setting up seminar programmes in five European cities (Rotterdam, Berlin, Lyons, Leicester and Rome).

The four day seminar was attended by 13 young people between the ages of 18–30 from the Christian, Bahá'í, Muslim and Hindu faiths. During the week there were sessions on the topics of faith, emotional intelligence, leadership skills, conflict resolution and the media. The

main facilitators were Geza Tessényi, the ICLS president, supported by Shireen Rizvi from Pakistan.

The ICLS seminar follows earlier Intercultural Leadership School seminars held in Bradford between 2002 and 2004 (the initial pilot series which was funded by Yorkshire Forward and Bradford Vision) and subsequently in other parts of the world such as Indonesia. ICLS is an independent organisation involving people from a number of different countries including the UK. In Bradford a core group of ICLS seminar participants has this year set up the Bradford Society of Intercultural Leadership. It has been negotiating with Yorkshire Forward to extend the programme to West Yorkshire more generally.

For further information about Bradford and West Yorkshire programmes contact Dominic Moghal of Active Faith Communities, Bradford dominicmoghal@activefaiths.org.uk For information on the pattern of ICLS work nationally and in Europe, contact Selina Ullah at S.Ullah@bdct.nhs.uk or Revd Guy Wilkinson at guy@gwilkinson.org.uk

The ICLS website is at www.intercivilization.net

Liverpool

The year 2004 is being celebrated in Liverpool as a year of 'Faith in One City', as part of the build-up for it being European Capital of Culture in 2008. Summer events included workshops on Liverpool's diverse faith community heritage in a cross-section of local secondary schools carried out by Liverpool Community Spirit with Liverpool Hope University. These are feeding into the production of education resources and an exhibition in the Museum of Liverpool Life. The events also included a multi faith evening called "The Hours" at Liverpool's Anglican Cathedral on 9 July, hosted by BBC Radio 3. This was an evening of live performances and debate focusing on the way music is used by world religions to mark the passing of the hours of the day and night. The event was a dual celebration of the cathedral's centenary and Faith in One City 2004.

London

The Maimonides Foundation held a series of events on Sundays during September on 'Dialogue Through Art'. Jewish and Muslim children were invited to visit together the Islamic art exhibition 'Heaven on Earth' at the Hermitage Rooms, Somerset House. During the visit, the pupils learnt about the cultural heritage of Islam

and were shown by a calligrapher how to write 'Abraham' and 'Peace' in Hebrew and Aramaic.

London, Greenwich

A major new housing and commercial development is taking shape on the Greenwich peninsula in South London. A visit was paid to this on 27 September by the four Presidents of Churches Together in England: Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams; the Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor; the Moderator of the Free Churches Group, Rev David Coffey; and Rev Esme Beswick representing other denominations; and members of local faith communities and Greenwich Council. They went to see the Greenwich Pavilion, a glass and steel building on the end of the peninsula which it is planned to move to South of the Dome to become a place where faith communities can work together, worship and serve the wider community. A multi faith chaplaincy will be at the heart of this cooperative work.

South London Inter Faith Group and Greenwich Multi-Faith Forum held a joint inter faith walk on 3 July. It took place in Plumstead and visited Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh places of worship. The aim was for the 70-80 people who took part – including people from each of the places of worship – to learn more about each other's traditions and also to bear witness, walking through the public streets, to the existence of harmony between religious communities. Walkers were joined by the Mayor of Greenwich, Cllr Brian O'Sullivan and his wife Sonja O'Sullivan.

Luton

Luton Council of Faiths held their 8th annual pilgrimage on 9 October. It began from the Guru Nanak gurdwara in Dallow Road and continued by bus to the Hindu mandir in Hereford Road and on to St Luke's, Leagrave High Street. Pilgrims went on by foot through Bury Park to return to the gurdwara.

Middlesbrough

Increasingly, local inter faith initiatives are contacting each other to learn more about each other's work. In June, a group of 35 people of different faiths from Middlesbrough went on a 'learning journey' by coach to meet with faith group leaders in Leicester. They also met the Mayor of Leicester, Councillor Piara Singh Clair, and Councillor Roger Blackmore, Leader of Leicester City Council. Short talks were given

by, among others, members of Leicester Council of Faiths, including its Chair, Resham Singh Sandhu, and by Liz Blyth, the Cultural Strategy Manager for Leicester City Council, Haseeb Ahmad, Community Cohesion Officer Leicester City Council and Paul Winstone, Policy Officer for Leicester City Council.

Many of those taking part in the trip were members of the Cleveland Interfaith Group and the group was led by its coordinator, Richard Stainsby. They were especially interested in learning more about how to achieve better understanding and respect between different faiths. In particular, they wanted to see the Leicester Council of Faith's Welcome Centre and to get ideas for a possible centre of a similar kind in Middlesbrough. The visit was organised by the Voluntary Development Agency and paid for by Middlesbrough's Community Network and a number of staff also went on the trip. They were interested to find out from Leicester how they work to achieve 'social regeneration' and 'neighbourhood renewal'.

Manchester

Members of many of the inter faith and multi faith groups in Greater Manchester and surrounding areas came together at St Peter's House, Manchester on 11 October to share news of their activities. Harriet Crabtree of the Inter Faith Network gave a presentation on local inter faith activity in the UK.

Manchester Cathedral has just held the sixth annual International Religious Poetry Competition. Over five hundred poems were submitted by more than two hundred poets from many faiths and nations. The winner was Rebecca Irvine, a Buddhist from Lancaster.

Nelson

Imams and Christian clergy of Nelson came together on a countryside visit to Wycoller Country Park on 21 July to discuss the barriers that ethnic minorities face in accessing the countryside. The event was sponsored by the Building Bridges Interfaith Project and Lancashire Countryside Service.

Oxford

The International Interfaith Centre and the University Church co-sponsored an evening on 3 November with Eliyahu McLean, peace activist from Israel, "Towards healing the faiths of Abraham". The evening began with a torchlit procession.

Suffolk

On 20 October, representatives from the different faiths came together for a 'festival of festivals' to share aspects of their autumn festivals on the theme of 'light'. The festival was organised by Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource and Suffolk College.

DIARY DATES

Television and Radio

Faith and the City. A six part television series from ITV1 Meridian focusing on the six major faiths in the City of Southampton: Hinduism; Judaism; Buddhism; Christianity; Islam; and Sikhism. Involving participants from these faiths and from Southampton Council of Faiths. The programmes run for 6 Sundays at 12 noon from 14 November.

Special 'days' and 'weeks'

21–28 November, Scotland's Inter Faith Week. Events taking place throughout Scotland. For further information Tel: 0141 429 4012.

22–28 November, Islam Awareness Week. IAW was initiated by the Islamic Society of Britain in 1994. This year's theme is 'Your Muslim Neighbour' and the Week seeks to highlight the valuable contributions to society made by Muslims from all walks of life. Information on events happening as part of the week can be found at www.iaw.org.uk

The launch of the Week will take place at Shakespeare's Globe in London and throughout the week special activities will be taking place there. More than twenty speakers will give talks on subjects from Islamic gardens to Abrahamic dialogue. Further information from gerry@shakespearesglobe.com

IAW events will also be taking place in other parts of the UK. Some have an inter faith focus. See under 'Local Events', 23 November, Birmingham.

27 January, Holocaust Memorial Day 2005

Next year's Holocaust Memorial Day falls on 27 January. It coincides with the 60th Anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz concentration camp and the theme will be 'Survivors, Liberation and Rebuilding Lives'.

Planning is under way for the national HMD event which will take place at Westminster Hall, London, on 27 January in the presence of the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh. Earlier that day, they will host a reception at St James' Palace for survivors of the Holocaust and British veterans who liberated the camps in 1945.

Holocaust Memorial Day stresses the importance of learning and educating each other about different cultures and religions, and accepting and embracing diversity. Antisemitic, Islamophobic and other racist attacks on individuals and groups seen as 'different' are a reminder of where prejudices can lead. HMD is an opportunity to bring together local people from all backgrounds and religions to remember all the victims of the Holocaust, to reflect upon those affected by more recent atrocities and work together to educate about the dangers of antisemitism, racism and all forms of discrimination.

Last year hundreds of councils, schools, churches, synagogues, museums, libraries, youth clubs, community groups and individuals held HMD events. Examples of the kind of events held last year can be found at: www.holocaustmemorialday.gov.uk/events/organizing/pastevents. HMD organisers hope the 2005 theme will inspire similar engagement, particularly among inter faith groups which have as one of their key aims to build mutual understanding and respect between religions. For more information on how to organise a local event please see the HMD local activities pack which is available for download from the HMD website www.holocaustmemorialday.gov.uk or hard copies are available by emailing localactivities@holocaustmemorialday.gov.uk

Conferences, courses and seminars

London, Wednesdays until 24 December, Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter

34 Chepstow Villas, London W11 are holding a course on seeking asylum and refuge in Britain. From 7.30pm – 9pm. Cost: £5 offering per

evening. Contact Sisters of Sion, Tel: 020 7313 8286 or email sioncde@yahoo.co.uk.

November 2004 to May 2005. St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art, Glasgow. 'Faith to Faith'. A series of workshops exploring faith and belief. Events are free but must be booked. Further information, Tel: 0141 5532557 or see www.glasgowmuseums.com.

13 November, Croydon, World Congress of Faiths, IARF (British Chapter) and the Unitarian Interfaith Panel. "Fideology 2004: The Study of Faith as Trust". From 9.30am – 4pm. Cost £5 registration at door. Advised to bring a bag lunch. Contact Rev Anne McClelland, Tel: 020 8679 2626.

28 November, Scottish Inter Faith Council's National Youth Conference. For further information, Tel: 0141 429 4012.

4 December, London. INFORM seminar, "Growing up in a New Religion". 9.30–4.30pm, New Theatre, London School of Economics. Bookings before 22 November £35 (students/unwaged £14). After this date £40 (£20 students/unwaged). Further information, Tel: 020 7955 7654 inform@lse.ac.uk

5 December, Cambridge. 2pm to 6pm at Homerton College. The East of England Faiths Agency is hosting a conference 'What the Faiths Teach about Gambling'. Cost £5 minimum per delegate. Set lunch available for £17 per head before the conference. To register, send cheque for the appropriate amount, payable to 'SIFRE' to East of England Faiths Agency Regional Conference, c/o Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource, Suffolk College, Rope Walk, Ipswich, IP4 1LT. Further information, Tel: 01379 678615.

7–9 January, 2005, St Albans. "Faith and the Environment." Christians Aware annual conference at London Colney. Further information, Tel: 0116 254 0770.

31 January – 2 February 2005, Manchester. Delivering Sustainable Communities Summit. Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott is hosting the Delivering Sustainable Communities Summit at the G-MEX Centre in Manchester from 31 January to 2 February 2005. The Summit will be the largest event of its kind ever held in the UK with 2000 delegates involved in all aspects of creating sustainable communities. Further information – including how to register and exhibit – can be found on the Summit web site at www.odpm.gov.uk/summit.

24 February to 6 March 2005, Edinburgh. Edinburgh International Centre for World Spiritualities, EICWS, Edinburgh Institute for Advanced Learning and EIAL are holding their second annual festival of Middle Eastern Spirituality and Peace. For further information contact Neill Walker Tel: 0131 331 4469 or email njwalk3300@hotmail.com.

Local Events

Space only permits one event to be listed for each organisation. For details of other events contact the relevant local groups. Local inter faith events are also listed in the One Family Newsletter available from the World Congress of Faiths, c/o London Inter Faith Centre, 125 Salisbury Road, London NW6 6RG.

Tuesday 2 November, Plymouth. 7.30pm at the Plymouth Religious and Cultural Resource Centre, 3a Watts Road, St Jude's, Plymouth. "Pagan Ways" A talk with Ian Jamison who is Interfaith Officer for the Pagan Federation for Devon and Cornwall. Contact the Cultural Resource Centre Tel: 01752 254438.

8 November, Bristol. "The Black Experience of Christianity and the Bristol Churches". Bristol Inter Faith Group meeting 7.45pm at Parkway Methodist Church Hall. Further information, Tel: 01454 313042.

12 November, Bolton. 7.30 pm at Friends Meeting House, Silverwell Street. Bolton Interfaith Council host a seminar with Gary Titley, MEP. Further information, Tel: 01204 522226.

12 November, Liverpool. 8pm at the Hindu Centre and Temple Edge Lane. Merseyside Interfaith Group invited by Hindu friends to join in a celebration of the Diwali Festival. Further information, Tel: 0151 733 1541

17 November, Bradford, Interfaith Women for Peace Group. Eid party taking place at the Interfaith Education Centre in Bradford. For further information, Tel: 01274 731674.

17 November, Horsham. Discussion of Huston Smith's book, *The World's Religions*. 7.30 pm at the Unitarian Church Hall nr Shelley Fountain. Further information from Richard Boeke, Tel: 01403 257 801 r.boeke@virgin.net.

20 November, Southall. Faith in Islam. Day conference consisting of talks, dialogue and a panel. For further information, contact Joy Barrow email: joybarrow@aol.com.

20 November, Harrow. 1pm to 2.30pm at St Anne's Shopping Centre. Festival of Light with all faiths contributing. Further information Tel: 020 8954 6525

23 November in Birmingham, 6.00pm to 9.00pm, Carrs Lane Church, Carrs Lane, Birmingham. Islam Awareness Week event, 'United Through Values'. An evening to bring people together across the community, united through common values, to explore how faith and/or values have contributed to shaping Britain historically and today. Further information and telephone bookings Tel: 07969 875824 or email: unitedthroughvalues@hotmail.com

25 November, Edinburgh. 7.15pm Augustine United Church, George IV Bridge. Readings on love and peace from religious traditions represented in Edinburgh, followed by sharing of food and friendship. Accompanying small exhibition of photography and children's peace art. Further information from victor@iefa.wanadoo.co.uk

26 November, Edinburgh. 7.15pm St George's West Church, Shandwick Place. A Christian Buddhist Dialogue. A showing of the film 'The Cross and the Bodhi Tree' followed by dialogue between ordained and lay persons from both religious traditions. Further information from: victor@iefa.wanadoo.co.uk

30 November. St Peter De Merton Chapter House, De Parys Avenue, Bedford 8pm. Talk on Jainism by Priti Shah and Priya Kothari, members of 'Young Jains'. Further information from bcof@24hrs-a-day.org

16 January, 2005 Peterborough. Faiths Festival and food at Peterborough Town Hall. Further information: Anne Emery, Tel: 01780 762686.

Inter Faith Relations: The UK and Europe

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**Inter Faith Network,
8A Lower Grosvenor Place,
London SW1W 0EN**

**Tel: 020 7931 7766
Fax: 020 7931 7722**

**Email: ifnet@interfaith.org.uk
www.interfaith.org.uk**



INTER FAITH

UPDATE

Spring 2005 Issue 27

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Commission for Equality and Human Rights and new "equality" reviews

The Government introduced its Equality Bill into the House of Commons on 3 March. In addition to including provisions offering further protection against discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief it also creates a duty on public authorities to promote equality of opportunity between men and women and prohibits sex discrimination in the exercise of public functions. However, the primary purpose of the Bill is to create the legal framework for the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights, following the extensive consultations which the Government has carried out, as reported in past issues of *Inter Faith Update*. The Bill is due to have a Second Reading in the House of Commons on 5 April.

The Bill provides for the new Commission to bring together the work of the Commission for Racial Equality, the Disability Rights Commission and the Equal Opportunities Commission. The CEHR will also have responsibility for the new equality areas of age, religion and belief, and sexual orientation and will work to promote human rights, therefore bringing together expertise on equality, diversity and human rights issues in one organisation. The present intention is that the new Commission will be established in October 2007 for all areas except those for which the Commission for Racial Equality is responsible. These would transfer to the CEHR by April 2009.

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Subscribing to Inter Faith Update

This newsletter is published three times a year and is available by subscription at £7.50 per year.

To subscribe, send your name and address with a cheque payable to "The Inter Faith Network" to:

Inter Faith Update Subscriptions,
Inter Faith Network,
8A Lower Grosvenor Place, London SW1W 0EN

New legislation on religious discrimination

The last issue of *Inter Faith Update* reported the Government's intention to end discrimination on the grounds of "religion or belief" in the provision of goods, facilities, services and premises, following the legislation already introduced dealing with discrimination on these grounds in employment and vocational training. As was anticipated, the relevant

legislative provisions have been included in the Equality Bill, whose primary purpose is to establish the framework for the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights. As reported above, the Bill was introduced into the House of Commons on 3 March and is due to have its Second Reading on 5 April.

(continued on page 3)

NETWORK NEWS

Executive Committee

Rev Daniel Otieno-Ndale, a nominee of the Minority Ethnic Christian Affairs Reference Group of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, which brings together representatives of the different strands of the ethnic minority Christian presence in Britain, has been coopted as a member of the Network's Executive Committee to fill the place left vacant by Rev Simon Reynolds who stood down at the 2003 AGM.

Rev Guy Wilkinson, currently acting as part time adviser to the Church of England on inter faith matters, has been coopted onto the Committee to fill the place left by Ven Michael Ipgrave, who has now become the Anglican Archdeacon of Southwark, as reported in the last issue of *Inter Faith Update*.

Staff

Gaylina Nguyen, who has worked part time, while a student, for the Network since Autumn 2002 was appointed in March as full time Finance and Administration Assistant.

NATIONAL UPDATE

Commission for Equality and Human Rights and new "equality" reviews

(continued from page 1)

The Bill sets out a range of powers for the CEHR to promote equality and tackle discrimination. These include: a new duty to consult with stakeholders to ensure all groups have an opportunity to participate and engage in its work; a new duty to monitor progress on equality, human rights and good relations between communities, through publishing a regular 'state of the nation' report; a new duty to promote good relations between and within communities, across all sections of society (the Commission is required to pay "particular regard" to exercising their responsibilities in this sphere "in relation to communities defined by reference to race, religion or belief"); an explicit role to combat prejudice and to work to reduce crime affecting particular communities, including new powers to monitor hate crimes; and provision for a regional presence across the country, and in Scotland and Wales.

The Inter Faith Network

The Inter Faith Network was founded in 1987. It works with its member bodies to promote good relations between the faith communities in the UK, to combat inter religious prejudice and intolerance and to help make the UK a country marked by mutual understanding and respect between religions where all can practise their faith with integrity. The Network:

- provides information on faith communities and on inter faith matters
- advises on multi faith projects and inter faith issues
- publishes materials to aid work in the religious and inter faith sectors
- fosters inter faith co-operation on social issues
- holds regular meetings where social and religious questions of concern to the different faith communities can be examined together
- links 105 member organisations including: representative bodies from the different faith communities; national and local inter faith organisations; and educational and academic bodies.

Inter Faith Update

Inter Faith Update is the newsletter of the Inter Faith Network for the UK. It keeps a wide range of organisations and individuals interested in developing good inter faith relations in the UK in touch with UK events and projects with a significant inter faith component.

Please send any items and diary dates for consideration for inclusion in the next issue by **28 June 2005** to: The Newsletter Editor, Inter Faith Network, 8A Lower Grosvenor Place, London SW1W 0EN or email to harriet.crabtree@interfaith.org marking your email 'newsletter'.

It will also have general powers to publish or disseminate ideas and information, to give advice and guidance, to undertake research, to provide education and training and to publish and disseminate ideas and information. It will have the power to work in partnership with and provide grant aid to others in support of its functions and to work with individuals, communities, businesses and public services. Copies of the Bill (and the explanatory notes) can be found on the Parliamentary website at www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/pabills.htm.

On 25 February, a few days before publication of its Equality Bill, the Government announced an Equalities Review which will be chaired by Trevor Phillips, the Chair of the Commission for Racial Equality, who will be joined by a panel of experts from the public and private sector social policy arenas. The Review panel is due to start work in March 2005 and to report to the Prime Minister by the Summer of 2006. It will look at barriers to opportunity and will make practical recommendations on key policy priorities for the Government and public sector; employers and trade unions; civic society and the voluntary sector. Its findings will inform the modernisation of equality legislation and the development of the new CEHR.

In the Government's earlier consultations on its equality and discrimination proposals, many respondents argued strongly that a new comprehensive "Single Equality Act" is needed. The Government has announced that in conjunction with the Equalities Review there will be a Discrimination Law Review, led by the Women and Equality Unit of the Department of Trade and Industry, which will consider how Britain's anti-discrimination legislation can be modernised to fit the needs of the 21st Century. This review will benefit from the background and analysis that will be provided by the Equalities Review and it is intended to be the basis for developing a single equality legislative framework that will be fairer to individuals and simpler for employers and service providers.

**The Inter Faith Network's
website:
www.interfaith.org.uk**

New legislation on religious discrimination

(continued from page 1)

The provisions would ban:

- direct discrimination where a person, on grounds of religion or belief, is treated less favourably than another;
- indirect discrimination where a requirement, condition or practice has the effect of putting people of a particular religious belief at a disadvantage which cannot be justified; and
- victimisation where someone is treated less favourably than others because, for example, they have complained of discrimination or have assisted someone else in a complaint.

The new measures would make it unlawful to discriminate against people because of their religion or belief or their lack of religion or belief. 'Belief' is defined as 'any religious or philosophical belief'. The courts have previously ruled that a religious belief "must attain a certain level of cogency, seriousness, cohesion and importance, and be worthy of respect in a democratic society and not be incompatible with human dignity". 'Philosophical belief' only includes beliefs which are similar to a religious belief, so the provisions would apply to discrimination against atheists and humanists, but not supporters of a political party or football team.

There are important exemptions for: faith-based schools to allow them to continue to operate a selection policy based on faith; charities and religion and belief organisations (which would, for example, allow faith-based charities to discriminate in favour of that faith in the provision of services on the grounds of religion or belief); and acts safeguarding national security.

It will be of particular interest to inter faith organisations that they are covered by these exemptions in a way which would allow them to restrict their membership to particular religious groups or restrict the range of faiths which are involved in their activities.

The Home Office press release relating specifically to the religious discrimination provisions in the Bill can be found at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/n_story.asp?item_id=1249.

Legislation on incitement to religious hatred

As foreshadowed in the last issue of *Inter Faith Update*, the Government introduced into Parliament at the end of last year legislation to create a new offence of incitement to religious hatred. The relevant provisions, included in the Serious Organised Crime and Police Bill, are along the same lines as those contained in the Anti-Terrorism Bill debated by Parliament in the Autumn of 2001, which were dropped before its enactment following opposition in the House of Lords. The Bill has passed through all its stages in the House of Commons and received a Second Reading in the House of Lords on 14 March. However, in the course of the debate a number of members expressed their opposition or disquiet about the provisions dealing with incitement to religious hatred and it is unclear whether the provision will be agreed at the House of Lords Committee stage, due in April.

The new Bill expands the existing criminal offence of incitement to racial hatred contained in the Public Order Act 1986. The relevant provisions make it an offence knowingly to use words, behaviour or material that is threatening, abusive or insulting with the intention, or likely effect, that hatred will be stirred up against a group of people targeted because of their religious beliefs or lack of religious beliefs. During the progress of the Bill through the House of Commons the name of the expanded offence was changed (through an amendment tabled by the Government in order to clarify the purpose of the provisions) to "Hatred against persons on racial and religious grounds". An amendment to provide for the repeal of the blasphemy law (which did not have the support of the Government) was heavily defeated.

The proposed legislation on incitement to religious hatred has been the focus of widespread public debate over recent months. Some critics have argued that the provisions would impose unacceptable restrictions on freedom of speech and might curtail freedom to engage in missionary activities. Others have suggested that the legislation will arouse excessive expectations of its effect, on the mistaken assumption that it will prevent straightforward vilification or abuse, which it is not designed to do. It has also been suggested that existing provisions under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 provide sufficient protection, but this is disputed by supporters of the legislation.

The Government has made it clear that the purpose of the legislation is to protect groups of people against the consequences of the incitement to religious hatred and that it is not intended to limit the freedom to criticise religious beliefs and practices or to engage in robust argument about these or to tell jokes. Under the legislation the consent of the Attorney General would be required for any prosecution in order to protect against frivolous or vexatious court actions or unintended consequences of this extension of the law.

The Network's Faith Communities Consultative Forum discussed the legislation at its meeting in mid-December and there was general support for it. The Forum is precluded by its terms of reference from issuing any statement of public policy, but a number of faith community members subsequently issued a joint *ad hoc* statement on 18 January welcoming the proposed legislation. This followed a similar *ad hoc* statement in April 2004 which had urged the Government to legislate against incitement to hatred on grounds of religious identity.

The January statement pointed to "an unjust and anomalous gap in the present law". The Jewish and Sikh communities are already protected from incitement to hatred under the provisions relating to incitement to racial hatred, while other faith communities are not, by contrast with the position in Northern Ireland where a similar provision extends to all faith communities. The statement argued that the present legal position "leaves the way open for extremists to incite hatred of religious groups not covered by the law at present, setting one group against another, in ways which could significantly undermine the good community relations painstakingly developed by ethnic and faith communities in Britain over recent decades. Where this happens it is not just specific communities who are vulnerable - the bonds of our common society are put under strain..... Stirring up hatred on grounds of religion is as damaging as stirring up racial hatred."

It remains to be seen whether the argument about the relevant provisions in the Bill can be resolved before the widely anticipated dissolution of Parliament prior to a general election.

There is detailed information about the legislation to be found on the Home Office's website at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/comrace/faith/crime>.

Watch your language!

It is widely anticipated that a general election will be held shortly. Elections often trigger complaints from members of the public concerned about the content of some electoral addresses and leaflets.

Trevor Phillips, the Chair of the Commission for Racial Equality, has written to a wide range of community-based organisations inviting them to encourage members of the public to report to the police and other public agencies any racially or religiously motivated criminal acts or materials they consider incite hatred. This might include graffiti and slogans in public places or election materials. He suggests that any concerns about the effectiveness of current legislation in this area should also be raised with local MPs and parliamentary candidates. In his letter he says: "Elections should be a time for the fullest debate of the issues faced by the people of Britain. This debate should be informed by fact and directed towards solutions; it should not be an occasion for peddling prejudice and stirring up and exploiting fear and anxiety."

The Commission for Racial Equality would be grateful to receive copies of any controversial election material so that they can raise this with the leaders of the relevant political party. Such material should be sent to the CRE's Senior Parliamentary Officer, Finola Kelly at the Commission for Racial Equality, St Dunstan's House, 201-211 Borough High Street, London SE1 1GZ. Her email address is fkelly@cre.gov.uk.

Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society

Following its consultation last year on *Strength in Diversity: Towards a Community Cohesion and Race Equality Strategy*, the Home Office published on 19 January a document entitled *Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society* setting out its strategy in the light of that consultation. The main focus of the new document is on the Government's policies and programmes in the field of race equality and community cohesion more generally and it does not address inter faith relations in any detail.

The document does, however, contain two specific policy announcements of particular interest to faith community and inter faith

organisations. It announced that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will be setting up a 'network' of officials from the 50 local authorities whose areas are the most diverse in terms of faith. The 'network' is to be coordinated through Government Regional Offices but the arrangements for it have yet to be worked out in detail.

The document also announced that the Government intends to establish a new £3 million programme to help faith communities, making it clear that this would not be "a programme to promote particular faiths", but "to encourage dialogue and understanding between faith groups and others in the community so that they can work in partnership for the good of all. It will also help build leadership in faith groups in a way that contributes to good race and faith relations." Details of the way this programme will operate are not yet available.

Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society can be found on the Home Office's website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/docs4/race_improving_opport.pdf.

CPS religious crime data published

The number of defendants dealt with by the Crown Prosecution Service for racially motivated crimes rose by 13 per cent last year according to a report published on 17 January. The report also includes figures for religiously aggravated crimes in 2003-04. 49 cases (each of which can have a number of defendants and charges) were finalised. A total of 60 offences were prosecuted, of which 44 were religiously aggravated. The actual or perceived religion of the victim in 22 of the 44 cases was Muslim. In the remaining cases, the victims were Christian (8), Jewish (5), Hindu (3), Sikh (2), Jehovah's Witness (1), and unknown (4). A guilty plea was submitted in 50 per cent of offences with an overall conviction rate of 77 per cent.

The breakdown of religiously aggravated offences mirrors racially aggravated offences. Public order was the predominant offence followed by assault, criminal damage and harassment. The majority of the charges were prosecuted in the magistrates' courts. In magistrates', crown and youth courts the overall conviction rate was 77 per cent on religiously aggravated charges and 86 per cent on all charges.

Holocaust Memorial Day

Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) took place on 27 January. It coincided with the 60th Anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz concentration camp and the theme was 'Survivors, Liberation and Rebuilding Lives'. The national HMD event took place in Westminster Hall, London in the presence of the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh. Earlier that day they had hosted a reception at St James's Palace for survivors of the Holocaust and British veterans who liberated the camps in 1945. The ceremony in Westminster Hall brought together over 600 Holocaust survivors living in Britain, as well as British soldiers who helped liberate the Bergen-Belsen death camp. Religious and political leaders also attended. The Queen led survivors in lighting 60 memorial candles and grandchildren of survivors read the names of 3,000 relatives who perished at the hands of the Nazis.

HMD events were held around the UK, including a number with a strong inter faith dimension. Some had a particular Christian-Jewish focus. For example, Birmingham Council of Christians and Jews hosted a meeting at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre on 16 January where Dr Hannah Holtschneider, of the Centre for the Study of Jewish-Christian Relations, spoke on Liberation and Rebuilding Lives: Topics for Jewish-Christian Relations. Other events had a multi faith dimension. Political leaders in Wales and religious representatives marked HMD on 26 January in an event also reflecting on the 90th anniversary of the Armenian genocide.

Brighton and Hove City Council in collaboration with the Brighton Inter Faith Contact Group organised a civic event which included key speakers on three main elements: hearing local survivors; teaching the lessons to younger generations; and how the city supports today's 'survivors'. Nottingham Inter Faith Council and the City Council hosted an event at Nottingham Council House. This included, among other contributions, a Statement of Commitment by a member of the Jewish Community and drama performed by Nottingham Youth Theatre. In Lewisham, a multi faith service was held at the Catford Synagogue on Crantock Road when candles were lit in memory of those who died. In Derby an evening of prayers, readings and prose from different faiths took place on 24 January at the Multi-Faith Centre at The University of Derby. This was organised by Derby HMD

Working Group in conjunction with the Forum of Faiths for Derby. Members of all faiths and cultures came together to remember victims of oppression and torture across the world at a short ceremony on 30 January on the steps of Blackburn Town Hall on King William Street in the town centre. This was arranged by Blackburn with Darwen Council and the Interfaith Council for Blackburn with Darwen whose chair, Madhubala Pandya, led the ceremony. Reverend Leslie Olsberg, Minister of Heaton Park Synagogue in Manchester, gave the main address. Following the Mayor's closing address there was a lighting of candles ceremony.

Does free speech have boundaries?

In recent weeks there have been several events which have raised in an acute form the question of how to balance the claims to freedom of speech with the sensitivities of faith communities and others.

Performances of *Behzti* (which means 'dishonour') written by Gurpreet Kaur Bahtti and depicting scenes of sexual violence in a *gurdwara* were cancelled in December after violence by a few of those members of the Sikh community demonstrating outside the theatre. There had previously been discussions between representatives of the theatre and of the community about some of its concerns. The community were not seeking to have the play banned but to have changes made to it, including its setting within a *gurdwara*, in view of the offence which they said would be caused to many Sikhs by this.

Events surrounding the play gave rise to widespread debate about the extent to which artistic freedom should be constrained by regard for the sensitivities of those of particular faiths or cultures in a diverse society. The discussion recognised that there are separate but overlapping issues of where the law should intervene and where restraint should be shown in cases where the law itself will not limit freedom of speech. The Birmingham Faith Leaders' Group (which includes Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh representatives) expressed support for the concerns of the Sikh community and anxiety about "the harm that this play will do within Birmingham and the wider society" and asked for "a higher degree of

sensitivity and understanding” from the management of the theatre, particularly given its financial subsidy “by local and national public funds”.

The fact that these issues arise in relation to concerns within both minority and majority communities was demonstrated by the pressure brought to bear (unsuccessfully) against the BBC by many Christian activists seeking the withdrawal from its programme schedules on 8 January of *Jerry Springer: The Opera*, whose characters include portrayals of God and Jesus which many find offensive.

It has been made clear by the Government that its current legislation on incitement to religious hatred would not cover cases of this kind.

Merger of Home Office's Faith Communities Unit and Community Cohesion Unit

The Home Office set up a separate Faith Communities Unit in the spring of 2003 (as reported in Issue 22 of *Inter Faith Update*). The Unit has now merged with the Community Cohesion Unit to form the joint Cohesion and Faiths Unit. The Head of the new Unit is Judith Lempriere, who became Head of the Community Cohesion Unit in the summer of 2004. Tony Heal, Deputy Head of the new combined unit, is carrying responsibility for faith issues. Godfrey Stadlen, who was Head of the separate Faith Communities Unit, will have continuing responsibility for a separate project team dealing with the Government's legislation on both incitement to religious hatred and religious discrimination.

New entry restrictions on ministers of religion cause problems

Last summer the Government introduced a new pre-entry English language requirement for overseas ministers of religion coming to the UK so that they have “the skills needed for ministry in a diverse and cohesive society” (as reported in Issue 25 of *Inter Faith Update*). Both the Hindu and Sikh communities are experiencing difficulties as a result of the restrictions. The Hindu Council for the UK has pointed out that

priests (known as *pujaris*) who work in Hindu temples, while carrying out important functions in relation to ritual and worship, do not preach or have a role in pastoral care and therefore that the language requirement is less relevant in their case. It poses a major problem because Hindu priests are trained in Sanskrit and generally come to this country only from India or Sri Lanka, normally only for one or two years at a time, because most temples rotate their priests. The operation of this system has been made much more difficult by the new legislation. There are no training institutions yet in this country.

The Sikh community have had similar problems with the new restrictions. *Granthis* also do not traditionally have a pastoral or preaching role. *Gurdwaras* traditionally have a system of visiting preachers who come to this country for around six months at a time. They may well not have fluent English skills and normally preach in Punjabi. *Gurdwaras* provide English translations or accompanying literature for those who need these.

These concerns have been taken up with the Home Office which has promised that there will be a review of the impact on faith communities of these restrictions, but this has yet to be initiated.

Religious slaughter of animals

The Government published on 8 March its final response to the Farm Animal Welfare Council (FAWC) report on the Welfare of Farmed Animals at Slaughter or Killing. In its response, the Government rejected a recommendation by the Farm Animal Welfare Council that religious slaughter of animals without prior stunning should be banned. Mr Bradshaw said the Government had maintained its position in not accepting FAWC's recommendation that slaughter without prior stunning should be banned. He said the Government respected the rights of communities in Britain to slaughter animals in accordance with the requirements of their religion.

Religious dress and uniform

On 2 March a Muslim girl from Luton, Shabina Begum, won the right to wear “head-to-toe” dress (*jilbab*) in the classroom after the court of appeal ruled her school had acted unlawfully in barring her. The school allows girls to wear the *hijab*, a headscarf, and trousers and tunic, but had refused Ms Begum permission to come to classes in full-length dress. Lord Justice Brooke, Vice-President of the Civil Division of the Court of Appeal, ruled that her school had: unlawfully excluded her; unlawfully denied her the right to manifest her religion; and unlawfully denied her access to suitable and appropriate education. He called on the Department for Education and Skills to give schools more guidance on how to comply with their obligations under the Human Rights Act. The appeal has important implications for schools across the country.

The swastika

The swastika (sanskrit *svastika*) is a cross with its arms bent at right angles to either the right or left. The symbol has been used by a variety of cultures throughout the ages as a sign of good fortune and stability and is often seen in Hindu architecture and Indian artwork. It connotes well being and blessing. The image of the swastika has, sadly, become associated for decades across much of the world with Nazism. Because of this there were calls, following the wearing of the image at a fancy dress party by Prince Harry earlier this year, from German MEPs for the use of the swastika to be banned in Europe.

On 20 January, the Hindu Council UK called on all MPs and MEPs to oppose this move. Anil Bhanot, general secretary of the Hindu Council, said: “The Hindu Council is asking all MPs and MEPs to influence the European Union to respect the right of religious freedom of a billion people of this globe, by not allowing a general ban on one of the most sacred Hindu symbols. We condemn Nazism, which uses the swastika in an inverted form signifying ignorance, but that does not mean that the true spiritual symbol worshipped by a billion people can be subjected to any legislation of the temporal world, in any form, whatsoever.” In the event, EU legislators decided against the blanket ban proposed and suggested instead that member states tackle the problem individually. At the end of February the UK government said that it did not intend to ban

the swastika, because Britain’s current race hate laws were sufficient to prevent its improper use. Holocaust Educational Trust chairman Lord Janner highlighted the difficulty of banning the symbol. “Having been a war crimes investigator in Germany and hating the swastika symbol I would love to have it banned, but it is totally impossible in the UK. Not least because of its perfectly proper use by my Hindu friends.” For further information, see <http://www.hindu counciluk.org/swastika.asp>

National identity cards

The Home Secretary published proposals for legislation on identity cards in April 2004 and the findings of a subsequent consultation exercise were published, together with the Government’s response to the report of the relevant Home Affairs Select Committee of the House of Commons in October 2004. The Identity Cards Bill was introduced on 29 November 2004 and has now passed through all its House of Commons stages.

The Government’s proposed scheme involves a database linked to cards carrying basic information, such as name, address and date of birth, together with biometric information, such as the image of face, iris of the eye or fingerprints. According to the Government, it is not planned that it will have details of religious identity, ethnicity, marital status or health records. Individuals will have subject access rights under the data protection act but strict safeguards will be placed on others who can access the information. A new Executive Agency, which incorporates the functions of the UK Passport Service and works closely with the Home Office Immigration and Nationality Directory, will operate the scheme. The scheme will be overseen by an independent commissioner. Identity cards will be mandatory but there will be no requirement to carry them. The purposes of the scheme are to: tackle illegal working and immigration abuse; to disrupt the use of false and multiple identities by organised criminals and those involved in terrorist activity; to help protect people from identity fraud and theft; to ensure free public services are used only by those entitled to them; and to enable easier and more convenient access to public services.

A faith community consultation consortium was formed in 2004 by the Hindu Forum of Britain specifically to look at aspects of the

Government's plans to introduce national identity cards. The consultation was sponsored by Fujitsu. It led to a report, *A Response to the Introduction of Identity Cards*, which was launched in the Jubilee Room at the House of Commons on 14 March. Speakers included Des Browne, Minister of State for Citizenship, Immigration and Nationality and Stephen Pound MP.

The consultation was carried out in order to explain the details of the scheme to faith communities; to inform the Government of the issues that different groups will face during enrolment and to identify ways by which faith communities can communicate the benefits of identity cards to their constituent congregations. Focus groups met in London, Birmingham, Leicester and Manchester. The concerns expressed by the participants related to: the security of the scheme itself and the information held within it; how to ensure the accuracy of the information recorded; verification methods; the costs of applying for the card and for any replacements; access to enrolment centres; physical contact with biometric sensors such as fingerprint systems; hygiene issues linked to multiple use of equipment during enrolment and verification; issues linked to physical appearance and national dress; and lack of confidence in the police service and other authorities.

Scotland's first 'Inter Faith Week'

The first 'Scottish Inter Faith Week' was held between 20-28 November. The objective was the promotion of dialogue, understanding and cooperation between Scotland's diverse religious communities in order to build a better Scotland for all. Inter Faith Week was supported by the Scottish Executive and Ministers and MSPs attended several events during the week. See page 17 for news of some of the events that took place during the week.

As part of the week, SIFC held a national youth conference on 28 November. This brought 150 young people together from the Baha'i, Brahma Kumaris, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Latter Day Saints, Muslim, and Pagan communities of Scotland to dialogue about inter faith issues, to get to know each other better, to have fun and to interact with other young people not affiliated with any faith. There were

workshops with representatives from all the faith communities to discuss service projects throughout Scotland and also to prepare questions for a panel of religious leaders.

Visit to the Scottish Parliament

A group of 23 people took part in the Scottish Inter Faith Council's visit to the Scottish Parliament on 15 December. A total of 23 people, from across Scotland's faith communities attended the tour of the new building. Their guide was Shiona Baird MSP, the Reporter to the Parliament's Equal Opportunities Committee on issues of religion and belief. Afterwards Ms Baird took questions and discussed issues of concern with members of the faith communities. SIFC plan to build on the good relations begun at this visit and hope there are many opportunities for faith communities to engage with Parliament in future.

Diversity and Dialogue North West

The Diversity and Dialogue Project is an inter faith project working with young people in the UK and inviting them to look outward beyond their own communities. It is funded by the Department for International Development and led by Save the Children working in partnership with a range of humanitarian organisations. Project workers are based in Leeds, London, and Manchester. On 11 March, a seminar was held in Manchester at UMIST for people working within faith based organisations, education and the local community. Participants listened to presentations from Oldham LEA and local and community faith groups, shared experiences and talked about some of the problems faced by young people and about the potential for inter faith work with youth groups and schools. A report on the day is planned and a second event is likely. For further information, contact s.dunbar@savethechildren.org.uk

Principles of working together – new CTE guidance on inter faith relations

Churches Together in England (CTE) published, in March, *A Statement of operating principles relating to other faith communities*. It is described by CTE as seeking to combine respect, integrity and working collaboratively for the common good. It shows how CTE as an ecumenical organisation is committed to function, and though it does not comprise a complete statement of the views of all CTE's 23 member Churches, CTE believes it will be a useful resource for Christian groups working in a multi faith context. The statement draws material from the Churches Commission on Inter Faith Relations' *Principles of Inter Faith Dialogue*, from *Working Together - Cooperation between Government and Faith Communities* (Home Office, February 2004) and the *Millennium Act of Reflection and Commitment* (January 2000). The document can be found at www.churches-together.org.uk.

Faith groups and inter faith bodies respond to Tsunami disaster

The Tsunami disaster which occurred on 26 December was responded to on a wide scale by faith and inter faith organisations in the UK.

Across the UK, special prayers were offered in places of worship. Services of remembrance and memorial events were held in many areas, often with a multi faith dimension and still others are planned. In Wales, the First Minister held a simple ceremony of silence as a mark of respect for the victims and invited members of the Inter Faith Council for Wales to attend. A national memorial service attended by the Queen and Prime Minister for the British victims of the Asian Tsunami will be held at St Paul's Cathedral on 11 May. Prime Minister Tony Blair announced in January that the Queen would attend the ceremony and other senior royals and politicians are expected to attend. Guests will include representatives of communities and faiths with close ties with the countries affected by the disaster, and of the relief agencies involved. As well as remembering the UK victims, the service will also recognise the suffering endured by all the countries affected and the overwhelming humanitarian response.

The World Congress of Faiths arranged an inter faith service on 26 January at Essex Hall, London, hosted by the Unitarian and Free Christian Churches. This was led by WCF Chair, Rabbi Jacqueline Tabick with devotions led by Buddhist, Christian, Hindu and Muslim members. In Glasgow, an inter faith gathering of prayer and reflection in memory of victims was held on 23 January at the University of Glasgow's Bute Hall. The event was supported by the Lord Provost of Glasgow, the Scottish Inter Faith Council and the Glasgow Forum of Faiths and featured speakers from diverse faiths, including Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Humanism, Judaism, Islam, and Sikhism. In Edinburgh, Cardinal Archbishop O'Brien offered a special mass at St Mary's Catholic Cathedral for victims of the disaster. The Moderator of the General Assembly, Dr Allison Elliot and the Episcopal Bishop of Edinburgh, Rt Rev Brian Smith, also participated in the service which was attended by many members and friends of Edinburgh Inter Faith Association.

In Southampton, the Mayor, MPs, and 400 people attended a 'Tsunami Act of Commitment' held at St Mary's Church, City Centre, with involvement from seven faiths affirming their unity and common commitment in the face of disaster. In Harrow, London, a 'multi faith/no-faith' memorial service took place at the Zoroastrian Centre on 22 February, organised by Harrow Interfaith Council. This was followed by a linked community conference on local relief projects and further aid work. Speakers during the service and conference included the Leader of Harrow Council, Cllr Navin Shah; the Deputy Leader, Cllr Sanjay Dighe, and the Chief Executive of Harrow Council, Joyce Markham. A Tsunami Interfaith Commemorative Service was held on 13 February at the House of Meditation, Monastery of Christ the King in Enfield, London with Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh prayers and readings from sacred texts.

A service was held on 3 February at Oxford University's University Church where the Chancellor Rt Hon Lord Patten introduced the service and the Rt Revd Richard Harries, Anglican Bishop of Oxford, was among the speakers. Readings were given by different faith groups and there were musical contributions by the Oxford Gamelan Society, the University Church choir and St Hilda's String Quartet.

Faith linked aid relief agencies, such as CAFOD, Christian Aid, the International Buddhist Relief Organisation, Islamic Relief, Khalsa Aid, Muslim Aid, SEWA International, and World Jewish Aid have moved to assist. Hindu Council UK, worked



closely with international agencies such as UNICEF to raise support or encouraged their followers to give through the combined Disasters Emergency Committee, as did other bodies. Many faith and inter faith bodies also led or participated in fundraising drives and relief programmes. There has been coordinated relief work undertaken within some faith communities. Hindu Forum of Britain, for example, organised a disaster task force linking over 50 organisations to launch a media campaign to appeal for funds.

Across the country, individual places of worship swung into action to gather donations and channel these to the affected countries. In Sparkhill Birmingham, for example, with support from Buddhist and Sikh relief organisations, scores of volunteers at the local gurdwara packed and sent donations to Sri Lanka, the Maldives and South India. The London Buddhist Vihara in Chiswick, with a significant Sri Lankan Buddhist congregation, was the focus of an aid effort to assist the Sri Lankan areas devastated by the recent Tsunami. Prince Charles visited the Vihara on 6 January to support the temple's ongoing effort. He commented, "We hear how people's faith may be challenged but, nevertheless, it has also helped in a strange way to reveal the love and compassion that exists in people's hearts."

On 14 January, the Earl and Countess of Wessex, visited Southampton to support the Southampton Inter Faith Council's initiative to raise funds and support for the Tsunami victims. They also visited a local gurdwara and the Vedic Temple to meet with local people who had been helping organise the donated clothing, blankets and provisions. In Northern Ireland, the Laxmi Naryan Temple in Belfast became a fund raising hub, with donations, channelled on through UNICEF, coming in from communities across Ireland.

There were also inter faith fund raising events. In Glasgow, an inter faith Tsunami relief concert took place at the Couper Institute. People of all faiths took part, including young people working together to help people affected by the Tsunami.

Individual faith linked bodies also responded in a variety of ways to the tragedy. The Jewish charity, Tzedek, produced a special educational pack for schools to explore Jewish responses to the disaster.

Natural disasters such as the Tsunami raise difficult religious and philosophical questions and these have been the subject of discussions at a number of inter faith meetings. For example, during the visit of the Earl and Countess of

Wessex to Southampton, they visited the Medina Mosque where they took part in a discussion with Christians, Jews and Muslims about how natural disasters are understood within different faiths and how they can work together following them. On 25 February Cambridge Inter Faith Group held an open discussion on the theme 'Faith and Natural Disaster' for participants to listen and share views on how people from different backgrounds deal with disasters like the recent Tsunami. In Bath, on 17 March, the Bath Interfaith Group held an event, 'Reflections after the Tsunami', where, after a period of reflection there was a discussion on faith and response to natural disasters.

Note: The sheer scale of the events and programmes responding to the disaster is so enormous that in this newsletter we have only been able to include illustrative examples.

Consultation paper on 'Spirituality and Spiritual Development in Youth Work'

The National Youth Agency is inviting individuals and organisations to take part in a consultation exercise on the subject of spirituality and spiritual development in youth work. The consultation was introduced at a policy meeting at the Agency in February and will run until the end of July. The Agency has issued a consultation paper, commissioned by the Department for Education and Skills and written by Maxine Green, *Spirituality and Spiritual Development in Youth Work*. Copies can be requested from Helena Ferrao-Read e-mail: helenaf@nya.org.uk or the document and comment form can be downloaded from the NYA's website: <http://www.nya.org.uk>

UNICEF and Religions for Peace

Religions for Peace is working with UNICEF to highlight their work across the world, providing children with health, education, equality and protection. As part of the project, every inter faith group in the UK is asked to join in helping the world's children throughout 2005. Further information from Brian Walker, Chair, Religions for Peace (UK) at hopeis@btinternet.com

Issues at the heart of Jewish-Christian relations

Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter held three linked one day seminars during the Autumn of 2004 on issues at the heart of Christian-Jewish relations, looking at fundamental questions regarding God's covenant with Jews and Christians; the heights and depths of human behaviour in the Shoah (Holocaust); and the role of Jesus from Christian and Jewish perspectives. Speakers included Dr Ed Kessler, Dr John Pawlikowski, Frank Dabba-Smith and Rabbi Mark Solomon.

On 6 December, the Centre for the Study of Jewish-Christian Relations hosted a conference on 'The Place of Covenant in Judaism, Christianity and Jewish-Christian Relations' which brought together Archbishop Rowan Williams, Chief Rabbi Dr Jonathan Sacks and Cardinal Walter Kasper.

Grand Mufti of Bosnia visits Three Faiths Forum

The Grand Mufti of Bosnia, Dr Mustafa Ceric, visited the offices of the Three Faiths Forum during his visit in February to London's Muslim community. The meeting, on 18 February, was hosted by Sir Sigmund Sternberg, one of the Co-founders of the Three Faiths Forum, which promotes dialogue and understanding among the Muslim, Christian and Jewish communities.

Jewish-Muslim lectures at SOAS

In November and December a Jewish-Muslim lecture series took place at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London arranged by the Maimonides Foundation and Leo Baeck College Centre for Jewish Education, in association with the London Middle Eastern Institute and SOAS. The theme this year was 'The challenge of living with multiple identities'. The specific topic of the series was chosen as relevant to both Jewish and Muslim young people.

The series enabled the audience to explore their national and religious identity without compromising one at the expense of the other.

Speakers included Sarah Joseph, Editor of Emel magazine; Professor Haleh Afshar, University of York; Rabbi Jacqueline Tabick, North West Surrey Synagogue; Dilwar Hussain, Islamic Foundation, Leicester; Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg, New North London Synagogue; and Imam Monawar Hussain, Eton College. Chairs included Rt Revd Richard Harries, Anglican Bishop of Oxford; Professor Doris Abouseif, SOAS; and Sheikh Dr Zaki Badawi.

Healing through remembering

The Corrymeela Community ran a special one day conference at St Ethelberga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace on 12 March. It was called 'Healing through Remembering: Dealing with the Past'. It explored issues of peace and reconciliation with particular consideration of the lessons from truth and reconciliation processes around the world. It examined how lessons learned through the reconciliation work in Northern Ireland and South Africa could be applied to reduce current divisions in our society, such as the tension between communities arising from war in Iraq. Speakers included Professor Roy McClelland, Brandon Hamber and Oliver McTernan. That evening there was a concert at St Martin in the Fields, London and the following day a service there, both marking the Corrymeela Community's 40th anniversary.

Chief rabbi's reception for Hindus

Chief Rabbi Dr Jonathan Sacks hosted a reception on 1 March to celebrate the relationship between the UK Jewish and Hindu communities. He told the gathering that Hindus had added "colour, grace and warmth" to British life, and praised their "gentleness and dignity". He said that both communities "seek to honour our traditions while contributing as members of British society. We both cherish our communities, our families and our children. We both think we have something more special than the individualism and consumerism of contemporary culture.....What we have in common unites us and our differences enrich us."

Archbishop Rowan Williams visits Swaminarayan Mandir, Neasden

Dr Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury visited the Swaminarayan Mandir, Neasden, the largest traditional Hindu Mandir outside India, on 29 January. He was greeted by A P Patel, Trustee of the Mandir, Sarah Teather MP, Brent East, Kamlesh Sharma, the High Commissioner for India, the Mayor of Brent, Cllr. Ahmed Shahzad and Cllr. Ann John, Leader of Brent Council. As the Archbishop entered the *Haveli* he was welcomed in the traditional Hindu manner by Sadhu Atmaswarupdas, Head of the Mandir. Dr Williams was formally garlanded in the main prayer hall in the presence of 2000 worshippers. Sadhu Atmaswarupdas in his address spoke of the Hindu tradition of welcoming visitors from all faiths. He went on to say that the message of Hinduism is that the entire world is but one human family. He added "Let us teach our followers that religion does not grow by quantity of numbers, but by quality of spirituality. We want to stress the unity in diversity, that there are more things that unite us than divide".

BBC Faith to Faith

During March BBC Radio 4 ran a series of three programmes produced by Phil Pegum where believers from across a religious divide spent time in each others' communities to discover the reality behind the hype, headlines and prejudice. *Faith to Faith* brought together Samina, a young British Muslim and Jenny, a Pentecostal Christian from a black majority church, the Church of God of Prophecy. Jenny experienced Ramadan firsthand as she joined Samina in her fast, with no eating or water for 12 hours and prayers five times a day. Jenny also wore the Muslim headscarf, or *hijab*, for the first time. Samina attended a Pentecostal service and challenged the church over its missionary work in a predominantly Muslim area of Birmingham. *Faith to Faith* explored what it means to be religious in Britain today as Jenny and Samina recorded their reflections and Religious Correspondent Jane Little asked them both what they had learnt about each other's communities and their own faith. In the second programme in

the series, Jagroop Singh, a Sikh, spent time with Hindu Girish Patel and in the third programme, Munisha, a Buddhist and Irene, a Jew met. You can hear the programmes using the BBC's 'Listen Again' option at http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/programmes/misc/faith_to_faith.shtml

Islam Awareness Week

Islam Awareness Week took place last November. The theme was 'Your Muslim Neighbour' and the aim was to highlight the valuable contributions to society made by Muslims from all walks of life. The launch of the Week took place at Shakespeare's Globe in London and throughout the week special activities took place there. More than twenty speakers gave talks on subjects from Islamic gardens to Abrahamic dialogue. As part of the week, the Three Faiths Forum led a discussion on Shakespeare and Islam.

Year of the volunteer

Early in 2004, Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown designated 2005 as the Year of the Volunteer. The Home Office, as the government department with responsibility for encouraging active citizenship, is working in partnership with Volunteering England (<http://www.volunteeringengland.org.uk/>) and CSV (<http://www.csv.org.uk/>) to coordinate the Year. Its main aims are to: increase the number of volunteers, particularly individuals from marginalised groups and young people; open up more volunteering opportunities in the public and voluntary sector; raise the profile of the work volunteers are doing nationwide; and thank volunteers everywhere for their time and commitment.

All volunteer organisations are encouraged to participate in, and benefit from, the Year of the Volunteer 2005. It offers the chance to increase engagement by providing opportunities for the public to volunteer, and to increase awareness of volunteering in general, and in particular that of participating organisations by branding existing work under the Year of the Volunteer banner. To get involved in the Year of the Volunteer campaign, go to http://www.yearofthevolunteer.org/html/involved_organisations.html

INTER FAITH PROFILE

In this issue, we interview Brian Pearce, who has been the Director of the Inter Faith Network since it was set up in 1987.

Q Can you tell me why the Inter Faith Network was founded?

In 1987 there were a number of national inter faith organisations in the UK, such as the long established Council of Christians and Jews, with its local branches, and the World Congress of Faiths, and separate local inter faith initiatives had also begun to emerge in different parts of the country. But there was no structure for linking these various national and local initiatives or for directly engaging the different faith communities of the UK in inter faith work in a structured way. So there was a need for a framework to enable those involved in this activity to share their experience and concerns and to discuss together ways in which inter faith work needed to develop in the future.

Q How did the Network begin?

A two year process of consultation took place to discuss with faith communities and inter faith organisations what kind of structure might be helpful. Following extensive discussions, 60 organisations came together in March 1987 to set up the Inter Faith Network for the UK with the late Rabbi Hugo Gryn and the late Bishop Jim Thompson at the helm as its first Co-Chairs, together with Vice-Chairs Dr Indarjit Singh, Dr Mughram Al-Ghamdi and Mr Om Parkash Sharma. We have been very fortunate throughout the Network's life to have particularly committed Officers and other Trustees to guide and oversee its work.

Q Has the Network helped raise the profile of inter faith work?

Together with its member organisations, the Network has helped to raise public awareness of the importance of working for good inter faith relations. Its own work and publications, and its cooperative work with Government and other public bodies has contributed significantly to this process. I think we crossed a watershed with the work we did through the 'Lambeth Group', advising on the "faith" dimension of the Millennium celebrations and working with the Department for Culture Media and Sport on the Shared Act of Reflection and Commitment by the Faith Communities of the UK in the Houses of Parliament at the beginning of 2000. This focused on values held in common by different faiths and was part of the official Millennium celebrations.

Q The Network links faith community representative bodies; inter faith organisations; local inter faith bodies; and educational and academic bodies. Why has this broad pattern of membership been so important?

Each type of member body has a vital contribution to make to building good inter faith relations in the UK. Faith communities have a key role in developing dialogue between their traditions and in educating their followers to understand their own faith well and to engage with respect with followers of other faiths. National inter faith organisations have dedicated programmes of activities which enable deep dialogue and shared action on particular

issues. The establishment of Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish inter faith bodies has added an important strength. Educational and academic bodies help to increase knowledge of different faiths and to educate for a positive inter faith future. Local inter faith bodies make a direct contribution to the development of grassroots inter faith understanding.

Q In recent years, the Network has worked closely with central and local government on a range of issues. Why do you think this is important?

There has been increasing engagement between Government and faith communities in recent years to ensure that policies and service delivery respond to the different needs and concerns of all its citizens. The Network has contributed in a major way to this process because its member bodies are clear that good inter faith relations can only develop securely where people of different faiths feel they are justly treated as truly equal members of a shared society rooted in common values. The development of the "community cohesion" agenda since the disturbances in northern towns and cities in 2001 and 9/11 later that year (and the events following that) has been of particular importance in this respect.

Q But will Government agendas bump 'real' inter faith work out of the picture?

Work on the public dimension of inter faith relations is 'real' inter faith work. But it must always go hand in hand with the more traditional inter faith work carried out by the Network and its member bodies, including in depth dialogue to achieve greater mutual understanding and to tackle the difficult burdens of past history; multi faith cooperative projects; inter faith education; and special focus work, such as the engagement of young people with inter faith issues.

Q What do you see as the challenges facing the Network in the next few years?

The proposed Commission for Equality and Human Rights is due to begin its work in 2007 and one of its major responsibilities will be in the field of 'good relations'. There is a need to work out what the implications of this will be for inter faith work in the future.

Like most voluntary bodies, the Network faces challenges of staffing and funding. However, its member faith communities have committed themselves to providing structured financial contributions for the Network and we have just received an assurance of sufficient Government funding to ensure that most of the Network's core work over the next two years can be sustained. Some additional funding needs, however, to be found, particularly for key projects, from trusts and other sources.

Q What are the best things about working for the Inter Faith Network?

The wonderful people I meet and work with, the amazing variety of the issues with which we deal and the strong conviction that we are making a genuine contribution to ensuring that this country's greater religious diversity is enriching our society in very positive ways.

Trade Justice Movement seeks to broaden faith involvement

The Trade Justice Movement (TJM) was formed in 2000 to work for change of the rules and institutions governing international trade to make trade work equitably for all. In 2005 Britain will host the G8 Summit and hold the Presidency of the European Union and TJM sees this as a particularly crucial campaign period. TJM links 50 UK organisations, including aid agencies, environment and human rights campaigns, trade unions, faith and consumer groups. Together, TJM's member organisations have over 9 million members, but until now the faith groups represented have been predominantly Christian. TJM is actively seeking to increase its diversity and involve other faith groups in its membership, policy and decision making. To find out more see www.tjm.org.uk or contact Glen Tarman, Trade Justice Movement Co-ordinator, glen@tjm.org.uk Tel: 020 7404 0530

Make Poverty History

Make Poverty History is a UK alliance of charities, trade unions, campaigning groups, faith communities and celebrities and is the UK mobilisation of the Global Call to Action Against Poverty. They are keen to engage faith and inter faith bodies in this year's campaign. See www.makepovertyhistory.org

The 2007 Project

2007 is the bicentenary of the abolition of the Slave Trade Act. Churches Together in England will be heading up a project to mark this. It has recently appointed Richard Reddie as Project Director. The Project Executive is chaired by Rev Dr Inderjit Bhogal of the Methodist Church. For further information contact richard.reddie@cte.org.uk

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Scottish Inter Faith Council appoints new staff members

In November, the Scottish Inter Faith Council appointed a new Chief Executive Officer, Pramila Kaur, to replace Sister Isabel Smyth on her retirement from the post. Vanessa Taylor has been appointed as SIFC's Equality and Policy Officer and Calum Henderson as full time office administrator. They join Maureen Sier who continues as Development Officer.

Board of Deputies

Jon Benjamin took up post in January as Chief Executive of the Board of Deputies of British Jews. He was previously Chief Executive of British ORT. A retirement reception was held on 15 February at Gray's Inn for Neville Nagler, who had been Chief Executive of the Board since 1991, following a civil service career in the Treasury and Home Office. He has now become part-time Director of the Sternberg Foundation, which deals with a variety of inter faith activities, including the Three Faiths Forum, but will be continuing to serve as a consultant to the Board on inter faith matters.

Faith-based Regeneration Network

FbRN have recently secured funding to appoint two staff and move to offices at: J2, 4th floor, Charles House Charity Centre, 375 Kensington High Street, London W14 8QH. Their Executive Director is Dr Doreen Finneron and their newly appointed Development Officer is Malcolm Deboo. The Faith Based Regeneration Network (FbRN) is drawn from nine faith traditions: Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Zoroastrian. It was established in 2001 by and for regeneration practitioners who identify with faith traditions, or who work with or for faith community organisations. Further information from admin@fbrn.org.uk.

Council of Christians and Jews moves office

The Council of Christians and Jews has moved offices to a different suite within its current building. The new address is: 1st Floor Camelford House, 87-89 Albert Embankment, London, SE1 7TP.

Honours for inter faith workers

In the New Year's Honours list, Mehri Nikham, Director of the Maimonides Foundation, received an MBE for services to Jewish-Muslim inter faith relations. Malcolm Stonestreet received an MBE for services to the community in Cumbria. He is the Chief Executive of United Religions Initiative UK. The Rev Dr Inderjit Bhogal, Methodist Minister and theologian and former President of the Methodist Conference of Great Britain, received an OBE for services to inter faith relations. Dr Syed Abdul-Aziz Pasha, founder of the Union of Muslim Organisations, received an OBE for services to race relations.

A farewell to inter faith friends

Archpriest Sergei Hackel

The Very Revd Archpriest Sergei Hackel, Russian Orthodox priest, died aged 73 on 6 February. As well as being a lifelong contributor to the Christian ecumenical movement, he was a Board and Executive Member of the Council of Christians and Jews and had made a very active contribution to Jewish-Christian understanding at national level as well as in Sussex where he was joint chairman of the CCJ branch in Brighton and Hove. He was also a well known broadcaster on the World Service

Hamid Husain

Hamid Husain, a much valued member of Manchester Interfaith Forum's Committee since its early days, died suddenly on 27 November 2004. He was born in Muradabad in India in 1932 and came to the UK in 1957, where he trained in chartered accountancy with a

Birmingham based firm. He settled in Manchester in 1962. In his spare time he shared his knowledge of Islam both with fellow Muslims, through a study circle and Sunday school talks, and with members of other faiths. He was an official visitor for HM prisons, and a speaker for Muslim patients at NHS hospitals as well as a Rotarian and a member of Amnesty International. Manchester Inter Faith Forum's Committee paid tribute to him as a 'tower of strength' for them and will miss his open mindedness, dry humour, courtesy and constant readiness to help.

Gulam Musa

Gulam Hussain Musa died on 26 December aged 84. He was well known to many for his work with Gloucestershire Interfaith Action, of which he had been Chairman for many years, and for his role within the Gloucester Shi'a community. Mr Musa came to Gloucester in 1969 from Kenya having been born in Zanzibar. Over the years he served on numerous committees and boards. The current chair of GIFA Mr Ahmed Bham said at his memorial service on 7 March, "Gulam Musa was a well respected and much liked elder statesman like figure who will be sadly missed. His legacy of inter faith work in Gloucestershire will be carried forward with much enthusiasm as he would have dearly liked."

Inter Faith Relations: The UK and Europe

ISBN 1 902906 14 4

Looking at the impact of the UK's membership of the European Union on faith communities and the inter faith agenda here. Report of the 2004 National Meeting. Available from the Inter Faith Network office at £3.00 plus £1 postage and packaging.

REGIONAL AND LOCAL UPDATE

Scotland

Edinburgh

Edinburgh Inter-Faith Association held a series of events during Scotland's Inter Faith Week (see page 9), including the Scottish Film Premier 'Mother Teresa: The Legacy'; an Open Space Evening at Augustine United Church; a Christian Buddhist Dialogue held in St Georges West Church, and the first Annual Meeting of Edinburgh's Religious Leaders, which was followed by a 'Question Time' when young people from Edinburgh had the opportunity to question the Religious leaders. This was filmed by Edinburgh Education Department for future use. On Sunday 21 November the Edinburgh Inter Faith Association also coordinated the visits of religious leaders and representatives, and MSP's to a Mosque and Islamic Centre and to a Sikh Gurdwara.

Dundee

In Dundee, Inter Faith Week was marked with a Shared Meal in Meadowside St Paul's Church. Baha'is, Christians, Jews, Muslims, Quakers, Sikhs enjoyed sharing food and fellowship. Maureen Sier, the SIFC Development Officer was also present. An inter faith display provided the backdrop to the meal, comprising information about SIFC and recently produced materials, as well as some local information about Dundee Inter Faith Association.

This display, augmented by further leaflets and panels from SIFC, formed a small exhibition for the concourse at Ninewells Hospital from 30 November to 3 December, and was seen by the many hundreds of people who use the hospital, as well as medical professionals. Many stopped to ask questions or take leaflets. This was initiated by NHS Tayside Spiritual Care Committee, and supported by the hospital chaplain, Rev David Gordon, who is keen to develop a multi faith dimension to the work of the Chaplaincy in the hospital.

Glasgow

On 20 November leaders and representatives from the Baha'i, Christian, Sikh, Muslim and Hindu communities and from SIFC and 'Glasgow Churches Together' visited Garnethill

Synagogue for their morning service. The following day leaders and representatives from the Buddhist, Baha'i, Christian and Muslim communities, with members of SIFC and 'Glasgow Churches Together' visited Blessed John Duns Scotus Priory Catholic Church proceeding then to Glasgow Central Mosque.

England

Meeting on regional faith forums

A meeting was held on 29 November by the Inner Cities Religious Council of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, in partnership with the Home Office Faith Communities Unit and the Inter Faith Network, to enable participants from different regional inter faith structures in England to reflect on their roles and share experiences. It also enabled regional and national government to catch up with recent developments in this field. Further information from Nigel.Wright@odpm.gsi.gov.uk.

East

Bedford A gathering of 120 people attended a celebration at The Place, Bradgate Road on Tuesday 25 January to mark Bedford Council of Faiths' recent acquisition of charity status. A variety of food generously given by the different communities was enjoyed by guests and music contributed by different faiths provided a tapestry of background sound. There were speeches by the High Sheriff of Bedfordshire, Clifton Ibbett, and Brian Pearce, Director of the Inter Faith Network who provided a perspective on the national inter faith scene. Members of ten different faiths gave presentations conveying their essential beliefs and values. Rabbi Daniela Thau, chair of Bedford Council of Faiths, presided over the event, inviting organisations to link with BCoF, and to benefit from its experience and knowledge of local religious and cultural diversity.

Cambridge On 20 March, Cambridge Faith Fair took place at the Small Guildhall under the auspices of the Cambridge Inter-Faith Group, Cambridge City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council.

Luton. The Luton News/Gazette reports that on Christmas Day, a group of Muslims from Bury Park Central Mosque, with support from Luton Council of Mosques and Luton Council of Faiths, came to Bury Park United Reformed Church to greet the Christian community. They were warmly welcomed by the church and Luton Council of faiths congratulated the Central Mosque for this initiative. The gesture was reciprocated by the Christians on the eve of Eid-ul-Adha on 19 January when a representative group from Bury Park United Reformed Church, along with other representatives from the Bury Park/Beech Hill Council of Churches delivered a Happy Eid message to the Central Mosque.

Peterborough. Peterborough Inter Faith Council held an event at Peterborough Town Hall on 16 January to celebrate 25 years of its work. This brought together members of Peterborough's Christian, Sikh, Hindu, Jewish and Muslim communities. There were presentations by faith speakers, including PIFC's chairman, Mr Jaspal Singh; Chuck Salamon of the Peterborough Jewish community; Dr Ataulah Siddiqui of the Islamic Foundation and Dr Indarjit Singh, Director of the Network of Sikh Organisations. Maqsood Ahmed of the Home Office's Cohesion and Faiths Unit gave a talk about how the Government is working to cement improving relationships between Britain's religious leaders. City Council Chief Executive Gillian Beasley also spoke. She said, "All faith groups have a major and important role in helping to contribute to the city's vision to develop Peterborough and its growth into a bigger and better city. We look forward to continuing our work with Peterborough Inter Faith Council and the positive support and help they provide."

East Midlands

Northampton. On 3 March, Northampton Faiths Forum held an evening on 'Fasting in Faith' with contributions from John Josephs of the Hebrew Synagogue and Njla Momen of the Bah'ai faith.

Nottingham. At a meeting on 1 February Nottingham Inter Faith Council met with a representative of Nottingham City Council, who made a presentation on the work currently being prepared with the City Council on Social Cohesion. There are to be further discussions on how NIFC can cooperate with the Council in this area.

London

East London. The Anglican Bishop of Chelmsford, Rt Rev John Gladwin, was the guest speaker at a meeting of the East London Three Faiths Forum on 3 February at the Community Centre attached to the Ilford Mosque. His topic was: "The Importance of Peace in the Middle East – A Christian Perspective".

Kensington and Chelsea. The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea have published an eighth edition of their *Guide to Ethnic and Faith Organisations in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea*. It is compiled by the Community Relations Section. For further information, telephone 020 7598 4632.

Southwark. The London Borough of Southwark has developed, with voluntary organisations, and the Southwark Multi Faith Forum, a booklet called 'Mark of Faith' which gives an insight into how people's faith impacts on their daily lives - births, marriages, death, worship, and special celebrations. The booklet is part of a project 'Celebrating Southwark' which is supported by the Southwark Alliance as part of the Home Office's Community Cohesion Programme. For further information, contact kevin.dykes@southwark.gov.uk or Julie.Humphreys@southwark.gov.uk

Tower Hamlets. Tower Hamlets Inter Faith Forum have been working in partnership with secondary schools and the SACRE to develop a model to support religious education and community cohesion by encouraging faith leaders to visit schools. Three schools will be piloting the project. A workshop took place on 21 February, led by Deborah Weston, Head of RE at Mulberry School, to look at how visits would be structured and to encourage faith leaders to be volunteers for the pilot. The idea is that volunteers would visit the classroom in pairs, as part of a lesson planned by the class teacher. They would be able to give faith perspectives and would also be role models showing respect and understanding across religions.

Westminster. Westminster Interfaith held its annual inter faith conference on 21 November at the Maria Assumpta Centre in London in association with the World Congress of Faiths. The main speakers at the November conference were Imam Dr Abduljalil Sajid, Sr Chandasiri, Rev Lawrence Hillel and Fr Michael Kirwan SJ. The theme was Buddhist, Christian and Muslim views on violence. On 27 February, WI arranged a visit to Bajtul Futuh Mosque in Morden.

North West

A report 'Faith in England's Northwest: Economic Impact Assessment', was launched at an event on 3 February at Manchester Town Hall supported by the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA) and Manchester City Council. According to the report, faith communities in England's Northwest contribute between £69.6 million and £94.9 million per annum to the region's economy. At the same event, the North West Forum of Faiths was launched; and the 'opening' of faithnorthwest.org.uk, a website dedicated to faith communities in the region was celebrated.

Among the speakers at the event were Cllr Afzal Khan, Deputy Lord Mayor of Manchester and Muslim Council of Britain; Claire Curtis Thomas MP for Crosby; Rt Rev Nigel McCullough, Anglican Bishop of Manchester, Louis Rappaport, President of Manchester Jewish Representative Council; and Mgr John Devine, Churches' Officer for the North West; and Steven Broomhead, Chief Executive of the NWDA who said "The NWDA is pleased to support this unique event which brings together the Northwest's faith communities to ensure they are involved in the regeneration of England's Northwest. Faith communities make a valuable contribution to the regional economy and the drive to improve our local communities. They have an excellent record of bridging the gap between the affluent and the deprived, with their infrastructure and volunteer network. As key stakeholders in the region's future, it is only right that they should be consulted and involved in the regeneration process. We are happy that the North West Forum of Faiths and the faithnorthwest website will enable them to do exactly that."

For further information and to view a copy of the 'Faith in England's Northwest: Economic Impact Assessment' report, visit:
www.faithnorthwest.org.uk

Altrincham. The Altrincham Interfaith Group held an Any Questions session in Timperley, which was attended by more than one hundred people. In the chair was District Judge, Michael Jackson. He fielded the questions to Fr David Roberts, a Catholic priest, Dr Kamal Rauniar, a Hindu from Nepal, Basil Hatahet, a Muslim orthodontist from Damascus and Julian Levy, the Jewish son of an Orthodox rabbi and father of Conservative and trainee Reform rabbis. AIG also held their second annual inter faith supper on

26 February at St Ambrose RC College, Hale Barns. Guests included the Mayor of Trafford, Cllr Pamela Dixon. The evening's theme was 'family values' and this was addressed by Professor Ram Gokol from the Hindu community, Michel Sharp from the Jewish community and Dr Sara Saigol from the Muslim community and Revd Alan Morris from the Christian community. The evening was chaired by AIG treasurer Iftikhar Awan. There were blessings from different faiths before the meal.

Bolton. Gary Titley, MEP, was the guest of the Bolton Interfaith Council at the Friends Meeting House on 19 November 2004. The MEP spoke about legislation going through the European Parliament and Commission. He also told the audience how the European Commission worked and the consultation processes that enabled legislation to eventually be passed. He stressed the importance of meeting and sharing experiences between the faith communities throughout Europe and that positive steps should be taken to break down barriers caused by misunderstanding or ignorance of the members faiths and customs.

Manchester. On 20 January, Manchester Interfaith Forum held an event called 'Endings?', to discuss beliefs and practices related to death. It was a follow-up to an earlier meeting on 'Beginning, Belonging and Continuing'. Participants split up into groups of five or six to discuss their beliefs about what happens to beings at death and after; what this means for our obligations to those dying and those who have died; and our attitudes to our own mortality. At the end they reassembled in one group, and shared thoughts that had come out of the discussions. Particularly timely, in the wake of the tsunami tragedy, was the question of how communities cope with widespread loss of life, caused by atrocity or natural disaster.

A Muslim-Jewish Forum has been started in Manchester. Its Co-Chairs are Cllr Afzal Khan, Deputy Mayor of Manchester, and Henry Guterman of the Jewish Representative Council.

Rossendale. On 23 February, a meeting was held in Rawtenstall, 'A Day to Decide', to discuss the setting up of a Rossendale Faith Communities Partnership. This followed earlier work by East Lancs Together (ELT) and Community Action in Rossendale and by a steering group with representation from the two main faiths in Rossendale (Christian and Muslim) and community partners. Speakers at the event

included Rev Keith Garner, Bolton and Rochdale Methodist Circuit, Dr Mahmood Chandia, Lancashire Council of Mosques, Fawad Bhatti, Hyndburn Borough Council, and Brian Pearce, Inter Faith Network. Further information from Anayat at anayat@elp.org.uk

South East

Brighton and Hove. Brighton and Hove Inter Faith Contact Group held its AGM on 20 February. Revd Johanna Boeke, President of the International Association of Liberal and Religious Women, spoke from a Unitarian perspective on 'Many are our names: In harmony with diversity.'

The Jewish Chronicle, 11 March, reports on an inter faith art project at the Brighton and Hove New Synagogue involving 20 young people, aged 8 to 14, from the synagogue, a church, a mosque and two local schools. They are working together on a mosaic, 'Pillars of Faith' which they hope to donate to the prayer room of the children's hospital in Brighton.

Medway. Medway Inter Faith Action Forum (MIFAF) has been working with staff at the Demelza House Children's Hospice to develop links between the hospice and local religious communities. Its programme began on 23 November with a training evening for care workers at the hospice. Representatives from some of the local faith communities gave talks to staff. These started by outlining the basic beliefs and structures of their religions before moving on to speak about the beliefs and practices surrounding death, dying and bereavement in their different traditions. Staff found the evening to be very helpful and moves are now being made to build on these early links that have been made between the hospice and local faith communities. It is hoped that MIFAF will be able to offer further assistance to the hospice as it develops its 'quiet room' into an area with resources for a number of different faiths to use. In addition plans are being made for staff training days that will include visits to local places of worship. This contact will give the hospice a number of religious communities to draw upon in the event that patients and their families need faith support beyond that which is currently offered by the chaplain. It is hoped that this will be the start of an enduring and fruitful relationship that serves to educate both the hospice staff about important faith issues and the local faith communities about the excellent work carried out at Demelza House.

Guildford. A Surrey branch of the Three Faiths Forum was launched on 2 March at Guildford Cathedral. Addresses were given by the Co-Founders of The Three Faiths Forum, Sheikh Dr M A Zaki Badawi KBE (Director, the Muslim College) and Sir Sigmund Sternberg KCSG. This initiative has been brought to fruition by Rev Andrew Facey (Vicar of Christ Church, Epsom and Inter-Faith Adviser to the Bishop of Guildford), Imam Shahid Hussain (Inter-Faith Adviser at the Islamic Cultural Centre, Regent's Park and Kingston Mosque), and Rabbi Danny Rich (Chief Executive, Liberal Judaism and Kingston Liberal Synagogue) with the support of Sydney Assor (Chairman of Three Faiths Forum Surrey and Advisory Board Member of the National Three Faiths Forum) and Sidney Shipton OBE (Co-ordinator, The Three Faiths Forum). Further information from sidney@sternberg-foundation.co.uk

West Midlands

The West Midlands Faith Forum held its first conference on 16 March at Aston University. Further information from emmap@rawm.co.uk

Birmingham. Birmingham Council of Faiths (BCF) celebrated its 30th anniversary on 5 December at Birmingham City Council House. Speakers included Brian Cooper, Ramona Kauth, Nila Parmar, and Jalal Uddin of BCF; the Lord Mayor of Birmingham, Cllr Michael Nangle; Councillor Alan Rudge; Rt Rev John Austin, Chair of the Church of England Synod's Inter Faith Consultative Group; and Dr Harriet Crabtree of the Inter Faith Network.

Stoke-on-Trent. The North Staffordshire Forum of Faiths was launched at Victoria Hall Hanley on 3 February. Over 450 people were present, representing faith groups across the city and North Staffordshire. The theme was Peace and Harmony. Presentations were made by five of the major faiths in North Staffordshire. Mohamed Tufail, director of North Staffordshire Race Equality Council, spoke of the need for the forum and its ability to represent faith groups across the area. The Chairman of the Forum, Mgr Patrick McKinnney, gave a short address and then a letter was read from the Mayor, who had been the instigator of the event but had sadly fallen ill and could not be present, formally launching the Forum. Further information from NSFF Coordinator, Keith Perrin, keith@kperrin.freemove.co.uk

Wolverhampton. Wolverhampton Inter Faith Group celebrated its 30th anniversary with an event, “Wolverhampton Alive”, at the City of Wolverhampton College on 27 November. This was attended by the Major, MP’s, local dignitaries, faith communities and members of the public.

On 5 March a memorial service was held for Ivy Guttridge, a WIFG founder member and a former Vice Chair of the Inter Faith Network (see obituary in issue 25 of *Inter Faith Update*).

South West

Bristol. A civic inter faith celebration, ‘Faith in the Future’ took place at the Council House on 18 March, by invitation of the Lord Mayor of Bristol, Cllr Simon Cook. An evening of readings, prayers, music and sacred songs was followed by an informal meal over a light buffet. The occasion was planned by Bristol Inter Faith Group in partnership with Bristol’s faith communities and the Lord Mayor’s secretary.

Truro. A madrassa or ‘Sunday school’, as local Muslim leaders call it, for Truro’s dozen young Muslims aged 5-14 has been opened in an office at Truro Cathedral. The Acting Dean, Canon Perran Gay, told the Church Times that the cathedral had offered one of its offices after some locals had objected to the school being held in the Imam’s house. Muslim worship is not held at the cathedral but will take place at a new multifaith facility at Truro College.

Yorkshire and Humber

Bradford. On 1 December the new Bradford District Faiths Forum was launched at the Conference Suite of Bradford City AFC. The day was given the theme ‘Faith in Citizenship’ and it was chaired by Sharmila Gandhi, Chief Executive of Bradford Vision. Speakers included Fiona Mactaggart MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Race Equality, Community Policy and Civil Renewal, the Lord Mayor of Bradford, Cllr Irene Ellison Wood, members of the Faith Forum Advisory Development Group, the Forum’s Development Worker, Cath Bromwich, Rt Rev David James, Anglican Bishop of Bradford, Sher Azam, Bradford Council of Mosques, Rajinder Singh, Sikh community, Rajendra Pal Johar, Hindu Cultural Society, and Brian Pearce of the Inter Faith Network. There were also contributions from local children, music and dance.

Leeds. Leeds Concord Inter Faith Fellowship held a meeting ‘Should they go or should they stay’ on 9 March at Thomas Danby College to look at asylum issues. The speaker was Gill Gibbons of Leeds Asylum Seekers Support Network. She talked about refugees and asylum seekers and some of the challenges they face. The multi faith meeting participants discussed ways that they might help, perhaps as volunteer hosts who can put people up for a few nights in crisis situations or by donating to the LASSN hardship fund.

Sheffield. An event was held on 21 November at Cutlers Hall in Sheffield by the Open Forum for Economic Regeneration (O.F.F.E.R.) to celebrate, inform and provide opportunity for networking between the various groups which have been working in the city to promote harmony and to support disadvantaged and socially excluded people. Agnostics, Christians, Muslims and Pagans were among those involved. Presentations were given by faith based groups and inter cultural organisations about their work.

DIARY DATES

Conferences, courses and seminars

22 March, London. Conference on ‘Employers’ Compliance in the Field of Religious Discrimination’ being held by Faith Regen UK to raise awareness about issues of religious discrimination in employment and training. Further information from jennifer@faithregenuk.org

3 May, London. ‘The National Media: Getting on the national media agenda.’ Guest speakers: Stephen Bates (Religion Correspondent, Guardian) and Roger Bolton (Presenter, *Sunday* and *Feedback*, Radio 4). 10:00-16:00. A vegetarian lunch will be provided. Cost: £70 per person. Further information from: Simon Cohen at ‘Tolerance’ info@tolerancelimited.com or call 01727 833 209. Tolerance is part-funded by UnLtd and the Millennium Awards Trust

4 May, London. ‘The Regional Media: Securing regular and positive media coverage’. Guest speakers: Mike Anderson (Managing Director, Evening Standard); Jumoke Fashola (Presenter, *Inspirit*, BBC London Radio); Ian Pearce

(Presenter, *Melting Pot*, BBC Three Counties Radio). 10:00-16:00. A vegetarian lunch will be provided. Cost: £70 per person. Further information from Simon Cohen 'Tolerance' info@tolerancelimited.com or call 01727 833 209. Tolerance is part-funded by UnLtd and the Millennium Awards Trust.

14 May at St Martin in the Fields, London and 19 June at West London Synagogue, London. 'Our search for community'. Two days arranged by the Council of Christians and Jews in conjunction with St Martin in the Fields and West London Synagogue for participants to experience each others' worship and to explore, through texts and discussion, how Jews and Christians can contribute to the common good of the world. Further information from cjrelations@ccj.org.uk

5 June, London. 'Moving from dialogue to action for justice and peace'. A one day seminar held by Religions for Peace. Developed out of inter faith dialogue for peace and reconciliation in West Africa, this one day interactive workshop is designed to help communities turn dialogue into action and for participants to discover for themselves how to make a difference for justice and peace locally, nationally and across the world. Free but places available on a first booked basis. For further details or booking contact Dr Brian Walker, hopeis@btinternet.com or Tel 01962 774221.

13 June, Belfast. Stranmillis College. 7.30 pm Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum host a showing of the film 'The Messenger'. Further information from vivek.regina@tesco.net

19 June, London. One day conference on Moses Maimonides arranged by the Maimonides Foundation and the Assembly of Masorti synagogues in Great Britain. Further information from info@maimonides-foundation.org.

4-12 July CCJ Young Adults' Study Tour of Israel. The study tour, designed for those 18-35, will take place in Givat Haviva, the Arab-Israeli centre for peace, near Tel Aviv. Participants will be offered the opportunity to see the green line area and to visit the Arab villages just outside Givat Haviva. In Jerusalem, participants will spend the Jewish Sabbath with a Jewish family and on Sunday go to a service in Bethlehem. £600 but some bursaries of up to 50% available. Further information from louise@ccj.org.uk

3-13 July, Rome. At the Waldesian Theological Faculty. Centre for the Study of Jewish-Christian Relations summer school 2005 led by Dr James Aitken: "Roma Aeterna - The enduring symbol of Rome in Jewish-Christian relations". Looking at the religious, cultural and political roots of Jewish and Christian symbols in Roman antiquity. Cost: £700 for bookings made before 28 February and £800 after. Contact Lucia Faltin Tel: 01223 741 038 or email l.faltin@cjcr.cam.ac.uk.

Local Events

Space only permits one event to be listed for each organisation. For details of other events contact the relevant local groups. Local inter faith events are also listed in the One Family Newsletter available from the World Congress of Faiths, c/o London Inter Faith Centre, 125 Salisbury Road, London NW6 6RG.

23 March, Edinburgh. Edinburgh Inter-Faith Association host a discussion with Jeremy Purvis, Liberal Democrat MSP for Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale, who will present his draft proposal for a Bill in the Scottish Parliament to allow capable adults with a terminal illness to access the mean to die with dignity. The purpose of the evening is to stimulate wider debate on end of life issues and encourage written submissions to the Parliament. 7pm Augustine's United Church, George IV Bridge. Further information from victor@eifa.wanadoo.co.uk.

3 April, 1 May and 5 June, London. "Sacred Silence". Meditation shared by those of different backgrounds. 3-5pm at the London Inter Faith Centre, 125 Salisbury Road, London NW6 6RG. Further information from info@londoninterfaith.org.uk.

5 April, London. Lambeth Multi-Faith Action Group meeting, 'Faith in Schools', with speakers Rev Stephen Kuhrt and Firdos Qazi. 7-9 pm, South London Liberal Synagogue, Prentis Road, London SW16.

12 April, Bradford. Bradford Concord Interfaith Society hosting a joint meeting with Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship on 'Inter faith: where next?'. 7.30 Interfaith Education Centre, Listerhills Road, Bradford. Further information from secretary@concord-leeds.org.uk

13 April, Bristol. Bristol Inter Faith Group AGM followed by 'Reflections on Interfaith Dialogue', with guest speaker Jonathan Marshall from the Plymouth Religious and Cultural Resource Centre. 7.15pm in the Apostle Room, Clifton Cathedral Church of SS Peter and Paul, Clifton Park, Bristol 8. Further information Tel 01454 313042.

21 April, Bolton. Launch of the new Bolton Faith Trail at 12.00 noon, Town Hall steps. Further information from CarolH@Boltoncvs.org.uk.

7 May, West Somerset/Exeter. West Somerset Interfaith Group trip to the Islamic Centre at Exeter. Further details Tel 01643 862525.

11 May, Bath. Bath Interfaith Group meeting on the theme 'Prejudice - How have different faiths experienced prejudice and responded?', with contributions from different faiths in the presence of the Mayor of Bath. Further information Tel 01225 422252.

15 May, Dundee, 2-6pm, Networking conference for Scottish local inter faith groups. For further information contact Maureen Sier, Scottish Inter Faith Council Tel 0141 429 4012.

6 June to 11 July, Nottingham at the Nottingham Bluecoat School and **11 July to 13 August** at Nottingham Central Library. "Flowerings of Belief" - an exhibition of visual arts by local artists, reflecting what their beliefs mean to them. Organised by Nottingham Inter Faith Council. Further information from info@interfaithnottm.org.uk

11 June, Bradford. 'Challenges to Democracy in a Multi Faith Society'. Talk by Baroness Kathleen Richardson as part of the Faith in Dialogue series at Bradford Cathedral. 10am to 2pm with lunch provided. Free but booking essential. Further information from Rev Sam Randall 01274 561640 or Rev Geoff Reid 01274 721626.

23 June, Wavertree. A Sikh perspective on Creation. Part of a Merseyside Interfaith Group and Merseyside Council of Faiths series on different faith perspectives on the topic of creation. 7.45 for 8pm at the Sikh Gurdwara, Wellington Avenue, Wavertree. Further information on this event and others in the series Tel 0151 733 1541.

9 July, London. Stockwell Faith Forum's annual Peace Space at Larkhall Park, Stockwell, London SW8 from 12 - 6pm. Activities, talks, games, resources and refreshments for all ages around the theme of practical peace-building in a beautiful yurt tent. Anti-bullying, mediation, massage, restorative justice, anger management, conflict transformation, education, labyrinth, inter faith discussion, mandala. This year we welcome the South London Inter Faith Group for tea at 4pm as part of their annual walk. Further information from 020 8674 4610 or faith.forum@btinternet.com.

10 July, Bedford. Bedford Council of Faiths annual study outing. Visit and guided tour to Norse Road Bedford Crematorium and Cemetery with a workshop on burial and mourning rites of the different faiths. Starts 1.30pm. £5 cost for the afternoon. Further information from bcof@24hrs-a-day.org

17 July, Altrincham. Altrincham Interfaith Group picnic in Tatton Park. For further information contact the Honorary Secretary Alf Keeling Tel 0161 929 9585.

Inter Faith Organisations in the UK: A Directory

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£6.50 including p and p

In January 2005 the Network published a second edition of this A5 size, 248 page directory which contains contact details for and information about the work of over 200 national, regional and local inter faith bodies.

To order, please send a cheque for £6.50, payable to The Inter Faith Network, to:

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**Inter Faith Network,
8A Lower Grosvenor Place,
London SW1W 0EN**

**Tel: 020 7931 7766
Fax: 020 7931 7722**

**Email: ifnet@interfaith.org.uk
www.interfaith.org.uk**



INTER FAITH

UPDATE

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The London bombings

On Thursday 7 July suicide bombers struck three tube trains and a bus in central London, killing 56 people and injuring 700. Four further bomb attacks took place on 21 July but no one was injured as the devices failed to explode.

Condemnation of the bombings has come from all quarters, including leaders of the UK's faith communities.

On the day of the bombings, Churches Together in Britain and Ireland and the Muslim Council of Britain issued a joint statement expressing sympathy at the death and suffering caused by the attacks; condemning these criminal acts; and noting that the scriptures and the traditions of both the Muslim and Christian communities repudiate the use of such violence.

“.....These attacks strengthen our determination to live together in peace, and to grow together in mutual understanding. This crime must inspire us to work unceasingly together in pursuit of peace, justice and respect for difference.” Churches Together in Britain and Ireland and the Muslim Council of Britain, 7 July.

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Government consultations

On 8 July Home Secretary Charles Clarke held a meeting with Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh faith leaders to reassure them of the Government's commitment to allaying any fears felt by the faith communities and encouraging them to work together in the aftermath of the tragedy.

On 19 July, Prime Minister Tony Blair and the leaders of the Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties, Michael Howard and Charles Kennedy, met with Muslim leaders at Downing Street to discuss response to the recent bombings and, more generally,

tackling extremism and the practical steps which can be taken.

On 20 July Charles Clarke, with Home Office Ministers Paul Goggins and Hazel Blears, held a meeting attended by a wide range of faith and community group representatives to discuss how to prevent young people being drawn into extremism. It was agreed, following this meeting, to set up a number of working groups, led by community members, to focus on: engaging with young people; tackling extremism and radicalisation; supporting regional and local initiatives and community actions;

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NETWORK NEWS

Network's 2005 AGM

The Network's 2005 AGM was held in Coventry on 27 June in conjunction with its National Meeting.

Rt Rev Dr Tom Butler and Jagjiwan Singh were re-elected as Co-Chairs, and Dr Manazir Ahsan as a Vice-Chair, for the coming year. Hon Barnabas Leith and Dr V P Narayan Rao were elected as a Vice-Chairs in succession to Jehangir Sarosh and Om Parkash Sharma.

Others who stood down from the Executive Committee included Archbishop Kevin McDonald and Abdul Rauf Mirza, as well as Sister Isabel Smyth who had served on the Committee since 1997. Ann Noonan, Gul Muhammad and Pramila Kaur were elected in their place. Ven Tawalama Bandula (replacing Ven Pandit Wilamajothi); Rev Daniel Otieno-Ndale (filling the vacancy left last year by Rev Simon Reynolds); and Rev Guy Wilkinson (replacing Ven Michael Ipgrave, who resigned as a Committee member following his appointment as Archdeacon of Southwark) were all co-opted to the Committee in the course of 2004-05. They were elected at the AGM to serve on the Committee for the coming year, along with Dina Gold who filled the place left vacant by Rosalind Preston.

Seven organisations were accepted into membership of the Network: Minorities of Europe Inter Faith Action Programme; Altrincham Inter Faith Group; Coventry Multi Faith Forum; Hounslow Friends of Faith; Newham Faith Sector Forum; Telford and Wrekin Interfaith Group; and Warrington Council of Faiths. This brings the total number of Network member bodies at the present time to 112.

Network thanks Rosalind Preston

Rosalind Preston stepped down at the AGM not only as a Vice-Chair, in which post she has been succeeded by Neville Nagler, but also from membership of the Executive Committee, on which she had served from 1993. During this time she served once as a Co-Chair and twice as a Vice-Chair. A presentation was made by Bishop Tom Butler and Jagjiwan Singh to Mrs Preston on behalf of all the members of the Network to mark her very significant contribution to the life of the Network over these years.

The Inter Faith Network

The Inter Faith Network was founded in 1987. It works with its member bodies to promote good relations between the faith communities in the UK, to combat inter religious prejudice and intolerance and to help make the UK a country marked by mutual understanding and respect between religions where all can practise their faith with integrity. The Network:

- provides information on faith and inter faith issues;
- advises on multi faith projects and inter faith issues;
- publishes materials to aid work in the religious and inter faith sectors;
- fosters inter faith co-operation on social issues;
- holds regular meetings where social and religious questions of concern to the different faith communities can be examined together;
- links 112 member organisations including: representative bodies from the different faith communities; inter faith organisations; local inter faith groups; and educational and academic bodies

Inter Faith Update

Inter Faith Update is the newsletter of the Inter Faith Network for the UK. It keeps a wide range of organisations and individuals interested in developing good inter faith relations in the UK in touch with UK events and projects with a significant inter faith component.

Please send any items and diary dates for consideration for inclusion in the next issue by **30 September** to: The Newsletter Editor, Inter Faith Network, 8A Lower Grosvenor Place, London SW1W 0EN or email to harriet.crabtree@interfaith.org marking your email 'newsletter'.

NATIONAL UPDATE

The London bombings

(continued from page 1)

At a meeting on 15 July at the Regent's Park Islamic Cultural Centre, London, over forty leading imams, muftis and ulama (Islamic scholars) representing a wide range of strands within the Muslim community in Britain made a public statement on the events of 7 July and responded to questions from the media. Their statement, read out by Maulana Shahid Raza of the World Islamic Mission, noted that "There can never be any excuse for taking an innocent life. The Qur'an clearly declares that killing an innocent person is tantamount to killing all mankind and likewise saving a single life is as if one had saved the life of all mankind....this is both a principle and a command. We are firmly of the view that these killings had absolutely no sanction in Islam, nor is there any justification whatsoever in our noble religion for such evil actions. It is our understanding that those who carried out the bombings in London should in no sense be regarded as martyrs". The full text and list of signatories can be found at www.mcb.org.uk/Signed_Ulama_statement.pdf Further responses from faith communities can be found below on pages 7–8.

Government consultations

(continued from page 1)

engaging with women; imam training and accreditation and the role of mosques as a resource for the whole community; providing a full range of education services, in the UK, that meet the needs of the Muslim community; security – Islamophobia, protecting Muslims from extremism, and community confidence in policing. These working groups will be supported by the Home Office and will draw up proposals for discussion at a follow up meeting in September.

In the coming weeks, Home Office Ministers Hazel Blears and Paul Goggins are holding a number of meetings across the country to meet members of the Muslim community in different areas. The police, local authorities, members of other faith communities and local MPs will also be involved in this programme of meetings and the outcome of them will be fed into the working groups being set up following the Home Secretary's meeting on 20 July.

The aftermath – community relations

The Metropolitan Police held a joint communication and consultation event, Communities Together, on 11 July to engage and reassure communities about police response. It was attended by 300 community and faith representatives from all over the capital. Following the shooting of an innocent man in error at London's Stockwell tube station, further efforts have been made to reassure those who are anxious about the implications of the 'shoot to kill to protect' policy which is currently in operation as a last resort for responding to suspected suicide bombers.

Following the bombings there have been reports of a number of attacks on places of worship and on individuals. The Metropolitan police have recorded a sharp rise in hate crimes following the London attacks, including attacks on mosques, physical attacks on individuals and verbal abuse. Metropolitan Police figures released on 2 August show that there were 269 religious hate crimes in the three weeks after 7 July compared with 40 in the same period of 2004. Metropolitan Police Assistant Commissioner Tarique Ghaffur said "There is no doubt that incidents impacting on the Muslim community have increased."

Immediately after the bombings the Commission for Racial Equality, through its Safe Communities Initiative, set up an 'observatory' to monitor any possible community tensions that might arise as a result of them. This is still operating and community conflict incidents, including attacks on places of worship, can be reported to the observatory. Contact Alexander Goldberg on 020 7939 0178 or agoldberg@cre.gov.uk.

On 8 July, the Inter Faith Network for the UK issued a document, *Looking After One Another: The Safety and Security of Our Faith Communities*. This gives practical guidelines for faith communities to respond jointly to such problems as attacks on their places of worship and encourages building strong and effective inter faith links at local level. The document was sent to all Network member bodies and went early the following week, with a covering press release, to local authority officers with responsibility for faith and inter faith issues; Race Equality Councils; and key faith

community contacts, it has been circulated more widely by these contacts. The text of the document and of the accompanying press release can be downloaded from www.interfaith.org.uk

The document had been under development since last year in consultation with the Commission for Racial Equality, the Association of Chief Police Officers and the Chief Fire Officers' Association, as well as Network member bodies. The Crown Prosecution Service advised separately on aspects of the text. The document was finalised rapidly given the possible repercussions for community relations of the terrorist attacks in London last Thursday.

The preparation of guidelines of this kind was suggested at a meeting of representatives of faith communities and other organisations convened some time ago by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams.

To download *Looking After One Another: The Safety and Security of Our Faith Communities* go to www.interfaith.org.uk

The Local Government Association issued 'Alerts' for local authorities on 13 July and 20 July, and a letter was sent by its Chairman, Sir Sandy Bruce-Lockhart on 25 July. All drew attention to community cohesion resources which can be of use in the current context. A press release issued on 13 July also highlighted some immediate actions local authorities may wish to take.

Vigils, prayers and observances

Around the UK, vigils, special prayers and observances have been taking place since the bombings and more are planned. Some examples of these follow.

On 8 July, during the *jumu'ah* prayers, Muslims throughout the UK offered prayers for the victims and families of the bombings.

Also on 8 July leaders of various faith groups, trade union members, school children and representatives of community organisations formed a group of over 200 people who held a silent vigil outside Aldgate station in sympathy for the victims of the explosions across London. Setting out after Friday prayers at the East London Mosque in Whitechapel, the group

walked to the edge of the cordoned off area in Aldgate. Speaking on behalf of the group, the Bishop of Stepney, Rt Rev Stephen Oliver, said: "We are here as an act of solidarity, remembering those who have died, the injured, and the grieving."

On 10 July a service for those affected by the terrorist attacks was held at the London Buddhist Vihara in Chiswick.

On 14 July, one week after the bombings, a two minute silence was observed at noon through the UK as well as in many other places around Europe. Train stations and airports fell quiet, buses and cabs pulled into the kerb, and busy streets became still, as people stopped what they were doing to observe the silence. Short observances were held at this time by people in many different parts of the country. In Wolverhampton, for example, a fifteen minute event with contributions from all the faith communities, organised by Wolverhampton Inter Faith Group, preceded the silence.

In London, thousands gathered later that day in Trafalgar Square to remember those who died, to thank the heroes of the transport and emergency services who saved so many lives on 7 July and to hear speakers including the Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone. Ben Okri opened the vigil with a poem for London and Lord Coe, Chairman of the London 2012 bid, Tessa Jowell, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, Brendan Barber from the Trades Union Congress and faith leaders from the Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh communities were amongst others who read poems, prayers and shared their thoughts.

Other events, linked to the midday silence, took place across the UK on 14 July. In Luton, for example, where unused bombs had been found in an abandoned car after the 7 July bombings, hundreds of shoppers and office workers gathered outside the Town Hall for the two minutes silence and also to hear words from civic leaders, including Luton's Mayor Haji Abid, and faith leaders.

On 17 July, during a young people's Jewish-Muslim football day, children and their parents and members of the organisers, Maimonides Foundation and Arsenal FC, remembered the victims of the 7 July terrorist acts in London by observing a one minute silence. The adults signed a letter of condolence to be sent to Ken Livingstone, Mayor of London, for inclusion in the London's Book of Condolence.

On 19 July a Hindu memorial service took place at Victoria Embankment Gardens in London. It was organised by the Hindu Forum with the Metropolitan Police Hindu Association. According to Hindu tradition, the period of mourning after such tragedies is 12 days and a special prayer is usually held on the last day. The service was attended by faith leaders from Jewish, Muslim Council of Britain, Hindu, Sikh and Christian organisations, Sir Ian Blair, Commissioner of Metropolitan Police; Lord Mayor of Westminster, Cllr Tim Joiner; and Home Office Ministers, Hazel Blears and Tony McNulty.

On 21 July, a memorial service was held at the British Medical Association where doctors at the Tavistock Square building had worked with ambulance crews to help the injured after a bomb exploded on the number 30 bus outside. The Bishop of Edmonton, Rt Rev Peter Wheatley, led the multi faith service and leaders of other faiths were also present. Lesley Garrett sang at the memorial in the courtyard which was attended by many members of the emergency services. Security workers who helped after the attacks were also present. Messages of support from doctors around the world were read.

On 21 July the Three Faiths Forum, Central London Mosque and Islamic Centre and the St John's Wood Liberal Jewish Synagogue held a multi faith service of remembrance and hope at the synagogue. The service was led by Rabbi Alexandra Wright, Senior Rabbi at the Liberal Jewish Synagogue, the Revd Dr Anders Bergquist, Vicar of St John's Wood Church, and Sheikh Salah al-Ansari of the Central London Mosque.

A number of other services and commemorations are planned, including an Inter Faith Commemoration Ceremony at the Al Khoei Islamic Centre, London on 6 August and a Jain Prayer for Peace in Harrow on 7 August.

Acts and messages of solidarity

There have also been many acts and messages of solidarity in the weeks following the bombings. Three local examples are:

On 14 July people of all faiths gathered at Gulshane Mosque in Bedford to remember in silence the victims of the London bomb blasts. The members of All Saints Parish Church presented to the mosque a book of condolence and solidarity, inscribed thus: "We, the people of Queen's Park in Bedford, are united in prayer for the victims of the London bombings, in sympathy for those who suffer and grieve, in anger that innocent people have been killed in God's name, in friendship as neighbours of different faiths, in hope that peace and goodwill will continue in Queen's Park and beyond". The book is being passed between the two mosques, the two churches and the gurdwara in Queen's Park for people to express their sympathy for the bomb victims and their solidarity as neighbours of different faiths.

On 16 July, the Cambridge Inter Faith Group led a multi faith visit of solidarity to the Cambridge Mosque.

In Oldham, 'Standing Together', an event organised by the Council and Oldham Inter Faith Forum, brought the communities there together in Alexandra Park on 22 July to remember the victims of the London bombings to show support for the emergency services, and to commit themselves to work together, across the communities of Oldham, to build respect and understanding and overcome the divisions and hatred which lead to such atrocities. Speakers included representatives of the Christian, Hindu, Jewish, and Muslim faiths and the Leader of the Council, Cllr David Jones.

Altrincham Unitarians sent a message of support to the Altrincham Islamic Cultural Centre: "In the wake of the recent London bombings and certain hostile responses towards Muslims and their property, we send you our support and good wishes – and our pledge to work for a community free from fear, prejudice and violence."

Other events linked to the bombings

On 12 July St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace held a commemoration for those who died in the bombings. Contributions in personal statements, reflections, poetry and music made up a reflective inter faith occasion where participants also discussed how people of faith can respond to terror in London.

On 19 July, the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Service, Sir Ian Blair, addressed the Advisory Board of the Three Faiths Forum. The Commissioner spoke about the need for dialogue between different faith communities at this critical time and the role of the Muslim community in helping tackle terrorism. He said that it is essential to identify the preachers of hate: such people can no longer be ignored in view of their clear influence on the young. He also stressed that it is essential for the Metropolitan Police Service to become far more representative of minority communities, particularly the Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and Jewish communities.

On 23 July, a conference, entitled 'A Call for Unity and Understanding', involving Muslims and those of other communities as well as local MPs, took place at the Hanfia Institute in Bentley Street, Lockwood, Huddersfield. Participants examined how to move forward from the attacks in London on 7 July.

On 24 July, community leaders and local people from Stockwell, South London, met to reflect on recent disturbing events in the area, including the shooting of Jean Charles de Menezes. Speakers from the local churches, Stockwell Green Mosque, the Latin American community and the police spoke of their sorrow at his death. The room was packed as speakers from the many ethnic and religious groups in Stockwell appealed to the community to hold together during this difficult time and not to allow this tragic event to divide them.

Within a few days it became known that the four bombers who committed the 7 July murders were British born and from Leeds and Dewsbury and there has been particular concern for community relations there since this discovery. Faith leaders, police and others in these areas have worked hard to help hold communities together.

On 14 July an Act of Remembrance was held in Millennium Square in Leeds. Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh leaders spoke alongside the Leader of the Council, Cllr Mark Harris. Afterwards some fifty faith leaders met with civic leaders. Those of other faiths asked to be present at Friday prayers in the city's mosques and were warmly welcomed there. On Friday, many attended the prayers and some civic and faith leaders were asked to speak alongside the imams. On 21 July, Cllr Harris again asked faith and black and minority ethnic community leaders to meet with him and together they began to look at ways of bringing faith communities closer together for the good of all and of helping young people to understand the faiths of those who are not part of their own religious community.

In response to the police raids in Beeston and Holbeck on 12 July, and the Government's call for a two minute silence to be observed on 14 July to remember the victims of the London bombings, Muslim, Sikh and Christian community leaders invited members of all the communities in Beeston and Beeston Hill to come together at the Hamara Centre as a visible sign of their shared resolution to oppose the use of terrorism and of their refusal to be divided by it and as a symbol of strength in light of recent difficulties the community has faced.

There was also a march organised by the 'Together in Leeds 11' organisation. The Leeds Evening Post reported "Several hundred friends of the Beeston community in Leeds filled the streets for a three-mile peace march into the city centre on Saturday. A colourful display of unity was created by demonstrators as they set off from the Hamara Healthy Living Centre on Tempest Road, Beeston, Leeds, on their way to Millennium Square in the city centre..... They had one collective purpose: to show a sense of harmony following the disturbing revelation that two of the suicide bombers responsible for the merciless attacks on London that claimed more than 50 lives a fortnight ago once lived among them..."

Faiths unite to condemn the actions of the bombers and call for continued good community relations

Statements on the bombings came from many faith linked organisations in the UK and beyond. Here are excerpts from just a few of these:

“...The Lancashire Council of Mosques and Churches Together in Lancashire...utterly condemn without reservation this act of terror. We hope that the Prime Minister will take steps to ensure that those responsible are swiftly brought to justice. We also hope that the Prime Minister will take steps to avoid any unwarranted backlash against vulnerable sections of the community.”
LCM/CTL, 7 July

“...Together, as citizens of the global village, we need to redouble our efforts in the struggle for peace, dialogue and understanding, to prevent such carnage occurring again.”
International Association for Religious Freedom, 7 July

“Sussex Muslims utterly condemn the cowardly attacks and explosions on the London Transport system...May Allah bring comfort to those who have suffered. *Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un* (We belong to Allah and we will return to Him). This is a very serious attack on our country's soil which every British citizen has a duty to protect.”
Council of Imams and Muslim Leaders (London and Southern Counties), 7 July

“Britain is a good example of a multicultural society where all faiths have been living together peacefully. It is now more important than ever to ensure that we do not succumb to terrorism by allowing ourselves to become divided.” Hindu Forum of Britain, 7 July

“We are united in our shared concern for the people of London following the terrorist bombings on 7 July....Our faith communities are supporting them in prayer. Members of the faith communities of Kirklees..are united to a common commitment to peace and rejection of the ways of violence...” Faith leaders and Mayor of Kirklees, 8 July

“...Clearly this was not a religious act, whatever those who were responsible thought. It is condemned by true Muslims, here in Birmingham as elsewhere, as an insult and injury to their faith. We stand united with them and refuse to let men of evil infect us with the disease of their hatred.”
Birmingham Council of Faiths, 8 July

“People of faith must support each other in such difficult times. Many people blame religion for spawning such atrocities, but it is not true religion that causes such evil, but the misuse...for twisted and perverted purposes.” World Congress of Faiths, 8 July

“..The scriptures and teachings of all our faiths – Baha’i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh – denounce the use of all indiscriminate violence. To justify such actions in the name of any religion is totally contrary to our values and practice...” Religious Leaders of Scotland, 8 July

“Whilst we abhor any action which causes the destruction of life, we also call for compassion and understanding to be extended to the perpetrators of these acts. Their minds are filled with hatred and non-understanding. We should try to help them to realise that violence is not the answer to their grievances and that all mankind

must strive to develop better tolerance and understanding, and mutual respect for the one life we share.” Sri Lankan Sangha Sabha UK (Buddhist), 8 July

“...As we unite to resist terrorism, we must also address forms of injustice that afflict so many in the world and are misused by some to justify and foment terror...” Dr William Vendley, International Secretary General, Religions for Peace, 8 July

“As religious leaders from several different faiths we came together this morning to pay tribute to the courage, commitment and sacrifice by which the evil of Nazism was resisted and ultimately overcome sixty years ago. We stand together now for a further purpose: to express our shared commitment to resisting and overcoming the evil of terrorism, which the events of recent days here in London have brought home to us afresh and with such devastating clarity. It is an evil that cannot be justified and that we utterly condemn and reject.....We want to signal the common ground on which we stand as faith leaders, and to reaffirm the values we uphold at this time of sorrow and pain. It is vital, when many will be feeling anger, bewilderment and loss, to strengthen those things we hold in common and to resist all that seeks to drive us apart. Central to what we share as people of faith is a belief in God's compassionate love for us. It is a love that compels us to cherish, not to disfigure, our common humanity. We commend and embrace the continuing efforts to build a Britain in which different communities-including faith communities-can flourish side by side on the basis of mutual

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respect and understanding.....” Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O’Connor, the Free Churches Moderator, Dr David Coffey, the Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth, Sir Jonathan Sacks, and the Chair of the Imams and Mosques Council, Sheikh Dr Zaki Badawi, 10 July

“... We are glad that there are warm and cordial relations between people of different faiths in our region, and we, as Muslim and Christian leaders, refuse to be diverted by acts of terrorism from continuing to work together to acknowledge our diversity, to affirm our common humanity, and to seek ways to share life together... We encourage all people of faith and goodwill in our region to continue to work together unceasingly in pursuit of values which build up our common life.” Regional leaders of the Christian and Muslim communities in Surrey and North East Hampshire, 11 July

“We, members of the Hounslow Friends of Faith, people from different faith communities in the [London] Borough of Hounslow, have met to respond to the terrorist attack in several parts of London... Our hearts go out to the innocent victims, ordinary people travelling by public transport, young and old, of different religious and ethnic backgrounds or visitors to London. We express our deep sorrow and convey our condolences to the bereaved families. We pray for the speedy recovery of those injured.” Hounslow Friends of Faith, 12 July

“... There can be no justification for deaths and injuries to civilians – whether those deaths are in London or Baghdad, Kabul or New York, Falluja or Madrid... It is important that we stand together and do not let people use terrorism to divide our communities and foster suspicion at the normal daily activities of some within the minority communities in this country.....” Faith leaders of Waltham Forest, 12 July

“We... condemn in no uncertain terms the terrorist actions of last Thursday which by no means can be justified. We express deepest condolences to all those who have been affected by this tragedy – Muslims, Jews, Christians, Hindus and Sikhs – all of whom have been targeted. We would also like to reiterate Londoners’ heartfelt gratitude for the amazing and courageous work carried out by our emergency services, a sentiment that can never be overstated..... It is our firm belief that Islam is a religion of peace and justice and that attacks such as those carried out on Thursday have no place in Islam or amongst Muslims..... As the leaders of tomorrow we find hope in the resilience and unity exemplified by Londoners. We will not be defeated in our quest to maintain London as a beacon of freedom, diversity and tolerance. We shall continue in our efforts to eradicate terrorism, racism and war – through education and understanding; for only through these methods can we truly claim to have mutual understanding and respect for one another.” National Union of Students; Federation of Student Islamic Societies; British Organisation of Sikh Students National Hindu Students Forum; and the Union of Jewish Students, 13 July

“.... We praise the prompt actions of the national police in searching for the truth, and, at a local level, the high level of consultation that we have received from local police leaders. We pledge our full support to them in ensuring community harmony in these coming days when all need to remain calm and focused in maintaining Leicester’s reputation for good relations. As after 9/11, we affirm our declaration that faith leaders will consider any attack or act of vandalism against any religious building or individual connected with that community, as an attack on all of us.” Leicester Council of Faiths, 13 July

“The perpetrators of this outrage had one purpose and that was to divide us [but] our strength is in unity.... In Luton, as a representative of the Council of Faiths, I am proud to be a Lutonian because over the past seven days I have received a tremendous amount of friendship and support from colleagues and that is our strength.” Zafar Khan, Chair, Luton Council of Faiths, 14 July.

“We are united in deploring the use of murderous violence to achieve political or religious ends. We are most strongly distressed when perpetrators of violence claim they are serving God in this way. Such actions are no part of an honest observance of any of our faiths...” Merseyside Council of Faiths, 13 July.

“... As we pray for peace and justice and remember the sorrow of the recently bereaved, we wish it to be known that any harm to, or provocation of, one faith community will be received as though it was intended for us all.” Lancashire Forum of Faiths, 18 July.

Reflection by the Network's Officers

In place of the usual Inter Faith Profile interview, this issue includes the following short reflection offered by Co-Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Inter Faith Network after their meeting together in July:

We continue to remember the pain and grief of those whose loved ones have died or been injured in the criminal terrorist attacks which have taken place in London. Our prayers are with them.

All our faith communities have condemned unequivocally the attacks and have stood together in solidarity with one another in recent days. Vigils, services of remembrance, and acts of witness in towns and cities across the UK have borne witness to a powerful desire to remember the dead and injured and to oppose the violence used by the terrorists.

Bonds of respect and trust between people in Britain's different communities have been formed patiently and steadily over recent decades. These close relationships have become part of the fabric of our society at national, local and neighbourhood level. We can now see how strongly this fabric has been woven. It is resisting the attempts of those who wish to tear our society apart.

The Muslim community has condemned the terrorists for their criminal acts and for the twisted interpretation of Islam which they have used to support these. We welcome the widespread public recognition that this evil ideology is far removed from the character of the faith held by the vast majority of Muslims in this country. We express our solidarity with Muslim organisations and individuals as they work to tackle the challenges which face them.

From time to time, in the course of history, faith traditions have been betrayed and perverted by some who claim – wrongly – to be their genuine followers. Hatred and violence have often been the bitter harvest.

The fruits of true faith are the pursuit of justice, wisdom and peace and acts of care and compassion. When we celebrated the new Millennium some five years ago, representatives of the UK's different faith communities came together to express their commitment to work together with one another, based on these values we hold in common. Now, more than ever, we need to redouble our efforts to build, together, a society where there is mutual respect, cooperation for the common good and commitment to a shared and positive future.

Rt Revd Tom Butler and Jagjiwan Singh (Co-Chairs) and Dr Manazir Ahsan MBE, Hon Barnabas Leith, Neville Nagler and Dr Narayan Rao (Vice-Chairs)

The death of Pope John Paul II

On 2 April Pope John Paul II, born Karol Józef Wojtyła in 1920, died. He had been Pope for nearly 27 years. Nearly 4 million people came into Rome in the days between his death and funeral mass.

Pope John Paul II's death was marked across the world. Over 2000 people attended the Vespers of the Dead at Westminster Cathedral to give thanks for his life. The Vespers were led by Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, gave a scripture reading and the Prayers of Intercession were read by leaders of other Christian denominations. Representatives of the UK's other major faiths were also present at the Vespers.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said of the late

Pope "Quite apart from his role as a spiritual guide to more than a billion men, women and children, he was a tireless advocate of peace, a true pioneer in inter faith dialogue....." Tributes were offered to him not just by fellow Catholics and other Christians, but by people of many faiths.

During his papacy, John Paul II had made strenuous efforts to improve relations with people of other faiths. He visited the Rome synagogue in 1986 and made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 2000 which helped deepen relations between the Catholic Church and Jews, as did the fact that during his papacy the Catholic church issued the document, "We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah," which criticised historic Christian anti-Semitism and challenged Holocaust denial. He also made attempts to deepen links with Muslims, for example, through his visit to Egypt where he initiated dialogue between the

Vatican and Al-Azhar. A number of Azhar-Vatican meetings subsequently took place. In 2001, in Damascus, Syria, he became the first pontiff to visit a mosque. In 1986, for the World Day of Prayer for Peace, he brought leaders of all the main world faiths together for prayer and conversation. A number of religious leaders, such as the Dalai Lama, developed close links with the Pope, visiting him on many occasions.

“There are some who claim that religion is part of the problem, blocking humanity’s way to true peace and prosperity. ...[But] religion and peace go together; to wage war in the name of religion is a blatant contradiction. The task before us, therefore, is to promote a culture of dialogue. I have always believed that religious leaders have a vital role to play in nurturing that hope of justice and peace without which there will be no future worthy of humanity.” *John Paul II, Closing Ceremony of Interreligious Assembly, Rome November 1999*

Pope Benedict XVI

On 19 April, Cardinal Ratzinger was elected as the new Pope and, as Pope Benedict XVI, was enthroned on 7 May. The name ‘Benedict’ comes from the Latin for ‘blessed’. Cardinal Cormac Murphy O’Connor noted that, in choosing the name of Benedict, the new Pope had had in mind Benedict XV, a dedicated reconciler and peacemaker, and had told the cardinals that he intended his name to signify peace and reconciliation. Many world and religious leaders were present in Rome for the occasion of Pope Benedict XVI’s enthronement and he met shortly thereafter those leaders who had attended. Included in his first message as Pope Benedict XVI was a call for dialogue with other religions.

Tsunami victims remembered

On 11 May a national service of remembrance was held at St Paul’s for victims of last December’s Asian tsunami. The Queen, the Duke of Edinburgh, the Prime Minister and Cabinet colleagues and leaders of the opposition parties joined 1,800 mourners in the Cathedral to remember those who perished in the Boxing Day

disaster. Among the congregation were members of 126 bereaved families, 73 survivors and aid workers, as well as representatives from the 12 affected countries. The sermon was given by Dr Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Remembering those who served in World War II

Between 4 and 10 of July the nation celebrated sixty years of the end of World War 2, with the main events taking place in London. Thousands turned out on National Commemoration Day to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the End of Second World War in London on 10 July.

G8 summit

The G8 summit was held from 6 to 8 July at the Gleneagles Hotel in Perthshire in Scotland. It was hosted by British Prime Minister Tony Blair as the UK has held the presidency of the G8 since January this year. Poverty in Africa was one of the key issues discussed at the summit.

The G8 summit has been pivotal in the campaign of Make Poverty History, a British and Irish coalition of charities, religious groups, trade unions, campaigning groups and celebrities, which has been working to increase awareness of poverty and to pressure governments to alleviate this. In the run up to the G8, the Make Poverty History campaign, and other movements campaigning for trade justice and third world debt relief and increased and appropriate international aid, held numerous events to highlight these themes. A series of concerts called Live 8 took place before the G8 summit to encourage activism and debate within the G8’s member countries, with the aim of increasing political pressure on the leaders and around 225,000 people came to Edinburgh on 2 July to demonstrate and make their demands to the G8.

London wins Olympic bid

On 6 July, International Olympic Committee President Jacques Rogge announced that the Games of the 30th Olympiad in 2012 had been awarded to London. A key aspect of the bid had

been the argument that London is a diverse world in miniature – many faiths, races, and cultures in one city. Faith groups in London had been actively involved in supporting the bid, with support from the London Civic Forum which had arranged a number of events to help brief and involve them.

Update on new legislation

The last issue of *Inter Faith Update* reported on the position which had been reached on the Government's legislation on religious discrimination and on incitement to religious hatred.

Prior to the dissolution of Parliament in April the Equality Bill received an unopposed Second Reading in the House of Commons. Following the General Election it was reintroduced (in slightly amended form) in the House of Lords and received a Second Reading there on 15 June. Since then, the Committee stage in the Lords has been completed and the Report and Third Reading stages will follow after the summer recess.

The Equality Bill has three parts: Part I covers the setting up of the proposed new Commission for Equality and Human Rights; Part II covers discrimination on grounds of religion and belief in the provision of goods, services and premises; and Part III places a new duty on public authorities to promote equality of opportunity in terms of gender. The changes from the Bill introduced into Parliament in the previous session are mostly minor and technical, but the exemptions in Part II on the application of the discrimination provisions to religion or belief organisations were widened.

The attempt by the Government in the last Parliamentary session, using the vehicle of the Serious Organised Crime and Police Bill, to create a new offence of incitement to religious hatred failed, as had its earlier attempt to introduce this legislation through the Anti-Terrorism Bill debated in Parliament in the autumn of 2001. On that occasion the relevant provisions were dropped in order to secure the Bill's enactment following opposition in the House of Lords. The Government dropped the provisions from the Serious Organised Crime and

Police Bill in order to secure the passage of that legislation, after the General Election had been announced, before Parliament was dissolved. Following the election, legislation dealing only with this incitement issue was introduced into the House of Commons on 9 June and the Racial and Religious Hatred Bill has since then passed through all its stages there. The Bill was introduced into the House of Lords on 12 July and will be considered by it after the recess. The Bill's provisions reproduce those included in the Government's previous attempts to legislate on this issue.

The Government has also reintroduced its Charities Bill in the House of Lords where it has reached the Report and Third Reading stage which will follow after the recess. As before, it includes important provisions about the position of new and existing charities, including religious organisations. The Bill sets out the activities which would qualify an organisation to be given charitable status. The categories of these are not being changed significantly by it and include the advancement of religion and the promotion of religious or racial harmony. The Bill also requires that the purpose for which a body is established is carried out for the "public benefit". In this regard, its provisions change the present position substantially, since it abolishes the previous presumption that religious bodies (and certain other categories or organisations) are operating for the public benefit and instead places an onus on all charitable organisations to demonstrate that this is so. The Bill requires the Charities Commission, in due course, to produce guidance on how they propose to assess "public benefit". Before this guidance is finalised, there will be a consultative process to which faith communities, along with others, will be able to contribute.

Data on religious identity in the 2011 census and of school pupils

The Office for National Statistics has been carrying out a consultation on arrangements for the 2011 Census. The consultation, which closes on 5 August, is linked to the publication of a number of documents by the ONS, which can be

found on its website at www.statistics.gov.uk/about/consultations/2011Census.asp. The consultation material makes it clear that the present intention is to collect data in the 2011 Census on religious identity, as was done in the 2001 Census. Therefore discussion is likely to focus on this occasion on the form which the relevant question should take and on the categories of religious identity which should appear on the Census form, rather than on the issue of principle itself.

The Department for Education and Skills is conducting a consultation on its guidance for local authorities on their collection of "Inclusion, Equality and Diversity Data". At present, schools in England do not report data on pupils' faith to the DfES, although many schools collect this data for practical and pastoral reasons. The Department is now considering collecting this data, along with data on disability, first language and traveller status. The DfES believes that it will be a helpful addition to the data already collected on the ethnic background of school pupils.

No final decision has been made on whether faith data will be collected and DfES Ministers will be considering, among other factors, the additional burden on schools which this additional data collection will involve. Information about this consultation, which closes on 9 August, can be found at www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations.

The Network office drew the attention of all its member bodies in June to both the ONS and DfES consultations.

Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme extended

In the 2005 budget, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme would be extended until 2008. The scheme, set up in 2001, returns to faith groups the equivalent of the VAT paid on eligible repairs and maintenance to their listed buildings. The scheme is open to applications from any formally constituted faith group, and successful applications have been made by most of the major faiths in the UK.

Around £28 million has been paid out since the scheme began. The scope of the scheme is

restricted to repairs or maintenance to the fabric of a listed building, and alterations to buildings, and works to fixtures and fittings, including plumbing and wiring, are ineligible. The scheme covers works to a building that is used solely or primarily for worship, and in which at least six religious meetings are held each year. It does not cover work to ancillary buildings.

Further information on the scheme is available from www.lpwscheme.org.uk or nptcallcentreuk@liberata.com or 0845 601 5945

Connecting for the future: young people and inter faith relations in Britain.

The Inter Faith Network held its national meeting in Coventry on 27 June on the theme "Connecting for the Future: Young People and Inter Faith Relations in Britain."

As the UK becomes increasingly religiously diverse, it becomes ever more important for young people to become involved in inter faith projects and initiatives and to build bridges of friendship and understanding. In the last few years, an increasing number of inter faith youth projects have been taking place in many parts of the UK. The meeting was a chance to reflect on the challenges of this vital area of work and to hear from, and talk with, some of the UK's younger contributors to building good inter faith relations.

Gaurav Prinja, Hindu participant in the Golden Jubilee Youth Forum and advisory board member for the *Connect Guide*, offered opening reflections on the vital importance of young people who are active and involved members of the distinct faith communities engaging in work to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation.

Dr Harriet Crabtree, Deputy Director of the Inter Faith Network gave an opening taster of the range of different kinds of youth inter activities happening in the UK and Sue Houlton of the National Youth Agency discussed how faith and inter faith issues fitted into the NYA's work. In a later workshop, Maxine Green talked about the NYA's new resource, *A Sense of Respect: Inter*

Faith Activities for Groups of Young People.

Further information on this can be found on NYA's website: www.nya.org.uk

Jagtar Singh, Sikh member of the Scottish Inter Faith Youth Council, and Dr Maureen Sier of the Scottish Inter Faith Council told the story of the second Scottish inter faith youth conference, which was held in Glasgow in November and attended by over 150 young people from all over Scotland. During a workshop later in the day, SIFC Youth Council colleagues, Haroon and Fariha Ahmed shared their experiences of taking part in the conference.

Rebecca Niknam of the Maimonides Foundation gave an insight into how the Foundation helps develop good relations between young people through football and art, as well as more traditional modes of dialogue.

Sofia Maskin from the Muslim tradition and Rachael Gilbert from the Catholic Christian tradition talked about their involvement in the Intercultural Leadership School in Bradford and Leicester respectively and the impact taking part has had on their lives.

Graham Langtree, RE Adviser at the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, looked at the contribution which RE can make to promoting understanding and respect for different faiths and beliefs. He explained how the first non-statutory National Framework for RE in England, recently published by the QCA, flags up the importance of pupils studying not just different religions but also how people of different faiths and beliefs relate to each other.

In a closing panel, reflections on the way forward were offered by Preet Majithia, President, Cambridge University Hindu Cultural Society, a member of Leicester Youth Inter Faith Group; Rowena Loverance, Commission for Inter Faith Relations of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland and member of the Society of Friends; Rauf Bashir, Building Bridges Project and Nelson Muslim community; and Rosalind Preston OBE, Vice-Chair Inter Faith Network.

Workshop topics included: youth inter faith forums and conferences; inter faith dialogue across the generations; youth organisations and inter faith activity; developing inter faith understanding and cooperation on campus;

educating for inter faith awareness; and Europe, the Commonwealth, the world (the wider picture for youth inter faith work).

- Dr Sarah Smalley and youth contributors including Lisa Elliott, Raihanna Hirji and Rebecca Owen, discussed the experience of involvement in successful SACRE youth faith forums in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough;
- Malcolm Stonestreet, Chief Executive of United Religions Initiative (UK), described its Spiritual Elders and Emerging Visionaries (SEEV) programme which brings older members and young people of faith traditions together to talk, and Musarrat Tariq, Clare North and John Murray talked about the SEEV event run recently by Nottingham Inter Faith Council.
- Maxine Green, consultant to the National Youth Agency and co-author with Carmel Heaney of the recently published NYA book, *Interfaith Action: A Resource Pack for Use with Young People*, discussed this new resource.
- Mark Waghorn, Scout Association Programme and Development Adviser, Faiths, Beliefs and BME communities and Daljit Singh, Sikh representative on the Scout Association Faiths and Beliefs Team and member Minority Support Team and Group Scout Leader, 13th Southall discussed Scouting and inter faith activity.
- Louise Mitchell, Council of Christians and Jews' Youth Officer, talked about CCJ's work on campus and Pritesh Karia, student member of Warwick Inter-Religious Roundtable for Dialogue discussed the Roundtable's role and activities.
- Becky Hatch and Imogen Gregg from the Diversity and Dialogue Project talked about its work to get young people of different faiths to come together and find out about global issues and work together constructively for a better world.
- Rauf Bashir, Project Manager, Building Bridges Pendle, Community Inter Faith Project described the Project's work with local schools. Ramona Kauth, Rev Jo Mason and Yvonne Stollard described the Ladywood Interfaith Education Project, Birmingham

jointly run by volunteers from different faith communities, which brings primary school students to visit the local places of worship.

- Susanna Darch, of the Royal Commonwealth Society talked about the “Youth CHOGM” project, together with Clare Linton and Niamh Quille, youth presenters from the recent Coventry Youth CHOGM.
- Preet Majithia and J R (Adseina) Alli from the multi faith youth team who went with Minorities of Europe to the Council for a Parliament of World Religions in Barcelona last year spoke of their experiences.

A strong team of volunteer facilitators and note takers and very good support from the conference team helped ensure a most successful and worthwhile day. A full report on the meeting will be available in the Autumn from the Network office.

Meeting of national inter faith bodies of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales

A meeting for the national inter faith bodies of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales was held by the Inter Faith Network for the UK at St Mungo’s Museum, 2 Castle Street, Glasgow on 21 June. It was hosted by the Scottish Inter Faith Council and chaired by SIFC’s Convenor, Diana Wolfson. Topics of discussion included: how information can best be shared between the different national bodies and the UK Network so as to learn from each other’s experiences; involving faith communities effectively; how to make bodies ‘representative’ of the faiths; working with Government and other agencies; funding and staffing questions; and work on diversity training and equal opportunities. There were reports on the recent work of all the bodies represented, as well as a chance to hear about how they came into being and the ways they work.

Scotland

The Scottish Inter Faith Council held their annual inter faith event for women on 26 July. This year the event took place in the Scottish Parliament and women from diverse faiths and from the different geographical regions of Scotland came together to enjoy a day of activities including a tour of the Parliament building, workshops on contemplation and presentations from Parliamentary Departments, including a welcome from Shona Baird MSP and former Religious Reporter to Parliament.

The third local inter faith group networking conference took place in Dundee on 15 May. Members of Scottish groups convened to discuss how to sustain and develop their activities.

An East Renfrewshire Faith Forum has recently been formed, with participation from eight faiths and from East Renfrewshire local authorities. Members travelled together on 10 April to attend the annual Vaisakhi celebrations in Glasgow, to join in holy day celebrations of two of the Forum’s members. A new inter faith group has also recently been formed in Fife. Further information about the new bodies from sifc@interfaithscotland.org Tel 0141 429 4012.

Wales

Schools from across Wrexham County Borough came together from 11–16 July to celebrate the fourth biennial ‘Tapestry of Life and Faith’ festival. Events and workshops helped Wrexham’s school children to explore their own as well as different cultures and traditions. Alan Schwartz of the Inter Faith Council for Wales was the keynote speaker at the festival’s launch and talked about the importance of good inter faith relations.

Alif-Aleph report

A new report from Alif-Aleph UK – A Mapping Report of Positive Contact between British Muslims and British Jews – was launched at Westminster Central Hall on 5 July 2005. Home Office Minister Paul Goggins, Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain, Sir Iqbal Sacranie, and the President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, Henry Grunwald QC spoke at the launch.

The report reveals positive relations between Jews and Muslims in the UK and explodes the commonly held assumption that Muslims and Jews have no contact with each other, know little about each other and fear or even hate each other. It also underlines the common experience of discrimination that both communities face in the form of Islamophobia and anti-semitism. Among the report's findings are that dialogue and inter faith activity can be at its strongest where there is tension between Jews and Muslims or discrimination from others outside of either community and that many Muslims and Jews recognise the benefit of addressing Islamophobia and Anti-semitism together. The report issues recommendations in the area of education, creative activities, 'safe space', the role of leaders and facilitating better relations on campus. For further information about the report, contact Alif-Aleph at 020 7472 6061 or download the report from the 'downloads page' at www.aauk.org

Wyndham Place Charlemagne Trust discusses Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia

The Wyndham Place Charlemagne Trust held a lunchtime discussion, "Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia: Two Sides of the Same Coin?" on 7 April with presenters Imam Dr Abduljalil Sajid and Sidney Shipton of the Three Faiths Forum and discussant Dr Edie Friedman of the Jewish Council for Racial Equality. The meeting took place at St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace, in London, whose Director Simon Keyes was in the chair.

Maimonides

Around 90 participants from the Abrahamic faiths took part in a one-day seminar at the Gustave Tuck Lecture Theatre, University College London on 19 June. The seminar commemorated the 800th anniversary of Maimonides' death and celebrated his legacy to the Jewish and Muslim world. It was arranged by the Maimonides Foundation in association with

the Assembly of Masorti Synagogues and called "Moses Maimonides: Bridging the Divide". Jewish and Muslim scholars (religious and secular) presented papers on Maimonides' contribution to, and influence on, the development of philosophy and theology in both Judaism and Islam. Further information can be found at www.maimonides-foundation.org.

Religions for Peace – from dialogue to action

Religions for Peace (UK) held an inter faith workshop on 5 June on the theme 'Moving from dialogue to action for justice and peace'. The workshop was developed out of inter faith dialogue for peace and reconciliation in West Africa. Further information about the workshop and about Religions for Peace's work is available from hopeis@btinternet.com.

Mystic India

The Royal World Charity Premiere of a new film, Mystic India, was held at the Imax Cinema of The Science Museum, London in the presence of their Royal Highnesses The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall on the evening of 7 June. The event was co-hosted by the Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, and BAPS Care International. The gates of the museum were draped with flowers and the royal party were garlanded and had customary threads of friendship tied to their wrists. The Science Museum was transformed into an exhibition of Indian culture and art with various artefacts, dances, musicians and craftsmen creating an authentic atmosphere. Over 50 young children from different nations across the globe assembled together waving flags from their respective countries and were dressed in their national attire as a symbol of such unity. The guests of many faiths were guided through the presentations and were offered a selection of Indian sweets and snacks after the film to complement their cultural experience.

Europe's local and regional authorities encourage inter faith engagement

The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (CLRAE) met in Strasbourg between 31 May and 2 June. Its 12th Plenary Session considered a Resolution and a Recommendation on 'Intercultural and inter-faith dialogue: initiatives and responsibilities of local authorities'. These were presented for adoption by Cllr Mary Hunt of Waverley District Council. The tabled report contained a separate annex reviewing inter faith activity in the UK and the support given to this by central and local government here.

CLRAE's 2/2005 Bulletin reports: "Local and regional executives are in a key position to work together towards better cohesion of their communities, which are increasingly diverse in religious and cultural terms. ... The [Congress] Rapporteurs list a whole host of possible initiatives, ranging from efforts to combat exclusion through the teaching of tolerance and respect to young people to the setting up of local inter faith councils".

In its Recommendation, the Congress asks all relevant Council of Europe bodies to organise jointly a major conference in 2006 to promote greater public recognition in Europe of the cultural and religious diversity that enriches the continent.

For further information see www.coe.int/t/e/CLRAE/. The website includes the report presented to this spring's conference and the full text of the Resolution and Recommendation adopted at it.

Toc H 'Tea and Cake' project

The charity Toc H is launching a nation-wide 'Tea and Cake' Campaign which will run from 11 September to 11 November. The campaign encourages people to invite members of another religious or minority group for refreshments as a way of building friendship and community. A copy of the leaflet about the campaign, including guidance on holding a 'Tea and Cake' event can be found at www.toch.org.uk/documents/teaandcakeleaflet.doc or Madeleine Fone, tel 01296 642020 email info@toch.org.uk, can provide further information.

BBC Charter Review

The House of Lords Select Committee on the BBC Charter Review is extending its inquiry into the BBC. Among other issues, it is asking for views on Religious Broadcasting, and, in particular, the questions: "Do different faiths (including no faith beliefs) figure sufficiently in BBC programmes and services? How should faiths be represented in BBC programmes, services and governance?"

The deadline for submitting written evidence is 10 October. Submissions should be sent to : Rita Logan, Select Committee on the BBC Review, House of Lords, London SW1A 0PW Tel 020 7219 5765 Fax 020 7219 4931 and preferably also as an email attachment to loganr@parliament.uk

The Committee's first report on the Government's Green Paper "*Review of the BBC's Royal Charter: A strong BBC, independent of Government*" will be published in late October. Alongside new evidence submitted in the context of this extension of the inquiry, any relevant written evidence already submitted to the current inquiry into the Green Paper will be considered and there is no need to resubmit it for this purpose.

British delegation to Bali inter faith dialogue

Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister, Kim Howells and the Indonesian Foreign Minister, Hassan Wirayuda co-chaired an Interfaith Dialogue with the 38 Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM) countries on 21 July in Bali. Dr Howells delivered a keynote speech highlighting the shared responsibility to encourage inter faith dialogue to counter rising extremism. Sir Iqbal Sacranie, Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain, Dilwar Hussain of the Islamic Foundation and Rt Rev David Gillett, the Bishop of Bolton, accompanied Kim Howells. The dialogue concluded with an agreed Bali Declaration on 22 July. This included an expression of sympathy for the victims of the London bombings and stressed the need to stand united against those who misused religion to further their aims. The Bali declaration can be found at www.fco.gov.uk/Files/KFile/BALI%20DECLARATION%20ASEM220705.pdf

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Two leaders of the UK's Jewish and Muslim communities knighted

Dr Jonathan Sacks, the Chief Rabbi, and Iqbal Sacranie, Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain, were knighted in the Queen's Birthday Honours in June. Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks has led the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth since 1991 and Sir Iqbal Sacranie has played a key role in the Muslim community, including helping establish and leading the Muslim Council of Britain. The Chief Rabbi was knighted for his services to the community and to inter faith relations and Sir Iqbal for his services to the community, charity and community relations.

New Archbishop of York appointed

The current Bishop of Birmingham, Rt Rev Dr John Sentamu, has been appointed as the next Archbishop of York, with responsibility for fourteen dioceses from Carlisle to the Midlands.

Dr Sentamu was born and brought up in Uganda. He practised law there and became a high court judge before having to flee to Britain in 1974 following persecution by the Idi Amin regime. He studied for his doctorate in theology at Cambridge University and was ordained in 1979. He went on to become Bishop of Stepney in 1996 and, while there, was an adviser to the Stephen Lawrence judicial inquiry and became chairman of the Damilola Taylor review in 2002. In 2002 he became Bishop of Birmingham. He has been involved in a number of inter faith initiatives.

Guy Wilkinson

Rev Guy Wilkinson has been appointed as the Church of England's National Inter Faith Relations Adviser and Secretary for Inter Faith Relations to the Archbishop of Canterbury. This new post combines the staff responsibilities of the national inter faith work of the Church of England with support for Archbishop's work in this area.

Sternberg Interfaith Award

On 31 May, the presentation of the 26th Annual Sternberg Interfaith Award took place at the National Portrait Gallery in London. The two recipients were George Mallinckrodt KBE (a Patron of the Three Faiths Forum) and Dr Khalid Hameed CBE. The award is given as a mark of recognition and encouragement to an individual who has made a contribution to furthering Christian- Jewish-Muslim relations.

Rabbi Tann's inter faith work recognised

Rabbi Leonard Tann was awarded a Doctor of Letters (DLitt) on 13 July by Aston University in recognition of his inter faith work in Birmingham. For almost 19 years Rabbi Leonard Tann has held the position of Chief Minister at the Singers Hill Synagogue in Birmingham. During this time the Rabbi has been involved with many church groups and faith leaders within the City to pursue his passion for inter faith work.

Inter Faith Relations: The UK and Europe

ISBN 1 902906 14 4

Looking at the impact of the UK's membership of the European Union on faith communities and the inter faith agenda here. Report of the 2004 National Meeting. Available from the Inter Faith Network office at £3.00 plus £1 postage and packaging.

REGIONAL AND LOCAL UPDATE

East of England

On 21 July the East of England Faiths Council (EEFC) held a launch, at the Cheneygates Room in Westminster Abbey, of a report 'Faith in the East of England'. The report is a study of faith based activity in the region. The day was chaired by Rev Erial Kirby, faiths representative on the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA). Speakers and panellists included Lord Ahmed of Rotherham; Rt Rev Christopher Herbert, Bishop of St Albans; Rt Rev Dr John Inge, Bishop of Huntingdon; Lord Janner of Braunstone; Zafar Khan, EEFC Co-Chair; Andrew Lansley, MP for South Cambridgeshire; Dr Roland Lovatt, University of Cambridge; David Rayner of the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit of the ODPM and Secretary to the Inner Cities Religious Council; Ellis Weinberger, EEFC Co-Chair; and Chris White, Deputy Chair of EERA.

The study was funded by the East of England Development Agency and the research was undertaken by the East of England Faiths Council and the University of Cambridge. It estimates that there are over 630,000 active members of worshipping communities in the region, which has a population of 5,388,000. The report reveals that faith communities in that one region alone are contributing over £30 million in volunteer time every year. An enormous range of activities supported by worshipping communities are taking place every day, from the 'traditional' such as visiting the sick (80% of faith groups do this) and running lunch clubs (36%) to the more innovative such as IT training (7%) and environmental groups (11%). Reaching beyond the worshipping community is important. For example, the report found that 20% of respondents work with homeless people, 32% undertake food distribution, and there is also assistance provided to those abusing alcohol (16%) and drugs (11%). 26% of faith groups are involved in community liaison of various types: for example, 18% have anti-racist projects; 12% have crime prevention projects, and 14% are part of emergency planning programmes. The report draws attention to the way that all faiths can speak with one voice on the value of human life, and that almost every section of society benefits from the presence and work of faith groups.

For further information about the report, contact Jenny Kartupelis at een@cambcatalyst.co.uk or 01223 421606

Bedford

Bedford Council of Faiths' annual pilgrimage took place on 13 April. It visited the Jame Mosque, the Roman Catholic church of St Francesca Cabrini, and Sri Guru Ravidass Bhawan.

Bury St Edmunds

On four evenings in April and May, St Edmundsbury Cathedral hosted a series of Christian/Muslim dialogues organised by Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource and the Lay Education Adviser for the Anglican Diocese, in conjunction with Churches Together in Bury St Edmunds. These looked at: Globalisation and Consumerism; Governance and Democratic Society; Human Rights; and Justice and the Rule of Law. Discussions on these themes are being held in 80 venues around the world and the results are to form the basis of a report to the Archbishop of Canterbury's Observer at the United Nations on whether there is evidence for a so-called "clash of civilizations" between Islam and the West.

Over 100 people from different Christian and Muslim backgrounds and from other faiths, took part in the seminars in Bury St Edmunds. Each evening consisted of introductory talks by a representative of each of the two faiths, followed by a discussion with an invited panel and then with the audience. It was emphasised by all the speakers that both Christians and Muslims are taught the importance of living in peace and harmony with their neighbours, whatever their faith. A report of the discussions can be found on www.sifre.org.uk and copies can be obtained by emailing mcdm@sifre.org.uk. Follow up meetings are now being planned.

East Midlands of England

Local artists contributed paintings, photographs and other forms of visual art to an exhibition entitled 'Flowerings of Belief', arranged by Nottingham Inter Faith Council and held at Bluecoat School from 6 June to 10 July and subsequently at Nottingham Central Library until 13 August. The purpose of the exhibition is to reflect people's artistic responses to what they believe, how their beliefs affect their life and how they have sought to communicate their feelings to others through the visual arts.

London

Camden and Islington

Westminster Interfaith's annual pilgrimage took place in North London on 4 June, wending its way through Camden and Islington. The pilgrimage set off from Friends House, Euston Road, and took in a mosque in Crowndale Road; the Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Kentish Town Road; Our Lady Help of Christians Roman Catholic Church in Kentish Town (where a sandwich lunch was served by members of the Sachkhand Nanak Dham International who had brought this down specially from Birmingham); the Shaolin (Chinese Buddhist) Temple in Junction Road; the Murugan (Saivite Hindu) Temple in Archway Road; and St Mellitus Roman Catholic Church, Tollington Park where a meal had been prepared by their Justice and Peace group.

Islington

During June–July, 20 Muslim and Jewish 9–12 year old boys and girls played football in mixed faith teams for three Sundays at Arsenal FC. This was organised by the Maimonides Foundation with coaching support from Arsenal in the Community. The programme was initiated by the Maimonides Foundation over five years ago. The children are recommended by Muslim, Jewish and secular schools, mosques, synagogues and faith-based community centres. This year, ten Muslim organisations and schools across greater London, and Jewish children from Orthodox, Reform and Liberal congregations participated in the programme.

Kensington and Chelsea

A group of women from St Pius X Roman Catholic Church in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) recently visited the Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre and a meeting was arranged between them and some Muslim women who work at the Centre. The women found they had a lot in common to talk about and felt that anything that helps them to learn about each other's faiths will bring women of all faiths together to work for the common good of the whole community. Forum of Faiths Kensington and Chelsea has decided that across the coming year arrangements will be made to give women of all faiths linked to the Forum a chance to meet and talk. The process will be serviced by the Community Relations Section of RBKC.

South London

In April, South London Inter Faith Group and Wimbledon Inter Faith Group were invited by the Sikh Khalsa Centre in Tooting to join in their Vaisakhi celebrations.

In July, members of South London Inter Faith Group took part in its annual inter faith walk which this year took place in Lambeth, beginning at the Caribbean Hindu Temple and finishing at Jamyang Buddhist Centre.

Tower Hamlets

The Diversity and Dialogue project is running an inter faith project in Island House community centre in the Isle of Dogs. The centre has a Christian basis but is also used as a Mosque and for Qu'ran classes by the Muslim community. During the project Diversity and Dialogue is working with a Muslim and a Christian group of young people. They are discussing their own faiths and learning about the symbols and art of the two religions. This will lead to the creation of a welcome sign, combining the two artistic traditions, which will be displayed in the entrance to the centre, after touring around different venues on the island. Further information from Becky Hatch, r.hatch@savethechildren.org.uk or on 020 7012 6438.

North West England

In May about forty members of Churches Together in Cumbria with their chair Rt Rev James Newcome, Bishop of Penrith, visited Preston for a “Meet your Neighbour” event. They visited the Gujarat Hindu Society Temple and heard about the Hindu community and the Hindu religion from the GHS president Ishwer Tailor. Lunch was South Asian food in a community centre with members of Preston Faith Forum. Father Michael Murphy spoke about inter faith practice in the city. The event ended in the Clarendon Street mosque with an explanation of Islam and an opportunity for questions with the imam Maulana Said Ahmed. This is the third year such a visit has been arranged.

Rev Malcolm Stonestreet, chair of the North West Multi Faith Tourist Association, organised a visit to Cumbria for Churches Together in Cumbria on 30 April for nearly 50 faith leaders and family groups from Accrington, Blackburn, and Nelson to visit Muncaster Castle and St Catherine’s Church in Eskdale. At the church the vicar gave a brief presentation about the Eucharist. At the end of the day there was a meeting to discuss possible future events and projects. Ideas included a possible inter faith festival in Cumbria (which is now being planned for next July at Rydal Hall); a mixed faith outward bound week; and tourist information leaflets in Asian languages.

South East England

Crawley

The launch of Crawley Interfaith Network took place on 25 June. The keynote speaker was Dr Indarjit Singh of the Network of Sikh Organisations and Thought for the Day. Further information from fatima.mirza@crawley.gov.uk

South West England

Bristol

Bristol Inter Faith Group’s annual Inter Faith Walk took place on 9 July. One of the places its visited was the Shah Jalal mosque where, sadly, they were still clearing up broken glass after windows were smashed on the night of 8 July.

West Midlands of England

Bishop’s Tachbrook

The Anglican Diocese of Coventry reports on a recent story of Sikh-Christian friendship and goodwill. Manjit Singh, the proprietor of the local village stores in Bishop’s Tachbrook, presented Rev Mervyn Roberts, Vicar of St Chad’s, Bishop’s Tachbrook with cash collected in his shop for £222.67 matched with a cheque for the same amount. The friendship between the shop owners and the church has grown over the years. The presentation to the church was made at the Village Fete. Rev Roberts said, “We are very fortunate to have a local shop and a village church both alive and active. It is particularly good to have developed a link that means we can respect, support and learn from each other’s faiths as well as work for the material and spiritual needs of our community.”

Yorkshire and Humber

Bradford

On 19 May, the Bradford Concord Inter Faith Society Pauline Stefanuti memorial lecture was given by Adeeba Malik on the topic of ‘Turning Challenges into Opportunities’. She addressed the challenges of living in a multi faith society – particularly Bradford – and looked at how these can be turned into opportunities for change and development in the community.

On 24 June, Bradford Concord held its annual Multi Faith Walk for Friendship, visiting places of worship and meeting people of different faiths. This year it visited the Brahma Kumaris Centre, the Hussainia Islamic Mission, St Joseph’s Roman Catholic church, and Guru Nanak Gurdwara.

Kirklees

On 6 July ‘Interfaith Kirklees’ was launched at Huddersfield Town Hall. This unique educational project involves the development of seven ‘faith centres’ where school children will actively engage with the faith of the community at that place of worship. The seven centres are: the Minster Church of All Saints, Dewsbury; Huddersfield Parish Church; the Hindu Society of Kirklees and Calderdale, Huddersfield;

Masjid-e-Noor, Batley; Nafial Institute, Huddersfield; Vajrapani Buddhist Centre, Huddersfield; and a Sikh faith centre involving the Shri Guru Singh Sabha Temple and Guru Nanak Sikh Sangat Temple in Huddersfield.

At each centre, students find artefacts, displays and on-line facilities. Trained guides from the faith community are there to welcome pupils and support them through an interactive experience using packages designed by practising teachers and other professionals within the community. The project is not just for students – the centres are places for Kirklees residents to find out more about the faith of their neighbours.

The project is funded from the Home Office's 'Connecting Communities Fund' and is overseen by Kirklees Racial Equality Council, with project partners Kirklees SACRE, North Kirklees Interfaith Council, Huddersfield Interfaith Council, faith communities across Kirklees, Kirklees Metropolitan Council and the Government Office for Yorkshire and Humber. Further information from Terry Murnane, Project Manager, tel 01484 540225 or www.interfaithkirklees.org.uk

North Lincolnshire Council

Multi Faith Partnership members from different religions, in a first for North Lincolnshire Council, gathered to say prayers at the annual meeting of the council on Wednesday 11 May at Pittwood House in Scunthorpe, when the new Mayor and Deputy Mayor was elected. The council invited the public to attend. The Mayor elect Cllr William Eckhardt, at all future full council meetings, will take prayers from a wide range of religious beliefs.

Sheffield

Sheffield Interfaith held their AGM on 8 May at the Quaker Meeting House. It featured storytelling, poetry and music from members of different faiths and cultures, including the poet Debjani Chatterjee.

DIARY DATES

Local Events

The following are just a few examples of local inter faith events happening around the UK in the coming months. To find out more about events in your area, you can contact the nearest local inter faith group. A list of local bodies can be found at www.interfaith.org.uk/locallist.htm

6 August, Edinburgh. The Festival of Spirituality and Peace opens with a Hiroshima Day 60th Anniversary Commemoration event. On 6 August 1945, the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. Local faith and community leaders join with other Festival participants for an event to mark the 60th anniversary and for the inauguration of a peace installation. Co-organised with the Consulate General of Japan. 12.30pm – 2pm at St John's Church, Princes St. Further information from Victor Spence, victor@eifa.wanadoo.co.uk

17 September, Luton. A 'British Cultural Evening' will be held by Grassroots and Luton Council of Faiths. 5-8pm at Stopsley High School, St Thomas Road, Luton. Further information from David Jonathan at Grassroots, 01582 416949 jgrassroots@aol.com

27 September, Bedford. Inter faith game evening, using 'Diversity', 'the game of inter faith and multicultural life'. 7.30pm at Bedford Quaker Meeting House, 5 Lansdowne Road. Further information from George Chaplin, 01480 212931.

5 October, Oxford. Oxford Round Table of Religions preparations for Week of Prayer for World Peace, 7.30pm at 12 Norham Road, Oxford. All welcome. Further information from Canon David Partridge 01865 202745.

15 October, Newport, Gwent. "Promises! Will 'Make Poverty History' result in yet more 'promises'?" Newport Interfaith Group's contribution to One World Week. 3–5pm at Eaton Road Community Centre, Newport, South Wales. All welcome. Further information from Mary Cook, tel 01633 484154.

23 October, London. The opening event of the Week of Prayer for World Peace. 3 – 4.30pm at the London Fo Kuang Temple, 84 Margaret Street, near Oxford Circus. Further information from Rev Sidney Hinkes sidney@fish.co.uk 01666 825249

Conferences, courses and seminars

In most cases, there is a registration fee for these events and the contacts listed can provide details.

Glasgow. From this Autumn, the University of Glasgow is offering a new designated post-graduate degree in Inter Faith Studies. Further information at www.religions.divinity.gla.ac.uk/Centre-Interfaith

Edinburgh, 6 August – 4 September. Festival of Spirituality and Peace: Tomorrow's World, St John's Church, Princes St. Further information at www.stjohns-edinburgh.org.uk/festival.shtml

London, 20 September. Faith Based Regeneration Network national conference, "Seeds of Enterprise", looking at social enterprise and, in particular, faith based enterprise. 10.30am to 5pm at the Zoroastrian Centre for Europe, Harrow Middlesex. For further information see www.fbrn.org.uk

Birmingham, 1 October. 11am to 4pm. Gandhi Celebration Event at the Unitarian Church in Birmingham. Speakers include Clare Short MP, Om Parkash Sharma MBE, and Dr Daryl Balia. Co-sponsored by IARF and the Unitarian Interfaith Panel. Further information from r.boeke.virgin.net.

London, 2 October. The Diversity and Dialogue project is working with the British Museum to create a trail on the theme of 'Living in a multi faith society'. 15–20 young people from all of the nine major faiths will work with curators to select objects that are relevant to them and their lives today and will write their own interpretations for the trail. The trail will be launched at a conference at the Museum on Sunday 2 October. This will involve around a hundred young Londoners in talking and thinking about faith and how we can work towards a successful multi-faith society. Further information for young people who may be interested in attending from: Becky Hatch, r.hatch@savethechildren.org.uk or tel 020 7012 6438.

Birmingham, 11 November – 13 November. 'People of Faith at Prayer'. A residential workshop at the United College of the Ascension, Selly Oak. The course, led by Dr Elizabeth Harris, will explore faith and meditation in the Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim traditions and includes a visit to a local faith community. Offered as part of the Methodist Year of Prayer but all welcome. Further information from Joan Marks, j.marks@bham.ac.uk tel 0121 415 6810.

Bilbao, 11–13 December, International Congress on Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue: "New Challenges in a World Longing for Peace". Organised by Barandiaran Kristau Alkartea – Pax Romana (International Catholic Movement for Intellectual and Cultural Affairs) in collaboration with UNESCO Etxea. Further information at www.icii-bilbao.org

Edinburgh and Glasgow, 9 February to 5 March 2006. Third annual Edinburgh International Festival of Middle Eastern Spirituality and Peace. Further information from Neil Walker, neillw@hotmail.com or see www.eial.org

Montreal, Canada 11–15 September 2006. 'World's Religions after September 11: A Global Congress'. Further information at www.worldsreligionsafter911.com

Inter Faith Organisations in the UK: A Directory

ISBN 1902906 179

£6.50 including p and p

A5 size, 248 page directory containing contact details for and information about the work of over 200 national, regional and local inter faith bodies.

To order, please send a cheque for £6.50, payable to The Inter Faith Network, to:

Gaylina Nguyen,
The Inter Faith Network,
8A Lower Grosvenor Place,
London SW1W 0EN

or email gaylina.nguyen@interfaith.org.uk requesting to be invoiced with publication.

SPECIAL 'DAYS' AND 'WEEKS'

11 September, Racial Justice Sunday. This year's theme is 'One Race, the Human Race'. Further information from Churches Commission for Racial Justice, Churches Together in Britain and Ireland ccrj@ctbi.org.uk tel 020 7654 7254

21 September, UN International Day of Peace. More information at <http://www.internationaldayofpeace.org>

23–30 October, One World Week. This year's theme is 'Promises, promises! Make poverty history'. 2005 is described by OWW as a promising year because the UK holds the presidencies of both the EU Council of Ministers and G8, the Commission for Africa has reported, and progress towards the 2015 Millennium Development Goals will be assessed. But will the promises be kept? Will poverty really be history by 2006? During this week events linked to the theme are happening around the UK. To find out more or order an activity pack, contact enquiries@oneworldweek.org tel 0118 9394933 or see www.oneworldweek.org

23–30 October 2005, Week of Prayer for World Peace. Further information from sidney@fish.co.uk

27 November–4 December, Scotland's inter faith week. Events taking place throughout Scotland. For further information contact the Scottish Inter Faith Council 0141 429 4012.

CSV Make a Difference Day – 29 October

CSV (Community Service Volunteers) Make a Difference Day is the UK's biggest day of hands-on volunteering and takes place on 29 October 2005.

Everyone has skills and experiences that others would benefit from. As an individual, you could join a local group that needs volunteers for their CSV Make a Difference Day activity, or organise your own. You can get involved in a whole range of projects, from teaching young people the basics of web design to building a sensory garden for the disabled.

You can search the online Activity Locator service for opportunities taking place in your area. As an organisation or group, arranging your own activity for the day gives you a great opportunity to attract new volunteers; build good relations in your local community; bring people together to meet a particular local need; and raise awareness of a particular campaign issue. For more information, activity ideas and to register, log onto www.csv.org.uk/difference or call the CSV Make a Difference Day freephone on 0800 284 533.



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Inter Faith Network, 8A Lower Grosvenor Place, London SW1W 0EN

Tel: 020 7931 7766

Fax: 020 7931 7722

Email: ifnet@interfaith.org.uk

www.interfaith.org.uk



INTER FAITH

UPDATE

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Funds boost faith based work for cohesion

In February, the Home Office announced that the Faith Community Capacity Building Fund has enabled a range of grants from £5,000 to £50,000 to be made to 578 organisations for faith community capacity building to increase community cohesion and inter faith activity across England and Wales. The funding will give much needed support to an area of work which has not been well funded to date and will make possible many new inter faith projects as well as the strengthening of existing ones. The Community Development Foundation were commissioned by the Home Office to run the Fund and are also taking forward the second round, details of

which are due to be announced this summer. An interview with CDF's Director of Projects, Debbie Ladds, responsible for CDF's work on the Fund appears on page 18.

CDF are also responsible for administering the new Connecting Communities Plus - Communities Grants programme for small locally managed organisations running local projects. One of the themes of this programme is 'bringing together communities from different races and faiths and promoting a shared sense of belonging (community cohesion)'.

Further information can be found at www.cdf.org.uk The closing date for applications is 5 July.

Subscribing to Inter Faith Update

This newsletter is published three times a year and is available by subscription at £7.50 per year.

To subscribe, send your name and address with a cheque payable to "The Inter Faith Network" to:

Inter Faith Update Subscriptions,
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 8A Lower Grosvenor Place, London SW1W 0EN

Equality Act reaches the statute book

The Equality Act received the Royal Assent on 16 February. The enactment of this important piece of legislation is the culmination of a lengthy process which goes back to the adoption, at the end of 2000, by the European Council of Ministers of a Directive dealing with discrimination in the employment field relating to the six 'strands' of disability, gender, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation and age. This led to Government consultations on the best way to provide institutional support on discrimination in these fields, given that the Disability Rights Commission, the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Commission for

Racial Equality were already in place. The question was whether to set up a new body to cover the remaining strands of religion and belief, age and sexual orientation; to set up three separate bodies covering each of these strands; or to create a new body bringing together the existing Commissions and covering the new strands as well. It was this final option which emerged as the preferred way forward and the Equality Act makes provision for the setting up of a single Commission for Equality and Human Rights. Successive stages on the path to this point have been charted in previous issues of Inter Faith Update.

(continued on page 5)

New resources from the Inter Faith Network

In March, the Network published a third edition of **Inter Faith Organisations in the UK: A Directory**. The new edition contains contact details and short descriptions of the work and structure of over 250 organisations working to promote good inter faith relations at UK-wide, national, regional and local level, 42 of which are new listings. ISBN 1 902906 24 1 Available from the Inter Faith Network at £7.50 (including £1.55 postage and packing). A sample page from the directory showing a local inter faith group entry can be found at www.interfaith.org.uk/orderdirectory.htm

To produce the directory, every entry was checked with bodies listed. Regional inter faith bodies were asked to let the Network know of any new local bodies which had emerged since the last issue and in Scotland the Scottish Inter Faith Council ensured that new initiatives could be approached for inclusion. The decision has been made to make the directory available only in hard copy at this stage but e-mail contact addresses for all regional and local inter faith groups willing to have these listed on the internet have been added to the Network's website at www.interfaith.org.uk/local/directory.htm

Looking After One Another: The Safety and Security of Our Faith Communities

As reported in the last issue of Inter Faith Update, the Network produced, shortly after the bombings of 7 July, in consultation with the Commission for Racial Equality, the Association of Chief Police Officers and the Chief Fire Officers' Association, guidelines for faith community organisations working together to respond to inter-community tensions and to attacks, or the threat of attacks, on

places of worship or other faith community property. These guidelines had been developed following a meeting convened by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, at Lambeth Palace some months earlier. The guidelines were widely distributed by e-mail but following requests for hard copy, they have been produced, with assistance from a Home Office project grant, as an A4 leaflet. The pdf can be downloaded free from the Network's website www.interfaith.org.uk or single copies are free with an A4 sized SAE from the Network office. Bulk copies can be ordered. To enquire e-mail gaylina.nguyen@interfaith.org.uk

New 'local inter faith zone' for the Network's website

During the last six months, the Network's website has received a major facelift and has had a new section added: 'The Local Inter Faith Zone'. This links to the recently published second edition of **The Local Inter Faith Guide** (published by the Network in association with the Inner Cities Religious Council, 2005 ISBN 1 902906 1 95. Price £6.95 plus £1.75 postage and packing from the Network office). Work on the website has been carried out for the Inter Faith Network by Bhupinder Singh, its former Information Officer.

Check out the
new website at
www.interfaith.org.uk

Inter Faith Update

Inter Faith Update is the newsletter of the Inter Faith Network for the UK. It keeps a wide range of organisations and individuals interested in developing good inter faith relations in the UK in touch with UK events and projects with a significant inter faith component.

Please send any items and diary dates for consideration for inclusion in the next issue by **5 September** to: The Newsletter Editor, Inter Faith Network, 8A Lower Grosvenor Place, London SW1W 0EN or e-mail to harriet.crabtree@interfaith.org marking your e-mail 'newsletter'.

NETWORK NEWS

Faith communities discuss faith and citizenship

As part of the Inter Faith Network's 'Faith and Citizenship' project a special meeting of the Network's Faith Communities Consultative Forum was held in London on 6 December. Brian Pearce, the Network's Director, introduced the project and set the scene for the day's discussions. He was followed by Judith Lempriere, Head of the Home Office's Cohesion and Faiths Unit, offering a Government perspective, and there were also presentations from Dr Manazir Ahsan, Director General of the Islamic Foundation and a Network Vice-Chair, and Sister Isabel Smyth, former Chief Executive of the Scottish Inter Faith Council and Secretary of the Churches Agency for Inter Faith Relations of Action of Churches Together in Scotland.

There were four contributions from different faith communities reflecting on aspects of inter faith relations and engagement with wider society to work together, as citizens, for the common good. These were from Miriam Kaye, Interfaith Officer of the Board of Deputies of British Jews; Barnabas Leith, Secretary for External Affairs of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the UK and a Network Vice-Chair; and Anil Bhanot, General Secretary of the Hindu Council (UK).

Anne Breivik, the Network's 'Faith and Citizenship' Project Officer, spoke about the importance of faith communities helping with materials for schools on faith and citizenship and about the forthcoming February seminar on the educational dimensions of the Network's project.

Throughout the day there were lively plenary sessions with a wide range of contributions from those attending the meeting.

From the day's proceedings there emerged a shared recognition of the need for members of faith communities to make a positive contribution to the development of British society; a positive approach to civic identity even if the legal connotations of citizenship can be more problematic; and a need for a nuanced and inclusive understanding of 'British' identity.

Educating for Shared Citizenship

On 7 February the Inter Faith Network, in association with the Citizenship Foundation, organised a seminar on 'Faith, Identity and Belonging; Educating for Shared Citizenship' to explore how schools can best help in preparing young people for life in multi-faith and multicultural society and how teachers tackle issues related to faith and citizenship in the classroom and to discuss such key issues as:

- How do faith identities affect understanding of British citizenship?
- How do we handle our multiple identities and loyalties?
- How does our UK citizenship interrelate with our international links and our responsibilities as global citizens?
- What does it mean to educate for shared citizenship within this complex of identities?

The event brought together over seventy invited specialists in Religious Education and Citizenship Education and members of faith communities. There were presentations from key people within RE and Citizenship Education, reflections from the classroom and young people's perspectives. Substantial time was set aside for plenary discussion since one of the overall aims of the day was to establish contact and dialogue between the different communities represented at the seminar. The working group session in the afternoon allowed participants to delve deeper into some more specific aspects of the day's focus.

The day was jointly chaired by Brian Pearce, the Network's Director, and Don Rowe, Director of Curriculum Resources, the Citizenship Foundation. Speakers included Tony Breslin, Chief Executive, Citizenship Foundation; John Keast, Consultant to the DfES on Religious Education and Intercultural Education; Balbir Sohal, Advisory Teacher for Citizenship, PSHE and Equalities, Coventry Local Authority; Rauf Bashir, Projects Manager, Building Bridges Pendle; Clare Giles, Citizenship Coordinator, Whitstable Community College, Kent; Deepa Mashru, Leicester Inter Faith Youth Group; and Sophia Ashraf, Bradford Student Shadow SACRE.

Coming out of the day was the acknowledgement that schools and teachers were facing substantial challenges within the field of faith and citizenship. The need for more resources and teacher training was highlighted, as was the need for schools to establish closer links with the community. Despite the room for improvement, there were examples of several projects that have very successfully addressed faith and citizenship. A lot of the debate in the plenary sessions revolved around issues of identity and belonging.

A report on the day's proceedings will be available from the Network's office in early May, cost £4.50 including postage and packaging.

Faith Communities Consultative Forum

The Faith Communities Consultative Forum of the Inter Faith Network met on 27 October and discussed the Home Office's consultation document, Preventing Extremism Together: Places of Worship and the Government's Terrorism Bill, as well as noting the position reached by then on the Racial and Religious Hatred Bill and the Equality Bill and on preparations for setting up the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights.

Meeting of national inter faith organisations

A meeting of representatives of national inter faith organisations was held by the Inter Faith Network in London on 24 November. There was a useful exchange of news and plans and also discussion on issues connected with the Network's current membership review.

Local inter faith link meetings in the North West and South West

The Inter Faith Network held regional meetings for local inter faith organisers in the North West in Bolton on 13 December and South West in Bristol on 28 March. These were a chance for sharing of news and discussion of their work.

Network newsletter

The current issue of Inter Faith Issue is a double one. The Autumn/Winter issue was delayed and the Network Office apologises to readers for this.

NATIONAL UPDATE

Equality Act reaches the statute book

(cont from page 1)

The CEHR is due to become operational in October 2007 when it will take on the work of the Equal Opportunities and Disability Rights Commissions, together with responsibilities in the field of age, religion and belief and sexual orientation. Responsibility for race matters will be transferred to the CEHR from the Commission for Racial Equality in 2009. The Commission will cover England, Scotland and Wales. In Scotland and Wales there will be statutory committees responsible for the work of the CEHR. In addition to its work in the area of discrimination, the CEHR will be charged with the promotion and protection of human rights, providing institutional support for the Human Rights Act and the promotion of good relations between members of different groups, and between members of those groups and others.

The CEHR will have a duty to consult with stakeholders to ensure that all groups have an opportunity to participate and engage in its work and a duty to monitor progress on equality, human rights and good relations between communities through publishing a regular 'state of the nation' report on these matters.

In February the Commission for Racial Equality launched a proposal that a new non-governmental body should be set up, alongside the CEHR, to guide, advise and mediate on community relations, civic engagement and citizenship, arguing that this would complement the work of the CEHR by focusing on the distinct challenges presented by community relations work. The CRE's proposal can be found at www.cre.gov.uk/newbody.

Secondary legislation enacted at the end of 2003 under the European Communities Act 1972 gave effect to the 2000 European Directive in the employment field in relation to religion or belief and to sexual orientation. Regulations, relating to discrimination in employment on the grounds of age, were recently approved by Parliament and are due to come into force in October.

Part II of the Equality Act makes unlawful discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief in the provision of goods, facilities, services, premises, education and the exercise of public functions. It also provides powers to outlaw, by secondary legislation, discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in the provision of goods, facilities, services, premises, education and the exercise of public functions. The Department of Trade and Industry is at present consulting on a draft of these regulations (see page 6). It is intended to bring into effect in October of this year both the powers in the Equality Act in relation to religion or belief and the secondary legislation in relation to sexual orientation. The Equality Act also creates a new duty on public authorities to promote equality of opportunity between men and women and to prohibit sex discrimination in the exercise of public functions.

The Religion and Belief Consultative Group on Equality, Diversity and Human Rights brings together representatives of faith community organisations and also of the British Humanist Association and the National Secular Society to monitor and discuss developments in the equality and diversity field. It is chaired by Barnabas Leith of the Baha'i community, a Vice-Chair of the Inter Faith Network. It keeps in close touch with the work of the Government's Steering Group which is preparing the way for the setting up of the Commission for Equality and Human Rights and also with progress on the Equalities Review and Discrimination Law Review.

The Equalities Review issued its interim report on 21 March (see page 6). The parallel Discrimination Law Review is examining the effectiveness of current anti-discrimination legislation and identifying gaps in protection for some groups. It is intended that the work of the two reviews should lead to a new Single Equality Act bringing together legislation on discrimination into one legal framework and the Government has committed itself to enacting this during the lifetime of the present Parliament.

Further Government measures on sexual orientation and discrimination

On 13 March the Department of Trade and Industry published a consultation paper outlining the Government's intention to introduce regulations in October 2006 to be made under the Equality Act 2006 to prohibit sexual discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in the provision of goods, facilities and services, the use of premises, education and the exercise of public functions. In December 2003, sexual orientation discrimination was made unlawful in the workplace and in the provision of occupational training, but there were specific exemptions for religious organisations.

The new draft regulations prohibit direct and indirect discrimination and victimisation, but not harassment. The Government's consultation paper recognises that "there may be circumstances where the new regulations could impact on aspects of religious activity or practice in the light of the doctrines of some faiths concerning sexual orientation and the beliefs of their followers" and views are invited on the impact that the regulations may have in these areas. The document says that "any exceptions would need to be clearly defined", and, it suggests, "limited to activities closely linked to religious observance or practices that arise from the basic doctrines of a faith". The document does not envisage any exemptions from the general prohibition on sexual orientation discrimination in contexts where a religious organisation provides a wider service to the community with a social or welfare aspect; where a religious organisation is contracted by a public authority to deliver a service on its behalf; or where a service is provided on a commercial basis.

Responses to the consultation are required by 5 June. The consultation document is also available from DTI publications ADMAIL 528, London, SW1W 8YT. It can be downloaded from www.dti.gov.uk/consultations/files/publication-1606.pdf

Interim report of equalities review

The current Equalities Review, chaired by Trevor Philips, Chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality, is looking at the root causes of inequality and how these can be tackled. It issued its interim report on 21 March. This has been published in order to provide a basis for the wider public debate which it hopes will inform its final report.

The Review has been invited by the Prime Minister to consider especially those areas of inequality which are not the result of pure economic disadvantage. The interim report suggests that it would be unrealistic to think that socio-economic disadvantages are not an important part of the background to the review but suggests that some kinds of inequalities can be identified which are partly or wholly separate from those caused by socio-economic factors. The Review believes that many of these are not wholly due to the effects of individual prejudice or discrimination or purely the result of cultural situations or choice, but arise from the failures of systems, policies or institutions. The interim report aims to set out the degree to which other kinds of differences or 'domains' besides the ones traditionally called 'class' may lead to individuals or groups of individuals suffering unjust inequalities. It focuses particularly on those inequalities which appear to have persisted over more than one generation and which seem impervious to the efforts to tackle them of Government, civil society or of individuals themselves.

The interim report makes only brief references to religion or belief as a factor in equality. It says that there is very little data available about the impact of this factor on life chances and describes this as being one of the 'data deserts'. Further analysis is being undertaken for the Review which will use data from 1971 onwards from the Office of National Statistics' Longitudinal Study to show how far members of each social group tend to be found to have a similar labour market status at distinct points across their lives. It is hoped that this analysis will also provide more information about the impact of religion or belief on labour market activity.

The interim report is available at www.theequalitiesreview.org.uk

Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006

The progress through its different Parliamentary stages of the Government's Religious and Racial Hatred Bill was dogged by controversy but there is now an Act on the statute book which received the Royal Assent on 16 February. It applies only to England and Wales. Its provisions will not come into force until the Home Secretary makes an order to this effect.

Following the general election in May last year the Government introduced a Bill which incorporated the provisions which it had dropped in past attempts to enact them, first in the autumn of 2004 when they formed part of the Anti-Terrorism Bill of 2001 and then when they were included in the Serious Organised Crime and Police Bill introduced into Parliament at the end of 2004. In each case the provisions on religious hatred were dropped, in the face of opposition to them in the House of Lords, in order to facilitate the enactment of the main parts of the legislation.

The short new Bill dealing just with incitement to religious hatred, with, as before, provisions parallel to those covering the existing offence of incitement to racial hatred, again provoked demands both inside and outside Parliament for greater safeguards for freedom of speech and expression.

Last autumn the Bill was effectively rewritten as a result of the amendments made to it by the House of Lords despite the Government's opposition to these. They provided that for an offence of stirring up religious hatred to be committed there must have been a clear intention to do so, in addition to words or behaviour having been threatening in character. The amendments also introduced additional safeguards for freedom of expression by providing in the legislation that it does not "prohibit or restrict discussion, criticism or expressions of antipathy, dislike, ridicule, insult or abuse of particular religions or the beliefs or practices of their adherents, or of any other belief system or the beliefs or practices of its adherents, or proselytising or urging adherents of a different religion or belief system to cease practising their religion or belief system".

It seemed at one stage that it might be possible to achieve some form of political compromise but when the Government brought forward its own counter amendments to the Bill on its return, after some delay, to the House of Commons in February of this year, the House rejected these amendments and thereby preserved the amendments which had been made in the House of Lords.

The new Act's provisions, as in the Government's original Bill, deal with the stirring up of hatred against people defined by their religious belief or their lack of religious belief. The Act leaves it to the courts to decide whether any particular belief is a 'religious belief'. The Act also retains the requirement for the Attorney General's agreement to be given before any prosecution can be brought under it.

The debates on this legislation made clear the lack of any broad agreement on the appropriate balance to be struck between freedom of expression and the protection of people against the stirring up of hatred against them on grounds of their religious identity and the extent to which the law should intervene in this.

Tackling extremism: working group reports

Following the London bombings last July, the Home Secretary set up seven working groups of Muslim representatives. The groups focused on the following topics: tackling extremism and radicalisation; engaging with young people; supporting regional and local initiatives and community actions; engaging with women; imam training and accreditation and the role of mosques as a resource for the whole community; providing a full range of education services in the UK, that meet the needs of the Muslim community; and security for the community, including tackling Islamophobia, protecting Muslims from extremism, and building community confidence in policing.

The reports of these working groups were published on 22 September and can be found at communities.homeoffice.gov.uk/raceandfaith/reports_pubs/publications/race_faith/255560

Preventing extremism together: places of worship

Following the London bombings last July the Government brought forward a number of measures to deal with terrorism, some of which are contained in the Terrorism Act 2006 which reached the statute book in early April.

In early October last year the Home Office published a consultation document, Preventing Extremism Together: Places of Worship. This proposed that power should be taken whereby those controlling a place of worship could be required by an order of the court to take steps to stop certain extremist behaviour occurring in a place of worship. It was clear that there was considerable concern among faith communities about these proposals. The responses received by the Government queried whether there was sufficient evidence to demonstrate that a power of this kind was required in relation to places of worship and also questioned whether such a power, if taken, should apply only to places of worship and not to other premises where extremism was arguably more likely to arise.

The Government announced on 15 December that it had decided not to proceed with this proposal in the light of the strong support which had been expressed by respondents for joint working and information sharing as the most effective way of stopping any abuse of places of worship by extremists.

Commission on Integration and Cohesion

In September last year the Home Secretary announced that he had written to faith leaders inviting their views on the Government's proposal for a Commission on Integration and Cohesion, an advisory body to be set up on a fixed term basis to identify and tackle ways to overcome barriers to integration. The proposal for this Commission had earlier been announced on 5 August by the Prime Minister as part of a package of responses to the July bombings in London. Since then, discussions about the shape and work of the Commission have been continuing, but it is understood that an announcement is likely to be made soon about the Commission's terms of reference and its membership.

New Faith Communities Consultative Council

Following a number of consultative meetings, the Government is in the process of forming a Faith Communities Consultative Council which will bring together the work of the Inner Cities Religious Council in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (which was set up in 1992) and of the Steering Group of the Home Office's Working Together review (which reported early in 2004). The new body will be co-chaired by Home Office and ODPM Ministers and it is expected that its first meeting will take place shortly.

Entry into the UK of 'ministers of religion'

A new distinction has been introduced between pastoral and non-pastoral religious workers in terms of the requirements for their entry to the UK. Issue 25 of Inter Faith Update reported in the summer of 2004 on the introduction of new pre-entry requirements for overseas 'ministers of religion' coming to the UK, including having a basic grasp of English. Issue 27 reported in the spring of 2005 that the Hindu and Sikh communities were in discussion with the Home Office about difficulties which they were experiencing as a result of the effects of these entry restrictions.

In December 2005, following the conclusion of further consultation with faith communities, the Home Office announced that it would be introducing a new immigration category for religious workers from abroad. This allows religious workers in non-pastoral roles to come to the UK to work for up to two years and covers workers whose duties include performing religious rites - such as reading the scriptures aloud or tending to the deities - but not preaching to a congregation. Unlike 'ministers of religion', they will not have to speak English, and will not be eligible to settle in the UK. A religious worker in a non-pastoral role will also be prohibited from acting as a 'minister of religion', missionary or member of a religious order, in order to avoid this new category being used to circumvent existing rules.

A further proposal contained in the Government's original consultation - for a post-entry civic knowledge test for 'ministers of religion' - is not now being pursued.

2011 census

Between May and August 2005 ONS ran a public consultation on the content of the 2011 Census questionnaire for England and Wales. The consultation exercise supported the need for almost all the information collected in the 2001 Census including a question on religious identity. Strong cases were also made for some new questions, especially language, sexual orientation, income and second residences.

A programme of question development and testing is underway. The emerging results of this testing will determine the choice of questions to be included in the 2007 Census Test. The Test questionnaires will be finalised in September 2006. The aim of ONS is to finalise the 2011 Census questionnaire by September 2008, for use in the 2009 Census rehearsal. The final questionnaire for 2011 will then be decided by Parliament.

A full report on the response to the consultation was published on 8 March and is available on the National Statistics website at:

www.statistics.gov.uk/about/consultations/2011Census_response.asp

Department for Constitutional Affairs

The first Faith Forum in Whitehall was launched by the Department for Constitutional Affairs on 21 February. It includes members of staff and members of the judiciary. The objective of the Forum is to develop a better, shared understanding of how faith relates to daily life, particularly in the workplace. Faiths represented include Christians, Hindus, Jews, Muslims, Sikhs and other faith communities. It is also open to those belonging to no faith but are interested in faith issues.

The content of civil marriage ceremonies

In November 2005 the General Register Office (GRO) published a report on the consultation exercise which it had carried out earlier in the year on the content of civil marriage ceremonies in England and Wales.

Civil marriage ceremonies were introduced in 1837, with ceremonies taking place in register offices. Since the Marriage Act 1994, such ceremonies can also take place in “approved premises”, such as hotels, and the option of using alternative venues has proved to be very popular. It has been a fundamental principle since the introduction of civil marriage that it should be clearly separated from religious marriage and the Marriage Act 1949 states that “no religious service shall be used at any marriage solemnised in the office of a superintendent registrar”. Civil marriages carried out on ‘approved premises’ are subject to a provision in the regulations governing these which states that “any readings, music, words or performances which form part of a ceremony of marriage celebrated on the premises must be secular in nature [and] ... a reading which refers to a god or deity, prayer or worship, or church or temple would not be secular.”

An earlier review by the GRO found that there has been inconsistency in the ways in which these requirements have been interpreted. On the basis of last year’s consultation, it is now proposed to establish a single set of criteria on the religious content of ceremonies applying to civil weddings in both register offices and ‘approved premises’. It is also proposed to allow ‘incidental’ references to a god or deity in a song or reading in an essentially non-religious context, but readings from sacred texts such as the Bible, the Qu’ran or the Torah will be excluded, as will hymns or religious chants. It is also proposed to apply the same guidance in respect of interpreting the provisions of the Civil Partnership Act 2004 which applies to same sex partnerships.

In addition to making the consequential changes to existing legislation, the GRO intends to issue guidance to registration offices. This will indicate, for example, that classical music of religious origin, such as Ave Maria, Pie Jesu and Zadok the Priest, would be acceptable as background at a civil ceremony and the lyrics may be included as long as these contain no more than an incidental reference to a god or deity. The guidance will also say that popular love songs containing lyrics with religious references would be acceptable, as would be readings from poetry and plays or novels.

A copy of the report on the consultation, together with information about the representations which were received in the course of it can be found at: www.gro.gov.uk/Images/consultationdocument_civilmarriagecontent2_tcm69-21282.pdf

Religious Education in faith schools

On 22 February a joint statement was issued from the Department for Education and Skills and Faith Communities on the importance of religious education. This reiterated the support of the signatory organisations for the non-statutory national framework for religious education published in 2004 and the principles underlying this.

The joint statement says that religious education enables pupils to “combat prejudice” and “to develop respect for and sensitivity to others, in particular those whose faith and beliefs are different from their own;” “encourages pupils to develop their sense of identity and belonging;” and enables them to “flourish individually within their communities and as citizens in a pluralistic society and global community.” The statement says that the signatory organisations “believe that schools with a religious designation should teach not only their own faith but also an awareness of the tenets of other faiths and are fully committed to using the framework and developing the religious education curriculum for [their] schools and colleges.” Many faith based schools already teach about faiths other than their own but there is no legal requirement for them to do so.

The statement was signed on behalf of the Catholic Church, the Church of England, the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the Buddhist Society, the Free Churches Association, the Hindu Council of the UK, the Methodist Church, the Muslim Council of Britain and the Network of Sikh organisations. The full text can be found at www.cofe.anglican.org/news/pr2106b.html

First state-funded Hindu school in UK

The Department for Education and Skills has approved a state funded Hindu school in Harrow, London following a bid from the I-Foundation/ISKON group. Nitesh Gor, from the I-Foundation said: “We are clearly delighted by this news. This paves the way for the first Hindu faith school in the UK. Our intent is to ensure that the school is fully integrated and working in synergy with the local community and schools. To this end, over the coming months we will be working closely with Harrow Council to begin a rigorous programme of community and local school

consultation to enable us to make this project successful. We are also developing strong relationships with education experts from other faith communities to ensure that pupils will have a strong sense of appreciation for other world faiths.” Harrow has a significantly large Hindu population. 20 per cent of Harrow residents are Hindu, the highest percentage for any local authority in the country.

Armed Forces appoints new chaplains

The Armed Forces have appointed Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh Chaplains. They were welcomed to their role by Secretary of State for Defence, John Reid, on 15 November. Dr Sunil Kariyakarawan (Buddhist chaplain), Krishan Attri (Hindu chaplain); Imam Asim Hafiz (Muslim chaplain); and Mandeep Kaur (Sikh chaplain) are all civilians with cross-service responsibilities. They were recruited following an external recruitment campaign. The chaplains are fully integrated members of the Armed Forces chaplaincy services and will provide spiritual, moral and pastoral support to service personnel and their dependents. They will also support the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces by providing advice on faith specific issues.

Chaplaincy in Further Education colleges

The Government’s White Paper on the future development of further education published in March, invites FE colleges to consider how their “pastoral arrangements can best reflect the characteristics of their student body, including faith, for example through multi faith chaplaincy arrangements”. The Faiths in Further Education Forum, which has multi faith membership, has been working to promote the development of multi faith chaplaincy in FE, where it is currently less developed than in institutions of Higher Education.

The Faiths in FE Forum can be contacted at info@neafe.org or by writing to Mannie Stewart, c/o Education Division, Church House, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3NZ.

The BBC and religion

On 14 March the Government issued a White Paper with its conclusions on the review of the BBC charter. In this the proposed new 10 year charter and continued license fee funding are linked to six new 'public purposes' which the BBC must serve, including 'sustaining citizenship in civil society'.

The House of Lords Select Committee which considered the issue of charter review recently produced a report covering an additional enquiry covering those issues which it was not able to investigate in sufficient detail ahead of its initial report. This additional enquiry included a focus on religious broadcasting. The Select Committee argues in favour of "a wide definition of broadcasting about religion and other beliefs" which "encourages all broadcasters, including the BBC, to find new, innovative and informative ways of tackling issues of religion, spirituality, ethics and values through all the different programming genres." The Select Committee says that the evidence which it received "shows that by approaching religion in this way viewers and listeners engage with it." It also says that the BBC "must provide its viewers and listeners with the background knowledge they require to understand the context of [a news] story. This is as true for stories related to religion and other belief systems as it is for any other subject area." The Select Committee recommends that "the BBC should be given a duty... to make sure viewers and listeners have a better understanding of the different religions and other belief systems through the objective portrayal of their different beliefs, practices and forms of worship." The full text of the Committee's report can be found at www.bbccharterreview.org.uk

It has been announced recently that Alan Bookbinder will be leaving the BBC this summer after almost five years in charge of the BBC's Religion and Ethics Department.

Holocaust Memorial Day

The UK's Holocaust Memorial Day commemorations began with a concert in Cardiff attended by around 100 genocide survivors and rescuers. It took place on Thursday 26 January to take account of the Jewish Sabbath, as this year's Holocaust Memorial Day fell on a the Friday, the first time since the event was instituted.

It was the first time that Wales had led the national commemoration. Eva Clarke, who was born at Mauthausen camp in Austria, in April 1945, introduced the concert with a tribute to survivors like her mother, Anna Bergman, 88, as well as the rescuers who "threw a lifeline to humanity" with life-saving acts of bravery. Among those honoured was American Charles Fawcett for his work in Marseille with Varian Fry during World War II. Former UN general Romeo Dallaire, spoke about his mission in Rwanda. Welsh First Minister Rhodri Morgan and Cardiff Council leader Rodney Berman told the audience that, earlier on Thursday, every school child in Wales had taken a pledge to "make a difference". The pledge was in the form of repeating a specially commissioned poem written by Gwyneth Lewis, Wales' national poet. The concert ended with the lighting of the memorial flame by seven-year-old Samuel Pfister, the great-grandson of Belgian woman Claire Keen-Thyrin, who was a teenager when she helped hide Jewish children on the run from the Nazis.

HMD projects and events also took place around the UK at local level. Many had an inter faith dimension. The Borough of Telford and Wrekin held an exhibition, with invited speakers, at the Civic Offices to commemorate the day, remembering those who suffered and the allied forces who strove to save them. An evening service of faith readings organised by Telford and Wrekin Inter Faith Group followed the daytime exhibition and focused on readings and reflections by young people of different faiths through poems and short stories. In the Royal Borough of Kingston on Thames, the local authority and the Kingston Inter Faith Forum commemorated National Holocaust Memorial Day in a morning programme of remembrance. This included a tree planting and dedication and a talk from Marcel Ladenheim, a Holocaust survivor. The Interfaith Forum also gave a presentation of photographs taken by their members who visited Auschwitz in July 2005. The Mayor, Councillor Yogan Yoganathan opened the ceremony remembering the persecution of the Jews and others during World War 2 and those still targeted today because of a difference in culture and faith.

For the sixth year Leicester Council of Faiths was one of the main organisers of the Leicester Holocaust Memorial Day. This was in partnership with the School Development Support Agency, the Stanley Burton Centre for Holocaust Studies and Leicester City Council and was held in the

St Philip's Centre. In London, the City Circle (an organisation of young Muslim professionals) held an early HMD event with the Holocaust Educational Trust at which they were addressed by Lodz ghetto survivor Roman Halter. City Circle's chair, Asim Siddiqui, said it 'Let us young Muslims and Jews stand united in our collective resolve to work together to learn the lessons and prevent a repeat of Europe's shameful past.'

Until January 2005, responsibility for delivering HMD lay with the Home Office. An independent body, the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, has now taken over responsibility. In November 2005, the eleven members and Chair of the new HMD Trust were announced.

Newcastle will host the 2007 Holocaust Memorial Day national event when the theme will be 'The Dignity of Difference'. On 30 March the Trust held a conference in London for local activity organisers from across the country to come together with academics and survivors of the Holocaust, and Bosnian and Rwandan genocides to discuss the theme for HMD 2007. HMT also arranged a trip in early March for hundreds of sixth formers and teachers to visit Auschwitz. Joining the groups were Home Office Minister Paul Goggins, a number of MPs, a contingent of police officers involved in race relations, and also the Secretary General of the Hindu Forum, Ramesh Kallidai and the Inter Faith Adviser to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rev Guy Wilkinson.

The United Nations General Assembly passed an official resolution on 1 November 2005 to designate January 27 as an annual international day of remembrance, urging every member nation to honour the memory of Holocaust victims, and encouraging the development of educational programs about Holocaust history as part of the resolve to help prevent future acts of genocide. The UN resolution rejects denial of the Holocaust, and condemns discrimination and violence based on religion or ethnicity.

Controversy over cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad

Following the publication in the Danish right wing newspaper, Jyllands-Posten, of cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad, there were angry protests by Muslims in many countries in which some protesters were killed. The vehemence of reactions to the cartoons not only reflected

reactions to the nature of the caricatures of the Prophet but the fact that any depiction of him is not permitted within Islam. Some demonstrators in central London who carried placards apparently inciting the murder of those responsible for the cartoons have had criminal charges brought against them. Their cases have yet to come to trial.

Statements by the Muslim Council of Britain, while strongly deploring the publication of the cartoons, condemned the violence, and threats of violence, which had taken place and made it clear that protests over the cartoons needed to be peaceful and called on Muslims to resist provocation by extremist elements.

The cartoons were originally published in Denmark last September, but the international campaigning against them had not spread widely to other countries until the early weeks of this year. Partly because of the heightened controversy over them the cartoons were reprinted in twenty other countries and on the web. However, the British press chose not to reproduce the cartoons. A number of British newspapers (and other commentators) argued that while they had the right to publish the cartoons if they chose to do so, freedom of expression needed to be exercised responsibly.

Jack Straw, the Foreign Secretary, commented: "There is freedom of speech, we all respect that, but there is not an obligation to insult or to be gratuitously inflammatory, and I believe that the re-publication of these cartoons has been unnecessary, it has been insensitive, it has been disrespectful and it has been wrong. And if I may say so, I place on record my regard for the British media who have shown considerable responsibility and sensitivity in this regard."

Hindu protests over stamps

The Hindu Forum of Britain complained to the Royal Mail about one of the stamps issued last Christmas which reproduced a series of nativity paintings from different cultures. This was the 68p stamp, used when mailing letters to India. The complaint related to the fact that the illustration of Mary, the mother of Jesus, had a *kumkum* in the centre of her forehead and that one of the shepherds, a Vaishnavite *tilak*, judged by some to be specifically Hindu marks. It was argued that it was insensitive to produce such a stamp at a time when the issue of conversions in India from Hinduism to Christianity has been the

subject of heated debate. As a result of the complaint, the Royal Mail decided to not to print further supplies of the stamp.

Institute of Community Cohesion

The Institute of Community Cohesion, set up by Ted Cante, Associate Director of the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA), was established on 27 March at De Montfort University. The new institute is intended to become a key international authority on cohesion work, based on a partnership of academic, statutory and non-governmental bodies, as well as public, private and voluntary sector agencies. It will bring together the expertise of the city councils and universities in Leicester and Coventry and will focus on professional evaluation of best practice, disseminating cohesion ideas that have been shown to have an impact on communities.

The first phase of the project involves the development of tool-kits, and leadership training and development schemes for elected members. Discussions with the Vice Chancellors of both Leicester's universities, and those of Coventry and Warwick, resulted in a decision that different aspects of the Institute's work will be hosted by each university. Overall, eight different departments will be involved across the four universities. National partners include IDeA, the Commission for Racial Equality, the National Health Service, the Housing Corporation, and several Government departments.

Under the auspices of the Institute, the School Development and Support Agency has been conducting a survey of inter faith activity particularly linked to the engagement of young people with a view to identifying useful models for this. Further information from

maurice.coles@sdsa.net

Earthquake in Pakistan

On 8 October a major earthquake hit northern Pakistan, sending shockwaves across an area of 30,000 square kilometres. It killed 73,000 and injured another 70,000 people, making 2.5 million people homeless and 2.3 million people without a secure food supply. It destroyed Muzaffarabad - the centre of the earthquake - damaging the towns of Bagh and Rawalakot and

affecting 15,000 villages in the region. Alongside the major aid agencies, including the faith based relief organisations, many Muslim and Hindu groups and members of other faiths in the UK joined in the fund raising and aid effort.

It has also been a time for expression of support across communities. In Guildford, for example, the Bishop of Guildford, Rt Rev Christopher Hill, visited the Shah Jahan Mosque in Woking on 14 October to express solidarity with worshippers in the aftermath of the Pakistan earthquake. The mosque serves a largely Pakistani community and the Bishop addressed a significant number of people gathered for prayer. 'We are profoundly concerned for all who have died or been made homeless by the earthquake,' he said. 'We want to express our solidarity with all those seeking to alleviate the suffering of the survivors of this terrible natural disaster.' In some areas inter faith observances were held, as in Bedford where at the Jamia Gulshani Mosque there was a reading from the Qur'an, a period of silent shared prayer and brief addresses by faith leaders as part of a service, "United in Prayer: Remembering the Victims of the Kashmiri Earthquake."

Faiths have also responded together to other overseas tragedies. In September, the Bishop of Glasgow and Galloway, Rt Rev Idris Jones, and Imam Habib Rauf from the Glasgow Central Mosque made a joint donation to the Niger Crisis Appeal. Imam Habib said "Whatever our religion, we are neighbours, whether here in Scotland or across the world. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, 'Whoever sleeps on a full stomach while his neighbour goes hungry is not one of us'. It is not an option but an obligation to help the poor and needy in the Third World."

Launch of Christian-Muslim Forum

More than 100 guests attended the launch of the new Christian-Muslim Forum at Lambeth Palace on 24 January. The Forum will offer practical ways of bringing Christians and Muslims together. It is chaired by the Anglican Bishop of Bolton, the Rt Revd David Gillett and the Vice-Chairman is Dr Atallah Siddiqui of the Islamic Foundation in Leicester, both of whom spoke at the launch, as did the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, and Prime Minister Tony Blair. Members of the 20-strong Forum include four Muslim presidents, four Christian presidents

and six pairs of Christian and Muslim specialists. Its first appointed co-director is Julian Bond. During the course of 2006 the Forum plans to hold two residential meetings, as well as several day meetings.

Further information at
www.christianmuslimforum.org.uk

Imams and Rabbis Conference

The first one day Conference of Imams and Rabbis in Britain took place on 30 March. Its topic was 'Working Together: A Jewish-Muslim Dialogue'. 100 Muslim and Jewish religious leaders, religious educators and community leaders, including women and young people, were invited from both communities. Delegates included members of the Sunni and Shi'a Muslim communities and the Orthodox, Reform, Sephardic, Liberal and Masorti Jewish communities. The conference was co-organised by the Imams and Rabbis Steering Group and by the Maimonides Foundation and Alif Aleph which are represented on the group.

Chief Rabbi calls US ministers to work for good relations

In February Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks addressed the Rabbinical Council of the United Synagogue conference in Bournemouth. He called on ministers to take a more active role in promoting inter faith relations, saying "We must work constantly for the sake of good community relations at the grassroot level and it is there that we have a significant contribution to make".

Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia

The Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia hosted a meeting at the Cathedral Westminster Cathedral Hall, London on 9 February to facilitate discussion within, and across, Muslim communities following events such as the London bombings, riots in Birmingham and unrest following publication of inflammatory cartoons in Denmark. The purpose of the meeting was to explore the possible need for an independent group of Muslims and non-

Muslims to facilitate coordinated Muslim responses to these sorts of issues. It was also to exchange information on current activities and initiatives, and to foster alliances between Muslim groups between Muslim groups and non-Muslim groups. It is likely that, in the light of the discussion at the meeting, an Institute of Muslim Affairs will be established "to promote informed dialogue and debate within the Muslim community of Britain and to promote a Muslim perspective on public policy to Parliament, government, the media, and business." Further information from cbmi@stoneashdown.org

40 years of Nostra Aetate

October 2005 marked the 40th anniversary of the proclamation, in the course of the Second Vatican Council, of Nostra Aetate, which deals with the relationship between the Catholic Church and people of other faiths, and was seen at the time to be a ground-breaking document.

A variety of events were held to mark this anniversary including a two-day conference held in London at Heythrop College and Westminster Cathedral Hall. It was organised jointly by Heythrop College and two committees of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales: the Committee for Other Faiths and the Committee for Catholic-Jewish Relations. In his remarks to the conference Archbishop Kevin McDonald emphasised the Catholic Church's commitment to inter faith dialogue and talked about the way in which this has developed over the years since the publication of Nostra Aetate, which provided a theological basis for it.

Plans for new national RE centre

The **Church Times** reports that plans are being made to establish a national centre for Religious Education in a redundant Wren Church, St Nicholas Cole Abbey, in Queen Victoria Street in the City of London. The interior is to be redesigned to include a multi-purpose hall, office and meeting space, a café-bar, display and resource areas and an open cloister area. It is planned that the building will house some physical resources and also be the home of the virtual resource centre REonline. The plans for the new centre are being developed by the Culham Institute, a Church of England

educational body that promotes and develops RE in all types of school. One-off capital funds of around £4 million will have to be raised in order to convert and equip the building to fulfil its new purpose, while preserving its character as a heritage building.

Centre for the study of Islam in the UK opens in Cardiff

A new Centre for the Study of Islam in the UK at Cardiff University was officially opened by Yusuf Islam on 20 September 2005. The opening was attended by over 400 guests including academics, local civic and political leaders, local and national faith community representatives, local inter faith associations and children from local schools. The Centre, which will be based in the School of Religious and Theological Studies, aims to promote scholarly and public understanding of Islam and the life of Muslim communities in Britain. As well as offering masters, diploma and other postgraduate qualifications the Centre will also host a public lecture series and international conferences. The Centre's Director, Dr Sophie Gilliat-Ray, said at the launch that Cardiff was an ideal location for the Centre as it was home to one of the oldest Muslim communities in Britain and the first mosque in the UK had been established in Cardiff in 1860.

Women meet to discuss combating prejudice and bigotry

The Women's Interfaith Network held a one day seminar in London on 7 March entitled "The Power of One". This was used to facilitate discussion on how each one of us can make a difference in combating prejudice and bigotry. The seminar was opened by Lady Gilda Levy and during the day there were presentations by Sara Bernstein, Hanadi Younan, Makaram Award and Rose Fitzpatrick. Further information on the work of the Women's Interfaith Network can be found at www.wominet.co.uk.

Faith representation on Local Strategic Partnerships

The Church Urban Fund and the Faith Based Regeneration Network are currently undertaking a study looking at the involvement of faith representatives on Local Strategic Partnerships and other public partnerships. If you are such a representative or can put the project in touch with such representatives in your area, please contact Billy Dann at billy.dann@cuf.org.uk or tel 020 7450 9071.

Maimonides Foundation

During November the Maimonides Foundation organised a lecture series entitled "Loyalties: Personal and Communal. An exploration of religious loyalties in a civil society". Throughout the month four lectures were held, each one addressed by both a Jewish and a Muslim speaker, allowing them to discuss the same topic from their own personal perspective. The lectures, organised in association with the Leo Baeck College Centre for Jewish Education and the London Middle Eastern Institute, SOAS, covered topics including political leadership, academic debate, youth and young adults and religious leadership.

The Maimonides Foundation held a seminar on 1 February for undergraduate students on the topic of "Marriage in the 21st Century". The seminar, arranged in association with the Chaplaincy at Royal Holloway, was addressed by Jewish and Muslim speakers who discussed the religious regulations of marriage, differences between cultural and religious practices and current issues relating to marriage for young Jews and Muslims in Britain.

Celebration of Mahatma Gandhi's birthday

People of different faiths gathered on 1 October in Birmingham for a celebration co-sponsored by the World Congress of Faiths and the International Association for Religious Freedom. There were contributions from Dr Daryl Balla, General Secretary of IARF, Richard Boeke and Vinod Kapashi of WCF, Om Parkash Sharma, President of the National Council of Hindu Temples, Dr Joy Barrow of the International Interfaith Centre, and others.

YOUTH INTER FAITH ACTIVITY

This issue contains a special report on this growing area

Over the last three to four years there has been a marked increase in inter faith activity involving young people. The Inter Faith Network has helped contribute to this with the publication in 2004, with the National Youth Agency and TimeBank, of the youth inter faith action guide **Connect: Different Faiths Shared Values**, and its special focus 2005 National Meeting, 'Connecting for the Future: Young People and Inter Faith Relations in Britain' (**Connect** and the National Meeting Report can both be downloaded free at www.interfaith.org.uk/publications/index.htm) The National Youth Agency's publication, **A Sense of Respect: Inter Faith Activities for Young People**, by Carmel Heaney and Maxine Green (NYA, 2005) is helping youth groups begin to work more confidently in this area.

National inter faith body initiatives

A number of the national inter faith organisations in the UK, such as Alif Aleph, Council of Christians and Jews Youth Section, the Maimonides Foundation, Minorities of Europe, and United Religions Initiative UK run active young inter faith programmes (contact details for these bodies can be found on the Network's website www.interfaith.org.uk). In Scotland, the Scottish Inter Faith Council has made youth inter faith activity one of its key strands of work.

Local inter faith bodies

An increasing number of local inter faith bodies are beginning to develop work in this area. For example, this year's Annual Lecture of the Forum of Faiths, Kensington and Chelsea, held on 22 March in association with the Community Relations Section of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, was on the theme of 'Faith and Young People'. The opening address for the afternoon's event was given by Councillor Paul Warrick, Cabinet Member for Service Improvement and External Relations. This was followed by a lecture by Dr Peter Vardy, Vice Principal of Heythrop College, a talk by Rev Dr

Alan Race, curator of 'The Global Ethic Exhibition', and a multi faith panel discussion on "Young People and the Common Good".

Some local inter faith bodies are working directly with schools. For example, Torbay Inter Faith Forum carried out a project in five local secondary schools in collaboration with RE teachers to discover teenagers' opinions on religions and school religious education because RE is so critical to living together harmoniously in a multi faith society. Four children of different ages were selected from each of the five schools and responded to a series of questions about their thoughts on religious education in schools which are now broadly based on the world religions.

Inter faith groups even in relatively un-diverse areas are working to increase engagement with young people. West Somerset Inter Faith Group, for example, has developed good relations with the local Community College and has an annual competition for Year 10 children to produce art (poems, pictures and so on) about religious tolerance. They also help with Christian Aid and Muslim Aid days at the school.

Some local projects have had a youth focus from the outset. Notable among these is Building Bridges Pendle. They recently held two events to bring together families and young children from the diverse communities of Pendle. The Festive Celebration for Young Children, held at the Brierfield Community Centre, was attended by 65 children who enjoyed an afternoon of activities including limbo dancing, musical chairs, quizzes and making posters. The children were also given the opportunity to ask questions and encouraged to share in the diversity of their culture and customs. The Festive Family Celebration, saw over 100 guests of all ages spending an enjoyable day together including a sit down two-course meal, several musical acts from different cultures, a magician and various competitions.

Building Bridges Burnley (more recently established) has developed an important programme of work with young people called 'The Bridge'. This brings young people in a number of local primary and junior schools together and gives them opportunities to understand the different cultures, religions, and backgrounds within our society today.

THE DIVERSITY AND DIALOGUE PROJECT

Diversity and Dialogue is an youth inter faith project set up to create better understanding between young people of different faiths and backgrounds. It is led by Save the Children in partnership with Islamic Relief, Muslim Aid, JCORE, World Jewish Aid, CAFOD, Christian Aid and the Citizenship Foundation and has been running since 2002. The project has organised a series of events in Bradford, Leeds, London, and Manchester to encourage young people to share their beliefs and values over the last two years. It was involved in developing a youth faith trail at the British Museum that was launched in October 2005. The trail is currently accessible on the British Museum's website, in the Compass section where it is listed as 'Faith Tour' under Tours (www.britishmuseum.ac.uk). The project has also assisted with the set up of a Bradford Youth Inter Faith Forum which was launched on 4 March 2006.

Diversity and Dialogue's website contains many interesting examples of youth inter faith projects (www.savethechildren.org.uk/diversityanddialogue/). It is also working on a range of educational resources for schools on 'growing up in a multi faith society'. These are due to go live on the website www.diversityanddialogue.org.uk in mid July and will be available free.

In preparation for the resource, 13 young people of different faiths from the London area will be working with the film production company Mouth That Roars (www.mouththatroars.com) to produce a video that will be used as a stimulus to classroom based discussion. The young people involved will be producing the film that has three sections of approximately five minutes each. The video will provide a snapshot of life in a multi faith society and will address issues such as friendship in a multi faith community, personal beliefs and values and the impact of global issues on local communities. It will be accompanied by a set of teachers' notes that will include questions aimed at facilitating discussion in the classroom and suggestions about role plays that can highlight specific issues raised in the video. The educational resources will also includes tips on how to set up a youth inter faith group focusing on social and global issues.

Diversity and Dialogue is nearing the end of its current two year funding but is likely to continue under the auspices of Save the Children. If you have any questions or queries regarding Diversity and Dialogue please contact Becky Hatch, Project Coordinator, on 020 7012 6438 or r.hatch@savethechildren.org.uk

SACREs lead way on youth forums

The National Association of SACREs is just completing its second round of grants to local SACREs to encourage projects which will promote dialogue between young people of different faiths and achieve community benefit in their areas. Two of those funded on the first round were Portsmouth SACRE which has established a Portsmouth Youth Interfaith Forum (PYIFF) and Bristol SACRE which held a youth inter faith conference on 28 March.

Interaction in learning

Religious Education and Citizenship Education are providing important contexts for the development of learning about inter faith issues in schools around the country. The Inter Faith Network's 7 February seminar, in association with the Citizenship Foundation, on 'Faith,

Identity and Belonging: Educating for Shared Citizenship' enabled reflection by educators and faith community members on ways that this may be developed. The seminar also looked at a range of other relevant issues such as joint work between faith schools of different traditions and extra-curricular projects. See page 3 for further information about the seminar.

Liberal Judaism magazine reports that Southgate Progressive Synagogue, in London, has joined forces with the Islamic Cultural Centre of Wembley to run a Religious Studies A Level class on Judaism and Islam with the teaching shared by Rabbi Stephen Howard and Imam Nyron Hassan Ali Gonzalez. 25 Jewish and Muslim students aged 17-86 are meeting for weekly classes at the Progressive Synagogue. Rabbi Southgate said, "This is excellent for inter faith relations and where the two religions differ, everyone has been very eager to learn about the other's point of view." Imam Gonzalez remarked "I am honoured to have this opportunity to help build bridges between the two communities and foster togetherness in society."

Campus inter faith forums

Within institutions of higher education, inter faith issues are also coming to the fore. A Cambridge University Faith Forum has joined other forums at Universities such as Warwick. CUFF began in early 2005 with informal gatherings between representatives of different faith societies and has now taken steps to become officially registered. It is currently co-convened by Preet Majithia and Pooja Jain and has a committee which is working on planning a programme of activity. New initiatives are also under development at a number of universities, such as Queen Mary's College, University of London (with the encouragement of Inter-Act and Three Faiths Forum).

One of the priorities for funding of the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund (see the interview on this page) has been 'young people' and a number of initiatives have been funded to help this area inter faith work. For example, the Three Faiths Forum has received a £50,000 grant to appoint an inter faith education worker to work with schools and colleges and Minorities of Europe has received funding towards community work aimed at bringing youngsters of different faiths together. This is the Interfaith Champions project, which will involve sixth formers in schools across Coventry and elsewhere. Mark Gifford, Interfaith Director at MoE will be helping teenagers work in their own schools to promote understanding between people from different religions and cultures. Alif Aleph has received a grant which will enable it, among other things, to make its resources better known to young people and encourage their involvement. A special section of their website is being developed as part of this.

An international angle

Although this newsletter does not usually cover international events, it is interesting to note the attention focused on inter faith working for young people in a number of other countries. This is very much the focus of the US based Interfaith Youth Corp (www.ifyc.org).

On 22 March, 2006 the 'International Conference on Faith and Service' gathered more than 500 leaders from the fields of religion, community service, academia, and public service at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D.C. The conference theme of 'Building Bridges Through

INTERVIEW

The Government announced last September the details of the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund. It is the first Government grant scheme specifically to support faith based and inter faith activity. In this interview, we speak with Debbie Ladds, the Director of Projects at the Community Development Foundation (CDF) which is administering the Fund for the Home Office.

Q Can you tell us about the purpose of the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund?

The Fund is sponsored by the Cohesion and Faiths Unit at the Home Office and has two key aims, both of which are at the heart of the Home Office's work with faith communities and community cohesion. The first aim is to support capacity building which can strengthen groups' organisational capabilities to enable them to sustain themselves in order to play a fuller part in civil society and community cohesion, and engage more effectively with public authorities. The second aim is to support inter faith activity which brings people of different faiths together to promote mutual understanding, respect and co-operation.

Q Why do you see the Fund as particularly important?

In a very practical way it gives faith and inter faith organisations the money and therefore the opportunity to contribute to community cohesion, in ways that the faith or inter faith organisation believes will make a difference. The Government has not directly funded the sector in this way before and I think it opens up many opportunities for all of us to make an even greater contribution to our communities.

Q What is the role of CDF?

CDF is a non-departmental public body supported by the Active Communities Directorate of the Home Office, and a registered charity. CDF aims to help communities achieve greater control over the conditions and decisions affecting their lives. We do this in many ways, for example by advising Government and other bodies on measures to build strong, active communities and promote community

WITH DEBBIE LADDS OF CDF

development and involvement. We support community work through networks, links with practitioners, collaborative work with partner organisations and management of local projects. We also carry out research, evaluation and policy analysis to identify good practice in community development and involvement, and spread the lessons through training, conferences, publications and consultancy. We have also managed grant programmes before and will apply many of these activities to the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund which is very much in keeping with these aims.

Q Has CDF worked in the past on faith based and inter faith projects?

This is quite a new area of work for us so as well as drawing on our own experience in the more general area of community development we have been drawing on the expertise of individuals from different faith communities and from a range of bodies with specialist knowledge of these areas, such as the Faith Based Regeneration Network and the Inter Faith Network for the UK. We have also appointed a FCCBF adviser for this area of our work, Osman Sheikh, and are extending our network of consultants with particular expertise in it.

Q Some people say that the Government should not fund 'religious activity'. Does the Fund support this kind of activity?

The guidance for the Fund made it clear that no grants would be given for any work which was of a potentially proselytising nature or which was to support the devotional or congregational life of particular faith communities. It would indeed be inappropriate for the Government to fund activities of this kind.

Q How many applications came in and how many grants were given?

We received a very large number of applications for both the capacity building and inter faith strands. We ran a high profile campaign to let faith and inter faith bodies know about the Fund. In total, 2,128 organisations applied to the Fund seeking funding of £52.5m. 578 grants were offered with funding of approximately £7.5million.

The amount made available in this first round of funding was significantly more than had originally been anticipated. Even so, the number of potentially fundable applications far outweighed the number which could be supported and the particular priorities of the fund, including those such as work with women and young people and work in particular geographical localities, helped shape the final pattern of grants awarded. We opted to fund as many strong applications as we could.

Q What impressions did you gain from the applications which came in?

I was impressed with the number of good quality applications and range of activities that organisations were proposing. I have also been impressed with the enthusiasm of those I have met and their commitment to making a difference where it matters. There are some excellent practical and relevant projects that we will be funding and I look forward to working with these organisations over coming months.

Q Is there going to be a further round of funding?

The fund will open for a second round in June this year and the dates for this will be announced in due course. We are reviewing the first round to learn from what we have already done and the criteria, priorities and paperwork might be amended or refocused as a result of this.

Q Is there any particular advice CDF would like to give to those putting in applications for the next round?

Obviously, read the guidance notes and do your best to match what you are asking for to the criteria and priorities of the fund. If you want help in completing the application form then ring us and ask. We can comment on draft forms for you. If you are applying for inter faith activity, make sure that you have consulted with, and got clear plans to involve, people from the relevant faith communities – not just your own – from an early stage. Lastly, we have 'building' in the title of the fund. Ironically one thing that the Fund does not support is physical building work so people should not to apply for this!

CDF's website is at www.cdf.org.uk

(continued from page 18)

Interreligious Dialogue and Youth Civic Engagement' promoted collaboration among Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and other faiths, emphasizing common purposes shared by diverse religions and the vital role that religious dialogue and youth service can play in reducing conflict throughout the world. The conference was co-convened by the Congressional Education Foundation and the National Conference on Citizenship (chartered by Congress), in partnership with Civic Enterprises, the Case Foundation, United Nations Foundation, MCJ Foundation, Universal Peace Federation, Points of Light Foundation, and many of the US's leading national youth service organizations.

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Appointments

New Ambassador to the Vatican

In December, Francis Campbell was appointed as Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Holy See. He is Britain's first Catholic Ambassador to the Holy See since the Reformation. In his official address to Pope Benedict XVI, he said "The UK is a strong supporter of furthering dialogue among people, in particular with the Christian family and with other faiths" and he identified inter-religious dialogue as one of three main themes for his Ambassadorship.

CTBI

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CBTI) has announced that Revd Canon Bob Fyffe will become its new General Secretary in May. He is an Anglican priest from the Scottish Episcopal Church. He succeeds Dr David Goodbourn in this post. Baroness Rev Kathleen Richardson has recently stepped down as Moderator of CTBI's Commission for Inter Faith Relations. She is succeeded by Bishop Angaelos of the Coptic Orthodox Church.

Faith community inter faith officers

The Board of Deputies appointed in the Autumn its first Interfaith Officer, Miriam Kaye. Mrs Kaye is a recent graduate in theology from Cambridge University, where she set up a dialogue group for female Jewish and Muslim

students. Her student internships included periods working at the Home Office and with the Inter Faith Network.

The Churches Agency for Inter Faith Relations Scotland, of Action of Churches Together in Scotland, has recently appointed a part-time Inter Faith Education Officer, Andrew Sarle, to encourage Christian churches and their members to engage in dialogue with members of other faith communities.

Honours and awards

Bishop John Austin and Sister Isabel Smyth

In the New Year's Honours list, OBEs for services to inter faith relations were awarded to Rt Revd John Austin, former Bishop of Aston and Chair of the Church of England's Inter Faith Consultative Group and to Sister Isabel Smyth, the first Chief Executive of the Scottish Inter Faith Council who is Secretary of the Churches Agency for Inter Faith Relations of Action of Churches Together in Scotland.

Cynthia Capey

In March, Cynthia Capey was given a **Muslim News Awards** for Excellence in the Championing a Muslim Cause category for her many years promoting understanding between Muslims, Christians and Jews in Suffolk, most recently through Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource and the East of England Faiths Agency.

David Cowling

In January, David Cowling of Grassroots in Luton was presented with the Mayor's Award for Citizenship 2005 for his work, including pioneering inter faith work in the town.

Sir Anthony Figgis and Clifford Longley

Sir Anthony Figgis, Marshall of the Diplomatic Corps, was presented with the Interfaith Gold Medallion of the Three Faiths Forum at a ceremony in the OBE chapel in St Paul's Cathedral on 3 February. On 8 February, Clifford Longley was presented with the Interfaith Gold Medallion in recognition of outstanding contributions to inter faith dialogue, particularly through his radio broadcasts.

Louise Mitchell

In December, the Council of Christians and Jews' Youth Officer, Louise Mitchell, was named 'Young Educational Thinker of the Year' by the Young United Kingdom Programme.

Rev Alan Race

Rev Alan Race was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws by the University of Leicester in January.

Hari Shukla

Hari Shukla OBE has been given the Freedom of the City of Newcastle in recognition of his many years of work to develop good community relations in the city.

Sir Sigmund Sternberg

In November, Sir Sigmund Sternberg was awarded an Italian knighthood for his inter faith work with Jews and Roman Catholics from the time of the Second Vatican Council.

Obituaries

Sheikh Dr Zaki Badawi KBE

The news of the passing of Sheikh Dr Zaki Badawi in January was received with sadness and a sense of great loss. He was a prominent Islamic scholar, community activist and pioneer of inter faith dialogue. Dr Badawi was awarded an honorary OBE in 1998 and an honorary KBE in 2003.

In 1986, Dr Badawi established the Muslim College in London, a postgraduate school for the training of imams and Muslim teachers in the West, incorporating the study of both Islam and Western society and emphasizing inter faith dialogue. The college was established under the aegis of the World Islamic Call Society. At the time of his death he was its Principal and also Chairman of the linked Imams and Mosques Council, a position he held from 1984.

Dr Badawi played a key role in numerous inter faith initiatives. He was Vice Chairman of the World Congress of Faiths and helped to co-found, with Sir Sigmund Sternberg and Rev Marcus Braybrooke, the Three Faiths Forum. His widow, Lady Maryam Badawi, will be continuing his work as a member of the Three Faiths Forum's Board.

Among his many other contributions and achievements, the Egyptian-born Dr Badawi had been Director of the Islamic Cultural Centre and Chief Imam of the London Central Mosque in Regent's Park. He was Chair of the Arabic Forum and of the Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism (FAIR).

Dr Badawi's funeral took place at the Central Mosque, Regent's Park on 27 January. On 27 February, a meeting for condolence (Dua Maghfirat) took place at the London Muslim Centre, hosted jointly by the Muslim Council of Britain and the Three Faiths Forum. A memorial service took place on 26 March at the School of African and Oriental Studies, arranged by the Muslim College and the World Islamic Call Society. Individuals of many faiths were present on all three occasions, and, among others attending the event on 26 March, were Prince Charles, the Home Secretary, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Chief Rabbi, reflecting Dr Badawi's great contribution to inter faith dialogue in the UK and beyond.

John Finel

John Finel died in January after a long illness. He was a founder member of the Shap Working Party of World Religions.

Bishop Charles Henderson

Bishop Emeritus Charles Joseph Henderson KCHS died peacefully on 10 April in Blackheath, London, aged 81 following diagnosis with cancer in January.

Bishop Charles was born and grew up in Waterford, Ireland. He was ordained priest in 1948 and titular Bishop of Tricala and auxiliary bishop in Southwark in 1972. Although Pope John Paul II accepted his resignation in January 2001, Bishop Charles retained many continuing commitments.

In 1976 he was appointed to the Ecumenical Commission for England and Wales and remained strongly committed to the process of Christian ecumenism. In the succeeding years he also became involved in the work of taking forward the work of deepening Catholic engagement with other faiths. In 1984 he established the Committee for Other Faiths of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. In 1990, Pope John Paul II appointed him to the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue. Bishop Charles was a member of the Churches Commission for Inter Faith Relations from 1994

to 2002 and also chairman of the Bishops' Committee for Catholic-Jewish Relations from 1992 to 2001, and a vice-chairman of the Council for Christians and Jews for many years. In 2001, he was awarded the Sternberg Interfaith Gold Medallion.

Bishop Charles was a key figure in the preliminary conversations leading up to the establishment of the Inter Faith Network and served as a member of its Executive Committee from its formation in 1987 until 2003. On a number of Network occasions he spoke movingly about the way in which his engagement with people of other faiths in the course of his inter faith work had broadened his own horizons and enriched him. He will be remembered by Network colleagues with deep affection as a person of enormous kindness in matters large and small: patient, encouraging and supportive. He will also be remembered as a man of great vision but one who also took care that whatever project or meeting he and others were involved in was conducted with courtesy and care for good process.

Rev Sidney Hinkes

Sidney Hinkes served as a paratrooper in the Second World War, and was ordained into the Church of England in 1954. He was active in the peace movement for 50 years. During the first Aldermaston march in 1958, which led to the birth of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, he provided accommodation for the peace marchers. He was a key figure in the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship. He helped establish the Week of Prayer for World Peace, was active in the World Congress of Religions for Peace and was the Secretary of Religions for Peace.

Joan MacMillan

Joan MacMillan of Gateshead died on 29 December after a two year battle with cancer. She worked tirelessly in the field of inter faith and inter cultural understanding. Her friends in Gateshead comment with appreciation on how her warm, intelligent and approachable manner drew great respect from all quarters during her more than 30 years work in Gateshead. She was working right up until her last days and left her hospital bed at the end of November to receive the Mayor of Gateshead's Award in recognition of her work.

NORTHERN IRELAND

The Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum (NIFF) met on 29 March at Stranmillis College, Belfast. The meeting began with the Forum's AGM and there was then a talk by Rev Tim Kinahan, a founder member of the Forum. NIFF has recently started an electronic newsletter. For further information about the Forum or to request to be on the newsletter distribution list email N.Richardson@Stran.acuk

SCOTLAND

Scotland's religious leaders meet

Scotland's religious leaders met on 28 March in Aberdeen at the Catholic Chaplaincy Centre of Aberdeen University. The event was supported by the Scottish Inter Faith Council, hosted by the Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, Most Rev Bruce Cameron, and attended by representatives of the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh communities. Convener of the Scottish Inter Faith Council, Dianna Wolfson, who co-chaired the meeting, said: "There are many issues which all faith communities in Scotland have to deal with and by creating a united approach we can show that it is possible to hold true to your own faith whilst respecting other people's."

Scottish Inter Faith Week

The second annual Scottish Inter Faith Week took place between 27 November – 4 December. Inter Faith Week is an initiative of SIFC and is supported by local inter faith groups and faith communities from around Scotland.

The Week sets out to further promote dialogue, understanding and cooperation between Scotland's diverse religious communities. The Scottish Executive showed support for the Inter Faith Week and their commitment to the One Scotland Many Cultures campaign by hosting a celebratory reception at which a multi faith choir featuring representatives from five major faith communities sang. There was a 5-day Scottish Inter Faith Council exhibition in the Scottish Parliament. and on St Andrew's day meditations

led from various faith perspectives were held at the Parliament. To mark the Week, Allan Forsyth (Chair of the Baha'i Council for Scotland) on behalf of Scotland's religious leaders presented a specially commissioned piece of artwork to the Parliament. The featured quotes and religious symbols in the artwork had been chosen by the leaders to focus on the values inscribed on Scotland's Mace: Integrity, Wisdom, Justice and Compassion. During the week, seven visits to places of worship by religious leaders and MSPS took place in Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Glasgow.

Inter Faith Week events took place locally across Scotland: in Dumfries, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Paisley, Perth, Shetland and Skye. In Edinburgh, for example, a 'three faiths forum' was held, along with the second gathering of Edinburgh's religious leaders, educational events in schools and a women's inter faith gathering. In East Renfrewshire, forty members of the Jewish community and forty members of the Muslim community met to share food during the week and women from the two communities came together to prepare food acceptable to everyone. Glasgow Sharing of Faiths hosted an evening of celebration and entertainment, compered by Ravinder Kaur Nijjar. The same note of celebration was reflected by an inter faith ceilidh in Skye.

The final event of the week was the third Scottish Inter Faith Youth Conference, entitled 'Walking Together Beyond Tolerance' to which young people travelled from across Scotland to attend. It was held in Dundee and included workshops, discussions, exhibitions and music and dance. Religious leaders from all the faith communities joined the young people during the workshops.

This report draws on the extensive coverage of the Week which can be found in issue 9 of the newsletter of the Scottish Inter Faith Council available at www.interfaithscotland.org

Edinburgh Festival of Middle Eastern Spirituality and Peace

The third Edinburgh Festival of Middle Eastern Spirituality and Peace took place from 8-12 March. It included spiritual retreats, workshops and conferences; a wide range of education events, including Persian and Arabic Calligraphy, and printmaking and sculpture workshops; spiritual and peace concerts; Middle Eastern percussion events; film series on Music of the Middle East and peace films; events on spiritual movement and dance; photography and visual arts exhibitions; poetry and theatre events on spiritual themes of the Middle East; Mesopotamian

storytelling; all women spiritual and cultural events and workshops; and community-led cultural events which celebrated Middle Eastern diversity within the wider context of diversity in Scotland. Professor Tariq Ramadan lectured on 'Islam and the West in a Quest for a Just and Peaceful World,' and Bishop Kallistos Ware lectured on 'Acquiring Inner Peace.' A further Festival of Middle Eastern Spirituality and Peace is planned for next year To find out more www.mesp.org.uk

Visit of the Dalai Lama

During November, the Edinburgh Inter-Faith Association hosted and coordinated the visit to Edinburgh of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. This included putting on a conference on 'Positive Education' at Edinburgh University and an event at Usher Hall on 'Ethics for the New Millennium'. Further information from victor@eifa.wanadoo.co.uk

WALES

Swansea's Interfaith Forum, Face 2 Faith, has now been up and running since the beginning of August last year and has over 40 members from eight different faith communities. The launch at an event in Brangwyn Hall on 11 September 2005 focused on remembering victims of terror, regardless of faith and nationality. It was attended by over 500 people and featured key speakers from Swansea's major faith communities. The group now meets once every six weeks with different faith communities taking it in turns to 'chair' and host the meetings at their places of worship.

Inter Faith Organisations in the UK: A Directory

ISBN 1902906 24 1, £7.50 including p and p

A5 size, 272 page directory containing contact details for and information about the work of over 250 national, regional and local inter faith bodies.

To order, please send a cheque for £7.50, payable to The Inter Faith Network, to:

Gaylina Nguyen,
The Inter Faith Network,
8A Lower Grosvenor Place,
London SW1W 0EN

or e-mail gaylina.nguyen@interfaith.org.uk requesting to be invoiced with publication.

REGIONAL AND LOCAL

Focus on the English Regions

England has eight 'Regions' and Greater London operates in effect as a ninth, but with an elected Mayor and Assembly. The English regions are increasingly important because it is at that level that decisions about transport and planning are taken. Also, every region has a Regional Economic Strategy which is drawn up by Regional Development Agencies in consultation with unelected Regional Assemblies and other partners and stakeholders. Over the last ten years, regional faith forums have come into existence in the East (2001/02), the East Midlands (2004), the South East (2001), the South West (1997) and the West Midlands (2003) to enable faith groups to contribute to these processes. In some cases the regional faith forums also include promotion of good inter faith relations within their purposes.

The past six months have seen the launch of two new regional faith forums in Yorkshire and Humber and in the North West, a stepping up of programme activity by the West Midlands Faiths Forum and the new South West body *faithnetsouthwest*, and consultations on a possible faith forum for Greater London. This issue of Inter Faith Update looks at these developments. A focus on work within other regional forums is planned for future issues. Details about the work of all the different regional faith forums can be found in the new edition of **Inter Faith Organisations in the UK: A Directory** (Inter Faith Network, 2006) and e-mail contact addresses for them can also be found on the Network's website www.interfaith.org.uk

At the end of November 2004 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, the Home Office and the Inter Faith Network held a meeting for representatives of the emerging regional faith forums. On 22 November 2005 a second meeting of representatives of these bodies was held in Coventry at the initiative of the West Midlands Faiths Forum with the assistance of the Faith-based Regeneration Network. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Inter Faith Network were represented at this. The meeting enabled an exchange of views and experience between the different regional initiatives and it was agreed that it would be helpful to have similar meetings for this purpose from time to time.

The Inter Faith Network holds regional meetings in England for organisers of local inter faith bodies

and regional inter faith initiatives to share news and ideas for programme development. Where regional forums are already existing, these meetings are planned in consultation with them. Well attended meetings, with participation from local inter faith groups from around the North West and the South West regions were held in Bolton on 13 December and in Bristol on 28 March respectively. The next, held in association with the South East of England Faiths Forum, is in Guildford on 23 May. For further information, contact the Inter Faith Network office.

Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum

The new Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum was launched on 8 December at Leeds Town Hall. The keynote speech was given by Dr John Sentamu, the new Archbishop of York, and other presentations were made by John Battle MP, Prime Minister's Faith Envoy and MP for Leeds West, Professor Kim Knott of the University of Leeds, speakers from a number of the region's faith communities and the Forum's Director, Inderjit Bhogal.

The launch was the culmination of a long consultative process. This included a research report carried out by the Community Religions Project at the University of Leeds, under the supervision of Professor Kim Knott, which looked into whether people thought that a regional faiths forum was a good idea, what its role would be, who would be involved and what faith communities would contribute to the regional agenda.

For a copy of this report, e-mail mail@yhassembly.gov.uk or call 01924 331580.

There were also ten events round the region asking faith communities what they thought about the idea. The Yorkshire and Humber Assembly, Churches Regional Commission for Yorkshire and Humber and a Multi Faith Steering Group worked closely together to develop the Forum.

The result is a Forum open to all people, organisations and faith communities which will bring people together by e-mail, newsletters and events and will endeavour to ensure that the voices of faith communities are included in relevant regional policies. It will also develop the capacity of faith communities to contribute to the life of the region and to work in partnership to the benefit of local communities.

A council of 21 members has been set up which will include members of the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Jain, Jewish, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Zoroastrian faiths and which will be responsible for driving the Forum. Posts were filled following public advertisement. For further information about the Forum, contact its Director at inderjit.bhogal@yorkshireandhumberfaiths.org.uk or tel 0113 380 4861.

Northwest Faiths Forum

The formal launch of the Northwest Faiths Forum took place on 20 January at St Augustine's New Avenham Centre in Preston. Paul Goggins MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary for State for Crime, Security and Communities, gave the keynote address. Among the contributors, Monsignor John Devine, Churches Officer for the North West, who has been involved since the outset in the work to develop the Forum, talked about the significance of the contribution of faith communities to the life of the North West region and outlined the role of the new Forum.

The Forum exists to relate to, and help shape, public policy, contributing positive insights from the several faith communities on the basis of theological perspectives and spiritual values. Its aim will be to ensure that, alongside other stakeholders, faith communities have a regional voice. It will enable government and other statutory bodies to consult with faith communities and ensure that faith communities can respond effectively to regional initiatives. It will meet three times a year in different parts of the region and have 24 individuals representing 9 major world faiths from every part of the region, with representation weighted on the basis of the 2001 Census. It is supported by the three instruments of regional governance: the North West Development Agency, the North West Regional Assembly and the Government Office for the North West. Its full terms of reference can be found at: www.faithnorthwest.org.uk/resources/186733/Terms_of_Reference_Nov05.doc

Although the Northwest Faiths Forum is new, it is building on work across several years. This has included the development of a detailed website, www.faithnorthwest.org.uk, and two key reports, **Faith in England's Northwest: The Contribution of Faith Communities to Civil Society** (November 2003), based on a survey of every place of worship of all faiths in the **North West; and Faith in England's Northwest: Economic Impact Assessment** (February 2005) commissioned from DTZ Pieda Consulting by the

Northwest Development Agency and the Churches Officer for the North West. Based on the findings of the report of November 2003, it demonstrated the value of the faith communities' contribution to life in the region in economic terms. The reports can be downloaded from www.faithnorthwest.org.uk/publications

faithnetsouthwest

In the South West region, 2005 saw the emergence, with funding from the ChangeUp programme, of a new regional body, *faithnetsouthwest*. The background to its coming into being can be found in **Daily Service: How Faith Communities Contribute to Neighbourhood Renewal and Regeneration in the South West**, a report commissioned two years ago from Marion Jackson and Richard Kimberle of the University of the West of England, by the South West Council of Faiths and the Government Office for the South West. This can be downloaded from the *faithnetsouthwest* website.

faithnetsouthwest is an initiative of the Churches' Council for Industry and Social Responsibility (ISR); the Exeter Diocesan Council for Church and Society; the South West Council of Faiths; and the South West Churches' Regional Forum. It is a regional partnership supporting faith groups engaging in social or community activity in the South West region. It is currently mapping the activities of worshipping communities in the region, with a view to discovering the full scope of their presence and their work. *faithnetsouthwest* is also currently working on a regional faith conference for the South West, due to take place in Taunton on 22 June. For further information about the conference or the work of *faithnetsouthwest*, contact Rev Heather Pencavel at heather@faithnetsouthwest.org or visit the *faithnetsouthwest* website at www.faithnetsouthwest.org.uk

West Midlands Faiths Forum

The West Midlands Faiths Forum has been running since 2003. It is an independent body aiming to enable the voices of the diversity of faith groups in the region to be heard and gathered in a structured manner by regional bodies, including the Regional Assembly. Its other aims are to promote the recognition that spiritual values are indispensable to the maintenance of an inclusive and cohesive society; to advocate on behalf of concerned faith communities at the regional level; to support

diversity and foster harmony between different communities by increasing knowledge and understanding of each other's ideals; and to create opportunities for inter faith encounter and education. It has an Executive Committee reflecting the major faiths within the Region and a series of Sub-Groups.

The West Midlands Faiths Forum held a conference in September 2005, 'Light and Shade' to explore issues of faith and race and, in particular, to address the need for greater spiritual, social and economic cohesiveness. This was particularly timely in the light of the bombings in London which had happened in July and their impact on people's reflections on identity, cohesion and personal and community safety. Speakers included Trudi Elliot, the Chief Executive of the West Midlands Regional Assembly; Maqsood Ahmed of the Home Office Cohesion and Faiths Unit; Dr Doreen Finneron of the Faith-based Regeneration Network; and Bishop Joe Aldred of the Council of Black Led Churches.

The Forum has recently received a project grant for the period up until March 2007 under the Home Office Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund programme. On the horizon is development of its website at www.wmfaithforum.org.uk and a second conference with a community cohesion link, 'Faith and Community: Cohesion or Fragmentation?' on 27 April at the Gurudwara Nishkam Sewak Jatha in Birmingham which will include reports from local inter faith and multi faith groups in the West Midlands region. Further information from 0121 551 1125 or satish.brahmbhat@CovCofE.org

Soundings on a way ahead for linking faiths in London

The London Civic Forum (LCF) is conducting a feasibility study to look at a possible faiths forum for London. At a working lunch on 6 April at Bloomsbury Baptist Church, there were presentations from Inderjit Bhogal, Director of the new Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum and from Fr Stephen Saxby of the London Boroughs Faiths Network who discussed the possible roles and purposes of a faiths forum for London. As an ongoing part of the feasibility study, LCF is contacting a wide range of stakeholders through focus groups, interviews and an on-line survey. The survey will be available on www.lcf.org.uk from 20 April and London faith groups and interested individuals from the faith communities are encouraged to take part in this.

Snapshots from around the regions

East

Luton

Luton Council of Faiths and Grassroots held a special conference, 'Plural Britain: Challenges and Prospects' at Luton Town Hall on 21 November. Among the speakers were John Battle MP and Brian Pearce, Director of the Inter Faith Network.

Peterborough

Peterborough Inter Faith Council held an event 'People for Peace' involving children of the major faiths in the city. It included prayers for peace and short presentations by the children. There was also a collection for the earthquake appeal.

East Midlands

Derby

The Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby was officially opened by the Duke of Gloucester on 19 October. Although the Centre had been open for business for several months, the project was not finally completed until the end of the summer. Around 100 people were present to hear many messages of congratulations and encouragement preceded by a presentation outlining the history of the project over the 14 years from when the idea was first conceived until the building was completed. The Centre has been funded by the Millennium Commission, matched by donations from individuals, religious and non-religious organisations, the City and the University of Derby. Further information can be found at www.multifaithnet.org

Leicester

The Leicester Mercury reports: Muslim and Christian leaders have been showing off their skills on the football pitch to show how communities can work together. Members of the clergy took on a team of imams at Judgemeanow Community College in January. The charity match was organised by the Muslim and Christian Dialogue Group, an organisation set up to develop links of friendship between the two communities. To ensure fair play, the game was refereed by a member of Leicester's Orthodox Jewish community. Imam Ibrahim Mogra who took part in

the match said: "If families can see how two sets of people, who are as different as chalk and cheese, can come together and have fun, then it will go a long way to educate future generations."

Rev Javaid Iqbal, of St Denys Church, in Evington, who helped to organise the event, said: "Football is a universal game and this match shows how closely our communities are working together."

The Bishop of Leicester, the Right Reverend Tim Stevens, was on the touchline. He said: "This event shows that Muslim and Christian communities are once again finding new ways of relating to each other and getting to know each other." The match finished 5-0 to the imams. All proceeds from the match went towards the Lord Mayor's better health appeal and two development projects in Malawi.

Greater London

Barking and Dagenham

The Barking and Dagenham Faith Forum was launched at a day conference, 'Faith Builds Community' on 17 November after many months of planning by the faith communities. Speakers from different faith groups, plus workshops, lunch and a live band kept people from across the Borough interested and entertained with a varied, day-long programme of events. The Bishop of Barking, the Rt Rev David Hawkins, Muslim scholar Muhammed Sharif Baqa, Jay Lakhani from the Hindu Council, and MPs Margaret Hodge and Jon Cruddas, gave keynote speeches. Forum planning group chairman and organiser Revd Jon Evens outlined the aims and objectives of the group. Barking and Dagenham Council Chief Executive Rob Whiteman, who chaired the afternoon panel, said: "Faith helps to build communities. This ties in with the Council's aim that together we will build communities and transform lives, with cohesion as a positive force for good in the whole community." A special ceremony during the launch involved Jo Richardson Community School pupils and representatives from the Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Christian, Jewish and Baha'i faiths.

Ealing

At the induction of Rabbi Janet Burden at Ealing Liberal Synagogue this autumn, leaders of Ealing's Christian, Sikh and Muslim communities and civic representatives were present as honoured guests, marking the importance for the Synagogue and its congregation of cross-faith understanding and relations.

Tower Hamlets

Residents from all different faiths who live or work on the Canary Wharf estate can now attend services and meetings at the borough's newest prayer room. The Prayer Room is in the Mall in Churchill Place, close to the new Canary Wharf Idea Store and other local amenities. It has also been designed to ensure the needs of disabled people are met and has extra wide doors for wheelchair users. The new room has been donated rent free by the Canary Wharf Group.

The opening ceremony was held on 30 March on the new premises and was attended by representatives of local religious groups and community members. The ceremony included prayers said by representatives of different faiths. Representatives from faith and community groups and organisations spoke on behalf of their groups, on behalf of Christians the Bishop of Stepney – Bishop Stephen Oliver; on behalf of Muslims Hizar Alikhan; on behalf of Buddhists Frederick Payan; and Henk Bourma who is the Chair of the Canary Wharf Prayer Room Steering Committee.

North East

Middlesbrough

A new Council of Faiths has been launched in Middlesbrough. It had its first formal meeting on February 23 at the Jamia Mosque in Waterloo Road. The Council came about after a long process of consultation initiated by the Middlesbrough Community Network, designed to create a Faith Communities Network. The new Council of Faiths will coordinate the activities of a wider Faith Network and enable faith representation on some of the working groups of the Middlesbrough Partnership, to contribute to planning, regeneration and neighbourhood renewal. Plans are also being made to establish an inter faith centre in central Middlesbrough and to develop inter faith work with younger as well as older people. Further information from counselg@fish.co.uk

**SEE THE NEW 'LOCAL
INTER FAITH ZONE' AT
[www.interfaith.org.uk/
local/index.htm](http://www.interfaith.org.uk/local/index.htm)**

Newcastle

Newcastle Council of Faiths was formally launched on 22 October in the presence of some 170 people and is now successfully established. The City Council has provided funds to enable the appointment of a co-ordinator and a programme of activity is under way. The Council of Faiths builds on the earlier work of the Tyne and Wear Racial Equality Council Inter Faith Panel and complements the work of the Newcastle Faith Leaders' Group. Further information from Hari Shukla tel 0191 243 3620.

North West

A regional link meeting for local inter faith organisers was held by the Inter Faith Network in Bolton on 13 December, with participation from groups from Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool, Bolton, Burnley, Greater Manchester, Liverpool, Oldham, Pendle, Preston, Rossendale, Wigan and from regional and subregional bodies including Lancashire Forum of Faiths, Merseyside Council of Faiths and from the Churches Officer for the North West.

Blackpool

Blackpool Faith Forum and SELNET held a conference on 'Growing Spiritual Social Enterprises' in Blackpool on 30 March to look at social enterprise opportunities in Blackpool for faith groups. Examples of faith based social enterprises were showcased during the day.

The Forum, with support from the local authority, has recently undertaken a survey of local faith communities, looking at membership, involvement in community and social action work and use of faith community buildings, and funding issues. The survey also looked at local faith groups' involvement in inter faith work (31% were currently involved). Next steps are to prepare and publish a new faith directory, **Belief in Blackpool** and to work on a draft inter faith plan, 'Faith in the Future'. Further information from Andy Divall, Inter Faith Development Manager at Blackpool City Council: andy.divall@blackpool.gov.uk

Greater Manchester

In Manchester, members of the Muslim Jewish Forum of Greater Manchester (MJFGM) have been exchanging visits. An Eid party was held in a Muslim preparatory school and a Chanukah party at the Menorah Synagogue in Sharton. The MJFGM is co-chaired by Henry Guterman and Manchester's Lord Mayor, Mohammed Afzal Khan.

Nelson

There are two interesting example of 'twinning' projects between places of worship of different faiths in Nelson which may encourage others around the country to initiate similar partnerships.

On Shrove Tuesday (28 February) a group from the Muhammadi mosque visited the Nelson United Reformed Church (and Catholic friends), with which it is now 'twinned'. The Christians and Muslims met for prayers, each in their own buildings, then came together for four brief speeches from Ayesha Jones, Imam Habibur Rheman Chaudhary (from the Mosque), Rev Dale Barton (from Lancashire Churches Together) and Elspeth Smith (from the URC Church) who spoke of the issues of fair trade and presented the mosque with a gift of two hampers of fairly traded goods. All then joined in a meal of meat and potato pie and salads with lime pickle available for those challenged by the bland flavours. This was followed by pancakes (eaten by Christians on Shrove Tuesday when eggs and fat are traditionally used up before the period of Lent).

There is a long standing inter faith project in Nelson called Building Bridges and the evening came about through the building of trusting long term relationships between local faith leaders. This was the second such event in the twinning partnership between the Muhammadi Mosque and the URC church. The first was at the mosque. Both events benefited from a Community Cohesion Grant from Pendle Partnership.

Nelson has a further 'twinning' arrangement between the Central Jamia Ghousia Mosque and Christ Church, Nelson (a church of Methodists and Catholics in partnership) and visits and meetings have taken place across the last year.

South East

Elmbridge

Elmbridge Multifaith Forum have been arranging a series of events revolving around visits to places of worship. February's event took the participants to St Andrew's Church, Cobham where there were presentations on the history of the bible and on Christian beliefs from Rev William Allberry and a guide to the church building by Rev Robert Jenkins.

Brighton and Hove

Brighton and Hove Inter-Faith Contact Group held its 9th AGM on 19 February at the Brighthelm Church and Community Centre, Brighton. Abbot Christopher Jamison of Worth Abbey was the guest speaker on the theme "Offering Sanctuary: The Role of Religion in Britain Today."

Gravesend

Thames Gateway Women's Multifaith Forum held a sell-out social evening in the Miskin Hall in November. 90 members from different faiths, organisations and inter faith groups working in Kent joined in a celebration of festivals of light and hard about the history and traditions of these faith festivals, were entertained by Asian dancing and the music of the Chalk Handbell ringers, and enjoyed a vegetarian supper.

South West

A regional link meeting for local inter faith organisers was held by the Inter Faith Network in Bristol on 28 March. Groups attended from Bath, Beaminster, Bristol, Plymouth, Torbay, Totnes and District, West Somerset and West Wiltshire. There was also participation from the South West Council of Faiths and *faithnetsouthwest*.

Bristol

Bristol Inter Faith Group has received a grant from the Home Office's Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund which will allow the appointment of a part time worker to develop the Group's programme and its faith community links. This post is currently being advertised and they are also looking to rent an office from which the appointed person can work.

West Wiltshire

A new local inter faith body has come into being in West Wiltshire. West Wiltshire Interfaith Group has been going a little over a year and has over twenty members who meet once a month. They have held an event on values which the three Abrahamic faiths hold in common and hosted a variety of talks on themes of conflict and pacifism, spirituality, religions and martyrdom, and on the Buddhist, Sikh, and Baha'i faiths. The Group has also arranged a women's meeting and hope to do so every month because many Muslim women do not find it appropriate to mix socially with men. They also hope to organise a women-only swimming session with female lifeguards of the kind

organised by the Bath Racial Equality Council and Bath and Somerset Council. The Group has agreed to assist Wiltshire Constabulary with their Initial Police Learning and Development programme for new recruits to inform them about faith matters and practices and has organised a two day workshop commencing 2 May. The Group has recently received a grant from the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund which they hope will help their development.

West Midlands

Sandwell multi faith conference

A free one day conference held by the Sandwell Multi-Faith Network on Saturday 18 March, "Faith, Health and Well-being", focused on how faith communities can contribute to the healthcare debate. Guest speakers included representatives from the Department of Health, Primary Care Trust and local faith communities and participants were given an opportunity to consult on the 2010 Health Care Agenda.

Yorkshire and Humber

Calderdale

Calderdale Interfaith Council have published a directory of the faiths and their organisations in Calderdale. Further information from sail.suleman@calderdale.gov.uk

Leeds

Leeds Faiths Forum was relaunched under its new name (it was previously called the Leeds Faith Communities Liaison Forum) at a special event on 5 March at the Leeds Islamic Centre. At the event, Leeds West MP John Battle highlighted the past achievements of the Forum and stressed how important it was for the group to grow and to engage even more deeply with the City's neighbourhoods. A grant from the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund will be helping the Forum do this across the coming year. The Forum is looking for a Development Worker. Post currently for one year. Salary NJC Scale SO1 – SO1 £23,175 - £25,437. Closing date for applications 19 April. Further information from David Randolph-Horn or Pam Butcher at iff@leedschurchinstitute.org or tel 0113 391 7902.

EUROPE AND INTERNATIONAL

Inter Faith Update does not carry coverage of international events unless they have a significant UK connection. The International Interfaith Centre, which services the Network of International Interfaith Organisations is a helpful resource for finding out about international inter faith events and programmes. Contact iic@interfaith-center.org tel 01865 202745.

Iraqi religious leaders meet in London

A conference for religious leaders from Iraq was held in London from 26-29 March at the invitation of Religions for Peace.

Inter Faith Relations: The UK and Europe

ISBN 1 902906 14 4

Looking at the impact of the UK's membership of the European Union on faith communities and the inter faith agenda here.

Report of the 2004 National Meeting. Available from the Inter Faith Network office at £3.00 plus £1 postage and packaging.

RESOURCES

Faiths and Further Education, A Handbook Towards a Whole-College Approach to Chaplaincy for a Pluralist Society

Written and compiled by Helen Thompson

In November 2005 the Learning and Skills Council, in partnership with the National Ecumenical Agency in Further Education, under whose auspices the Faiths in Further Education Forum was established, published this handbook which explores the role and rationale for chaplaincy in an FE context and offers models for organising, funding and managing chaplaincy. It provides a guide through the key areas of chaplaincy activity, including multi faith working. It also offers a basis for a partnership or formal agreement on chaplaincy provision. The publication is available to download from the Learning and Skills Council website: www.lsc.gov.uk or can be obtained from LSC publication enquires at 0870 900 6800. The publication reference is LSC-P-NAT-050589.

Faith as Social Capital: Connecting or Dividing?

Robert Furbey, Adam Dinham, Richard Farnell, Doreen Finneron, Guy Wilkinson with Catherine Howarth, Dilwar Hussain and Sharon Palmer, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Policy Press, 2006.

The UK government has identified faith communities as important sources of 'social capital' in community development and regeneration. But religion is also associated with conflict and division. How far is this faith in 'faith' justified? And how far should faith communities comply? The report assesses the debate and the evidence and summarises the controversies surrounding the idea of 'social capital' and the place of 'faith' in community policy; assesses the contribution of faith communities to social capital that extends beyond bonding to build bridges and links with others in civil society; and identifies policy and practice implications for secular and faith organisations and networks. The research in the report encompasses five major faith traditions across four English regions. It explores the nature and the quality of social capital stemming from faith buildings, association; engagement with governance, and participation in the wider public domain.

Faith, Hope and Clarity: Developing a model of faith group involvement in civil renewal

**Vivien Loundes and Rachael Chapman, Local
Governance Research Unit, De Montfort
University, Leicester.**

This report, published in November 2005, was funded by the Home Office under its Civil Renewal Research Programme. It sets out “to uncover the often implicit – and sometimes competing – rationales for faith group involvement in civil renewal”. The review explores three rationales which it describes as “normative, resources and governance”. It examines the extent to which current policy and practice reflects these three rationales, drawing on documentary analysis and interviews with policy makers and faith group representatives at both national level and in the city of Leicester. The report assesses the relative importance of the three rationales for different stakeholders and proposes a model of the faith group involvement that specifies the relationship between the three rationales, their key components in practice and the challenges they afford to both policy makers and faith communities themselves. The report maps faith involvement in civil renewal identifying the key players and their roles. The report is available from the Local Governance Research Unit at De Montfort University or can be downloaded from www.togetherwecan.info/acc/faith_hope_and_clarity.html.

Presence and Engagement: The Churches’ Task in a Multi-Faith Society

This report from the Inter Faith Consultative Group of the Church of England looks at the task of churches in areas where 10% of the population are from faiths other than Christian. It focuses on the situation of churches in multi faith neighbourhoods, with the aim of re-affirming the commitment of the Church of England’s ministry in these areas, encouraging Church of England dioceses to review their strategies for supporting clergy, and encouraging theological reflection. The report offers the results of the Group’s survey including both anecdotal and statistical data looking at the themes of identity, confidence and sustainability. The report can be downloaded from www.cofe.anglican.org/info/interfaith/presence.pdf

Transcendence: Prayer of People of Faith

**Co-edited by Daniel Favre
and Tony McCaffry, 2005.**

Newly revised and enlarged edition of a resources for multi faith occasions, such as school assemblies and inter faith celebrations, including prayers drawn from all the world’s spiritual traditions. ISBN 0 9536215 5 3. £7.00 plus postage. E-mail alfredagius@hotmail.com for further details on ordering.

Employing People in Higher Education: Religion and Belief: Guidance.

This guidance published by the Equality Challenge Unit provides a comprehensive overview of the current and prospective legal position in the area of religion or belief and offers Higher Education institutions practical advice on preventing discrimination and facilitating good relations between people of different backgrounds on the basis of religion and belief. It reproduces as one of its annexes the Network’s code Building Good Relations between People of Different Faiths and Beliefs.

Promoting Good Campus Relations: Dealing with Hate Crimes and Intolerance

Guidelines published in November jointly by the Equality Challenge Unit, Universities UK and the Standing Conference of Principals to help Higher Education institutions deal with hate crimes and intolerance on campus and describes the current legislative framework on this. It includes case studies which show how intolerant and extremist activity can potentially cause problems on campus and how Higher Education institutions might best deal with them.

Copies of these ECU publications can be obtained from www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/guidancepublications and bookshop.universitiesuk.ac.uk.

DIARY DATES

Local Events

The following are just a few examples of inter faith events happening around the UK in the coming months. To find out more about events in your area, you can contact the nearest local inter faith group. A list of local bodies can be found at www.interfaith.org.uk/locallist.htm

Bath, 24 May. 'The Religions of East Asia'. A talk by Curator Alisa Laxton, 7.30pm at the Museum of East Asian Art, 12 Bennett Street. Further information tel 01225 464640.

Dunblane, 26 April, 'A Dialogue with Judaism', the first in a series of events for 2006 in 'Christianity and Scotland's Other Faiths' programme. Led by Rabbi Nancy Morris of Glasgow New Synagogue. 10.30pm – 3 pm at Scottish Churches House, Dunblane. Booking fee of £16. For reservations, contact Scottish Churches House, Kirk Street, Dunblane FK15 OAJ.

Glasgow, 30 April. Scottish Local Inter Faith Groups Networking Seminar (11am) and national Inter Faith Conference (2pm) in Pollock Park, Glasgow. Further information from Maureen@interfaithscotland.org

Godalming, 12-14 May. World Congress of Faiths retreat at Fintry House. An inter faith discussion on issues of medical ethics. Further information from jtabick@lineone.net

London, 13 May. Inter Faith Quiet Day led by Jay Lakhani. This is an opportunity to share silence across faiths. Lunch is provided. 8am-3pm at the London Inter Faith Centre, 125 Salusbury Road, London NW6. For further information or to register telephone 020 7604 3053.

London, 17 May. 'Faith Communities: Deliverers of Public Services?' Workshop by the Association of London Government with the London Churches Group for Social Action, the London Borough Faiths Network. 2.30-3.30pm 59½ Southwark Street, London SE1. No charge but advance booking essential. Further information from patlogan67@btonpenworld.com

London, 21 May Rabbi Dr Michael Shire and **18 June** Dr Ataullah Siddiqui speaking on 'Prophetic Voices' in Religious Traditions. Part of a series at the Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter. 2.30pm-4.30pm, Sion Centre, 34 Chepstow Villas, London W11 2QZ. Further information tel 020 7313 8236 sioncde@yahoo.co.uk

Faith Foods Yorkshire and Humber Style!

11 June

The Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum is inviting people of different faiths and beliefs in their Region to participate in a Food Festival planned for Sunday 11 June. Sharing food with each other is a way of celebrating diversity and promoting community cohesion. This initiative is part of the Forum's Commitment to advance the contributions of faith in the region, encouraging people to work together, and challenging discrimination and injustice.

Why Food? "First we eat, then we meet" Guru Amardas Sahib

We all enjoy good food. The diversity of the Yorkshire and Humber region and its cultures is reflected in our foods. It is not unusual to be served a Yorkshire pudding filled with Chicken Tikka Masala. Yorkshire pudding, Wensleydale Cheeses, Grimsby Fish, Rothwell Rhubarb, Chicken Tikka Masala, Rice and Peas and more is our fan fare. Food is celebrated in many ways by faith communities. All faith communities keep an open table at meal times and food and hospitality stories from faiths abound. Let us share these stories and our distinctive cuisines with each other with pride, and learn from each other. You can arrange a meal in your local community to bring people of different faiths and beliefs together. It could be a bring and share meal, a picnic in a park, a Bar-B-Q in your garden, Sunday lunch in your home, or a meal in your local worship centre or community centre. Invite neighbours, friends old and new. Eat with each other as a way of meeting with each other to form friendships and foster relationships of respect and trust.

Further information and guidance on holding events from info@yorkshireandhumberfaiths.org.uk

Exhibitions, courses, seminars and conferences

In most cases, there is a registration fee for these events and the contacts listed can provide details.

Until 19 April, Oxford. 'The Via Dolorosa: Multimedia presentation of the Stations of the Cross interpreted by artists of different faiths'. Mon-Sat 9.30-4.30, Sun 1.00-4.30 at Christ Church Cathedral, St Aldgates, Oxford. Admission: £4.50 for adults.

20 April – 8 June, Edinburgh. Basic Introduction to the world faiths, led by members of these. A certificated course, organised by Creative Space and the Edinburgh Inter-Faith Association, for the public and for professionals with a workplace need. £40 (concessions available). 7-8.30pm at St Georges West Church, Shandwick Place, Edinburgh. Further information from www.creativespacesgw.org.uk under 'events'.

27-30 April, Glasgow. Sikh Religious Educational and Interfaith Event, including an inter faith conference on 30 April organised by the Scottish Inter Faith Council: 'Working Together for Humanity'. There will be an opportunity to observe Sikh worship and view an extensive exhibition of the Sikh faith as well as other world faiths. For more information, e-mail knijjar@hotmail.com

30 April – 11 May. Council of Christians and Jews Israel Study Tour 2006: Memory and Modernity. The tour offers an in-depth experience of Israel, including site visits and meeting with people. A visit to the Palestinian territories is usually included in the CCJ study tour. Cost £1,220 (single supplement £200). For further information contact Beryl Norman (tour leader) on 020 8673 9134.

13 May, London. INFORM seminar on 'Spirit, Possession and Exorcism'. 9.30 – 4.30 at the New Theatre, London School of Economics and Political Science. For further information on cost, programme and registration, contact INFORM on 020 7955 7654 or e-mail inform@lse.ac.uk

25 June, Bath. 'Interfaith Matters'. A conference for local faith communities, statutory and voluntary bodies and members of the public to discuss the role of inter faith understanding in helping to build cohesive communities. 2-6pm, the Guildhall, Bath. Further information tel 01225 341921 or 422252.

14 -15 June, London 'Multicultural Britain: from anti-racism to identity politics to...?'. Conference being held by Roehampton University at Southlands College. The aim of the conference is to set the historical context for multiculturalism in the aftermath of '7/7' and assess its long term consequences in the UK and Europe. For information about registering visit www.surrey.ac.uk/Arts/CRONEM or contact Mirela Dumic at M.Dumic@surrey.ac.uk.

29 June, St Albans. 'Coping with Death and Bereavement: A Multi Faith Perspective'. Conference organised by the St Albans City and District Bereavement Network. With David Oliviere, Head of the Education Department at St Christopher's Hospice and speakers from different faiths. 9.30am-3.30pm, School of Law, Hatfield Rd, St Albans. £30, including buffet lunch. Some concessionary places at £10. Further information from m.c.rowegrov@ntlworld.com.

23-26 July, Birmingham. 'Faith, Politics and Society'. A conference hosted by the Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations of the University of Birmingham. Further information from brismes2006@lists.bham.ac.uk

7 - 13 August, Ammerdown Centre, Radstock, near Bath. Residential summer school with the theme of 'Jerusalem in the three faiths: sacred, beloved, contested' run by the Ammerdown Centre in association with the Three Faiths Forum. The leaders for the week will be Rabbi Michael Hilton and Sheikh Bashir Dultz as well as a Christian leader still to be announced. £325 for the week and £240 for students. Some bursaries may be made available to young people and students (bringing the cost down to £115 for them). To find out more or to make a booking, please contact centre@ammerdown.org or tel 01761 433709.

18 September, London

Study day on HIV and AIDS - faith and facts. 8.45a.m – 4.15 p.m. at the Mildmay site in London. £80 for the day, lunch and coffee provided. Further information from Fiona Davison on 020 7613 6314 or e-mail Fiona.davison@mildmay.org

23-24 October, Birmingham

"Seeking the Transformation of a Fractured World". World Congress of Faiths 70th anniversary conference, with Birmingham University. Further information from Dr David Cheetham D.Cheetham@bham.ac.uk

ANNIVERSARIES AND SPECIAL DAYS AND WEEKS

350th Anniversary of the Resettlement of Jews in England

2006 marks the 350th Anniversary of the Resettlement of Jews in England, following the expulsion by Edward I in 1290. For the past year an umbrella group has been working, under the chairmanship of the President of the Board of Deputies, to bring a series of events together and a wide range of activities from the academic to the cultural to the simply entertaining - performances, lectures and publications is taking place. Details on events can be found at www.britishjews350.org.uk/index.php?page=events

Festival of Muslim Cultures

The Festival of Muslim Cultures was launched in Sheffield in January 2006 by HRH the Prince of Wales. The Festival continues until July 2007 with events around the UK. It is working with arts and educational institutions across the UK to promote the mainstreaming of Muslim cultures within UK everyday life. The Festival was created out of the need to encourage a better understanding between Muslims and non Muslims (as a two-way process), to promote respect for Muslim cultures and to demonstrate how culture creates the pathways that connect people of many backgrounds together. For further information see www.muslimcultures.org

2007: the bicentenary of the abolition of slavery

25 March 2007 will mark 200 years to the day that a Parliamentary Bill was passed to abolish the slave trade in the British colonies. A project entitled **set all free** has been established by Churches Together in England to commemorate the bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act. **set all free** will be working with government, statutory bodies and community groups to host a conference and produce materials to make people aware of the bicentenary and is eager for a faith-based dimension to all aspects of the commemoration. More information can be found at www.setallfree.net

The Heritage Lottery Fund is keen to encourage community-based organisations to apply for funding for projects inspired by the Parliamentary abolition of Britain's involvement in the slave trade. A seminar is due to be held on this later in the summer. Further details are available at www.hlf.org.uk/English/InYourArea/London/News/Transatlantic+slave+trade.htm

10 September: Racial Justice Sunday

A day organised by the Churches' Commission for Racial Justice (CCRJ) for Christians and others across Britain and Ireland to learn, think and pray about racial justice, and to celebrate human dignity and diversity. The day helps to raise money for the Racial Justice Fund which supports projects around Britain and Ireland which are working to create better community relations. Information packs cost £3.50 and can be ordered from CTBI Publications, 4 John Wesley Road, Peterborough PE4 6ZP (enquiries sales@mph.org.uk).



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- provides information on faith and inter faith issues;
- advises on multi faith projects and inter faith issues;
- publishes materials to aid work in the religious and inter faith sectors;
- fosters inter faith co-operation on social issues;
- holds regular meetings where social and religious questions of concern to the different faith communities can be examined together;
- links 112 member organisations including: representative bodies from the different faith communities; inter faith organisations; local inter faith groups; and educational and academic bodies



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Inter Faith Network, 8A Lower Grosvenor Place, London SW1W 0EN

Tel: 020 7931 7766

Fax: 020 7931 7722

E-mail: ifnet@interfaith.org.uk

www.interfaith.org.uk



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Commission on Integration and Cohesion publishes Interim Statement

In early November the Commission on Integration and Cohesion published a consultation paper with questions for national bodies, local bodies and individuals and additional sectoral questions, such as those for faith organisations. The Commission published its Interim Statement on 21 February. This offers a short summary of some of the key issues flagged up by respondents to the consultation and

also reflects some of the Commission's thinking so far on these. It also signposts several of the areas the Commission thinks will be important to consider in more detail in its final report, but in an attempt to be brief does not deal with each in full. The interim statement can be found at www.integrationandcohesion.org.uk/Interim_Statement.aspx

(continued on page 2)

Religious dress and symbols

Over the last few months, there has been renewed debate about the wearing in public of items of religious dress and of religious symbols in a religiously diverse society like Britain. A wide variety of views and concerns have been expressed in the course of this. At times these have shown a lack of appreciation of the reasons why religious dress and symbols are significant to the wearers or have made the inappropriate assumption that a person is somehow less 'British' or less of a full member of this society because of items they wear for religious reasons.

The Network's Executive Committee has issued a document, 'Wearing of Religious Dress and Symbols', setting out the wider context for discussion

about religious dress and symbols: the deeply held beliefs which underlie choices about the wearing of these; the need for courteous and sensitive handling of the issues involved; and some of the factors to be taken into account in considering limits on the wearing of particular items for reasons of security, organisational corporate identity or health and safety.

The reflections close with a statement of three basic principles:

- The wearing in public of religious dress and symbols can be an important aspect of an individual's religious identity and discussion about the wearing of these should at all times be conducted in a courteous and sensitive way.

(continued on page 3)

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8A Lower Grosvenor
Place, London
SW1W 0EN

Commission on Integration and Cohesion publishes Interim Statement

(Continued from page 1)

The Commission's programme of visits to projects in the different English regions, consultations, special focus 'round tables', meetings and events will continue until May 2007. So too will its programme of research.

Background note: In August 2005 a proposal to set up a short term Commission on Integration and Cohesion was announced by the Prime Minister as part of a package of responses to the July bombings in London. Subsequently, Charles Clarke, who was then Home Secretary, consulted faith leaders inviting their views on this proposal. It was decided around the turn of the year that the proposal should be modified and that a Commission on Faith should be set up, to be chaired by Charles Clarke himself and plans for this were well advanced by the time when he ceased to be Home Secretary at the time of the Ministerial reshuffle last May. It was intended that this Commission should address a wide ranging agenda of issues relating to the place of faith in the Britain of today with the aim of its reporting before the end of this year. In a change of plan, following the reshuffle in May it was decided to revert to the initial idea of a Commission on Integration and

Cohesion. In June 2006 it was announced by Ruth Kelly, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, that she had asked Darra Singh, Chief Executive of the London Borough of Ealing, to chair a Commission on Integration and Cohesion which will report to her.

The terms of reference of the Commission, which is due to report by June 2007, are to consider how local areas themselves can play a role in forging cohesive and resilient communities, by: examining the issues that raise tensions between different groups in different areas, and that lead to segregation and conflict; suggesting how local community and political leadership can push further against perceived barriers to cohesion and integration; looking at how local communities themselves can be empowered to tackle extremist ideologies; and developing approaches that build local areas' own capacity to prevent problems, and ensure they have the structures in place to recover from periods of tension.

The Commission was asked to undertake its work within the context of existing Government policy and to focus on developing practical solutions for local communities based on the best existing practice. It was also asked to consider the needs of communities defined by a shared characteristic (such as race or faith), which may require regional or national solutions. Recommendations for local areas will cover England only, but will consider issues which affect Scotland and Wales, and good practice from other countries.

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NETWORK NEWS

Religious dress and symbols

(Continued from Page 1)

- A choice to wear religious dress and symbols should be respected wherever other overriding factors such as security or health and safety do not come into play. There are situations in which some compromise is needed. However, any restrictions – whether because of the need to establish personal identity or because of the requirements of a particular job or the wearing of a uniform in accordance with the policy of a school or other corporate body – should only be imposed where these requirements are clearly necessary and after appropriate consultation.
- Careful and sensitive handling of issues linked to the wearing of religious dress and symbols is part of the wider commitment of our society to religious freedom and to valuing diversity alongside the shared pursuit of the common good.

The full document can be found at www.interfaith.org.uk

Reflection document on faith and citizenship

During the last year there has been renewed discussion about the place of faith communities within society, the nature of citizenship, and the different ways we belong to, and help shape, our common society in Britain today. During the Autumn the Network's Office worked with the Executive Committee on a reflection document entitled *Faith, Citizenship and Shared Life in Britain Today*. A draft of this was sent to member bodies for comment in November and also put on the Network's website for wider comment. A final version of the document is under preparation.

Meeting with representatives of Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum, Scottish Inter Faith Council and Inter Faith Council for Wales

A meeting was held on 7 December in the Welsh

National Assembly building in Cardiff between Inter Faith Network staff and representatives of the Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum, the Scottish Inter Faith Council and the Inter Faith Council for Wales (which made the arrangements for the meeting). The meeting was a valuable opportunity to exchange news of developments since a similar meeting held in 2005 in Glasgow and to reflect on the ways in which the relationship between the Northern Ireland, Scottish and Welsh bodies and the work of the Inter Faith Network are currently developing.

Meeting of regional faith forums in England

A meeting of representatives of regional faith forums in England, convened jointly by the Inter Faith Network and the Faith based Regeneration Network, was held in London on 5 December. The meeting discussed the relationship between the work of the forums and other emerging multi faith initiatives; and the relationship between the Network, on the one hand, and the regional faith forums, on the other, and local inter faith initiatives.

The meeting also discussed a paper on the future handling of meetings of regional faith forums and it was agreed that these should continue to be facilitated by the Network and FbRN.

Regional 'link' meeting for local inter faith initiatives

A Network regional 'link' meeting was held, in association with the Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum, for organisers of local inter faith initiatives in the Yorkshire and Humber region in Leeds on 20 February. The meeting took place at the Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha in Beeston which kindly provided, through the Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum, a meeting room and *langar* lunch for participants.

Building Good Relations on Campus

On 30 November the Inter Faith Network, in association with the higher education Equality

Challenge Unit held a consultation meeting on “Building Good Relations on Campus”. The meeting brought together a range of those interested in this topic, including representatives of national student religious bodies.

Participants were welcomed by the day’s chairman, Brian Pearce, the Network’s Director, and by Nicola Dandridge, Chief Executive, Equality Challenge Unit. Harriet Crabtree, the Network’s Deputy Director, gave a presentation looking at inter faith activity in the UK, the significance of good inter faith relations on campus and offered some preliminary reflections on taking this agenda forward. This was followed by national perspectives offered from a range of student organisations on the importance of working for good inter faith relations on campus. Contributors included: Jo Merrygold of the Student Christian Movement; Bijal Bhagwan of the National Hindu Students Forum; David Myers of the Union of Jewish Students; Simrit Sandhu of the British Organisation of Sikh Students; and Sabeen Akhund of the Federation of Student Islamic Societies (FOSIS). Additional input was offered by Richard Cunningham of UCCF (the Christian Unions); Adam Berry of the Catholic Student Forum; Parizad Avari and Tina Mistry of Young Zoroastrians; Alyaa Ebbiary of FOSIS; and Nava Hinrichs of the Baha’i Youth Committee for England.

Moussa Haddad, of the Equality Challenge Unit, then spoke on the role of the Unit and the work it has undertaken recently on promoting good relations on campus, within the context of its work on equality and diversity on campus.

After discussion, a presentation was given by Ronnie Millar, Director, Corrymeela Centre, Ballycastle, of the Corrymeela Community in Northern Ireland about the importance of creating safe spaces for encounter and dialogue.

Co-convenor of the University of Cambridge Faith Forum, Preet Majithia, talked about this recently formed example of a student multi faith forum and Sarah Talcott, Inter-Faith Education Officer at the University of Surrey, gave an overview of work to develop a multi faith student council there and of the wide ranging programme of inter faith activities which she and colleagues are taking forward with support this year from a grant from the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund. This was followed by a presentation from Revd Hugh Shilson-Thomas, National Adviser for Higher Education and Chaplaincy, Church of England, on chaplaincies and their role in helping build good inter faith relations on campus.

A report on the day is under preparation. Further information from ifnet@interfaith.org.uk

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NATIONAL UPDATE

Machinery of Government changes

As part of the machinery of government changes accompanying the Ministerial reshuffle last May the Prime Minister created a new Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) with Ruth Kelly as its Secretary of State. This brought together the responsibilities for regeneration, neighbourhood renewal and local government previously exercised by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, with the communities and civic renewal functions previously undertaken by the Home Office, including the work of its Cohesion and Faiths Unit.

The new Department also has responsibility for equality policy, including policy on race, faith, gender and sexual orientation, where functions were previously split between several Government departments. In consequence, the Women and Equality Unit moved to DCLG from the Department of Trade and Industry and DCLG is the sponsor department for the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights. Responsibility for policy on disability and age equality remained with the Department for Work and Pensions.

Phil Woolas, as one of DCLG's Ministers of State and a former Minister in ODPM, has responsibility for work on community cohesion and faith issues (along with local government policy, local government finance, neighbourhood renewal, supporting people; fire and civil resilience; and cities). He is supported in work on community cohesion and faith by Meg Munn, one of the Parliamentary Secretaries in the new Department. She was previously a Minister in DTI where she was responsible for piloting the Equality Act 2006 through the House of Commons. She is also responsible for women and equalities work and issues relating to gypsies and travellers and planning case work. Baroness Andrews, also a Parliamentary Secretary, is the Department's spokesperson in the House of Lords.

The machinery of Government changes also involved the creation of a new Office of the Third Sector (ie the voluntary and community sector) set up in the Cabinet Office, with Ed Miliband as the Minister with responsibility for its work, reporting to Hilary Armstrong.

Planning for the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights

The Equality Act, which received the Royal Assent a year ago, makes provision for the setting up of a single Commission for Equality and Human Rights. The new body now exists as a legal entity and is due to become operational in October of this year when it will take on the work of the Equal Opportunities (EOC) and Disability Rights Commissions (DRC) and also (as decided in the autumn) of the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), together with responsibilities in the fields of age, religion and belief and sexual orientation, for which there have been no existing commissions of this kind. For some time, the agreed position had been that the CRE would not immediately become part of the CEHR but would do so "no later than 2009". However, it has now been agreed that it will become part of the CEHR at the same time as the EOC and DRC. The Department for Communities and Local Government will be the sponsor department for the new body.

It was announced in September that the Chair of the new Commission is to be Trevor Phillips, then Chair of the Commission Racial Equality. The following Commissioners were appointed in December:

- Kay Allen – Diversity Manager, BskyB
- Dame Jane Campbell – Health and Social Care Policy Adviser
- Kay Carberry – Assistant General Secretary, TUC
- The Baroness Greengross – Chief Executive, International Longevity Centre
- Francesca Klug – Professorial Research Fellow, Human Rights Centre, LSE
- Ziauddin Sardar – Writer and academic
- Ben Summerskill – Chief Executive of Stonewall
- Neil Wooding – Director, Public Service Management Wales, Welsh Assembly Government

Also appointed in December were three 'Transition Commissioners', one from each of the existing equality commissions – who will support the Chair and Commissioners through their knowledge and

experience of equality and diversity issues: Jeannie Drake (EOC); Kay Hampton (CRE) and Bert Massie (DRC). There are further appointments yet to be made for the position of Scottish Commissioner and “up to four GB Commissioners with expertise in business, government and faith and belief issues”.

Dr Nicola Brewer, formerly on the staff of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, has been appointed as the Commission’s Chief Executive and took up post on 1 March. Work is in progress on staffing issues relating to the transfer of staff from the existing Commissions.

The Religion and Belief Consultative Group on Equality and Diversity and Human Rights, described in the last issue of *Inter Faith Update*, has continued to keep in touch with these developments and also with progress on the Equalities Review and Discrimination Law Review.

Equalities Review

The final report of the Equalities Review, chaired by Trevor Phillips, was published on 28 February. The Equalities Review was jointly sponsored by the Equality Minister in the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Minister for the Cabinet Office. It was established to carry out an investigation into the causes of persistent discrimination and inequality in British society. The Equalities Review report recommends a ten step programme for making Britain a fairer and more equal society. These include supporting employers to take positive action, an enforcement regime overseen by the Commission for Equality and Human Rights and targeted action on the most persistent inequalities. Trevor Phillips said: “Today, we report that greater equality would benefit the whole of society. But we also warn that inequality still scars our entire society and holds back too many individuals from realising their potential.” The report can be downloaded from the Equalities Review website:

www.theequalitiesreview.org.uk

Parallel to the Equalities Review, the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) is working on a review to assess how anti-discrimination legislation can be modernised to fit the needs of Britain in the 21st century. More information about the Discrimination Law Review, which is due to publish its proposals shortly, is available on the DCLG’s Women and Equality Unit website: www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk

Discrimination on grounds of religion and belief in the supply of goods and services

Part II of the Equality Act 2006 contains provisions to prohibit discrimination on the grounds of religion and belief in the supply of goods and services and the letting of premises. It had been anticipated that these provisions would be brought into force last autumn, but it is now expected that they will be brought into force this Spring, along with the parallel regulations covering Great Britain to be made under the Equality Act dealing with discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation.

A move to annul the secondary legislation making parallel provision on discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation in Northern Ireland was defeated by the House of Lords on 9 January.

The content of the regulations for Northern Ireland and the consultation on the forthcoming regulations for Great Britain gave rise to sharp exchanges between the Government and the Roman Catholic Church, focusing in particular on the requirement for Catholic adoption agencies in receipt of public funds from local authorities to be required to be willing to place children for adoption with gay couples. In a letter to Tony Blair, the Prime Minister, Cardinal Cormac Murphy O’Connor said that “to oblige our agencies in law to consider applications from homosexual couples as potential adoptive parents would require them to act against the principles of Catholic teaching”. However, the Government refused to provide an exemption to cover the point, although there is to be a transition period to the end of 2008 for the agencies to prepare for the change.

Meetings of the Faith Communities Consultative Council

The last issue of *Inter Faith Update* reported the setting up by the Government of a Faith Communities Consultative Council, bringing together the work of the Inner Cities Religious Council in the then office of the Deputy Prime Minister and of the Steering Group of the Home Office’s Working Together Review. The Council’s Chair is now Phil Woolas, a Minister in the Department for Communities and Local

Government (DCLG). It has representatives on it from the nine faith communities in direct membership of the Network, together with representation from Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and from the offices of the Inter Faith Network and the Faith-based Regeneration Network.

The Council first met on 27 April when discussion focused on its terms of reference. Its second meeting was held on 26 July. This discussed plans for the Government's Commission on Integration and Cohesion; the review by the Treasury and Office of the Third Sector of the role of the third sector in social and economic regeneration; the work of the Immigration Services Commissioner; and the report of the Church of England's Commission on Urban Life and Faith. The Council's third meeting took place on 6 December. The agenda included items on plans for a working group on emergency planning; teenage pregnancy strategy; the role of faith communities in local public partnerships (linked to a recent report by the Church Urban Fund); work on 'preventing extremism together'; and the national reducing reoffending delivery plan (with a presentation by Baroness Scotland, the relevant Home Office Minister).

The Council held its latest meeting on 28 February. An update was received on the work of the Council's Emergency Planning Working Group from Monsignor John Devine (who is chairing this). Members heard and discussed presentations on the work of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion and on its Interim Statement from Sayed Shah, Head of the Commission Team in DCLG; from Terrie Alafat, Director of Housing Strategy and Support Directorate in DCLG, on its work on Supporting People and Chaotic Adults; from David Rayner of the DCLG's Cohesion and Faiths Unit on the work that he is doing on issues relating to the engagement of faith communities with Local Public Partnerships and on a number of other issues relating to local authority engagement with faith and inter faith issues; and from Brian Pearce, Director of the Inter Faith Network, on the role of local inter faith forums.

Meeting of the Faith Communities Consultative Forum

A meeting of the Faith Communities Consultative Forum was held on 1 June. It noted that the Government had decided not to proceed with its

earlier proposals to take powers to close places of worship given the strong support which had been expressed by respondents to its consultation for joint working and information sharing as the most effective way of stopping any abuse of places of worship by extremists. The meeting also noted the outcome of further consultation by the Government on entry requirements for 'ministers of religion', which had led to a distinction being made for this purpose between those with 'pastoral' and those with 'non-pastoral' duties. The meeting discussed the planned Commission on Integration and Cohesion and preparations for the setting up of the Commission on Equality and Human Rights; and heard also a brief presentation on the recently published report by the Church of England's Commission on Urban Life and Faith.

The latest meeting of the Faith Communities Consultative Forum was held on 22 February. Members discussed the relationship of the work of the Forum to the work programme of the DCLG's Faith Communities Consultative Council; the work of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion; the membership pattern of the Inter Faith Network; and heard a presentation from Belinda Pratten of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations about work to develop a link between umbrella organisations in different areas of voluntary sector activity and discussed ways in which the faith sector might best engage with this.

Incitement to religious hatred

The Racial and Religious Hatred Act (which applies only to England and Wales) which received the Royal Assent in February last year following a controversial passage through Parliament, has yet to come into force. It is expected that it will do so this Spring.

Rise in prosecutions for religiously aggravated cases

On 4 December the Crown Prosecution Service's Racist and Religious Incident Monitoring Report for 2005-2006 was published. It showed an increased in prosecutions on the previous year for both types of offences.

Prosecutions for racially aggravated offences rose by 28 per cent with 7,430 defendants, of which the CPS prosecuted 6,123 defendants or 82 per cent. Religiously aggravated cases rose by 26.5 per cent with 43 defendants, of which the CPS prosecuted

41 defendants or 95.3 per cent.

The Director of Public Prosecutions, Ken Macdonald QC said: “Racist and religiously aggravated crimes are particularly nasty because victims are targeted solely because of their identity or beliefs. These crimes don’t just affect individual victims and their families but whole communities.”

Charity news

The Charities Act 2006 received the Royal Assent last November. The Act defines a charity as a body or trust which is for a charitable purpose and is for the public benefit. The descriptions of the main purposes which are charitable include “the advancement of religion”, “the advancement of citizenship or community development” and “the advancement of human rights, conflict resolution or reconciliation or the promotion of religious or racial harmony or equality and diversity”.

In the past the assumption has been that all “religious” charities were acting for the public benefit. This is no longer the case. Both existing charities and organisations seeking charitable status for the first time will need to demonstrate, if their charitable status is linked to “the advancement of religion”, that their work is “for the public benefit”. The Charity Commission has already initiated consultation on the application of this “public benefit” test and it is due to issue a formal consultation document on 7 March. It will be made available on the Commission’s website www.charity-commission.gov.uk

The Charity Commission has recently published *Stand and deliver* which offers guidance for charities delivering public services or contemplating doing so. It comments on the fact that, according to a survey it has carried out, over 40% of charities delivering public services are not achieving full cost recovery. It also comments on the extensive use of one year funding. The Commission’s Chair, Dame Suzi Leather, said in launching the report: “The future for public service delivery by charities needs careful consideration. Charities can bring something unique to service delivery but their independence must not be compromised by short-termism or expediency – either by government or by charities themselves.”

Review of Citizenship and Diversity

Early last summer Sir Keith Ajegbo, the former headmaster of Deptford Green School in London, was invited to carry out an independent review, helped by a small team, of the way in which issues of identity and diversity are currently addressed in schools in the context of Citizenship Education. The report of the review was published on 25 January. The report can be downloaded at http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/DfES_Diversity_&_Citizenship.pdf

Education Secretary Alan Johnson has accepted Sir Keith’s key recommendation that there should be a new strand in Citizenship education for pupils aged between 11 and 16 on ‘Identity and Diversity: Living together in the UK’, with a focus on the historical understanding of issues that shaped British life today and discussing shared values. The report recognises the role which Religious Education can play in contributing to this.

The main new elements in Citizenship will be:

- encouraging critical thinking about ethnicity, religion and race, with an explicit link to political issues and values;
- using contemporary history to illustrate thinking on contemporary issues related to citizenship; and
- an understanding of the make-up of the UK, immigration, Commonwealth and Empire, the European Union and extending the franchise.

Alan Johnson also accepted the review’s recommendations:

- that there should be a national “Who we think we are” week which will be the starting point for schools to launch local projects, cultural celebration, debates on identity and values – this would be an annual ongoing event; and
- that schools should be active in “twinning” with other schools of different ethnic, cultural, social and religious backgrounds so children can meet and work together on various activities.

The second of these points had been stressed in evidence submitted to the review from the Inter Faith Network office in line with the report of last year’s seminar, held by the Network in association with the Citizenship Foundation, on “Faith, Identity and Belonging: Educating for Shared Citizenship”, which is mentioned in the review’s report.

QCA secondary curriculum review

On 5 February the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) published a review of the secondary curriculum for 11-14-year-pupils in England with an online consultation on proposed changes to the national curriculum at key stage 3 through this review. The revised programmes of study and supporting materials can be viewed online at

www.qca.org.uk/secondarycurriculumreview along with more information about the consultation. The consultation runs from 5 February until 30 April prior to final Ministerial decision in early June and implementation from September 2008.

Alan Johnson, Secretary of State for Education and Skills, said: "The new draft Curriculum is designed to create greater flexibility for schools so they can ensure pupils master the basics as well as offer more stretching opportunities for those who excel". He added that "the curriculum should evolve to meet a rapidly changing world, and enable teachers to teach in a way that will continue to interest and enthuse their pupils. These proposals move us away from a 'one size fits all' curriculum to one that offers more flexibility to tailor teaching to pupils' needs and aspirations. More flexibility for teachers, more interesting for pupils."

Schools are legally required to teach RE according to their local agreed syllabus or, in schools with a religious character, according to their governors' policy. However, there are no statutory programmes of study for RE at national level. In 2004, the Department for Education and Skills and the QCA published a non-statutory national framework for religious education, to be used by local agreed syllabus conferences for the development of agreed syllabuses for RE, and by faith communities for the development of RE programmes in their schools.

The non-statutory national framework for RE is included in the revised curriculum outlined in the Review in two forms: the current form, reflecting the structure of the 1999 national curriculum; and a re-presented form, reflecting the structure of the revised secondary curriculum. The content is the same in both versions of the framework but the re-presentation is designed to help ensure coherence across subjects and across the curriculum, and ensure clear progression in the transition between key stages. Inter faith issues therefore remain, as the non-statutory national framework indicated an

important area for students to learn about. The re-presentation is currently in draft form and has a restricted distribution. www.qca.org.uk/secondarycurriculumreview/subject/ks3/re/approaches/index.htm

New national centre for Religious Education being developed

RE Online reports that it is intended is to transform the closed Wren church of St Nicholas Cole Abbey south of St Paul's Cathedral into a national centre for Religious Education. The plan is for a centre with its multi-purpose hall, offices, resource room, café/restaurant and display areas which will become the hub for national work on RE. It will be linked electronically to RE teachers throughout the country, provide a focus for RE teachers wherever they are working and will be a showcase for RE nationally and internationally. It is intended that the centre will also be the home of the Religious Education Council. A design has been prepared by architect Maxwell Hutchinson and plans have been submitted recently to the City of London planners. A £7million pound fundraising programme is about to start. £5.5million of this is for converting the building. Full details of the proposal and design can be seen at www.culham.ac.uk/coleabbey.

The future role of the third sector in social and economic regeneration – interim report

In his 2006 Budget Gordon Brown, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, launched a review looking at the vital future role third sector organisations, such as social enterprises, voluntary and community groups, and charities play in society. To inform the review the Chancellor promised the largest ever consultation with the third sector. It involved over 2,000 people, representing over 1,000 organisations across the country and included a variety of regional events and targeted events for equalities and faith groups, social enterprises, the private sector and local government.

On 6 December an interim report on the review was published, "The future role of the third sector in social and economic regeneration". It can be downloaded at www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/pre_budget_report/prebud_pbr06/other_docs/prebud_pbr06_odthirdsector.cfm. In his Pre

Budget Report in the House of Commons on the same day, the Chancellor set out the main findings from the consultation and announced:

- a commitment from Government to see three-year funding settlements passed to third sector organisations as the norm rather than the exception;
- a community assets fund of £30m to enable communities and community groups to take on the management and ownership of assets;
- allocation of an extra £6.5 million within the Safer and Stronger Communities fund in Local Area Agreements, with a focus on building the capacity of local community groups and to help strengthen the voice of the local third sector.

The review is continuing, in consultation with the third sector, with a view to setting out “a common vision for the partnership between Government and the third sector”.

House of Lords reform?

On 7 February the Government published a White Paper, ‘The House of Lords: Reform’, “to set the stage for the free votes on the composition of a future House of Lords promised in the Government’s 2005 manifesto”. It proposes that a reformed House of Lords should be a hybrid House, part elected and part appointed by a new and independent Statutory Appointments Commission; and that the representation of the Church of England should continue in the new House.

The reform of the House of Lords has been under discussion for many years. A Royal Commission on this issue published in January 2000 a report entitled *A House for the Future*, which included detailed recommendations relating to faith community representation in any reformed second chamber. In a subsequent White Paper, published in November 2001, the Government proposed that the representation of the Church of England in the House of Lords should be reduced from 26 to 16 but did not accept the Royal Commission’s recommendations for formal representations for other denominations and religions on the grounds that “the practical obstacles are simply too great. ... Most other denominations and faiths do not have a hierarchical structure which deliver readily

identifiable representatives. There are many more denominations and faiths than could be accommodated by the numbers proposed,” (ie by the Royal Commission which had suggested that there should be 26 representatives of the Church of England and other Christian denominations and that the proposed Appointments Commission “should ensure that at any one time there are at least five members of the Second Chamber specifically selected to be broadly representative of the different non-Christian faith communities.”).

The Government’s new White Paper says that “it is important that faith communities are represented in the House of Lords. ... It is... right for there to continue to be special representation of the Church of England in the reformed Lords. ... but it would be difficult to justify retaining the current number of 26 Lords Spiritual. ... It is equally important that a reformed House of Lords reflects the wider religious make up of the United Kingdom, though the formal nominated representation of particular faith groups may not be possible. ... The Government will look carefully at how the views of those of faith and those of none can be represented in a reformed House of Lords. This will of course only be realistically possible if there is a significant appointed element in a reformed House.”

It remains to be seen what views are expressed by Parliament in the forthcoming debates on the White Paper and what legislation the Government brings forward in due course in the light of these.

Holocaust Memorial Day

This year, the UK’s national commemorative event to mark Holocaust Memorial Day was in England and was hosted by Newcastle upon Tyne. Its theme was that of HMD 2007: ‘The Dignity of Difference’. The event took place on 28 January at the Theatre Royal. The programme included personal testimony, song, poetry, music, film and speeches. Sir Jonathan Sacks, Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth, and Ruth Kelly, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, joined a range of other speakers, including Auschwitz survivor Harry Nagelsztajn and Mary Blewitt from the Rwandan Survivors Fund, to remember the victims of the Holocaust and other genocides, and



to highlight the importance of respecting difference throughout society. Further details of the event can be found at www.hmd.org.uk

Across the UK an estimated 25,000 people attended 600 events, many of which had an inter faith dimension. For example, in the London Borough of Redbridge, the Borough's Faith Leaders, Councillors, Officers, and members of the Jewish community and other communities gathered in the specially dedicated Holocaust Memorial Garden in Valentines Park, Ilford, to mark HMD and show their respect for victims of the Holocaust and all genocides. In Wolverhampton, a multi faith service was organised at the city's Cenotaph in St Peter's Gardens. At the Cenotaph in Swindon a short ceremony took place with participation from members of different faith groups and town dignitaries, including the Mayor, who spoke and laid a wreath. After this, at the Quakers' Friends Meeting House, Eastcott Hill, there was a time for further reflection and contemplation with speakers from different faith groups and community groups in Swindon.

Walsall Multi Faith Forum and Walsall Council marked Holocaust Memorial Day with a special service on Saturday 27 January at The New Art Gallery, Walsall, attended by representatives of local faith groups and the Council. The event was held to bring people of different faiths and backgrounds together to focus on, or pray for, peace and reconciliation. It included a short interview with Marcianne Uwimana, who lived through the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 before she came to live in the area.

Telford and Wrekin Council organised an HMD exhibition, 'The Long Goodbye', about the experiences of 10,000 children who left Nazi Germany. This was followed by an evening service where there was music, readings and presentations by representatives of different faiths and community groups. In Plymouth, the Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity held a Holocaust Memorial evening of reflection, with readings and music, in the presence of the Lord Mayor. In Brighton, the Jubilee Library hosted a small exhibition depicting the experiences of European Gypsies during World War II. This was arranged by the Traveller Education Service and Friends, Families and Travellers and there was also a screening of a short film 'Sticks and Stones' in which Gypsy children describe the abuse they suffer today. Lancashire County Council held an exhibition to mark Holocaust Memorial Day. There

was also a Book of Commitment to sign on behalf of the people of Lancashire plus a selection of library books with a reading list and workshops were held with young people, youth workers, librarians and members of the community in the run up to HMD.

Holocaust Memorial Day has a special significance for York where, linked to the commemoration, a candle vigil remembered the destruction of some 150 Jews at Clifford's Tower in 1190. Prayers and poems were read to mark the occasion.

In Northern Ireland, a Holocaust Memorial Day commemoration was organised by the Office of First and Deputy First Minister in partnership with Lisburn City Council. This provided local community representatives with the opportunity to reflect on the meaning and relevance of HMD. A number of other HMD linked events also took place in Northern Ireland, such as the event held by Belfast City Council Event looking at the impact that the Holocaust and the events of the second World War have had, and continues to have, on local people in Belfast. Two members of Belfast City Council's Youth Forum, who were part of a recent Council visit to Auschwitz and Birkenau, shared some reflections on this experience and a DVD documenting the experiences of 92 year old Rev Dr Ray Davey, who was a prisoner of war, was shown. He followed on from his experiences by founding the Corrymeela Community for peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland. Millisle, a small village in Co. Down was a final destination for many Jewish children who were evacuated from Europe during the second world war. The children of the school reenacted these events and produced a DVD telling this story and excerpts from this was also shown.

In Scotland, Anne Frank's cousin joined a memorial service to mark the deaths of millions of Jews persecuted during the Nazi Holocaust. Bernd 'Buddy' Elias, a cousin of Anne and Margot Frank, visited Kirkcaldy as part of the town's Anne Frank and You festival programme which ran throughout January and was organised by Fife Council, Adam Smith College, Fife and other public sector partners. In Aberdeen, over 100 people attended an HMD event at The Tunnels, organised this year by Grampian REC (GREC) with funding from Aberdeen City Council. A range of speakers shared their experiences along with music and a variety of food from around the world.

In Wales, Cardiff Council's annual ecumenical service to mark HMD was held at the Assembly Room. Representatives from schools throughout the city participated in the service, which included

interdenominational readings and prayers. A candle was lit in memory of the victims of genocide during the service, which was led by Revd Stewart Lisk. Cardiff County and the Vale of Glamorgan Youth Orchestra and Youth Choir gave performances during the service while dignitaries laid official wreaths of remembrance. Alan Schwartz, Chairman of the South Wales Jewish Representative Committee, joined Revd Lisk to give a departing Levitical Blessing. In Swansea, Swansea Council and the city's Faith Forum organised an HMD event at the Dylan Thomas Centre to promote good community relations and racial harmony in the area. Speakers included Holocaust survivor Ellen Davis; Uzo Iwobi, a commissioner for racial equality; Faith Forum chairperson, Rev Alan Bayes; and Norma Glass, a member of Swansea's Jewish community.

The Muslim Council of Britain continues to decline to be represented at HMD events on the basis that it does not see this as sufficiently inclusive of all genocides. Its Central Working Committee is currently holding a consultation with its 400 plus affiliate bodies about the issue.

Bolton City Council decided to hold an event as part of a genocide memorial day in June rather than to mark HMD, on the basis that this would be more inclusive, but flew its flag at half mast on HMD. Lord Janner, Chairman of the Holocaust Educational Trust, told the Jewish News: "I have no objection to having a Genocide Memorial Day but it should not be in place of a Holocaust memorial." "Other massacres", he added, "are included in the commemorations."

The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust has announced that Liverpool had been chosen as UK host city for HMD in 2008.

Queen's Christmas Day broadcast highlights contribution of faith communities

The Queen, in her Christmas Day broadcast recorded at Southwark Cathedral, urged greater efforts to bridge the generation gap. In her speech she focused on the relationship between different generations, what old and young have to offer each other, and how all faiths highlight the need to nurture and guide young people, and to encourage respect for elderly people. The Queen said: "It is very easy to concentrate on the differences between the religious faiths and to forget what they

have in common – people of different faiths are bound together by the need to help the younger generation to become considerate and active citizens."

Jewish Community marks 350th anniversary

During 2006, the Jewish community celebrated its 350th year of continuous presence in Britain since resettlement in 1656 under Oliver Cromwell after their expulsion during the Middle Ages. Celebrations included a special celebration at Bevis Marks synagogue in the City of London, addressed by Prime Minister Tony Blair; a reception hosted by the Queen at St James's Palace; a dinner at the Mansion House and a cultural fair at Trafalgar Square.

At the royal reception at St James's Palace on 28 November, Sir Jonathan Sacks, Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth, presented the Queen with a *hanukia* and Rabbi Tony Bayfield of the Reform Movement presented a *kiddish* cup to Prince Philip. Sir Sigmund Sternberg, co-chair of the 350th Anniversary Steering Group commented, "I have been especially pleased by the way in which Jewish communities countrywide have joined together in the 350 celebrations, and there can be no higher accolade than this reception hosted by the Queen and Prince Philip. In our celebrations, we are not only marking a special anniversary in the history of this community but we are sending out a message to new communities, still struggling to find their way in Britain, that service and commitment to crown and country do not require a loss of cultural or religious identity. We are no longer Englishmen of the Jewish persuasion but, proudly, British Jews."

A special booklet to commemorate the anniversary, edited by Zaki Cooper, *Living and Giving: The Jewish Contribution to Life in the UK 1656-2006* can be ordered from 350@bod.org.uk or downloaded from www.britishjews350.org.uk/uploads/LivingGiving.pdf

One World Week

One World Week is an annual opportunity to join a world-wide movement of people taking action for justice locally and globally. It aims to enable groups at local level to work across boundaries such as culture and is also about stimulating

imaginative activities which nurture values of *ubuntu* (an African term for 'active togetherness'). The theme for OWW 2006 was 'Mind the Gap', which focused on the gaps between the world's rich and poor, between words and actions and between 'friends' and 'enemies' in a world divided by conflict.

Numerous local groups and schools across the country marked the occasion during the month of October, celebrating the diversity of cultures; learning and sharing in caring for the earth and its resources; and taking action for justice, equality, peace and fullness of life for all. Activities ranged from talks, discussions and workshops to concerts, art exhibitions and poetry competitions. Some had an inter faith dimension. For example, Chelmsford OWW's inter faith celebration, in the presence of the Mayor at the Friends' Meeting House. Members of various faith and community groups gave reflections, readings, music and prayers on the theme 'Mind the Gap', looking at environmental, poverty and diversity issues. In St Albans, the Parish Church of St Michael organised an education programme during the month of October with four speakers from different faiths, focusing on dialogue between the Christian faith and those other faiths with each having an opportunity to understand and learn from the other. The programme culminated during One World Week with a Muslim speaker.

CSV Make a Difference Day

CSV (Community Service Volunteers) is the largest volunteering organisation in the UK. 'Make a Difference Day' (MDD) is a campaign which it runs annually. It is the UK's largest single day of volunteering. Over 100,000 people across the UK take part, giving time instead of money to improve communities. The 11th Make a Difference Day took place between 21 October and 4 November (according to local arrangements).

Among the bodies which took part were around 30 groups which identified themselves as 'faith-based' and, between them, involve around 860 volunteers. Many other people of different faiths also took part in activities not specifically 'faith based'. Some of the activities highlighting the faith and inter faith dimension included a multi faith cooking and gardening project organised by the Dashmesh Sikh Community Centre in Manchester; the Spitalfields City Farm (London) project where Israeli and Palestinian students joined other volunteers on the farm to help brighten up local park, Allen Gardens; and an activity for men

aiming to help them improve their parenting skills, interact more with their children and share their experiences with other dads which was organised by St Andrew's Church in Plymouth. Muslim Youth Helpline reached out to imprisoned Muslim women through their CSV MD Day activity where the Helpline's volunteers collected donated gifts and information on where to get support after their release, which they packed into boxes and sent to prisoners for Eid.

Remembrance service for victims of Tsunami Disaster

The London Buddhist Vihara organised a 2nd year remembrance service on 26 December for people of all faiths for those who lost their lives in the 2004 disaster.

Hindu bodies oppose possible European ban on swastika symbol

On 1 January Germany took over the EU Presidency for 6 months. Early in January, Germany indicated that it wanted to harmonise rules throughout the 27-member bloc for dealing with Holocaust deniers and for punishing displays of the symbol of Adolf Hitler's Nazi party, the swastika, banned in Germany and several other states. The proposed ban on the swastika was strongly opposed by national Hindu representative bodies in the UK and by Hindu groups in Holland, Belgium and Italy and, in setting out plans for an EU-wide anti-racism law at the end of January, Germany said it would not seek to prohibit 'specific symbols such as swastikas'.

This was the second time in recent years that a ban on the swastika has looked imminent. It was under consideration in 2005 but EU legislators decided against the blanket ban proposed and suggested instead that member states tackle the problem individually. At the end of February 2005, the UK government said it would not pursue a ban on the swastika as the Home Office said that Britain's current race hate laws were sufficient to prevent improper use of the swastika. Holocaust Educational Trust chairman Lord Janner highlighted the difficulty of banning the symbol. "Having been a war crimes investigator in Germany and hating the swastika symbol I would love to have it banned, but it is totally impossible in the UK. Not least because of its perfectly proper

use by my Hindu friends.”

Background Note: The swastika (sanskrit *svastika*) is a cross with its arms bent at right angles to either the right or left. The symbol has been used by a variety of cultures throughout the ages as a sign of good fortune and stability and is often seen in Hindu architecture and Indian artwork. It connotes well being and blessing.

Conferences to combat extremism

On 14 December, a national conference, ‘Tackling Extremism Together: Building Safer and Stronger, Cohesive Communities’, was held in London. It was organised by Neil Stewart Associates in association with the Muslim Council of Britain and Policy Review Magazine to bring together representatives from local government, the police, various educational institutions and communities to consider effective approaches to improve cohesion and strengthen relationships.

On 22 February, the British Muslim Forum and Birmingham City Council held a conference, Islam in Britain: Policy to Action, in Birmingham, hosted by Councillor Rudge and Zareen Ahmed Chief Executive of the BMF. The conference was addressed by Ruth Kelly, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. The aim of the conference was to develop partnerships between the community and the public sector to tackle issues of alienation, disadvantage and extremism. There were presentations setting out the theological, juridical and spiritual context for strategies to address issues of citizenship, civic engagement and de-radicalisation. Workshops explored questions relating to the implications of *Shari'ah* within a modern western democracy, faith based citizenship and the role of civic institutions in policy and engagement.

New funding for local authorities to tackle extremism

The Communities Secretary, Ruth Kelly, announced on 7 February the launch of a new funding programme aimed at overcoming violent extremism in England. Financial support will be given to support local councils and communities in increasing their role in isolating extremists. The new £5 million Preventing Violent Extremism

Pathfinder Fund will support local authorities and the guidance sets out how they can play a key role in building strengthened partnerships with the peaceful majority in communities to isolate and defeat violent extremism. Government Offices are working with around 50 local authorities, primarily from main urban areas, with the guidance to develop programmes of activities which the new fund will support. They will work in partnership with Muslim communities in bringing forward proposals. The guidance indicates that partnerships are to be with ‘...other agencies locally – including the police, third sector and local Muslim (and perhaps other faith) organisations.’ *Preventing Violent Extremism Pathfinder Fund, Guidance Note for Government Offices and Local Authorities in England*, is available at: www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1506075

Evangelical Alliance and MCB meet

Dr Abdul Bari, Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain and Dr Manazir Ahsan, Chair of MCB’s Mosque and Community Affairs Committee met on 6 February with Dr Joel Edwards, General Director of the Evangelical Alliance and Dr David Muir, its Public Policy Director, for an informal opportunity to share information about their work and activities.

Hindu-Christian Forum

The Hindu-Christian Forum held a meeting at the St Philips Centre in Leicester on 3 March. To help clarify its aims and broaden its base it is currently developing a ‘listening exercise’ modeled on the Christian Muslim listening exercise which led to the formation of the Christian Muslim forum in 2004. The Forum is also planning to hold a national conference on Hindu-Christian dialogue in April 2008.

The Hindu-Christian Forum, which began its work in 2004, is a national forum involving several Christian denominations and a range of Hindu bodies. Current Co-Chairs are Canon Andrew Wingate and Dr Girdhari Lal Bhan. Its purpose is to facilitate understanding between Hindus and Christians in the context of their living together in a positive way in Britain. A significant achievement early in its life was to agree a statement of good practice in relation to issues of mission and conversion. Further information from Canon Andrew Wingate

andrew.wingate@stphilipscentre.co.uk or
Sudarshan Bhatia info@nchtuk.org

Hindu-Christian dialogue

On 9 November, the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies held a conference at Regent's Park College in association with the Centre for Christianity and Culture. This one-day symposium brought together Christian, Buddhist, and Hindu perspectives on the theme of Desire. This was part of a series of Comparative Theology seminars and symposia in which scholars compare Hindu ideas with other theologies.

Christian Muslim Forum statement on religious festivals and celebrations

On 12 November, the Christian Muslim Forum issued a statement by the Forum's Chair, Rt Revd David Gillett, and Vice-Chair, Dr Ataullah Siddiqui, emphasising the value of all religious communities in the UK and the importance of recognising major festivals within each community. This was in response to various calls to move away from public celebration of festivals, such as Christmas, on the basis that these could offend members of other religious traditions. The CMF statement stressed that Christmas is a celebration of the birth of Jesus and this significant aspect of the Christian heritage should be acknowledged in national life. It said "We believe that our open and democratic society should promote freedom of religion in the public space rather than negatively restrict its observance... This is a positive way of affirming the public contribution that people of different traditions bring to our society." The statement can be found at www.christianmuslimforum.org/downloads/Religious_Festivals.pdf

Christian and Muslim youth workers engage

On 22 February, nearly 100 youth workers Christian and Muslim youth leaders from around the UK came together in for the Christian Muslim Forum 'getting engaged' event at the Second City Suite in Digbeth to explore how they can 'get engaged' with each other, share their resources and help young Christians and Muslims to contribute

better to community cohesion. The day event included presentations from Steve Chalke, founder of Faithworks; Muhammad Khan, founder of Muslim Youthwork Foundation and lecturer at Birmingham University; as well as discussion and interactive workshops with trainers Andrew Smith and Wahida Shaffi, the respective Christian and Muslim youth specialists for the Christian Muslim Forum. For more information about 'getting engaged' and other Christian Muslim Forum youth work, see www.christianmuslimforum.org/youth.asp

Ahimsa Day

The Institute of Jainology celebrated Ahimsa Day in the House of Commons on 1 November. This year's meeting, with the theme, 'Ahimsa and the Environment', attracted over 35 MPs. Invitations were extended to the major faith communities and representatives from many of these attended the event. Speakers included Elliot Morley, MP, Special Representative for Global Climate Change Affairs in the Office of the Prime Minister; Martin Palmer, Secretary-General of Alliance for Religions and Conservation (ARC); John Vidal, Environment Editor of *The Guardian*; and Harshad Sanghrajka, of the Institute of Jainology.

World Congress of Faiths holds 70th anniversary conference

On 23-24 October, the 70th anniversary conference of the World Congress of Faiths, 'Seeking Transformation for a Fractured World', was held at Selly Oak, Birmingham in association with the University of Birmingham. It was sponsored by the Hibbert Trust. 'Religion' is sometimes accused of being responsible for the world's violence and the aim of contributors was to draw attention to the potential for 'religion', and in particular for 'inter faith work', to become part of the solution to conflict.

Contributors to the conference included Professor Scott Appleby, Director of the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana, USA; John Hick, Fellow of the Institute for Advanced Research in Arts and Social Sciences, University of Birmingham, UK; Jim Kenney, Director of the Interreligious Engagement Project, Chicago; Perry Schmidt-Leukel, Professor of Systematic Theology and

Religious Studies and Chair of World Religions for Peace, University of Glasgow; Professor Gurharpal Singh, Nadir Dinshaw Professor of Interreligious Relations, University of Birmingham, UK; Dr Geraldine Smyth, OP, Irish School of Ecumenics; and Professor Jonathan Webber, UNESCO Professor of Jewish and Interfaith Studies, University of Birmingham. Further information about the topics which they addressed can be found at www.worldfaiths.org/2006%20Events.htm Some of the conference contributions will be published in *Interreligious Insight*, the journal of the WCF (www.interreligiousinsight.org).

Muslim women's inter faith initiative

A Muslim Women's Network for inter faith work was launched at the Markfield Conference Centre, Leicestershire on 25 February. Speakers included Sughra Ahmed, the Coordinator of the Women in Faith Project; Irshad Baqui, Executive Director of the Islamic Foundation; the Inter Faith Network's Deputy Director, Harriet Crabtree; and Wahida Shaffi of the Muslim Christian Forum. There were also testimonials from Farah Alvi and Nazneen Amin-Belmour, who had been studying on the Women in Faith course (see below). The Network will work to promote, support and enhance inter faith dialogue. Further information from Sughra Ahmed, tel. 01530 244 944 ext 222, email: sughra@islamic-foundation.org.uk

The new Network emerged from a course which The Islamic Foundation, funded by the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund, ran over six weekends finishing in February. The course, 'Women in Faith' was designed to give the participants training in the field of faith, a chance to learn about a variety of faiths in the UK and to visit places of worship and gain understanding of a number of dimensions of worship and prayer. The women have also studied extensively some of the issues and concepts which relate to Muslims in Britain as well as the wider communities. Participants also received specialist training on working with the media and setting up inter faith projects. Participants were awarded a certificate from The Islamic Foundation.

Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund

On 6 March, Communities Minister Phil Woolas announced grants totalling more than £4.3 million to 343 organisations to promote a common sense of citizenship, following bids from more than 1,200 organisations to the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund. This is the second round of a £13.8 million fund to help organisations promote community cohesion and shared citizenship at a local community level. Applications came from a wide range of faith, inter faith and non-faith based community groups. A full list of the 343 organisations that have been recommended for funding is available at www.communities.gov.uk

Announcing the grants, Phil Woolas said "Faith organisations play an important role in our communities and know their communities well. We want to draw on the expertise of faith, inter faith and non faith based community groups and do all we can to support them". He commented that "This local approach will help reach directly into communities to promote shared citizenship and integration. It is vital that we find ways of bringing people from different faiths and cultures together to understand their differences and celebrate their shared experiences."

The fund is administered by the Community Development Foundation (CDF) www.cdf.org.uk The Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund was first announced in the Government's 'Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society' strategy in January 2005.

The Community Development Foundation (CDF) is currently providing support to organisations funded in Round 1 of the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund (FCCBF) through its own staff and a group of CDF consultants. As many projects as possible are being visited and CDF is using a range of case studies and learning in its reporting of the fund. Some were drawn on at its forthcoming conference: *Integration: if not now, when?* which took place on 8 March in London.

CDF is also producing a publication "Setting up for success, a practical guide for community organisations" for FCCBF and Connecting Communities Plus, Community Grants (also administered by CDF) funded organisations as well as unsuccessful applicants to each of the funds. This publication builds on CDF's experience of supporting community groups and those it is funding. It has also been asked to audit 10% of those who received FCCBF funding in

Round 1, and to ask all funded organisations to complete a second evaluation questionnaire so it can identify progress / trends they have made and therefore the overall impact of the fund.

CDF received over 1,200 applications for Round 2 of FCCBF by the closing date. Notification of awards is expected in the first week of March once funding has been approved by the Minister for Communities and Local Government.

New centre aims to build bridges between Jews and Muslims

The Centre for the Study of Muslim-Jewish Relations (CMJR), has been established in Cambridge by Dr Edward Kessler and Dr Amineh Hoti. Dr Hoti will be its first Director. CMJR is a sister organisation to the existing Centre for Jewish-Christian Relations (CJCR).

The Centre was opened on 1 February by Sir Jonathan Sacks, Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth. In his presentation he said “We as Jews, Christians and Muslims have to keep talking. It doesn’t matter if we don’t agree...Difference makes a marriage work.”

The objectives of the CMJR include the development of the UK’s first ever curriculum on the study of Jewish-Muslim relations at undergraduate and postgraduate levels and an examination of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, and the training of Jewish and Muslim lay leaders as well as rabbis and imams. Its programme begins in September. The Centre will, like CJCR, be under the auspices of the new Woolf Institute (for further information about the Institute see www.cjcr.cam.ac.uk/news/mk3leaflet.pdf).

Flexible Interfaith Education Programme launched by CJCR with CMJR and CCJ

In October CJCR launched the Flexible Interfaith Education Programme, working in partnership with the Centre for the Study of Muslim-Jewish Relations and the Council of Christians and Jews. The project has been funded by the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund to provide an educational resource in inter faith relations and citizenship. FIEP brings together a cross section of

local communities’ cultural, religious and professional groups including police, teachers, clergy, local government and members of different faith communities to develop their skills in inter faith dialogue, improve their understanding of the inter faith encounter and learn to deal with difference in their community. The first of the FIEP events took place in Newcastle in the autumn and the second in February in Manchester (launched by the Lord Mayor) and in Hillingdon in London (launched by the Mayor, who is also participating in the course). FIEP will also be going to Birmingham,. For more information please see www.cjcr.cam.ac.uk or contact Esther Haworth ech40@cam.ac.uk or 01223 742178

Council of Christians and Jews develops new programme of work

A number of new events and projects have been set up recently by CCJ, following a re-structuring of its work. These include a programme of seminars for Christian clergy and theological students under the ‘Yehi Or’ heading (Hebrew for ‘Let there be light’). One of these will take place in conjunction with the Three Faiths Forum at Sarum College on ‘Visions of the Other’, looking at discourses in society and texts from Jewish, Christian and Muslim perspectives. Others include a Jewish/Christian text study day for ordinands, to be held at Ripon College, Oxford, and a 10-day seminar for Christian clergy at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. Also under the ‘Yehi Or’ banner, CCJ is carrying out a nationwide survey of attitudes of church-goers today to Jews and Judaism, and matters of inter faith dialogue in general. Currently a pilot survey has been carried out of Anglicans and Free Churches in four main areas. Further information about CCJ’s work can be found at www.ccj.org.uk/

In February, CCJ Youth Programmes ran a study tour to Israel and Bethlehem for young Jewish and Christian educators. Participants visited Israeli and Palestinian schools and looked at opportunities for educating for co-existence. Further information about CCJ’s Youth Programme can be obtained from Louise Mitchell louise@ccj.org.uk

Faith, Homophobia and Human Rights conference

A one-day conference on Faith, Homophobia and Human Rights took place in London on 17 February. It was opened by Cllr Brian Coleman, Chair of the Greater London Assembly. The opening speech was delivered by Lord (Chris) Smith, former Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, Chairman-designate Advertising Standards Authority. Speakers at the conference also included Lord Smith, as well as Vic Codling of the Gay Police Association; Revd Malcolm Duncan of Faithworks; Revd Giles Fraser, broadcaster and Guardian columnist and Team Rector of Putney; Sandhya Drew, Barrister, Took Chambers and specialist in Equality and Human Rights Law; Kay Carberry, Assistant General Secretary, TUC who is currently an Equal Opportunities Commissioner; and Arpita Dutt, a partner at Russell Jones and Walker solicitors and chair of the London Anti-Racist Alliance.

Face 2 Faith – Methodist Church month of prayer for inter faith relations

The Methodist Church is one of the largest Christian churches serving Great Britain, with nearly 300,000 members and regular contact with over 800,000 people. It has about 5,800 churches in Great Britain, and also maintains links with other Methodist churches totalling a worldwide membership of 70 million. During February, the Methodist Church's month of prayer for inter faith relations, Face 2 Faith, took place. Churches have been taking part by praying for better inter faith relations in Britain and the world; by doing something to encourage inter faith understanding in their community; and by entering the Face 2 Faith photo competition.

Face 2 Faith Photo Competition

The Face 2 Faith photograph competition was launched as part of the Methodist Church's month of prayer for inter faith relations (see above). It is open to anyone in Britain and Ireland of all ages and faiths, with young people especially encouraged to take part. Up to four pictures can be submitted with digital, print and even camera

phone images being accepted. There is a first prize of £350 worth of Jessops vouchers. The aim is to find images that communicate something powerful about inter faith relations.

Sponsored by Methodist Insurance, the competition will be judged on how well an image expresses something about inter faith relations and how people of different faiths in Britain and Ireland can live, work and love together. The competition will run until 31 May and entries will be displayed on the Face 2 Faith website: www.face2faith.org.uk All the competition details can be found on the website or requested by post from: Inter Faith Office, Methodist Church House, 25 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5JR or from Anna Drew, Media and Information Assistant drewa@methodistchurch.org.uk

National Portrait Gallery Exhibition Faith and Church: Portraits by Don McCullin

3 February saw the opening at the National Portrait Gallery in London of a display of ten newly commissioned photographs of leaders and senior representatives of the major faiths in the UK. It is the latest in a sequence that has previously charted the health sector and the field of telecommunications. Taken by Don McCullin, internationally recognised as one of the greatest of British photographers, the subjects are captured in locations that reflect their spiritual lives. Sitters include Rabbi Tony Bayfield (Head of The Movement for Reform Judaism); Reverend Esme Beswick (the first black woman to become a President of the Churches Together in England); Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor, (Archbishop of Westminster); Dr Syed Aziz Pasha (General-Secretary of the Union of Muslim Organisations); Rev Baroness Kathleen Richardson of Calow (former Moderator of the Methodist Church); Sir Jonathan Sacks (Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth); Sir Iqbal Sacranie (former General Secretary of the Muslim Council of Britain); Dr Indarjit Singh (Director, Network of Sikh Organisations); Om Parkash Sharma (former President of the National Council of Hindu Temples); and the Archbishop of Canterbury Dr Rowan Williams.

A reception for the subjects of the portraits took place at the Gallery on 5 February. Speaking about the series, Rabbi Dr Tony Bayfield, said: "Arriving

and seeing the ten photographs for the first time, I realised that, not only do we all know each other, but most of us are on first name terms. I was struck by the fact that I am part of a group who are committed to working together to restore the good name of religion and for the benefit of British society. It was both moving and hopeful.”

The exhibition runs until 7 May. Gallery opening hours are Saturday to Wednesday 10am-6pm, Thursdays and Fridays 10am-9pm

Diversity and Dialogue Moves to Citizenship Foundation

Diversity and Dialogue, the joint agency project which aims to create better understanding and friendship between young people from different faith and cultural backgrounds has moved to the Citizenship Foundation after more than two years based at Save the Children. Diversity and Dialogue supports individuals and organisations interested in building better relations between young people from different faiths and backgrounds. It acts as an information, support and ideas sharing network, publicising good practice, producing resources and giving advice. Diversity and Dialogue also works directly with young people, developing innovative projects and models of dialogue. Projects create spaces where young people from different faiths and backgrounds can come together to discuss controversial issues, then work together for change. Further information from Shula Maibaum, shula.maibaum@citizenshipfoundation.org.uk

Joseph Interfaith Foundation

A new inter faith organisation was launched in December. Its focus is improving Muslim-Jewish ties. It is the initiative of Mehri Nikham, previously the Director of the Maimonides Foundation.

The inaugural lecture of a series of national lectures organised by The Joseph Interfaith Foundation took place at the School of Oriental and African Studies on 30 January. Shahid Malik, MP for Dewsbury, Rabbi Danny Rich, Chief Executive, Liberal Judaism GB and Dr Reza Shah Kazemi, Author, Research Associate IIS, addressed the question ‘Is Religion the cause of integration or isolation in today’s British society?’ The event was chaired by John Battle MP, Prime Minister’s Envoy to Faith Communities. For information about the Joseph Interfaith Foundation, contact info@josephinterfaithfoundation.org

Conversation with Jack Straw

On 2 November at University College London the Three Faiths Forum and the City Circle arranged an evening, ‘In Conversation with Jack Straw MP’. The Leader of the Commons, MP for Blackburn, and former Foreign Secretary, whose comments on the *niqab* earlier in the autumn had sparked great debate, spoke on a range of issues including this and responded to questions and points from the audience.

‘Tea and Cake’ – Toc H spread neighbourly hospitality

From 11 September to 11 November, the national charity Toc H ran a ‘Tea and Cake’ campaign encouraging people to invite others of different faiths in to talk over tea and cake with the idea that by offering simple hospitality people can help create common bonds between communities and forge a safer and fairer society. Madeleine Fone of Toc H said “Most groups are good at putting the kettle on and getting out the juice and biscuits, so why not do what we do best. The campaign is about offering a gesture of friendship. It is not about converting people of other faiths or of none and it’s not about fundraising. It is to simply engender goodwill and share time together.” Events took place around the UK and there was also a special reception at the House of Lords on 18 October. Further information about the campaign from madeleinef@toch.org.uk

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INTERVIEW WITH RICHARD REDDIE & INDERJIT BHOGAL

25 March 2007 is the bicentenary of the 1807 Abolition of the Slave Trade Act. We talk with Richard Reddie, Project Director and Inderjit Bhogal, Chair, of *Set All Free*, an initiative established by Churches Together in England to commemorate the bicentenary this year of the Act and to respond to its legacies.

Q How do you see the significance of the bicentenary?

Richard Reddie: Its significance was enormous. The 1807 Act outlawed the slave trade throughout the British Empire and made it illegal for British ships to be involved in the trade, marking the beginning of the end for the transatlantic traffic in human beings. Although it marked just the start of the road to the eventual abolition of slavery itself, it is the key date to mark and this year sees a programme of linked events. You can find out about these at www.direct.gov.uk/en/slavery/DG_065970 and at www.setallfree.net/whats_on.php. There is a particular significance in the date for Christians. Because of the involvement of the Christian churches in the slave trade and also because of the role of Christians, both black and white, in working for its abolition, many events are being organised by Christian bodies. A National Service is being held at Westminster Abbey on 27 March to mark the bicentenary.

Q Is there an inter faith dimension to projects marking the bicentenary?

Inderjit Bhogal: Very much so. For example, the Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum (of which I am Director) and East Riding's Council Community Cohesion Group have developed the 'Wilberforce Way', a new 35 mile walk which will be launched in May 2007, linking Hull, the birth place of abolitionist William Wilberforce, and Pocklington where he went to school and from where wrote his first letter of protest from there against the African slave trade at the age of 14, and went on to become MP for Hull and then for Yorkshire. You can find out more about this at www.eastriding.gov.uk/newsflash/archive/07020207896.html. The Wilberforce 2007 team at Hull City Council and the Hull and East Riding Inter Faith have worked with editor Rev Tom McCready of the Hull Unitarian

Church to produce a special inter faith prayer book, *From Every Heart in the City of Hope*, as part of the 2007 Wilberforce Commemoration. Local young people have produced a music CD, Freedom Road, to accompany this. (Further information from thomas.mcready@tesco.net).

Q But did the 1807 Act actually end slavery?

Richard Reddie: Slavery was finally abolished in the Americas in 1888 but it is estimated that over 20 million people are still in forms of servitude today. And even where slavery has ended, there are bitter legacies that remain.

Q What factors have contributed to slavery and what can we do today to respond?

Inderjit Bhogal: Sadly, one of the factors has been justifications of slavery based on religious beliefs. Faith and the slave trade have links historically and even today. You can find out more about understandings of slavery of different religions at www.bbc.co.uk/religion/ethics/slavery/. Most 'contemporary slaves' come from countries where the major world religions are practised and we believe that the fight to end the legacies of the Transatlantic Slave Trade and contemporary enslavement must involve all faiths. All faiths uphold a belief in the sanctity of human life and faith can once more play an inspirational role in ending global slavery. I hope that people of all the faiths will work to help end contemporary forms of servitude.

Q You spoke of slavery's legacies. What are these and what role can faith communities play in helping end these?

Richard Reddie: The legacies are many, but in particular forms of racism and injustice. Much has changed in this country since the initial campaign to end the Transatlantic Slave Trade, and Britain is a richer society for its diverse religious and cultural influences. There is little doubt that these faith communities have a key role in the work to break down the barriers of exclusion and the vital task of building a fairer, more cohesive society where the legacies of slavery which affect many in minority ethnic communities are finally ended.

PLACES AND PEOPLE

Zoroastrians working for good inter faith relations

The Inter Faith Network links communities of nine world faiths in its representative body category: Baha'i; Buddhist; Christian; Hindu; Jain; Jewish; Muslim; Sikh; and Zoroastrian. The communities are all developing programmes of work to build good relations with other faiths and to increase understanding between faiths. In this issue we highlight the Zoroastrian contribution.

There are only around 6,000 Zoroastrians in the UK but in inter faith terms they make a very significant contribution. Recently, Dorab Mistry was elected as the Vice Chair of Faith based Regeneration Network (FbRN) and he is also a member of the Executive Committee of Inter Faith Network for the UK. Zoroastrian Malcolm Deboo is a staff member at FbRN.

Some other prominent Zoroastrians involved in inter faith work include: Jehangir Sarosh (Religions for Peace Europe and a former Vice-Chair of the Inter Faith Network); Shahin Bhekhradnia (World Congress of Faiths); Ervad Rustom Bhedwar (Week of Prayer for World Peace); Mark Gifford (Minorities of Europe); Marzbeen Jila (Religions for Peace UK); Phiroza Gan Kotwal (Harrow Interfaith Council); Homai Modi (World Council of Religious leaders of WCRP International); Aspi Cichiger (Inter Faith Council in Milton Keynes) and Tehmtan Framroze (Brighton and Hove Inter Faith Contact Group).

A number of other leading Zoroastrians also have an interest in this field, such as Zerbanoo Gifford, the Founder Director of the ASHA Foundation, which encourages and supports philanthropy worldwide and works for inter faith and intercultural understanding.

New Chair for MCB Interfaith Committee

Sheikh Ibrahim Mogra has become the Chair of the Interfaith Committee of the Muslim Council of Britain. The Committee handles MCB's inter faith related correspondence and arranges for attendance of inter faith events. For further information about the Committee's work, contact its Secretary, Mary Barber at mary@islamic-foundation.org.uk

CTBI appoints new Secretary for Inter-Faith Relations

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland have appointed Rev Peter Colwell as its Secretary for Inter-Faith Relations (part-time) in which capacity he is serving the Churches Commission on Inter Faith Relations. A United Reformed Church minister since 1994, he has served as Deputy Director of the London Inter-Faith Centre and URC Adviser on Christian-Muslim relations. Contact details: ccifr@ctbi.org.uk

Churches Together in England appoints its first Inter Faith Officer

Churches Together in England has appointed Celia Blackden as its first Inter Faith Officer (part-time), in response to the Churches' requests that this area of work should be given a higher priority. Celia Blackden is a Catholic and a member of the Focolare movement who has worked for many years in the field of inter faith relations. She took up post in the autumn and will focus on encouraging and resourcing relations between Christians and other faith communities in the regions and counties, and working through 'Churches Together' groupings. For more information about this work see www.cte.org.uk/group/group.aspx?id=43001

Board of Deputies appoints new Interfaith Officer

In December, the Board of Deputies of British Jews appointed Aviva Dautch as its new Interfaith Officer to work with the community in facilitating and promoting inter faith relations. Her role at the Board will include promoting both strategic and grassroots inter faith dialogue and will involve steering a Home Office funded research project on the Jewish community's involvement in inter faith work; sitting on governmental advisory bodies; and working in education with students and teachers.

Office of the Chief Rabbi appoints new Projects Director

Leonie Lewis has recently been appointed Projects Director for the Office of the Chief Rabbi. This is a new post and its primary remit is to focus on inter faith issues.

Hindu Forum GB

Harsha Trivedi has become the Interfaith Representative for Hindu Forum GB.

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OBITUARIES

Most Venerable Dr Medagama Vajiragnana

The Most Venerable Dr Medagama Vajiragnana, Buddhist scholar, teacher and inter faith pioneer, died in December after a long period of illness. His funeral at Kensal Green Crematorium was attended by many hundreds of mourners both Buddhist and of other faiths. Born in 1928 in Sri Lanka, where he was ordained, he studied in Sri Lanka and India. His roles in Sri Lanka included that of Principal at the Parama Dhamma Cetiya Pirivena in Ratmalana and Principal at Pirivena Teachers' Training College in Ratmalana.

Dr Vajiragnana spent the years from 1966 to 1980 and from 1984 until his death in Britain where he made a major contribution to the development of Buddhist teaching. From 1984 he was the Head of the London Buddhist Vihara. In this role, he became involved in the setting up of the Inter Faith Network for the UK in 1987. He played a leading role in its work for nearly 20 years, tirelessly speaking at meetings and with visitors and emphasising the importance of respect, tolerance and informed dialogue. Dr Vajiragnana served as a Network Executive Committee member until 2004 and as Vice-Chair from 2000 to 2001.

Dr Vajiragnana also represented his community in many other contexts, from the annual Commonwealth Day Observance to the Remembrance Day service at the Cenotaph. He took particular pleasure, however, in the opportunities for deeper dialogue and friendship afforded by inter faith meetings and, alongside his multi faith engagements, took an active role in Buddhist-Christian dialogue. In the New Year's Honours list 2006, he was appointed OBE for his services to inter faith relations.

Brian Pearce, the Network's Director, spoke at Venerable Vajiragnana's funeral of the enormous contribution he had made to the development of good inter faith relations in Britain and the great loss that was felt by his many friends of all faiths.

Natubhai Jagivan

Nathubhai Jagjivan died on 19 October 2006. Born in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1925, he came to the UK in the exodus of Asians from Kenya. He was a founder member of the Leicester Council of Faiths, where he served as Vice-Chairman and also as Honorary President. Leicester colleagues note that he devoted his time and tireless efforts throughout



his life for the benefit of the community as a whole. His affiliations with a large number of different organisations in Leicester and across the UK, both Hindu and multi faith, demonstrated the importance of good cross-cultural links for an integrated and peaceful society. His efforts in charitable fundraising, community events, organisation of religious programmes and his leadership qualities of being a well-respected, honest and hard-working member of the community will all be very greatly missed.

Dr Beman Khosravi

Dr Beman Khosravi, a leading member of the Northern Ireland Baha'i community and founder member and former treasurer of the Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum died in August, aged 73.

NORTHERN IRELAND

On 18 January the Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum held its AGM at Stranmillis University College, Belfast. This was followed by a presentation from the Rev Inderjit Bhogal Director of the Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum

An open meeting of the Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum took place in the Conference Hall of Stranmillis University College on 18 October. It was in the form of a symposium on the theme of Religious Education in a Multifaith Context, with contributions from a range of people concerned with the development of a broad and inclusive approach to RE in Northern Ireland's schools.

SCOTLAND

On 29 October the Scottish Inter Faith Council hosted its AGM, with representatives of faith communities and inter faith groups present from all over Scotland and an open public meeting. The public meeting featured a key note address by Catriona Noonan, from the Department of Film and Media, Stirling University who gave a presentation on 'The Media, Religion and Scottish Identity'. This was followed by workshops on the same subject.

Throughout October a number of training events were held. Some focused on delivering training to faith communities on the 2003 (Religion and Belief) Employment Regulations and others were delivered to organisations keen to raise their general awareness of faith communities in Scotland. This training is on-going and is currently

part of SIFC's remit.

SIFC also facilitated workshops at the Scottish Women's Convention on 26 October on the 'needs of women from faith communities'.

Scottish Inter Faith Week took place from 25 November to 2 December. The aim of the annual Inter Faith Week is to promote dialogue, understanding, and co-operation between Scotland's diverse religious communities. The 2006 Week was launched at Glasgow University with around 150 people from all the major faith traditions in attendance. Short presentations were given by representatives of the Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist and Baha'i traditions. A welcome was given by the Convener of the Inter Faith Council and representative of the Jewish Community, Dianna Wolfson, and Professor Andrew Nash, Clerk of Senate, Glasgow University. Interspersed between the presentations Glasgow University Chapel Choir sang and chanted. The event also included the launch of the NHS (Education for Scotland) Multi-Faith Resource for Healthcare Staff.

Religious Leaders of Scotland also hosted their first national conference during Inter Faith Week 06. Keynote speakers included Cardinal Keith O'Brien and Professor Haldane from St Andrew's University. Workshops were held exploring such topics as 'spiritual identity and social cohesion', 'faith communities in dialogue and cooperation', 'education and faith schools' and 'religion and the media'. SIFC acted as secretariat for the conference.

Throughout inter faith week local events were held in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, Skye, Aberdeen, East Renfrewshire, Fife, Dumfries and Galloway and Ayr. In Glasgow and Edinburgh a whole week of activities took place. The finale of Scottish Inter Faith Week is an annual Youth Conference. The conference theme was 'Visions, Dreams and Realities'. The conference included a key note address from Shiona Baird MSP who commended the SIFC Youth Group for their publication 'Our Sacred Earth' and encouraged those present to work together on practical projects to help save the planet. The conference also included storytelling, drumming, clay meditations, music, a Religion and Human Rights DVD, faith exhibitions and vegetarian lunch. Despite atrocious weather conditions around 85 young people from diverse faith traditions and none attended.

Dumfries

An inter faith seminar took place on 4 December at the University of Glasgow Dumfries Crichton campus with speakers Louis Bezuidenhout, Church of Scotland minister; Samier Hamad, who is doing a PhD on the identity of British Muslims; and Venus Carew, a member of the local inter faith group. The event included group discussion on creating a culture of respect and getting dialogue between faiths and a 'Time for Reflection', with words of peace, love, tolerance and forgiveness from all the world's religions, led by Jan Lethbridge, with music by Rosalyn Blake and singing by Rosalind Connell.

Fife

Fife Interfaith Group held its first inter faith event on Saturday 11 November in Rothes Halls, Glenrothes. It was open to anyone interested in finding out more about the different faith communities in Fife. Information on different faiths was available to be picked up or people were able to speak directly with faith representatives. The Scottish National Museum in Edinburgh loaned information about a range of faiths. Playing in the background throughout the event was music from various faith traditions and a light buffet with food from the different communities was also available. One of the speakers provided information on the work being done nationally with the different inter faith groups across Scotland through the Scottish Inter Faith Council.

The Group has produced an information leaflet on the different faiths in Fife and this is available through Frae Fife. Further information from: Zahida Ramzan, tel. 01592 413652.

Glasgow

In November, the Secretary of the Churches' Agency for Inter-Faith Relations in Scotland (CAIRS), Sr Isabel Smyth, addressed a meeting in Falkirk attended by members of Falkirk Churches Together and of the Falkirk Islamic Centre. Sr Isabel's talk was entitled, "Islam has nothing to do with us!" The ensuing discussion convinced all present of the continued desirability and need for dialogue and cooperation between members of the

two faith communities, particularly in the light of a recent arson attack on the local Islamic Centre. Further information from CAIRS Education Officer, Andrew Sarle on 0772 456 8259 or at andrew.cairs@acts-scotland.org.

As a follow on to a study day led by Rabbi Nancy Morris of Glasgow Reformed Synagogue (GRS), the Churches' Agency for Inter-Faith Relations in Scotland (CAIRS) arranged a visit to GRS to attend *Shabbat* service, join in *Kiddush* and dialogue with members of the Synagogue on Saturday 24 February.

WALES

Funding across the last year from the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund has enabled the Inter-Faith Council for Wales (IFCW) to develop its work further with the assistance of Project Worker, Brigid Bowen. IFCW continues to meet regularly, and is in the process of applying to become a Charitable Company. Members of the Council are looking forward to enjoying new links with Welsh regions and local inter faith groups through a new network of inter faith initiatives being developed which Brigid Bowen describes as enabling dialogue groups to enjoy a new sense of fraternity with a larger inter faith community. IFCW hopes that its website – interfaithwales.org – will help these diverse groups meet.

IFCW helped to support the launch of the Swansea Faiths Forum in November. The Forum's work with environmental charities and with Swansea Council is a beacon example of how larger civic Faith Forums can contribute to cohesion in cities. Such forums can also be a platform for religious and other spiritual communities to make their voices heard on issues of current concern.

For more details of what's new in Wales go to www.interfaithwales.org

Cardiff

In December Cardiff's Rabbi Mordechai Wollenberg invited members from Muslim and Christian communities to the Orthodox synagogue, to share a Friday night *Shabbat* supper with members from both the Reform and Orthodox Jewish communities.

The Inter Faith Network's website: www.interfaith.org.uk

ENGLAND – REGIONAL AND LOCAL UPDATES

East

The East of England Faiths Council (EEFC), the regional body that brings together the major faiths of the six counties, has been active in recent months in facilitating debate and increasing its support for faith groups engaged in community activity. This support is provided through the FaithNetEast programme funded by FCCBF, and run jointly with Anglia Ruskin University. Information and Learning Events held in September (Chelmsford) and January (Norwich) have attracted more than 100 delegates from faith groups involved in a whole range of projects, from youth activity to language classes. Delegates were able to network, and find out more about topics including funding, governance and evaluation. FaithNetEast is also providing development advice to selected pilot projects, and a monthly e-bulletin to the 2,300 faith groups on its database.

EEFC itself, which is the main point of contact between faiths and regional governance, has secured funding from its RDA to extend the Faith in the East of England research by looking in more detail at certain aspects of faith-based community activity; it has also undertaken a further study with faith representatives on Local Strategic Partnerships, Local Area Agreements and SREPs that will result in a summer event to address their expressed needs.

The Council has also been invited by a number of organisations, including the Environment Agency in the region to work with them on literature reflecting the contribution of the faiths in addressing climate change.

Luton

Yasmin Aktar, Luton Council of Faiths' Development Worker, writes: "On Saturday 2 December some young people from Luton, made history by speaking in the Council Chamber, nestling into the seats usually occupied by Luton Borough councillors. Let's face it together, a Youth Conference organised by Luton Council of Faiths, featured a variety of speakers, presentations and workshops involving statutory and voluntary organisations, community representatives from different faith backgrounds, local councillors, as well as LCoF and Luton Borough Council's community cohesion team. Organising Representatives from LCoF and Grassroots and various other colleagues and organisations from

Luton were impressed by the understanding shown of issues such as drugs, crime, immature/premature sex, teenage pregnancies, late night party culture, faith and education. There was also an issue based play presented by performing arts students from Luton Sixth Form College."

East Midlands

Derby

The Forum of Faiths for Derby in conjunction with the University's Multi-Faith Centre held a poetry competition for the people of Derby and Derbyshire. The theme was "How I Feel About Faith Or Religion Or Spirituality". It stimulated a response from many budding poets of different faiths and none and 140 poems were submitted to the three judges, Adrian Buckner, Julie Lumsden and Sean Woodward, all local poets with an interest in faith. The prizes were presented at an event held at the Multi-Faith Centre in November attended by the prize winners and local people and presented by the Mayor of Derby. Following the prize giving and a buffet the five winners read their poems and then there was entertainment by local Asian dancers and Baha'i singers. All the places of worship in Derby and those whose entries were published have received a free copy of the poetry booklet which contains the best, as agreed by the judges, 48 poems. It can be purchased for £4.00 to include post and packing from The Multi-Faith Centre, University of Derby, Kedleston Road, Derby DE22 1GB or tel 01332 591574 or email mfc@derby.ac.uk All proceeds to help the Forum of Faiths for Derby.

Leicester

Leicester Council of Faiths has recently appointed a new Co-ordinator, Dr Ajay Aggarwal.

Peterborough.

A Festival of Faith and Foods in Peterborough took place on Sunday 21 January at Peterborough Town Hall. The annual event was organised by the Peterborough Inter-Faith Council and hosted by Peterborough City Council. The topic of discussion was the view of different faiths on Environmentalism. Peterborough City Council chief executive Gillian Beasley said: "Global concern about the environment and climate change means that people of all faiths need to consider

how their beliefs and moral values can influence the way they care for the planet.” Jaspal Singh, chairman of Peterborough Inter-Faith Council, added: “It is important that all individuals work together with national and local government organisations to protect the planet. This festival will promote community and cultural cohesion as delegates reflect on how the sacred writings of different faiths encourage us to care for the earth.” Participant Gaurav Prinja writes “The event begun with a fantastic spread of foods from different cultures in a buffet style lunch. Having filled our stomachs with different foods that were all delicious, we then took our places in the main hall and filled our intellects with different faiths that were all environmentally friendly. There were eminent speakers from the Sikh, Christian, Muslim, Hindu and Jewish communities who each gave informative insights into the view of their faiths on the planet and the role and responsibilities of mankind.”

London

Faith Forum for London

Leaders of London’s faith communities gathered on 29 November at St Ethelburga’s Centre for Reconciliation and Peace to hear the findings of the first feasibility study into the setting up of a Faith Forum for London and to discuss the next steps. The findings reveal strong support for a London-wide independent forum whose primary purpose would be to enable faith communities to develop responses to local, regional and national government policy initiatives. Kate Monkhouse, Director of London Civic Forum, said that the study has produced a blueprint that could bring the project to life.

Inter Faith Event for Young Londoners

On 20 February, Diversity and Dialogue worked with the British Library to put on a youth inter faith event for young Londoners. This followed on from its event at the British Museum in October 2005 and formed part of the lead up to the British Library’s Sacred Texts exhibition. Young Londoners of all beliefs and backgrounds were invited to a day of dialogue and activities. The event focused on issues including freedom of speech and religious conflict. There were small group discussions and also space for more creative expression and the learning of new skills during arts and spoken word workshops. After the event, the young people’s views were recorded and will

be edited into a resource that can be used by schools to provoke dialogue in Religious Education.

Barnet

Barnet Multi Faith Forum held a plenary session on 8 November in the presence of the Mayor of Barnet, Councillor Eva Greenspan. Representatives from the Christian, Muslim, Jewish and Hindu and Jain Faith Communities participated in an “Any Questions” programme on the topic of faith schools. The chairman for the evening was Superintendent Richard Walton of the Barnet Police.

Clapham

Christian communities came together in the first week of February for a series of talks in Clapham. Shi’a Muslim leader, Maulana Kamzi, spoke at the Clapham Methodist Church each evening from Sunday 4 to Wednesday 7 February. At this time of year, Shi’a Muslims remember the martyrdom of the Prophet’s grandson, Imam Hussain. The theme of the event was “The sufferings of Imam Hussain and Jesus.” Accompanied by Christian leaders from around Clapham, Kamzi explored themes such as the love of God, according to the New Testament. Around 30 Muslims and 30 Christians, along with people of other faiths and of none, participated each evening and learned about each others’ beliefs and shared traditions. The event was supported by the Clapham and Stockwell Faith Forum and the South London Interfaith Group. For information or to get involved in similar events, email Hannah Barker at info@csff.co.uk

Hillingdon

The local authority held a meeting on 12 September to discuss the development of an inter faith network for Hillingdon. The meeting was opened by the Mayor Cllr Routledge and chaired by Director of Social Services, Hugh Cunnachie, with presentations from Hillingdon SACRE, Hillingdon Metropolitan Police and from Sutton Faith and Belief Forum and the Inter Faith Network for the UK and contributions from a range of members of local faith communities. Further information from Fiona Gibbs fgibbs@hillingsdon.gov.uk.

Islington

An inter faith conference, 'Strengthening Communities and Promoting Well Being', supported by the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund, took place on 12 October at historic Wesley's Chapel in London. Hosted by Islington Faiths Forum, the conference aimed to bring together the leaders and representatives of Islington's faith groups to identify and share common values; present IFF's aims and objectives, achievements to date and future plans; acknowledge and celebrate contributions of faith groups that support community well being; and explore how faith groups can develop the capacity to get more involved in local and national initiatives.

Lambeth

Faith Around the Elephant is a new network growing up for people of faith living, working or worshipping around the Elephant and Castle in the London Borough of Lambeth who would like to meet their neighbours from different religious and spiritual traditions. On 7 November they held a meeting at the Keyworth Centre for interested individuals to share stories about elephants from religious sources with Sarah Clive from 'state of the heart' storytelling and to discuss ideas for future meetings and events. They are planning to meet roughly every 6 weeks in 2007. Further information from suzanne@abcfilm.clara.co.uk

Tower Hamlets

An Inter Faith Week was held from 12 to 19 November, as part of the Tower Hamlets Inter Faith Forum programme for 2006-2007. Funded by the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund, Inter Faith Week was the first project of its kind celebrating the diversity of faith communities in Tower Hamlets. Objectives of the project included the celebration of the vital contribution religious faith makes to the lives of the local communities; fostering greater understanding and respect between communities; and breaking down prejudice and discrimination based on faith while promoting social cohesion. Events included an *Eid* party; an opening gathering bringing together faith leaders, people interested in inter faith work and members of the local authority to engage in discussion; a film night; a children's art exhibition; a tour of the Museum of Immigration and Diversity, a workshop titled 'Tolerance and Diversity' for young people; a comedy night; faith trail; and a music and food festival.

The events were enjoyed and contributed to by over 450 people of all backgrounds and beliefs. Further information from interfaith@towerhamlets.org.uk

Wandsworth

In October, young people in Year 9 or above taking Religious Studies at school in Wandsworth attended a 'speed-dating' event at the town hall. Here, they were able to fire a series of quick-fire questions at representatives from the borough's different faith groups. The Faith Direct initiative was organised by Wandsworth Local Strategic Partnership Multi Faith-Sub-group. It brought together speakers from local Muslim, Christian, Hindu, Sikh, Jewish and Buddhist communities. 65 students from seven secondary schools conducted a whistle-stop tour round the room interviewing each faith representative in turn. Executive member for children and young people's services for Wandsworth, Kathy Tracey, said: "Wandsworth is a modern and diverse borough which is home to many communities. This unique event set out to improve young people's understanding of different faiths and the common bonds that exist between them."

Wimbledon

The Wimbledon Interfaith Group organised a meeting last October at a local RC Church where Robi Damelin, an Israeli mother who had lost her son to a Palestinian sniper, spoke with Ali Abu Awwad, a Palestinian who had lost a brother shot by an Israeli soldier. Both speakers are active in the Bereaved Families Forum: Israeli and Palestinian Bereaved Families for Peace, set up in 1994. This organisation, comprising 500 families across the divide, channels their grief towards work for reconciliation and non-violence through many educational and artistic initiatives. 55 people came to the meeting including Jews, Christians and Muslims. More information from www.familiesforum.co.uk

North East

Middlesbrough

Cleveland Interfaith Group held its annual 'Cultural Evening' on 24 January at Middlesbrough Council of Faiths. It was an opportunity to share the ways and thoughts of the members of the different faith group as well as to share food brought for an inter faith supper. 20

people attended the gathering and each member was given an opportunity to share their thoughts, which were diverse but not divisive. As always, the event closed with those present joining hands and saying 'The Lord Watch Between You And Me, While We Are Absent One From Another.'

A Festival of Faiths was held on 12 December in Middlesbrough, organised by Middlesbrough Council of Faiths and Middlesbrough Council. 120 people attended the event which was planned in response to a request from the Community Councils in the town to learn more about the different faith traditions. There was singing from Muslim and Christian groups and the 'Diversity Game' (developed by Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource to extend players knowledge of different faiths and beliefs) was played at round tables. Representatives of five different faith communities gave 5 minute summaries of the key aspects of their faith, followed by questions from the floor. The evening ended with a shared meal.

A number of social events have been organised by the Women's Initiative of Middlesbrough Council of Faiths to build social contacts between women members of all the faith communities, to break down barriers of misunderstanding, build friendships, and identify issues that women members wish to work on together. These events include social gatherings at which women present have a conversation with other women in an adaptation of 'speed dating'; and women only swimming classes in which each group of 12 women normally comprise 6 different faith traditions. As a result of these activities, friendships across faith groups are being developed.

Newcastle

The Hindu Temple Newcastle held an inter faith service as part of a Shat Chandi Maha Yagya event on 22-25 February which had as its purpose prayer for peace and prosperity for people of the North East and of the world. Rt Revd Martin Wharton, Bishop of Newcastle, chaired.

North West

Manchester

On 9 January, some Manchester Christians and Muslims joined to celebrate their common father, Abraham. The idea came from a Muslim youth worker, who involved his mosque committee and then ran it past the Anglicans' European Officer,

who involved the Christians. The event took place at the Al Khizra Mosque in Cheetham Hill, Manchester. Some Christians and a Muslim talked about what Abraham meant to them, followed by further discussion and a meal. The next step may be an evening at a church after Easter, to talk about Jesus, a figure of great importance to both faiths.

Pendle

A Peace Vigil to mark the first anniversary of the earthquake disaster in Pakistan, where an estimated 75,000 people died and over 3.3 million were left homeless, was organised by Building Bridges Pendle on 6 October. The vigil was held in remembrance of those who had died and also in recognition of the reaction of the local community in responding to the devastation. The welcome address was made by Dr Malik, followed by speeches from guests and a two minute silence to pray for the victims.

Rochdale

Rochdale Multi Faith Partnership held a meeting on 10 February in Littleborough to help people learn about other faiths. There were displays on the details of birth, death and marriage and charity in the different faiths. A Hindu guest speaker was invited from Vishwa Hindu Parishad to explain in slightly more detail about these rites in the Hindu faith. The Hindu speaker, along with a Muslim and two Christian representatives then took questions from the floor ranging from the queries about specifics of how rites are performed to philosophical questions about the nature of death. Similar meetings, but with variation in inputs from different faiths, were held by RMFP in Heywood and Middleton on 27 January and 17 February.

Stockport

Stockport Inter-Faith Network held a meeting in November on 'Young people and faith'. Samantha Dunbar from Save the Children gave a presentation about its "Diversity and Dialogue" project. The aim of the project is to build better understanding between young people living in a multi faith society. Following her presentation, three discussion groups formed to look at questions prepared by Samantha from her experience of the project. This was followed by a showing of the DVD produced by the young people from the project. The DVD has been designed as a resource for youth groups and classroom settings to stimulate discussion amongst young people. Further information about the project at www.diversityanddialogue.org.uk

Warrington

At the invitation of Warrington Council of Faiths, and hosted by the Mayor of Warrington Cllr Linda Dirir and her Consort Allin Dirir, himself a Muslim, Christian leaders came together at Warrington town hall at the close of Ramadan. About 20 gathered for conversation and refreshments, as part of the Toc H 'Tea and Cake' initiative, which encouraged simple acts of kindness and occasions of hospitality between 11 September and 11 November, two dates significant in the 'war and peace' calendar.

South East

Brighton

Brighton and Hove Inter-Faith Contact Group held its AGM on 18 February at the Brighthelm Church and Community Centre in Brighton. Dr Indarjit Singh, Director of the Network of Sikh Organisations, spoke on 'The relevance of Sikh teachings in today's multicultural society'.

Crawley

In November the Crawley Interfaith Network hosted a visit by two members of the Jerusalem Peacemakers, Eliyahu McLean and Sheikh Bukari, the former an Israeli Orthodox Jew, and the latter a Palestinian Sufi Sheikh. The organisation is dedicated to bringing peace in Israel-Palestine by encouraging people of different faiths and social groups to come together to speak with one another and share their experience of loss and conflict, and the vision which their respective faiths offers them. Jerusalem Peacemakers is composed of Jews, Muslims, Christians and Druze, Israeli and Palestinian. The speakers described how the leaders have succeeded in bringing together people of very radical views and opposing ideologies.

Guildford

Between February 19-23 a Festival of Faiths was held at the University of Surrey. Lunchtime exhibitions on faith took place and evening panel discussions were held on such topics as 'building inter faith understanding' and 'women's leadership in religion'. Further information from Sarah Talcott, Inter Faith Education Officer s.talcott@surrey.ac.uk.

Portsmouth

On 6 December, there was a Muslim-Christian evening to celebrate jointly the birth of Jesus.

Around 80 people of all ages took part in the event at St Thomas's Cathedral in Old Portsmouth. The evening started with prayers followed by a tour of the Cathedral. The tour was followed by a meal where all the Muslims brought halal meat dishes and all the Christians brought vegetarian dishes, so everybody could indulge without having to worry. Taki Jaffer of the Portsmouth Interfaith Forum commented "There was genuine engagement all round where everybody seemed to have someone to talk to....This was community cohesion at its best."

Thames Gateway

Thames Gateway Women's Multi Faith Forum members spoke to a meeting in Maidstone of an inter faith group interested in offering spiritual support to people suffering from Alzheimer's disease or dementia. There are to be follow-up meetings with TGWMF's local Alzheimer's and Dementia Support group. The Forum has also been advising their area's Supporting Fosterers' Service, on issues of concern when fostering a child of a faith different to that of the host family. Together with other local Partners, the Forum organised a well attended seminar on domestic abuse, "Why Suffer In Silence".

West Midlands

A Conference. "Cohesion Through Faith – Good Practice and Positive Action in the West Midlands" was held by the West Midlands Faiths Forum (WMFF) in collaboration with North Staffordshire Forum of Faiths in November 2006 to look at community cohesion and practical actions that can be taken locally to foster inter faith dialogue and understanding. A conference report highlights examples of good practice and outlines a wide range of ideas for practical actions to strengthen community cohesion. The Report is available from www.wmfaithsforum.org.uk or from Ruth Wagstaffe, WMFF Secretariat Tel: 024 7652 1326.

Birmingham

Birmingham will be hosting a wealth of special events to mark European Capital of Culture 2008. Birmingham Council of Faiths is planning to develop a series of "pulpit exchanges" among leaders of different faiths in the run up to 2008. The aim will be to promote greater understanding and appreciation of other cultures and faiths. In 2008 there will be a major conference to celebrate and share experiences.

Sandwell

Sandwell Multi-Faith Network hosted a conference, 'How we use sounds and silence in our worship', on 3 February at Christ Church C of E Primary School in Albert Street, Oldbury. It provided an insight into the rituals of various religious beliefs. Network Officer, Barbara Dixon, commented: "People will work with or live near people of a different faith and may have wondered why they engage in certain rituals or behaviours. Hopefully the conference answered some of these questions in a user friendly way." Further information from: Barbara Dixon, tel. 0121 544 6423, or email: sandwellmultifaith@yahoo.co.uk

Telford

Over 120 people attended two public meetings organized by Telford and Wrekin Interfaith Group (known as 'TWIG') on two consecutive Tuesday evenings in November. A local councillor chaired and each participating faith was invited to provide a speaker who would take some ten minutes to offer a personal perspective on 'What I believe'. Questions from the floor were then invited before the turn of a speaker from another faith.

Wolverhampton

The Wolverhampton Inter Faith Group, which is one of the older local inter faith organisations in the country, has been renamed as the Wolverhampton Inter Faith Council to reflect the organisation's coalition of diverse faith communities, groups and agencies. The new name underlines the significance of collaboration in the organisation's work.

Worcestershire

Worcestershire Inter-Faith Forum (WIFF) have been engaged in two major activities. The first, titled 'Engaging Faith Communities in the Youth Justice System', is in partnership with the Youth Offending Service. The Forum is overseeing the project through a small steering group. Currently, the research worker, Roy Griffiths, has commenced interviews and mapping work. The second activity has been with Worcester Cathedral in a two day 'Faith on the Move' project for 6th formers. A panel of speakers from different faiths addressed the students, who were provided with food prepared by the Forum's Vice Chairman, Malik Fazaz. Three WIFF members also led an afternoon for the RNIB New College in Worcester. A teacher fed back: "The students appreciated the non-patronising and gentle tone of the debate and the great role models provided...people of different

faiths who clearly have great liking and respect for each other."

South West

On 31 January 30 people from seven different faith groups met in Taunton to explore their shared concerns for their communities and for the region. The event was organised by faithnetsouthwest, in partnership with the SW Council of Faiths. Edson Burton, Development Worker with the Bristol Multi Faith Forum, outlined the scope of work for faith communities engaging with Bristol City Council, and the limitations of capacity and sustainable funding. The Forum works in two directions: providing information and developing understanding of faith issues in the public sector and maintaining links between faith groups. Jonathan Marshall, Director of the Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity, spoke about the work of the Centre in bringing people of different faiths together and in the education in faith matters both of school students and public service workers: the dialogue with the public sector is important, suggesting that most important of all is to retain the core values of one's own faith in all these contexts. Rev Heather Pencavel, Director of faithnetsouthwest and Faith Communities Representative on the SW Regional Assembly, spoke of the place of faith in shaping public policy – remaining true to one's beliefs, but listening with openness to the agendas of others and working with them for change.

In the group discussions which followed, there was agreement that more meetings would be helpful – perhaps an annual regional event and more frequent meetings at sub-regional level. Three themes emerged from the day: the need for inter faith understanding; the possibilities of multi faith working; and the related theme of the government's faith agenda, which often moved at a different speed than the faith groups could achieve and so risked failing to hear their voices.

Yorkshire and Humber

'Faith 2 Faith, was the first ever region-wide inter faith event for 16 to 25 year olds in Yorkshire and the Humber. Organised by Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum, the event was attended by over 100 young people from a variety of faith backgrounds from across the region. It was held at Leeds University on 12 December to discuss discrimination and injustice, celebrate different



faiths and ensure that young people's voices are heard on issues that matter to them. The conference formed the start of a programme of activities by the Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum to create a platform for young people of faith for dialogue and to influence policymaking. Kiran Bali, spokesperson for young people from the Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum, said: "Young people are young citizens in all communities with their own particular needs and hopes. By creating platforms for young people to discuss views, we encourage their direct contribution to the agendas of democracy, citizenship and social inclusion."

The conference included a wide range of young people from diverse faiths talking about their experiences of discrimination and a variety of workshops looked at ways to tackle discrimination positively through creativity and working with the media, dialogue and partnership. The event also explored innovative ways in which young people can continue to engage in issues of importance to them and can be involved in the ongoing work of the Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum including the setting up of a Youth Council.

Further information on the event from Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum, tel. 0113 245 6444, email: info@yorkshireandhumberfaiths.org.uk or at www.faith2faith.org.uk

Calderdale

Calderdale Interfaith Council (CIC) held its Annual Interfaith Celebration Event on 6 December at the Square Chapel, Halifax. The theme chosen was 'Peace and Respect'. Faith representatives including the Bahai, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Quakers all provided a brief overview of the significance of the theme in their traditions. The event was jointly chaired by the Mayor of

Calderdale Councillor Colin Stout (CIC's Chair), and CIC Vice Chair Rev Wendy Wilby, Vicar of Halifax. The event was attended by over 170 delegates. Presentations were delivered jointly by young people and faith representatives. The Hindu presentation included young people playing instruments and the *bhanja*, the Muslim presentation included a young person reciting the *Qur'an*, the Jewish representative sang their own songs dedicated to the theme and the Sikh young people played various instruments. At the end there was a minute's silence followed by an evening buffet supper.

Leeds

On 18 October, Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship held its annual Peace Service at the Quaker Meeting House. The service involved readings, music, meditation and the lighting of candles for peace by representatives of the faith communities in Leeds. Two new items to the programme included 'passing the Peace Flame' and signing the Peace Flag, which was then taken to Faslane in a peaceful protest over Trident.

York

York Interfaith met on 14 January. A volunteer from each faith represented read some teaching, offered a prayer or gave a brief synopsis of ideas from their faith background on making a peaceful world. A discussion followed on how to move forward on building good inter faith relations in York, especially in involving young people. The York Interfaith calendar of events, a calendar of festivals in various faiths and other literature from Yorkshire and Humberside Faiths Forum and the Inter Faith Network for the UK were made available.

RESOURCES

Women's Inter Faith Initiatives in the UK: A Survey

Commissioned by the Inter Faith Network from Dr Fatheena Mubarak and published in October. The report examines some of the different types of inter faith initiatives set up and run by women, gives many examples of 'good practice' throughout the report, reflects on the role of women in inter faith work more generally and provides a basis for further work in future on this important area. The report can be downloaded from the Network's website or bound hard copies can be ordered from the Network office at a cost of £5.50 plus £2 postage and packing. ISBN 1 902906 27 6

Faithful Representation: Faith Representatives on Local Public Partnerships

Report by the Centre for Local Economic Development at Coventry University, the Church Urban Fund and the Faith-Based Regeneration Network (FBRN) on behalf of the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG). The report details findings of research exploring the experiences of representatives of faith communities on local partnerships, such as Local Strategic Partnerships. Among other findings, it indicates that over 80% of faith representatives on local public partnerships surveyed would like to see the establishment of a national network for them with an easily accessible expertise database to enable them to communicate more effectively and draw upon the support, experience and expertise of one another. A downloadable summary of the report is available at www.cuf.org.uk/resources Further information about the research from billy.dan@cuf.org.uk

Faith in LSPs?: The experience of faith community representatives on LSPs

Report published in December by the Churches Regional Network, by Phillip Escott and Pat Logan. The report analyses how faith communities are involved in Local Strategic Partnerships and looks at the experience of faith community representatives on these. It can be downloaded at www.cte.org.uk/Publisher/Article.aspx?id=63910

Faith and Nation

A report by the Evangelical Alliance, was published on 23 October. Christian denominations and representatives from other faiths were invited to contribute. The report offers 100 recommendations on areas such as religious liberty, the environment, and constitutional matters, including the call for the Coronation ceremony to retain the phrase 'Defender of the Faith'. Launching the report, the Evangelical Alliance's Public Policy Director, Dr David Muir, said, "The report offers Christians, people of other faiths, and those of no faith, resources for engagement, discussion and action on a wide range of contemporary issues. We hope the report will help people understand the continued importance of the Christian faith in 21st century Britain". The report can be downloaded from <http://www.eauk.org/faithandnation/upload/faith%20and%20nation%20finalrevised.pdf>

The Imam and the Pastor

A 40-minute documentary, *The Imam and the Pastor*, had its first public screening on 9 December before an audience of nearly 300 people in the Friends House, Euston in London. The film tells the story of Imam Muhammad Ashafa and Pastor James Wuye of Kaduna, northern Nigeria. Both once led armed gangs in defence of their communities at a time of religious and ethnic conflict in their city in the early 1990s, and now they are joint directors of an Interfaith Mediation Centre. The film shows how, drawing on their respective faith traditions, they have succeeded in overcoming their animosity towards each other, and have created a partnership which has been effective in calming tensions in Nigeria and elsewhere. The event was co-sponsored by Initiatives of Change (www.uk.iofc.org) and the Nigerian High Commission. For further details contact: info@fltfilms.org

Faith Perspectives on Climate Change

A 12 page booklet produced by Redbridge Faith Forum. Further information from Urmi Acharya urmi.acharya@redbridge.gov.uk

Our Sacred Earth

The Scottish Inter Faith Council Youth Committee has produced a new booklet, called *Our Sacred Earth*, which encourages faith communities to be environmentally friendly. For details on ordering contact Calum at admin@interfaithscotland.org

Churches' Agency for Inter-Faith Relations in Scotland (CAIRS)

Publishes a monthly e-journal, highlighting local, national and international inter faith news and events. Copies of recent issues can be read at www.acts-scotland.org/cairs/articles.shtml. To register for your own e-mail copy, contact andrew.cairs@acts-scotland.org.

Local People, Global Faiths

Book 2 of *Local People, Global Faiths* by James Nelson and Norman Richardson, published by Colourpoint Press, was launched at the October Forum meeting of the Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum. It features sections about Muslims, Buddhists and Baha'is in Northern Ireland and complements the earlier volume which covers Jews, Hindus and Sikhs. Further information from info@colourpoint.co.uk

Reflecting on the past and looking to the future: The 2007 Bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade in the British Empire

Department for Culture, Media and Sport/Home Office booklet. Information on ordering from 020 7211 6200.

Leicester Council of Faiths 20th Anniversary Brochure

Available from the office of Leicester Council of Faiths, 1st Floor, Pilgrim House, 10 Bishop Street, Leicester, Leicestershire LE1 6AF. Illustrated and full colour Cost £2 to cover postage and handling. Or view at www.leicestercounciloffaiths.org.uk/pdf/files/20thBrochure.pdf

Women's Interfaith Media Literacy project website

Coming soon – www.wiml.org a 'One stop shop' interactive media web site. On 27 March Clare Short MP will launch this web site designed by the Women's Interfaith Media Literacy project of National Board of Catholic Women(NBCW). Regional, interactive, media taster days are planned to encourage women to meet together and become more media active. The site and taster days will help people in faith communities become more easily informed and actively engaged in understanding and influencing the ways in which all forms of media affect our lives and those of our children. The project has been developed with ecumenical and inter faith partners and was set up

with the help of a grant from the Faith Communities Development Fund. The project has a small management group and an Advisory Panel of women from different faith networks. The impetus for the project was concern on the part of NBCW and partners about the premature sexualisation of and marketing to children in the media, the portrayal of faith and faith communities in the media and the continued exploitation and stereotyping of women in the media. Further information from Angela Perkins enquiries@nbcw.org

Victoria and Albert Museum launches free intercultural tours

The Victoria and Albert Museum, in London, has launched a new programme of tours relating to objects of relevance to the Jewish, Christian, Islamic, Hindu, Jain, Buddhist and Sikh heritages. Visits last one hour and are led by V and A trained intercultural guides. Visitors can choose one faith or from a number of themed intercultural tours which compare and contrast different traditions. The tours are free for youth and communities organisations, supplementary schools and charitable faith organisations. For further information or to book a tour (2 weeks advance notice required) call 020 7942 2211 or email bookings.office@vam.ac.uk

Faith, Identity and Belonging: Educating for Shared Citizenship

ISBN 190290625X

The printed report is no longer available but it can be downloaded from www.interfaith.org.uk/publications/index.htm

Report on a seminar held by the Inter Faith Network for the UK in association with the Citizenship Foundation.

FUNDING

Roger Hooker Memorial Trust

The Roger Hooker Memorial Trust offers grants of up to £500 (and occasionally more by agreement) to organisations and individuals involved in inter faith work or who wish to run an inter faith event. The trust was established six years ago in memory of Dr Roger Hooker and its aims are to promote good relations between faith communities in the Birmingham and adjacent urban areas through encouraging and developing interfaith and intercultural understanding at all levels, but particularly among young people. Bids are considered quarterly and forms can be obtained from our secretary at margaretozanne@fsmail.net or ring 0121 449 3839. For other enquiries call its Chair, Mr S S Mandla, on 07980 44 85 83.

Inter Faith Youth Trust (Alma Royalton-Kisch Trust)

The Inter Faith Youth Trust is part of the Alma Royalton-Kisch Trust which was established to promote the education of children and young people about the religions of the world and funds projects that bring together young people of different faiths to improve collaboration and understanding. Chair of the Trust, Simon Abbott said, "The Trust funds a variety of different projects ranging from safeguarding children from child abuse to inter faith conferences and arts and environmental projects. Priority is given to projects which are organised and run by young people." Grants of up to £3,000 are available to fund or part-fund projects. Further information and grant applications forms are available at www.kisch.org.uk. All applications and work reports should be on the Trust form downloaded or supplied on request. Applications should be submitted in the previous month for decision at meetings held in March, July, and November.

NASACRE/Westhill Awards

The National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (NASACRE) have announced the NASACRE/Westhill Awards 2007/8 for Young Inter-Faith Projects. The programme has been made possible for the third year through a grant from the Trustees of the Westhill Foundation. Local SACREs are invited to apply for awards for projects which promote dialogue between young people of different faith positions and seek to benefit the local community. All SACREs have already received full documentation, but further information and an application form may be found at www.nasacre.org.uk. Applications for an Award should be received at NASACRE's office in the University of Birmingham by 31 March.

Connecting Communities Plus: Community Grants, Round 2

In December, CDF announced Round 2 of a grants scheme for local communities, on behalf of the Department of Communities and Local Government, to increase race equality and community cohesion within communities. This £1 million fund is aimed at a local level and CDF believes local communities are in an excellent position to work with others to improve their own situations. Applications are welcomed from small, locally run and managed voluntary and community organisations who want to improve opportunities for people locally and to improve relations between people of different ethnic and/or faith backgrounds. The Fund has four key priorities derived from 'Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society', the Government strategy to increase race equality and community cohesion, one of which is: 'bringing together communities from different races and faiths, and promoting a shared sense of belonging (community cohesion)'. Guidance notes and application forms are available to download at www.cdf.org.uk. To talk with CDF about the fund, ring 01223 400343. Closing date for applications is 29 March.

DIARY DATES

Local Events

The following are just a few examples of inter faith events happening around the UK in the coming months. To find out more about events in your area, you can contact the nearest local inter faith group. A list of local bodies can be found at www.interfaith.org.uk/locallist.htm

8 March, Ilford, LB Redbridge. Redbridge Faith Forum is organising an event to mark International Women's Day. It will comprise speeches from a variety of speakers, readings from a range of poetry and prose, and issues affecting women in today's modern world will be discussed. 6.45pm-9pm at Gloucester Room, Ilford Central Library, Clements Road, Ilford. Further information from Urmi Acharya, tel. 020 8708 2478, email: Urmi.Acharya@redbridge.gov.uk

10 March, London. Sakinah Forum is hosting a joint session, 'Muslim and non-Muslim women in dialogue' as part of a series of sessions to deepen the dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims in Britain. 2-5pm at St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace, 78 Bishopsgate, London EC2N. For more information tel. 020 7496 1610 or email tent@stethelburgas.org

13 March, Crawley. A joint inter faith day on the theme 'Meditation and Social Action' at Worth Abbey hosted by Horsham Interfaith Forum, Crawley Interfaith Network, Brighton and Hove Interfaith Contact Group and the World Congress of Faiths. 10am-4pm, Paddockhurst Road, Turners Hill, Crawley. Further information toc@worthabbey.net or tel Pam Spencer 01403 248165.

14 March, Plymouth. 'Promoting and facilitating multifaith and interfaith understanding and dialogue' at Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity, led by the Centre's Director, Jonathan Marshall. At PCFCD, 3A Watts Road, St Judes, Plymouth, PL4 8SE. £35 including refreshments and lunch. Pre-booking required. Further information from pcfcd@plymouth.gov.uk or tel 01752 254438.

20 March, Bristol. Bristol Inter Faith Group meeting on Islamic banking. Speaker Amjid Ali, Head of HSBC Amanah UK. The City Academy, Russell Town Avenue, Bristol BS5 9JH. Further information from info@bifg.org.uk

22 March, Derby. "Should Religious Groups be allowed to Censor the Arts?" Discussion with local

performing and graphic artists. University of Derby, Kedleston Road, 7.00-8.30pm Charges: £3.00, £2.00 concessions, free for students. Contact: Jo on 01332 591285 or email mfc@derby.ac.uk www.multifaithcentre.org

1 May, Bedford. Bedford Council of Faiths Faith Walk commencing at 6.30pm in Queen's Park covering All Saints Church, Guru Nanak Gurdwara and Jamia Masjid Gulshani Baghdad. Further information at www.bcof.org.uk or tel. 01234 307281, email: bcof@bcof.org.uk

29 May, Bury St Edmunds. West Suffolk Festival of Culture, 10:00am to 4:00pm Corn Exchange, Bury St Edmunds. Further information from Suffolk Inter Faith Resource. Further information from office@sifre.org.uk or tel 01473 343661

27 June, London. 'Music from the Faiths'. Brent Interfaith presents an evening of music from many of the world's religious traditions. 7.30pm London Inter Faith Centre, 125 Salusbury Road, London NW6 6RG. Free but please reserve a place by contacting info@londoninterfaith.org.uk tel 020 7604 3053.

Conferences, Exhibitions, Festivals and Seminars

Until Sunday 11 March, Edinburgh The 4th Annual Edinburgh International Festival of Middle Eastern Spirituality and Peace is bringing together people from a wide range of spiritual backgrounds, educators, teachers and scholars, people from artistic and cultural backgrounds, people from diverse cultures and traditions, and people from across Scotland and internationally. All of the principal faith and spiritual traditions of Scotland have been invited to participate in this spiritual, educational, artistic and cultural, and international festival which celebrates peace and mutual understanding. The Festival is jointly organized by the Edinburgh International Centre for World Spiritualities, EICWS, and the Edinburgh Institute for Advanced Learning, EIAL. Further information at www.eicws.org

15 March, Cambridge. Faith Communities and Social Enterprise. A seminar introducing the idea of social enterprise and giving practical guidance for faith communities on getting involved. Organised by the Faith-based Regeneration Network and supported by East of England Faiths

Council and St John's Innovation Centre. 9.30am to 4pm at St John's Innovation Centre, Cowley Road, Cambridge CB4 0WS Registration begins at 9.30 am £40.00 Statutory & Commercial Sector £25.00: Community and Faith Based Voluntary Organisations with funding Free: Individuals and Faith Based Voluntary Organisations without funding.

Feb-29 March Edinburgh, 7-9pm Course – An Introduction to the Heart of the World Faiths Edinburgh Inter-Faith Association is partnering with Creative Space at St George's West Church to provide a second course on introducing the major world religions. This course consists of nine evening sessions which are each presented by a practitioner from that particular faith tradition. Further details and a downloadable registration form can be obtained at this weblink: www.creativespacesgw.org.uk/events/event_details.asp?id=171

2 April, London. Conference on the Role of Faith and Faith Communities in supporting Mental Well-Being amongst Refugees. University of East London, Docklands. 10.30-4.30. Sponsored by the Department of Health. No charge to attend or for the lunch but places must be prebooked. Further information from Sue Hearsom at suehearsom@aol.com

27 April-23 September, London at the British Library, Euston Road, London. "Sacred: discover what we share – The world's greatest collection of Jewish, Christian and Muslim holy books". An exhibition bringing together some of the world's most important and beautiful religious texts for the first time. Exquisite and rare examples of Jewish, Christian and Muslim sacred texts from the Library's collections will be presented alongside treasures on loan from other institutions in a unique and compelling modern context. 'Sacred' marks the first time that sacred texts from these three faiths will have been displayed and explored together, side by side, in a major UK exhibition. To accompany this exhibition, the Learning Team at the British Library are running a wide range of events for young people and teachers to engage with exhibition themes through free, onsite workshops. Participants will focus on similarities between texts as well as engaging with differences and contradictions. These free workshops are available on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 7 May until 14 September. To find out more or to make a booking, please contact Ria Bartlett on ria.bartlett@bl.uk or call 020 7412 7797.

8 May, Birmingham. AGM of the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (NASACRE) on the theme 'Working Together for a Healthy Community' will take place at the Birmingham Council House. Main speakers will include Rev Nims Obunge of Freedom's Ark, Minister of a black-led London church, and Prof Brian Gates, Chair of the RE Council. Participants normally attend on behalf of their local SACRE, but members of the public are also welcome. Cost £70 per person, to include refreshments and lunch with dietary options. Places should be booked in advance. Further details at www.nasacre.org.uk

14-17 May, Kettlewell. Welcoming the Stranger. How do we value and appreciate a sense of God in 'the other'? How might we recognise the presence of God in the stranger, both in our individual relationships and in the public space? Through the insights of three major faiths – Islam, Judaism and Christianity – the course will explore the concept of the Stranger, drawing deeply on the spirituality of these three traditions. Contributors: Dr Musharraf Hussain, Principal of the Karimia Institute, Nottingham; Rabbi Dr Michael Hilton, Kol Chai Hatch End Jewish Community; Rev Dr Alan Race, Editor of Inter religious Insight and Anglican Priest Scargill House, Kettlewell, Skipton, N Yorks BD23 in the Yorkshire Dales National Park. The course will begin at 6 pm and conclude after lunch on the final day. Cost £162. For more information contact Dilly Baker: warden@scargilhouse.co.uk

15-17 May, Hertfordshire. Christian Interfaith Practitioners' Annual Consultation. The Christian Imperative to Inter Faith Dialogue – Good News for Everyone? All Saints Pastoral Centre, London Colney, Hertfordshire. Keynote Speaker Revd Marcus Braybrooke, The cost for this consultation is £120 full board or £70 day-visitor (lunch and evening meals). The Christian Inter Faith Practitioners' Association (CIPA) is a support group for Christians of all denominations involved in inter faith work and a group endorsed by the Churches Commission for Inter Faith Relations (CCIFR), a commission of the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI). Further details from, and bookings to : jgrassroots@aol.com

5-7 October, Turvey Abbey. Meditation and mindfulness: A Christian-Buddhist weekend learning from each other's spiritual tradition. Led by a Buddhist nun, and a Turvey Benedictine nun. Turvey Abbey. Cost £85 (£60 plus non-returnable deposit of £25) Further information from courses-retreats253@turveyabbey.org.uk or tel 01234 881432.

20 November, 2007, Dunblane. In Dialogue with Hinduism. An opportunity to learn more about Hinduism, the Hindu community in Scotland, and ways to improve dialogue between Christians and Hindus, led by Rev Professor Frank Whaling, Methodist Minister, President of the Edinburgh Inter-Faith Association, and Emeritus Professor of the Study of Religion at Edinburgh University. 10.30am to 3pm, Scottish Churches House, Dunblane. A study day, jointly promoted by SCH and CAIRS. Further details from andrew.cairs@acts-scotland.org

CONSULTATIONS

The Office for National Statistics is holding a series of open meetings in London, Sheffield and Cardiff on the content of the 2011 Census in England and Wales. These are on 9 March in Sheffield; on 16 March in London; and in Cardiff (date tbc). In the morning session of each meeting, ONS will give its latest views on the likely content of the 2011 Census questionnaire, and the afternoon will focus on the ethnicity and identity questions in particular. Attendance can be for morning or afternoon sessions only if preferred. Further details and how to register for attendance at a meeting are available on the National Statistics website at www.statistics.gov.uk/events/2011Census_updated/default.asp

Connect: Different Faiths Shared Values

ISBN 1902906128

Single copies of the booklet free with a C5 sized SAE (23p postage) or available online at: www.interfaith.org.uk/publications/index.htm

A 28 page full colour inter faith action and resource guide for young people aged 16-25.

CALLS FOR INFORMATION

South East mapping exercise to identify faith groups working with offenders

The South East Reducing Re-Offending Strategy was published in March 2006 and applies to all activity with offenders and those on community sentences in the South East. The work of Pathways, Partnerships and Alliances, under the auspices of the Regional Offender Manager (ROM), is to “facilitate effective partnership working across the statutory, private, voluntary and community and faith sectors.” A Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) and Faith Alliances Steering Group has been set up to ensure that the interest and perspectives of partners from this sector are taken into account on an ongoing basis as well as act as a conduit for informing and advising the ROM commissioning process. The Department of Social Responsibility in Guildford Diocese is undertaking a mapping exercise to identify different faith groups working with offenders. A questionnaire has been produced and the Diocese would appreciate anyone involved in this work completing it. Please contact Jane Schofield at Janeschofield@cofeguildford.org.uk or tel: 01483 790333.

Growing up in a Mixed-Faith Family: A Project at the University of Warwick Is Looking for Participants

A three year study, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council on growing up in a mixed-faith family, will take place from June 2006–May 2009 at the University of Warwick. Currently, there are few solid statistics on the number of mixed faith or inter faith marriages and academic research in this area is scant. Yet every faith community is aware that such marriages are on the rise, particularly among young adults. The research team, comprising Dr Elisabeth Arweck, Dr Eleanor Nesbitt, and Prof. Robert Jackson, is building on previous studies of religious nurture in the Warwick Religions and Education Research Unit (WRERU) in investigating how children, whose parents have different faith backgrounds (namely Christian, Hindu, Muslim or Sikh) form their own religious identities. The research team would welcome any relevant information and contact with members of mixed-faith families. Please contact: Elisabeth Arweck, tel: 02476 528 434, email: elisabeth.arweck@warwick.ac.uk

Carnegie Trust – Inquiry

The Carnegie UK Trust is actively seeking public participation in its http://democracy.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/civil_society Inquiry into the Future of Civil Society. The Inquiry will explore the possible future threats and opportunities for the development of a healthy civil society, looking out to 2025; Identify how policy and practice can be enhanced to help strengthen civil society; enhance the ability of civil society associations to prepare for the challenges of the future. The Inquiry will last 18 months starting in November 2006. The Inquiry Commission is keen to hear views about future threats and opportunities for Civil Society in the UK and Ireland as well as contributions that reflect on the European and global dimensions of civil society, especially in so far as they relate to the UK and Ireland. Further information at www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk

Bridge Building at the Grassroots – Aston Centre study

In the Autumn, the Aston Centre for Voluntary Action Research (ACVAR) at Aston Business School, Aston University (www.cvar.org.uk) began an 18 month research project on 'Bridge Building at the Grassroots'. The research is exploring local and neighbourhood-based activity intended to build bridges between people and communities traditionally divided by ethnic or religious differences. It is focusing on London Borough of Tower Hamlets; the City of Birmingham; and Oldham Metropolitan Borough. At this stage of the project, the research team are finding out what bridge building activities are taking place in each of the three areas and would welcome help in this since many of these activities are not well known or widely publicised. If you are aware of any examples of organised formal or informal interpersonal bridge-building activities in any of these three areas, or if you can put the team in touch with appropriate local people, please contact the Project Leader, Professor Margaret Harris on m.e.harris@aston.ac.uk or ACVAR's Research Support Officer, Selena Teeling on s.teeling@aston.ac.uk or tel: 0121 204 3253.

Network newsletter

The Network Office apologises to readers for the delay in the production of this Winter/Spring double issue of Inter Faith Update.

Inter Faith Update

Inter Faith Update is the newsletter of the Inter Faith Network for the UK. It keeps a wide range of organisations and individuals interested in developing good inter faith relations in the UK in touch with UK events and projects with a significant inter faith component.

Please send any items and diary dates for consideration for inclusion in the next issue by **14 May** to:
The Newsletter Editor, Inter Faith Network, 8A Lower Grosvenor Place, London SW1W 0EN or e-mail to ifnet@interfaith.org marking your e-mail 'newsletter'.



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Inter Faith Network, 8A Lower Grosvenor Place, London SW1W 0EN

Tel: 020 7931 7766
Fax: 020 7931 7722

E-mail: ifnet@interfaith.org
www.interfaith.org.uk



INTER FAITH

UPDATE

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Inter Faith Network marks 20 years of working for good relations

The Inter Faith Network for the UK was founded in 1987 to promote good relations between people of different faiths in this country and to “advance public knowledge and mutual understanding of the teachings, traditions and practices of the different faith communities in Britain, including an awareness both of their distinctive features and of their common ground”. Its member bodies include the representative bodies of the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Zoroastrian faiths; national, regional, local and other inter faith bodies; and educational and academic bodies specialising in

inter faith relations. Together, and through their individual programmes, they work to promote understanding and respect between the faith communities in the UK.

The Network's National Meeting in Coventry on 16 July had an anniversary theme: 'The Inter Faith Network for the UK: 20 Years of working together for inter faith understanding and cooperation.' At it, member bodies looked back at some of the key moments of the first two decades and celebrated their work together as well as considering some of the continuing challenges.

(Continued on page 2)

Subscribing to Inter Faith Update

This newsletter is published three times a year and is available by subscription at £7.50 per year.

To subscribe, send your name and address with a cheque payable to “The Inter Faith Network” to:

Inter Faith Update
Subscriptions,
Inter Faith Network,
8A Lower Grosvenor
Place, London
SW1W 0EN

Commission on Integration and Cohesion

The final report of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion, Our Shared Future, was published on 14 June. It puts forward a wide-ranging set of recommendations for practical action to address cohesion and integration issues at a local level, along with suggestions for a national framework to support these. It followed an interim report published on 21 February. The Government has said that it will be making its response in the Autumn to the Commission's findings.

The report reflected a programme of commissioned research; visits by

Commissioners to a number of communities in England to hear about the barriers to integration and cohesion in different local situations and conversations with researchers; and practitioners working on integration and cohesion related projects. Commissioners also visited Northern Ireland to explore how issues of integration and cohesion are being handled there. It also reflected the 600+ responses to its consultation paper. These included a very high return level from the faith and inter faith sectors.

(Continued on page 4)

NETWORK NEWS

Inter Faith Network marks 20 years of working for good relations

(Continued from page 1)

Dr Indarjit Singh reflected in his keynote presentation on some of the most significant developments of the Network's first 20 years. Then, in 'Local inter faith work – a visual journey across 20 years', Chas Raws, Secretary of Merseyside Council of Faiths and member, Society of Friends and Urmi Raval, Project Officer of the Inter Faith Network, looked back across 20 years at how this vital area of work has developed and at the Network's role in this.

At lunchtime, Ven Bandula of the Sri Lankan Sangha Sabha and a Network Vice-Chair during 2006-07 spoke of the achievements of the Network and of the importance of the harmonious spirit of friendship characterising the relationships it has helped build. He spoke of the endeavours of members, staff and trustees who, across the 20 years, have helped the work come this far. He closed by saying "I pray that our work continues in the same peaceable, cooperative and effective way that it has done since 1987. Let us give thanks and join in a moment of celebration". Then a special 20th anniversary cake was officially cut by outgoing and newly elected Officers and by the Director and representatives of the four categories of Network membership.

Afternoon discussion groups were facilitated by Professor Brian Gates, Chair, RE Council for England and Wales; Rev Dr John Hall, Chair, West Midlands Faiths Forum; Pramila Kaur, Chief Executive of the Scottish Inter Faith Council; Dorab Mistry, Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe; Deepak Naik, Minorities of Europe; and Ann Noonan, Roman Catholic Conference of Bishops for England and Wales. Participants discussed the particular strengths of past work of the Inter Faith Network on which they thought the Network should build for the future; how the Network's role might develop most fruitfully across the coming years; whether there were any particular needs or tasks they wanted to identify; and how the framework of the Network, and the links which it provides can best be used to work together to deepen inter faith understanding and cooperation in Britain. Key points were fed back into the plenary in a short report back by

Stella Opoku-Owusu, Inter Faith Network Project Officer.

Panellists Shaykh Ibrahim Mogra, Chair of the Inter Faith Relations Committee of Muslim Council of Britain, Rabbi Jacqueline Tabick, Chair of the World Congress of Faiths, and Dr Harriet Crabtree, Deputy Director of the Inter Faith Network reflected on some of the key themes that emerged during the day.

The meeting was chaired by Network Co-Chairs Bishop Tom Butler and Dr Nawal Prinja.

A full report on the National Meeting will be available from the Network office in the Autumn.

Network AGM

At the Network's AGM held in Coventry on 16 July in conjunction with its National Meeting the following organisations were admitted to Network membership: Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (in place of its Commission on Inter Faith Relations); Churches Together in England; Faiths Forum for the East Midlands; Joseph Interfaith Foundation; St Ethelburga's Centre for Peace and Reconciliation; St Philip's Centre for Study and Engagement in a Multi Faith Society; Blackpool Faith Forum; Bradford District Faiths Forum; Crawley Interfaith Network; Horsham Interfaith Forum; Keighley Interfaith Group; Faith Network for Manchester; Middlesbrough Council of Faiths; Portsmouth Interfaith Forum; Redbridge Faiths Forum; Rugby Inter Faith Forum; Swansea Faiths Forum; Tameside Interfaith Network; Westminster Faith Exchange; Centre for Christianity and Interreligious Dialogue at Heythrop College in the University of London; and Cambridge Inter-Faith Programme.

The AGM noted that the Centre for the Study of Jewish-Christian Relations, in the University of Cambridge, under its Director, Dr Ed Kessler, (which had been in Network membership since 2004) now formed part of the Woolf Institute of Abrahamic Faiths, which also incorporates the new Centre for the Study of Jewish-Muslim Relations which was set up in 2006.

The number of Network member bodies is now 150.

Bishop Tom Butler and Dr Nawal Prinja were elected as Co-Chairs for 2007-08, with Dr Manazir Ahsan, Dr Natubhai Shah, Dr Indarjit

Singh and Vivian Wineman as Vice-Chairs and Ramesh Shah as Treasurer. Dr Fatma Amer, Dina Gold, Dr Elizabeth Harris and Harsha Trivedi stood down from the Committee. The new members elected to it were Sughra Ahmed, Rev Peter Colwell, Aviva Dautch and Nitin Palan. Outgoing officers and other trustees were warmly thanked for their contribution to the Network's work.

Network document on faith and citizenship

The last issue of *Inter Faith Update* referred to a reflection document entitled "Faith, Citizenship and Shared Life In Britain Today" which had been sent to Network member bodies for comment last November and had also been put on the Network's website for wider comment. The final version of the document is now on the Network's website.

We are currently in the process of gathering pictures, quotes and memories about the Network's first 20 years for a special '20 Year' supplement to the Annual Review.

If you have any memories or stories that you would like to share about the Network please ring or email Urmi Raval at 020 7931 7766 or urmi.raval@interfaith.org.uk by Friday 7 September.

Women's Inter Faith Initiatives in the UK: A Survey

ISBN 1902906276, £5.50 plus £2 for postage and packaging

A4 size, 63 page report looking at the pattern of women's inter faith initiatives.

To order, please send a cheque for £7.50, payable to The Inter Faith Network, to:

Gaylina Nguyen,
8a Lower Grosvenor Place,
London SW1W 0EN

Or email gaylina.nguyen@interfaith.org.uk requesting to be invoiced with publication.

NEW EDITION Inter Faith Organisations in the UK: A Directory

ISBN 1 902906 314. £8.95 (£11 including postage and packaging) from the Inter Faith Network ifnet@interfaith.org.uk 8A Lower Grosvenor Place, London SW1W 0EN. Cheques payable to The Inter Faith Network or request invoice.

This fourth edition of *Inter Faith Organisations in the UK: A Directory*, published July 2007, lists more than 250 inter faith bodies promoting good relations. The directory is a valuable resource for all those engaged in the work of developing mutual respect, understanding and encouraging good relations between faith communities of the UK. It lists contact names, addresses, telephone numbers, websites and email addresses for 217 local, 14 regional and 25 national inter faith groups as well as brief information about the activities of each of them. Over recent years, there has been a steady increase in the establishment of local inter faith groups and this year alone, there are 27 new additions among those listed in the directory. There are also 11 other new entries, among them academic centres focusing on inter faith relations which is a category of listing new to this edition.

In the last 20 years the work of local inter faith bodies has become varied and local groups are engaging with public, private and education sectors on a daily basis. Since the 70s the number of local inter faith groups has nearly tripled. The increase of local inter faith bodies shows that dialogue and action among faith communities is increasing active.

NATIONAL UPDATE

Commission on Integration and Cohesion

(Continued from page 1)

The terms of reference of the Commission, which was chaired by Darra Singh, Chief Executive of the London Borough of Ealing, were to consider how local areas themselves can play a role in forging cohesive and resilient communities, by: examining the issues that raise tensions between different groups in different areas, and that lead to segregation and conflict; suggesting how local community and political leadership can push further against perceived barriers to cohesion and integration; looking at how local communities themselves can be empowered to tackle extremist ideologies; and developing approaches that build local areas' own capacity to prevent problems, and ensure they have the structures in place to recover from periods of tension.

The Commission was asked to undertake its work within the context of existing Government policy and to focus on developing practical solutions for local communities based on the best existing practice. It was also asked to consider the needs of communities defined by a shared characteristic (such as race or faith), which may require regional or national solutions. Recommendations for local areas were to cover England only, but the Commission was able to consider good practice from Scotland and Wales, and good practice from other countries.

The report notes the contribution that faith groups make to the life of local communities. In its recommendations it picks up, however, the fact that this contribution could be strengthened if there was a higher level of 'religious literacy' on the part of public agencies and recommends that 'faith communities should be encouraged to work with Government, the LGA and other relevant agencies to develop a programme to increase 'religious literacy''. The report notes also a possible under use of faith-based bodies by some local authorities 'due we think in part to the lack of understanding about faith groups, but also to a squeamishness about the possibility of their proselytising...[and] some evidence of a concern that engaging with faith groups might undermine the inclusiveness of the local authority's wider strategies.' It recommends that 'A set of clear guidelines should be developed to enable local

authorities and others to be able to award public service contracts to faith based bodies without fear that there will be issues over whether this will lead to proselytising or pressure on users of services to accept the religious beliefs of the providers.'

More broadly, the report notes the fact that 'Religious faith is profoundly important to those whose lives it shapes' and that is 'is potentially a unifying force within society'. At the same time, the report notes that 'At times religious identity can be advanced in divisive ways or can become a factor which separates people from the wider community – for example in many of the areas where 'parallel lives' are most in evidence.' It underlines the importance of inter faith engagement: "We believe that the way relations between people of different faiths and beliefs develop in the coming years in England's diverse local areas will be very important to integration and cohesion. There has already been much effective work to develop these relationships but more needs to be done." The Commission recommends that 'Local authorities and LSPs conduct a brief 'audit' of opportunities for cross-cultural and inter faith engagement in their areas" It also calls for 'A nationally sponsored 'community week' with a focus on celebrating all communities and inter-community engagement' which could be a time, among other things, for individual faith and other groups to open their doors to each other. In an annex responding to the consultation of the then DfES on the Duty to Promote Cohesion, the Commission again picks up the significance of inter faith issues in relation to schools.

As well as stressing the important of inter faith engagement, the report also highlights the need for broader intercultural dialogue and for a more constructive conversation between those who are religious and those who are not. The report, overall, has a strong emphasis on interaction and shared citizenship.

The report is available free of charge from Communities and Local Government Publications, PO Box 236, Wetherby LS23 7NB. Tel: 0870 1226 236, fax: 0870 1226 237, textphone: 0870 1207 405, email: communities@twoten.com. Please quote the product code when ordering. Delivery will be 5 to 7 days from receipt of order. A maximum quantity restriction may apply. It can also be downloaded

at www.integrationandcohesion.org.uk/upload/assets/www.integrationandcohesion.org.uk/our_shared_future.pdf

Government changes under the new PM

In the new administration formed in late June when Gordon Brown became Prime Minister the Department for Communities for Local Government continues to carry the main responsibility for relations between the Government and faith communities. However, the Department has new Ministers dealing with this issue and with issues of community cohesion. The Department's new Secretary of State is Hazel Blears; and a new Parliamentary Under Secretary, Parmjit Dhanda, who will be chairing the Faith Communities Consultative Council.

There have been significant machinery of Government changes affecting equalities issues including general responsibility for the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights.

A new Equalities Office has been established which is located within the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) but will have its own Vote from the House of Commons. The Women and Equalities Unit, previously based in the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), (and before that in the Department of Trade and Industry), are being transferred to the new Office. However, because of the links to the community cohesion agenda, race and faith issues remain located with the rest of the community agenda in DCLG.

Harriet Harman, who is Leader of the House of Commons, will be responsible for the Equalities Office at Cabinet level as Secretary of State for Equality. Barbara Follett, in addition to her current role as Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the DWP, will be Parliamentary Under-Secretary in the Equalities Office, with the title Minister for Equality. There continue to be lead Secretaries of State and Ministers for individual policy areas as follows:

- Harriet Harman is the lead Cabinet Minister for women and is supported in this role by the Women and Equality Unit in DWP
- Peter Hain, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, is the lead Cabinet Minister for disability issues, supported by Ann McGuire, Minister for Disabled People, and the Office

for Disability Issues in DWP.

- Hazel Blears, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, is the lead Cabinet Minister for race and faith issues.
- Stephen Timms, Minister of State at the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform, is also to play an important role in advising the Government on issues of concern to faith communities.
- Baroness Ashton, Leader of the House of Lords, will cover the equalities agenda there.

The Sub-Committee on Communities and Equalities, a sub-committee of the Domestic Affairs Committee, will bring together Ministers from across Government to discuss key policies on equalities and is to be chaired by Ed Miliband, Minister for the Cabinet Office.

The Governance of Britain

In early July the Government published a substantial document, under the title *The Governance of Britain*, setting out a wide range of proposals relating to constitutional arrangements in Britain. It covers proposals to limit the powers of the executive; to make the executive more accountable; to reinvigorate democracy; and to address issues relating to the citizen and the state.

There are a number of proposals which may be of particular interest to faith communities.

The document says that the Government intends "through an inclusive process of national debate to develop a British statement of values that will set out the ideals and principles that bind us together as a nation." As a starting point, over the next few months the Government will release a series of discussion documents and materials to inform this debate. The Government wishes to build on the current and ongoing work of various "expert and representative groups". The process of developing a British statement of values will involve local, regional and national level events and opportunities for contributing to it and the Government will engage with a wide range of people and groups, from individual members of the public to community groups, schools, academics, local authorities and other interested parties. The aim is the production of "a British statement of values that reflects the voices of citizens across the country". The document says the debate will also provide valuable insights into national views on citizenship and Britishness,

which may be published after a period of dialogue and feedback.

The document also says that the Government plans to bring forward a comprehensive set of proposals to complete reform of the House of Lords and will develop proposals for a substantial or wholly elected second chamber.

It is also intended that the Prime Minister should in future not have an active role in the selection of individual candidates for appointment as Bishops of the Church of England. At present the Prime Minister receives two nominations and decides which to recommend to the Queen. It is proposed that in future the Prime Minister should receive only one nomination which he would then recommend to the Queen.

Preventing Violent Extremism – winning hearts and minds

In early April the Government published a new action plan to step up work with Muslim communities to isolate, prevent and defeat violent extremism. *Preventing Violent Extremism – winning hearts and minds* says that the Department for Communities and Local Government, working with others, will take this forward through four key approaches: promoting shared values, supporting local solutions, building civic capacity and leadership, and strengthening the role of faith institutions and leaders.

It set out the Government's immediate priorities as being to: broaden the provision of citizenship education in supplementary schools and *madrassahs* within the Muslim community; ensuring the most effective use of the education system in promoting faith understanding; supporting local authorities to work with their communities in tackling violent extremism; increasing the number of local forums on extremism and islamophobia; supporting the developing of "tackling violent extremism roadshows"; fundamentally rebalancing the Government's engagement towards those organisations that uphold shared values and reject and condemn violent extremism; strengthening the role that women can play within their communities; working with the Charity Commission to raise standards of governance in mosques; developing a new fully accredited Continuous Professional Development

Programme for faith leaders; and establishing a framework of minimum requirements for all imams engaged by the state.

In launching the report, Ruth Kelly, then Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, announced that the Government would be providing £600,000 to the Charity Commission to help it create a new Faith and Social Cohesion Unit; and would provide an additional £6 million to fund work in around 70 local authorities to tackle violent extremism. This work would include support for local authorities in establishing at least 40 new local forums on extremism and islamophobia in addition to the 12 already in place.

Accompanying the main document was a separate set of case studies of preventing violent extremism initiatives funded from the Preventing Violent Extremism Pathfinder Fund.

The Government's proposals were discussed at a meeting of the Government's Faith Communities Consultative Council on 6 June. Faith community representatives expressed concern that there had not been prior consultation with faith communities generally on these proposals and emphasised the need for more involvement of all faith communities in tackling this agenda. Plans are being made for further briefing and engagement of faith community representatives towards the end of August.

Condemnation of terror attacks in London and Glasgow

Following the attempted terror attacks in central London and at Glasgow airport at the end of June, statements condemning them were issued by the British Muslim Forum and the Muslim Council of Britain and also by religious leaders in Scotland. The statement from the British Muslim Forum spoke of "the duty of every British citizen to assist the Police in safeguarding national security and ensuring the safety of all our citizens." The MCB said that "those who deliberately seek to kill or maim innocent people are the enemies of all of us... Those who engage in such murderous actions and those that provide support for them are the enemies of all, Muslims and non-Muslims, and they stand against our shared values in the UK." Scottish religious leaders voiced their concern "that the public reaction to such attacks is

not mis-directed against others by association of race or religious belief, and in particular against the Asian community” and said that “... any act of terrorism carried out in the name of religion is a gross perversion of the purpose of faith and is not supported by either the tenets of any of the faiths in Scotland nor by the vast majority of the followers of each faith.”

New counter terror proposals

In a statement to the House of Commons on 25 July Prime Minister Gordon Brown proposed fresh measures to tackle terrorism. He referred to three lines of defence: overseas at other countries’ ports and airports where people embark on journeys to this country and from where British embassies issue visas; security within Britain’s own borders; and ID security within Britain. He said that “the British way is that every measure we take to enhance security is complemented by additional protections against any arbitrary treatment and in defence of the liberties of the individual.”

The Prime Minister emphasised that the Government wants to consult widely and seek all party consensus on proposals relating to the treatment of intercept evidence and new provisions for pre-charge detention and post-charge questioning. He went on to say that there is a need to “work with all communities in all countries through debate, discussion, dialogue and education as we tackle at root the evils that risk driving people, particularly vulnerable young people, into the hands of violent extremists”. The proposal which has attracted most public comment is for an extension of the current limit of 28 days in the period for which a suspect may be held without charge, subject to certain judicial and Parliamentary checks.

Gordon Brown said that over the next three years the Government would provide an additional £70 million to support local authorities and community groups in improving the capacity of local communities to resist violent extremism. This would include developing leadership programmes for young people, strengthening capacity of women’s groups and local projects to build citizenship. This approach builds on the announcements in the Government’s earlier document on *Preventing Violent Extremism – winning hearts and minds*.

The Prime Minister said that the Government would “propose inter faith bodies in every community in the country to build greater understanding”. He had already mentioned in his responses during Prime Minister’s Question Time on 4 and 11 July his wish to encourage the development of local inter faith bodies across the country.

There are a number of ways in which anyone who is interested in the proposed new counter terror legislation can become involved in the Home Office’s consultation exercise on this. There is a website dedicated to the Bill which can be accessed at <http://security.homeoffice.gov.uk> and this contains a number of documents relevant to the Bill and related issues. Any queries or concerns about the Bill, the measures proposed for inclusion in it or pre charge detention can be emailed to CTBill2007@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Commission for Equality and Human Rights

As reported in the last issue of *Inter Faith Update*, the Commission for Equality and Human Rights came into being as a legal entity at the end of last year following the appointment of its Chair, Trevor Phillips, in September and a number of other Commissioners in December. The Commission begins operations on 1 October when it will take over the work of the existing Commissions for Disability Rights, Equal Opportunities and Racial Equality commissions, together with responsibilities in the fields of age, religion and belief and sexual orientation. However, it has been made clear in recent statements that while the new Commission will be “open for business” from 1 October it will not be fully operational from that date.

In addition to its Chief Executive, Nicola Brewer, who was previously a civil servant in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, a number of senior management posts have been filled and arrangements have been made for the transfer of staff from the existing Commissions. The transition team has held meetings with a wide range of the Commission’s key stakeholder organisations, including the Inter Faith Network and the Religion and Belief Consultative Group.

There are still further Commissioner appointments which remain to be made, including one for which a candidate was sought with expertise in “faith and belief” issues.

Part 2 of the Equality Act 2006 providing protection against discrimination on the grounds of religion and belief in the supply of goods, facilities and services took effect on 30 April. Regulations made under the Act relating to discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, which include certain exemptions for religion and belief organisations, also came into effect on 30 April.

Discrimination Law Review: proposals for a Single Equality Bill

In June the Government published a lengthy consultation document setting out proposals for a Single Equality Bill covering Great Britain (ie England, Scotland and Wales). These proposals have been developed through the Discrimination Law Review which was launched in February 2005. The Government subsequently announced that it is considering publishing such a bill, in draft, in the next Parliamentary session.

This is clearly a most important document which will contribute to the shaping of equalities legislation for Great Britain, including provisions relating to discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief. Among the many issues it addresses, the Review proposes the retention in a new Single Equality Bill of the present exemptions for religion or belief organisations from existing legal requirements dealing with discrimination on the grounds both of religion or belief and of sexual orientation in the fields of employment and vocational training and in the supply of goods, facilities, services and premises. It also opens up discussion on whether the duty on public authorities to promote equality should be extended to cover religion and belief.

The consultation document is available at www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=15112. Responses to the consultation need to be sent by 4 September to the Women and Equality Unit, which, following recent machinery of government changes, is now in the Department for Work and Pensions. They should be addressed to Kate Hepher, Discrimination Law Review Team, Women and Equality Unit, Ashdown House, 123 Victoria Street, London SW1E 6DE or sent by email to kate.hepner@communities.gsi.gov.uk

The Government has said that it wants to take forward its proposals on a participative basis with the full involvement of all those who have an interest in this area and comments from everyone are welcome. Contact with stakeholders will continue during and after the consultation period as the proposals contained in the consultation document are further developed and refined. There are to be special arrangements to ensure that the Single Equality Bill is tailored to the needs of Scotland and Wales.

Part 1 of the paper asks for views on proposals to promote a culture of compliance with the law; to simplify and standardise definitions and tests in discrimination law; to simplify and harmonise exceptions; to simplify and harmonise the way the law treats public functions and public services; and to bring the law of equal pay into the Single Equality Bill and update it in line with case law.

Part 2 asks for views on proposals to allow a wider range of balancing measures to effectively address entrenched discrimination and disadvantage; to simplify the current duties placed on public authorities to promote race, disability and gender equality in order to tackle disadvantage more effectively; to consider extending the coverage of public sector equality duties to cover age, sexual orientation and/or religion or belief; to explore how public authorities can actively take account of equality issues in procurement; ways to improve equality practice in the private sector; and to improve the resolution of discrimination disputes outside the workplace.

Part 3 asks for views on whether changes should be made to the statutory protected grounds; the case for prohibiting age discrimination in areas outside employment; whether to strengthen the protection on grounds of gender reassignment outside employment; whether to strengthen the protection on grounds of pregnancy and maternity outside employment; whether to strengthen prohibitions on discrimination by private clubs; how to improve access to, and use of, let residential premises for disabled people; and whether express statutory protection from harassment should be extended outside the employment area for the different grounds of discrimination.

**Visit the Network's website
at www.interfaith.org.uk**

Racist and religious crime

The Crown Prosecution Service has produced a draft of a revised policy statement on the way in which they deal with racist and religious crime. This is because there have been changes in the law and CPS procedures since the publication of their first policy document in July 2003. The draft of the revised document can be found at www.cps.gov.uk/consultations/rrc_index.html and comments on it are invited by 14 September which should be sent to jonathan.bushell@cps.gsi.gov.uk or in writing to Jonathan Bushell, Crown Prosecution Service, Cambria House, Merthyr Tydfil Industrial Park, Pentrebach, Merthyr Tydfil, CF48 4XA.

Faith Communities Consultative Council

A meeting of the Government's Faith Communities Consultative Council was held on 6 June. The agenda included Ministerial presentations on work with faith communities of both the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department for International Development (by Jim Murphy and Gareth Thomas respectively); the REACH Group's recommendations on work on raising the aspirations and attainment among black boys and young men; and the DCLG's document on *Preventing Violent Extremism and the Winning hearts and minds*.

Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society

The Department for Communities and Local Government has published a 'two years on' progress report on taking forward the agenda set out in January 2005 in *Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society*, the cross-government strategy to increase race equality and improve community cohesion. The report covers many areas of work across a range of Government departments.

In the chapter dealing with "Building cohesive communities" there is a section on engagement with faith communities. This says that in developing partnership working with faith communities the focus will be on:

- increasing faith communities' contribution to active citizenship and community cohesion, their role as agents of change within communities, and provision of services as part of the voluntary and community sector;
- drawing in the other faiths to work alongside, and support, Muslim communities in addressing radicalisation and extremism;
- developing the role of faith communities in wider social action and regeneration; and
- developing local and regional interfaith forums and structures, in line with the commitments we have made in the Local Government White Paper.

The document can be found at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1512143>

Faith groups and the BNP

A number of faith leaders and organisations including the Archbishop of York, the Muslim Council of Britain and the Jewish Council for Racial Equality, encouraged voters not to support the British National Party (BNP) in Yorkshire and other target areas in the local elections in May. The BNP is a legal political party but its perspective on a range of issues, including its perspective on Islam, have led many to see it as a threat to a harmonious and respectful multi faith Britain. Target areas for the BNP included Bradford, Sandwell and outer Essex. The party failed to gain significant numbers of seats in council elections, but did win increased support in some areas such as Windsor and Maidenhead.

Change in the English regions

In July the Government announced that the existing unelected regional assemblies in the English regions are to be abolished, with their powers split between local councils and Regional Development Agencies. The change does not affect the elected Greater London Assembly. No timetable has been announced and primary legislation will be required. It is understood that the change is unlikely to take place for two or three years.

These changes have been decided following a review of "sub-national economic development and regeneration" launched in the spring of 2006.

The Green Paper on *The Governance of Britain* launched earlier in July by Prime Minister Gordon Brown said that this sub-national review would “signal a shift of focus to local authorities, open up the possibilities of powerful city regions and give a clearer role for the regions of England”.

More details of how the roles of local authorities and of Regional Development Agencies will be affected are set out in the statement made to the House of Commons on 17 July by John Healy, now a Minister of State of the Department for Communities and Local Government. The full report of the review is to be found at www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/spending_review/spend_csr07/reviews/subnational_econ_review.cfm.

When he formed his Government the new Prime Minister appointed eight Regional Ministers to provide a “clear sense of strategic direction for their region” and more is said about their role in paragraphs 115 to 120 of the Government’s Green Paper, *The Governance of Britain*. The functions of the new Regional Ministers are mostly clustered around the responsibilities of the regional Government Offices providing “central government in the regions” and implementing a wide range of policies on behalf of 11 Whitehall Departments); and the Regional Development Agencies, which drive and coordinate regional economic development and regeneration. Regional Ministers will be able to take questions in Parliament on the work of regional bodies, and on regional strategies. The Government suggests that one means of achieving effective Parliamentary scrutiny would be through the establishment of nine regional select committees.

The list of Regional Ministers is: North East of England – Nick Brown; North West – Beverley Hughes; Yorkshire and the Humber – Caroline Flint; London – Tessa Jowell; South West – Ben Bradshaw; East Midlands – Gillian Merron; West Midlands – Liam Byrne; East of England – Barbara Follett.

Consultation on consultation!

The Government is reviewing its consultation policy and has issued a consultation document, *Effective Consultation: asking the right questions; asking the right people; listening to the answers*.

This consultation exercise is intended to seek evidence from a wider range of stakeholders to help in the design of an updated consultation policy which will lead to better consultation practices across Government. It forms the centrepiece of a review of the Government’s consultation policy and follows discussions within Government and with a number of external organisations on how consultation exercises can be improved.

The document, which can be found at www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/regulation/documents/consultation/pdf/effectiveconsultation.pdf, is in two parts. The first discusses how Government currently consults and how this can be improved upon. It asks questions about the principles on which Government consultations should be based and how fulfilment of these principles should be monitored. It also explores the relationship between consultation and impact assessment and discusses how departments should consult. Issues which are addressed include awareness-raising, Government responses to consultations and consultation fatigue.

In the second part of the document three options for consultation policy are presented. These options have been designed to address, to varying degrees, some of the issues explored in the first part of the document. They are intended to stimulate discussion rather than being exhaustive.

Responses to the consultation need to be sent to the Cabinet Office by 28 September. These can be submitted in writing to Cabinet Office, 4th Floor, 22 Whitehall, London SW1A 2WH or by email to consultation.policy@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk

Religion and the law

Three cases over the last few months have involved the courts adjudicating in matters affecting religious belief and practice.

In February a ruling was given in a High Court case in which a Muslim schoolgirl sought judicial review of a decision reached last September by a head teacher to refuse to allow her to wear the niqab at school. This claim was dismissed, but the judge who heard the case made it clear that his judgment did not “concern or resolve” the issue of whether the wearing of the niqab should be permitted in the schools of this country which “is not a question that a court could or should be asked to resolve”. The judgment was concerned

simply with the case in question. The full text of the judgment can be found at www.judiciary.gov.uk/docs/judgments_guidance/x_v_y_school_full210207.pdf

In a second High Court judgment it was decided that a Christian schoolgirl was not discriminated against when she was banned from wearing a purity ring (which symbolises chastity) in school and that the school had not breached her right to “freedom of thought, conscience and religion” under Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights. The judge rejected the submission that the ring was a “religious artefact” and therefore exempt from the school’s uniform policy which bans jewellery.

In both these cases the legitimacy of the uniform policy operated by the schools in question was upheld.

The third and most recent case involved the decision by the Welsh National Assembly to slaughter Shambo, a bullock kept in the sanctuary of the Skanda Vale Temple near Carmarthen in South Wales, because it tested positive in a routine test for tuberculosis. The Government’s current policy is to kill any animal suspected of carrying bovine TB because of the threat to other livestock. Cows and bulls are considered sacred by Hindus who refrain from eating beef and both the Hindu Council for the UK and the Hindu Forum of Britain appealed for the life of Shambo to be spared. The Skanda Vale community took the Welsh National Assembly to court in the hope of preventing the implementation of the slaughter notice. The temple community argued that the bullock had been placed in isolation to prevent infection of other livestock and was also isolated from contact with the public in a specially constructed shrine within the main temple. The High Court in Cardiff upheld the appeal against the slaughter notice but this decision was overturned on an appeal by the Welsh National Assembly and Shambo was taken away from the temple for slaughtering shortly afterwards.

New cremation, burial and death notification and certification proposals

In July the Government circulated to a range of organisations, including a number of faith community bodies, its proposals for new cremation regulations. The consultation by the

Ministry of Justice on these proposals ends on 22 October. The document is available on its website at www.justice.gov.uk. The proposals reflect two main policy changes. Firstly, the bereaved would have a right to inspect the medical forms before cremation. The Government is still considering what further changes might be required to death certification legislation in the light of the deaths of patients of Dr Harold Shipman. Secondly, cases involving contagious diseases would be handled differently. At the time of a pandemic the regulations would be amended to allow for a simpler procedure for the cremation of bodies.

The Ministry of Justice has also just published the Government’s responses to the consultation carried out in recent years on the basis of a consultation document produced in 2004 on burial law and policy which covered a wide range of issues concerning the provision and maintenance of burial grounds and the legislative framework within which burials and exhumations are conducted. The Government will now be proceeding to implement changes in these by making use of existing legislation wherever possible and by developing new guidance, introducing other changes by new primary legislation when the opportunity to do so arises. The Government’s conclusions were summarised in a statement to the House of Commons on 5 June by Harriet Harman, Minister of State in the Ministry of Justice. The full report is available at www.justice.gov.uk/docs/burial-law-policy.pdf

Also just published by the Ministry of Justice is a preliminary consultation paper on the statutory reporting of deaths to coroners, making proposals in relation to: the public service personnel on whom the duty to report deaths should rest;

the specific circumstances and categories of death that should be reported to the coroner; and the sanctions that may apply if there is a failure to report a relevant death to the coroner.

The document is available at www.justice.gov.uk/docs/cp1207.pdf Responses to the consultation are to be sent by 7 September to Coroner Reform Team, Coroners’ Unit, Ministry of Justice 5.08, 5th Floor Steel House 11 Tothill Street London SW1H 9LH or emailed to coroners@justice.gsi.gov.uk

In its third report in July 2003 the Shipman Inquiry proposed a radical overhaul both of the Coroners’ system and of the arrangement for death certification. The draft Coroners’ Bill published by the Government in June 2006 embodied the Government’s response in terms of

the Coroners' system. The Department of Health has now circulated proposals for improving the process of death certification in England and Wales in order to address the weaknesses identified by the Shipman Inquiry. The proposals are intended to provide a more transparent, proportionate, consistent and affordable system, which improves the surveillance of causes of death and removes current inequalities in the way burials and cremations are dealt with.

The consultation document is available on the Department of Health's website at www.dh.gov.uk/consultations Responses to the consultation are due by 24 October.

Organ donation

'Can we count on you?' is a new campaign encouraging the UK's black and Asian communities to become organ donors. The drive aims to dispel common myths that are known to affect the rate of organ donation and highlights the fact that people of black and Asian origin are three times more likely to need a kidney transplant due to increased diagnosis of diabetes, high blood pressure, kidney diseases and heart disease, which can lead to organ failure. The campaign is backed by comedienne Nina Wadia and Gina Yashere, as well as other prominent celebrities

Visit www.uktransplant.org.uk or call the Organ Donor line on 0845 60 60 400.

As a part of this national campaign, a leaflet titled 'Organ donation and religious perspectives,' is being distributed. Different faith communities helped some years ago in the development of this. The leaflet explains that none of the major faiths practised in the UK forbids becoming an organ donor and it lists the support religious leaders from Buddhist, Christian, Hindu,, Jewish Muslim, and Sikh faiths.

The leaflet can be downloaded at:

www.uktransplant.org.uk/ukt/newsroom/factsheets/religious_leaflets/general_religious_lflet-2005.pdf

There are also six leaflets covering the views of the six faiths which helped develop the material and they can be downloaded from:

www.uktransplant.org.uk/ukt/how_to_become_a_donor/religious_perspectives/religious_perspectives.jsp

Religious charities and public benefit

To meet the statutory definition of a charity included in the Charities Act 2006 an organisation must both have purposes falling within the list of charitable purposes set out in the Act and operate for the public benefit. It removes the presumption that currently exists that those charities relieving poverty or advancing education or religion benefit the public.

The Charity Commission is under a statutory obligation to publish guidance on the way it proposes to exercise its powers and duties in relation to this 'public benefit' test. The 2006 Act does not define what is meant by 'public benefit' which continues to be governed by existing law, based on decisions made by the courts and the Charity Commission over the years. But in future all charities will have to demonstrate that their purposes benefit the public and the trustees of charities will be required to take account of the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit when this has been finalised, reinforcing the general duties that Trustees already have to act for the public benefit.

The last issue of *Inter Faith Update* foreshadowed the publication in early March of a consultation document by the Charity Commission on the application to charities of the 'public benefit' test. The Charity Commission's consultation document can be found at www.charitycommission.gov.uk The formal consultation exercise by the Charity Commission on the basis of this document has now closed and it is due to issue in October general guidance on the public benefit test. However, the Commission will be launching towards the end of this year a three month public consultation on more detailed guidance dealing with the public benefit of charities established for the advancement of religion; as well as for the prevention and relief of poverty; and the advancement of education.

It is due also to publish in September next year the results of pilot public benefit assessments and to begin then its formal assessments. There is a commitment to review in 2010 the impact of the public benefit requirement.

In May the Charity Law Association held a day conference to discuss the public benefit test and the Charity Commission's consultation document. The report of this conference, *For the Public Benefit*, is now available from Plaza Publishing,

3 Rectory Grove, London SW4 0DX (020 7819 1200). The report includes a section on the application of the public benefit test to charities set up for the advancement of religion based on contributions to one of the workshops held in the course of the day.

Third sector developments

The last issue of *Inter Faith Update* reported on the publication in early December of an interim report of the Government's review on "The Future Role of the Third Sector in Social and Economic Regeneration". The final report on the review was published in late July by the Office of the Third Sector in the Cabinet Office. It sets out a strategy to promote the partnership between the Government and the third sector over the next ten years.

Most of the measures will be led by the Office of the Third Sector, which will invest more than £515 million in third sector programmes to support thousands of community organisations across the country.

The main aims outlined in the report are to help give third sector organisations a greater voice and to work with the sector to strengthen communities, transform public services, encourage social enterprise and support the conditions for the sector to thrive.

The Government will give third sector organisations more of a voice and ensure that third sector organisations are able to speak out and represent their communities.

The Government will develop innovative approaches to consultation, work to protect the rights of organisations to campaign and mechanisms to ensure Ministers hear the views of third sector organisations on policy. The Office of the Third Sector is planning to create a single advisory body drawing in expertise from across the third sector.

The Government will also work with third sector organisations to bring people from different backgrounds together to improve life in their communities. It will invest £50 million in endowments for community foundations to make sure they can provide grants in the future for community groups, and at least £10 million of new investment in community anchor organisations and community asset and enterprise development. In addition, the Government will provide £117 million of new resources for youth volunteering.

The report recognises the vital role of some organisations in helping to deliver public services, and contains a commitment to improve public services by fully drawing on the understanding and experience of the sector in designing, developing and delivering services. The Government will build the capacity of third sector organisations to improve public services, though the Futurebuilders Fund, which provides loans and grants to organisations looking to deliver public services, training for public sector commissioners and work to build the evidence on opportunities for the third sector.

The Government will also encourage 'social enterprises' – businesses with social and environmental aims. The Government will promote awareness of the social enterprise business model, and support its departments to investigate areas for social enterprise delivery, including getting social enterprise into the Key Stage 3 and 4 of the curriculum framework from 2008.

Finally, the Government wants to improve the environment in which all third sector organisations work. The Government will improve funding arrangements for the third sector, and make three-year funding the norm, rather than the exception; create a new national research centre as part of a programme to build the third sector evidence base; and implement a new third sector skills strategy. It will also invest over £85 million of new resources in developing third sector infrastructure through the Capacitybuilders agency, and continue to focus on the Compact as a means to build the relationship between the third sector and all levels of Government.

The full report gives details of all the proposals and can be found at www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third_sector/documents/review/ots_review.pdf

The report says that the Office of the Third Sector will champion and provide support to Government departments wishing to provide strategic and long term funding to third sector organisations to provide a consistent voice in public policy making, alongside the development or updating of departmental third sector strategies.

In this context the Department for Communities and Local Government is planning to develop a strategic partnership programme for engaging third sector organisations to provide a strategic voice and to support local action in the Department's policy areas. Subject to the

outcome of this year's Comprehensive Spending Review, the Department plans to develop a new strategic partners grant programme providing core funding over a three year period for strategic partners. It will encourage the pooling of small grants programmes to the third sector to provide certainty, efficiency and the potential to develop deeper relationships with the third sector. The Department published a discussion paper on its plans in June, *Third Sector Strategy for Communities and Local Government*. Comments are invited by the Department on this by 20 September. Comments can be sent by email to thirdsector@communities.gsi.gov.uk or by post to Towards a Third Sector Strategy, DCLG, Zone 1/E5 Ashdown House, 123 Victoria Street, London SW1E 6DE. The document is available at www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1510989

The Department has also provided an Expressions of Interest Form for organisations to complete if they wish to enter a strategic partnering relationship with the Department, together with accompanying information on these arrangements. This makes it clear that the Department will not accept applications from certain categories of organisations including those the scope of which is solely local or regional; or whose work is primarily "the promotion of religious activity". Applications from partnerships/consortia may be submitted through a lead organisation. Only organisations that register their interest by 20 September and are subsequently given the status of strategic partners will be eligible to apply for strategic funding from the Department.

OFSTED reports improvement in Religious Education

In June the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (OFSTED) reported on its findings on Religious Education in schools and the impact of locally agreed RE syllabuses.

The report says that RE has improved overall in the past few years but there are still variations in the quality of provision and achievement by pupils remains very inconsistent. It questions whether RE in non-faith maintained schools is best served by the current statutory arrangements under which it lies outside the National

Curriculum, with all 151 local authorities in England having responsibility for developing their own locally agreed RE syllabus. It suggests that this means that there is insufficient consistency in the quality of RE across the country and that RE cannot respond quickly enough to important national initiatives, such as the emphasis on a more flexible curriculum and the drive to promote community cohesion.

The report finds that RE often makes a positive contribution to the development of pupils' understanding of diversity and to the promotion of community cohesion. Nonetheless, it argues that the curriculum and the teaching of RE, particularly in secondary schools, do not place sufficient emphasis on exploring the changing political and social significance of religion in the modern world and that, as a result, the full potential of the subject to contribute to community cohesion, education for diversity and citizenship is not being realised.

The report argues that RE should not ignore controversy or the changes in the role and significance of religion in the modern world. Pupils should be taught that religion is complex but its impact is ambiguous and should be given the opportunity to explore that ambiguity. The current focus in RE on ethical or philosophical issues needs to be complemented by consideration of questions about the social role of religion.

The report finds that Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACREs) provide valuable support for RE when they are led and resourced properly. The report recommends that consideration should be given to extending the role of SACREs to reflect the priorities of promoting community cohesion and educating for diversity. However, many local authorities do not have sufficient resources to ensure that SACREs fulfil their responsibilities effectively. The report welcomes the recent submission to the (then) Department for Education and Skills by the Religious Education Council for England and Wales proposing a national strategy for RE.

The OFSTED report can be downloaded from www.ofsted.gov.uk/assets/Internet_Content/Shared_Content/Files/2007/june/mkngnsnsofrlg.doc

Good relations on campus

The report of a conference, 'Building Good Relations on Campus', held by the Inter Faith Network with the Equality Challenge Unit (reported on in the last issue of *Inter Faith Update*) last November has been widely circulated and further work in this area is under discussion. The report can be downloaded free at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/publications/campus.pdf>

Across the last two years, the Inter Faith Network has helped facilitate a series of conversations between national student religious bodies. In May, the following statement on building good relations was agreed by the Baha'i Youth Committee for England Catholic Student Forum (Catholic Youth Service); British Organisation of Sikh Students; Federation of Student Islamic Societies; National Hindu Students Forum; Student Christian Movement; Union of Jewish Students; Young Jains; and Young Zoroastrians:

Good Relations on Campus: A Joint Statement

The primary purpose of national student faith-based bodies is to resource, support and work for students of their own particular faith. At the same time, a commitment to dialogue and to working together to encourage good relations between our members on campus is of great importance.

Representatives from the national student faith-based bodies and relevant faith community youth committees have held a series of informal conversations across recent months, facilitated at our request by the Inter Faith Network for the UK. These have focused on the desire of our bodies to strengthen their mutual links in order to discuss together issues of common concern and to work to promote good relations on campus. Future work in pursuit of these aims is under discussion between our bodies, and also with the Inter Faith Network and the National Union of Students. This includes a programme of activities and of training opportunities to help students of different faiths on the UK's campuses to work with confidence and commitment to promote understanding and respect on campus between those of different faiths and beliefs.

On 29 June, Universities UK and Association of Managers of Student Services in Higher Education (AMOSSHE) held an event "Delivering good campus relations" which looked at new reports and developments since the publication of UUK guidance on related issues in November 2005. The event explored tackling discrimination on campus including anti-semitism and Islamophobia, as well as institutional approaches to good campus relations. Further information from info@UniversitiesUK.ac.uk

RE programmes of study for Key Stage 3

Alongside the new national curriculum for secondary schools in England launched by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) on 12 July a programme of study (which unlike the national curriculum material is non-statutory) for Religious Education at Key Stage 3 was also published. The content of this is substantially the same as the Key Stage 3 element of the non-statutory National Framework for RE published by QCA in 2004 offering national guidelines for the subject. The material can be found on the QCA website at www.qca.org.uk/qca_12228.aspx

Faiths in FE

The National Ecumenical Agency in Further Education (NEAFE), Faiths in FE Forum (FiFE) and the Centre for Excellence in Education published, in July, *Making Space for Faith: Values, Beliefs and Faiths in the Learning and Skills Sector*. It is the report on a national enquiry carried out by NEAFE and FiFE into opportunities for spiritual and moral development in the Further Education Sector. Launching the publication on 16 July, the Minister of State for Lifelong Learning and Further and Higher Education, Bill Rammell, said: "This report comes at an important time for further education when we are working with colleagues from across the system to review how to strengthen its contribution to community cohesion."

The purpose of the enquiry was to build up a picture of:

- the role of the sector in enabling all members of society, irrespective of age, gender, ethnic background, values, beliefs and faiths, to engage with one another in shaping a positive approach to 21st-century pluralism

- the views of learners and staff in colleges and in workplaces on issues of values, beliefs and faiths
- how the system and its stakeholders could improve responses to learner and staff needs in relation to issues of values, beliefs and faiths in a way that is in keeping with the sector's economic, educational and social missions

A total number of 41 colleges and 924 individual students and staff participated in the enquiry, which found that:

- almost three quarters of students (74%) were more likely to feel part of a college or workplace that actively encouraged dialogue and activities between people and communities of diverse faiths and beliefs
- 79% of students, regardless of their own personal beliefs, thought that colleges should provide for people's faith and belief needs
- almost three quarters of staff surveyed (73%) thought that legal entitlement to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development provided for learners in school sixth forms through the *1944 Education Act* should be extended to cover students and trainees over the age of 16 in the learning and skills sector

The report offers a number of recommendations for the government, agencies, colleges, learning providers, churches and faith communities.

Further information from NEAFE on 020 7898 1529

The Queen receives inter faith award

On 17 May leading members of nine faiths were present at Buckingham Palace when The Queen was presented with a specially struck Interfaith Gold Medallion with diamond. The award was conferred in gratitude for the lead The Queen has given personally in the search for mutual tolerance, respect and brotherhood.

The traditional Jewish blessing upon meeting with royalty was recited by Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks. Sir Sigmund Sternberg, one of the Founders of the Three Faiths Forum, then presented the award, making reference to Her Majesty's 2006 Christmas message in which she said that "it is very easy to concentrate on the differences between the religious faiths and to forget what they have in common". This, he said,

summed up what the gathering on this occasion represented.

Moulana Shahid Raza of the Muslim College read out the accompanying scroll in which the leading members of the major faith communities placed on record their deep and sincere appreciation of the lead The Queen has given to the nation "in the promotion of respect and understanding for minority faiths and in seeking to include new communities as natural components of this society."

Three Faiths Forum celebrates 10 years

200 people gathered at the National Portrait Gallery on 9 May to celebrate the achievements of the Three Faiths Forum in its first decade. Speakers included Forum co-founder Sir Sigmund Sternberg; Sandy Nairne, Director of the Gallery; Rev Dr Marcus Braybrooke, a co-founder of the Forum; Henry Grunwald QC, President of the Board of Deputies; and Faris Badawi, son of the late Sheikh Dr Zaki Badawi, the third co-founder of the Forum; and Stephen Shashoua, Director of the Youth and Education Division of the Forum;

Imams and rabbis conference

On 26 March a conference of Imams and Rabbis took place in Manchester. 'Building Alliances, Respecting Differences'. Hazel Blears, then Minister without Portfolio at the Home Office, was among the speakers. In the course of her speech she said, "It is through inter faith dialogue and learning that true respect can be forged. Many Christians are simply unaware that the Qur'an reveres Jesus as a prophet. Many Jews, Muslims and Christians are unaware of the rich Abrahamic heritage we share in common. A study of other people's religions is a prerequisite for a greater understanding of one's own. There has been much discussion about the tensions between religions, races and ethnic groups. But I believe that Britain is an exemplar of how a multi-faith, multi-ethnic nation can work in practice. We are an immeasurably richer country for the contribution of people arriving here, often in search of a better life." John Battle MP, then Prime Minister's Envoy to Faith Communities, also addressed the Manchester conference.

Jewish-Muslim dialogue at conference for women

On 28 March in London a conference was held to bring together Jewish and Muslim women, including community leaders, congregational religious leaders, educators, social activists and grass-root members as well as young women in order to work towards greater inter faith interactions in a multi-faith and cohesive society. The conference was organised on behalf of the Imams and Rabbis Committee by the Joseph Interfaith Foundation and Alif-Aleph. Meg Munn MP, then Deputy Minister for Women and Equalities, addressed the conference. She said, "Having inter faith dialogue is important to the creation of a society that reflects positive interaction between people of all faiths and none. It can act as the social glue that joins our differences in culture, faith and ethnicity together. Inter faith activity is not just about conversation and discussion; it is about co-operation and devising practical examples which can inspire real change."

Jain Manuscript Catalogue launched

In the presence of H R H The Duke of Edinburgh over 300 Jain dignitaries, both local and international, and guests of other faiths attended the launch ceremony on 15 May at Buckingham Palace of the three volume catalogue of Jain manuscripts of the British Library. They included delegates from India, Singapore, Oman, Kenya and UAE. It has taken the Institute of Jainology over fifteen years to complete the project. Visit www.jainology.org for further details.

Younghusband lecture

On 26 April the annual Younghusband Lecture of the World Congress of Faiths took place at Essex Hall in London. Writer and broadcaster Jonathan Freedland spoke on "Multiculturalism: Is the British Model Failing?".

Jews and Christians consider slavery and redemption

Jews and Christians met together at Westminster Abbey on 19 April to explore shared values of social justice under the title 'Let My People Go'. The seminar, held by the Council of Christians and Jews to mark the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade, involved leading Jewish and Christian speakers and activists. The emphasis was on practical outcomes from shared traditions. Those present heard Clive Lawton, founder of the informal Jewish learning initiative 'Limmud' and Director of 'Tzedek', and Dave Tomlinson, writer and Anglican priest, on the question of 'redemption'. Malcolm Duncan, leader of the Christian social initiative 'Faithworks' spoke about the "shared commitment of Christians and Jews to affirm the dignity of humanity" and Rabbi Dr Jonathan Romain, historian and congregational minister, recalled the Biblical prophetic imperative to seek justice and righteousness in practical ways. The seminar was chaired by Jane Clements, CCJ's Director of Programmes. Canon Robert Reiss welcomed speakers and guests on behalf of the Dean and Chapter.

Alif-Aleph launches interactive web forum

On 29 March, Alif-Aleph UK, a grass-roots organisation promoting positive contacts between Muslims and Jews, launched the first interactive web forum for cross-community dialogue. The website, funded by through the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund, provides the tools for a new and dynamic discourse to take place between Muslims and Jews of all ages throughout the UK and beyond. Alif-Aleph UK members were treated to a night of music from a variety of Jewish and Muslim traditions to celebrate the launch. To post on the forums, users need to visit <http://www.aauk.org/> and register some basic details. From there they can join already existing discussions or start new feeds on any subject they want.

Brian Pearce thanked for his service as the Network's Director

Brian Pearce stands down as Director of the Inter Faith Network at the beginning of September. At the close of the Network's National Meeting in Coventry on 16 July member bodies thanked him for his 20 years of dedicated service.

Dr Manazir Ahsan, a Vice-Chair of the Network, made a formal presentation on behalf of the Network. He spoke of the remarkable gift of time and skill which Brian had made, full time on a voluntary basis since the Network was founded. He said "The Inter Faith Network and Brian Pearce are so intertwined that these two appear to me as synonymous. The image that permeates the Inter Faith Network and makes it the cohesive and successful organisation has no doubt been shaped by Brian's mild and humble persona, his dedication and above all his handling of faith with care and sensitivity....Brian always downplays his role and never refers to himself as a 'founder' of the Network.....However, his dedicated, patient and determined work was probably the most significant factor in enabling the Inter Faith Network to come into existence. Likewise, it has been his careful, diplomatic engagement with people of the different faiths, as well as his tireless willingness to talk through difficulties on occasions when these occur,

which has helped hold together, through nearly twenty years, a highly diverse network of faith community organisations and local inter faith bodies. His ability to bring out the best in people and to inspire work to build trust and understanding has helped the Network's own work prosper but also helped support and strengthen many other faith community and inter faith initiatives."

Bishop Tom Butler added his personal appreciation and read out a range of tributes that had been received. Following a presentation of a bouquet to Brian Pearce's wife Michelle, whose support of the Network has also been of enormous importance, Harriet Crabtree then joined Dr Ahsan to present to Brian Pearce a set of annual reviews from each year of the Network's existence; a bound photo book of twenty years of photographs put together especially for the occasion; and a selection of other gifts, culminating in a small Royal Crown Derby owl painted in beautiful colours which "seemed the most appropriate present we could find for one of the wisest directors that you could possibly imagine".

The meeting closed with those present marking their appreciation of Brian's contribution with a standing ovation.

The Inter Faith Network

The Inter Faith Network was founded in 1987. It works with its member bodies to promote good relations between the faith communities in the UK, to combat inter religious prejudice and intolerance and to help make the UK a country marked by mutual understanding and respect between religions where all can practise their faith with integrity. The Network:

- provides information on faith and inter faith issues;
- advises on multi faith projects and inter faith issues;
- publishes materials to aid work in the religious and inter faith sectors;
- fosters inter faith co-operation on social issues;
- holds regular meetings where social and religious questions of concern to the different faith communities can be examined together;
- links 150 member organisations including: representative bodies from the different faith communities; inter faith organisations; local inter faith groups; and educational and academic bodies

INTERVIEW WITH BRIAN PEARCE

In September Brian Pearce will be standing down from his post as Director of the Inter Faith Network for the UK, having served in this capacity for just over twenty years.

Q You left a career in the Civil Service to help set the Network up and work full time for it. What was it that motivated you to do this?

My initial interest in questions of religious diversity came from my desire, as a Christian, to explore how I could relate theologically to other religious traditions. But I soon realised that there were important issues more concerned with relations between the communities here in the UK linked to these different religious traditions and their place in society. I became involved in the World Congress of Faiths and the Council of Christians and Jews, helped to set up a local inter faith group in South London and was asked to join the Committee of the Churches' Committee on relations with other faiths. Then the idea emerged of my taking a year's leave of absence from the Civil Service to explore ways in which the profile of inter faith work might be enhanced and links between those involved in it developed further. And I never went back to work in Whitehall.

Q As you look back on your time as the Network's Director, what are some of the main changes you have seen in the inter faith landscape?

The changes have certainly been considerable. Twenty years ago inter faith activity was, in general, relatively marginal and indeed seen by many as being vaguely heretical! Now it is a key item on the mainstream agenda of all our main faith communities. There were far fewer national inter faith organisations than now. Some pioneering work had been done in setting up local inter faith organisations over the previous decade. But by 1987 there were only 27 of them across the whole of the UK. Today there are 217. There was little interest on the part of Government, whether central or local, in inter faith issues and that continued to be the case until the setting up of the Inner Cities Religious Council in 1990 in which the Network was involved.

Q Are there moments in the work on which you look back with particular pleasure or satisfaction?

In many ways the most important times have been personal encounters and conversations with people from many diverse backgrounds. These have been a great enrichment for me. I am very sad when I hear initiatives to bring together people who might not otherwise meet being dismissed as "tea and samosas". Active projects and cooperation are important but so is building mutual respect and understanding at a personal level. More publicly, the Network's contribution in helping plan the faith dimension of the Millennium celebrations was a watershed and the Shared Act of Reflection and Commitment which we helped to organise in the House of Lords on 3 January 2000 was a very special occasion.

Q Do you have any thoughts about how you hope inter faith work in this country might develop in the coming years?

With over 250 inter faith bodies in the UK a good deal of the organisational fabric needed for this work is in place. But in many cases these structures need to be strengthened and the level of dialogue and cooperation to be deepened. And we need to ensure that inter faith work at UK, national, regional and local levels fits together well.

I am sure that the greater interest of Government in recent years, at both central and local level, in faith and inter faith matters has been of significant benefit, but the relationship is still settling down. I hope there will be greater stability in future in the Government's handling of its engagement with faith communities and that longer term funding will be provided for inter faith work. It makes an important contribution to the community cohesion agenda. But building good inter faith relations is an even broader long term task for faith communities themselves, both in tackling prejudice and stereotyping in their internal teaching and through their engagement in inter faith work.

I believe the Network itself will continue to have a vital role to play as a central source of advice and information, complementing and promoting the work of its member bodies. I am naturally delighted to know that the work of the its office will be in such good hands as my colleague of many years, Harriet Crabtree, becomes the Network's second Director.

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Diversity and Dialogue

James Sevitt has been appointed as a Project Officer at Diversity and Dialogue which is an inter faith and intercultural project working with young people based at the Citizenship Foundation. For further information see <http://www.diversityanddialogue.org.uk/>

Muslim dialogue development worker begins work at Blackburn Cathedral

A Muslim is working to promote dialogue between communities from Blackburn Cathedral. Anjum Anwar, previously an education officer at the Lancashire Council of Mosques, has been appointed to the newly-created post of Dialogue Development Officer. Her post is being funded by the North West Development Agency (NWDA) for an initial two year period. Canon Chris Chivers, who has responsibility for inter-faith issues, said he knew the move would raise eyebrows, but said: "We are not trying to convert each other, and we are secure enough in our own faith to do this." He said it is believed to be the first time a Muslim has been appointed to work from an Anglican Cathedral in an outreach role. Welcoming the development, Abdul Hamid Qureshi, Chairman of the Lancashire Council of Mosques, said: "This is very happy news for us in the Muslim community. It indicates the level of trust already developed between communities, and can help to take things to a new level." Further information at <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/4962>

Church of Scotland

Iain Stewart has been appointed as the Church of Scotland's Inter-Faith Support Worker. His main role will be to offer advice and encouragement to local churches on inter faith matters.

Alan Race

In October, Rev Dr Alan Race, editor of *Interreligious Insight*, will take up the post of Dean of Postgraduate Studies at St Philip's Centre for Study and Engagement in a Multi-Faith Society as well as that of priest in charge of St Philip's Church, Leicester.

Obituaries

Henry Guterman MBE

One of the UK's best known Jewish community and inter faith activists Henry Guterman has died, following a stroke. He came to the UK with his family after the 1938 Kristallnacht pogrom and dedicated much of his adult life to working to encourage understanding and respect between people of different races and faiths. He was a central figure in most of Manchester's inter faith groups, including the Muslim-Jewish Forum and Indian Jewish Association, the Black Jewish Forum, the Council of Christians and Jews, and Manchester Interfaith Forum. He was a founder of the Black Jewish Forum. He also represented the Jewish community on the Manchester and Trafford Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education, as well as on the Manchester Council of Community Relations. Some years ago Mr Guterman received an MBE for his work.

REGIONAL AND LOCAL UPDATES

NORTHERN IRELAND

On 23 June a small group of members of the Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum travelled to Rostrevor in County Down to visit the Benedictine monastery. The group included representation from a range of faith communities including Hindu, Buddhist and Bahá'í. The purpose was to visit the Benedictine Monks and to be present at their celebration of the Eucharist. The group was welcomed at the Monastery by Brother Thierry and had an opportunity for a conversation about the nature of inter faith dialogue and the opportunities that the Brothers have for inter faith encounter. They then joined the congregation that was gathering in the church for the celebration of the Eucharist and had the opportunity to be able to observe the Monks leading worship. They then travelled a short distance to Kilbroney park for lunch, where they were joined by some other members of faith communities in Rostrevor.

A week long Inter Faith Peace Walk from Dublin to London took place in May. Full details of the background to the walk and its route can be found on the following web site

www.footprintsforpeace.net People from various communities organised accommodation and hospitality along the route and many even joined in parts of the walk. Civic receptions were being given by several towns along the route. Following this event a musical evening was held at the South Belfast Friends Meeting House where a varied programme of music was performed by many local musicians and there was an opportunity for those attending to speak with organisers of the walk.

SCOTLAND

Women from across Scotland from a variety of faith traditions joined together in an inter faith event at the Albert Halls in Stirling on 28 March 'Looking After One Another: The Safety and Security of Our Faith Communities'. This explored how to 'look after one another as women of faith' and hear about the work women within faith communities are doing to create a more cohesive and caring society. Guest speakers included women from Amina Muslim Women's Centre; the Samaritans; the Association of Baha'i Women Scotland; the Hindu Mandir, Glasgow;

the Sikh Sanjog, Edinburgh; and from Rokpa Buddhist Centre, Dundee. Leah Granat the Jewish Parliamentary Officer also spoke. Pramila Kaur, Chief Executive of the Scottish Inter Faith Council, gave the opening address and highlighted the need for more effective engagement between representatives of the Police force and faith communities. At the event Association of Chief Police Officers Scotland (ACPOS) launched its Religion and Belief Action Plan which sets out a strategy for the more effective engagement of Police Officers and the faith communities.

Just a few of the local inter faith events which have been taking place in Scotland in recent months are:

Ayr

50 students attended an inter faith seminar on 17 April at University Campus, Ayr. Anwar Din and Fahed Kayani of Shawlands Academy, and Zam Zahid of Ashcraig School, gave a personal account of their Muslim faith. Discussion touched on family life, education, growing up in Islam, responses to stereotyping and discrimination, and partnership between the religions. It was an opportunity to put faith in context, from three different perspectives.

Dundee

Dundee people of Christian, Buddhist, Sikh and Baha'i Faiths, as well as some of no religion, participated in a walkabout, visiting places of worship in Dundee. These included the Rokpa Centre in Meadowside; St Paul's Church; the Hindu Mandir; and the Sikh Gurdwara, where the children gave presentations about their faith, in Punjabi and English, followed by a Sikh hymn.

Fife

Fife Interfaith Group visited various places of worship in Kirkcaldy on 19 May to raise awareness and gain a better understanding of other faith communities in Fife. The Group started their visit at Fife Islamic Centre, Cumberae Terrace and were met by the Committee who explained how the centre was run, the different prayer times and how they pray, and hold classes for children in Arabic. They were shown the body washing facilities where they prepare the deceased for burial. The next visit was to St.

Mary's Church in Dunniker Road - a Roman Catholic Church which had formerly been used by the Church of Scotland and is one of two Catholic Churches in Kirkcaldy. The Group completed their tour with a visit with the Buddhist Group who meet monthly at the Volunteer Centre and had a short introduction to the basic principles of the daily practice of gongyo and daimoku (chanting the title of the Lotus Sutra – Nam Myoho Renge Kyo).

Shetland

In June Shetland Inter Faith and friends gathered for the public launch of their constitution. Maureen Sier, Development Officer from the Scottish Inter Faith Council, gave a public address.

Skye

In April 'Faiths Together' in Skye held a meal and ceilidh to celebrate 'Our Sacred Earth'. In June representatives of the group attended 'The Power of Compassion' a programme of dance, chants and prayers by Tibetan Monks from Tashi Lhunpo Monastery at the Kyleakin Village Hall.

WALES

On 9 July the Centre for the Study of Islam in the UK and the Muslim Council of Wales held an event attended by over 400 people, entitled "Interfaith Dialogue: Muslim and Christian Perspectives". Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor, the Archbishop of Westminster, spoke of the importance of inter faith in today's modern times. Dr Jamal Badawi, an internationally known speaker on Islam and Professor Emeritus, commented on the aims of inter faith work and how they can be achieved.

Swansea

Interfaith Swansea is developing a new website at interfaithswansea.org funded jointly by the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund and the Communities @One Welsh Assembly Government initiative to help people in Communities First areas make the most of new technology.

ENGLAND

Meetings of English regional multi faith bodies

A meeting of representatives of the English regional faith forums, convened jointly by the Inter Faith Network and the Faith based Regeneration Network UK, was held in London on 17 April. The meeting endorsed plans for the setting up of a new 'English Regional Faith Forums Network'.

FaithAction (a consortium of Faithworks, Faith Regen Foundation and Lifeline) is carrying out a project funded by the Office of the Third Sector relating to the creation of a framework to support faith based organisations in tendering for the delivery of public services and to provide a 'voice' for them. Representatives of FaithAction attended part of the meeting on 17 April to facilitate discussion of the relationship between its work, which has an important regional dimension, and that of the regional faith forums. The meeting also heard a presentation from Faithworks on the second round BASIS bid that they will be submitting to the Lottery for funding for work on supporting Christian, and possibly multi faith, structures.

A further meeting of representatives of those regional faith forums in membership of the Network took place on 30 April to discuss the Network membership review and associated issues. It was agreed to undertake further work on clarifying the relationship between inter faith work at national, regional and local levels.

East

Faith Making a Difference, a networking event for faith representatives on Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) in the East England, took place on 13 June at the offices of Stevenage Borough Council. It was organised by the East of England Faiths Council, the regional faith forum that brings together the major faiths in the Region, together with Welwyn Hatfield Interfaith Group. Jenny Kartupelis, Director, East of England Faiths Council, spoke about faith communities connecting with regional governance and supporting local action; Terry Osborne, Chief Partnerships and Performance Officer, Welwyn Hatfield Council, addressed the topic of engaging the local community in partnerships and looked at

the possibilities for joined up working in the future; Christine Novelli, Chair of Welwyn Hatfield Inter Faith Group, looked at the contribution of faith communities to Local Strategic Partnerships; and Natubhai Solanki, a trustee of the Hindu Community Centre, Luton, spoke from the experience of a community worker. Participants had the opportunity to put questions to the speakers and there were two workshops: 'Finding our way in a new territory with a new language' and 'What am I meant to do?: Developing the role'.

Bedford

An inter faith cricket match was held on 10 June between Luton Council of Faiths and Bedford Council of Faiths. This event was a return match between the two groups after one held last June. The aim of the game was to use the widespread interest in cricket as a catalyst to bring different faiths together. Spectators were welcomed and refreshments were provided. Visit www.bcof.org.uk for more information about the event.

Cambridge

Cambridge Inter Faith Group held its 5th Cambridge Faith Fair at Guildhall, Market Place, in the Small Hall on 24 June. Visit http://www.cam.net.uk/home/interfaith/ifg_diary.html to find out more.

Suffolk

A celebration of the people who make up Suffolk's past and present was the focus of a week long series in May of seminars, workshops and a photographic exhibition, 'The Faces of Suffolk'. The events were organised by Suffolk Inter Faith Resource and Suffolk Racial Harassment Initiative and other partners. The seminars held in St Michael and All Angels Church Occold were on faith and cultures and were aimed mainly at staff of statutory bodies and local industry but were also open to others interested. On different evenings evening there were guest speakers from the Hindu, Muslim, Jewish, Sikh and Buddhist faiths traditions where the topic of My Life and Faith was covered. Three presentations for schoolchildren were also held during the week. A film called A Gypsy's Wish gave insight into the area's traveller community followed with a presentation by The Romany Theatre Company. For more information about these events visit www.sifre.org.uk

East Midlands

Leicester

Last year in Leicester, imams and clergy fielded competing cricket teams for a match. This year, on 26 May a joint cricket team of imams and clergy played their counterparts from Bradford at the Leicestershire Country Cricket Grounds. The game was organised by the Federation of Muslim Organisations and the St. Philip's Centre.

Hundreds of people came to watch the game, which the Leicester team, which included the Bishop of Leicester, Rt Rev Tim Stevens, and Dr Ashraf Makadam of the Federation of Muslim Organisations, won. The entrance to the grounds was free by courtesy of the Leicestershire Country Cricket Club, a partner in this unique event, and all donations and contributions went to the Clean Drinking Water project for the people of Mozambique.

Loughborough

An evening of multi-faith performances organised by Loughborough Council of Faiths took place at Loughborough Town Hall on 22 March to celebrate the different faith traditions in the area. The diverse performances, from the young and old, included devotional songs, music with a variety of different musical instruments, and acting. The event was funded by a Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund and Charnwood Borough Council.

Nottingham

"The spirit of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire", a photographic exhibition by young people in Nottingham, was launched on 30 May. The display, at Nottingham Council House, was of a collection of photographs taken by young people of different faiths in the county. The subjects covered included people of faith at work, leisure and worship. The exhibition was organised by Nottingham Inter Faith Council. It was sponsored by the United Religions Initiative (URI) and Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County Councils.

London

Thursday's Child, an inter faith and peace festival with exhibition and activities that promoted the message of peace, was held on 7 and 8 July at

West Ham Memorial Recreation Ground. The event was an educational exploration and a 'Celebration of Faith'. Individuals and organisations representing a range of faiths and inter faith initiatives gathered to take part and unite in an understanding and mutual respect of each other's beliefs. Workshops, talks, dancing, singing, Newham School children singing for Peace, and story telling took place over the weekend. Further information at <http://www.thursdays-child.co.uk/>

City of London

An evening dialogue took place on 26 April at St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace in London exploring the message of nonviolence from different faith perspectives. Speakers included Imam Abduljalil Sajid, Jay Lakhani and Mohinder Singh.

CCID at Heythrop College

The Centre for Christianity and Interreligious Dialogue (CCID) at Heythrop College held an event on 11 May on 'Catholics in Encounter with Hinduism'.

Brent

The London Inter Faith Centre hosted an event on 27 June on 'Music from the Faiths', in partnership with Brent Inter Faith Forum. The evening showcased music from many of the world's religions.

Croydon

Nearly 500 people from Christian, Muslim and other faith backgrounds from Croydon, gathered for a dialogue session between Imam Quasim Ahmad of the Al-Khair Foundation and Rt Revd Nick Baines, Anglican Bishop of Croydon.

The theme for the event was 'Two faiths, one world, where do we go from here?' and it focused on different aspects of Christian – Muslim relations and the basic beliefs of each faith with the intention of improving understanding of the faiths.

Finchley and Golders Green

The 21st Annual Multi Faith Pilgrimage of Westminster Interfaith, the inter faith programme of the Catholic Diocese of Westminster, was held in the Finchley and Golders Green area on 3 June.

Each year the pilgrimage goes through different areas within the diocese and on this occasion the tour started at the Swaminarayan Hindu temple and

'Health preachers'

Waltham Forest Faith Communities Forum has published a report on the outcomes of the health preacher's scheme that was held last year. Early in 2006, through WFFF's participation in the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), they held discussions with the local Primary Care Trust (PCT) on how the Forum could help to convey key health messages to people within Waltham Forest's religious congregations. The idea of a "Health Preachers" scheme developed from these discussions. The key concept behind this idea was that religious people might be motivated by their faith to make positive health changes, especially if they were able to access health messages as part of their faith community experience. The PCT had previously run a course to train local people as Community Health Outreach Workers (CHOWs) and agreed to re-run this scheme for a group of faith community leaders recruited by the Forum. The local authority agreed to provide LSP funding for the scheme.

The volunteer trainees were recruited to train as "Health Preachers" who would communicate key health messages to their congregations in a way that would seek to engage others with health as a faith issue. There was an enthusiastic response from the faith communities and WFFF recruited 3 Muslim, 3 Sikh and 9 Christian leaders, the last from a wide variety of church traditions. Out of the 155 people who took part in the sessions 137 recorded that the event had encouraged them to live a healthier lifestyle, whilst 125 people said they would eat more healthily, exercise more or do a combination of both. Father Steven Saxby commented, "Health Preachers' was, we are sure, the first scheme of its kind in the UK and we were enthusiastic to promote it as something for others to emulate, a model for faith community engagement on the issue of health as well as a for inter faith co-operation. However, the proof of the low-fat, high-fibre fruit pudding had to be in the eating. The course made a difference to our health decisions as trainees; could we convince others, through our preaching and activities, to make positive health changes? This results of the evaluation work indicate that we could and did and demonstrate the success of the scheme!"

To order the report, contact:

Marion.Waruguru@Walthamforest.gov.uk

ended at Trinity URC/Baptist Church. The group visited two synagogues, an Islamic cultural centre, a Catholic Church where a Sikh group provided lunch and a Methodist church, where a member of the Brahma Kumaris gave a talk.

Wandsworth

Perspectives from Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Hinduism on the Evolution of Marriage were the discussion point for Wandsworth Multi-Faith Forum at an event on 12 June in Nightingale House, South West London.

Westminster

Voluntary Action Westminster hosted a Celebration of Faiths event at Westminster Cathedral Hall. The theme of the gathering, held on 22 March, was 'Love Thy Neighbour'. The event marked the launch of an updated version of *Westminster Directory of Faiths* and was sponsored by Westminster Faith Exchange and Westminster City Partnership for Racial Equality. The directory can be downloaded from <http://www.westminster.gov.uk/communityandliving/faithsbeliefsandreligions/> For more information about Westminster Faith Exchange visit: contact Nazia Mirza on 0207 6413047 or at nmirza@westminster.gov.uk

North East

Meetings have been taking place in the North East of England to establish the basis of a framework to develop a regional faith forum for the area. At a meeting held on 16 April at the Centre for Life Jenny Kartupelis, the Director of East of England Faiths Council, and Revd John Hall, Chair of the West Midlands Faith Forum, were keynote speakers. The Inter Faith Network's Director, Brian Pearce, also contributed to the days proceedings.

This event was the first of two organised through the regional Faiths Task Group that has been set up to work on developing a structure that best reflects the needs of local and regional inter faith organisations in the area. Paul Southgate, the Chief Officer of the Churches' Regional Commission, who is working on this development said that local inter faith bodies need to be able to link to, and learn from, each other, to cooperate and learn how to support each other at a regional level. He added that there are some notable local examples of inter faith work including initiatives in Middlesbrough, Newcastle, Darlington. Participants in the

workshops at the conference made recommendations on developing the foundations for the regional forum.

The Faiths Task Group held a further networking meeting in Durham on 4 July for members from faith communities in the North East.

North West

Bolton

Faith, food, and identity are topics that have been covered by the Bolton Interfaith Council in recent meetings. The discussion on faith and food was held at the Swaminarayan Temple in 2 June. In March, participants took part in a tour of the Zakariyya Central Mosque, in Peace Street, and observed prayers there. This was followed by a panel discussion at the open forum meeting titled: 'What does it mean to be British? What does it mean to you?'

Burnley

A group of faith community representatives and faith leaders from Building Bridges Burnley explored the sights and sounds of London on a three-day visit. The group visited the Houses of Parliament, the Department for Communities and Local Government, the National Observatory in Greenwich, the East London Mosque and London Muslim Centre in Whitechapel and three places of Christian worship, including Westminster Cathedral. The programme had various objectives which included developing broader thinking; providing an opportunity to travel, learn and explore together; and understanding political and religious power bases. The visit also helped the participants, through spending time together, to achieve a better understanding and relationship between Burnley faith leaders.

Nelson

A church and a mosque opened their doors for members of faith and non-faith communities to learn about the Christian and Muslim faiths. Christ Church and Central Ghausia Mosque, in Nelson, Lancashire, hosted the event on 27 March where participants were encouraged to learn together about the role of faith and places of worship in society. The day was organised by Building Bridges Pendle and started with morning meeting and refreshments at Christ Church followed by lunch at the Ghausia Mosque.

South East

Crawley

On 10 June Horsham Interfaith Forum, Crawley Interfaith Network and Brighton and Hove Interfaith Contact Group held a joint inter faith day at: Worth Abbey, near Crawley with the theme: 'Holy Living'.

Elmbridge

Elmbridge Multifaitth Forum held a faith and community supper on 28 June at the Claygate Village Hall. Jewish, Islamic, Christian and Hindu speakers discussed how their faiths support the development of friendship and respect in the wider community with a focus on working towards integration and cohesion. A curry supper was provided and the Mayor of the Borough of Elmbridge attended the event.

Hampshire

At the inaugural meeting of the Hampshire Interfaith Network on 16 May, Rageh Omaar, the broadcaster addressed participants about his experience as a British Muslim. The aim of the event was to bring people of influence together including county and district councillors and LSP members as well faith group representatives from the Hampshire Interfaith Network, to explore how it feels if you belong to minority faith group in Hampshire. The lecture was attended amongst others by the Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire, Mary Fagan, as well as the Anglican Bishop of Winchester, Rt Revd Michael Scott-Joynt. The HIN website was launched at the event too: <http://www.hants-interfaith.org/news.htm>

Maidenhead

The faith groups of Maidenhead held a series of events during the first half of 2007 to allow members of the faith communities of Maidenhead to meet together and to share their faiths and values with each other. At the events, each speaker discussed either their faith or current issues from their faith's perspective. The other half of the session was time set aside for discussion between everyone on the topics raised. The programme was open to the public and had speakers from a range of faiths. Further information from Nigel Cohen of Maidenhead InterFaith nigel.cohen@softwaredesign.co.uk

West Midlands

West Midlands Faiths Forum (WMFF) launched two reports at the Government Office for the West Midlands on 31 July. The first, *Widening the Net*, is an account of the proceedings of WMFF's third annual conference held in March. The second, *A Faith Group Engagement Strategy*, maps the level of engagement of faith groups with infrastructure support providers and ChangeUp Consortia across the region. The research for the second report was carried out by b:RAP (a strategic equalities based advisory organisation in Birmingham) which was commissioned by WMFF. WMFF had received funding for this from the Capacitybuilders Improving Reach programme. The research is part of the development of an Engagement Framework, for implementation in 2007-2008, which will assist faith based organisations in the region to access capacity building resources including funding and help in enhancing governance and workforce development. Speakers at the meeting included Angelina Jetson who introduced the FaithReach project, which is a part of Capacitybuilders' Improving Reach programme; Jane Gallagher from WMFF who spoke about policy and priorities from the faith sector in relation to the *Widening the Net* report; Mary Jane Peach, Capacitybuilders regional manager for West Midlands; and Dr Chris Allen, Director of research and policy for b:RAP. More information about WMFF's activities can be found by visiting www.wmfaithsforum.org.uk

Birmingham

The role of women in nurturing faith within the family was the subject of an inter faith mother's day conference that was held on 31 March by Sutton Asian Women's Forum and Sikh Nari Manch UK. The event was held in Fellowship Hall, Sutton Coldfield. The aims were to develop a better understanding of different faiths and to help the empowerment of women. There were speakers from the Buddhist, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Jewish and Rastafarian faiths. Keynote speakers were Andrew Mitchell MP for Sutton and Coldfield and Shadow Secretary for International Development, and Neena Gill, a Member of European Parliament.

Coventry

Coventry Inter Faith Forum held an exhibition on 'Sacred Writings of World Faiths' on 5 May at the Coventry Multi-Faith Centre. There was a special attraction for children on the day which included

storytelling by Kusumika Chatterjee and Pru Porretta who is known as Coventry's Lady Godiva, who has for the past twenty years, brought Lady Godiva to life for the people of Coventry and visitors to the city by telling the tale of her life. She was accompanied by African Drummer Jahman Aggrey. Viewing of the Sacred Writings of World Faiths exhibition can be arranged by telephoning Coventry Multi-Faith Forum on 024 7625 7594.

Wolverhampton

Wolverhampton Interfaith Council held its annual pilgrimage event on 30 June. Participants met to board the coach at the starting point at the Shri Krishna Hindu Temple, Marston Road. The first visit was Balaji Temple in Oldbury where lunch was provided and then the group visited Guru Nanak Nishkam Jatha Temple in Birmingham.

South West

Faithnetsouthwest is acting as regional representative for the One World Week Inter Faith Project, which will bring together three faith groups to exchange ideas on OWW events they are organising, before and after the event. The project will help produce guidance on inter faith involvement specifically for One World Week which will be published on the OWW website for others to use. For more information, contact Alistair Beattie at alistair@faithnetsouthwest.org.uk

Bristol

A tour of places of worship on the afternoon of 21 July was organised by Bristol Inter Faith Group. Participants had an opportunity to visit the Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Shah Jahal Mosque, the local Baptist Church, the Bristol and West Progressive Synagogue and Bristol Hindu temple.

Yorkshire and Humber

On 12-13 May, people of diverse faiths and from key government organisations from across Yorkshire and Humber walked together to demonstrate their partnership in tackling modern forms of slavery and injustice, and to inaugurate a permanent new trail, 'The Wilberforce Way'. Members of the Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum and the East Riding Community Cohesion Forum, who developed the walk to commemorate the bi-centenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade

Act, were joined by representatives from the Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber and Yorkshire Forward. The walk inaugurated the new 35 mile trail linking Hull, the birth place of William Wilberforce and Pocklington. Wilberforce was educated at Pocklington School and wrote his first letter of protest from there against the African slave trade at the age of 14, and went on to become MP for Hull and then for Yorkshire.

A free guide leaflet outlining the route and key landmarks has been published by the East Riding County Council and distributed in the county to encourage walkers and to raise awareness on issues of community cohesion in the area. Further information from Inderjit Bhogal, Director, the Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum 0113 245 6444, mobile 07793780588 email: inderjit.bhogal@yorkshireandhumberfaiths.org.uk

The second regional 'faith and food' day took place on 10 June. Guidelines for local events can be seen on the Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum site at www.yorkshireandhumberfaiths.org.uk/activities/food/

Keighley

'Being British and Muslim' was the focus of a talk organised by Keighley Interfaith Group. Around 45 members and friends of the groups attended the event that was held at the Balti House Restaurant in 14 March to listen to Wahida Shaffi speaking on the topic. The aim of the meal and talk was to hear the views and experiences of a young Muslim woman living in Britain today. On 7 July the Keighley 'Walk for Friendship' gave faith communities and their families the chance to come together and walk through Keighley Town Centre. The walk, organised by Keighley Interfaith Group, began at the Town Hall Square, and went on to Cliffe Castle Park where there was entertainment and a picnic tea.

Leeds

Members of different faith traditions gathered in Leeds for the annual Walk of Friendship sponsored by Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship and visited places of worship in Leeds. Participants walked along Chapeltown Road with a rainbow banner and enjoyed each other's company on the tours of Catholic, Pentecostal and Anglican Churches, a gurdwara and a mosque. The Lord Mayor, Mohammed Iqbal, and Favian Hamilton MP led the walk. Photographs of the walk can be viewed at www.concord-leeds.org.uk

Europe

WCRP women's initiative

The World Conference of Religions for Peace (WCRP) invited women from different faiths to come together at a meeting in Rome, in May, to form a Women's Coordinating Committee of Religions for Peace in Europe. The meeting followed a gathering in August of last year at the World Assembly of Religions for Peace in Kyoto, where women of faith from Europe expressed their desire to create a network to promote peace in Europe and to elect a committee to coordinate its activities and projects. Ravinder Kaur Nijjar, from the Sikh community in Scotland, and one Executive Committee member of both the Scottish Inter Faith Council (SIFC) and the Inter Faith Network was invited from the UK. She was selected to be coordinator of the European Women of Faith Coordinating Committee (EWCC), which will bring together and work in partnership with faith-based and inter faith women's organisations to form a European Women of Faith Network. The Committee, together with the Religions for Peace European Governing Board, visited the Vatican and met with senior members of the Pontifical Council and discussed inter faith dialogue. They also met with the Mayor of Rome and the newly formed inter-religious council, an initiative introduced by the mayor.

Global

United Nations

In 2005 the 'Alliance of Civilisations' was founded, at the initiative of the Governments of Spain and Turkey, under the auspices of the United Nations. A High-level Group was formed by former Secretary-General Kofi Annan to explore the roots of polarization between societies and cultures today and to recommend a practical programme of action to address this issue. Further information about the initiative can be found at http://www.unaoc.org/repository/implementation_plan.pdf

In April of this year the UN announced that Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon had designated Jorge Sampaio, the former President of Portugal, as High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations. His role is to 'promote the Alliance of Civilizations as a credible and viable attempt to diminish the dangerous tensions between diverse societies and their threat to international stability,

as assessed in the report of the High-Level Group of the Alliance of Civilizations'. Speaking in May, the High Representative told the Member States of the Organization that many of the political conflicts facing the world today are underpinned by intercultural and inter-religious tensions. "What is at stake in these conflicts is not religion or culture themselves, but the ways in which cultural identity or religious beliefs are often exploited in pursuit of political ends". He noted that intercultural tensions around sensitive issues have the potential to inflame passions and can act as lightning rods for expressions of anger and resentment and that these, in turn, can have widespread political repercussions. Mr Sampaio invited the members of the General Assembly to develop a better understanding of the interaction between the world of politics, on the one hand, and cultural and religious factors, on the other. "And it is crucial that this understanding is reflected in political decision-making and global diplomatic efforts".

The Alliance of Civilizations, he said, will be one of his key priorities in the coming months as it can play an important role in facilitating and fostering partnerships among key players at the levels of government, international organisations and agencies, civil society and the private sector.

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DIARY DATES

Local Events

The following are just a few examples of inter faith events happening around the UK in the coming months. To find out more about events in your area, you can contact the nearest local inter faith group. A list of regional and local inter faith bodies can be found at www.interfaith.org.uk/locallist.htm

26 August, Redbridge. Redbridge Faith Forum, in East London, in partnership with IG-SOC, an umbrella organisation for Muslims living in Redbridge, will be hosting a multi-faith barbecue at the Drive Methodist Church, on the corner of The Drive and Easter Avenue, Ilford, from 1pm to 7pm. Refreshments and halal, kosher and vegetarian food will be available. Call 020 8708 2478 for more information.

1 September, Bolton. Bolton Interfaith Council are holding an open forum meeting exploring 'The Role of Women and Faith' at Friends Meeting House, Silverwell St, Bolton, BL1 1LS from 12:30 to 2:30pm. Email tony.mcneile@virgin.net for further information.

5 September, Lancaster. A full meeting of Lancashire Forum of Faiths will be held at Friends' Meeting House, Meeting House Lane, Lancaster from 7pm. It will focus on the work that local inter faith organisations are doing at grass roots level as well as the work that local authorities are undertaking with faith groups. For further details about the meeting contact Shahida Akram at shahida.akram@communitygateway.co.uk or telephone 01772 268031.

6-9 September, Coventry. The Coventry Multi-Faith Forum invites people to visit the Coventry Multi-Faith Centre, which is taking part in this year's Heritage Open Day event. The open day celebrates England's fantastic architecture and culture by offering free access to properties that are usually closed to the public or normally charge for admission. Visit www.coventry-multifaith.org for more information.

6-9 September, Leicester. A peace pilgrimage, organised by Leicester Council of Faiths, will take place as part of a Heritage Open Day event. It will start from City Centre, at Fountain Square near Council Hall, at 9.45 am. The walk will cover visits to the Jain Centre, the Shri Sanatan Temple, Guru Teg Bahadur Gurdwara, Hebrew Congregation Centre, Leicester Central Mosque

and St Margaret's Church. Email info@leicestercounciloffaiths.org.uk for more details.

11 September, Suffolk Inter Faith Resource (SIFRE), Ipswich. SIFRE will hold its first annual gathering of members, associates, affiliate representatives and friends. It will be an informal get together that will give those attending an opportunity to learn about what SIFRE's staff have been doing over the last year, which will be followed by a garden party. The events will start at 7:00pm to 9:00pm, but *the venue is to be confirmed*. Contact 01473 343661 for more information or check the website <http://www.sifre.org.uk/index2.htm>

15 September, Greenwich, London. Join the Greenwich Multi-Faith Forum's faith walk from 10am to 5.30pm for a day of visiting places of worship in the Greenwich area. The purpose of the walk is to encourage friendship and understanding amongst people of all faiths in the Borough of Greenwich and in South London. For further information contact Revd Jesse Van Der Valk on 020 8854 2302.

15 September, Telford. Telford and Wrekin Interfaith Group (TWIG) are holding an evening of music and dance featuring the Driftwood Quartet (eclectic mix of Western music), bhangra music (Sikh folk music from the Punjab), Indian Dandia (stick) dance and Jewish circle dancing from 7.30 to 11.00pm. Admission by ticket only: Adult £7, Concessions £5, Children & Young People age 5-16 £2. Includes a buffet and soft drinks. Email twigweb@twig.org.uk to book a place.

18 September, Bradford on Avon. West Wiltshire Inter Faith Group will be celebrating International Peace Day at St Laurence School, Trinity Hall, Ashley Road. The meeting is open to all. The film Peace One Day by Jeremy Gilley will be screened followed by a group discussion. For further information call Farzana Saker on 07834 812 663, or email farzana_saker@yahoo.co.uk

24 September, Taunton. The Somerset Faith Forum will be launched in the Lutterall Room, County Hall, The Crescent from 6.30pm to 8.30pm. The event will have exhibitions, displays and presentations by different faith groups in Somerset. For further details contact Revd Bruce Thompson on 01823 275 756 or email at revbrucet@tiscali.co.uk

26 September, London. 'Inter faith marriages.' A dialogue with Heather al-Yousuf and guest speakers exploring some of the issues faced by couples in mixed faith marriages, from managing aspects of daily life like food, fasting and festivals in a home with two faiths, to deeper questions of identity, parenting, dilemmas about conversion and respect for the unique spirituality of each partner. A collaboration of St Ethelburga's with the Interfaith Marriage Network, who will be launching a new resource pack. 6.30pm at the St Ethelburga's Centre, 78 Bishopsgate, London EC2N 4AG. Further information from enquiries@stethelburgas.org

28 September, Battersea, London. South London Inter Faith Group is holding an informal lunch meeting to share inter faith news and reflect on inter faith experiences. From 12.30pm to 2pm at All Saints' Church, Prince of Wales Drive, Battersea Park, SW11 4BD. For further information call Alan Gadd on 020 8678 8977 or email secretary@southlondoninterfaith.org.uk

1-5 and 12-15 October, Crawley. Crawley Interfaith Network is holding an Interfaith Exhibition. Images from the exhibition show a variety of celebrations, festivals and events that have taken place, over a period of 18 months, within Crawley's faith communities. The exhibition will be on display at the K2 Leisure Centre between 1 to 5 October and at The Hawth Theatre, Hawth Avenue, from 12 to 15 October. Call 01293 438565 or email Vikki Jacobs at vikki.jacobs@crawley.gov.uk for more information.

13 October, Esher, Surrey. Elmbridge Multi-Faith Forum will be holding its Annual Gala at The Joyce Grenfell Centre, Claremont Fan School, Claremont Drive. This is famous for its delicious food, varied and eclectic entertainment. Tickets include food, soft drinks and entertainment and we ask that you make a donation of £5 per person (children are free), to help to meet the costs of the event. Tickets can be booked by calling Geoffrey Morris on 01932 868454.

27 October, Luton. Luton Council of Faiths in conjunction with Grassroots is holding a One World Week faith and citizenship evening with music by Berakah, an inter-faith music initiative, at 6.30pm for a 7pm start. The venue is to be confirmed and reservations are on a first come first served basis. Call 01582 416 964 or email jgrassroots@aol.com

31 November, Gloucestershire. South Gloucestershire Faith Forum will be holding an

event on teenage pregnancy. Participants will include members of faith communities, primarily professionals and representatives of voluntary and community organisations. The event style will be a lively and engaging debate from people who are passionate about the issue. Email Alistair Beattie at alistair@faithnetsouthwest.org.uk or by telephoning 0117 304 2298 for venue details.

13 December, Bradford. At this year's annual conference the Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum will showcase the work of local faith forums and facilitate partnership working between faith communities and local and regional agencies. The programme and detailed arrangements are currently under development. To register your interest visit <http://www.yorkshireandhumberfaiths.org.uk/events/>

Local inter faith focus on the environment

Sharing different faith perspectives on the environment and looking after the earth is increasingly becoming a part of local inter faith bodies' programmes.

Luton Council of Faiths and Bedford Council of Faiths held an open day on 18 May to launch a 'Faith Woodlands' project. An area of Maulden Woods, which lies between Bedford and Luton, has been provided by the Forestry Commission to be transformed into a permanent spiritual and educational space. Local faith communities and inter faith will work together with other organisations in partnership with other organisations to change the area.

Watford Inter Faith Association held a public meeting on 18 June with speakers from four different faith communities addressing the topic of the environment. As part of a Hull and East Riding Interfaith meeting on 17 July aspects of plants in the Bible and the views of different religions on climate change were discussed. London Sustainability Week 2007, from 5-12 June, focused on Faith in London's Environment with seven events looking at a multi-faith action approach encouraging working towards achieving a sustainable London environment, were held. For further details visit <http://www.london21.org/page/36/show/1277>

See under Conferences, Exhibitions and Seminars for details of a forthcoming seminar on the Earth Charter and faith groups.

SPECIAL DAYS AND WEEKS

21-28 October, One World Week. One World Week is an annual opportunity for people from diverse backgrounds to come together to learn about global justice, to spread that learning and to use it to take action for justice locally and globally. The theme this year is 'All Together Now'. For further information about the week and how to take part, see www.oneworldweek.org

19-27 November, Islam Awareness Week. An annual festival of events. This year's theme is 'One World' and many events will focus around both historic similarities and environmental necessities that bind people of all faiths together. Exhibition listings, teachers materials and more will be available on the website <http://www.iaw.org.uk/>

25 November-2 December, Scottish Inter Faith Week at various locations. The aim of Inter Faith Week is to promote dialogue, understanding, and co-operation between Scotland's diverse religious communities. This initiative was born out of the recognition that religious communities can no longer afford to exist in isolation from each other but must seek, instead, to replace barriers of prejudice and fear with bonds of friendship, in order to build a better Scotland for all. The week will open at Aberdeen University on 25 November, launched by John Battle, MP. The national youth conference will take place at Glasgow University on 2 December. For further information contact the Scottish Inter Faith Council on 0141 420 6982 or email admin@interfaithscotland.org

27 January 2008. Holocaust Memorial Day. Holocaust Memorial Day commemorates all of the communities who suffered as a result of the Holocaust and Nazi persecution and provides a focus – through national and local events and activities – for people to think about the continuing repercussions of the Holocaust and more recent genocides on society. This year's theme is 'Imagine...remember, reflect, react'. Remember the past; -Reflect on the present; React to create a better future. Further information at www.hmd.org.uk As 27 January (the annual HMD date) will fall on a Sunday, which may be unsuitable for faith, community and school events, the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust advises organisers to plan their event on a day convenient to them in the weeks either side of 27 January.

CONFERENCES, EXHIBITIONS AND SEMINARS

Until 23 September, British Library, Euston Road, London. "Sacred: Discover what we share". A major British Library exhibition bringing together for the first time some of the world's most important and beautiful religious texts of the Jewish, Christian and Muslim faiths. A series of events will be taking place over the coming weeks at the British Library including musical evenings and talks. A touring programme, "Sacred on Location", being provided in partnership with museums, libraries and heritage organisations is bringing activities inspired by Sacred and based around the theme of faith to a wider audience. For more information about events and booking visit www.bl.uk/sacred

25 September, Taplow. UNESCO UK, in association with the Earth Charter, is holding a day seminar on 'Active Faith: The Earth Charter' to engage people from faith organisations in discussing how and in what ways the Earth Charter can be a vehicle for learning for change towards a just, sustainable and peaceful world. Plans for developing a network of interested organisations from faith perspectives to support and endorse the Earth Charter will be discussed at the seminar. The seminar is being hosted by Soka Gakkai International. Attendance fee is £20 and includes lunch and refreshments. Venue: Taplow Court, Taplow, near Maidenhead. Further information from Toni-Ann Hirayama at Toni-Ann.Hirayama@sgi-uk.org by 7 September.

12 October, Leeds. Day conference 'Faith Schools and Social Cohesion – part of the problem or the solution?' The keynote speaker will be John Battle MP. The event is being organised by Chance Your Arm, an education and training provider. The cost is £149 (less £25 for delegates observing Ramadan). Email cyaconf@aol.com for further details or to book a place.

1-2 November, Belfast. 'Rights and Righteousness: Religious Pluralism and Human Rights'. A conference being organised by the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and the Irish School of Ecumenics to stimulate discussion about the relation between faith and rights. Some of the questions to be explored at this conference include: What role do cultural and religious traditions have in the articulation of human rights? Are human rights secular necessarily as some advocates would argue? Or perhaps, as others argue, is a religious commitment

necessary to believe that human beings have an inherent dignity that should be respected? By what means should we hope to achieve consensus when we differ?

Visit <http://www.tcd.ie/ise/news/events.php> for further details.

October and November, Liverpool. Liverpool Community Spirit will be holding faith literacy training sessions at Liverpool Cathedral. The first session exploring Judaism, Christianity and Islam, will run on 31 October from 9.30am to 3.00pm and on 7 November from 9.30 am to 3.00pm Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism will be covered. The training is to develop understanding and awareness of identity, values, traditions and customs of the faith. For more information call Cressida Godding on 0151 709 3171, email

cressida.godding@community-spirit.org.uk or visit www.community-spirit.org.uk

December 2008, Israel. The theme for the 2008 ICCJ (International Council for Christians and Jews) conference in Jerusalem will be the impact of Israeli-Palestinian Conflict on Jewish-Christian dialogue. A variety of lectures, workshops and study visits will take place. From September 2007 onwards the conference will “start” on the Internet. An internet forum composed of experts will discuss the impact of the conflict in the Middle East on Jewish-Christian relations. All those interested in the topic, are invited to read the contributions of the invited experts and to take part in the discussion. If you are interested, please let the ICCJ know at info@iccj-buberhouse.de

COURSES AND TRAINING

Workshops for development workers. SkILD, a project of NAVCA (National Association for Voluntary and Community Action), is running courses in different cities in England to provide skills and knowledge for local development through relevant training to support voluntary and community groups. It particularly welcomes applications from development workers who are supporting faith-based organisations. Courses available cover seven areas, some of which include governance, funding and financial management and organisational development. The cost is £45 for voluntary and community organisations. For an application pack and further course details visit www.skild.org.uk

Roehampton University is launching a new postgraduate programme called Management of Religious and Faith-based Organisations MSc. This programme is aimed at enabling managers and leaders of religious and faith-based organisations to understand their organisations better. For more information visit <http://www.roehampton.ac.uk/pg/mrfo/index.html>

Faith in Maintenance aims to provide training and support for the thousands of volunteers in England and Wales who help to maintain historic places of worship.

Thirty training courses are offered each year for volunteers to look after a variety of faith buildings across the country. Courses are free and are available to any faith group using an historic building for its worship. Faith in Maintenance is supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, English Heritage and the Council for the Care of Churches. For more information telephone 020 7456 0913 or email info@spabfim.org.uk

London, East Midlands and East of England.

‘Diversity and Interfaith’ is a 10 week course where participants choose to study one of the following: tools of inter faith dialogue, an introduction to Jewish-Christian-Muslim relations or ‘Citizenship and interfaith’. Participants are required to attend three seminars, one at the beginning, middle and at end of the course. The courses will be taught by Centre for Jewish Christian Relations (CJCR) and Centre for Muslim Jewish Relations (CMJR) tutors. Much of the course will be via e-learning therefore access to a computer is a necessity. On successful completion participants will receive a certificate from CJCR and CMJR, Cambridge. The London courses begin on 13 November and finish on 29 January 2008. The middle seminar date will be on 11 December. The seminars will run from 7pm to 9pm on these dates and will take place at Friends House, 173 Euston Road (opposite Euston Station). There is a £20 registration fee which includes all materials. Information about the application process can be found at www.cjcr.cam.ac.uk/courses/adie.html The deadline for completed forms is 3 November. Email Trisha Kessler at t.kessler@cjcr.cam.ac.uk or by telephone on 01223 742 352 for details about the East Midlands and East of England courses.

Praying for Peace Domestic Violence and Faith Communities Project. The Greater London Domestic Violence Project (GLDVP) will run a Praying for Peace Domestic Violence and Faith

Communities Project. The scheme aims to build on the dialogue and recommendations put forward at a meeting that took place in between domestic violence service providers and faith leaders at City Hall London, in November 2006. Over the coming year the GLDVP intends to produce guidelines for faith communities and domestic violence services providers detailing the important role faith communities through their interaction with children and young people in challenging, preventing and educating them about domestic violence. It will also highlight information about interventions that can be made to hold perpetrators responsible for their violent behaviour. Training for faith leaders and domestic violence service providers to help build partnerships and understanding will be developed and run over the year. If you are interested in this project and would like more information visit www.gldvp.org.uk or call 020 7785 3860.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES AND COMPETITIONS

Insight Film Festival. The Insight Film Festival is encouraging young filmmakers to make films to explore faith in modern society and contribute to the growing understanding of faith and faith related issues as an important part of life today. Applicants must be 16-30. The winner will receive a prize of £1,000. Judges will include Sarfraz Manzoor, writer, broadcaster and documentary film maker; Anna Cox, senior development executive with BBC Religion and Ethics; and Rajinder Dudrah, Head of Drama and Senior Screen Lecturer at the University of Manchester. The deadline for entries is 28 September. For more information on the entry rules and for an application pack visit www.insightfestival.co.uk

Community Foundation Network. The Community Foundation Network is a charitable trust supporting local community causes. Community foundations are charities located across the UK dedicated to strengthening local communities, creating opportunities and tackling issues of disadvantage and exclusion. There are 60 community foundations in the UK and they can be found in the East of England, East Midlands, London, North East, North West, Northern Ireland, Scotland, South East, South West, Wales, West Midlands and Yorkshire and Humberside. Visit www.communityfoundations.org.uk to find information about grants available in your area.

Building Communities Fund (East of England).

If you are based within the six counties of Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk, are a 'community owned' organisation and your work benefits groups of people in the wider community, you can now apply for funding to purchase and develop buildings and land. A new £3m Building Communities Fund is available as part of the East of England Development Agency (EEDA) Investing in Communities programme. The Fund provides both capital grants and bursary awards to help communities achieve greater potential. The Fund will be active for two years until March 2009, and provides capital between £250,000 and £750,000. Bursary awards up to £15,000 to help work up a business plan and grant application. Visit www.buildingcommunitiesfund.org.uk or telephone Andrew Hibbert on 01223 243 087, or email at andrew.hibbert@co-opandcommunityfinance.coop

The Department for International Development have a mini grants scheme aimed at organisations or networks with an interest in development education work in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales who want to undertake 1-3 year projects which seek to raise awareness and understanding of international development issues; of our global interdependence; of the need for international development; and of the progress that has been made and that is possible. DFID's contribution to a project will be a minimum grant of £1,000 and a maximum grant of £10,000 per year. Find out more at <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/funding/dafminigrants.asp>

RESOURCES

Religions in the UK: 2007-2010 Directory ISBN 9 78 0 901437 30 1 £25.00 (£30 including post and packing) Edited by Paul Weller. A joint project of the Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby and the University of Derby, 2007. A 'one stop shop' providing reference material and information about the nine world religious traditions with substantial communities in the UK. A CD-ROM with addresses of over 20,000 Christian places of worship and contact details for 3,500+ other organisations and places of worship across the religions is included. Order from The Multi-Faith Centre, University of Derby, Kedleston Road, Derby DE22 1GB, cheques payable to "The Multi-Faith Centre" For further information contact 01332 591285 or email mfd@derby.ac.uk

A Global Guide to Interfaith Reflections from around the World by Sandy and Jael Bharat ISBN 978 1905047970, published by O Books, 2007. £19.99 (with royalties to UNICEF). An insight into what the authors call ‘the inter faith movement’ through varied personal reflections from more than one hundred activists and academics from all corners of the world looking at the “when, why, who, how and what” of inter faith issues and considering the origins of the inter faith movement, its cause, its issues and its resources. From their differing perspectives the contributors present their inspirations and insights, concerns and motivations and their thoughts about the future. Practitioners also give pointers on organising inter faith events and projects.

Tools 4 Dialogue The Youth and Education Division of Three Faiths Forum has developed *Tools 4 Dialogue*, religious text-based educational programme inspired by the methodology of Scriptural Reasoning. It uses texts from the Tanakh, Qur’an and New Testament to bring Christians, Jews and Muslims to an understanding of each other through their own written teachings while focussing on themes that are relevant to young people today. It is currently being piloted in a number of colleges, universities and schools. For more information, see www.3ff.org.uk

Improved Understanding of South London’s Multi Faith Situation by Sarah Thorley and *An Evaluation of Different Models of Inter Faith Activity* by Siriol Davies. Two pieces of research on inter faith activity published by South London Inter Faith Group. The second of these publications comes with a CD containing interviews relevant to this project. For more information contact Revd Alan Gadd at secretary@southlondoninterfaith.org.uk or telephone 020 8678 8977. Visit www.southlondoninterfaith.org.uk for more details about the group’s activities.

Interfaith Relationships: A Resource Pack for Couples, Heather al-Yousuf and Rosalind Birtwistle for the Interfaith Marriage Project. A resource pack for people in a relationship with someone of a different faith, wanting to know whether it can work, and looking for information and support. At a national consultation seminar in 2006 a number of religious leaders and academics, experts in cultural studies, psychology and relationships, as well as people with personal experience of inter faith and inter racial relationships, identified some of the questions and dilemmas faced by couples in mixed marriages. There were discussions about how to arrange a

wedding ceremony, and how to manage religious rules about food and hygiene, fasts and festivals in a home with two faiths, as well as deeper questions of identity, including dilemmas about conversion and respect for the unique spirituality of each person. Lastly – and most important for many families – there was discussion on how children are brought up when their parents have different beliefs. This resource pack draws on the expertise of those at the seminar to highlight the issues that are likely to affect people involved in marriages between people of different faiths and beliefs. It contains resources such as books, websites and organisations, as well as personal stories. The appendix includes brief descriptions of the main faiths found in Britain today, and what, if anything, they have to say about mixed marriages. The pack can be downloaded at

www.interfaithmarriage.org.uk

Setting up for Success: A practical guide for community organisations. ISBN 978 1 901 974 75 1. £9.95 A new handbook written by Anna Allen and Catriona May published by CDF (Community Development Fund) providing practical tips, templates, case studies and links to resources to help community organisations. Subjects including financial management, promoting your organisation, policies and procedures and employment. The guide was inspired by the experiences of groups across the country that received funding from round one of the Faith Community Capacity Building Fund, Connecting Communities Plus Community Grants, administered by CDF. More information about the handbook and how to order is available at www.cdf.org.uk

Keeping it Together: A Reflective Practice Tool for Faith-Based Community Development Practitioners by Steve Miller (£7) and *Priceless, Unmeasurable? Faith and Community Development in the 21st Century England* by Adam Dinham (£5)

Published in partnership between the FbRN UK (Faith Based Regeneration Network), Anglia Ruskin University, the Churches’ Community Work Alliance and the Community Development Exchange. Two new publications developed from a series of seminars, funded by the Faith Community Capacity Building Fund, drawing together community development practitioners from different faith traditions to reflect and share good practice and issues they encounter. To order either publication visit www.fbrn.org.uk or telephone 020 7471 6791.

Faith and Voluntary Action: An Overview of Current Evidence and Debates.

Faith in the community: The contribution of faith-based organisations to rural voluntary action.

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations, 2007

The first report addresses some of the questions and misunderstanding surrounding faith based organisations, explores some of the more commonly used concepts associated with their work and reviews current evidence regarding their scope, coverage and activities. It reviews the Government's policies and initiatives relating to faith based organisations and the current diversity of views regarding the involvement of faith based organisations in the public realm. The report contains suggestions that whilst faith based organisations are distinctive, by treating them as separate from secular charities or community groups there is a danger that policy makers will alienate civil society. It suggests that both secular and faith based organisations can at times be discriminated against when applying for Government funding and excluded from policy discussions.

The second report was produced in partnership with the Commission for Rural Communities and forms part of the NCVO's programme of research and policy development focusing specifically on the needs of voluntary and community organisations working in rural areas. It examines the contribution of faith based organisations to community life in rural areas, drawing on the experience of those working in this field to identify the type of services and activities faith based organisations provide and the resources they are able to mobilise in support of these activities. There is a particular focus on the changes and challenges they face and how they are responding to these. The report contains 15 case studies.

Both reports are available on the NCVO's website at www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/publications and hard copies can be obtained from NCVO (telephone 020 7520 2484 or email to referral@ncvo-vol.org.uk

Local faith directories

Directories listing contact details and places of worship in areas have become very popular over the last few years. An increasing number of local authorities, SACREs, colleges and local inter faith organisations are researching and developing their own handbooks with the help of faith communities in a bid to promote greater awareness of different communities and to make it easier to draw them into consultation or projects or to arrange visits to their places of worship. Directories also, of course, help those of a particular faith find out where their own places of worship are located. As Councillor Genevieve Hibbs says in the introduction to the directory recently published by the London Borough of Hounslow, "For many people who arrive in the borough, their faith can be a reassuring anchor in new and unusual surroundings." Many directories are available on line. For some examples see:

www.merton.gov.uk/directoryplacesworship.pdf

www.kirklees.gov.uk/community/localorgs/orgdirectory.asp?CatCode=S03/02

www.wandsworth.gov.uk/Home/CommunityServices/RegisterOffice/About/regfaithAtoZ.htm

www.uwe.ac.uk/chaplaincy/faith_communities/ (Bristol)

http://www.ifcg.co.uk/category_idtxt_directory.aspx (Brighton)

http://www3.westminster.gov.uk/docstores/publications_store/Westminster%20Faith%20Directory%202007.pdf (LB Westminster)

<http://www.prescap.co.uk/Faith%20Forum%20website%2016,3,05/directory.htm#buddhist> (Preston)

Correction

MCB's Committee is called the Inter Faith Relations Committee and not Inter Faith Committee as reported in the last issue of *Inter Faith Update*. Further information from interfaithrelations@mcb.org.uk for the attention of Mary Barber.

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Please send any items and diary dates for consideration for inclusion in the next issue **by 31 October** to: The Newsletter Editor, Inter Faith Network, 8A Lower Grosvenor Place, London SW1W 0EN or e-mail to harriet.crabtree@interfaith.org marking your e-mail 'newsletter'.



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Inter Faith Network, 8A Lower Grosvenor Place, London SW1W 0EN

Tel: 020 7931 7766

Fax: 020 7931 7722

E-mail: ifnet@interfaith.org.uk

www.interfaith.org.uk



INTER FAITH

UPDATE

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Faith Communities Forum members visit Church of England Synod

On 14 February, the Church of England invited members of the Inter Faith Network's Faith Communities Forum to a lunch reception and special briefing on how the Church of England's decision making processes and public affairs work and to attend a session of Synod which was in progress at Church House. Bishop of Bradford, Rt Revd David James, hosted the lunch; Dr Philip Giddings, Chair of the Church of England's Mission and Public Affairs Council, welcomed participants; and Canon Guy Wilkinson, Inter Faith Adviser, gave the briefing. Participants were later warmly welcomed from the floor of

Synod by its Chair at the time, Rt Revd Michael Perham, the Bishop of Gloucester. 28 members of the Forum attended on behalf of the faith communities linked in national faith community representative body membership by the Inter Faith Network.

This formal sharing of public life decision making processes event was a 'first' for the faith communities at national level and it is hoped that, linking with an ongoing programme of work by the Faith Communities Forum, other such opportunities from within the different faith communities will follow.

Subscribing to Inter Faith Update

This newsletter is published three times a year and is available by subscription at £7.50 per year.

To subscribe, send your name and address with a cheque payable to "The Inter Faith Network" to:

Inter Faith Update
Subscriptions,
Inter Faith Network,
8A Lower Grosvenor
Place, London
SW1W 0EN

Government consultation on 'inter faith strategy'

On 17 December the Department for Communities and Local Government launched a consultation document on the development of its inter faith strategy. Hazel Blears, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Parmjit Dhanda, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Dr Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, and young people from Burnley were among those who spoke at the launch event. The

document is entitled "*Face-to-Face and Side-by-Side*": *A framework for inter faith dialogue and social action*. The closing date for responses to the consultation is 7 March.

In her foreword to the document Hazel Blears says that "through this consultation we aim to find out how we can all best work in partnership with each other to increase inter faith dialogue and social action and

(Continued on page 3)

NETWORK NEWS

Network meetings

The Inter Faith Network's Executive Committee met on 18 October and 28 January. Its Faith Communities Forum met on 13 November (see report on page 5) and 14 February. At the meeting on 14 February Forum members were invited to attend a session of the Church of England General Synod (see full report on page 1). On 6 November the Network held a meeting for advisers on inter faith issues within the national faith community bodies (see report on page 6).

The Inter Faith Network co-facilitated a meeting, with the Faith Based Regeneration Network (UK), of the English Regional Faith Forums Network on 31 January (see report on page 20) and on 11 February held a consultation meeting, with the Community Development Foundation, on the preparation of some short, web-based, guidelines to support development workers in local inter faith organisations as well as those hiring and supporting these (full report on page 21).

The Network also facilitated a meeting on 13 December between the Office for National Statistics and faith community representatives to discuss issues relating to the 2011 Census.

Network's new Director takes up post

In September, Dr Harriet Crabtree took up post as Director of the Inter Faith Network, succeeding the Network's first Director, Brian Pearce. He continues to work for the Network part-time as Adviser on Faith and Public Life. Dr Crabtree has worked for the Inter Faith Network since 1990. During 2006–7 she served, in a personal capacity, as a Commissioner on the Commission on Integration and Cohesion and was the Commissioner with responsibility for engagement with the faith sector.

The last issue of *Inter Faith Update* contained a report on the National Meeting of the Network in Coventry at which an extensive tribute was given to retiring Director Brian Pearce and it also carried an interview with him.
www.interfaith.org.uk/newsletter/ifu33.pdf.

20th Anniversary of the Inter Faith Network

Subscribers to *Inter Faith Update* will have received a copy of the recently published brochure marking the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Inter Faith Network for the UK, together with a copy of the Network's Annual Review for 2006–07. The 20th anniversary special brochure looks at the key milestones across the last twenty years on the journey together of the Inter Faith Network and its member bodies towards greater inter faith understanding and cooperation. The brochure and also the Annual Review can be downloaded from the Network's website www.interfaith.org.uk or requested from the Inter Faith Network office.

Reader survey

Readers of *Inter Faith Update* were invited to complete a readership survey that was sent out with Issue 33 of the newsletter. The aim of the survey was to find out what readers thought of the present layout; to understand and identify which sections of the Network's newsletter readers find most useful; and to look at whether there are different patterns of interests linked to particular categories of Network membership. The intention is to use this information to improve the layout and content of the newsletter. Thank you to all those who responded to the survey.

Out of the 30+ responses a majority of readers said they liked the current layout but would like to see images used with some of the stories. It was also suggested by some that there should be less on issues connected with Government and more on inter faith initiatives at local level; and that there could perhaps be less information presented in a more user-friendly format.

The sheer amount of activity on the inter faith front has increased astonishingly across the last 12 to 18 months and across the next 6 months the Inter Faith Network will be considering the best ways to share this – both through *Inter Faith Update* and through other routes such as e-bulletins as well as member circulars.

Government consultation on 'inter faith strategy'

(Continued from page 1)

ensure that this activity results in tangible and positive change within local communities in terms of increased cohesion, greater community empowerment and resilience to extremism in all its forms." She says that "in developing this strategy we are not seeking to reinvent 'inter faith'. We are building on a long history of people from different faith communities in the UK working together to build mutual understanding and respect and develop strong and positive relationships with one another and with wider civil society." She sees the consultation as providing "an opportunity to reflect on how Government should support inter faith activity and the circumstances in which inter faith activity is helping to make a positive difference within local communities." The Government's vision is that "inter faith activity will build good relations and break down barriers between people from different backgrounds through 'face-to-face' interactions and 'side-by-side' collaboration in shared activities, with a common purpose and concrete outcome."

The consultation document has sections dealing with "Building cohesive communities: the role of inter faith dialogue and social action"; and "Developing a framework for partnership". It sets out a set of questions which respondents are invited to address. The document and response form can be downloaded from the CLG website at: www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/interfaithdialogue. Hard copies can be ordered free of charge, quoting product code 07CFU04974, from the Department for Communities and Local Government Publications, PO Box 236, Wetherby LS23 7NB. Tel: 0870 1226 236, fax: 0870 1226 237, textphone: 0870 1207 405, email: communities@twoten.com.

NATIONAL UPDATE

Government's response to report of Commission on Integration and Cohesion

The Government's response to the report of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion (published in June of last year, as reported in the last issue of *Inter Faith Update*) was published on 4 February. The full response can be found at www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/governmentresponsecoic.

The response details actions that the Government will take over the coming months and years to support strong cohesive communities:

- **Specialist cohesion teams** will be established by central Government to provide advice and support to local authorities facing cohesion challenges – particularly those areas facing rapid change or experiencing migration for the first time. The teams will provide advice on conflict resolution, mediation, leadership and on the steps that local leaders might take when new people arrival in their area. Over the coming months central Government will work with local government to determine how these teams can best provide that support.
- **Local authority twinning** - different areas experience different cohesion challenges. It is therefore practical actions and solutions taken by local areas themselves that will have the biggest impact. The Commission stressed the importance of local authorities mapping their areas in order to understand the character and composition of their communities as part of ensuring they are well placed to anticipate possible tensions. Extensive research by the Commission identified five 'family groups' of areas experiencing comparable cohesion

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challenges. In the future the Government wants to work in partnership to use this data to facilitate 'twinning' between areas of the country experiencing similar issues in order to share ideas and solutions to inspire innovation to respond to these challenges. Burnley and Leicester are already working together on common issues that they have identified.

- **New guidance for local authorities on developing Information Packs for migrants.** Misunderstandings and conflict can arise when people coming from abroad behave in a way that is out of step with the normal way of doing things or, in extreme cases, against the law. Information packs can be an effective way of providing new arrivals with information that will help them to integrate successfully and understand what is expected of them.
- **Consultation on cohesion guidance for funders** – analysis of data from the Citizenship Survey shows that cohesion is strongest when people from different backgrounds interact with each other. An annex to the Commission's report suggested that in some contexts where funding is used to support a single group only it can create barriers to cohesion. Alongside its response to the Commission's report the Government has published a consultation document with a view to providing guidance for funders on how they can promote cohesion. This can be found at www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/cohesionfundersconsultation). The closing date for consultation on this is 26 May.
- **Cohesion impact tests** – a tool to assess whether the activities they are planning will have a positive impact on cohesion in their neighbourhoods will be available for access by all local authorities. It will enable them to input information around the activities and events they are planning in order to test whether they are going to have a positive impact on cohesion.

Earlier this year the Government published guidance on how to better balance translation of public materials with supporting more people in gaining the language skills they need to live and work (www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/translationguidance). Its new guidance on 'Citizen Days' encourages local authorities to think about the opportunities available in their community for people from different backgrounds come together and to share experiences.

(www.citizenshipfoundation.org.uk/main/resource.php?s367)

Later in the year the Government will publish a Cohesion Delivery Framework to provide further advice for local authorities in delivering cohesion. Local authorities will be able to use this document to analyse the issues of cohesion in their areas and draw up cohesion action plans.

As reported elsewhere in this issue, on 17 December, the Department for Communities and Local Government opened consultation on an inter faith strategy. The consultation is exploring how government can best work in partnership with faith communities, faith and non faith-based organisations, inter faith organisations and wider civil society to increase levels of inter faith dialogue and social action within local communities. The response to the Commission's report in its reference to this consultation notes that research to be carried out by the Local Government Association in partnership with the Inter Faith Network into the role that local authorities play in local inter faith activity and says that these findings, as well as consultation responses, will inform the development of the inter faith strategy.

The response says that the Government believes that a programme to help increase 'religious literacy' on the part of public agencies, as suggested by the Commission, could be valuable but believes that it will be best achieved if faith communities themselves take the lead on this and develop a programme of training which builds on their existing resources in the area. It says that the Government is currently working with faith stakeholders on a specific project which may have the potential to deliver such a programme.

The response also says that the Government will convene a panel of experts to help develop clear guidelines, as recommended by the Commission, to enable local authorities and others to be able to award public service contracts to faith based bodies without fear that there will be issues over whether this will lead to proselytising or pressure on users of services to accept the religious beliefs of the providers. The panel will include representatives from faith communities, the LGA, and Charity Commission. The response says that the Government hopes that this will lead, in 2009, to publication of a standardised version of a charter for excellence in public service delivery by faith communities.

The Government has made £50 million investment available over the next three years to



promote community cohesion and support local authorities in preventing and managing community tensions. Local councils will be able to use the money to respond to their own particular cohesion challenges: some focusing on managing new migration, others looking more at how they promote interaction between people from different backgrounds.

EHRC opens its doors for business

The new Equality and Human Rights Commission began to operate on 1 October, providing a single voice on equality and human rights. The steps leading to this significant development have been fully charted in past issues of *Inter Faith Update*.

On 1 October the three existing equality commissions merged into the new body: the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE); the Disability Rights Commission (DRC); and the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC). The EHRC also covers new areas of discrimination law including sexual orientation, religion and belief, and age and has human rights within its remit. Also within its remit is the promotion of 'good relations', on which it has a statutory obligation to give priority to race and religion and belief.

In the last issue of *Inter Faith Update* it was reported that further Commissioner appointments to the new Equality and Human Rights Commission were awaited, including one for which a candidate was being sought with expertise in 'faith and belief' issues. In November it was announced that Rev Joel Edwards, General Director of the Evangelical Alliance, had been appointed a Commissioner, along with Maeve Sherlock, a former Director of the Refugee Council, (who is currently doing a doctorate at Durham University on the subject of the 'interface' between Faith and the State in modern Britain). This brings the number of Commissioners to 15.

The Government's Faith Communities Consultative Council

Meetings of the Government's Faith Communities Consultative Council (FCCC) were

held on 20 November and 19 February. The FCCC is serviced by the Cohesion and Faiths Unit within the Department for Communities and Local Government and chaired by Parmjit Dhanda, one of its Ministers. The main item of discussion at both meetings was the Government's forthcoming consultation on its inter faith strategy. At the meeting on 19 February, the Government's proposal to abolish the blasphemy laws was also considered (on which see page 7). FCCC members also met on 8 February to discuss with Lord Goldsmith the review of citizenship which he is taking forward on a personal basis at the request of the Prime Minister.

Faith Communities Forum of the Inter Faith Network

A meeting of the Inter Faith Network's Faith Communities Forum was held on 13 November in London. Forum meetings are a chance for the faith communities with representative bodies in membership of the Network to discuss current issues of concern, including relevant legislation in preparation. Issues discussed on 13 November included the Government's programme on 'Tackling Preventing Violent Extremism'; the report of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion and the Government's preliminary response to it, including its proposal for the development of an 'inter faith strategy'; the Equality and Human Rights Commission and related work of the Religion and Belief Consultative Group; the meeting of the Government's Faith Communities Consultative Council which was to be held on 20 November; the engagement of faith communities with public life issues more generally; and the Forum's future work.

On 14 February, the Faith Communities Forum met in London at Church House prior to the reception and briefing on behalf of the General Synod of the Church of England reported on the first page of this issue. On the agenda were discussion of *'Face to Face and Side by Side': a framework for inter faith dialogue and social action*, the consultation document issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government; the Government's proposal for repeal of the blasphemy laws (on which see page 7); a report on the work of Religion and Belief Consultative Group and developments relating to

the Equality and Human Rights Commission; and planning for the 2011 Census. There was also brief discussion of the recent observations of the Archbishop of Canterbury on *shari'ah* law, in the context, of his Temple lecture, (on which see page 12).

National faith community inter faith advisers and leads meet to discuss the inter faith agenda

A growing number of national faith community representative bodies in membership of the Inter Faith Network are appointing individuals with a responsibility for inter faith relations. In some cases these are paid appointments and in other cases voluntary. On 6 November a meeting was held by the Inter Faith Network for personnel to share news of their work and to discuss issues of common concern. The meeting took place at NCVO in London and was chaired by Dr Indarjit Singh, one of the Network's Vice-Chairs. The final session of the meeting was a chance to meet and talk with Anna Cummins and Nicola Speechly of the Department for Communities and Local Government about the Government's consultation document, *'Face to Face and Side by Side: A Framework for Inter Faith Dialogue and Social Action* (on which see page 20). Among the issues discussed was the importance of recognising the important role of national faith communities in developing inter faith resources thoroughly rooted in the teaching of their traditions and supporting and encouraging their local members to engage with the inter faith agenda.

Employers Forum on Belief

The Employers Forum on Belief (EFB) held its first public meeting at the House of Lords on 13 February. The Forum, which was established in 2004 by a small group of major employers, provides opportunities for employers to discuss issues relating to the religious or other beliefs of their diverse workforces and offers practical guidance and shares good practice on issues such as dress codes, religious holidays, the inter-relationship between religious belief and other diversity strands and conflict in the workplace. The Chair of the EFB is Caroline Waters, Director

of People and Policy at British Telecom, and its Director is Rachel Kryss. It can be contacted at: Employers Forum on Belief, Floor 3, Downstream, 1 London Bridge, London SE1 9BG (tel: 020 7785 6533; email: info@efrb.org.uk)

CRE investigation into regeneration

The Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) has now become part of the new Equality and Human Rights Commission (see above at page 5). Last September, as one of its last acts, the CRE published a report on its formal investigation into regeneration schemes in England, Scotland and Wales, (making use of powers under Section 48 of the Race Relations Act to carry out a general formal investigation into any activity). This was described as one of the most important pieces of work carried out by the CRE in its 30 year history.

Julia Chain, CRE Commissioner, headed the investigation with three individuals chosen for their expertise in regeneration: Sir Howard Bernstein, Chief Executive of Manchester City Council; Lord Victor Adebawale, Chief Executive of Turning Point; and Vincent Wang, an entrepreneur and development consultant. The report's findings were based on research which included a questionnaire sent to all local authorities and development agencies in England, Scotland and Wales; five detailed local case studies; interviews with national and regional stakeholders, including regeneration bodies; and voluntary and community sector groups and an open call for evidence.

The report highlights 'the hidden human cost' of regeneration schemes. These schemes are about shaping the communities of tomorrow and securing social justice and sustainable futures for all with billions of pounds of public money being invested to create brighter futures for some of the most deprived areas in this country. The investigation suggests "that the communities that these schemes are affecting are not being properly involved in the process" and that "organisations involved in spending huge sums to transform communities are often not looking at which groups will benefit and what the impact will be on community relations." The report says that some positive examples were found but that it is clear that there is some way to go before best practice is being applied across the board. The report highlights that new buildings and public spaces must allow for interaction between different communities but the investigation found

that often schemes to bring this about create further divisions between groups.

The report can be found at www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publicationsandresources/pages/default.aspx on the “Final legacy publications” page.

A new framework in England for ‘involvement’

In November the Department for Communities and Local Government published two linked documents. The first was draft statutory guidance on *Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities*. This is being developed by the Government following enactment of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act at the end of October. The material, to be found at <http://statutorysurvey.communities.gov.uk>, covers the role of Local Strategic Partnerships; the implications of the new ‘duty to involve’; and the process for establishing Local Area Agreements. The Government sees this statutory guidance as being central to the delivery of a ‘new settlement’ between central government, local government and citizens, as set out in its White Paper on Strong and Prosperous Communities published in the autumn of 2006. The closing date for responses was 12 February.

Linked to this broader consultation on statutory guidance, a separate consultative document, *Principles of Representation; A Framework for Effective Third Sector Participation in Local Strategic Partnerships*, was also published in November and can be found at www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/principlesofrepresentation. This discussion paper was produced in consultation with a working group on which a number of voluntary and community sector organisations were represented, including the office of the Inter Faith Network for the UK. It is not a document which has been agreed with members of the group but results from the process of consultation with them. It offers a guiding set of principles by which third sector bodies can organise themselves to be effectively represented on Local Strategic Partnerships and in local public life more generally and is therefore of particular relevance to voluntary and community sector organisations. Responses to this consultation (to Thirdsector@communities.gsi.gov.uk) were also invited by 12 February.

Abolition of blasphemy law?

In December the High Court rejected an attempt by a Christian evangelical group to prosecute the Director General of the BBC for blasphemy over the screening of the musical “Jerry Springer – The Opera”. The court held that the Theatres Act 1968 and the Broadcasting Act 1990 prevented the prosecution for blasphemous libel of a theatre or broadcaster. Some years ago a House of Lords Select Committee predicted that any future blasphemy prosecution would fail because it would clash with the rights to free speech in the European Convention on Human Rights, now enshrined in UK law through the Human Rights Act 1998.

On 9 January the House of Commons discussed an amendment to the Criminal Justice Bill, tabled by the Liberal Democrat MP Evan Harris, to abolish the blasphemy laws, as had been recommended by the Law Commission in 1985. His amendment was withdrawn after Maria Eagle, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State in the Ministry of Justice, said that subject to ‘short and sharp’ consultations with the Church of England the Government intended to bring forward its own amendments to the Bill in order to abolish the offences of blasphemy and blasphemous libel. Labour MPs had been whipped to oppose the amendment but there had been concerns that there would be a significant backbench revolt on the issue. The Government has also taken steps to consult other faith communities through the mechanism of the Faith Communities Consultative Council.

The Church of England has informed the Government that while it would have wished there to be more time to evaluate the effect of the recent legislation establishing an offence of incitement to religious hatred it does not oppose the repeal of the blasphemy laws if the Government wishes to proceed with this.

Faith and offending

Last November the National Offender Management Service published a consultation document entitled *Believing We Can*. This explores the contribution which faith based organisations can make to reducing adult and youth re-offending.

In his foreword, David Hanson, Minister of State in the Home Office, says that “faith based

organisations have a long and impressive history of working with some of the most challenging and socially excluded young people and adults in our society to help them turn away from crime. Faith can be a great support and a motivator for personal change and can also motivate people from a wide range of backgrounds to help and care for others. Some faith based organisations are large service providers. Many employ staff but most are based in local communities and rely heavily on the contribution of committed volunteers.” The Government wants to overcome the challenges of working in effective partnership with faith based organisations and increase their role in prevention and reducing re-offending.

While the consultation closed on 22 February, the document remains on the Ministry of Justice website at www.noms.homeoffice.gov.uk/news-publications-events/publications/consultations/BWC_third_sector_08/. It contains interesting material exploring the role of faith based organisations, with a series of case studies, and questions relating to future third sector commitments and actions; regional faith and voluntary and community sector alliances; ‘achieving competitive neutrality’; volunteering and mentoring; and chaplaincy.

2011 Census

In 2001 a question was included in the Census, for the first time in modern times, on religious identity. Plans are now well under way for the Census to be carried out in 2011 and a question on religious identity will again be included in the three separate Censuses to be held in England and Wales; in Northern Ireland; and in Scotland.

The Office for National Statistics is working towards the publication of a single White Paper on the Census for England and Wales to be presented at the end of October 2008 both to the UK Parliament at Westminster and the National Assembly for Wales. The White Paper will set out proposals covering the date of the Census; the questions to be included in it; arrangements for carrying out the Census; the processing of the data which is collected; and the dissemination of the Census results. The necessary secondary legislation will be brought forward following public and Parliamentary debate on the White Paper. A similar timetable is being followed for the separate White Papers being prepared by the General Register Office for Scotland and the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency.

The Office for National Statistics published a report last month on the responses which it received to its consultation of ‘users’ on questions in the 2011 Census in England and Wales on ethnicity, national identity, religion and language. There is a summary report together with separate reports in relation to four categories of respondents: Central and Devolved Government; Experts, Community and Special Interest Groups; Local and Regional Government; and Local Service Providers. The reports can be found at www.statistics.gov.uk/census/2011Census/Consultations/ethnicidntconsultation.asp

The Inter Faith Network arranged a meeting on 13 December between faith community representatives and the relevant officials in ONS for a discussion on the handling of the question on religious identity included in the 2011 Census; aspects of the arrangements for the Census itself; and the analysis of the data collected in the course of it.

New Proposals on Citizenship

On 20 February the Border and Immigration Agency in the Home Office published a Green Paper entitled *The Path to Citizenship: Next Steps in Reforming the Immigration System*. A copy of this paper is available online at www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/aboutus/consultations/pathtocitizenship/.

The Green Paper sets out plans for “radical simplification” of the immigration laws. The objective of this “is to make our immigration system clearer, more streamlined and easier to understand, in the process reducing the possibilities for abuse of the system, maximizing the benefits of migration and putting British values at the heart of the system.”

The Green Paper suggests that the current system “does not provide enough of an incentive for a migrant to progress to British citizenship.” The Government wants “to encourage people with the right qualifications and commitment to take up citizenship so that they can become fully integrated into our society.”

The deadline for formal responses to the Green Paper is 14 May.

Entry requirements for Ministers of Religion

The Border and Immigration Agency of the Home Office has put on to its website material explaining how individuals can apply to come to work in the UK as a minister of religion, missionary or a member of a religious order. The website (which contains application forms for individuals to complete) gives details of the admission requirements in terms of qualifications and the need to show that an individual is able to communicate well in English, and also information on how an individual can extend their visa or apply to settle permanently in the UK after they have lived here for five years. This material is available at www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk/ministersofreligion.

Charity Commission's Faith and Social Cohesion Unit

The Charity Commission has recently created a new Faith and Social Cohesion Unit, partially funded by a grant from the Department for Communities and Local Government. It says that "faith-based charities form a significant part of the charitable sector. The beneficiaries of these charities can be counted in their millions, and they make a huge contribution to communities across England and Wales."

Over the last two years, following its earlier consultation with independent and black majority Churches, the Commission has run a series of workshops with a wide range of faith-based charities to learn more about the way they work and to help strengthen their governance and effectiveness. It has held a total of fifteen events and met with representatives from over 800 faith-based organisations, including representatives from the Muslim, Jewish, Sikh, Hindu and Buddhist communities, as well delegates from the UK's smaller faiths, such as Baha'i and Zoroastrian. The Commission says that these events have given the Commission a valuable insight into the main issues, concerns and tensions faced by these charities, and a clearer understanding of the benefits they bring to the communities in which they work.

The Commission's new Faith and Social Cohesion

Unit will provide support and advice to faith-based groups through outreach work, capacity building training and guidance. The new Unit is headed by Ghulam Rasool, Chair of the Green Light Muslim Youth Forum in Dudley and formerly Mosques Capacity Building Coordinator for the British Muslim Forum. He can be contacted at: Faith and Social Cohesion Unit, Charity Commission, PO Box 1227, Liverpool L69 3UG tel: 0845 3000 218 or email enquiries@charitycommission.gsi.gov.uk writing 'For the attention of the Faith and Social Cohesion Unit' in the subject box.

The Unit aims to:

- engage with faith communities to identify and support organisations that could be, but are not, currently registered with the Commission;
- assist faith-based charities to improve their standards of governance and accountability and thereby increase their effectiveness;
- work collaboratively to achieve and promote well run and effectively regulated faith-based charities; and
- improve the Commission's and society's understanding of faith-based charities.

The Unit will initially work primarily with Muslim charities and communities. A Project Board including representatives of the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board (MINAB) has been established to direct the Unit's work and to provide specialist advice.

The Commission is also establishing a Faith Advisory Group with representatives from a variety of faiths to advise it on its work.

Charities and Public Benefit

As reported in earlier issues of *Inter Faith Update*, under the Charities Act 2006 'public benefit' is now included in the definition of a charitable purpose. This provision is expected to take effect from 1 April. Over past months the Charity Commission has been carrying out consultations prior to issuing formal guidance on the interpretation of this 'public benefit' requirement. Charity trustees will be required to have regard to this guidance and to report on their charity's public benefit in the annual report of their trustees.

In January the Charity Commission published *Charities and Public Benefit* as its formal guidance. This can be found on the Commission's

website at www.charity-commission.gov.uk/publicbenefit/default.asp. A summary of the guidance for Charity trustees is also to be found on the Commission's website together with a document analysing the law underpinning it.

The Commission will shortly be beginning a series of further consultations on supplementary guidance on the public benefit for specific types of charity and among the first to be covered will be public benefit and the advancement of religion. The Commission had an initial informal consultation on this in October.

Holocaust Memorial Day

Holocaust Memorial Day takes place annually on or near the date of 27 January – the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. This year's HMD theme was "Imagine... remember, reflect, react", providing a focus for people to remember the past and reflect on racism and intolerance in society.

Liverpool was the host city for the national event which took place on 27 January. The event featured testimonies by survivors and speeches from senior public figures including the Chief Rabbi and the Archbishop of Canterbury as well as music from the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and a community choir of 100 voices; a new dance piece on the story of the Sarajevo Romeo and Juliet choreographed by Jenny Rees; and new music and theatre by Brian Abbott and Rick Jukes drawing on the words and voices of young people from Liverpool. Alongside the national event there was also an Anne Frank exhibition, a Roscoe lecture, a play and a film featuring testimonies by survivors of the atrocity living in the city. Merseyside Council of Faiths organised a Walk of Faiths leading to the Liverpool Philharmonic Hall in Hope Street where the national event was held.

Representatives from bodies across the UK attended the event, including faith leaders. These included representatives of the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), the UK's largest Muslim body, which had voted to end its six-year non-participation in Holocaust Memorial Day.

In Northern Ireland, a Regional Holocaust Memorial Day commemoration was held in the Parliament Buildings on 24 January. The audience included members of the local Jewish Community as well as representatives from local ethnic minority and other groups. Holocaust Remembrance Scotland was hosted by East

Renfrewshire Council on 28 January, in Eastwood Theatre. The event was chaired by George Reid, former Scottish Parliament presiding officer. A panel of speakers took questions from the floor on the Holocaust, the lessons to be learned from it and from world events such as the current violence in Kenya. The panel was made up of MSPs Nicola Sturgeon, Annabel Goldie and Ken Macintosh; Dr Stephen Smith, Holocaust Memorial Day Trust chair; and Scott McKay of the Scottish Youth Parliament.

There were many events across the UK to mark Holocaust Memorial Day. Many local inter faith bodies held or participated in HMD events.

Cardiff held its annual service for Holocaust Memorial Day on 24 January at City Hall, organised by Cardiff City Council. Cardiff County and the Vale of Glamorgan Youth Choir gave performances during the service while dignitaries laid official wreaths of remembrance. Mr Alan Schwartz, Chairman of the South Wales Jewish Representative Committee and the Cardiff Interfaith Association along with other members from the group attended.

The Edinburgh Inter-Faith Association (EIFA), in partnership with the City of Edinburgh Council, marked Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January in Lothian Chambers. The event included short addresses by Lord Provost George Grubb, Council Leader Jenny Dawe and EIFA General Secretary Victor Spence, together with readings of survivor testimonies, poems, music and reflections on recent visits to Auschwitz. Pupils from Forrester High School and Holyrood High School performed poetry and music. After the event the Lord Provost hosted a civic reception.

Medway Inter-Faith Action Forum, in partnership with Medway Council and Rochester Cathedral, held an evening service at Rochester Cathedral with students from local schools and the Rochester Cathedral Choir. An exhibition of work by the students was on display at the cathedral to coincide with this. Nottingham City Council, in association with Nottingham Inter Faith Council, held a Service of Remembrance and Renewal at St Mary's Church, High Pavement, followed by a civic reception at the Council House. Exeter Interfaith Group held a service at the Guildhall, opened by the Mayor. There was an exhibition on display and the service included readings and prayers, the lighting of candles and silence. In East London, an inter faith service was held at the East London Synagogue, Nelson Street, with representatives from the Tower Hamlets Inter

Faith Forum. Participants from different faith traditions were invited to give talks on the year's theme. A local Holocaust survivor also joined the service and spoke about his experiences, and the importance of "Imagine... remember, reflect, react".

Leicester Council of faiths organised a memorial event on 27 January with the support of the Leicester City Council, the School Development Support Agency and Leicester University's Stanley Burton Centre For Holocaust Studies. Leicester Council of Faiths chairman, Minou Cortazzi welcomed participants. There was an introduction by Leicester Lord Mayor, Councillor Gary G Hunt, and a talk on the importance of marking Holocaust Memorial Day. Rwandan genocide survivor Beatha Uwazaninka gave a keynote address on the Holocaust Memorial theme for 2008 "IMAGINE ... remember, reflect react", drawing on her personal experience of the horrors of ethnic cleansing.

HMD was marked in many other contexts such as schools. In Northern Ireland, for example, pupils from local schools participated in a special event on 4 February at Derryloran Hall and at the Fermanagh County Museum in Enniskillen, Northern Ireland. One of the youngest Holocaust survivors, Eva Clarke, was invited to tell her personal story.

The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust produced materials specific to this year's theme and resources are available to download on <http://www.hmd.org.uk/>

Under a new Government funded scheme, announced on 4 February by Minister Jim Knight, two sixth-form pupils from every school in England are to visit Auschwitz to learn about the Holocaust. The idea behind the visit programme is for pupils to educate their classmates and communities on their return by drawing on what they have learned.

Hindus condemn Government's lack of engagement with their community

Following a meeting on 3 February at Bhaktivedanta Manor nearly thirty Hindu organisations, including the community's main national representative bodies, sent a message to the Prime Minister condemning "the Government's total lack of engagement with the Hindu community".

The last issue of *Inter Faith Update* included a report on the decision by the Welsh National Assembly to slaughter Shambo, a bullock kept in the sanctuary of the Skande Vale Temple in South Wales because it tested positive in a routine test for tuberculosis. In January Gangotri, one of the sick cows being treated at Bhaktivedanta Manor, where a Cow Protection Centre is being developed to demonstrate new ways of ethical, compassionate and sustainable farming, was put down by officials from the RSPCA. Gauri das, President of Bhaktivedanta Manor, said that "the RSPCA and police had given assurances that they would not take drastic action and that the temple would be allowed to form a legal case, but they returned to kill the cow at a time when many devotees were praying."

The gathering of Hindu representatives on 3 February took stock of these and other current concerns and adopted a resolution which said:

"We, the undersigned, condemn the Government's total lack of active engagement with the Hindu community. We have come to the conclusion that only those communities who shout the loudest tend to get immediate attention from this Government. Those who make an active contribution to community cohesion and the economic, cultural and social development of Britain get ignored and feel isolated. The unwarranted killing of Gangotri and the Government's indifference to the needs of this peace-loving community is an exhibition of undisguised contempt and utter disregard. We call upon this Government to recognise its responsibilities in engaging equitably with all faith communities and to honour its own commitment to building a cohesive society where all faiths feel included and valued."

**Visit the Network's
website at
www.interfaith.org.uk**

Anglican Bishop's comments prompt controversy

An article published in *The Sunday Telegraph* on 6 January, prompted some controversy. Rt Revd Michael Nazir Ali, Bishop of Rochester wrote that "in fewer than 50 years Britain has changed from being a society with an acknowledged Christian basis to one which is increasingly described by politicians the media as 'multi faith'", as a result of which "it is now less possible for Christianity to be the public faith in Britain", arguing that the existence of chapels and chaplaincies in places such as hospitals, prisons and institutions of higher education is in jeopardy either because of financial cuts or because the authorities want 'multi faith' provision, without regard to the distinctively Christian character of the nation's laws, values, customs and culture.

Much of the attention given to his article focused on his statement that one of the results of "a worldwide resurgence of the ideology of Islamic extremism . . . has been to further alienate the young from the nation in which they are growing up and also to turn already separate communities into 'no-go' areas where adherence to this ideology has become a mark of acceptability. Those of a different faith or race may find it difficult to live or work there because of hostility to them. In many ways, this is but the other side of the coin to far-Right intimidation. Attempts have been made to impose an 'Islamic' character on certain areas, for example by insisting on artificial amplification for the adhan, the call to prayer."

Some of those who reacted to the Bishop's article endorsed his concerns and expressed worries over the extent to which there is now a degree of segregation within particular urban areas. However, others, including Muslim representatives and a number of senior Christian clergy, said that they did not recognise his description of this country and expressed regret that in his article he had disregarded the constructive efforts being made by different communities, including the Muslim community, to promote bridge building and integration. For example, the Church's Bishop for Urban Life and Faith, Rt Rev Stephen Lowe, told BBC Radio 4's Today programme: "I have not seen these sort of areas. There are, no doubt, as there are in all faiths, some people of extreme persuasions. But the vast majority of the Christian and Muslim populations that I know are working happily

together" and Rev Arun John, Team Vicar of St Paul's Manningham in Bradford, said that in an area that was the focus of the 2001 riots practising Christians are now in a minority of 5% yet in the three years he had ministered there he had not felt in any way threatened by Muslim dominance. Representatives of Tower Hamlets local authority in London, together with the police, local faith groups and Tower Hamlets Inter Faith Forum said in a joint statement that "... we do not shy away from the problems and challenges to be tackled in this borough – but they relate far more to social deprivation than to religious intolerance or extremism."

A number of Muslim organisations expressed their disquiet over the Bishop's article and were concerned at its potential impact on work being done to take forward the promotion of good relations between the Muslim and other communities in this country. The Muslim Council of Britain said that it deeply regretted "the incendiary comments recently made by the Bishop of Rochester Dr Michael Nazir Ali. His assertion that British Muslims have created 'no go areas' in some parts of Britain is not borne out in any credible research; the remarks are alarming and serve only to benefit the far right. Across the country, British Muslims are seeking common cause with their neighbours, sharing and living with peoples of other faiths. Local inter faith groups are coming together to seek mutual understanding and work for the common good."

In response to the concerns expressed about his newspaper article, Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali issued a statement a few days later pointing out that "the fact of 'separated' communities had already been noted by distinguished commentators..." and that politicians had "also recognised its reality". He said "I deeply regret any hurt and do not wish to cause offence to anyone, let alone my Muslim friends, but unless we diagnose the malaise from which we all suffer we shall not be able to discover the remedy." In a further statement on his website on 1 February, the bishop wrote that the purpose of his article had been 'to point out that the best way for welcoming and integrating newer arrivals in this country should have been a Christian vision of hospitality and not the secular policy of multiculturalism which has led to such disastrous consequences' and he explained further his reference to 'no-go' areas and problems for Christian workers in some areas. He noted that death threats following the publication of his newspaper article illustrated the importance of

having freedom of discussion and, perhaps, to have one's views changed, whether in politics, religion or science.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, in an interview said that the Bishop of Rochester's comments had given "a very unfortunate impression". In his view, relations between the two faiths in Britain were in a "very good place". But he said that there was a problem of "mutual isolation" in some areas with different communities, and that to ask how that could be resolved was "a very good question".

Archbishop of Canterbury's Temple lecture on civil and religious law

On 7 February the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, gave a lecture on "Civil and Religious Law in England: a Religious Perspective" as the first in a series on "Islam in English Law" under the auspices of the Temple Church and the Centre for Islamic and Middle Eastern Law at the School of Oriental and African Studies. In a lengthy and closely argued lecture he discussed the conceptual basis on which it might be possible to accommodate different aspects of religious conscience within the overall framework of English law drawing on some aspects of *shari'ah* for illustration. Setting this in a broader context he explored the limits of a unitary, and solely secular, legal system in the presence of an increasingly plural, including religiously plural, society; and ways in which a unitary system might be able to accommodate religious claims within it. The lecture made it clear that he was not proposing the introduction of parallel legal jurisdictions but, rather, consideration of the scope for reasonable accommodation for religious conscience.

Prior to his lecture, the Archbishop gave a radio interview for BBC Radio 4's *World At One*. Following this and the lecture itself there was widespread media coverage which was highly critical of what the Archbishop was thought to have advocated, even though in a number of cases this seemed to be at odds with his actual remarks.

In a statement the Muslim Council of Britain said that it was grateful for the "thoughtful intervention" of the Archbishop "exploring the possibilities of an accommodation between

English law and some aspects of Islamic personal law". The Christian-Muslim Forum said that in the Archbishop's "significant and important" lecture he "had raised the vital issue of how to allow for religious conscience and belief to operate within the overall framework of English and UK law".

When he spoke at the opening of the meeting of the Church of England General Synod on 11 February, the Archbishop was greeted with a standing ovation. In his address he took responsibility for any "unclarity" in his lecture but strongly defended the appropriateness of his addressing issues around the perceived concerns of other religious communities trying to "bring them into better public focus". He said that in his lecture he was not talking about "parallel jurisdictions". The question was whether additional choices should be available under UK law for resolving disputes and regulating transactions, for example in the way that there is already special provision for Islamic mortgage arrangements, which would create a helpful interaction between the courts and the practice of Muslim legal scholars in this country. But he said that much work would have to be done if there were to be a move in that direction.

The lecture, together with subsequent clarifications, can be found on the Lambeth Palace website at www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/1.

Muslims hold vigil outside 10 Downing Street

In the wake of the reaction by the media and others to the remarks by Dr Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury, on *shari'ah*, Muslim representatives held a vigil outside 10 Downing Street on 16 February.

A statement issued beforehand by the Muslim Council of Britain, the British Muslim Forum and other organisations read, in part, as follows:

"We, the British Muslim community, are a rich mosaic bound by the universality of our faith. We have diverse origins, cultures and schools of thought which all strengthen our communities. We are united in the belief that our faith, along with other faiths, can be a force for good for Britain. As British Muslims we reaffirm our conviction in the British values of fair play and the rule of law and we see no incompatibility in these principles with Islam whose fundamental

tenets include the pursuit of social justice. The values of fair play should apply when actions of a tiny minority amongst us are used to judge and condemn us as communities and as a faith.

We do not seek parallel legal systems, nor do we aim to enforce on anyone any particular code or way of life. But we do expect a fair discourse free from the current shrill hysteria screaming of impending doom from invading hordes.”

MINAB (Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board)

The Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board (MINAB) launched its draft constitution and draft standards document for consultation on 29 November at the Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre in London. The documents are for mosques and training establishments for imams as part of efforts within the Muslim communities, to improve standards of governance and leadership through self regulation and self assessment. While emphasising that mosques should excel as places of worship, in promoting cohesive communities, and combating all forms of violent extremism in society, other key priorities set out in the documents include increasing the skills and competencies of imams; developing mosques as centres of community cohesion, citizenship and dialogue; strengthening accountability and governance practices/procedures; improving access of women and young people to mosques; and providing advice on the suitability of imams and scholars coming from abroad.

The draft material on constitution and core standards was the work of MINAB’s founding members; Al-Khoei Foundation, the British Muslim Forum (BMF), the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB) and the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB). MINAB is chaired by Dr Manazir Ahsan. For details about the consultation events visit www.minab.org.uk and to obtain more information about the draft constitution and draft standards document.

£1 m to support RE in English schools

In a speech to a conference on 17 January organised jointly by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils for RE Jim Knight, Minister for Schools and Learners, announced that the Government is to spend £1 million over three years on methods “to spread best practice in RE across the schools and authorities who need to do more to reach the level set by the best”.

He said that these additional financial resources “will pay for the creation of new online support material, including video case studies and a toolkit of activities [to] support RE as a subject in the revised secondary curriculum. It will also pay for the production of state of the art learning materials on world religions specifically including help with handling the kinds of issues that pupils are increasingly raising – like 9/11 and the issues of hate crimes and religious fundamentalism.”

The Government’s intention is to “rationalise and quality assure the many RE teaching resources that are already available”, which the Minister said “vary enormously in quality and appropriateness”. It is also intended to improve training for RE teachers and to support SACREs through making use of “the experience from last year’s successful pilots to improve training and to increase the diversity of ethnic minority members”. He said that his Department would be working with other Government Departments, including the Department for Communities and Local Government, to raise the profile of SACREs.

He also announced that his Department would begin a consultation soon on updating the current guidance on RE. In doing so, the guidance on RE will be separated from the guidance on collective worship which will not be reviewed in the immediate future so as to focus on RE. The RE guidance will be brought up to date to include references to the non-statutory national framework on RE in England and to support schools in their new duty to promote community cohesion. He said that in time he expected all local authorities to adopt the national framework.

Faith in the System

On 10 September the Department for Children, Schools and Families published *Faith in the System: the role of schools with a religious character in English education and society*. In this document the Government, alongside Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh faith school providers, set out their ‘shared vision and understanding of the integral part which schools with a religious character play in the publicly funded school system in and in society. They jointly confirmed a “commitment to continue to work together and with schools with and without a religious character to improve the life chances of children, to build bridges to greater mutual trust and understanding and to contribute to a just and cohesive society, while nurturing children in their faith and as engaged citizens.”

The document sets out the history of ‘faith schools’, together with more recent developments which have seen Muslim, Sikh, Seventh Day Adventist and Greek Orthodox schools joining the maintained sector alongside Church of England, Catholic, Methodist, Quaker and Jewish schools. Around one third of the total number of maintained schools in England are schools with a religious character (6,580 out of a total of around 21,000 maintained schools). Out of 47 academies 16 have a faith designation and nearly 2 out of every 5 independent schools in England have a religious character (around 900 out of a total of just over 2,300 independent schools). The document says that “this dual system of voluntary schools supported by faith organisations and schools with a religious character is ... at the heart of the school system in England”.

Among the commitments made by providers of faith schools are to ensure that their schools promote community cohesion; work in a spirit of partnership with the local authority and the Learning and Skills Council; and endeavour to meet the needs of all their pupils whether they are of the faith or not. The document sets out the position in terms of the curriculum in faith schools and of their admissions policies, as well as exploring the way in which faith schools are working collaboratively with other schools and with the wider community.

The document says that “the Government will ... continue to support the establishment of new schools, including faith schools, in the maintained sector where the local decision making process shows that is what parents and the local

community want and where the schools is willing and able to comply with the requirements on all maintained schools.” The document can be downloaded from www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/faithinthefsystem/pdfs/FaithInTheSystem.pdf.

Board of Deputies to appoint Muslim adviser for faith school linking project

The Board of Deputies of British Jews is recruiting a Muslim Schools Adviser as part of a major initiative that will create a linking scheme between Jewish and other faith schools or comprehensive schools where a single faith dominates. The ‘Shared Futures’ project aims to promote respect for diversity and to deepen understanding between communities and schools through a broad range of programmes that will appeal to Jewish and Muslim schools. Subsequent phases of the programme will include links between Jewish, Catholic, Sikh, and Hindu schools.

A central aim of the project is to create programmes that enable interaction between students through the participation in ‘hands-on’ projects and it will explore schemes inspired by business ethics groups, sports associations and environmental bodies. One ‘Shared Futures’ team coordinator has been working with the Muslim Police Association to promote both a sports programme and a mentoring programme.

The project was developed following consultation with, among others, the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and faith school providers. From September 2008 onwards, the OFSTED inspection framework will be looking specifically at cohesion and linking when inspecting single-faith schools.

Tackling extremism on campus

On 22 January the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills published new guidance aimed at helping universities and colleges prevent violent extremism and promote good relations on campus. The document is entitled: *Promoting good campus relations, fostering shared values*

and preventing violent extremism in Universities and Higher Education Colleges. It replaces earlier guidance, issued in 2006.

The Government's assessment is that the biggest current threat to the UK is from Al Qa'ida influenced terrorism and it considers that the threat in Higher Education is serious but not widespread. In some of its contents the guidance specifically focuses on this form of violent extremism and elsewhere on all forms of violent extremism. The document says that it reflects the increased knowledge it now has of how violent extremist groups operate, how they recruit and what the scale and nature of this activity is within communities.

The Government recognises that universities face similarly complex issues with regard to the activities of the extreme far right, animal rights activists, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, as well as wider issues of race, faith, sexual orientation and gender intolerance.

The guidance highlights five key areas, offering practical advice and issues for staff and students to consider. These are:

- Promoting and reinforcing shared values: creating space for free and open debate; and listening to and supporting mainstream voices;
- Breaking down segregation amongst different student communities: supporting inter-faith and inter-cultural dialogue and engaging all students in playing a full and active role in wider engagement with society;
- Ensuring student safety and that campuses are free from bullying, harassment and intimidation;
- Providing support to vulnerable students and offering appropriate advice, guidance and sources of support to all staff and students;
- Ensuring staff and students are aware of their roles in preventing violent extremism.

The guidance emphasises the clear role that universities have in creating spaces for free and open debate to challenge violent extremism. The Government says that academic freedom forms a key strand of its policy in preventing violent extremism in both Higher and Further Education.

A consultation document covering similar ground but directed towards further education colleges was issued by the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills on 11 February, in association with the Association of Colleges. Its publication follows consultation with a wide

range of key stakeholders including College Principals. The document says that the present consultation is "the first time we have debated these issues widely in the FE sector". It is described as being "relevant to all organisations providing Further Education in a dedicated learning environment and the term 'college' is used to refer to these throughout. We are also, therefore, interested in providers offering training within a workplace setting, to consider how the issues we explore relate to their work."

The higher education document can be found at www.dius.gov.uk/publications/extremismhe.pdf and the further education document (on which the consultation process runs until 6 May) at www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations/conDetails.cfm?consultationId=1521.

Report on chaplaincy in institutions of higher education

A major report commissioned by the Church of England and based on work taken forward with the engagement of a range of faith communities in the UK was launched on 15 January. Researched and written by the Revd Jeremy Clines, Chaplain of York St John University, the report shows how chaplains are active examples of how religious communities can work alongside each other in an environment of mutual respect that promotes dialogue and builds community cohesion. As part of the project, Jeremy Clines undertook a wide-ranging survey among 111 of the 128 higher education institutions in England and Wales, supplemented by seven regional practice workshops. The findings illustrate how chaplaincies assist their institutions in shaping their vision, particularly in relation to internationalisation, widening participation and increasing community engagement.

Examples of good practice highlighted in the report include setting up inter faith societies, organising visits to places of worship, or mounting a 'faith week' to raise awareness about different world faiths. The report points to the key role such projects play in fostering good relations between the future leaders of different faith communities in the UK.

The report calls on higher education institutions and the Government to continue to invest in chaplaincies to help them further their significant contribution to social cohesion, at a time when 43

per cent of young people in England and Wales have experienced higher education. It urges the higher education sector to support the creation of a national 'Faiths in Higher Education Forum', to include senior representatives of faith communities and supported by a working group. It also recommends that training materials and guidance should be produced to assist those working in the sector to navigate this complex subject. The report recommends that with collaboration between national chaplaincy advisors, chaplains, Universities UK, GuildHE, the Equality Challenge Unit, the Association of Managers of Student Services in Higher Education, the National Union of Students and the Inter Faith Network, the working group should aim to offer universities:

- **Further advice on how to determine the best provision for a range of faith groups, appropriate to the local context:** how 'dynamic equivalence' can be built into provision for the faiths, considering the history, heritage and location of the institution as well as the constituency of the student body and what provision they really need. While space is still at a premium for universities and colleges seeking to offer facilities to a range of faith communities, 95 per cent of chaplaincies report some provision for prayer spaces at their institution. While this is important, the report suggests that people with religious beliefs are more likely to feel that their identity is respected and affirmed through having their needs met in relation to a variety of issues including prayer space, accommodation, catering arrangements, opportunities to celebrate religious festivals and flexibility in the academic timetable.
- **Advice on possibilities for increasing the number of salaried religious professionals working in chaplaincies from all the faith communities,** and resources to help chaplaincies manage the implications of the large number of volunteers helping to run their services. The survey found that 78 per cent of all chaplaincy staff are Christian, while 19 per cent of chaplaincy staff come from the Baha'i, Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, and Sikh faiths. With 95 per cent of all salaried staff having a Christian role in their chaplaincy team, the report raises the issue of how other faith groups can explore opportunities for resourcing chaplaincy provision, perhaps through collaborative joint bids.

The report, funded by the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund, is being sent to vice-chancellors, principals and chaplaincies across the country. Copies can be downloaded from: <http://www.cofe.anglican.org/news/pr0508.html>

Conference focuses on 'chaplaincy for all' in higher and further education

On 15 January, a conference took place at Church House, London on 'Chaplaincy for All: Meeting Students' Spiritual Needs in the Multi-Faith Context of Further and Higher Education'. It was organised by the Church of England Board of Education and in association with the Methodist Church, the National Council of Faith and Beliefs in Further Education (fbfe) and the Churches' Higher Education Liaison Group).

Hindu students discuss inter faith issues at anniversary conference

National Hindu Students Forum (NHSF) celebrated their 15th anniversary by hosting, on 2-4 November at Imperial College, a conference: "Dynamic Spirit 2007: A Meeting With Yourself". At the conference two workshops were run on inter faith issues by Nitin Palan of the Swaminaryan Mission and Inter Faith Network Trustee with Harriet Crabtree, Director of the Inter Faith Network. Bijal Bhagwan of NHSF organised and oversaw the workshops at which there were contributions from young Hindus from universities across the UK. Inter Faith Network Project Officer Urmi Raval ran a stall during part of the event.

Undergraduate 'Parliamentors' programme launched by 3FF and Faith Matters

Three Faiths Forum's youth programme 3ff and Faith Matters launched an 'Undergraduate Parliamentors Programme in the House of

Commons on 31 January 2008. Through this programme, politicians are invited to act as mentors for existing university students studying in the political field. Mentors will meet at least once per month with an 'Abrahamic Trio' of Muslim, Christian, and Jewish students who will be working on a project together. The nature of the project will be decided by the mentor and their group together, and the Three Faiths Forum office will co-ordinate delivery of the project with the mentees on an on-going basis. The option will be offered to each group to link with a non faith-based NGO or think tank in order to further promote the action aspect of the programme. Students are in their second year of a bachelor's degree in politics or a related subject, and are offered the chance to enter the UP programme through the relevant university department. MPs involved are: John Battle MP (Labour); Peter Bottomley MP (Conservative); Louise Ellman MP (Labour); Lynne Featherstone MP (Liberal Democrat); Dominic Grieve MP (Conservative); Simon Hughes MP (Liberal Democrat); Syed Kamall MEP (Conservative); Sadiq Khan MP (Labour); and Susan Kramer MP (Liberal Democrat).

The Culture Faith and Youth Connective

The Culture Faith and Youth Connective is a new network, under development, of organisations delivering faith and cultural programmes to schools, colleges, universities and youth groups to encourage young people to engage with each other, in a process that allows them to explore their own as well as each other's identity. Organisations within the Connective use a variety of methods to break down barriers, such as cultural events, social action, and exploring religious texts. By offering a 'menu' of programmes, the Connective aims to empower users to choose the ones that best suit their needs. Currently the Connective links: Alif Aleph UK; Council for Christians and Jews; Encompass Trust; London Youth; Interfaith Action; Minorities of Europe; Polygon Arts; St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace; the Diversity and Dialogue programme at the Citizenship Foundation; and 3FF (the youth division of Three Faiths Forum). The current focus is mainly London but the hope is to widen the focus to the UK more widely. Further information from Stephen Shashoua, Project Director, Three Faiths Forum at 3FF@threefaithsforum.org.uk or on 020 7482 9536.

Events for chaplains in the North East and London

The Council of Christians and Jews has held two events on the theme "Faith Versus Fear: Managing inter faith conflict on campus" for University Chaplains in Northern England and in London. At the first of these, in North Shields on 4 December, speakers included Revd Hugh Shilson-Thomas, National Advisor for Higher Education Chaplaincy; Jonathan Freeman, Violent Extremism Unit, DCLG; and Imam Ibrahim Mogra, Chair of the Muslim Council of Britain's Inter Faith Relations Committee and a member of the Christian Muslim Forum. The second, on 29 January, took place at St Ethelburga's Centre For Peace and Reconciliation and was facilitated by Simon Keyes, Director of St Ethelburga's, with speakers including Imam Admani, London Metropolitan University; Imam Rajput, Brunel University; Rabbi Ian Broder, London University Chaplain; and Samuel McBratney, Christian Chaplain and Lecturer, City University. For further information about the issues covered during the conference contact council of Christians and Jews at chaplainsprojects@ccj.org.uk

Faiths and Beliefs in Further Education

NEAFE National Council and the Faith in FE Forum have agreed an amalgamation and have formed a new body called the National Council of Faiths and Beliefs in Further Education (fbfe). fbfe is a national independent inter faith charity working with the learning and skills sector, faith and local communities and national and local faith/belief based groups. The new website address is www.fbfe.org

Muslim Christian youth dialogue

A Youth Dialogue Event was held on 19 January where Christian teenagers from Kenilworth met with up with Muslim teenagers from Aston at Aston Church Centre, Birmingham. This was the third time the groups had met. The focus of the day was on discussing 'A Common Word between Us and You' the open letter sent to Christian.



The intention is for the young people to take their findings and turn them into song, pictures, and a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams. The project is a joint partnership between Youth Encounter of Scripture Union and The Christian Muslim Forum's Youth Specialist Group.

Hindu-Christian Relations

Meetings between Christian representatives and members of a number of Hindu organisations took place in January. These addressed issues that had arisen in the work of the Hindu Christian Forum and its Listening Exercise. In the constructive discussions various issues were highlighted as opportunities and obstacles to the development of good Hindu-Christian relations and it was agreed that proposals would be made about future Hindu representation on the Forum.

New Churches' Inter-religious Network at CTBI

A new 'Churches' Inter-religious Network' (CIN) within Churches Together in Britain and Ireland will succeed the Churches' Commission for Inter Faith Relations of CTBI. The proposed Network will be a forum for the Churches and National Ecumenical Instruments to meet on Inter Faith matters. The representatives to the Network will be appointed in due course.

For further information about CTBI and about its work on inter faith issues see www.ctbi.org.uk or contact Revd Peter Colwell, Secretary for Church and Life and Inter Faith Relations (peter.colwell@ctbi.org.uk).

Funding inter faith work in Wales

On 28 November the Inter Faith Council for Wales held a networking event in Cardiff, in partnership with the Community Development Foundation (CDF) Wales, that focused on funding for inter faith work in Wales. Representatives from various inter faith bodies around the country attended the meeting. Urmi Raval, Inter Faith Network's Local and Regional Project Officer, was in attendance and spoke briefly about the

Inter Faith Network and its work. Nigel Anthony of the Inter-Faith Council for Wales spoke about a mapping exercise to identify local inter faith bodies and projects. Other speakers included Asim Hafeez, Social Cohesion Project at the Welsh Assembly Government; Chris Myant, Director of the Equality and Human Rights Commission; Liz Court, CDF Wales; Rev Aled Edwards, General Secretary of Churches Together in Wales and a member of the Inter-Faith Council for Wales; and Pam Evans from the inter faith project Peace Mala. CDF associate Martin Shaw was at hand to give funding surgery sessions to members of the groups who attended.

Launch of Interfaith Legal advisers network

On 7 December an inaugural meeting of the Interfaith Legal Advisers Network took place at Cardiff University. It brought together, for the first time, advisers to a wide range of religious groups to share their experiences and to address contemporary themes at the interface between religious law and State law. Discussion topics ranged from the use of religious symbols in public to impartiality in relation to religion. The Centre for Law and Religion at Cardiff University has developed the Network to provide members with a greater understanding of their respective religious legal systems. Professor Norman Doe, Director of the Centre, said: "The establishment of the network is particularly timely given the large number of recent high profile court cases involving religion, including cases concerning religious dress, sacred animals, and faith schools. Discussions will be ongoing providing members with a greater understanding of their respective religious legal systems and the common legal issues they face."

Irish Inter-Religious Council considered

Senior religious leaders from the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland met on 31 October in Dundalk, County Louth for a meeting to consider the establishment of a Council of Religious Leaders, the Irish Inter Religious Council (IIRC). Most religious communities on the island – including Roman Catholic, Church of Ireland and Presbyterian Christians as well as Buddhists, Muslims and Sikhs – were represented

at the meeting. Positive support was also forthcoming from the Hindu and Jewish communities. Participants emphasised the symbolic value of the IIRC bringing together leaders from both North and South of the island. Mr. Jehangir Sarosh, the President of Religions for Peace (Europe), facilitated this initiative.

At the meeting, senior representatives of the religious communities agreed that a formal structure for inter-religious cooperation may be established, and appointed a working group to bring the process forward. The group was mandated to explore the objectives of the proposed Irish Inter Religious Council (IIRC) as well as to propose a possible constitution. It is hoped that this further work can be completed by the spring of 2008 so that the proposal can then be presented to the respective General Assemblies for ratification.

During the meeting, the religious leaders highlighted a number of matters of common concern, which the Inter Religious Council might address in more detail later, such as issues of violence, poverty and education. Jehangir Sarosh, a Zoroastrian, and Dr Brian Walker, Director of Religions for Peace (UK), shared their experience with similar structures in other parts of Europe. Religions for Peace (Europe) was asked to continue the initiative of facilitating the process of considering a Council of Religious Leaders in Ireland.

Scottish Inter Faith Week

Scotland's First Minister, Alex Salmond, launched the fourth Scottish Inter Faith Week in the James MacKay Hall at the University of Aberdeen on 25 November. The launch event was organised by the Scottish Inter Faith Council, Aberdeen Inter Faith and the University of Aberdeen. The occasion also marked the launch of an NHS booklet *Religion and Belief Matter*, produced by Dr Geoff Lachlan on behalf of the Scottish Inter Faith Council and the Scottish Government's Health and Wellbeing "Fair for All" initiative.

Scottish Inter Faith Week is an annual week of events that see people of all faiths, across Scotland actively creating opportunities to build understanding and co-operation between religious communities.

SIFC holds women's meeting

On 22 January Scottish Inter Faith Council (SIFC) held a first meeting with women to begin to plan a strategy for developing women's role in inter faith activity throughout Scotland. This year's SIFC seminar for women is planned for 17 June in Discovery Point, Dundee. Links have been made with the European Women of Faith Network, and the Global Women of Faith Network.

FaithAction Conference

The first FaithAction National Conference, 'Money Well Spent', took place at Westminster Central Hall. Government Ministers spoke about their experience of working with faith-based organisations and there were opportunities to discuss partnership funding opportunities with a range of Central Government departments including the Department for Communities and Local Government, Health, International Development and Children, Schools and Families.

English Regional Faith Forums Network

A meeting of the new English Regional Faith Forums Network (ERFFN) was held at the offices of the Inter Faith Network on 31 January. ERFFN enables the regional faith forums to discuss issues of common interest and concern and to share news and good practice. It is facilitated by the Inter Faith Network for the UK and the Faith Based Regeneration Network, reflecting the fact that a number of the regional faith forums' work spans both inter faith and faith based social action work.

A special focus at the January meeting was how the forums might wish, jointly, to give input to the Government's consultation document *Face to Face and Side by Side: A Framework for Inter Faith Dialogue and Social Action*. Anna Cummins and Nicola Speechly of the Department for Communities and Local Government came to a session of the meeting to discuss the consultation with members. This discussion built an earlier meeting of ERFFN on 18 September which had included an extended joint session with CLG's Cohesion and Faiths Unit and 'cohesion

leads' of the Government Offices for the Regions at which early input on a number of issues relating to a possible Government inter faith strategy and resourcing for regional faith forums had been given by the forums.

Guidelines to support development workers in local inter faith organisations

The Inter Faith Network is working with the Community Development Foundation (CDF) to develop some short, web-based, guidelines to support development workers in local inter faith organisations as well as those hiring and supporting these.

Most local inter faith bodies continue to be run by their members on a voluntary basis. However, there is a growing trend towards appointing a development worker to take forward increasingly wide ranging programmes. This received a boost with the Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund (administered by CDF) which across the last two years enabled a number of groups to employ such a worker for the first time.

Development workers coming new to the field of inter faith work find that although there is continuity with community development work in other fields, inter faith work has some very distinctive features and particular challenges. In response to suggestions from development workers and also from inter faith organisations looking to create development posts and manage workers for the first time, the Inter Faith Network and the Community Development Foundation are undertaking a joint project to develop some short web based guidelines on these issues.

A working group was formed in the autumn to advise on process, with membership reflecting the Inter Faith Network's local and regional membership and development workers. As part of this project a joint consultation meeting, organised by the Network and CDF, took place in Sandwell, West Midlands on 11 February. 35 development workers and trustees from local inter faith bodies around England and Wales came together to discuss the areas the guidelines could most helpfully cover. The Scottish Inter Faith Council, which links local inter faith bodies in Scotland, was also represented at the meeting. Presentations were made by Rabbi Maurice

Michaels of Redbridge Faith Forum, Steve Sparrow of Dudley Inter Faith Network and Naila Shaukat and Taiba Yaseem of Inter Faith Forum Rotherham. For further information please contact Stella Opoku-Owusu at stella.opoku-owusu@interfaith.org.uk

New course on inter faith work at LSJS

As a result of a joint venture of the London School of Jewish Studies, the Office of the Chief Rabbi and the United Synagogue a six week course was held at LSJS during the Autumn looking at a range of issues connected with inter faith dialogue and living in multi faith society.

Conference for imams and ministers

The Christian Muslim Forum held a conference for imams and ministers on 28 and 29 November at High Leigh Christian Conference Centre, Broxbourne, with the theme of 'Spiritual Leadership'. The programme included scripture studies, leadership workshops, a film screening of The Imam and the Pastor, and presentations and workshops.

The Joseph Interfaith Foundation

The Joseph Interfaith Foundation held a meeting on 6 December at the University of Manchester on 'Textual Encounters; How to move forward' and also explored how to move towards integrated citizenship of a cohesive and multi faith society by understanding the positive and negative perceptions of the 'other' in religious texts.

Inter faith service for peace

World Congress of Faiths held an inter faith service for peace on 28 October at Golders Green Unitarian Church, Hoop Lane, Golders Green. There were representatives of the world faiths and a speaker from Neve Shalom – Wahat al-Salam (Oasis of Peace), which is a village, jointly

established by Jewish and Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel, that is engaged in educational work for peace, equality and understanding between the two peoples. Funds raised on the day went towards the School for Peace at Neve Shalom – Wahat al-Salam.

Week of Prayer for World Peace

This year's event for the Week of Prayer for World Peace took place on 21 October at Global Co-operation House in Brent, London (the International Centre of the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University (UK)). For over 30 years, following its inauguration on 19th October 1974 in Westminster Abbey, people of all faiths have honoured this special week by coming together to pray for peace in different locations. The committee and the sponsoring body include members of the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Zoroastrian faiths.

One World Week: 21–28 October 2007

One World Week (OWW) is an annual opportunity for people from diverse backgrounds to come together to learn about global justice, to spread that learning and to use it to take action for justice locally and globally. OWW has recently broadened its approach formally to include people from all backgrounds and faiths. As part of One World Week 2007, a new website was launched reflecting OWW's new approach to include people from all backgrounds and faiths. The Inter Faith Network helped One World Week in this development with information and guidelines for organising inter faith activities during the week. The 'Resources' page of One World Week's website provides information on different types of inter faith activities, including faith trails and events involving young people.

The theme for One World Week 2007 was "All Together Now", and events took place from 21 to 28 October 2007. Events happened in many areas around the country. Two examples are an event held by West Wiltshire Interfaith Group on 21 October which looked at issues of respect and living in harmony and discussed justice and economic prosperity in the global world; and an inter faith walk on 28 October organised jointly

with the Portsmouth Interfaith Forum, Interfusion, Portsmouth Racial Equality Network, WDM, Portsmouth Climate Action Network and Portsmouth City Council, which started in Somerstown and ended in Southsea Community Centre, visiting various places of worship and hearing what different faiths had to say about caring for the world.

One World Week's 2008 theme is "Growing Together", with a focus on human rights in relation to climate change, fair-trade, poverty and the millennium goals, while stressing the *Ubuntu* concept of responsibility for one another.

Islam Awareness Week launch

Islam Awareness Week (IAW) was launched on 16 November at The British Library at an event with an inter faith dimension. This year's theme was 'One World, Our Children, Our Future'. The IAW web page for schools was launched at the event. The webpage will enable teachers and students can download basic information about Islam and Muslims. Speakers at the event included IAW National Coordinator Tahmina Saleem, Heather Norman, Head of Public Regional Marketing at The British Library, Dr Zahoor Qurashi, President of the Islamic Society of Britain, Sir Sigmund Sternberg, Chair of the Three Faiths Forum, and Ruth Watson from the children's project Hamara. Denise Chaplin, the Chair of NASACRE, held an afternoon workshop.

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INTERVIEW WITH AVIVA DAUTCH

The Board of Deputies has, across the last two years, been developing a broad programme of work in the inter faith field, as its Interfaith Officer, Aviva Dautch, explains.

Q First, Aviva, can you tell us a bit about the Board of Deputies of British Jews?

The Board of Deputies is the democratically elected national representative body of the British Jewish community, whose welfare it exists to protect and promote on a cross-community basis. It was established in 1760 when seven Deputies were appointed by the elders of the Spanish and Portuguese Congregations to form a standing committee to pay homage to George III on his accession to the throne. In the 1830s it received official recognition from Parliament. Parliament had no sitting Jewish members until the second half of the nineteenth century so the Board played an important political role.

Today the Board is constituted of 300 Deputies elected by synagogue congregations (of several different denominations including the United Synagogue and regional Orthodox synagogues, the Sephardi Spanish and Portuguese congregations, the Assembly of Masorti Synagogues, the Movement for Reform Judaism and the Liberal Movement) and other communal and cross-communal organisations. The Board continues to represent the perspective of the Jewish community to Government, as well as working on policy, research, education and civil society issues which affect British Jews.

Q How did the Board of Deputies get involved in inter faith work?

The first national inter faith organisation in the UK was the Council of Christians and Jews. This was formed in 1942 as a response to the Holocaust. Through involvement with CCJ the British Jewish community has been engaged in inter faith work for a long time. The Board of Deputies has been a member body of the Inter Faith Network for the UK since that was founded in 1987. In 2005, the Board decided to formalise and extend its engagement in inter faith issues by creating a staff position. Miriam Kaye was the first Interfaith Officer and when she left to work for the Three Faiths Forum, I took over the role. I had worked for the Board previously as part of the education team so my appointment has

enabled the inter faith and education departments to work together with a particular focus on projects to encourage cohesion in schools, Further Education and Higher Education.

Q What kind of inter faith projects is the Board taking forward?

Thanks to the support of all the synagogue movements who are members of the Board, as well as the Office of the Chief Rabbi, we are carrying out a piece of research on Jewish involvement in inter faith activities. We have sent questionnaires to all the synagogues, youth and cultural organisations; held focus groups for students, grassroots activists and community leaders; done an audit of articles in the Jewish press; and are now in the process of writing up our findings for publication this summer. We think it's important to map what is already happening and find out what people on the ground need so that we can then help them in the most appropriate way.

Many synagogues are already participating in inter faith work. The Masorti, Reform and Liberal movements have been involved in dialogue for a number of years and, under the aegis of the Chief Rabbi, the London School of Jewish Studies are running training seminars for orthodox Jews who wish to engage in inter faith activities. The Board has also received an Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund grant to expand its regional infrastructure and run regional training seminars and dialogue days

On the education front, we've recently launched 'Shared Futures', a schools-linking programme to run joint activities between Jewish faith schools and schools for students of other faiths and in the process of appointing a Muslim Schools Advisor to work with us to help facilitate the links. We also run the Jewish Way of Life Exhibition which travels around the country to schools, libraries and museums providing opportunities for people in local communities to meet and learn more about their Jewish neighbours and encourage them to interact.

There is an amazing amount going on – as there is now on the inter faith front in the UK generally!

PEOPLE AND PLACES

New Year's Honours

The following individuals whose work includes engagement with inter faith and multi faith issues received awards in the New Year's Honours List. Kiran Bali, JP, Director, of the Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum, received an OBE for her services to community relations in West Yorkshire; Revd David Coffey, President, Baptist World Alliance, received an OBE for services to inter faith relations; Moulana M Shahid Raza, General Secretary of the Imams and Mosques Council, Head Imam of Leicester Central Mosque and a member of the Inter Faith Network's Executive Committee was awarded an OBE for his services to the Muslim community in Leicester; Revd Donald Reeves, a former rector of St James' Piccadilly in London, received an MBE for his services to inter faith work; and Revd David Wilkes, Chaplain General of HM Land Forces, was made a Commander of the Order of the Bath.

Revd Dr David Cornick

Revd Dr David Cornick has been appointed General Secretary of Churches Together in England. He has been General Secretary of the United Reformed Church since 2001. Prior to that he was Principal of Westminster College, Cambridge, one of the United Reformed Church's ministerial training colleges, and this included a period as Vice-President of the Cambridge Theological Federation. He will take up the appointment in April after the current General Secretary, Revd Bill Snelson retires.

Christian-Muslim Forum

Dr Musharraf Hussain and Rt Revd Richard Cheetham, Bishop of Kingston, have recently become the Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively, of the Christian-Muslim Forum.

Steven Longden has been appointed as the new Muslim Director of Programmes and Project Development for the Christian Muslim Forum and will work alongside the Christian Director of Management and Communication, Julian Bond.

New role for Dr Maureen Sier

In August 2007 Dr Maureen Sier (of the Scottish Interfaith Council) began a 2 year secondment with the Scottish Government. The key remit of the secondment is to work with the local inter faith groups of Scotland in strengthening inter faith relations at a local level. It is also hoped that during the period of the secondment a Scottish Government Strategy for inter faith development will be put in place. Dr Sier will be working closely with the Equality Unit of the Scottish Government, the Scottish Inter Faith Council and local inter faith groups in Scotland during her secondment.

Changing faces at Scottish Inter Faith Council

In October Dianna Wolfson stood down after three years as Convenor of the Scottish Inter Faith Council. Dr Salah Beltagui serves as Convener for the next three years,

Carrie Varjavandi and Frances Hume have been appointed, on a job share basis, as Development and Education Officers for the Scottish Inter Faith Council during the period of Maureen's secondment to the Scottish Government. Aside from generic work to support the SIFC office, Frances Hume's remit is focussed on young people and Carrie Varjavandi has responsibility for working with women.

OBITUARIES

Maryam Badawi

Mrs Maryam Badawi died on 1 February. A chartered educational psychologist with wide knowledge of Muslim societies in Singapore, Malaysia, Nigeria and the UK, she had lectured and worked in educational institutions from universities in the Far East and West Africa to the Schools Psychological Service in the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA). Brought up in a family which had wide contact with people of many faiths and origins, she had latterly helped her late husband, Sheikh Dr Zaki Badawi, in his work as Principal of the Muslim College in London. She was, like her late husband, very much involved in the work of the Three Faiths Forum and, after his death, served as a member of its Advisory Board.

Lalage Fair

Mrs Lalage Fair, a longstanding promoter of local inter faith work in the Salisbury area, died in October. Contributions raised at her funeral were kindly donated to the Inter Faith Network.

Brother Daniel Faivre

The founder of Westminster Interfaith, Brother Daniel Faivre died on 10 September. A funeral service was held at St Anselm's Catholic Church, The Green, Southall on 17 September and a memorial service on 25 November at Westminster Cathedral Hall. Both were attended by his friends of many faiths as well as by members of the Catholic community of St Gabriel to which Brother Daniel belonged.

He founded Westminster Interfaith, a Roman Catholic initiative, in 1986 with the support of Rt Revd Gerald Mahon. Cardinal Basil Hume made Westminster Interfaith an agency of the diocese in the early 1990s. Brother Daniel was an adviser to the Bishops' Conference in England and Wales on inter faith relations and for many years a member of the Committee for other Faiths. He made the teachings of the Vatican Council II on inter faith dialogue readily accessible to people in the diocese and nationally. He authored a number of books on inter faith matters, on prayer, liturgy and multi faith services, including *Transcendence*, *Prayer of People of Faith and Resources for Multifaith Celebrations*. He also pioneered the annual multi faith Pilgrimage for Peace in London which is today in its 23rd year, as well as leading multi faith delegations to Rome to meet Pope John Paul II.

Jodie Higgs

Jody Higgs, Honorary President of the Edinburgh Inter Faith Association died on 3 February.

She was a founder member of the Association when it came into being in 1986, serving as a Buddhist representative and for a period as its Co-Convenor. She also served as the EIFA representative on the Scottish Inter-Faith Council.

Father Gordian Marshall OP

A pioneer of inter faith work in Scotland, Father Gordian Marshall, died on 14 December aged 69. He was a member of the Dominican order. Having studied philosophy and theology he went on to teach, then to work in Leicester, as chaplain to the university. In 1990 he was assigned, as superior, to the Dominican house in Glasgow. There he taught religious studies at St Andrew's College, Bearsden, and later at the department of Religious Education at the University of Glasgow, from which he retired recently. In Scotland he served on the Churches' Agency for Interfaith Relations, the Scottish Inter Faith Council (which he helped establish), Action of Churches Together in Scotland, and the Council of Religious Superiors in Scotland. For much of his life Father Gordian was involved with inter faith dialogue, initially with the Council of Jews and Christians, and then with the Council of Christians, Jews and Muslims. Until recently he attended and lectured at the annual conference of Christians, Jews and Muslims at Benendorf in Germany; his knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures and the Qur'an enabled him to make important contributions to discussion and debate. In 2005 the Dominican community moved to St Columba's Parish, Woodside, Glasgow, and it was there that Father Gordian died.

Sidney Shipton OBE

Sidney Shipton, Co-ordinator of the Three Faiths Forum since it began in 1997, died on 11 January, aged 78. He was buried in Israel and a memorial service was held at the New North London Synagogue on 19 February.

Three Faiths Forum's Co-Founder Sir Sigmund Sternberg paid tribute to his long-time colleague, saying: "Sidney Shipton's passing is a great loss for the whole world of inter faith endeavour. Whether at home or abroad – he travelled extensively – he was an ambassador for good relations between the faith communities, establishing dialogue groups wherever the

opportunity presented itself. He was tireless and never spared himself, especially in the promotion of friendship with the Muslim community.”

Sidney Shipton was awarded an OBE in 2004 for services to inter faith work. He was a member of the Council of the Wyndham Place Charlemagne Trust, of the Executive of United Religions Initiative and of the Royal Institute for International Affairs (Chatham House). At various times he held executive positions in his local United Nations Association branch, and in the London Civic Forum, Business Against Drugs, the Board of Deputies of British Jews, and the Jewish fraternal organisation B'nai Brith.

Tom Gulliver

Tom Gulliver died on 1 December aged 87. He had been elected as a Vice-President of the World Congress of Faiths earlier in 2007. He made a significant contribution, particularly after his retirement from ToCH, (for which he worked after a career in the civil service), to inter faith work in this country.

He was a member of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) and was very active in inter faith work on their behalf. He was a member of the WCF Executive Committee for many years and in the late 1980s was the organisation's General Secretary. He represented WCF in the planning of the Inter Faith Network for the UK and served on the Network's Executive Committee from 1987 to 1990.

He had a particular interest in the relationship between the Christian and Buddhist traditions and in the mid 1980s he launched, and facilitated for around 15 years, a 'by invitation' Buddhist-Christian dialogue group which was valued greatly by all those who attended its meetings.

Dr L M Singhvi

Dr L M Singhvi, India's longest serving High Commissioner to the United Kingdom (from early 1991 to the end of 1997) died on 6 October aged 76.

Dr Singhvi was a constitutional expert and supporter of the secular tradition in the Indian Constitution. Among his writings were *Towards Global Togetherness, Democracy and the Rule of the Law, Freedom on trial, and Jurisprudence of Non-Violence*. He was a strong supporter of inter faith work. He was an Honorary Graduate at the University of Leicester where he inaugurated the Dr L M Singhvi Lecture Series on Pluralism.

Dr Singhvi was a member of the Jain tradition and the Institute of Jainology, in association with Bharatiya Vidhya Bhavan, held a condolence and prayer meeting in London in his memory on 22 October.

Rabbi Leonard Tann

Birmingham Hebrew Congregation's Chief Minister for nearly 20 years, Rabbi Leonard Tann, died aged 62 on 12 November. He was involved with many church groups and faith leaders through his passion for inter-faith work. The day after the attacks in the US on September 11 2001, Rabbi Tann visited the Birmingham Central Mosque to visit its leaders as a pledge of solidarity in response to the verbal attacks and daubing it had received. Other faith leaders came as well and out of this emerged the Birmingham Faith Leaders Group, which now has regular meetings. Rabbi Tann received an honorary doctorate from Birmingham's Aston University in July, 2005 in recognition of his inter faith work in Birmingham.

REGIONAL AND LOCAL UPDATES FROM SCOTLAND, NORTHERN IRELAND, WALES AND ENGLAND

This section contains updates on a range of regional and local activities within each of the nations of the UK.

SCOTLAND

Edinburgh

In November the Edinburgh Inter Faith Association ran a series of workshops for the 'Identity Projects' for Muslim and Sikh men aimed at exploring what it means to be young, male, Muslim or Sikh and living in Scotland. Participants were encouraged to use photography, film, sound, the internet and other means to explore questions of identity. They also had the opportunity to meet and talk with members of the Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh city councillors and council officials. The work created by those taking part in the workshops is going to be displayed in a public exhibition. There will also be a booklet created as part of the project to help other people understand more about what life is like for young Muslim and Sikh men.

Cardinal Keith O'Brien, visited Annandale Street Mosque on 2 December as part of a series of events marking Edinburgh Inter Faith Week. Some other Inter Faith Week events in Edinburgh included 'The Imam and the Bishop: A Muslim Christian Dialogue and A Meeting of Hearts and Mind' meeting on 5 December in St John's Church, Princes Street. This meeting involved Rt Revd Brian Smith, the Episcopal Bishop of Edinburgh, in conversation with Shaykh Ibrahim Mogra, an Imam from Leicester and Chair of the Inter Faith Committee of the Muslim Council of Britain.

Fife

Fife Interfaith Group celebrated Scottish Interfaith Week with an exhibition in the atrium of Adam Smith College. The exhibition had an environmental theme which highlighted the respect which all faiths share for the earth. Many of the faiths practised in Fife took part in the exhibition and representatives from different faiths were on hand to provide information and answer questions on the links between religious and environmental issues. During the week a draw was held of the environmental quiz organised by the Fife Interfaith Group for Fife schools.

Glasgow

'Faith to Faith' is the title of a series of meetings being held by St Mungo Museum in Glasgow. The first event was held on 18 November and the meetings run through until June. 'Faith to Faith' provides an opportunity to listen, debate and discuss issues relating to religion in Scotland today. The first meeting was held to mark Islam Awareness Week. It explored a Muslim perspective and looked at understanding the Shia-Sunni divide. For more details about future meetings visit www.glasgowmuseums.com

North Lanarkshire

An inter faith food celebration took place in November in Old Monkland Community Centre organised by the Abrahamic Roots Group and North Lanarkshire Muslim Women and Family Alliance. Christian and Muslim women shared the afternoon in an effort to better understand each others beliefs and traditions.

Shetland

During Scottish Interfaith Week at the end of November, Shetland Inter Faith held a civic reception, breaking new ground and heightening the profile of inter faith work in that area.

WALES

Swansea

Interfaith Swansea held a meeting on 18 February at St Benedict's Roman Catholic Church, Llythrid Avenue, Swansea. This was hosted by the Catholic community and there was a presentation from members.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum hosts 'Faiths and Music' event

The Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum held a Forum meeting on the evening of 27 November at the Belfast Indian Community Centre. The event

focused on the theme of 'Faiths and Music' and included examples of music from different traditions. There were contributions from members of the local Hindu mandir and from members of the Muslim community, a Baha'i choir and a choir from St Peter's Cathedral. Those who attended the meeting had the opportunity to explore and learn about the roles that music plays in various faith traditions.

ENGLAND

EAST

East of England Faiths Council

East of England Faiths Council (EEFC) held its quarterly Council meeting on 12 December at St John's Innovation Centre, Cambridge. Topics on the agenda included discussion and information exchange about reports on the business of the East of England Regional Assembly; a presentation on the work of the Equalities and Human Rights Commission in the region by its Regional Director James Doubleday; faith representation on Local Strategic Partnerships; and engaging faith groups in consultation on the Environment Agency's Committees. There was also a report on an employment and skills pilot project. At the meeting Rabbi Daniela Thau from Bedford Council of Faiths gave a presentation about a young people's event held on 5 November called 'Mind the Gap' in which five young people were invited to speak on the theme 'How young people's approaches to faith differ from those of their parents', in which young people from Hindu, Buddhist and Baha'i faiths had participated.

Cambridge

Cambridge Inter-Faith Group held a seventh Civic Celebration of Community on 18 November at the Guildhall, Cambridge. This year's celebration theme was called 'The Meaning of Life'. It was sponsored by Cambridge City Council Community Development. Mayor Jenny Bailey gave a welcome address. There were short contributions from various Cambridge faith groups, including poetry and music, followed by refreshments and a chance to socialise. The event was to encourage faith groups to remember and speak about values and to celebrate diversity. The civic celebrations in Cambridge aim to bring members of different faith groups together in the spirit of co-operation and mutual acceptance.

Luton

Luton Council of Faiths, in conjunction with Grassroots (a Christian ecumenical organisation), held a One World Week faith and citizenship evening on 27 October. There was a musical performance by Berakah at Sir Ian Dixon Theatre, University of Bedfordshire, Park Square in Luton. Berakah is an Arabic and Hebrew word meaning 'blessing of grace'. The band members of the group are from the Jewish, Muslim and Christian faith traditions.

On November 9, members of different faith communities from Luton Council of Faiths and Grassroots made two visits to join in Diwali celebrations. They visited the Guru Ravidassia Bhawan in Cardigan Street and then the Hindu Mandir Cen-Sanatan, in Hereford Road. Greetings were given by the visitors to their hosts. At the Mandir, young children enacted the story of the Ramayana, telling the story of Rama's return from exile to the kingdom after defeating king Ravana, which underlies the Diwali celebrations.

Young people in Luton were invited to join in an event on 1 December to SPEAKOUT at a Luton Council Of Faiths (LCOF) event held in the town hall to explore the subjects of identity, citizenship, diversity, faith, and human values amongst young people. The event, funded by Luton Borough Council's Stronger Communities, aimed to explore differences, opinions and break down barriers between groups of young people aged from 13 to 19 years of age. More than 60 young people attended the event. Debates that were held focused on themes that young people had chosen, which included global and local effects, different but united; inspiration and identity and views and values.

Peterborough

Young people from faith communities were the focus for Peterborough Inter Faith Council's celebration of UN Day with a Praying for Peace Together event on 15 November. Children and young people of all ages from the Hindu, Sikh, Muslim, Buddhist, Christian and Jewish faith communities participated in various activities including singing hymns, readings from the Guru Granth Sahib, as well as from the Hebrew Scriptures and the Qur'an. There were also prayers said for world peace including a mantra, the prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi, and a supplication was made by Muslim students. The event was held at Peterborough Cathedral and was attended by members of various faith traditions. The compère was Canon Jonathan Baker, and the Dean of



Peterborough Cathedral, the Very Revd Charles Taylor, welcomed those present and opened the programme. The United Nations Association was also represented by Mrs Devinder Kaur-Suali. A candle was lit to demonstrate the coming together of different faiths to pray for world peace. The closing prayer was read by all participants and Jaspal Singh, Chairman of Peterborough Inter Faith Council gave the vote of thanks.

Watford

Watford Interfaith Association (WIA) celebrated its 30th anniversary at the Week of Prayer for World Peace gathering at Friends Meeting House, Church Road on 28 October. Members of nine different faiths lit candles at the event. Short speeches were given by special guests Mayor Dorothy Thornhill and Lord Tom McNally and there was a sit-down buffet. On 28 November WIA explored the subject of faiths' perspectives on family values with a panel of four speakers from different faith traditions.

EAST MIDLANDS

Faiths Forum for the East Midlands

The Faiths Forum for the East Midlands is in the process of reviewing its constitution and how it functions following the recent Government decision to dissolve Regional Assemblies.

Derby

The Forum of Faiths for Derby was set up three years ago and is run by a steering group, which consists of representatives of all the faith communities and advisers. It was established to appoint two representatives of faith groups on to the Derby City Partnership Board and to explore the potential for involvement in other partnership groups. It also identifies how the views and experience of the broad range of faith groups in the city can be drawn together and take part in wider public life. The Forum is based at St James Centre in Normanton and currently there are 57 faith organisation affiliated to it. It is currently running three projects: The Barriers and Bridges Project, where a team of fourteen researchers from the seven different faith communities are holding interviews with Faith Organisations to look at the barriers and bridges to interfaith work in Derby; the Tapestry of Faith Project, where activities and events are being organised to help people explore how they can work together and share our riches across the faith communities; and the African

Caribbean Churches Development Project, where the Black Majority Churches will be looking at how they can work together with the Forum of Faiths

Leicester

Leicester Council of Faiths held a Peace Pilgrimage on 9 September. The event was to encourage members of the public to visit different places of worship to learn about the different faith traditions that are practised in Leicester and to promote understanding between different faith communities. Leicester Council of Faiths was supported by English Heritage in organising this pilgrimage, which included visiting various places of worship.

Loughborough

On 20 November the third annual Feast of Faiths was celebrated at John Storer House, Wards End in Loughborough. It was organised by the Loughborough Council of Faiths and the theme of the event was 'marriage'. A working group made up of partners from Charnwood Borough Mayoralty, the Racial Equality Council and Voluntary Action Charnwood as well as the Council of Faiths came together to plan the event.

Thrapston

East Northants Faith Group (ENFG) held their annual general meeting on 21 November in the Council Buildings at Cedar Drive in Thrapston. The ENFG meets on a quarterly basis as part of the East Northants District Council's Local Strategic Partnership program. The format of the meeting included an opening devotion followed by a discussion of local needs and issues.

LONDON

Faiths Forum for London

An open discussion meeting was held on 12 December at the London Muslim Centre, Whitechapel Road, to look at the programme and plans for the year ahead for the development of Faiths Forum for London. There were short presentations on behalf of a number of organisations on how they could engage with a Faiths Forum for London and the benefits of a city-wide network. Speakers included Nick Williams from the Metropolitan Police Communities Together Strategic Engagement Team whose remit includes engagement with faiths communities;

Tom Flude from Transport for London; Heidi Pearson from the Resilience team at the Government Office for London; and Hannah Peaker from the London Civic Forum's National Empowerment Partnership programme. During the discussion participants broke into smaller groups to provide their input on questions about the kind of activities, events and programmes that they see the Faiths Forum for London taking forward. The Forum plans to employ a development worker and there will be a series of pilot programmes and activities to test out the most useful ways in which it can add value to London's civic life.

North London

On 19 January a 'meet your neighbour' social evening was held by North London Inter Faith at Hampstead Meeting House, Heath Street, Hampstead. This brought together members of the inter faith group, the Jewish Christian Quaker group and the Dialogue Society as well as speakers who have contributed to meetings over the last two years. It was also the occasion of the launch of a photographic exhibition called 'Seeking common ground – Neighbours in London'. This exhibition is available for loan. Enquiries to info@northlondoninterfaith.org.uk

South London

South London Inter Faith Group held prayers for world peace at Kingston Mosque, in East Road, on 11 November. The multi faith service involved representatives of several different faiths taking turns to offer prayers, reading and reflections.

Barnet

A Muslim-Jewish Meeting took place on 15 September at the New North London Synagogue (NNLS). The Jewish High Holy Days and the Holy month of Ramadan started on the same day and to mark this a meeting was organised in association with NNLS and with representatives from the Muslim College, Al-Khoei Foundation, Muslim Cultural Centre, British Muslims for Democracy, League of British Muslims, Muslim Schools and several mosques. More than one hundred members of the synagogue's congregation and Muslim guests attended the meeting. In his opening remarks, Andrew Dismore, MP for Hendon, emphasised the importance of inter faith co-operation as an integral part of a multi faith democratic society. The synagogue's rabbi, Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg and Moulana Shahid Raza, Executive Secretary of the Shari'ah Council, discussed the similarities of *taubah* and *teshuvah* (contrition and turning or

repentance), the two major themes of Yom Kippur and Ramadan. The participants shared an Iftar (breaking of fast) and the ending of Shabbat together.

Greenwich

On 14 September Greenwich Multi Faith Forum held a Faith Walk around places of worship in Woolwich and Plumstead. Around 100 people, including members of Bexley Multi Faith Forum and Thamesmead Multi-Faith Forum, visited Greenwich Hindu Temple, East Plumstead Baptist Church, Woolwich mosque, St Peter's Roman Catholic Church in Woolwich and Mason Hill Sikh Gurdwara. The Mayor of Greenwich, Cllr Sajid Jawaid, and Eltham MP Clive Efford also joined the walkers.

Kensington and Chelsea

The use of scripture in Christian – Muslim relations was discussed at the Centre for Christianity and Interreligious Dialogue, Heythrop College, University of London, on 31 October. This seminar was a part of a series on 'Christianity and Islam: Encounters and Traditions'.

Child safety was the topic of discussion at a meeting held by the Forum of Faiths Kensington and Chelsea on 25 November. A member of the local authority's Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) briefed the forum about child safety issues and discussed how the group can work with the LSCB.

Lambeth

A round table discussion on 'How do we make Clapham and Stockwell better places for young people to live, work and play?' took place on 30 October. The meeting was organised by Clapham and Stockwell Faith Forum and Lambeth Youth Council and was held at Stockwell Community Resource Centre. The event's aim was to encourage young people to come together and share their thoughts and views.

Dealing with difference and resolving conflict was the theme of this year's One World Week event for Lambeth Multi-Faith Group on 4 November held in Brixton. Contributors from Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Buddhist traditions offered perspectives at the event and there was also an opportunity for participants to learn about the work of the Lambeth Meditation Service and to meet the imam from South London Islamic Centre and Streatham Mosque.

The concept of fasting in different faiths was explored at an event held at and organised by the



Hyderi Islamic Centre, in Estreham Road, Streatham on 7 October. The programme of the meeting started with evening prayers and was followed by talks on the theme by speakers from three different faiths.

Lewisham

The South East London branch of the Council for Christians and Jews held an event, "Freemasonry: its role in bringing Christians and Jews together", on 30 October at Catford Synagogue, Crantock Road. A panel of Christians and Jewish Freemasons spoke about the work of Freemasons and answered questions about this.

Redbridge

A public forum on 'Faith and Mental Health' was held by Redbridge Faith Forum on 18 October at Ilford Central Library. This provided the opportunity to investigate the role of spirituality in mental health and to examine how faith leaders can play a vital role in fostering a greater understanding of this complex area, as well as helping those affected by the illness move towards recovery. Speakers at the event included specialists in mental health care and practice within Redbridge and a consultant psychiatrist from a west London hospital.

On 30 November Redbridge Faith Forum, in partnership with Redbridge Equalities and Community Council and the local authority, held a conference about community cohesion in Redbridge Town Hall, Ilford. Keynote speakers included Council Leader Cllr Alan Weinberg, Lesley Hilton, Chair of Redbridge Equalities and Community Council, Cllr Lesley Hilton, Sally Sealey-Kyambadde from the Cohesion and Faith Unit at the *Department for Communities and Local Government* and the Director of the Inter Faith Network, Dr Harriet Crabtree. A series of workshops were held, one of focused particularly on faith aspects of cohesion. This was chaired by Rabbi Maurice Michaels, a Redbridge Faith Forum trustee.

Tower Hamlets

Tower Hamlets Inter Faith Forum's Inter Faith Week took place during 18 to 23 November. This year all members of the forum were invited to host open days at their places of worship. During the week short conversations between members of faith communities about what it means to live as a person of faith in Tower Hamlets were recorded. The mini inter views will be featured on the forum's website within the next few months

www.faithintowerhamlets.com.

The Geoff Ashcroft Community Centre in Shadwell hosted a Women's Interfaith Dialogue Group meeting at St Mary's Church Hall, Johnson Street. Two of the first meetings to set up the group took place on 17 January and these discussed the shape of the group in the future.

Wandsworth

A multi faith seminar on the topic of Medical Ethics was held by Wandsworth Multi-Faith Network and St George's NHS Trust at St George's Medical School in Tooting on 29 January. This was an opportunity to hear medical experts from different faith traditions speak on key issues of concern today and to explore health topics which the St George's Medical Team were keen to discuss with local residents.

Westminster

The London Central Mosque arranged an inter faith dinner for leaders from Christian, Muslim and Jewish faith communities based in Westminster on 3 October. Dr Ahmad Al-Dubayan, Director General, of Regent's Park Islamic Cultural Centre, welcomed guests. The leader of Westminster Council, Sir Simon Milton spoke of his commitment to building a peaceful tolerant city. An exhibition of Arabic calligraphy and illumination from Iran was on display.

St Paul's Church in Covent Garden was the venue for a concert by Berakah, which is a band featuring members from Jewish, Christian and Muslim faith traditions. The concert took place on 27 November and was hosted by writer and director Gary Cohen.

NORTH EAST

More than 80 people from the North East attended the launch on 24 September of '*Understanding Faiths – A practical guide to working with faith communities*' at the Dolphin Centre, Darlington. The guide has been written and produced by the Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum and the Churches' Regional Commission for the North East. Representatives from public bodies, local authorities, faith communities and the voluntary and community sector gathered for the event at which Rev Inderjit Bhogal the Director of the Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum, and Paul Southgate, Chief Officer of the Churches' Regional Commission in the North East, spoke. The guide looks at the ways in which people's faith traditions may impact on their public as well as their private

lives. It also explores provisions made by UK laws against discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief.

Middlesbrough

Middlesbrough Council of Faiths, in conjunction with Cleveland and Tees Valley Interfaith Group, organised an inter faith social evening on 28 January at 49 Grange Road, Middlesbrough. There were short introductions by speakers on about 'The Practices and Values of each faith group' that was followed by group discussions.

NORTH WEST

North West

Faiths4Change is a new regional multi-faith environmental transformation project, to be carried out in urban areas within Merseyside, Manchester, Burnley and Preston. It has been funded for three years with just over £1 million, principally by the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA), the Environment Agency and local authorities and is supported by faith communities in the region.

Faiths4Change aims to support and enable people to work together to develop their ideas to transform their neighbourhoods and enhance their own skills. It is based on learning from the successful, Merseyside-based pilot project Operation EDEN that was inspired by the Anglican Bishop of Liverpool, the Rt Revd James Jones. Operation EDEN encouraged volunteers from faith communities to work in partnership with other local residents to create small scale environmental projects that transformed Merseyside communities.

Bolton

In Bolton a group from St Catherine's Church, in Highfield Road, Farnworth took part on 8 January in a 'faith trail', visiting the Veda Mandir in Thomas Holden Street and to the Zakariyya Central Masjid, in Peace Street. It was organised by the Bolton Inter Faith Council which also arranged for parents of children who attend a local children's centre to go on a 'faith trail' to visit Zakariyya Central Masjid on 21 January.

Liverpool

Liverpool Community Spirit (LCS) offers adult learner courses called *Community Spirit* for community members and those from voluntary

organisations in Liverpool. These courses are a longer version of Liverpool Community Spirit's Faith Diversity Training that explores the six major world faiths including Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism. Participants take part in interactive classroom sessions about each faith, which includes tasting traditional foods and is followed by a visit to a place of worship or an opportunity for the group to meet with a member of that faith and have a discussion. The Faith Diversity training was last held in the autumn, with one session exploring the Abrahamic faiths and another exploring Sikhism, Hinduism and Buddhism. The training was held at the conference facilities of the Kuumba Imani Millennium Centre in the Millennium Centre and NOVAS. Participants visited the Princes Road Synagogue and the Ar Rahma Mosque both in Toxteth. A classroom discussion with a member of the Sikh community also took place, which included a demonstration in turban tying. This year LCS plans to run five *Community Spirit* courses and to has been asked to deliver bespoke in-house Faith Diversity Training to organisations in the city.

Pendle

Building Bridges in Pendle held an inter faith seminar on 23 January at Brierfield People's Centre, Colne Road, looking at identity in the UK and exploring how people identify themselves by their faith, nationality, race or by one's parents' country of origin. Guest speakers include Anjum Anwar from Blackburn Cathedral, Brian Astin from Pendle Borough Council, Carlo Schroder from Lancashire Forum of Faiths and Rob Mooney from Pendle Neighbourhood Management.

On 13 November Building Bridges in Pendle held an inter faith seminar at Jamia Masjid Minhaj-ul-Qur'an, Brunswick Street, in Nelson, which focused on learning to live together in a religiously diverse society and asked how secular and religious traditions might respond to this shared challenge. Dr Philip Lewis, Inter Faith Adviser to the Bishop of Bradford and Lecturer in Peace Studies at the University of Bradford, was a guest speaker.

Wigan

Members of the Wigan Faith Network (WFN) are currently working on two initiatives within the Wigan North and Wigan South Township areas. The first is a chaplaincy service where WFN representatives have been meeting with staff of Wigan and Leigh College (Wigan Campus) to

discuss the provision of a chaplaincy service to support staff and students. A draft aims and objectives of this service are being agreed. The second initiative is a parent support service and members of Wigan Faith Network have had meetings with “Care for the Family”, a charity that provides support services for families and with Westfield Sure Start Centre, in Montrose Avenue, Wigan. The Faith Network believes that there is an urgent need to encourage many more parents to access support services.

SOUTH EAST

Crawley

Crawley Inter Faith Network held a meeting on the evening of 14 January at St Johns Hall, Church Walk, Crawley where Ruth Growney from Crawley Borough Council’s ‘Lets FACE it!’ campaign was invited to speak about the concept of an inter faith garden project, which could involve people from different faith groups working together to plant a small public garden that could be used for picnics and educational activities.

Horsham

Horsham Interfaith Forum held a meeting at St John’s Catholic Church on 27 October meeting looking at ‘Religions in India’. The speaker, Sukmar Sivaraman, gave a talk about the major faiths in India and Hindu religious ceremonies, festivals and worship. This followed by a question and answer sessions and refreshments.

Oxford

A consultation meeting was held 15 November in Oxford Town Hall to discuss the setting up of an Oxford Council of Faiths. David Paterson, a steering group member, welcomed the participants from different faith communities to the meeting which was chaired by the Sheriff of Oxford, Councillor Mary Clarkson. Brief talks were given by Councillor Altaf Khan, the Cabinet Member for Safer City, and Urmi Raval, Local and Regional Project Officer from the Inter Faith Network. Oxford Council’s Community Cohesion Officer, Nisha Prakash, who has been working with the steering group on the development of Oxford Council of Faiths for the last 18 months, gave a presentation about the work that has been carried out so far. This was followed by focus group discussions looking aspects of setting the council of faiths.

The next steps for the steering group, with the support of the council, will be looking at the election and nomination of members; working on the constitution or terms of reference; and fundraising to get Oxford Council of Faiths launched. Further information can be obtained by contacting Nisha Prakash Nprakash@oxford.gov.uk or by telephoning 01865 252373.

Dispute over plan for broadcast call to prayer

A dispute has broken out over a plan by Oxford Central Mosque to seek permission from the local council to broadcast a two minute *adhan*, the traditional Muslim call to prayer, through loudspeakers in the minaret. Initially there were suggestions that the request would be for the call to prayer to be made three times a day, but Imam Munir Christi subsequently said that the intention was for it to be broadcast once a week at the time of *jummah* prayer on Friday lunchtimes.

Opinion in Oxford is divided. The Anglican Bishop of Oxford, Rt Revd John Pritchard, called for tolerance urging people to “enjoy our community diversity” and to be “as respectful to others as you would hope they would be to you”. He said “I believe we have good relationships with the Muslim community here in Oxford and I am personally very happy for the mosque to call the faithful to prayer in East Oxford. Faith is a very important factor in the lives of 80 per cent of the world’s population and a public expression of that faith is both natural and reasonable.” Bishop John said practical issues over the number of times the call went out, the volume and whether a trial period would be required would need to be ironed out, but said in principle it was “entirely reasonable” proposal.

However, Rev Charles Cleverly, Rector of St Aldate’s Church in Oxford, called on the mosque to drop its plans, while saying that he welcomed Muslims in Oxford and hoped a local dialogue between the faiths could be established. Many others also protested at the plans.

The newly elected management committee of the Oxford Central Mosque is reported to be reviewing plans for the use of a loudspeaker. Its Secretary General, Altaf Hussain, said that the proposals had emerged “without proper consultation with our neighbours” and that this had caused “anxiety and misunderstandings”.

SOUTH WEST

Faith community representatives on local and regional strategic bodies and networks attended 'Representing Faith', a regional seminar held by Faithnetsouthwest at Albemarle Centre, Albemarle Road, Taunton on 27 February.

Bath

Work is underway to establish a Bath and North East Somerset Faith Forum. The aim of the Forum is to encourage communication between faith communities and public bodies on social and community issues. It will have a particular focus in providing faith community representatives to sit on the Local Strategic Partnership committee of Bath and North East Somerset Faith Forum Council. Members currently sitting on the steering group have had four meetings and a draft terms of reference has been developed. For more information email faithforum@communities.beintouch.org.uk or visit <http://communities.beintouch.org.uk/inovem/inovem.ti/faithforum/view?objectId=549776&expa=exp&expf=549776&expl=1>

Exeter

Exeter Interfaith Group organised a places of worship walk on 21 October. The walk began at the Mint Methodist Church, in Fore Street, where around 50 participants were met by Rev Andrew Sails who gave a brief explanation about the building and its congregation. The second location was Exeter Synagogue, in Synagogue Place, where there was an introductory talk about the synagogue and Exeter's Jewish community. The walk ended at the Exeter Mosque and Cultural Centre, in York Road, where the participants were greeted and shown around the building and provided with warm refreshments.

Plymouth

During Islam Awareness Week (19 – 25 November) Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity held two events. At lunchtime on 22 November a speaker from the Muslim community shared a short Muslim reflection. Later that afternoon there was an in-depth discussion looking at Islam and inter faith dialogue, which was followed by an evening event where participants had the opportunity to discuss the theme of Islam Awareness Week 'One World – our children – our future' was explored.

Taunton

Somerset Faith Forum was launched on 24 September. Members of faith communities from across Somerset met in Lutterall Room, County Hall. Speakers from different faith traditions talked about the importance of faith communities' contributions to society and the also the significance of people of different faith traditions working together. The launch of this new body is supported by Somerset Churches Together and was funded by the Faith Community Capacity Building Fund, Somerset County Council, the Forum for Equality and Diversity. Organisational and administrative support was given from *faithnetsouthwest*.

Torbay

Members of the newly founded Torbay Youth Inter-Faith Forum attended a residential weekend at Grangehurst House, Buckfast Abbey in Devon on 5 to 7 October. 40 pupils from secondary schools in Torbay took part in various different activities that promoted inter faith dialogue. The focus was on extending knowledge and understanding of faiths as well as exploring contemporary social and faith issues with young people who may or may not have a personal faith commitment.

WEST MIDLANDS

West Midlands Faiths Forum

At the end of 2006, West Midlands Faiths Forum (WMFF) was asked by the *Birmingham Post* to provide a regular faith reflection feature to appear in the paper each Saturday. WMFF decided to do this in partnership with Birmingham Council of Faiths and the scheme has been running since the start of 2007. Following talks with the newspaper's deputy editor the WMFF and Birmingham Council of Faiths will continue to submit features for 2008 as well. Pdf versions of the faith reflection features are available on the website at www.wmfaithsforum.org.uk

As part of WMFF's *Faith Reach* Project a series of events called 'Access to Resources' have been organised in the region. On 30 November the first of these was held for faith based groups in Herefordshire and Worcester at the Pershore Civic suite, Civic Centre in Worcester. Representatives of many faith traditions including Sikh, Baha'i and Christian as well as

those who work in inter faith, inter faith groups, and statutory representatives from the local authority, the Prison Service, Primary Care Trusts and those from educational bodies and establishments. Further Access to Resources events were held on 1 February in Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent and on 13 February in Solihull.

Birmingham

Exploring the Faithful City, a new publication that tells the story of the Birmingham Faith Leaders Group, was launched on 14 December at the Council House in Birmingham by the city's Mayor Randal Brew. The Catholic Archbishop of Birmingham, Most Rev Vincent Nichols, from the Archdiocese of Birmingham spoke at the event on behalf of the Faith Leaders' Group. The book's editor, Secretary to the BFLG, Jonathan Gurling also spoke. See under 'Resources' for further information. Sadly the person who had been the inspiration behind the creation of the Birmingham Faith Leaders group, Rabbi Leonard Tann, had died three days before the book was received from the printers (see under Obituaries).

Burton upon Trent

Members of Burton upon Trent Inter Faith Network (BIFN) joined the Quaker community on 27 and 28 October, during national Meet the Quakers Week. Burton upon Trent's Quaker community are active supporters of BIFN. This event was attended by around 30 people including Burton upon Trent's Mayor and Mayoress. Some members of BIFN contributed Asian food to the buffet. The local Quakers are a small group who meet monthly in a room at a Methodist Church and whose meetings are always open to visitors. Display material was on show illustrating what Quakers practise and their history and their current day actions. On the Sunday visitors and members joined the Quakers for silent prayers.

YORKSHIRE AND HUMBER

Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum

Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum's annual conference took place on 13 December. This year's topic was 'Faith Voices: Working together for community cohesion'. The event was held at the Thornbury Centre, Old Leeds Road, Bradford. The day was chaired by Rt Revd Tony Robinson, Bishop of Pontefract. Speakers included Anjum Anwar, Dialogue Development Officer with Blackburn Cathedral; Rev Inderjit Singh Bhogal, Director of the Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum; and Dr Harriet Crabtree, Director of the Inter Faith Network.

The conference focused on sharing good practice and encouraging partnership working between faith communities and local and regional agencies. A variety of workshops were held with topics such as working with inter faith groups; exploring regional support for local inter faith groups; cohesion and co-existence; peace and respect in rural and urban communities; listening and engaging with young people and engaging with women. Additional workshops were on 'City of Sanctuary', 'Believing we can' and 'Health, Faith and Wellbeing'. At the event 'United Faiths', a Youth Interfaith Council was launched, with young speakers from a range of faiths.'

Leeds

Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship in partnership with Leeds City Council Peacelink group held its annual Peace Service in the Civic Hall on 17 October. The Lord Mayor, Cllr Brian Cleasby, lit a candle from the World Peace Flame on behalf of all citizens of Leeds. This was followed by presentations from nine member faiths of the Fellowship – Baha'i, Brahma Kumaris, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Muslim, Jewish, Pagan and Sikh. They spoke about or sang on the theme of peace from their faith tradition before lighting a candle on behalf of their faith community. The service included songs from the Beth Hamidrash Hagadol Synagogue choir, music from a Sikh family, a time of quiet reflection and a time to unite in prayers for world peace.

Scarborough

Scarborough Interfaith Discussion Group is in the process of compiling an online database of places of worship, religious groups, and other faith based organisation in the town. The group intends to develop and provide a resource that will be useful to visitors, newcomers in the town and also for other organisations. For more details about the directory visit <http://scarboroughinterfaith.org.uk/directory.php>

Sheffield

Sheffield Faiths Forum is currently undertaking an audit of faith groups in the city to collect information on their activities in the local community and the contribution they make to the city. The information gathered from the audit will be shared with Sheffield Faiths Forum's partners in order to help the organisation strengthen links and also to influence decision making within Sheffield. To download a survey form visit <http://www.sheffieldfaithsforum.org.uk>

Inter Faith Organisations in the UK: A Directory

ISBN 1 902906 314. £8.95 (£11 including postage and packaging) from the Inter Faith Network ifnet@interfaith.org.uk 8A Lower Grosvenor Place, London SW1W 0EN. Cheques payable to The Inter Faith Network or request invoice.

This fourth edition of *Inter Faith Organisations in the UK: A Directory*, published July 2007, lists more than 250 inter faith bodies promoting good relations. The directory is a valuable resource for all those engaged in the work of developing mutual respect, understanding and encouraging good relations between faith communities of the UK. It lists contact names, addresses, telephone numbers, websites and email addresses for 217 local, 14 regional and 25 national inter faith groups as well as brief information about the activities of each of them. Over recent years, there has been a steady increase in the establishment of local inter faith groups and this year alone, there are 27 new additions among those listed in the directory. There are also 11 other new entries, among them academic centres focusing on inter faith relations which is a category of listing new to this edition.

EUROPE AND INTERNATIONAL

Inter Faith Update has a primary focus on the UK but carries information on selected European and international events or projects with a particular bearing on the work of inter faith organisations in the UK.

EUROPE

European Fundamental Rights Agency

In March 2007 a new European Union Fundamental Rights Agency was launched in order to provide the European community and its member states, when implementing community law, with assistance and expertise relating to fundamental rights.

The FRA succeeds the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) but within its enlarged scope, will continue with its work on racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and related intolerance issues. The new agency will build on the EUMC's experience of data collection mechanisms and cooperation with Government and international organisations. However, its work will give more emphasis than the EUMC to two dimensions: raising public awareness and cooperation with civil society.

The European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance which operates within the framework of the Council of Europe is continuing its work. Mr Mohammed Aziz, a Muslim from the UK active in the inter faith field, has recently been elected as its new Chairman.

INTERNATIONAL

Meeting of International Interreligious Organisations Network

The fifth meeting of the International Interreligious Organisations Network was held from 26 to 28 November in Nuneham Courtenay near Oxford. The meeting was attended by delegates from the United States, Australia, India and Europe, representing the Council for the Parliament for the World Religions; the

International Association for Religious Freedom; the North American Inter Faith Network; the Temple of Understanding (New York); the World Congress of Faiths (UK based), the World Federation of Interreligious Councils (India); and the International Interfaith Centre (Oxford). A representative from the Inter Faith Network for the UK was in attendance.

The topics discussed at the conference included recent developments in inter faith work at the United Nations; plans for the meeting in Melbourne in 2009 of the next Parliament of the World's Religions; inter faith work with young people; overcoming difficulties in inter faith communications; how to respond to hateful speeches and violent action; and future plans for the IION itself, including the issue of participation in it by regional and national 'networks'.

IION is serviced by the International Interfaith Centre based in Oxford

Religions for Peace International

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Rowan Williams, has become a Co-President of Religions for Peace. Dr Williams joins a World Council comprising eminent religious leaders representing the world's diverse faith communities to lead the global Religions for Peace network, which seeks "to advance just and harmonious societies by working to stop war, end poverty and protect the earth".

2009 Parliament of the World's Religions

The Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions, based in Chicago, has announced that the next Parliament will be held from 3 to 9 December 2009 in Melbourne, Australia. Full details of the plans will be found at www.parliamentofreligions2009.org. The last Parliament was held in Barcelona in 2004.

'A Common Word'

'A Common Word Between Us and You', an open letter signed by 138 leading Muslim scholars, clerics, and intellectuals from around

the world, was sent on 13 October to Pope Benedict XVI, Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, twenty five other named Christian leaders and to "leaders of Christian Churches everywhere. The final form of the letter was presented at a conference in September 2007 held under the theme of "Love in the Quran", by the *Royal Academy of The Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought in Jordan*, under the Patronage of HM King Abdullah II. The letter identifies some common ground between Christianity and Islam and seeks to promote world peace through embracing two theological commitments made by Muslims and Christians rooted in the teaching "love of the One God" "and love of the neighbour" The letter says that it is time that Muslims and Christians recognised the similarities between them because world peace hinges on greater understanding between the two faiths.

The letter followed an earlier response to Pope Benedict XVI's 12 September 2006 lecture at the University of Regensburg

To view a full version of the letter visit <http://www.acommonword.com/lib/downloads/CW-Total-Final-v-12g-Eng-9-10-07.pdf>

Muslim scholars and leaders call for action to improve Muslim-Jewish Relations

Muslim religious scholars and Muslim leaders from around the world have issued a statement to the world's Jewish Community. The letter describes itself as a call "in the face of the negative and destructive tensions in the Middle East" ... "to positive and constructive action that aims to improve Muslim-Jewish relations". It contends that the community are faced not with a "clash of civilizations" but with a "clash of misunderstandings". It closes with a call for "wider dialogue between all faiths and communities, including the non-Abrahmic ones". The initiative behind the statement came from the Muslim scholars of the Centre for the Study of Muslim – Jewish Relations (CMJR), Cambridge, Dr Amineh Hoti (Director) and Sheikh Michael Mumisa (Lecturer). The letter was formally launched following the Centre's annual Stone-Ashdown lecture given by Professor Tariq Ramadan on 25 February.

Inter faith issues at the UN

On 4 and 5 October last year, in pursuance of earlier resolutions (A/RES/61/221) on “Promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue, understanding and cooperation for peace”, the General Assembly undertook its first ever formal, High-Level Dialogue on issues of interreligious and intercultural understanding and cooperation for peace, including freedom of religion and belief and the need for respect for a diversity of religions and cultures. The High-level Dialogue was opened by the President of the General Assembly on 4 October in the General Assembly Hall and the Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon, addressed the meeting. The informal interactive hearing with civil society representatives held in conjunction with this High-level Dialogue provided a platform for an exchange of views among Member States and civil society, including NGOs and the private sector. In the course of this, leading academics, religious leaders and other civil society representatives offered their reflections on the challenges and best practices of interreligious and intercultural cooperation.

The High Representative of the Secretary-General for the Alliance of Civilisation, Jorge Sampaio, addressed the hearing and representatives of 74 members contributed to it during the two days. It was in 2006, responding to proposals from Spain and Turkey, that the UN Secretary General commissioned a high-level study group that resulted in the formation of the Alliance of Civilisations, aiming to reduce cross cultural polarisation between Islam and the West and Jorge Sampaio, a former President of Portugal, was invited to oversee this initiative. He has subsequently set out the challenges facing it as being how to: live together in a globalizing world; avoid clashes of civilization; bridge cultural and religious fault lines that divide society; improve mutual respect and understanding between different communities and societies.

Commonwealth Foundation report launched

Two years ago when Commonwealth Heads of Governments met in Malta they commissioned work “to explore initiatives to promote mutual

understanding and respect among all faiths and communities in the Commonwealth.”

Since then the Commonwealth Foundation has been working with faith organisations to promote partnerships that help use mutual respect and understanding as a basis for collaboration to achieve effective development. A number of activities have been taking place, enabling examination of the role that faith-based organisations and co-operation between different faith communities can play in delivering effective development. Many of these are documented in a recent Commonwealth Foundation report, *Engaging with Faith*, prepared for the 2007 Commonwealth People’s Forum and Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM).

The report, launched on 23 November, concludes that there is a need to understand and engage with faith communities, and make connections between faith communities and non-faith structures to promote successful development. It recommends in particular that strategies be developed to include the marginalised, particularly young people and women and a move beyond dialogues between religious leaders to build direct links and partnerships between communities which can be seen to lead to improvements in people’s lives.

The report was endorsed by the Commonwealth People’s Forum in their Kampala Civil Society Statement to CHOGM, when they urged Commonwealth governments to commit to implementing its recommendations and to support a programme of practical inter faith exchange and co-operation. It can be downloaded at http://www.commonwealthfoundation.com/uploads/documents/faithreport_final.pdf

The Commonwealth Foundation’s work has been carried out alongside, and complementary to, research carried out by the Commonwealth’s High Level Commission on Respect and Understanding, whose report *Civil Paths to Peace*, prior to its presentation at the CHOGM in Kampala, was launched on 9 November, at Marlborough House in London. See www.thecommonwealth.org for further information. The Inter Faith Network made a submission to the Commonwealth Foundation on patterns of inter faith activity in the UK.

DIARY DATES

Events

The following is just a small sampling of inter faith events happening around the UK in the coming months. To find out more about events in your area, you can contact the nearest local inter faith group. A list of regional and local inter faith bodies can be found at www.interfaith.org.uk/locallist.htm

26 February, Horsham. Speakers from the Muslim, Jewish and Christian faith traditions will speak about 'What faith means to me' at 7:30 pm at the Friends Meeting House, Worthing, Rd, Horsham. Email chrissmith@btinternet.com for further details about the group's forthcoming programme.

5 March, Crawley. A day meeting exploring 'Living my faith in a world community' is being held by Sussex Interfaith Forum from 10am to 4pm in the Unity Room in Worth Abbey. There will be presentations from members of different faiths traditions. Admission is free BUT to register in advance contact Rosemary Saunders at The Cloister, Worth Abbey, RH10 4SB, ring 01342 710318 or email toc@worthabbey.net

18 March, Blackburn. Conversation with Anjum Anwar and Canon Chris Chivers to be held in the crypt at Blackburn Cathedral, Cathedral Close, Blackburn at 12.55pm to 2pm. Admission is free. For further information contact Anjum Anwar on 01254 503081 or 07093731106.

27 April, Glasgow. The topic of 'Religion and the Environment' will be discussed at St Mungo's Museum from 2pm to 4pm. As climate change and care of the environment become global issues, learn more about the approach different religious traditions have taken to the physical world we live in. Booking must be made in advance by telephoning 0141 553 2557. For more details visit

<http://www.glasgowmuseums.com/venue/showEvent.cfm?venueid=13&itemid=531>

18 May, Birmingham. West Midlands Faiths Forum (WMFF) is encouraging inter faith bodies to join them in Birmingham at the International Convention Centre, Broad Street to mark the tenth anniversary of the G8 Human Chain. WMFF is supporting the Jubilee Debt Campaign.

Faith communities are invited to highlight the debt issue on that day with special services or meetings in the city. Jubilee Debt Campaign is producing worship resources and visual materials. For further information contact Audrey Miller Regional Representative 0121 471 4175 or visit www.jubileedebt.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk

21 May, Torbay. A panel discussion about inter faith issues will be held by Torbay Inter-Faith Forum. Venue details are to be confirmed. For more information call 01803 690079.

21 May, Bedford. Bedford Council of Faiths' Walk of Faith will be held from 6.30pm onwards. The first stop will be the Guru Nanak Gurdwara in Fort End Road, Queen's Park. The walk will then move to Jamia Masjid Gulshani Baghdad Mosque and the All Saints Church both in Westbourne Road. For more information email bcof@bcof.org.uk

CONFERENCES, EXHIBITIONS AND SEMINARS

1-11 March, Edinburgh Edinburgh International Festival of Middle Eastern Spirituality And Peace 2008. A celebration of the aspects of spiritual peacemaking, with a wide range of events including spiritual retreats, workshops and conferences. The festival welcomes guests from across the UK and further afield to enrich conversations and the spiritual and cultural exchange. Further information from www.mesp.org.uk; mesp2008@hotmail.co.uk; tel 0131 331 4469.

3 March, Chelmsford East of England Faith Council and Inspire East are hosting a conference on 'Faith in New Developments'. The event is aimed at faith groups and leaders, town planners, community cohesion officers and local strategic partnership officers in the region. The agenda includes the launch of new research and evidence for developing planning policy; discussions on what faiths contribute and what support they need; and a consideration of different role models for optimising faith contribution to the region. Speakers will include Rt Revd Laurie Green, Bishop of Bradwell, Dr Adam Dinham, Faith and Civil Society Unit from Anglia Ruskin University, and Gwyneth Jones from Inspire

East. Essex Record Office, Wharf Road, from 9.15am to 2.15pm. For further details or to book a place contact Daniel Durrant at Inspire East on 01223 484 7600 or email at enquiries@inspire-east.org.uk

6 March, Birmingham West Midlands Faiths Forum will be holding its fourth Annual Conference on 6 March at the Government Office for the West Midlands. Visit www.wmfaithsforum.org.uk for further details.

10–16 March, Germany JCM (Jewish, Christian and Muslim) – Partners in Dialogue 35th international student' conference for dialogue between Jews, Christian and Muslims. The event will focus on challenges of inter religious learning. For more information and to obtain a booking form contact conference secretary Katja Dummer by telephoning 049 202 89004 830.

14–15 March, Daventry, Northants, at Staverton Park Hotel, Staverton. The Christian Muslim Forum will be holding a conference on 'Belief and Being' to provide an opportunity for Christian and Muslim teachers and teaching assistants to consider together ways in which they can maintain the integrity of their faith in secular schools and use it as a resource for their pupils' education and well being. There will be workshops on topics such as learning and teaching, the curriculum, behaviour management, spiritual development and the handling of controversial issues. Residential: £30.00; day delegate £20; Teacher Trainees – Residential £20.00 Teacher Trainees – Day delegate £15.00 Bookings can be made online at: www.christianmuslimforum.org.

24 April, Yorkshire and Humber A conference for the media and faith communities is planned which will aim to create a platform to explore ways of working together more appropriately on issues relating to faith. This forms part of Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum's work to tackle discrimination particularly in relation to faith. The programme and venue details are still to be confirmed, but those interested are invited to register interest by emailing at info@yorkshireandhumberfaiths.org.uk to receive full details in due course.

25 March–12 April, London A travelling exhibition 'The life of Gandhi' will be launched at the British Library on 25 March. It will form part of the Festival of Nonviolence. The exhibition will be opened to the public on 29 March at Kingsley Hall, in Bromley-by-Bow.

Visit www.gandhifoundation.org for further details.

3 April–8 May, London. Cardinal's Lectures – six public lectures on faith and life in Britain. What is the role of Christianity in a multi-cultural Britain and how can we collaborate with our neighbours of other religions for the common good? Are there outstanding examples from history which might illustrate the importance of faith in public life and the role of Parliament? There are many challenges that face religious communities in presenting their message in the secular society and the role of religion in the media is an important aspect of our life today. There is also the wider role Britain plays in world politics and how faith and culture will influence peace-building and conflict resolution at a global level. A series of distinguished speakers address these questions and themes on Thursdays at 7pm from 3 April to 8 May at Westminster Cathedral. Mark Thompson, Director General of the BBC (10 April); Most Rev and Rt Hon Dr Rowan Williams (17 April); William Hague MP (24 April); Rabbi Dame Julia Neuberger (1 May); and Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor (8 May). Another speaker in April has yet to be confirmed. Admission only with ticket. Tickets can be booked via the internet at www.rcdow.org.uk/lectures.

28–29 April, Leeds Imams and Ministers Conference: 'Spiritual Guidance in Our Multi-Faith Society' looking at spiritual guidance in multi faith societies and examining the principles and methods of spiritual guidance as well as helping to build networks between Muslims and Christians imams, ministers, chaplains and others and to identify practical projects that can be worked on together at local, regional and national levels. Bookings can be made online from the end of January at: www.christianmuslimforum.org.

10 May, London A conference "Living with diversity – faith in a pluralist society" looking at the place and importance of inter faith relations in this country. The meeting's keynote speaker will be Dr Indarjit Singh. It is being held by the 'Faiths Together Programme' of the Centre For Christianity And Interreligious Dialogue and takes place at Heythrop College, Kensington Square, London from 10.30 to 4.30 pm. The cost is £5.00 per person (including refreshments and lunch). Contact lanef@heythrop.ac.uk for further information.

15 May to 12 June Thursdays at 6.30pm
Facilitation and dialogue skills for inter-faith groups. A four-week course at St Ethelburga's for anyone leading or participating in mixed faith groups. It offers experiential exercises, dialogue, teaching and reflection to support productive conversations. Many of the principles will also apply to working with diverse groups in general. With Justine Huxley. Topics: Inclusivity and participation; Meeting and dialogue tools; The essence of dialogue; Being with tension and difference. The cost for the full course is £42 (including booking fee). Further information from enquiries@stethelburgas.org or telephone 020 7496 1610.

19 May, Luxembourg Inter Faith Marathon for a United World. The first interreligious marathon in partnership with the third ING Europe-marathon is set to take place in Luxembourg on 3 May. This event follows on the first International "Priests United" Run on 19 May 2007. All ordained ministers are cordially invited to participate. Visit www.interfaith.lu for further details.

20–22 May, Manchester Christian Interfaith Practitioners' Association (CIPA) will hold its annual consultation event. This year's focus is the question 'Can religions ever be channels for peace? Or do we need religious disarmament?' Keynote speakers will include Alan Race, Ataullah Siddiqui, Chris Baker and Katalina Cahaafe Williams. The event takes place at Luther King House, Brighton Grove, Manchester. For details contact David Jonathan by telephoning 01582 416946 or email jgrassroots@btconnect.com.

7 June, Oxford 'The Boundaries of the Secular, the Religious, and the Spiritual'. Study day organised by World Congress of Faiths (WCF) in association with The Alister Hardy (AHS) Society at Friends' Meeting House, 43 St. Giles, Oxford from 10am to 4pm. Speakers include Revd. Canon Prof. Edward Bailey and Dr. Marcus Braybrooke and Mary Braybrooke. Cost of day for AHS and WCF members is £15, £20 for non members and £10 for concessions. Bring your own lunch. Call Marianne Rankin on 01684 772417 or email at marianne@johnrankin.demon.co.uk.

10–11 September, Faith and Citizenship Conference Culcutta House, Old Castle Street, London, E1. In collaboration with the Faith and Citizenship Programme, London Metropolitan University and Cambridge University's Interfaith Programme, the Forum is organising a conference on the theme of faith and citizenship. This conference will explore the possibility that in contemporary European cities, and most particularly London, active religious communities and citizenship are mutually supportive. This conference will be divided into three sections. The first will explore the academic debate concerning the historical, theological and philosophical relationship between faith and citizenship. The second will look at education and the relationship between the two in schools. The third will look at political action and most particularly community organising as a means of reconciling faith and citizenship. For further details contact: Clare Keefe email c.keefe@londonmet.ac.uk tel. 0207 320 1161

Special 'weeks' and 'days'

10–17 March Commonwealth Week Festival "A Festival of Culture and Celebration from the Contemporary Commonwealth" is a new initiative from the Friends of the Commonwealth, in association with the Commonwealth Foundation. The festival will draw together events with a Commonwealth connection under a common Commonwealth Week brand, thus creating a virtual festival, mostly by offering a comprehensive listings service, which will market activities to diverse communities and networks, including wide-ranging Commonwealth networks, in the hope that this will encourage increased and broad participation in events. Events will be displayed on interactive web pages, to be launched in early 2008, emails, posters and flyers. If you are planning a suitable event, please get in touch with Emma D'Costa, e.dcosta@commonwealth.int.

RESOURCES

Cities in Transition

The report has recently been published of the Global Exchange Forum meeting held in December 2006 in Birmingham. The Forum was organised jointly by the Barrow Cadbury Trust, the Young Foundation and the German Marshall Fund of the United States. Delegates came from four of the most diverse cities in the world: Birmingham, Los Angeles, Marseille and Toronto. As the report says, the meeting was held in a context in which there are 'cities in transition' which are globally connected and where the population has rapidly changed its colour, age and origins in the last 30 years to the point where minority communities – ethnic, faith and/or cultural are becoming the majority; and in which these emerging 'plural' cities are at the forefront of negotiating the challenges of globalisation and encapsulate the key questions about migration, integration, equality and identity that are pertinent to many cities around the world. The report is available on the website of the Barrow Cadbury Trust at www.bctrust.org.uk/programmes/gex-cities-in-transition.php. Copies of it can also be obtained from the Trust at: Barrow Cadbury Trust, 25–31 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9SF.

Equalities and Communities. Challenges, Choice and Change

ISBN 978-1-901974-80-5 £9.95. Written by Alison Gilchrist and published by Community Development Foundation in association with Community Development Xchange. A guide for those committed to working on equalities issues, setting out a framework for tackling inequalities. Visit www.cdf.org.uk and click on publications to order the book.

Exploring the Faithful City: A Year of Work of the Faith Leaders of Birmingham.

ISBN 978 1 85858 420 1 £7.95. Edited by Jonathan Gurling. Available from most bookshops or from the publisher www.brewinbooks.com. This book explores a year of the work of the Birmingham Faith Leaders' Group from July 2006 – 12 months in which acts of terrorism overseas, wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and violence on the streets of Birmingham challenged the faith leaders to seek harmony and justice and to explore the impact

which faith could bring to bear on the city of Birmingham. It includes photographs, speeches and articles written by the members, some of which were published in the Birmingham Mail.

The Citizens' Day Framework. Building cohesive, active and engaged communities

By Tony Breslin. Published by the Citizenship Foundation in November. Guidance commissioned and funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government. The booklet provides advice and guidance for local authorities, their partners in the voluntary and community sector and other organisations and individuals committed to building community engagement and cohesion through active citizenship. It includes examples of projects which can help in illustrating what local people have in common and bringing together people from different backgrounds. Available to download at www.citizenshipfoundation.org.uk/main/resource.php?s367

In Good Faith: The Four Principles of Interfaith Dialogue, a brief guide for the Churches.

A number of copies of this useful document, published some years ago, are still available. Send an A5 stamped (24p) addressed envelope to Churches Together in England, 27 Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9HH or you can telephone 020 7529 8131.

A Handbook of Faiths

ISBN 1 902360 10 9. Price £5.95. Published by Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource in association with The Festival Shop. Contact Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource, c/o Suffolk New College, Rope Walk, Ipswich, IP4 1LT. Telephone: 01379 678615 or email: office@sifre.org.uk to order a copy of the book.

From the Cradle to Beyond the Grave?

DVD of the second national multi-faith symposium held under the auspices of the NIMHE (National Institute for Mental Health in England) Spirituality Project, Staffordshire University and the Spirituality and Mental Health Forum. At the study day people from the major

faiths/ beliefs and user and carer groups considered 'end-of-life' issues and how faiths/beliefs can assist in making the passing from this life as human and humane as possible. To order a DVD contact Elaine Stanway, Administrative Assistant, Centre for Ageing and Mental Health, Staffordshire University, Blackheath Lane, Stafford ST18 0AD.

Engaging with Faith: Report of the Commonwealth Foundation Project on Improving Understanding and Co-operation between Different Faith Communities, 2005-2007.

ISBN 978-0-903850-28-5 Price £ 8.99.
Published by the Commonwealth Foundation.
The report covers topics such as understanding faith, identity and peace, talking about faith and diversity and faith and development. Available to buy online at
<http://publications.thecommonwealth.org/engaging-with-faith-559-p.aspx>

Friends, Strangers, Citizens? Life in Britain post 7/7.

Price £10 A DVD produced by the South Asian Development Partnership and Masala BridgeBuilders that looks at aspects of life in London after the 7 July bombings. It consists of recorded views from people who live in London and some experts on key issues. There are also worksheets available on each section. Questions discussed include What happened on 7 July? What kind of Britain do we want? Is religion the problem or the solution? Is multiculturalism dead? Available to buy from
<http://www.southasian.org.uk/resources.html>

The Inter Faith Network

The Inter Faith Network was founded in 1987. It works with its member bodies to promote good relations between the faith communities in the UK, to combat inter religious prejudice and intolerance and to help make the UK a country marked by mutual understanding and respect between religions where all can practise their faith with integrity. The Network:

- provides information on faith and inter faith issues;
- advises on multi faith projects and inter faith issues;
- publishes materials to aid work in the religious and inter faith sectors;
- fosters inter faith co-operation on social issues;
- holds regular meetings where social and religious questions of concern to the different faith communities can be examined together;
- links 150 member organisations including: representative bodies from the different faith communities; inter faith organisations; local inter faith groups; and educational and academic bodies





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Inter Faith Network, 8A Lower Grosvenor Place, London SW1W 0EN

Tel: 020 7931 7766

Fax: 020 7931 7722

E-mail: ifnet@interfaith.org.uk

www.interfaith.org.uk



IFN e-bulletin

Inter Faith Week in England and Wales – 15 to 21 November

Inter Faith Week is just 3 weeks away! There has been a fantastic response to the Week so far and preparations are well underway for events across England and Wales. Suggestions for ideas on how to take part in the Week, including material for schools, together with listings of regional and national events can be found at www.interfaithweek.org.uk.

A national launch event for the Week in England, organised by CLG in partnership with the Inter Faith Network (IFN), is being held in London on 12 November. An exhibition at this will showcase work of faith communities and inter faith bodies in the UK. Launch and other special events will be taking place in the different English Regions. Listings for local events in the different English regions can be found on the websites of the English regional faith forums:

East of England: www.eefaithscouncil.org.uk

East Midlands: www.ffem.org.uk

London: www.londoncivicforum.org.uk/?id=436

North East: www.nerfn.org

North West: www.faithnorthwest.org.uk

South East: www.se-faithforum.net

South West: www.faithnetsouthwest.org.uk

West Midlands: www.wmfaithsforum.org.uk

Yorkshire and Humber: www.yorkshireandhumberfaiths.org.uk

A selection of national events can be found on the main Inter Faith Week website www.interfaithweek.org.uk

For events in Wales, check out the Inter Faith Council for Wales site: <http://www.interfaithwales.org/>

In Wales a major inter faith event is being held on 5 December: Inter Faith Eisteddfod at Urdd theatre, Millennium Centre, Cardiff, **for** further information please contact Fleur Missaghian on 07969768939

Scottish Inter Faith Week – 22 to 29 November

The launch of Scottish Inter Faith Week will take place on the afternoon of Sunday 29 November at the University of Dundee from 2.30—5.30pm at the University of Dundee in the Dalhousie Building. Full details about the Week including a list of events taking place across Scotland can be found at

www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org/22.html. It is supported by local inter faith groups, the Scottish Government and Scotland's religious leaders. The theme of Scottish Inter Faith Week this year is 'A Place of Home and Welcome'.

IFN Officers' statement

Following this month's meeting of IFN's Executive Committee, the Chairs and Co-Chairs issued a statement on responding to divisive and extreme developments which can drive a wedge between communities. The full text of this can be found at www.interfaith.org.uk/newsrelease09October2009.pdf.

DfID Community linking project

IFN is part of the consortium which is delivering a Department for International Development (DfID) 'community linking project'. This will be offering funding and learning opportunities to community groups in the UK that have a link with a community group in a developing country. The first stage is a baseline survey to find out about different types of community linking already going on. Faith and inter faith groups are being encouraged to participate in the survey on this as DfID is very keen to see involvement from faith communities. So if you are involved in a community link haven't already done so, please do complete the survey at www.dfid.gov.uk/DCLP.

2009 Parliament of the Worlds Religions

The Parliament of the Worlds Religions takes place every five years and this year is taking place in Melbourne, Australia, from 3 to 9 December. Full details on the Parliament, including a list of events and details on registration can be found at www.parliamentofreligions.org/index.cfm. The IFN office has had a number of queries from bodies keen to know about other UK bodies planning to attend. If you are going, please let us know if you would like to put in touch with others attending.

The International Interfaith Centre and the World Congress of Faiths have a stall at the Parliament and is happy for it to be used as a rendez vous point for people from UK organisations.

The International Interfaith Organisations Network (IION) is inviting bodies attending the Parliament to list their programmes at the Parliament on the website www.interfaithorganisations.net Please send the information to Sandy Bharat at iic@interfaith-centre.org The IION site is a useful resource for finding out about international inter faith developments.

Inter Faith Focus: Details on work of national and regional inter faith bodies

IFN has recently published *Inter Faith Focus*, a full colour booklet showcasing the work of national and regional inter faith organisations in its membership. Hard copies can be ordered free of charge from the IFN office ifnet@interfaith.org.uk or a pdf can be downloaded from the IFN website at www.interfaith.org.uk/publications.

Faiths Act Fellowship

The application process for the 2009-10 Faiths Act Fellowship programme, an initiative of the Tony Blair Faith Foundation and the Interfaith Youth Core, has now closed. Thirty young leaders aged between 18-25 drawn from the different faiths from the US, UK, and Canada have been selected to mobilise young people of faith to raise awareness and resources to promote the Millennium Development Goals. In the UK, the Fellows are being hosted by two of IFN's member bodies, the St Philip's Centre in Leicester and the Christian Muslim Forum. Full details of the programme can be found at www.tonyblairfaithfoundation.org/projects/faiths-act/fellows

Assisted suicide

The Director of Public Prosecutions has recently published, as a basis for public consultation, his interim policy for prosecutors on assisted suicide. The text can be found at www.cps.gov.uk/consultations/as_policy.html The closing date for the consultation is 16 December.

Census 2011

Following publication last December of its White Paper on arrangements for the 2011 Census in England and Wales, which it is planned to hold on Sunday 27 March 2011, the Government undertook further testing and consultation on the form of the voluntary question to be used on religious identity. The Draft Census (England and Wales) Order 2009 was laid before Parliament on 21 October (News release - <http://2011mc.census.gov.uk/index.php?module=documents&action=view&id=503>) The Government have decided to maintain the position set out in the White Paper and to use a question on religious identity which is in almost identical terms to that used in the 2001 Census. The text can be found on page 5 of this document www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011-census/2011-census-questionnaire-content/recommended-questions---religion.pdf which sets out the background to the development of the question.

BBC Trust review

The BBC Trust – the governing body of the BBC – carries out an in-depth review at least once every five years of its services. It has recently launched a review into BBC One, BBC Two, BBC Four and the BBC Red Button. The Trust has also just launched a consultation on the BBC's Editorial Guidelines in order “that the BBC's standards reflect the expectations of the public”. Full details of both the review and how you can take part in the consultation can be found at www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust.

EHRC funding programme

Applicants to the EHRC's Strategic Funding Programme (Priority One and Priority Two) have now been informed of the outcome of their first stage application. The

applications for Priority Three (legal advice) are being considered.
www.equalityhumanrights.com/fairer-britain/funding-from-the-commission

Inter Faith Network website and e-bulletin

The IFN website is currently undergoing redesign. We would welcome your views on features and functions which you would like to see. Please email paresh.solanki@interfaith.org.uk or ring him on 020 7931 7766.

Paresh would also be pleased to hear your views on the format of this short e-bulletin. It is currently planned to issue such a bulletin monthly, complementing more detailed Circulars to member bodies.

If you would like to let us have items for consideration for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 23 November 2009

2010–2019

Newsletters of the Inter Faith Network for the UK



IFN e-bulletin

28 April 2010

Council of Dharmic Faiths UK

Leaders of national faith organisations of the Buddhist, Hindu, Jain, Sikh, and Zoroastrian communities have met together to facilitate the formation of the Council of Dharmic Faiths UK. [Read more...](#)

Meeting God in Friend and Stranger

The Catholic Church in England and Wales has published a new teaching document on inter-religious relations entitled *Meeting God in Friend and Stranger: Fostering Respect and Mutual Understanding Between the Religions*. [Read more...](#)

Equality Act 2010

Prior to the dissolution of Parliament ahead of the General Election, the Government's Equality Bill completed its passage through Parliament and received the Royal Assent. [Read more...](#)

The Government's Prevent programme

On 30 March, the Communities and Local Government Select Committee of the House of Commons published its report on Prevent. [Read more...](#)

Churches election guidelines and hustings events

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland has produced a document entitled *Faith in Politics: Preparing Churches for the General Election 2010*, a 16-page guide to some of the key policy areas likely to be debated in the run up to polling day. [Read more...](#)

Hope not Hate Election pledge

The Board of Deputies of British Jews, Jewish Council for Racial Equality and Three Faiths Forum, have facilitated the issuing of an election pledge. [Read more...](#)

Council of Dharmic Faiths issues statement on voting

The Council of Dharmic Faiths has issued a statement noting that Dharma is about right conduct towards all beings regardless of race or belief and encouraging all who share its vision to vote for ethical and trustworthy candidates, regardless of party, who will fulfil their duty to represent them with integrity. [Read more...](#)

Muslim Council of Britain statement on voting

A range of leading Muslim scholars, from Islam's diverse theological traditions, have signed a joint statement on voting. [Read more...](#)

Hindu Forum of Britain encourages Hindu community to vote

The Hindu Forum of Britain is implementing a campaign to encourage the Hindu community to engage with their prospective parliamentary candidates and to air their views before making an informed decision as to which party to vote for. [Read more...](#)

Charity Commission guidance on elections

As noted in the last issue of the IFN e-bulletin but repeated here because of its topicality, the Charity Commission has published an updated version of its guidance on Charities and Elections. [Read more...](#)

The Sanctuary Pledge

In the run-up to the General Election, churches, faith groups and other organisations can ask politicians to sign the 'Sanctuary Pledge'. [Read more...](#)

Inter Faith Week 2010

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Rev Dr John Hall, until recently Chair of the West Midlands Faiths Forum, has this month taken up post as Director of the St Philip's Centre in Leicester. [Read more...](#)

New multi faith chaplaincy centre at the University of Bedfordshire

Faith community leaders and staff from the University of Bedfordshire have met together to celebrate the opening of the new spirituality, faith and social justice centre – SeedBeds. [Read more...](#)

Restoring Dignity Toolkit launch

The Restoring Dignity Campaign to 'End Violence Against Women' was launched on 17 April in Mumbai, India by Religions for Peace Global Women of Faith Network. [Read more...](#)

Statement on ASEM Inter Faith Dialogue

The 6th ASEM (Asia-Europe Meeting) Interfaith Dialogue was held from 7 to 9 April in Spain. [Read more...](#)

Diary dates

Information on many inter faith events taking place around the country. [Read more...](#)

If you would like to let us have items for consideration for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 20 May 2010, with the word 'E-bulletin' in the subject line.

Disclaimer:

Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Council of Dharmic Faiths UK

At a meeting on the 30 March in London leaders of national faith organisations of the Buddhist, Hindu, Jain, Sikh, and Zoroastrian communities met together to facilitate the formation of the Council of Dharmic Faiths UK. The aim of the Council is to encourage friendship, goodwill, respect, equality and understanding between the Dharmic Faiths. On the basis of a shared cultural tradition, the participating faith leaders and organisations agreed to cooperate in advancing the public knowledge of these faiths and their communities in Britain, including the understanding of their teachings, traditions and practices. There will be an official launch in due course.

For more information please contact the Chair of the Council, Dr Natubhai Shah at natubhaishah@aol.com or the Secretary of the Council, Mr Ramesh Pattni at rameshpattni@hotmail.com.

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Meeting God in Friend and Stranger

The Catholic Church in England and Wales has published a new teaching document on inter-religious relations entitled *Meeting God in Friend and Stranger: Fostering Respect and Mutual Understanding Between the Religions*. The document stresses that inter-religious dialogue is not restricted to academics but also takes place where everyday life is shared in an atmosphere of respect and openness. A copy of the document can be downloaded free from

www.catholicchurch.org.uk/catholic_church/media_centre/press_releases/press_releases_2010/new_teaching_document_on_interreligious_dialogue_from_the_bishops_conference_of_england_and_wales

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Equality Act 2010

Prior to the dissolution of Parliament ahead of the General Election, the Government's Equality Bill completed its passage through Parliament and received the Royal Assent. A note on the new Act is available on the IFN website at www.interfaith.org.uk/briefingnotes.htm.

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The Government's Prevent programme

On 30 March, the Communities and Local Government Select Committee of the House of Commons published its report on Prevent. It contains a lengthy list of recommendations. In its report the Committee says that the Government's Preventing Violent Extremism programme is "a complex and sensitive agenda which has met with widely varying perceptions as to what the programme stands for and what it aims to deliver on the ground"; and that its inquiry "has shown that the current overall approach to *Prevent* is contentious and unlikely ever to be fully accepted in its existing form by those it is most important to engage." The Select Committee's report

can be found at www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cmcomloc.htm. A background note on Prevent is available on the IFN website at www.interfaith.org.uk/briefingnotes.htm.

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ELECTION RELATED NEWS

Churches election guidelines and hustings events

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland has produced a document entitled *Faith in Politics: Preparing Churches for the General Election 2010*, a 16-page guide to some of the key policy areas likely to be debated in the run up to polling day. This document, together with other materials on the forthcoming elections, can be found at www.ctbi.org.uk/CFH/427. They do not support a 'Church' view or party line, but aim to help people engage with a range of important issues facing the country, however they may decide to vote.

Many Churches across the UK are now working in partnership with other local faith communities to hold hustings events. The online hustings registration system and database, where you can advertise your meeting or see what is happening in your constituency, is now working, with plenty of events already entered. To search for a hustings in your constituency, go to: www.ctbi.org.uk/428. If you are interested in organising a hustings, please register your details at: www.ctbi.org.uk/444.

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Hope not Hate Election pledge

The Board of Deputies of British Jews, Jewish Council for Racial Equality and Three Faiths Forum, have facilitated the issuing of the following election pledge: "With the approach of the General Election we are all too aware of those political forces who would seek to divide our country by promoting ideologies of racism and prejudice. We are immensely proud of the fundamentally British characteristics of equality, respect and fairness and of British society's uncompromising rejection of the demonisation of any group, whether religious, ethnic or otherwise. We therefore urge every British citizen to use their vote to support any party of their choice which stands opposed to the destructive politics of hatred, to vote for freedom not fear, partnerships not prejudice, and hope not hate." A list of those who have signed up to the pledge to date can be found at www.threefaithsforum.org.uk/electionpledge.html. Organisations which wish to sign up to it can email either stephen@threefaithsforum.org.uk, edie@jcore.org.uk or philip.rosenberg@bod.org.uk.

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Council of Dharmic Faiths issues statement on voting

The Council of Dharmic Faiths issued a statement on 22 April noting that Dharma is about right conduct towards all beings regardless of race or belief and encouraging all who share its vision to vote for ethical and trustworthy candidates, regardless of party, who will fulfil their duty to represent them with integrity. For further information contact Mr Ramesh Pattni, Secretary of the Council, at rameshpattni@hotmail.com.

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Muslim Council of Britain statement on voting

A range of leading Muslim scholars, from Islam's diverse theological traditions, have signed a joint statement saying that Muslims have an obligation to join hands with others to elect those who will seek the common good. The joint statement observes that the forthcoming General Election is an ideal opportunity for voters to reconnect and hold to account their representatives. The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) has urged mosques to convey this message to Muslim congregations at Friday prayers until polling day. With this statement, MCB kicks off a programme of activities ahead of the General Election. While maintaining its non-partisan stand on politics, the MCB will be encouraging British Muslims to play a full part in the democratic and civic life of the country. The MCB will also highlight those public policy issues that will affect Muslims in the next few years. The Muslim Council of Britain has launched a website for the elections at www.muslimvote.org.uk.

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Hindu Forum of Britain encourages Hindu community to vote

The Hindu Forum of Britain is implementing a campaign to encourage the Hindu community to engage with their prospective parliamentary candidates and to air their views before making an informed decision as to which party to vote for. As part of the campaign it is organising local hustings and distributing information through temples, community centres and other mediums to raise awareness about the importance of voting. Further information can be found at www.hinduforum.org/Default.aspx?slD=45&clD=443&ctID=43&IID=0.

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Charity Commission guidance on elections

The Charity Commission has recently updated its guidance on elections and politics. This guidance is for use by charities during the period between the announcement of an election, and the date on which an election is held and applies to both national

and local elections. The guidance sits alongside other requirements, such as electoral law, which apply to charities and non-charities alike. A full copy of the updated guidance on *Charities and Elections* can be downloaded at www.charity-commission.gov.uk/supportingcharities/elect.asp.

The Charity Commission's website says: "The independent nature of the charitable sector is of fundamental importance to society, and is greatly valued by the public. The guiding principle of charity law in terms of elections is that charities should be, and be seen to be, independent from party politics. This guidance contains legal and good practice advice to charities to help ensure that they are able both to: retain the essential quality of independence; and use their voice effectively at election times."

This brief updated guidance should be read in conjunction with the Charity Commission's more detailed guidance on the wider subject of *Speaking Out: Guidance on campaigning and political activities by charities* (www.charity-commission.gov.uk/publications/cc9.asp). The principles described in this continue to apply during an election period.

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The Sanctuary Pledge

In the run-up to the General Election, faith groups and other organisations can ask politicians to sign the 'Sanctuary Pledge' (<http://sanctuarypledge.org.uk>). The Pledge calls on Parliamentarians to:

- Campaign responsibly, positively and sensitively in the 2010 election
- Use the term 'sanctuary' instead of 'asylum' when communicating with the public
- Support policies that will end the detention of children and families for immigration reasons
- Promote tolerance and neighbourliness between local communities
- Safeguard the long-term future of sanctuary
- Meet with the Sanctuary Pledge organisers six months after they are elected to review progress

A full list of those who have signed up to the pledge can be found at <http://sanctuarypledge.org.uk/#/supporters/4536536994>. Those wishing to be added as supporters, can contact support@sanctuarypledge.org.uk.

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Inter Faith Week 2010

The second national Inter Faith Week in England and Wales is taking place from Sunday 21 to Saturday 27 November 2010. The aims of the Week are: to strengthen good inter faith relations at all levels; to increase awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, in particular celebrating and building on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society; and to increase understanding between people of religious and non-religious belief.

For any enquiries about Inter Faith Week in England, please email: enquiries@interfaithweek.org.uk. The Inter Faith Week website www.interfaithweek.org.uk will be further developed across the coming weeks to provide further resources (including a report on last year's Week) and event and project ideas.

An Inter Faith Week is currently under consideration in Northern Ireland.

Scottish Inter Faith Week is taking place from 28 November to 5 December. Further details can be found at www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org.

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The Big Lunch – 18 July

The Big Lunch is an Eden Project initiative which takes place across the UK on 18 July and aims to build and strengthen communities by encouraging people to have lunch with their neighbours, as a simple, fun and inclusive act of community. The Big Lunch took place for the first time last year with 730,000 people eating at 8,000 Lunches all across the UK – the biggest set of street parties since the Golden Jubilee.

The Big Lunch aims to be as inclusive as possible and the team are working with many organisations (including the Inter Faith Network) to help spread the word. Inter faith initiatives often use food as an essential part of their activities to encourage dialogue and networking between people of different faiths. The Big Lunch is a great opportunity to reach out and start conversations in an informal way in your neighbourhood.

If you are interested in holding a Big Lunch in your own community you can find free Big Lunch tips and resources at www.thebiglunch.com, where you can also register your Big Lunch on the special map. For further information please contact Claire Crook on 020 7307 3144 or at claire.crook@thebiglunch.com.

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REsilience website launched

The website for the *RE*silience project of the Religious Education Council of England and Wales has now been launched at www.re-silience.org.uk. The project to develop a training programme for religious education teachers on community cohesion and preventing violent extremism, is scheduled to last until March 2011 and aims to Building confidence to handle contentious issues in RE.

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New Director for the St Philip's Centre

Rev Dr John Hall, until recently Chair of the West Midlands Faiths Forum, has this month taken up post as Director of the St Philip's Centre in Leicester and also as Director for Inter Faith Relations for the Diocese of Leicester. Further information can be found at http://stphilipscentre.dioceseofleicester.com/?page_id=4.

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New multi faith chaplaincy centre at the University of Bedfordshire

Faith community leaders and staff from the University of Bedfordshire met together to celebrate the opening of the new spirituality, faith and social justice centre - SeedBeds, on the Bedford campus and to engage in a workshop about how the university can build bridges with the local community. For more information on the Centre please contact Revd Cassandra Howes, Co-ordinating Chaplain, on 01234 793177 or at cass.howes@beds.ac.uk.

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INTERNATIONAL

Restoring Dignity Toolkit launch

The Restoring Dignity Campaign to 'End Violence Against Women' was launched on 17 April in Mumbai, India by Religions for Peace Global Women of Faith Network. The launch was attended by religious leaders and women from around the globe. The Restoring Dignity Toolkit is designed to help equip religious leaders and communities for multi-religious cooperation around education and advocacy to defend the dignity and rights of women and girls. The Toolkit can be accessed on the Religions for Peace website at <http://religionsforpeace.org/resources/toolkits/restoring-dignity-a-toolkit.html>.

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Statement on ASEM Inter Faith Dialogue

The 6th ASEM (Asia-Europe Meeting) Interfaith Dialogue was held from 7 to 9 April in Spain. ASEM Interfaith Dialogue was established in 1995 and aims to provide a framework in which Government representatives, policy makers, scholars and religious leaders can exchange views on religious, social and cultural issues in the spirit of respect, mutual tolerance and understanding.

The deliberations of the 6th ASEM Interfaith Dialogue focused on three major themes: Religious Freedom and Human Rights; Respect and Mutual Knowledge; and Interfaith and Intercultural Dialogues as a Bridge between Societies.

At the conclusion of the event a statement was issued calling for dialogue among leaders and religious groups to reach the general public. Further information on the event and a copy of the statement can be found at www.aseminfoboard.org/Calendar/Activities/?id=303.

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DIARY DATES

Christian Muslim Forum, together with Scripture Union and MADE in Europe, is running a training day on Saturday 15 May entitled *Cross, Crescent and Cool* looking at how Christians and Muslims can build bridges between young people of the two faiths. The day runs from 10.30am to 4pm at the St Ethelburga's Centre for Peace and Reconciliation, Bishopsgate, London and costs £25. You can book a place at www.christianmuslimforum.org/crosscrescentandcool.

Council of Christians and Jews is running a 10 day seminar for clergy and lay readers at the Yad Vashem Institute in Jerusalem. The programme has been designed jointly by the Head of the British Desk at Yad Vashem and Dr Jane Clements, CCJ consultant. The topics covered include Jewish life before the Holocaust, communities, the history of Jewish/Christian relations, art, the Final Solution, survivor stories and theological issues. The cost is £875 including flights, in-country transport, all taxes, full board, excursions, entry fees and tours. Further information including an application form can be found at www.ccj.org.uk/Yadvashem-Seminar. If you have any queries, please contact CCJ on 020 7820 0090 or at cjrelations@ccj.org.uk.

St Philip's Centre, Leicester, is running a three-day training course on *Presence and Engagement in a Multi Faith World*. The course takes place on 18 May, 1 June and 15 June. It is mainly for Christians of all denominations working in inter faith situations, but all who are interested are welcome. The training course costs £120 non residential, including lunches. Accommodation can be arranged if required. Training is funded for members of the Anglican Diocese of Leicester; others can enquire about funding through their training officers or local churches. For any enquiries, please telephone 0116 273 3459.

Winchester Centre for Reconciliation and Peace will be holding its launch event at 7.00pm on Thursday 20th May in the Stripe on the King Alfred Campus at the University of Winchester. Admission to the event is free and refreshments will be served from 6.15pm. The Right Reverend Joseph C. Humper, Chair of the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission, will share his thoughts and experience of the 'Blood Diamond' Rebel War. If you would like to attend the launch event, please email conferences@winchester.ac.uk. Further information on the Centre can be found at www.winchester.ac.uk/?page=10828.

World Congress of Faiths, together with the Fintry Trust, is hosting an event on *The Emotional and Spiritual Needs of Older People – How Can Faith Communities Help?* from 10am to 4pm on Saturday 17 July. The meeting is being held at The Fintry Trust, Fintry, Brook, Godalming and there is an entrance fee of £10 for the day. If you would like to attend, please contact the Fintry Trust on 01428 682621 or at secretary@thefintrytrust.org.uk.

Scottish Inter Faith Council

The Annual Networking Seminar for local inter faith groups in Scotland will take place on Sunday 16 May from 12 noon until 4.45pm at the Beveridge Park Hotel in Kirkcaldy. This year the seminar is being hosted by the Scottish Inter Faith Council in partnership with Fife Inter Faith Group and will take place in the Kingdom of Fife. Its theme is "Sustaining Diversity: Working Together to Sustain our Communities and the Environment. Further information from: fhume@scottishinterfaithcouncil.org 0141 420 6982.

Brighton and Hove Inter Faith Contact Group is hosting a *Spirit of Brighton* event with World Sacred Music at 2.30pm on Sunday 25 April. The event is being held at Brighton Unitarian Church, New Road, Brighton. For further details please contact Charlotte Gravestock at mail@jcgravestock.plus.com.

Muslim-Christian Forum (Bury) will be holding its annual *Harmony Event* at 2pm on Saturday 24 April. The event will begin at St Marie's Church, Silver Street, Bury and will end at Noor ul-Islam Mosque in Yarwood Street, Bury. For further information please contact Keith Trivasse at keithtrivasse@ourchurch.plus.com.

Calderdale Interfaith Council is holding a Faith Leaders meeting from 10.30am to 12.30pm on Thursday 29 April. The meeting will be held at Heath Training Centre, Free School Lane, Halifax and aims to bring together faith leaders from across the borough to discuss how faith can be promoted more widely and to share good practice. The meeting will also be sharing the report and findings of the Scoping Study of the Faith Sector in Calderdale which Leeds Metropolitan University was commissioned by the Interfaith Council to undertake. If you would like to attend the meeting, please contact Raja Muhammad Taufiq Azhar Dockrat on 07775 649655 or at calderdale.interfaithcouncil@yahoo.co.uk.

Hastings and District Interfaith Forum is hosting a workshop on *Conflict and bridge-building* from 1pm to 6pm on Saturday 22 May. The workshop is being held at the Isobel Blackman Centre, South Street, St Leonards on Sea and there is a fee of £10 for the workshop. If you would like to attend, please contact Tim Miller at timjmill@onetel.net.

Horsham Interfaith Forum and **St Ethelburga's Centre** are running a day entitled *Sharing our Faith Journeys* from 10am to 3pm on Saturday 22 May. The event is free to attend and is being held at St Johns Church, Springfield Road, Horsham. To register in advance please ring 01403 258334.

Hull and East Riding Interfaith will be hosting a 'forum on tolerance' which will be opened by Lord Bhikhu Parekh and Raphael Cohen-Almagor at 5pm on Tuesday 25 May. All are welcome to the event which will take place at the Guildhall in Hull. For further information please contact Jackie Lukes on 01482 445728 or at jackie.lukes@heri.org.uk.

Kirklees Faiths Forum is leading this year's West Yorkshire *Treasures Revealed* festival from 29 May until 6 June. 48 places of worship across Kirklees are taking part in the festival. For more information visit www.kirkleesfaithsforum.org.uk or contact them on 01924 324 836.

Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship is holding its Walk of Friendship on 1 May. The walk will be the inaugural event of the 'Treasures Revealed in Leeds' programme and will include visits to five different places of worship: a Pagan stone spiral, a Methodist church with English and Chinese congregations, an Anglican church, a Hindu temple and a mosque. For further information please contact Cynthia Dickinson at secretary@concord-leeds.org.uk.

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For detailed information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Scottish Inter Faith Council: www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org

For detailed information on events and projects in the English regions see:

East of England: www.eefaithscouncil.org.uk

East Midlands: www.ffem.org.uk

London: www.londoncivicforum.org.uk (Faiths Forum for London)

North East: www.nerfn.org

North West: www.faithnorthwest.org.uk

South East: www.se-faithforum.net

South West: www.faithnetsouthwest.org.uk

West Midlands: www.wmfaithsforum.org.uk

Yorkshire and Humber: www.yorkshireandhumberfaiths.org.uk

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If you would like to let us have items for consideration for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 20 May 2010, with the word 'E-bulletin' in the subject line.

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The Inter Faith Network for the UK

www.interfaith.org.uk

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IFN e-bulletin

25 March 2010

Inter Faith Week in England and Wales

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New IFN Co-Chair from Christian community

Rt Revd Dr Alastair Redfern, IFN's new Co-Chair from the Christian community, co-chaired his first Executive Committee meeting in February together with Dr Girdari Lal Bhan of the Hindu community. [Read more...](#)

IFN publications

Three IFN reports have recently been printed, including the report of a seminar held jointly with the National Association of SACREs on *Local Inter Faith Organisations and Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education: Working together for understanding and community cohesion* as part of IFN's 'Soundings' programme. [Read more....](#)

Equality Bill

The Report stage in the House of Lords of the Equality Bill was completed on 2 March and Third Reading took place on 23 March. A full briefing note on the Bill was placed on IFN's website last month. [Read more...](#)

Faiths in Action Round 2 and 'Faith Matters'

The second round of funding under the Faiths in Action programme administered by the Community Development Foundation is open for applications. [Read more...](#)

Secretary of State announcements at Faith and Social Action conference

At the Communities and Local Government conference, *Faith and Social Action: Innovation and Expertise*, held in London on 17 March its Secretary of State, Mr John Denham, announced a number of measures relating to faith based engagement in social action and in the 'public square'. [Read more...](#)

Visible - quality assurance and faith based organisations

The Faith based Regeneration Network (FbRN) is working with the Community Matters, the Church Urban Fund and the Faith and Civil Society department of Goldsmith's College to develop a quality assurance framework for faith based organisations. [Read more...](#)

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The EHRC has published two reports in its Research Report series. [Read more...](#)

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New model constitution for very small charities

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Revised guidance for RE

Updated guidance on RE provision for primary and secondary schools and local authorities to support the delivery of good RE in schools in England by the Department for Children, Schools and Families was published at the end of January following a consultation exercise last summer. [Read more...](#)

Annual Scottish Inter Faith Council Networking Seminar for Local Inter Faith Groups

The Annual Networking Seminar for local inter faith groups in Scotland will take place on Sunday 16 May from 12 noon until 4.45pm at the Beveridge Park Hotel in Kirkcaldy. [Read more...](#)

Regional inter faith link meeting in East of England.

The Inter Faith Network holds, with the regional faith forums in the English regions, periodic meetings for local inter faith organisers to share news and discuss issues of common concern. The next such meeting will take place in the East of England in Cambridge on 19 April. [Read more...](#)

Building Good Community Relations in Wales

The Inter-faith Council for Wales is currently working on a project with the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the Community Development Foundation to help build capacity for inter faith work in Wales. [Read more...](#)

Inter Faith Facilitators online community

The St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace has created an online community for 'interfaith facilitators'. [Read more...](#)

Inter Faith Network website

The Inter Faith Network website is currently undergoing re-design. [Read more...](#)

If you would like to let us have items for consideration for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by Friday 16 April 2010.

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Inter Faith Week in England and Wales

An Inter Faith Week will take place across England and Wales from Sunday 21 to Saturday 27 November 2010.

The aims of the Week are: to strengthen good inter faith relations at all levels; to increase awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, in particular celebrating and building on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society; and to increase understanding between people of religious and non-religious belief.

This will be the second time that such a Week has taken place in England and Wales. It builds on the very successful pattern of events held last November which ranged from social action events, to discussions and dialogues, inter faith football matches, meals, inter faith walks and pilgrimages, festivals and celebrations, tree plantings, exhibitions, concerts, film festivals, activities in schools and in FE and HE and other institutions.

The Week is being led by the Inter Faith Network for the UK, working with its member bodies, in consultation with the Department for Communities and Local Government and also with the Department for Children, Schools and Families, the Local Government Association and the Equality and Human Rights Commission. Regional Faith Forums in England will again play a key role in supporting and making known the pattern of events in their regions. In Wales, the lead on the Week is being taken by the Inter Faith Council for Wales in consultation with relevant statutory and other bodies.

For any enquiries about Inter Faith Week in England, please email: enquiries@interfaithweek.org.uk. The Inter Faith Week website www.interfaithweek.org.uk will be further developed across the coming weeks to provide further resources (including a report on last year's Week) and event and project ideas.

An Inter Faith Week is currently under consideration in Northern Ireland.

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Scottish Inter Faith Week

Scottish Inter Faith Week, now in its seventh year, will run from 28 November to 5 December.

Scottish Inter Faith Week 2009 was held from 22 to 29 November on the theme of 'A Place of Home and Welcome'. Full details of the events that took place across Scotland throughout the Week can be found at www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org/resources/Programme+SIFW7+2009.doc.

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New IFN Co-Chair from Christian community

Rt Revd Dr Alastair Redfern, IFN's new Co-Chair from the Christian community, co-chaired his first Executive Committee meeting in February together with Dr Girdari Lal Bhan of the Hindu community.

Bishop Alastair has been Bishop of Derby since 2005 and is currently the Chair of the Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby.

He has taken up post in place of Rt Revd Tom Butler, who this month retired as Bishop of Southwark.

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IFN publications

Reports of three IFN events have recently been published:

- * A seminar on *Bilateral Inter Faith Dialogue in the UK* held by IFN at Lambeth Palace, by kind permission of the Archbishop of Canterbury, as part of IFN's 'Soundings' programme.
- * A seminar held jointly with the National Association of SACREs on *Local Inter Faith Organisations and Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education: Working together for understanding and community cohesion* at Coventry TechnoCentre, as part of IFN's 'Soundings' programme.
- * IFN's 2009 National Meeting on *Good Inter Faith Relations: The Next Generation* held at Leicestershire County Cricket Club.

Pdfs of these reports are all available free of charge on the IFN website at www.interfaith.org.uk/publications. Hard copies can be purchased from the IFN office (ifnet@interfaith.org.uk).

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Equality Bill

The Report stage in the House of Lords of the Equality Bill was completed on 2 March and Third Reading took place on 23 March. A full briefing note on the Bill was placed on IFN's website last month. The Bill now returns to the House of Commons for it to consider the amendments made to the Bill by the House of Lords in Committee, on Report and on Third Reading.

During the Report stage the House of Lords voted to accept an amendment to the Bill in order to remove the prohibition on civil partnerships taking place in religious buildings, while placing no obligations on religious organisations to host civil partnerships if they do not wish to do so. The amendment enables Liberal Judaism, the Quakers and Unitarians to do so, which is what they wish. On Third Reading some consequential amendments were agreed without a vote. The relevant provisions will be brought into force by a commencement order. The Government made it clear that it would consult fully about the

details of the implementation of these new arrangements, including the new regulations which will be required in due course.

Another amendment to the Bill, which was agreed at the Report stage without a vote, was to confer powers on 'a Minister of the Crown' to amend, by order, the section describing the protected characteristic of 'race' "so as to provide for caste to be an aspect of race". The Government has commissioned the National Institute of Economic and Social Research to explore the nature, extent and severity of caste prejudice and discrimination in Britain, and its associated implications for future Government policy; and, on this basis, accepted the inclusion of a power in the Bill which could be exercised or not in the light of the research and consultation on it.

You can follow the progress of the Bill at <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2009-10/equality.html>.

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Faiths in Action Round 2 and 'Faith Matters'

Faiths in Action is a £4 million grant programme being administered by the Community Development Foundation (CDF). The fund is being distributed over two years in two rounds of funding. In the first round, 216 organisations were offered grants of up to £12,000, totalling over £2.43 million.

Applications have now opened for the second round of funding.

Grants of up to £6,000 are being offered. There is no formal deadline for applications. It is a rolling programme and applications will be accepted in the date and time order that they are received by CDF until the total value of the eligible relevant applications equals the overall value of the fund.

More information on the funding programme and how to apply, together with a PowerPoint briefing presentation and pdf leaflet can be found at www.cdf.org.uk/web/guest/faiths-in-action.

You can also telephone the helpline on 01223 406533 or e-mail CDF at fundingadmin@cdf.org.uk.

CDF's new publication, 'Faith Matters' is a collection of 19 in-depth case studies of projects funded by the Faiths in Action grant programme. Looking specifically at projects dealing with the environment, dialogue, young people and social action, 'Faith Matters' offers faith practitioners evidence to inform their projects and to prove the importance of faith work to policy-makers. Voluntary and community sector workers will benefit from good practice drawn from case studies in running local projects and attracting funding.

A free pdf of the book can be downloaded from www.cdf.org.uk/web/guest/news-headline?id=222269. Hard copies are available at £15.95 and can be purchased online.

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Secretary of State announcements at Faith and Social Action conference

At a CLG conference on faith and social action on 17 March Mr John Denham, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, announced a new Faith Leadership in Government Fund worth £1.2m, designed to increase the capacity to engage of national faith community bodies which work with Government; a £50,000 Innovation in Faith-Based Social Action Prize to help publicise and reward faith based projects which have not yet received the recognition they deserve which are finding new ways to meet local problems, bring people together and meet the needs of local communities; and 'mythbusting' guidance for local authorities to remove confusion affecting commissioning of faith based bodies to deliver services. The press release can be found at:

www.communities.gov.uk/news/corporate/1507453, the speech made by John Denham at www.communities.gov.uk/speeches/corporate/faithsocialaction, and the 'myth busting' document, *Ensuring a level playing field: Funding faith based organisations to provide publicly funded services*, at www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/15073411.pdf.

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Visible - quality assurance and faith based organisations

The Faith based Regeneration Network (FbRN) is working with the Community Matters, the Church Urban Fund and the Faith and Civil Society department of Goldsmith's College to develop a quality assurance framework for faith based organisations. This will build on the VISIBLE framework (www.visiblecommunities.org.uk/) which Community Matters has been using for some years and which is currently being revised. As part of the process, they will be piloting the quality assurance framework with six faith based organisations. If you would like to be considered as a pilot project or to learn more about the project please contact Jane: 07734 962140; janewinter@fbrn.org.uk by 31 March.

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Two EHRC research reports

The EHRC has published two reports in its Research Report series.

The first was *Good Relations: a conceptual analysis* by Nick Johnson and John Tatam of the Institute of Community Cohesion.

This report examines what is actually meant by good relations and how this reflects, or stems from, theoretical approaches and public policy, and begins to suggest ways in which good relations might be measured. It therefore forms the initial output from the Commission's programme of work on good relations that will result in the establishment of a Good Relations Measurement Framework (GRMF). The report can be found at:

www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/research/research_report_42_-_good_relations_a_conceptual_analysis.pdf.

The second report, *Religion or belief: identifying issues and priorities*, was produced by Linda Woodhead (with the assistance of Rebecca Catto) who is Professor of Sociology and Religion at Lancaster University and Director of the Religion and Society Programme of the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Economic Research Council.

In April and May 2009 three seminars were held in London, Lancaster and Glasgow. Each seminar had around thirty participants, all experts in the field, including academics, policymakers and practitioners. The London seminar focused particularly on the situation in England; the Lancaster seminar on England and Wales, and the Glasgow seminar on Scotland. After these three seminars, a final one was held at the Commission's offices in Manchester, at which preliminary findings were discussed with Commission staff. The purpose of the seminars was to assist the Commission in the early stages of thinking about its responsibility for 'religion or belief', and associated issues of religious equality and discrimination, fairness and good relations, with a particular focus on developing the evidence base for this mandate. This report completes this seminar-based research project. It summarises the aims, methodology and context of the research, offers an overview of the papers presented at the seminars, analyses the main themes arising from the seminars, and draws out research and policy implications. The report can be found at: http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/research/research_report_48_religion_or_belief.pdf.

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National Policing Improvement Agency guidance

The Citizen Focus and Neighbourhood Policing Programme Team of the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) has recently produced an interactive guide for neighbourhood policing teams and partners on *Working with Faith Communities*.

This guide is one in a series produced by the Citizen Focus and Neighbourhood Policing Programme Team aimed at increasing engagement with the public. The guide includes information on visiting places of worship and is designed to support Neighbourhood Policing Teams and partners to work more closely with faith communities at a local level. Its aim is to help them in identifying and addressing the specific needs and priorities identified by faith communities within a wider neighbourhood policing engagement strategy.

A copy of the guide can be downloaded from www.npiadocuments.co.uk/faithguidance.pdf.

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Counter Terrorism in Places of Worship

The National Counter Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO) has researched and produced a guide intended to give protective security advice to those who are responsible for security in places of worship. Whilst the document concentrates on

measures to counter terrorism, it is hoped that these will also work against other threats, such as theft, burglary and arson (which remain the greatest threats to places of worship). The NaCTSO press release says “It is accepted that the concept of absolute security is almost impossible to achieve in combating the threat of terrorism, but it is possible, through the use of this guidance, to reduce the risk to as low as reasonably practicable.”

A copy of the guide can be downloaded from www.nactso.gov.uk/placesofworship.php.

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Charity Commission guidance on elections

The Charity Commission has recently updated its guidance on elections and politics. This guidance is for use by charities during the period between the announcement of an election, and the date on which an election is held and applies to both national and local elections. The guidance sits alongside other requirements, such as electoral law, which apply to charities and non-charities alike. A full copy of the updated guidance on *Charities and Elections* can be downloaded at www.charity-commission.gov.uk/supportingcharities/elect.asp.

The Charity Commission’s website says: “The independent nature of the charitable sector is of fundamental importance to society, and is greatly valued by the public. The guiding principle of charity law in terms of elections is that charities should be, and be seen to be, independent from party politics. This guidance contains legal and good practice advice to charities to help ensure that they are able both to: retain the essential quality of independence; and use their voice effectively at election times.”

This brief updated guidance should be read in conjunction with the Charity Commission’s more detailed guidance on the wider subject of *Speaking Out: Guidance on campaigning and political activities by charities* (www.charity-commission.gov.uk/publications/cc9.asp). The principles described in this continue to apply during an election period.

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New model constitution for very small charities

The Charity Commission, in partnership with a number of umbrella bodies across the charity sector, has launched a new, simplified constitution which is designed for very small charities with an annual income of under £5,000 (which do not need to register with the Charity Commission, but are still subject to charity law) and which do not own land or employ staff. The template constitution uses clear, direct language and is just 700 words long. For more information, including the downloadable constitution, go to www.charitycommission.gov.uk/registration/smallcharity.asp. (Please note that if a charity’s income exceeds £5,000, it will need to register with the Charity Commission and will then need a more comprehensive governing document.)

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Charity Commission good practice guide for faith-based organisations

The Charity Commission has published *Faith in Good Governance*, a new guide to good practice for the 30,000 faith-based organisations in the third sector. It is hoped that the guidance, released by the Commission's Faith and Social Cohesion Unit, will help trustees, staff and volunteers of faith-based charities, including places of worship, comply with charity law, and equip them to work even better, whilst recognising that maintenance of their faith-identity, core aims and mission is key. The guidance is primarily aimed at the trustees, staff and volunteers of those charities established with a religious purpose whose primary focus is religious worship and associated activities, rather than wider social or pastoral activity. A full copy of *Faith in Good Governance* can be downloaded at www.charity-commission.gov.uk/tcc/faithgov.asp#fore.

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Public benefit assessments for charities

Charities are required to submit to the Charity Commission as part of their report for financial years commencing on or after 1 April 2008 a report on how their activities achieved their aims for the public benefit.

Guidance about the public benefit requirements specifically for religious charities is contained in the Commission's document on *The Advancement of Religion for the Public Benefit* which can be found at www.charity-commission.gov.uk/publicbenefit/pbreligion.asp.

The Commission has placed on its website a report on the emerging findings for charity trustees of its public benefit assessment work so far. The report contains case studies relating to 12 charities (including four charities 'advancing religion'). (www.charity-commission.gov.uk/publicbenefit/default.asp)

The Commission has also placed on its website some illustrative (fictitious) examples of reporting on public benefit including one for a mosque. These can be found under its website section on Public Benefit Reporting. (www.charity-commission.gov.uk/publicbenefit/pbreport.asp)

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'Refreshed' Compact published

A refreshed version of the 'Compact' between the Government and the voluntary sector has been developed.

A 'Compact' between the Government and the voluntary sector was established in England in November 1998, inspired by recommendations in the earlier Deakin

Commission report on the Future of the Voluntary Sector. The Compact provides an overall framework for promoting effective partnership working between the Government and the third sector. A new version has now been developed following extensive debate and consultation.

The refreshed Compact retains all the key points of the original but takes into account recent developments in law, policy and practice and subsumes material previously covered in separate Codes of Practice. It is divided into three key areas covering involvement in policy development, allocating resources and advancing equality. The agreement reaffirms the Government's and the third sector's commitments to 12-week consultation and three-year funding. In addition, it recognises that volunteering is a defining characteristic of the third sector and this cross-cutting theme is acknowledged throughout the shared principles and commitments. It highlights the shared principles which Compact partners should follow when engaging in partnership working, and records all the Compact commitments. These commitments cover three key areas: involvement in policy development; allocating resources; and advancing equality

The revised Compact has been signed by the Prime Minister and by the Chair of Compact Voice and on behalf of the third sector.

The 'refreshed' Compact is accompanied by a smaller publication entitled 'An introduction to the Compact', containing general information about the Compact, explaining to whom it applies to and how to implement it and resolve differences. Both this and the Compact itself can be found on the website of the Commission for the Compact at www.thecomcompact.org.uk.

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Places of Worship risk survey and VAT refunds

English Heritage, as part of its *Heritage at Risk* programme, is researching the physical condition of places of worship. On 30 June it will announce the results of a sample survey that offers an insight into the condition of England's listed faith buildings, revealing how many are likely to be at serious risk of decay and explore what is happening in others to maintain these national treasures for the future. English Heritage's press release can be found at www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/ConWebDoc.17689. To widen its research and to improve its understanding of how it can best help congregations to help themselves, English Heritage invites anyone with an interest in their local historic church or other place of worship to tell them of their challenges and successes and answer a few simple questions on its website www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.21499.

A large number of historic church buildings are under threat because they will soon lose the right to a special refund. The refund, which allows historic churches and other places of worship to claim back the VAT on the cost of repairs and maintenance, is due to end in March 2011. An online petition to save the refund has been set up at www.savetherefund.info.

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Revised guidance for RE

Updated guidance on RE provision for primary and secondary schools and local authorities to support the delivery of good RE in schools in England by the Department for Children, Schools and Families was published at the end of January following a consultation exercise last summer. The guidance was produced in consultation with faith groups, RE professional bodies, representatives of the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) and partners within the Religious Education Council. It replaces the guidance on RE (but not collective worship) contained in Circular 1/94 issued in 1994 by the then Department for Education.

The guidance takes into account significant changes in types of schools and the curriculum, and to set out the Government's views on the importance of RE in the early 21st century. It reflects the multi-ethnic and multi-faith nature of our society and the Government's emphasis on community cohesion, which schools have a new duty to promote.

It also includes:

- A greater emphasis on personalising learning to help pupils to better develop socially and emotionally as well as in their studies
- Information on how different types of schools – from Academies to voluntary aided faith schools – should provide RE
- More guidance on how to link RE to other subjects in line with the new, more flexible and coherent primary and secondary curriculum
- Case studies and practical information on how teachers can work with local faith groups and can use RE to support community cohesion.

Alongside this updated guidance, DCSF published the first ever programme of learning for primary religious education (RE). The new non-statutory programme of learning and updated RE guidance will give local authorities and schools more ideas and support on how to develop their local RE curriculum. This will also make RE teaching consistent with the rest of the new primary curriculum, which is intended for first teaching in September 2011.

The relevant DCSF Press Notice can be found at http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2010_0027 and links to the two documents can be found at <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/subjects/re/guidance/> and <http://curriculum.qcda.gov.uk/new-primary-curriculum/areas-of-learning/religious-education/index.aspx>.

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Annual Scottish Inter Faith Council Networking Seminar for Local Inter Faith Groups

The Annual Networking Seminar for local inter faith groups in Scotland will take place on Sunday 16 May from 12 noon until 4.45pm at the Beveridge Park Hotel in Kirkcaldy. This year the seminar is being hosted by the Scottish Inter Faith Council in partnership with Fife Inter Faith Group and will take place in the Kingdom of Fife. Its

theme is “Sustaining Diversity: Working Together to Sustain our Communities and the Environment. Further information from: fhume@scottishinterfaithcouncil.org 0141 420 6982.

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Regional inter faith link meeting in East of England

The Inter Faith Network holds, with the regional faith forums in the English regions, periodic meetings for local inter faith organisers to share news and discuss issues of common concern. The next such meeting will take place in the East of England in Cambridge on 19 April. For further information please contact: elin.henrysson@interfaith.org.uk.

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Building Good Community Relations in Wales

The Inter-faith Council for Wales is currently working on a project with the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the Community Development Foundation to help build capacity for inter faith work in Wales. This includes holding Interfaith Consultation events across Wales and creating a Wales Interfaith Network to help share knowledge and experience of inter faith activities. The project will run from January to April 2010.

Interfaith Consultation Events across Wales are being held on the following dates:
27 March – Newport (South East Wales area)
17 April – Bangor (North West Wales area)
24 April – Lampeter (West Wales area)

For more information contact Nigel Anthony at info@interfaithwales.org.

The Inter-faith Council for Wales is developing an online Map and Directory of Interfaith groups, projects, activities and events across Wales. Anyone involved in such work is invited to contact the Council at info@interfaithwales.org or to phone Nigel Anthony, the Development Worker on 07940 001394. (The early development of the Map and Directory can be found at www.interfaithwales.org.)

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Inter Faith Facilitators online community

The St Ethelburga’s Centre for Reconciliation and Peace has created an online community for ‘interfaith facilitators’. See <http://interfaithfacilitators.ning.com>.

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Inter Faith Network website

The IFN website is currently undergoing redesign. We would welcome your views on features and functions which you would like to see. Please email paresh.solanki@interfaith.org.uk or ring him on 020 7931 7766.

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For detailed information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org
Scottish Inter Faith Council: www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org
Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org

For detailed information on events and projects in the English regions see:

East of England: www.eefaithscouncil.org.uk
East Midlands: www.ffem.org.uk
London: www.londoncivicforum.org.uk (Faiths Forum for London)
North East: www.nerfn.org
North West: www.faihnorthwest.org.uk
South East: www.se-faithforum.net
South West: www.faihnetsouthwest.org.uk
West Midlands: www.wmfaithsforum.org.uk
Yorkshire and Humber: www.yorkshireandhumberfaiths.org.uk

The Inter Faith Network for the UK

www.interfaith.org.uk

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IFN e-bulletin

2 June 2010

New Ministers in the Department for Communities and Local Government

The new Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government is Rt Hon Eric Pickles, Conservative MP for Brentwood and Ongar. [Read more...](#)

Cabinet Office and Big Society

The Office of the Third Sector has been renamed the Office of Civil Society and Nick Hurd, Conservative MP for Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner, becomes the Minister for Civil Society, with responsibilities for charities, social enterprises and voluntary organisations. [Read more...](#)

Coalition programme

The Government has issued a document about the programme as a whole which it plans to undertake. [Read more...](#)

Repair grants for places of worship

English Heritage, with the Heritage Lottery Fund, are running a *Repair Grants for Places of Worship in England* scheme, which is available to support urgent repair projects to listed places of worship in England. [Read more...](#)

Research project on multi faith spaces

The University of Manchester have launched a new research project, *Multi-Faith Spaces: Symptoms and Agents of Social and Political Change*. [Read more...](#)

JAINpedia at the V&A in London

The first JAINpedia exhibition, a national project digitising Jain manuscripts, is currently open at the V&A Museum in London. [Read more...](#)

New study programmes from the Woolf Institute of Abrahamic Faiths

The Woolf Institute of Abrahamic Faiths is offering two new programmes of study: *Islam, Judaism and Muslim-Jewish Relations* and *Study of Jews, Christians and Muslims in Contemporary Europe*. [Read more...](#)

Launch of the Winchester Centre of Religions for Reconciliation and Peace

The Winchester Centre of Religions for Reconciliation and Peace at the University of Winchester was officially launched by Bishop Joseph Humber of Sierra Leone. [Read more...](#)

Faith Youth Manchester announces inter faith innovation awards programme

Faith Youth Manchester, the Youth Section of Faith Network 4 Manchester, launched *Co-exist: The Awards for Inter-faith Innovation* at the *Co-exist: In Your Faith* event in early May. [Read more...](#)

New General Secretary for the European Council of Religious Leaders

Mr Stein Villumstad has been appointed as the new General Secretary for the European Council of Religious Leaders. [Read more...](#)

UNICEF and Religions for Peace release guide for religious communities

UNICEF and Religions for Peace have released a joint guide, *From Commitment to Action: What Religious Communities can do to Eliminate Violence against Children*. [Read more...](#)

Diary dates

Information on many inter faith events taking place around the country. [Read more...](#)

If you would like to let us have items for consideration for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 28 June 2010, with the word 'E-bulletin' in the subject line.

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New Ministers in the Department for Communities and Local Government

The new Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government is Rt Hon Eric Pickles, Conservative MP for Brentwood and Ongar.

Two CLG Ministers have roles which are likely to have particular relevance to the concerns of faith and inter faith bodies. Greg Clark, Conservative MP for Tunbridge Wells, becomes Minister of State for Decentralisation, Big Society and Planning Policy. Andrew Stunell OBE, Liberal Democrat MP for Hazel Grove, has been appointed as Parliamentary Under Secretary of State with responsibility for community cohesion (including the future of Prevent); race equality; building regulations; Big Society, housing and regeneration.

More details on the new CLG Ministers can be found at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/newsroom/articlesandspeeches/>

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Cabinet Office and Big Society

The Office of the Third Sector has been renamed the Office of Civil Society and Nick Hurd, Conservative MP for Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner, becomes the Minister for Civil Society, with responsibilities for charities, social enterprises and voluntary organisations.

At <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/407789/building-big-society.pdf> is a document outlining the thinking underlining the Government's 'Big Society' concept which is likely to frame thinking about some important dimensions of engagement with, and by, faith communities. The Cabinet Office will have a particular responsibility for taking this cross-Government programme forward. The press release giving background can be found at:

http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/newsroom/news_releases/2010/100518-news-big-society-launch.aspx

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Coalition programme

The Government has issued a document about the programme as a whole which it plans to undertake. Background information can be found at:

<http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/topstorynews/2010/05/the-coalition-our-programme-for-government-2-50350> and the document itself, *The Coalition, Our Programme for Government*, can be found at

http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/409088/pfg_coalition.pdf

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Repair grants for places of worship

English Heritage, with the Heritage Lottery Fund, are running a *Repair Grants for Places of Worship in England* scheme, which is available to support urgent repair projects to listed places of worship in England, for example the repair of roofs, gutters, towers etc where the overall project cost is estimated to be in excess of £10,000. They welcome applications from any faith group that worships in a listed building, regardless of the type of building (for example, a building formerly used as a cinema but now used by a formally constituted faith group for worship at least six times a year would be eligible).

Applications can be made in two batches each year, with this year's application deadlines being 30 June 2010 for grade I and II listed buildings and 30 September 2010 for grade II buildings. An application pack can be downloaded from www.english-heritage.org.uk where you can also find details of your local English Heritage regional office to help you with any queries.

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Research project on multi faith spaces

The University of Manchester have launched a new research project, *Multi-Faith Spaces: Symptoms and Agents of Social and Political Change*. They are currently in the early stages of their investigation and are seeking to locate a wide range of multi-faith spaces to visit and survey; speak with individuals who are (or have been) involved in their design and management; and locate and evaluate key documents and materials.

They would like to hear from anyone interested in taking part in this research, anyone who wishes to nominate a multi-faith space that could be included and anyone who has documents or photographs that might be of interest to the research team. For further information please visit their website at www.manchester.ac.uk/mfs or email mfs@manchester.ac.uk.

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JAINpedia at the V&A in London

JAINpedia is a national project which is digitising Jain manuscripts held in the V&A Museum, British Library, Wellcome Trust Library and Bodleian Library, Oxford. The project will be holding major exhibitions over the next 2 years at these institutions. The first JAINpedia exhibition is currently open at the V&A Museum in London and will be displayed in the Museum's Nehru Gallery of Indian Art until 31 December 2012. The exhibition consists of 20 beautiful manuscripts, manuscript covers and paintings. A series of events and activities will coincide with this special display. For more information, please visit www.jainpedia.org.

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New study programmes from the Woolf Institute of Abrahamic Faiths

The Woolf Institute, in conjunction with the University of Cambridge's Institute of Continuing Education, is running a certificate programme in *Islam, Judaism and Muslim-Jewish Relations*, which consists of three independent modules on Islam and Muslim Perceptions of the 'Other'; Judaism and Jewish Perceptions of the 'Other'; and Muslim-Jewish encounters: challenges for inter faith dialogue. Further details can be found at www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/cmjr.

The Institute is also offering a course on an *Introduction to the Study of Jews, Christians and Muslims in Contemporary Europe* which begins with an induction week from 4 to 8 October 2010, followed by three modules (History, Culture and Citizenship). Fees for the course are £650. Bursaries may be available depending on academic merit and financial circumstances. For further information please visit: www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/jcme/index.php.

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Launch of the Winchester Centre of Religions for Reconciliation and Peace

The Winchester Centre of Religions for Reconciliation and Peace at the University of Winchester was officially launched on 20 May by Reverend Bishop Joseph C Humper, Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Sierra Leone. The new centre has been set up by the University of Winchester with Religions for Peace International, New York, and St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace, London as founding partners.

Dr Brian Walker, Director of the Winchester Centre, said that future plans include launching the annual Winchester Peace Lecture, a degree module in reconciliation and peace, and seeking accreditation for a Masters degree.

For further information, please contact the University of Winchester press office at 01962 827678 or email press@winchester.ac.uk.

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Faith Youth Manchester announces inter faith innovation awards programme

Faith Youth Manchester, the Youth Section of Faith Network 4 Manchester, launched *Co-exist: The Awards for Inter-faith Innovation* at the *Co-exist: In Your Faith* event in early May. These awards provide an opportunity for young people to design, develop and deliver new ideas for inter faith projects or activities in Manchester, and any group of young people living in Greater Manchester can apply for grants between £500 and £1,500. Applicants will need to identify a supporting organisation such as their school, college, youth group, charity etc to administer the grant.

For guidelines and an application form (which must be submitted electronically) please visit their website, www.fn4m.org or for further information, email Jonny Wineberg at jonny@fn4m.org.

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New General Secretary for the European Council of Religious Leaders

During the annual meeting in Istanbul on 26 April 2010, the Executive Committee of the European Council of Religious Leaders – Religions for Peace (ECRL) appointed Mr Stein Villumstad as their new General Secretary from 1 January 2011. Mr Villumstad, who is currently Deputy Secretary General of Religions for Peace International, will succeed Revd Vebjorn L. Horsfjord, who will leave ECRL on 30 November 2010 to take up a position as a research fellow in theology at the University of Oslo.

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UNICEF and Religions for Peace release guide for religious communities

UNICEF and Religions for Peace have released *From Commitment to Action: What Religious Communities can do to Eliminate Violence against Children*. The joint guide, produced with input from religious actors and child protection specialists, aims to help religious communities harness their spiritual, moral and social strengths to prevent, respond to and eliminate violence against children.

From Commitment to Action outlines practical ways that religious leaders, theologians, educators, community mobilisers and others can respond to violence directed towards children that are in keeping with the recommendations of the Violence Study. It also includes concrete suggestions for how these actors can work effectively with governments, civil society and United Nations agencies.

For more information, please contact Kate Donovan at UNICEF New York at +212 326 7452 or kdonovan@unicef.org or Andrea Louie at Religions for Peace at 212 687 2163 or alouie@religionsforpeace.org. Alternatively please visit www.unicef.org/media/media_53664.html.

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Diary dates

The AHRC/ESRC Religion and Society Programme with Faiths and Civil Society Unit, Goldsmiths, are holding a one-day conference at the British Library, London on Thursday 1 July. This conference will explore the rapidly changing relations of faith and policy and ask 'where next?' for the policy rhetorics of the last decade – community, cohesion, and social capital; prevention of violent extremism/'radicalisation'; the 'sectoralisation' and 'mainstreaming' of faith-based work. The registration fee, which covers tea, coffee and lunch, is £25 waged and £10 unwaged. The conference is subsidised by the Religion and Society Programme. To register go to: www.religionandsociety.org.uk/events/programme_events/show/faith_and_policy_what_next_for_religion_in_the_public_sphere.

The Refugee Studies Centre and the Las Casas Institute on Ethics, Governance and Social Justice at the University of Oxford are organising an international conference from 21 to 23 September on 'Faith-based humanitarianism: The response of faith communities and faith-based organisations to people affected by conflict, crisis and forced migration'. The conference will take place at St Catherine's College, Manor Road, Oxford. For further information please contact the Refugee Studies Centre Programme Manager, Heloise Ruaudel, at rsc-conference@geh.ox.ac.uk.

The International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF) will be holding an open 'bag lunch' meeting on Thursday 10 June, from 12 noon to 1.00 pm at Essex Unitarian Church, 112 Palace Gardens Terrace, Notting Hill Gate, London W8 4RT. This will look at coming IARF events, including the IARF Congress from 1 to 7 September 2010 which will be held in India. For further information phone or email Dr Richard Boeke, Chair, British Chapter on 01403.257801 or at r.boeke@virgin.net.

The Joseph Interfaith Foundation, in conjunction with the Islamic Unity Society and Youth for a United World, will be holding a seminar entitled *A Person of Faith in a Secular Society: Personal Perspectives* on Sunday 6 June from 2.00pm – 5.00pm. Attendance is by prior registration only, and places are limited. For further information please contact info@josephinterfaithfoundation.org or london@ius.org.uk.

The Woolf Institute of Abrahamic Faiths are hosting an international colloquium from 24 to 25 June entitled *The Frankfurt School and Antisemitism Revisited*, at the Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge CB3 0BU. Jack Jacobs, Thomas Wheatland and Eva-Maria Ziege will be speaking. A small number of bursaries will be available for graduate students. More information can be found at www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/cjcr/news-and-events/colloquium.php.

The World Congress of Faiths is organising a visit to the Islamic Cultural Centre's exhibition on *Islam's Relationship with Other Faiths* on Monday 21 June, from 2.00pm to 3.30pm. Anyone interested in attending should meet at the London Central Mosque, 146 Park Road, London NW8 7RG.

Horsham Interfaith Forum, together with Faiths in Sussex and the World Congress of Faiths, are holding a conference on *The present and future of faith* on Sunday 20 June from 2.00pm – 6.00 pm. The event is being held at the Performing Arts Centre, Worth Abbey, Turners Hill, Crawley RH10 4SB and the keynote speaker is Peter Owen-Jones, presenter of 'Around the World in Eighty Faiths'. There will also be open discussion and presentations by panel members. Admission is free. For further details, visit www.horsham-interfaith.org.uk. To register, please email Alison Schillinger at toc@worthabbey.net or telephone Richard Boeke on 01403 257801.

Norwich Interfaith will be present at the *Norwich Peace Camp and Peace Cycle* on Saturday 26 June from 9.00am – 4.00pm at the Norwich Forum, next to City Hall. For further details on this event, please visit www.norwichpeace.org.

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The Inter Faith Network for the UK
www.interfaith.org.uk

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IFN e-bulletin

22 July 2010

Inter Faith Week 2010

The second national Inter Faith Week for England and Wales is taking place from Sunday 21 to Saturday 27 November 2010. [Read more...](#)

IFN AGM and National Meeting

IFN held its AGM and National Meeting in London on 8 July. The National Meeting theme was 'Shaping our shared society: the key role of local inter faith organisations'. [Read more...](#)

Equality Act

The Government Equalities Office is taking steps to implement the core provisions of the Equality Act. [Read more...](#)

Faiths in Action funding

Round 2 of the Faiths in Action funding programme, administered by the Community Development Foundation (CDF), is currently open for funding. [Read more...](#)

Report on Places of Worship

The first ever sample survey of places of worship, recently published by English Heritage, indicates that 89% are in good condition but 11% are at risk or in serious need of repair. [Read more...](#)

Church of England report on evangelism in a multi-faith society

The Church of England has published a General Synod report entitled *Sharing the Gospel of Salvation* exploring the subject of Christian evangelism in a multi-faith society. [Read more...](#)

'Big Society' and faith communities

Faith communities and inter faith bodies around the UK are beginning to explore the Government's Big Society agenda. [Read more...](#)

Remembering the WWI contribution of Indian soldiers of different faiths

The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall paid tribute to the contribution of Muslim and Sikh and Hindu soldiers in the First World War during a visit to the Neuve-Chapelle Indian Memorial on 19 July. [Read more...](#)

Review of Prevent

The Home Office's Structural Reform Plan includes a commitment to review the Prevent programme. [Read more...](#)

Carnegie UK Trust report on Making Good Society

The Carnegie UK Trust has recently published a report entitled 'Making Good Society'. [Read more...](#)

ACPOS launches online inter faith discussion forum

An online inter faith discussion forum is being launched by the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS). [Read more...](#)

Holocaust Memorial Day 2011

'Untold Stories' is the focus of Holocaust Memorial Day 2011 and the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust is running a programme of free afternoon workshops across the UK in preparation for this. [Read more...](#)

Global Community Links – funding programme open

Global Community Links (GCL) is a programme that aims to increase understanding of global issues in the UK through strengthening 'Links' between community groups, including faith communities, in the UK and community groups in developing countries. The first phase of funding is now open for applications by 6 August and a workshop on the programme is taking place in Birmingham on 31 July. [Read more...](#)

Rights to Warmth campaign

A campaign is underway locally and nationally with places of worship and faith community organisations to promote awareness of the dangers in cold weather. [Read more...](#)

International Council of Christians and Jews conference

The ICCJ held its annual conference this year in Istanbul on the theme of Christian-Jewish-Muslim encounter. [Read more...](#)

ICOCO Awards for Bridging Cultures 2010 – Celebrating intercultural dialogue

The Awards for Bridging Cultures (ABCs) were created to promote the work of the many organisations across the UK that promote intercultural dialogue. [Read more...](#)

Certificate in Inter Faith Relations

The fourth Certificate Course in Inter Faith Relations begins at the London Inter Faith Centre in September. [Read more...](#)

Medway Inter Faith Action providing hospital with faith community prayers

Medway Inter Faith Action has recently been contacted by the Chaplain of the Wisdom Hospice in Rochester and invited to supply a rota list of names for prayers of different faiths to be said in the chapel. [Read more...](#)

Diary dates

Information on many inter faith events taking place around the country. [Read more...](#)

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Inter Faith Week 2010

The second national Inter Faith Week in England and Wales is taking place from Sunday 21 to Saturday 27 November 2010. The aims of the Week are: to strengthen good inter faith relations at all levels; to increase awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, in particular celebrating and building on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society; and to increase understanding between people of religious and non-religious belief.

The Inter Faith Week website www.interfaithweek.org.uk will be further developed across the coming weeks to provide further resources and event and project ideas.

For enquiries about Inter Faith Week in England, please email: enquiries@interfaithweek.org.uk. For enquiries about Inter Faith Week in Wales, please email: info@interfaithwales.org

Organisations can apply for support for local Inter Faith Week events under the [Faith in Action programme](#).

Scottish Inter Faith Week is taking place from 28 November to 5 December. Further details can be found at www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org.

An Inter Faith Week is currently under consideration in Northern Ireland.

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IFN AGM and National Meeting

IFN held its AGM and National Meeting in London on 8 July. At the AGM Officers and Executive Committee members for 2010-11 were elected. Co-Chairs are Rt Revd Dr Alastair Redfern and Dr Manazir Ahsan MBE. Vice-Chairs are Dr Girdari Bhan; Venerable Bogoda Seelawimala; Dr Indarjit Singh CBE; and Mr Vivian Wineman.

The National Meeting was on the theme of 'Shaping our shared society: the key role of local inter faith organisations' with a wide range of speakers of different faiths from local, regional and national bodies. The meeting looked at how local inter faith organisations working at local level are developing their work, what challenges they are facing and the opportunities they see ahead. The day also included presentations on how national faith communities can support and encourage local work. Andrew Stunell MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State in the Department of Communities and Local Government was among the speakers.

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/newsstories/newsroom/1637560>

A full report of the Meeting will be available from the IFN office in due course. To indicate an interest in receiving a copy of this, please email: ifnet@interfaith.org.uk

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Equality Act

The Government is taking steps to implement the core provisions of the Equality Act 2010 with effect from 1 October, (as the previous Government had planned), but decisions have not yet been taken about some of the Act's provisions, including those on public duties.

"Equality Act 2010: What do I need to know?" is a series of summary guides and 'Quick Start' guides to the key changes in the law, produced by the Government Equalities Office in partnership with the British Chambers of Commerce, Citizens Advice and the Equality and Diversity Forum, to support implementation of the Act. These guides set out clearly what the legislation will mean for business, the public sector, the voluntary sector and the public, aiming to help people understand their new responsibilities and rights.

The four guides are as follows:

- Equality Act: what do I need to know? A summary guide to your rights
- Equality Act: what do I need to know? A summary guide for voluntary and community sector service providers
- Equality Act: what do I need to know? A summary guide for public sector organisations
- Equality Act: what do I need to know? A summary guide for businesses who sell goods and services

The guides can be downloaded from www.equalities.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=1631.

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Faiths in Action funding

Round 2 of the Faiths in Action funding programme administered by the Community Development Foundation (CDF), is currently open for funding. The maximum size of a grant in Round 2 is £6,000. This is a rolling programme so there is no formal deadline for applications.

More information on the funding programme and how to apply can be found at <http://www.cdf.org.uk/web/guest/faiths-in-action> You can also telephone the helpline on 01223 406533 or e-mail CDF at fundingadmin@cdf.org.uk.

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Report on Places of Worship

The first ever sample survey of places of worship, recently published by English Heritage, indicates that 89% are in good condition but 11% are at risk or in serious need of repair.

Research into the impact of the £25 million a year Repair Grants for Places of Worship (RGPW) scheme, run jointly by English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund, reveals that:

- 76% of congregations would not have been able to complete their repair and maintenance project at all without a grant.
- Without a grant, over the last eight years, some 1,190 of England's most important places of worship would have become seriously at risk and 30% state that they would have closed, 17% indefinitely.
- For 73% of places of worship, the RGPOW makes up more than 50% of the total cost of their repairs.

Recipients of both schemes said grants helped them plan a more certain future for their place of worship, increase numbers of visitors and broaden community use. Grants also impact on the local economy as the research found that 90% of recipients exclusively used local businesses to undertake repairs.

In response to the survey, English Heritage has produced a practical guide, *Caring for Places of Worship*, together with a DVD and dedicated website, www.english-heritage.org.uk/powar. Dr Simon Thurley, Chief Executive of English Heritage, said: "We are also encouraging the different faith groups and Christian denominations to make the launch of Caring for Places of Worship the biggest ever co-ordinated offer of help to local congregations, reinforcing the good work already being done and supporting those that are struggling."

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Church of England report on evangelism in a multi-faith society

The Church of England has published a General Synod report entitled *Sharing the Gospel of Salvation* exploring the subject of Christian evangelism in a multi-faith society. The report was commissioned after a Private Members Motion was put to the General Synod in February 2009 about evangelism among people of other faiths.

The report can be downloaded from:

www.cofe.anglican.org/about/gensynod/agendas/july2010/gsmisc/gsmisc956.pdf.

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'Big Society' and faith communities

Faith communities and inter faith bodies around the UK are beginning to explore the Government's Big Society agenda.

The theme was addressed in the presentation to IFN's National Meeting on 8 July by [Andrew Stunell MP](#), one of CLG's new Ministers.

On 16 July, together with the Chief Rabbi, the Archbishop of Westminster and leaders of other faiths, the Archbishop of Canterbury hosted a discussion with the

Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Eric Pickles, and CLG's Minister for Decentralisation, Greg Clark on the Government's Big Society agenda. www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/2939

The Prime Minister made a speech in Liverpool on 19 July on the Big Society www.number10.gov.uk/news/speeches-and-transcripts/2010/07/big-society-speech-53572

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Remembering the WWI contribution of Indian soldiers of different faiths

The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall paid tribute to the contribution of Muslim and Sikh and Hindu soldiers in the First World War during a visit to the Neuve-Chapelle Indian Memorial on 19 July. Their Royal Highnesses attended a memorial service, which was attended by children from a number of schools in Britain learning about the contributions of the many different ethnic communities that fought and died in the First World War for the Allied cause. The Prince and The Duchess toured the memorial grounds meeting with veterans, Gurkhas and representatives from Britain's Hindu, Sikh and Muslim communities who had made the journey to Neuve-Chapelle especially for the service.

www.princeofwales.gov.uk/newsandgallery/news/trh_visit_the_indian_memorial_at_neuve_chapelle_in_france_1322479656.html

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Review of Prevent

The Home Office's Structural Reform Plan includes a commitment to review the Prevent programme. The Government believes that this is not working as effectively as it could. The review will look at, among other matters, separating the Prevent strategy from wider community cohesion and integration work and how Prevent objectives are prioritised and how these are delivered locally. The Government is due to report on the findings of the review by January 2011. A rapid review of the Government's key counter-terrorism and security powers is also underway.

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/about-us/corporate-publications/structural-reform-plan/pdf-version?view=Binary>

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Carnegie UK Trust report on Making Good Society

The Carnegie UK Trust has recently published a report entitled 'Making Good Society'. This is the final report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Future of Civil Society, which explores how civil society, including faith communities, can help to grow a more civil economy, to enable a rapid and just transition to a low carbon economy, to democratise media ownership and content and to grow participatory and deliberative democracy.

Hard copies of the report can be ordered from makinggoodsociety@carnegieuk.org or it can be downloaded from http://democracy.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/civil_society/publications/making_good_society.

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ACPOS launches online inter faith discussion forum

An online inter faith discussion forum is being launched by the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS).

The inter faith web forum is the first of its kind to be used by police forces and partnership agencies across Scotland to gather opinions from young people of all faiths.

Its launch this week comes six months ahead of ACPOS' first Interfaith Youth Conference and aims to provide a platform for discussion before and after the event which is being held in December 2010. By engaging with young people across the country, ACPOS hopes the forum will not only give them a voice to raise concerns and issues, but will be used as a basis for generating the content of the conference itself. There are six key areas on the forum, including subjects such as the role of the media in representing faith communities and the impact of hate crime. Each area has been specifically chosen and tailored to reflect the different groups involved in the conference.

Following the event, the website will stream pod casts from the event's keynote speakers, allowing those unable to attend to listen to the content as well as contribute further to the forum and maintain an ongoing inter faith dialogue. The Interfaith Youth Conference will bring together 200 young people from faith communities across Scotland. Further information can be found by visiting the conference website at www.interfaithconnect.org.

The conference is being run by Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS) with support from AMINA Muslim Women's Resource Centre, Anne Frank Foundation Scotland, British Transport Police, Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS), Scottish Inter Faith Council, West of Scotland Regional Equality Council and with the co-operation of schools across Scotland.

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Holocaust Memorial Day Trust

'Untold Stories' is the focus of Holocaust Memorial Day 2011.

The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust is running a programme of free afternoon workshops across the UK suitable for anyone organising an HMD 2011 event and is keen to work with faith and inter faith groups. The workshops will consist of an introduction to HMD and the resources available from HMDT, together with guidance on using the theme of Untold Stories. The workshops are being held during September and October. For more information visit www.hmd.org.uk or call 0845 838 1883. Places are limited.

HMDT has now released its Education Materials for HMD 2011, which can be found at <http://education.hmd.org.uk>.

The HMD 2011 Campaign Pack can be pre-ordered from www.hmd.org.uk/resources/campaignpack or by calling 0845 838 1883.

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Global Community Links – funding programme open

Global Community Links (GCL) is a programme that aims to increase understanding of global issues in the UK through 'links' between community groups, including faith communities, in the UK and community groups in developing countries. It provides funding and support to established 'links' to build support for international development within their wider community and across the UK. Global Community Links is funded by UKaid from DFID and delivered by a consortium of the British Council, iCoCo, the Inter Faith Network for the UK and VSO.

There are two types of Community Linking grants. These are: £1,000 - to a maximum £2,000 to be spent over a four month period, or £7,000 - to a maximum of £10,000 to be spent over a nine month period. Round one is now open and the application deadline is 6 August. To find out more about the programme and how to apply, visit www.dfid.gov.uk/communitylinks. [[See below for workshop on 31 July.](#)]

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Rights to Warmth campaign

A campaign is underway locally and nationally with places of worship and faith community organisations to promote awareness of the dangers of the cold.

Last winter is expected to record, once again, in excess of 35,000 winter deaths. This affects everyone, not just those who are short of means and now exposed by rises in fuel costs. It mainly arises because there is insufficient understanding of the lasting damage cold does to health, meaning also at least 300,000 emergency admissions. Rights to Warmth will be campaigning to promote awareness of the dangers of the cold and the importance to everyone of staying warm and using the financial support available to do so.

For general background information, please visit www.rightstowarmth.org.uk.

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International Council of Christians and Jews – report on Istanbul conference

The ICCJ held its annual conference this year in Istanbul. The conference theme, 'So that you may know one another' was taken from Sura 49:13 of the Quran and focused on the theme of Christian-Jewish-Muslim encounter. Each day's work was introduced by a meditative moment from one of the three religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. This was followed by plenary lectures preceding each day's workshops and deliberations. Full texts of plenary lectures and opening addresses will become available soon on the ICCJ website, www.iccj.org.

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ICOCO Awards for Bridging Cultures 2010 – Celebrating intercultural dialogue

The Awards for Bridging Cultures (ABCs) were created to promote the work of the many organisations across the UK that promote intercultural dialogue. Funded by the Baring Foundation, the awards scheme gives cash prizes for projects that successfully build trust and respect between people from different cultures.

There are three different categories of the Awards:

- Voluntary or community groups or organisations running projects to promote intercultural dialogue with gross annual financial income of over £100,000 (in the last two financial years)
- Voluntary or community groups or organisations running projects to promote intercultural dialogue with gross annual financial income of £100,000 or under (in the last two financial years)
- Local authorities, public sector organisations and private companies who can demonstrate their support for voluntary sector projects which promote intercultural dialogue by financing, initiating or supporting grassroots projects.

The deadline for applications is 13 September and full details can be found at: www.bridgingcultures.org.uk.

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Certificate in Inter Faith Relations

The fourth Certificate Course in Inter Faith Relations begins at the London Inter Faith Centre in September. This is a two year course for “anyone interested in a fuller engagement with people and issues around living in a many and non faith society”. The course runs on Wednesday evenings from 7.30pm until 9.30pm. The course fees are £175 per term or £500 per year and advice on available grants can be given. This is a highly interactive course and each two-hour session will generally be divided evenly between presentation and discussion. If you would like further details, please contact Rev Maggie Hindley on 020 7372 2765 or at maggie.hindley@londoninterfaith.org.uk.

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Medway Inter Faith Action providing hospital with faith community prayers

Medway Inter Faith Action has recently been contacted by the Chaplain of the Wisdom Hospice in Rochester and invited to supply a rota list of names for prayers of different faiths to be said in the chapel. This has now started on a weekly basis lasting half an hour. All the necessary literature is supplied to include all the faiths, and staff, patients and volunteers are invited. For further information, please contact John Caruana at jenksmal@yahoo.com.

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Diary dates

[Global Community Links](#) is hosting an Inspiration Activation Workshop in Birmingham on Saturday 31 July from 10am-4.30 pm to help people increase the impact of their 'link' and to make the best use of an Action Grant if successful in applying for one. If you are part of an inter faith group or faith community group which has a 'Link' with an overseas community group in a developing country, Inspiration Activation workshops are a great opportunity to develop ideas. In a day of fun, interactive group activities and discussion, you will develop your ideas about how you can involve your wider community, help other people learn more about the realities of life in your Link community overseas and build support for international development in the UK.

For more information and to register at the Birmingham workshops or to find out dates of later workshops please contact Global Community Links at: communitylinks@britishcouncil.org.

The **Joseph Interfaith Foundation** is hosting an event entitled "Illuminating the Soul: Similarities between Jewish and Muslim mystical poetry" at 7pm on 29 July. Mehri Niknam MBE, Executive Director of the Foundation, will be giving a talk at the Jewish Museum, Raymond Burton House, 129-131 Albert Street, Camden Town, London NW1 7NB in conjunction with the Museum's exhibition: "Illumination: Hebrew treasures from the Vatican and major British collections". For further information, please contact the Foundation on info@josephinterfaithfoundation.org.

The Joseph Interfaith Foundation is also arranging a meeting of Palestinian and Israeli youth with British Muslim youth in August 2010. This is a closed meeting and anyone interested in attending should contact the Foundation on info@josephinterfaithfoundation.org.

The **Jewish Museum** is hosting an event on Sunday 25 July entitled "The Other Schindlers: Who were they and why?". As a baby, Agnes Grunwald-Spier JP was saved from the horrors of Auschwitz by an unknown official. Now a trustee of the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, she has written a book bringing together the stories of thirty individuals who rescued Jews during World War II. Together with Henry Grunwald OBE QC, she will be exploring why people were prepared to risk so much for their fellow men and women.

The event is being held at 2.30pm on Sunday, 25 July at the Jewish Museum in London. Tickets cost £10 and can be obtained by emailing admin@jewishmuseum.org.uk or phoning 020 7284 7384. Please visit the Museum's website, www.jewishmuseum.org.uk, for further information.

JAINpedia is conducting special intercultural tours surrounding the Jain collections at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London. The tours will be conducted on 25 July and 15 August by a specially trained V&A Intercultural Guide. The tours are open to the general public and Jain community alike. Places are limited so it will be on a 'first come, first served' basis. Further to this there will be an active programme of events and activities at the Museum until 2012 when the display ends. In September 2010

Jainpedia will be displaying a special exhibition at the Treasures Gallery in the British Library. This will be held up until March 2011 supported by another series of cultural activities and events for the public. For further information, please visit www.jainpedia.org.

The **Muslim Youth Helpline** is offering a free half-day interactive training session on young Muslims and relationships, in advance of publishing a report on this issue. The training will cover a range of issues, from forced marriage and child sexual abuse to stereotyping and faith sensitivity.

There are only two training sessions, each with a maximum capacity of 25 people. The sessions take place from 10am until 1pm and from 2pm until 5pm on Friday 30 July and are being allocated on a 'first come, first served' basis. The training is being held at the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, 90 York Way, London N1 9AG. For further information and a booking form, please contact musab.younis@muslimyouth.net.

Hull and East Riding Interfaith is holding its next forum on the topic of "What are the causes of prejudice?". The topic will be opened by a refugee living in Hull whose family has suffered prejudice, harassment, and persecution first in their own country, then again in Hull. The meeting will be held at 5 pm on Tuesday, 28 September in Committee Room 1, Ground Floor, Guildhall, Hull and all are welcome. For more information and a map, visit www.heri.org.uk.

The **Ammerdown Centre** in Bath is hosting a number of different inter faith events during August and September. For further information, please either visit the Centre's website, www.ammerdown.org, or email centre@ammerdown.org.uk or telephone 01761 433709.

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For detailed information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org
Scottish Inter Faith Council: www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org
Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org

For detailed information on events and projects in the English regions see:

East of England: www.eefaithscouncil.org.uk
East Midlands: www.ffem.org.uk
London: www.londoncivicforum.org.uk (Faiths Forum for London)
North East: www.nerfn.org
North West: www.faithnorthwest.org.uk

South East: www.se-faithforum.net
South West: www.faithnetsouthwest.org.uk
West Midlands: www.wmfaithsforum.org.uk
Yorkshire and Humber: www.yorkshireandhumberfaiths.org.uk

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If you would like to let us have items for consideration for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 30 August 2010, with the word 'E-bulletin' in the subject line.

Disclaimer:

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Inter Faith Network for the UK , 8A Lower Grosvenor Place, London SW1W 0EN
www.interfaith.org.uk

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UK/NATIONAL UPDATES

Inter Faith Week 2010

Inter Faith Week in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Inter Faith Week in England and Wales drew to a close on 27 November. A huge variety of excellent events took place in both countries and this year, for the first time, also in Northern Ireland. Faith communities held and took part in numerous activities from open door days to faith and social action events and dialogues. Inter faith organisations hosted exhibitions, festivals, discussions, faith and food events and much, much more. Schools, FE colleges and universities stepped up their involvement and other agencies and institutions such as local authorities, hospitals and prisons joined in too. There was also greater involvement this year from the private sector and two events focused particularly on faith in the work place. Media coverage was considerably up on last year. For some examples, see: www.interfaithweek.org.uk/index.php/media/media-coverage.

At national level, there was no multi faith event on the scale of last year's launch as the change in Government led to late confirmation of support for the Week and limited planning time. But the new Government expressed strong support for the Week and the Secretary of State for Communities, Eric Pickles, hosted a reception at Admiralty House for the Week at which Communities Minister Andrew Stunell also spoke (see www.communities.gov.uk/news/communities/1777179)

Scottish Inter Faith Week

Scottish Inter Faith Week was held from 28 November to 5 December with a special launch event in Inverness. Its theme this year was 'Faith in Action'. The Week was again very successful despite severe weather conditions meaning that some events had to be postponed.

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Inter Faith Week dates for 2011

Inter Faith Week 2011 will take place in England, Wales and Northern Ireland from Sunday 20 November until Saturday 26 November. Its first day will again coincide with Mitzvah Day (whose organisers have chosen 20 November for that Day).

Dates for Scottish Inter Faith Week and for National Sewa Day (which this year was on the same day as Mitzvah Day) have not yet been announced.

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Publication of the Government's Equality Strategy

The Home Secretary, Theresa May, announced on 2 December the publication of the Government's Equality Strategy: *Building a Fairer Britain*. The document, which can be found at www.equalities.gov.uk/news/equality_strategy.aspx, sets out the Government's vision for "...a strong, modern and fair Britain...built on two principles of equality – equal treatment and equal opportunity.....a society where no one is held back because of who

they are, or where they come from.” The Government describes its approach as one “aimed at changing culture and attitudes, tackling the causes of inequality and building a stronger, fairer and more cohesive society where equality is for everyone and is everyone’s responsibility”. Its strategy describes how it will work with business, local communities and citizens to promote good practice, transparency and accountability, “moving away from the identity politics of the past and to an approach that recognises people’s individuality”. It sets out a new role for Government, “promoting equality through transparency and behaviour change and working with businesses, the voluntary sector and wider civil society to create equal opportunities for everyone”.

The wide-ranging document sets out the Government’s plans in a variety of fields – on early years, education and social mobility; a ‘fair and flexible’ labour market; opening up public services and empowering individuals and communities; changing culture and attitudes; and on transparency and accountability.

The Equality Strategy also announced that the Government Equality Office, currently located within the Cabinet Office, is to become part of the Home Office.

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Equality Act 2010

As previously reported, the new Government implemented the main provisions of the Equality Act 2010 with effect from 1 October 2010 and intends that the provisions relating to the new general public duty and the secondary legislation setting out specific public duties should come into force in April 2011.

On 17 November the Government announced that it will not bring into force Section 1 of the Act which would have placed on Government departments and certain other public bodies a duty to consider how their strategic decisions might help to reduce inequalities associated with socio-economic disadvantages. In its recently published Equality Strategy, (see above), the Government said that it would be seeking greater transparency in relation to the gender pay gap in private and voluntary sector organisations through voluntary action and would therefore also not implement the gender pay reporting measures in Section 78 of the Act at least until the effectiveness of this voluntary approach can be assessed.

The Strategy also announced that the Act’s provisions on positive action on recruitment and promotion in Section 159 will be brought into force in April 2011. The Government is still considering a number of other provisions in the Act (of which full details are also available on the GEO’s website) including the provision in Section 202 relating to civil partnerships on religious premises.

A revised Briefing Note on the Act has been placed on IFN’s website at www.interfaith.org.uk/briefingnotes.htm.

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Equality Act and race/caste: NIESR Report published

To date, legislation on discrimination and harassment on the grounds of caste has not been covered by UK discrimination legislation. However, Section 9(5) of the Equality Act 2010 made it possible to amend by Ministerial Order the description in the Act of the protected characteristic of 'race' "so as to provide for caste to be an aspect of race", thus bringing caste within the scope of the Act.

In this context the previous Government commissioned the National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR) to explore 'the nature, extent and severity of caste prejudice and discrimination in Britain, and its associated implications for future Government policy'. The Government has now received the NIESR report and will be considering whether or not to exercise the power in Section 9(5). The report and an executive summary of it are available on the Government Equalities Office website at: http://www.equalities.gov.uk/equality_act_2010/faqs_on_commencement_of_the_eq/caste.aspx

The NIESR report identifies evidence suggesting caste discrimination and harassment in relation to employment (bullying, recruitment, promotion and task allocation); the provision of services; and education (pupil on pupil bullying), all of which constitute discrimination and harassment of the type covered by the Equality Act. The study also identified evidence suggesting caste discrimination and harassment which may fall outside the Equality Act in relation to voluntary work, harassment, demeaning behaviour and violence.

The report suggests that to reduce caste discrimination and harassment, the Government might take educative or legislative approaches and that either would be useful in the public sector, but that non-legislative approaches are less likely to be effective in the private sector.

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Localism Bill introduced

The Localism Bill was introduced into Parliament on 13 December 2010. Its aim is described as being to shift power from central government back into the hands of individuals, communities and councils. The measures in the Bill exemplify and take forward the six actions of decentralisation that underpin the Government's approach to this, further information on which can be found in *Decentralisation and the Localism Bill: an essential guide* (www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/decentralisationguide).

A full copy of the Bill can be found online at <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2010-11/localism.html>.

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Review of Prevent

A review of the Government's strategy for preventing violent extremism was announced on 9 November by Home Secretary Theresa May. The review will assess how this strand of the Government's counter-terrorism programme can work more effectively. The conclusions will inform what is described as a 'refreshed strategy' to be published next year. Lord Carlile of Berriew QC will provide expert, independent oversight on the review.

The Government envisages a clearer separation between work on preventing violent extremism, led by the Home Office, and on the promotion of integration, which will be led by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG). As part of its work on integration CLG will also be coordinating work across Government to address challenges faced from non-violent extremism.

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National Citizen Service (NCS) piloting planned

National Citizen Service (NCS) is a key part of the Government's plans for building the 'Big Society'. It will bring 16 year olds from different backgrounds together in a residential and home-based programme of activity and service. As part of the experience, participants will spend two weeks away from home, to give them the opportunity to develop life skills and resilience and to serve their communities. Activities will include outdoor challenges, structured tasks to develop personal skills whilst visiting and helping groups in the local neighbourhood, and designing and delivering a social action project in consultation with local communities.

NCS will give many young people an introduction to community action and there will be opportunities for them to continue their involvement once they have completed their NCS programme, and to keep in touch via alumni networks. There will also be opportunities for some NCS graduates to take part in International Citizen Service, enabling them to undertake valuable voluntary service in developing countries.

The Government is planning to run two years of pilots, starting in summer 2011 and then building on that learning with another pilot in 2012. Over 10,000 16 year olds will have the opportunity to take part in Summer 2011, and 30,000 in Summer 2012. The model will be tested by a wide range of organisations in a range of locations, including urban, rural and suburban settings in different parts of the country. Those organisations running NCS pilots in 2011 will be seeking to establish strong links with local groups in their areas, including faith organisations, to ensure young people from all backgrounds are able to take part in NCS.

Further information can be found at <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/news/national-citizen-service-introduced>

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Supporting a Stronger Civil Society – OCS consultation

The Office for Civil Society (OCS) is taking a new approach to funding advice and support services for civil society groups. Through its consultation, OCS is looking for your thoughts and ideas on the role it can play in ensuring that civil society in England has the advice, support and influence that will help it to modernise and respond to change.

Having considered the current evidence base and given the difficult fiscal situation, the Office for Civil Society expects its future investment in support services to be guided by the following principles:

- Central investment must be a catalyst for driving greater efficiency and reducing long term dependence on the state.
- Reform of the support system must be driven by frontline needs.
- Infrastructure organisations have a valuable role to play, not least in strengthening local networks.
- To address inequality and to ensure all voices are heard and promote cohesion, there is a need to ensure support is accessible by diverse organisations.

The consultation asks for specific feedback on proposals in six key areas:

- Easier access to advice through online services
- Access to wider sources of support, particularly from the private sector
- Direct support to frontline organisations through bursaries
- Consolidation of support services through merger and collaboration
- Better local public sector partnerships
- Better partnerships between Central Government and national infrastructure.

The proposals in the consultation are all subject to outcomes of the Spending Review. Further information about the consultation, and a downloadable consultation document, can be found at: <http://www.capacitybuilders.org.uk/consultation/aboutconsultation>. The consultation closes on 6 January.

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OCS consultation on modernising commissioning

On 7 December the Office for Civil Society published the Government's Green Paper on *Modernising commissioning: increasing the role of charities, social enterprise, mutuals and co-operatives in public service delivery*. The proposals and questions set out in the paper are intended to encourage discussion and responses to it will be fed into the Treasury-led Public Service Reform White Paper due to be published in early 2011.

The key questions asked by the Green Paper are:

- In which public service areas could Government create new opportunities for civil society organisations to deliver?
- How could Government make existing public service markets more accessible to civil society organisations?
- How could commissioners use assessments of full social, environmental and economic value to inform their commissioning decisions?
- How could civil society organisations support greater citizen and community involvement in all stages of commissioning?

Responses are to be submitted by 5 January to the Cabinet Office at ocscommissioning@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk

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Christian Muslim Forum statement on halal food

In the light of recent concerns, reported in the media on the provision by some institutions of 'halal only' food (and over the labelling of halal products), the Christian Muslim Forum has produced a statement dealing with issues of non-compulsion and openness. The text can be found at www.christianmuslimforum.org/index.php/working-together/news/halal-statement.

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BBC Diversity Strategy review

The BBC is currently reviewing its diversity strategy in preparation for the public sector equality duty of the Equality Act coming into force next April.

It is seeking the views of organisations representing a diverse range of people across the UK along with their members. It would like input on its draft Diversity Strategy to help ensure that it has a positive impact on all staff and its diverse audiences.

Individuals and organisation can give their views by visiting: www.perceptor.com/perceplive/Survey/BBC_EQ_P. The consultation runs until 7 January 2011. Once the findings from the research and the consultation process have been considered the BBC will finalise the Diversity Strategy and publish it in April 2011.

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Charity Commission seeks views on future strategy

The Charity Commission is seeking to review its key priorities for the next five years and develop a new strategy which can be delivered within the resources available.

A preliminary consultation, which runs to 14 January, is the first stage of the review. It asks for comments on the key risks the Commission should seek to address, and the different expectations stakeholders have of the charity regulator. As the review progresses, outline proposals and further questions for consultation will be published, with the intention of completing the review and implementing the necessary changes from next May.

Responses are invited from all those with an interest in the effective regulation of charities. There are three ways to respond:

- Complete a survey at charitycommissionreview.blogspot.com, answering some key questions about the Commission's role and approach
- Post comments on the site, to help spark debate and encourage the exchange of ideas
- Email responses directly to strategicreview@charitycommission.gsi.gov.uk

The Charity Commission is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. See www.charitycommission.gov.uk for further information.

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An update from the Scottish Inter Faith Council

In the first few months of the new year the Scottish Inter Faith Council will be organising a conference for young people which will be organised in partnership with the Association of Chief Police Officers. SIFC will also be beginning arrangements for a visit of inter faith activists from Barcelona and New York. This is the third of a series of international visits which have allowed contact and sharing of ideas and resources across different cultures and concerns.

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PROJECTS

London 2012 Cultural Programme

The Culture Diary is the calendar and online planning tool created by the Greater London Authority to help the planning and promotion of every cultural event taking place across London in 2012. The Diary is open to all events from large spectacles to small community events, whether specifically for 2012 or part of an ongoing programme. Registration is free - visit the Culture Diary website and register as a new user www.theculturediary.com. The Culture Diary closes to new registrations on 31 December 2010. Once registered, bodies have until 31 March 2011 to add details of any cultural event/s they are planning in 2012. All planned events can be added even if they are pending, for example awaiting funding, artists or venues. Events can be updated with further details when these are available. If necessary events can be removed from the Diary at a later stage.

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JAINpedia

JAINpedia is an on-going project digitising rare and sacred Jain manuscripts. An official launch of the JAINpedia display at the Victoria and Albert Museum was held on 18 November when His Royal Highness Prince Charles visited the display and viewed the JAINpedia website. The display at the Nehru Gallery, in the Victoria and Albert Museum is continuing until December 2012.

The Institute of Jainology and JAINpedia in partnership with the British Library have opened a display on Jain manuscripts at the John Ritblat Gallery: Treasures of the British Library until April 2011. For further information on the project please see www.jainpedia.org or contact info@jainpedia.org.

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Dudley Borough Interfaith Network 30th anniversary

Dudley Borough Interfaith Network will mark its 30th Anniversary in 2011 as an established organisation working in Dudley. In March it will celebrate 30 years of achievements in building a strong and peaceful borough, connecting communities and supporting faith communities in acting and interacting together. On the evening of 17 March it will host an event to celebrate the last 30, and next 30 years of working together in Dudley.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

£100 million Transition Fund

A £100 million Transition Fund has opened for applications. It is designed to help civil society organisations which deliver public services adapt to a different funding environment during a period when they are at risk from reductions in taxpayer funded income affected by public spending reductions. The fund, which was announced in the Government's Spending Review, will be managed by the Big Fund, which is part of the Big Lottery Fund.

The Fund is available to organisations with a turnover of between £50,000 and £10 million which usually derive much of their funding from state sources and which are spending at least 50 per cent of their total income delivering frontline public services in designated areas. Grants of between £12,500 and £500,000 will be available to enable organisations to make changes to become sustainable in the longer term. For more information on eligibility and how to apply, visit <http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/transitionfund>, or contact the Big Fund on 0330 303 0110 or email enquiries@bigfund.org.uk.

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Global Community Links - Next grant round opening 4 January

'Community linking' is an ongoing relationship between a community group in the UK and a community group in a developing country. Any kind of community group can be involved in a link, from youth groups to sports clubs to faith groups to social enterprises.

Global Community Links is a programme funded by UKaid from DFID, delivered by a consortium led by the British Council and including the Inter Faith Network, that increases understanding of global issues in the UK through promoting linking between community groups in the UK and developing countries. Through enabling cross-learning between groups in the UK, it is also designed to deepen community cohesion in this country at the same time as increasing development awareness.

The next GCL round of grants opens on 4 January and closes on 14 February. Global Community Links funding is open to community groups in the UK, including the Channel Islands and Isle of Man, that are involved in a link with a community group in a developing country. Groups can apply for up to £10,000 to be spent over nine months on activities in the UK.

Grants are for: a) building knowledge and understanding of global development, including the Millennium Development Goals or b) building an understanding of global interdependence and promoting actions that individuals can take to reduce global poverty levels. Grants are to build knowledge and understanding of development in the UK, and cannot be used for visits overseas from the UK. The grants can, however, be used to bring a representative from your link group overseas to the UK.

For more information see: <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Getting-Involved/How-you-can-help/DFID-Community-Linking-Programme/Grants-FAQs/>

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Share and Learn Grant Scheme

The Share and Learn Grant Scheme is funded by the Children's Workforce Development Council which is working in partnership with a Children and Young People's Voluntary Sector Workforce Consortium led by Children England including the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS), the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA), and the Race Equality Foundation (REF). The scheme is aimed at front-line organisations in the voluntary and community sector located in England which deliver services to children, young people and families. It will support them to share their experience of supporting and developing their staff and volunteers and enable other front-line organisations (known as Learning Partners) to learn from their practice.

Learning Partners working with faith groups are one of the priority groups the scheme will support. The application deadline for Learning Partners is 14 January. For more information visit the website of the National Council for Voluntary and Youth Services (NCVYS) at www.ncvys.org.uk/index.php?alias=share

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NEW RESOURCES

Catholic Church in Scotland – inter faith resources

The Catholic Church in Scotland has recently produced a short leaflet about Nostra Aetate, the document on the Church's relationship to other religions which came out 45 years ago towards the end of the Second Vatican Council. This leaflet which went out to every parish in Scotland was published to celebrate the anniversary of Nostra Aetate and as a contribution to Scottish Inter Faith Week.

The Scottish Catholic Education Service produced a school pack on the Church's teaching on interreligious dialogue. This was for senior pupils in secondary schools and was sent to every catholic school.

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South East England Faiths Forum – faith community impact assessment

The South East England Faiths Forum has carried out an economic impact assessment of the work of faith communities in the South East.

Faith groups carry out a broad range of different activities. Many of these activities make a contribution to the local economy, even when this is not the primary or stated intention of the activity. The aim of this research project, carried out for SEEFF by West Midlands Enterprise, was to identify those activities across different faith groups within the South East region and establish a consistent, robust and comparable way of measuring their contribution.

There are an estimated 3,800 faith groups across the South East of England, helping to target many issues in local areas. Their volunteers unknowingly save the economy large amounts of money, time and resources. The report on the assessment shows estimated time given by volunteers as equating to £95million each year.

The summary of the report *Faith Communities – The Hidden Contribution* can be downloaded from www.se-faithforum.net/files/economic-impact-project/Faith_in_Comm_WEB_STDMaster.pdf The full report *Economic Impact Assessment of Faith in the South East* is downloadable www.se-faithforum.net/EIA%20of%20Faith%20Organisations%20in%20the%20South%20East%20report.pdf.

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Faith in Action in North Somerset

North Somerset, supported by Faithnetsouthwest, have just carried out a faith audit and survey of the community work of faith groups in North Somerset. 118 faith groups (a 63% response rate) responded to the questionnaire. A team of specially trained community researchers from Somerset Racial Equality Council (SREC) and members of the steering group made direct contact with faith groups.

The findings show that faith groups offer significant support to communities across the whole spectrum of social support activities. The audit showed that services are provided annually to the value of £4.22 million. 6,500 people in North Somerset currently use services provided by faith groups. This figure represents 3.4% of the total population of 209,100. Faith groups identified approximately 1,950 volunteers, giving approximately 5,460 hours a week. The audit shows there is further scope for developing partnership working between all sectors and service providers. In prioritising and delivering current and future services it is essential that the sectors work together, sharing information on good practice and resource. The formation of a Faith Network or Forum in North Somerset could be a starting point.

For a hard copy of the full report contact Faithnetsouthwest on 0117 3042298 or at info@faithnetsouthwest.org.uk.

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Somerset Faith and Beliefs forum – mobile exhibition and DVD

The Somerset Faiths and Beliefs Forum has produced a mobile exhibition and accompanying DVD. The exhibition is designed to show the contribution people of faith make to the community of Somerset and break down prejudice and misunderstanding. It has been inspired by the Somerset Anne Frank Exhibition held in Taunton in March 2006 which had over 10,000 visitors from across the county and beyond.

The exhibition will be taken to schools, colleges, community organisations, council offices, libraries, health centres, any location where the public might gather. There are five panels, four of which feature young people from a particular faith group. These include quotes about what faith means to them and how it can help create better relations between people in the community. Copies of the DVD are available to purchase. For more information see www.somersetfaithforum.org.

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NCVYS e-bulletin

NCVYS is inviting faith groups which work with young people across England to sign-up to a free monthly e-bulletin. This will provide news connected to volunteer and staff training and development. Past bulletins have included details about free government funded management training, grants, free factsheets, events and developments such as new apprenticeship schemes and volunteer programmes. To go on the mailing list email nichola@ncvys.org.uk and request to be mailed the *Snippets* e-bulletin. To read past e-bulletins go to <http://www.ncvys.org.uk/Workforce.html>

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS AND TENDERS

Inter Faith Week 2010 event information and photographs

The IFN office is currently adding to the Inter Faith Week website, www.interfaithweek.org.uk, photographs of events held to mark the Week. If you have any good photographs of your event and would like to submit these for consideration with a short caption describing them and any photo credit that needs displaying, please could you send these to Ashley.beck@interfaith.org.uk. We will assume, unless you indicate otherwise, that any photograph has been cleared for use for promotional purposes. (Photographs may also be used in other contexts, such as Flickr, to promote good inter faith relations. If you prefer to restrict the use of your photographs just to the Inter Faith Week website, please indicate this.) As last year, we will be putting together a list of events at all levels known to have been held to mark the Week. If you have not already sent details of your event and would like to ensure that it is included, please email details to Ashley.beck@interfaith.org.uk.

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Equality and Human Rights Commission research project

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is inviting tenders for a new research project entitled 'Understanding equality and human rights in relation to Religion or Belief'. This has been posted on the procurement page of the EHRC website at <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/about-us/procurement-opportunities/tender-for-research-to-understand-equality-and-human-rights-in-relation-to-religion-and-belief/>

The overall aims of the programme of work are to:

- Understand the views and experience of a range of stakeholders, employers and/or employer organisations and service providers as to the key dilemmas and conflicting interests that they experience particularly around the right to manifest belief.
- Use the information acquired through this project and from a possible related project in 2011-12 to develop guidance/advice about the law, case studies demonstrating non-legal means of resolution and a toolkit of principles to help resolve existing practical dilemmas arising from religion and belief equality and human rights in the workplace, or in service delivery that link to the EHRC's statutory remit and role as a regulator.

The full tender pack is available from the Procurement Team at tenders@equalityhumanrights.com The deadline for receipt of tenders is 1.00pm on 12 January. Please contact the Procurement Team if you have any queries about this tender opportunity.

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Call for papers – The Politics of Living Religion/Spirituality and Gender/Sexuality in Everyday Context

A conference jointly organised by Professor Peter Nynas of Abo Akademi University in Finland and Dr Andrew Kam-Tuck Yip of Nottingham University on 'The Politics of Living Religion/Spirituality and Gender/Sexuality in Everyday Context' is being held in London on Tuesday 24 May. This aims to bring together scholars who are doing research on the intersection of religion/spirituality and gender/sexuality in contemporary society. The conference will explore the multi-facetedness of this intersection with a particular focus on the everyday context. It will be a small-scale conference providing a platform for in-depth and productive dialogue. Those interested to participate are invited to submit an abstract of no more than 250 words, alongside a brief biographical note (max 150 words) to Prof Nyas (peter.nyas@abo.fi) and Dr Yip (andrew.yip@nottingham.ac.uk). All participants must submit a fairly developed paper to the organisers by 22 April, which will be distributed among participants in advance of the conference to facilitate in-depth discussion on the day. Following the conference fully developed papers must be submitted to the organisers by 15 July to facilitate the preparation of the edited volume.

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The 'Big Society' Awards

Prime Minister David Cameron has launched a new award that will recognise some of the excellent examples of the 'Big Society' in action taking place all around the country. In a statement he said: "These awards are a chance to pay tribute to those making a valuable contribution to their community, the real champions of the Big Society...I hope they will motivate many others to take action, get involved and drive change in their area."

Individuals, businesses, charities, community groups and other organisations are all eligible if they illustrate the 'Big Society' in action. This might be by:

- bringing their community together, giving people more power to take decisions and shape their area
- transforming public services by setting up staff cooperatives, new providers or finding innovative ways of delivering better services to the public
- giving their time and money to help others, the unsung heroes changing lives in every neighbourhood of the country

Winners will be selected from among the nominees by a panel made up of previous winners, and representatives of civil society organisations, Government and the private sector.

To nominate an organisation that you think deserves the acclaim of a 'Big Society' award or for more information visit: www.number10.gov.uk/big society awards. There is no deadline.

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International Bremen Peace Award 2011

Invitations are invited for nominations for this award, which is administered by the Threshold Foundation and seeks to honour people and organisations which set an example through their work contributing to reconciliation, human rights, overcoming of racism, preservation of creation and intercultural and inter-religious understanding. There are three categories, each of which carries an award of 5,000 Euros.

- Award for the Unknown Peace Worker: honouring dedicated individuals working at grassroots level without much public attention or recognition: people who contribute to peace, justice and the integrity of creation through unconventional initiatives.
- Award for Exemplary Organisations: initiatives or organisations that contribute to the goals of the Threshold Foundation in an outstanding manner.
- Award for Public Engagement: honouring renowned public figures such as journalists, scientists, politicians and artists, who persistently and courageously contribute to peace, justice and the integrity of creation.

For further information please contact Petra.Titze@dieschwelle.de or telephone 0049.421.3032577 (a Bremen number). Award brochures are available at www.dieschwelle.de

The closing date for submission of proposals is 31 January.

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JOBS AND VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

Faiths Act Fellowships

The Faiths Act Fellowship is a year-long, paid international Fellowship that brings together exceptional future leaders inspired by faith to serve as interfaith ambassadors for the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Faiths Act Fellows build partnerships across faith lines in their home countries to show the world how faith can be a positive global force in the 21st century. Faiths Act Fellows work in local NGOs to mobilise communities to take part in MDG-focused, multi-faith action. Fellows receive a stipend and health benefits throughout the Fellowship year. The Faiths Act Fellowship is a programme of the Tony Blair Faith Foundation in collaboration with Interfaith Youth Core. For more information, or to apply, go to www.faithsactfellows.org.

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Kirklees Faiths Forum volunteers

Kirklees Faiths Forum provides visits to places of worship across Kirklees for adults, including community groups, parents, and teachers. This gives people the opportunity to experience a place of worship first hand, and learn about its spiritual significance and meaning.

Volunteers are needed to host these visits by delivering learning packages that provide an interactive experience for visitors to different faith centres across Kirklees, including Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist. No formal qualifications are needed as full training is provided. Applicants will need to have passion and some basic knowledge about their faith and place of worship. Volunteering is open to everyone, timing is flexible and all expenses will be reimbursed. Please call 01924 324 836 or email info@kirkleesfaithsforum.org.uk for more information. A role description, application form and equality form can be downloaded from www.kirkleesfaithsforum.org.uk/volunteering.asp.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Holocaust Memorial Day 27 January 2011

Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) takes place on 27 January each year. The theme for HMD 2011 is Untold Stories. The purpose of HMD is to honour and remember the victims and survivors of the Holocaust, Nazi persecution and subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Bosnia, Rwanda and the ongoing atrocities in Darfur. HMD gives us all a chance to look to our own lives and communities and celebrate the things which are sometimes used as reasons to separate us.

There is no type of commemoration or event to mark HMD 2011 that is right or wrong, nor is any event too big or too small and it is not too late to arrange to mark the Day in some way. The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust (HMDT) provide free resources and advice for event organisers on their website, www.hmd.org.uk. They also supply free Campaign Packs at www.hmd.org.uk/resources/campaignpack. You can also contact the HMDT

office for further information and advice. Call 0845 838 1883 or email enquiries@hmd.org.uk.

If you are already planning an event HMD would be grateful if you could please complete a short [online events form](#).

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World Interfaith Harmony Week

A resolution on an annual World Interfaith Harmony Week each February (in the first week) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in October. The resolution was put by Jordan and a website has been set up linked to this:

www.worldinterfaithharmonyweek.org. While this is clearly a worthwhile and positive one, it is not clear at this stage how widely the Week will in practice be observed in different countries. The Department for Communities and Local Government has indicated that Government has no plans to mark the UN Week in February.

While the decision has been taken to keep Inter Faith Week in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in November (see above) for a range of practical reasons, the branches in this country of international inter faith bodies organisations might well choose to play a special role in marking this important World Week in February and to focus on the vital issue of global inter-religious harmony. It could be a very visible and positive opportunity for doing so.

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Celebrating RE Month March 2011

March 2011 sees a month long celebration of RE in schools, colleges, universities, faith and belief communities and local communities throughout England and Wales. The purpose is to celebrate the contribution that high quality RE can make to the education of every child and young person. It also aims to raise public awareness and understanding of the nature of RE as a subject which is relevant, challenging, interesting and of educational value to all, whatever their religious or philosophical background.

A resource newly added to its site, www.celebratingre.org is a leaflet about the importance of inter faith issues and how inter faith groups can support and work with schools to promote dialogue. It also shows a range of ideas and activities which schools can use to explore the inter faith dimension. Examples include exploring scriptures and discussing what different faiths say about such concepts as greed or forgiveness, looking at similarities and differences within a faith or considering how words such as 'sabbath' or 'priest' are understood by different faiths. See:

<http://www.celebratingre.org/index.php/what-can-you-do/inter-faith-if-groups>

The Celebration is organised by the RE Council of England and Wales. Planning and organisation are co-ordinated by a sub-committee of the REC, supported by part-time project officers and by many teachers, advisers, faith and belief community members, SACREs and others all over the two countries taking part. For further information see www.celebratingre.org.

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UK's first Climate Week 21 to 27 March 2011

Events and activities highlighting the positive steps being taken to help prevent climate change are being planned by organisations from every part of society for the UK's first Climate Week, taking place from 21 to 27 March. Among the national bodies supporting the Week are many faith and inter faith organisations. Organisers are encouraging faith communities to use Climate Week as an opportunity to focus during sermons and in study groups on the religious basis for environmental care and to use events, exhibitions and coffee mornings to highlight ways faiths are taking steps to help prevent climate change. During the Week itself, an online environmental 'challenge' will be set each day to which school and university teams will be encouraged to find a solution.

For more information on Climate Week or to register for the Climate Week Challenge, please contact Kate Shepherd, Head of Campaigns, at kate@climateweek.com or on 0203 397 2602. Further information on the week can be found at www.climateweek.com.

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National Family Week 30 May to 5 June 2011

National Family Week aims to highlight the importance of families spending quality time together and aims to promote the benefits of a healthy, active lifestyle. Over the last two years, the Week has involved families in thousands of events, competitions, offers and promotions. Next year the Week will take place from Monday 30 May to Sunday 5 June and the organisers are keen to encourage faith-based and inter faith groups to get involved by:

- Promoting the Week (free posters, balloons, stickers etc. are available)
- Holding community events and registering these on line through the National Family Week Event finder
- Having a special family focus during the week, e.g. at meetings, worship, youth activities etc.

For further information visit www.nationalfamilyweek.co.uk or contact bee@nationalfamilyweek.co.uk

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National Dementia Awareness Week

Dementia Awareness Week 2011 takes place in Northern Ireland from 12 to 18 June and in England and Wales from 3 to 9 July. The theme of the Week, 'Remember the person', encourages everyone to be a friend to people with dementia - to look beyond the diagnosis to engage with the person and their history and passions, and remember the simple things that can make their lives more manageable and enjoyable.

Good quality of life can be achieved after a diagnosis of dementia, and research shows that spirituality and staying engaged with faith communities can play a key role in helping

someone stay well. Carers also get enormous benefit from being welcomed and supported by their local faith communities. The Alzheimer's Society, www.alzheimers.org.uk, is looking to faith communities to engage with the theme of "Remember the Person" during the Week. There are plans for a Day of Worship for People with dementia and their carers during the Week, and the Alzheimer's Society would like to hear from faith communities that would like to be involved. For more information, please contact External Affairs Manager, Brigid Bowen, at brigid.bowen@alzheimers.org.uk or call her on 02920 480566.

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Mitzvah Day 20 November 2011

Mitzvah Day takes place on Sunday 20 November. It is a Jewish led day of social action – around the world thousands of people take part in hands on projects to support existing charities and to build stronger communities. The goal is to reduce hardship and poverty and to help the environment. People are encouraged to volunteer for projects in their communities and anyone can take part regardless of their background. Last year a number of projects had a multi faith dimension. See www.mitzvahday.org.uk for further information and to register an event.

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Inter Faith Week 2011

Sunday 20 to Saturday 26 November in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Scottish Inter Faith Week dates are due to be announced in the new year.

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DIARY DATES

The Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby is running six evening workshops on 'Diversity of Faiths: Meeting Challenge, Celebrating Difference'. The workshops will be held on 10, 17, 24 and 31 January, and on 14 and 21 February. The objectives for these workshops are to:

- increase your understanding of the issues related to religious diversity
- share experiences of religion and culture
- recognise stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination related to religion
- increase your skills to help create a more inclusive diverse environment
- gain personal and career development in today's multi-cultural society

Everyone will receive an attendance certificate. Workshops are open to all people - religious and non-religious. They will run from 6.30 to 8.30pm and cost £60 which includes a copy of Religions in the UK Directory worth £25.00. For more information contact the Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby on 01332 591285 or email e.fry@derby.ac.uk.

Bristol Inter Faith Group is continuing its series of Dig Deeper events and workshops. The next event is a 'Transformative Communication Workshop' with Clare Russell which will be held on Wednesday 12 January from 6.30pm to 9.30pm at Lawrence Hill Church, Lincoln Street, Barton Hill, Bristol, BS5 0BJ. All faiths place value on active caring for others. One of the first steps to enable that care is empathy – as Paul Tillich states, 'the first duty of love is to listen'. This is an experiential, fun and powerful workshop. Learn simple yet effective communication skills to create the relationships you want. To book a free place on this workshop contact Bernard Omar on 01454 775 454 or b.f.omar@btinternet.com.

St Philip's Centre, Leicester is holding a Muslim-Christian Dialogue Group meeting on Monday 17 January. The meeting will run from 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm and will be held at St Philip's Church, Evington Road, Leicester LE2 1HN. For more information, please see <http://stphilipscentre.dioceseofleicester.com>.

Hull and East Riding Interfaith is holding its next forum at 5pm on Tuesday 18 January in Committee Room 1, Ground floor, Guildhall, Hull. This is a double meeting. Refreshments will be available from 4.30pm. At 5.00pm there will be a discussion on the 'Spirituality in Contemporary Funerals' report of research done in Hull and the East Riding, published in August 2010, by Professor Margaret Holloway and Hull University's Centre for Spirituality Studies, with a Project Advisory Team including Professor John Friend and other HERI members from different religion and belief groups. Professors Holloway and Friend will open the discussion. All welcome to share views and experiences. At 6.00pm there will be discussion about a new community-based movement called 'Transition' spreading round the UK and USA now which aims to rethink the economy, employment, sustainability, and dependence on oil, in a long-term, basic, and radical way. All are welcome to both discussions. For more information, please contact Jackie Lukes, Secretary, on 01482 445728 or see www.heri.org.uk.

Bristol Inter Faith Group, as part of its continuing series of Dig Deeper events and workshops, will be hosting an event on 'How People of Faith Help the World's Poor' on Thursday 10 February from 7.00pm to 9.30pm at Progressive Synagogue, 43-45 Bannerman Road, Easton, Bristol, BS5 0RR. The talk will be led by Revd Dr Marcus Braybrooke, President of the World Congress of Faiths and prolific author. He is a retired priest in Dorchester-on-Thames Team Ministry near Oxford and has taken an active part in interfaith dialogue for over forty years. He is President of the World Congress of Faiths and was also a Co-Founder of the Three Faiths Forum. For more information contact Valerie Russell Emmott at valerie.emmott@bifg.org.uk or on 07507 563 289.

The Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter, London are continuing their Sunday afternoon series on respecting difference in interfaith dialogue, 'Engaging with the Other' with a discussion on 13 February, between 2.30pm – 4.15 pm, entitled 'Does Jesus unite us or divide us?'. Speakers are Sr Margaret Shepherd (Sisters of Our Lady of Zion) and Rabbi Mark Solomon (Interfaith adviser for Liberal Judaism). The event will be held at the Sion Centre for Dialogue & Encounter, 34 Chepstow Villas, London W11 2QZ. A suggested donation of £8.00 is requested. To book, or for further information, email sioncde@yahoo.co.uk or telephone 020 7313 8286 or 020 7727 3597.

St Ethelburga's Centre, London is the venue for an event hosted by Rosy Fairhurst and **the Grubb Institute** on the topic of 'Death and dying - A Matter of Faith'. The event will consider how society approaches death, dying and bereavement and how people of faith approach death and dying with integrity and connectedness in a multi-faith society where many are secular. The event begins at 6.30pm on Tuesday 15 February. For more information see <http://stethelburgas.org/civicrm/event/info?id=199&reset=1>.

The Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby in conjunction with **Volunteering England** and partners are hosting a regional Modernising Volunteering Conference entitled 'The Way to a Bigger Society'. The conference will be held on Tuesday 22 February from 10.30am to 5pm, with registration starting at 9.45am. This conference explores the findings from four cutting edge priority areas, including: faith-based volunteering, new forms of volunteering involvement, overcoming barriers to volunteering and skills-based employer supported volunteering. There is a delegate fee of £60, which includes lunch, refreshments and an electronic resource pack. Full conference details and booking information are available at www.volunteering.org.uk/VEevents.

Leo Baeck College is organising the 38th International Students' Conference for Dialogue between Jews, Christians and Muslims in Europe. The conference will be held in Wuppertal in Germany from 28 March to 3 April. The conference will be on the theme of 'Still of use? Do religious communities have something to offer to the wider society?'. There is a fee to attend the event and numbers are limited. For enquiries and information on registration please contact Irit Burkeman at Leo Baeck College on 020 8349 5605 or at irit.burkeman@lbc.ac.uk.

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For detailed information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Scottish Inter Faith Council: www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org

Inter-Faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org

For detailed information on events and projects in the English regions see:

East of England: www.eefaithscouncil.org.uk

East Midlands: www.ffem.org.uk

London: www.faithsforum4london.com

North East: www.nerfn.org

North West: www.faithnorthwest.org.uk

South East: www.se-faithforum.net

South West: www.faithnetsouthwest.org.uk

West Midlands: www.wmfaithsforum.org.uk

Yorkshire and Humber: www.yorkshireandhumberfaiths.org.uk

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If you would like to let us have items for consideration for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 26 January 2011, with the word 'E-bulletin' in the subject line.

Disclaimer:

Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 8A Lower Grosvenor Place, London SW1W 0EN
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If you would like to let us have items for consideration for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 18 March 2011, with the word 'E-bulletin' in the subject line.

Disclaimer: Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

UK/NATIONAL UPDATES

Inter Faith Network for the UK

The Inter Faith Network (www.interfaith.org.uk) held a joint meeting with the National Union of Students (NUS) at the offices of NUS on 31 January for inter faith organisations running programmes on university campuses. This provided a chance for participants to share information about current projects and discuss some of the opportunities and challenges in this important area of work.

At its meeting on 3 February, which fell during the UN endorsed World Interfaith Harmony Week, the Executive Committee of the Network, during its customary opening period of silent reflection, held in mind at this time the vital work of all around the world working for inter faith understanding and cooperation.

On 10 February, IFN's Director was part of an Inter Faith Council for Wales (IFCW) Roundtable which looked at how local inter faith initiatives in Wales had marked the 2010 Inter Faith Week and at aspects of the development of local inter faith work in Wales.

On 14 February, the Inter Faith Network held, in association with the North East Regional Faiths Network (www.nerfn.org), a regional link meeting for local inter faith organisers in the North East of England. This took place at the Newcastle Civic Centre and was attended by local inter faith councils and forums from Durham, Gateshead, Hartlepool, Newcastle, Sunderland and South Tyneside. Participants from People to People North East and the Iona Community Northumbria Interfaith Group were also present.

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Consultations on community rights to challenge and buy

On 4 February, Decentralisation Minister Greg Clark opened a consultation on how new rights for communities should work in practice. The Community Right to Challenge and Community Right to Buy are two key elements of the Localism Bill, which was introduced to Parliament in December 2010.

Under the Community Right to Buy, local groups will have a legal right to nominate any vital community asset – including local shops, pubs, libraries and leisure centres – to be assessed for recording on a 'most wanted' list by the local council. The asset could then be listed for five years. In that time, the owner of a listed asset will have to tell the council if they intend to sell, which will trigger a window of opportunity or 'community countdown', giving people time to prepare their business plan and raise the funds they need to make a credible bid before it goes on the open market.

The Community Right to Challenge opens the door to a transformation in the way that local public services are run. It will give community or voluntary sector groups, as well as parish councils and council employees, new powers to challenge and take over a local service. This could include running children's centres, social care services and even improving local transport links. Under the new law, councils must respond to this challenge and consider the positive impact the proposal could have on the community. If the proposal is turned down the council must publish the reasons for this. This new right puts voluntary and charity groups on the front foot when it comes to running public services and has the potential to open up new revenue for them.

The consultation period will run for 12 weeks until 3 May and the documents and response forms can be found on the DCLG website at:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/righttobuyconsultation>
(Community Right to Buy) and
www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/righttochallengeconsultation
(Community Right to Challenge).

Four consultation events are being held during the consultation period in Manchester (9 March), Bristol (22 March), Birmingham (31 March) and London (13 April). For further information please contact crtchallenge@communities.gsi.gov.uk or crtbuy@communities.gsi.gov.uk.

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Reviews of counter-terrorism measures and of Prevent

An announcement was made by Home Secretary Teresa May on 26 January about the review of the Government's counter-terrorism strategy. The Review considered six key counter-terrorism and security powers: the detention of terrorist suspects before charge, including how the period of detention can be reduced to below 28 days; section 44 stop and search powers and the use of terrorism legislation in relation to photography; the use of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) by local authorities and access to communications data more generally; measures to deal with organisations that promote hatred or violence; extending the use of 'Deportation with Assurances' in a manner that is consistent with our legal and human rights obligations; and control orders (including alternatives) .

The full report, *Review Of Counter-Terrorism And Security Powers Review Findings And Recommendations*, can be found at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/counter-terrorism/review-of-ct-security-powers/review-findings-and-rec?view=Binary. The review proposed:

- A return to 14 days as the standard maximum period that a terrorist suspect can be detained before they are charged or released
- An end to the indiscriminate use of terrorism stop and search powers provided under Section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000
- The end to the use of the most intrusive 'Regulation of Investigatory Powers' (RIPA) powers by local authorities to investigate low level offences and a requirement that applications by local authorities to use any RIPA techniques are approved by a magistrate
- A commitment to rationalise the legal bases by which communications data can be acquired and, as far as possible, to limit that to RIPA
- A stronger effort to deport foreign nationals involved in terrorist activities in this country fully respecting our human rights obligations
- The end of control orders and their replacement with a less intrusive and more focused regime. Additional resources will be provided to the police and security agencies to ensure the new measures are effective not only in protecting the public but in facilitating prosecution

A new version of the Government's counter terrorist strategy, CONTEST, will be published within a few months.

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Charity Commission sets out initial conclusions on future strategy

On 16 February, the Charity Commission set out its key regulatory priorities for the next four years as it concluded the first stage of its strategic review and published the responses from the public consultation.

The key priorities agreed by the Commission are:

- Registering charities
- Providing guidance to trustees to enable them to manage their charity effectively
- Ensuring charities are accountable to the public by requiring and publishing information
- Giving permissions as required in law
- Taking action to deal with serious mismanagement or abuse of charity
- Organisational structure and culture

The next stage of the review will involve further work to develop and refine these priorities into a detailed strategy and activities, as well as developing a new organisational structure for the Charity Commission to enable it to deliver the new strategy. This will involve further external and internal consultation over the coming month. The Charity Commission aims to begin implementing these changes from May 2011 with a view to having the new strategy and structure fully in place from 1 October 2011.

More information can be found

on: http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/RSS/News/pr_initial_conclusions.aspx

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Charitable Incorporated Organisations

The Charity Commission is currently preparing a new corporate structure designed specifically for charities: the Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). It is planned that this will be introduced in late Spring. The Commission will soon be publishing detailed guidance for trustees that will explain how to set up a new CIO, how charitable companies or charitable industrial and provident societies can convert to CIOs and what unincorporated charities need to do to become CIOs. The introduction of the new model will be phased in to manage what the Commission expects will be high demand from charities.

More details can be found online at

[www.charitycommission.gov.uk/Start_up_a_charity/Do_I_need_to_register/Charitable Incorporated Organisations_index.aspx](http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/Start_up_a_charity/Do_I_need_to_register/Charitable_Incorporated_Organisations_index.aspx).

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National Citizen Service now recruiting

National Citizen Service (NCS) is a key part of the Government's efforts to build a bigger, stronger society. The two month programme will mix sixteen year olds from a variety of backgrounds, and will include a two week stay away from home. It will give 16 year olds a challenge – and help them to help their communities.

The first two weeks of the programme will take young people away from home and involve tough physical activities that will boost their confidence and build their teamwork and leadership skills. They will then return home and spend a further five weeks working in teams to develop a project that will help to change something they don't like about their communities.

Starting in July, after exams have finished, 12 NCS pilot programmes will take place across the country with a total of 11,000 spaces up for grabs. Some of the projects have already started accepting registrations. More than 8,000 people have so far expressed an interest, with 1,000 people already signed up.

All 12 pilots are now open to teenagers who have just turned or are about to turn 16 – and who would normally have completed year 11 at school.

More details can be found at <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/news/pioneering-teenagers-help-build-big-society-national-citizen-service-now-recruiting>

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Civil partnerships in religious buildings

The Government announced on 17 February that religious buildings will be allowed to host civil partnership registrations. The change will be entirely voluntary and will not force any religious group to host civil partnership registrations if they do not wish to do so. It will give same-sex couples, who are currently prevented from registering their civil partnership in a religious setting, the chance to do so.

The changes to the rules governing civil partnerships will come about by enacting section 202 of the Equality Act 2010 which lifts the explicit ban on holding civil partnership registrations in religious premises included in the Approved Premises (Marriage and Civil Partnership) Regulations 2005. Section 202 makes clear the voluntary nature of the provision by stating “*For the avoidance of doubt, nothing in this Act places an obligation on religious organisations to host civil partnerships if they do not wish to do so.*” Making the necessary changes to the Approved Premises Regulations will require further legislation. The Government Equalities Office will launch a formal consultation on this later in the spring.

The Government's announcement also said that Ministers have identified a desire to move towards equal civil marriage and partnerships, and will be consulting further on how legislation can develop, working with those who have an interest in this issue.

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Public Sector Equality Duty

In January the Government confirmed that the new public sector equality duty will be brought into force in April. Equalities Minister Lynne Featherstone said that public sector bodies should start preparing for the new duty, which will ensure that public bodies embed equality considerations into their day to day work. The duty extends beyond race, disability and gender to cover age, sexual orientation, religion or belief and gender reassignment in full. New draft regulations have been published following the consultation

in autumn 2010, setting out new specific duties for England which focus on increasing transparency and democratic accountability. The press release covering the announcement can be found at www.equalities.gov.uk/media/press_releases/public_sector_equality_duty.aspx.

A public consultation on the specific duties occurred in Autumn 2010. A summary of the responses received and the Government response has been published and can be found at www.equalities.gov.uk/pdf/110114%20Promoting%20equality%20through%20transparency%20-%20Summary%20of%20responses.pdf.

Guidance is available from the Government Equalities Office (GEO) and the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) to help public bodies understand and prepare for the public sector equality duty. The GEO guidance can be found at www.equalities.gov.uk/pdf/110117%20Public%20sector%20Equality%20Duty%20Guide%20-%20FINAL%20ACCESSIBLE.pdf and the EHRC guidance at www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-duties/new-public-sector-equality-duty-guidance.

The Scottish and Welsh administrations are taking forward their own specific duties, governing relevant public bodies in Scotland and Wales.

In Scotland, these have been laid before the Scottish Parliament, along with a draft order setting out the Scottish public bodies to which these (and the general duty) will apply.

In Wales, the consultation on their specific duties closed just before Christmas, and the Welsh Assembly Government is hoping to finalise their regulations and the list of Welsh public bodies to which the duties will apply shortly.

The intention is for the general Equality Duty and the specific duties for each administration to commence across Great Britain on 6 April 2011.

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Equality Act positive action provisions

In January the Government published guidance on how the Equality Act's positive action provisions will work. The Equalities Minister, Lynne Featherstone, has urged employers to look at this before the law changes on 6 April.

The 2010 Equality Act's positive action provisions give employers the option, when faced with two or more candidates of equal merit, to choose a candidate from a group that is under-represented in the workforce. This does not mean allowing 'quotas' or giving someone a job just because they are a woman, or from an ethnic minority – positive discrimination is not acceptable and remains unlawful. By choosing to have a workforce that reflects the community it serves, an employer can ensure it draws talent from the widest possible pool and fully understands the needs of all its customers.

Guidance for employers, entitled *Equality Act 2010: What do I need to know? A quick start guide to using positive action in recruitment and promotion*, is available at www.equalities.gov.uk/pdf/Positive%20Action%20in%20Recruitment%20and%20Promotion%20Guide%201.pdf.

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Review of National Curriculum in England announced

On 20 January the Secretary of State for Education announced a Review of the National Curriculum in England. A copy of the press release can be found at www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/curriculum/nationalcurriculum/a0073149/national-curriculum-review-launched.

The review will look at the National Curriculum for both primary and secondary schools. Religious Education, while compulsory, is not part of the National Curriculum and so is not covered by the Review. Paragraph 11 of the document outlining the remit of the Review explains “..... it is essential to distinguish between the National Curriculum and the wider school curriculum. There are a number of important components of a broad and balanced school curriculum for which, as is currently the case, it would be inappropriate to prescribe national Programmes of Study. This applies, for example, in the case of religious education (RE), where what is taught needs to reflect local circumstances. Religious education will not, therefore, be considered as part of the review of the National Curriculum. The Government does not intend to make any changes to the statutory basis for religious education.”

In a release on 21 January, the RE Council for England and Wales welcomed the reference to the statutory position of RE, and sought reassurance that the statutory position of RE will be accompanied by actions which guarantee effective implementation in every school, college and academy. It drew attention to the current and long-standing statutory requirement that the school curriculum promotes the "spiritual, moral... and cultural development of pupils and of society" identified in the 1944 and 1988 Education Acts and said that these forms of development need to be remembered within the new national curriculum as well as the wider curriculum, and it is vital that they are directly addressed in the wording of the Education Bill as it is framed. It noted that the local basis of RE is reaffirmed. Ways therefore need to be found to ensure that the Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education, which individually cover each area of the country, are strengthened rather than diminished.

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Measuring national well-being

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is developing new measures of national well-being. The aim is that these new measures will cover the quality of life of people in the UK, environmental and sustainability issues, as well as the economic performance of the country.

In order to develop better measures of the nation's well-being ONS is consulting with people across the UK to ask what matters most in people's lives. Respondents can fill in an online questionnaire at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/26PKQ9K> or can respond by email (nationalwell-being@ons.gsi.gov.uk) or by post (Measuring National Well-being Consultation, ONS, Room 1.024, Government Buildings, Cardiff Road, Newport NP10 8XG) to the questions on the ONS website at www.ons.gov.uk/about/consultations/measuring-national-well-being/index.html.

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Government and voluntary sector agree new Compact

A renewed Compact - the agreement which governs relations between the Government and civil society organisations in England - was published in December by the Government and Compact Voice, the organisation which represents civil society organisations on the Compact.

The new, shorter, agreement aims to create the right environment for partnership working. It is backed by a set of accountability and transparency measures outlined in a new guide. The National Audit Office will carry out a one-off study into the operation of the Compact across government which will be reported to parliament.

A copy of the Compact, together with the accountability guide, can be found online at www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/resource-library/government-voluntary-and-community-sector-agree-new-compact-working-partnership.

For more information about the Compact renewal, the accountability measures or the work of Compact Voice, contact Dugald McNaughtan, Communications Officer, Compact Voice (National Council for Voluntary Organisations), on 020 7520 2486.

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Equality Challenge Unit Religion and Belief in Higher Education Project

The Equality Challenge Unit Research project *Religion and Belief in Higher Education: researching the experiences of staff and students* which is being carried out by the University of Derby has completed collecting data. The project worked on seven institutional case studies and ran an online survey that had over 6,000 responses that closed on 1 January this year. The project runs until April and will produce a detailed report for the Equality Challenge Unit that will be distributed through the sector.

For more information visit the project website www.derby.ac.uk/ehs/research/religion-and-belief-in-HE

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New Church of England Secretary for Inter Religious Affairs

The Revd Dr Toby Howarth has been appointed to serve as Secretary for Inter Religious Affairs for the Church of England and is expected to take up his new post in late April. Dr Howarth, who follows the Revd Canon Guy Wilkinson in the post, is currently Inter Faith Adviser to the Bishop of Birmingham. He was Vice Principal at Crowther Hall in Selly Oak where he also taught Islamic studies, having previously spent five years in India, where he carried out research on the subject of Islamic preaching.

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Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum's Chief Executive moves to Corrymeela

Following the death of its Leader and Chief Executive Dr David Stevens last May, the Corrymeela Community, one of Northern Ireland's leading peace building organisations, has appointed the Revd Dr Inderjit Bhogal as his successor. A Methodist minister, theologian and former President of the British Methodist Conference, Dr Bhogal has been Chief Executive of the Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum and United Faiths - its youth council - since 2005. He is also the Chair and founder of the City of Sanctuary, a national movement committed to building a culture of welcome and hospitality for people seeking sanctuary in the UK.

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Religions for Peace/ECRL changes

Mr Stein Villumstad has taken up the position as General Secretary for European Council of Religious Leaders – Religions for Peace. He comes to ECRL after serving five years as Deputy Secretary General in Religions for Peace. He also served in Norwegian Church Aid for twenty years, both as regional representative in Eastern Africa and as Assistant General Secretary.

Ms Yolande Iliano has been elected President of Religions for Peace (Europe) in succession to Dr Hans Ucko. Ms Iliano, a Christian from Belgium, is a retired teacher and school director by profession. She has been involved in Religions for Peace for twenty years and since 1990 has been operational in a range of activities and projects in peace education and inter faith dialogue.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

European Year of Volunteering grants

The Cabinet Office has made available small scale contracts and grants for organisations to develop and implement activity within England, as part of the national work programme for European Year of Volunteering.

2011 has been designated as the European Year of Volunteering within the European Union (<http://europa.eu/volunteering/en/home2>). The purpose of the Year is to support the efforts of member states and civil society organisations to create conditions which are conducive to the development of volunteering across Europe. As part of the national work programme for the Year, the Office for Civil Society has identified national priorities which support the Big Society Vision, and is seeking partner organisations to support the development and implementation of activities within England which relate to these priorities. The national priorities include:

- Encouraging and enabling individuals to make a contribution within their communities and help solve social issues by volunteering.
- Promoting good practice within the private, public and voluntary and community sector in relation to the development of effective employer supported volunteering (ESV) programmes.
- Identifying and sharing good practice and resources relating to effective volunteer management; and
- Promoting good practice in opening the door to volunteering opportunities to those traditionally less likely to volunteer.

More information on the roles and grants available and how to apply can be found at <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/content/european-year-volunteering-2011-funding-opportunities-develop-and-implement-activities>.

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European Refugee Fund and European Integration Fund

Calls for proposals for the European Refugee Fund and European Integration Fund are now open. Further information can be found at: www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/newsfragments/39-erf-eif The closing date for completed applications is 7 April 2011. The application pack is available via the Home Office's Emptoris e-procurement site. To register, email Emptoris at EUFunding@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk.

To assist bidders in preparing their applications, a 1-day workshop will be held in March 2011. Limited spaces will be available on a first come, first served basis. Further details will be provided after you register on Emptoris.

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RESOURCES

Charity Commission – advice for small charities

The Commission has developed a new section of its website dedicated to advice and guidance for charities with small incomes. The new pages provide trustees with basic information about: starting, running or winding down a small charity; finding trustees; registering with the Commission; accounting and reporting; holding meetings and voting; and dealing with property. The section also explains where trustees can go for more detailed guidance - often through links to other sections of our website. See www.charitycommission.gov.uk/Charity_requirements_guidance/Specialist_guidance/Small_charities/default.aspx for more information.

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Who moved my samosa? – a guide to competing equality claims

brap, a Birmingham-based equality and human rights charity, has published a report entitled 'Who moved my samosa?' on managing and resolving competing equality claims. The guide is based on a research report *brap* undertook for the Equality and Diversity Forum which was commissioned to stimulate debate about how to address situations where individual rights conflict. Containing real-life examples, the guide sets out what a range of organisations have done to resolve conflict in the workplace and community.

The guide can be downloaded from www.brap.org.uk/content/view/343/123.

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British Secularism and Religion: Islam, Society and the State

Edited by Yahya Birt, Dilwar Hussain and Ataullah Siddiqui, *British Secularism and Religion: Islam, Society and the State* provides an in-depth deliberation upon the relationship between religion and politics in contemporary Britain. Combining theological reflections and academic and policy perspectives, this topical collection includes contributions from Ted Cattle, Sunder Katwala, Maleiha Malik, Tariq Modood, Abdullah Sahin, Norman Soloman and Nick Spencer.

The book is a published report of the seminar hosted by the Policy Research Centre at the Islamic Foundation and the Markfield Institute of Higher Education, which took place in January 2009 on the topic of 'British Muslims and the Secular State'.

The report can be purchased from www.islamic-foundation.com/p712/British-Secularism-and-Religion.-Islam,-Society-and-the-State/product_info.html.

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Faith Leadership through Chaplaincy

Faith Leadership through Chaplaincy was published in December by Faith Matters. It is a report that outlines the views of Muslim chaplains, sector leaders and Muslim communities as well as other faith communities on faith leadership. The report looks at the provision of chaplaincy and pastoral care services within the following sectors: the NHS, Higher and Further Education sectors and the Prison Service.

The report is available to download from http://faith-matters.org/images/stories/fm-reports/faith_matters_chaplaincy_report.pdf.

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Citizenship, Identity and Difference – teachers' pack

Citizenship, Identity and Difference is an interactive CD-Rom with a teachers' pack, including supporting worksheets for RE and Citizenship Education at Key Stage 2-3. This flexible new resource from the Council of Christians and Jews explores different strands of religious and non-religious traditions in British society today, and has been produced in response to requests from RE teachers for materials enabling discussion of citizenship and identity. The pack is available from CCJ and also to download from their website at www.ccj.org.uk/citizenship.

Regional workshops to introduce the materials are being planned. For more information, please contact Fiona Hulbert at the Council of Christians and Jews at fiona.hulbert@ccj.org.uk.

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The Story of the International Council of Christians and Jews

The International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCJ) has recently published *The Story of the International Council of Christians and Jews* by William W Simpson and Ruth Weyl. A Brief History of the ICCJ was written in 1982 by William Simpson. Mr Simpson died in 1987 and his close friend and colleague, Ruth Weyl, has now updated the History. The final version is available to download from the ICCJ website at www.iccj.org.

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Understanding reports on charity financial statements

The Charities Panel of the Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy Charities Panel has produced a new guide entitled 'Understanding reports on charity financial statements'.

This guide is for accountants and non-accountants and is part of a series that seeks to provide information aimed at improving understanding of charity accounting and reporting and highlighting areas of interest to those involved in the civil society and public service spheres. The guide provides a brief overview of the main forms of external reports produced on charity financial statements. The report is downloadable from http://trusteenet.org.uk/files/CIPFA%20CPG%20Understanding%20Reports%20Charity%202010_0.pdf.

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TRAINING

Three Faiths Forum Interfaith Connectors Programme

Three Faiths Forum and the US-based Interfaith Youth Core have launched a new inter faith education and leadership training opportunity for ten to twelve undergraduate students who are passionate about creating inter faith cooperation in their community and on campus. The selected students will be trained to facilitate inter faith workshops for teenagers in schools, and promote inter faith social action and events on their campus. At the end of the programme, they will receive a modest stipend, and qualify as Certified Youth Inter Faith Facilitators.

For more information please email Debbie Dannon at the Three Faiths Forum at Debbie@threefaithsforum.org.uk or call 0207 485 1390.

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An introduction to Judaism for Imams

The Joseph Interfaith Foundation in partnership with the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board (MINAB) is organising a series of seminars to introduce Judaism to Imams. Rabbis from the Council of Imams and Rabbis (Orthodox, Reform, Liberal and Masorti) will give introductions on the religious aspects and history of Judaism. The seminars will include information on history, scripture, theology, lifecycles and festivals.

The seminars will take place from April to June at Central London mosques and synagogues. For further information please contact Mehri Niknam at info@josephinterfaithfoundation.org.

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Inter faith chaplaincy course

The Chaplaincy at the University of Bolton is running a course during March and April exploring chaplaincy from an inter faith perspective. The course will: explore how Hindus, Muslims and Christians use their faith resources to support and understand chaplaincy work in a non-religious environment; and consider the common elements in chaplaincy work (hospital, hospice, prison, school, university, airport etc), learning from chaplains working in some of these institutions.

The course is designed for those who want to know more about chaplaincy work in a multi faith environment and for those already working in chaplaincy to enable them to reflect further upon their work. Speakers include Revd Dr Stephen Heap, Church of England National Higher Education Adviser, Moulana Rashid Ali Musa Seth, Imam of the Zakariyya Central Masjid, Bolton, and Rt Revd Chris Edmondson, Bishop of Bolton.

The Course runs from 9.30am until 4.00pm at the following times and venues:

- Saturday 26 March – University of Bolton
- Sunday 27 March – Zakariyya Central Masjid
- Friday 8 April – URC of St Andrew & St George
- Saturday 9 April – Veda Mandir

The Award Ceremony is on Saturday 16 April, 12noon -2.00pm followed by lunch. There is a fee of £110 for the four days including drinks and lunch each day, plus an arranged visit to a chaplaincy. For further details contact the Course Co-ordinators: Waleed Shoukat on 07885 788 178, CDOMM@thebcom.org or Karen Openshaw on 07837 209 182, chaplain.karen@bolton.ac.uk.

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Coexistence Trust Campus Ambassadors programme

In January the Coexistence Trust launched its Campus Ambassadors initiative. This is a part-time one-year leadership development scheme for first and second year Muslim and Jewish undergraduates who have demonstrated an interest in fostering collaborative partnerships between their communities. The Trust is now looking for students who are active on campus to make up its first cohort of Ambassadors.

During monthly sessions and a weekend retreat, the programme will cover different aspects of inter-communal leadership, including conflict resolution and practical leadership strategy, helping participants to develop their personal leadership vision. Each Ambassador will receive personalised one-on-one mentoring from the Coexistence Trust team and other leading professionals in the not-for-profit sector. Ambassadors will receive personalised one-on-one mentoring from the Trust team and other leading professionals in the not-for-profit sector. Ambassadors will then have the opportunity to 'pitch' their project ideas to a panel of potential investors in order to win funding for their on-campus social action project.

Further information can be found online at www.coexistencetrust.org. For any enquiries, please email shahnaz.ahsan@coexistencetrust.org.

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Ariane de Rothschild Fellowship: Social Entrepreneurship and Cross Cultural Network – call for applications

The Ariane de Rothschild Fellowship brings together primarily Muslim and Jewish social entrepreneurs and non-profit sector leaders from the US, UK and France to learn together. The Fellowship aims to develop a network of entrepreneurs with a demonstrated interest in social change and cross cultural dialogue.

This year's programme takes place from 15 to 31 July at the Cambridge Judge Business School at Cambridge University. Travel and accommodation are paid for by the Fellowship. The closing date for applications is 28 February. Applicants should complete an online questionnaire at www.adrfellowship.org/apply, which needs to be submitted together with their CV and business plan. Further details can be found online at www.adrfellowship.org and any enquiries can be addressed to adrfellowship@ebdrf.com or gul@alumni.tufts.edu.

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Free fundraising training sessions for BAME and faith-based organisations

The National Children's Bureau's Voluntary Sector Support programme is running free fundraising training sessions for voluntary sector BAME and faith-based organisations.

The courses aim to increase understanding of what funders and commissioners are looking for in organisations and applications, to improve confidence and application skills and to help people think outside the box in relation to funding.

The events are being held on 4 March in London and on 11 March in Manchester. Bookings can be made online at www.ncb.org.uk/vss/training_events.aspx. Travel bursaries are being offered to organisations with low income levels.

For further information about the events and bursaries, contact Sarah Fullegar at sfullegar@ncb.org.uk or on 020 7833 6845.

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Restorative Justice Training for Faith Leaders

The Tower Hamlets Hate Crime Policy and Partnership Team are organising a training session on Restorative Justice for Faith Leaders. The course aim is to enable participants to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively facilitate Simple Restorative Approaches and more complex Restorative Conferences. This course utilises a student centred approach combining instruction with skills practice/role play allowing for experiential learning. It is aimed at anyone who may need to deal quickly with minor conflict where little investigation or preparation is required and risk of further harm is minimal, as well as those conflicts that require significant preparation and consideration of risk before facilitating more complex restorative meetings.

This will be a three-day training course taking place in March and April 2011. Wednesday 30 March, Thursday 31 March and Friday 1 April. You do not have to be a faith leader to take part in this course but could be working in a faith setting. There are only 16 places available which will be offered on a first come, first served basis. To book your place, please email nazma.begum@towerhamlets.gov.uk with your name, role, organisation, contact number and any special requirements by Monday 7 February 2011.

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Parliamentary Outreach training sessions

Faith based organisations are often central to local social action and advocacy on community issues. Local faith based community groups can bring valuable experience and expertise to the decisions made at Parliament. Topics as diverse as the desecration of graveyards, the legal status of weapons used in religious ceremonies, and local poverty issues have been raised by faith groups at Parliament, informing legislation and debate.

The Parliamentary Outreach team was established in 2007 with the purpose of building the knowledge and confidence of individuals and community groups so that they are best able to influence parliamentary decision making using their local community experience. The team is non-party political. There is a strong emphasis on supporting local people to be involved at different levels of decision making thus ensuring that local knowledge is

recognised in parliamentary research and debate including informing select committees about very specific community related issues.

The team provides free training and activities to explore how Parliament works, how laws are made, what Select Committees do and how your voice can be heard in these processes. You can learn how to contribute to the creation of legislation, how to submit evidence to a Select Committee and how to work with your MP to raise an issue at Parliament. The sessions are tailored to your group, with a date, time and venue to suit you. These can last from an hour to a whole day. You can find out more information for your area at: www.parliament.uk/get-involved/outreach-and-training.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS AND TENDERS

‘Faith in the World’ competition

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, has launched a 'Faith in the World' writing prize, which invites young people to submit an essay in response to the question posed in a choice of essay titles, each exploring an aspect of faith in the world today. The competition is divided into three age groups: 13 to 15 year olds; 16 to 17 year olds; and 18 to 21 year olds.

There are cash prizes for the winner of each age group, which will be presented at a reception at Lambeth Palace. Winning and highly commended entries will be published on the Archbishop of Canterbury's website and extracts may also be published in *The Daily Telegraph*. Full details of how to enter and entry forms can be found at www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/3110. The closing date is 11 March 2011.

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Census competition to celebrate national diversity

The Office for National Statistics has launched an online photo competition to encourage more people from ethnic minorities to fill in the 2011 Census. Called 'Then and now: family stories' the competition will give families across England and Wales the chance to celebrate the personal histories behind the changing face of Britain in the last 50 years.

Contestants need to illustrate their story using just two photographs and 250-500 words. To find out more and to enter go to <http://2011.census.gov.uk/2011thenandnow>.

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The 'Big Society' Awards

The 'Big Society' Awards have been created to recognise individuals, groups or organisations that are demonstrating the 'Big Society' in their work or activities. Individuals, businesses, charities, community groups and other organisations are all eligible for nomination. You may like to nominate an individual, faith community organisation or inter faith organisation in your area. Examples of activities include bringing the community together and giving time and money to help others.

Anyone, including people who benefit from the group, organisation or individuals activities, may make a nomination. There is no deadline for nominations. For more information visit www.number10.gov.uk/big society awards.

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Inter Faith Week 2010 events – call for information and photographs

The IFN office is still adding to the Inter Faith Week website, www.interfaithweek.org.uk, photographs of events held to mark the 2010 Week. If you have any good photographs of your event and would like to submit these for consideration with a short caption describing them and any photo credit that needs displaying, please could you send these to Ashley.beck@interfaith.org.uk. Unless you indicate otherwise, it will be assumed that any photograph has been cleared for use for promotional purposes. (Photographs may also be used in other contexts, such as Flickr, to promote good inter faith relations. If you prefer to restrict the use of your photographs just to the Inter Faith Week website, please indicate this.)

As last year, we will be putting together a list of events at all levels known to have been held to mark the Week. If you have not already sent details of your event and would like to ensure that it is included, please email details to Ashley.beck@interfaith.org.uk.

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JOBS AND VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

Three Faiths Forum: Education Projects Officer

The Three Faiths Forum is looking for an experienced individual to join its growing team. They are seeking a Projects Officer to develop and deliver their educational programmes, which run in schools, colleges, universities and with youth organisations; and to support schools/teachers (both primary and secondary) on their faith school linking programme.

The successful candidate will have excellent skills in communicating with young people, experience in delivering educational programmes, understanding of faith and inter faith issues, excellent knowledge of Christianity, and some knowledge of Islam and Judaism. They will need to be committed to achieving the organisational aims of the Three Faiths

Forum and have lots of ideas for ways of helping young people explore and learn about others.

The deadline for applications is 21 February. A full job description and application form can be found online at www.threefaithsforum.org.uk/jobs/education-projects-officer/index.html.

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Religions for Peace – Volunteer Executive Director

Religions for Peace (UK) is now accepting applications for the position of volunteer Executive Director. RfP (UK) is an affiliate of Religions for Peace (RfP), a multi-religious coalition that advances common action among the world's religious communities for peace and works to transform violent conflict, advance human development, promote just and harmonious societies, and protect the earth. The successful candidate will have a Master's degree in peace studies, religious studies, business administration or equivalent degree; and five years of successful experience and advancement in reconciliation and peace work, or community engagement. For a full job description and details on how to apply, please contact Mr David Horner, Hon Secretary, Religions for Peace (UK) at dvd.horner@googlemail.com.

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Ofqual advisory group members

Ofqual regulates qualifications, (other than degrees), in England and vocational qualifications in Ireland. Ofqual are currently seeking to recruit additional members to an advisory group on promoting equality and inclusion in qualifications and assessments through regulations.

The group will be invited to comment and advise on:

- the potential impact of Ofqual's proposed and existing regulatory policies and practices on people who have one or more of the protected characteristics
- research and other relevant ways of working from which Ofqual could learn
- Ofqual's progress in embedding equality and inclusion in its approach to regulation
- Ofqual's approach to equality and diversity impact assessment
- progress being made by Ofqual to fulfil the commitments set out in its Single Equality Scheme for England.

Full details on the role and how to apply can be found online at www.ofqual.gov.uk/news-and-announcements/83/540. Applications should be received by 1 March.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Celebrating RE Month March

March sees a month long celebration of RE in schools, colleges, universities, faith and belief communities and local communities throughout England and Wales. The purpose is to celebrate the contribution that high quality RE can make to the education of every child and young person. It also aims to raise public awareness and understanding of the nature of RE as a subject which is relevant, challenging, interesting and of educational value to all, whatever their religious or philosophical background.

One of the resources on its site, www.celebratingre.org, is a leaflet about the importance of inter faith issues and how inter faith groups can support and work with schools to promote dialogue. It also shows a range of ideas and activities which schools can use to explore the inter faith dimension. Examples include exploring scriptures and discussing what different faiths say about such concepts as greed or forgiveness, looking at similarities and differences within a faith or considering how words such as 'sabbath' or 'priest' are understood by different faiths. See:

<http://www.celebratingre.org/index.php/what-can-you-do/inter-faith-if-groups>

The Celebration is organised by the RE Council of England and Wales. Planning and organisation are co-ordinated by a sub-committee of the REC, supported by part-time project officers and by many teachers, advisers, faith and belief community members, SACREs and others all over the two countries taking part. For further information see www.celebratingre.org.

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UK's first Climate Week 21 to 27 March

Events and activities highlighting the positive steps being taken to help prevent climate change are being planned by organisations from every part of society for the UK's first Climate Week, taking place from 21 to 27 March. Among the national bodies supporting the Week are many faith and inter faith organisations. Organisers are encouraging faith communities to use Climate Week as an opportunity to focus during sermons and in study groups on the religious basis for environmental care and to use events, exhibitions and coffee mornings to highlight ways faiths are taking steps to help prevent climate change. During the Week itself, an online environmental 'challenge' will be set each day to which school and university teams will be encouraged to find a solution.

For more information on Climate Week or to register for the Climate Week Challenge, please contact Kate Shepherd, Head of Campaigns, at kate@climateweek.com or on 0203 397 2602. Further information on the week can be found at www.climateweek.com.

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National Family Week 30 May to 5 June

National Family Week aims to highlight the importance of families spending quality time together and aims to promote the benefits of a healthy, active lifestyle. Over the last two years, the Week has involved families in thousands of events, competitions, offers and promotions. Next year the Week will take place from Monday 30 May to Sunday 5 June and the organisers are keen to encourage faith-based and inter faith groups to get involved by:

- Promoting the Week (free posters, balloons, stickers etc. are available)
- Holding community events and registering these on line through the National Family Week Event finder
- Having a special family focus during the week, e.g. at meetings, worship, youth activities etc.

For further information visit www.nationalfamilyweek.co.uk or contact bee@nationalfamilyweek.co.uk

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The Big Lunch

The 'Big Lunch' will take place this year on 5 June. The Big Lunch is an annual one-day get together with your neighbours - wherever you live. It can be anything from a simple lunch to a full-blown street party with DJs and a home cooked feast. Find out more at: www.thebiglunch.com/index.php

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National Dementia Awareness Week

Dementia Awareness Week 2011 takes place in Northern Ireland from 12 to 18 June and in England and Wales from 3 to 9 July. The theme of the Week, 'Remember the person', encourages everyone to be a friend to people with dementia - to look beyond the diagnosis to engage with the person and their history and passions, and remember the simple things that can make their lives more manageable and enjoyable.

Good quality of life can be achieved after a diagnosis of dementia, and research shows that spirituality and staying engaged with faith communities can play a key role in helping someone stay well. Carers also get enormous benefit from being welcomed and supported by their local faith communities. The Alzheimer's Society, www.alzheimers.org.uk, is looking to faith communities to engage with the theme of "Remember the Person" during the Week. There are plans for a Day of Worship for People with dementia and their carers during the Week, and the Alzheimer's Society would like to hear from faith communities that would like to be involved. For more information, please contact External Affairs Manager, Brigid Bowen, at brigid.bowen@alzheimers.org.uk or call her on 02920 480566.

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National Sewa Day

National Sewa Day 2011 will take place on 25 September. The Sanskrit word 'Sewa' means 'selfless service'. National Sewa Day is a national day of service which seeks particularly, but not exclusively, to engage the support and talents of the Hindu, Sikh, Jain and Buddhist communities. It provides people a chance to give back to the community through volunteering on a single day to make a difference. For more information, or to get involved, please visit www.nationalsewaday.org.

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Mitzvah Day 20 November

Mitzvah Day takes place this year on Sunday 20 November. It is a Jewish led day of social action – around the world thousands of people take part in hands on projects to support existing charities and to build stronger communities. The goal is to reduce hardship and poverty and to help the environment. People are encouraged to volunteer for projects in their communities and anyone can take part regardless of their background. Last year a number of projects had a multi faith dimension. See www.mitzvahday.org.uk for further information and to register an event.

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Inter Faith Week 20 – 26 November

Inter Faith Week 2011 www.interfaithweek.org.uk will take place this year in England, Wales and Northern Ireland from Sunday 20 November until Saturday 26 November. The first day of the Week will again coincide with Mitzvah Day.

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Scottish Inter Faith Week 27 November – 4 December

Scottish Inter Faith Week will take place from Sunday 27 November to Saturday 4 December.

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DIARY DATES

The **Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby** in conjunction with **Volunteering England** and partners are hosting a regional Modernising Volunteering Conference entitled 'The Way to a Bigger Society'. The conference will be held on Tuesday 22 February from 10.30am to 5pm, with registration starting at 9.45am. This conference explores the findings from four cutting edge priority areas, including: faith-based volunteering, new forms of volunteering involvement, overcoming barriers to volunteering and skills-based employer supported volunteering. There is a delegate fee of £60, which

includes lunch, refreshments and an electronic resource pack. Full conference details and booking information are available at www.volunteering.org.uk/VEvents.

Watford Interfaith Association is holding its AGM on Tuesday 22 February at 7.15pm for 7.30pm at Beechen Grove Baptist Church - on the corner of Clarendon Road and Beechen Grove in Watford, close to Watford Junction Station. The AGM business will be brief to allow time for the invited speaker, Simon Keyes, Director of St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace. He will be recounting the story of the bombing of this medieval church in 1993 in the Bishopsgate bombing and its resurrection from the ashes by the hands of volunteers over several years into the inter faith and reconciliation centre it has become today. Refreshments will be served, all are welcome and there is no charge to attend. For more information, contact Judith Bruni on 01923 774812, or Stephanie Grant on 01923 461834, or email wifasec@aol.com.

The MUJU Crew bring Muslims and Jews together through a shared passion for creating art. The next in their series of Thursday open workshops – Upstarts – will be held on Thursday 24 February at the Tricycle Theatre in Kilburn from 7.15pm to 9.00pm. Upstarts begins 2011 with a new director and the opportunity to perform work inspired by untold true stories of Muslim heroes during the Second World War and the Holocaust. With the stories as stimulus, the group will collaborate alongside director, Josh Azouz, to devise a show, and perform it at the Tricycle Theatre in May. No theatre experience is necessary, just an open mind. Expect drama, debate and lots of laughs. Potential actors, directors and writers are all welcome to attend. For more information, please contact info@muju.org.uk.

The **Council of Christians and Jews** is supporting a special event as part of Jewish Book Week entitled 'Jesus and the Jews'. The event will be held at 3.30pm on Sunday 27 February at the Royal National Hotel in London. The discussion will be led by Susannah Heschel, Professor of Jewish Studies at Dartmouth College, Miri Rubin, Professor of Early Modern History at Queen Mary's, London and David Cesarani, Research Professor of History at Royal Holloway, University of London. Tickets costs £8 and can be purchased at www.jewishbookweek.com/2011/susannah-heschel-miri-rubin.php.

The **Scottish Inter Faith Council** established a Women's Inter Faith Network in Scotland in June 2010. The network brings women together from across Scotland from all faith traditions to engage in inter faith dialogue and social action projects. The next meeting of the Women's Inter Faith Network will take place on Monday 28 February at 4.30pm at the Brahma Kumaris Centre in Edinburgh, 20 Polwarth Crescent, EH11 1HW. These meetings will be in part to discuss arrangements for the Scottish Inter Faith Council's Annual Women's Seminar which will take place on Sunday 27 March from 1pm to 5pm, venue tbc. The theme of the seminar is 'Spirituality, health and wellbeing'. For further information, please contact Frances Hume on fhume@scottishinterfaithcouncil.org or on 0141 420 6982.

Bristol Inter Faith Group, as part of its series of Dig Deeper events and workshops, will be hosting a Civic Inter Faith Celebration: 'Working together'. This event will be held on Wednesday 2 March 2011, 7pm for 7.15pm start at The Council House, College Green, Bristol BS1 5TR. This event is by kind invitation of The Lord Mayor of Bristol, Councillor Colin Smith. There will be readings, prayers, and music from the teachings of faith

communities on cooperation, followed by an informal meeting over light refreshments. For further information Bernard Omar on 01454 775 454 or b.f.omar@btinternet.com.

The **World Congress of Faiths**, in conjunction with the **International Association of Religious Freedom** and the **Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University** will be holding a time of reflection on the theme of 'Journey to Compassion' from 8 to 10 March 2011 at the Global Retreat Centre, Nuneham Park, Nuneham Courtney, Oxfordshire. The Global Retreat Centre generously offers hospitality but donations will be greatly appreciated. All meals will be vegetarian. For further information or to book please contact Maureen.goodman@uk.bkwsu.org.

The **Scottish Inter Faith Council** is working with Central Scotland Police and a variety of organisations running a one-day youth inter faith conference for young people aged 16 – 26. The conference will take place on Thursday 10 March from 10am to 3pm at Strathclyde Police Training Complex at Jackton near East Kilbride. Deadline for applications is Thursday 10 February. Please request an application form from Frances Hume at the Scottish Inter Faith Council at fhume@scottishinterfaithcouncil.org or on 0141 420 6982

The **Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter**'s final Sunday afternoon session in the discussion series on respecting difference in interfaith dialogue, *Engaging with the Other* takes place from 2.30pm to 4.15pm on 13 March at the Centre at 34 Chepstow Villas, London W11 2QZ. The subject is 'Beyond the Spiritual: Religion and the Everyday' and the speakers are Dr Michael Barnes SJ and Anil Goonewardene. A donation of £8.00 is suggested. For further information or to book, please telephone 020 7313 8286/020 7727 3597 or email sioncde@yahoo.co.uk.

Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship's Peter Bell Memorial Lecture will take place on Wednesday 16 March at 7.30pm at the Leeds Civic Hall. The guest speaker is Dr Musharraf Hussain OBE, Director of the Karimia Institute at Nottingham University and his talk is entitled 'Seventy Ways to Enrich Interfaith Activity'. For further information, please email secretary@concord-leeds.org.uk.

As the latest in its series of 'Leaders' events, the **Christian Muslim Forum** is bringing together 20 pairs of Christian and Muslim leaders (religious, community, youth and others) on 16 and 17 March for an event entitled 'Mill Towns, Religion and Understanding'. Spread throughout the North of England there are many former mill towns that share not only a common industrial history, but also a common community demographic. They are home to Muslim communities of significant size that contribute to the distinctive character of the towns. The Christian Muslim Forum is working in partnership with Blackburn Cathedral eXchange Project, Building Bridges Pendle and Bradford Churches for Dialogue and Diversity and with the support of The Henry Smith Charity and the Church Urban Fund. The event will seek to strengthen local partnerships and initiatives, explore models of leadership, consult with young people and women on their expectations of leaders and celebrate the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible and 1400 years since the first revelation to the Prophet Muhammad. The key aim is to develop the capacity and ability of 20 Christian and 20 Muslim leaders and people of influence to engage with other faiths and be good role models for dialogue. This residential event is being hosted at Jamiatul-Ilm Wal-Huda College and Blackburn Cathedral and bookings can be made online at www.christianmuslimforum.org.

Dudley Borough Interfaith Network marks its 30th Anniversary this year. On 17 March it will celebrate 30 years of achievements in building a strong and peaceful borough, connecting communities and supporting faith communities in acting and interacting together. Look out for more details on celebration plans at www.dbinterfaith.org.uk.

Leo Baeck College is organising the 38th International Students' Conference for Dialogue between Jews, Christians and Muslims in Europe. The conference will be held in Wuppertal in Germany from 28 March to 3 April. The conference will be on the theme of 'Still of use? Do religious communities have something to offer to the wider society?'. There is a fee to attend the event and numbers are limited. For enquiries and information on registration please contact Irit Burkeman at Leo Baeck College on 020 8349 5605 or at irit.burkeman@lbc.ac.uk.

Hull and East Riding Interfaith are holding an Interfaith Symposium on Religious Education from 5pm to 7pm on Tuesday 29 March. The symposium will take place in Committee Room 1 at the Guildhall in Hull, with refreshments from 4.30pm. The event is being held as part of National RE Month and will consider five topics: Why should RE be compulsory in all schools in England & Wales, not just Faith Schools? Where should RE be taught? Who should teach RE and who should shape the syllabuses? What should schools teach? How should it be taught? All are welcome. For further information, including a map and parking, see www.heri.org.uk and [www.CelebratingRE.org/what's on](http://www.CelebratingRE.org/what's_on). You can contact Hull and East Riding Interfaith's Secretary, Jackie Lukes, on 01482 445728 or at jackie@lukes.heri.org.uk.

The **Jain community** will be celebrating the 2609th Birthday of Bhagwan Mahavir on Saturday 16 April at the Jain Centre, 64-68 Colindale Avenue, London NW9 5DR. The programme runs from 10.30am until 5.00pm and will contain dance and music as well as the launch of Heritage and Cultural Academy as part of the educational programme of the Jain Network. All are welcome to attend. For further information or invitations, please contact Dr Natubhai Shah at dr@natubhaishah.com.

Peterborough Inter Faith Council will be holding its annual Festival of Faiths and Foods from 12.30pm on Sunday 8 May. The theme of this year's event, which will be held at Peterborough Town Hall, is 'The Heart of My Faith'. The event begins with an inter faith lunch and there will be speakers from each of the main faiths, led by the Bishop of Peterborough, The Rt Revd Donald Allister. There is no charge to attend and all are welcome. For further information, please contact the Secretary, Brian Keegan on 01733 265769 or at brian@briankeegan.demon.co.uk.

The **Christian Interfaith Practitioners' Association** will be holding their Annual Consultation 2011 from 17 to 19 May at Luther King House, Brighton Grove, Manchester M14 5JP. This year's theme is 'Reflective approaches to dialogue' and the speaker will be Dermot Killingley, a former lecturer of the Department of Religious Studies at Newcastle University. There is a charge to attend. Details can be found online at www.cipa-uk.com. For more information please contact Any Lie on 07720 118603 or at asj_lie@hotmail.com.

The **International Council of Christians and Jews** is holding its annual conference from 3 to 6 July in Cracow, Poland. This year's conference is being co-hosted with the Jagiellonian University of Cracow. The conference is part of an ongoing ICCJ project

dealing with interreligious dialogue in Central and Eastern Europe and the theme will be 'Religions and Ideologies, Polish perspectives and beyond'. Cracow was chosen because of its historical associations for Christians and Jews and for the central role it has played in Polish history. The conference will include a trip to the memorial site of Auschwitz/Birkenau and visits to sites of historical and religious interest in Cracow. Further information can be found at www.iccj.org.

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For detailed information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Scottish Inter Faith Council: www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org

Inter-Faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org

For detailed information on events and projects in the English regions see:

East of England: www.eefaithscouncil.org.uk

East Midlands: www.ffem.org.uk

London: www.faithsforum4london.com

North East: www.nerfn.org

North West: www.faithnorthwest.org.uk

South East: www.se-faithforum.net

South West: www.faithnetsouthwest.org.uk

West Midlands: www.wmfaithsforum.org.uk

Yorkshire and Humber: www.yorkshireandhumberfaiths.org.uk

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If you would like to let us have items for consideration for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 18 March 2011, with the word 'E-bulletin' in the subject line.

The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and future projects and events and so items will be about:

- **forthcoming inter faith events which will be of interest to people across the UK**
- **inter faith and multi faith projects where you are seeking input**
- **resources which you have recently developed which you think may be helpful to those working in the inter faith field**
- **brief information about any jobs you are advertising within inter faith organisations or for inter faith posts (eg local inter faith development worker; national faith community inter faith officer)**

Disclaimer:

Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 8A Lower Grosvenor Place, London SW1W 0EN www.interfaith.org.uk
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If you would like to let us have items for consideration for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by Friday 15 April 2011, with the word 'E-bulletin' in the subject line.

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UK/NATIONAL UPDATES

2011 Census

The 2011 Census takes place on Sunday March 27. The detailed personal information will not be released for 100 years and legal requirements are designed to ensure that information cannot be traced to a particular household or individual. ONS randomises the information, so information on individuals is not known.

Data collected in the Census can affect communities in important ways, particularly those where a significant number of their numbers lived in specific geographical clusters. It helps to shape the future pattern of funding of public services, for example in relation to housing, emergency services and care for the elderly, and provides the basis for decisions on this for at least the following ten years. A number of faith communities are encouraging members to complete their forms. See, for example: the news releases of the Muslim Council of Britain

www.mcb.org.uk/article_detail.php?article=announcement-975; of the Hindu Forum of Britain; www.hinduforum.org/Default.aspx?sID=763&cID=483&ctID=43&IID=0); and of Churches Together in England

http://cte.churchinsight.com/Groups/83341/Churches_Together_in/Working_Together/Inter_faith/Events_Courses/Events_Courses.aspx

The Network of Buddhist Organisations is running a campaign 'tick the box for Buddhism' <http://www.nbo.org.uk/get-involved/nbo-campaigns/tick-the-box> The British Humanist Association, meanwhile, is campaigning to encourage non-religious people to tick the 'No religion' box <http://census-campaign.org.uk/> and has criticised the nature of the question relating to religious identity. For the background to the reasons for inclusion of a question on religious identity and way this is framed, see www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011-census/2011-census-questionnaire.../recommended-questions---religion.pdf

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Early day motion on Religious Education and the English Baccalaureate

A new 'English Baccalaureate' certificate is to be awarded to students who achieve A* - C grades in Maths, English, two Sciences, a foreign language and a humanity (defined as Geography or History). The first pupils to gain the certificate will do so in 2013. Schools will be judged in new league tables that will assess numbers of students achieving this new qualification. RE is not considered a humanities subject for the purposes of the E Bac. Last month, Stephen Lloyd, Liberal Democrat MP for Eastbourne and Willingdon, tabled an early-day motion calling on the Government to recognise RE in the EBac. www.parliament.uk/edm/2010-11/1375 A number of other bodies are encouraging members to write by the end of March to ask their MP to support this motion.

For further information see www.religiouseducationcouncil.org/content/view/189/45/ and www.religiouseducationcouncil.org/content/view/186/45/.

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Near Neighbours programme

The Government has awarded the Church Urban Fund £5 million to promote interaction in communities through a new project called Near Neighbours. The three-year initiative aims to bring people together in diverse communities, helping them build relationships and collaborate to improve the local community they live in.

Near Neighbours will be set up as a charity by the Church Urban Fund and Church of England to foster better understanding and relationships between people of different faiths. People of any faith will be able to bid for funding through the local parish church for grants of up to £5,000 for individual local interaction projects. A wide range of community, education, environmental, arts, and sports activities will be eligible, as long as they encourage involvement by local people from different faiths or none.

Near Neighbours will start operating later in 2011 in locations in the M62 'mill towns' corridor in Yorkshire and Lancashire; Leicester; East London; and Birmingham (north and east). It is the intention that the programme will complement and strengthen existing patterns of inter faith work in these areas. There will be consultation with the Inter Faith Network for the UK, through which the Churches work alongside all the major faiths for good inter faith relations. The resources of the Christian Muslim Forum, the Council of Christians and Jews and the Hindu Christian Forum will be drawn on to assist with particular local needs.

Further information can be found online at www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours and a copy of the Church Urban Fund press release can be found at www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/press-release.

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Training for community organisers

The Government announced on 23 February that Locality has been selected to deliver and train up to 5,000 Community Organisers. Locality is the new nationwide network of community led organisations, formed through the merger of the Development Trusts Association (DTA) and bassac (British Association of Settlements and Social Action Centres), which will come into being in April 2011. It has been chosen to carry out work including developing a training framework; a Code of Conduct for Community Organisers; and an Institute for Community Organising. Its partners in this work are: Re:generate; the Urban Forum; Faith-based Regeneration Network; Voice4Change England; Church Urban Fund; Manchester Metropolitan University; Goldsmiths University, South East London; Trafford Hall, Chester; St Katherine's Foundation, East London; and the Open College Network, Yorkshire and the Humber.

Community Organisers are envisaged as playing a major role in delivering the Big Society, working closely with communities to identify local leaders, projects and opportunities, and to empower the local community to improve their local area. Up to 500 senior Community Organisers will be trained and given bursaries of £20,000 for their first year, along with a further 4,500 part-time and voluntary organisers who will support them. In total, 5,000 Community Organisers will be trained between April 2011 and March 2015. Locality has ten areas 'ready to go' where community organisations have committed to recruiting organisers and to 'hosting' them. Further information can be found online at www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/news/government-names-new-partner-deliver-community-organisers.

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Consultation on the Equality and Human Rights Commission

The Government published on 22 March its consultative document on the future of the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

The Home Office press release can be found at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/media-centre/news/ehrc-reform and the consultation document at www.equalities.gov.uk/what_we_do/ehrc_reform.aspx.

The consultation closes on 15 June. To contact Government Equalities Office, or to request alternative formats of documents or send a response, email ehrc.reform@geo.gsi.gov.uk.

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Public Sector Equality Duty

The public sector Equality Duty applies to public authorities and others carrying out public functions. It consists of a general duty, with three main aims (set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010); and specific duties (set out in secondary legislation to accompany the Equality Act 2010). The specific duties are designed to help public bodies with the better performance of the general duty. The general Equality Duty will be commenced on 5 April 2011.

As reported in the last e-bulletin, the Government published draft specific duties regulations on 12 January following a public consultation. Since then, the Government has considered the draft regulations further in the light of the policy objective of ensuring that public bodies consider equality when carrying out their functions without imposing unnecessary burdens and bureaucracy, and thinks there is room to do more to strip out unnecessary process requirements. On 17 March, the Government announced the publication of a policy review paper seeking views on new draft specific duties regulations. Comments on the new draft regulations should be submitted to the Government Equalities Office by 21 April 2011. For the period from 5 April until the new specific duties are in place, public bodies will still need to comply with the general Equality Duty.

The policy review paper can be accessed at www.equalities.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=1788.

The Government has finalised the Draft Order amending Schedule 19 to the Equality Act, which sets out the list of public bodies to which the general Equality Duty will apply. The Draft Order was laid before Parliament on 14 February and will be considered by the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments and debated in both Houses in the near future.

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Bill of Rights

The Government announced on 18 March the setting up of an independent Commission to investigate the case for a UK Bill of Rights.

It is to be chaired by Sir Leigh Lewis, a retired civil servant, and includes eight human rights experts. An Advisory Panel will provide advice and expertise to the Commission on issues arising in relation to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The Commission will report jointly to the Deputy Prime Minister and Kenneth Clarke, Secretary of State for Justice. The Government has stipulated that the Commission's recommendations must ensure that the rights incorporated in the European Convention on Human Rights continue to be enshrined in UK law. The aim is for the Commission to report no later than the end of 2012.

Further information can be found at www.justice.gov.uk/news/newsrelease180311a.htm.

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Secretary of State speech on voluntary sector funding

Eric Pickles, MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, gave a speech on 1 March at the Annual Conference of the National Council of Voluntary Organisations.

In his speech he set out three 'reasonable expectations of how Local Authorities will conduct themselves' in their relationships with the voluntary sector:

- First, it is reasonable to expect that councils will not pass on disproportionate cuts to local voluntary and community groups. That they will not inflict bigger reductions to your budgets than they take on themselves.
- Second, any sensible council has known for many months that we were facing tough times – so it is reasonable to expect that they will have been talking to voluntary and community groups at a very early stage about how services need to change.
- Third, it is reasonable to expect that they will have given three months' notice or more when they think they need to end or alter a grant, or other support.

The full text of his speech can be found online at www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/networking-discussions/blogs/20591/11/03/01/eric-pickles-mp-secretary-state-communities-local-govern.

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'Multiculturalism' and integration

Issues of integration, values and perspectives on 'multiculturalism' were at the heart of two speeches made, respectively, by the Prime Minister in Munich on 5 February (www.number10.gov.uk/news/speeches-and-transcripts/2011/02/pms-speech-at-munich-security-conference-60293) and the Deputy Prime Minister in Luton on 3 March (www.dpm.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/news/deputy-prime-ministers-speech-open-confident-society). These have sparked considerable debate.

Responding on 17 March to a written question from Jim Cunningham (Labour, Coventry South) about what recent steps the Department for Communities and Local Government has taken to improve community relations between different populations, Andrew Stunell, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, said, "Integration and positive relations between different populations are integral parts of the big society. As the Prime Minister set out in his recent speech in Munich, integration is fostered by meaningful and active participation in society, which is achieved by shifting the balance of power away from the state and towards the people, and by initiatives such as the National Citizen Service. DCLG also recently awarded the Church Urban Fund £5 million to promote interaction in local communities between people of different faiths, through a new programme called Near Neighbours. DCLG are considering what additional, specific activities are needed to improve integration and overcome divisions in communities. We are working to develop a cross-government approach by May 2011."

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Universities and freedom of speech

On 18 February Universities UK published *Freedom of Speech on Campus: Rights and Responsibilities*. The report examines the meaning of academic freedom and freedom of speech. It then explores the contemporary context in which universities are operating, both in terms of the diversity of current student populations, and the wider national environment. It summarises the relevant law and describes the Government's security strategy and other security initiatives and structures. It then reviews the various ways in which universities from across the UK have addressed these challenges and sought to reconcile differing priorities, drawing on an on-line survey conducted by Universities UK of all its members in 2010. Inter faith engagement on campus is touched on at a number of points.

The report is the result of a Universities UK working group chaired by Professor Malcolm Grant, President and Provost of University College London (UCL). The working group was established in January 2010 following the arrest of Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab in the United States on Christmas Day 2009 for an attempted act of terrorism. Eighteen months previously he had graduated from UCL.

The report can be downloaded from:

<http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/Publications/Pages/Freedomofspeechoncampus.aspx>

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PROJECTS

Jubilee Debt Campaign Multifaith Project update

Jubilee Debt Campaign (JDC) now runs a Multifaith Project to build on past activities and engagement by the various faith communities. The national project, based in Birmingham, was launched in 2010 and focuses on building awareness and encouraging action to combat global poverty, with a particular focus on the issue of sovereign debt.

In the year since it was launched the JDC Multifaith Project has built links with local and national faith groups and university groups. People involved in the project have attended and organised campaign events such as 'Drop the Debt' (in Birmingham city centre) and held stalls at Islam Awareness Week and Inter Faith Week events across the West Midlands. In March 2011 the project organised a Multifaith Women's Conference.

For more information about the project and information about upcoming events and resources visit www.jdcmultifaith.org or email faith@jubileedebtcampaign.org with your name and contact details to receive updates about the project's work.

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Campus inter faith relations

Across the last two years, the NUS Inter Faith Project, funded by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (DBIS), has been providing students' unions with information, advice and training on how better to engage with, and support, the diverse needs of students of faith with the aim of improving the experiences of students of faith in further and higher education. The project has also supported students and students' unions in organising inter faith activities on campus to increase dialogue and understanding of different faith groups. They will shortly be launching an inter faith toolkit for students' unions in further and higher education. For further information please contact Kat.Luckcock@nus.org.uk

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Women of Faith

A second consultative meeting is being held in Birmingham on 30 March by Religions for Peace (Europe) to explore the development of a UK Women of Faith Network. This follows an initial meeting which took place in London last year to discuss the formation of such a network when those present, although very supportive of the idea, felt that a larger consultation meeting was required with more women from faith based and inter faith women's organisations being invited. There will be a linked launch of a new exhibition 'Words of Wisdom on Women' to celebrate the Centenary of International Women's Day. For further details, see under Diary Dates.

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Knit for Peace

Knit for Peace is an initiative of the Charities Advisory Trust that encourages women and men from different communities to come together informally to knit (or sew or crochet). With a shared common goal, differences in background are irrelevant and individuals come together to knit peacefully. Knit for Peace holds events from time to time in the UK, for example a knitting and coffee morning earlier this month as part of an Artogether event hosted by the Three Faiths Forum with women from all faiths and backgrounds. For more information about Knit for Peace see www.charitiesadvisorytrust.co.uk/knitForPeace.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS AND TENDERS

Inter faith activity and young people

The Inter Faith Network is currently updating its information on inter faith projects of and for young people. This is part of developing new web-based resources highlighting this vital area of work and also working towards a new edition of the widely used youth inter faith action guide, *Connect: Different Faiths, Shared Values*. If your organisation is carrying out work to increase the involvement of young people in inter faith interaction,

learning and cooperation, Augustine Booth-Clibborn would be very pleased to receive information about this at augustine.booth-clibborn@interfaith.org.uk.

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The Big Survey: Faith-Based Youth and Community Work

Nigel Pimlott, who works for the Frontier Youth Trust and is a PhD student at Staffordshire University, is currently researching the relationship between faith-based work, community cohesion and the concept of the 'Big Society'. He would be interested to hear from any faith-based youth workers (paid or volunteer) who would be willing to give their views via a short questionnaire. The questionnaire can be found at http://www.kwiksurveys.com/online-survey.php?surveyID=IJJGK_4ef1e494 and should take about 10 minutes to complete.

For further information please contact nigel@pimlott.org or telephone 07940 545469. If you wish to contact Staffordshire University about the research, please email P.L.Twilley@staffs.ac.uk or telephone 01782 294793.

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Faith Shorts 2011

The Faith Shorts 2011 film competition, run by the Tony Blair Faith Foundation, opened in March. The competition is open to anyone aged between 14 and 18 years old. Entries should be three minutes long and should show how faith inspires the entrant. The film can be made on any camera, mobile phone or filming device. There are three categories to enter: Faith Short Family Movie – how faith has inspired you and your family personally; Faith Short Action Movie – how faith inspires you to take action in your community or the wider world; and Faith Short Musical Movie – how you can use music or song to celebrate your faith. The prizes include: a trip to London for winners to accept their awards at BAFTA; a personal tour of the National Film and Television School; a film workshop in Manchester; and making and editing a film with a professional crew.

Films must be submitted by 1 July. Anyone without a camera can submit a pitch for their film and win a camera to film it. Further information can be found online at www.faithshorts.org.uk or by emailing faithshorts@tonyblairfaithfoundation.org.

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JOBS AND VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

Equality and Human Rights Commission – Commissioner post

The Equalities and Human Rights Commission is seeking to appoint a Commissioner to assist in its role as a regulator of UK equality and anti-discrimination law and as a national human rights institution. They are seeking candidates from the commercial sector with an outstanding track record of achievement in senior management, finance or HR, with proven experience of delivering measurable results and an understanding of governance challenges. Expertise in religion and belief and the ability to represent the

interests of those with or without beliefs would also be desirable; plus of course candidates must be committed to equality and human rights. Commissioners receive £500 per day for around 20 – 30 days a year, and the initial appointment will be for three years.

For more information and to apply online, please visit www.appointments.org.uk, quoting reference CS0235. Information is also available in other formats (e.g. Braille or on tape) by calling 0113 394 7980 or emailing carole.carlton@appointments.org.uk. Applications must be received by 12 noon on Monday, 28 March.

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Church Urban Fund – Near Neighbours director

Church Urban Fund will shortly be recruiting a Director for the Near Neighbours Programme. This is a new role with the responsibility for the overall delivery of the programme under the direction of the Board of Directors of the Near Neighbours charity, with day to day supervision though a member of the senior management team of the Church Urban Fund. Full details and an application pack will be available at www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Celebrating RE Month

A month long celebration of RE in schools, colleges, universities, faith and belief communities and local communities throughout England and Wales is entering its last week. Details of events can be found at www.celebratingre.org/index.php/whats-on.

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Islam Awareness Week

Islam Awareness Week has moved from its traditional November slot to earlier in the year. This year's Week takes place from 28 March to 3 April. This year's theme is 'Connecting People Online and Offline' and is about bringing people's hearts together, in an open, honest and civilised way, online and offline. For more information visit www.iaw.org.uk. For lists of events taking place for Islam Awareness Week see www.iaw.org.uk/this-years-theme/2011-events.

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National Family Week 30 May to 5 June

National Family Week aims to highlight the importance of families spending quality time together and aims to promote the benefits of a healthy, active lifestyle. Over the last two years, the Week has involved families in thousands of events, competitions, offers and promotions. Next year the Week will take place from Monday 30 May to Sunday 5 June and the organisers are keen to encourage faith-based and inter faith groups to get involved by:

- promoting the Week (free posters, balloons, stickers etc. are available)
- holding community events and registering these on line through the National Family Week Event finder; and
- having a special family focus during the week, eg at meetings, worship, youth activities.

For further information visit www.nationalfamilyweek.co.uk or contact bee@nationalfamilyweek.co.uk.

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The Big Lunch

The 'Big Lunch' will take place this year on Sunday 5 June. The Big Lunch is an annual one-day get together with your neighbours - wherever you live. It can be anything from a simple lunch to a full-blown street party with DJs and a home cooked feast.

Find out more at: www.thebiglunch.com/index.php.

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European Days of Jewish Culture and Heritage

This year's EDJCH runs from Sunday 4 to Sunday 11 September. The theme will be 'Facing the Future', which looks at the new era of communication that has opened up possibilities for presenting and highlighting Jewish culture and heritage. The National Heritage Open Days will also coincide with EDJCH, running from Thursday 8 September to Sunday 11 September. Events must be registered by Friday 1 April. For an official registration form, contact bbukjewishheritage@gmail.com.

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Sewa Day

Sewa Day will this year take place on Sunday 25 September. The Sanskrit word 'Sewa' means 'selfless service'. National Sewa Day is a national day of service which seeks particularly, but not exclusively, to engage the support and talents of the Hindu, Sikh, Jain and Buddhist communities. It provides people a chance to give back to the community through volunteering on a single day to make a difference. For more information, or to get involved, please visit www.nationalsewaday.org.

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Mitzvah Day 20 November

Mitzvah Day takes place this year on Sunday 20 November. It is a Jewish led day of social action – around the world thousands of people take part in hands on projects to support existing charities and to build stronger communities. The goal is to reduce hardship and poverty and to help the environment. People are encouraged to volunteer for projects in their communities and anyone can take part regardless of their background. Last year a number of projects had a multi faith dimension. See www.mitzvahday.org.uk for further information and to register an event.

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Inter Faith Week 20 – 26 November

Inter Faith Week 2011 www.interfaithweek.org.uk will take place this year in England, Wales and Northern Ireland from Sunday 20 November until Saturday 26 November. The Week aims to: strengthen good inter faith relations at all levels in our increasingly diverse society; encourage local faith groups and communities to reach out to each other and build stronger bonds of understanding and co-operation; increase awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, with a particular focus on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society; gain positive profile for inter faith initiatives, locally, regionally and nationally, as well as for the overall work of building good inter faith relations; increase understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs; and encourage the development of new partnerships within local communities and by faith communities with statutory and third sector partners.

If you would like to discuss your plans for the Week or to suggest additional resources which might be helpful to add to the Inter Faith Week website, Ashley Beck, Project Officer at IFN will be glad to hear from you: 020 7931 7766, ashley.beck@interfaith.org.uk

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Scottish Inter Faith Week 27 November – 4 December

Scottish Inter Faith Week will take place from Sunday 27 November to Saturday 4 December. For further information please contact Frances Hume at the Scottish Inter Faith Council at fhume@scottishinterfaithcouncil.org.

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Holocaust Memorial Day – 27 January 2010

The theme for next year's Holocaust Memorial day is: Speak up, Speak out. The theme will challenge everyone to "Speak Up, Speak Out" so that the lessons of the past are

learned and there can be a safer, better future. More information, including a downloadable campaign pack, can be found at www.hmd.org.uk.

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DIARY DATES

The Association of Managers of Student Services in Higher Education (AMOSSHE) is hosting an event entitled 'Equality, Diversity and Multi-faith: Challenges for Higher Education' on Friday 25 March at the Rembrandt Hotel in London. The workshop runs from 10am until 4pm and is part of a year-long project looking at supporting students around issues of faith in HE from a student support perspective. It continues the work of the Knowledge Community's online Forum held in 2010 and further addresses current issues facing student services. It is hoped that a toolkit for student services will be developed from this workshop bringing together case studies, best practice and practical ideas for providers of services to students for the sector. There is a fee to attend. For further information and booking details, email info@amosse.org.uk.

The Global Community Links project is holding a day of workshops on Exploring Gender Equality and Linking on Saturday 26 March. The day of learning, discussions and activities will examine a number of global issues that has a bearing on gender equality such as HIV /AIDS and Environmental Sustainability. There will also in depth discussions on the UN Women's Agency, equal rights for women and the types of gender equality work currently being carried out by community groups. Places are limited. To register, please log on to the link profile at <http://communitylinks.britishcouncil.org/forms/main.aspx> and click on the workshops tab. If you do not have a Community Link Profile on the database, you will, first have to set one up by clicking 'register your link'. Further information from Gabriella Wood at global.learning@vso.org.uk. General information about Global Community Links work can also be found at www.dfid.gov.uk/communitylinks.

Warwick District Faiths Forum is holding its 2011 Faiths Trail event in Leamington Spa on Saturday 26 March. This family event will begin at 9.30am at Leamington Baptist Church, Chandos Street, CV32 4RN. There will be visits to different places of worship throughout the morning and the trail may be joined at any point on the journey. Every is welcome to attend. For further details of the programme, please contact Jatinder Birdi on 07958 589464 or at wdfaitsforum@yahoo.co.uk.

The **Scottish Inter Faith Council** and the **Janki Foundation** are co-hosting the National Annual Women's Seminar in Glasgow on Sunday 27 March. The theme of the seminar is 'The Heart of Wellbeing'. It will look at the relationship between health, wellbeing, spirituality and faith. It runs from 12.30pm until 5.00pm and will be held at the University of Glasgow, Forehall, The Square, University Avenue, Glasgow G12 8QQ. The seminar is free to attend and a vegetarian lunch will be provided. To book a place please contact Frances Hume at the Scottish Inter Faith Council on 0141 420 6982 or at fhume@scottishinterfaithcouncil.org.

As part of the **Llanelli Multicultural Weekend** an event is being held on Sunday 27 March at the Glenalla Hall, Glenalla Road, Llanelli, SA15. The event is open to everyone and free to attend. There will be exhibits from different faiths, live music and films. The event runs from 1.00pm until 4.00pm. For more details, please visit www.lmcn.org.

Hull and East Riding Interfaith are holding an Interfaith Symposium on Religious Education from 5pm to 7pm on Tuesday 29 March. The symposium will take place in Committee Room 1 at the Guildhall in Hull, with refreshments from 4.30pm. The event is being held as part of National RE Month and will consider five topics: Why should RE be compulsory in all schools in England & Wales, not just Faith Schools? Where should RE be taught? Who should teach RE and who should shape the syllabuses? What should schools teach? How should it be taught? All are welcome. For further information, including a map and parking, see www.heri.org.uk and [www.CelebratingRE.org/what's on](http://www.CelebratingRE.org/what's_on) or contact Hull and East Riding Interfaith's Secretary, Jackie Lukes, on 01482 445728 or at jackie@lukes.heri.org.uk.

The **Islington Faith Forum** Community Festival takes place on Wednesday 30 March at the Assembly Hall, Islington Town Hall, Upper Street, London N1 2UD. It runs from 10.30am to 3.30pm and includes live entertainment, information and advice, free vegetarian lunch and community services. The Festival is free to attend and all are welcome. The Festival is sponsored by Faiths in Action and Islington Council. For more information, please contact Rosalind Miller at rosalind.miller8@btinternet.com.

Religions for Peace European Women of Faith Network is organising a second consultation meeting to discuss the formation of a UK Women of Faith Network on Wednesday 30 March. The meeting is open to all faith based and inter faith based women's organisations throughout the UK and will run from 10.30am to 4.30pm at the NCA Centre, 6 Soho Road, Birmingham B21 9BH. In the morning there will be the launch of a new exhibition entitled 'The Dignity of Women - Scriptural Reflections to Celebrate the Centenary of International Women's Day'. This will be followed in the afternoon by the consultation meeting for women only. If you would like to attend please email Ravinder Kaur Nijjar at rknijjar@hotmail.com or rknijjar@rfpwomenoffaith.eu.

The **Bournemouth Media School**, in conjunction with the **UK Speechwriters' Guild**, is hosting a one-day conference in Bournemouth on Friday 8 April focusing on how faith is reported in the media. The conference, entitled 'We do, do God – How Do People in Public Life Communicate Faith?', runs from 9.30am to 4.30pm and will bring politicians, religious leaders and journalists together to discuss their work. Speakers will look at ways in which spiritual ideas are communicated, reflecting on how best to present faith, so as to avoid misunderstanding. The speakers include Alan Wilson, Bishop of Buckingham, Rabbi Jonathan Romain, Ruth Gledhill, Religious Affairs Correspondent, *The Times*, Conor Burns MP, Paul Johns, Director of the College of Preachers, Simon Cohen, Global Tolerance, Professor Max Atkinson, a public speaking expert, Tony Lobl, a Christian Scientist, Professor Ian Linden, Director of Policy, Tony Blair Faith Foundation and Shaun Hayes, Member of the Order of Bards Ovates and Druids. There is a charge for attending and a limited number of concessions are available. For more details visit www.ukspeechwritersguild.co.uk/wedodogod or contact Brian Jenner on 01202 551257.

The **South East England Faith Forum's** Annual Conference exploring 'Faith and the Big Society' will take place from 10.30am until 3.30pm on Monday 11 April at the University of

Surrey, Guildford, GU2 7XH. Speakers include Baroness Sandip Verma, Spokesperson for the Cabinet Office, International Development and Equalities and Women's Issues, Revd Dr Malcolm Brown, Director of Mission and Public Affairs for the Church of England and David Rayner, former Senior Policy Advisor, Department for Communities and Local Government. For further information and to register, please contact Ushna Mughal at ushna.mughal@se-faithforum.net or contact@se-faithforum.net or call 07854 373965.

The **Institute of Jainology** will be holding an event at the British Library on 15 April for Mahavir Jayanti, the Jain festival celebrating the birth of Mahavira. More details of this free event are at www.jainpedia.org or email info@jainpedia.org.

The **Jain community** will be celebrating the 2609th Birthday of Bhagwan Mahavir on Saturday 16 April at the Jain Centre, 64-68 Colindale Avenue, London NW9 5DR. The programme runs from 10.30am until 5.00pm and will contain dance and music as well as the launch of Heritage and Cultural Academy as part of the educational programme of the Jain Network. All are welcome to attend. For further information or invitations, please contact Dr Natubhai Shah at dr@natubhaishah.com.

The **National Spirituality and Mental Health Forum** is holding its annual conference on Friday 6 May in Derby. The conference, entitled 'Wanted! Spirituality in Your Trust', will take place from 9.00am until 4.00pm at the Derbyshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust Education Centre, Ashbourne Centre, Kingsway site, Derby DE22 3LZ. There is a fee of £35 to attend. For further information and to receive a booking form, please contact Vicky Nicholls at info@mhspirituality.org.uk. Booking closes on 15 April.

Peterborough Inter Faith Council will be holding its annual Festival of Faiths and Foods from 12.30pm on Sunday 8 May. The theme of this year's event, which will be held at Peterborough Town Hall, is 'The Heart of My Faith'. The event begins with an inter faith lunch and there will be speakers from each of the main faiths, led by the Bishop of Peterborough, The Rt Revd Donald Allister. There is no charge to attend and all are welcome. For further information, please contact the Secretary, Brian Keegan on 01733 265769 or at brian@briankeegan.demon.co.uk.

The **Christian Interfaith Practitioners' Association** will be holding their Annual Consultation 2011 from 17 to 19 May at Luther King House, Brighton Grove, Manchester M14 5JP. This year's theme is 'Reflective approaches to dialogue' and the speaker will be Dermot Killingley, a former lecturer of the Department of Religious Studies at Newcastle University. There is a charge to attend. Details can be found online at www.cipa-uk.com. For more information please contact Any Lie on 07720 118603 or at asj_lie@hotmail.com.

The **Alister Hardy Society** and the **World Congress of Faiths** are hosting a joint conference on Saturday 11 June entitled 'Spirituality: how might spiritual/religious experience help towards understanding and compassion?'. The conference will run from 10.00am to 4.30pm at the Essex Unitarian Church, 112 Palace Gardens Terrace, Kensington, London W8. The speakers are the Revd Dr Marcus Braybrooke, Dr Gregory Barker and Eley McAinsh. To book or for further details please contact johnfranklin35@hotmail.com.

The **London College of Fashion, University of the Arts London** and the **University of Amsterdam** are jointly convening an academic symposium entitled 'Mediating Modesty: Fashioning Faithful Bodies' on Wednesday 15 June. The event takes place from 9.30am until 5.30pm at Rootstein Hopkins East Space, London College of Fashion, 20 John Princes Street, London, W1G 0BJ. The symposium will bring together speakers from cultural studies, anthropology, fashion studies and religious studies to think about women's modest self presentation in the context of new forms of commerce, commentary, and community and explore how and to what extent women of different backgrounds are engaging in shared discourses about modest dressing and body management within and across faiths. Tickets cost £25 (£15 concessions). Further details and booking information can be found at: <http://newsevents.arts.ac.uk/event/mediating-modesty>.

The **World Congress of Faiths** will be holding a special informal service at 6.30pm on Sunday 24 July at St Martin-in-the-Field to mark its 75th anniversary. It was at St Martin's in 1942 that the memorial service was held for Sir Francis Younghusband, the explorer and mystic and founder of the World Congress of Faiths. The theme of the service will be 'Compassion' with readings and music from many faith traditions. Rabbi Jackie Tabick, Chair of WCF, will give the address. All are welcome. For further information, please contact Tony Reese at enquiries@worldfaiths.org.

The **International Council of Christians and Jews** is holding its annual conference from 3 to 6 July in Cracow, Poland. This year's conference is being co-hosted with the Jagiellonian University of Cracow. The conference is part of an ongoing ICCJ project dealing with interreligious dialogue in Central and Eastern Europe and the theme will be 'Religions and Ideologies, Polish perspectives and beyond'. Cracow was chosen because of its historical associations for Christians and Jews and for the central role it has played in Polish history. The conference will include a trip to the memorial site of Auschwitz/Birkenau and visits to sites of historical and religious interest in Cracow. Further information can be found at www.iccj.org.

The **Kirby Laing Institute for Christian Ethics** is hosting a conference in Cambridge from 26 to 28 September on 'Sustainability in Crisis'. This builds on the conference and book on 'Creation in Crisis' which was part of the 'Hope for Creation' project run jointly with the Faraday Institute. The event will involve both secular and faith perspectives in the same conversation to encourage both sides to see how religions have a vital contribution to make in motivating their adherents to take action, both as individuals and communities. Further details and booking information can be found at www.sustainability-in-crisis.org or by emailing Colin Bell at crb11@cam.ac.uk.

Parliament of the World's Religions in 2014

Brussels has been chosen as the host city of the Parliament of the World's Religions in 2014. The selection of Brussels was made by the Board of Trustees of the governing organisation at its March 13 meeting in Chicago. More than 10,000 people from diverse religious, spiritual and convictional traditions are expected to participate in the Parliament, which will last for 7 days and will comprise more than 500 programs, workshops and dialogues, alongside music, dance, artistic exhibitions and related events hosted by religious communities and cultural institutions. Note: Since the historic 1893 World's Parliament of Religions was held in Chicago, modern Parliaments have been held in Chicago (1993), Cape Town (1999), Barcelona (2004) and Melbourne (2009). These periodic Parliament events are the world's oldest and largest interreligious gatherings.

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For detailed information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Scottish Inter Faith Council: www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org

Inter-Faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org

For detailed information on events and projects in the English regions see:

East of England: www.eefaithscouncil.org.uk

East Midlands: www.ffem.org.uk

London: www.faithsforum4london.com

North East: www.nerfn.org

North West: www.faithnorthwest.org.uk

South East: www.se-faithforum.net

South West: www.faithnetsouthwest.org.uk

West Midlands: www.wmfaithsforum.org.uk

Yorkshire and Humber: www.yorkshireandhumberfaiths.org.uk

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If you would like to let us have items for consideration for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by Friday 15 April 2011, with the word 'E-bulletin' in the subject line.

The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and future projects and events and so items will be about:

- **forthcoming inter faith events which will be of interest to people across the UK**
- **inter faith and multi faith projects where you are seeking input**
- **resources which you have recently developed which you think may be helpful to those working in the inter faith field**
- **brief information about any jobs you are advertising within inter faith organisations or for inter faith posts (eg local inter faith development worker; national faith community inter faith officer)**

Disclaimer:

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IFN e-bulletin

April 2011

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UK/NATIONAL UPDATES

English Regional Faith Forums

Across the last three years a funding and capacity building programme linked to the previous Government's *Face to Face and Side by Side* framework has helped English Regional Faith Forums (RFFs) carry out very valuable work to promote engagement of faith groups in public policy and social action within their regions and to support and stimulate local inter faith work. This funding came to an end on 31 March and, while Government has indicated its continuing appreciation for the Forums' work, central Government support for them in the coming period is no longer available. Forums are evaluating the position and responding in a range of ways.

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Localism Bill – Consultation on ‘community rights’

The Government's Localism Bill completed its Committee stage in the House of Commons on 10 March. The Community Right to Challenge and the Community Right to Buy are two key elements of it. A consultation on these two ‘Community Rights’ is running until 3 May. They were described in the February e-bulletin which also gave details of the consultation documents and response forms to be found on the DCLG website at:

www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/righttobuyconsultation
www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/righttochallengeconsultation

Under the Community Right to Buy, local groups will have a legal right to nominate any vital community asset – including local shops, pubs, libraries and leisure centres – to be assessed for recording on a ‘most wanted’ list by the local council. The asset could then be listed for five years. In that time, the owner of a listed asset will have to tell the council if they intend to sell, which will trigger a window of opportunity or ‘community countdown’, giving people time to prepare their business plan and raise the funds they need to make a credible bid before it goes on the open market.

The Community Right to Challenge will give community or voluntary sector groups, as well as parish councils and council employees, new powers to challenge and take over a local service. This could include running children's centres, social care services and even improving local transport links. Under the new law, councils must respond to this challenge and consider the positive impact the proposal could have on the community. If the proposal is turned down the council must publish the reasons for this. It is believed that this new right will put voluntary and charity groups on the front foot when it comes to running public services and has the potential to open up new revenue for them.

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New Public Sector Equality Duty

The new integrated Public Sector Equality Duty contained in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 and covering the protected characteristics (including religion and belief) came into force on 6 April. It requires all public bodies – including central government departments, local authorities, key health, education, transport and criminal justice

system bodies and any other body (for example, third-sector organisations) if it is carrying out public functions - to have 'due regard' to the need to: eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations between different groups.

This general duty is to be supplemented by specific duties to be contained in secondary legislation which will be made under the 2010 Act. As noted in the March e-bulletin, the Government has been consulting on the content of these regulations.

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Equality Act codes of practice

The Equality and Human Rights Commission's new codes of practice on employment, services and equal pay, reflecting the Equality Act 2010, as commenced on 1 October 2010, came into force on 6 April 2011. The codes are admissible in evidence in civil proceedings. Failure to comply with a code must be taken into account by a court or tribunal, where relevant.

Printed copies of the Codes can be purchased from The Stationery Office at www.tsoshop.co.uk/bookstore.asp. Free pdf copies can be downloaded from the EHRC website at www.equalityhumanrights.com/legal-and-policy/equality-act/equality-act-codes-of-practice.

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Future of EHRC's 'good relations' role

As noted briefly in the March e-bulletin as this went to print, the Government is consulting on the future of the Equality and Human Rights Commission. Fuller details follow here.

The EHRC was envisaged at the time of its establishment as having a specific role in the promotion of 'Good Relations', alongside its work in the fields of equality and human rights, and this is currently part of its statutory remit. However, the future of the EHRC is being considered as part of the Government's broader review of 'quangos'. The Government has drawn up proposals on the basis that it sees a clear legal need for an independent equality regulator and National Human Rights Institution, but that it believes that overall the EHRC's performance to date has been 'weak' and that it has not been able to demonstrate that it is delivering value for taxpayers' money. Its consultative document on the future of the EHRC, published last month, seeks views, *inter alia*, on whether a separate 'good relations' remit is still necessary or appropriate (see: www.homeoffice.gov.uk/media-centre/news/ehrc-reform.)

The document proposes a number of changes to the EHRC's statutory framework contained in the Equality Act 2006 in order to set out more clearly its core functions. The Government also proposes to repeal the General Duty in Section 3 of the 2006 Act, which sets out the characteristics the development of which in British society EHRC should encourage and support. The Government believes that this creates unrealistic expectations about what the EHRC can achieve.

The Government also intends to stop non-core activities of EHRC and where appropriate make alternative provision for them. It is seeking views on whether the EHRC's power to make provision for conciliation services should be repealed. The Government has

decided to stop funding EHRC's advice helpline and its grants programmes from 31 March 2012. In terms of information and advice for citizens the Government plans to commission a new service from the private sector or civil society. It intends to establish an alternative funding stream better to support the voluntary and community sector in a way that fits with the Government's wider support of the sector and its promotion of social action to build a more inclusive and cohesive society. The consultation document also sets out a number of proposals intended to clarify EHRC's relationship with Government and strengthen further its governance and systems with the aim of providing greater transparency, accountability and value for money.

At paragraph 9, the consultation document says: "...[W]e are seeking views on whether a separate 'good relations' remit is still necessary or appropriate in the light of the Commission's activities in the last three years and the strengthened requirements on public bodies to promote good relations, which EHRC will be subject to and have responsibility for regulating."

The consultation document can be found at:

www.equalities.gov.uk/what_we_do/ehrc_reform.aspx. The consultation closes on 15 June.

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'Red Tape' challenge

In pursuit of the Government's aim "to leave office having reduced the overall burden of regulation", the Cabinet Office has launched a 'Red Tape' challenge website which is inviting comments on legislation affecting different sectors of industrial and commercial activity and inviting respondents to identify "which regulations are working and which are not; what should be scrapped, what should be saved and what should be simplified".

The website covers general legislation and regulations which respondents might wish to argue should be dropped or modified. In addition to all legislation on health and safety, environmental protection, pensions, company law and employment, this part of the website covers equalities, including the Equality Act 2010. More details can be found at www.redtapechallenge.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/home/index.

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Ofqual single equality scheme

The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulations (Ofqual) is currently consulting on the draft of its single equality scheme. The scheme sets out Ofqual's commitment to promote equality and diversity in all that it does and the actions it intends to take to achieve this. The single equality scheme will provide a framework within which it will monitor and report on its success in promoting equality in its work.

The draft is currently open for public consultation and the scheme will be revised in the light of feedback received. Information on how to respond to the consultation can be found online at <http://comment.ofqual.gov.uk/single-equality-scheme>.

Comments can be submitted by email, post or using the online form. The deadline for receipt of responses is 5pm on 9 May 2011.

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Strategic partnerships announced by Office for Civil Society

The Office for Civil Society announced on 22 March that it had chosen nine organisations to see out its strategic partner programme over the next three years. The Strategic Partners will receive a total of £8.2m across the three years.

The OCS Strategic Partners are:

- ACEVO in partnership with Euclid Network and New Philanthropy Capital
- Community Foundation Network in partnership with Association of Charitable Foundations
- Institute of Fundraising
- Locality (new name from April 2011 resulting from DTA and Bassac merger)
- NAVCA
- NCVO
- Social Entrepreneurship Partnership (School for Social Entrepreneurs, UnLtd, CAN, Plunkett Foundation and Social Firms UK)
- Social Enterprise Coalition in partnership with Cooperatives UK
- Volunteering England

The Minister for Civil Society, Mr Nick Hurd, said “We have had to reduce the number of strategic partners, not least to focus resources on front line services. However this is a good mix of partners who will represent the sector well. I look forward to working with them to help the sector manage change and maximise the opportunities that will flow from the Big Society agenda.”

Some other Government Departments continue to fund strategic partner programmes to support specific policy objectives which complement this programme.

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Charity Commission updates

A Charities Bill 2011 was introduced to the House of Lords on 3 March. The Bill does not (and cannot) introduce or change policy but consolidates and simplifies existing legislation and was prepared by the Law Commission. A copy of the full Bill can be found at www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldbills/050/11050.i-v.html.

The Charity Commission is currently preparing a new corporate structure designed specifically for charities: the Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). It is planned that this will be introduced in late Spring. However, the regulations which complete the legal framework for CIOs have not yet been debated by Parliament, so the Commission does not know when the CIO will be available for charities to use. The Commission will soon be publishing detailed guidance for trustees that will explain how to set up a new CIO, how charitable companies or charitable industrial and provident societies can convert to CIOs and what unincorporated charities need to do to become CIOs. The introduction of the new model will be phased in to manage what the Commission expects will be high demand from charities. More details can be found online at www.charitycommission.gov.uk/Start_up_a_charity/Do_I_need_to_register/CIOs/default.aspx.

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PROJECTS

‘Sister Cities’ exchange programme

From 17 - 26 September, the Scottish Inter Faith Council will be hosting 16 delegates from the Interfaith centre of New York (ICNY) and the UNESCO Centre of Catalonia's Department for Interreligious Dialogue in Barcelona. The delegates will visit a number of voluntary and statutory agencies and places of worship across Scotland.

The ambitious three year 'Sister Cities' exchange programme was launched by the Interfaith Centre of New York in 2009. Glasgow was chosen from a number of European cities to participate in this programme in recognition of the extensive inter faith work being undertaken there. Glasgow delegates attended a programme in New York in 2009 and in Barcelona in 2010 and look forward to hosting delegates in September 2011. Further information is available from the Scottish Inter Faith Council at www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org or by emailing chenderson@scottishinterfaithcouncil.org

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Women of Faith Network

A second consultative meeting was held in Birmingham on 30 March by Religions for Peace (Europe) to explore the development of a UK Women of Faith Network. This followed an initial meeting which took place in London last year to discuss the formation of such a network when those present, although very supportive of the idea, felt that a larger consultation meeting was required with more women from faith based and inter faith women's organisations being invited. There was also the launch of a new exhibition 'Words of Wisdom on Women' to celebrate the Centenary of International Women's Day. Further information about the development of the UK Women of Faith Network is available from Ravinder Kaur Nijjar at rknijjar@hotmail.com

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RESOURCES

Shaping our Shared Society: The Key Role of Local Inter Faith Organisations

The report on IFN's 2010 National Meeting, *Shaping our Shared Society: The Key Role of Local Inter Faith Organisations*, is available to download from: www.interfaith.org.uk/publications/index.htm.

Hard copies can be purchased from the IFN office for £6.95 plus £2.50 postage and packing.

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Young people and inter faith engagement e-resource

For the 2010 Inter Faith Week reception held by the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Inter Faith Network office created a number of boards highlighting the range of work engaging young people in inter faith activity. A short e-resource has been developed from this. It can be downloaded from www.interfaith.org.uk/publications/index.htm.

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NUS Inter Faith Toolkit

As part of its Interfaith Project, funded by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, the National Union of Students has produced a toolkit to help students' unions consider their role in building good relations on campus; assess the state of existing inter faith relations and resources; develop a plan for supporting good inter faith relations; and help them to organise student-led inter faith activities. The IFN office assisted on a number of aspects of this and IFN's Director, Harriet Crabtree, who is a member of the Advisory Group of the NUS Interfaith Project, spoke at its launch at King's College London on 30 March.

Good Inter Faith Relations on Campus: A Toolkit provides a series of case studies and activities to illustrate effective models of engagement and inspire students' unions to develop their own projects. Staff in supporting roles in a college or university may also find the toolkit helps them to support students and consider issues in a wider context. A copy of the press release, including a link to download the toolkit, is online at www.nusconnect.org.uk/news/article/faith/1834.

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Calendar of Religious Festivals – email version

The *Calendar of Religious Festivals* produced by the Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education is switching to an email version. From this year printed copies will no longer be available.

The email version will provide: 3 A4 sheets which can be printed and laminated; a brief description of each religious festival; an overview of 18 months from July of one year to December of the next; details on 12 different faiths from Baha'i to Zoroastrian and including Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism and Sikhism; and 12 beautiful images from David Rose for you to print.

The cost of the email version, along with the booklet and 12 photos from David Rose will be £3.50. This will be available in July this year. To subscribe to the new email version you can either send a subscription request to calendar@shapworkingparty.org.uk or sign up online at www.shapworkingparty.org.uk/calendar.html.

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Young people's DVD – 'It Matters to Me '

The Devon Faith and Belief Forum have now completed and launched a DVD made by young people of eight different faiths and beliefs. The Forum are now hoping to develop a permanent Youth Forum across faiths and beliefs.

Copies of the DVD are available at £5.00 each (including postage and packing). Please contact Martyn Goss on martyn.goss@exeter.anglican.org or telephone 01392 294924.

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Global Community Links project

The Global Community Links project is shortly to launch two new resources to help community groups to strengthen their links with groups abroad. The resources are on Gender Equality and Sustainable Linking. The project has already produced two other resources, the *Global Learning Activities Guide* and "Are we making a difference?" Further details at:

<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Get-Involved/How-you-can-help/DFID-Community-Linking-Programme/Resources/?tab=0>

Global Community Links is organising two workshops on Exploring Gender Equality in Linking. These will be in Manchester on Saturday 4 June 2011 and Saturday 25 June 2011 in Cardiff. To register go to: <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/Get-Involved/How-you-can-help/DFID-Community-Linking-Programme/Getting-started/>

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Belief in Dialogue: Religion and Belief Relations in Scotland: Good Practice Guide

The Scottish Working Group on Religion and Belief Relations has produced a guide for individuals, faith communities, belief groups, inter-faith groups, local authority equality officers as well as for statutory and voluntary organisations: *Belief in Dialogue: Religion and Belief Relations in Scotland: Good Practice Guide*. For details see

www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/03/22143221/0 and www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org/resources/Belief+in+Dialogue.pdf.

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office report on Human Rights and Democracy

On 31 March the Foreign and Commonwealth Office published its 2010 global report on Human Rights and Democracy. It has separate sections on Promoting British Values; Human Rights in Safeguarding Britain's National Security; Human Rights in Promoting Britain's Prosperity; Human Rights for British Nationals Overseas; Working Through a Rules-based International System; Promoting Human Rights in the Overseas Territories; and on Human Rights in Countries of Concern (covering 28 countries). A copy of the report can be found online at <http://fcohrdreport.readandcomment.com>.

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Free BT community website

BT is offering charities and not-for-profit community organisations access to a free web-hosting and design service. The 'Community Web Kit' provides free website hosting, a free web address, a choice of layouts and designs and a step-by-step guide to building your site.

The service is part of BT's 'Get It Together' campaign to encourage as many people as possible to get online. Further details can be found online at www.btck.co.uk/Main/About.aspx.

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Inter Religious Relations courses

The St Philip's Centre in Leicester is currently accepting applications for the Certificate, Diploma and MA courses in Inter Religious Relations, run in conjunction with De Montfort University in Leicester, which begin in September 2011.

The courses are intended for: members of faith communities who have a practical or theoretical interest in relations with people of different faiths; those working for secular or religious agencies, private or public, where faith issues are significant; specialist ministers in inter faith relations; and anyone interested in extending their grasp of a lively field of enquiry.

All modules will be taught in Leicester. Full details of tuition fees and entry requirements can be found online at http://stphilipscentre.dioceseofleicester.com/?page_id=29. For further information and applications, please contact the Dean of Studies or the Administrator/Registrar, Maureen Hebblewhite, at admin@stphilipscentre.co.uk or on 0116 273 3459.

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FUNDING

Church Urban Fund Mustard Seed Programme

The Church Urban Fund's Mustard Seed Programme provides grants of up to £5,000 to enable churches and faith-based organisations working in very deprived communities to engage in social action.

All applications need to be made via the network of local Diocesan Link Officers. This is a rolling programme and there are no deadline dates. For more information visit www.cuf.org.uk/about/contact/regional-contacts.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS AND TENDERS

Inter faith activity and sport

The Inter Faith Network for the UK is currently updating its information on programmes linking sport and inter faith activities. If you are currently working on any sport related projects, we would be grateful to have a brief update.

In the context of Inter Faith Week 2011 it would also be useful to know if you are planning to hold any inter faith activities which have a sporting dimension.

Please send any information on past or planned inter faith sport projects to Paresh Solanki at paresh.solanki@interfaith.org.uk.

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Inter faith activity and young people

The Inter Faith Network is currently updating its information on inter faith projects of and for young people. This is part of developing new web-based resources highlighting this vital area of work and also working towards a new edition of the widely used youth inter faith action guide, *Connect: Different Faiths, Shared Values*. If your organisation is carrying out work to increase the involvement of young people in inter faith interaction, learning and cooperation, Augustine Booth-Clibborn would be very pleased to receive information about this at augustine.booth-clibborn@interfaith.org.uk.

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JOBS AND VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

Near Neighbours – Director

Near Neighbours is a £5m programme, funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government, that aims to bring people together in diverse communities, helping them build relationships and collaborate to improve the local community they live in. The programme is a collaboration between the Church Urban Fund and the Church of England. This is a new role with the responsibility for the overall delivery of the programme under the direction of the Board of Directors of the Near Neighbours charity with day to day supervision though a member of the senior management team of the Church Urban Fund.

The project is seeking an outstanding manager with an understanding of the Not for Profit sector. Experience of inter faith engagement is essential, as is an ability to work flexibly, independently and proactively in a complex environment. Up to £50k plus benefits. An application pack can be downloaded from www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours. The closing date for applications is 5pm on 26 April and interviews will be held on 9 May in central Birmingham.

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Three Faiths Forum – Mentoring Programme Manager (maternity cover)

The Three Faiths Forum is looking for an experienced individual to manage the Undergraduate ParliaMentors programme, which equips upcoming leaders of different faiths and beliefs with the skills, experiences and networks they need to advance their leadership careers. The successful candidate will have experience of working with parliamentarians and of managing projects that work with students or young leaders, as well as knowledge of issues relating to faith communities in the UK.

This is a full time 10 month contract beginning in mid-June. The salary is £26,000 to £28,000 depending on experience. Submissions are only being accepted via application form. For further information and an application form, call 020 7482 9549, email info@threefaithsforum.org.uk or go to <http://www.threefaithsforum.org.uk/jobs/mentoring-programme-manager/> The deadline for applications is 10am on Friday 6 May.

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Tony Blair Faith Foundation – Faiths Act Trainer (maternity cover)

The Tony Blair Faith Foundation is looking for an exceptional individual to develop the training syllabus for its global multi-faith volunteer programme, Faiths Act. The post holder will design, deliver and co-ordinate training for Faiths Act, which has volunteers in over 100 countries. They will create syllabi with associated training materials and resources; design and implement a distance learning package including the use of interactive and online technologies; and design and deliver a train-the-trainer package. The post holder will also create and selectively deliver intensive training workshops and courses suitable for British and international audiences.

The ideal candidate will have training experience relevant to the role; experience of community mobilising or grassroots campaigns, ideally in a multi-faith, multi-cultural or international context; a background in interfaith or intercultural dialogue, conflict resolution, international development or related field; and experience of working with young adults. The post-holder will be extremely busy, will work hard and be expected to perform duties to the highest possible standard in what is a very responsible role.

This is a 6 month maternity cover post. The salary range is available on application. Please contact Catalina Gutierrez catalina.gutierrez@tonyblairfaithfoundation.org, for a complete job description and an application form if you are interested. Closing date for applications is 2 May. Interviews will be held during the week commencing 9 May in London.

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Culham Educational Foundation - Director

Since the charity's foundation in 1980, the Culham Educational Foundation has supported training and development in Religious Education in England, developed a suite of websites including the very successful REOnline for teachers, and provided grants to many individuals both at home and abroad. A proposed merger with the St Gabriel's Trust to form Culham St Gabriel's will make the new charity a very significant contributor to the further development of Religious Education in England. The work of the Director in implementing the Trustees' policy for supporting and developing Religious Education

nationally will be crucial to the formation and success of the new charity. The post of Director is currently based at Culham's offices in the Department of Education at the University of Oxford, and will carry remuneration commensurate with experience, from £60,000 per annum, plus an appropriate pension contribution. For further information and details on how to apply, please visit www.culham.ac.uk/newdirector.

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Ofqual advisory group members

Ofqual regulates qualifications, (other than degrees), in England and vocational qualifications in Ireland. Ofqual has extended its deadline to recruit members to an advisory group on promoting equality and inclusion in qualifications and assessments through regulations.

They are particularly interested to recruit people with relevant knowledge of the protected characteristic of 'religion and belief'. The position is voluntary and will require attendance at meetings 3 times per year for about 2-3 hours.

The group will be invited to comment and advise on:

- the potential impact of Ofqual's proposed and existing regulatory policies and practices on people who have one or more of the protected characteristics
- research and other relevant ways of working from which Ofqual could learn
- Ofqual's progress in embedding equality and inclusion in its approach to regulation
- Ofqual's approach to equality and diversity impact assessment
- progress being made by Ofqual to fulfil the commitments set out in its Single Equality Scheme for England.

Full details on the role and how to apply can be found online at www.ofqual.gov.uk/news-and-announcements/83/540 or by emailing Shakina.Chinedu@Ofqual.gov.uk

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

National Family Week 30 May to 5 June

National Family Week aims to highlight the importance of families spending quality time together and aims to promote the benefits of a healthy, active lifestyle. Over the last two years, the Week has involved families in thousands of events, competitions, offers and promotions. Next year the Week will take place from Monday 30 May to Sunday 5 June and the organisers are keen to encourage faith-based and inter faith groups to get involved by:

- promoting the Week (free posters, balloons, stickers etc. are available)
- holding community events and registering these on line through the National Family Week Event finder
- having a special family focus during the week, eg at meetings, worship, youth activities

For further information visit www.nationalfamilyweek.co.uk or contact bee@nationalfamilyweek.co.uk.

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The Big Lunch: Sunday 5 June

This year's Big Lunch takes place on Sunday 5 June. The Big Lunch is a programme of the Eden Project. Its aim is to get as many people as possible across the UK to have a community lunch once a year. The project was launched in 2009 and since its inception thousands of lunches have taken place across a wide range of communities. In 2009 and 2010 almost 1 million people (each year) took part in Big Lunches – ranging from a few neighbours meeting in a garden to large scale street parties with decorations and entertainment.

The Big Lunch organisers have been in discussion with the IFN office about the significance of faith communities in bringing people together for 'Big Lunch' events. Such events could be hosted by, for example, local inter faith organisations or local places of worship for people in their neighbourhoods. The event is an ideal opportunity for people of different faiths to come together in their local communities, meet each other and have conversations over food.

If you are interested in planning a faith based or inter faith Big Lunch, you can request a free Big Lunch Starter Pack by registering the planned event online at www.thebiglunch.com or by calling the Big Lunch on 0845 850 8181. The pack contains a step-by-step guide for running an event, publicity materials, 'crowd cooking' recipe ideas, stickers and much more.

The Big Lunch would like to let even more organisations and individuals know about the project. If you can help publicise the Big Lunch to your contacts and networks Kate Groves would be very pleased to hear from you: Tel 020 7255 6455 or kate.groves@thebiglunch.com

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European Days of Jewish Culture and Heritage

This year's EDJCH runs from Sunday 4 to Sunday 11 September. The theme will be 'Facing the Future', which looks at the new era of communication that has opened up possibilities for presenting and highlighting Jewish culture and heritage. The National Heritage Open Days will also coincide with EDJCH, running from Thursday 8 September to Sunday 11 September. Events must be registered by Friday 1 April. For an official registration form, contact bbukjewishheritage@gmail.com.

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Sewa Day

Sewa Day will this year take place on Sunday 25 September. The Sanskrit word 'Sewa' means 'selfless service'. The aim of Sewa Day is to provide people a chance to give back to the local community through volunteering on a single day to make a difference. Each event organised is based on at least one of the following guiding principles: to relieve hardship and poverty; to bring a little joy where none exists; to help the environment. For more information, or to get involved, please visit www.nationalsewaday.org. The report on the 2010 Sewa Day can be downloaded at www.nationalsewaday.org/images/nsd_annual_report_A4_lr.pdf.

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One World Week

This year's One World Week takes place from 23 to 30 October. The focus is on 'Living for One World', which incorporates: Living for the Planet (valuing the environment and developing lifestyles and attitudes which work in co-operation with nature); Living for its People (sharing resources and respecting people everywhere, recognising that we are all linked); and Living and Acting for Change (to use collective power to influence change towards a fairer and more sustainable world).

A handbook explaining One World Week and exploring some of the concepts brought up by the Ubuntu project was launched on 7 April. For further information, visit www.oneworldweek.org. The guide can be downloaded from www.oneworldweek.org/v2/uploads/One%20World%20Week%20Handbook.pdf and is also available in hard copy.

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Mitzvah Day 20 November

Mitzvah Day takes place this year on Sunday 20 November. It is a Jewish led day of social action – around the world thousands of people take part in hands on projects to support existing charities and to build stronger communities. The goal is to reduce hardship and poverty and to help the environment and “to bring a little joy - hands on – no fundraising”. People are encouraged to volunteer for projects in their communities and anyone can take part regardless of their background. Last year a number of projects had a multi faith dimension. See www.mitzvahday.org.uk for further information and to register an event.

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Inter Faith Week 20 – 26 November

Inter Faith Week 2011 www.interfaithweek.org.uk will take place this year in England, Wales and Northern Ireland from Sunday 20 November until Saturday 26 November.

The Week aims to: strengthen good inter faith relations at all levels in our increasingly diverse society; encourage local faith groups and communities to reach out to each other and build stronger bonds of understanding and co-operation; increase awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, with a particular focus on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society; gain positive profile for inter faith initiatives, locally, regionally and nationally, as well as for the overall work of building good inter faith relations; increase understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs; and encourage the development of new partnerships within local communities and by faith communities with statutory and third sector partners.

If you would like to discuss your plans for the Week or to suggest additional resources which might be helpful to add to the Inter Faith Week website, Ashley Beck, Project Officer at IFN, will be glad to hear from you on 020 7931 7766 or at ashley.beck@interfaith.org.uk.

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Scottish Inter Faith Week 27 November – 4 December

Scottish Inter Faith Week will take place from Sunday 27 November to Saturday 4 December. For further information please contact Frances Hume at the Scottish Inter Faith Council at fhume@scottishinterfaithcouncil.org.

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Holocaust Memorial Day – 27 January 2012

The theme for next year's Holocaust Memorial day is: Speak Up, Speak Out. The theme will challenge everyone to speak up and speak out so that the lessons of the past are learned and there can be a safer, better future. More information, including a downloadable campaign pack, can be found at www.hmd.org.uk.

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DIARY DATES

The **Contextual Theology Centre**, the **Cambridge Interfaith Programme** and **Citizens UK** have a limited number of tickets available for their joint Scriptural Reasoning event on Monday 2 May. 150 Christians, Jews and Muslims will be reflecting on Biblical and Qu'ranic texts on 'Money, Debt and Justice', prior to an assembly to celebrate ten years of the Living Wage Campaign. The Scriptural Reasoning event is at 11am for 11.30am at Methodist Central Hall, London. To book a place, email Angus Ritchie at director@theology-centre.org.

Stafford and District Friends of Faith, the **Church of England** and **Staffordshire University** are hosting an event on Tuesday 3 May entitled 'Children of Abraham – Common Beliefs Common Values'. This is a Christian, Jewish, Muslim dialogue addressing the common ancestry of the three Abrahamic faiths and how they uphold their own traditions and beliefs whilst valuing and respecting those of others. The event is being held from 7.00pm to 9.15pm at St Mary's Church, 3 St Mary's Place, Stafford ST16 2AR. Everyone is welcome and refreshments will be provided. For more information contact 07825 400099 or 01785 258511.

The **Cambridge Interfaith Programme** is holding an Open Scriptural Reasoning workshop on Wednesday, 4 May from 7.30pm – 9.30pm. The workshop, which will be held at The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, is free of charge and offers an opportunity for participants to read and debate sacred texts from Jewish, Muslim and Christian sources and grow in understanding of each other's traditions and beliefs. Spaces are limited. If you would like to attend, please RSVP to cip@divinity.cam.ac.uk by 27 April.

The **Centre for Christianity and Interreligious Dialogue** and the **Aquinas Institute, University of Oxford** are holding a seminar on Thursday, 5 May from 2.00pm – 5.00pm looking at the influence of Islamic thought on the theology of Thomas Aquinas and Christian knowledge of the Qur'an. The event takes place in the Marie Eugenie Room, Heythrop College, University of London, Kensington Square, London W8 5HQ and is open to all, without charge. To book a place or find out further details please email Dr Martin Ganeri, Director of CCID, at m.ganeri@heythrop.ac.uk.

The **National Spirituality and Mental Health Forum** is holding its annual conference on Friday 6 May in Derby. The conference, entitled 'Wanted! Spirituality in Your Trust', will take place from 9.00am until 4.00pm at the Derbyshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust Education Centre, Ashbourne Centre, Kingsway site, Derby DE22 3LZ. There is a fee of £35 to attend. For further information and to receive a booking form, please contact Vicky Nicholls at info@mhspirituality.org.uk. Booking closes on 15 April.

Peterborough Inter Faith Council will be holding its annual Festival of Faiths and Foods from 12.30pm on Sunday 8 May. The theme of this year's event, which will be held at Peterborough Town Hall, is 'The Heart of My Faith'. The event begins with an inter faith lunch and there will be speakers from each of the main faiths, led by the Bishop of Peterborough, The Rt Revd Donald Allister. There is no charge to attend and all are welcome. For further information, please contact the Secretary, Brian Keegan on 01733 265769 or at brian@briankeegan.demon.co.uk.

The British Chapter of the **International Association for Religious Freedom** will be holding its Annual Meeting on Thursday, 12 May, from 1.30 pm - 4.00 pm at Dr Williams Library, 14 Gordon Square, London. The speaker will be the Rev Chris Hudson MBS, Minister of All Souls Belfast, and Chair of the Northern Ireland Chapter of IARF. There will be a bring and share lunch. (Tea, coffee and juice will be provided.) For further information, please see www.iarf.net/britishchapternotices.htm.

The **Christian Interfaith Practitioners' Association** will be holding their Annual Consultation 2011 from 17 to 19 May at Luther King House, Brighton Grove, Manchester M14 5JP. This year's theme is 'Reflective approaches to dialogue' and the speaker will be Dermot Killingley, a former lecturer of the Department of Religious Studies at Newcastle University. There is a charge to attend. Details can be found online at www.cipa-uk.com. For more information please contact Any Lie on 07720 118603 or at asj_lie@hotmail.com.

Religions for Peace (UK) are holding a discussion meeting on 26 May from 10.00am to 4.30pm to further explore the role of faith in public life. Subjects under discussion will include the boundaries between faith and public life; whether it is ever legitimate for believers to engage in efforts to change laws so as to reflect their own fundamental beliefs and morals, or to try to change the morals of a state; how should the belief that there should be no coercion in religion be reflected in the political/social activities of believers, and is witness a more powerful tool than the use of law? The event will take place at St Ethelburga's Centre, 78 Bishopsgate, London EC2N 4AG. For further information please email jehangirsarosh@btconnect.com.

The World Congress of Faiths 75th Anniversary Meeting will be held on Wednesday, 1 June at 5.00pm at the London Interfaith Centre, 125 Salusbury Road, London NW6 6RG.

This will be followed by a workshop in three parts from 6.45pm – 8.00pm entitled ‘The Golden Rule? Compassion?’ For further information, please contact enquiries@worldfaiths.org.

Central Scotland Police has teamed up with a variety of organisations including the **Scottish Inter Faith Council** to run a one-day youth inter faith conference for young people aged 16 - 26 on 21 June at Strathclyde Police Training Centre, Jackton, East Kilbride. Further information is available at <http://www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org/resources/Covering+Letter.doc> For an application form please contact Anton Stephenson at Central Scotland Police on 01768 456 993 or email: anton.stephenson@centralscotland.pnn.police.uk.

The **Alister Hardy Society** and the **World Congress of Faiths** are hosting a joint conference on Saturday 11 June entitled ‘Spirituality: how might spiritual/religious experience help towards understanding and compassion?’. The conference will run from 10.00am to 4.30pm at the Essex Unitarian Church, 112 Palace Gardens Terrace, Kensington, London W8. The speakers are the Revd Dr Marcus Braybooke, Dr Gregory Barker and Eley McAinsh. To book or for further details please contact johnfranklin35@hotmail.com.

The **London College of Fashion, University of the Arts London** and the **University of Amsterdam** are jointly convening an academic symposium entitled ‘Mediating Modesty: Fashioning Faithful Bodies’ on Wednesday 15 June. The event takes place from 9.30am until 5.30pm at Rootstein Hopkins East Space, London College of Fashion, 20 John Princes Street, London, W1G 0BJ. The symposium will bring together speakers from cultural studies, anthropology, fashion studies and religious studies to think about women’s modest self presentation in the context of new forms of commerce, commentary, and community and explore how and to what extent women of different backgrounds are engaging in shared discourses about modest dressing and body management within and across faiths. Tickets cost £25 (£15 concessions). Further details and booking information can be found at: <http://newsevents.arts.ac.uk/event/mediating-modesty>.

The **International Council of Christians and Jews** is holding its annual conference from 3 to 6 July in Cracow, Poland. This year’s conference is being co-hosted with the Jagiellonian University of Cracow. The conference is part of an ongoing ICCJ project dealing with interreligious dialogue in Central and Eastern Europe and the theme will be ‘Religions and Ideologies, Polish perspectives and beyond’. Cracow was chosen because of its historical associations for Christians and Jews and for the central role it has played in Polish history. The conference will include a trip to the memorial site of Auschwitz/Birkenau and visits to sites of historical and religious interest in Cracow. Further information can be found at www.iccj.org.

The **World Congress of Faiths** will be holding a special informal service at 6.30pm on Sunday 24 July at St Martin-in-the-Field to mark its 75th anniversary. It was at St Martin’s in 1942 that the memorial service was held for Sir Francis Younghusband, the explorer and mystic and founder of the World Congress of Faiths. The theme of the service will be ‘Compassion’ with readings and music from many faith traditions. Rabbi Jackie Tabick, Chair of WCF, will give the address. All are welcome. For further information, please contact Tony Reese at enquiries@worldfaiths.org.

The Kirby Laing Institute for Christian Ethics is hosting a conference in Cambridge from 26 to 28 September on 'Sustainability in Crisis'. This builds on the conference and book on 'Creation in Crisis' which was part of the 'Hope for Creation' project run jointly with the Faraday Institute. The event will involve both secular and faith perspectives in the same conversation to encourage both sides to see how religions have a vital contribution to make in motivating their adherents to take action, both as individuals and communities. Further details and booking information can be found at www.sustainability-in-crisis.org or by emailing Colin Bell at crb11@cam.ac.uk.

Parliament of the World's Religions in 2014

Brussels has been chosen as the host city of the Parliament of the World's Religions in 2014. The selection of Brussels was made by the Board of Trustees of the governing organisation at its March 13 meeting in Chicago. More than 10,000 people from diverse religious, spiritual and convictional traditions are expected to participate in the Parliament, which will last for 7 days and will comprise more than 500 programs, workshops and dialogues, alongside music, dance, artistic exhibitions and related events hosted by religious communities and cultural institutions. Note: Since the historic 1893 World's Parliament of Religions was held in Chicago, modern Parliaments have been held in Chicago (1993), Cape Town (1999), Barcelona (2004) and Melbourne (2009). These periodic Parliament events are the world's oldest and largest interreligious gatherings.

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For detailed information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org
Scottish Inter Faith Council: www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org
Inter-Faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org

For detailed information on events and projects in a number of the English regions see:

East of England: www.eefaithscouncil.org.uk
London: www.faithsforum4london.com
North East: www.nerfn.org
North West: www.faithnorthwest.org.uk
South East: www.se-faithforum.net
South West: www.faithnetsouthwest.org.uk
West Midlands: www.wmfaithsforum.org.uk

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 17 May 2011 with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line.

Disclaimer:

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Inter Faith Network for the UK, 8A Lower Grosvenor Place, London SW1W 0EN www.interfaith.org.uk
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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 30 June 2011 with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Material may be edited for length or style.

The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and future projects and events and so items are likely to be about:

- forthcoming inter faith events likely to be of interest to people across the UK
- inter faith and multi faith projects where you are seeking input
- resources which you have recently developed which you think may be helpful to those working in the inter faith field
- brief information about any jobs you are advertising within inter faith organisations or for inter faith posts (eg local inter faith development worker; national faith community inter faith officer)

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UK/NATIONAL UPDATES

Civil partnerships on religious premises: a consultation

As recorded in the February e-bulletin, on 17 February the Government announced its commitment to enabling civil partnerships to be registered on the religious premises of those faith groups who wished to host them. This will be done by implementing Section 202 of the Equality Act 2010. This provision removes the legal prohibition on civil partnerships being registered on religious premises, enables regulations to be made setting out the arrangements for these premises to be approved by the local authority and clarifies that there is no obligation on faith groups to have civil partnership registrations on their premises.

Civil partnerships on religious premises: a consultation, to be found at www.equalities.gov.uk/pdf/425156%20Civil%20partnerships%20tagged.pdf, sets out detailed proposals for this voluntary measure. The proposals are designed to enable faith groups to opt in, respect the different decision-making structures of different faith groups, minimise the risk of successful legal challenges and be straightforward for local authorities to operate. It would also be unlawful for a civil partnership to be registered on a religious premises that had not been approved for the purpose by the local authority. That approval will be given only with the approval of the faith group concerned.

The closing date for the consultation is 23 June. If you have any queries on this, please email civilpartnerships@geo.gsi.gov.uk.

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Council of Dharmic Faiths

Following the formal public launch of the Council of Dharmic Faiths at the House of Commons on 16 May (details available from info@dharmicfaiths.org), CoDF will be continuing its work to "promote the quality of life for the Dharmic Faith communities in the UK by advancement of education and training, promotion of good health and social welfare, advocacy, recreational activities and create a mechanism to preserve their cultural and religious interests in the UK".

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EHRC initial response to Government consultation

The March and April e-bulletins reported that the Government had launched a consultation on the future of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). The consultation document can be found at www.equalities.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=1789 and the consultation closes on 15 June. The EHRC has now published its own initial response which can be found at www.equalityhumanrights.com/about-us/vision-and-mission/government-consultation-on-our-future/#initial.

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Red Tape Challenge - Equalities

The last e-bulletin referred to the launch by the Cabinet Office of a 'Red Tape Challenge' website which is inviting comments on legislation affecting different sectors of industrial and commercial activity and inviting respondents to identify "which regulations are working and which are not; what should be scrapped, what should be saved and what should be simplified". The website covers general legislation and regulations which respondents might wish to argue should be dropped or modified.

Its section on equalities, includes the Equality Act 2010, and still does so, although the Home Secretary, Theresa May, told the House of Commons on 5 May that the Government has no plans to repeal it. The 'Red Tape' website says that there will be a focus on equalities legislation on the 'Red Tape' website from 9 to 29 June. For further information, see www.redtapechallenge.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/home/index.

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Strengthening Women's Voices in Government

The Government is currently seeking responses to its consultation entitled 'Strengthening Women's Voices in Government'.

The consultation document sets out the Government's proposals for a new approach for engaging and listening to women through:

- Direct engagement between ministers, women and organisations that represent women to ensure government understands the views of a wide range of women in the UK, and providing the opportunity for a genuine two way dialogue on policies that affect women.
- Bringing in expertise from the women's sector and beyond to support the new model and support independence from government where this is critical, particularly in the international arena.
- Looking Ahead to enable government to anticipate emerging and future issues, such as the impact of the changing demography of the UK, which will be important for women.
- A new IT platform, making the most of modern communication techniques to get the informed voice of women to Government when they need to be heard.

The consultation document can be found online at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/StrengtheningWomensVoicesConsultation> and runs until 10 June 2011.

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Government publishes White Paper on 'Giving'

On 23 May the Government launched its White Paper on 'Giving' which outlines ways in which it hopes to make it easier and more attractive to give time and money to good causes.

The Cabinet Office press release says that : "Britons are already generous but evidence suggests levels of giving time and money have flat-lined in recent years. The Giving White Paper seeks to renew Britain's culture of philanthropy by working with charities and businesses to support new ways for people to contribute which fit into busy modern lives."

The White Paper announces a range of measures designed to encourage the giving of both time and money and includes:

- a £10m Social Action Fund and Challenge Prizes around volunteering
- a Giving Summit in late autumn 2011
- £30m for a Local Infrastructure Fund in order to encourage more effective support for frontline civil society organisations
- a year-long national payroll giving campaign.

The White Paper can be found online at www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/giving-white-paper.pdf.

The Government has also announced that, following a suggestion in its Green Paper on 'Giving', its member banks have unanimously agreed to enable giving through all their cash machines in 2012.

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NCVO Task Force report launched

On 17 May NCVO President, Lord Hodgson, launched his Task Force report, *Unshackling Good Neighbours*, which considers how to cut red tape for small charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises.

The report identifies some of the barriers that discourage people from giving time and money to civil society organisations and explores some of the ways in which public engagement can be increased by reducing bureaucracy and red tape. Some of the key recommendations include considering reforms to the law to clarify the liability of charity trustees and volunteers and displaying information prominently in all Jobcentres encouraging volunteering and emphasising that it does not affect benefits.

A copy of the report can be found online at www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/resource-library/unshackling-good-neighbours.

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PROJECTS

Scriptural Reasoning Imams Council

In conjunction with Scriptural Reasoning, Children of Abraham and the Scriptures in Dialogue Academic Collaboration, a third consultative meeting was held on 10 May for the establishment of the new Scriptural Reasoning Imams Council, to provide Islamic guidance and education for Muslims in support of all varieties of scripture-based inter faith dialogue (for example, 'Scriptural Reasoning', 'Abrahamic Texts Reading', 'Bible and Quran Study'). The Council consists of distinguished international Islamic scholars from a breadth of Sunni and Shi'a communities, and works in partnership with the Rabbinic Council of Children of Abraham. The SR Imams Council's new guidance document, "*Scriptural Reasoning and Interfaith Textual Reading: Guidance for Muslims*" is to be launched on 27 June. The Imams Council is currently seeking consultative input from inter faith practitioners who use study of sacred texts in dialogue. For more information, please write to enquiries@scripturalreasoning.org.uk.

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RESOURCES AND TRAINING

Guide to story-based methods in community building

What's your story? is St Ethelburga's new guide to the use of personal narrative and story-based methods in community building. It illustrates the richness and value of these techniques for building bridges across differences of faith, race and background, and presents over twenty tried and tested methods with case studies and pointers for best practice.

It is available both online and as a hardcopy booklet. Please see <http://stethelburgas.org/narrative-resource> for more details.

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Discovering Through Death – Beliefs and Practices

The Muslim Burial Council of Leicester has produced a book entitled *Discovering Through Death – Beliefs and Practices*, which explores the customs and traditions surrounding death and burial. The book has been compiled by people from the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Humanist, Jain, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh communities.

It is hoped that it will be particularly useful to public workers such as police, health workers and faith communities themselves. The project has received the support of

many organisations including Leicester City Council, Voluntary Action Leicestershire and faith communities throughout Leicestershire.

For more information and to obtain a copy of the book, please email admin@mbcol.org.uk.

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NIFCON i-book on inter faith relations

The Anglican Communion Network for Inter Faith Concerns (NIFCON) has launched a new resource to assist Anglicans and other Christians in their engagement with people of other faiths. *Generous Love: the truth of the Gospel and the call to dialogue – an Anglican theology of inter faith relations* was produced in 2008 by NIFCON members. The report, which formed the basis for work at the 2008 Lambeth Conference in this field, has become increasingly well-known over the last three years, and is becoming a bench-mark for involvement by Anglicans in inter faith relations throughout the Communion. The i-book can be accessed at: www.aco.org/books. For further information or to offer material for inclusion please contact the Revd Rana Khan at the Anglican Communion Office: rana.khan@aco.org.

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MINAB youth toolkit

The Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board have launched *The Mosques and Youth Engagement Guidelines and Toolkit* to support Mosques in meeting the MINAB Quality framework and increase the access, participation and involvement of young people in mosques. This includes material about the engagement of young Muslims in inter faith activity through the mosque context. For further information, see www.minab.org.uk/projects/youth-engagement/mosques-a-youth-engagement-guidelines-and-toolkit. The toolkit can be downloaded at www.minab.org.uk/images/stories/Documents/Mosques-And-Youth-Engagement-Guidelines-And-Toolkit.pdf.

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Dignity of Women – Scriptural reflections exhibition

The exhibition, 'The Dignity of Women - Scriptural Reflections', set up by the Religions for Peace European Women of Faith Network, in partnership with Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha (GNNSJ) and the Nishkam Civic Association (Birmingham), is available for hire. The exhibition relates verses from the different Religious Scriptures regarding the status and honour of women. The exhibition aspires to educate religious and secular communities on the role and status of women and in turn help to overcome misrepresentation of and discrimination against women. There will be a small charge for hiring plus delivery costs. For more information, please contact Ravinder Kaur Nijjar at rknijjar@hotmail.com.

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An Introduction to Jewish and Christian Scriptures for Muslims

Scriptural Reasoning in partnership with Al-Azhar Institute for Dialogue with the Monotheistic Religions and the Scriptures in Dialogue Academic Collaboration presents a training programme for Muslims, taught by Muslim scholars, in an Islamic environment. The course introduces Muslims to the sacred texts of Judaism and Christianity, with an opportunity to visit Christian and Jewish seminaries and places of worship, and hear presentations by scholars of these faiths. It is text-based and includes a course in Elementary Hebrew (for which some prior knowledge of Arabic is an advantage). This free programme is open to all Muslims and is "supervised and sanctioned according to Islamic *shari'a* by the Scriptural Reasoning Imams Council". The course commences on Saturday 4 June at 5.00pm at Al-Azhar College, 77 Greenfield Road, London E1 1EJ. To book a place, please email enquiries@scripturalreasoning.org.uk.

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Woolf Institute e-Learning course: The Jewish Muslim Encounter

The Woolf Institute is running an e-Learning course, in co-operation with the American University Washington, entitled '*Bridging the Great Divide: The Jewish Muslim Encounter*'. The course will explore the history, culture and theology of Muslims and Jews, reflecting both on similarities and differences as well as the major challenges, and will also offer strategies for building bridges between the communities. It will provide a space for the discussion of the entire range, in the broadest sense, of the Jewish-Muslim encounter and will not preclude exploration of the more controversial issues.

For more information please contact enquiries@woolf.cam.ac.uk.

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Hinduism perspectives

Hindu Council UK draw attention to the Hindu Academy website with clips covering various aspects of Hinduism, with a playlist of talks on a wide range of topics including inter faith issues. See <http://www.youtube.com/hinduacademy>.

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Face to Faith programme

Face to Faith, which aims to break down barriers and expand horizons by using technology to connect students of different cultures and religions around the world is hosting teacher training workshops in the North West of England, South Wales, Northern Ireland, Italy, the Palestinian Territories and the Philippines. For more information on Face to Faith in the UK contact jo.malone@tonyblairfaithfoundation.org.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS AND TENDERS

The draft Charter for the current Coroner Service

A consultation has been launched on the draft Charter for the current coroner service. It will close on Monday 5 September and is aimed at coroners, coroners' officers, voluntary organisations who deal with bereavement, local authorities, bereaved people and all those who have an interest in the Coroner Service. The consultation paper and questionnaire template for responses are available online at <http://www.justice.gov.uk/consultations/index.htm>.

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Faith Shorts: TBFF Global Film competition

Entries are open for the Tony Blair Faith Foundation's global film competition, Faith Shorts. Young people between 14-18 are asked to answer the brief, "Let me show you how my faith inspires me". Winners will have their films premiered at the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) in London. The deadline for film entries is 1 July. TBFF have just sent out 25 portable video cameras to young people who didn't have any access to film making equipment to countries including the Palestinian Territories, Sierra Leone, Nigeria the Philippines and Pakistan. Film ideas so far include a story of hope from a young boy in Egypt who witnessed Christians and Muslims uniting during the revolution and a Jordanian film which explores our obligations to help those in need from neighbouring countries. TBFF is keen for more UK entries. Go to www.faithshorts.org to find out more.

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JOBS/VOLUNTEERING

Near Neighbours Project Worker (Muslim)

The Christian Muslim Forum is looking for a Project Worker for the Near Neighbours programme, an initiative of the Church of England and the Church Urban Fund to initiate and strengthen relationship and action across faiths and cultures. The Christian Muslim Forum is delivering Near Neighbours leadership training, in partnership with the Presence and Engagement Centres, in Birmingham, Bradford, Leicester and London.

The Project Worker will: lead on the delivery of leadership training; organise training events and commission training resources; build up the Forum's network of contacts with leaders, activists and volunteers; and work closely and liaise regularly with P&E Centres. The post will be a three-year contract, working 18 hours per week, and is advertised at £22,000 per annum (pro rata plus pension). The closing date for applications is midnight on 10 June and interviews will be held on 23 June. CMF indicate that "Due to the joint faith ethos of the Christian Muslim Forum, this appointment is only open to Muslims and has attached to it a genuine occupational requirement under paragraph 7(3) of the Employment Equality Regulations 2003."

Further details, including the job description and application form, can be found online at www.christianmuslimforum.org/index.php/working-together/news/project-worker-vacancy.

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JAINpedia Volunteers

The JAINpedia project is currently seeking volunteers to assist in many areas. Volunteers can choose: to go to venues where the travelling exhibition will be throughout the country to guide exhibition visitors; to explain the displays; to run arts, crafts and other workshops related to the Jain faith; or to contribute to the website, particularly to *Jain Spirit*. Volunteers can also take on practical tasks, such as organising events and publicity, and transporting equipment.

JAINpedia believes that volunteers are an important part of the project. To express an interest to help, fill in the volunteer form online at <http://blog.jainpedia.org/volunteer-registration-form>.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

European Days of Jewish Culture and Heritage 4-11 September

This year's EDJCH runs from 4 to 11 September. The theme will be 'Facing the Future', which looks at the new era of communication that has opened up possibilities for presenting and highlighting Jewish culture and heritage. The National Heritage Open Days will also coincide with EDJCH, running from Thursday 8 September to Sunday 11 September. For an official registration form, contact bbukjewishheritage@gmail.com.

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Sewa Day 25 September

Sewa Day will this year take place on Sunday 25 September. The Sanskrit word 'Sewa' means 'selfless service'. The aim of Sewa Day is to provide people a chance to give back to the local community through volunteering on a single day to make a difference. Each event organised is based on at least one of the following guiding principles: to relieve hardship and poverty; to bring a little joy where none exists; to help the environment. For more information, or to get involved, please visit www.nationalsewaday.org. The report on the 2010 Sewa Day can be downloaded at www.nationalsewaday.org/images/nsd_annual_report_A4_lr.pdf.

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One World Week 23–30 October

One World Week is a Development Education Charity. Each year, the Week is an opportunity for people from diverse backgrounds to come together to learn about global justice, to spread that learning and to use it to take action for justice locally and globally. One World Week 2011 takes place from 23 to 30 October and takes the theme of 'Living for One World'. The Week will explore many aspects of the environment and what can be done to preserve and protect it under the headings of Living for the planet, Living for its people and Living and acting for change. For further information, including advice and guidance on events, please visit <http://www.oneworldweek.org/v2>.

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Mitzvah Day 20 November

Mitzvah Day takes place this year on Sunday 20 November. It is a Jewish led day of social action – around the world thousands of people take part in hands on projects to support existing charities and to build stronger communities. The goal is to reduce hardship and poverty and to help the environment. People are encouraged to volunteer for projects in their communities and anyone can take part regardless of their background. Last year a number of projects had a multi faith dimension. See www.mitzvahday.org.uk for further information and to register an event.

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Inter Faith Week 20–26 November

Inter Faith Week www.interfaithweek.org.uk will take place this year in England, Wales and Northern Ireland from Sunday 20 November until Saturday 26 November.

The aims of Inter Faith Week are:

- Strengthening good inter faith relations at all levels
- Increasing awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, in particular celebrating and building on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society
- Increasing understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs

If you would like to discuss your plans for the Week or to suggest additional resources which might be helpful to add to the Inter Faith Week website, Ashley Beck, Project Officer at IFN, will be glad to hear from you: 020 7931 7766, ashley.beck@interfaith.org.uk

The illustrated report on Inter Faith Week 2010 in England will be available shortly to download from www.interfaithweek.org.uk

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Scottish Inter Faith Week 27 November – 4 December

Scottish Inter Faith Week will take place from Sunday 27 November to Saturday 4 December. For further information please contact Frances Hume at the Scottish Inter Faith Council at fhume@scottishinterfaithcouncil.org.

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Holocaust Memorial Day 27 January 2012

The theme for next year's Holocaust Memorial day is: Speak up, Speak out. The theme will challenge everyone to "Speak Up, Speak Out" so that the lessons of the past are learned and there can be a safer, better future. More information, including a downloadable campaign pack, can be found at www.hmd.org.uk.

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DIARY DATES

The **World Congress of Faiths** will be holding their Annual General Meeting and Workshop on Wednesday 1 June at the London Interfaith Centre, 125 Salusbury Road, London NW6 6RG. The AGM takes place at 5.00pm, followed by refreshments at 6.00pm, with the workshop on '*The Golden Rule and Compassion*' commencing at 6.45pm. There will be three sessions – 'a silent conversation' with Dr Joy Barrow, 'textual discussions' with Pejman Khojasteh and 'an exploration in art' with Deborah Pelling. For further information please contact admin@worldfaiths.org or telephone 01935 864055.

The **Centre for Faiths and Public Policy at the University of Chester**, in association with the **Department of Philosophy at the University of Liverpool** and the **William Temple Foundation**, are holding a one day workshop on Wednesday 1 June. The event explores '*New Directions in the Philosophy of Religion and Post-Secular Practical Theology*' and runs from 10.30am to 4.30pm at the University of Chester. The day costs £10, including refreshments (but not lunch). For more information please visit www.chester.ac.uk/cfpp/events or contact Charlotte Morgan at c.morgan@chester.ac.uk or on 01244 511031.

Huddersfield Interfaith Council are holding their annual 'Walk of Friendship' on Saturday 4 June. Beginning at 9.15am at Jamia Masjid Usman it goes via Huddersfield Train Station (10.15am) to Huddersfield Parish Church (10.40am), Shree Sita Ram Hindu Mandir (11.15am) and Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara (12 noon). People are welcome to join at any stage, with refreshments offered at each place of worship and a vegetarian lunch at the Sikh Gurdwara. Walkers are asked to dress modestly, bring along a scarf, cap or hat to cover their heads and be prepared to remove their shoes if requested. For further information please contact Shazad Hussain at msh7861a@yahoo.co.uk or on 07939 288848.

The **Employers Forum on Belief**, in conjunction with **KPMG**, is running a 'Taste of Religion' event from on Monday 6 June. The event runs from 11am to 2pm and will include presentations by Rabbi Dr Naftali Brawer, the Revd Jonathan Evens, Khola Hasan, Shaunaka Rishi Das, Dr Satinder Singh and Simon Webley. There will be food available from different religious traditions and the Forum will also be giving out printed versions of their festival guides including those on Easter, Christmas, Jewish High Holy Days, Passover, Hanukkah, Ramadan, Eid ul-Adha and Diwali. The event takes place at KPMG, 15 Canada Square, London E14 5GL and tickets cost £40 plus VAT for Employers' Forum on Belief members and £75 plus VAT for non-members. More information can be obtained from www.efbelief.org.uk/events.php/31/taste-of-religion.

The **Woolf Institute** is hosting an event on Tuesday 7 June entitled '*Jews and the Medieval Islamic State*'. The speaker for the event will be Professor Marina Rustow from John Hopkins University, USA. The event runs from 5pm to 6pm and will be held in the Old Common Room, Wesley House, Jesus Lane, Cambridge CB5 8BJ. For further information, please contact Dan Avasilichioaie at dan@woolf.cam.ac.uk.

Guildford and Godalming Inter Faith Forum will be holding a discussion forum on Thursday 9 June at St Joseph's RC Church, York Road, Guildford. Dr Nabil Mustapha, Mr Mark Bishop, Prof Ray Traynor, Mrs Irene Black and Prof Adel Sharif, from the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Jewish and Muslim faiths will each address the theme "*What is the role of faith in your life?*", followed by discussion. Participants are asked to arrive at 7pm for 7.30pm. For further details please email interfaithfriend@aol.com.

Westminster Interfaith will be holding their 26th annual London Multi-Faith Pilgrimage for Peace in Southall on Saturday 11 June. The Pilgrimage will start at 9.30am at Holy Trinity Church, Uxbridge Road, London UB1 3HJ and will visit Vishwa Hindu Kendra, Southall Sai Centre (where special guests will be the Baha'i Choir and other groups) and lunch will be provided. In the afternoon the Pilgrimage will take in the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association, Guru Granth Gurdwara, Missionaries of Charity, Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Saba, Central Jamia Masjid Mosque, Buddha Vihara, Sri Guru Valmik Sabha, Shree Ram Mandir, Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha, De Nobile House, St John's Church, Br Daniel's House, St Anselm's RC Church before finishing at Ramgarhia Sabha at 5.00 pm. All are welcome. For further details and a booking form please contact Jon Dal Din at Westminster Interfaith at jondaldin@rcdow.org.uk or on 07527 758729 or visit www.westminsterinterfaith.org.uk.

The **Alister Hardy Society** and the **World Congress of Faiths** are hosting a joint conference on Saturday 11 June entitled '*Spirituality: how might spiritual/religious experience help towards understanding and compassion?*'. The conference will run from 10.00am to 4.30pm at the Essex Unitarian Church, 112 Palace Gardens Terrace, Kensington, London W8 4RT. The speakers will be the Revd Dr Marcus Braybooke, Dr Gregory Barker and Eley McAinsh. To book or for further details please contact John Franklin at johnfranklin35@hotmail.com.

The **Wolfson Research Institute at Durham University** will be launching the short film, '*Earth to Earth: Woodland Burial and the Church of England*' on Wednesday 15 June. The event begins at 1.15pm with tea and coffee, and a welcome by Professor Douglas Davies, who commissioned the film. The film, which lasts just under half an hour, looks at the range of values brought to natural burial by bereaved families, individuals and funeral professionals at a woodland burial ground, Barton Glebe. Afterwards there will be a question and answer session. For more information or to register for the event please email Linda.crowe@durham.ac.uk or visit www.dur.ac.uk/wolfson.institute/events/?eventno=10039.

Churches Together in England is holding a one-day conference on Wednesday 16 June entitled '*Sacred Spaces: Inside Out*'. The event will run from 9am til 4pm at the Jain Centre, 32 Oxford Street, Leicester LE1 5XU. This is a free conference offering faith-based organisations and education practitioners the opportunity to explore how learning outside the classroom experiences in sacred spaces can support teaching and learning in RE. The event will include visits to the Jain Centre, the Buddhist Centre and Leicester Cathedral. For more information or to make a booking, please call 020 7529 8145 or email education@cte.org.uk.

The **Scottish Inter Faith Council**, the **Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland** and **Central Scotland Police** are holding a National Youth Inter Faith Conference on Tuesday 21 June. The conference will run from 10am until 3pm at the Strathclyde Police Training Centre, Jackton, East Kilbride and is free to attend. For further information and to register, please visit www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org/49.html.

Westminster Faith Exchange is holding a discussion event on '*Faith and Freedom of Speech*' on Wednesday 22 June, from 6.00pm to 8.00pm at the University of Westminster, 35 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5LS. The event is free and open to everyone, of any faith or none, and the discussion will be led by inter faith officers and chaplains from the University. For more information, please contact Jessica Bradford on 020 7641 3247 or at jbradford@westminster.gov.uk.

Bradford Concord will be holding their 18th Annual Multi-Faith Walk for Friendship on Saturday 25 June. Walkers meet at 9.30am at Ramgarhia Gurdwara, 720 Bolton Road, Bradford BD3 0ND, with a civic send-off by the Lord Mayor of Bradford, and will call at Tawakuliya Mosque, Bradford Synagogue, Cartwright Hall (where a talk on Hinduism and the Kalighat painting tradition will be given) and finish at Trinity Methodist Church around 3.15pm. Participants are invited to join all or part of the walk. The total walking distance is about 3.5 miles. Participants are asked to bring suitable head covering and their own packed lunch. For further details, contact Mohinder Singh Chana at mohinder@cyberstyle.it or on 07740 245841.

The **Leeds Roman Catholic Diocesan Interreligious Commission** is holding a discussion meeting exploring the Catholic Bishops' statement on interreligious dialogue, *'Meeting God in Friend and Stranger'*. The event takes place on Saturday 25 June from 9.30am (for a 10.00am start) and runs to 1.30pm, when a buffet lunch will be served. Speakers include Archbishop Kevin McDonald, the Rt Revd Tony Robinson (Bishop of Pontefract and Chair of Kirklees Faiths Forum) and Fakhara Rehman (Community Faiths Co-ordinator, Kirklees Faiths Forum). There will be opportunity for questions and discussion. There is no charge but donations up to £5 are requested to help cover costs. Please book places by Monday 13 June by contacting David Jackson at dandt55@btinternet.com or on 01274 581094.

The **Woolf Institute** is hosting a colloquium on *'The Other Jewish Question'*. The colloquium will take place from 27 to 28 June at Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge and will offer an opportunity to engage with Jay Geller's work by focusing on three figures: Marx, Kafka, and Freud. Vivian Liska (Kafka), Liliane Weissberg (Freud), and Lars Fischer (Marx) will offer detailed responses to Geller's work and its usefulness for their own research, followed by a response from Geller and a concluding round table. Further details can be found online at www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/cjcr/resources/oquestion.php. For more information please contact Lars Fischer at lf309@cam.ac.uk.

Calderdale Interfaith Council is holding a *'Food Festival'* evening on Thursday 30 June. The event will run from 6pm to 9pm at the Raven Street Youth Centre, Halifax HX1 4NB. Food and drink from different faiths and cultures will be available. All are welcome and there is no admission fee. For more information, please call Raja Taufiq Khan on 07775 649655 or email Calderdale.interfaithcouncil@yahoo.co.uk.

The **Woolf Institute** is hosting a colloquium on *'Understanding and Affirming Judaism in Christian Preaching and Teaching'* with Clare Amos, William Brosend, Kelvin Holdsworth, Amy-Jill Levine, and Martin Seeley. The colloquium will take place from 30 June to 1 July at Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge and offers an opportunity to take careful stock of, and discuss in detail, what has been achieved and what remains to be done to facilitate more widespread understanding and affirmation of Judaism in Christian preaching and teaching. Further details can be found online at www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/cjcr/resources/levine_colloquium.php. For more information please contact Lars Fischer at lf309@cam.ac.uk.

The **JAINpedia** project and the **Institute of Jainology** are holding a Cultural Treasure Hunt on Sunday 10 July. The Treasure Hunt will take place across the city of London, with clues released on JAINpedia Twitter and Facebook. It is hoped that the Hunt will give participants the opportunity to see London in a different light and there will be prizes awarded at the end. A limited number of groups with a maximum of 6 people in each group will be able to compete. You can enter your group into the Treasure Hunt by contacting the JAINpedia team at bansri.mehta@jainpedia.org.

Kirklees Faiths Forum will be holding its three day *'Treasures Revealed'* festival from Friday 15 July to Sunday 17 July. The festival gives people the opportunity to experience what goes on in many local places of worship. A number of churches,

(one of which is hosting an exhibition from the Baha'i community), a Sikh temple and a Hindu temple will open their doors and there will be guided tours, music, food and much more. For full details, please visit www.kirkleesfaithsforum.org.uk or www.treasurersrevealed.co.uk or call Kirklees Faiths Forum on 01924 326419.

The World Congress of Faiths will be celebrating its 75th anniversary at the Younghusband Interfaith Service to be held at 6.30pm on Sunday, 24 July at St Martin-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square, London WC2N 4JJ. If you would like to attend please email smartin@worldfaiths.org.

The **JAINpedia** project has simultaneous exhibitions of Jain manuscripts currently going on in the British Library until 30 June 2011 and the Victoria & Albert Museum until December 2012. The British Library has the largest collection of Jain artefacts outside of the Indian sub-continent. To book a group tour of either of these displays please contact us on info@jainpedia.org.

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For detailed information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Scottish Inter Faith Council: www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org

Inter-Faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org

For detailed information on events and projects in a number of the English regions see:

East of England: www.eefaithscouncil.org.uk

London: www.faithsforum4london.com

North East: www.nerfn.org

North West: www.faithnorthwest.org.uk

South East: www.se-faithforum.net

South West: www.faithnetsouthwest.org.uk

West Midlands: www.wmfaithsforum.org.uk

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 30 June 2011 with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer:

Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 8A Lower Grosvenor Place, London SW1W 0EN www.interfaith.org.uk
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July 2011

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 15 August 2011 with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Material may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and future projects and events and so items are likely to be about:

- forthcoming inter faith events likely to be of interest to people across the UK
- inter faith and multi faith projects where you are seeking input
- resources which you have recently developed which you think may be helpful to those working in the inter faith field
- brief information about any jobs you are advertising within inter faith organisations or for inter faith posts (eg local inter faith development worker; national faith community inter faith officer)

Disclaimer: Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

UK/NATIONAL UPDATES

IFN AGM and National Meeting

IFN held its AGM and National Meeting in Birmingham on 13 July. The National Meeting was on the theme of 'The Big Picture: National and local faith communities working together for inter faith cooperation and understanding' with a wide range of speakers of different faiths from local, regional and national bodies. The meeting looked at:

- the roles national faith community bodies play in resourcing local inter faith cooperation and learning – including through resources, guidelines and 'modelling' particular forms of inter faith engagement such as dialogue and joint social action;
- some particular ways in which national faith community organisations are working to help increase involvement in work to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation;
- some examples of this in local contexts; and
- how learning from local members helps inform national reflection and guidance and what local inter faith practitioners find helpful from national faith communities in supporting their work.

A full report of the Meeting will be available from the IFN office in due course. To indicate an interest in receiving a copy of this, please email: ifnet@interfaith.org.uk

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Discontinuation of Faith Communities Consultative Council

Following an earlier 'holding answer' on 13 May from Mr Andrew Stunell, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at DCLG, to a Parliamentary Question about the composition of the FCCC saying that:

"The Government have decided to discontinue the Faith Communities Consultative Council. We believe that it did not add value to the effective arrangements that Departments already have in place for consulting faith communities on policy",

Mr Stunell provided the following further Written Answer on 24 June:

"Our preference is to work with faith communities in a manner that is strategic and appropriate for particular situations. My Department will continue to liaise individually with national faith communities that provided members of the Council,

and to convene ad hoc groupings to discuss policy as necessary. Officials from various Departments will continue to attend meetings of the Faith Communities Forum of the Inter Faith Network for the United Kingdom, in order to engage with faith communities collectively. The Government recognises the vital contribution that faith communities make to civil society, and we are committed to facilitating linkages and tackling barriers that faith groups face. For instance my Department has invested £5 million in the Church Urban Fund's Near Neighbours programme, using the local infrastructure of the Church of England to build productive relationships between people from different faith backgrounds in four key geographical areas."

The full text can be found at:

www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm110623/text/110623w0003.htm#11062350000238

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Faith Leaders write to Prime Minister about RE

A number of senior faith leaders have written to the Prime Minister expressing grave concern about the negative impact which they see a range of current Government policies as having on religious education (RE) in schools and colleges. The text of this letter will shortly be available on the website of the RE Council

<http://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org/> A similar, shorter, letter from the same individuals was printed in the *Daily Telegraph* on 9 July

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/letters/8626662/Events-before-the-News-of-the-World-scandal-show-that-we-cant-trust-MPs-to-expose-criminality.html>

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Equality Challenge Unit launches report on religion and belief in HE

Over the past few decades, the religion and belief composition of the student and staff bodies in English, Welsh and Northern Irish higher education institutions has changed substantially. In addition to its growing diversity, the profile of religion and belief has also changed, becoming more visible and public than was previously the case in many institutions.

The Equality Challenge Unit commissioned research from the University of Derby to develop an evidence base for understanding the experience of staff and students in higher education with a religion or belief. The project was carried out by a team led by Professor Paul Weller of the University of Derby. The research is based on survey responses from 3077 HE staff and 3935 students, supplemented by in-depth case-study work, focus groups and interviews in a number of higher education institutions.

The final report of the project 'Religion and Belief in HE: researching the experiences of staff and students' was launched on 11 July and can be downloaded at:

<http://www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/files/religion-and-belief-staff-and-students-in-he-report.pdf/view>

The report identifies a number of areas where the sector needs to undertake further work to support staff and students in higher education with a religion or belief.

The ECU will be prioritising areas recommended within the report for future work, including good relations on campus and supporting other organisations including the National Union of Students and Universities UK. It plans to work with the sector to find effective methods to collect, interpret and learn from the variety of data sources available (for example, monitoring information, staff and student surveys, evidence of incidents of discrimination and harassment and evidence from engagement activities) to develop services and policies that support all staff and students, whatever their religion or belief background.

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Government's new counter-terrorism strategy

The Government's revised counter-terrorism strategy (known as CONTEST) was published on 12 July.

It retains the previous four strand structure: Pursue – to stop terrorist attacks; Prevent – to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting violent extremism; Protect – to strengthen protection against terrorist attack; and Prepare – where an attack cannot be stopped, to mitigate its impact.

The strategy has been revised to take account of the current assessment of the terrorist threats which the country now faces. It says that Al-Qai'da continues to pose a significant threat and other terrorist groups, some affiliated to Al-Qai'da have become stronger. The threat from Northern Ireland related terrorism has also increased. The strategy looks ahead to the UK's biggest peace-time security operation around the 2012 Olympic Games in London.

The Home Office press release can be found at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/media-centre/press-releases/contest-strategy and the strategy review document at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/counter-terrorism/counter-terrorism-strategy.

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Review of Prevent Strategy

As explained above, one of the four components of the Government's CONTEST strategy is 'Prevent' – designed to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting violent extremism.

The launch on 9 November of the Government's review of the Prevent strategy was noted in the e-bulletin for December. The Government published its new Prevent strategy on 7 June. The document includes a detailed review and evaluation of past Prevent work and an assessment of the extent and causes of radicalisation in this country and overseas. This can be found at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/counter-terrorism/prevent/prevent-strategy. It is accompanied by a summary of the consultation responses which it received which can be found at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/counter-terrorism/prevent/prevent-strategy/prevent-summary-consultation?view=Binary.

The full strategy document is a lengthy one of nearly 120 pages, which cannot be readily summarised. There is, however, an Executive Summary before the main report, Paragraphs 10.114 to 10.133 (on pages 80 to 82) deal specifically with faith communities.

The new Prevent strategy makes it clear that “policy and programmes to deal with extremism and with extremist organisations more widely are not part of Prevent and will be coordinated from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)”. The Government has already decided that responsibilities for Prevent will lie with the Home Office (in the Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism) and responsibility for integration with DCLG.

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Specific duties required in relation to Public Sector Equality Duty laid before Parliament

On 5 April 2011 the Government brought into force the public sector Equality Duty, for public bodies in Great Britain. Following two consultations on earlier drafts, [see e-bulletins of March and April], on 27 June the Government laid before Parliament for approval *The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011*. These new regulations will require public authorities in Great Britain to publish:

- Equality objectives, at least every four years, by April 2012; and
- Information to demonstrate their compliance with the Equality Duty, at least annually.

With the exception of schools, public authorities will be required to publish relevant information demonstrating their compliance by 31 January 2012, and their first equality objectives by 6 April 2012. Schools will be required to publish both their information and their equality objectives by 6 April 2012.

The Government and the Equality and Human Rights Commission will be producing some non-statutory guidance on complying with the regulations. The Government has also committed to reviewing the regulations in two years' time.

Although the Equality Duty is Great Britain- wide, Scotland and Wales are able to set their own specific duties. The specific duties in Wales came in to force on 6 April 2011 and specific duties that will apply to Scottish public bodies are still being decided.

To read the Written Ministerial Statement, follow this link:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/about-us/parliamentary-business/written-ministerial-statement/equality-duties-regs-wms/?view=Standard&pubID=904605>

For more information about the Public Sector Equality Duty, follow this link:

http://www.equalities.gov.uk/equality_act_2010/public_sector_equality_duty.aspx

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Red Tape Challenge

The equality theme on the Government's Red Tape Challenge website, [see the May e-bulletin], closed on 30 June. Over 5,000 responses were made.

The Government has said that it will be reviewing all the comments it received and liaising with its key partners to discuss next steps. It has made it clear that any proposals for change to the existing legislation will receive careful consideration as to whether they are proportionate, practical, beneficial and in keeping with the Government's wider commitments and EU or domestic legal obligations. Any proposals that passed that test would then need to go through the normal consultation and Parliamentary process.

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EHRC proposes 'reasonable accommodation' for religion or belief is needed

Judges have interpreted the law too narrowly in religion or belief discrimination claims, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has said in its application to intervene in four cases at the European Court of Human Rights, all involving religious discrimination in the workplace. If given leave to intervene, it will say that the courts have set the bar too high for someone to prove that they have been discriminated against because of their religion or belief; and that it is possible to accommodate expression of religion alongside the rights of people who are not religious, and the needs of businesses.

The Commission is concerned that rulings already made by UK and European courts have created a body of confusing and contradictory case law. As a result, it is difficult for employers or service providers to know what they should be doing to protect people from religion or belief base discrimination. They may be overly cautious in some cases and so are unnecessarily restricting people's rights. It is also difficult for employees who have no choice but to abide by their employer's decision.

The Commission thinks there is a need for clearer legal principles to help the courts consider what is and what is not justifiable in religion or belief cases, which will help to resolve differences without resorting to legal action. The Commission will propose the idea of 'reasonable accommodations' that will help employers and others manage how they allow people to manifest their religion or belief.

The Commission's press release on this subject can be found at:
<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/news/2011/july/commission-proposes-reasonable-accommodation-for-religion-or-belief-is-needed/>

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EHRC research report on Religious Discrimination in Britain

A review of research evidence commissioned by the Equality and Human Rights Commission indicates that there are different perceptions about the legal protections for religion or belief and about the level of discrimination towards different religions or beliefs. Evidence in the report shows that people's understanding of their rights around religion or belief is not always matched by recent changes to equality law.

The report, prepared by Professor Paul Weller at the University of Derby, is entitled 'Equality and Human Rights Commission on "Religious Discrimination in Britain - A Review of Research Evidence, 2000-10: Research Report 73" and can be downloaded in PDF or Word format from www.equalityhumanrights.com/publications/our-research/research-reports/research-reports-71/#73.

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EHRC report on the impact of counter-terrorism measures on Muslim communities

In June the Equality and Human Rights Commission published an independent report entitled 'The impact of counter-terrorism measures on Muslim communities' (Research report 72). It examines the diverse experiences of Muslims on the street and in the community, at ports and airports, and in mosques, schools and universities, as a result of counter-terrorism measures. EHRC commissioned this research to provide a contribution to the evidence base on the impact of counter-terrorism measures in Britain, an area where few facts are known.

While the opinions in the report are those of the researchers and not necessarily the views of the EHRC, some of the findings have informed EHRC's response to the Government's counter-terrorism review and more recently the Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures Bill.

The report can be found online at <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/publications/our-research/research-reports/research-reports-71/>.

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Consultation on the future of the EHRC

Having already published on 20 May an initial response, the Equality and Human Rights Commission published on 15 June its more detailed response to proposals in the Government's consultation document on the Commission's future, 'Building a fairer Britain: Reform of the Equality and Human Rights Commission', launched on 22 March.

A copy of the full response can be found online at www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/aboutus/ehrc_geo_reponse.doc.

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EHRC three-year strategic plan

The EHRC has launched the first of three phases of the consultation to develop its next three-year strategic plan, which will be laid before Parliament in April 2012.

Phase one looks at its Strategic Plan 2009-12 and how far it has delivered what it promised. This will be followed by phase two, a 60 day consultation seeking views on its emerging priorities for 2012-15, in early autumn. The third and final phase, a 30 day consultation seeking views on its draft strategic plan, will commence in early 2012.

The EHRC would like to involve actively as many people as possible in this process and sees it as an open conversation with stakeholders until the Strategic Plan 2012-15 is finalised.

Phase one of the consultation runs for 30 days and will close on 22 July 2011. To access the supporting information and complete the consultation questionnaire, please visit www.equalityhumanrights.com/about-us/vision-and-mission/our-strategic-plan/consultation-on-our-strategic-plan-2009-12.

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New Chief Executive for EHRC

Mr Mark Hammond has been appointed as EHRC's Chief Executive. He has had a career in local and central government and was Chief Executive of West Sussex County Council from 2004 to 2010.

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Localism

The Government's Localism Bill has passed through all its stages in the House of Commons and received its First Reading in the House of Lords on 19 May. The Second Reading took place on 7 June.

On 9 June, the Parliamentary Select Committee on Communities and Local Government published its report on localism, including measures in the Localism Bill. The report says:

- The Government has not produced a compelling vision of what its imagined localist future will look like and the functions and responsibilities of the players within it. Greater clarity and certainty is needed.
- Localism should not be adopted purely as a way to achieve reductions in public sector costs, for it is unclear whether it will be able to deliver this in the short term.
- There is not universal support for the idea that central government should retreat entirely from local affairs, allowing accountability to local people to

replace performance monitoring from the centre. In particular, organisations representing vulnerable, marginalised or minority groups argue that these sections of the community need protection that cannot be provided by the current mechanisms of local democratic accountability.

Further details can be found at www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/communities-and-local-government-committee/news/localism-report-pn/.

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BBC Diversity strategy

The BBC has published its Diversity Strategy, which sets out 5 strategic equality and diversity objectives which it has developed in consultation with its audiences and with staff:

- Advance equal opportunities to diversify and develop the workforce and senior leaders so that they better reflect audiences
- Deliver high quality programming which reflects modern Britain accurately and authentically
- Connect with audiences, including underserved audiences, using different methods to inform the quality and direction of programmes
- Build in accessibility from the start when developing new products and services, and ensuring their accessibility over time
- Achieve systematic and consistent consideration of equality and diversity within BBC planning and review processes, and meet public duties

The Diversity Strategy and Diversity Action Plans can be found online at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/diversity/documents.shtml>.

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PROJECTS

JAINpedia

The JAINpedia project has been running events and exhibitions in the past year and developing an online resource for the past three years. It will be reaching a milestone this year when it launches its website. Look out for updates on the JAINpedia blog at www.jainpedia.org or on JAINpedia Facebook and Twitter pages.

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Blackburn-Cape Town inter faith school exchange

Blackburn College is playing host to a group of South African students as part of an inter faith exchange programme. The inter faith school exchange project is organised by the Cape Town Interfaith Initiative in partnership with the College. The South African students are getting the chance to take part in a whole host of activities,

including an inter faith session at Blackburn Cathedral with Anjum Anwar MBE, believed to be the first Muslim in the world to be appointed to the staff of a Cathedral. They are also due to meet the Mayor and visit the Lambeth Street mosque and a Jewish Rabbi's house and synagogue to explore the diversity of the region. In July 2012 students from Blackburn will visit Cape Town and participate in a week-long follow-up programme. The project is being funded by Blackburn College and donors from the Cape Town Community.

http://www.blackburn.ac.uk/blackburn_college_at_forefront_of_interfaith_relations.html

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Heritage Lottery Fund

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) distributes money from the National Lottery to heritage projects across the United Kingdom and is the UK's leading advocate for the value of heritage to modern life. HLF's funding supports all aspects of heritage from archives and nature conservation to oral history and cultural traditions; from community activities requesting £3,000 to multi-million pound capital projects. Their projects have conserved collections and historic buildings linked to individual faith groups and helped communities explore the heritage of faiths, languages, cultures and customs of people living within the UK. They do not fund the promotion of faith or religion. For more information on HLF's priorities and grant programmes or to find your local HLF office please contact their helpline on 020 7591 6042 or visit their website at www.hlf.org.uk.

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Inter Faith Youth Trust – grants for Inter Faith Week

The Inter Faith Youth Trust (Alma Royaltan-Kisch Trust) has now launched its Grant Programme for 2011. The Grant Programme is specifically to fund young people's inter faith events for Inter Faith Week in November 2011.

The deadline for applications is 16 September and the maximum grant is £500. Further information and an application form can be found online at www.ifyouthtrust.org.uk.

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RESOURCES AND TRAINING

Charity Commission guidance on risk for small charities

The Charity Commission has published guidance on risk designed specifically for small charities. It includes 10 useful questions that small charities should ask themselves to avoid problems covering areas such as making sure your charity is working in line with its governing document, ensuring that all trustees are properly appointed, how to assess risk and the importance of preparing accounts and trustee reports.

The guidance can be found online at www.charitycommission.gov.uk/Charity_requirements_guidance/Specialist_guidance/Small_charities/Avoiding_problems_in_running_your_charity.aspx.

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Woolf Institute e-learning courses

The Woolf Institute is running two new e-learning courses.

Bridging the Great Divide: the Jewish-Muslim Encounter is a 15-week course starting at the end of August taught in partnership with the School of International Service at the American University in Washington. More information can be found online at www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/cmjr/news-and-events/news-2.php.

Jews, Christians and Muslims in Europe: Modern Challenges is a three-part course starting in November focusing on the relationships between Jews, Christians and Muslims and their impact in modern Europe, looking at their history, culture and issues of citizenship. The course is taught at a final-year undergraduate level. Any queries should be directed to Dr Emma Harris at eth22@cam.ac.uk.

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Working with SACREs: an introduction for local inter faith organisations

The East of England Faiths Council has developed a document to encourage interaction between local inter faith groups and Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACREs).

While, the document has been developed with the East of England in mind, it may be of interest to other local inter faith organisations around the country. It sets out the background to SACREs and their role and includes suggestions on how local inter faith groups and SACREs can work together.

A copy of the document can be found on the East of England Faiths Council's website at www.faithneteast.org.uk/pdf/SACRE%20information%20for%20LIFOs.pdf.

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Faithbook

The Lesbian and Gay Foundation have produced a resource called *Faithbook*, funded by the Faiths in Action programme of the Department for Communities and Local Government. It explores approaches to sexuality of different religions and possible ways of handling conflicts of view on the issues and is described by LGF as a resource to help "reassure lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people that whatever your personal beliefs there will be others who can support you both within your faith and in your sexual orientation". The guide provides a range of contacts and bibliography and other sources, such as films. It can be downloaded at www.lgf.org.uk/faithbook.

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Exhibition Islam at London Central Mosque

'The Islam Gallery' has now been opened to the public at the Islamic Cultural Centre and Central London Mosque (Regents Park Mosque) as a permanent exhibition. The exhibition is described as the first of its kind to be installed at any Muslim centre within the United Kingdom. It is seen by the exhibitors as an important contributor to inter faith understanding and the key note speech at the launch was given by HE Dr Abdullah bin Abdulmuhsin Al-Turki, Secretary General of the Muslim World League, with speakers also from the Christian and Jewish traditions.

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Nottingham Inter Faith Council exhibition

Nottingham Inter Faith Council launched its new exhibition resource, the *Faiths in Nottingham Exhibition*, on 23 June. This new exhibition updates and replaces an older exhibition resource, produced around the turn of the Millennium. Along with accompanying leaflet and new website, the exhibition provides a resource for schools, community groups, places of worship, public spaces and businesses in the Nottingham area, and will be available for loan.

For further information, please visit the new accompanying website at: <http://www.interfaithnottm.org.uk>.

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Introduction to Judaism for Imams

The Joseph Interfaith Foundation, in association with the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board, has been holding a series of seminars on 'Introduction to Judaism for Imams'. The seminars were specifically written and delivered by senior rabbis of the Foundation's Council of Imams and Rabbis and were inclusive of Orthodox, Reform, Liberal and Masorti rabbis. The seminars were alternatively held at synagogues and mosques and included history, theology and life cycle.

The project is due to continue in the autumn. For further information contact info@josephinterfaithfoundation.org.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS AND TENDERS

Active Citizens of Europe Awards

Nominations are currently being accepted for the 5th Active Citizens of Europe Awards. Nominees can be individual volunteers, non-governmental organisations or corporate organisations. They must be outstanding pioneers and ambassadors for voluntary action and active citizenship and have great community service programmes.

To request a nomination form, please email PSadowski@csv.org.uk. The deadline for nominations is 19 August and the awards will be presented during the annual Volonteurope Conference in Edinburgh on 21 October.

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JOBS AND VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

Faiths Forum for London - Senior Project Officer

Faiths Forum for London (FFL) and the Fayre Share Foundation (FSF) are currently recruiting for a Senior Project Officer to implement a programme of inter faith and cross-sector social engagement in London.

The Senior Project Officer will be responsible for oversight of all projects, staff, consultants and budgets within both FFL and the FSF. The includes projects relating to:

- Developing Collaboration between identified sectors in London;

- A Faiths' Social Finance Bond for London;
- A Conference on Social Innovation;
- A Young Faith in Action Prize;
- A 'Watershed' Collaboration Conference in 2012; and
- Engaging with Borough Faith Forums.

The salary is ca £32,000 for a fixed one year contract which is renewable. To apply please send an application letter, (maximum 2 sides of A4) and CV, to info@faithsforum4london.org by 12 noon on 18 July.

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Tony Blair Faith Foundation –Faiths Act Co-ordinator

Faiths Act Co-ordinator

The Faiths Act Co-ordinator will support the TBB's international inter faith programme, Faiths Act, with supporters and volunteers in over 100 countries. They will have particular responsibility for co-ordinating the Faiths Act youth leadership programme in India, working closely with the TBFF staff team in the UK, US and Canada.

This is a 10-month fixed term contract and is a part-time position. The post is based in New Delhi and the application deadline is 22 July. To apply please send your CV and request an application form from Catalina Gutierrez at catalina.gutierrez@tonyblairfaithfoundation.org.

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Transformation Cornwall

'Transformation Cornwall', a charitable company set up by the Diocese of Truro, the Church Urban Fund and the Methodist Church in Cornwall, is looking to employ a new worker, 4 days per week, to work ecumenically with people of faith or people of no faith.

For a copy of the job specification and application form, please email Rosey Sanders at Rosey.sanders@truro.anglican.org or telephone Diocesan House on 01872 274351 x238. If you have any questions about the post, please email Debbie Croucher at Debbie.Croucher@truro.anglican.org.

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Bristol Inter Faith Group - Committee members

Bristol Inter Faith Group is looking for representatives from a number of faiths (including the Muslim, Jewish, Sikh and Hindu communities) to join its Committee. If

interested, please contact Bernard Omar, BIFG Chair, at Bernard.omar@bifg.org.uk or telephone 01454 775454.

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JAINpedia volunteers

JAINpedia volunteers are an important part of the JAINpedia project and are currently assisting in all areas. Volunteers can choose to guide exhibition visitors, go to venues where the travelling exhibition will be throughout the country to explain the display and run art, craft and other workshops related to the Jain faith or contribute to the website, particularly Jain Spirit. Volunteers can also take on practical tasks, such as organising events and publicity and transporting equipment.

At the moment they are particularly looking for volunteers to assist with various tasks related to the website, for example searching for images, external links and scanning books and magazines for an e-library.

To register as a volunteer, please fill in the volunteer form on the JAINpedia blog at <http://blog.jainpedia.org/volunteer-registration-form>.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

European Days of Jewish Culture and Heritage 4-11 September

This year's EDJCH runs from 4 to 11 September. The theme will be 'Facing the Future', which looks at the new era of communication that has opened up possibilities for presenting and highlighting Jewish culture and heritage. The National Heritage Open Days will also coincide with EDJCH, running from Thursday 8 September to Sunday 11 September. For an official registration form, contact bbukjewishheritage@gmail.com.

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Sewa Day 25 September

Sewa Day will this year take place on Sunday 25 September. The Sanskrit word 'Sewa' means 'selfless service'. The aim of Sewa Day is to provide people a chance to give back to the local community through volunteering on a single day to make a difference. Each event organised is based on at least one of the following guiding principles: to relieve hardship and poverty; to bring a little joy where none exists; to help the environment. For more information, or to get involved, please visit www.nationalsewaday.org. The report on the 2010 Sewa Day can be downloaded at www.nationalsewaday.org/images/nsd_annual_report_A4_lr.pdf.

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One World Week 23–30 October

One World Week is a Development Education Charity. Each year, the Week is an opportunity for people from diverse backgrounds to come together to learn about global justice, to spread that learning and to use it to take action for justice locally and globally. One World Week 2011 takes place from 23 to 30 October and takes the theme of 'Living for One World'. The Week will explore many aspects of the environment and what can be done to preserve and protect it under the headings of Living for the planet, Living for its people and Living and acting for change. For further information, including advice and guidance on events, please visit <http://www.oneworldweek.org/v2>.

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Mitzvah Day 20 November

Mitzvah Day takes place this year on Sunday 20 November. It is a Jewish led day of social action – around the world thousands of people take part in hands on projects to support existing charities and to build stronger communities. The goal is to reduce hardship and poverty and to help the environment. People are encouraged to volunteer for projects in their communities and anyone can take part regardless of their background. Last year a number of projects had a multi faith dimension. See www.mitzvahday.org.uk for further information and to register an event.

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Inter Faith Week 20–26 November

Inter Faith Week www.interfaithweek.org.uk will take place this year in England, Wales and Northern Ireland from Sunday 20 November until Saturday 26 November.

The aims of Inter Faith Week are:

- Strengthening good inter faith relations at all levels
- Increasing awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, in particular celebrating and building on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society
- Increasing understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs

If you would like to discuss your plans for the Week or to suggest additional resources which might be helpful to add to the Inter Faith Week website, Ashley Beck, Project Officer at IFN, will be glad to hear from you: 020 7931 7766, ashley.beck@interfaith.org.uk.

The illustrated report on Inter Faith Week 2010 in England is available to download from www.interfaithweek.org.uk. Hard copies can be ordered from the Inter Faith Network office.

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Scottish Inter Faith Week 27 November – 4 December

Scottish Inter Faith Week will take place from Sunday 27 November to Saturday 4 December. For further information please contact Frances Hume at the Scottish Inter Faith Council at fhume@scottishinterfaithcouncil.org.

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Holocaust Memorial Day 27 January 2012

The theme for next year's Holocaust Memorial day is: Speak up, Speak out. The theme will challenge everyone to "Speak Up, Speak Out" so that the lessons of the past are learned and there can be a safer, better future. More information, including a downloadable campaign pack, can be found at www.hmd.org.uk.

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DIARY DATES

The **Humanist Philosophers' Group** is organising a day conference on 'The Place of Religion in Public Life' which takes place from 10am to 4pm on Saturday 16 July at Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL. Professor Richard Norman, who is the Chair of the Humanist Philosophers' Group and who was one of the speakers at the joint IFN/BHA event held as part of Inter Faith Week 2009, is keen for this event to be an open discussion with contributions from different religious and non-religious perspectives, in a genuine dialogue. They have tried to reflect to some degree their aim for diversity in their list of speakers and they hope there will be a diverse audience at the event. There is an entrance fee of £5 and further details can be found at <http://www.humanism.org.uk/meet-up/events/view/147?page=1>, where intending participants can also register in advance.

Kirklees Faiths Forum will be holding its three day '*Treasures Revealed*' festival from Friday 15 July to Sunday 17 July. The festival gives people the opportunity to experience what goes on in many local places of worship. A number of churches, (one of which is hosting an exhibition from the Baha'i community), a Sikh temple and a Hindu temple will open their doors and there will be guided tours, music, food and much more. For full details, please visit www.kirkleesfaithsforum.org.uk or www.treasuresrevealed.co.uk or call Kirklees Faiths Forum on 01924 326419.

Woking People of Faith are running a cricket tournament on Sunday 17 July. Woking residents are encouraged to participate, and all are welcome to watch. The day will be held at West Byfleet Recreation Ground, Camphill Road, West Byfleet, KT14 6EF. For further information, please email Muhammad Ali at

u970056@yahoo.com or telephone 07877 337 287; alternatively email Simon Tuson at simontuson@gmail.com or telephone 07859 902 277.

Bath Interfaith Group will be holding an Annual Social Event on Sunday 17 July to offer members an opportunity to get to know one another informally. This event runs from 3pm – 5pm and will be held at New Oriel Hall, Larkhall, Bath BA1 6RA. Please bring a plate to share. For further information please telephone 01225 422252 or contact janeohara@blueyonder.co.uk.

Bristol Inter Faith Group will be holding a Dialogue Circle meeting on Monday 18 July from 7.30pm to 9.30pm to discuss “In what ways do people of faith respond to the ‘war on terror’?”. The meeting will be held at the University of Bristol Multifaith Chaplaincy, The Grange, 1 Woodland Road, Clifton, Bristol BS8 1AU. For further details please contact bernard.omar@bifg.org.uk or anula.beckett@bifg.org.uk.

Somerset Faiths and Beliefs Forum will be holding a conference to explore the issue of faith-based social action on Wednesday 20 July. The conference is free to attend (but booking is essential), and will be held at Bridgwater St John Ambulance HQ, Woodlands Court Business Park, Bristol Road, Bridgwater, Somerset TA6 4FJ. For further information please contact faithandbelief@hotmail.co.uk or telephone 01458 448517.

The **Faith Communities’ Response** in the Bristol and Somerset area, together with the **Avon and Somerset Constabulary** will be holding an introductory day for those interested in learning about the area’s provision for a multi-faith response to a major emergency. It will be held on Thursday 21 July at the Avon and Somerset Constabulary Headquarters in Portishead. For further information please contact Vena Prater at mep@ccisr.org.uk or telephone 01179 557430.

The **World Congress of Faiths** is this year celebrating its 75th anniversary. To commemorate the occasion an informal evening service, in which members of different faiths will take part, is being held at 6.30pm on Sunday 24 July at St Martin-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square, London WC2N 4JJ. It was at St Martin’s in 1942 that the memorial service for Sir Francis Younghusband was held, the explorer and mystic and founder of the World Congress of Faiths. During the service, WCF’s Chair, Rabbi Jackie Tabick, will be awarded the Interfaith Gold Medallion. All are welcome to attend and there is no need to register.

The **Swindon Interfaith Group Cricket Team** will be playing Rodbourne Green XI at Moredon playing fields in August. If you would like to play or offer support, please contact Barbara Aftelak at barbaraaftelak@ntlworld.com or telephone 01793 536815.

The **Scottish Inter Faith Council** 'Youth Away Day' is taking place on Sunday 14 August at Samye Ling Tibetan Buddhist Centre in Dumfriesshire, where people will join in the celebrations of the Centre’s Annual Tea Party and Open Day. Come and visit the centre, enjoy a buffet lunch and music and dance from East and West. Transport by car will be provided from Glasgow, leaving from outside Glasgow Queen Street Station at 12pm and those participating will be returned to Glasgow for

6.30pm. If you would like to attend our Away Day, please contact Frances Hume at fhume@scottishinterfaithcouncil.org to secure your place in the car or call the office on 0141 420 6982

The **Christian Muslim Forum** is holding an event entitled 'Cross, Crescent and Cool' on Wednesday 7 September to look at how Christians and Muslims can build bridges between young people of the two faiths. The day will run from 10am until 4pm at the Springfield Centre, Springfield Road, Moseley, Birmingham B13 9NY and will be led by Raheema Caratella and Dr Andrew Smith. There is a £20 cost to attend (£10 concessions) which includes handouts, refreshments and a light lunch. For more details please contact Julian Bond on 020 7820 0444 and to book a place log on to <http://tiny.cc/cccboking>.

Bristol Inter Faith Group will be holding its AGM on Wednesday 21 September. It will be held at Redland Friends Meeting House, 126 Hampton Road, Bristol BS6 6JE and will begin at 7.15pm. It will be followed by a talk on '*Faith in Bristol: its contribution to the city's future*', by Alistair Beattie, Chief Executive of Faithnetsouthwest. For more information please contact Bernard Omar at Bernard.omar@bifg.org.uk or on 01454 775454, or Anula Beckett at anula.beckett@bifg.org.uk or on 01179 645655.

Uniting for Peace is holding a public meeting from 6.30pm to 8.30pm on Wednesday 21 September to mark the 'UN International Day of Peace'. The keynote speaker is Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP, Former Secretary of State for International Development, who will speak on 'After the Conflicts – How can Development Build Peace?'. The event will take place at Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ. Further information can be found at www.unitingforpeace.com.

In October the **Cambridge Coexist Programme** joins forces with the Times Cheltenham Literature Festival and leading writers and thinkers from Britain and overseas to create a new series of polemical events focussed on religion. What are the challenges of translating Holy Texts? Does Britain's mainstream media throw the Christians to the lions? How do women writers of differing cultures reflect faith in their fiction? The Times Cheltenham Literature Festival is from 7 to 16 October and further information can be found at www.cheltenhamfestivals.com.

From 15 to 17 November at the **Abbey House Retreat** in Glastonbury there will be an informal gathering, 'Opening to the heart: Creating a new vision for interfaith encounter'. The event is open to any lay person or clergy member involved in grassroots inter faith work and is designed to share and explore new ways of working in the inter faith field. For costs and more details please contact Nigel Anthony on 07940 001394 or the Revd Alan Bayes on 01792 892603 or Interfaith Minister Annie Blampied at annie@annieblampied.co.uk.

JAINpedia currently has an exhibition of manuscripts at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London until December 2012. To book a group tour please contact on info@jainpedia.org.

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For detailed information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Scottish Inter Faith Council: www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org

Inter-Faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org

For detailed information on events and projects in a number of the English regions see:

East of England: www.eefaithscouncil.org.uk

London: www.faithsforum4london.com

North East: www.nerfn.org

North West: www.faithnorthwest.org.uk

South East: www.se-faithforum.net

South West: www.faithnetsouthwest.org.uk

West Midlands: www.wmfaithsforum.org.uk

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 15 August with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer:

Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.



IFN e-bulletin

August 2011

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 7 September 2011 with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Material may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and future projects and events and so items are likely to be about:

- **forthcoming inter faith events likely to be of interest to people across the UK**
- **inter faith and multi faith projects where you are seeking input**
- **resources which you have recently developed which you think may be helpful to those working in the inter faith field**
- **brief information about any jobs you are advertising within inter faith organisations or for inter faith posts (eg local inter faith development worker; national faith community inter faith officer)**

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UK/NATIONAL UPDATES

Faith and inter faith responses to the recent riots

The second week of August saw rioting in a number of England's cities. The causes of the riots are the subject of much debate; their impact is not. They have affected profoundly the lives of many communities – and in particular families in Birmingham and London who have lost family members to violence. Others have lost their homes and businesses.

The response of members of England's faith communities to the recent riots was on a remarkable scale. Faith communities across the country opened the doors of their places of worship, offering food, drink and facilities to recharge mobile phones to those who had lost their homes; providing cups of tea to the Police, other emergency workers and clean up teams; and encouraging prayers for peace.

Faith community leaders in many local areas issued statements appealing for calm, condemning acts of violence and vandalism, and encouraging members of their communities to get involved in community clean-up operations. They also drew on their knowledge of local communities to initiate discussion about the causes of the riots and ways forward. National faith communities and their leaders offered their reflections too.

The Circular about the riots sent to members on 11 August, together with an accompanying document linking to coverage of many of the responses can be found at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/riotsinuk.htm> An updated note will be posted in the near future.

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Statement by IFN Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs on Norway attacks

Following the tragic loss of life in the attacks in Norway at the end of July, the Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs of IFN issued a statement which can be found on the IFN website at www.interfaith.org.uk/publications/IFN_News_Release_250711.pdf

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Urgent EHRC consultation on legal cases involving discrimination and religion or belief

Last month the Equality and Human Rights Commission announced that it had applied to intervene at the European Court of Human Rights in four legal cases involving discrimination and religion or belief. It has now announced that it has been granted permission to do so.

The EHRC is considering using the four cases already before this Court as a platform to advise on and clarify the interpretation of human rights laws. It is seeking views on its proposed submission on the human rights elements of the four cases claiming religious discrimination, and separately, whether the concept of reasonable accommodation has any useful practical application in cases concerning the manifestation of religion or belief.

It has produced an informal consultation document which sets out the general direction of the Commission's intervention and asks some specific questions. The closing date for response is Monday 5 September. This is a short deadline but, as expected, the Court has only given it a few weeks in which to prepare its submissions.

For more information, please download the consultation document from the EHRC website at www.equalityhumanrights.com/legal-and-policy/human-rights-legal-powers/legal-intervention-on-religion-or-belief-rights-seeking-your-views.

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Select Committee comments on EBacc proposals

The House of Commons Select Committee on Education has said that the English Baccalaureate should not have been introduced before the current National Curriculum Review was completed. In its report published on 28 July (see <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/education-committee/news/ebac-report-substantive/>, which also provides a link to the full report), the Committee suggests that any new performance or curriculum measures affecting schools should only be implemented after proper consultation with key stakeholders and the wider public, which it says did not happen with the plans for the English Baccalaureate (EBacc).

The report notes that “certain academic subjects studied at A-level are more valued by Russell Group universities than others” but argues that a “focus on a fairly narrow range of subjects, demanding considerable curriculum time, is likely to have negative consequences on the uptake of other subjects.”

The Committee does not make recommendations on which subjects should or should not be included in the EBacc, including Religious Education, but rather encourages the Government to reconsider the EBacc's composition when the National Curriculum Review is concluded.

The Government's present position on the inclusion of RE in the EBacc, as set out on its website, is that: "We have not included religious studies because it is already a compulsory subject. One of the intentions of the English Baccalaureate is to encourage wider take up of geography and history in addition to, rather than instead of, compulsory religious education. However, we recognise, as many schools do, the benefits that religious education can bring to pupils. This is why the teaching of religious education remains compulsory throughout a pupil's schooling. Success in all subjects studied at GCSE will also continue to be recognised by other performance table measures, as it has in the past."

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/qualifications/englishbac/a0075980/ebaccontentsfaqs>

This position was restated by the Schools Minister, Nick Gibb, in a response on 16 August to a letter to the Prime Minister sent last month by a number of senior faith leaders (their letter can be seen at <http://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org/content/view/202/45/>).

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UK Bill of Rights

In March this year the UK Government established a Commission on a Bill of Rights to investigate the creation of a UK Bill of Rights. On 5 August the Commission launched a discussion paper entitled 'Do we need a UK Bill of Rights?' The paper is available on the Commission's website at www.justice.gov.uk/about/cbr/index.htm.

The discussion paper is the first part of a wide-ranging work programme that will include public engagement and consultation. While the discussion paper is endorsed by all members of the Commission, one member, Dr Michael Pinto-Duschinsky, is intending to publish a note setting out his comment on the paper. A link to Dr Pinto-Duschinsky's note, once it is available, will be provided on the Commission's website. The deadline for responding to the discussion paper is 11 November.

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PROJECTS

Inter Faith Week

Inter Faith Week is now tweeting and has its own Facebook page. If you would like to follow Inter Faith Week on Twitter, the handle is [@IFWeek](#). Please use the hashtag #IFWeek whenever you tweet anything related to the Week. The Facebook page is simply called Inter Faith Week, and can be found www.facebook.com/pages/Inter-Faith-Week/194238653936191. These pages are still in their infancy, and more work

will be done on them – including more regular updates – nearer to the Week. Please encourage anyone you know who might be interested in inter faith activity to follow.

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Diamond Jubilee Beacons

It is planned to light 2,012 Beacons throughout the United Kingdom, Channel Islands, Isle of Man, the Commonwealth and UK Overseas Territories on Monday 4 June. Her Majesty The Queen will be lighting the National Beacon and a special book containing all the Diamond Jubilee Beacon locations will be given to The Queen after the event (in a similar way to the book produced for The Queen's Golden Jubilee Beacons in 2001, which now resides in The Royal Library at Windsor Castle).

The organisers of Diamond Jubilee Beacons hope that all faith communities in the UK will wish to take part in the project. I am attaching a copy of the '*Guide to taking part*' which contains information about the different types of beacons and how to become involved. Further information can be found online at www.diamondjubileebeacons.com.

The Big Jubilee Lunch

Next year's Big Lunch takes place on Sunday 3 June and will form part of the official Diamond Jubilee celebrations. The Inter Faith Network has been invited to become a Key Supporting Organisation and, following discussion at the last meeting of its Executive Committee, has agreed to do so.

The Big Lunch is an Eden Project initiative that aims to get as many people as possible across the UK to have a community lunch once a year. The project was launched in 2009 and since its inception thousands of lunches have taken place across a wide range of communities. Nearly 2 million people took part in The Big Lunch this year and faith communities played a significant role – ranging from a local inter faith organisation meeting in a garden to events in places of worship and large scale street parties with decorations and entertainment. The event is an ideal opportunity for people of different faiths to come together in their local communities, meet each other and have conversations over food.

For help and information with planning a faith based or inter faith Big Jubilee Lunch, you can email info@thebiglunch.com and request a free Big Jubilee Lunch Starter Pack. Packs will be despatched from December 2011 and contain a step-by-step guide for running an event, publicity materials, recipe ideas and all the things you need to get the event off the ground. You can find out more about The Big Jubilee Lunch and sign up to the newsletter at www.thebiglunch.com or call 0845 850 8181 to speak to one of The Big Lunch team.

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Research project on Liberal Theology and the Jews

Dr Lars Fischer, Academic Director of the Centre for the Study of Jewish-Christian Relations, has just received a British Academy grant to begin to pursue a research project entitled 'Liberal Theology and the Jews'. This will explore to what extent, if any, liberal theology (or liberal theologies) from the 17th century onwards are predisposed towards anti-Judaism. Grounded in a strong interest in historiographical issues and intellectual history, Lars' work focuses predominantly on the history of anti-Semitism and Jewish/non-Jewish relations in the later modern period.

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Art and Sacred Places

Art and Sacred Places is a national arts consultancy and commissioning agency which specialises in promoting interaction between faith and the contemporary visual arts. The organisation has recently launched an updated website at www.artandsacredplaces.org and a new blog at <http://artandsacredplaces.wordpress.com>. Some of their latest news relates to artwork being proposed for Manchester Cathedral and Didsbury Mosque and Islamic Centre.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Home Office funding

As part of the Government's ambition to drive up community activism and build safer neighbourhoods, organisations from the voluntary sector across England and Wales are being invited to apply for a share of a new £5 million fund to support local areas in tackling the issues that matter most to them. The 'Community Action Against Crime: Innovation Fund', administered by the Home Office, aims to bring together active citizens and encourage new and creative ways of working within communities to tackle crime, with a further £5 million set aside for 2012-13. Full details of the application process for 2011-12 will be made available on the Home Office website shortly – enquiries can be addressed to CAACFunding@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk.

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Inter Faith Youth Trust – grants for Inter Faith Week

The Inter Faith Youth Trust (Alma Royalton-Kisch Trust) has now launched its Grant Programme for 2011. The Grant Programme is specifically to fund young people's inter faith events for Inter Faith Week in November 2011.

The deadline for applications is 16 September and the maximum grant is £500. Further information and an application form can be found online at www.ifyouthtrust.org.uk.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS AND TENDERS

Papers for International conference on Multi-Faith Spaces

21st – 22nd March 2012, University of Manchester, UK

A conference is being held from 21 to 22 March at the University of Manchester to bring together key outputs from the three year research project *Multi-Faith Spaces: Symptoms & Agents of Religious and Social Change*, funded by the AHRC/ESRC under the Religion and Society Programme. The project considers how individuals from different religious and cultural backgrounds might be brought together, concretely, within new types of 'faith space' that are often simultaneously religious, spiritual and secular. The conference will coincide with the launch of a touring photographic exhibition. Further details can be found at: www.manchester.ac.uk/mfs

In addition to presenting their findings, they hope to encourage contributions from stakeholders within the extended project, alongside a number of individuals working in the area of multi-faith provision (from academic, professional or practitioner backgrounds). To facilitate conversations across disciplinary boundaries, they envisage a range of attendees and contributors from academia, architectural practice, chaplaincy, interior design, public policy, and a host of other fields.

They are currently preparing their programme, and would welcome expressions of interest within the following areas (note: this list is not exhaustive, and other contributions are encouraged):

- Multi-faith theologies and spatial practice
- Theorising multi-faith space
- The architecture of multi-faith space
- Design and 'best practice' issues in multi-faith space
- Public policy around multi-faith space
- Multi-faith space as sacred space
- The management of multi-faith space

If you are interested, please contact chris.hewson@manchester.ac.uk. Please indicate whether you would be interested in:

- Contributing a long paper (20 min. presentation)
- Contributing a short paper (10 min. presentation)

- Taking part in a panel
- Contributing to a workshop
- Attendance only

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RESOURCES AND TRAINING

Bridges and Barriers to Hindu Christian Relations

The Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies (OCHS) has published a report commissioned by the Hindu Christian Forum entitled 'Bridges and Barriers to Hindu Christian Relations'.

The report was commissioned by the Hindu-Christian Forum (HCF) as a "listening exercise" attending to the voices of Hindus and Christians throughout the community, to lay the foundations for a new and revived HCF. The HCF received a grant from the Department for Communities and Local Government with which to undertake the research, and researchers at De Montfort University helped to shape the first proposal for the research. The project was then passed to the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies which, in consultation with the Oxford Centre for Christianity and Culture, completed the proposal and carried out the research. The report encapsulates the result of that process of listening to the experiences, concerns and suggestions of 24 Christians and 29 Hindus from three cities across the UK.

A copy of the report can be downloaded from www.presenceandengagement.org.uk/pdf_lib/73_resource.pdf.

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Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct

Following a five-year series of consultations carried out by the World Council of Churches, the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue and the World Evangelical Alliance have published a document entitled '*Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World: Recommendations for Conduct*'. The joint document on Christian witness calls for careful study of the issues of mission and inter-religious dialogue, the building of trust and co-operation among people of all religions, and the promotion of religious freedom everywhere.

The full document can be found at http://www.oikoumene.org/fileadmin/files/wcc-main/2011pdfs/ChristianWitness_recommendations.pdf.

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Centre for the Study of Muslim-Jewish relations

From autumn 2012, it will be possible to study for a Cambridge University Masters of Philosophy in Middle Eastern Studies with a specialisation in Muslim-Jewish relations. Academic staff at the Centre for the Study of Muslim-Jewish Relations are collaborating with colleagues from the Department of Middle Eastern Studies to deliver courses on Muslim-Jewish relations, and further details, including information about bursaries, should be available in September.

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End of life issues in Judaism and Islam

Under the auspices of the Centre for Public Education and in partnership with the National Health Service, Dr Claire Henderson Davis and the Revd Andrew Brown led a very successful pilot course in June at the Royal Free Hospital in London which looked at end of life issues in Judaism and Islam. It is hoped that the course, accredited by the NHS, will be delivered to hospital staff around the UK.

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Religious Diversity and Anti-discrimination training

The Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby is offering a training course to become a trainer as part of a UK and European Network of trainers in Religious Diversity and Anti-discrimination.

The training will take place at the Multi-Faith Centre in Kedleston Road, Derby, on Saturday 22 and Sunday 23 October, Sunday 13 November, Sunday 11 December and Saturday 14 and Sunday 15 January. (Overnight accommodation can be arranged if required.) The basic cost for the 6 training days including lunch and refreshments, manual and certificate is £600. (Accommodation and travel are not included.)

For further information, please contact Eileen Fry, Training Coordinator at e.fry@derby.ac.uk.

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Classes in Biblical Hebrew

Two courses on learning Biblical Hebrew for beginners are being run in London next year. One course is daytime (Thursdays from 10am to 12noon) and one is evening (Sundays from 7pm to 9pm) and both are taught by Rabbi Rachel Montagu. The courses will teach the subtleties and beauty of biblical language which are not

evident from translations. Over the year students will gain a good knowledge of Biblical Hebrew grammar and learn how to read simple Biblical texts.

For information on the daytime course please contact the Benedictine Study and Arts Centre at enquiries@bsac.ac.uk or on 020 8862 2156. For information on the evening course please contact Rabbi Montagu at Rachel@gn.apc.org or on 0208 452 3725.

An intermediate class is also available for students who have completed an introductory course and wish to deepen their knowledge. For further information contact Rachel@gn.apc.org.

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JOBS AND VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

Board of Deputies of British Jews

The Board of Deputies of British Jews is recruiting for two positions:

Inter Faith Relations and Social Action Officer - fostering engagement and good relations with other religious and ethnic communities on behalf of British Jewry and promoting the community's contribution to a more just and sustainable world.

Education Policy and Projects Manager – acting as the principal interface between the Jewish schools sector and government, keeping a watching brief on education policy, responding to Government consultations and providing analysis of policy for the schools sector. Responsible for educational projects which build a greater understanding of Judaism in wider British society, including the flagship “Jewish Way of Life Exhibition”.

Please apply to martin.frey@bod.org.uk with a CV and covering letter to receive a Job Specification. The closing date is Wednesday 31 August.

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Religions for Peace (UK) Volunteer Executive Director

Religions for Peace (UK) is currently accepting applications for the position of volunteer Executive Director. Founded in 2011, the charity is an affiliate of Religions for Peace, a world-wide multi-religious coalition that advances common action among the world's religious communities for peace.

The Executive Director will report to the Executive Committee, manage a small number of volunteers and be responsible for the overall strategic direction, leadership

and administration. The successful candidate will have a Master's degree in peace studies, religious studies, business administration or equivalent degree; and five years of successful experience and advancement in reconciliation and peace work, or community engagement.

The voluntary commitment is for a flexible 2 days per week, working from home. Whilst the post is volunteer based, a competitive salary and reasonable expenses will be paid when additionally engaged directly on funded project work.

To apply, please send a cover letter, resume and three references to Mr David Horner, Hon Secretary, *Religions for Peace* United Kingdom, 18 Little Acres, Ware, Hertfordshire SG12 9JW or by email to dvd.horner@googlemail.com.

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Muslim Youth Helpline volunteers

The Muslim Youth Helpline is looking for new Volunteer Helpline Workers aged 18 to 28 who are willing to learn new skills and can demonstrate tolerance, empathy and reliability in supporting young people in need. Anyone interested in becoming a Helpline volunteer will need to attend an open evening on 6 September (from 6.00pm to 8.00pm) and a selection evening on 8 September (from 6.00pm to 9.00pm).

For more information please email naida.haq@myh.org.uk or call 0207 435 8171.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

European Days of Jewish Culture and Heritage (EDJCH) 4-11 September

This year's EDJCH runs from 4 to 11 September. The theme will be 'Facing the Future', which looks at the new era of communication that has opened up possibilities for presenting and highlighting Jewish culture and heritage. The National Heritage Open Days will also coincide with EDJCH, running from Thursday 8 September to Sunday 11 September. For an official registration form, contact bbukjewishheritage@gmail.com.

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International Peace Day 21 September

International Peace Day was established by a United Nations resolution in 1981 to coincide with the opening of the General Assembly. The first Peace Day was celebrated in September 1982 and has been held on 21 September each year since then. Further information can be found online at www.internationaldayofpeace.org.

Anyone, anywhere can celebrate Peace Day. It can be as simple as lighting a candle at noon, or just sitting in silent meditation. Or, it can involve getting your co-workers, community or organisation involved in a large event.

Uniting for Peace, an independent international NGO, is encouraging faith and inter faith organisations to arrange events demonstrating the positive role that religions can play in improving relations between different ethnicities and cultures, defusing conflict and building peace. They also have Inter Faith Resource packs available, cost £5 (cheques payable to UfP Peace Services). For further enquiries or to give them information about any events you have planned please telephone 0131 446 9545 or write to Uniting for Peace, PO Box 28209, Edinburgh EH9 1ZR.

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Sewa Day 25 September

Sewa Day will this year take place on Sunday 25 September. The Sanskrit word 'Sewa' means 'selfless service'. The aim of Sewa Day is to provide people a chance to give back to the local community through volunteering on a single day to make a difference. Each event organised is based on at least one of the following guiding principles: to relieve hardship and poverty; to bring a little joy where none exists; to help the environment. For more information, or to get involved, please visit www.nationalsewaday.org. The report on the 2010 Sewa Day can be downloaded at www.nationalsewaday.org/images/nsd_annual_report_A4_lr.pdf.

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One World Week 23–30 October

One World Week is a Development Education Charity. Each year, the Week is an opportunity for people from diverse backgrounds to come together to learn about global justice, to spread that learning and to use it to take action for justice locally and globally. One World Week 2011 takes place from 23 to 30 October and takes the theme of 'Living for One World'. The Week will explore many aspects of the environment and what can be done to preserve and protect it under the headings of Living for the planet, Living for its people and Living and acting for change. For further information, including advice and guidance on events, please visit <http://www.oneworldweek.org/v2>.

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Mitzvah Day 20 November

Mitzvah Day takes place this year on Sunday 20 November. It is a Jewish led day of social action – around the world thousands of people take part in hands on projects to support existing charities and to build stronger communities. The goal is to reduce hardship and poverty and to help the environment. People are encouraged to volunteer for projects in their communities and anyone can take part regardless of

their background. Last year a number of projects had a multi faith dimension. See www.mitzvahday.org.uk for further information and to register an event.

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Inter Faith Week 20–26 November

Inter Faith Week (see www.interfaithweek.org.uk) will take place this year in England, Wales and Northern Ireland from Sunday 20 November until Saturday 26 November.

The aims of Inter Faith Week are:

- Strengthening good inter faith relations at all levels
- Increasing awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, in particular celebrating and building on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society
- Increasing understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs

If you would like to discuss your plans for the Week or to suggest additional resources which might be helpful to add to the Inter Faith Week website, Ashley Beck, Project Officer at IFN, will be glad to hear from you: 020 7931 7766, ashley.beck@interfaith.org.uk.

If you would like to send IFN details of your event, please visit the Inter Faith Week website and complete an Event Listing form.

The illustrated report on Inter Faith Week 2010 in England is available to download from www.interfaithweek.org.uk. Hard copies can be ordered from the Inter Faith Network office.

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Scottish Inter Faith Week 27 November – 4 December

Scottish Inter Faith Week will take place from Sunday 27 November to Saturday 4 December. For further information please contact Frances Hume at the Scottish Inter Faith Council at fhume@scottishinterfaithcouncil.org.

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Holocaust Memorial Day 27 January 2012

The theme for next year's Holocaust Memorial day is: Speak up, Speak out. The theme will challenge everyone to "Speak Up, Speak Out" so that the lessons of the past are learned and there can be a safer, better future. More information, including a downloadable campaign pack, can be found at www.hmd.org.uk.

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DIARY DATES

The **St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace** will be continuing their weekly Heart Meditation sessions every Thursday lunchtime, from 12.45pm to 1.30pm, throughout the summer period. The sessions take place at 78 Bishopsgate, London EC2N 4QG and all are welcome.

<http://stethelburgas.org/civicrm/event/info?id=137&reset=1>

Meditatio (the outreach arm of The World Community for Christian Meditation) are organising a dialogue event on Thursday 1 September, from 7.00pm to 9.30pm at St Mark's, Myddleton Square, London EC1R 1XX where Fr Laurence Freeman OSB and Lama Geshi Tashi will be discussing 'Emptiness and poverty of spirit: what Christians and Buddhists can learn from each other'. A donation of £10 is suggested and places can be booked by emailing uk@wccm.org or telephoning 0207 833 9615.

The **Ammerdown Centre** will be holding a retreat from 6pm on Monday 5 September to Friday 9 September on the theme of 'Choosing Life: The Living Scripture'. The retreat will be held at the Centre in Ammerdown Park, Radstock, BA3 5SW and will be led by Sr Maureena Fritz NDS, Professor and Academic Director of the Bat Kol Institute in Jerusalem, an association of Christians who are committed to the study of Torah as transmitted by Jewish traditions. The Bible will be the main source of inspiration, but use will also be made of modern day films and songs. The cost of the retreat is £360 (residential) or £240 (non-residential) and further information can be obtained by visiting www.ammerdown.org, emailing centre@ammerdown.org or telephoning 01761 433709.

The **Christian Muslim Forum** is holding an event entitled 'Cross, Crescent and Cool' on Wednesday 7 September to look at how Christians and Muslims can build bridges between young people of the two faiths. The day will run from 10am until 4pm at the Springfield Centre, Springfield Road, Moseley, Birmingham B13 9NY and will be led by Raheema Caratella and Dr Andrew Smith. There is a £20 cost to attend (£10 concessions) which includes handouts, refreshments and a light lunch. For more details please contact Julian Bond on 020 7820 0444 and to book a place log on to <http://tiny.cc/cccboking>.

The **University of Bradford** will be holding a conference from Wednesday 7 to Thursday 8 September entitled: 'Beyond Belief: Religion and Belief in Professional Practice'. The conference will consider how religion has interacted with changing government policy and legislation, the market, and society more broadly, in areas including education, healthcare and welfare provision. Subjects covered by workshops and presentations include the challenges different religious beliefs and practices may pose for professionals working with various service user groups; safeguarding issues; training materials; the potential strengths associated with religious beliefs which may help people cope with life crises; the contribution of chaplaincy to service delivery and development and different perspectives on mental illness. Fees are as follows: Wednesday 7 (afternoon only), £50; Thursday 8 (full day) £100, full conference (both days) £125. Joseph Rowntree Foundation Bradford

are funding 18 bursaries, aimed at students, service users and volunteers not in full time paid employment and employees of small voluntary organisations. The closing date for applications for bursaries is 31 August 2011. For further information on the conference or on applying for a bursary, please visit the conference web site at www.brad.ac.uk/study/cpd/belief/, email events@bradford.ac.uk, or telephone 01274 233217.

The **St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace** are organising a 'Living Library' event on Saturday 10 September from 12.00pm to 5.00pm at Bowstock, the St Barnabas Community Fete in Mile End Park, London, where you can 'borrow' from a fascinating catalogue of human 'books' and hear their stories. For more information on the various 'Bowstock' events, visit www.stbarnabascommunityfete.org.

Bolton Interfaith Council is lead host organisation for the fourth annual 'Spirit of Bolton' event on Saturday 10 September in Victoria Square in Bolton. The event will be full of activities, entertainment and community group displays and will be on from 10.30am to 3.30pm. For further information, please contact Chan Parmar on 01204 546110.

The **London Interfaith Centre** will be exhibiting, from 11 September to 24 September at Lumen, 88 Tavistock Place, London WC1, artwork by young adults at faith schools which explore aspects of emergent identity. For more information, contact fergus.capie@londoninterfaith.org.uk.

Faiths together in Lambeth will be organising the Lambeth Inter Faith Peace Picnic on Sunday 18th September, 3pm - 5pm. The event will be held in Windrush Square, Brixton, London and will be part of the London Peace Week. Food from Five Faiths (Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish and Muslim) will be on offer and there will be a programme of music, drama and information.

Bristol Inter Faith Group will be holding its AGM on Wednesday 21 September. It will take place at Redland Friends Meeting House, 126 Hampton Road, Bristol BS6 6JE and will begin at 7.15pm. It will be followed by a talk on '*Faith in Bristol: its contribution to the city's future*', by Alistair Beattie, Chief Executive of Faithnetsouthwest. For more information please contact Bernard Omar at Bernard.omar@bifg.org.uk or on 01454 775454, or Anula Beckett at anula.beckett@bifg.org.uk or on 01179 645655.

Uniting for Peace is holding a public meeting from 6.30pm to 8.30pm on Wednesday 21 September to mark the 'UN International Day of Peace'. The keynote speaker is Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP, Former Secretary of State for International Development, who will speak on 'After the Conflicts – How can Development Build Peace?'. The event will take place at Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ. Further information can be found at www.unitingforpeace.com.

The **St Ethelburga's Singers**, an inter faith choir meeting at the St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace, 78 Bishopsgate, London EC2N 4QG, begin their new term on Thursday 29 September. Sessions begin at 7pm. For more

information on the choir, please visit
<http://stethelburgas.org/civicrm/event/info?reset=1&id=312>.

Churches Together in England and the **Christian Muslim Forum** are hosting an event on Tuesday 11 October at Hinsley Hall, Leeds, entitled 'Christian engagement with Islam: context and developments in England'. The event is particularly designed for people who are new to, or less comfortable with, Christian-Muslim relations who need solid information as well as an opportunity to talk. The morning speakers will be Christian, with Muslim colleagues speaking in the afternoon. The cost is £40 (waged), or £25 (unwaged), inclusive of lunch and refreshments. Booking is essential. For further information or to book place visit:

www.cte.org.uk/Articles/274209/Churches_Together_in/Working_Together/Inter_faith/Christian_Muslim_Relations/Christian_Engagement_with.aspx.

The Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter begins its autumn series of seminars 'The Bible, the Land and its Peoples – hopes and challenges for the future' on Tuesday 11 October when Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg will be speaking on 'Holding each other's chains – the narrative of the other'. Registration is from 10.30am with lectures beginning at 11.00am. Please bring a packed lunch. The suggested donation for the day is £15.00, or £40 for all three sessions in the series (the others being on 9 November and 13 December). The seminar will be held at the Sion Centre, 34 Chepstow Villas, London W11 2QZ. For further information or to book please visit www.sistersofzion.org, email sioncde@yahoo.co.uk or telephone 020 7313 8286.

In October the **Cambridge Coexist Programme** joins forces with the Times Cheltenham Literature Festival and leading writers and thinkers from Britain and overseas to create a new series of polemical events focussed on religion. What are the challenges of translating Holy Texts? Does Britain's mainstream media throw the Christians to the lions? How do women writers of differing cultures reflect faith in their fiction? The Times Cheltenham Literature Festival is from 7 to 16 October and further information can be found at www.cheltenhamfestivals.com.

The Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter's Sunday afternoon series on 'Respecting Difference in Inter Faith Dialogue' begins on Sunday 23 October with a session looking at how healing is described in Jewish and Christian texts. The speakers are Rabbi Rachel Montagu and Sr Margaret Shepherd NDS and the session runs from 2.30pm – 4.15pm. A donation of £8 is suggested. The theme will be further developed on Sunday 18 December.

From 15 to 17 November at the **Abbey House Retreat** in Glastonbury there will be an informal gathering, 'Opening to the heart: Creating a new vision for interfaith encounter'. The event is open to any lay person or clergy member involved in grassroots inter faith work and is designed to share and explore new ways of working in the inter faith field. For costs and more details please contact Nigel Anthony on 07940 001394 or the Revd Alan Bayes on 01792 892603 or Interfaith Minister Annie Blampied at annie@annieblampied.co.uk.

Cardiff University and **St Michael's College, Llandaff** will be running a conference on 'Chaplaincy in a Multi-Faith Context' from Thursday 1 December to Friday 2 December. For further details please visit www.stmichaels.ac.uk/news-2011-chaplaincy-in-a-multi-faith-context-conference.php or contact Tina Franklin at tina.franklin@stmichaels.ac.uk or on 02920 563379.

JAINpedia currently has an exhibition of manuscripts at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London until December 2012. To book a group tour please contact on info@jainpedia.org.

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For detailed information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org
Scottish Inter Faith Council: www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org
Inter-Faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org

For detailed information on events and projects in a number of the English regions see:

East of England: www.eefaithscouncil.org.uk
London: www.faithsforum4london.com
North East: www.nerfn.org
North West: www.faithnorthwest.org.uk
South East: www.se-faithforum.net
South West: www.faithnetsouthwest.org.uk
West Midlands: www.wmfaithsforum.org.uk

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 7 September with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer:

Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 8A Lower Grosvenor Place, London SW1W 0EN www.interfaith.org.uk
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September 2011

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 5 October 2011 with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Material may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and future projects and events and so items are likely to be about:

- **forthcoming inter faith events likely to be of interest to people across the UK**
- **inter faith and multi faith projects where you are seeking input**
- **resources which you have recently developed which you think may be helpful to those working in the inter faith field**
- **brief information about any jobs you are advertising within inter faith organisations or for inter faith posts (eg local inter faith development worker; national faith community inter faith officer)**

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UK/NATIONAL UPDATES

House of Lords debate on multiculturalism and inter faith dialogue

On 8 September a short debate on the subject of inter faith dialogue took place in the House of Lords prompted by a question tabled by Lord Mitchell, a trustee of the Coexistence Trust.. The debate featured contributions from Lord Young of Graffham, Lord Hussain, the Chief Rabbi Lord Sacks, the Bishop of London, Lord Ahmed of Wimbledon, Lord Judd, Lord Sheikh, Lord Stone of Blackheath, Lord Harries of Pentregarth, Lord Popat, Lord Noon, Lord Rees of Ludlow and Baroness Royall of Blaisdon.

Referring to the call for unity between communities by Tariq Jahan following the death of his son Haroon and brothers Shazad Ali and Abdul Musavir during rioting in Birmingham in August, Lord Mitchell explained why he had tabled the debate: "In the shadow of the tragic death of a young Muslim man in Birmingham, and with the tenth anniversary of 9/11 just days away, I think we need to ask ourselves if there is more that we could be doing to improve interfaith dialogue in the UK."

All speakers underlined the need for inter faith engagement, dialogue and activity. The work of a number of bodies of whose work they were aware was mentioned. Responding to the debate on behalf of the Government, Baroness Warsi said: "Interfaith dialogue helps raise the standard of all faith-based debate in our country...I profoundly believe that there is far more that unites faith communities than divides them: common bonds that should be the basis for better understanding."

The full transcript of the debate can be found on Hansard at www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201011/ldhansrd/text/110908-0002.htm#11090855000830 (column 469) and the debate can be viewed at: www.parliamentlive.tv/Main/Player.aspx?meetingId=8942&player=silverlight&st=16:43:55.

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Riots Communities and Victims Panel

The Riots Communities and Victims Panel has been set up by the Government to examine and understand why the August 2011 riots in England took place. Darra Singh, Chief Executive of Job Centre Plus and former Chief Executive of Ealing and Luton Councils, chairs the independent panel announced by the Deputy Prime Minister on 16 August. The other panel members are Simon Marcus, Heather Rabbatts and Baroness Sherlock.

Working at the grass-roots, the Panel aims to listen to the experiences of those affected by the riots, as well as wider debates around potential casual factors. The Panel will examine potential motives for, effects of and responses to the riots, and will submit their findings to Government in March, and make these available on the Panel website soon after.

For further information about the Panel, or to submit evidence to it, visit <http://riotspanel.independent.gov.uk/> or email riotspanel@communities.gsi.gov.uk. Details of public meetings to be arranged by the Panel can also be found on the website.

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Faith community responses to the riots

IFN's August e-bulletin noted that a Circular about the riots sent by IFN to member bodies in August, together with an accompanying document linking to coverage of many of the responses, could be found at www.interfaith.org.uk. A supplementary note with further information has now been posted alongside this on the IFN website at www.interfaith.org.uk.

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Best Value Guidance on funding decisions for the voluntary and community sector

On 2 September, Communities Secretary Eric Pickles published guidance to local authorities on how to protect voluntary and community groups from disproportionate cuts to their funding. This followed warnings from Mr Pickles earlier this year that councils should not "pull up the drawbridge" in the tough economic climate, but should instead look to give greater support for local groups which help some of the most vulnerable in their communities.

As part of assisting local councils, the Government has replaced detailed prescriptive statutory guidance on local priorities introduced by the previous Government, with one page of guidance on how best to achieve Best Value in their areas - not just in terms of cost, but also the wider social and environmental benefits above and beyond the services they provide. In deciding how best to fulfil their Best Value Duty, councils are required to consult those using, or likely to use, a local service. This should include community and voluntary organisations.

The guidance includes the following:

- those councils looking to reduce or end funding, or any other support to one of these organisations should give at least three months' notice of the actual reduction to both the organisation involved and the users of the service they provide;
- councils should involve and discuss their plans with the organisation and local service users as early as possible before making any final decisions on the future of the service; and
- councils should give organisations, local service users and the wider community the opportunity to offer options for reshaping and reducing the costs of the services provided.

There will no longer be a requirement for councils to undertake lifestyle or diversity questionnaires of their residents or their suppliers.

Central Government departments have already signed up to these same principles.

The new Best Value guidance applies to all 'best value' authorities, which are councils plus a range of other authorities including Police, Fire, the Broads Authority and Waste and Transport authorities. It is available at www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/bestvaluestatguidance.

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Updated guidance from the Charities Commission on the Equality Act

The Charity Commission has published updated guidance on the Equality Act, replacing earlier guidance published last September. The new guidance contains more illustrative examples and information about how exceptions under the Act, including the positive action provisions, can be used by some charities, with particular guidance for grant makers and charities with restricted funds. The guidance can be downloaded from www.charitycommission.gov.uk/Charity_requirements_guidance/Charity_governance/Good_governance/equality_act_guidance.aspx.

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EHRC consultation on legal cases involving discrimination and religion or belief

As reported in the August E-Bulletin, the EHRC announced in July that it had been granted permission by the European Court of Human Rights to intervene in four UK cases before the Court which involved alleged discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief. At the same time the EHRC published a consultation document, the closing date for responses to which was 5 September.

This consultation document reflected a change of mind on the part of the Commission about putting to the Court the possibility that the concept of 'reasonable accommodation' had any useful application in cases concerning the manifestation of religion or belief.

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Enforcement of Equality Act Specific Duties Regulations

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 came into force on 10 September 2011. These regulations set out the specific duties imposed on listed

public bodies to enable them to carry out the public sector Equality Duty more effectively and with greater transparency.

To achieve this public bodies are required to publish:

- information to demonstrate their compliance with the Equality Duty, by 31 January 2012 (6 April 2012 for schools) and then at least annually; and
- equality objectives, by 6 April 2012 and then at least every four years.

Voluntary and community sector organisations will have a significant role to play in aiding public bodies to achieve accountability and transparency in their equality performance. The Government Equalities Office is developing a toolkit to help them in doing this.

For more information on the regulations, an explanatory memorandum about the regulations and further information on the public sector Equality Duty visit:

www.homeoffice.gov.uk/equalities/equality-act/equality-duty.

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10th anniversary of the 11 September 2001 bombings in the USA

11 September 2011 marked ten years since the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre and other sites in the USA.

In the UK the anniversary was marked in services at St Paul's and Westminster Abbey and in a number of towns and cities. For example, a service of remembrance and commitment, open to people of all faiths and none, was held at Leicester Cathedral. In Edinburgh a 9/11 Walk for Peace took place and in Reading a Friendship Walk. In London the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board held a special conference on the subject of 'Building a better integrated and resilient society' which looked at the ways in which good inter faith and community relations can continue to be built. In Glasgow, an inter faith service of remembrance was held at Cathcart Old Parish Church, and the first minister attended a service at St Nicholas Kirk in Aberdeen. In Birmingham members of the Faith Leaders Group, which began in the wake of the attacks ten years ago, came together to mark both the anniversary of the attacks and of their own founding. The day included a lecture from Archbishop Vincent Nicholls on future goals for inter faith relations.

Westminster Faith Exchange, another group which began its life in the wake of the attacks, held a reflection event, '10 years on from 9/11 and the Founding of the Faith Exchange: An Interfaith Remembrance'. In Southall over 100 local people joined with Southall faith leaders to mark the tenth anniversary of 9/11 and together affirm their commitment to peace and harmony in Southall and beyond.

The service at St Paul's also marked Awareness Sunday, part of a campaign by the Awareness Foundation, an international charity founded in 2003 in response to the rise in religious conflict and violence across the world. The Foundation can be contacted at communications@awareness-foundation.com.

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Indarjit Singh appointed life peer

Dr Indarjit Singh CBE, Director of the Network of Sikh Organisations, well known broadcaster and a founder and Vice-Chair of the Inter Faith Network for the UK, has been appointed a life peer.

Further information about his appointment can be found at:

www.parliament.uk/business/news/2011/september/appointments-commission-announces-two-new-crossbench-peers-/.

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New Director for Faiths Forum for London

Philip Rosenberg has been appointed as the new Director of the Faiths Forum for London (FFL) and the Fayre Share Foundation. He was previously Projects Manager for Interfaith Relations and Social Action at the Board of Deputies of British Jews. Further information about the FFL can be found online at www.faithsforum4london.org.

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PROJECTS

Three Faiths Forum Interfaith Connectors programme

The Three Faiths Forum (3FF) and US-based Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC) are now accepting applications for their new Interfaith Connectors education and leadership training programme.

The programme will give students the opportunity and training to organise inter faith activities on their own campuses and to facilitate inter faith workshops in London schools. It is open to undergraduates currently studying at a London university and will run from October to December 2011. Application forms are available to download from www.threefaithsforum.org.uk and the deadline for applications is 10am on Wednesday 28 September. Applicants must be free for training in central London on Wednesday 5 (1pm to 7pm) and Thursday 6 October (6pm to 9pm).

For more information please contact Sean at sean@threefaithsforum.org.uk or call 020 7482 9539 or see www.threefaithsforum.org.uk/connectors.

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Scottish Inter Faith Council 'Sister Cities' exchange programme

SIFC is currently hosting 16 delegates from the Interfaith centre of New York (ICNY) and the UNESCO Centre of Catalonia's Department for Interreligious Dialogue in Barcelona. The delegates are visiting a number of voluntary and statutory agencies and places of worship across Scotland.

The three year 'Sister Cities' exchange programme was launched by the Interfaith Centre of New York in 2009. Glasgow was chosen from a number of European cities to participate in this programme in recognition of the extensive inter faith work being undertaken there. Glasgow delegates attended a programme in New York in 2009 and in Barcelona in 2010 and are hosting delegates this September. More about the Barcelona leg of the exchange can be found at www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org/45.html.

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Summit of Youth Religious Leaders, Warsaw

From 16 to 19 September, twenty two Young Religious Leaders representing the biggest European youth organisations of the Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Zoroastrian faiths, are meeting in Warsaw, for a 3-day summit and training, pledging for multi-religious cooperation. Stein Villumstad, Secretary General of the European Council of Religious Leaders, is also participating.

Further information can be found at www.rfp-europe.eu/index.cfm?id=356984.

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Insight Film Festival

Insight Film Festival, a biennial short film competition focusing on inter faith films which is run in association with Coexist Foundation, is preparing for its major annual event on 3 and 4 December. The date for submissions of films has now passed, but a number of young people have been working on advertisements to promote the event, and these can be found at www.insightfestival.co.uk/blog.

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Faith Links in the South West

Faith Links is a new inter faith project for Bournemouth and Poole aiming to provide opportunities for people of all faiths and none to come together and learn about the richness and diversity of each other's faiths.

For more information, please see www.faithlinks.org.uk or email them at faith_links@yahoo.co.uk.

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Faith in harmony

A seven person music group called All Faiths, with practising clergy from many different religions, has been formed. It was drawn together by Jeff Chegwin who said that the idea came to him after seeing how in the music industry people from all classes, ethnic backgrounds and religions get on well together and work alongside each other in harmony. Also among its members is Times religious correspondent Ruth Gledhill. Further information can be found at www.allfaiths.org.uk/contact.html and www.ruthgledhill.com/All_Faiths.html.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Inter Faith Youth Trust IFW Grant Programme - deadline extended

The deadline for applications to the Inter Faith Youth Trust's grant programme for Inter Faith Week projects has been extended to 5pm on Wednesday 28 September.

Grants of up to £500 are available for inter faith events/activities organised by and for young people focussed around Inter Faith Week (20-26 November 2011) and Scottish Inter Faith Week (27 November - 4 December 2011). Priority will be given to projects which actively involve young people (11-25 years of age) in planning, running, and evaluating of the projects.

Application forms are available at: www.ifyouthtrust.org.uk.

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MUJU/Arvon - theatre grants

MUJU, a Muslim/Jewish arts project, provides platforms for cross faith and community collaboration through education workshops, theatre productions, arts festivals and other live events. In collaboration with the Arvon Foundation, an organisation which runs residential creative writing courses, they are offering two grants for young people aged 18 - 35 to attend a theatre course entitled, 'Tell it the only way you can'.

The course is being held from Monday 21 to Saturday 26 November at the Totleigh Barton Arvon centre in Devon. Information on the course and the grant application process can be found on www.arvonfoundation.org/p302.html and the deadline for applications is 30 September. Any concerns regarding the application requirements can be addressed to Georgina Bednar at MUJU on info@muju.org.uk.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS AND TENDERS

Coexist Prize

The Coexist Foundation has launched a global search for an unsung hero who has made an exceptional contribution to building bridges between people of different faiths. The Coexist Prize, worth \$100,000, aims to celebrate the positive social role religion plays for so many people in the world.

The prize will honour an individual who has shown inspirational courage, imagination and commitment, and been nominated by the public, or by Coexist's global network of nominating partners. The Prize is open to people of all faiths, and those of no religious persuasion. There are also two runner up awards worth \$10,000.

The winners' stories will be featured in short documentaries which Coexist will showcase at the Prize ceremony next March at New York University. They will also be made available online, so that they can be an inspiration and example for others. Coexist will work closely with the Prize winners to carry on their work and ensure its lasting impact in their society and beyond.

An international panel of judges, including Her Excellency Mary Robinson, His Excellency The Grand Mufti of Egypt Sheikh Ali Gomaa, Rabbi David Rosen (American Jewish Committee's International Director of Interreligious Affairs), and Professor David Ford of the Cambridge University Inter-Faith Programme, will choose the winner and the two runners up.

Members of the public can nominate people through the online nomination form which can be found, together with further information about the criteria and guidelines, at www.coexistfoundation.net/en-gb/prize/20/coexist-prize.htm. The deadline for nominations is 14 October. Candidates can also promote their project on Twitter as part of the competition, by using the hashtag #coexistprize.

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RESOURCES AND TRAINING

Conversations for the Soul

The St Ethelburga's Centre and the National Union of Students are offering a one-day training programme with follow up support to chaplains, staff and students who would like to deliver 'Conversations for the Soul', an inter faith 'tandem dialogue' programme, to their universities.

The programme is designed to bring people of different faiths together to meet in pairs and discuss beliefs and practice in depth, allowing for a different quality of conversation that can be deeper and more satisfying than group dialogue. The training will take place on Tuesday 8 November at the National Union of Students

HQ, 4th floor, 184 – 192 Drummond Street, London NW1 3HP and costs £50, which includes all training materials, lunch and refreshments on the day.

For more information about the programme please contact Kat.Luckcock@nus.org.uk, or for information about the training day itself visit <http://stethelburgas.org/multifaith/projects> (this also gives a link to book a place).

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Christian Muslim Relations course in Bradford

Bradford Churches for Dialogue and Diversity (BCDD) are offering a short course for Christians in leadership in Christian Muslim Relations. The course is designed for people who want to learn more about Christian ministry and mission among Muslims and reflect with others who are involved. Speakers include Dr Philip Lewis, author of *Young, British and Muslim*, and Dr Helen Reid, Programme Director of BCDD.

The course takes place on two separate study days placed three months apart – Wednesday 5 October and Wednesday 25 January. The course costs £160 and will take place at St Paul's Church, Manningham, Bradford.

To book a place please contact Carmel at BCDD on 01274 668312 or at admin@bccdd.org.uk.

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Media Trust – Community Newswire

Community Newswire is a free news distribution service offered by the Media Trust. It aims to help to make it as easy as possible for community groups and charities to gain access to the media and get their voices heard.

The service lets charities and community groups upload their press releases and news stories, which are then picked up by journalists from the Press Association news agency, rewritten, fact checked and distributed to newsrooms nationwide.

Following receipt of funding from the Big Lottery Fund, this service is now available again. Further information can be found online at www.mediatrust.org/get-support/community-newswire-1.

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JOBS AND VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

Three Faiths Forum – Education Projects Assistant

The Three Faiths Forum is recruiting an Education Projects Assistant whose key responsibilities will include: supporting the delivery of their Interfaith Education Workshops in schools, colleges, universities and with youth organisations; assisting the School Linking Manager in delivering their Faith School Linking programme; and providing general administrative assistance to other teams or members of staff

Applicants will need at least one year's experience in an office environment, and possess excellent written and verbal communication skills, plus experience of working with young people and/or students.

This is a full time post, initially for 6 months. Full details and an application form can be found at www.threefaithsforum.org.uk/jobs/education-projects-assistant. The closing date for applications is 9am on 19 September.

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Tony Blair Faith Foundation – Faiths Act Programme Manager

The Tony Blair Faith Foundation (TBFF) is recruiting a Faiths Act Programme Manager who will manage the delivery of TBFF's international inter faith social action programme, Faiths Act, which works towards the UN Millennium Development Goals and in particular the elimination of deaths from malaria.

Key duties will include: managing the delivery of Faiths Act Fellowship programmes in the UK, India, Canada, USA and Sierra Leone; developing and delivering a new model of the programme to be piloted in the United Arab Emirates; working closely with the Director of Communications to connect the work of the Faiths Act Fellows with the broader Faiths Act campaign in over 130 countries; managing relationships and reporting structures with key partner organisations; and liaison with representatives of the major world religions.

The closing date for applications is 23 September. Further information can be found at www.tonyblairfaithfoundation.org/recruitment/entry/faiths-act-programme-manager.

To apply, please send your CV and request an application form from Emma Selwood at emma.selwood@tonyblairfaithfoundation.org.

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Tony Blair Faith Foundation – Faiths Act Fellowship Interfaith Coach

The Tony Blair Faith Foundation is currently recruiting a part-time Faiths Act Fellowship Interfaith Coach. The role will be for one day per week, based from home, preferably in London. Coaches support and mentor participants in the Tony Blair Faith Foundation's inter faith youth leadership programme, the Faiths Act Fellowship. Coaches spend up to one day per week coaching Fellows, based in their own country via phone/Skype, with some in person meetings, and use a pre-designed coaching curriculum.

Employment will be on a 10 month fixed term contract and the deadline for applications is 23 September. For further information, including essential requirements for the job, please visit:

www.tonyblairfaithfoundation.org/recruitment/entry/job-role-faiths-act-fellowship-interfaith-coach.

To apply, please send your CV and request an application form from Emma Selwood at emma.selwood@tonyblairfaithfoundation.org.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

International Peace Day 21 September

International Peace Day was established by a United Nations resolution in 1981 to coincide with the opening of the General Assembly. The first Peace Day was celebrated in September 1982 and has been held on 21 September each year since then. Further information can be found online at www.internationaldayofpeace.org.

Anyone, anywhere can celebrate Peace Day. It can be as simple as lighting a candle at noon, or just sitting in silent meditation. Or, it can involve getting your co-workers, community or organisation involved in a large event.

Uniting for Peace, an independent international NGO, is encouraging faith and inter faith organisations to arrange events demonstrating the positive role that religions can play in improving relations between different ethnicities and cultures, defusing conflict and building peace. They also have Inter Faith Resource packs available, cost £5 (cheques payable to UfP Peace Services). For further enquiries or to give them information about any events you have planned please telephone 0131 446 9545 or write to Uniting for Peace, PO Box 28209, Edinburgh EH9 1ZR.

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Sewa Day 25 September

Sewa Day will this year take place on Sunday 25 September. The Sanskrit word 'Sewa' means 'selfless service'. The aim of Sewa Day is to provide people a chance to give back to the local community through volunteering on a single day to make a difference. Each event organised is based on at least one of the following guiding principles: to relieve hardship and poverty; to bring a little joy where none exists; to help the environment. For more information, or to get involved, please visit www.nationalsewaday.org. The report on the 2010 Sewa Day can be downloaded at www.nationalsewaday.org/images/nsd_annual_report_A4_lr.pdf.

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One World Week 23–30 October

One World Week is an opportunity for people from diverse backgrounds to come together to learn about global justice, to spread that learning and to use it to take action for justice locally and globally. This year it takes place from 23 to 30 October and takes the theme of 'Living for One World'. The Week will be a chance to explore many aspects of the environment and what can be done to preserve and protect it under the headings of Living for the planet, Living for its people and Living and acting for change. For further information, including advice and guidance on events, please visit www.oneworldweek.org/v2.

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Mitzvah Day 20 November

Mitzvah Day takes place this year on Sunday 20 November. It is a Jewish led day of social action. Around the world thousands of people take part in hands on projects to support existing charities and to build stronger communities. The goal is to reduce hardship and poverty and to help the environment. People are encouraged to volunteer for projects in their communities and anyone can take part regardless of their background. Last year a number of projects had a multi faith dimension. See www.mitzvahday.org.uk for further information and to register an event.

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Inter Faith Week 20–26 November

Inter Faith Week (see www.interfaithweek.org.uk) will take place this year in England, Wales and Northern Ireland from Sunday 20 November until Saturday 26 November. This is the third such Week in these nations.

The aims of Inter Faith Week are:

- Strengthening good inter faith relations at all levels
- Increasing awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, in particular celebrating and building on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society
- Increasing understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs

An information pack will shortly be available to download from the Inter Faith Week website at www.interfaithweek.org.uk. If you would like to discuss your plans for the Week or to suggest additional resources which might be helpful to add to the Inter Faith Week website, Ashley Beck, Project Officer at IFN, will be glad to hear from you: 020 7931 7766, ashley.beck@interfaith.org.uk.

If you are planning to run an event to mark Inter Faith Week, please send IFN the details of your event by visiting the Inter Faith Week website at www.interfaithweek.org.uk. This website will be carrying listings for all types of event this year, including local events.

The illustrated report on Inter Faith Week 2010 in England is available to download from www.interfaithweek.org.uk. Hard copies can be ordered from the Inter Faith Network office.

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Scottish Inter Faith Week 27 November – 4 December

Scottish Inter Faith Week will take place from Sunday 27 November to Saturday 4 December. The theme for Scottish Inter Faith Week is 'Belief in Dialogue' in line with the *Belief in Dialogue Good Practice Guide* produced by APS Group Scotland and prepared by The Scottish Working Group on Religion and Belief Relations www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org/resources/Belief+in+Dialogue.pdf (reported on in the April 2011 e-bulletin). For further information please contact Frances Hume at the Scottish Inter Faith Council at fhume@scottishinterfaithcouncil.org.

Established by the Scottish Inter Faith Council in 2004, the Week provides a chance for individuals, local inter faith groups and faith communities across the country to plan events that bring local people together to promote dialogue, understanding and co-operation between Scotland's diverse religious communities.

Inter faith week is supported by local inter faith groups, the Scottish Government and Scotland's religious leaders. The week provides a chance for individuals, local inter faith groups and faith communities across the country to plan events that bring people together to promote dialogue, understanding and co-operation between Scotland's diverse religious communities.

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Holocaust Memorial Day 27 January 2012

The theme for Holocaust Memorial Day 2012 is 'Speak Up, Speak Out'. The theme challenges everyone to speak out against racism and discrimination so that the lessons from the past are learned to create a safer, better future. The Holocaust

Memorial Day Trust are running a series of free workshops across the UK between September and November for anyone who is planning to mark HMD. To find a workshop near you, visit hmd.org.uk/about/our-work/hmd-workshops. To find out more information about Holocaust Memorial Day 2012 and order a free Campaign Pack, you can visit www.hmd.org.uk.

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DIARY DATES

London Inter Faith Centre's Art of Identity Project exhibition, in which London teenagers from across five world religions explore aspects of their identity, including faith, through the visual arts, runs until Friday 23 September (10.00am to 6.00pm) at Lumen URC Centre, 88 Tavistock Place, London WC1. For more information, contact fergus.capie@londoninterfaith.org.uk.

The final event in the **Open University's** 'Building on History' project, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, will be a one day conference, 'Religious Diversity in modern Britain: how can history inform the present?' This takes place at Toynbee Hall in London on Wednesday 21 September from 10.00am to 4.00pm and will explore the historical interactions between different religions, with special reference to the East End of London as a case study. Historians, religious leaders and community figures will discuss the ways in which awareness of the past might inform our understanding of religious diversity in the present. The cost of £5 includes lunch but places are limited. For further information and to book, visit www.open.ac.uk/Arts/building-on-history-project/docs/religious-diversity-programme.pdf.

Bristol Inter Faith Group will be holding its AGM on Wednesday 21 September. It will take place at Redland Friends Meeting House, 126 Hampton Road, Bristol BS6 6JE and will begin at 7.15pm. It will be followed by a talk on '*Faith in Bristol: its contribution to the city's future*', by Alistair Beattie, Chief Executive of Faithnetsouthwest. For more information please contact Bernard Omar at Bernard.omar@bifg.org.uk or on 01454 775454, or Anula Beckett at anula.beckett@bifg.org.uk or on 01179 645655.

Salford Interfaith Network in conjunction with **The Anchor's Interfaith Dialogue Group** will be hosting its inaugural meeting on Wednesday 21 September from 7.15pm to 9pm. The meeting will debate moguls who monopolise the media and what that might mean to people of faith. Speakers include Aziz Rashid and Tommy Nagra. The meeting will be held at The Anchor, MediaCityUK, Broadway, Salford, M50 2EQ. Admission is free. Information on The Anchor, which is the chaplaincy at MediaCity UK, visit www.anchormediacityuk.org/about-us. For further information about the event, contact Hayley Matthews on 07857 636850.

Uniting for Peace is holding a public meeting from 6.30pm to 8.30pm on Wednesday 21 September to mark the 'UN International Day of Peace'. The keynote speaker is Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP, Former Secretary of State for International Development, who will speak on 'After the Conflicts – How can Development Build

Peace?'. The event will take place at Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ. Further information can be found at www.unitingforpeace.com.

The **Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby**, in association with the Bishop of Derby, the City and Neighbourhoods Partnerships and Derby City Council, is holding a seminar on Thursday 22 September on 'Growing Communities Together: the role of faith communities in building cohesion/strengthening neighbourhoods'. The seminar will take place at the Riverside Centre, Riverside Court, Pride Park, Derby DE23 8HY and will commence at 9.30am with registration and conclude at 3.00pm. The event is being held to raise awareness of the current city agenda for stronger communities and to explore the relationships between faith communities and their work in Derby in an effort to relate better to each other, examine ways of productively working together and allow those who are rarely heard to express their hopes, expectations and challenges for faith communities in Derby. Registration is essential and you can book online at <http://multifaithcentre.wufoo.com/forms/growing-communities-conference>.

Faithful Friends, with the Bishop of Barking, are hosting a conference on inter faith relationships on Thursday 22 September at Emmanuel Church, Forest Gate, London. The conference will take place from 10.30am to 3.30pm and will explore how Christians can relate to and work with people of other faiths, with speakers from the Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities. There is no charge and lunch (including Halal food) will be provided. To book please contact the Revd Chigor Chike on 07905 155494 or at chigor.chike@sky.com.

Islington Faiths Forum will be holding a Peace Event on Sunday 25 September from 3pm to 4.30pm at St Mary's Church, Upper Street, London N1. The event will include music, poetry and singing. Further information from Rosalind Miller at Rosalind.miller8@btinternet.com.

Capital Growth are holding a networking event, 'Faith and Food Growing' on Monday 26 September, from 6.00pm to 9.00pm at the Royal Foundation of St Katherine, London E14 8DS. It offers an opportunity for people of all faiths to hear from successful inter faith growing projects, take part in workshops and meet like-minded people over food and drink. The event is free to Capital Growth members, £5 for London Food Link members, and £10 for others (includes food). Visit www.capitalgrowth.org for more information.

The **Wolverhampton Inter-Faith and Regeneration Network** will be holding its AGM on Wednesday 28 September at 6.30pm. The meeting will take place at the City of Wolverhampton College, Paget Road, Wolverhampton. For more information and to attend, please contact WIFRN on 01902 427 601 or email admin@wifrn.org.uk.

The **St Ethelburga's Singers**, an inter faith choir meeting at the St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace, 78 Bishopsgate, London EC2N 4QG, begin their new term on Thursday 29 September. Sessions begin at 7pm. For more information on the choir, please visit <http://stethelburgas.org/civicrm/event/info?reset=1&id=312>.

The **Chapter of Derby Cathedral**, the **Friends of Derby Cathedral** and the **Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby** are jointly hosting a lecture on 'Muslim Christian relations, past, present and future' by Professor David Thomas, Professor of Christianity and Islam at the University of Birmingham. The lecture takes place at 7.30pm on Monday 3 October at Derby Cathedral and will be followed by refreshments. To attend please RSVP to Lucille at Lucille@derbycathedral.org by 23 September.

Islington Faiths Forum have organised a half day workshop on Thursday 6 October from 9.30am to 2.30pm, for staff and volunteers at faith, refugee and BAME organisations on how to advise members of the community on accessing services specific to issues around welfare benefits, debt, worklessness, housing and immigration. The event takes place at Wesley's Chapel, 49 City Road, London EC1Y 1AU. Lunch is provided. To book please email Rosalind.miller8@btinternet.com. A donation of £8 is requested

The **Cambridge Coexist Programme** is joining forces with the Times Cheltenham Literature Festival and leading writers and thinkers from Britain and overseas to create a new series of polemical events focussed on religion. What are the challenges of translating Holy Texts? Does Britain's mainstream media throw the Christians to the lions? How do women writers of differing cultures reflect faith in their fiction? The Times Cheltenham Literature Festival is from 7 to 16 October and further information can be found at www.cheltenhamfestivals.com.

The **Christian Muslim Forum** is hosting a day conference for teachers and teaching assistants in all curriculum areas entitled 'Belief and Being in School II' on Saturday 8 and Sunday 9 October at the Methodist International Centre, London NW1 2EZ. The cost is £25 but with a discount for group bookings. For details please visit www.christianmuslimforum.org/index.php/events/event-listing/621.

Churches Together in England and the **Christian Muslim Forum** are hosting an all-day event on Tuesday 11 October at Hinsley Hall, Leeds, entitled 'Christian engagement with Islam: context and developments in England'. The event is particularly designed for people who are new to, or less comfortable with, Christian-Muslim relations who need solid information as well as an opportunity to talk. The morning speakers will be Christian, with Muslim colleagues speaking in the afternoon. The cost is £40 (waged), or £25 (unwaged), inclusive of lunch and refreshments. Booking is essential. For further information or to book place visit: www.cte.org.uk/Articles/274209/Churches_Together_in/Working_Together/Inter_faith/Christian_Muslim_Relations/Christian_Engagement_with.aspx.

The **Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter** begins its autumn series of seminars on the theme of 'The Bible, the Land and its Peoples – hopes and challenges for the future' on Tuesday 11 October when Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg will be speaking on 'Holding each other's chains – the narrative of the other'. Registration is from 10.30am with lectures beginning at 11.00am. Please bring a packed lunch. The suggested donation for the day is £15.00, or £40 for all three sessions in the series (the others being on 9 November and 13 December). The seminar will be held at the

Sion Centre, 34 Chepstow Villas, London W11 2QZ. For further information or to book please visit www.sistersofsion.org, email sioncde@yahoo.co.uk or telephone 020 7313 8286.

Bath Interfaith Group will be hosting a meeting at 7.30pm on Tuesday 11 October at Bath Islamic Centre, 8 Pierrepont St, Bath. The Revd Marcus Braybrooke, Bath Interfaith Group's former President and well known worker in the international inter faith field, will be interviewed by the Revd Kevin Tingay. For further information contact janeohara@blueyonder.co.uk.

The **Christian Muslim Forum**, in partnership with **Las Casas Institute Oxford**, is holding a seminar entitled 'A Place for Faith Schools' on Saturday 22 October. The event will be held at Blackfriars Hall, 64 St Giles, Oxford, OX1 3LY and will look at Christian and Muslim Faith Schools and their place in a mainly secular society. Speakers include Dr Liam Gearon, Senior Lecturer in Religious Education at the University of Oxford Department of Education, Maurice Irfan Coles, iCEO of Curriculum Enrichment for the Common Era (CE4CE) and Director of Islam and Citizenship Education project (ICE), Julia Ipgrave, senior lecturer and researcher in religious education at Warwick University RE Research Unit and Professor Richard Pring, formerly Director of the Department of Educational Studies at Oxford University. Tickets cost £10 (£5 concessions). To book online visit <http://christianmuslimforum.org/index.php/events/event-listing/623>.

The **Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter** begins its autumn series on 'Respecting Difference in Interfaith Dialogue – Engaging with the Other' on Sunday 23 October with talks by Rabbi Rachel Montagu and Sr Margaret Shepherd on the theme of 'Healing in the Bible'. This session will take place from 2.30pm to 4.15pm at the Sion Centre (34 Chepstow Villas, London W11 2QZ) and will look at how healing is described in Jewish and Christian texts. A donation of £8 is suggested. For further information or to book a place, please email sioncde@yahoo.co.uk or visit www.sistersofsion.org or telephone 020 7313 8286.

The **Cornwall Faith Forum** and the **United Nations Association** will be running an inter faith devotional on 'celebrating friendship' on Sunday 30 October at 2pm. For further information, please contact Manijeh Smith on 07774 514 211 or Philomena Clifford on 07811 853 639.

From 15 to 17 November at the **Abbey House Retreat** in Glastonbury there will be an informal gathering, 'Opening to the heart: Creating a new vision for interfaith encounter'. The event is open to any lay person or clergy member involved in grassroots inter faith work and is designed to share and explore new ways of working in the inter faith field. For costs and more details please contact Nigel Anthony on 07940 001394 or the Revd Alan Bayes on 01792 892603 or Interfaith Minister Annie Blampied at annie@annieblampied.co.uk.

Just This Day's central event this year takes place on Wednesday 23 November from 7.45am. The programme includes various events throughout the day, and will explore the benefits of silence and stillness, particularly in an educational context.

The event will take place at St Martin in the Fields, Trafalgar Square, London. Further information is available from www.justthisday.org.

Cardiff University and **St Michael's College, Llandaff** will be running a conference on 'Chaplaincy in a Multi-Faith Context' from Thursday 1 December to Friday 2 December. For further details please visit www.stmichaels.ac.uk/news-2011-chaplaincy-in-a-multi-faith-context-conference.php or contact Tina Franklin at tina.franklin@stmichaels.ac.uk or on 02920 563379.

JAINpedia currently has an exhibition of manuscripts at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London until December 2012. To book a group tour please contact on info@jainpedia.org.

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For detailed information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org
Scottish Inter Faith Council: www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org
Inter-Faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org

For detailed information on events and projects in a number of the English regions see:

East of England: www.eefaithscouncil.org.uk
London: www.faithsforum4london.com
North East: www.nerfn.org
North West: www.faithnorthwest.org.uk
South East: www.se-faithforum.net
South West: www.faithnetsouthwest.org.uk
West Midlands: www.wmfaithsforum.org.uk

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 5 October with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer:

Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.



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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 7 November 2011 with ‘e-bulletin’ in the subject line. Material may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and future projects and events and so items are likely to be about:

- **forthcoming inter faith events likely to be of interest to people across the UK**
- **inter faith and multi faith projects where you are seeking input**
- **resources which you have recently developed which you think may be helpful to those working in the inter faith field**
- **brief information about any jobs you are advertising within inter faith organisations or for inter faith posts (eg local inter faith development worker; national faith community inter faith officer)**

Disclaimer: Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

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UK/NATIONAL UPDATES

Inter Faith Week 20–26 November – register your event!

Inter Faith Week (see www.interfaithweek.org.uk) takes place in England, Wales and Northern Ireland from Sunday 20 November until Saturday 26 November. Its aims are:

- strengthening good inter faith relations at all levels
- increasing awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, in particular celebrating and building on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society
- increasing understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs

More information and resources are available at www.interfaithweek.org.uk. The website now carries listings for national, regional and local events in England, Northern Ireland and Wales.

Just a few examples of events already registered are: a multi faith exhibition at Central Manchester University Hospitals Foundation Trust; a Shared Values GCSE ethics conference in South Bromsgrove; a multi faith celebration of the Week in Guildford; Living Library events in Birmingham; a panel discussion at the Parliament Buildings with members of the Northern Ireland Assembly on issues relating to faith diversity in Northern Ireland; an arts event, 'Hands together for Inter Faith Week' in Cheltenham; a celebration event in Wisbech; an inter faith fair in Leicester; a networking opportunity for local inter faith groups in the East of England; a Cheshire-wide event: 'Bridging the Gap - public services and faith communities working together'; an inter faith arts exhibition in London; and a special 'mock tribunal' arranged by the Employers' Forum on Belief which will be a unique opportunity to hear from a lawyer, tribunal judge and barrister in a simulated hearing focussed on discrimination on grounds of religion or belief where, guided by legal experts Lewis Silkin, participants will learn the proceedings, the evidence required, the possible objective justifications and potential questions, who might be called and what they may be asked and have a chance to cast their verdict.

If you are running a local, regional or national event in England, Northern Ireland or Wales to mark Inter Faith Week, please register it as soon as possible online at www.interfaithweek.org.uk to let the media, the general public and the IFN office know what is happening and raise the profile of the Week.

If you do not have an event planned and might like to create one, visit the Inter Faith Week website www.interfaithweek.org.uk for ideas. Some are specially designed to take from planning to execution within three weeks.

For details on Scottish Inter Faith Week, see the [Special Days and Weeks Section on page 18](#).

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IFN Faith Communities Forum

The Faith Communities Forum, which brings together for discussion the national faith community bodies in membership of the Inter Faith Network, met on 27 September. It discussed: the review of the Equality and Human Rights Commission; preparations for Inter Faith Week 2011; the Government's integration policy; faith and dietary practice; and other public policy issues.

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Meeting of national and regional inter faith bodies

On 17 October, there was an IFN meeting of national and regional inter faith bodies (other than umbrella/linking bodies). As well as sharing news of current projects they discussed Inter Faith Week; aspects of the Government's policy which touch on their work; use of multi media; and issues of how to monitor and evaluate inter faith work.

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Equality and Human Rights Commission consultation

On 12 October the Equality and Human Rights Commission launched a 60 day consultation to help it develop its next three-year strategic plan, which is due to be laid before Parliament in April 2012. The consultation provides an opportunity to comment on the Commission's proposed mission and roles and the key equality and human rights issues for 2012-15 and the final phase of consultation will take place for 30 days in early 2012.

Information on the consultation can be found online at www.equalityhumanrights.com/about-us/vision-and-mission/our-strategic-plan/consultation-on-our-strategic-plan-2009-12 and responses are requested by 12 December.

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Equality and Human Rights Commission submission to European Court of Human Rights

On 28 September the EHRC published its submission to the European Court of Human Rights on four cases related to alleged religious discrimination in the workplace. A summary of the more than 500 responses which it had received to its consultation was also published.

The submission and the consultation response summary can be found at www.equalityhumanrights.com/legal-and-policy/human-rights-legal-powers/legal-intervention-on-religion-or-belief-rights.

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Expansion of National Citizen Service programme

Prime Minister David Cameron announced on 5 October that National Citizen Service (NCS) for 16-year-olds will be tripled in size to offer 90,000 places by 2014. NCS is a voluntary programme that gives 16-year-olds the opportunity to take on new challenges, learn new skills and make a difference in their communities. Young people from very different backgrounds are brought together into a team, with a common objective, to achieve something of which they can all be proud. Activities include outdoor team-based challenges; structured tasks to develop personal skills; visiting and helping groups in the local neighbourhood; and designing and delivering a social action project in consultation with local communities. Following the first pilot this summer, up to 30,000 places will be offered in 2012 and 90,000 by 2014.

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Riots Communities and Victims Panel open meetings

The Riots Communities and Victims Panel set up by the Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg, in September to examine the causes of London riots in August is holding a series of consultation meetings. While many are closed, a series of public meetings is providing members of affected communities with the opportunity to talk to the Panel about their experiences of the riots. The first of these meetings took place on 17 and 18 October in Ealing and Croydon. The next two meetings will be taking place on Wednesday 2 November at Enfield Dugdale Centre and Thursday 3 November in Tottenham (venue tbc). For more information, visit <http://riotspanel.independent.gov.uk/meetings-and-visits/>.

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150th Anniversary of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe

This year is the 150th anniversary of Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE). A series of celebratory events are taking place through the year. This month, His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh visited the Zoroastrian Centre in London as part of the celebrations. He was welcomed by leading members of the community and presented with a range of gifts. He presented special commemorative medallions, on behalf of ZTFE, to a number of community members for their work in its service. Medallions were also presented to a small number of other figures, including the Inter Faith Network's former Director, Mr Brian Pearce, to honour him for his long and dedicated service to inter faith work in the UK. Dr Harriet Crabtree also received a medallion on behalf of the Inter Faith Network.

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Consultation launched on ‘Principles of Good Impact Reporting’

A universal set of principles for impact reporting in charities and social enterprises has been released for consultation. The initiative, led by New Philanthropy Capital, the Charity Finance Directors Group (CFDG) and the Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO), is now in a consultation phase, seeking feedback from key groups involved in developing impact reporting including chief executives, finance directors, fundraisers and grant-makers.

The document looks at how charities should communicate their impact and what charities should communicate. The six general principles identified are clarity, accessibility, transparency, accountability, proportionality and verifiability and the document considers how these should be applied.

A copy of the document can be downloaded from www.acevo.org.uk/document.doc?id=1731. The organisations involved are keen to hear whether the principles are constructive in helping the voluntary and community sector in communicating their impact. Any feedback can be sent to tlumley@philanthropycapital.org.

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PROJECTS

JAINpedia

The JAINpedia project has reached a milestone with a demonstration and launch of the ‘beta’ version of its multimedia site in India on 14 October. A further launch in the UK will be held in November. The website brings the physical into the virtual with over 5,000 folios of rare and ancient manuscripts and much contextual information. Further updates will appear on the JAINpedia blog, at <http://blog.jainpedia.org> or on the JAINpedia Facebook and Twitter pages.

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Luton Faith Woodlands Communities

The Faith Woodlands Communities project, centred on Maulden Woods in Bedfordshire, runs until 30 April 2013. The project is a joint venture between Luton Council of Faiths, Bedford Council of Faiths, the Forestry Commission, the Greensand Trust, Luton Borough Council and Grassroots and is funded through Natural England’s ‘Access to Nature’. The project aims to help people from all backgrounds to enjoy and learn more about nature and the countryside, and make particular use of the diverse faith networks in Luton and Bedford to show how all faiths and none share an appreciation of nature and care for the environment. For more details on the project and its partners, including a video of some of the guided walks and events, see www.faithwoodlands.org.uk.

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Religions for Peace – Reconciliation and peace building work

Religions for Peace (UK) is considering calling a meeting of secular and faith-led organisations that are involved in reconciliation or peace building, to discuss the future of this work and to answer some of the questions, such as:

- How much of our work is being duplicated?
- Is there potential for co-operation/collaboration?
- The possibility of considering a joint secretariat (as most of our organisations are dependent on total voluntary work which could be greatly assisted if we had some sort of joint secretariat)
- Is there need and possibility of linking with the local interfaith groups to advocate this agenda?
- What role can we play on the European and the international stage together?

If you feel there is some validity in calling such a meeting please contact David Horner, Religions for Peace (UK), at dvd.horner@googlemail.com or on 07768 105387.

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Peace Pathway for St Pancras

The Week of Prayer for World Peace (WPWP) is creating a circular Peace Pathway in the historic St Pancras Old Church Gardens in London. The Pathway is designed to celebrate diversity and for different communities to work on a peace project together.

In its centre will be a map of the world. It will be surrounded by the word for 'Peace' in each of the 232 plus languages spoken domestically in London. Around the circle the names of the continents and the days of the week will be displayed. A solar-powered World Peace Flame is featured in the centre of the globe. This is interactive and by turning a handle, one can make the light shine even more brightly onto the world showing how each individual can make a difference.

WPWP welcomes any help with the project. For further information please contact wpwpeace@aol.com.

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3FF Undergraduate ParliaMentors

Senior politicians such as Iain Duncan Smith, Hazel Blears and Jo Swinson have all been mentors on 3FF's Undergraduate ParliaMentors (UP) initiative, which will run throughout the academic year and involve 45 students from 15 universities across the UK. Over a dozen MPs will take part in the UN award-winning programme this year, acting as mentors to university students who are keen to gain the skills, experiences and networks to become the next generation of politicians and community leaders in the UK.

UP was created by 3FF to build understanding and better relations between people of different faiths and beliefs at university, while giving undergraduates valuable leadership training. Together, the students will use their new skills to work on social action and community empowerment projects addressing local and national issues. The programme was previously only for Muslim, Christian and Jewish students, but has this year expanded to include people of all faiths and beliefs – including non-religious beliefs.

In addition to this, 3FF's mentoring model is expanding into Europe. 3FF has partnered with Belief in Dialogue, a British Council initiative, to give eight students from Denmark, Finland, Germany, Sweden and the UK the opportunity to be mentored by two MEPs. They will travel to Brussels over the course of their academic year to meet their MEP mentors and attend parliamentary committee meetings and debates.

Further information can be found online at www.threefaithsforum.org.uk/news/2011/09/undergraduate-parliamentors.html.

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'Visible' project - Quality assurance for faith based organisations

'Visible' is a quality assurance programme for faith based organisations led by the Faith Based Regeneration Network (FBRN) working in partnership with Community Matters, the Church Urban Fund and the Faiths and Civil Society Unit, Goldsmiths, University of London. FBRN is running an 18 month pilot project to assess the value of 'Visible' faith-based organisations. The project is investigating how the 'Visible' programme can assist faith groups to: be confident of their faith values and ethos when promoting their work to potential funders and partners; promote the contribution they make to community development and cohesion in a way that is recognised by the wider voluntary and community sector, local government and other agencies; and engage as equals with other community service providers.

The pilot project focuses on seven faith based projects selected from across the country. Each project is supported by a faith based mentor with an understanding of the particular opportunities and needs faced by faith organisations serving the local community through social action and community engagement. The pilot is assessing how 'Visible' can contribute to improving the reach of faith based organisations by raising their profile and credence within the voluntary community sector.

Further information on the 'Visible' programme can be found at www.fbrn.org.uk/fbrn-visible-quality-assurance-programme-faith-based-organisations.

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National Hindu Students Forum – 20th anniversary

The National Hindu Students Forum (UK) (NHSF (UK)) is this year celebrating its 20th anniversary. It has taken as its anniversary theme, 'Arise Arjuna', which it describes as 'celebrating action over inaction, practice over hypocrisy, vision over apathy and truth over ignorance'. NHSF (UK) is holding a special anniversary event around this

theme on 19 November in London. The importance of relations with other faith groups will be one of the strands of the event. For further information, contact: prteam@nhsf.org.uk.

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Diamond Jubilee Beacons Project

It is planned to light 2,012 Beacons throughout the United Kingdom, Channel Islands, Isle of Man, the Commonwealth and UK Overseas Territories on Monday 4 June. Her Majesty The Queen will be lighting the National Beacon and a special book containing all the Diamond Jubilee Beacon locations will be given to The Queen after the event (in a similar way to the book produced for The Queen's Golden Jubilee Beacons in 2001, which now resides in The Royal Library at Windsor Castle).

The organisers of Diamond Jubilee Beacons hope that all faith communities in the UK will wish to take part in the project. The '*Guide to taking part*' which contains information about the different types of beacons and how to become involved can be downloaded from www.diamondjubileebeacons.co.uk.

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Malaria No More – film, faith and fundraising

To mark Inter Faith Week on 20-26 November, Malaria No More UK is encouraging faith groups throughout the country to come together for an evening of film, faith and fundraising. Malaria No More UK is committed to ending suffering and death caused by malaria. During Inter Faith Week it would like people to hold a film related event that would help to highlight the plight of people suffering from malaria and help raise funds for the organisation. The money raised during Inter Faith Week will go towards specific work in Ghana where large sections of the population are at risk.

The project is being coordinated by Charlotte Dando and Usman Nawaz who are Faith Act Fellows from the Tony Blair Faith Foundation currently working with Malaria No More UK. They have produced a resource on a step by step guide to help event organisers. This will be going online shortly at <http://malariafornomore.org.uk/themes/faith>.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Near Neighbours

The Near Neighbours programme is a three-year initiative, run by the Church Urban Fund, which aims to bring people together in diverse communities, helping them build relationships and collaborate to improve the local community in which they live. This is a rolling programme with no deadlines but it is due to end in March 2013. Award

amounts range from £250-£5000. The fund will invest in environmental, social, cultural, artistic and sporting ideas which fulfill the criteria, which can be found at www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/grants.

The Fund is pleased to receive applications from people of different faith groups or none, working in partnership with people of different faiths and within the criteria. Details on how to apply can be found at www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/grants.

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Social Action Fund

The Office for Civil Society has opened a social action fund worth over £20million. The fund will offer grants of £100,000 and more to projects across England that plan to expand volunteering and giving of time, money, knowledge and assets. The fund will be managed by the Social Investment Business.

The Fund is open to proposals relevant to its three main themes:

- Social action in the community – projects that will encourage people to come together to support each other and improve their communities.
- Social action inspired by the Olympics and Paralympics legacy – projects that build on the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympics Games, creating a legacy of social action.
- Social action for all ages – projects that motivate people across all generations to get involved in volunteering and charitable giving.

The first window for applications closes at noon on Wednesday 2 November, 2011. A second application window is due to open in early 2012.

The Social Action Fund is open to applications to fund social action projects in England from civil society organisations, public sector bodies and businesses with a track record of delivering social action programmes. Organisations must have operated for more than 2 years and have a minimum turnover of £100,000 to be eligible. For more information and to apply, visit www.thesocialinvestmentbusiness.org/saf/.

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Community First Fund and Community Organisers

An £80 million Community First fund, which will provide small grants to community groups and local social action projects, was opened on 6 October by Nick Hurd Minister for Civil Society. This comes as the first of 5,000 people to be trained as Community Organisers took up post. The Government describes these as ‘two flagship Big Society initiatives which together will encourage people to do more to help each other out and give them the tools they need to make a difference’

.A Community First website has been opened which invites people to sign their community up to receive support. Funding will be handed out by panels of local people. The fund is divided into two strands. £30 million will be used to provide small grants. The remaining £50 million will be used to match private donations invested in

community endowment funds which will pay out money for small grants well into the future. The Community Development Foundation (CDF) will work with several organisations to deliver the Community First programme, including supermarket chain Asda.

The first Community Organisers took up post this week. They have begun a twelve month training programme based in local community groups in eleven places in England supported by Locality, the Government's national partner. They are learning the skills they need to identify local leaders and bring people together to act on what matters to them, including using new powers devolved from government to citizens. They will play an important role organising communities to take advantage of Community First funding. A total of 5,000 Community Organisers will be trained from now to 2015.

Further information can be found online at www.cdf.org.uk/web/guest/community-first.

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Village SOS competition

The Village SOS competition, run by the Big Lottery Fund, aims to give around 250 villages across the UK a share of £5.3 million to begin a community business. Awards of between £10,000 and £30,000 will be made to support inspiring business ideas that will bring people together in villages, and support activities and enterprises that will tackle the challenges they face.

The competition deadline has been extended to 20 October and entries can be accepted from informal community groups. To find out more about the competition visit www.villagesos.org.uk. For help developing ideas into a sustainable business, you can call the Big Lottery Fund Village SOS Advice Line on 0845 434 9123.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS AND TENDERS

British Association for the Study of Spirituality – call for abstracts

The deadline for papers for the 2nd International Conference of the British Association for the Study of Spirituality has been extended to 30 November.

The theme of the Conference, which will take place from 15 May to 17 May at Highgate House in Northampton, is 'Spirituality in a Fragmented World'. Abstracts were initially invited only for oral paper presentation which address the theme of the conference through one or more of its sub-themes: spirituality and health; spirituality and religion; spirituality and humanity and social justice; spirituality and ecology; and spirituality and politics. Abstracts are now also invited for Workshops and Roundtables. Abstracts are invited from people working in academic institutions,

health, social care and religious practice, policy makers, business environments and general public life. They are particularly keen to encourage PhD students to present their work and plan to use the conference to launch an interdisciplinary PhD network for all students looking at spirituality.

Conference information and booking and abstract submission forms can be viewed and downloaded from www.basspirituality.org.uk. Abstracts should be sent by email attachment to Margaret Holloway, Chair of the Conference Scientific Committee at m.l.holloway@hull.ac.uk and also to Claire Gregory, conference administrator, at c.gregory@hull.ac.uk.

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Coexist Prize

The deadline for nominations for the new Coexist Prize has been extended to 31 October. The prize, worth \$100,000, aims to celebrate the positive social role religion plays for so many people in the world. It will honour an individual who has shown inspirational courage, imagination and commitment, and been nominated by the public, or by Coexist's global network of nominating partners. The Prize is open to people of all faiths, and those of no religious persuasion. There are also two runner up awards worth \$10,000. Members of the public can nominate people through the online nomination form which can be found, together with further information about the criteria and guidelines, at www.coexistfoundation.net/en-gb/prize/20/coexist-prize.htm.

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RESOURCES AND TRAINING

Confronting anti-Semitism and Islamophobia

The Joseph Interfaith Foundation has produced a book of the proceedings of its one-day international conference in 2009, *Confronting anti-Semitism and Islamophobia: An exploration of their socio-historic and theological roots and similarities*. The book will be launched at the House of Lords on 24 October.

Full details of the 2009 conference can be found at www.josephinterfaithfoundation.org/joseph-main/previous/confronting.php. For information on receiving a copy of the book, please email info@josephinterfaithfoundation.org.

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Jews, Christians and Muslims in Europe: Modern Challenges

The Woolf Institute is offering an e-learning course entitled 'Jews, Christians and Muslims in Europe: Modern Challenges'. The course commences on 7 November and the closing date for applications is 14 October.

The course is taught at final-year undergraduate level and the e-learning approach allows students to study via the internet wherever and whenever they choose, both individually and jointly with other students. The course fee is £300 and bursaries are available, depending on academic or professional merit and financial circumstances. A Woolf Institute Certificate is awarded on completion of the course. Further information can be found at www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/courses/jcme.asp or by contacting Dr Emma Harris at emma.harris@woolf.cam.ac.uk.

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Religious Diversity and Anti-discrimination training

The Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby is offering a training course to become a trainer as part of a UK and European Network of trainers in Religious Diversity and Anti-discrimination. The training will take place at the Multi-Faith Centre in Kedleston Road, Derby, on Saturday 22 and Sunday 23 October, Sunday 13 November, Sunday 11 December and Saturday 14 and Sunday 15 January. (Overnight accommodation can be arranged if required.) The basic cost for the 6 training days including lunch and refreshments, manual and certificate is £600. (Accommodation and travel are not included.)

For further information, please contact Eileen Fry, Training Coordinator at e.fry@derby.ac.uk.

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Birmingham Faith Guiding course

The Faith Encounter Programme in Birmingham is running a Faith Guiding Course which seeks to give people of all faiths the knowledge, understanding and skills required for successful guiding around a particular place of worship. The course, which leads to an Institute of Tourist Guiding Certificate (Level 2 qualification), runs on Thursdays from 6.00pm to 9.00pm, from 10 November to 9 February, with a 2 week Christmas break and is held at Lozells Methodist Community Centre, 113 Lozells Street, Birmingham B19 2AP.

There are 20 places available. Applicants must be over the age of 18 and have the ability to communicate well in English. The cost of the course is £33. For application forms please contact the Course Director, Ruth Tetlow, at ruthtetlow@btinternet.com or on 0121 449 4892. Further information can be found online at www.faihtencounter.org.uk.

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Conversations for the Soul training workshop

Conversations for the Soul is an inter faith programme run by the St Ethelburga's Centre which uses tandem dialogue. It is designed to allow participants to experience a deep and honest experience of dialogue and to be helpful in forming sustainable grassroots friendships across faith boundaries. The programme is suitable for both adults and young people.

An initial training workshop was held in September. The second of the one-day training workshops, being held on Tuesday 8 November at the National Union of Students (NUS) offices, is for university chaplains, NUS officers and students who would like to deliver this dialogue programme on their university campus or in their community. The workshop fee is £40 which includes free resource material and a handbook. For further information, see <http://stethelburgas.org/multifaith/projects>.

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Cambridge Inter-Faith Programme Scriptural Reasoning workshop

The Cambridge Inter-Faith Programme (CIP) is running a Scriptural Reasoning workshop on Thursday 27 October from 7.30pm – 9.30pm. The workshop will include training in Scriptural Reasoning and the chance to do some scriptural reasoning in a small group, guided by an experienced 'reasoner'. CIP runs open events each term to introduce Scriptural Reasoning to new audiences, and to encourage people to get involved in this inter faith practice. This event forms part of the Cambridge University Festival of Ideas and will take place in the Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge.

The event is open to all and free of charge, but please email cip@divinity.cam.ac.uk if you would like to attend.

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Religious Literacy Leadership programme

The Faiths and Civil Society Unit at Goldsmiths, University of London, is running two Religious Literacy Leadership workshops this November. The workshops will take place in London on 14 and 15 November and are designed to explore the practical challenges and opportunities posed by religious identity in university spaces, supporting senior HE leaders and managers to put in place excellent policies and practices, which enhance their 'offer' to students and staff. They are intended for senior staff in key operational roles including: heads of academic departments; chaplaincies; student services; admissions and registry; exams and timetabling; student counselling; catering, food, bars and accommodation; student financial services; and NUS executives.

For further details and to register visit <http://religiousliteracyhe.org/events-2/2011-rlw>.

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Free capacity building training for NGOs

The Runnymede Trust is offering Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and grassroots organisations working in the equalities sector an opportunity to attend one of two free awareness raising seminars on advocacy, the media and monitoring: one in London in November or one in Glasgow in February.

The London seminar will be held from 10am to 4.30pm on Thursday 17 November. Full details, including the application form and draft programme, can be found online at www.runnymedetrust.org/news/333/391/Equality-and-non-discrimination-free-awareness-raising-seminars-for-NGOs.html. Small travel bursaries are available.

The Glasgow seminar details have yet to be released. To register an interest in attending the Glasgow event, email rebecca@runnymedetrust.org.

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JOBS AND VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

Faith Based Regeneration Network – Executive Director

The Faith Based Regeneration Network (FbRN) is seeking an Executive Director to lead it into the next stage of development. The Executive Director's key activities will be: to provide leadership for FbRN; to develop and deliver a 3 year strategic plan within the framework laid down by the Board; to ensure that FbRN is well placed to meet the demands of the funding situation in a time of economic restraint and that it becomes significantly less dependent on central government funding; to shape FbRN's offer to meet the needs of its members and clients; to ensure FbRN UK's effective contribution to the development of and active engagement in strategic partnerships; to be responsible for resourcing and overseeing the financial affairs of FbRN; to facilitate, guide, and advise the Board on matters of planning, policy and strategy; to represent and promote FbRN, its aims and values, externally; and to manage staff and volunteers for effective delivery of FbRN UK's services.

The job would either suit one person full time, or two people working part time in a job share, and the initial contract will be for one year. The salary will be £40,000 per annum. If the job is shared, each of the two post holders will be paid pro rata according to the number of days worked per week.

For a full job description and application form, visit www.fbrn.org.uk/news/fbrn-executive-director-job-alert. The closing date for applications is 5pm on 24 October 2011.

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Interact (Interfaith Action) - Project Manager

Interact (Interfaith Action) is seeking to recruit a Project Manager to lead and manage various inter faith projects and programmes of activity building understanding between people from all faith and belief backgrounds through facilitating dialogue and enabling voluntary action, amongst students and young people across London.

The appointment is a full time position based in Kentish Town in London. The post holder may be required to work some evenings or weekends for which time off will be allowed in lieu. The salary for the post is dependent on experience.

To apply send a CV and covering letter to recruitment@interact-uk.org.uk. The closing date for applications is 5pm on 20 October 2011. For any questions email lucy@interact-uk.org.uk or call 020 74824020.

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Diocese of Guildford – Faiths Links Development Adviser

The Diocese of Guildford is seeking to recruit a Faith Links Development Adviser to build on the existing work of promoting the Faith Infrastructure and its engagement in developing, improving and extending services in communities across the county of Surrey.

The post holder will be proactive and able to work with public services, local authorities and voluntary and community agencies as well as faith organisations at county, district and local levels. The post will be ongoing subject to funding. The salary is £22,730 plus a benefits package and the position is full time and based in Guildford.

The closing date for applications is 26 October and interviews will be held on 15 November. For an application pack please contact Gerardine Brown at recruitment.diocese@cofeguildford.org.uk or on 01483 790302.

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Coordinating Committee of Religions for Peace (UK) Women of Faith Network

Applications are invited from women of faith to serve on the Religions for Peace (UK) Women of Faith Network Co-ordinating Committee on a voluntary basis.

Religions for Peace sees women of faith around the world as having enormous capacities for leadership and effective action to build peace and promote just and harmonious societies. It believes that their experiences and resources, when

mobilised, can strengthen community-based effective responses for peace and human development.

Currently in Europe there are women of faith networks in Belgium, Finland and France with discussions also taking place in the United Kingdom, Romania, Morocco, Bosnia Herzegovina and Italy to form National Women of Faith Networks.

Membership of the Women's Co-ordinating Committee will be drawn from the following religions Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Jain, Jewish, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Zoroastrian. Women who are interested in serving on the committee should send a CV to Mrs Ravinder Kaur Nijjar, Co-Chair RfP European Women of Faith Network, PO Box 7611, Glasgow, G42 2FT, giving details of any contribution to their own faith communities and inter faith dialogue/activities. An understanding of issues concerning women in general and women of faith in particular is important.

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Coexistence Trust recruiting 'campus ambassadors'

The Coexistence Trust is recruiting 48 inspirational Muslim and Jewish students to become Campus Ambassadors for the 2011/12 academic year. The 12 month Campus Ambassadors programme: trains future leaders to help combat Islamophobia and anti-Semitism; offers free accredited leadership training strategies that will be excellent for students' CVs; teaches skills in conflict prevention and resolution, campaigning and advocacy, media relations and inter communal dialogue; provides mentoring and networking opportunities with experts, employers and entrepreneurs; and offers internships and access to a network of useful contacts for the future.

The closing date for applications is 28 October 2011. To apply go to www.coexistencetrust.org or for further information email campusambassadors@coexistencetrust.org.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Week of Prayer for World Peace 16-23 October

This year's Week of Prayer for World Peace is currently taking place. The Week is based on the guiding principle that "The peace of the world must be prayed for by the faiths of the world". A leaflet giving prayers for each day, drawn from many different faiths and focusing on a particular part of the world or a specific theme can be ordered through www.weekofprayerforworldpeace.com or by email via wpwpeace@aol.com.

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One World Week 23–30 October

One World Week is an opportunity for people from diverse backgrounds to come together to learn about global justice, to spread that learning and to use it to take action for justice locally and globally. This year it takes place from 23 to 30 October and takes the theme of 'Living for One World'. The Week will be a chance to explore many aspects of the environment and what can be done to preserve and protect it under the headings of Living for the planet, Living for its people and Living and acting for change. For further information, including advice and guidance on events, please visit www.oneworldweek.org/v2.

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Mitzvah Day 20 November

Mitzvah Day takes place this year on Sunday 20 November. It is a Jewish led day of social action. Around the world thousands of people take part in hands on projects to support existing charities and to build stronger communities. The goal is to reduce hardship and poverty and to help the environment. People are encouraged to volunteer for projects in their communities and anyone can take part regardless of their background. Last year a number of projects had a multi faith dimension. See www.mitzvahday.org.uk for further information and to register an event.

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Inter Faith Week in England, Northern Ireland and Wales 20- 26 November

For details see [page 1](#).

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Scottish Inter Faith Week 27 November - 4 December

Scottish Inter Faith Week will take place from Sunday 27 November to Saturday 4 December. The theme for Scottish Inter Faith Week is 'Belief in Dialogue' in line with the *Belief in Dialogue Good Practice Guide* produced by APS Group Scotland and prepared by The Scottish Working Group on Religion and Belief Relations www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org/resources/Belief+in+Dialogue.pdf (reported on in the April 2011 e-bulletin). For further information please contact Frances Hume at the Scottish Inter Faith Council at fhume@scottishinterfaithcouncil.org.

Established by the Scottish Inter Faith Council in 2004, the Week provides a chance for individuals, local inter faith groups and faith communities across the country to plan events that bring local people together to promote dialogue, understanding and co-operation between Scotland's diverse religious communities.

Inter faith week is supported by local inter faith groups, the Scottish Government and Scotland's religious leaders.

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Holocaust Memorial Day 27 January 2012

The theme for Holocaust Memorial Day 2012 is 'Speak Up, Speak Out'. The theme challenges everyone to speak out against racism and discrimination so that the lessons from the past are learned to create a safer, better future. The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust is running a series of free workshops across the UK between September and November for anyone who is planning to mark Holocaust Memorial Day. To find a workshop near you, visit hmd.org.uk/about/our-work/hmd-workshops. To find out more information about Holocaust Memorial Day 2012 and order a free Campaign Pack, you can visit www.hmd.org.uk.

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DIARY DATES

Theos, in partnership with the **London School of Economics Forum for Religion**, is holding a public discussion on Thursday 20 October from 6.30 to 8.00pm entitled 'Is there a future for Multiculturalism?'. Speakers are due to be Dr Jonathan Chaplin, Claire Fox, Professor Tariq Modood and Dr Jenny Taylor, with Jane Little chairing the discussion. The event will be held at the Old Theatre, Old Building, London School of Economics, Houghton Street, London WC2. The event is free and open to all with no ticket required, but is on a first come, first served basis. For any queries email events@lse.ac.uk or call 020 7955 6043. Further information can be obtained from www2.lse.ac.uk/publicEvents/events/2011/20111020t1830vOT.aspx.

The **Coexistence Trust** is hosting an event at 7.00pm on Thursday 20 October to launch this year's Campus FaithHub programme (a campaigning and advocacy initiative, bringing leading speakers to campuses). The event is a film evening which will facilitate a discussion of faith, identity, ethnicity and multiculturalism between a panel of film experts and the audience and will take place in the Pearson Lecture Theatre, Pearson Building (North East entrance), University College London Gower Street, London WC1E 6BT. For further information, visit www.campusfaithhub.org or contact Harry at info@campusfaithhub.org or on 07791 942834.

The **Inter-faith Council for Wales** is hosting an event with Father Cyprian Consiglio, a Benedictine monk of the Carmaldolese Congregation from California, on Thursday 20 October. The event will take place from 8.00pm to 9.30pm at the Canton Uniting Church, Cowbridge Road East, Cardiff, CF5 1LQ. The evening will also include the launch of a new book by Gethin Abraham-Williams, 'Seeing the Good in Unfamiliar Spiritualities', and a performance from India Dance Wales. To further information and to attend, contact interfaithwales@gmail.com.

The **Christian Muslim Forum**, in partnership with **Las Casas Institute Oxford**, is holding a seminar entitled 'A Place for Faith Schools' on Saturday 22 October. The

event will be held at Blackfriars Hall, 64 St Giles, Oxford, OX1 3LY and will look at Christian and Muslim Faith Schools and their place in a mainly secular society. Speakers include Dr Liam Gearon, Senior Lecturer in Religious Education at the University of Oxford Department of Education, Maurice Irfan Coles, iCEO of Curriculum Enrichment for the Common Era (CE4CE) and Director of Islam and Citizenship Education project (ICE), Dr Julia Ipgrave, senior lecturer and researcher in religious education at Warwick University RE Research Unit and Professor Richard Pring, formerly Director of the Department of Educational Studies at Oxford University. Tickets cost £10 (£5 concessions). To book online, visit <http://christianmuslimforum.org/index.php/events/event-listing/623>.

The **Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter** begins its autumn series on 'Respecting Difference in Interfaith Dialogue – Engaging with the Other' on Sunday 23 October with talks by Rabbi Rachel Montagu and Sr Margaret Shepherd on the theme of 'Healing in the Bible'. This session will take place from 2.30pm to 4.15pm at the Sion Centre (34 Chepstow Villas, London W11 2QZ) and will look at how healing is described in Jewish and Christian texts. A donation of £8 is suggested. For further information or to book a place, please email sioncde@yahoo.co.uk or visit www.sistersofsion.org or telephone 020 7313 8286.

Guildford and Godalming Interfaith Forum is hosting an event on Monday 24 October at St Nicolas Parish Room, Millmead, Guildford. The event starts with refreshments at 7pm and the speaker will be Dr Richard Boeke, Unitarian Minister, Vice-President of the World Congress of Faiths and founder of the US Chapter of the International Association of Religious Freedom. He will be addressing this year's One World Week theme, 'Living for One World – for the Planet – for its People – and Acting for Change'. For further information, contact Carolyn Neogi on 01483 415773 or Bernard Jones on 01483 424257.

The **Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby** is hosting, as part of its 'Wellbeing and Spirituality' series, a talk by SaraJane Aris on Tuesday 25 October from 6.30pm to 8.00pm. Ms Aris is Head of Clinical Psychology Adult Services and Head of East Midlands Regional Spirituality Network and Derbyshire Healthcare Trust at the Radbourne Unit, and she will explore ideas around spirituality and the significant part it plays in wellbeing, particularly looking at its place in the mental health service. There is no charge and all are welcome. The Centre is in Kedleston Road, Derby DE22 1GB. For information on this and other Centre events please visit www.multifaithcentre.org.

The **Department of Theology and Religious Studies at Canterbury Christ Church University** and the **Franciscan International Study Centre** are jointly organising a conference in Canterbury entitled 'Praying for Peace: Spirituality and Interfaith Dialogue' on Thursday 27 and Friday 28 October. This two-day conference, involving a range of speakers from different faiths, is being held to commemorate the Meeting of Prayer for Peace in Assisi in 1986. There is a fee of £25 for one day or £40 for two days, which includes access to all sessions and tea/coffee. For information on the venue and registering to attend the event, visit www.canterbury.ac.uk/arts-humanities/theology-and-religious-studies/prayingforpeace.aspx.

The **Cornwall Faith Forum** and the **United Nations Association** will be running an inter faith devotional on 'celebrating friendship' on Sunday 30 October at 2pm. For further information, please contact Manijeh Smith on 07774 514 211 or Philomena Clifford on 07811 853 639.

The **Scottish Inter Faith Council** is holding an Annual Public Talk entitled 'In the Steps of St Francis' on Sunday 30 October. The presenter for this year's event is the Moderator of the Church of Scotland, The Right Reverend David Arnott, who will be sharing his reflections on his recent participation in the multi-faith event hosted by Pope Benedict the XVI and held in Assisi. The event will take place at the Lauriston Jesuit Centre, 28 Lauriston Street, Edinburgh, EH3 9DJ at 3.00pm. For further information, contact the Scottish Inter Faith Council on 0141 420 6982 or at enquiries@scottishinterfaithcouncil.org. Places have to be booked by Monday 24 October.

The **Greater London Presence and Engagement Network (PEN)** will be holding its 2011 PEN Lecture on Monday 31 October. This year's speaker is the Revd Dr Toby Howarth, Secretary for Inter Religious Affairs to the Archbishop of Canterbury and National Inter Religious Affairs Adviser for the Church of England, who will be speaking on 'What do we bring to the party? The mission of the church in a multi-faith neighbourhood'. The lecture will take place at 7.00 pm (with light refreshments served from 6.30 pm) at St Marylebone Parish Church, 17 Marylebone Road, London NW1 5LT. Admission costs £5 and places can be booked via pen@theology-centre.org.

The **Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum** will be holding a lunchtime lecture on Monday 7 November, from 12.45pm to 2.00pm. The speaker will be Professor Gallagher, Pro-Vice Chancellor at Queen's University, Belfast and his subject is 'Shared education – how faith schools could work together for the common good'. Advance registration is essential. For further details and to register, contact Edwin Graham, Secretary of the Forum, at edwin.graham21@gmail.com or on 07779 600254.

The **Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby's** 7th Annual Lecture will be given by Dr Ed Kessler, Executive Director of the Woolf Institute, on Monday 7 November on 'Changing Landscapes: Jews, Christians and Muslims in the UK today'. The event is free of charge but entry is by ticket only. The Centre is in Kedleston Road, Derby DE22 1GB. To apply for tickets, contact Adam Kemp at a.kemp@derby.ac.uk.

The **Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter** continues its autumn series of seminars on the theme of 'The Bible, the Land and its Peoples – hopes and challenges for the future' on Wednesday 9 November with Dr Jonathan Gorsky and Sr Margaret Shepherd nds speaking on 'Holding each other's chains – the narrative of the other'. Registration is from 10.30am with lectures beginning at 11.00am and ending at 3.30pm. Please bring a packed lunch. The suggested donation for the day is £15.00 The seminar will be held at the Sion Centre, 34 Chepstow Villas, London W11 2QZ. For further information or to book visit www.sistersofsion.org, email sioncde@yahoo.co.uk or telephone 020 7313 8286.

From 15 to 17 November at the **Abbey House Retreat** in Glastonbury there will be an informal gathering, 'Opening to the heart: Creating a new vision for interfaith encounter'. The event is open to any lay person or clergy member involved in grassroots inter faith work and is designed to share and explore new ways of working in the inter faith field. For costs and more details please contact Nigel Anthony on 07940 001394 or the Revd Alan Bayes on 01792 892603 or Interfaith Minister Annie Blampied at annie@annieblampied.co.uk.

Just This Day's central event this year takes place on Wednesday 23 November from 7.45am. The programme includes various events throughout the day, and will explore the benefits of silence and stillness, particularly in an educational context. The event will take place at St Martin in the Fields, Trafalgar Square, London. Further information is available from www.justthisday.org.

The **Three Faiths Forum** is holding an arts festival 'Faith in the City' at Red Gallery in Shoreditch in London from 21 November to 4 December. This will be an opportunity for people from all communities to get together to enjoy work by artists on Three Faiths Forum's Urban Dialogues programme. The festival will feature three exclusive inter faith art collaborations, created by the recipients of the Urban Dialogues Visual Artist Awards. Further information is online at www.threefaithsforum.org.uk/arts.

On Wednesday 30 November, 6.30 for 7pm, there will be an annual ecumenical and inter-faith service for peace and justice, organised by **CAFOD** (Catholic Agency for Overseas Development) at St Charles Borromeo Church, Jarratt Street Hull HU1 3HB. The service will include poems, readings, candle-lighting, children's choirs and music. For further information, contact Norah on 01482 802814 or at norah.hanson1@hotmail.co.uk.

Cardiff University and **St Michael's College, Llandaff** will be running a conference on 'Chaplaincy in a Multi-Faith Context' from Thursday 1 December to Friday 2 December. For further details please visit www.stmichaels.ac.uk/news-2011-chaplaincy-in-a-multi-faith-context-conference.php or contact Tina Franklin at tina.franklin@stmichaels.ac.uk or on 02920 563379.

The annual Younghusband Lecture of the **World Congress of Faiths** takes place on Wednesday 7 December at 6.30pm at the Liberal Jewish Synagogue, 28 St John's Wood Road, London NW8 7HA. Karen Armstrong will be talking on 'The Core of Religion'. Entry costs £5 for WCF and the Liberal Jewish Synagogue members and £10 for non-members. Tickets can be bought online at www.worldfaiths.org/index.php.

JAINpedia currently has an exhibition of manuscripts at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London until December 2012. To book a group tour contact info@jainpedia.org.

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For detailed information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Scottish Inter Faith Council: www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org

Inter-Faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org

For detailed information on events and projects in a number of the English regions see:

East of England: www.eefaithscouncil.org.uk

London: www.faithsforum4london.org

North East: www.nerfn.org

North West: www.faithnorthwest.org.uk

South East: www.se-faithforum.net

South West: www.faithnetsouthwest.org.uk

West Midlands: www.wmfaithsforum.org.uk

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 7 November with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer:

Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 8A Lower Grosvenor Place, London SW1W 0EN www.interfaith.org.uk
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IFN e-bulletin

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 10 January 2012 with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Material may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and future projects and events and so items are likely to be about:

- **forthcoming inter faith events likely to be of interest to people across the UK**
- **inter faith and multi faith projects where you are seeking input**
- **resources which you have recently developed which you think may be helpful to those working in the inter faith field**
- **brief information about any jobs you are advertising within inter faith organisations or for inter faith posts (eg local inter faith development worker; national faith community inter faith officer)**

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UK/NATIONAL UPDATES

Inter Faith Week in England, Wales and Northern Ireland 20–26 November

The third Inter Faith Week in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, took place between 20 and 26 November. Nearly 500 events are already known to have taken place - a significant increase over previous years. News on yet others is still coming in. The range of events held for the Week has been very wide, as was that of the types of bodies holding them. National faith community organisations and inter faith bodies, local places of worship, inter faith groups, schools and colleges, universities, hospitals, police forces, NGOs and many others were involved. Information about events can be found on the Inter Faith Week website at www.interfaithweek.org.uk.

The Week received a wide range of press coverage, both locally and nationally, including an article by Bess Twiston Davies in *The Times* on Saturday 19 November. Her article was entitled 'Seven days to strengthen ties between religions: Interfaith Week starts tomorrow and it is bigger than ever' and appeared in the main section on the 'Faith' page. *The Times* also had follow up material in two later articles. *The Church Times* and the *Jewish Chronicle* online were among the faith press which covered the Week. BBC coverage included the Sunday programme as well as a number of regional reports. See www.interfaithweek.org/media/2011-media-coverage for links to articles.

A video featuring Andrew Stunell MP, Minister for Cohesion at the Department for Communities and Local Government, was added to the Inter Faith Week website during the Week following an interview with him at an Inter Faith Week event on Thursday, www.interfaithweek.org/index.php/media/videos/andrew-stunell-mp, and we will be continuing to update the website as further news and coverage comes in.

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Inter Faith Week survey

Inter Faith Week highlights the contribution of faith communities to society and helps more people recognise the importance of dialogue and cooperation and get involved. We hope that any readers whose organisations held events for the Week in England, Wales and Northern Ireland will let us have their stories and reflections so that we can develop the Week even more effectively.

A short survey has been produced to help us gather in more information about events and to learn how well respondents feel the Week is meeting its aims. The survey also gives space to report on events held and offer reflections on how the Week might be further developed. It can be answered by event holders and also those who attended rather than held events. The final comment box on the survey can be used to tell us your Inter Faith Week story. The survey takes on average between 5 and 10 minutes to complete and can be found at www.smart-survey.co.uk/v.asp?i=44110tbqpm.

Information on a national faith communities event can be found [below](#).

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National faith communities Inter Faith Week event

On 21 November 50 senior religious figures, including national leaders, met for an inter faith conversation in London (Central Hall Westminster) to mark the first working day of Inter Faith Week. The meeting was organised by the Inter Faith Network for the UK and was chaired by its Co-Chairs, Bishop Alastair Redfern and Dr Manazir Ahsan.

The opening speakers were the Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth, Lord Sacks, and the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd and Rt Hon Dr Rowan Williams. Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, the Rt Hon Eric Pickles also offered his reflections from a Government perspective. These three opening reflections were followed by contributions to the conversation from a wide range of other participants.

The discussion explored aspects of how faith communities contribute to society; continue to develop strong patterns of inter faith understanding and practical cooperation; and engage with wider society for the common good.

Videos of the three opening presentations can be found on the Inter Faith Week website at www.interfaithweek.org/media/national-event-2111. The videos are also on Youtube, and can be reached via this page. There is further information about the Archbishop's presentation at www.lambethpalace.org and a DCLG news story about the event can be found at www.communities.gov.uk/newsstories/communities/2035473. The *Jewish Chronicle* has a piece on the story online at www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/58836/chief-rabbi-opens-week-interfaith-activity.

As background to the discussion, some questions about 'Living Well Together in Britain Today' were developed in consultation with the Officers and Executive Committee of IFN. They reflect many of the issues which have been coming to the fore at local and national levels (including within discussion at the IFN Executive Committee and within the Faith Communities Forum). These were sent to IFN members at the end of October and are also available on the Inter Faith Week website in the 'Resources' section at www.interfaithweek.org.uk/index.php/resources/living-well-together.

If your organisation used the questions during Inter Faith Week or is planning to do so at an event in the next few months, do keep us in touch with the reflections or conclusions which emerge from these. Similarly, if you are already engaged in programmes of work which touch on these themes, please do let us know. The person to contact is augustine.booth-clibborn@interfaith.org.uk.

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Scottish Inter Faith Week

Scottish Inter Faith Week took place from 27 November until 4 December. A list of events which took place across Scotland for the Week can be found at: www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org/resources/SIFW+FINAL4.doc

Established by the Scottish Inter Faith Council in 2004, the Week provides a chance for individuals, local inter faith groups and faith communities across the country to plan events that bring local people together to promote dialogue, understanding and co-operation between Scotland's diverse religious communities. The theme of Scottish Inter Faith Week this year was 'Belief in Dialogue'. Earlier this year, the Scottish Government produced the '*Belief in Dialogue: Religion and Belief Relations in Scotland Good Practice Guide*', which provides guidance on building good relations among and between religious and belief communities and individuals.

The launch of the week took place on Sunday 27 November at St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art in Glasgow. Deputy First Minister Nicola Sturgeon MSP and Humza Yousaf MSP gave key note addresses and there were readings and performances on the Week's theme from the major faith communities in Scotland, including the Tashi Lhunpo Tibetan Buddhist monks who created an intricate sand mandala at the museum during the week.

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Mitzvah Day

Mitzvah Day, a Jewish led day of social action, took place on 20 November. Around the world thousands of people took part in 'hands on' projects to support existing charities and to build stronger communities. Many events that were held involved people from a range of different faith communities. Further information can be found online at www.mitzvahday.org.uk.

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IFN Faith Communities Forum

The Faith Communities Forum, which brings together for discussion the national faith community bodies in membership of the Inter Faith Network, met on 14 December. It discussed: Inter Faith Week; a forthcoming survey of the inter faith work of national faith communities; next steps on IFN's 'Soundings' programme of exploring issues in the inter faith field; and a range of public policy developments.

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Near Neighbours launch

The Near Neighbours programme, an initiative of the Church Urban Fund, was officially launched on 14 November at an event attended by the Rt Hon Eric Pickles, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, and the Rt Revd Richard Chartres, Bishop of London. The event was attended by over 100 people, including senior faith leaders and clergy and community workers from the four areas covered by the Near Neighbours programme.

In his speech, a copy of which can be found at www.communities.gov.uk/speeches/corporate/nearneighbourslaunch, the Rt Hon Eric Pickles spoke about the long history of people of different faiths working alongside each other in East London, and the role of compassion, in all faiths, for the welfare of others. Speaking about the contribution that faith groups make to social

welfare, he said: "We see the value of the work that faith groups do - and recognise that a little support now can make a big difference not just in this financial year, but for many years to come. So I see the five million pounds we are putting in the Near Neighbours programme over the next three years as an investment in the future."

Other speakers at the event were Baroness Margaret Eaton, the Chairman of Near Neighbours; Ramesh Pattni, Co-Chair of the Hindu Christian Forum, and the Revd Alan Green, Vicar of St John on Bethnal Green.

The Revd Tim Clapton, the Near Neighbours coordinator in London, interviewed Fulma Begum from the DIVA women's group in Bethnal Green, one of the first projects to receive a Near Neighbours grant this year. The interview is available online at <http://soundcloud.com/andywalton/near-neighbours-launch>, and there is also a Church of England podcast at www.churchofengland.org/media-centre/follow-us-online/podcasts.aspx which features the event. More photos are available on the Near Neighbours Facebook page at www.facebook.com/nearneighbours.

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Council of Christians and Jews 70th anniversary

This November marked the start of the 70th Anniversary Year of the Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ). CCJ was the first national inter faith organisation in Britain. The idea for it was conceived in Manchester in November 1941, and the inaugural meeting took place under the auspices of Chief Rabbi Hertz and Archbishop William Temple – the Council's co-founders – in March 1942. A message from CCJ Chairman, the Rt Revd Nigel McCulloch, which gives more of the past history and present work and also looks to the future of CCJ can be found at: www.ccj.org.uk/Articles/284146/Council_of_Christians/About_Us/Latest_News/Mess_age_from_the.aspx. A copy of BBC Radio 4's *Thought for the Day* by the Chief Rabbi that was broadcast on 14 November to mark the start of the anniversary can be found online at www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00lvc3t. The anniversary was also featured on the BBC's Sunday Programme on 12 November. Further information from cjrelations@ccj.org.uk.

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25th Anniversary of the World Day of Prayer for Peace

Leaders from faith communities around the world were invited by His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the *World Day of Prayer for Peace* in Assisi on 27 October. The day, based on the theme *Pilgrims of Truth, Pilgrims of Peace*, started with a spiritual pilgrimage by train from Rome to Assisi with the Pope, after which he and other delegates presented their speeches at the Basilica of *Santa Maria degli Angeli*. Preceding the addresses, the delegates attended a screening of a short video recalling the 1986 meeting.

In the afternoon, a lunch shared by the delegates was followed by a period of silence for individual reflection and prayer, then all those present processed towards the Basilica of St Francis. The day concluded with a solemn renewal of the joint commitment to peace.

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Happy Christmas 4All

A campaign called Happy Christmas 4All has been initiated by Phoenix, which describes itself as a broad coalition of people of different faiths, atheists and agnostics and people from the left and right of the political spectrum. Responding to annual stories in the media about some local authorities 'banning Christmas', the campaign aims to demonstrate the diversity of non-Christian support and respect for Christmas as an important part of the cultural landscape of the nation; and to "surprise the wider public by debunking myths and assumptions that are widely held regarding some religious and ethnic minority groups".

This year, the campaign is mainly social media led, but is also promoting work on the ground – encouraging people to engage in charitable work such as helping out at soup kitchens, or visiting neighbours who may be lonely during the festive period.

More information can be found on Facebook and at www.christianmuslimforum.org/index.php/working-together/news/happy-christmas-4-all.

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Jain declaration with Catholic Church

The Trustees of the Institute of Jainology went to the Vatican City on 6 December to sign a Joint Declaration with the Roman Catholic Church. The declaration focuses on how the principle of *Ahimsa*, non-violence, provides the way to resolve most of the world's problems. The Declaration not only refers to *Ahimsa* as a way of preventing wars and visible physical acts of violence, but also to violence in the hearts and minds of humans and to the natural world.

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West Midlands Faiths Forum statement on disturbances

The West Midlands Faiths Forum (WMFF) issued a statement on 14 November reflecting on the series of disturbances across the country this summer. In it WMFF "encourages all faith communities to be more vocal about the values they hold and the relevance of these values for society as a whole." The statement also offers a five point strategy to address underlying issues behind the crisis. The strategy calls for coordinated steps to be taken by the community, police, national and local authorities. A copy of the press statement will be available shortly on the West Midlands Faiths Forum website at www.wmfaithsforum.org.uk. Further information is available from Jane Gallagher at j.gallagher@wmfaithsforum.org.uk.

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National Curriculum Review Update

On 20 January last year Mr Michael Gove, the Secretary of State for Education, announced a review of the National Curriculum in England. The review is looking at the National Curriculum for both primary and secondary schools. The new National Curriculum will set out only the essential knowledge that all children should acquire, and give schools and teachers more freedom to decide how to teach this most effectively and to design a wider school curriculum that best meets the needs of their pupils. A suite of documents - setting out the evidence gathered to date by the National Curriculum review - was published on 19 December 2011. These can be found at www.education.gov.uk/publications. They comprise:

- the report of the review's expert panel - setting out their recommendations in relation to the framework for the new National Curriculum;
- a summary of the evidence gathered about curricula for English, mathematics and science in high performing jurisdictions;
- a research report looking at subject breadth in the curricula used in other education jurisdictions; and
- a summary report of the responses to the review's call for evidence.

The Secretary of State also announced that in light of the far-reaching, and complex nature of the expert panel recommendations, and to allow for more radical reform of both curriculum and qualifications, he has decided to change the planned timetable for the introduction of the new National Curriculum. Instead of new curricula for English, mathematics, science and PE being introduced from 2013 - and any other subjects in 2014 - the new curriculum for all subjects will be introduced in 2014. A detailed timetable for the conduct of the remainder of the review - including a refreshed remit - will be published early in 2012.

The Ministerial statement can be found at: www.education.gov.uk/a00201092/written-ministerial-statement-on-the-national-curriculum-review. Those wishing to be in touch with the Department regarding the documents or other aspects of the Review can email NationalCurriculumReview.Feedback@education.gsi.gov.uk.

Whilst the review is called the National Curriculum Review, much of what it covers relates to the whole curriculum. Religious Education is a statutory subject but not part of the National Curriculum; it does, however, make a significant contribution to the whole curriculum. On this basis, the Religious Education Council for England and Wales has met with, and written to, Schools Minister Mr Nick Gibb to ask that Religious Education's contribution be taken into account and is awaiting a decision on whether RE can now become a part of the Review process.

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Civil Partnerships on Religious Premises

As reported in IFN's May e-bulletin, the Government ran a consultation earlier this year on *Civil partnerships on religious premises*. The proposals were designed to enable faith groups to opt in, to respect the different decision-making structures of different faith groups, to minimise the risk of successful legal challenges and to be straightforward for local authorities to operate. It would also be unlawful for a civil

partnership to be registered on religious premises that had not been approved for this purpose by the local authority. That approval would be given only with the approval of the faith group concerned.

The Government response to this consultation was published on 2 November. It contains a summary of responses to it, together with a copy of the draft regulations. The regulations have now been laid in both Houses. A copy of the Government response is available at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/equalities/lgbt-equality-publications/civilpartnership-response.

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Government Equalities Office 'quick start' guide to specific duties

The Government Equalities Office has published a 'quick start' guide intended to help public sector organisations understand the specific duties that support the public sector Equality Duty in the Equality Act.

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 came into force on 10 September 2011. They require public bodies to publish relevant, proportionate information demonstrating their compliance with the Equality Duty; and to set themselves specific, measurable equality objectives.

The guide can be found at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/equalities/equality-act-publications/equality-act-guidance/specific-duties.

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Faith Based Regeneration Network new appointments

FbRN Trustees have announced the appointment of Steve Miller and Jane Winter as FbRN's new Executive Directors. They will share the role on a 50:50 basis and will take up their appointments on 1 January 2012. Former Director, Dr Doreen Finneron MBE, retired at the end of the summer. Further information can be found at www.fbrn.org.uk.

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Review of charity law

Parliament built in to the Charities Act 2006 a requirement that the effectiveness of the Act should be reviewed after five years. Last month, the Government appointed Lord Hodgson to carry out the review and he is due to report to Parliament by June 2012.

Lord Hodgson's review is wide-ranging and, at a high level, will look at what charities need to have/be able to do in order to carry out their roles. On a more detailed level, he will look specifically at:

- fundraising, including regulation of public charitable collections, self regulation, fundraising statements and willingness of volunteers to fundraise;
- the role of the Charity Commission and challenging the Commission in the Charity Tribunal;
- reducing bureaucracy, including dual regulation of cross-border charities;
- the transparency and accountability of the sector, including accounting, reporting and audit procedures;
- thresholds for registration;
- facilitating social investment;
- the charity merger provisions of the 2006 Act; and
- methods of supporting and encouraging individuals to volunteer as trustees.

For details of the review process, visit www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/news/review-charity-law.

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Faith representation in a reformed House of Lords

A Joint Select Committee of both Houses of Parliament is currently scrutinising the Government's draft White Paper and draft House of Lords Reform Bill.

The membership of the House of Lords currently includes 26 Church of England Bishops and Archbishops on an *ex officio* basis, their right to sit and vote in the House being established by ancient usage and by statute. The Government has proposed that 12 Church of England Bishops should remain in an 80% elected Second Chamber, in line with the proposed reduction to 300 seats overall.

The Committee has received submissions of evidence from, among others, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, Chief Rabbi Lord Sacks, the Muslim Council of Britain and the Zoroastrian Trust Fund of Europe. The submission by the Archbishops does not oppose the proposed reduction in the number of bishops in a revised Second Chamber, but underlines some of the practical difficulties which would arise in consequence. It says that there is "a strong case for placing the Appointments Commission under a duty to ensure, among other things, the presence of those from across the United Kingdom who have or have had senior responsibility in Churches and faiths other than the established Church". The other three submissions also all strongly urge that there should be faith community representation in a revised Second Chamber. The submissions from the British Humanist Association and the National Secular Society both argue that there should be no reserved places for Church of England bishops or for any other religious representatives. Evidence submitted to the Joint Committee can be found online at www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/joint-select/draft-house-of-lords-reform-bill/publications/.

A House of Lords Library Note on religious representation in the House of Lords was produced at the end of November, which provides background information on the role of Bishops in the Second Chamber and in the context of the Government's proposals for reform of the House, it examines arguments both in favour and against their continued membership. It goes on to consider further issues arising from the Government's proposals, as well as arguments made regarding the formal

representation of other denominations or faiths in Parliament. The document can be found at www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/LLN-2011-036.

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Public Consultation by the Office for National Statistics on ‘Beyond 2011’

The 2011 Census may be the last one of its kind. The ‘Beyond 2011’ Programme of the Office for National Statistics was formally established in April “to investigate and assess alternative options for producing the population and socio-demographic data required by users in England and Wales”. Collaboration is taking place with the devolved administrations in Scotland and Northern Ireland to ensure that the obligation to produce consistent UK statistics is met. The outcome will have implications for all population-based statistics in England and Wales and potentially in the longer term for the statistical system as a whole.

The Programme will be carrying out a full assessment of all alternative approaches in order to allow the UK Statistics Authority to make recommendations to Parliament in 2014 on the best way forward. Its recommendations will be informed not only by an assessment of the statistical viability of the potential solutions but also by a consideration of user requirements, public burden and public acceptability. A range of statistical options will be considered under the following three ‘high level’ categories: Census-type solutions; Administrative data solutions; and Survey solutions.

The Office for National Statistics has launched an initial public consultation, which closes on 20 January 2012. The consultation document can be downloaded from the ONS website at www.ons.gov.uk/ons/about-ons/consultations/open-consultations/beyond-2011---public-consultation/index.html. It includes a brief discussion of the issues involved and guidance on the questions included in the brief questionnaire. The questionnaire itself can be accessed online via the same webpage and can be completed online or returned to beyond2011@ons.gov.uk by 20 January 2012.

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Independent Riots, Communities and Victims Panel

The Independent Riots, Communities and Victims Panel set up by the Deputy Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition in September to examine the causes of the riots in August and to study how communities responded to the violence and looting, has held consultation meetings in riot hit areas including Tottenham, Croydon, Ealing, Birmingham and Salford, as well as areas which did not experience disorder, such as Bradford and Sheffield. These visits enabled Panel members to speak to shopkeepers, local residents, voluntary organisations, young people, police forces and local councils to hear about the impact the riots had on their areas. Further visits are due to be organised to gather more evidence for the Panel’s final report which is expected in March.

The Panel released an interim report on 28 November, which can be found at www.5daysinaugust.co.uk.

On 5 December data was released from a study by the London School of Economics and *The Guardian* based on interviews with 270 rioters. Material from the study has been published in *The Guardian* and is available on *The Guardian's* website at www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2011/dec/05/anger-police-fuelled-riots-study.

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Expansion of National Citizen Service programme

It was announced on 5 October that the National Citizen Service (NCS) for 16-year-olds will be tripled in size to offer 90,000 places by 2014. NCS is a voluntary programme that gives 16-year-olds the opportunity to take on new challenges, learn new skills and make a difference in their communities. Young people from very different backgrounds are brought together into a team, with a common objective, to achieve something of which they can all be proud. Activities include outdoor team-based challenges; structured tasks to develop personal skills; visiting and helping groups in the local neighbourhood; and designing and delivering a social action project in consultation with local communities. Following the first pilot this summer, up to 30,000 places will be offered in 2012 and 90,000 by 2014.

More information can be found online at www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/news/major-expansion-national-citizen-service-16-year-olds.

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UK Chairmanship of the Council of Europe

The UK assumed the Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe from 7 November. The Government has said that, as a founder member of the organisation and the first country to ratify the European Convention on Human Rights, the UK takes the responsibility of the Chairmanship, which it last held in 1993, very seriously. It sees it as an opportunity for the UK to play a leading role in the vital work of the Council of Europe in promoting rights, democracy and the rule of law across the continent and has said that the overarching theme of its Chairmanship will be “the promotion and protection of human rights”. This will have a particular focus on developing practical measures in the following areas:

- a. reforming the European Court of Human Rights and strengthening implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights;
- b. supporting Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland’s programme of reform of the Council of Europe as an organisation;
- c. strengthening the rule of law;
- d. internet governance, including freedom of expression on the internet;
- e. combating discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity; and

- f. streamlining the Council of Europe's activities in support of local and regional democracy.

In addition to these priorities, the UK Chairmanship will work to progress other areas of important Council of Europe business.

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UN Periodic Review of Universal Human Rights

The Universal Periodic Review was established by the UN Human Rights Council, to improve the human rights situation on the ground in each of the 192 UN Member States. Every four and a half years, the human rights situation in all UN Member States is examined by other states. The UK is scheduled to be reviewed in May 2012. The UPR was established when the Human Rights Council was created on 15 March 2006, with 48 States reviewed each year.

The UN Human Rights Council now holds a public examination every four years to examine where governments are doing well and how they can improve. All UN Member States will be reviewed every four years. More detail on the process can be found at www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/BasicFacts.aspx. A helpful briefing note on the website of the Equality and Human Rights Commission explains the UPR process at www.equalityhumanrights.com/human-rights/universal-periodic-review/how-the-upr-works.

The Review is being overseen for the UK Government by the Ministry of Justice. The date for formal submissions has passed but it is anticipated that there will be engagement with NGOs, including faith communities, over recommendations resulting from the Review process.

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PROJECTS

Museum of World Religions

Discussions are in progress to establish a Museum of World Religions in Birmingham. The Museum is intended to be a shared space for dialogue and understanding between people from different faith communities as well as for people of no religious or faith affiliations. It will serve as an educational resource for learners of all ages, and provide an opportunity for individuals to explore the part that religion plays in contemporary life. The idea originated with the International Programme Director of the Museum of World Religions in Taiwan, but this UK project is independent of that institution.

Further information can be found online at www.museumofworldreligions.com.

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Railways and Religion faith trail

'Railways and Religion in the Western Dales' is an innovative new faith trail focusing on the places of worship associated with the railways of Cumbria, including the famous Settle-Carlisle line.

For hard copies of the trail visit the website of the Churches Trust for Cumbria at www.ctfc.org.uk/promoting-your-church-on-the-web.html or contact Gina Dowding on 07501 469374.

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The Big Jubilee Lunch

The Big Lunch next year takes place on Sunday 3 June and will form part of the official Diamond Jubilee celebrations as The Big Jubilee Lunch.

The Big Lunch aims to get as many people as possible across the UK to have a community lunch once a year. The project was launched in 2009 and since its inception thousands of lunches have taken place across a wide range of communities. Nearly 2 million people took part in The Big Lunch in 2011 and faith communities played a significant role.

For help and information with planning a faith based or inter faith Big Jubilee Lunch, you can email info@thebiglunch.com and request a free Big Jubilee Lunch Starter Pack, containing event guides, publicity materials and recipe ideas available from early 2012. You can find out more about The Big Jubilee Lunch and sign up to the newsletter at www.thebiglunch.com or call 0845 850 8181 to speak to one of The Big Lunch team.

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Olympic Bell Ringing

As part of the London 2012 Festival, which is the finale of the four-year Cultural Olympiad, a project is taking place called *Work No. 1197: All the bells in a country rung as quickly and as loudly as possible for three minutes*.

The project is an opportunity for everyone in the UK to take part in the festivities for the first day of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and the producers are particularly keen for faith communities, places of worship and multi faith groups to get involved.

The idea behind the project is that at 8.00am on Friday 27 July, thousands of people across the UK will simultaneously perform the three minute piece by Turner Prize-winning artist Martin Creed. The organisers hope that people from all walks of life will volunteer and will ring everything they can including hand bells, door bells, bicycle bells, church bells, town hall bells, sleigh bells, cow bells, school bells, last orders bells and dinner bells.

Further information can be found online at www.allthebells.com.

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Diamond Jubilee Beacons

As part of the celebrations to mark Her Majesty The Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012, it is planned to light 2,012 Beacons throughout the United Kingdom, Channel Islands, Isle of Man, the Commonwealth and UK Overseas Territories on Monday 4 June. Her Majesty The Queen will be lighting the National Beacon and a special book containing all the Diamond Jubilee Beacon locations will be given to The Queen after the event (in a similar way to the book produced for The Queen's Golden Jubilee Beacons in 2001, which now resides in The Royal Library at Windsor Castle).

The organisers of Diamond Jubilee Beacons hope that all faith communities in the UK will wish to take part in the project. Further information can be found online at www.diamondjubileebeacons.co.uk.

An updated version of the Guide to Taking Part, which contains information about the different types of beacons and how to become involved, can be downloaded from [www.diamondjubileebeacons.co.uk/Diamond Jubilee Beacons/DOWNLOAD.html](http://www.diamondjubileebeacons.co.uk/Diamond_Jubilee_Beacons/DOWNLOAD.html).

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Big Local Trust

In July it was announced that the Community Development Foundation (CDF) and its partners had been selected by the Big Lottery Fund to set up a new charitable organisation to manage the Big Local Trust and to start to develop and deliver the Big Local programme. Together the Trust and programme will provide support and at least £1m funding per area to 150 local areas in England over the next ten years, through a £200m endowment from the Big Lottery Fund.

Since the summer announcement, CDF has been working to set up the new organisation and has also started to work with the first 50 Big Local areas. CDF is supporting them to get people in their areas involved and to develop their thinking about how they would like to make their areas better places to live.

To find out the location of the Big Local areas, or for more information about the programme, visit www.cdf.org.uk/web/guest/biglocal. The latest Big Local newsletter, www.cdf.msgfocus.com/cdf/02122011.htm, outlines what Big Local areas have been doing so far. A Big Local Partnership Guide is also available on the site.

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Near Neighbours

The Near Neighbours programme is a three-year initiative, run by the Church Urban Fund, which aims to bring people together in diverse communities (in particular areas), helping them build relationships and collaborate to improve the local

community in which they live. It is a rolling programme with no deadlines but it is due to end in March 2013. Award amounts range from £250-£5000. The fund invests in environmental, social, cultural, artistic and sporting ideas which fulfill the criteria, which can be found at www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/grants.

The Fund is pleased to receive applications from people of different faith groups or none, working in partnership with people of different faiths and within the criteria. Details on how to apply can be found at www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/grants.

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Community First Fund and Community Organisers

The Community First fund provides small grants to community groups and local social action projects.

The fund is divided into two strands: £30 million is being used to provide small grants and the remaining £50 million is being used to match private donations invested in community endowment funds which will pay out money for small grants well into the future. The Community Development Foundation (CDF) is working with several organisations to deliver the Community First programme, including supermarket chain Asda.

A Community First website has been opened which invites people to sign their community up to receive support. Funding will be handed out by panels of local people. Further information can be found online at www.cdf.org.uk/web/guest/community-first.

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RESOURCES AND TRAINING

Hampshire Interfaith Network calendar

The 2012 Hampshire Interfaith Network calendar, entitled 'Creations', has been printed and is now on sale. This 32 page colourful calendar features designs such as drawings and paintings from infant and primary school children between the ages of 5 and 11 from across Hampshire. There are over 100 religious festivals and events and activities featured in the calendar from the nine faith groups represented.

The calendar, produced on a 'not for profit' basis, is available to purchase at £3.50 and single copies can be ordered at www.hants.gov.uk/shop/product.php?productid=16555&cat=291&page=1&js=n. Discounts are available on bulk orders, which can be ordered at www.hants-interfaith.org/cal.htm. For further information, email amjid.jabbar@hants.gov.uk.

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Right to Object? Conscientious Objection and Religious Conviction

Right to Object? Conscientious Objection and Religious Conviction was published by the British Humanist Association (BHA) on 3 November. This new pamphlet from the Humanist Philosophers Group of the BHA looks to philosophy and ethics to explore matters including liberty, equality, rights and religious conviction, and applies them to contemporary examples of religious, moral and conscientious objections.

Details of the publication can be found at www.humanism.org.uk/news/view/923.

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Innovative Voices in Education: Engaging Diverse Communities

The Society for Dialogue and Action has contributed to a book entitled *Innovative Voices in Education: Engaging Diverse Communities*. Diverse schools offer enriched academic and social environments, as students and families of different backgrounds and experiences provide a vibrant mosaic of insights, perspectives, and skills. The book contains insights, resources and strategies shared by 17 teachers, educational leaders and community activists around the world, who provide first-hand accounts of successes, challenges and lessons learned.

Further information can be found at www.innovativevoicesineducation.com and the book can be ordered on the website.

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Confronting anti-Semitism and Islamophobia

The Joseph Interfaith Foundation has produced a record of the proceedings of its one-day international conference in 2009, *Confronting anti-Semitism and Islamophobia: An exploration of their socio-historic and theological roots and similarities*. It was launched at the House of Lords on 24 October.

Full details of the 2009 conference can be found at www.josephinterfaithfoundation.org/joseph-main/previous/confronting.php. For information on receiving a copy of the book, please email info@josephinterfaithfoundation.org.

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FbRN mini courses

The Faith Based Regeneration Network (FbRN) produced a new resource to celebrate Inter Faith Week 2011. Following on from *Practical Spirit*, its

publication and video training programme launched last year, it launched two mini courses in Inter Faith Week 2011. The courses cover Community Development, and Equality and Diversity in faith based social action. Further information and worksheets can be downloaded from www.fbrn.org.uk/inter-faith-week-mini-courses.

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New version of 'Good Governance Code' for smaller voluntary organisations

Good Governance: a Code for the Voluntary and Community Sector ('the Code') has been written by the voluntary sector, for the sector. It is a practical and easy-to-use guide to help charities develop good practice. The Charity Commission supports the Code and encourages all charities – from large to small – to use it.

An independent Steering Group including representatives from the Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations, the Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators, the National Council for Voluntary Organisations and the Small Charities Coalition is responsible for developing the Code, with support from the Charity Commission. A second edition of it was published in October 2010, and a version for smaller organisations was published this month.

The Code is based on six key principles describing how an effective board provides good governance and leadership: understanding their role; ensuring delivery of organisational purpose; working effectively both as individuals and a team; exercising effective control; behaving with integrity; and being open and accountable. The Code explains why each principle is important, and gives examples of how to apply them in practice.

The Code Steering Group currently has no funding for a print-run of the Code, but it is hoping to obtain further funding in future. For the time being the Code is only available as a download, which can be found online at www.charity-commission.gov.uk/Charity_requirements_guidance/Charity_governance/Good_governance/governancecode.aspx.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS AND TENDERS

Church of Scotland Moderator's Medal

The Moderator's Medal is a competition to encourage young people to think about spirituality, faith and belief. For the 2012 award the theme is the Olympics so entries could, for example, be on the themes of competition, co-operation, peace, celebration, determination, hard-work, fair play or achievement.

The competition, run by the Church of Scotland, is open to young people from all faith communities, aged 10 to 18, living in Scotland. Entries can be from individuals or groups of up to four people. Entries can come in any format including artwork, writing, short films, music and other media. There are three age categories: 10 to 13; 14 to 15; and 16 to 18.

Entries must be made by 31 March 2012 either by e-mail to churchandsociety@cofscotland.org.uk or by post to Moderator's Medal Competition, Church and Society Council, Church of Scotland, 121 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 4YN. Entries must include: the name(s) of the author(s); contact information; which age category; and which school, youth club, or organisation is involved. Prizes include book tokens, cash and the Moderator's Medal. Winners and runners up will be invited to a prize giving ceremony at the General Assembly in May in Edinburgh.

Information can be found online at www.churchofscotland.org.uk/speak_out/education/articles/moderators_medal.

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Religious Difference and Conflict Conference – call for papers

Papers are currently being accepted for a conference at Stranmillis University, Belfast, from 5 to 7 September 2012, on 'Religious Difference and Conflict'. September 2012 marks the centenary of the signing of the Ulster Covenant, a dramatic political gesture rooted in the distinctive religious culture of the province. This conference is the culminating event in a research project 'Protestant-Catholic Conflict: Historical Perspectives and Contemporary Realities', funded under the Research Councils UK 'Global Uncertainties' programme. It will include the presentation of research from the project, and contributions from practitioners in conflict resolution as well as from academics are warmly welcomed.

Papers should address one or more of the following themes:

- the history and/or contemporary experience of religious difference in Ireland;
- Protestant-Catholic conflict in historical and international perspective;
- understanding and addressing religious tensions in the contemporary UK, continental Europe or North America (papers can be concerned with any significant religious group(s)); and
- case studies of religion, conflict and conflict resolution around the world (for example in Israel/Palestine, sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia).

Enquiries and proposals for papers (up to 300 words) should be submitted by email to Arts-Prot-RC-Project@open.ac.uk by 19 March 2012. Decisions on proposals will be communicated during April and the deadline for registration will be 31 May 2012. Thanks to the generosity of the AHRC and ESRC, who are funding the project, the conference fee (inclusive of meals and accommodation for the nights of 5 and 6 September) will be waived for participants with papers accepted for presentation.

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JOBS AND VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

St Ethelburga's Centre – Interns

The St Ethelburga's Centre is seeking to recruit two voluntary interns to help with specific projects. One is an evaluation project, for which they are seeking a self-motivated person with good language skills and an organised mind to work alongside another intern conducting and writing up telephone interviews, carrying out basic analysis of the data and writing a report. This would be a 4 or 5 day working week for approximately 6 to 8 weeks. The other is a marketing role, for which they are seeking a self-starter with a marketing background who can help them with essential research, collect and organise marketing data, help with producing written materials and updating their website and organise publicity. This would be a 3 to 5 day working week for a minimum of 2 months.

For further information, please contact Justine Huxley at justine@stethelburgas.org.

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Holocaust Memorial Day Trust – Faith Intern

Holocaust Memorial Day provides an opportunity for everyone to learn lessons from the Holocaust, Nazi persecution and subsequent genocides and apply them to the present day to create a safer, better future. As part of its strategic vision to 2015, the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust (HMDT) is expanding its outreach work to engage new audiences. HMDT is currently recruiting for a faith intern to support this expansion, who will join its team for five months for one day per week. The successful candidate will be responsible for auditing and assessing its faith and inter faith resources, advising on possible new resources or partnerships, and analysing current trends in faith dialogue in social media and other forms of communication. They will advise on a faith strategy for HMDT, extending until 2015.

For more information on the role, visit <http://hmd.org.uk/about/vacancies/faith-internship>.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Holocaust Memorial Day 27 January 2012

Holocaust Memorial Day provides an opportunity for everyone to learn lessons from the Holocaust, Nazi persecution and subsequent genocides and apply them to the present day to create a safer, better future. The theme for Holocaust Memorial Day 2012 is 'Speak Up, Speak Out'. The theme challenges everyone to speak out against racism and discrimination so that the lessons from the past are learned to create a safer, better future. To find out more information about Holocaust Memorial Day 2012 and order a free Campaign Pack, visit www.hmd.org.uk.

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World Interfaith Harmony Week February 2012

World Interfaith Harmony Week is a UN recognised Week, established in 2011, which takes place each year during the first week of February. The Week was proposed to the UN General Assembly by HM King Abdullah of Jordan, and the first UN World Interfaith Harmony Week took place in February 2011. Further information about the Week, including its aims and objectives, can be found on its website at <http://worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com>.

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DIARY DATES

The **Council of Christians and Jews North East** is screening the film 'Strangers No More' which tells the story of students from a school in Tel Aviv which has 832 pupils from 48 countries including Muslims, Christians and Jews, on Thursday 5 January at 7.00pm at the City Learning Centre, West Road, Newcastle upon Tyne. For more information visit www.nerfn.org/page/events-listing/ccj---strangers-no-more.

The **Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum** will be holding a Forum meeting on Wednesday 25 January from 7.30pm on the theme 'The Role of Righteous Muslims'. The meeting, which marks Holocaust Memorial Day, will feature a presentation from Mr Saleem Kidwai OBE, President of the Muslim Council of Wales. For more information email ni.interfaith@gmail.com or visit http://niinterfaithforum.org/index.php?view=details&id=20%3Athe-role-of-righteous-muslims&option=com_eventlist&Itemid=64.

Initiatives of Change UK, together with the **Civil Society Forum** and **The Cordoba Foundation**, plan to hold a one-day forum, in response to the recent riots in England, to understand different perspectives on the underlying civic, moral, political and social challenges and explore what we can do individually and collectively in response. The forum will take place on Wednesday 1 February and the keynote address will be given by Dr Peter Selby, President of the National Council for Independent Monitoring Boards and previously Bishop of Worcester, Bishop to HM Prisons and a Church Commissioner. The Forum will be held at the IofC UK centre at 24 Greencoat Place, London SW1P 1RD on 1 February 2012. The day will be a combination of inter-active presentations, and large and small group dialogue. More information can be found at www.uk.iofc.org/node/58572.

The **Urban Forum** and **NAVCA** are running a free workshop, 'Community Rights Made Real', in partnership with **South West Forum** and **The Zebra Collective** to brief people on the details, implications and practicalities of new rights under the Localism Act. The workshop takes place on Wednesday 22 February from 10.00am to 4.00pm. For more information see: <http://urbanforum220212-eorg.eventbrite.co.uk/?ebtv=F>.

JAINpedia currently has an exhibition of manuscripts at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London until December 2012. To book a group tour contact info@jainpedia.org.

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For detailed information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Scottish Inter Faith Council: www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org

For detailed information on events and projects in a number of the English regions see:

East of England: www.eefaithscouncil.org.uk

London: www.faithsforum4london.org

North East: www.nerfn.org

North West: www.faithnorthwest.org.uk

South East: www.se-faithforum.net

South West: www.faithnetsouthwest.org.uk

West Midlands: www.wmfaithsforum.org.uk

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 10 January 2012 with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer:

Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.



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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 15 February with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Material may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and future projects and events and so items are likely to be about:

- forthcoming inter faith events likely to be of interest to people across the UK
- inter faith and multi faith projects where you are seeking input
- resources which you have recently developed which you think may be helpful to those working in the inter faith field
- brief information about any jobs you are advertising within inter faith organisations or for inter faith posts (eg local inter faith development worker; national faith community inter faith officer)

Disclaimer: Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

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UK/NATIONAL UPDATES

A Year of Service

All faith communities have within their ethical teaching the values of compassion, care and social justice. One of the ways that their members put these values into everyday practice is through volunteering. In 2012 a special project called 'A Year of Service' will be taking place. In each month, for A Year of Service, faith communities will be hosting a day or days of volunteering and inviting people of other faiths and non-religious beliefs to join in. There will also be workplace volunteering opportunities. The Year provides an opportunity for marking in a practical way the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty The Queen – of whose reign service has been a key theme.

The Year, which recognises and celebrates the role of faith in inspiring charitable and social action work, is supported by the Department for Communities and Local Government and has been developed with the assistance of a multi faith Reference

Group and a Steering Group. IFN is represented on the Steering Group advising on aspects of the Year. Its role is focused on helping to bring the Year to the attention of local, regional and national inter faith bodies and advising on, and helping enable, their participation.

The days around which the programme is built have been chosen through discussion within its Reference Group and reflect both religious festivals and dedicated faith-based special volunteering 'Days'. Other faith groups around the country can choose to hold their own volunteering events linked to other days.

A press release about the project was issued on 13 January by the Government and this can be found at www.communities.gov.uk/news/newsroom/2065499. In this, Eric Pickles said: "Faith is a great motivator, and throughout the year people from different faiths regularly give something back, volunteering for projects that benefit individuals in need or their local neighbourhood... We want to help them do what they do best, recognising that just a little support can make a big difference. The Year of Service is a chance to link these great efforts together throughout the year... [projects will be] led by individual faith communities but involving people of all faiths and none."

Further information about the project can be found at www.ayearofservice.org.uk. The site, which is owned and managed by Mitzvah Day for A Year of Service, will include ideas for activities, case studies of existing projects and background information on why volunteering is important to each featured faith community.

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Inter Faith Week

Event Photos

The IFN office would be pleased to receive photographs of Inter Faith Week 2011 events. These may be drawn on for use on the Inter Faith Week website or in reporting on or promoting the Week. If readers would like to send pictures, these can be emailed to enquiries@interfaithweek.org.

Survey

The survey for Inter Faith Week 2011 will continue to be available online at www.smart-survey.co.uk/v.asp?i=44110tbqpm until Tuesday 31 January. The survey has been produced to help gather information about events and to learn how well respondents feel the Week is meeting its aims. It also gives space to report on events held and offer reflections on how the Week might be further developed. It can be answered by event holders and also those who attended rather than held events. The IFN office hopes that the final comment box on the survey will be used for respondents to tell their Inter Faith Week story. The survey takes on average between 5 and 10 minutes to complete.

2012 dates

Dates for Inter Faith Week 2012 will be announced shortly.

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Draft Charter for the Coroner's Service – response to consultation

From May to December 2011 the Government ran a consultation on the draft charter for the Coroner's service aimed at coroners, local authorities and all those with an interest in the processes and practice of the Coroner's Service. The original draft of the charter is available for download at www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/consultations/draft-charter-coroner-service.pdf.

The Government has now published the 135 responses received to this consultation in the form of a report. Relevant to faith and inter faith organisations was the request from a number of faith-based organisations that family members might request less invasive post-mortem examinations instead of conventional ones. The report outlines the limited availability of the technology required to perform such operations to the Coroner's service and the lack of protocol and guidelines on the use of non-invasive techniques as reasons to not include guidance to this effect in the Charter. More detailed information on this point is available at paragraphs 28 to 30 of the report on the consultation, which is available to download at www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/consultations/coroner-draft-charter-response.pdf.

For any further information, visit www.justice.gov.uk/consultations/cp52011.htm.

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The 'Role of Faith Groups' in the Big Society

In December the House of Commons Public Administration Select Committee published its 17th report entitled *The Big Society* to examine 'what the Big Society project means for Whitehall and whether the implementation of this policy is on track to succeed.' The report considers in great depth the ways in which government, both national and local, engages with the 'Big Society' and tackles the rolling out of policies that fall under this term. It goes on to 'propose a number of steps to change the way the Civil Service and local authorities commission and manage contracts for public services.'

Of particular relevance is the section entitled 'The Role of Faith Groups' (paragraphs 137 – 143), which notes a breadth of views on the participation of faith groups in the delivering of local public services including those of the Chief Rabbi, Lord Sacks, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of Leicester, Charles Wookey (on behalf of Archbishop Vincent Nicholls) and Andrew Copson, Chief Executive of the British Humanist Association. The report recognises the potential benefits of faith groups helping to deliver public services but cautions against the exclusion of those who work in multi-faith contexts or those of non-religious beliefs who can also help in this way.

The full report can be downloaded at www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/public-administration-select-committee/publications.

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EHRC Human Rights Measurements Framework

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has published the Human Rights Measurement Framework (HRMF), a new set of indicators that brings together information and evidence for analysing and assessing human rights in Britain. The framework is a set of indicators, based on those developed by the office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, that will help the Commission, the Government, public bodies, NGOs and others with an interest in human rights, to evaluate their compliance with, and progress towards, the implementation of human rights in Britain.

The HRMF is made up of a broad range of information including the statutory, regulatory and public policy framework for protecting human rights; case law outcomes; concerns highlighted by domestic and international human rights monitoring bodies; allegations raised by NGOs and media reports; and a wide range of statistical sources. It covers both the requirements of the UK Human Rights Act and rights that are drawn from international conventions the UK government has signed up to, such as the International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights.

For more information and to download a copy of the HRMF, visit www.equalityhumanrights.com/human-rights/policy-and-research/human-rights-measurement-framework.

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New arrangements for information, advice and support on discrimination and human rights

The Government is commissioning a new Equality Advisory and Support Service to help individuals in England, Scotland and Wales who have problems with discrimination. The new service will be open to all members of the public, regardless of their situation. It will be a source of expert advice and support, with a particular focus on supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals to help find quick and informal solutions to their problems wherever possible.

It will consist of a telephone advice service for advice on discrimination and a lay independent advocacy service that will provide support for people who need face to face help. If individuals do not have access to legal counsel and are in need to support this advocacy service will help them in preparing to issue a claim. This service is designed to run alongside existing legal aid available under the Equalities Act 2010. The Government will no longer be solely funding legal aid to help those who are discriminated against.

For more information and to download more detailed information on the new arrangements, visit www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/equalities/government-equality/New-service-further-info.

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Convention for the Protection of National Minorities – Opinion on the UK and Comments

On 4 January 2012 the UK Government released their comments on the Council of Europe's Advisory Committee on the Convention for the Protection of National Minorities' third opinion on the United Kingdom's implementation of the Convention in December 2011.

In comments on Article 6 of the Convention (Fighting Racism and Intolerance) the UK Government commented on the issue of Islamophobia (as many British Muslims belong to minority communities) saying: 'The Government is determined that events involving the Muslim community should not be exploited by anyone as an excuse to start blaming, persecuting, or preaching inflammatory messages about any particular group.' The broader issue was underlined at the end of the section: 'The Government is fully committed to engaging with faith and non-faith communities to help build a more inclusive, tolerant and cohesive society.'

In comments on Article 8 of the Convention (Religion) the UK Government emphasised that UK Religious Education was based in the needs and traditions of the local community with Agreed Syllabi being determined with input from SACREs. On the central prescription of the teaching of Religious Education the Government commented: 'that central prescription and the uniformity it implies do not necessarily produce the best outcomes. We are therefore reducing central prescription on schools - including guidance on what and how they should teach.'

To download the Committee's third opinion, visit www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/minorities/3_FCNDocs/PDF_3rd_OP_UK_en.pdf.

To download the UK government's comments on the opinion, visit www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/minorities/3_FCNDocs/PDF_3rd_Com_UK_en.pdf.

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Equality and Human Rights Commission update guidance

In December the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) published revised versions of their public sector equality duty guides on: Equality information and the equality duty; Equality objectives and the equality duty; and Engagement and the equality duty. These revised editions reflect the final public sector specific equality duty regulations that came into force in September 2011 (and were noted in IFN's September e-bulletin), and they replace the first edition of the guides published in January 2011. These guides are for England and non-devolved bodies in Scotland and Wales, (the guides for Wales have been updated in January and the guides for Scotland being updated currently).

The guides are available to download from the EHRC website at: www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-equality-duty/guidance-on-the-equality-duty.

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Charity Commission Strategic Plan

In December the Charity Commission, the regulator for charities in England and Wales, published its Strategic Plan for 2012-2015.

The Plan sets out the Commission's two key strategic priorities for the period, which are: Developing the compliance and accountability of the charity sector; and Developing the self-reliance of the charity sector.

It also sets out the regulator's new Vision, Mission and Values, with the Vision being 'Charities you can support with confidence'.

The publication of the Strategic Plan follows the Commission's Strategic Review consultation which began in October 2010 and involved numerous charities, professional advisors, umbrella bodies and members of the public.

A copy of the Plan can be found online at [www.charitycommission.gov.uk/About us/About the Commission/strategic plan 2012.aspx](http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/About_us/About_the_Commission/strategic_plan_2012.aspx).

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Voluntary Sector Compact – National Audit Office findings

The National Audit Office (NAO) has published the findings from its inquiry into how Government departments are implementing the Compact with the voluntary sector in their work.

The inquiry - announced as part of the accountability and transparency measures which accompanied the renewed Compact in 2010 - highlights some key issues and makes a number of recommendations to improve departmental activities. The report's findings include that:

- the Compact is supported by Government departments and there are good examples of it being applied
- leadership is not always visible in Government departments, with recommendations that more needs to be done to increase "visible promotion and oversight ... by senior department officials"
- 40% of consultations issued since the renewed Compact was launched had shorter than 12 week time periods
- there are concerns with the lack of clarity about the Office for Civil Society's role regarding the Compact, with the lack of a full time staff member dedicated to it.

The report, www.nao.org.uk/publications/1012/national_compact.aspx, sets out a number of recommendations to address these concerns.

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PROJECTS

Women's Interfaith Media Network

The Women's Interfaith Media Network (WIMN) is a project which aims to provide information and resources to help women from different faith communities to share their views and concerns, and interact with the media more effectively.

WIMN currently has members from several different faith backgrounds and locations and provides a platform for women of all faiths and none to share information and experiences, as well as an opportunity to learn new skills. Further information about WIMN, including how to join, can be found online at www.wimn.org.uk/Introduction.html.

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INFAC

The Tony Blair Faith Foundation and Tzedek are launching a new Interfaith Action Campaigns Programme called INFAC on 5 February. The programme aims to recognise and celebrate the key role of women in society to end poverty and offers the opportunity for people to be trained by some of the leading experts in international development, community engagement and advocacy to produce their own campaign.

The programme is free and takes place over 8 weeks, with meetings every Wednesday from 7pm to 9pm.

Places on the programme are limited. To sign up or get more information, contact charlotte@tzedek.org.uk or call 020 7443 5167 by 27 January.

Further information can be found online at www.tzedek.org.uk/events/past_events/infact_interfaith_action.

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Reading at St Ethelburga's

'Reading Matters' is a weekly multi-faith reading group run by the St Ethelburga's Centre in London.

Each week, a poem, tract, short story or prose piece will be at the centre of a 90-minute discussion. The group is led by professional writer Marina Benjamin and seeks to nurture understanding between people from different faith backgrounds.

There is no extra reading required either before or after the sessions, which take place every Wednesday at the St Ethelburga's Centre from 4pm to 5.30pm. Group members will be expected to make a donation of £4. For further information and to register, email Marina Benjamin at marinab52@yahoo.com.

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Art 4 Action

Art 4 Action is a project being run in Birmingham by the Birmingham Council of Faiths and Birmingham Faiths Act Fellows. The project is to encourage young people under the age of 25 to create a work of art to express concerns about malaria from a faith perspective. The project includes a number of workshops.

Art 4 Action runs from now until 30 March. For further information and details of particular events, contact i.kaur@springfieldproject.org.uk (Faiths Act Birmingham) or pjrookes@gmail.com (Birmingham Council of Faiths).

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Inter faith youth theatre group

The Tony Blair Faith Foundation, Tzedek and the Central School of Speech and Drama are launching an Inter Faith Youth Theatre Group for anyone aged 18-25. The aim of the group is to make a difference, to use theatre as a medium to share experiences with others and to show that relations between different faiths are not all negative.

No experience of theatre is necessary to be involved. Becoming a member of the group will involve weekly workshops; rehearsals of the play created and a performance in week commencing 16 April.

The project is free to all participants but places are limited. For further information or to register an interest in joining, contact Maryam Duale at Tzedek on 0207 443 5167 or at maryam@tzedek.org.uk.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Social Action Fund – Second round open

The Social Action Fund is a grant fund of over £20 million managed by the Social Investment Business on behalf of the Office for Civil Society. The Fund aims to

inspire organisations to create new social action opportunities; encouraging people to give what they have, be it time, money, assets, knowledge or specific skills.

The second application window opened on 9 January and all applications have to be received by noon on 3 February.

The Social Investment Business website notes that successful applications will address the following themes:

- Encourage people to come together in their locality to support each other. Projects that scale proven models to regional or national levels, or replicate them in other localities. Some priority will be given to models that encourage those who do not traditionally get involved as volunteers. They are also particularly interested in models that offer people the opportunity to give time and/or money to activities that deliver a public benefit and complement the public sector.
- Focus on the different life stages of volunteering. Programmes that target the following will be favoured:
 - building a culture of participation among school children and university graduates
 - encouraging professionals who have retired or are on point of retirement to use their experience and skills for community/public benefit
 - inspiring and supporting National Citizen Service graduates who want to continue contributing to their communities through social action projects.

In order to download the Social Action Fund application pack, interested groups first need to complete the online eligibility checklist. This can be found on the Social Investment Business website at www.thesocialinvestmentbusiness.org/our-funds/social-action-fund.

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Near Neighbours

The Near Neighbours programme is a three-year initiative, run by the Church Urban Fund, which aims to bring people together in diverse communities (in particular areas), helping them build relationships and collaborate to improve the local community in which they live. The programme currently operates in a limited number of geographical areas: East and South East London, North Birmingham, Leicester, Bradford, Burnley and Oldham.

It is a rolling programme with no deadlines but it is due to end in March 2013. Award amounts range from £250-£5000. The fund invests in environmental, social, cultural, artistic and sporting ideas which fulfill the criteria, which can be found at www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/grants.

The Fund is pleased to receive applications from people of different faith groups or none, working in partnership with people of different faiths and within the criteria. Details on how to apply can be found at www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/grants.

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Big Local Trust

The Community Development Foundation (CDF) is leading a consortium of organisations as the Big Local Trust to manage and deliver the Big Local funding programme. The Trust and programme will provide support and at least £1m funding per area to 150 local areas in England over the next ten years, through a £200m endowment from the Big Lottery Fund.

Since the announcement in July 2011, CDF has started to work with the first 50 Big Local areas, which all received 'round 1' funding in response to applications from community organisations or groups of community organisations on behalf of their 'local area' to the Big Lottery Fund. Those 'local areas' that received 'round 1' funding applied for 'round 2: getting people involved' funding from the Big Local Trust in late summer 2011. This funding can be used to engage their local area with the Big Local project, including developing 'local partnerships' of eight or more local organisations to deliver the Big Local project to their local area, and to run Big Local projects. There has been no further information as yet on 'round 3' or other funding made available to those 50 Big Local areas, nor is there any information on when applications will open for any new 'local areas'.

To find out the location of the Big Local areas, or for more information about the programme, visit www.cdf.org.uk/web/guest/biglocal. The latest Big Local newsletter (December 2011) is available for download from here: www.cdf.msgfocus.com/cdf/02122011.htm. A Big Local Partnership Guide, press releases and other documents are also available on the site.

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Community First Fund and Community Organisers

The Community First fund provides small grants to community groups and local social action projects.

The fund is divided into two strands: £30 million is being used to provide small grants and the remaining £50 million is being used to match private donations invested in community endowment funds which will pay out money for small grants well into the future. The Community Development Foundation (CDF) is working with several organisations to deliver the Community First programme, including supermarket chain Asda.

A Community First website has been opened which invites people to sign their community up to receive support. Funding will be handed out by panels of local people. Further information can be found online at www.cdf.org.uk/web/guest/community-first.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS AND TENDERS

Sacred Practices of Everyday Life – Call for papers

The Religion and Society Programme of the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Economic and Social Research Council is holding a conference in May on 'Sacred Practices of Everyday Life' at Edinburgh University.

The purpose of the conference is to explore new evidence, analysis and theory concerning the sacred practices of everyday life, such as roadside shrines, divorce parties, prayer cairns, naming ceremonies and healing rituals. The conference will showcase thirty or so projects funded by the Religion and Society Programme which have new findings in this area and papers are also being sought. There is a particular focus on the varied ways in which the life course is being re-enchanted in the 21st century, but papers looking at other eras and/or larger forms of sacred practice (such as civic rituals) are also welcome. The scope is global.

The conference streams are: Formation and Cultivation; Life-styles and (After)Death-styles; Sex, Life and Love; Gods, Spirits and the Sacred; Fate, Destiny and the Future; Identity, Solidarity and Conflict; Suffering, Healing and Well Being; and Objects, Language, Rituals and Consumption.

Individual paper proposals (max. 200 words) should be submitted to Peta Ainsworth, p.ainsworth@lancaster.ac.uk, by 29 February.

Further details on the conference can be found online at www.religionandsociety.org.uk/events/programme_events/show/sacred_practices_of_everyday_life.

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JOBS AND VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

Woolf Institute – Development Officer

The Woolf Institute in Cambridge (www.woolf.cam.ac.uk) examines past, present, and future relations between Jews, Christians, and Muslims in order to advance understanding of the public good. It is currently seeking to recruit an ambitious, creative, self-starter to establish a development office, support staff with research and other funding applications, and contribute to raising the funds necessary to meet annual overhead costs.

The successful candidate will have strong communication and organisational skills with a track record of successful fundraising, both through grant applications and other efforts. The successful candidate should also have the ability to interact with

diverse groups, including academics, government officials and religious and business leaders and be at ease in a cross-cultural setting.

The post is based in Cambridge and the salary will be between £27,000 and £32,000. Details of the post can be downloaded from www.cfappointments.com (click on Vacancies). Applications can be made online with a CV and covering letter to Sara Kyte at CF Appointments. The closing date is 23 January.

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Bristol Multi-Faith Forum - Development Worker

Bristol Multi-Faith Forum is seeking to recruit a Development Worker to support the work of the Forum, enabling it to be a representative voice for the faith communities of Bristol. The Development Worker will help to build the capacity of members of faith groups to engage with the Forum in public activities across the city.

The salary for the post is £12,736 annually for 18.5 hours per week. The closing date for applications is 31 January and interviews will be held on 15 February.

For application materials, email info@faithnetsouthwest.org.uk, quoting 'BMFF Development Post', or phone 0117 955 7430 with inquiries.

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St Ethelburga's Centre - Volunteers

St Ethelburga's are seeking a voluntary intern to work part time for three months helping to evaluate volunteer management. The work will involve collecting survey data and interviewing volunteers. For more information, email justine@stethelburgas.org.

St Ethelburga's are also seeking a volunteer to work two days per week or equivalent to help manage their new contacts database. The work will involve data input and some internet research. For more information email the marketing adviser, Zaila, at zailaidrus@gmail.com.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Holocaust Memorial Day 27 January 2012

Holocaust Memorial Day provides an opportunity for everyone to learn lessons from the Holocaust, Nazi persecution and subsequent genocides and apply them to the present day to create a safer, better future. The theme for Holocaust Memorial Day

2012 is 'Speak Up, Speak Out'. The theme challenges everyone to speak out against racism and discrimination so that the lessons from the past are learned to create a safer, better future. To find out more information about Holocaust Memorial Day 2012 visit www.hmd.org.uk.

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Poverty and Homelessness Action Week 28 January to 5 February

Poverty and Homelessness Action Week, jointly organised by Church Action on Poverty, Housing Justice and Scottish Churches Housing Action, brings together Homelessness Sunday and Poverty Action Sunday.

The Week aims to: raise awareness of the issues of poverty and homelessness in the UK; raise funds for projects and campaigns which work to tackle poverty and homelessness; and involve people in campaign actions that tackle the causes of poverty and homelessness. Further information, including details on events and resources can be found on its website at www.actionweek.org.uk/html/about.html.

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World Interfaith Harmony Week First week of February

World Interfaith Harmony Week is a UN recognised Week which takes place each year during the first week of February. The Week was proposed to the UN General Assembly by HM King Abdullah of Jordan, and the first UN World Interfaith Harmony Week took place in February 2011. Further information about the Week, including its aims and objectives, can be found on its website at <http://worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com>.

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DIARY DATES

The **Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter** are beginning their Spring Seminar series on The Story of Holy Week with a seminar on Tuesday 24 January on 'The Person and Mission of Jesus'. The seminar takes place from 10.30am to 3.30pm at the Sion Centre, 34 Chepstow Villas, London W11 2QZ. The speakers will be Rabbi Henry Goldstein and Sr Margaret Shepherd. There is a suggested donation of £15 and participants are asked to bring a packed lunch. For further information or to book, telephone 020 7313 8286/020 7727 3597 or email sioncde@yahoo.co.uk.

The **Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum** will be holding a Forum meeting on Wednesday 25 January from 7.30pm on the theme 'The Role of Righteous Muslims'. The meeting, which marks Holocaust Memorial Day, will feature a presentation from Saleem Kidwai OBE, President of the Muslim Council of Wales. For more information email ni.interfaith@gmail.com or visit http://niinterfaithforum.org/index.php?view=details&id=20%3Athe-role-of-righteous-muslims&option=com_eventlist&Itemid=64.

Hull and East Riding Interfaith will be holding a Double Discussion Forum on Tuesday 31 January at 5.00pm. The event, which takes place at Committee Room 1, Ground floor, at the Guildhall in Hull, will include discussion on the riots which took place in parts of England in the summer, and the possible causes and consequences of these; and also on the Prime Minister's speech on multiculturalism and integration at the Munich Security Conference last year. For further information, email jackie.lukes@heri.org.uk or phone 01482 445728.

The **Big Lottery Fund** and **Faith to Engage North East** are jointly organising two funding advice sessions in the North East region. The seminars are for any faith or belief organisation representatives who would like to find out more about funding opportunities to support their projects. The seminars will take place in Newcastle-upon-Tyne on Tuesday 31 January and in Stockton-on-Tees on Wednesday 1 February. For further information, see <http://faithtoengage.net/events/2012/1/31/big-lottery-fund---funding-advice-sessions-in-ne>.

The **World Congress of Faiths**, the **International Association for Religious Freedom**, **Religions for Peace (UK)** and **United Religions Initiative (UK)** are holding an event to mark World Interfaith Harmony Week on Wednesday 1 February on the theme of 'Healing the World'. The event will take place from 12.30pm to 5.00pm at London Central Mosque, 146 Park Road, London NW8 7RG. 12.30pm until 3.00pm will focus on Abrahamic traditions and 3.00pm until 5.00pm will focus on Eastern traditions. There is no charge to attend. To register, email dvd.horner@googlemail.com.

Initiatives of Change UK (IoC UK), together with the **Civil Society Forum** and **The Cordoba Foundation**, plan to hold a one-day forum, in response to the recent riots in England, to understand different perspectives on the underlying civic, moral, political and social challenges and explore what people can do individually and collectively in response. The forum will take place on Wednesday 1 February and the keynote address will be given by Dr Peter Selby, President of the National Council for Independent Monitoring Boards and previously Bishop of Worcester, Bishop to HM Prisons and a Church Commissioner. The Forum will be held from 10.00am to 5.00pm at the IoC UK centre at 24 Greencoat Place, London SW1P 1RD. The day will be a combination of inter-active presentations, and large and small group dialogue. More information can be found at www.uk.iofc.org/node/58572.

York Interfaith will be meeting on Wednesday 1 February at 7.30pm. The theme of the meeting will be 'Learning to Listen - open to being changed: talking theology' with

speaker Michael A Chester. For further information, contact Charlie Bridge on 01904 655116.

Cumbria Interfaith Forum will be meeting on Wednesday 1 February in Penrith. Cumbria Deputy Chief Constable Stuart Hyde will be the speaker. For further information, email cameronbutland@btinternet.com.

The **Jubilee Debt Campaign Multifaith project** is organising a conference on Thursday 2 February, as part of World Interfaith Harmony Week, on 'Faith in Justice'. The conference will focus on Dharmic faiths' attitude to global poverty and will take place at the Nishkam Centre, Soho Road, Birmingham, B21 9BH from 10.00am until 3.00pm. To book, contact Audrey Miller on 0121 4714175 or email jubileedebt@blueyonder.co.uk.

The **Religion and Society Programme of AHRC/ESRC**, with the assistance of **Theos**, is hosting a series of Westminster Faith Debates from February to May. The first event takes place on Wednesday 8 February from 5.30pm to 7.00pm at RUSI, 61 Whitehall, London SW1A 2ET. The topic is 'Religious identity in 'superdiverse' societies' and the speakers include Trevor Phillips, Dominic Grieve, Kim Knott and Therese O'Toole. For further information, visit www.religionandsociety.org.uk/faith_debates. To register, email p.ainsworth@lancaster.ac.uk.

The second event in the **Westminster Cathedral Interfaith Group** discussion series on the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales document, *Meeting God in Friend and Stranger* takes place on Wednesday 15 February. The event runs from 4.00pm to 5.00pm in the Hinsley Room, Morpeth Terrace, London SW1P 1QW on the topic of 'The changing face of Britain'. The document costs £5.95 and it would be helpful to have read the relevant chapter in advance of the meeting. For further information, contact John Woodhouse on 07908 888 586.

The **Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter** continue their Spring Seminar series on The Story of Holy Week with a seminar on Tuesday 21 February on 'The Trial of Jesus: What is truth?'. The seminar takes place from 10.30am to 3.30pm at the Sion Centre, 34 Chepstow Villas, London W11 2QZ. The speakers will be Rabbi Mark Solomon and Ian Boxall. There is a suggested donation of £15 and participants are asked to bring a packed lunch. For further information or to book, telephone 020 7313 8286/020 7727 3597 or email sioncde@yahoo.co.uk.

The **Urban Forum** and **NAVCA** are running a free workshop, 'Community Rights Made Real', in partnership with **South West Forum** and **The Zebra Collective** to brief people on the details, implications and practicalities of new rights under the Localism Act. The workshop takes place on Wednesday 22 February from 10.00am to 4.00pm. For more information, visit <http://urbanforum220212-eorg.eventbrite.co.uk/?ebtv=F>.

The second event in the Westminster Faith Debates hosted by the **Religion and Society Programme of AHRC/ESRC**, assisted by **Theos**, takes place on

Wednesday 22 February from 5.30pm to 7.00pm at RUSI, 61 Whitehall, London SW1A 2ET. The topic is 'What's the place of faith in schools?' and the speakers include Richard Dawkins, John Pritchard, Jim Conroy and Robert Jackson. For further information, visit www.religionandsociety.org.uk/faith_debates. To register, email p.ainsworth@lancaster.ac.uk.

Plymouth University Chaplaincy will be holding a lecture at Sherwell United Church, North Hill, Plymouth, PL4 8ER on Wednesday 22 February at 7.00pm. The Revd Tony Peck, the General Secretary of the European Baptist Federation will speak on Thomas Helwys and religious toleration. 2012 marks the 400th anniversary of what is thought to be the first plea for complete religious toleration ever made in the English language. There is a further lecture on 21 March. For further information call the Revd David Evans at Plymouth University Chaplaincy on 01752 587760 or email him at David.v.evans@plymouth.ac.uk.

The **Faiths Forum for London** and the **Fayre Share Foundation** are holding a meeting on Monday 5 March on the theme of 'Reclaiming London Together' to promote collaboration for London's young people after the 2011 disturbances. The forum will offer an opportunity, six months on, to reflect on the causes of the riots and the efficacy of responses to them. Speakers include Boris Johnson, Camila Batmanghelidjh and the Rt Revd Christopher Chessun. For further information, contact info@fayresharefoundation.org.

The **St Philips Centre** in Leicester is organising a Muslim-Christian Fundraising Dinner and Auction on Friday 9 March at 7.00pm. The dinner will be held at St Philip's Church, Evington Road, Leicester LE2 1HN. Further details from 0116 2733459.

The **World Congress of Faiths** is hosting a tour of Guildford Cathedral on Wednesday 14 March with Canon Andrew Bishop and chaplains at the University of Surrey. The tour will take place at 11.30am and will be followed by lunch and discussion of the proposed new inter faith centre. For further information or to register attendance, email events@worldfaiths.org.

The **St Ethelburga's Centre** is holding a workshop on 'Using personal storytelling in palliative care' on Thursday 15 March from 10.00am until 5.00pm at the London Inter Faith Centre, 125 Salusbury Road, London NW6 6RQ. The workshop, intended for hospice chaplains and others who work with the ill or dying, will be run by Roi Gal-Or, Director of the International School of Storytelling and organiser of the 'Healing Words' peace festival in the Middle East. Further details can be found online at <http://stethelburgas.org/civcrm/event/info?id=371&reset=1>.

The **JAINpedia project**, in conjunction with the Victoria & Albert Museum supported by the Jain Art Fund, are holding a study day on Saturday 24 March. Experts will reveal how the Jain manuscripts from India were selected, conserved, digitised and catalogued for the website. For further information, email info@jainpedia.org.

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For detailed information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Scottish Inter Faith Council: www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org

For detailed information on events and projects in a number of the English regions see:

East of England: www.eefaithscouncil.org.uk

London: www.faithsforum4london.org

North East: www.nerfn.org

North West: www.faithnorthwest.org.uk

South East: www.se-faithforum.net

South West: www.faithnetsouthwest.org.uk

West Midlands: www.wmfaithsforum.org.uk

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 15 February with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer:

Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.



IFN e-bulletin

February 2012

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 16 March with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Material may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and future projects and events and so items are likely to be about:

- **forthcoming inter faith events likely to be of interest to people across the UK**
- **inter faith and multi faith projects where you are seeking input**
- **resources which you have recently developed which you think may be helpful to those working in the inter faith field**
- **brief information about any jobs you are advertising within inter faith organisations or for inter faith posts (eg local inter faith development worker; national faith community inter faith officer)**

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UK/NATIONAL UPDATES

Inter Faith Week 2012

In this Diamond Jubilee year, there will be a special extended Inter Faith Week in England, Northern Ireland and Wales running from 18 - 27 November. This reflects the fact that there will be additional activities taking place, including some linked both to the Week and to the *A Year of Service* programme which is described above. The opening Sunday of the Week will again coincide with Mitzvah Day. Further information can be found at www.interfaithweek.org

Scottish Inter Faith Week has to date, since its establishment in 2004, fallen at the turn of November and December because it is linked to St Andrew's Day which is on 30 November. This year the Week will begin on Sunday 25 November. Further information is available from the Scottish Inter Faith Council www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org

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A Year of Service

All faith communities have within their ethical teachings the values of compassion, care and social justice. One of the ways that their members put these values into everyday practice is through volunteering. In 2012 a special project called 'A Year of Service' will be taking place. In each month, for A Year of Service, faith communities will be hosting a day or days of volunteering and inviting people of other faiths and non-religious beliefs to join in. There will also be workplace volunteering opportunities. The Year provides an opportunity for marking in a practical way the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty The Queen – of whose reign service has been a key theme.

Monday 28 February will see the formal launch of the project in London at the first faith community volunteering day of A Year of Service, led by the Baha'i community.

Further information about the project and how to get involved can be found at www.ayearofservice.org.uk

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Government's integration approach

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) published on 21 February its paper *Creating the Conditions for Integration*. The document can be found at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications /communities/integration> and the press release announcing it at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/news/newsroom/2092169>

The approach is described by the Government as a new 'localist' one to achieving a more integrated society, focusing on creating the conditions for everyone to live and work successfully alongside each other. Its primary focus is England although key issues are noted as having a wider relevance across the UK.

Core values and shared experience and commitments are seen in the paper as of key importance to integration. ‘British values’, which the document describes as “democracy, the rule of law, equality of opportunity and treatment, freedom of speech and the rights of all men and women to live free from persecution” and tolerance, are highlighted.

The approach sets out five key factors which the Government sees as contributing to integration: 1) Common ground - a clear sense of shared aspirations and values, which celebrates what we have in common rather than our differences; 2) Responsibility - a strong sense of our mutual commitments and obligations, which brings personal and social responsibility; 3) Social mobility - people able to realise their potential to get on in life; 4) Participation and empowerment - people of all backgrounds have the opportunities to take part, be heard and take decisions in local and national life; and 5) Tackling intolerance and extremism - a robust response to threats, whether discrimination, extremism or disorder, that deepen division and increase tensions.

The document contains material about a wide range of issues such as education, programmes to engage young people, equality, social mobility, hate crime, community organisers, entrepreneurship, migration, immigration, and English language speaking skills. Faith has a very significant place in the approach. Faith communities are described as being “involved in a huge range of activities and projects to improve communities” and a number of projects that involve faith communities that are receiving support as part of this approach are mentioned. The document says “We will encourage links and dialogue between people from different faith and cultural backgrounds, defend the valuable role of faith in public life, and will tackle cultural isolation and segregation”.

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Lambeth Palace multi-faith reception marking Diamond Jubilee

On Wednesday 15 February, Her Majesty The Queen and Prince Phillip attended a multi-faith reception at Lambeth Palace, hosted by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, at the outset of the Diamond Jubilee Year. They met with Christian representatives as well as those of the Baha’i, Buddhist, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Zoroastrian faiths. Each group of faith leaders was gathered around a sacred object of particular significance to the faith or practice of their community, or their life in the UK and The Queen and Prince Phillip spoke to each group about their particular faith and significant object. More information on the objects presented at the reception is available here:

<http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/2355/sacred-objects-displayed-by-faith-communities-to-hm-the-queen>

Speaking at the reception the Queen paid tribute to the value of faith communities in the UK, and to the role of the established Church of England in creating an environment where all faith communities can live freely together and its duty to protect the free practice of all faiths in this country. The full text of the speech, and that of the Archbishop of Canterbury are available here:

<http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/2358/the-queen-attends-multi-faith-reception-at-lambeth-palace>

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Official Ministerial visit to the Holy See

On 14 February an official delegation of ministers visited the Vatican to mark the 30th anniversary of the re-establishment of full diplomatic relations between the United Kingdom and Holy See in 1982. The delegation included Baroness Warsi, Minister without Portfolio and Co-Chair of the Conservative Party; Mr Jeremy Hunt, Secretary of State for Culture, the Olympics, Media and Sport; Mr Michael Moore, Secretary of State for Scotland; and Mr Alan Duncan, Minister for International Development.

Baroness Warsi gave a speech to the students of the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy on the role of faith in modern society in which she emphasised the beneficial role of faith communities in public life; the importance of dialogue between faiths; the need to recognise Europe's Christian heritage; and the dangers of marginalising faith in the name of secularism. The full text of the speech is available here: <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/news/baroness-warsi-speech-holy-see>

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Prayers at council meetings

On 10 February the High Court ruled on the case of the National Secular Society and Mr Clive Bone v Bideford Town Council on the matter of whether Bideford council had the authority to include prayers as a formal part of full council meetings. The National Secular Society and Mr Clive Bone argued that the practice was discriminatory under the Equalities Act 2010, contravened Mr Bone's rights under Sections 9 and 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and contravened Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Mr Justice Ouseley ruled that the practice of including prayers on the formal agenda was not discriminatory towards Mr Bone under the Equalities Act 2010 nor did it contravene Articles 9 and 14 of the ECHR. He ruled that, under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council did not have the authority to summon any councillors to a meeting at which prayers were part of the formal agenda. He also made it clear that the saying of prayers in a local authority chamber before a meeting of such a body was lawful, provided councillors were not formally summoned to attend. The full ruling is available for download here:

<http://www.secularism.org.uk/uploads/bideford-judgment-final.pdf>

Responding to this ruling, Mr Eric Pickles, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government announced on 18 February that he had 'fast tracked' a commencement order for the Localism Act 2011 to give local councils a 'power of general competence' that would allow them to hold prayers as part of the formal agenda of meetings. In his statement the Secretary of State said that the high court ruling reflected the fact that "for too long, faith has been marginalised in public life." [The new powers were made available to local councils from 18 February](#)

The Secretary of State's statement is available here:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/news/newsroom/2091532>

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Charities Act (2006) Review – a consultation

The Government has commissioned a review of the Charities Act 2006. This is being undertaken by Lord Hodgson and has now entered its 'consultation phase' which involves:

- a survey for members of the public
- a survey for charities
- a 'call for evidence' on a variety of topics, listed here: <https://update.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/resource-library/charities-act-review-calls-evidence> (further topics of 'calls for evidence' will be published in the coming weeks and are also listed on the webpage above)

The deadline for responses to the public survey, charities survey, and 'calls for evidence' is 16 April.

A series of events are being held across England and Wales for charities to discuss some of the issues in more detail with Lord Hodgson. Places are still available for events in Taunton (5 March); Newcastle (7 March); Cardiff (15 March); and London (29 March). All events run from 4 pm – 6pm.

For more details regarding the consultation and bookings for the events visit: <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/content/charities-act-review>

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Home Office consultation on police powers

The Home Office ran a consultation on police powers to promote and maintain public order that closed on 13 January. One of the specific areas on which the consultation gathered views were new powers to request the removal of face coverings.

Full details of the consultation including the detailed consultation document are available here:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/about-us/consultations/police-powers/>

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All Party Parliamentary Group on RE

The Religious Education Council for England and Wales (REC) announced on 17 February that a new All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) is being set up which will 'focus on safeguarding the provision of RE in our schools and explore how the subject can continue to deliver a valuable dimension to the education of all children and young people.' The REC will be providing the secretariat of the APPG.

The APPG, which will be chaired by Mr Stephen Lloyd, MP for Eastbourne and Willingdon, will draw on earlier cross-party support for the inclusion of RE in the English Baccalaureate.

Further information can be found on the website of the REC at: <http://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org/content/view/232/46/>.

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Religious donors give more than twice as much as those of no faith

People who are religious donate over twice as much money to charity as those without a faith, according to figures from the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF)'s 2011 Market Tracker Report. The average amount given to charity by those who are religious was £576 over the previous twelve months, compared to the £235 contributed by those of no faith. Only 31% of religious donors had given money to a religious activity. The split across the other causes tended to be more in line with the rest of the population, 68% donating to medical charities and 48% to overseas aid, which were also the two most popular choices for those of no faith. CAF Director of Research Richard Harrison commented: "These results not only show that those of faith are more generous to charity in general, but that their giving is not uniquely focused on their own religious activities. If anything, people of faith broadly give in line with the rest of the general public, to a variety of different appeals. The culture of giving within religious circles that is demonstrated by our survey is an admirable one, and a phenomenon that clearly enriches our society".

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IFN on the move

The Inter Faith Network office has moved to new premises, not far from its previous ones. The short-term lease has been made available to IFN on a charitable basis which brings a reduction in rent while still providing offices close to public transport and in a central location within London. The new address is: 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH and the new telephone number is 020 7730 0410.

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PROJECTS

Faith Matters 'Measuring anti-Muslim attacks' programme: Tell MAMA

Faith Matters has launched a programme called 'Tell MAMA'. The programme will look to provide support to victims of anti-Muslim attacks in England. It will also collate, map and work with support partners to analyse areas where anti-Muslim attacks are clustered and will work with Victim Support and Neighbourhood Watch UK through which victims of these attacks can be further supported. Funding towards the project is being provided by the Department for Communities and Local Government. For further information see <http://tellmamauk.org/main> or contact Laura at info@faith-matters.co.uk.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Near Neighbours

The Near Neighbours programme is a three-year initiative, run by the Church Urban Fund, which aims to bring people together in diverse communities, helping them build relationships and collaborate to improve the local community in which they live. The

programme currently operates in the following areas: East and South East London, North Birmingham, Leicester, Bradford, Burnley and Oldham.

Near Neighbours has a grants programme, due to end in March 2013, which at present operates on a rolling basis with no deadlines. Grant amounts range from £250-£5000. The fund invests in environmental, social, cultural, artistic and sporting ideas which fulfill the criteria, which can be found at www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/grants. Examples of funded projects can be found at: <http://www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/funded-projects>

The Fund is pleased to receive applications from people of different faith groups or none, working in partnership with people of different faiths and within the criteria. Details on how to apply can be found at www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/grants.

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Big Local Trust

A Community Development Foundation (CDF) led consortium is managing the new independent Big Local Trust. The Trust and programme will provide support and at least £1m funding per area to 150 local areas in England over the next ten years, through a £200m endowment from the Big Lottery Fund.

Since the announcement in July 2011, CDF has started to work with the first fifty Big Local areas, which all received 'round 1' funding in response to applications from community organisations or groups of community organisations on behalf of their 'local area' to the Big Lottery Fund. Those 'local areas' that received 'round 1' funding applied for 'round 2: getting people involved' funding from the Big Local Trust in late summer 2011. This funding can be used to engage their local area with the Big Local project, including developing 'local partnerships' of eight or more local organisations to deliver the Big Local project to their local area, and to run Big Local projects. There has been no further information as yet on 'round 3' or other funding made available to those 50 Big Local areas, nor is there any information on when applications will open for any new 'local areas'.

To find out the location of the Big Local areas, or for more information about the programme, visit www.cdf.org.uk/web/quest/biglocal. The latest Big Local newsletter (December 2011) is available for download from here: www.cdf.msgfocus.com/cdf/02122011.htm. A Big Local Partnership Guide, press releases and other documents are also available on the site.

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Community First Fund and Community Organisers

The Community First fund provides small grants to community groups and local social action projects. The fund is divided into two strands: £30 million is being used to provide small grants and the remaining £50 million is being used to match private donations invested in community endowment funds which will pay out money for small grants well into the future. The Community Development Foundation (CDF) is

working with several organisations, including supermarket chain Asda, to deliver the Community First programme,

A Community First website has been opened which invites people to sign their community up to receive support. Funding will be distributed by panels of local people. Further information can be found online at www.cdf.org.uk/content/funding-programmes/community-first

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FCO Human Rights and Democracy Fund

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has announced that it will again have funds available for human rights and democracy projects taking place over 2012-2013. The Fund aims to support international projects that “are fundamental to our [the FCO’s] democracy support and our human rights priorities.’ The fund this year will have a particular focus on projects that maximise opportunities to support local civil society. The Fund’s target areas include ‘upholding freedom of religion and belief.”

The deadline for submitting proposals is 12 March.

For more information concerning the fund visit: <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/global-issues/human-rights/around-the-world/programmes-projects/>

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RESOURCES AND TRAINING

Cambridge Inter-faith Programme Summer School

In July the Cambridge Inter-faith Programme will bring students from Islamic, Christian and Jewish backgrounds to Cambridge University's Madingley Hall, for a three-week programme of immersion in inter faith education and encounter. Students will benefit from a series of lectures delivered by specialist academics and peacemakers from around the world. They will be given training in the practice of inter faith Scriptural Reasoning and be facilitated through a process of teaching one another about aspects of their traditions. The Summer School also includes visits to religious communities around the UK. Most importantly, participants benefit from opportunities to get to know and learn from their fellow participants, who come from a wide variety of countries; relationships which last well beyond the Summer School itself.

The deadline for applications has been extended to 5pm on Monday 27 February. For more information, visit: www.interfaith.cam.ac.uk/en/education/summerschool and watch the Summer School film at www.youtube.com/watch?v=x8NFP0biRQs.

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St Ethelburga's dialogue and facilitations skills week

St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace is running an intensive week long course to develop skills for facilitating groups, hosting conversations and getting the most out of dialogue. The course covers a number of areas including: practical dialogue models and processes; theories of dialogue; creating safe space; principles of group facilitation; responding to tension and conflict; dealing with common facilitator challenges; using storytelling techniques to open up conversation; a brand new module on listening. The course will run from Monday 16 – Friday 20 April. For bookings and more information email contact Angela West at angela@stethelburgas.org, or phone 020 7496 1610 or Alternatively visit: <http://stethelburgas.org/civicrm/event/info?id=385&reset=1>

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS AND TENDERS

4th Insight Film Festival - Call for submissions

Insight, in association with the Coexist Foundation, is encouraging people to make films which explore, challenge, critique, celebrate, question or reflect on faith in contemporary life, with the aim of promoting better understanding and community cohesion.

They are looking for short films (not more than 30 minutes in length) which must be in English or have English sub-titles. Entrants must be over 18 and films need to be submitted on DVDs to reach Insight by 7 May. Entrants will have their films viewed by a judging panel including film industry professionals, and have a chance to win awards and prizes. For more details, visit www.insightfestival.com or email team@insightfestival.com.

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NUS Faith and Sexual Orientation Dialogue project within FE Colleges

The National Union of Students (NUS) has recently launched a six-month pilot initiative to support staff and students to tackle real and perceived tensions between lesbian, gay and bisexual equalities and religion and belief equalities in FE colleges. The overall aims of the project are:

- to tackle tensions (real and imagined) between lesbian, gay and bisexual equalities and religion and belief equalities in the learner community
- to promote inclusive and cohesive communities – with a particular focus on inter faith relations and the interaction between students in relation to sexuality and religion/belief
- to improve the experiences of students in FE – in particular LG B students and students with a religion or belief.

A toolkit of materials will be produced and made available in July in print and online at www.njusconnect.org.uk for public use and ILearnings from the project will be disseminated across the sector at conferences and events.

NUS welcomes contact from individuals and organisations who feel they could offer insight into how this pilot project can be best developed and would like to share learning. They are particularly interested in examples of activities or initiatives colleges or other institutions have developed to encourage discussion and education about these issues. For further information or to share any learning, please contact lucy.hawthorne@nus.org.uk.

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Women, Authority and Leadership in Christianity and Islam – Call for papers

Religions for Peace (UK), Faith Matters, the Christian Muslim Forum and the University of Roehampton are jointly organising a 3-day conference on 'Women, Authority and Leadership in Christianity and Islam'.

The 3-day conference will take place from Monday 10 to Wednesday 12 September at Southlands College at the University of Roehampton. The conference themes are:

- Revelation and interpretation: women, authority and leadership in religious texts.
- Women interpreters of the Bible or the Qur'an.
- Theological and doctrinal issues relating to the role of women.
- Historical and contemporary perspectives on women as leaders, religious representatives, spiritual figures or role models.
- Women's devotional practices in relation to institutions and authority structures.
- Secularism and women's rights.
- Women's religious communities and societies.
- Women imams, preachers, priests and ministers

The first two days will be for academic participants, and calls for papers which explore these themes are invited. Abstracts of not more than 250 words should be submitted by 31 May to Caroline Matthews at c.matthews@roehampton.ac.uk or to Lucy Parsons at l.parsons@roehampton.ac.uk.

For more information, or to book a place at the conference, visit <http://estore.roehampton.ac.uk>.

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Sacred Practices of Everyday Life – Call for papers

The Religion and Society Programme of the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Economic and Social Research Council is holding a conference in May on 'Sacred Practices of Everyday Life' at Edinburgh University. The purpose of the conference is to explore new evidence, analysis and theory concerning the sacred practices of everyday life. The conference will showcase thirty or so projects funded by the Religion and Society Programme which have new findings in this area and

papers are also being sought. There is a particular focus on the varied ways in which the life course is being re-enanted in the 21st century, but papers looking at other eras and/or larger forms of sacred practice (such as civic rituals) are also welcome. The scope is global. The conference streams are: Formation and Cultivation; Life-styles and (After)Death-styles; Sex, Life and Love; Gods, Spirits and the Sacred; Fate, Destiny and the Future; Identity, Solidarity and Conflict; Suffering, Healing and Well Being; and Objects, Language, Rituals and Consumption.

Individual paper proposals (max. 200 words) should be submitted to Peta Ainsworth at p.ainsworth@lancaster.ac.uk by 29 February.

Further details on the conference can be found online at www.religionandsociety.org.uk/events/programme_events/show/sacred_practices_of_everyday_life.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

The Big Jubilee Lunch 3 June

The Big Lunch next year takes place on Sunday 3 June and will form part of the official Diamond Jubilee celebrations as The Big Jubilee Lunch.

The Big Lunch aims to get as many people as possible across the UK to have a community lunch once a year. The project was launched in 2009 and since its inception thousands of lunches have taken place across a wide range of communities. Nearly 2 million people took part in The Big Lunch in 2011 and faith communities played a significant role.

For help and information with planning a faith based or inter faith Big Jubilee Lunch, you can email info@thebiglunch.com and request a free Big Jubilee Lunch Starter Pack, containing event guides, publicity materials and recipe ideas available from early 2012. You can find out more about The Big Jubilee Lunch and sign up to the newsletter at www.thebiglunch.com or call 0845 850 8181 to speak to one of The Big Lunch team.

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European Days of Jewish Culture and Heritage 2 – 9 September

The theme of this year's EDJCH, organised by B'nai B'rith UK, will be 'The Joys of Jewish Humour', which can be expressed in many ways and across a myriad of platforms, from comic books, cartoons, jokes and comedians to cinema, theatre and comedy writers. The week will also coincide with the National Heritage Open Days, which run from 6 to 9 September.

Organisations wishing to register and have their events appear in the publicity leaflets need to complete a registration form, obtainable from bbukjewishheritage@gmail.com. Completed forms need to be returned by 30 March. For further information, visit www.jewishheritage.org.

B'nai B'rith also welcome synagogues holding events marking the Olympics, and particularly the Paralympics, which fall during Heritage Days. Sir Ludwig Guttmann, who founded the Paralympics, was a Jewish refugee neurologist who pioneered the rehabilitation of patients with spinal injuries at Stoke Mandeville Hospital.

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Inter Faith Week 18-27 November 2012

In this Diamond Jubilee year, there will be a special extended Inter Faith Week in England, Northern Ireland and Wales running from 18 - 27 November. Further information [above](#) and at www.interfaithweek.org

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Scottish Inter Faith Week 25 November – 2 December 2012

This year the Week will begin on Sunday 25 November. Further information [above](#) and from the Scottish Inter Faith Council www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org

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DIARY DATES

Bristol Multi-Faith Forum is co-ordinating Diverse Door Bristol Open Day on Sunday 26 February. This annual event offers opportunities to visit any of the 21 participating places of worship throughout the day. For further information contact Bristol Multi-Faith Forum at info@bristolmultifaithforum.org.uk.

Bexley Multi Faith Forum will be holding a 'Peace Conference on Spirituality and Wellbeing' on Sunday 26 February from 12.30pm. For further details or to book a place, please contact narinderkaur597@msn.com.

Heythrop College are holding a seminar entitled 'Time and Eternity in St Clare and Mira Bai' on 29 February at 4.00 pm. This is part of their comparative theology public lecture and conference series, and is led by Dr Christina Manohar, a research fellow of the Centre for Christianity and Interreligious Dialogue. For further information, visit <http://heythrop.ac.uk/research/centre-for-christianity-and-interreligious-dialogue>

Birmingham Council of Faiths will be running an 'Interfaith Poetry' event on Wednesday 29 February at 7pm. It will include a practical session on prosody, led by Yann Lovelock, as well as sharing of poems and refreshments. The event takes place in the Meeting Room, Warehouse Café, Allison St, Digbeth. For further information please contact Birmingham Council of Faiths at info@bhamfaiths.org.uk.

As part of its 'Space for Thought' festival the **London School of Economics and Politics** is hosting an event on Saturday 3 March entitled 'Faith, Doubt and Certainty

in a Secular Age'. The event will take place from 3.00pm to 4.30pm in the Sheikh Zayed Theatre in the New Academic Building at LSE in London and is free to attend. Speakers include Richard Holloway and Alex Preston. For further information and to book, visit

<http://www2.lse.ac.uk/publicEvents/events/2012/03/LitFest20120303t1500vSZT.aspx>

Faiths Forum for London and the **Fayre Share Foundation** will be hosting an event entitled 'Reclaiming London Together' on Monday 5 March, from 9am – 5.30pm. The event, featuring Mayor of London, Boris Johnson; the Bishop of Southwark, The Rt Revd Christopher Chessun; and Kids Company founder, Camilla Batmanghelidj, will look back to the riots in London last summer and consider the prospects for London's young people. It will examine ways in which charities, faith communities and philanthropists can work together to offer hope. Registration is essential. For further information, or to register, visit

<http://fayresharefoundation.org/reclaiming-london-together-program/>

The **Religion and Society Programme of AHRC/ESRC**, with the assistance of **Theos**, is hosting a series of Westminster Faith Debates. The third event takes place on Wednesday 7 March from 5.30pm to 7.00pm at RUSI, 61 Whitehall, London SW1A 2ET. The topic is 'What have we learned about radicalisation?' and the speakers include Mehdi Hasan, Ed Husain, Mark Sedgwick, Marat Shterin and Mat Francis. For further information, visit www.religionandsociety.org.uk/faith_debates. To register, email p.ainsworth@lancaster.ac.uk.

Heythrop College are holding a public lecture on the subject of 'Double Belonging' on 7 March, commencing 6.00 pm. The lecturer is Professor Catherine Cornille from Boston College. For further information, visit <http://heythrop.ac.uk/research/centre-for-christianity-and-interreligious-dialogue>

York Interfaith will be holding its next meeting on Wednesday 7 March at 7.30pm in the Clementhorpe Room, Priory Street Centre, Priory Street. Naseem Beebeejaun will be speaking on the subject "Women in Islam". For further information, please contact Charlie Bridge on 01904 655116.

The **St Philips Centre** in Leicester is organising a Muslim-Christian Fundraising Dinner and Auction on Friday 9 March at 7.00pm. The dinner will be held at St Philip's Church, Evington Road, Leicester LE2 1HN. Further details from 0116 2733459.

The **Parkes Institute for the Study of Jewish/Non-Jewish Relations** is hosting an event on Sunday 11 March on 'Responses to the Holocaust Cultural Day'. The event, which will focus on a variety of responses to the Holocaust as portrayed on television in literature and through music, will be held from 10.00am to 4.00pm at the Avenue Campus in Southampton. Speakers include Professor Tony Kushner, Dr James Jordan, Dr Shirli Gilbert, Dr Jane Gerson and Dr Devorah Baum. Tickets cost £25 (£20 concessions) including refreshments and a buffet lunch. For further details and to book, visit:

www.soton.ac.uk/humanitieslearn/english/courses/responses_to_holocaust.html.

The **Scottish Inter Faith Council** with the **Edinburgh Women's Interfaith Group** will be holding a joint annual inter faith women's seminar in Edinburgh on Sunday 11 March to mark International Women's Day. For further information, please contact

the Scottish Inter Faith Council on 0141 420 6982 or at fhume@scottishinterfaithcouncil.org.

The **Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby** is holding an event on Tuesday 13 March to launch 'European Muslims, Civility and Public Life' by Paul Weller and Ihsan Yilmaz. The launch takes place from 6.00pm to 8.00pm and at the Multi-Faith Centre and all are welcome. For further information, contact 01332 591285 or email mfc@derby.ac.uk.

The **World Congress of Faiths** is hosting a tour of Guildford Cathedral on Wednesday 14 March with Canon Andrew Bishop and chaplains at the University of Surrey. The tour will take place at 11.30am and will be followed by lunch and discussion of the proposed new inter faith centre. For further information or to register attendance, email events@worldfaiths.org.

The **St Ethelburga's Centre** is holding a workshop on 'Using personal storytelling in palliative care' on Thursday 15 March from 10.00am until 5.00pm at the London Inter Faith Centre, 125 Salusbury Road, London NW6 6RQ. The workshop, intended for hospice chaplains and others who work with the ill or dying, will be run by Roi Gal-Or, Director of the International School of Storytelling and organiser of the 'Healing Words' peace festival in the Middle East. Further details can be found online at <http://stethelburgas.org/civicrm/event/info?id=371&reset=1>.

The **Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby** is continuing its series of 'Conversations Across Faiths' on Thursday evenings from 7.00pm. The next conversation takes place on Thursday 15 March on the theme of 'Should religious people be involved in war?' at the Multi-Faith Centre. New members welcome. For further information, contact 01332 591285 or email mfc@derby.ac.uk.

The **Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter** continue their Spring Seminar series on 'Engaging with the Other' with a Jewish-Muslim text-based dialogue on Sunday 18 March on 'Forgiveness'. The session takes place from 2.30pm to 4.15pm at the Sion Centre, 34 Chepstow Villas, London W11 2QZ. The session will be led by Rabbi Sybil Sheridan with Humera Khan. There is a suggested donation of £8. For further information or to book, telephone 020 7313 8286/020 7727 3597 or email sioncde@yahoo.co.uk.

The **Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter** are continuing their Spring Seminar series on The Story of Holy Week with a seminar on Tuesday 20 March on 'Crucifixion and Burial of Jesus – Can religious violence ever be justified?'. The seminar takes place from 10.30am to 3.30pm at the Sion Centre, 34 Chepstow Villas, London W11 2QZ. The speakers will Dr Ed Kessler MBE and Fr Christopher Jackson MA. There is a suggested donation of £15 and participants are asked to bring a packed lunch. For further information or to book, telephone 020 7313 8286/020 7727 3597 or email sioncde@yahoo.co.uk.

The third event in the **Westminster Cathedral Interfaith Group** discussion series on the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales document, *Meeting God in Friend and Stranger* takes place on Wednesday 21 March. The event runs from 4.00pm to 5.00pm in the Hinsley Room, Morpeth Terrace, London SW1P 1QW on the topic of 'Dialogue in the teachings of the Catholic Church'. The document costs

£5.95 and it would be helpful to have read the relevant chapter in advance of the meeting. For further information, contact John Woodhouse on 07908 888 586.

The fourth event in the Westminster Faith Debates hosted by the **Religion and Society Programme of AHRC/ESRC**, assisted by **Theos**, takes place on Wednesday 21 March from 5.30pm to 7.00pm at RUSI, 61 Whitehall, London SW1A 2ET. The topic is 'What role for religious organisations in an area of shrinking welfare?' and the speakers include David Blunkett, Peter Smith, Adam Dinham and Sarah Johnsen. For further information, visit www.religionandsociety.org.uk/faith_debates. To register, email p.ainsworth@lancaster.ac.uk.

The **Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource** will be hosting the third of four lecture-discussions entitled 'Faith and the Origins of the Secular Mind: A typology of spiritual pluralism' on Wednesday 21 March. The event will take place from 7pm in the library seminar room of the Inter-Faith Centre. For further information, or to register, please contact SIFRE on 01473 233447 or at aa@sifre.org.uk.

The **JAINpedia project**, in conjunction with the Victoria & Albert Museum supported by the Jain Art Fund, are holding a study day on Saturday 24 March. Experts will reveal how the Jain manuscripts from India were selected, conserved, digitised and catalogued for the website. For further information, email info@jainpedia.org.

The **North East Regional Faiths Network** will be hosting its first AGM as an independent charity on 27 March at Gateshead Civic Centre from 6 pm – 8.30 pm. The theme of the evening is 'All in the same boat'. Guest speaker Harriet Crabtree, Director of the Inter Faith Network for the UK and presentations from Women's Interfaith Media Network and representatives from local Media with workshop discussions with members. Further information is available from the NERFN Chair: chair@nerfn.org

The **University of Aberdeen** is hosting this year's Hay of Seaton Memorial Lecture in Aberdeen on Monday 16 April and at the British Academy in London on Wednesday 18 April. This year's lecture is entitled 'Opportunities for cooperation between the Faiths of the Middle East: an humanitarian view from the Order of Malta' and will be given by HMEH Fra' Matthew Festing, Grand Master of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta. For further information, visit www.abdn.ac.uk/hayofseaton.

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For detailed information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Scottish Inter Faith Council: www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org

For detailed information on events and projects in a number of the English regions see:

East of England: www.eefaithscouncil.org.uk

London: www.faithsforum4london.org

North East: www.nerfn.org

North West: www.faithnorthwest.org.uk

South East: www.se-faithforum.net

South West: www.faithnetsouthwest.org.uk

West Midlands: www.wmfaithsforum.org.uk

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 16 March with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer:

Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH www.interfaith.org.uk
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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 20 April with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Material may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and future projects and events and so items are likely to be about:

- **forthcoming inter faith events likely to be of interest to people across the UK**
- **inter faith and multi faith projects where you are seeking input**
- **resources which you have recently developed which you think may be helpful to those working in the inter faith field**
- **brief information about any jobs you are advertising within inter faith organisations or for inter faith posts (eg local inter faith development worker; national faith community inter faith officer)**

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UK/NATIONAL UPDATES

Inter Faith Week 2012

As noted in the February issue of the e-bulletin, in this Diamond Jubilee year there will be a special extended Inter Faith Week in England, Northern Ireland and Wales running from 18 - 27 November. This reflects the fact that there will be additional activities taking place, including some linked both to the Week and to the 'A Year of Service' programme. The opening Sunday of the Week will again coincide with Mitzvah Day.

Further information and resources will be added in the coming weeks to the Inter Faith Week website at www.interfaithweek.org.

Scottish Inter Faith Week runs from 25 November until 1 December. Further information is available from the Scottish Inter Faith Council at www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org.

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IFN Faith Communities Forum

IFN's Faith Communities Forum, which brings together for discussion the national faith community bodies in membership of IFN, met on 6 March. It discussed the 'A Year of Service' programme, the Government's recently published document, 'Creating the Conditions for Integration', faith communities and active citizenship; and a range of other public policy issues.

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A Year of Service

As noted in the January and February issues of the IFN e-bulletin, a special programme called 'A Year of Service' is taking place during 2012. All faith communities have within their ethical teachings the values of compassion, care and social justice. One of the ways that their members put these values into everyday practice is through volunteering. In each month, for A Year of Service, faith communities will be hosting a day or days of volunteering and inviting people of other faiths and non-religious beliefs to join in. There will also be workplace volunteering opportunities. The Year provides an opportunity for marking in a practical way the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty The Queen – of whose reign service has been a key theme.

The formal launch of the project took place on 28 February at the first faith community volunteering day of A Year of Service, led by the Baha'i community. Mr Eric Pickles, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, attended the event and a copy of the press release issued can be found at www.communities.gov.uk/news/newsroom/2096316. Several events to mark No

Ruz, led by the Zoroastrian community, took place last week, including visits to a senior citizens home.

A calendar of volunteering days taking place throughout A Year of Service based upon information provided by faith communities for the website can be found at <http://ayearofservice.org.uk/days-of-volunteering>.

Further information about the project and how to get involved can be found at www.ayearofservice.org.uk.

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Riots, Communities and Victims Panel – final report

On 28 March the Riots, Communities and Victims Panel published its final report. A copy of the full report and an executive summary can be downloaded from <http://riotspanel.independent.gov.uk/>.

The report makes wide-ranging public policy recommendations which the cross party Panel argues must be enacted together, to ensure the risk of future riots seen on the scale of last August can be significantly reduced. The findings are based on research in communities, and consultation with third sector organisations and social enterprises, local authorities, and private sector employers. According to the Panel's press release "Many people the Panel spoke to shared a concern about a lack of opportunities for young people, poor parenting, a lack of shared values and sense of responsibility among some, an inability of the justice system to prevent re-offending, concerns about brands and materialism and issues relating to confidence in the police."

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Inter faith response to murders in Toulouse

The murder of a rabbi and three children in Toulouse by Mohamed Merah on 19 March led to inter faith statements at European level and inter faith actions in Toulouse and Paris to remember the dead and underline solidarity between people of different faiths in France. The European Council of Religious Leaders and a number of organisations in the UK put out statements deploring the attacks or offered condolences to the Jewish community <http://disarmeurope.wordpress.com/>
<http://www.rfp-europe.eu/index.cfm?id=373687>
http://www.bod.org.uk/live/content.php?Item_ID=130&Blog_ID=348
http://www.bod.org.uk/live/content.php?Item_ID=130&Blog_ID=355 (regarding condolences from the Hindu community)
http://www.mcb.org.uk/media/presstext.php?ann_id=478.

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The Government's 'Equal civil marriage' consultation

The Government published *Equal civil marriage: a consultation* on 15 March. The key points in the Government's proposals on which it is consulting are:

- It is considering how best to enable same-sex couples to have a civil marriage;
- The consultation is about civil marriage only, ie only civil marriage ceremonies in a register office or other approved premises (like a hotel);
- No changes are proposed to religious marriages. These will continue to be legally possible only between a man and a woman;
- The Government is proposing to retain civil partnerships for same-sex couples only;
- Individuals would, for the first time, be able legally to change their gender without having to end their marriage.

The consultation, concerning policy in England and Wales only, will run for twelve weeks ending on 14 June. Responses can be submitted both on an organisational or individual basis. The website for the consultation is www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/about-us/consultations/equal-civil-marriage/ and the consultation document can be downloaded from www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/about-us/consultations/equal-civil-marriage/consultation-document?view=Binary.

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Church of England schools

The Church of England published a report on church schools, *The Church School of the Future Review*, on 23 March. It seeks to clarify the position of the Church of England as a major provider of schools at all levels and to consider ways in which church schools will meet future education needs.

The section of the document that focuses on Religious Education speaks of it being subject to multiple challenges across the school system. The document says that "...exclusion of religious education from the new English Baccalaureate is having a more than symbolic effect on its provision within GCSE options, and thereby on numbers of students taking the full-course GCSE; exclusion of any consideration of religious education from the current revision of the National Curriculum is likely to have a damaging effect on the status of the subject despite the retention of the statutory requirement; the reduction in the number of Post-Graduate Certificate in Education places for religious education will continue to affect the ability to meet the need for specialist teachers; cuts in local authority funding will lead to a complete stop on any previously agreed syllabus revisions, even if a commitment to fund Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education is retained for the time being, and the local mechanism for producing religious education syllabuses will break down completely; and existing anxieties about standards in religious education will not be addressed, thus leaving children vulnerable to inadequate provision in this most sensitive and important subject, which is vital for their understanding of themselves and the world in which they are growing up." The document says that the Church of England "...will continue to press for recognition of the damage being done to religious education".

The review document can be downloaded at [www.churchofengland.org/media/1418393/the%20church%20school%20of%20the%20future%20review%20-%20march%202012\[1\].pdf](http://www.churchofengland.org/media/1418393/the%20church%20school%20of%20the%20future%20review%20-%20march%202012[1].pdf).

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2011 Census ‘roadshows’ on outputs and web-based dissemination

The Office of National Statistics (ONS) is holding a series of ‘roadshows’ during the course of April to inform stakeholders of progress in delivering the 2011 Census data outputs. The ‘roadshows’ will also cover the planned web-based dissemination tools designed to help users access and understand the Census data. All events will run between 10:00 and 16:00.

The planned list of locations is as follows:

- 17 April – Manchester City Hall, Manchester
- 18 April – St William’s College, York
- 19 April – Royal Statistical Society, London
- 25 April – Thistle Hotel, Birmingham
- 26 April – Office for National Statistics, Newport
- 27 April – Civil Service Club, London

For more information and to register, visit www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/census/2011/the-2011-census/census-consultations/planned-events/index.html or email 2011.Census.LA.Liason@ons.gov.uk.

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EHRC Human Rights Review 2012

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) published its Human Rights Review 2012 on 5 March. The review assesses how well Britain is meeting its human rights obligations under the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR) and the Human Rights Act 1998.

In the review the EHRC sets out the rights and freedoms protected in the ECHR, and assesses to what extent each is enjoyed by people living in Britain today; looks at how British laws, institutions and institutional processes support and protect each right; highlights the ways in which the protection of human rights in Britain has been strengthened in recent years by law, policy and practice; and indicates some key areas where the EHRC believes serious human rights problems could be better tackled and protections ensured.

For more information, visit www.equalityhumanrights.com/human-rights/human-rights-review. The full text of the review can be found online at www.equalityhumanrights.com/human-rights/human-rights-review/the-review.

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Government hate crime blueprint

The Government launched on 14 March its new plan to tackle hate crime with the publication of the document *Challenge it, Report it, Stop it: The Government's Plan to Tackle Hate Crime*.

The plan is for Government to work across departments and with local agencies, voluntary organisations and an independent advisory group to tackle hate crime concerning race, faith, sexual orientation, gender identity, perceived disability or any other issue.

The plan focuses on three key objectives:

- a. Preventing hate crime
- b. Increasing the reporting of hate crimes
- c. Improving the operational response to hate crime.

The document can be downloaded from www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/crime/hate-crime-action-plan/action-plan?view=Binary. For more information, visit www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime/hate-crime.

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EHRC cancels further Public Sector Equality Duty statutory codes of practice

On 8 March the EHRC announced the cancellation of any further statutory codes of practice relating to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and the Further and Higher Education (FEHE) sector and schools. It explained that the Government is keen to reduce bureaucracy around the Equality Act 2010, and feels that further statutory guidance may place too much of a burden on public bodies. In this context, the EHRC will be issuing non-statutory codes which it says will still give “a formal, authoritative and comprehensive legal interpretation of the PSED and education sectors of the Act.”

For the full text of the statement, visit www.equalityhumanrights.com/legal-and-policy/equality-act/equality-act-codes-of-practice/ (it is at the bottom of the page).

For the non-statutory guidance on the PSED, visit www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-equality-duty/guidance-on-the-equality-duty.

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Three Faiths Forum 15th anniversary

This year is the 15th anniversary of the Three Faiths Forum. Following a launch event on 6 March with playwright and commentator Bonnie Greer OBE, who delivered the Undergraduate ParliAMentors Annual Lecture, anniversary celebrations will continue with a number of public and private events throughout the year. Further information from: info@3ff.org.uk

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PROJECTS

Heritage Open Days: An opportunity for places of worship

Heritage Open Days is an annual event during which owners or managers of buildings outside of London can open their doors to the public and share with visitors what makes them special. The project encourages buildings of architectural, social and cultural significance to open their doors. This year's event will take place from Thursday 6 to Sunday 9 September.

The Open Days are a good opportunity for places of worship to open to the public and to tell the wider community about what happens inside and to convey something of the life of their community. It can also be a chance to talk about how they are working with other faith groups for the benefit of their neighbourhoods.

Many places of worship are already open to the public at certain times. The advantage of registering with Heritage Open Days is that the national coordinators provide advice, public liability cover, promotional support and access to a network of local organisers to help places of worship make the most of their participation. Places of worship that register by 1 May will also get the maximum amount of publicity via the Heritage Open Days website, but the final deadline for registering is 1 August.

There are a few criteria that all participating buildings, including places of worship, have to meet. To find out more get in touch with the Heritage Open Days team on 020 7553 9290 or via info@heritageopendays.org.uk. Alternatively, further information and registration material can be accessed at www.heritageopendays.org.uk.

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North East Regional Faiths Network

Following its first AGM as a registered charity on 27 March at the Gateshead Civic Centre, the North East Regional Faiths Network (NERFN)'s newly elected Committee, chaired by Vijaya Kotur, is working to build on the work of the Network to date and to develop its membership and programme of work in the North East. Further information about getting involved is available from the NERFN Chair at chair@nerfn.org.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Communitybuilders Fund

The Communitybuilders Fund, previously owned by the Department for Communities and Local Government, is now an endowed fund, owned and administered by the Adventure Capital Fund.

The Fund is designed to support neighbourhood-based, community-led organisations to become more sustainable through a mixture of loans, grants and business support.

The Fund is open to applications from:

- independent and community led organisations which are not controlled by the private or public sector
- organisations operating for the benefit of a defined neighbourhood in England
- locally controlled organisations with local people or local representatives making priority decisions
- multipurpose organisations providing or hosting a number of different activities
- organisations unable to secure funding from a commercial funder or unable to fund the proposal from unrestricted reserves
- organisations with a sensible business and financial plan that is well developed and tested and is achievable
- organisations with proposals for which funds can be drawn down and spent within 6 months of approval, for the long term benefit of the organisations

Application criteria and guidance can be found online at www.communitybuildersfund.org.uk. The application deadline is 13 April.

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Community Games Fund

On 19 March, the Cabinet Office announced a £2 million grant from its £20 million Social Action Fund to support a Community Games programme, which will provide support and resources for communities to organise their own local sporting and cultural events in celebration of the London 2012 Olympic Games. The events can be anything from a triathlon or a sponsored walk to a live concert, and will reflect the interests and needs of the local community.

Community Games will be delivered by County Sports Partnership Network (CSPN) and the YMCA. The programme has been running in the West Midlands since 2010, where over 200 Community Games have already taken place, and the aim is now, with this new funding, to bring Community Games to people all over England.

For further information, visit <http://www.cspnetwork.org>, and for information on the kind of projects which have so far been run in the West Midlands, visit www.communitygames.org.uk.

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Near Neighbours

The Near Neighbours programme is a three-year initiative, run by the Church Urban Fund, which aims to bring people together in diverse communities, helping them build relationships and collaborate to improve the local community in which they live. The programme currently operates in the following areas: East and South East London, North Birmingham, Leicester, Bradford, Burnley and Oldham.

Near Neighbours has a grants programme, due to end in March 2013, which at present operates on a rolling basis with no deadlines. Grant amounts range from £250-£5000. The fund invests in environmental, social, cultural, artistic and sporting ideas which fulfill the criteria, which can be found at www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/grants. Examples of funded projects can be found at: <http://www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/funded-projects>

The Fund is pleased to receive applications from people of different faith groups or none, working in partnership with people of different faiths and within the criteria. Details on how to apply can be found at www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/grants.

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Big Local Trust

A consortium led by the Community Development Foundation (CDF) is managing the new independent 'Big Local Trust'. The Trust programme will provide support and at least £1m funding per area to 150 local areas in England over the next ten years, through a £200m endowment from the Big Lottery Fund.

On 29 February it was announced that a further fifty areas had now received access to their funding. They will join the fifty organisations who gained access to this initial funding in 2011 which are now in the process of setting up their 'local trusts' (as part of round 2 of the programme) and putting together their ten year 'big local plan' which will detail how they plan to use the funds in their local area. There is currently no information about when applications for and selection of the next 50 areas is due to begin.

To find out the location of the current Big Local areas, or for more information about the programme, including how to get involved, visit www.localtrust.org.uk.

For the latest March 2012 newsletter, visit www.localtrust.org.uk/?new=news-march-newsletter and for previous newsletters, visit www.localtrust.org.uk/?new=news-previous-newsletters.

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Community First Fund and Community Organisers

The Community First fund provides small grants to community groups and local social action projects. The fund is divided into two strands: £30 million is being used to provide small grants and the remaining £50 million is being used to match private donations invested in community endowment funds which will pay out money for

small grants well into the future. The Community Development Foundation (CDF) is working with several organisations, including supermarket chain Asda, to deliver the Community First programme,

A Community First website has been opened which invites people to sign their community up to receive support. Funding will be distributed by panels of local people. Further information can be found online at www.cdf.org.uk/content/funding-programmes/community-first

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RESOURCES AND TRAINING

Conflict coaching and group facilitation at St Ethelburga's

St Ethelburga's is launching a new conflict coaching service to provide one to one support for anyone experiencing conflict who wants to be able to respond in a more skilful way. St Ethelburga's has been developing and testing its own structured approach to this tool. The Centre is offering conflict coaching for the workplace (<http://stethelburgas.org/conflict-coaching-workplace>); conflict coaching training (<http://stethelburgas.org/training-conflict-coaching>); and personal conflict coaching (<http://stethelburgas.org/personal-conflict-coaching>).

St Ethelburga's has also created a free downloadable resource on the principles of group facilitation, which was produced in collaboration with Corrymeela in Northern Ireland and the Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel. A copy of the document can be found online at

<http://stethelburgas.org/sites/default/files/Principles%20of%20Group%20Facilitation%200.pdf>.

Places are also still available on the Centre's week-long dialogue and facilitation skills week that was listed in the February issue of the IFN e-bulletin. The course will run from Monday 16 to Friday 20 April. For bookings and more information, email Angela West at angela@stethelburgas.org or phone 020 7496 1610 or visit <http://stethelburgas.org/civicrm/event/info?id=385&reset=1>.

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Faith, Diversity and Youth Work Training Day

The Feast is running a training day for youth workers on Tuesday 17 April. The training is aimed at both Christian and Muslim youth workers who would like to think through and learn how to run events that bring together young people from the two faiths.

Presenters include Dr Andrew Smith, Founder and Chair of Trustees for The Feast and Director of Interfaith Relations for the Diocese of Birmingham, and Natasha Griffith, Jenni Creasy and Nahim Khan, The Feast's youth workers. The day will conclude with a youth forum to hear from the young people themselves.

The day runs from 10am until 5pm at Riverside House, 21 Alcester Road, Birmingham B13 8AR. Tickets cost £25 pre-pay or £35 on the day (some concessions available) and lunch is included.

For further information, contact Tim Fawssett, The Feast Project Manager, at tim@thefeast.org.uk or on 07540 925290.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS AND TENDERS

Inter Faith Week 2011

Ashley Beck is currently working on reporting on Inter Faith Week 2011 and adding images to the photo gallery. If you have photographs of your event which you are willing to let IFN have for possible use in Inter Faith Week reporting or publicity, he would be very grateful to be sent these, along with a short description and any necessary photo credit information. His email address is ashley.beck@interfaith.org.uk.

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Art 4 Action competition

Faiths Act Birmingham is inviting entries to an art competition and exhibition, Art 4 Action, to raise awareness and funds for malaria prevention.

Competition entries should be pieces inspired by an Art 4 Action Presentation or Workshop and should be based on one or all of these themes:

- Faith communities working together 'force 4 good'
- Malaria
- Health as a human right/Injustice of poverty

Age categories for the competition are: 3 – 5; 6 – 8; 8 – 11; 12 – 15; 16 – 18; and 18+/Independent Artist. (Group entries are accepted if all members of the group are from the same age category.)

One of the judges, Iminder Singh of Iminder Arts, has produced a piece entitled 'Saving Souls' inspired by his Sikh faith, which will be auctioned to raise funds for multi faith initiatives in Sierra Leone, to help save lives from Malaria (<http://iminderarts.com/saving-souls/>).

Winning entries will be exhibited at the Midlands Art Centre at the Art 4 Action Exhibition around World Malaria Day from Monday 23 April to Saturday 28 April. The exhibition will feature a variety of events and opportunities for people of all faiths,

cultures, and backgrounds across Birmingham and further afield. It will be free and open to all members of the general public.

Official Faiths Act Birmingham Entry Forms are available from the assigned Art 4 Action teacher or leader at your organisation. For independent entries, forms will be available at Art 4 Action workshops or by email, for more information please contact i.kaur@springfieldproject.org.uk.

The entry deadline has been extended to Monday 2 April.

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Hosts wanted for 'Multi-faith Spaces' exhibition

Multi-Faith Spaces: Symptoms and Agents of Religious and Social Change is a research project based at the University of Manchester that has been developed to highlight the material, spatial and architectural dimensions of faith related practice, funded by the AHRC/ESRC *Religion & Society Research Programme*. The project examined over two hundred multi faith spaces (MFS), mainly in the UK but also in 10 other countries. Data collected included 14,000 photographs and 200 interviews which have been developed into an exhibition on MFS.

The MFS project team are looking for individuals or organisations who would like to host this exhibition. The exhibition has 32 key themes that emerged from the study, and incorporates over 300 photographs. It is designed to appeal to those with little prior knowledge of MFS and those with an interest in issues such as design, diversity and faith.

The *full exhibition* consists of a decagon with eight double sided panels, held by a self-supporting wooden frame. It includes an entrance, exit and stand-alone threshold. Exhibitors can personalise the exhibition, utilising their own materials and faith specific objects within the inside of the decagon.

A *basic set-up* could see the separate panels hung or displayed against a vertical surface.

For more information about the research of the MFS project and to enquire about booking the exhibition contact Dr Chris Hewson at mfs@manchester.ac.uk or visit www.manchester.ac.uk/mfs.

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4th Insight Film Festival - Call for submissions

Insight, in association with the Coexist Foundation, is encouraging people to make films which explore, challenge, critique, celebrate, question or reflect on faith in contemporary life, with the aim of promoting better understanding and community cohesion.

They are looking for short films (not more than 30 minutes in length) which must be in English or have English sub-titles. Entrants must be over 18 and films need to be

submitted on DVDs to reach Insight by 7 May. Entrants will have their films viewed by a judging panel including film industry professionals, and have a chance to win awards and prizes. For more details, visit www.insightfestival.com or email team@insightfestival.com.

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Women, Authority and Leadership in Christianity and Islam – Call for papers

Religions for Peace (UK), Faith Matters, the Christian Muslim Forum and the University of Roehampton are jointly organising a 3-day conference at the University of Roehampton and Southlands College from 10-12 September on 'Women, Authority and Leadership in Christianity and Islam'. The first two days will be for academic participants.

For more information, or to book a place at the conference, visit <http://estore.roehampton.ac.uk>.

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JOBS AND VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

St Philip's Centre Leicester – Three vacancies

The St Philip's Centre (www.stphilipscentre.co.uk), Leicester, currently has three vacancies. These are for a full time Supporting and Training Officer; a full time Communications and Marketing Officer; and a part-time Youth Worker. The full time posts are on one year contracts and the youth post is for 12 months paid on a sessional basis. The application deadline is 6 April for the full time posts and 20 March for the part-time post. Further information is available at: <http://stphilipscentre.dioceseofleicester.com/?p=2068> or by contacting the Centre at 0116 2733459 or at admin@stphilipscentre.co.uk.

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Three Faiths Forum – Development Manager

The Three Faiths Forum is seeking to recruit a Development Manager. This is a 12 month-contract of 37.5 hours per week with some evening and weekend work. The post will be based in Kentish Town, North London. Applications will only be accepted on the official application form which can be downloaded from www.3ff.org.uk/jobs, together with further information. The deadline for applications is 10 April and interviews will be held in the week beginning 16 April.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

The Big Jubilee Lunch 3 June

The Big Lunch this year takes place on Sunday 3 June and will form part of the official Diamond Jubilee weekend celebrations as The Big Jubilee Lunch: <http://www.thebiglunch.com/join-in/jubilee-2012.php> The Inter Faith Network is a Key Supporting Organisation for the Big Lunch.

The Big Lunch aims to get as many people as possible across the UK to have a community lunch once a year. Since the project was launched in 2009 thousands of lunches have taken place across a wide range of communities. The Big Lunch is hoping that faith communities and inter faith groups will again play a significant role this year – hosting and participating in lunches.

For those wishing to take part, help and information with planning a faith based or inter faith Big Jubilee Lunch, can be obtained by emailing info@thebiglunch.com and requesting a free Big Jubilee Lunch Starter Pack, containing event guides, publicity materials and recipe ideas.

Further information about The Big Jubilee Lunch and how to sign up to their newsletter can be found at www.thebiglunch.com. It is also possible to call 0845 850 8181 to speak to one of The Big Lunch team.

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European Days of Jewish Culture and Heritage 2 – 9 September

The theme of this year's EDJCH, organised by B'nai B'rith UK, will be 'The Joys of Jewish Humour', which can be expressed in many ways and across a myriad of platforms, from comic books, cartoons, jokes and comedians to cinema, theatre and comedy writers. The week will also coincide with the National Heritage Open Days, which runs from 6 to 9 September (See the [Projects](#) section above).

Organisations wishing to register and have their events appear in the publicity leaflets need to complete a registration form, obtainable from bbukjewishheritage@gmail.com. Completed forms need to be returned by 30 March. For further information, visit www.jewishheritage.org.

B'nai B'rith also welcome synagogues holding events marking the Olympics, and particularly the Paralympics, which fall during Heritage Days. Sir Ludwig Guttmann, who founded the Paralympics, was a Jewish refugee neurologist who pioneered the rehabilitation of patients with spinal injuries at Stoke Mandeville Hospital.

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Inter Faith Week 18-27 November 2012

In this Diamond Jubilee year, there will be a special extended Inter Faith Week in England, Northern Ireland and Wales running from 18 - 27 November. Further information [above](#) and at www.interfaithweek.org

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Scottish Inter Faith Week 25 November – 2 December 2012

This year the Week will begin on Sunday 25 November. Further information [above](#) and from the Scottish Inter Faith Council www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org

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DIARY DATES

faithnetsouthwest is hosting an event on Monday 2 April to launch the new **North Somerset Faith Forum**. The launch will take place at 6.30pm at the Lounge, 48 Knightstone Road, Weston-Super-Mare, BS23 2BD. To attend, email info@faithnetsouthwest.org.uk.

Kick it Out is hosting a forum exploring how faith and football can coexist. The event, entitled 'A Focus on Faith', will be held from 10.30am until 2.00pm on Wednesday 11 April at the Jasper Carrott Suite, Birmingham City Football Club, St Andrew's Stadium, Birmingham, West Midlands B9 4RL. Keynote speakers, presentations and a panel session will include Barry McGuigan, Joe Jackson, the Revd Peter Allen and Alex Goldberg. Booking is required and places are limited. To attend, contact Kevin Coleman on 020 7253 0162 or at kevin@kickitout.org.

Faiths Act Fellows of the **Tony Blair Faith** Foundation and **Tzedek**, a Jewish voluntary-led organisation working to fight extreme poverty, are jointly hosting an inter faith theatre event on Sunday 15 April entitled 'A Muslim, a Jew, a Christian, a Hindu and a Baha'i walk into a synagogue'. The play, created by a cast of young people exploring the importance and power of faiths to work together to eradicate extreme poverty, will take place at the LOST Theatre, 208 Wandsworth Road, London SW8 2JU. As well as the performance there will be a small exhibition and a question and answer session with the cast and crew. For further information and to purchase tickets, visit www.eventelephant.com/interfaiththeatre.

The **University of Aberdeen** is hosting this year's Hay of Seaton Memorial Lecture in Aberdeen on Monday 16 April and at the British Academy in London on Wednesday 18 April. This year's lecture is entitled 'Opportunities for cooperation between the Faiths of the Middle East: an humanitarian view from the Order of Malta' and will be given by HMEH Fra' Matthew Festing, Grand Master of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta. For further information, visit www.abdn.ac.uk/hayofseaton.

The fourth event in the **Westminster Cathedral Interfaith Group** discussion series on the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales document, *Meeting God in Friend and Stranger* takes place on Wednesday 18 April. The event runs from 4.00pm to 5.00pm in the Hinsley Room, Morpeth Terrace, London SW1P 1QW on the topic of 'Prayer and Worship'. The document costs £5.95 and it would be helpful to have read the relevant chapter in advance of the meeting. For further information, contact John Woodhouse on 07908 888 586.

The **Religion and Society Programme of AHRC/ESRC**, with the assistance of **Theos**, is hosting a series of Westminster Faith Debates. The fifth event takes place on Wednesday 18 April from 5.30pm to 7.00pm at RUSI, 61 Whitehall, London SW1A 2ET. The topic is 'What limits to religious freedom?' and the speakers include Lisa Appignanesi, Maleiha Malik and Peter Jones. For further information, visit www.religionandsociety.org.uk/faith_debates. To register, email p.ainsworth@lancaster.ac.uk.

Teignbridge Community and Voluntary Services is holding a free networking event for faith based organisations and faith communities involved in community work in Teignbridge on Thursday 19 April from 9.30am to 12.30pm at Hannahs at Seale-Hayne, Newton Abbot, TQ12 6NQ. The speaker will be Daniel Singleton, National Executive Director of Faith Action. The event will provide an opportunity to share stories of successful faith based community involvement, explore volunteering practice, learn about the resources and support available locally and nationally and also to hear about the 2012 'A Year of Service' project. For more information, contact Anja Kroening-Maynard on 01626 215903 or email volunteercentre@teigncvcs.org.uk.

The **Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby** is continuing its series of 'Conversations Across Faiths' on Thursday evenings from 7.00pm. The next conversation takes place on Thursday 19 April on the theme of 'Should religion accept, tolerate or reject same sex marriage?' at the Multi-Faith Centre. New members welcome. For further information, contact 01332 591285 or email mfc@derby.ac.uk.

The **Institute of Community Cohesion** is hosting a conference to discuss integration and cohesion on Monday 23 April entitled 'At Ease With Each Other'. The conference will be hosted at One Birdcage Walk, London, SW1H 9JJ and will bring together policymakers, academics and those at the frontline of integration. The keynote speech will be given by Eric Pickles MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. There is a charge to attend. For further information, contact cohesion@coventry.ac.uk.

World Malaria Day takes place this year on Wednesday 25 April on the theme of 'Sustain Gains, Save Lives: Invest in Malaria'. The Faiths Act Fellows of the Tony Blair Faith Foundation have organised a number of initiatives across the UK to mark World Malaria Day. Information on events can be found online at www.tonyblairfaithfoundation.org.

The sixth and final event in the Westminster Faith Debates hosted by the **Religion and Society Programme of AHRC/ESRC**, assisted by **Theos**, takes place on Wednesday 2 May from 5.30pm to 7.00pm at RUSI, 61 Whitehall, London SW1A 2ET. The topic is 'What are the main trends in religion and values in Britain?' and the speakers include Aaqil Ahmed, Cole Moreton, Linda Woodhead and Grace Davie. For further information, visit www.religionandsociety.org.uk/faith_debates. To register, email p.ainsworth@lancaster.ac.uk.

The fifth event in the **Westminster Cathedral Interfaith Group** discussion series on the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales document, *Meeting God in Friend and Stranger* takes place on Wednesday 16 May. The event runs from 4.00pm to 5.00pm in the Hinsley Room, Morpeth Terrace, London SW1P 1QW on the topic of 'Interreligious marriage'. The document costs £5.95 and it would be helpful to have read the relevant chapter in advance of the meeting. For further information, contact John Woodhouse on 07908 888 586.

London Insight Meditation is hosting an event on Sunday 20 May on the subject of 'The Future of Religion'. The two speakers will be Stephen Bachelor and Don Cupitt and the event will be chaired by Madeleine Bunting of *The Guardian*. The event will take place at 2.00pm at Friends House, Euston, London. Tickets bought online cost £14 (£10 concessions) or £17 on the door. For more information, visit www.londoninsight.org or email enquiries@londoninsight.org.

The 27th Annual Multi-Faith Pilgrimage for Peace, organised by **Westminster Interfaith**, will take place on Saturday 26 May. The pilgrimage will this year take place in the East End of London, starting from St Ethelburga's in Bishopsgate near Liverpool Street Station and heading towards Manor Park and Forest Gate in the Borough of Newham and in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brentwood. More details and a booking form will be available shortly. Any queries can be directed to Jon Dal Din at jondaldin@rcdow.org.uk or on 07527 758729.

Faith in Community, Scotland is holding an inter faith seminar at 2.30pm on Sunday 27 May to bring together the different faith communities in Dundee, to learn more about the Scottish Government's Good Practice Guide entitled 'Belief in Dialogue'. The seminar will be held at the Dundee Hebrew Congregation. For further information, contact Ellen McCance at ellen@faithincommunitydundee.org.

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For detailed information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Scottish Inter Faith Council: www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org

For detailed information on events and projects in a number of the English regions see:

East of England: www.eefaithscouncil.org.uk

London: www.faithsforum4london.org

North East: www.nerfn.org

North West: www.faithnorthwest.org.uk

South East: www.se-faithforum.net

South West: www.faithnetsouthwest.org.uk

West Midlands: www.wmfaithsforum.org.uk

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 20 April with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer:

Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH www.interfaith.org.uk
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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 22 May with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Material may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and future projects and events and so items are likely to be about:

- **forthcoming inter faith events likely to be of interest to people across the UK**
- **inter faith and multi faith projects where you are seeking input**
- **resources which you have recently developed which you think may be helpful to those working in the inter faith field**
- **brief information about any jobs you are advertising within inter faith organisations or for inter faith posts (eg local inter faith development worker; national faith community inter faith officer)**

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UK/NATIONAL UPDATES

Inter Faith Network 25th anniversary

Since 1987, the Inter Faith Network for the UK has worked with its member bodies and others to build bridges of inter faith understanding and cooperation and to contribute to the continued development of a shared society, rooted in values held in common and with an appreciation of the positive aspects of diversity which strengthen this.

2012 marks the 25th anniversary of the Inter Faith Network. Its work of helping to foster inter faith understanding, respect and cooperation continues to be of vital importance – yet ever harder to resource in a climate of economic austerity.

In this context, a 25th anniversary appeal has been launched to enable IFN to secure a sound operational footing for the future and to help its work to continue. Anyone who appreciates the importance of IFN's work and would like to make a gift to support its continuing work can do so online at: www.interfaith.org.uk/donations.htm or by sending a cheque to: The Inter Faith Network for the UK, Donations, Freepost, RSXC-XCGG-AJLL, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, LONDON, SW1W 0DH.

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Inter Faith Week

Inter Faith Week 2011

The report on Inter Faith Week 2011 has been published by IFN. It draws on a survey conducted by the IFN office and on information and images supplied by event holders. It can be downloaded from the Inter Faith Week website at: www.interfaithweek.org

Inter Faith Week 2012

As noted in earlier issues of the e-bulletin, in this Diamond Jubilee year there will be a special extended Inter Faith Week in England, Northern Ireland and Wales running from 18 - 27 November. This reflects the fact that there will be additional activities taking place, including some linked both to the Week and to the 'A Year of Service' programme. The opening Sunday of the Week will again coincide with Mitzvah Day.

Further information and resources will be added in the coming weeks to the Inter Faith Week website at www.interfaithweek.org.

Scottish Inter Faith Week runs from 25 November until 1 December. Further information is available from the Scottish Inter Faith Council at www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org.

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A Year of Service

As noted in earlier issues of the IFN e-bulletin, a special programme called 'A Year of Service' is taking place during 2012. All faith communities have within their ethical teachings the values of compassion, care and social justice. One of the ways that their members put these values into everyday practice is through volunteering. In each month, for A Year of Service, faith communities will be hosting a day or days of volunteering and inviting people of other faiths and non-religious beliefs to join in. There will also be workplace volunteering opportunities. The Year provides an opportunity for marking in a practical way the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty The Queen – of whose reign service has been a key theme.

A calendar of volunteering days taking place throughout A Year of Service based upon information provided by faith communities for the website can be found at <http://ayearofservice.org.uk/days-of-volunteering>. The most recent events to have taken place were those arranged during April by the Jain community, linked to Mahavira Jayanti. The theme was 'visiting the sick' and visits took place to Great Ormond Street hospital, Leicester Royal Infirmary and a number of other locations. Further information can be found at <http://ayearofservice.org.uk/days-of-volunteering/jain/jain-resources>. Further information about the project and how to get involved can be found at www.ayearofservice.org.uk.

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Release plans for 2011 Census statistics

The Office of National Statistics (ONS) has published the dates on which it will release the statistics from the 2011 Census. Due to the breadth of the statistics there will be four releases from July 2012 to October 2013:

- the first release in July 2012 will consist of age, sex, and occupied household estimates for England and Wales;
- the second release over the period of November 2012 to February 2013 will consist of 'key and quick statistics'
- the third release over the period of March 2013 – June 2013 will consist of 'local characteristics;' and
- the fourth release from July to October 2013 will consist of 'detailed characteristics, detailed themes and armed forces information.

It is the second release of statistics that will include those on such subjects as ethnic group and religion.

For more information, visit <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/census/2011/census-data/2011-census-prospectus/release-plans-for-2011-census-statistics/index.html>.

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Faith representation in a reformed House of Lords

The Joint Select Committee of both Houses of Parliament that has been scrutinising the Government's draft White Paper and draft House of Lords Reform Bill published its recommendations in the form of a report on 26 March.

The report recommended a reformed House of Lords consisting of 80% elected and 20% appointed peers numbering 450 in total; and that, on this basis, it should contain "up to 12 Lords Spiritual" who would not lose their *ex officio* basis for sitting. This number would include the five 'named Archbishops and Bishops' (the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, and Bishops of Durham, London and Winchester) and seven other diocesan bishops. However, the report recommended that if the Government were to opt for a fully elected chamber the Lords Spiritual should lose their seats in the upper chamber.

Regarding faith representation more generally, the report noted that there were a number of submissions to the Joint Select Committee which called for greater faith representation in the upper house. The report recommended that faith be part of the 'diversity criterion' that the Appointments Commission should take into account when appointing peers.

This information is covered in more detail in section 17 of the report, which is available to view online at www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/jt201012/jtselect/jtdraftref/284/28402.htm.

A minority of the Joint Select Committee, while signing the overall report, offered an 'alternative' report highlighting their concerns that the Government's proposed legislation would cause an "unbridgeable gap between the election of the House of Lords and the primacy of the House of Commons." This report urged that the Government reconsider its draft legislation on House of Lords reform and suggested the convening of a 'Constitutional Convention' composed of members of both Houses, representatives of civil society groups and others, including faith communities, to re-examine the issue.

The 'alternative' report can be viewed online at www.houseoflordsreform.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/FinalPrint19042012-3.pdf.

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The EHRC Strategic Plan

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) published its strategic plan for 2012-2015 on 27 March. The plan, the result of its strategic review carried out in late 2011 and early 2012, outlines its proposed work plan for the 2012-2015 period. In this, three strategic priorities are outlined:

1. to promote fairness and equality of opportunity in Britain's future economy;
2. to promote fair access to public services, and autonomy and dignity in service delivery; and
3. to promote dignity and respect, and safeguard people's safety.

The plan does not make any mention of the EHRC's 'good relations' remit and makes only one explicit mention of religion or belief when committing to resolve issues between different equality strands.

The plan can be downloaded from:

www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/Strategic_Plan_2012_15/strategic_plan_2012-15_pdf.pdf.

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New RE teaching framework

It was announced on 30 March that Nick Gibb MP, Minister of State for Schools, has offered his support to help shape a revised RE teaching framework that would promote academic rigour and put the teaching of RE in line, in terms of design and style, with a National Curriculum. The Minister has asked the Religious Education Council for England and Wales (REC) to investigate best practice in RE and to compile a report, taking into account the views of teachers, academics and faith and belief organisations, based on the results of this investigation. John Keast, Chairman of the REC, responded to the announcement saying: "We're pleased the minister has asked the REC to work collaboratively on how RE can change in line with a refreshed national curriculum." The Minister was subsequently the invited speaker at the AGM of the REC in London on 3 May.

The REC press release can be read online at

www.religiouseducationcouncil.org/content/view/235/46/

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PROJECTS

Scriptural Reasoning online – a new opportunity from Cambridge Inter-faith Programme

Scriptural Reasoning is a practice in which Jews, Christians and Muslims gather in small groups to read their sacred scriptures together, often around a common theme. The practice is one fostered by the Cambridge Inter-faith Programme (CIP) to enable participants to engage in in-depth conversations, to discover more about their own scriptures and those of other faiths, and to build lasting friendships. CIP is developing a new website for inter faith conversations and is looking for volunteers to be part of one of its newly formed Scriptural Reasoning online groups. It is free and no previous experience is needed. To find out more about Scriptural Reasoning online, contact CIP at SRonline@interfaith.cam.ac.uk or visit www.interfaith.cam.ac.uk.

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Interfaith Explorers

The Maimonides Foundation is launching a new project for young people called 'Interfaith Explorers'. The project includes: a six week programme of cross-curricular activities; faith and cultural resources for pupils to explore online; a national competition providing opportunities for pupils to showcase their learning; prizes for winning schools; free teaching resources for primary schools; and support for pupils to develop skills, attitudes and values that build respect and understanding. The project is funded by the D Khalili Charitable Settlement and produced in partnership with EdisonLearning Ltd. For further information, visit www.interfaithexplorers.com.

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Occupy Faith 'Pilgrimage for Justice'

Occupy Faith UK is planning a 'Pilgrimage for Justice'. Described as "a highly visible statement of people's determination to see a better, fairer society" and "a focus for exploring what that kind of society might look like, and the policy changes to propose for getting there", the Pilgrimage will take place over a period of two weeks from 7 June, wending its way from St Paul's Cathedral in London to Canterbury Cathedral.

The route will be set out in a sequence of discrete legs, with potential participants invited to join either for the full walk, or at whichever point they prefer, or simply for a particular leg of the journey. There will be overnight stops in which there will be opportunities for interaction with local communities: "Events held along the route will explore how local communities, faith communities, cooperatives, social organisations and individuals can identify common concerns and work together, reinventing the idea of civil society – the commons – as a potent force for social change".

The Pilgrimage will culminate in a conference organised by the University of Kent entitled 'Building a Just Society.' This will take place over three days, with sessions for discussion being partly fed in through the Pilgrimage, but also with set sessions with academics, experts, social and economic policy makers and possibly politicians.

Further information about the route, the conference, supporting bodies and funding needs can be found at www.occupyfaith.org.uk or from Lead Organiser, Tanya Paton Tel: 07813870783 tanyakd23@gmail.com.

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Jain Community 'Love of Faith' Walk

On Saturday 30 June, the Jain Community will be doing a special charity faith walk through central London. The 'Love of Faith' walk will start with prayers at a Jain temple early in the morning and encompass visits to places of worship of other faiths between St John's Wood and Westminster – Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Christianity – culminating at Westminster Abbey. The initiative is organised by the Jain organisation Shrimad Rajchandra Mission Dharampur (UK), and the founder of the Mission, Pujya Gurudevshri Rakeshbhai, will be leading the Walk. The visits highlight the Jain community's commitment to developing good inter faith relations, reflecting the Jain tenet of *anekantvada* which points to the many-sidedness of truth with a message of love and harmony and 'Love of Faith'. Funds raised by walkers will go towards children's health and welfare projects in the developing world. This reflects the Jain commitment – shared with other faiths – of helping those in need and to service.

The walk is one of the ways that the Jain community is marking the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty The Queen and has a link to the A Year of Service programme, www.ayearofservice.org.uk The organisers will be pleased to welcome as honoured guests, walkers of other faiths. If you would like details of the walk and to express an interest in taking part, please contact Ashwin Mehta, Shrimad Rajchandra Mission Dharampur (UK) on 07766 852950 or at ashwin933@yahoo.co.uk.

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Inter Faith Walks in London

The South London Inter Faith Group (SLIFG) has helped local groups organise inter faith walks for many years as a good way for local people from different religious and other traditions to meet each other, visit local communities and learn from their neighbours.

This year's walks will be part of the Olympic Truce. SLIFG is inviting all the London boroughs to walk on the same weekend – 14 and 15 July. Anyone interested in finding out more is invited to attend a meeting at City Hall at 6.30pm on Tuesday 15 May at 6.30 pm. For further information, email SLIFG at secretary@southlondoninterfaith.org.uk.

Westminster Interfaith will also be holding its annual Multi-Faith Pilgrimage for Peace. This takes place on 26 May in the East End of London (see Diary Dates).

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Welsh schools support Gower pilgrimage – Walking for World Peace

A number of Swansea schools are actively supporting a Gower Pilgrimage taking place in July 2012 and entitled "In the Steps of the Saints, Walking for World Peace with the Celtic Saints of Gower." This pilgrimage is in celebration of the 10th anniversary of the award winning multi faith Peace Mala project. The five day journey will follow the sacred sites of Gower including holy wells, springs and churches, starting on 18 July from St Teilo's Church in Bishopston and ending on 22 July at St Rhidian & St Illtyd's Church in Llanrhidian. The pilgrimage hopes to re-ignite awareness of the spiritual power of pilgrimage and knowledge of the Celtic Saints. A small book on the Celtic Saints of Gower, the holy wells and springs and other relevant historical information is being written to accompany the pilgrimage. This will be illustrated by children from local schools who have been researching the

Celtic Saints in preparation for the pilgrimage. For further information contact the Revd Alan Bayes at revalanbayes@aol.com.

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Jubilee Debt Campaign Multifaith Project

The Jubilee Debt campaign is keen to extend its support to all people of all faith communities. The Multifaith Project is based in Birmingham and a number of successful events have been held there over the last two years, including a conference of Dharmic Faiths in February. Faith Leaders are being invited to sign a letter which calls for an end to unjust lending, cancellation of the unpayable debts of the poorest countries and a reform of taxation as an alternative to excessive borrowing. There is also a national petition.

If your faith community or inter faith organisation would like to know more, pairs of speakers – people of two different faiths together- are available to come and make a presentation, on the theme, ‘Jubilee Debt – a campaign for all faiths.’ For further information, contact Ruth Tetlow on ruthetlow@btinternet.com.

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Inter Faith Water Project, Diocese of Wakefield

The Diocese of Wakefield has been involved in a week-long peace mission, called ‘New Horizons’, as part of which they invited imams, priests, lawyers and police officers to Britain from the town of Goyra in Pakistan, which was struggling with inter faith tensions. The project aimed to build relations between the participants and invited them to experience a number of inter faith projects in the UK and learn from some of the issues experienced through these.

At the end of the visit an Inter Faith Water Project was launched, to bring fresh drinking water to Goyra through collaboration between the faith communities. Further information is available online at www.wakefield.anglican.org/news/story/interfaith_water_project_brings_new_hope_for_pakistan_peace_mission.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Communitybuilders Fund

The Communitybuilders Fund, previously owned by the Department for Communities and Local Government, is now an endowed fund, owned and administered by the Adventure Capital Fund. The Fund is designed to support neighbourhood-based,

community-led organisations to become more sustainable through a mixture of loans, grants and business support. Applications for Communitybuilders Feasibility Grants closed on 13 April 2012. Successful applicants will be announced in early summer. A new round of grants and loans will be on offer from June. More information on eligibility will be available soon at www.communitybuildersfund.org.uk.

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Near Neighbours

The Near Neighbours programme is a three-year initiative, run by the Church Urban Fund, which aims to bring people together in diverse communities, helping them build relationships and collaborate to improve the local community in which they live. The programme currently operates in the following areas: East and South East London, North Birmingham, Leicester, Bradford, Burnley and Oldham.

Near Neighbours has a grants programme, due to end in March 2013, which at present operates on a rolling basis with no deadlines. Grant amounts range from £250-£5000. The fund invests in environmental, social, cultural, artistic and sporting ideas which fulfill the criteria, which can be found at www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/grants. Examples of funded projects can be found at: <http://www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/funded-projects>

The Fund is pleased to receive applications from people of different faith groups or none, working in partnership with people of different faiths and within the criteria. Details on how to apply can be found at www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/grants.

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DCMS grants for places of worship

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) is providing a one-off grant in 2012-13 for capital works in listed places of worship. The National Churches Trust is administering a share of money in the form of open grants programme for listed places of worship outside the care of the Church of England. Another share is being administered by the Church of England through its dioceses. Places of worship for from all faith communities are eligible for grants, as long as the building was built for worship originally.

Details of the programme are now available on the NCT website at <http://nationalchurchestrust.org/supporting-you/grants/community-grants-new.php>. Grants are available for new capital works (for example, extensions and facilities such as kitchens, toilets and heating) so repairs and maintenance of existing fabric are not eligible.

There are limited funds available and due to the need for all grants under the scheme to have been claimed and paid by 31 March 2013, the programme is open for application from now until 30 August 2012. There will be opportunities for decisions in May, October and December of this year. For further information, contact Alison Pollard, NCT Grants Manager at alisonp@nationalchurchestrust.org or on 020 7776 1043.

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All Our Stories, a new Heritage Lottery Fund £1m Programme

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has launched a new £1m small grant programme, entitled 'All Our Stories', designed to help local communities explore their heritage. This will make available grants ranging from £3,000 to £10,000. Projects could range from researching local historic landmarks, learning more about local customs and traditions, delving into archives or investigating the origins of street and place names. HLF has developed All Our Stories in support of the BBC's *The Great British Story – A People's History*. Presented by Michael Wood, the new series will be broadcast on BBC Two. All Our Stories will also feature in five BBC Learning events at flagship heritage locations, which will be run in tandem with the TV series, to get people involved with their local heritage.

Applications will be accepted from a wide range of organisations including community groups, heritage organisations and charities. To find out more or to apply, visit www.hlf.org.uk/HowToApply/programmes/Pages/Allourstories.aspx. Applications need to be submitted online by 31 July 2012 and applicants will receive a decision by October.

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Community Games

The Community Games programme, which received a £2 million social action grant from the Cabinet Office in March, is an initiative to get communities to organise their own local sporting and cultural events, and this year they are in celebration of the London 2012 Olympic Games. The events can be anything from a triathlon or a sponsored walk to a live concert, and will reflect the interests and needs of the local community.

Community Games will be delivered by County Sports Partnership Network (CSPN) and the YMCA, but the scheme also encourages individual schools and other local bodies to organise games. The programme has been running in the West Midlands since 2010, where over 200 Community Games have already taken place, and the aim is now, with this new funding, to bring Community Games to people all over England.

For further information, to see what games are taking place near you visit, or to register interest in organising a games, visit www.communitygames.org.uk

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Big Local Trust – Wave 2 'Getting Started' funding

A consortium led by the Community Development Foundation (CDF) is managing the new independent 'Big Local Trust'. The Trust programme will provide support and at least £1m funding per area to 150 local areas in England over the next ten years, through a £200m endowment from the Big Lottery Fund.

In March it was announced that the fifty 'Wave 2' areas that received funding in February would have access to their 'Getting started' funding. This funding, up to £20,000, is for getting initiatives started and form the first steps on the 'Big Local

pathway.' Wave 2 areas will be consulting with their local community about the best ways to use this and their initial £1 million funding for the scheme.

For more information on the 'Getting started' funding, visit <http://www.localtrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Getting-Started-brief-details.pdf>

To find out the location of the current Big Local areas, or for more information about the programme, including how to get involved, visit www.localtrust.org.uk.

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Community First Neighbourhood Matched Fund

The Community First Neighbourhood Matched Fund provides small grants to community groups and local social action projects at the ward level. The £30 million Fund is being used to provide small grants for community projects in some of the most deprived areas in the country

The Community Development Foundation (CDF), which is administering the fund, released a list of wards eligible to receive the funding earlier in October 2011. Community First panels of local people will administer the funding in these areas, applications to form Community first panels in are still open and the deadline for registering is 31 May. For more information, <http://www.cdf.org.uk/content/funding-programmes/community-first/neighbourhood-matched-fund>

The Fund has a sister project the 'Endowment Match Challenge' which seeks to match £50 million in Government funding by raising a further £100 million through corporate and individual philanthropic giving. This is being administered by the CDF and delivered via Community Foundation Network. For more information, visit <http://www.cdf.org.uk/content/funding-programmes/community-first/endowment-match-challenge>

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RESOURCES AND TRAINING

CTE Golden Rule resource

Churches Together in England has prepared a resource for volunteers and others for use at the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games (which can be used later as well). It is based on the Golden Rule shared by all religions and people who do not have a formal faith. It is a 3 page text and a postcard and can be seen on the CTE website www.cte.org.uk/goldenrule. A limited number of postcards are also available and can be obtained from the CTE office on 020 7529 8131.

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Three Faiths Summer School and Understanding Islam

The Ammerdown Centre near Bath is running a Three Faiths Summer School on the subject of 'Pilgrimage' from 3 to 9 July. The course, led by Rabbi Dr Michael Hilton, the Revd Dr Liz Carmichael and Sheikh Bashir Ahmad Dultz, is described as offering an opportunity to mix and relax with people of other faiths, to share and discuss, to learn and grow, to laugh and cry and to worship together. The full residential cost is £485, but there are bursaries available for people on low income which reduce the cost to £323, and a limited number of free places are available for young people and students (maximum age 25).

The Centre is also offering an intensive three day course from 10 to 12 May (and from 15 to 17 November) on the subject of 'Understanding Islam'. The course is intended for anyone who interacts with Muslims in their daily life, whether at a personal or professional level – for example, community workers, clergy, chaplains, teachers, social workers, members of the police force or the NHS. The course content aims to provide understanding of Muslims' world view, beliefs and practices, as well as an overview of the history of relations through the centuries. Course leader is Dr Chris Hewer. Course fees are: Residential, £220 (all inclusive); non-residential, £145.

For further information on either of the above courses, visit www.ammerdown.org or email centre@ammerdown.org.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS AND TENDERS

Inter faith marriage study

Faith Matters is undertaking a study on inter faith marriages. They are looking for individuals who are Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Sikh, Hindu or Buddhist within inter faith marriages. Anyone interested in being involved in the study should contact the Director of Faith Matters, Mr Fiyaz Mughal OBE, at info@faith-matters.co.uk.

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4th Insight Film Festival - Call for submissions

Insight, in association with the Coexist Foundation, is encouraging people to make films which explore, challenge, critique, celebrate, question or reflect on faith in contemporary life, with the aim of promoting better understanding and community cohesion.

They are looking for short films (not more than 30 minutes in length) which must be in English or have English sub-titles. Entrants must be over 18 and films need to be submitted on DVDs to reach Insight by 7 May. Entrants will have their films viewed by a judging panel including film industry professionals, and have a chance to win awards and prizes. For more details, visit www.insightfestival.com or email team@insightfestival.com.

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Faith Shorts 2012

Run by the Tony Blair Faith Foundation, Faith Shorts is a short film competition, open to young film makers aged between 14 to 27, who are invited to submit a short film showing how faith impacts their life and the lives of those around them. Through sharing personal stories and providing insights to their world, Faith Shorts gives young people the chance to correct some of the presumptions that exist around religion and religious views, and show that faith means different things to different people.

Entries will be judged by a high profile panel including Hollywood stars Hugh Jackman and Jet Li; Bollywood star Anil Kapoor; producer Lord Puttnam; the Grand Mufti of Bosnia and British actress Dawn French. The competition is designed to be as accessible as possible and those who don't have access to film making equipment can apply to win a portable video camera, by outlining their thoughts for a film to enter into the main competition. Applications to win a camera need to be received by 7 May and entries to the Faith Shorts competition itself need to be received by 9 July. Winning entries will be premiered at BAFTA in London later this year. For more information, visit www.tonyblairfaithfoundation.org/projects/faithshorts.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

The Big Jubilee Lunch 3 June

The Big Lunch this year takes place on Sunday 3 June and will form part of the official Diamond Jubilee weekend celebrations as The Big Jubilee Lunch: <http://www.thebiglunch.com/join-in/jubilee-2012.php> The Inter Faith Network is a Key Supporting Organisation for the Big Lunch.

The Big Lunch aims to get as many people as possible across the UK to have a community lunch once a year. Since the project was launched in 2009 thousands of lunches have taken place across a wide range of communities. The Big Lunch is hoping that faith communities and inter faith groups will again play a significant role this year – hosting and participating in lunches. On 5 April, a press release was put out by the Big Lunch about support from faith community leaders: [Faith Leaders back The Big Jubilee Lunch](#)

For those wishing to take part, help and information with planning a faith based or inter faith Big Jubilee Lunch, can be obtained by emailing info@thebiglunch.com and requesting a free Big Jubilee Lunch Starter Pack, containing event guides, publicity materials and recipe ideas.

Further information about The Big Jubilee Lunch and how to sign up to their newsletter can be found at www.thebiglunch.com. It is also possible to call 0845 850 8181 to speak to one of The Big Lunch team.

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European Days of Jewish Culture and Heritage 2 – 9 September

The theme of this year's EDJCH, organised by B'nai B'rith UK, will be 'The Joys of Jewish Humour', which can be expressed in many ways and across a myriad of platforms, from comic books, cartoons, jokes and comedians to cinema, theatre and comedy writers. The week will also coincide with the National Heritage Open Days, which runs from 6 to 9 September (See the [Projects](#) section above).

Organisations wishing to register and have their events appear in the publicity leaflets need to complete a registration form, obtainable from bbukjewishheritage@gmail.com. Completed forms need to be returned by 30 March. For further information, visit www.jewishheritage.org.

B'nai B'rith also welcome synagogues holding events marking the Olympics, and particularly the Paralympics, which fall during Heritage Days. Sir Ludwig Guttmann, who founded the Paralympics, was a Jewish refugee neurologist who pioneered the rehabilitation of patients with spinal injuries at Stoke Mandeville Hospital.

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Inter Faith Week 18-27 November 2012

In this Diamond Jubilee year, there will be a special extended Inter Faith Week in England, Northern Ireland and Wales running from 18 - 27 November. Further information [above](#) and at www.interfaithweek.org

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Scottish Inter Faith Week 25 November – 2 December 2012

This year the Week will begin on Sunday 25 November. Further information [above](#) and from the Scottish Inter Faith Council www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org

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DIARY DATES

Luton Council of Faiths is holding a Peace and Unity Vigil on Friday 4 May inviting residents of Luton and others to come together to “express and experience the strength of community solidarity in Luton.” The event is held the evening before the English Defence League (EDL) plan to march and demonstrate in Luton and calls upon residents to “reject the divisive and provocative politics of the small extremist groups.” The vigil will start at 4:30pm and is being held in the grounds of St Mary’s Church, Church Street, Luton, Bedfordshire, LU1 3JF. For further information, contact David Jonathan on 01582 416946 or at igrassroots@btconnect.com.

Buddhist Group of Kendal (Theravāda) will be holding a Vesak Celebration on Saturday 5 May from 6.55pm at the United Reformed Church in Kendal. Members of other faiths are welcome. For further information, contact South Lakeland Interfaith Forum at slinterfaithforum@talktalk.net.

Watford Interfaith Association will be playing a key role in Watford Celebration 2012 on Bank Holiday Monday 7 May from 11am at Watford Colosseum. This free event encompasses the cultures, faiths and talents of the Watford area expressed in performance, food of all nations, discussion groups and demonstrations of different faiths, stalls for community, charity and faith groups, and children’s activities. For further information, visit www.watfordcelebration.org or contact Judith on 01923 774812.

Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust is holding a conference on Tuesday 8 May entitled ‘Coming Together in Chaplaincy: A Multi-Faith Approach In Mental Health’. The keynote speaker will be the Rt Revd Peter Wheatley, Bishop of Edmonton. The conference takes place at the Conference Centre, West Wing, St Pancras Hospital, 4 St Pancras Way, London NW1 OPE. Registration opens at 9.15am and the conference runs from 9.45am to 4.00pm. There is no charge to attend. To book a place, email Marian.Stratton@candi.nhs.uk or telephone 020 7561 4192.

Birmingham Council of Faiths is holding a joint seminar with Birmingham Jubilee Debt Campaign on Wednesday 9 May. The seminar is entitled ‘Banks, Bonuses and a Faith Perspective on the Financial Crisis’ and will be held at Birmingham Progressive Synagogue from 7.00pm to 9.00pm. For further information, contact Ruth Tetlow at ruthtetlow@btinternet.com.

Nottingham Inter Faith Council will be holding its annual inter faith 6-a-side football tournament, ‘Kickin’ it with Faith’ on Sunday 13 May from 10am at the Forest Recreation Ground, Nottingham. The tournament will include various age ranges from ages 11 upwards. There is also a girls tournament. For further information, contact 07815 032 837 / 07970 952 616 or email najeeb.nazir@ntlworld.com or www.interfaithnottingham.org.uk.

The **Women’s Interfaith Network**, in partnership with **Tzedek** and **Faiths Act Fellows** Charlotte Flowers and Maryam Duale, are holding an event on Sunday 13 May entitled ‘A Woman’s Role?’, celebrating and exploring women’s role in society in the UK and the developing world. The event will be held from 2.00pm to 6.00pm at the London Interfaith Centre, 125 Salusbury Road, West Kilburn, London NW6 6RG.

Tickets cost £8 and can be purchased through <https://eventelephant.com/aomansrole>. For more information, call 020 7443 5167 or email maryam@ymuk.net.

Islington Faiths Forum is holding a half day workshop on Wednesday 16 May for staff and volunteers at faith, refugee and BME organisations on how to advise members of the community on accessing services specific to issues around welfare benefits, debt, worklessness, housing and immigration. The workshop will take place from 9.30am to 2.30pm at Archway Methodist Church, Archway, London N19 3TD. Donations of £8 are requested and lunch is provided. To book a place, email Roz Miller at Rosalind.miller8@btinternet.com.

The fifth event in the **Westminster Cathedral Interfaith Group** discussion series on the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales document, *Meeting God in Friend and Stranger* takes place on Wednesday 16 May. The event runs from 4.00pm to 5.00pm in the Hinsley Room, Morpeth Terrace, London SW1P 1QW on the topic of 'Interreligious marriage'. The document costs £5.95 and it would be helpful to have read the relevant chapter in advance of the meeting. For further information, contact John Woodhouse on 07908 888 586.

The **Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby** is continuing its series of 'Conversations Across Faiths' on Thursday evenings from 7.00pm. The next conversation takes place on Thursday 17 May on the theme of 'Market economy or moral economy – is our economic system ethical?' at the Multi-Faith Centre. New members welcome. For further information, contact 01332 591285 or email mfc@derby.ac.uk.

The British Chapter of the **International Association for Religious Freedom** is holding its AGM at 10.30am on Saturday 19 May at the Unitarian Church, 1 The Croydon Flyover, Croydon CR0 1ER. The meeting will include panel discussions on 'Challenges to Civil and Religious Liberty Today' and 'Freedom and Responsibility Today'. Lunch will be 'bring and share' and there is a £5 registration fee. For further information and to register attendance, contact Dr Richard Boeke at r.boeke@virgin.net or on 01403 257801.

London Insight Meditation is hosting an event on Sunday 20 May on the subject of 'The Future of Religion'. The two speakers will be Stephen Bachelor and Don Cupitt and the event will be chaired by Madeleine Bunting of *The Guardian*. The event will take place at 2.00pm at Friends House, Euston, London. Tickets bought online cost £14 (£10 concessions) or £17 on the door. For more information, visit www.londoninsight.org or email enquiries@londoninsight.org.

The **Christian Muslim Forum** is holding a residential event as part of the Near Neighbours programme entitled 'London Leaders' on Monday 21 and Tuesday 22 May at the Emmaus Centre, Layhams Road, West Wickham, Kent BR4 9HH. The event seeks to establish dialogue, joint working and friendships between Christians and Muslims in London. It includes training for Near Neighbours leaders; addressing issues in the community; including women and young people; Christian-Muslim dialogue groups; Scripture discussions and action planning for Near Neighbours

Leaders. For more information and to book, email zahra@christianmuslimforum.org or telephone 0207 820 0444.

Bath Interfaith Group will be holding a talk about 'Rudolf Steiner: his Life and Work' on Wednesday 23 May. The talk will take place at 7.30pm at the Minerva Centre in Bath. For further information, contact John James on 01225 422252 or email info@bathinterfaithgroup.co.uk.

Welwyn Hatfield Inter Faith Group will be holding a talk entitled 'Religious Artefacts, Architecture and Symbols' on Thursday 24 May from 7.30pm at Campus West, Welwyn Garden City. For further information, contact Reynold Rosenberg on 01707 880941 or at reynoldrosenberg@yahoo.co.uk.

The 27th Annual Multi-Faith Pilgrimage for Peace, organised by **Westminster Interfaith**, will take place on Saturday 26 May. The pilgrimage will this year take place in the East End of London, starting from St Ethelburga's in Bishopsgate near Liverpool Street Station and heading towards Manor Park and Forest Gate in the Borough of Newham and in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brentwood. More details and a booking form will be available shortly. Any queries can be directed to Jon Dal Din at jondaldin@rcdow.org.uk or on 07527 758729.

Bolton Interfaith Council is part of a group of organisations hosting an 'Interfaith Open Forum' on Saturday 26 May on the question "Can sport lead the way in promoting diversity in our communities?" The event will be held from 12 noon until 2.30pm at the Friends Meeting House, Silverwell Street, Bolton BL1 1PP. For further information, contact Chan Parmar on 01204 546110 or visit www.boltoninterfaithcouncil.org.uk.

Faith in Community, Scotland is holding an inter faith seminar at 2.30pm on Sunday 27 May to bring together the different faith communities in Dundee, to learn more about the Scottish Government's Good Practice Guide entitled 'Belief in Dialogue'. The seminar will be held at the Dundee Hebrew Congregation. For further information, contact Ellen McCance at ellen@faithincommunitydundee.org.

Hull and East Riding Interfaith (HERI) is holding a meeting on Tuesday 29 May at 5pm in Committee Room 1, ground floor, at the Guildhall, Hull with refreshments from 4.30pm. Professor Lord Bhikhu Parekh, Emeritus Professor of Politics, University of Hull, will open a discussion on the current House of Lords reform proposals with particular reference to representing more faith groups than the existing 26 Church of England Bishops, or no faith groups at all. All welcome to join the discussion. For more info contact jackie.lukes@heri.org.uk www.heri.org.uk

The final event in the **Westminster Cathedral Interfaith Group** discussion series on the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales document, *Meeting God in Friend and Stranger* takes place on Wednesday 13 June. The event runs from 4.00pm to 5.00pm in the Hinsley Room, Morpeth Terrace, London SW1P 1QW and will be discussing Chapter 6: 'At the local level'. The document costs £5.95 and it

would be helpful to have read the relevant chapter in advance of the meeting. For further information, contact John Woodhouse on 07908 888 586.

The **St Philip's Centre** in Leicester will be holding its Annual General Meeting and Annual Lecture on Tuesday 19 June from 5.00pm to 7.00pm. The lecture will be given by Professor Paul Weller, Professor of Inter-Religious Relations at the University of Derby, on 'Controversies as a Lens on Change'. The lecture will be based on the chapter he has contributed to the book *Religion and Change in Modern Britain*, a guide to religion in Britain since 1945, edited by Linda Woodhead and Rebecca Catto. For further information, contact admin@stphilipscentre.co.uk.

The **World Community for Christian Meditation** has organised a day of dialogue on the theme of 'Salvation or Enlightenment?' on Thursday 21 June. The discussions will be led by Dr Alan Wallace, a Tibetan Buddhist and Fr Laurence Freeman, a Benedictine monk. The event will take place from 10.00am to 4.00pm at Westminster Cathedral Hall, Ambrosden Avenue, London. Tickets cost £35 which includes tea and coffee. Participants are asked to bring a packed lunch. For further information, visit www.wccm.org or telephone 07980 581351.

The **International Council of Christians and Jews** is holding its 2012 Conference in Manchester from Sunday 1 to Wednesday 4 July. The theme of the conference will be 'New Neighbours, New Opportunities: The Challenges of Multiculturalism and Social Responsibility'. The deadline for registrations is 1 June and some accommodation has been reserved which is available on a first come first served basis. The official opening will be at Manchester Town Hall and the plenary sessions and workshops will be held at the Manchester Communication Academy. Outings to places of interest, a meeting with the Manchester Jewish community on Tuesday 3 July and a special gala dinner on Wednesday 4 July are all included. The ICCJ Annual General Meeting will take place at the end of the conference on Thursday 5 July. For further information, visit www.iccj.org.

Interfaith Vision will be holding an event on Tuesday 3 and Wednesday 4 July at Emerson College, Forest Row, Sussex entitled 'Opening to the heart: Co-creating a new vision for interfaith encounter'. The event is open to lay people or clergy involved in grassroots inter faith work and is designed to share and explore new ways of engaging amidst differences. For further information, including costs, contact Nigel Anthony on 07940 001394 or the Revd Alan Bayes on 01792 892603 or Interfaith Minister Annie Blampied at annie@annieblampied.co.uk.

Kirklees Faiths Forum is once again facilitating the 'Treasures Revealed in Kirklees' festival between Friday 13 and Sunday 15 July. The festival encourages faith communities to open their doors and welcome visitors to their places of worship and is also an excellent opportunity to showcase the valuable faith and interfaith work of organisations in Kirklees. For further information, contact info@kirkleesfaithsforum.org.uk or visit www.kirkleesfaithsforum.org.uk/treasures-revealed.

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For detailed information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Scottish Inter Faith Council: www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org

For detailed information on events and projects in a number of the English regions see:

East of England: www.eefaithscouncil.org.uk

London: www.faithsforum4london.org

North East: www.nerfn.org

North West: www.faithnorthwest.org.uk

South East: www.se-faithforum.net

South West: www.faithnetsouthwest.org.uk

West Midlands: www.wmfaithsforum.org.uk

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 22 May with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer:

Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH www.interfaith.org.uk
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IFN e-bulletin

August 2012

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 3 September with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Material may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and future projects and events.

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UK/NATIONAL UPDATES

Inter Faith Network 25th anniversary

Since 1987, the Inter Faith Network for the UK has worked with its member bodies and others to build bridges of inter faith understanding and cooperation and to contribute to the continued development of a shared society, rooted in values held in common and with an appreciation of the positive aspects of diversity which strengthen this.

2012 marks the 25th anniversary of the Inter Faith Network. Its work of helping to foster inter faith understanding, respect and cooperation continues to be of vital importance – yet ever harder to resource in a climate of economic austerity. In this context, a 25th anniversary appeal has been launched to enable IFN to secure a sound operational footing for the future and to help its work to continue. Anyone who appreciates the importance of IFN's work and would like to make a gift to support its continuing work can do so online at: www.interfaith.org.uk/donations.htm or by sending a cheque to: The Inter Faith Network for the UK, Donations, Freepost, RSXC-XCGG-AJL, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, LONDON, SW1W 0DH.

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Inter Faith Network 2012 National Meeting and AGM

IFN held its National Meeting and AGM in London on 12 July.

The National Meeting, which marked the 25th anniversary of IFN's establishment, was on the theme of 'Working together for inter faith understanding and co-operation: the changing face of inter faith engagement'. The meeting explored how the face of inter faith dialogue and co-operation in the UK has changed across the last 25 years, together with the present challenges and opportunities. There were workshops on Inter faith engagement in a changing world; Resources for inter faith understanding and co-operation; Tackling suspicion, prejudice and harassment; 'Networking' – what is it?; Educating for inter faith understanding; Inclusion in inter faith contexts – aspirations and actualities; and Religious/non-religious dialogue. A report will be available from the IFN office in due course. To indicate an interest in receiving a copy of this, please email: ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

Both the National Meeting and the AGM discussed issues relating to IFN's membership policies and processes and reached decisions on a number of membership applications. The AGM endorsed plans for a strategic review which will begin in October. One of the topics which it will be examining is IFN's membership policy. Other issues are likely to include: the place of IFN in the wider context of inter faith engagement and UK society; the work of IFN; Inter Faith Week; the sustainability of IFN; short, medium, and long term views on the future work of IFN; and governance, internal processes and operations of IFN.

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Faith and the Olympic and Paralympic Games

The Olympic Games is drawing to a close, with the Paralympic Games on the near horizon. Faith has played a pivotal role prior to and during the games as the UK's faith communities welcome competitors and visitors from all over the world.

Ahead of the Games, services were held and prayers said as Olympics torch bearers made the journey from Land's End to London, welcomed in many places by people of different faiths.

The London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games (LOCOG) has worked with faith communities to provide a Multi-faith Centre and Chaplaincy. The Centre is being run by 50 chaplains working on shift around the clock and catering to the needs of 17,000 athletes and officials, up to 200,000 staff and volunteers, and 20,000 members of the press.

Just a few of the many faith and inter faith markings of the Olympics:

The South London Inter Faith Group co-ordinated a series of multi-faith walks within south London boroughs during the weekend of 14 and 15 July. The aim was to celebrate the multi faith character of London and to demonstrate the inter faith collaboration that is taking place, while the world is watching. Mayor of London Boris Johnson said "The Olympic and Paralympic Games offer the most wonderful demonstration of togetherness, and it will be a joy to see athletes and visitors from all over the world, of all faiths and none, coming together in our capital where we are almost unique in being able to offer them all a home from home. That is something to celebrate and for which we can all give thanks, and I can think of no better way to do so than by joining one of these Inter Faith walks in that same spirit of togetherness and sporting endeavour."

On 22 July, the World Congress of Faiths helped St Martin in the Fields London arrange an inter faith service "Go for the Golden Rule" and Churches Together in England produced a special 'Golden Rule' card for the Olympics. In Coventry, Coventry Inter Faith Network worked with faith leaders to arrange "Coventry Welcomes The World", also on 22 July, which started with an opening ceremony with leaders and representatives of faith groups reciting welcome messages from their own faiths and lighting candles as a symbol of unity.

The Olympics are taking place during Ramadan and a project called Iftar 2012 is working with various Olympic authorities to invite Olympic teams and individual Olympians to experience a British Iftar.

Over 40 churches are participating in a series of 'Faith Walks organised by the Diocese of London. Entrance to all the buildings on the routes is free, with illustrated booklets of the walks available at participating churches. For more details and free downloads visit <http://www.london.anglican.org/walking-routes>

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Inter faith response to Oak Creek Sikh Temple shootings

The shooting at the Sikh Temple in Oak Creek Wisconsin on 5 August that left six worshippers dead has prompted inter faith response across the US, including vigils to remember the victims of the massacre and to urge greater religious tolerance, and call for gun control.

In the UK a number of faith communities and leaders have released statements of support and condolence to the Sikh community in Oak Creek and globally.

The atrocity appears to have, like the actions in Norway last summer of Anders Behring Breivik, links with ultra extremist views as well as profound misunderstanding of the beliefs and practices of a community.

The Inter Faith Network for the UK works to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation. While IFN's work focuses on the UK and formal statements are rarely issued on overseas events, the Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs of IFN have expressed in a Circular to member bodies their concern about the underlying issues of extremism and prejudice which, sadly, cross all national boundaries and their sympathy to the Sikh community. The incident, like the murders in Toulouse last year – and others in different countries – are, together with examples from time to time of prejudice, hatred and even violence in our own country, a reminder of the need to work tirelessly for greater understanding about and between different faiths.

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Inter Faith Week

10 August marks 100 days until the start of national Inter Faith Week 2012 in England, Northern Ireland and Wales.

In this Diamond Jubilee year the Week has been especially extended, running from Sunday 18 November to Tuesday 27 November, reflecting the fact that there are additional activities taking place, including some linked both to the Week and to the 'A Year of Service' programme.

The Inter Faith Week website listings section will open in early September for listing of events happening in England, Northern Ireland and Wales.

The range of events held for every Week to date has been very wide, as has the types of bodies holding them. National faith community organisations and inter faith bodies, local places of worship, inter faith groups, schools and colleges, universities, hospitals, prisons, police forces, NGOs and many others were involved last year. This year it is hoped that even more bodies will take this opportunity to build bridges of understanding and cooperation.

Further information from: ashley.beck@interfaith.org.uk, Tel: 020 7730 0410

Scottish Inter Faith Week runs from 25 November until 1 December. Further information is available from the Scottish Inter Faith Council at www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org.

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National celebration of faith-based local action

On Tuesday 27 November, as its contribution to Inter Faith Week, the Department for Communities and Local Government is organising, in consultation with a range of bodies of bodies involved in A Year of Service and Near Neighbours, a celebration of faith and social action and faith-based volunteering. This will take place in central London and further details will be available in due course. If your faith community or inter faith organisation has run a social action event or project during 2012, whether linked to A Year of Service, the Near Neighbours programme or totally separate, and would like to contribute stories or images or be otherwise involved, please contact Harriet Ackunson at DCLG (harriet.ackunson@communities.gsi.gov.uk).

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A Year of Service

As noted in earlier issues of the IFN e-bulletin, a special programme called 'A Year of Service' is taking place during 2012. All faith communities have within their ethical teachings the values of compassion, care and social justice. One of the ways that their members put these values into everyday practice is through volunteering.

In each month, for A Year of Service, faith communities will be hosting a day or days of volunteering and inviting people of other faiths and non-religious beliefs to join in. There are also be workplace volunteering opportunities. The Year provides an opportunity for marking in a practical way the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty The Queen – of whose reign service has been a key theme.

A calendar of volunteering days taking place throughout A Year of Service based upon information provided by faith communities for the website can be found at <http://ayearofservice.org.uk/days-of-volunteering>.

The most recent events to have taken place were those arranged in August by the Muslim community linked to Ramadan. The theme was 'A Taste of Faith', encouraging mosques and community centres to open their doors and welcome in guests from their local communities to come and share Iftar with them as well as encouraging people from all parts of the community to give their time to the needy.

The next events to take place will be linked to the marking of the Harvest Festival by the Christian community on 5 October.

If you would like to be involved or to find out more, please visit the Year of Service website, www.ayearofservice.org.uk.

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Court of Appeal ruling on adjudicating on tenets of religious belief

The Court of Appeal unanimously ruled on 17 July that the courts should not adjudicate on matters of doctrine and the substance of religious belief. The judgement came in the context of a court case involving a dispute over the governance of two *gurdwaras* which started in 2008 and hinged on a doctrinal issue. The Court of Appeal upheld the defence's argument that the claim should be struck out since it inevitably involved a judgement on a matter of religious belief.

Lords Justice Mummery, Hooper and Pitchford agreed that while the issue of the place of religion in public life was important the courts did not have sufficient knowledge or authority to make a judgement on the substance of religious belief. Subjective matters of religious belief and faith were not matters on which secular courts could reach a decision. They emphasised that voluntary procedures involving mediators and specialists in the resolution of religious disputes were an alternative way of settling such disputes.

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Release plans for 2011 Census statistics

The Office of National Statistics (ONS) has published the dates on which it will release the statistics from the 2011 Census. There are four releases from July 2012 to October 2013:

- the first release on 16 July consisted of age, sex, and occupied household estimates for England and Wales;
- the second release over the period of November 2012 to February 2013 will consist of 'key and quick statistics';
- the third release over the period of March 2012 – June 2013 will consist of 'local characteristics;' and
- the fourth release from July to October 2013 will consist of 'detailed characteristics, detailed themes and armed forces information.'

It is the second release of statistics that will include, among a range of other data, such as ethnic group, the data obtained from the question on religious identity.

For more information visit:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/census/2011/census-data/2011-census-prospectus/release-plans-for-2011-census-statistics/index.html>

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House of Lords Reform Bill withdrawn

On 6 August, the Government has abandoned its House of Lords Reform Bill. The changes came after a programme motion to set a timetable for the bill to move through Parliament in this Parliamentary term was withdrawn after opposition from Conservative back bench MPs on 10 July and, following this, Conservative back

bench MP's also threatened to vote against the Second Reading of the House of Lords Reform Bill itself. These developments led to the Government announcing its plans to abandon the bill on 6 August.

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Use of faith community centres for civil marriages

The Home Office released new guidance on the use of faith community centres for civil marriages on its website on 23 May. The new guidance states that Schedule 23 of the Equality Act could be applied to Faith Community Centres that do not wish to be compelled to hold civil partnership ceremonies. It states that 'if the conditions set out in Schedule 23 are met, then organisations relating to religion or belief (as defined), whose sole or main purpose is not commercial and where it is not acting under contract on behalf of a public authority, can rely on the exception to refuse to host civil partnership registrations on the premises which they own or control, without the risk of a successful legal action against them for unlawful sexual orientation discrimination.' Importantly, the guidance makes it clear that 'in these instances, local authorities should not revoke an approved premises grant of approval if the religious organisation lawfully refuses to host civil partnership registrations.'

The revised guidance can be found online at:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/agencies-public-bodies/ips/general-ips-publications/civil-reg/civil-partnership-premises-qa>.

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Government responses on the Equalities Red Tape Challenge and reform of the EHRC

On 15 May the Home Secretary published a statement on the outcome of the recent Equalities Red Tape Challenge consultation and on the Government's response to the consultation (which closed on 30 October 2011) on reform of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), including "a strong package of legislative and non-legislative reforms to clarify the Commission's remit, focussing it on those areas where it can add value because of its unique role and functions, and improve its financial and operational performance".

The statement confirmed that, following the Red Tape Challenge consultation, the Government's review of the Public Sector Equality Duty (a legal obligation on public bodies to consider the impact of their decisions on different groups) will be brought forward and extended to include both the general and specific duties to establish whether the Duty is operating as intended.

A further consultation undertaken on the removal of provisions relating to: employer liability for the harassment of an employee by a third party, eg a customer; and the power of Tribunals to make wider recommendations in a successful discrimination case; and the statutory mechanism by which individuals can obtain information where they think an employer, or service provider, has acted unlawfully towards them closed on 7 August. The Government's response is expected to be published in the Autumn

The Government's measures for reforming the Equality and Human Rights Commission include:

- recruiting a new Chairman to succeed Mr Trevor Phillips, who is to stand down in September, and establishing a new and smaller Board;
- conducting a comprehensive review of the EHRC's budget;
- implementing tighter performance and financial controls set out in a new Framework Document; and
- amending the statutory provisions relating to the EHRC in the Equality Act 2006, including the repeal of its duty in relation to 'good relations'."

The Government describes its vision as being that the EHRC should become "a valued and respected national institution focusing on its core roles as:

- a national expert on equality and human rights issues – as an 'A-rated' National Human Rights Institution monitoring the effectiveness of equality and human rights law, undertaking research, conducting inquiries, making recommendations, and monitoring progress in reducing persistent inequalities; and
- a strategic enforcer of the law and guardian of legal rights – promoting awareness and understanding of rights, supporting victims of discrimination, and using its strategic enforcement powers to ensure the law is working as intended."

The Government proposes to use the earliest suitable legislative vehicle to amend the Equality Act 2006 to:

- repeal the EHRC's general duty at Section 3– which it says has no specific legal purpose and does not help to clarify the precise functions that the EHRC is required to carry out;
- amend the EHRC's Section 12 duty to monitor progress – to align the outcomes against which the EHRC is required to monitor progress to its core equality and human rights duties, and change the requirement for it to report from every three years to every five years. This will not prevent the EHRC publishing reports at more frequent intervals, should it choose to do so, but does allow a longer timescale between reports, enabling meaningful change over time to be captured; and
- repeal the EHRC's good relations duty at Section 10 and its associated power at Section 19 – on the basis that a separate good relations mandate is not necessary and that the EHRC's most valuable work in this area, for example its inquiries into disability harassment or the home care of older people, can be carried out under its existing equality and human rights duties. This is intended to support the EHRC to develop a more integrated and coherent work programme overall.

The statement noted that the Government announced in March 2011 that it would commission a new, improved Equality Advisory and Support Service from the private sector or civil society. This is due to launch this autumn.

The Government has decided not to replace the EHRC's strategic grants programme with a single grants-based programme to the voluntary and community sector, but instead to target Government funding at initiatives that provide practical help and support direct to, for example, victims of sexual and domestic violence.

The Government has also decided to repeal the EHRC's power to make arrangements for the provision of conciliation in non-workplace disputes.

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Review of Public Sector Equality Duty

One of the measures included in the Government's Red Tape Challenge announcement on 15 May was to bring forward and extend, in order to include both the general and specific duties, the already planned review of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) "in order to establish whether the Duty is operating as intended." It is proposed that the review will be completed by April next year.

The Government is currently refining the terms of reference of the review, and considering how it might best be carried out and what evidence needs to be collected. There is likely to be a PSED Review Steering Group, but the make-up of this has yet to be determined. It will be open to both organisations and individuals to submit material and evidence to the review. Concern has been expressed that because of the bringing forward of the timing of this review, there will in practice be very little evidence of the impact which the PSED is in practice having, given that it only came into effect in April of last year.

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The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012

Revised Draft Regulations on the Equality Duty in Scotland were approved by the Scottish Parliament and came into force on 27 May.

A consultation was carried out by the Scottish Government last autumn on the Public Sector Equality Duty Revised Draft Regulations. In March the Scottish Government published the 'Equality Duty Revised Draft Regulations Analysis of Consultation Findings' report and its response. The report presents an analysis of the consultation findings. The Scottish Government's response to the issues raised in the consultation report includes a copy of the revised regulations it proposed.

The relevant documentation can be found online at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2012/03/4239>.

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Government's Equality Strategy Progress Report

On 22 May the Government published a progress report highlighting its achievements since the first cross-Government equality strategy was launched in 2010. The Government statement said that its new strategy "marked a fundamental change in focus, moving away from regulation, legislation and coercion" and that "instead the Government is concentrating its efforts on developing intelligent, light-touch, common sense policies that have a demonstrable impact on people's lives".

The progress report can be found online at <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/equalities/equality-strategy-publications/progress-report>.

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Cabinet Office survey on Community Life

The Cabinet Office is planning to launch a new survey this autumn called Community Life, looking at volunteering, giving and community action, which will involve face to face interviews with a representative sample of between 2,000 – 3,000 adults every month.

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Commission on a Bill of Rights second consultation

The Commission on a Bill of Rights, established by the Government in March 2011 to look into the creation of a UK Bill of Rights, opened its second consultation on the issue on 11 July. The consultation is open to anyone, individuals or organisations, and will run until September 2012.

The second consultation follows on from issues raised in response to the ‘discussion paper’ that was circulated to the public in 2011. It continues to address in broad terms the questions of whether or not the UK needs a separate Bill of Rights and, if so, what form it might take. The consultation document also asks questions on how a Bill of Rights might sit alongside the European Convention on Human Rights and the Human Rights Act (1998), and questions on the individual rights themselves (such as rights of children).

It also has a section looking at how a UK Bill of Rights could be formulated to take account of the human right positions in the devolved nations’

Further information is available on the Department of Justice’s website:

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/about/cbr/second-consultation>

The consultation document is available to download here:

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/about/cbr/second-consultation/cbr-second-consultation.pdf>

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Report on Review of Charities Act 2006

The report of the review of the Charities Act 2006 undertaken by Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbot was published in July entitled ‘Trusted and independent: giving charity back to charities.’ The review procedure was built into the original 2006 Act, with the aim of examining its effects and implementation and improving on it over time.

The review made a large number of recommendations affecting charities and the charity commission. Among these were recommendations: that charities defined as ‘large’ (with an income over £1million a year) should be allowed to pay their trustees; that trustees should have a legal ‘right to know’ to access information held by their

charity; that there should be no statutory definition of public benefit; the Charity Commission should remain the principal regulator of charities in England and Wales; the Commission should focus more tightly on the regulation of the sector in particular the abuse of charitable status; the Commission should increase its partnerships with relevant umbrella bodies recognising that its primary competence is in charities law; and the Commission's name should be changed to the Charity Authority; and it should be the 'co-regulator' rather than the 'primary regulator.'

The review document can be found here:

<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Review-of-the-Charities-Act-2006.pdf>

Alongside the review Ipsos Mori conducted a survey of the public perceptions of charity that fed into the final report. The text of this can be found here:

<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/12-019441-01-Public-Perceptions-of-charity-a-report-for-the-Charities-Act-2006-review-FINAL-v2.PDF>

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Re-Imagining the Church of England: Social Action and Civic Role

The 'think tank' ResPublica has announced the commencement of a new project as part of its 'British Civic Life' workstream. This explores the civic role of the Church of England. The project is entitled 'Re-Imagining the Church of England: Social Action and Civic Role' and has the support of thirteen Church of England bishops, including the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams. A press release of 16 April from ResPublica said that the project arises out of the context where: "Over the past decade the Church of England has grown in confidence and self-understanding, asserting more than ever the importance of its role in public political life and responsibility for social action." It also states that the project "will seek to unearth the actual value of the Church, and critically assess its importance for British civic life, both amidst and beyond specific policy agendas and passing governmental trends."

The first phase of the research will involve consultation with "faith leaders, community groups, churches, members of parliament and civil servants" in order to assess the current impact of the established church. ResPublica are actively seeking opportunities for partnership on this project and urge all interested parties to get in touch.

The full text of the ResPublica press release can be found here:

<http://www.respublica.org.uk/item/Re-Imagining-the-Church-of-England-Social-Action-and-Civic-Role>

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PROJECTS

City of Sanctuary

City of Sanctuary is a project which aims to emphasise the positive values of hospitality and friendship to people seeking sanctuary, such as asylum seekers and refugees, and seeks to encourage and celebrate mutual relationships of support, learning and friendship between them and local people.

A 'City of Sanctuary' is a place where:

- the skills and cultures of people seeking sanctuary are valued, where they are included in local communities and able to contribute to the life of the city.
- community groups, local government, media, business, schools and colleges have a shared commitment to offering sanctuary, so that it is seen as part of the city's identity by local people.
- people seeking sanctuary can easily build relationships with local people as neighbours, friends and colleagues. Through these relationships, local people come to understand the injustices refugees face, and become motivated to support and defend them.

The movement began in Sheffield in 2005 and since then 14 other cities have become 'Cities of Sanctuary'. To find out more, visit www.cityofsanctuary.org.

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Muslim Jewish London Roots

Muslim Jewish London Roots is a project of the Faith Regen Foundation intended to help young Muslims and Jews aged 17 to 25 to connect to East London's history and heritage. Participants will have the opportunity to train with the British Library, the Jewish Museum and experts on the history of Muslim communities in the UK. They will also conduct interviews with members of Jewish and Muslim communities, get involved in inter faith presentations in mosques and synagogues, and attend an Achievement Evening at the House of Commons. Participants will also leave with practical skills by learning how to produce a documentary and e-magazine. For further information, visit www.faihrefgenuk.org or email Faaria Ahmad on faaria@faihrefgenuk.org.

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Jubilee Debt Campaign Multifaith Project

The Jubilee Debt Campaign is inviting all faith leaders to sign a letter to be delivered to the Prime Minister calling for him to seize the moment and proclaim a new Jubilee, rooted in the idea that people around the world should not be permanently shackled with burdens of unjust or unpayable debts, some accumulated before they were born.

The Jubilee Debt Campaign Multifaith project can also offer presentations and workshops to faith groups, schools and all those wanting to take action in this particular field of global poverty.

For further information, please visit www.jubileedebtcampaign.org.uk.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Inter Faith Youth Trust Small Grants Programme for Inter Faith Week 2012

This programme is specifically for events organised by and for young people focussed around Inter Faith Week 18-27 November 2012. Grants are awarded for proposals for inter-faith activities by children and young people from Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and other faiths and those of no formal faith in understanding and co-operation. The age range for young people is 11-25 years.

Priority will be given to projects which:

- Actively involve young people in planning, running, and evaluation of the project.
- Promote positive action i.e. young people from different backgrounds coming together to address shared problems like improving green spaces.
- Are run by non-statutory organisations, such as youth clubs, scout/guide groups, local voluntary and community organisations.

Grants can provide part-funding. Grants are not available for converting young people to a different faith.

Grants are given only to UK based organisations and are given for the agreed purposes set out in the completed grant application form.

Grants are for use in accordance with the Trust's charitable objectives. The Inter Faith Youth Trust as funder takes no responsibility for carrying out the work.

The deadline for applications is 12 September. For more information and an application form please visit http://www.ifyouthtrust.org.uk/?page_id=8

Deadline for applications: **14 September 2012**

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Near Neighbours

The Near Neighbours programme is a three-year initiative, run by the Church Urban Fund, which aims to bring people together in diverse communities, helping them build relationships and collaborate to improve the local community in which they live. The programme currently operates in the following areas: East and South East London,

North Birmingham, Leicester, Bradford, Burnley and Oldham. The scheme has also recently been undertaking some capacity building work in Luton.

Near Neighbours has a grants programme, due to end in March 2013, which at present operates on a rolling basis with no deadlines. Grant amounts range from £250-£5000. The fund invests in environmental, social, cultural, artistic and sporting ideas which fulfill the criteria, which can be found at www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/grants. Examples of funded projects can be found at: <http://www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/funded-projects> Inter Faith Week projects are among those which can be considered.

The Fund is pleased to receive applications from people of different faith groups or none, working in partnership with people of different faiths and within the criteria. Details on how to apply can be found at www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/grants.

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Community Games

The Community Games programme, which received a £2 million social action grant from the Cabinet Office in March, is an initiative to get communities to organise their own local sporting and cultural events, and this year they are in celebration of the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games. The events can be anything from a triathlon or a sponsored walk to a live concert, and will reflect the interests and needs of the local community.

Community Games will be delivered by the County Sports Partnership Network (CSPN) and the YMCA, but the scheme also encourages individual schools and other local bodies to organise games. The programme has been running in the West Midlands since 2010, where over 200 Community Games have already taken place, and the aim is now, with this new funding, to bring Community Games to people all over England.

For further information, to see what games are taking place near you visit, or to register interest in organising a games, visit www.communitygames.org.uk

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Big Local Trust – Wave 2 ‘Getting Started’ funding

A consortium led by the Community Development Foundation (CDF) is managing the new independent ‘Big Local Trust’. The Trust programme will provide support and at least £1m funding per area to 150 local areas in England over the next ten years, through a £200m endowment from the Big Lottery Fund.

In March it was announced that the fifty ‘Wave 2’ areas that received funding in February would have access to their ‘Getting started’ funding. This funding, up to £20,000, is for getting initiatives started and form the first steps on the ‘Big Local pathway.’ Wave 2 areas will be consulting with their local community about the best ways to use this and their initial £1 million funding for the scheme.

For more information on the 'Getting started' funding, visit <http://www.localtrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Getting-Started-brief-details.pdf>

To find out the location of the current Big Local areas, or for more information about the programme, including how to get involved, visit www.localtrust.org.uk.

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Community First Neighbourhood Matched Fund

The Community First Neighbourhood Matched Fund provides small grants to community groups and local social action projects at the ward level. The £30 million Fund is being used to provide small grants for community projects in some of the most deprived areas in the country. The Community Development Foundation (CDF), which is administering the fund, released a list of wards eligible to receive the funding earlier in October 2011. Community First panels of local people will administer the funding in these areas. The first round of grant applications in eligible areas has now closed, but the second grants round has opened and applications may be made up until the end of the financial year (31 March 2013). For information on the Fund and how to apply visit <http://www.cdf.org.uk/content/funding-programmes/community-first/neighbourhood-matched-fund>

The Fund has a sister project the 'Endowment Match Challenge' which seeks to match £50 million in Government funding by raising a further £100 million through corporate and individual philanthropic giving. This is being administered by the CDF and delivered via Community Foundation Network. For more information, visit <http://www.cdf.org.uk/content/funding-programmes/community-first/endowment-match-challenge>

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RESOURCES AND TRAINING

Interfaith Explorers

Interfaith Explorers is the title of a new learning resource developed by the Maimonides Foundation with Edison Learning. It is a free six-week programme which gives school children the opportunity to find out more about the three Abrahamic faiths, including their similarities and differences. It is an interactive resource, which includes resources for the classroom and for independent learning. Further information is available from www.interfaithexplorers.com

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ICCJ Conference report

The first texts of the plenary speeches at the International Council of Christians and Jews' conference held in Manchester on 1 – 4 July are now available on their website, www.iccj.org.

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Demos research faith based social action

The think tank Demos is undertaking a three part research project on issues of faith. They have published the report of the first part, 'Why those who do God, do Good', which can be found on their website, at www.demos.co.uk/files/Faithful_citizens_-_web.pdf. The second part of the research will look at the impact of faith based social action under the headings of Youth, Welfare to Work, Integration, and Drugs and Alcohol. For more information contact jonathan.birdwell@demos.co.uk

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Sharing Eden

Sharing Eden: Green teachings from Jews, Christians and Muslims, is the title of a new handbook written by Natan Levy, David Shreeve and Harfiyah Haleem. The book 'sets out to show how respect for the environment is at the heart of the Jewish, Christian and Muslim faiths'. It combines practical action points and ideas with reflections on key texts from sacred texts and from the wider writings of each tradition. Further information is available from www.sharingeden.org.

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Jubilee Woods packs

The Woodland Trust is offering community groups the chance to apply for packs of free trees as part of their Jubilee Woods campaign this year. Anyone interested in creating a faith or inter faith green space or a community garden, or just wanting to enhance their local area, should visit www.jubileewoods.org.uk/community or telephone Beverley Gormley, Community Tree Packs Project Manager, on 0845 293 5861. Tree packs come in three sizes – 60, 105 or 420 saplings in various themes. The deadline for the present round of applications is 20 August. Alternatively, packs for Spring 2013 are also available.

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St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace

St Ethelburga's are running several courses in the autumn, including a dialogue and facilitation week from 24 to 28 September. This is a 5 day intensive course exploring dialogue models, creating safe space, working with conflict and tension,

using narrative and story, group dynamics and deep listening. For further information on this and other courses, visit www.stethelburgas.org

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Ammerdown Centre study events

The Ammerdown Conference and Retreat Centre is running two study events in August, both of which are led by Sr Margaret Shepherd and Rabbi Mark Solomon: 17 to 19 August: Jewish/Christian Study Weekend, 'Seek Peace and Pursue it'; and 20 to 24 August: Jewish/Christian Study Week, 'Families in Conflict'. For further information please email info@ammerdown.org or visit www.ammerdown.org.

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JOBS AND VOLUNTEERING

Future for Religious Heritage - volunteer

Future for Religious Heritage, the European network for organisations and individuals that support the conservation of religious heritage buildings, is looking for a dedicated volunteer to support their conference taking place in Venice in November 2012. The post holder will assist the Development Officer and the Event Focus Group in preparing and organizing the conference, and tasks will include record keeping of registered delegates, assisting with marketing and PR, collating presentations and preparing delegate packs, as well as helping with all administrative needs during the event in Venice. They will need to have clear and concise written and oral communication skills, organisational skills, be IT-literate and have an interest in built heritage conservation. The post is for 1 to 3 days per week, from 10 September to 10 December, and is based in London. To apply send a CV and covering letter to leena.seim@futurereligiousheritage.eu before 15 August.

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Bedfordshire and Luton Emergency Volunteers Executive Committee (BLEVEC)

BLEVEC are developing an all year round multi faith emergency response capabilities and are looking for volunteers from faith communities in Bedfordshire who, after training, can be called upon to advise the emergency services about faith issues, and be willing, if necessary, to attend an Assistance Centre to offer pastoral and spiritual advice during an emergency as part of a multi faith team. For further information please contact cass.howes@beds.ac.uk

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HMDT looking for new Trustees

The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust is looking for new Trustees to join its Board from November. Its Trustees play a pivotal role in developing the strategic aims of HMDT to encourage everyone to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January each year. Further information can be found at:

<http://hmd.org.uk/about/vacancies/trustee-recruitment> To apply, send a completed application pack and equality and diversity monitoring form to recruitment@hmd.org.uk no later than **midday on 7 September**. Hard-copy applications will not be accepted.

CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS AND TENDERS

University of Derby research project

During the past three years the University of Derby has been researching how people's views and reported experiences of unfair treatment on the basis of religion or belief may have changed in the last decade in England and Wales, in the hope that their findings will ultimately influence policies, practices and laws. They would now like to engage with an even wider range of practitioners from religion or belief, voluntary and community, public, private and legal sectors. They are therefore holding a workshop which will share their research findings and provide participants with the opportunity to contribute to them in the light of the experience of their own organisations or groups.

Workshops take place across the country:

- Wednesday, 19 September in Derby
- Friday, 5 October in Oxford
- Thursday, 11 October in Manchester
- Thursday, 25 October in Cardiff
- Wednesday 7 November in London

They last from 10 am – 5 pm and are free to join, but by invitation and application only. To apply, visit www.derby.ac.uk/knowledge-exchange-workshops or call Lesley Sawley on 01332 591730 by 15 August 2012.

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Westminster Cathedral Interfaith Group 'Faith and the Environment' talks

Westminster Cathedral Interfaith Group is looking for speakers available on a Wednesday afternoon to talk about faith and the environment in an autumn series of talks to be held at the Hinsley Room next to Westminster Cathedral.

For further information, contact John Woodhouse at woodhousesopten@btinternet.com.

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Pause for Thought - the search for a new voice

In conjunction with The Times Cheltenham Literature Festival the Coexist Foundation is searching for a new broadcaster on matters of faith. The successful person will get

the opportunity to present five 'Pause for Thought' broadcasts on Vanessa Feltz's BBC Radio 2 show.

Submissions must take the form of an audio recording of original 'material' lasting exactly two minutes, accompanied by a written transcript of the text. The theme for the entry is left open; however, it must be a religious reflection suitable for transmission in the 'Pause for Thought' slot. The Talent search is being run in association with BBC Radio 2, The Times Cheltenham Literature Festival, The Cambridge Inter-faith Programme and TBI Media.

All submissions must be received before the extended closing date and time of Friday 17 August at 11:59pm. Details of how to submit an entry and terms and conditions can be found at <http://www.cheltenhamfestivals.com/literature/2012/pause-for-thought>.

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Faith based organisations and health services

FaithAction has been asked by the Rt Hon Stephen Timms MP, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Faith and Society (of which FaithAction is the secretariat) to gather evidence from any faith based organisations currently offering health and wellbeing services. FaithAction is particularly interested in the work of these organisations, and any potential barriers they have faced (ranging from funding cuts to discrimination against faith-based organisations) on a local or national level. FaithAction would be interested to hear from any faith groups involved in such work as soon as possible. Please contact felicity.smith@faithaction.net before 5 pm on 13 August.

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Faith through a lens photography competition

The Faith through a Lens competition is looking to find the amateur photographer who best captures the essence of faith and the community in one of the following categories:

- Moments of faith
- Community spirit against the odds
- A year of service (a new category to coincide with the Queen's Jubilee)

Four finalists from each category will be invited to an exclusive awards ceremony to be held in London as part of Inter Faith Week. Each finalist will receive a prize bag worth £200 including photography software and a Photography Made Simple one day course. The winner from each category will receive a prize worth £1,400 which includes a Nikon 1 V1 with 10-30 and 30-110 mm lenses. The closing date for entries is 31 October. For more information, visit www.faiththroughalens.co.uk

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

European Days of Jewish Culture and Heritage 2 – 9 September

The theme of this year's EDJCH, organised by B'nai B'rith UK, will be 'The Joys of Jewish Humour', which can be expressed in many ways and across a myriad of platforms, from comic books, cartoons, jokes and comedians to cinema, theatre and comedy writers. The week will also coincide with the National Heritage Open Days, which runs from 6 to 9 September (See the [Projects](#) section above).

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International Day of Peace 21 September 2012

International Peace Day was established by a United Nations resolution in 1981 to coincide with the opening of the General Assembly. The first Peace Day was celebrated in September 1982 and it has been held on 21 September each year since then. International Day of Peace is run by the UN delegated Culture for Peace Initiative. Further information can be found online at www.internationaldayofpeace.org.

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Peacemaking Sunday 23 September

Churches and Inter Faith Work for World Peace are encouraging faith communities of all traditions to support the UN World Peace Day on 21 September and Peacemaking Sunday on 23 September by holding inter faith events, special services and perhaps uniting with local peace groups.

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Sewa Day 7 October 2012

Sewa Day 2012 will take place on Sunday 7 October. The Sanskrit word 'Sewa' means 'selfless service'. The aim of Sewa Day is to provide people a chance to give back to the local community through volunteering on a single day to make a difference. For more information and to get involved visit: www.sewaday.org

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Mitzvah Day 18 November 2012

Mitzvah Day is a Jewish led day of social action – around the world thousands of people take part in hands on projects to support existing charities and to build stronger communities. The goal is to reduce hardship and poverty and to help the environment. People are encouraged to volunteer for projects in their communities and anyone can take part regardless of their background. See www.mitzvahday.org.uk for further information and to register an event.

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Inter Faith Week 18-27 November 2012

In this Diamond Jubilee year, there will be a special extended Inter Faith Week in England, Northern Ireland and Wales running from 18 - 27 November. Further information on page 3 [above](#) and at www.interfaithweek.org

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Scottish Inter Faith Week 25 November – 2 December 2012

This year the Week will begin on Sunday 25 November. Further information from the Scottish Inter Faith Council www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org.

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DIARY DATES

Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter: The Centre is running a Jewish/Christian study weekend on the subject 'Seek peace and pursue it', led by Sr Margaret Shepherd and Rabbi Mark Solomon. Participants will be invited to look at how they can transform the energy in their faith communities to help bring healing, justice and peace to their part of the world. The weekend takes place from 17 to 19 August at the Sion Centre, 34 Chepstow Villas, London W11 2QZ. For more information or to book please email sioncde@yahoo.co.uk

The **World Congress of Faiths** will be holding its ninth inter faith service in celebration of animals on 2 September at 3.00pm at Golders Green Unitarian Church, 31 Hoop Lane, Golders Green, London NW11 8BS. For further information, go to www.worldfaiths.org/events.php or contact 01935 864055.

Hull and East Riding Interfaith (HERI) will be holding a participative interfaith discussion at 5 pm on 4 September in the Committee Room 1 (Ground floor) of the Guildhall, Hull (with refreshments from 4.30 pm). The discussion will look at ideas of Heaven and Hell in different religions, and all are welcome to share their views,

bringing, if they wish, a passage of text from any book or poem which they think may aid illumination and understanding. For more information please contact Tim.Stephenson@heri.org.uk or visit www.heri.org.uk.

The **University of Salford** will be hosting a conference on 11 September entitled 'Faith and Sexual Orientation: Reconciling the Differences'. This includes speakers, interactive workshops and networking opportunities that will look into the relationship between sexuality and faith within the Higher Education sector. The conference will take place at the Lady Hale Centre at the University of Salford from 10.00am to 5.00pm. For more information, email h.morgan1@salford.ac.uk or telephone 0161 295 9003.

St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace will be running an autumn series of courses. Those for September are as follows:

- 11 – 13 September: Transformative conversations – skills for responding to conflict using the transformative meditation model, which highlights opportunities for relationship and for empowerment
- 13 September – Using personal storytelling in palliative care – using powerful biographical story techniques to work with memories at the end of life (this course is aimed at hospice chaplains and others working with the ill or dying)
- 24 – 28 September: St Ethelburga's dialogue and facilitation skills (see under Training, above)

All courses take place at St Ethelburga's Centre, 78 Bishopsgate, London EC2N 4AG. For details and online booking see www.stethelburgas.org/events or contact training@stethelburgas.org

The Historic Religious Buildings Alliance will be holding their Annual Members' Day on 12 September in the New West End Synagogue, St Petersburg Place, Bayswater, London W2 4LB. The event gives information on projects and initiatives taking place across the country, all helping to secure the future of historic religious buildings and is open to everyone, (though HRBA members will have priority booking and receive a discount). Information can be found at: http://www.hrballiance.org.uk/?page_id=5

The **Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter** is holding the first of its autumn seminars on conflict and reconciliation in the Bible and Society today on Wednesday, 19 September. Registration is from 10.30am, the lecture starts at 11.00am and the day finishes at 3.30pm. (Please bring a packed lunch.) The subject is 'Families in conflict in the Biblical narratives' and speakers are Rabbi Mark Solomon, a lecturer at Leo Baeck College, and Sr Margaret Shepherd, a lecturer in Bible and Jewish/Christian relations. There is a suggested donation of £15. The event takes place at the Sion Centre, 34 Chepstow Villas, London W11 2QZ. For further information or to book please email sioncde@yahoo.co.uk or telephone 020 7313 8286.

The Politics of Religious Diversity will present the research findings from two major academic projects, Muslim Participation in Contemporary Governance and ACCEPT Pluralism: Tolerance, Pluralism and Social Cohesion. There will also be a panel discussion with Kris Hopkins MP, Sadiq Khan MP, Professor Tariq Modood and Fiyaz Mughal. The event takes place on 19 September from 2 – 5 pm at

Toynbee Hall, East London. For details see <http://www.bris.ac.uk/ethnicity/diversityevent.pdf>. Registration is open at <http://religiousdiversity.eventbrite.co.uk>.

University of Derby Practitioner workshops on 'Religion and Belief, discrimination and equality' (See under Projects for full information):

- Wednesday, 19 September in Derby
- Friday, 5 October in Oxford
- Thursday, 11 October in Manchester
- Thursday, 25 October in Cardiff
- Wednesday 7 November in London

Open House Weekend, London: Open House London celebrates all that is best about the capital's buildings, places and neighbourhoods. Every September is your unique opportunity to get out and under the skin of London's amazing architecture, with over 700 buildings of all kinds opening their doors to everyone – all for free. The dates for 2012 are 22 and 23 September. Several places of worship will be opening their doors, including the Zoroastrian Centre. Brochures can be purchased through the London Open House website, <http://www.londonopenhouse.org/> and should also be available free soon in most London libraries.

St Ethelburga's autumn series of courses will continue with:

- 6 October – The inner reconciliation of opposites
- 8 – 12 October – Narrative mediation
- October – November (8 week evening course, dates to be confirmed) – Skills for using personal narrative in conflict and community building
- 3 November – Letting go of the past
- 8 November – Facilitator network and skills sharing day

Further information will be included in later e-bulletins, or you may wish to visit www.stethelburgas.org.

European Future for Religious Heritage Network have organised a conference in Venice from 14 – 17 November on the extended use of religious buildings. Registration is now open and a call for papers has been launched. Papers are invited on a number of themes, including:

- What has been done in Europe to extend the use of religious buildings?
- What is feasible within different denominations and cultures?
- What direction should we take for the future?

For more details, please visit <http://www.futurereligiousheritage.eu/upcoming-conference-november-2012/>

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For detailed information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Scottish Inter Faith Council: www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org

For detailed information on events and projects in a number of the English regions see:

East of England: www.eefaithscouncil.org.uk

London: www.faithsforum4london.org

North East: www.nerfn.org

North West: www.faithnorthwest.org.uk

South East: www.se-faithforum.net

South West: www.faithnetsouthwest.org.uk

West Midlands: www.wmfaithsforum.org.uk

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 3 September with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer:

Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH
www.interfaith.org.uk

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September 2012

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 7 October with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Material may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and future projects and events.

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UK/NATIONAL UPDATES

Inter Faith Week – listings section goes live

29 September marks 50 days until the start of national Inter Faith Week 2012 in England, Northern Ireland and Wales.

The listings section of the Inter Faith Week website (www.interfaithweek.org.uk) is now open for organisers to list events happening in England, Northern Ireland and Wales.

The range of events held for every Week to date has been very wide, as has the types of bodies holding them. National faith community organisations and inter faith bodies, local places of worship and inter faith groups, schools and colleges, universities, hospitals, prisons, police forces, NGOs and many others were involved

last year. This year it is hoped that even more bodies will take this opportunity to build bridges of understanding and cooperation.

A number of events are already planned to mark Inter Faith Week, including a faith leaders' conference, organised by Thurrock Faith Matters; a 'celebrating our faiths' event, organised by South Lakeland Interfaith Forum; an event 'Meet the Imams and Ask Questions', organised by the Joseph Interfaith Foundation; an 'inter faith tour' in South Cardiff, organised by the Cardiff Third Sector Council; an inter faith netball tournament, organised by Thames Valley Police; an event 'Mohiniyattam', organised by Manasamitra and York Minster; and 'A Celebration of Faiths', organised by Eastbourne's Faiths Forum.

Schools in many areas are gearing up to take part. Education Secretary Michael Gove has said "Without doubt the constructive working and mutual understanding between faiths in this country is one of our greatest strengths. Educating children about different faiths is of immense importance in leading children to understand the history that has helped shape the values and traditions of this country, and of other countries and cultures. The extended Inter Faith Week that will take place in November this year gives even more opportunity for schools and young people to participate, and I hope they will take advantage of this to build new partnerships and celebrate the diversity that exists across the UK."

If you are planning to mark the Week by running an event, please register your event on the Inter Faith Week website at www.interfaithweek.org. We will shortly be adding a printable paper registration form, and a new facility enabling you to add multiple events at the same time.

For further information, contact Ashley Beck at ashley.beck@interfaith.org.uk or on 020 7730 0410.

Scottish Inter Faith Week runs from 25 November until 1 December. Further information is available from Interfaith Scotland at www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org.

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A Year of Service

As noted in earlier issues of the IFN e-bulletin, a special programme called 'A Year of Service' is taking place during 2012. All faith communities have within their ethical teachings the values of compassion, care and social justice. One of the ways that their members put these values into everyday practice is through volunteering.

In each month, for A Year of Service, faith communities are hosting a day or days of volunteering and inviting people of other faiths and non-religious beliefs to join in. The Year provides an opportunity for marking in a practical way the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty The Queen – of whose reign service has been a key theme.

A calendar of volunteering days taking place throughout A Year of Service based upon information provided by faith communities for the website can be found at <http://ayearofservice.org.uk/days-of-volunteering>.

The next events to take place will be linked to the marking of the Harvest Festival by the Christian community on 5 October.

If you would like to be involved or to find out more, please visit the Year of Service website, www.ayearofservice.org.uk.

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Scottish Inter Faith Council becomes Interfaith Scotland

An update from the Scottish Inter Faith Council.

On 14 August the Office of the Scottish Charities Regulator approved the transfer of the Scottish Inter Faith Council from a charitable company to a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation. It keeps its charity number but will now be known as 'Interfaith Scotland'. The focus of its work will be to promote dialogue between the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh communities on matters of religious, civic and national importance. It will also encourage dialogue between these faith communities (which will have responsibility for its governance) and other religious, faith and belief communities. The approval of the Scottish Charities Regulator came at the end of a long consultation process which had the support and agreement of SIFC's members. Further information about the work and structure of Interfaith Scotland can be found online at www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org.

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Responses to the film 'The Innocence of Muslims'

A Youtube clip entitled The Innocence of Muslims has been linked to demonstrations, violence and attacks in a number of countries. The clip depicts a fictionalised version of the life of the Prophet Muhammad and his early followers, portraying them as a band of savage tribesmen who regularly kill women and children. In the UK, on 14 and 23 September, there were protests near the US embassy in London and a demonstration in Cardiff on 22 September. The film has been universally condemned by world leaders, including religious leaders. The Christian Muslim Forum issued a statement on 13 September 'A call for calm' <http://www.christianmuslimforum.org/index.php/news/91-call-for-calm>.

For further information on the film, including a link to the content, visit: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Innocence_of_Muslims#cite_note-1111.

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Christian Voice blog post and Diwali publication

On 6 September a controversial group called Christian Voice run by Stephen Green published a blog post called 'Back to School & welcome to Diwali term.' This comments critically on the inclusion of Diwali in schools, urging parents, children and teachers to refuse to participate in Diwali celebrations. It announces "A new Christian

Voice resource for parents, school governors, pastors and leaders strips away the mask to reveal the darkness behind the Diwali lights” and comments in negative and sensationalist terms about aspects of Hindu belief and practice as it understands them. It is also critical of multi-faith celebrations in schools more generally. The group is not backed by the mainstream British Churches and the Revd Joel Edwards, when Director of the Evangelical Alliance, some years ago termed its leader an extremist.

A statement, which has been agreed by the Directors of the Hindu Christian Forum, is being sent to SACREs and RE Advisers and Inspectors through the RE Council of England and Wales and is also being distributed through Churches Together in Britain and Ireland Networks.

A link to the CV statement is at <http://www.christianvoice.org.uk/?p=4102>.

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Ministerial appointments

Following the recent Ministerial reshuffle, Rt Hon Baroness Warsi moves from being Chair of the Conservative Party to take up two new positions: Minister of State for Faith and Communities in the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and Senior Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs at the Foreign Office. She will continue to attend Cabinet meetings.

Andrew Stunell who was the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at DCLG with the community cohesion brief has stepped down and has been replaced by Rt Hon Don Foster whose portfolio includes ‘Integration and race equality’ and ‘Localism, decentralisation and community rights’.

Lynne Featherstone has stepped down as Minister for Women and Equalities and Rt Hon Theresa May, who continues in her role as Home Secretary, has also relinquished her Equalities role. Taking on Equalities roles are Maria Miller, the new Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), who is also Minister for Women and Equalities, Helen Grant, who is a Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State in both DCMS and the Ministry of Justice, and Jo Swinson who is a Parliamentary Under Secretary of State in both DCMS and the Department of Business Innovation and Skills. It is anticipated that the Government Equalities Office will move from the Home Office to DCMS.

Nick Gibb has stepped down as Minister of State for Schools He has been replaced by David Laws. The role’s portfolio had included curriculum reform and Mr Gibb had dealt with issues relating to Religious Education. This role has now been passed on to a new Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Education and Childcare, Ms Elizabeth Truss.

A full list of current ministerial appointments can be found on the Parliament website at: <http://www.number10.gov.uk/the-coalition/the-government/>

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Release plans for 2011 Census statistics

The Office of National Statistics (ONS) has published the dates on which it will release the statistics from the 2011 Census. There are four releases from July 2012 to October 2013:

- the first release on 16 July consisted of age, sex, and occupied household estimates for England and Wales;
- the second release over the period of November 2012 to February 2013 will consist of 'key and quick statistics';
- the third release over the period of March 2013 – June 2013 will consist of 'local characteristics;' and
- the fourth release from July to October 2013 will consist of 'detailed characteristics, detailed themes and armed forces information.'

It is the second release of statistics that will include, among a range of other data, such as ethnic group, the data obtained from the question on religious identity.

For more information visit:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/census/2011/census-data/2011-census-prospectus/release-plans-for-2011-census-statistics/index.html>

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EHRC religion or belief and equalities report

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) published a report on 23 August entitled '*Research Report 84: Religion or belief, equality and human rights in England and Wales.*' The report is the result of the research undertaken by the Human Rights and Social Justice Research Institute at London Metropolitan University which was commissioned by the EHRC in January 2011.

Pages 27 – 32 of the report deal with 'Government engagement with religion and belief groups' and 'Authority and representativeness within religion or belief groups.' The report draws out the complexities of engaging with religion and belief groups, especially in the finding of and engaging with 'representative' and 'authoritative' voices or leaders within faith communities and belief groups.

The report draws out a number of conclusions addressed to bodies across the religion or belief and equalities sector. It identifies areas where there is a potential for broad consensus which are described as:

- a) a non-privileged voice for religion and belief groups in the formation of policy;
- b) reasonable accommodation for religion or belief in the workplace;
- c) the undesirability of pursuing litigation and the benefit of resolving disputes outside the courtroom; and
- d) the value of proactive approaches to equality and human rights.

The report also urges public debate on religion or belief and equalities to be conducted in a constructive manner and suggests that:

- a) participants follow ethical 'rules of engagement';
- b) safe spaces are created for the discussion of sensitive issues;
- c) debates not be drawn up in 'secular' versus 'religious' terms; and
- d) allegations of discrimination against particular religious communities should always be carefully contextualised.

The Executive Summary and the Conclusions of the report are to be found at pages iii – xviii and 183 – 193 respectively.

The report is available to download from the EHRC website here: http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/research/rr84_final_opt.pdf

It is not available in hard copy.

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EHRC religion or belief seminars

The EHRC has announced that it will be holding a series of seminars this Autumn on religion or belief and the application of the UK's equality and human rights laws. The discussions are planned to build upon the work of Research Report 84 summarised above

They will be inviting leading figures from a range of religious and non-religious belief groups, and employment and education leaders to share their views on the topic.

The EHRC tendered for an independent partner to run the seminars with some involvement from the EHRC and the Government Equalities Office and further information will be released in due course.

For more information visit: <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/news/2012/august/commission-plans-religion-or-belief-seminars/>

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Freedom of religion cases at the ECtHR

On 4 September the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) in Strasbourg met to rule on the admissibility and merits of four cases relating to freedom of religion in the UK. The cases of Chaplin v. the UK and Edeirwa v the UK relate to the wearing of the cross in the workplace as being essential to the Christian faith. The cases of Ladele v. the UK and McFarlane v. the UK relate to the right not to engage in actions condoning homosexuality again on grounds of Christian faith. All four applicants claim that UK law does not adequately protect their freedom of religion and are appealing against rulings made in the UK.

The cases of Chapin and Edeiwa and the cases of Ladele and McFarlane were presented as two pairs of cases, reflecting the similar nature of the claims made. During the hearings lawyers for the UK Government and the plaintiffs presented arguments to the Court. After the hearing the court entered into deliberations on each of these four cases which will include examinations of written interventions from a number of Christian figures including former Archbishop of Canterbury Lord Carey

and submissions from Equality and Human Rights Commission and human rights charity Liberty.

A judgement on whether or not the cases are admissible is not expected for several months.

For more information on the cases and ECtHR process visit: [http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/sites/eng-press/pages/search.aspx?i=003-4057687-4743672#{\"itemid\":\[\"003-4057687-4743672\"\]}](http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/sites/eng-press/pages/search.aspx?i=003-4057687-4743672#{\) and download the pdf of the press release.

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Religious Education updates

The Religious Education Council (REC) is currently undertaking a National RE Subject Review, to run alongside the Government's National Curriculum Review. This comprehensive Review will explore a range of issues, including the strengths and weaknesses of RE, approaches to assessment, examples of excellence and the impact of Government policy on the subject. Further information can be found at <http://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org/content/view/254/100/>.

It was announced on Tuesday 18 September by the Education Minister and Deputy Prime Minister that the Government plans to replace GCSEs – the standard qualification examinations taken by 16 year olds in England – with the newly established English Baccalaureate (EBC). The press release can be found at <http://www.education.gov.uk/inthenews/inthenews/a00213908/oral-statement-ks4-exam-reform>.

There are some concerns in the RE community about the EBC as RE is not included as a qualifying subject at present. Whilst it has been indicated that schools will still retain a statutory obligation to teach RE, research carried out by NATRE suggests that a number of schools have already downsized their provision of the subject in response to the emergence of the EBC. It is not yet known what the new EBC, as a replacement of the GCSE, will look like, and how subjects currently excluded from the EBC might be examined in future. The RE Council is continuing to lobby Government about this, and part of its Subject Review includes a stream of work to 'make the case for RE'.

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New Chair of the Charity Commission appointed

Minister for the Cabinet Office, Rt Hon Francis Maude, has appointed a new chair of the Charity Commission. Mr William Shawcross CVO, a writer and broadcaster who has significant experience working on human rights and international aid issues will take up his post as Chair on 31 October. He replaces Mr John Wood who has been Interim Chair since August following Dame Suzi Leather who stepped down on 31 July after the completion of her second and final period of appointment.

For more information visit: <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/news/charity-commission-chair-appointed>

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Charity Commission consultation on public benefit guidance

The Charity Commission's consultation on its new public benefit guidance which has been running since June closes on 26 September.

The consultation takes the form of a blog where individuals and organisations are asked to offer comments on the Charity Commission's updated online guidance on public benefit for charity trustees. Comments can also be submitted privately by email.

For more information visit the consultation blog here:

<http://publicbenefitconsultation.blogspot.co.uk/>

The new guidance for charity trustees can be found here: http://publicbenefit.solutionsclient.co.uk/Charity_requirements_guidance/Charity_essentials/Charitable_purposes/Public_benefit/default.aspx

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Charity Commission research on Public Benefit

In June the Charity Commission published a report entitled 'The impact of the public benefit requirement in the Charities Act 2006: perceptions, knowledge and experience.' This reports on a study conducted for the Charity Commission by the Institute for Voluntary Action Research in partnership with Sheffield Hallam University. The study explored: the impact of the renewed emphasis on public benefit required by the 2006 Act; ways in which the charity sector had changed as a result of this emphasis; and views on the level of support and guidance offered by the Charity Commission.

Among the key findings were that three kinds of charity were seen to be especially affected by the new emphasis on public benefit:

- religious and faith organisations that were seen as often having "insufficient knowledge and resources to engage with the complex public benefit requirement in relation to faith and spiritual issues" due to the large number of small charities in this category;
- fee charging charities and in particular fee charging schools; and
- membership organisations who were perceived to benefit their member bodies more than the general public.

The full report is available to download from the Charity Commission website at:

<http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/Library/guidance/rs27text.pdf>

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Home Office releases hate crime data

On 13 September the Home Office for the first time released data on hate crime in England and Wales covering the 2011/2012 period. The data showed that in total 43,748 hate crimes took were recorded by the police of which 1261 (4%) were religious hate crimes.

Hate crime data has previously been released only by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). The two data sets are not comparable as the ACPO statistics are on a calendar year basis and the Home Office statistics are on a financial year basis. ACPO published their statistics for the 2011 period also on 13 September. The show a total of 39,311 hate crimes recorded on which 1,773 (5%) were religious hate crimes.

The duty to monitor hate crime passed from ACPO to the Home office in 2011 and this dual release marks the end of ACPO's publication of the data and the beginning of it being done by the Home Office who will continue publishing the data annually.

For the Home Office press release visit: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/science-research-statistics/research-statistics/crime-research/hate-crimes-1112/>

For the ACPO press release visit: <http://www.acpo.presscentre.com/Press-Releases/ACPO-publishes-hate-crime-data-for-2011-1a1.aspx>

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PROJECTS

'Faith in Dudley'

Dudley Borough Interfaith Network has launched a new newspaper called 'Faith in Dudley'. Produced with Big Lottery money, it contains contributions from all the faiths involved in the DBIN and from some community organisations. The whole of the back page was written and designed by a cross-faith group of young people. It can be viewed at <http://www.dbinterfaith.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Faith-in-Dudley-Newspaper-published-version.pdf>.

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Wellingborough Inter Faith Group 'Faith Bags'

Wellingborough Inter Faith Group has been involved in putting together resource bags for loan to schools and interested community groups under the headings of Sacred Texts, Water, Light, Worship, Creation and Celebration.

The bags were designed and decorated by school children in two local schools and filled with appropriate resources funded by CDF Faiths in Action programme. A DVD was then produced the following year using the local Infuse Youth Café (a Methodist project) of local faith leaders/representatives being interviewed by the young people on the resource subjects. This part of the project was funded through an application to the Northamptonshire Community Foundation with funding from the Constance Travis Charitable Trust.

The bags are an ongoing project with resources and information being added when possible.

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Joseph Interfaith Foundation 'Reflections' project

The Joseph Interfaith Foundation has set up a new project called 'Reflections', which invites responses to articles posted on their website at www.josephinterfaithfoundation.org/joseph-main/reflections.php. Contributions are welcomed of up to 500 words and should be emailed to info@josephinterfaithfoundation.org.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Near Neighbours

The Near Neighbours programme is a three-year initiative, run by the Church Urban Fund, which aims to bring people together in diverse communities, helping them build relationships and collaborate to improve the local community in which they live. The programme currently operates in the following areas: East and South East London, North Birmingham, Leicester, Bradford, Burnley and Oldham. The scheme has also recently been undertaking some capacity building work in Luton.

Near Neighbours has a grants programme, due to end in March 2013, which at present operates on a rolling basis with no deadlines. Grant amounts range from £250-£5000. The fund invests in environmental, social, cultural, artistic and sporting ideas which fulfill the criteria, which can be found at www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/grants. Examples of funded projects can be found at: <http://www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/funded-projects> Inter Faith Week projects are among those which can be considered.

The Fund is pleased to receive applications from people of different faith groups or none, working in partnership with people of different faiths and within the criteria. Details on how to apply can be found at www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/grants.

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Funding Central website extended

Minister for Civil Society, Mr Nick Hurd, announced on 5 September that the Cabinet Office would commit £500,000 of funding to extend the NCVO's Funding Central website for a further 18 months.

The free website offers charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises access to approximately 4000 sources of funding and finance opportunities. It also offers tools and resources to support organisations to develop sustainable income strategies appropriate to their needs.

The funding central website is www.fundingcentral.org.uk and the press release announcing the extended funding can be found at <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/news/funding-central-boost-delivers-continued-support-civil-society>.

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Community First Neighbourhood Matched Fund

The Community First Neighbourhood Matched Fund provides small grants to community groups and local social action projects at the ward level. The £30 million Fund is being used to provide small grants for community projects in some of the most deprived areas in the country. The Community Development Foundation (CDF), which is administering the fund, released a list of wards eligible to receive the funding earlier in October 2011. Community First panels of local people will administer the funding in these areas. The first round of grant applications in eligible areas has now closed, but the second grants round has opened and applications may be made up until the end of the financial year (31 March 2013). For information on the Fund and how to apply visit <http://www.cdf.org.uk/content/funding-programmes/community-first/neighbourhood-matched-fund>

The Fund has a sister project the 'Endowment Match Challenge' which seeks to match £50 million in Government funding by raising a further £100 million through corporate and individual philanthropic giving. This is being administered by the CDF and delivered via Community Foundation Network. For more information, visit <http://www.cdf.org.uk/content/funding-programmes/community-first/endowment-match-challenge>

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RESOURCES AND TRAINING

Inter faith art exhibition

To mark the national 'A Year of Service' project an exhibition has been created in Birmingham by Daniel Connell, an Australian artist. The exhibition features portraits of various faith and community leaders from Birmingham and is currently on display at the Nishkam Centre.

The exhibition is available to hire. For further information, visit www.nishkammediacentre.com.

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Unity and Inter Faith Relations

Unity in Process: reflections on ecumenism, a book recently published by DLT, contains a chapter by Helen Reid and Celia Blackden entitled 'Unity and Inter Faith Relations'.

Further details can be found online at http://www.cte.org.uk/Articles/316330/Churches_Together_in/News_Events/News/Unity_in_Process.aspx.

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A World of Prayer

The St Ethelburga's Centre in London recently held a launch event for a new book edited by Rosalind Bradley entitled 'A World of Prayer' in which 'spiritual leaders, activists and humanitarians' share their favourite prayers'. Further information at <http://rosbradley.com/aworldofprayer/book.htm>.

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Religious Literacy Leadership workshops

The Religious Literacy Leadership Programme is a partnership between the Faiths and Civil Society Unit at Goldsmiths, University of London and the Cambridge Inter-Faith Programme at the University of Cambridge. It is funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England. The Programme aims to assist Higher Education leaders to develop outlooks and strategies that engage positively with faith, promoting universities as places that can lead and shape informed responses to faith in wider society.

Free workshops will take place to explore the processes, impacts and experiences of developing strategy in relation to religion in higher education settings. There will also be opportunities to meet with counterparts in other institutions and in faith-related settings to exchange skills and learning and consider potential for partnership and networking around these issues.

The workshops will take place from 9.30am to 4.30pm on 7 November in London (Haldane Room, University College London, Gower Street) and from 9.30am to 4.30pm on 8 November in Birmingham (Michael Tippett Room, Staff House,

University of Birmingham, Ring Road South).

For further information and to register for the workshops, visit <http://religiousliteracyhe.org/about/>.

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Interfaith Chaplaincy course

A new chaplaincy course is being run at the Nishkam Centre in Birmingham. The course runs for 10 weeks from September and is being partly funded by the Near Neighbours programme. The course will bring together people of different faiths training them to become community chaplains. For further information, contact Narinder Kaur at chaplaincyservices@ncauk.org.

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St Ethelburga's Dialogue and Facilitation Skills week

The St Ethelburga's Centre in London is running a training course from Monday 24 September to Friday 28 September including listening skills, dialogue models, group facilitation, using personal story and narrative, responding to conflict and tension, group dynamics, common facilitation challenges, event planning and design. For more information, visit www.stethelburgas.org/events or email training@stethelburgas.org.

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JOBS AND VOLUNTEERING

Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby – Project Officer

The Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby is currently seeking a part time Project Officer to support the Director of the Centre and Project Management generally with hands on day-to-day development, organisation, implementation and completion of projects undertaken by the organisation and its partners. The post is 22.5 hours per week on a 6 month fixed term contract (with an option to extend) and the salary is £20,000 per annum pro rata. For an application pack, contact Joanna Thornewill on 01332 591285 or at j.thornewill@derby.ac.uk or Phil Henry at p.m.henry@derby.ac.uk. The closing date for applications is Wednesday 26 September.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS AND TENDERS

University of Derby research project

During the past three years the University of Derby has been researching how people's views and reported experiences of unfair treatment on the basis of religion or belief may have changed in the last decade in England and Wales, in the hope that their findings will ultimately influence policies, practices and laws. They would now like to engage with an even wider range of practitioners from religion or belief, voluntary and community, public, private and legal sectors. They are therefore holding a workshop which will share their research findings and provide participants with the opportunity to contribute to them in the light of the experience of their own organisations or groups.

Workshops are taking place across the country and spaces are still available for

- Friday 5 October in Oxford
- Thursday 11 October in Manchester
- Thursday 25 October in Cardiff

The workshops last from 10 am – 5 pm and are free to join, but by invitation and application only. To apply, visit www.derby.ac.uk/knowledge-exchange-workshops or call Lesley Sawley on 01332 591730.

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Religious teaching inspired by the Paralympic Games

Faiths Forum for London (FFL) is currently collecting religious teaching about disability that has been inspired by the Paralympic Games. FFL is interested to hear about any sermons or blogs on the topic, details of which can be sent to info@faithsofurm4.london.org.

FFL has provided the text of what Rabbi Barry Lerer from Barnet United Synagogue shared with his congregation as an example:

<http://www.faithsforum4london.org/2012/09/lessons-from-the-paralympic-games/http://www.faithsforum4london.org/2012/09/lessons-from-the-paralympic-games/>.

Information on the 'Faith and Disability' event which FFL is hosting, together with the Faith Based Regeneration Network, on 24 October, can be found under [Diary Dates](#).

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Faith through a lens photography competition

The Faith through a Lens competition is looking to find the amateur photographer who best captures the essence of faith and the community in one of the following categories:

- Moments of faith

- Community spirit against the odds
- A year of service (a new category to coincide with the Queen's Jubilee)

Four finalists from each category will be invited to an exclusive awards ceremony to be held in London as part of Inter Faith Week. Each finalist will receive a prize bag worth £200 including photography software and a Photography Made Simple one day course. The winner from each category will receive a prize worth £1,400 which includes a Nikon 1 V1 with 10-30 and 30-110 mm lenses. The closing date for entries is 31 October. For more information, visit www.faiththroughalens.co.uk

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Spirituality and Ageing – Call for papers

The fifth Annual Conference on Spirituality and Ageing takes place in Edinburgh in July 2013 on the theme of 'Creativity in Spiritual Care'. The conference is jointly sponsored by Faith in Older People and the Methodist Homes (MHA).

The conference programme directors are now inviting submissions for presentations and papers addressing the topic of creativity and ageing, and engaging with the three conference themes: Ageing Gifts; Ageing Changes; and Ageing Hopes.

For further information, including details on abstracts, presentations and submission, please contact info@fiop.org.uk. The closing date for receipt of proposals and papers is 31 January 2013 and a decision will be made by the end of February.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Sewa Day 7 October 2012

Sewa Day 2012 will take place on Sunday 7 October. The Sanskrit word 'Sewa' means 'selfless service'. The aim of Sewa Day is to provide people a chance to give back to the local community through volunteering on a single day to make a difference. For more information and to get involved visit: www.sewaday.org

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Week of Prayer for World Peace 14 – 21 October

Although it was a Christian initiative that led to the founding of the Week of Prayer for World Peace in 1974, it soon became an inter faith activity, and now welcomes everyone, of all faith traditions or none, to take part. Its first Chairman, the late Dr Edward Carpenter, former Dean of Westminster, established the guiding principle of the Week in the words "The peace of the world must be prayed for by the faiths of the

world”, and this is still the basis of its work today. Further information can be found online at <http://www.weekofprayerforworldpeace.com/events.html>.

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One World Week 21 - 28 October

One World Week provides an opportunity for people from diverse backgrounds to come together to learn about global justice, to spread that learning and to use it to take action for justice locally and globally. The theme for the One World Week 2012 is ‘Sharing Destiny – Moving Towards One World’. For more information, visit <http://www.oneworldweek.org>.

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Mitzvah Day 18 November 2012

Mitzvah Day is a Jewish led day of social action – around the world thousands of people take part in hands on projects to support existing charities and to build stronger communities. The goal is to reduce hardship and poverty and to help the environment. People are encouraged to volunteer for projects in their communities and anyone can take part regardless of their background. See www.mitzvahday.org.uk for further information and to register an event.

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Inter Faith Week 18-27 November 2012

In this Diamond Jubilee year, there will be a special extended Inter Faith Week in England, Northern Ireland and Wales running from 18 - 27 November. Further information on page 2 [above](#) and at www.interfaithweek.org.uk.

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Scottish Inter Faith Week 25 November – 2 December 2012

This year the Week will begin on Sunday 25 November. Further information can be obtained from the Scottish Inter Faith Council at www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org.

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Holocaust Memorial Day 27 January 2013

Holocaust Memorial Day provides an opportunity for everyone to learn lessons from the Holocaust, Nazi persecution and subsequent genocides and apply them to the

present day to create a safer, better future. The theme for Holocaust Memorial Day 2013 is 'Communities Together: Build a Bridge'. To find out more, visit www.hmd.org.uk.

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DIARY DATES

Inter-Faith North/West (Northern Ireland) is holding an open forum entitled 'What is Interfaith?' on Wednesday 26 September from 7.30pm (with refreshments available from 7.00pm). The event is taking place at Alexander House, Bishop Street, Londonderry. Inter-Faith North/West's series of panels and discussions on the theme 'Listening and Learning' explore relations between different faiths and communities. For further information, contact info@interfaith-nw.org.uk.

The **Christian Muslim Forum (CMF)** is hosting a 'Northern Leaders' event from Friday 5 October to Saturday 6 October. The event is for people in Bradford, Burnley and Oldham who are leaders, activists and volunteers concerned about their communities, seeking to share their stories, be inspired by others and committed to engaging locally. Speakers are due to include: Imam Qari Asim, Makkah Masjid, Leeds; Dr Helen Reid, Bradford Churches for Dialogue and Diversity; PC Fiz Ahmed, West Yorkshire Police; Dr Phil Lewis, Peace Studies, University of Bradford; and Rashid Khan and Desmond Henry of 'Make Bradford British'. The event starts at 3.00pm on 5 October and finishes at 4.00pm on 6 October at Hinsley Hall, Diocese of Leeds Pastoral Centre, 62 Headingley Lane, Leeds LS6 3BX. Tickets cost £20 (waged), £10 (unwaged), £0 (bursaries) including refreshments, lunch, dinner and overnight accommodation. Further information can be found online at www.christianmuslimforum.org/index.php/calendar?task=view_event&event_id=4.

Faiths in Sussex and **South East England Faiths Forum** are jointly hosting a conference on Saturday 6 October on 'The Economic Crisis – A Faith Perspective'. The conference takes place from 1.30pm to 5.50pm at Worth Abbey, Turners Hill, Crawley, RH10 4SB. The two speakers will be Paul Moore, former Head of Risk Management at HBOS, and Tarek El Diwany, who established the Islamic Finance department at Prebon Yamane and is currently the senior partner at Zest Advisory LLP. There is no charge to attend but all donations are welcome. For further information, visit www.horsham-interfaith.org.uk. To register, ring 01342 710318 or email toc@worthabbey.net.

HEAR, London's network of equality and human rights organisations, will be holding its 2012 conference on Tuesday 9 October at the Human Rights Action Group building, 17 – 25 New Inn Yard, London EC2A 3EA. The conference will take place from 9.30am to 3.30pm and will provide an opportunity to voice concerns about recent attacks on equality and human rights, to engage and inform debate on cross-equalities work, and to understand disability better from a cross-equalities perspective, through keynote speeches, discussion groups and debate. More

information can be found on <http://www.faithsforum4london.org/event/hear-conference-2012>.

A **One World Week** inter faith event is planned for Saturday 13 October at the Meadowside Leisure Centre, Burton upon Trent, DE 14 1TL commencing at 3.30pm. This will include speakers from different faiths and displays of social action based around the Burton upon Trent area, interspersed with some entertainments from around the world. Full details have yet to be confirmed. For further information, please contact either Syd Bill at sqbill@btopenworld.com or Lawrence Oates at esbcflowerman@gmail.com.

Southwark Cathedral is hosting an autumn study series on Thursday evenings on the theme 'A Word for the World: The Bible Today'. The event on Thursday 18 October, entitled 'The Word in Dialogue' will explore how different faith traditions read scripture, and what can be learnt from one another. The discussion and workshop will take place with Shaykh Ibrahim Mogra, Rabbi Natan Levy and Bishop Michael Ipgrave, chaired by Canon Bruce Saunders. The event will take place from 7.30pm to 9.00pm. For further information, visit the Events Calendar at <http://cathedral.southwark.anglican.org/worship/calendar> or call 020 7367 6700.

Faiths Forum for London together with the **Faith-based Regeneration Network** have organised a roundtable on 'Faith and Disability' on the evening of Wednesday 24 October for disabled people and disability-rights organisations to discuss how to make faith communities more inclusive of disabled people. Anyone interested in taking part or who could recommend someone who would be a good participant, should contact Faiths Forum for London at info@faithsforum4london.org. [See also under [Calls for Information](#) above.]

The **Centre for Christianity and Interreligious Dialogue** is hosting a study day on Wednesday 24 October entitled 'A *Common Word* five years on: Leading Christians and Muslims consider the impact of this groundbreaking document on Muslim-Christian relations'. The study day is open to all and takes place from 10.00am to 4.30pm in the Loyola Hall at Heythrop College, University of London, Kensington Square, London W8 5HQ. There is a charge of £15 to cover refreshments and a vegetarian lunch. To book a place, contact Dr Martin Ganeri, Director of CCID at m.ganeri@heythrop.ac.uk.

Bristol Inter Faith Group will be holding a dialogue event on Thursday 25 October at the Progressive Jewish Synagogue, Easton, Bristol on the theme "Is religion the source of peace?" For further information, contact Anula Beckett at anula.beckett@bifg.org.uk or on 0117 964 5655.

Cheltenham Inter Faith will be holding its next meeting on Sunday 28 October at Sacred Hearts Church Hallom Charlton Kings. Rabbi Anna Gerrard of Cheltenham Liberal Jewish Community will be speaking about her journey to the rabbinate. For further information, email info@cheltenhaminterfaith.org.uk or call 01242 602412.

The **World Congress of Faiths** is hosting an event on Thursday 1 November entitled 'Non Stop Turmoil or Global Spring'. It is a chance for people of different religions and philosophies to explore progressive themes and shape the future. The dialogue will be led by Jim Kenny who is Founder and Director of Common Ground, an Interreligious adult study centre in the USA. He was formerly International Director for the Parliament of the World's Religions. The event takes place from 7.00pm to 9.00pm at St Ethelwold's House, 30 East St Helen Street, Abingdon OX14 1DG. Tickets cost £10 and must be booked in advance by contacting St Ethelwold's House on 01235 555486 or at ethelwoldhouse@btinternet.com.

Elmbridge Multifaith Forum will be holding its Annual Gala at 7.00pm on Saturday 3 November at the Joyce Grenfell Centre, Claremont Drive, Esher, KT10 9LY. A donation of £15 is requested. For further information or to book a place, telephone Rushna on 01932 248751.

The **Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter** is holding the second of its autumn seminars on 'Conflict and Reconciliation in the Bible and Society Today' on Tuesday 6 November. Registration is from 10.30am, the lecture starts at 11.00am and the day finishes at 3.30pm. (Please bring a packed lunch.) The subject is 'Seek peace and pursue it' and the speaker will be Mr Jonathan Gorsky, a lecturer at Heythrop College. There is a suggested donation of £15 and the seminar takes place at the Sion Centre, 34 Chepstow Villas, London W11 2QZ. For further information or to book, email sioncde@yahoo.co.uk or telephone 020 7313 8286.

The **Churches Agency for Inter Faith Relations in Scotland** is hosting a series of open meetings on the theme 'The Ground We Share: Relationship Forming in a Multi Faith Society'. The meetings are designed to offer Christians of all denominations the opportunity for dialogue with the other faith communities with whom they live but all are welcome to attend. The first event on Wednesday 7 November is entitled 'Dialoguing with our Sikh neighbour' and takes place from 10.00am to 5.00pm at the Guru Nanak Gurdwara, 27 Otago Street, Kelvinbridge, Glasgow G12. For further information, contact Tom Moyes at tommoyes@acts-scotland.org.

The **Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby** will be hosting its Annual Lecture on Monday 12 November. This year's speaker is Mr Jay Lakhani and the theme will be 'Reconciling religious and non-religious world views'. The lecture takes place from 6.00pm to 8.00pm at the Multi-Faith Centre. To reserve a place, contact the Centre on 01332 591285 or at mfc@derby.ac.uk.

The **Joseph Interfaith Foundation** is organising an event for Orthodox Rabbis, Orthodox rabbinic students and academics on Tuesday 13 November entitled 'Meet the Imams and Ask Questions'. The event takes place from 5.00pm to 7.00pm at the St Johns Wood United Synagogue in London. The session will be led by three senior imams of three major mosques in London, who are members of the Foundation's Council of Imams and Rabbis. For further information, contact Info@josephinterfaithfoundation.org.

European Future for Religious Heritage Network have organised a conference in Venice from 14 – 17 November on the extended use of religious buildings.

Registration is now open and a call for papers has been launched. Papers are invited on a number of themes, including:

- What has been done in Europe to extend the use of religious buildings?
- What is feasible within different denominations and cultures?
- What direction should we take for the future?

For more details, please visit <http://www.futurereligiousheritage.eu/upcoming-conference-november-2012/>

Roman Catholic Diocese of Westminster is hosting a series of lectures on Tuesday evenings entitled 'Faith Matters'. On Tuesday 20 November the lecture will be given by Professor Ian Linden (Director of Policy at the Tony Blair Faith Foundation, formerly director of the Social Action Programme, Faiths Act, and an associate professor in the Study of Religion at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London). The theme of the lecture will be 'Finding God in other Cultures and Religions'. The lecture will take place from 7.00pm to 8.30pm at Westminster Cathedral Hall, Ambrosden Avenue, London SW1P 1QH. The lecture is free but registration via faithmatters@rcdow.org.uk or 020 7931 6078 is required to guarantee a place. There is a suggested donation of £3.

Faithnetsouthwest will be holding its annual conference on Thursday 22 November. The theme for this year's conference is 'Faith groups – building social harmony in the community'. The event runs from 9.45am to 3.00pm and will be held at Taunton Central Library, Paul Street, Taunton TA1 3XZ. For further details and to book, please contact Alistair@faithnetsouthwest.co.uk.

The **World Congress of Faiths** will be holding its annual 'Sir Francis Younghusband Lecture' on Wednesday 5 December. The lecture will take place at 6pm for a 6.30pm start at Global Cooperation House, 65-69 Pound Lane, London NW9 2HH and this year will have a new format. William Garner and Randall Starrett will talk about the new film Tournament of Shadows that they are making about Francis Younghusband and show clips from the film. Further details will be posted on www.worldfaiths.org in due course.

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For detailed information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Scottish Inter Faith Council: www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org

For detailed information on events and projects in a number of the English regions see:

East of England: www.eefaithscouncil.org.uk

London: www.faithsforum4london.org

North East: www.nerfn.org

North West: www.faithnorthwest.org.uk

South East: www.se-faithforum.net

South West: www.faithnetsouthwest.org.uk

West Midlands: www.wmfaithsforum.org.uk

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 7 October with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer:

Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH

www.interfaith.org.uk

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 27 November with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Material may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and future projects and events.

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UK/NATIONAL UPDATES

Inter Faith Network for the UK Strategic Review

The Inter Faith Network is commencing a strategic review which will run across the 2012/2013 operating year. This was agreed at the 2012 AGM, following a recommendation from IFN's Executive Committee. The Review will be looking at issues such as: the place of IFN in the wider context of inter faith engagement and UK society; IFN's membership and patterns of engagement and consultation; programmes of work undertaken by IFN; the place and continued relevance of Inter Faith Week; the sustainability of IFN; short, medium and long term views on the future work of IFN; and governance and operational issues.

A Strategic Review Working Group was announced at the end of October. Its recommendations are expected in summer 2013. Established by IFN's Executive Committee, it will develop its own independent report and recommendations in the light of its engagement in the process of conducting the Review. Members include: Sughra Ahmed, the Revd Alan Bayes, Mohinder Singh Chana; the Revd Peter Colwell, Acharya Modgala Duguid; Kathryn Luckock; Rabbi Maurice Michaels; Ramesh Pattni and Patricia Stoa. Members come from a number of different nations of the UK and regions of England and from a range of backgrounds and bring with them a wide range of experience and expertise in a diverse range of fields such as work with young people, work with women, and work in chaplaincy contexts.

The Strategic Review Working Group will be chaired by a respected senior figure from a local inter faith context who is well grounded in work at grassroots level, with experience of the broader inter faith landscape: Patricia Stoa. Ms Stoa has for a number years played an active role in the Nottingham Council of Faiths. She also brings rootedness in her own faith community; an informed interest in other faith traditions (including academic background in these); awareness of the importance of bilateral as well as multilateral dialogue and understanding; experience of working at a management level in the area of social responsibility and, most recently, management responsibility as CEO of the Faiths Forum for the East Midlands. She is actively involved at local level in the inter faith work of her own faith community through the Catholic Diocese of Nottingham and is currently Vice-President of the National Board of Catholic Women.

The Strategic Review Working Group is a small, task-focused, working group; it is envisaged that the broader range of relevant constituencies will be heard by way of the overall Review process and one of the Strategic Review Group's most important tasks will be to ensure a broad pattern of engagement with the Review issues. It will be meeting for the first time later this month and details about the Review process and how to feed into this will be developed and made known across the following weeks.

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Inter Faith Week

Inter Faith Week 2012 in England, Northern Ireland and Wales is less than two weeks away, beginning on Sunday 18 November.

Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government Eric Pickles has said “Once again Inter Faith Week is upon us, and people of different faiths in neighbourhoods around the country are coming together to celebrate, to learn about each other, to work together on joint projects – and above all to have fun. Our society functions so much better when there are no barriers of ignorance and suspicion to keep us apart; and the realisation that different faiths have so much in common, and so much to contribute, is a vital part of removing those barriers. That is where Inter Faith Week and the work of the Inter Faith Network in general are so important, and I warmly congratulate all participants in the Week.”

If you are planning to mark the Week by running an event, please do take a few minutes to register your event on the Inter Faith Week website at www.interfaithweek.org. There is also a printable paper registration form, and a new facility enabling you to add multiple events at the same time. Registering your event is very helpful to other people who would like to find an event to attend and also helps strengthen the effectiveness of the Week overall through conveying the wide range of activities.

Just a few examples of events planned are: a faith leaders’ conference, organised by Thurrock Faith Matters; a ‘celebrating our faiths’ event, organised by South Lakeland Interfaith Forum; an ‘inter faith tour’ in South Cardiff, organised by the Cardiff Third Sector Council; an inter faith netball tournament, organised by Thames Valley Police; an event ‘Mohiniyattam’, organised by Manasamitra and York Minster; and ‘A Celebration of Faiths’, organised by Eastbourne’s Faiths Forum. Some local inter faith bodies such as Kirklees Faiths Forum and Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource are helping enable programmes of events running through the Week.

Schools in many areas are gearing up to take part. Education Secretary Michael Gove has said “Without doubt the constructive working and mutual understanding between faiths in this country is one of our greatest strengths. Educating children about different faiths is of immense importance in leading children to understand the history that has helped shape the values and traditions of this country, and of other countries and cultures. The extended Inter Faith Week that will take place in November this year gives even more opportunity for schools and young people to participate, and I hope they will take advantage of this to build new partnerships and celebrate the diversity that exists across the UK.”

For further information, contact Ashley Beck at ashley.beck@interfaith.org.uk or on 020 7730 0410.

Scottish Inter Faith Week runs from 25 November until 1 December. Further information is available from Interfaith Scotland at www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org.

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A Year of Service

As noted in earlier issues of the IFN e-bulletin, a special programme called 'A Year of Service' is taking place during 2012. All faith communities have within their ethical teachings the values of compassion, care and social justice. One of the ways that their members put these values into everyday practice is through volunteering. In each month, for A Year of Service, faith communities have been hosting a day or days of volunteering and inviting people of other faiths and non-religious beliefs to join in. The Year provides an opportunity for marking in a practical way the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty The Queen – of whose reign service has been a key theme.

A calendar of volunteering days taking place throughout A Year of Service based upon information provided by faith communities for the website can be found at <http://ayearofservice.org.uk/days-of-volunteering>.

The next events to take place will be linked to Mitzvah Day, which is a project from the Jewish Community, on Sunday 18 November.

A Year of Service and Near Neighbours are holding an event celebrating faith based social action on 27 November during National Inter Faith Week.

If you would like to be involved or to find out more, please visit the A Year of Service website, www.ayearofservice.org.uk.

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New Chair of the EHRC appointed

On 18 October it was announced that Baroness Onora O'Neill has been appointed as the new Chair of the Equality and Human Rights Commission. Baroness O'Neill is a cross-bench peer in the House of Lords and a former Principal of Newnham College, Cambridge. An emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the University of Cambridge, she has written extensively on equality and freedom throughout her academic career and is a specialist on human rights. For more information, visit <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/news/2012/october/commission-welcomes-appointment-of-new-chair/>.

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New Equality Advisory and Support Service

The new Equality Advisory and Support Service (EASS), funded by the Government Equality Office, began operating on 1 October. The new service replaces the helpline run by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, which had operated in Scotland, Wales and England for some time and ceased to function from 1 October 2012. It is directed towards people who think they may have experienced discrimination and will not be available to employers, service providers or educators. The service aims to support individuals referred from local organisations, advisory groups, faith based

organisations and other groups working within the community that support people experiencing discrimination.

Local groups and organisations are encouraged to refer in cases of discrimination to the EASS. The service will provide advice and information on discrimination and human rights issues, specifically it will:

- explain what the law says and how this applies to individuals in the country they live in;
- explain how a situation could be resolved by individuals and, in particular, how situations can be resolved informally;
- refer individuals to conciliation services if informal resolution is not an option;
- help individuals work out whether or not they are eligible for legal aid if a legal situation is sought; and
- assist those who are ineligible for legal aid in finding an accessible legal service.

The EASS will not:

- provide legal advice;
- represent individuals when providing pre-claim support;
- advise on the strength of individual cases, or on evidence needed to prove cases; and
- offer any advice on court proceedings once a claim has been issued.

The service will work with both the Equality and Human Rights Commission and devolved institutions to identify cases with a strategic interest and refer them to these bodies for consideration. It is intended as a resource for organisations that assist people who may have experienced discrimination. It will not be advertised to the general public.

The EASS will be run by SITEL in partnership with Disability Rights UK. The Law Centres Federation, the British Institute for Human Rights, Voiceability, and the RAD Deaf Law Centre are providing support services to this new venture.

For more information, visit www.equalityadvisoryservice.com.

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Round table discussions on religion or belief

In October, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) commissioned the Religious Literacy Leadership Programme at Goldsmiths, University of London, working in partnership with the Coexist Foundation, to explore a number of key religion or belief themes. The Government Equalities Office is partnering the EHRC on this project.

Six half-day dialogue events are planned for early 2013 with invited participants drawn from employment and public service stakeholders and religion or belief organisations. While the topics are still being finalised, each event is expected to include input from an expert followed by facilitated discussion. It is envisaged that summary reports of each event will be published on the EHRC website, with further

discussion and debate being encouraged through a blog on the Goldsmiths' website. The overall aim of the project is to seek to increase mutual understanding and consensus between groups as a way of reducing divisive litigation in this area.

Further information can be found on the Goldsmiths' website at <http://www.gold.ac.uk/news/pressrelease/?releaseID=971>.

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National RE Subject Review

The Religious Education Council (REC) is currently undertaking a National RE Subject Review, running alongside the Government's National Curriculum Review. A Scoping Report, commissioned to outline the scope of the Subject Review, identified four main areas of focus for the Review: Aims and Purposes; Curriculum; Exemplifications of Good Practice; Assessment and Qualifications.

Phase 1 of the Review, in which an expert panel were commissioned to draw together a report on the current state of RE, along with recommendations around the four areas of focus, is nearing completion, with the final consultative stage now in process. Subsequent Phases of the Review process will take the Review forward, and it is intended that the Review will be completed during 2013. Further background to the Subject Review can be found on the REC's website at <http://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org/content/view/254/100/>.

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Concerns about the position on RE

As noted in the September e-Bulletin, it was announced by the Education Minister and Deputy Prime Minister that the Government plans to replace GCSEs – the standard qualification examinations taken by 16 year olds in England – with the newly established English Baccalaureate (EBC). The press release can be found at <http://www.education.gov.uk/inthenews/inthenews/a00213908/oral-statement-ks4-exam-reform>. Under this system, pupils who undertake courses from a particular pool of subjects would qualify for an English Baccalaureate award.

Religious Education is not among the qualifying subjects, and this has led to concerns that a weakening of RE provision in schools may occur as a result, with schools diverting resources to those subjects which enable pupils to attain this new award. Research carried out by the National Association of Teachers of RE (NATRE) suggests that a number of schools have already downsized RE provision in response to the emergence of the EBC. Provision of RE is still a statutory requirement in the majority of maintained schools.

The Religious Education Council (REC) has been leading a campaign, along with other bodies including the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (NASACRE) and NATRE, to encourage Government to rethink its position on the exclusion of RE from the English Baccalaureate. In recent weeks, the REC has written to Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg and to the Education

Minister Michael Gove, noting the importance of RE for building good inter faith relations and reducing prejudice. These letters – the latter of which notes Michael Gove’s support for Inter Faith Week and its relevance to the position on RE – can be viewed on the REC website at <http://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org/>.

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BBC coverage of religion, immigration and Europe

An independent impartiality review of the BBC's breadth of opinion, led by former ITV chief executive Stuart Prebble, will include scrutiny of the BBC's coverage of religion, immigration and Europe. It is due to report in early 2013.

Further information about the Review can be found at:
http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/news/press_releases/2012/breadth_of_opinion.html

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Jubilee for Justice Faith leaders letter

The Jubilee Debt Campaign (JDC), which campaigns for the writing off of third world debt globally, has circulated a letter for faith leaders to sign in the Diamond Jubilee year. The letter says that “In this year of the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee, we recall the ancient custom of the Jubilee Year, in which debts would be cancelled.” The letter explains that the jubilee tradition exists across both Abrahamic and Dharmic faiths, and calls for “finance to be put in its place as a means to human well-being.”

The letter is part of the Jubilee for Justice in 2012 campaign which calls for the cancellation of “unjust debts of the most indebted nations;” the promotion of “just and progressive taxation, rather than excessive borrowing;” and the stopping of “harmful lending which forces countries into debt.” So far 253 signatures have been gathered and the JDC plans to present the letter to the Prime Minister later in 2012 along with a similar petition which has attracted thousands of signatures globally.

For more information and to download and sign the letter, visit
<http://www.jubileedebtcampaign.org.uk/ACT3720NOW373A3720Sign3720the3720Faith3720Leaders3720Letter+7635.twl>.

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Home Office consultation on review of Schedule 7 powers

On 19 September the Home Office announced a consultation on a review of the operation of Schedule 7 to the Terrorism Act 2000. Schedule 7 permits an examination officer to ‘stop, search, question and detain a person travelling through a port/airport or the border area.’ The consultation document states that the review of the operation of Schedule 7 has arisen amid concerns raised during the review of Counter-terrorism legislation in 2010 by Mr David Anderson QC that Schedule 7 can operate unfairly. Mr Anderson acknowledged that ‘Schedule 7 has made a negative impact on some Muslim communities.’

The consultation runs until 13 December. For more information, the consultation document and access to online and downloadable copies of the consultation questionnaire, visit www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/aboutus/consultation/schedule-7-review.

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DCLG consultation on Local Government transparency

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) opened a consultation on 25 October closing on 20 December on improving Local Government transparency. The consultation aims to ensure consistency in the data and information published by local authorities across England to enable them to be accountable to the local people. DCLG has said that it wishes to hear from local authorities, relevant bodies, local community groups, open data experts, developers, citizen activists and other interested parties.

For more information and to download the consultation document, visit <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/makingthecode>.

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Support Group for Charity Chairs launched

A new support group for charity chairs was launched on 12 October at a meeting hosted by the Charity Commission. It is being provisionally referred to as an independent 'Institute of Chairs', and is the idea of governance expert Ruth Lesirge and Rosalind Oakley, Chair of Charities Evaluation Services. The institute will find new ways of strengthening the support that is available to trustees and in particular chairs by providing peer-to-peer support and training to improving the skill-set of chairs. It is also planned for the new Institute to be a source of research on subjects such as the links between good chairing and the effective delivery of social change.

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PROJECTS

3FF Urban Dialogues workshops

3FF is running its arts programme Urban Dialogues for a fourth year. The programme aims to use the work of contemporary artists from a wide range of backgrounds and perspectives to appeal to broader audiences. The work takes the form of three commissioned artistic collaborations and pieces by individual artists exploring issues around belief, identity or faith. The work is shown in an exhibition which, this year, takes place at the Red Gallery in London from Tuesday 20 November to Saturday 1 December.

In previous years the Urban Dialogues programme has run artist-led workshops for young people and schools. In 2012 3FF are extending the Urban Dialogues programme beyond the festival and plan to develop a programme of artist-led workshops that take place in schools.

3FF are building a pool of freelance artists who are interested in working on the Urban Dialogues programme. To register an interest in becoming part of the Urban Dialogues programme, email a CV along with an explanation of your interest in the project to eli@3ff.org.uk.

For more information about the Urban Dialogues programme and the upcoming exhibition, visit <http://www.3ff.org.uk/arts/>.

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‘Come to the Edge’ launch and roadshows

The Christian Muslim Forum is launching its ‘Come to the Edge’ report with a series of roadshows across the UK. The report examines the conversations held between Christian and Muslim women in the UK in the Autumn of 2011. The events will be an opportunity for Christian and Muslim women to come together and share food and entertainment, and celebrate their lives in the UK’s cities. These events are supported by the Christian Muslim Forum and Near Neighbours and some are also being held to mark Inter Faith Week.

The roadshows will be held in:

- Leicester on 15 November, 7pm;
- Burnley on 20 November, 6.30pm;
- Birmingham on 21 November, time TBC;
- Bradford on 22 November, 6.30pm; and
- London on 27 November; 6.30pm.

For more details and to book places at the events, visit http://www.christianmuslimforum.org/index.php/calendar/forum-events?task=view_event&event_id=22.

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Campus Lokahi launched

The Lokahi Foundation has announced that its flagship project, Campusalam, which has been running as a resource for Muslim students and encouraging good relations between different faiths and beliefs on campuses since April 2010, will be renamed and relaunched as Campus Lokahi.

Campus Lokahi will explore the idea of ‘lokahi’ (harmony through diversity) on campuses through a programme of research and action. It aims to equip students

and staff to flourish in situations of diversity and to work for positive social change with people of different faiths and beliefs.

In the 2012/2013 academic year, the Campus Lokahi team will be working closely with the students' unions and student societies at six different campuses: Birkbeck College, University of London; University of Birmingham; Heythrop College, University of London; King's College London; Queen Mary, University of London; and University College London.

The Campusalam website (www.campusalam.org) will continue to be active hosting resources and advice for Muslim students and staff.

For more information about Campus Lokahi, visit http://www.lokahi.org.uk/impact/projects/campus_lokahi.

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Multi-faith Centre opened in Manchester

The Faith Network 4 Manchester in collaboration with the University of Manchester Chaplaincy opened a new Multi-faith centre in September. The centre is in Ada House, 77 Thompson Street, Manchester M4 5FY and is for people in Manchester of all faiths and none to meet together, learn from each other, share information, develop mutual respect and plan joint work. It provides a venue for seminars, workshops, dialogues, and other events and aims to be a hub of excellence for effective inter faith engagement, information sharing and good practice. For more information, visit www.fn4m.org.

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Holocaust Memorial Day Youth Champion Programme

Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) is launching a new Youth Championship Programme. HMD takes place on 27 January each year in remembrance of the millions who lost their lives during the Holocaust and in subsequent genocides.

The Youth Championship Programme will launch with a workshop held in London on 18 November. During the workshop young people will be encouraged to respond to the theme of HMD 2013 'Communities Together: Building a Bridge' in ways that are relevant to them. The aim is to train young people to become youth ambassadors for HMD, spreading the importance of its message to a younger generation.

There will be two workshops for those from 13 to 17 and 18 to 24 held from 1.30pm to 3.30pm and 4.00pm to 6.00pm respectively. The deadline for registering for the workshop is 9 November.

For more information and for a registration form, contact Naomi Line at Naomi.Line@hmd.org.uk

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IARF Peace Commission

The Peace Commission of the International Association for Religious Freedom (IARF) plans to link half a dozen peace-making groups to focus on one project for action. The Peace Commission plans to meet, in or around London, every two months. For further information or if you wish to attend the next meeting, contact Richard Boeke by phone on 01403 257 801, or by email at r.boeke@virgin.net.

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Woodland Trust trees project

The Woodland Trust is offering community groups, youth groups and schools the chance to apply for packs of free trees for delivery in March 2013. This project is designed for groups interested in helping wildlife; creating a faith, or inter faith, green space; or a community garden or allotment. There are three sized packs in various themes – 30 saplings, 105 saplings and 420 saplings.

The deadline for applications is Christmas 2012. For more information, visit <http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/en/moretreesmoregood/free-trees/Pages/free-tree-packs.aspx?qclid=CPui64ehvbMCFaTMtAodakQAqQ>.

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Nothing Holy about Hatred

A new project has been launched entitled 'Nothing Holy about Hatred', to "bring together people from all faiths, denominations and non-religious beliefs, to stand against the damage and harm caused by homophobia". More information can be found online at <http://nothingsholyaboutthatred.org/>.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Near Neighbours

The Near Neighbours programme is a three-year initiative, run by the Church Urban Fund, which aims to bring people together in diverse communities, helping them build relationships and collaborate to improve the local community in which they live. The

programme currently operates in the following areas: East and South East London, North Birmingham, Leicester, Bradford, Burnley and Oldham. The scheme has also recently been undertaking some capacity building work in Luton.

Near Neighbours has a grants programme, due to end in March 2013, which at present operates on a rolling basis with no deadlines. Grant amounts range from £250-£5000. The fund invests in environmental, social, cultural, artistic and sporting ideas which fulfill the criteria, which can be found at www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/grants. Examples of funded projects can be found at: <http://www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/funded-projects> Inter Faith Week projects are among those which can be considered.

The Fund is pleased to receive applications from people of different faith groups or none, working in partnership with people of different faiths and within the criteria. Details on how to apply can be found at www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/grants.

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Funding Central website extended

Minister for Civil Society, Mr Nick Hurd, announced on 5 September that the Cabinet Office would commit £500,000 of funding to extend the NCVO's Funding Central website for a further 18 months. This free website offers charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises access to approximately 4000 sources of funding and finance opportunities. It also offers tools and resources to support organisations to develop sustainable income strategies appropriate to their needs.

The funding central website is www.fundingcentral.org.uk and the press release announcing the extended funding can be found at <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/news/funding-central-boost-delivers-continued-support-civil-society>.

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Community First Neighbourhood Matched Fund

The Community First Neighbourhood Matched Fund provides small grants to community groups and local social action projects at the ward level. The £30 million Fund is being used to provide small grants for community projects in some of the most deprived areas in the country. The Community Development Foundation (CDF), which is administering the fund, released a list of wards eligible to receive the funding earlier in October 2011. Community First panels of local people are administering the funding in these areas. The second grants round has opened and applications may be made up until the end of the financial year (31 March 2013). For information on the Fund and how to apply, visit <http://www.cdf.org.uk/content/funding-programmes/community-first/neighbourhood-matched-fund>.

The Fund has a sister project the 'Endowment Match Challenge' which seeks to match £50 million in Government funding by raising a further £100 million through corporate and individual philanthropic giving. This is being administered by the CDF and delivered via Community Foundation Network. For more information, visit

<http://www.cdf.org.uk/content/funding-programmes/community-first/endowment-match-challenge>.

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‘All Our Stories’ grants

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has announced that it will be launching its ‘All Our Stories’ grant scheme supporting community heritage on 22 November. This new small grants programme will celebrate and seek to preserve the local stories and traditions of communities across the UK.

The programme will be launched with an event on 22 November featuring Michael Wood in conversation with some of the people organising local projects. It will take place from 12.30 to 2.00pm at the Terrace Gallery and Garden Room, Museum of London, 150 London Wall, London EC2Y 5HN.

For more information and to register attendance, contact Lucinda Tyrell at lucindat@hlf.org.uk or by telephone on 020 7591 6031 by 16 November.

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Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme extended

The Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme (LPWGS) has now been extended to reflect the new arrangements that came into effect on 1 October.

As part of the 2012 Budget the Government announced the withdrawal of the zero rate of VAT for approved alterations to listed buildings, effective from 1 October. As a result the LPWGS has been extended to offset the financial impact of the VAT change on listed places of worship undertaking alteration works. The extended scheme will incorporate repairs, maintenance and alterations to listed places of worship.

Other minor changes to the scheme include the return to a system of monthly payments; and some of the restrictions on eligibility criteria on certain repair and maintenance works have been lifted.

For more information, visit <http://www.lpwscheme.org.uk/>.

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HLF Places of Worship grants

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) will be launching its latest grant for places of worship in late 2012. HLF will be holding an information seminar in the run up to the launch to raise the profile of the grant scheme and provide information for those who intend to apply.

It will be held on Monday 12 November from 10.30am to 4.00pm at St George’s Bloomsbury, 6-7 Little Russell Street, London WC1A 2HR.

Anyone interested in attending this event, should contact Helen Bottomley by email at helenb@hlf.org.uk quoting 'HLF Places of Worship information session' in the title line to reserve a place.

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RESOURCES AND TRAINING

St Ethelburga's 'Debate in the Neighbourhood' training

The St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace is offering a 'Debate in the Neighborhood' public speaking skills training programme which seeks to empower particularly young people to become articulate advocates for their communities and to instigate social change. The course will focus on reconciliation and dealing with tension and community building. The training day will take place on Monday 12 November from 9.30am to 4.00pm at St Ethelburga's Centre, 78 Bishopsgate, London EC2N 4AG. Tickets cost £20. To book a place on the training day, visit <http://stethelburgas.org/civicrm/event/info?id=463&reset=1>. For more information, email music@stethelburgas.org or phone 07776 136 609.

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Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum 'World Religions' training

The Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum is delivering a training course on World Religions in Downpatrick. The training gives an introduction to a range of world faiths. The last two sessions of the course are open to members and friends of the Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum. On Tuesday 13 November there will be a panel discussion with a number of people from various Christian denominations and on Tuesday 20 November there will be a session entitled 'Sacred Sounds' with readings and music from a range of faith traditions. The sessions are held at Down County Museum, The Mall, English Street, Downpatrick, Co Antrim BT30 6AH and start at 10.30am and finish at 12.30pm.

For more information or to register, contact Edwin Graham edwin.graham21@gmail.com.

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Woolf Institute e-learning course

The Woolf Institute has announced that applications are now open for its e-learning course 'Jews, Christians and Muslims in Europe: Modern Challenges.' The course focuses on the relationships between Jews, Christians and Muslims and their impact in Modern Europe. The course is taught at final-year undergraduate level over the course of one calendar year, the e-learning approach allows participants to study wherever they choose over the internet working with Woolf Institute tutors and other students both individually and jointly.

The deadline for applications is 1 February 2013 and the course commences on 25 February. The totally cost of the course is £350.

For more information, visit www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/courses/jcme.asp.

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Three Faiths Forum training

The Three Faiths Forum (3FF) is running inter faith training sessions on Wednesday 31 October and Tuesday 27 November. The training is for anyone dealing with diversity and equality, as well as those interested in becoming a Volunteer Speaker on 3FF's schools programme. It will give an introduction to 3FF's methodologies and provides opportunities to learn skills for confident, sensitive and effective inter faith communication.

For further information and to register contact sean@3ff.org.uk.

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Weekend course at the City Lit centre

The City Lit centre for adult learning is holding a one day weekend course called 'Do the Abrahamic faiths (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) have anything in common?' on Sunday 27 January from 10.30am to 3.30pm. The course will explore the relationship that each religion has with the figure of Abraham and what insights can be gained about each religion by considering their differences. The course takes place at City Lit's main site in London. For more information, visit the City Lit website (<http://www.citylit.ac.uk/>) or phone the Humanities department on 020 7492 2652.

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JOBS AND VOLUNTEERING

Lokahi Foundation Internships

The Lokahi Foundation is looking to recruit interns to support in the delivery of their projects; support collaboration; and engage in bridge building in local communities and universities. Interns will have the opportunity to deliver workshops; organise campus and community events; communicate online and in-person; and run social media campaigns. Lokahi are looking for skilled and motivated recent graduates or current students. The internships will be available full time (35 hours a week) or part time (14 hours a week) for nine months beginning on 1 December 2012. Interns will be paid the London Living Wage (currently £8.30 an hour).

The deadline for applications is Thursday 15 November at 8:00pm. Interviews will involve participation in a two-day Lokahi Apprentice project on 21 and 22 November from 10.00am to 6.00pm. Applicants must complete the online form at <http://bit.ly/lokahi-intern> and upload their CV. For more information, visit bit.ly/Wbcupl or email Rafika Teladia at rt@lokahi.org.uk or call 020 7795 4187.

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Peace One Day – Education Campaign Intern

Peace One Day is seeking an Education Campaign intern with excellent research and communication skills to work alongside their Education team. The intern will support both UK and Global Outreach – contacting educators around the world and helping to raise awareness of Peace Day, held on 21 September each year, and Education resources. The position is unpaid but interns will be able to claim expenses of up to £10 a day. For more information and details on how to apply, visit <http://www.w4mpjobs.org/JobDetails.aspx?jobid=37412> and for more information on Peace One Day, visit <http://peaceoneday.org/>.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS AND TENDERS

FbRN requires new premises

The Faith Based Regeneration Network (FbRN) is urgently looking for new premises to move into by the second week of December. They are looking for an office in central London accessible by public transport, with space for 3 to 4 desks in a self-contained office space with some access to meeting rooms, with a preferred secure tenure of at least two years.

If you are able to help, contact Malcolm Deboo by email on malcomd@fbrn.org.uk, or by phone on 07825 705 810/020 7842 8519.

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Spirituality and Ageing – Call for papers

The fifth Annual Conference on Spirituality and Ageing will take place in Edinburgh in July 2013 on the theme of 'Creativity in Spiritual Care'. The conference is jointly sponsored by Faith in Older People and the Methodist Homes (MHA). Submissions are invited for presentations and papers addressing the topic of creativity and ageing, and engaging with the three conference themes: Ageing Gifts; Ageing Changes; and Ageing Hopes.

For further information, including details on abstracts, presentations and submission, contact info@fiop.org.uk. The closing date for receipt of proposals and papers is 31 January 2013 and a decision will be made by the end of February.

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European Future for Religious Heritage Network – Call for papers

The European Future for Religious Heritage Network is organising a conference in Venice from 14 to 17 November on the extended use of religious buildings. Registration is now open and a call for papers has been launched. Papers are invited on a number of themes, including:

- What has been done in Europe to extend the use of religious buildings?
- What is feasible within different denominations and cultures?
- What direction should we take for the future?

For more details, visit <http://www.futurereligiousheritage.eu/upcoming-conference-november-2012/>.

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Voluntary sector Honours nominations

The Cabinet office is looking for more nominations for Honours from within the voluntary sector. For information on how to nominate someone, visit http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Governmentcitizensandrights/UKgovernment/Honoursawardsandmedals/DG_067917 or http://www.direct.gov.uk/prod_consum_dg/groups/dg_digitalassets/@dg/@en/documents/digitalasset/dg_202071.pdf.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Mitzvah Day 18 November 2012

Mitzvah Day is a Jewish led day of social action – around the world thousands of people take part in hands on projects to support existing charities and to build stronger communities. The goal is to reduce hardship and poverty and to help the environment. People are encouraged to volunteer for projects in their communities and anyone can take part regardless of their background. See www.mitzvahday.org.uk for further information and to register an event.

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Inter Faith Week 18-27 November 2012

In this Diamond Jubilee year, there will be a special extended Inter Faith Week in England, Northern Ireland and Wales running from 18 - 27 November. Further information on page 2 [above](#) and at www.interfaithweek.org.uk.

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Scottish Inter Faith Week 25 November – 2 December 2012

This year the Week will begin on Sunday 25 November. Further information can be obtained from Interfaith Scotland at www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org.

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Holocaust Memorial Day 27 January 2013

Holocaust Memorial Day provides an opportunity for everyone to learn lessons from the Holocaust, Nazi persecution and subsequent genocides and apply them to the present day to create a safer, better future. The theme for Holocaust Memorial Day 2013 is 'Communities Together: Build a Bridge'. To find out more, visit www.hmd.org.uk.

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DIARY DATES

Please note that Inter Faith Week events are listed on the Inter Faith Week website: www.interfaith.org

The **AHRC/ESRC Religion and Society Programme** is organising a series of interviews on the subject of 'Faith in Public Life.' The interviews will be held at venues around London conducted in front of an audience and attendance is free of charge. On Wednesday 21 November Baroness Shirley Williams will be interviewed by Clifford Longley of the Moral Maze at the Queen Elizabeth Conference Centre, Broad Sanctuary, London SW1P 3EE; and on Wednesday 5 December Delia Smith CBE will be interviewed at BMA House, Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9JP. The interviews are held from 5.30pm to 7.00pm and will be followed by drinks. To register, contact Peta Ainsworth at p.ainsworth@lancaster.ac.uk with the name, affiliation/institution (if applicable) and email address of each person who requires a place.

The **Human Rights Law Centre at the University of Nottingham** is holding a one day conference on 'Religion and Human Rights: Religion in Public and Private Spaces' which will take place on Thursday 8 November in the Senate Chamber, Trent Building. The conference will address the issue of the place of religion in public and private spaces. Questions arising from this will be addressed by some of the world's leading experts on law and religion. To register for the conference and for more information, visit <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/hrlc/events/otherconferences.aspx> or email hrlc@nottingham.ac.uk.

The **Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby** will be hosting its Annual Lecture on Monday 12 November. This year's speaker is Jay Lakhani and the theme will be

'Reconciling religious and non-religious world views'. The lecture takes place from 6.00pm to 8.00pm at the Multi-Faith Centre. To reserve a place, contact the Centre on 01332 591285 or at mfc@derby.ac.uk.

The Book Group at the **London Inter Faith Centre** will be holding its next meeting from 12.30pm to 2.00pm on Tuesday 13 November. The Group will be discussing 'Religion and Change in Modern Britain' edited by Linda Woodhead and Rebecca Catto. Chapters 2 and 5 will be discussed and photocopies are available on request. The Group meets at the Centre at 125 Salusbury Road, London NW6 6RG. A donation is requested for a sandwich lunch. To register to attend, email info@londoninterfaith.org.uk.

The **Joseph Interfaith Foundation** is organising an event for Orthodox Rabbis, Orthodox rabbinic students and academics on Tuesday 13 November entitled 'Meet the Imams and Ask Questions'. The event takes place from 5.00pm to 7.00pm at the St Johns Wood United Synagogue in London. The session will be led by three senior imams of three major mosques in London, who are members of the Foundation's Council of Imams and Rabbis. For further information, contact Info@josephinterfaithfoundation.org.

The **Westminster United Nations Association** is holding a meeting in the House of Lords on Tuesday 13 November entitled 'Is *Equality Lite* the new human rights standard?' to discuss the Government's attitudes towards the UK's human rights agenda. Confirmed speakers include Baroness Campbell of Surbiton and Professor Sir Bob Hepple and the event will be chaired by Lord Judd of Portsea. It will run from 6.30pm in Room 4a. All are welcome and those attending should enter by the Cromwell Garden entrance and allow 20 minutes to pass through the security zone. For further information, contact David Wardrop by telephone on 0207 385 6738 or email info@unawestminster.org.uk.

The **Cambridge Inter-faith Programme** has announced that this year's Coventry International Prize for Peace and Reconciliation is to be presented to Professor David Ford, its Director. The ceremony will be held on Wednesday 14 November at 7pm at Coventry Cathedral and is open to all, with no ticket required. After the official award ceremony, Professor Ford will be facilitating a conversation on the role of inter-faith dialogue in global peace building. The conversation will include Senior Rabbi Alexandra Wright, Dr Aref Ali Nayed, and Jerry White. For further information, visit www.coventrypeaceprize.org.uk

Interfaith Scotland is holding its annual national Interfaith Youth Conference on Saturday 17 November. There are still places available for the event which is being held at the University of Dundee from 11am to 4pm. The topic is 'Faith in Peace Building' and the event is open to young people aged 16 to 35 from all faiths and none. Booking closes on Friday 9 November. For further details, contact Frances Hume at fhume@scottishinterfaithcouncil.org or phone 0141 420 6982.

The **Faithful Neighbourhoods Centre** is launching a photography exhibition called 'Faithful Friends' based around the theme of friendship on Saturday 17 November. It features photographic stories of people of different faiths who have been brought

together by the work of Near Neighbours in Birmingham. The Exhibition is being held to mark Inter Faith Week, and celebrate one year of Near Neighbours in Birmingham. The launch will be held at 4pm at St Martin in the Bullring Church and will be hosted at other churches around the city. For information visit: <http://www.faithfulneighbourhoods.org.uk/wordpress/>.

The **Interfaith Forum for Leicestershire** is meeting to discuss 'Religion, Equalities Law and Human Rights' on Monday 19 November. The meeting will include guest speakers Peter Cumper, from the University of Leicester, and Dr Halla Diyab, of Liberty Media Productions. The meeting will start at 6.30pm, with a light buffet will be available from 6.00pm, and is being held at County Hall, Glenfield, Leicester LE3 8RA. For further information, contact Noel Singh on 0116 3057020 or at noel.singh@leics.gov.uk.

The **Roman Catholic Diocese of Westminster** is hosting a series of lectures on Tuesday evenings entitled 'Faith Matters'. On Tuesday 20 November the lecture will be given by Professor Ian Linden (Director of Policy at the Tony Blair Faith Foundation, formerly director of the Social Action Programme, Faiths Act, and an associate professor in the Study of Religion at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London). The theme of the lecture will be 'Finding God in other Cultures and Religions'. The lecture will take place from 7.00pm to 8.30pm at Westminster Cathedral Hall, Ambrosden Avenue, London SW1P 1QH. The lecture is free but registration via faithmatters@rcdow.org.uk or 020 7931 6078 is required to guarantee a place. There is a suggested donation of £3.

The **Westminster Cathedral Interfaith Group** is holding a series of meetings on 'Faiths and the environment' to consider green teaching from Jews, Christians and Muslims. The group meets every third Wednesday of the month from 4.00pm to 5.00pm at Hinsley Room, Morpeth Terrace on the right of the main entrance to Westminster Cathedral. The next meeting will be on Wednesday 21 November. The authors of the handbook 'Sharing Eden' will be attending some of the sessions and it would be helpful if participants have read the book in advance (www.sharingeden.org). The event is free and all are welcome. For more details, contact John Woodhouse on 07908 888 586, preferably by text.

Faithnetsouthwest will be holding its annual conference on Thursday 22 November. The theme for this year's conference is 'Faith groups – building social harmony in the community'. The event runs from 9.45am to 3.00pm and will be held at Taunton Central Library, Paul Street, Taunton TA1 3XZ. For further details and to book, contact Alistair@faithnetsouthwest.co.uk.

The **Public Policy Exchange** are organising a symposium entitled 'Working in Partnership to Prevent Extremism and Promote Cohesion in Universities and Colleges.' This is partly in response to new ACPO guidance 'Prevent, Police and Universities' released in May this year which responds both to the Government's Prevent strategy and recommendations recently made by the Institute for Community Cohesion on the subject. The symposium will take place in central London on Thursday 22 November from 10.30am to 4.30pm and is an opportunity for universities and colleges, police, local authorities and other key partners to come together to discuss how all can work better in partnership on these issues. To book a

place and for more information, visit <http://publicpolicyexchange.co.uk/events/CK22-PPE.php>.

Hull and East Riding Interfaith is holding its next open forum on Tuesday 27 November at 5pm (with refreshments from 4.30pm) in Committee Room 1 of the Guildhall in Hull. The topic will be 'Does the advance of science make religion redundant?'. All are welcome. For further information, visit www.heri.org.uk and click on 'Meetings'.

Greenbelt Festival and **Hodder & Stoughton publishing** have organised a speaking tour with author, speaker, and public theologian Brian McLaren to discuss 'The place of Christianity in a multi-faith society.' The discussions will take place over six nights in six different cities and at each location Brian McLaren will be joined by a local faith leader from a tradition other than Christian and a further guest. The dates of the tour are:

- Thursday 29 November at 7.30pm, St Martin's in the Bullring, Birmingham;
- Friday 30 November at 7.30pm, Manchester Cathedral;
- Saturday 1 December at 7.30pm, Turbine Hall, Castle Gate, Newcastle;
- Monday 3 December at 7.30pm, Woodlands Church, Bristol;
- Tuesday 4 December at 7.30pm, Central Hall, Southampton; and
- Wednesday 5 December at 7.30pm, Oasis Centre, London.

These are ticketed events (£8 entry). For more information and to book tickets, visit www.greenbelt.org.uk/boxoffice or call 020 7329 0039.

The **Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter** is holding the third of its autumn seminars on 'Conflict and Reconciliation in the Bible and Society Today' on Tuesday 4 December. Registration is from 10.30am, the lecture starts at 11.00am and the day finishes at 3.30pm. (Please bring a packed lunch.) The subject is 'Healing a Traumatized Society' and the speakers will be Susan Denton Brown, Chairperson, Neve Shalom/Wahat al Salaam, and Ruth Barnett, a teacher and psychotherapist. There is a suggested donation of £15 and the seminar takes place at the Sion Centre, 34 Chepstow Villas, London W11 2QZ. For further information or to book, email sioncde@yahoo.co.uk or telephone 020 7313 8286.

Watford Interfaith Association is holding its annual 'Winter Social' on Tuesday 4 December. It will be a chance to socialise with people of all faiths and none in the Watford area and activities will include the Diversity Game. Pot luck refreshments are greatly appreciated. It is being held from 7.30pm at the Watford Fire Station, Lower High Street, Watford. For further information, contact wifasec@aol.com.

The **World Congress of Faiths** will be holding its annual 'Sir Francis Younghusband Lecture' on Wednesday 5 December. The lecture will take place at 6pm for a 6.30pm start at Global Cooperation House, 65-69 Pound Lane, London NW9 2HH and this year will have a new format. William Garner and Randall Starrett will talk about the new film Tournament of Shadows that they are making about Francis Younghusband and show clips from the film. Further details will be posted on www.worldfaiths.org in due course.

Theos and the **London School of Economics Forum on Religion** are holding a debate called 'With good reason: a debate on the foundations of ethics' engaging with the question of whether theism or atheism offers a better basis for 'moral realism.' Angus Ritchie, Director of the Contextual Theology Centre, Julian Baggini, writer and philosopher, and Mark Vernon, writer and journalist, will discuss this issue. The event will be held from 6.30pm to 8.00pm on Thursday 6 December at LSE Hong Kong Theatre, Clement House, London. The event is free and entry is on a first come, first served basis. For all queries, email events@lse.ac.uk or call 020 7955 6043.

Religions for Peace (UK) is holding a lecture entitled 'The Palestinian State: a Jewish justification' on Tuesday 29 January. Rabbi Professor Dan Cohn-Sherbrook, Emeritus Professor of Judaism at the University of Wales will be arguing for the two state solution, drawing from the Jewish ethical tradition. It will be held from 6.30pm to 8.30pm at Cathedral Clergy House, 42 Francis St, London SW1P 1QW. To register your interest in this event, email dvd.horner@googlemail.com or jehangirsarosh@gmail.com. This event is being held to mark World Inter-faith Harmony Week 2013.

Religions for Peace (UK) is holding an event called 'Choice – Empathy or Enmity' on Tuesday 5 February. The event will be a dialogue between Jo Berry, daughter of Sir Anthony Berry MP who was killed in the 1984 IRA Brighton Bombing of the Tory Party Conference, and Pat Magee, a former IRA activist who was give multiple life sentences for carrying out the bombing. The event is hosted and will be chaired by Lord Alderdice. It will take place from 6.30pm to 8.30pm in Committee Room 4A, House of Lords, London. Places are extremely limited so to register, email jehangirsarosh@gmail.com as soon as possible to book a place. This event is being held to mark World Inter-faith Harmony Week 2013

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For detailed information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Scottish Inter Faith Council: www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org

For detailed information on events and projects in a number of the English regions see:

East of England: www.eefaithscouncil.org.uk

London: www.faithsforum4london.org

North East: www.nerfn.org

North West: www.faithnorthwest.org.uk

South East: www.se-faithforum.net

South West: www.faithnetsouthwest.org.uk

West Midlands: www.wmfaithsforum.org.uk

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 27 November with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer:

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Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH

www.interfaith.org.uk

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IFN e-bulletin

January 2013

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 7 February with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Material may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and future projects and events.

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UK/NATIONAL UPDATES

Inter Faith Network for the UK Strategic Review

The Inter Faith Network for the UK has begun a strategic review which is looking at issues such as: the place of IFN in the wider context of inter faith engagement and UK society; IFN's membership and patterns of engagement and consultation; programmes of work undertaken by IFN; the place and continued relevance of Inter Faith Week; the sustainability of IFN; views on the future work of IFN; and governance and operational issues. For more detail about the Review and the Working Group taking this forward see the November 2012 issue of the e-bulletin at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/ebulletin.htm>

The Strategic Review Working Group, chaired by Patricia Stoa, has met in November, December and January for opening discussion of some of the issues and to consider how best to draw in views of the range of relevant constituencies and to develop one of the Review's key tools, which is a questionnaire on the topics and questions which the Review Group is keen to hear views. There will be a link to this from the IFN website, www.interfaith.org.uk when it goes live, which is planned for the beginning of February.

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New IFN Co-Chair from the Christian Community

At the beginning of the year, the Revd Bob Fyffe, General Secretary of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, took over from the Rt Revd Dr Alastair Redfern, Bishop of Derby, as IFN's Co-Chair from the Christian community. He brings a wide knowledge of inter faith issues and ecumenical engagement with these by the Churches. Bishop Alastair was thanked for his much appreciated service to IFN at the 2012 AGM and by the Executive Committee at their meeting in September.

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A Year of Service

All faith communities have within their ethical teachings the values of compassion, care and social justice. One of the ways that their members put these values into everyday practice is through volunteering. To highlight this, a special programme called 'A Year of Service' took place throughout 2012. Each month faith communities hosted days of volunteering, in which people of other faiths and non-religious beliefs were invited to join. One of the highlights of the project was showcasing faith based social action and a national event with this focus was held on 27 November during Inter Faith Week. This was supported by the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Coexist Foundation and arranged with the assistance of the Faith based Regeneration Network. The event also had a link to the Near Neighbours programme. At the event, there were stalls showing examples of social action by different faith communities. Integration Minister, Don Foster MP, paid tribute to the work of faith communities, the Senior Minister for Faith and Communities, Baroness Warsi, gave a speech on 'Inter Faith Action and Identity' and

there were contributions from a range of faith community and inter faith practitioners including from FbRN and the Inter Faith Network.

A short report about A Year of Service will be published soon. The Government has indicated a keenness to see a continuation of faith and social action work of this kind and DCLG, which supported A Year of Service, is expected to make an announcement relating to this shortly.

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Inter Faith Week

Inter Faith Week 2012 in England, Northern Ireland and Wales ran from Sunday 18 to Tuesday 27 November. This was a special, extended Week, with a number of events taking place linked to both the Diamond Jubilee and A Year of Service (see above). A wide range of events took place across the country, and those which were registered on the national website can be viewed at <http://www.interfaithweek.org/events/events/main-events-calendar>. The Week received some enthusiastic media coverage, including a piece in *The Times* and coverage in many local papers. The popular resources for schools, in addition to being available on the main Week website, were also hosted at the *TES* website for 2012.

If you have any photographs from the 2012 Week which you would like to submit for IFN to draw upon for the IFW website, please email these to Interfaithweek@interfaith.org.uk along with brief details of what the photograph is about and a photo credit.

Scottish Inter Faith Week ran from 25 November until 1 December, with a special event held at the Scottish Parliament. Further information is available from Interfaith Scotland at www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org.

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National RE Subject Review

As noted in the November issue of the E-bulletin, the Religious Education Council for England and Wales (REC) is currently carrying out a National RE Subject Review. The Subject Review relates to England. Phase One of the Review, which included wide consultation with RE stakeholders and drew together a report and recommendations, is now complete. Phase Two is about to commence.

Work in Phase Two will be led by two Task Groups. Recruitment for the first of those groups has just been completed. Task Group One will develop non statutory guidance material on RE and its curriculum, with particular concern for its aims, its distinctive knowledge, understanding and skills and its assessment. Task Group Two will develop strategies designed to structure and sustain the future of RE. Following the recommendations identified by the Phase One report, this group will work to build influential links with different RE stakeholders to promote RE in schools as well as key external bodies, including the DfE and examination boards. In liaising with

different stakeholders and policy makers, they will explore ways in which the collective efforts and wisdom of the whole RE community can be optimised for the benefit of the subject and young people studying it.

Further information about the Review is available at <http://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org/content/view/292/100/>.

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Eric Pickles speech on integration and launch of English language service competition

On 13 January the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Rt Hon Eric Pickles, spoke on integration policy at an event co-hosted by think-tanks British Future and Policy Exchange. He outlined key areas of importance for the Government's integration approach over the coming year.

In the speech, Mr Pickles emphasised the localist nature of the Government's approach and the importance of English language learning. He said that what made people British was not their ethnic or religious background but their adoption of "great British liberties" and their ambition. Faith was another key emphasis. Referencing 'participation' as a crucial part of integration policy, Mr Pickles said "Our faith communities are past masters of bringing people together...we definitely do 'God.' Faith provides a clear moral compass and a call to action that benefits society as a whole." He attacked "intolerance and aggressive secularism" which he said had undermined the freedom of religion and said "We're committed to the right of Christians and all people of all beliefs to follow their faith openly, wear religious symbols and pray in public." He used the examples of 'A Year of Service' and the 'Near Neighbours' programme to illustrate 'why faith still counts', saying that plans would soon be announced to build on the success of A Year of Service and that his Department would be supporting a further 190 Near Neighbours projects.

A final part of the speech attacked extremism, racism and intolerance, Mr Pickles said that the Government would "continue work to isolate extremism...there can be no hiding place for racists in our society." He attacked the EDL, the 'poppy burners' and anti-Muslim racism and said that "In 2012 we won the argument" against those groups.

For a transcript of the speech visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/uniting-our-communities-integration-in-2013>

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2011 Census data on religion and belief

On 11 December the Office of National Statistics (ONS) released the second of five sets of data from the 2011 Census, including data on religion in England and Wales. The data was gathered by a voluntary question "What is your religion" in the same format as the 2001 question. This means that the two sets of data (2001 and 2011) are directly comparable, although there are many circumstantial factors affecting the statistics, such as an increased rate of self-identifying with various groups.

Key points in the data on religion include a decrease in the number of people identifying as 'Christian' from 37.3 million to 33.2 million, this represents a 12.3 drop in real terms and a drop from 72% to 59% of Census respondents. All other groups in this category have registered a growth in numbers of people identifying with them. The Muslim population increased from 1.5 million to 2.7 million, an increase of 42.85%, making up 5% of census respondents increasing from 3% in 2001. Those who identify as non-religious increased from 7.7 million to 14 million - an increase of 45.25% in real terms and an increase from 15% to 25% of Census respondents.

RELIGIOUS GROUPING	2011	% of population	% increase
Baha'i	5,021	0.0090%	7.49%
Buddhist	247,743	0.442%	41.69%
Christian	33,243,175	59.28%	-12.32%
Hindu	816,633	1.46%	32.38%
Jain	20,288	0.036%	25.41%
Jewish	263,346	0.470%	1.30%
Muslim (Islam)	2,706,066	4.83%	42.85%
No religion	14,097,229	25.14%	45.25%
Sikh	423,158	0.755%	22.17%
Zoroastrian	4,105	0.0073%	8.94%

The data on religion are set out in the table below. The figures given are for England and Wales and have next to them the percentage of total respondents in those countries. The 2001 figures and respondent percentages have been included for comparison as well as the numerical and percentage increase/decrease between the two sets of figures.

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New EHRC Commissioners appointed

On 14 January the Government announced the new members of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), who will, alongside its Chair, Baroness Onora O'Neill, make up the EHRC board. They are:

- Ms Caroline Waters OBE (Deputy Chair)
- Ms Sarah Anderson
- Ms Ann Beynon OBE (Wales Commissioner)
- Ms Kaliani Lyle (Scotland Commissioner)
- Mr Chris Holmes MBE (Disability Commissioner)
- Mr Evelyn Asante-Mensah OBE
- Mr Laura Carstensen
- Mr Professor Swaran Singh
- Ms Sarah Veale CBE

The new Commissioners come from a range of backgrounds with ties to particular equality strands. None have a background in working specifically with people of different faiths and beliefs.

For further information, visit <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/about-us/the-commissioners>.

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Update on Equal Civil Marriage legislation

On 11 December the Government published its response to its consultation document on equal marriage issued in March 2012. The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, and Minister for Women and Equalities, Ms Maria Miller, spoke on the Government's plans for equal civil marriage legislation on that day to the House of Commons. She said that "the response I am publishing today makes it clear that we will enable same-sex couples to get married through a civil ceremony. We will also enable religious organisations that wish to conduct same-sex marriages to do so....I am also clear that there should be complete respect for religious organisations and individual religious leaders who do not wish to marry same-sex couples. The Government must balance the importance of treating all couples equally and fairly with respect for religious organisations' rights to their beliefs."

The Government's response to the consultation outlines the proposed arrangements for granting civil marriage to same sex couples and both civil and religious marriage to same sex couple in religious organisations that 'opt-in' to this system. To ensure that religious organisations are not forced into marrying same sex couples the response outlines a 'quadruple lock' of protections for faith communities against this:

- The legislation will state explicitly that no religious organisation, or individual minister, can be compelled to marry same-sex couples or to permit this to happen on their premises.
- It will be unlawful for religious organisations, or their ministers, to marry same-sex couples unless they have expressly opted in to do so and the legislation will make it clear that no law requires any religious organisation to 'opt-in'.
- The Equality Act 2010 will be amended to provide that no discrimination claims can be brought against religious organisation or individual ministers for refusing to marry a same-sex couple or allowing their premises to be used for this purpose.
- The legislation will not apply to the Church of England (or the Church of Wales), or to their Canon Law. This means that it will continue to be illegal for these Churches to marry same-sex couples or to 'opt-in' to do so.

The consultation on civil marriage received a record 228,000 responses along with 19 related petitions. On the question on whether the Government should open up religious same sex marriage the majority of respondents answered that it should. Currently there is no information on when a Bill is likely to be introduced into Parliament.

For more information and for the Government's response to the consultation, visit <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/about-us/consultations/equal-civil-marriage>.

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Scottish Government Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill Consultation

On 12 December the Scottish Government opened a consultation on a Bill to bring into law same sex marriage and religion and belief registration of civil partnerships. The decision to move forward on this was a result of a previous consultation held on the subject in Scotland in 2011. The present consultation explores the detail of how the legislation might be implemented.

The proposed Bill would allow religion and belief groups which wished to perform same sex marriages and same-sex civil partnerships to do so if they 'opted in' to the scheme. Religion and belief organisations would be under no obligation to do so and it would not be legal for celebrants to perform same sex marriages in places of worship owned by these organisations unless the organisation has opted in. In order to ensure that there is no compulsion of religion and belief celebrants to perform same sex marriage the Scottish Government has asked the UK Government to amend the Equalities Act (2010) to afford them further protections.

The Bill also includes changes to existing marriage legislation including the ability to hold a civil marriage ceremony in any location and a 'belief ceremony' as a third type of marriage ceremony designed so that groups such as Humanists can have distinctive and legally binding ceremonies.

The consultation will run until 20 March 2013.

To download the consultation document visit:
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0041/00410330.pdf>

To respond to the consultation visit: <https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/family-law/marriagebill>

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European Court of Human Rights judgements

On 15 January the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) ruled on the cases brought against the UK by Ms Eweida, Ms Chaplin, Ms Ladele, and Mr McFarlane submitted to the court in 2010 (*Ms Eweida and others vs UK*). All stipulated that the UK had failed to take into account their fundamental liberty to manifest their religion as enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights. In the case of Ms Eweida and Ms Chaplin this referred to the wearing of a cross in their places of work as a BA check-in clerk and nurse respectively. In the case of Ms Ladele and Mr McFarlane the cases related to sanctions taken against them by their employers after they objected to carrying out services which they considered to condone homosexual unions in their positions as, respectively, a registrar and a counsellor. Ms Eweida, Ms Chaplin and Mr McFarlane all argued their cases under Article 9 of the Convention taken in conjunction with Article 14 and Ms Ladele argued under Article 14 of the Convention taken in conjunction with Article 9.

The ECtHR ruled in favour of Ms Eweida, stating that "a fair balance had not been struck between, on the one side of the scales, her desire to manifest her religious belief and be able to communicate that belief to others, and, on the other side of the

scales, her employer's wish to project a certain corporate image", finding that the UK authorities had failed to protect her right to manifest her religion in breach of Article 9. However the court ruled against Ms Ladele, Ms Chaplin, and Mr McFarlane stating that they found no evidence that either Articles 9 or 14 had been breached in these cases and that the UK authorities had struck the right balance in these cases.

The cases of Ms Chaplin and Mr McFarlane were voted on unanimously by the seven judge bench, but in the cases of Ms Eweida and of Ms Ladele dissenting opinions were issued by two judges in each case, which were annexed to the judgement.

The judgement can be downloaded from: <http://hudoc.echr.coe.int>.

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Commission on a Bill of Rights report

On 18 December the Commission on a Bill of Rights presented to Parliament its report '*A UK Bill of Rights? The Choice Before Us*'.

On the issue of whether or not there should be a UK Bill of Rights, seven of the Commission's nine members considered there to be a strong argument in favour of it. This was because such a Bill would incorporate and build on the UK's obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights, and would not lessen the protections offered under current Human Rights Act and the devolution settlements – although a new Bill could usefully define more clearly the scope of some rights and adjust the balance between different rights. The most persuasive arguments that the members of the commission found for a new Bill were the lack of ownership by the public of the existing Human Rights Act and the European Convention on Human Rights, and the opportunity which a UK Bill of Rights would offer to provide greater protection against possible abuses of power.

The two members who opposed this conclusion, Baroness Helena Kennedy and Mr Philippe Sands, concluded that it was not the right time to dedicate time and resources to a new UK Bill of Rights. They said that the majority of Commission members failed to identify any shortcomings in the Human Rights Act or its application by the courts. While remaining open to the idea of a UK Bill of Rights, they feared that concerns over the issue of public ownership of rights could be used to promote other aims, including the diminution of rights available to all people, and a de-coupling of the UK from the European Convention on Human Rights.

All the members of the Commission agreed that any future debate on a UK Bill of Rights must be acutely sensitive to issues of devolution and, in the case of Scotland, to possible independence and that it must involve the devolved administrations in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. In respect of Northern Ireland, the Commission made it clear that it does not wish its conclusions to be interpreted or used in such a way as to interfere in, or delay, the separate Northern Ireland Bill of Rights process.

Further details can be found on the Commission on a Bill of Rights' website <http://www.justice.gov.uk/about/cbr>.

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Charitable Incorporated Organisations (CIOs) now available in England

The first applications to set up Charitable Incorporated Organisations (CIOs) are now being submitted (with the first registrations expected in January 2013). A CIO is created on registration with the Charity Commission and is subject to the sole regulation of the Commission. It has the advantage of limited liability without the dual regulation of charity and company law. Initially, CIOs will only be available for new charities, and then for existing unincorporated charities. Existing charitable companies will not be able to convert until 2014 at the earliest (an exact date is yet to be confirmed). According to the Charity Commission, CIOs will be most suitable for small to medium sized organisations which employ staff and/or enter into contracts. If a charity is likely to want to issue debentures, a company limited by guarantee will be a better option.

For further information, visit http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/Start_up_a_charity/Do_I_need_to_register/CIOs/default.aspx.

Note: The option to register as a CIO is available in England and Wales. In Scotland organisations have been able to register as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) since April 2011. In Northern Ireland organisations have been able to register as a CIO since 2008.

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INTERNATIONAL UPDATES

World Interfaith Harmony Week

A World Interfaith Harmony Week was proposed at the UN General Assembly on September 23, 2010 by HM King Abdullah II of Jordan and adopted by the UN the following month. It takes place in the first week of February. The Week was based on the work of the Common Word initiative which started in 2007 and called for Muslim and Christian leaders to engage in a dialogue based on two common fundamental religious Commandments - Love of God, and Love of the Neighbour - without compromising any of their own religious tenets. Events can be registered on the site www.worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com

While the decision has been taken to keep Inter Faith Week in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in November for a range of practical reasons and Scotland also continues to mark its Inter Faith Week in November/December, the World Week is marked by a number of organisations in the UK, including the branches in this country of international inter faith bodies organisations which help raise awareness of, and encourage involvement with, the vital issue of global inter-religious harmony.

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2014 Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions

The Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions and the Parliament of the World's Religions Brussels 2014 have announced that, due to the European financial crisis, it has not been possible to raise the necessary funds to hold the 2014 Parliament. The two organisations are exploring other potential joint projects and, separately, the Council is pursuing options for the next Parliament with other interested and qualified cities. Further information can be found at www.parliamentofreligions.org.

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PROJECTS

REC Young Ambassadors Programme

The Religious Education Council for England and Wales (REC) is launching a new Young Ambassadors for RE scheme. The scheme will give students in England and Wales aged 11-18 opportunities to:

- share their enthusiasm and interest for RE and gain leadership experience;
- give their perspective to adults who work to support RE at the highest levels, such as the RE Council and MPs in parliament;
- develop skills in communicating successfully to a wide range of audiences;
- build up relevant experience for college, UCAS or job applications; and
- meet and debate with other young people about why RE matters.

Further information, and application forms, are available at <http://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org/content/view/293/100/>.

The closing date for applications is 1 March 2013.

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Faith and fire

The Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) is interested in hearing from faith community contacts who have an interest in issues relating to faith communities and fire safety or have materials about this which they might like to draw to its attention. There is more information online at www.communigate.co.uk/lakes/faithandfire/

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RE Council 40th anniversary sponsored walk

The Religious Education Council for England and Wales (RE Council) is organising a sponsored walk to mark its 40th anniversary. Each walk will take in a number of places of religious significance. The walk will be held in cities, towns and villages across England and Wales during May 2013. The walk is for anyone aged over 18 wishing to support RE in schools and aims to raise the profile of the RE Council. The aim is for 20 different walks to take place, each with fifty participants, with each participant raising at least £100 in sponsorship. The money raised will be divided 50/50 between the RE Council and another charity chosen by each local team.

People can take part by: volunteering as a member of the national organising team; volunteering as a member of a local organising team; volunteering to take part as a walker; or committing to sponsor someone else. For further information, contact sarah@religiouseducationcouncil.org.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Near Neighbours

The Near Neighbours programme is a three-year initiative, run by the Church Urban Fund, which aims to bring people together in diverse communities, helping them build relationships and collaborate to improve the local community in which they live. The programme currently operates in the following areas: East and South East London, the City of Birmingham, Leicester, Bradford, Burnley and Oldham. The scheme has also recently been undertaking some capacity building work in Luton.

Near Neighbours has a grants programme, which at present operates on a rolling basis with no deadlines, but is due to end in March 2014. Grant amounts range from £250-£5000. The fund invests in environmental, social, cultural, artistic and sporting ideas which fulfill the criteria, which can be found at www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/grants. Examples of funded projects can be found at: <http://www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/funded-projects> Inter Faith Week projects are among those which can be considered.

The Fund is pleased to receive applications from people of different faith groups or none, working in partnership with people of different faiths and within the criteria. Details on how to apply can be found at www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/grants.

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Funding Central website extended

The NCVO's Funding Central website offers charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises access to approximately 4000 sources of funding and finance opportunities. It also offers tools and resources to support organisations to develop sustainable income strategies appropriate to their needs. The funding central website is www.fundingcentral.org.uk.

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Community First Neighbourhood Matched Fund

The Community First Neighbourhood Matched Fund provides small grants to community groups and local social action projects at the ward level. The £30 million Fund, administered by the Community Development Foundation, is being used to provide small grants for community projects in some of the most deprived areas in the country. The second grants round has opened and applications may be made up until the end of the financial year (31 March 2013). For information on the Fund and how to apply, visit <http://www.cdf.org.uk/content/funding-programmes/community-first/neighbourhood-matched-fund>.

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Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme

The Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme makes grants towards the VAT incurred in making repairs and carrying out necessary alterations to listed buildings mainly used for public worship. For more information, visit <http://www.lpwscheme.org.uk>.

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Heritage Lottery Fund Places of Worship grants

In December the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) launched its new grant programmes for places of worship in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. As previously, the priority remains structural repairs urgently required within the next two years that have been clearly identified and defined in a condition survey such as a Quinquennial Inspection. The new programme is also designed to encourage a wider range of people to take an interest in their local places of worship and to help care for them in the future. They hope to achieve this by finding new ways in which places of worship can be used by the wider community beyond the primary function of worship and/or by providing new opportunities for people to find out about the heritage of places of worship. They will also fund new capital works, such as toilets or kitchens, improvements to heating or electrical systems, other works to improve energy efficiency, and works to assist with the on-going maintenance of the place of worship.

Decisions are made four times a year by local Committees. The first deadlines for submission are at the end of February 2013 for the first Committee meeting being held in June. Full guidelines can be found online at http://www.hlf.org.uk/HowToApply/programmes/Pages/Grants_Places_Worship_Engl_and.aspx.

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RESOURCES AND TRAINING

When Two Faiths Meet: Marriage, Family and Pastoral Care

The Christian Muslim Forum (CMF) has launched guidelines for inter faith marriage in a document entitled *When Two Faiths Meet: Marriage, Family and Pastoral Care*. CMF hopes that the guidelines will be a helpful resource in enabling religious leaders to support mixed-faith couples. In preparing the guidelines CMF worked in partnership with the [Inter Faith Marriage Network](#) and the [Muslim-Christian Marriage Support Group](#). A copy of the guidelines can be found on the CMF website at <http://www.christianmuslimforum.org/images/When%20Two%20Faiths%20Meet%20guidelines.pdf>.

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Baptist inter faith myth buster postcards

The Baptist Union of Great Britain has created a set of postcards for Christians dealing with some common misconceptions people have when dealing with those of other faiths. The postcards, which were launched during national Inter Faith Week, include background information and suggestions for use within a small-group context. The postcards can be purchased online from <http://www.baptist.org.uk/crossingplaces/inter-faith.html>.

BUGB is also developing support materials 'Inter faith journeys' for the cards and these can be found at www.baptistunion.org.uk/interfaith

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Report on inter faith activity at grassroots in Wales

A report, "Assessment of the Extent to which Inter-faith Activity is Practiced amongst Grassroots Faith Communities in Wales" presents the findings of research in 2012 looking at levels of regular inter faith contact at the grassroots level between different faith communities in Wales. The overall objectives of the work were to:

- Assess the extent to which grassroots faith communities within Wales are engaged in sustained positive contact with each other (eg types of activity, level of community support, participants, geographical spread) and why.
- Provide evidence of good practice to the Faith Communities Forum, to support the promotion of appropriate inter faith activity.
- Increase the Welsh Government's knowledge of inter faith activity, to enable it to make more informed decisions on how it can engage with faith groups, and how forums such as the Faith Communities Forum should be constituted.

The report was commissioned by the Welsh Government from Resources for Change in partnership with the Community Development Foundation. It can be downloaded from:

<http://wales.gov.uk/about/aboutresearch/social/latestresearch/interfaithactivity/?lang=en>.

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God's Favourite Colour is Tartan

The Moderator of the Horsham Interfaith forum, Tim Firth, has recently published an inter faith resource entitled *God's Favourite Colour is Tartan: Reconciling Religious Difference*. Individual copies of the book cost £12.50 plus postage. For further information, visit www.godscolourtartan.co.uk, email info@godscolourtartan.co.uk or write to Box 256, 24a Carfax, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 1BF.

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DVD - Who am I? the religious identity of young people

'Who am I? the religious identity of young people' is the title of a DVD resource produced in partnership between Art Beyond Belief, The Oxford Diocesan Committee for Inter-faith Concerns, South East England Faiths Forum, Slough Grammar School and the Baynes Foundation. 'Who Am I?' came out of an event held at the Friends' Meeting House in Reading as part of Inter Faith Week 2010. The event was such a success, that in 2011 it was decided to run it again. This time the event was filmed, and the DVD contains a range of presentations on religious identity, followed by group discussions held with Sixth-Form students at Slough Grammar School. Further information about the resource, including video clips, can be found at <http://www.art-beyond-belief.com/who-am-i/>.

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Birmingham Faith Guiding course

The Faith Encounter Programme seeks to train people of all faiths in Birmingham as 'Faith Guides' so that places of worship are better equipped to offer high quality educational visits. The course is designed to provide participants with the knowledge, understanding and skills required for successful guiding around a particular place of worship.

The course is running on Wednesday evenings from 2 January to 27 March at the Faithful Neighbourhoods Centre in Sparkhill, Birmingham. Applicants must be over 18 and have the ability to communicate well in English. The course is offered at the discounted rate of £33 which is the registration fee to the Institute of Tourist Guiding. This may be subsidised by the place of worship and concessions may be available.

For an application form, contact the Director, Ruth Tetlow, on 0121 449 4892 or at ruthtetlow@btinternet.com. For further information, visit www.faithencounter.org.uk.

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Historic Religious Buildings Alliance training event

The Historic Religious Buildings Alliance, in partnership with PurcellUK, is hosting a training event for those who are involved with building projects in churches and other places of worship on Thursday 21 February at All Saints Church, Daresbury, Cheshire <http://www.daresburycofe.org.uk/>.

The day will help with managing all stages of a building project in a place of worship, from start up through to making sure benefits are achieved over the long term. The day is open to people of any denomination or faith group, whatever the size, type or location of their place of worship. It will be relevant to new builds, alterations and repairs and to both single building and multiple building projects. Although focusing on projects of a significant size, many of the principles apply in simplified form to smaller projects, and the day should be useful for all sizes of project.

Everyone is welcome, and especially those in the North West. If this day is successful, training events will be run in other regions. Further details about the day and how to book can be found at http://www.hrballiance.org.uk/?page_id=5 and/or <http://www.purcelluk.com/news-events/news#/>. For any queries, contact Lisa-Marie Bradley on 020 7397 7171 or at HRBArsvp@purcelluk.com.

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The Cambridge Inter-faith Programme Summer School 2013

In August 2013 the Cambridge Inter-faith Programme will bring together an international group from Islamic, Christian and Jewish backgrounds, for three-weeks of immersion in inter faith education and encounter. Students benefit from a series of lectures delivered by specialist academics and peacemakers from around the world; they are given training in the practice of inter faith Scriptural Reasoning, and are facilitated through a process of teaching one another about aspects of their traditions. The Summer School also includes visits to religious communities around the UK. Most importantly, participants benefit from opportunities to get to know and learn from their fellow participants, who come from a wide variety of countries; relationships which last well beyond the Summer School itself.

Applications are due by Friday 1 February 2013. For more information, visit <http://www.interfaith.cam.ac.uk/en/education/summerschool>. The Summer School film can be seen at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x6P5iwWICkU>.

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Re-evaluating Chaplaincy course

The St Christopher's Hospice in London will be holding a one day course on 4 February 2013 on 'Re-evaluating chaplaincy'. The day will reconsider what the chaplain does within hospice and palliative care settings and how as member of a multi-professional team the chaplain can continue to play an important role in the holistic care of patients and their families.

This day will examine: models for community engagement with clergy and faith leaders; how the chaplain can educate clergy, ministers and other pastoral workers in end of life care; the Chaplain as a “Hopeful Presence” – an evaluation of the chaplain’s presence with others; and Community Chaplaincy Listening.

The day is aimed at chaplains, clergy, faith leaders, spiritual carers, bereavement workers, social workers and those who have an interest in the ways in which meaning and creating meaning help the processes of dying and bereavement. There is a charge to attend. For more information on this course and booking details, visit <http://www.stchristophers.org.uk/education/course/re-evaluating-chaplaincy>.

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Weekend course at the City Lit centre

The City Lit is holding a one day course called ‘Do the Abrahamic faiths (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) have anything in common?’ on Sunday 27 January from 10.30am to 3.30pm at its main site in London. The course will explore the relationship that each religion has with the figure of Abraham and what insights can be gained about each religion by considering their differences.. For more information, visit the City Lit website (<http://www.citylit.ac.uk/>) or phone the Humanities department on 020 7492 2652.

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JOBS AND VOLUNTEERING

Lancaster University – Lecturer

The Department of Politics, Philosophy and Religion at Lancaster University seeks to appoint a Senior Lecturer or Lecturer in Politics/International Relations and Religion. All major areas of Politics/International Relations and Religion will be considered. For more information, visit <http://hr-jobs.lancs.ac.uk/Vacancy.aspx?ref=A597>. The closing date for applications is 7 February.

Informal enquiries may be made to the Head of Department, Professor Robert Geyer, r.geyer@lancaster.a.cuk.

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INFORM - Director

INFORM is a registered charity that collects, evaluates and disseminates information about minority religions which is as reliable and objective as possible. It is seeking a new Director. The Director is responsible to INFORM’s Board of Governors for ensuring that its aims are achieved. The job is described as requiring ‘vision’ in the sense of setting the directions in which research needs to be steered in order to investigate the constantly changing landscape of minority religions and the reactions

to them. The Director also needs to be a 'self-starter' and 'doer' who not only initiates new areas of research but also sees them through to completion, including the dissemination of findings for the benefit of stakeholders and the public.

Further particulars and the application form can be downloaded from www.inform.ac. Applications and any questions should be sent to informdirector@yahoo.co.uk. The closing date for applications is 1 March.

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EHRC – Council of Europe experts

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is seeking expressions of interest in two UK independent expert posts in the Council of Europe - on the European Commission against Racism and intolerance (ECRI) and the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. The closing date for both posts is 11 February.

Details on the two posts can be found at <http://publicappointments.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/applications/50f0444ee4b05a42eb243158> and <http://publicappointments.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/applications/50f0451ee4b05a42eb24315a>.

For further information or to discuss any queries, contact Ian Naysmith at Ian.Naysmith@communities.gsi.gov.uk.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS AND TENDERS

National Diversity Awards 2013

The National Diversity Awards are a celebration of outstanding achievements of positive role models, entrepreneurs and community organisations from across the UK. The Awards aim to: promote equality and diversity; create role models from all sections of society; eliminate discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, religion or age; celebrate the achievements of people, community/charity organisations and companies that strive for a more inclusive society; and highlight how diverse communities have contributed to the economy of the UK.

Nominations are now being accepted for all Awards, including the religion/faith strand. For further information, visit www.nationaldiversityawards.co.uk.

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Charity Awards 2013

The Charity Awards 2013 are now open for entries. Each year charities of all sizes, locations and missions enter the Charity Awards and about thirty go on to be shortlisted for a black-tie presentation evening in the summer. Awards are presented in ten categories: Advice, support and advocacy; Arts, culture and heritage; Children and Youth; Disability; Education and training; Environment and conservation; Grantmaking and funding; Healthcare and medical research; International aid and development; and Social care and welfare.

Entry to The Charity Awards 2013 is free and entries are welcome from charities of any size based anywhere in the UK. The closing date for entries is Friday 8 March 2013 and the nomination form can be downloaded from <http://www.civilsociety.co.uk/charityawards/nominations>.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Holocaust Memorial Day 27 January 2013

Holocaust Memorial Day provides an opportunity for everyone to learn lessons from the Holocaust, Nazi persecution and subsequent genocides and apply them to the present day to create a safer, better future. The theme for Holocaust Memorial Day 2013 is 'Communities Together: Build a Bridge'.

This year's theme is one which has prompted wide local inter faith involvement. Some examples of events which are being held can be found under diary dates.

Interfaith Scotland, in partnership with Glasgow City Council, Education Scotland and the Scottish Government, is organising an 8-day programme of events to mark Holocaust Memorial Day with invited guests Jean Paul Samputu and Sello Hatang. They will be speaking at schools in Glasgow and Edinburgh, refugee organisations, faith communities, film showings at the GFT and a main event which will take place at Glasgow City Chambers.

To find out more, visit www.hmd.org.uk.

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World Interfaith Harmony Week February 2013

World Interfaith Harmony Week is a UN recognised Week which takes place each year during the first week of February. The Week was proposed to the UN General Assembly by HM King Abdullah of Jordan, and the first UN World Interfaith Harmony Week took place in February 2011. Further information about the Week, including its aims and objectives, can be found on its website at <http://worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com>.

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DIARY DATES

Coventry Multi-Faith Forum has put on an exhibition to mark Holocaust Memorial Day this year. The exhibition is running from 2 to 28 January on the upper level of Priory Visitor Centre. Further information is available from <http://www.coventrymultifaithforum.org/holocaust-memorial-day-0> or multi-faith.forum@zen.co.uk.

Bolton Interfaith Council is jointly hosting an event to mark Holocaust Memorial Day at 2pm on Wednesday 23 January. The event will be a tribute by school children, community and civic leaders and will take place in the Festival Hall at the Town Hall, Bolton. For further information, contact Chan Parmar on 01204 546110 or visit www.boltoninterfaithcouncil.org.uk.

The **Multi-Faith Centre** and the **Centre for Society, Religion and Belief at the University of Derby** are running a series of research seminars throughout the year, which are open to staff, students and members of the public. The next seminar is on Wednesday 23 January and the presenter will be Dilwar Hussain, Head of the Policy Research Centre at the Islamic Foundation. The seminars will all take place from 1.30pm to 3.00pm at the Multi-Faith Centre. All are welcome and there is no need to book. A fair trade lunch is available from 12noon at a cost of £2.50. For further information, contact mfc@derby.ac.uk or ring 01332 591285.

Suffolk Inter Faith Resource will be holding a seminar on Sufi Mysticism on Wednesday 23 January from 7.00pm to 9.30pm. The seminar will be held at the Inter Faith Centre, University Campus Suffolk. Further information is available at <http://www.sifre.org.uk/>.

Bristol Multifaith Forum is holding an event entitled 'Environment – Our responsibility to this World', on Thursday 24 January. The event, which runs from 6.30pm to 9.00pm at the St Werburghs Community Centre, Horley St, will include representatives of different faiths discussing the subject, and a keynote speech from Rob Telford, a local Green Party activist. Further information can be found at http://www.bristolmultifaithforum.org.uk/index.php?option=com_gcalendar&view=google&Itemid=55.

Cheltenham Inter Faith will be meeting on Friday 25 January at 7.30pm. The event, on the theme 'Can Muslims and Christians pray together?', will feature a talk by Professor Gavin D'Costa. The will be held at the Friends Meeting House, Warwick Place, Portland Street, Cheltenham. For further information, contact info@cheltenhaminterfaith.org.uk.

Calderdale Interfaith Council is hosting an event to mark Holocaust Memorial Day at Halifax Minster on Sunday 27 January at 6pm. Further information is available from <http://www.calderdale-interfaith.co.uk/news.htm> or calderdale.interfaithcouncil@yahoo.co.uk.

South Shropshire Interfaith Forum is hosting an event to mark Holocaust Memorial Day on Sunday 27 January. The event will take place at the Community Centre in Craven Arms, at 6.30pm. Further information is available from <http://www.ssif.org.uk/events.html>.

Bedford Council of Faiths will be hosting, with **Bedford Borough Council**, two Holocaust Memorial Day events on Monday 28 January. There will be a commemoration at the Ann Frank Tree in Russell Park at 12.00 noon, followed by a civic commemoration at 12.45pm at the Harpur Suite, Harpur Square. Further information is available from <http://www.bcof.org.uk/>.

Religions for Peace (UK) is holding a lecture entitled 'The Palestinian State: a Jewish justification' on Tuesday 29 January. The event will be chaired by Bishop John Arnold and the speaker, Rabbi Professor Dan Cohn-Sherbrook, Emeritus Professor of Judaism at the University of Wales, will be arguing for the two state solution, drawing from the Jewish ethical tradition. It will be held from 6.30pm to 8.30pm at Cathedral Hall, Westminster Cathedral, Ambrosden Avenue, London SW1P. To register your interest in this event, email dvd.horner@googlemail.com or jehangirsarosh@gmail.com. This event is being held to mark World Interfaith Harmony Week 2013.

Hull and East Riding Interfaith will be holding its next meeting on Tuesday 29 January. The event will be a discussion about multiculturalism on the anniversary of Prime Minister David Cameron's Munich speech on this topic. The meeting will be opened by Ratna Lachman, Director of JUST West Yorkshire, and Dr Khaled Sultan will give an account of his work with Syrian refugees. All are welcome. For further information, visit www.heri.org.uk and click on 'Meetings'.

Religions for Peace (UK) is holding an event called 'Choice – Empathy or Enmity' on Tuesday 5 February. The event will be a dialogue between Jo Berry, daughter of Sir Anthony Berry MP who was killed in the 1984 IRA Brighton Bombing of the Tory Party Conference, and Pat Magee, a former IRA activist who was give multiple life sentences for carrying out the bombing. The event will be hosted and chaired by Lord Alderdice. It will take place from 6.30pm to 8.30pm in Committee Room 4A, House of Lords, London. Places are extremely limited so to register, email jehangirsarosh@gmail.com as soon as possible to book a place. This event is being held to mark World Inter-faith Harmony Week 2013.

York Interfaith will be meeting on Wednesday 6 February at 7.30pm. Paul Wordsworth will be speaking on 'The work of York City of Sanctuary.' The meeting will take place at the Main Hall, Priory Street Centre, Priory Street. Further information is available from http://www.yorkinterfaith.org/calendar_2013.html.

Faiths Together in Lambeth is hosting an Interfaith Harmony Breakfast to mark World Interfaith Harmony Week. The event will take place on Thursday 7 February from 8.00am to 10.00am at Streatham Friends Meeting House, Redlands Way, London. Further information is available at www.faithstogetherinlambeth.org or from ftil@hotmail.co.uk.

Altrincham Interfaith will be holding its annual Shared Meal on Saturday 9 February at Altrincham Grammar School for Boys. Further details and tickets will be available soon from <http://www.altrincham-interfaith.org.uk/>.

Dudley Borough Interfaith Network will be holding a Pancake Party on Tuesday 12 February. The event will include an opportunity to learn about how Shrove Tuesday fits into the Christian year, and will take place in the crypt of St James' Church, the Parade. For further information, contact Gillian on interfaith@dudleycvs.org.uk.

Horsham Interfaith Forum will be meeting on Tuesday 12 February at Friends Meeting House, Worthing Road, Horsham. The meeting, which starts at 7.30pm, will be led by Seth Ammar and on the theme 'Reflections in the Jewish tradition'. For further information, visit <http://www.horsham-interfaith.org.uk/events.php>.

Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship will be visiting the Jewish Heritage Centre for Children in Shadwell, Leeds on Sunday 17 February at 2.00pm. Advance booking is required. Entry is free to Concord members, or £3 to non-members. For further information, visit <http://www.concord-leeds.org.uk/programme2.htm> or email secretary@concord-leeds.org.uk.

Norwich InterFaith Link will be meeting on Tuesday 19 February at 7.30pm. The theme of the meeting will be 'Religion and Secularism: Can there be a Dialogue?' and will take place at The Parlour, Princes Street United Reformed Church Rooms, Norwich. Entry costs £2. Further information is available from <http://www.norwichinterfaith.co.uk/events.htm>.

The **Hindu Christian Forum** is holding a study day for Hindus and Christians on Tuesday 12 March entitled 'What is Modern Yoga?'. The conference will focus on physical yoga or 'hatha yoga'. In the first part of the day, leading scholars will present the origins of 'hatha yoga' and its development into a modern Western fitness phenomenon and the final part of the day will be an open forum for Hindus and Christians. The event will take place from 11.00am to 4.00pm in the Marie Eugenie Room Heythrop College, Kensington Square, London W8 5HN. Lunch will be provided and there is no cost for the day. To book a place, contact Dr Kate Wharton at katherine.wharton@lambethpalace.org.uk.

Bristol Inter Faith Group is holding its annual Civic Inter Faith Celebration on Tuesday 12 March from 7.00pm to 9.30pm. The event is being held by invitation of The Lord Mayor of Bristol Councillor Peter Main and is on the theme of 'Faiths in Community – What unites us?'. The evening will include readings, prayers, spiritual songs and music offered by members of different faith communities in Bristol. It will be held at City Hall, College Green, Bristol BS1 5TR and all are welcome to attend. For further information, contact Marie Hackett at marie.hackett@bifg.org.uk or on 0117 970 8022.

Christian Interfaith Practice in Action will be holding its 2013 conference from Tuesday 21 to Thursday 23 May at Luther King House in Manchester. This year's theme is 'Vulnerability and Risk in an increasingly Secular Society' and the keynote speaker will be Professor Paul Weller, with contributions from the Revd Philip Ind and Professor Dermot Killingley. For further information, visit <http://www.cipa-uk.com/2013consultationprogra.htm>.

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For more information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Scottish Inter Faith Council: www.scottishinterfaithcouncil.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org

For more information on events and projects in a number of the English regions see:

East of England: www.eefaithscouncil.org.uk

London: www.faithsforum4london.org

North East: www.nerfn.org

North West: www.faithnorthwest.org.uk

South East: www.se-faithforum.net

South West: www.faithnetsouthwest.org.uk

West Midlands: www.wmfaithsforum.org.uk

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 7 February with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer:

Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH

www.interfaith.org.uk

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 14 March with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Material may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and future projects and events.

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UK/NATIONAL UPDATES

Inter Faith Network for the UK Strategic Review

The Inter Faith Network for the UK (IFN) has initiated a Strategic Review which is looking at issues such as: the place of IFN in the wider context of inter faith engagement and UK society; its membership and patterns of engagement and consultation; programmes of work undertaken by it; the place and continued relevance of Inter Faith Week; the sustainability of IFN; views on its future work; and governance and operational issues. For more detail about the Review and the Working Group taking this forward see the November 2012 issue of the e-bulletin at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/ebulletin.htm>

As part of its process of developing recommendations, the Strategic Review Working Group, chaired by Patricia Stoot, has put out a questionnaire on the topics and questions on which it is keen to hear views. Organisations which would like to respond can download an interactive pdf from www.interfaith.org.uk. The response deadline is **Monday 18 March**. Hard copy of the questionnaire is available on request from strategicreview@interfaith.org.uk.

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Inter Faith Week 2013

Dates for Inter Faith Week 2013 in England, Northern Ireland and Wales have been confirmed as 17 to 23 November.

Writing on the 'Liberal Democrat Voice' website, Rt Hon Don Foster, Minister for Communities and Local Government praised the Government's 'Integration approach' for: "supporting projects that pioneer innovative ideas and encourage integration, such as National Inter faith Week."

Scottish Inter Faith Week runs from 24 November until 1 December, including, as usual, St Andrew's Day.

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EHRC guidance on religion and belief in the workplace

In February the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) published guidance on religion and belief in the workplace based on the judgements in January of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) on the four combined cases (Ladele, McFarlane, Eweida, and Chaplin) on religious freedom.

The judgements affect the responsibilities of employers to put in place policies to protect religion or belief rights in the workplace both for the rights of employees and the rights of customers. While the cases were brought exclusively by Christians the implications of the judgement apply to employees of any religion or belief, including those of non-religious beliefs.

The EHRC has produced two guidance documents in response to this. The first is a short guide for employers on how to accommodate needs of people of religions or beliefs in the workplace, including best practice examples of how to deal with employee requests regarding their religion or belief. The second is a legal explanation of the ECtHR judgements which goes into detail on their implications for UK legislation.

For further information and to download the documents, visit <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/guidance-for-employers/religion-or-belief-new-guidance-february-2013/>

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Red tape cut for community events

In January the Government today announced plans to cut unnecessary regulations around neighbourhood events. The change will mean that community venues – including community centres, schools, village halls and hospitals - will be exempt from licensing restrictions. People will be able to put on cultural events like dance displays and concerts without having to apply to the local council for a licence. More information can be found on the website of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport at http://www.culture.gov.uk/news/media_releases/9652.aspx.

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'Together in Service'

On 14 February the Government launched a faith based social action initiative called 'Together in Service' (TiS), which follows on from the 'A Year of Service' programme held during 2012. Speaking at the launch of the Jubilee+ organisation's National Church and Social Action Survey, Baroness Warsi said: "Our faith groups make a huge contribution to society with an army of dedicated volunteers who commit their time and enthusiasm throughout the year. I'm thrilled to announce Together in Service today to build on this excellent work."

TiS is a 3 year programme, designed to motivate new social action work, especially multi-faith volunteering projects, and to celebrate all the social action that faith communities already undertake. It will be based around an on-going monthly calendar of faith-based volunteering, supported by a 'fellowship' of active volunteers and A Together in Service small-grants fund to encourage new multi faith social action projects in areas where there may be a lack of confidence or knowledge in undertaking volunteering work in a multi-faith way. The fund will be financed by contributions from faith communities with DCLG match-funding on a 1:1 basis, up to a maximum of £100,000 per annum.

In addition to the match-funding for grants DCLG will offer £50,000 per annum in total grant to the organisation or partnership of organisations at national level that is selected to develop the programme, in consultation with the faith communities, following a tendering process. It is expected that this will be opened shortly and that the programme will be operational by late Spring.

For more information, visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/baroness-warsi-launches-together-in-service-the-next-phase-of-support-for-multi-faith-volunteering>

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Update on equal marriage legislation

The January edition of the e-bulletin reported that the Government had drawn up a bill to implement same sex marriage. The Marriage (same-sex couples) Bill (2013) had its First Reading in the House of Commons on 24 January. The House of Commons gave the Bill a Second Reading on 4 February by 400 to 175 votes, on a free vote.

The Bill is now being debated by a Select Committee which met on 14 February and is expected meet again on 28 February. The Committee is due to report on 12 March. The Bill will then have a Third Reading in the House of Commons before proceeding to the House of Lords.

For further information about the process of the Bill and for transcripts of the Second Reading and Committee debates, visit <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2012-13/marriagesamesexcouplesbill.html>

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Girlguiding and its 'Promise'

Girlguiding is carrying out a consultation about its 'Promise'. Individuals can take part in this consultation through an online survey until **3 March** by visiting Girlguiding.org.uk and following the link from the home page. Organisational responses can also be made through the online survey or by e-mailing guiding.development@girlguiding.org.uk by **11 March**. A pdf of the questionnaire is available from this same email address for those who would like this in preparing an emailed organisational response.

Girlguiding explains that it provides girls and young women with a framework to support the development of their personal values. This framework is set out in the Promise and the Guide Law. The Promise has evolved over the years in order better to reflect the needs of girls and changes in society, changing 11 times over the past 100 years.

The Promise and the reason for the consultation are described by Girlguiding thus: "The Promise is guiding's beating heart – it's the core expression of our values and the common standard that brings us all together. But over the past few years we have heard from more and more girls and volunteers who struggle with the wording, particularly in interpreting what it really means to girls today. Girlguiding is committed to retaining a Promise that is in line with its original principles, but we know it's crucial that girls and young women understand and believe in the words they say. That's why, in the 2012-14 Strategic Plan agreed by our Board of Trustees, it was decided to invite all current members of Girlguiding UK as well as the wider public to discuss the wording of the Promise. We know feelings are strong and wide-ranging. This is why everyone's opinion matters." Girlguiding are keen to hear from a wide range of individuals and organisations as part of their consultation.

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National Curriculum update – implications for RE

On 7 February Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Education, made a statement in the Commons regarding changes to the proposed new arrangements for the National Curriculum. In his statement he unveiled the new draft National Curriculum for England and Wales, announced major new changes to the GCSE system, and new measures of school accountability.

Responding to the announcement, the RE Council said that it saw the implications for Religious Education (RE) arising from this statement as mixed. Mr Gove had announced that it was no longer planned to introduce 'EBacc Certificates' as a replacement to the GCSE qualification in EBacc subjects. However, the EBacc as a performance indicator will retain the same subject make-up as now in the new curriculum, with RE still not included as a Humanities subject.

The new school accountability measures which formed part of the announcement (Performance8) allow for three further GCSEs to be taken alongside EBacc 'core subjects' in measuring schools' success, and these include the full course in GCSE Religious Studies (though not the GCSE short course). The REC commented that the EBacc subjects still appeared to be the 'headline measure', and saw this as implying that non-EBacc subjects still have 'second class academic status'. The announcement does, however, underline that: "all state schools ... must teach RE to pupils at every key stage."

The full text of the statement can be found here:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmhansrd/cm130207/debtext/130207-0001.htm#13020759001092> (starting column 441)

The new National Curriculum document can be found here:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/curriculum/nationalcurriculum2014/>

The text of the statement by the RE Council about the implication for RE of the new arrangements can be found here:

<http://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org/content/view/304/46/>

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PROJECTS

Interfaith Glasgow

Interfaith Glasgow is a new project fostering understanding, respect, and cooperation between Glasgow's faith communities. Glasgow is a religiously diverse city with a long history of inter faith engagement, beginning with the establishment of the first inter faith group in Scotland in the 1970s. Building on this legacy, the project is aiming to create a sustainable structure for inter faith engagement in the city; establish effective communication networks; and increase participation through new initiatives. The project is hosted by Interfaith Scotland and funded by the Scottish Government. Its website is www.interfaithglasgow.org.

Groundwork for the initiative was laid by research commissioned by Interfaith Scotland last year and published last month: *Inter Faith Engagement in the City of Glasgow* conducted by Dr Suzanne Bunniss of Firecloud Research. It can be found at <http://glasgowforumoffaiths.files.wordpress.com/2013/02/interfaith-engagement-in-glasgow.pdf>.

Dr Rose Drew was appointed as Glasgow Interfaith Officer in October and is exploring different models of inter faith structures as part of the development process. A part-time Project Worker and part-time Youth Worker are shortly to be appointed and will work, respectively, on developing inter faith events in Glasgow and involving young people of different faiths. Further information is available from Dr Rose Drew at rose.drew@interfaithglasgow.org.

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Faith Matters Ambassadors

Faith Matters is looking for young people aged between 16 and 25 who live, work, worship or study in the London borough of Westminster to be part of their Faith Ambassador project.

The project will include 40 young people from all different faith and ethnic backgrounds, who will undertake inter faith workshops and training to become faith cohesion ambassadors for their faith community. The training will take place across three days in March. (Dates are to be confirmed with participants.) For more information, contact Sally on 020 79355573 or at sally@faith-matters.org.

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Three Faiths Forum Undergraduate ParliaMentors programme

Applications are now open for the 2013-14 Undergraduate ParliaMentors programme of the Three Faiths Forum.

The programme is open to undergraduates who identify with a faith or belief (religious or non-religious), are keen to work with others of different backgrounds and aspire to be political or community leaders. The Three Faiths Forum is looking for participants who have an interest in making a positive impact on society beyond university, and who take an interest in British politics.

For further information, visit <http://www.3ff.org.uk/mentoring/apply/>.

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Faith and fire

The Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) is interested in hearing from faith community contacts who have an interest in issues relating to faith communities and fire safety or have materials about this which they might like to draw to its attention. There is more information online at <http://www.communigate.co.uk/lakes/faithandfire/>.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Bursaries to study PGCE Religious Education

Candidates can train to teach Religious Education (RE) through a PGCE course in 28 universities in England, 2 in Wales and 2 in Scotland. Although the government no longer provides a bursary for RE, there are other sources of support. For 2013-14, trainees in secondary RE could be eligible to apply to one of the Church College Trusts for a grant towards course expenses or living expenses. Candidates can check www.cstg.org.uk/acct for details of the trusts and foundations to which they can apply.

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Heritage Lottery Fund 'Sharing Heritage' programme

The Heritage Lottery fund has announced the opening of its new programme, entitled 'Sharing Heritage', which is a small grants programme for people to explore their community's heritage. The programme includes grants from £3,000 to £10,000 and is for any not-for-profit group wanting explore, share and celebrate their community's heritage. Activities which can be supported include events, exhibitions, festivals and celebrations, producing local history publications, conserving individual heritage items, site and places and volunteer training and support. Further information can be found online at

<http://www.hlf.org.uk/HowToApply/programmes/Summaryofprogrammes2013/Pages/Openprogrammes.aspx>

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Near Neighbours

The Near Neighbours programme is a three-year initiative, run by the Church Urban Fund, which aims to bring people together in diverse communities, helping them build relationships and collaborate to improve the local community in which they live. The programme currently operates in the following areas: East and South East London, the City of Birmingham, Leicester, Bradford, Burnley and Oldham. The scheme has also recently been undertaking some capacity building work in Luton.

Near Neighbours has a grants programme, which at present operates on a rolling basis with no deadlines, but is due to end in March 2014. Grant amounts range from £250-£5000. The fund invests in environmental, social, cultural, artistic and sporting ideas which fulfill the criteria, which can be found at www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/grants. Examples of funded projects can be found at: <http://www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/funded-projects> Inter Faith Week projects are among those which can be considered.

The Fund is pleased to receive applications from people of different faith groups or none, working in partnership with people of different faiths and within the criteria. Details on how to apply can be found at www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/grants.

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Funding Central website

NCVO's Funding Central website offers charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises access to approximately 4000 sources of funding and finance opportunities. It also offers tools and resources to support organisations to develop sustainable income strategies appropriate to their needs. The funding central website is www.fundingcentral.org.uk.

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Community First Neighbourhood Matched Fund

The Community First Neighbourhood Matched Fund provides small grants to community groups and local social action projects at the ward level. The £30 million Fund, administered by the Community Development Foundation, is being used to provide small grants for community projects in some of the most deprived areas in the country. Applications for the second grants round may be made up until the end of the financial year (31 March). For information on the Fund and how to apply, visit <http://www.cdf.org.uk/content/funding-programmes/community-first/neighbourhood-matched-fund>.

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Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme

The Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme makes grants towards the VAT incurred in making repairs and carrying out necessary alterations to listed buildings mainly used for public worship. For more information, visit <http://www.lpwscheme.org.uk>.

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Heritage Lottery Fund Places of Worship grants

In December the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) launched its new grant programmes for places of worship in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. As previously, the priority remains structural repairs urgently required within the next two years that have been clearly identified and defined in a condition survey such as a Quinquennial Inspection. The new programme is also designed to encourage a wider range of people to take an interest in their local places of worship and to help care for them in the future. They hope to achieve this by finding new ways in which places of worship can be used by the wider community beyond the primary function of worship and/or by providing new opportunities for people to find out about the heritage of places of worship. They will also fund new capital works, such as toilets or kitchens, improvements to heating or electrical systems, other works to improve energy efficiency, and works to assist with the on-going maintenance of the place of worship.

Decisions are made four times a year by local Committees. The first deadline for submissions was the end of February for the Committee meetings being held in June. For the next Committee meetings, being held in September, the deadline is 31 May. Full guidelines can be found online at http://www.hlf.org.uk/HowToApply/programmes/Pages/Grants_Places_Worship_Engl_and.aspx.

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RESOURCES AND TRAINING

***Faithful Providers* report**

Demos has published a report entitled *Faithful Providers*, in response to the Government's White Paper on Open Public Services. The report, which investigates 20 faith-motivated organisations across a variety of policy areas, argues that local authorities stand to benefit both financially and through improved community relations if religious groups are brought into service delivery. It also argues that, if religious groups in receipt of public money were to be required to work with organisations of other faiths when delivering services, the result could be improved integration, a greater sense of community and stronger local institutions. It suggests that local authorities should cease to view commissioning as purely an economic decision, and instead consider the added social value that charitable and faith providers bring.

The report is available to download free or can be purchased in hard copy for £10.00. For further information, visit <http://www.demos.co.uk/publications/faithfulproviders>.

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Inter Faith Journeys and Engagements

Following on from the launch of its postcards on the 'Myths of Inter Faith Engagement' during Inter Faith Week last year, the Baptist Union of Great Britain has two further downloadable resources available free of charge designed for Christians who would like to explore this area in more depth. Copies of both documents can be downloaded from <http://www.baptist.org.uk/crossingplaces/inter-faith.html>.

Inter Faith Journeys shares the stories of 13 people who have been engaging in inter faith encounters, with each person being asked to reflect on questions about their involvement in inter faith matters, what excites and concerns them about it, and how it has affected their own faith. The Baptist Union would also be glad to hear from anyone who has a story that they feel is worth telling and to consider including it in a future update. For further information, contact faithandsociety@baptist.org.uk.

Inter Faith Engagements is for those who wish to explore the subject in more detail. It is a theological exploration of some of the frequently asked questions of inter faith issues, in six sections, with questions for discussion in a group setting.

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Jewish-Christian Relations in the English Novel

The Woolf Institute (Cambridge) has announced the introduction of its first online short course, *Jewish-Christian Relations in the English Novel*.

This course is the launch pad for a series of online short courses planned for the next few years. The Institute is developing three streams of online short courses:

introductory, advanced and/or specialised, and practice-based. Further courses will include *Interfaith Dialogue: Past, Present, and Future*; *Women and Religion*; *Breaking down Barriers: Engaging with Other Religions*; and a course on *Shakespeare*.

These courses will be available 365 days of the year and open to all who are interested in engaging in topics related to interfaith relations. Designed as five-week courses, students will be able to view their chosen course for two months. No specific academic qualifications are required. Students who participate fully in their chosen course will receive a Woolf Institute Certificate of Completion. For further information, including the application form, visit <http://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/courses/short-courses.asp> or contact Emma Harris at eth22@cam.ac.uk.

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JOBS AND VOLUNTEERING

Three Faiths Forum

The Three Faiths Forum (3FF) is seeking to recruit a Schools Officer and a Deputy Director. It welcomes applications from people of all backgrounds including those with non-religious and religious beliefs.

Schools Officer

The Schools Officer will develop and deliver 3FF's schools and training work. 3FF is seeking an experienced individual with excellent skills in communicating with young people, experience in delivering education programmes, strong knowledge of Christianity and some knowledge of other faiths and beliefs.

A copy of the job description and application form can be found online at <http://www.3ff.org.uk/jobs/schools-officer.php>. (CVs and covering letters will not be accepted.) The closing date for applications is 4 March. For more information, call 0207 485 1390.

Deputy Director

The Deputy Director position is a maternity cover contract only. This is a senior management role that requires clear strategic thinking and a high level of enthusiasm and professionalism. The successful candidate will be committed to achieving 3FF's aims and have lots of ideas for ensuring the long term success of the organisation. A copy of the job description and application can be found online at <http://www.3ff.org.uk/jobs/deputy-director-maternity-cover.php>. (CVs and covering letters will not be accepted.) The closing date for applications is 29 March. For more information, call 020 7482 9534.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS AND TENDERS

NATRE's 'Art in Heaven' Competition 2013

The National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE) is holding its 10th Annual 'Art in Heaven' competition for pupils aged 4 to 19 years.

There are five themes to choose: 'Prayer: How and why?', 'Windows on the Soul', 'God: What is...?', 'Open mind!' and 'Jerusalem by William Blake'. Entries can be a drawing, painting, art, video, sculpture or other media. Entries should be no larger than A3 size but good digital photos of 3-D or larger entries are welcome and pupils should write briefly about their art work.

Submission of entries, to be considered for an award, must arrive at NATRE on or before 31 July. For further information, visit <http://www.natre.org.uk/spiritedarts/2013.php>.

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'Religion, Migration and Mutation' conference – Call for papers

The 12th European Association for the Study of Religions Annual Conference will be hosted by the British Association for the Study of Religions at Liverpool Hope University in September. The call for panels and papers is now open.

The conference invites papers and panels that examine what happens to religious beliefs and practices when they are displaced and what occurs to religions when new cultural practices interact with them. Panels will be 2 hours long and consist of 4 speakers (papers should be no more than 25 minutes long, allowing a 20 minute discussion period). The submission deadline is 1 June.

For further information and submission details, contact Sara Fretheim at frethes@hope.ac.uk.

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Contemporary religion in historical perspective: engaging outside academia

The Open University will be holding a conference under the broad theme of 'Contemporary religion in historical perspective' from 15 to 16 May in Milton Keynes. The conference will be addressing two parallel streams. The first is 'Engaging with the past to inform the present' and the second is 'The public value of research on contemporary religion'.

For further information or to become a panellist, send a short (200-300 word) proposal to Dr John Maiden at j.maiden@open.ac.uk by 15 March.

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Journal of Dialogue Studies – Call for papers

The Dialogue Society is making a preliminary call for papers for 'The Journal of Dialogue Studies' which is an academic journal that will be published twice a year. Its aim is to study the theory and practice of dialogue between individuals and/or people of different groups in relation to social, political, religious and cultural issues.

The journal will publish conceptual, research and/or case-based works on both theory and practice which relate to the evaluation of dialogue. The editors invite contributors from a variety of disciplines. The first issue will be published in July 2013 and focus on 'dialogue studies' as a concept; specifically its boundaries, viability and usefulness as an academic field. The submission deadline is 20 April 2013.

For more information visit <http://www.dialoguesociety.org/publications/academia/829-journal-of-dialogue-studies.html> and for submission of papers, e-mail journal@dialoguesociety.org.

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National Diversity Awards 2013

Applications are still open for the National Diversity Awards, which are a celebration of outstanding achievements of positive role models, entrepreneurs and community organisations from across the UK. The Awards aim to: promote equality and diversity; create role models from all sections of society; eliminate discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, religion or age; celebrate the achievements of people, community/charity organisations and companies that strive for a more inclusive society; and highlight how diverse communities have contributed to the economy of the UK.

Nominations for all Awards, including the religion/faith strand, close on 19 July. For further information, visit www.nationaldiversityawards.co.uk.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Climate Week

This year's Climate Week takes place from **4 to 11 March**.

Among the national bodies supporting the Week are many faith and inter faith organisations. Organisers are encouraging faith communities to use Climate Week as an opportunity to focus during sermons and in study groups on the religious basis for environmental care and to use events, exhibitions and coffee mornings to highlight ways faiths are taking steps to help prevent climate change. To sign the Climate Week Declaration calling on Government to take urgent action on climate change, especially in the Energy Bill now going through Parliament, visit <http://www.climateweek.com/climate-week-declaration>. For more information on Climate Week or to register for the Climate Week Challenge, visit www.climateweek.com.

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Islam Awareness Week

Islam Awareness Week (IAW) will take place from **11-17 March**. This is IAW's 20th year and the theme is "The Things we have in Common".

"*The Things We Have In Common* seeks to continue to convey and share one of the core messages of IAW: Britain's Muslims inherently share an essential commonality with their fellow citizens along all of life's avenues, and in all that we value and hold dear. The theme will share and celebrate this through the lived experience of life - its objects, moments and memories." A number of events, such as that being held in Sheffield (see diary dates, 13 March) have an inter faith dimension. Further information at: <http://www.iaw.org.uk/pages/page.php?id=home>

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Sewa Day

Sewa Day will be taking place on **6 October**. The Sanskrit word 'Sewa' means 'selfless service'. The aim of Sewa Day is to provide people a chance to give back to the local community through volunteering on a single day to make a difference. For more information and to get involved visit: www.sewaday.org

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One World Week

One World Week will take place from **20-27 October**. One World Week provides an opportunity for people from diverse backgrounds to come together to learn about global justice, to spread that learning and to use it to take action for justice locally and globally. For more information, visit <http://www.oneworldweek.org>.

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Mitzvah Day

Mitzvah Day will be taking place on Sunday 17 November. Mitzvah Day is a Jewish led day of social action – around the world thousands of people take part in hands on projects to support existing charities and to build stronger communities. The goal is to reduce hardship and poverty and to help the environment. People are encouraged to volunteer for projects in their communities and anyone can take part regardless of their background. See www.mitzvahday.org.uk

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Inter Faith Week

Inter Faith Week 2013 in England, Northern Ireland and Wales will take place from **Sunday 17 to Saturday 23 November**.

The aims of the Week are: strengthening good inter faith relations at all levels; increasing awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, in particular celebrating and building on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society; and increasing understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs.

Building good relationships and working partnerships between people of different faiths and beliefs is part of the year-round work of many people and organisations across the UK. Having a special Week provides a focal point, helping to open inter faith activity up to a wider audience so that more and more people are made aware of the importance of this vital work and are able to participate in it.

An online event registration form will be available at www.interfaithweek.org later in 2013.

Scottish Inter Faith Week runs from **24 November until 1 December**, including, as usual, St Andrew's Day. More information can be found online at <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/22.html>.

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DIARY DATES

The School of Oriental and African Studies is holding its second Interfaith Music Festival on Thursday 28 February from 9.00am to 11.00pm. The festival has over twenty confirmed performances and will share music and dance from diverse religions traditions. The festival will be at the Brunei Gallery Lecture Theatre at SOAS, Thornhaugh Street, London WC1H 0XG. Entrance is free and all are welcome. For more information, contact Anja Fahlenkamp at 298869@soas.ac.uk.

Dudley Borough Interfaith Network will be holding a free half-day Mental Health Awareness workshop run with Dudley Mental Health Partnership. The event, which is aimed at faith leaders, communities, third sector and voluntary organisations, will take place on Saturday 2 March at Claughton Community Centre, Blowers Green Road, Dudley from 10.00am to 1.00pm. For further information or to register, email interfaith@dudleycvs.org.uk.

Cambridge Inter-Faith Group will be holding its AGM on Monday 4 March at 7.00pm, followed at 7.30pm by a talk by David Capey about the East of England Faiths Agency. This will be held at Friends' Meeting House (downstairs), 12 Jesus Lane, Cambridge. For further information email ddw@aber.ac.uk.

The **Women's Interfaith Network** is hosting a Celebration of International Women's Day on Tuesday 5 March. The event, on the theme of 'Where are we as women in the 21st century? Why do women still suffer abuse?', will be held from 3.00pm to 6.00pm in the 3rd floor meeting room, Victoria Charity Centre, 11 Belgrave Road, London SW1V 1RB. For further information, contact marion@wominet.co.uk.

The **London College of Fashion** at the University of Arts London is hosting a series of events focusing on Faith and Fashion. The next event takes place on Tuesday 5 March from 6.00pm to 7.00pm at the London College of Fashion, 20 John Prince's Street, London W1G 0BJ. To celebrate International Women's Day, Professor Reina Lewis will be joined by Debbie Danon of the Three Faiths Forum, Janet Adler of the Women's Interfaith Network and Barjis Chohan, a designer and entrepreneur. The expert panel will explore why and how fashion has become central to the expression of personal faith, spirituality and ethics for women from many different faiths and for women who see themselves as secular. Booking is essential. All bookings and queries can be addressed to rhs@fashion.arts.ac.uk.

The **Multi-Faith Centre** and the **Centre for Society, Religion and Belief at the University of Derby** are running a series of research seminars throughout the year, which are open to staff, students and members of the public. The next seminar is on Wednesday 6 March on the topic of 'Young people, Deprivation and Religion in the UK: Copying and Resistance'. The speaker will be Giselle Vincett. The seminars will all take place from 1.30pm to 3.00pm at the Multi-Faith Centre. All are welcome and there is no need to book. A fair trade lunch is available from 12noon at a cost of £2.50. For further information, contact mfc@derby.ac.uk or ring 01332 591285.

Islington Faiths Forum is holding a lecture and debate on the theme 'Why do religious beliefs sometimes cause conflict in families?' This will take place on Wednesday 6 March from 6.30pm at Henry Thomas Lecture Hall, London Metropolitan University Tower Building, 166-220 Holloway Road, London. Registration is essential. For further information, or to register, email rosalind.miller8@btinternet.com.

Inter-Faith North/West will be holding an open forum on 'Prayer and Meditation' as part of its 'listening and learning' series of panel discussions. The event will take place on Wednesday 6 March from 7.00pm at Alexander House, Bishop Street, London/Derry. For further information, contact info@interfaith-nw.org.uk.

Belief in Mediation and Arbitration is organising a participative workshop, hosted by the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, on Friday 8 March. The event is entitled 'Women as Catalysts for Change in Conflicts Justified by Religious Belief'. It runs from 3.00pm to 9.00pm and is being held at the CIA, 12 Bloomsbury Square, London WC1A 2LP. For further information, contact zaza@bimagroup.org or telephone 01322 314820.

Southampton Council of Faiths is running a 'Steps for Peace Youth Walk' again this year, on Sunday 10 March. The walk will begin at 1.00pm at the Vedic Temple. For further information, email info@southampton-faiths.org.

The **Hindu Christian Forum** is holding a study day for Hindus and Christians on Tuesday 12 March entitled 'What is Modern Yoga?'. The conference will focus on physical yoga or 'hatha yoga'. In the first part of the day, leading scholars will present the origins of 'hatha yoga' and its development into a modern Western fitness phenomenon and the final part of the day will be an open forum for Hindus and Christians. The event will take place from 11.00am to 4.00pm in the Marie

Eugenie Room Heythrop College, Kensington Square, London W8 5HN. Lunch will be provided and there is no cost for the day. To book a place, contact Dr Kate Wharton at katherine.wharton@lambethpalace.org.uk.

Islam Awareness Week event, "The Things We have in Common". Wednesday 13 March at the Wilson Carlisle Centre, 50 Cavendish Street, Sheffield, S3 7RZ. The evening will consist of a dialogue between five different Faith groups: Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jews and Muslims, each of which will have 3 minutes to talk about "the common things between us all".

The **Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby** is hosting a lecture at 6.30pm on Tuesday 12 March by Professor Jolyon Mitchell on the topic of 'Promoting Peace, Inciting Violence: The Role of Religion and Media'. During the lecture he will analyse a wide range of media and draw on diverse examples from around the world to investigate inciting violence and promoting peace. The lecture will take place in the Devonshire Dome, Room DO/GO4. All are welcome. To reserve a free place, contact the University Chaplaincy at Buxton on 01298 330376 or at chaplains@derby.ac.uk.

Hastings and District Interfaith Forum will be holding an event called 'Aspects of Creative Meditation' with Janet Derwent on Tuesday 12 March at 6.30pm to 9.00pm at St Michaels Hospice, St Leonards on sea. For further information, visit <http://www.hastingsinterfaith.org/event-calendar>.

Bristol Inter Faith Group is holding its annual Civic Inter Faith Celebration on Tuesday 12 March from 7.00pm to 9.30pm. The event is being held by invitation of The Lord Mayor of Bristol Councillor Peter Main and is on the theme of 'Faiths in Community – What unites us?'. The evening will include readings, prayers, spiritual songs and music offered by members of different faith communities in Bristol. It will be held at City Hall, College Green, Bristol BS1 5TR and all are welcome to attend. For further information, contact Marie Hackett at marie.hackett@bifg.org.uk or on 0117 970 8022.

York Interfaith will be meeting on Wednesday 13 March at 7.30pm. The theme of the meeting is 'The Place of Prayer in the Different Religious Traditions' and it will include speakers Patricia Harriss and Imam Abid Salik. The event will take place at the Clementhorpe Room, Priory Street Centre, Priory Street. For further information, email loscosens@yahoo.co.uk or visit http://www.yorkinterfaith.org/calendar_2013.html.

The **Christian Muslim Forum** is hosting a subsidised conference on 'Religious Literacy and Spirituality' at Westminster Abbey on Thursday 14 March. The event will focus on how the dimension of spirituality might best be located within work to develop religious literacy in children and young people today. The conference outcomes are intended to feed into the RE Subject Review, sponsored by the Religious Education Council and other educational policy-making destinations. Bookings are on a 'first come, first served' basis at the rate of £50 per person. Bookings can be made online at www.christianmuslimforum.org/literacy_spirituality or by emailing info@christianmuslimforum.org or telephoning 0207 729 6830.

The **British Museum** is holding a study day on Friday 15 March on 'Encountering the sacred in museums'. The event, which runs from 10.30am to 5.00pm, will explore what role museums play in visitors' religious and spiritual lives and will include speakers from a mix of museum and academic backgrounds. The event will be held

in the Stevenson Lecture Theatre and the Museum will remain open until 8.30pm. There is a £35 charge to attend, (£28 members/concessions) and further information, including booking, can be found online at <http://www.britishmuseumshoponline.org/study-days/encountering-the-sacred-in-museums/inv/mevsd1encsac/>.

Northampton Inter Faith Forum is hosting its annual Multi Faith Day on Saturday 16 March from 10.00am to 2.00pm. The Day offers a chance for people to find out more about Northamptonshire's faith communities, to ask questions and look at displays and also includes a free food tasting. The event will be held in the Great Hall at the Guildhall in Northampton. All are welcome and admission is free. For more information, telephone Neelam on 07791 618450 or email northamptonniff@gmail.com.

Brighton and Hove Inter-Faith Contact Group will be holding a 'People of Faith' day on Saturday 16 March, followed by its AGM, from 2.00pm to 6.00pm at Friends' Meeting House, Ship Street, Brighton. The 'People of Faith' day will feature stalls and displays from different faith communities in the area. The AGM will include guest speaker Hon Barney Leith. For further information, email admin@interfaithcontactgroup.com.

Hounslow Friends of Faith is hosting a Passover Seder on Sunday 17 March from 2.30pm to 4.30pm at St John's Centre, 80 St Johns' Road, Isleworth. This will be an opportunity to learn about and experience the Jewish festival of Passover. Booking is essential. For further information, or to book, contact info@hounslowfriendsoffaith.org.

The **Faith-based Regeneration Network** is holding its National Conference on Monday 18 March on the theme of 'Facing the Challenges, Looking for Opportunities'. The conference provides an opportunity for practitioners – activists, volunteers and professionals – to meet with similar people from across the country as well as policy-makers and academics who wish to support and engage with faith-based social action. The event will be held from 10.00am to 4.00pm at the Centre for Voluntary Action, 138 Digbeth, Birmingham B5 6DR. A limited number of free places and travel bursaries are available on application. Further information, including a booking form, can be found online at <http://www.fbrn.org.uk/events/fbrn-national-conference>.

The **St Philip's Centre in Leicester** is hosting an exhibition of photographs from the finalists and winners of the 'Faith Through a Lens' competition from Monday 18 March to Friday 22 March. The exhibition is being held at St Martins House, Peacock Lane, Leicester LE1 5PZ. For further information, contact Maureen Hebblewhite at Maureen@stphilipscentre.co.uk.

Cheltenham Inter Faith will be holding its AGM on Monday 18 March at 7.00pm followed by a talk on 'The Challenge of Religious Education in a Multi Faith Society' by Stephen Pett, author and Gloucestershire County Advisor for Religious Education Services Today. Further information is available from info@cheltenhaminterfaith.org.uk.

The **St Philip's Centre in Leicester** is hosting a seminar on Monday 19 March from 6.00pm to 7.00pm. The seminar on 'Seeing is Believing; Exposing Themes for Dialogue' by the Revd Canon Dr John Hall will take place from 6.00pm to 7.00pm in the Wycliffe Room, St Martin's House, Peacock Lane, Leicester LE1 5PZ. For further information, contact Maureen Hebblewhite at Maureen@stphilipscentre.co.uk.

Bristol Multi Faith Forum will be holding an event entitled 'Know your Housing Benefits' at 6.30pm on Tuesday 19 March at St Nicholas of Tolentino, Lawford's Gate, Easton, Bristol. The event includes speakers Roger Allen and Alistair Beattie. For further information, visit <http://bristolmultifaithforum.org.uk/events/know-your-housing-benefits>. Booking is required.

Islington Faiths Forum is organising a 'Best Practice and Networking Conference' on 'Mental Health & Poverty' on Wednesday 20 March. The conference aims to: raise awareness of the current issues under mental health and poverty; reduce the stigma surrounding mental ill health; present examples of best practice in related services; promote more joined up work across all sectors; and include hard to reach groups. The conference runs from 9.30am to 3.30pm and will be held at Islington Town Hall. Everyone is welcome. To register, email rosalind.miller8@btinternet.com.

Building Bridges Pendle is hosting 'Why is integration important?' featuring a series of presentations on the new Integration Approach announced by Government. The event will take place on Tuesday 20 March from 10.30am to 12.30pm at Christ Church, Carr Road, Nelson. For further information, or to book a place, email office@buildingbridgespendle.org.uk or visit <http://www.buildingbridgespendle.org.uk/#/events/4546520817>.

Horsham Interfaith Forum will be holding 'The economic crisis: a faith response', a talk and discussion with Tarek El Diwany on Saturday 23 March. The event takes place at 1.00pm at Brighton Road Baptist Church, Horsham. For further information, email info@horsham-interfaith.org.uk.

Brent Interfaith is holding an event on Sunday 24 March on 'Foods associated with Faith Traditions'. The event runs from 1.00pm to 3.00pm at the London Inter Faith Centre, 125 Salusbury Road, NW6. There will be an opportunity to sample different foods and to hear stories about them. All are welcome. For further information, contact the Revd Laurence Hillel at revhillel@aol.com.

Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource (SIFRE) is hosting a seminar on Wednesday 27 March on the theme 'Dimensions of Islamic Spirituality: hope in the age of hopelessness', led by Mojlum Khan. The seminar will run from 7.00pm to 9.30pm at the Inter-Faith Centre, University Campus Suffolk, Waterfront Building. For further information, email d.capey@sifre.org.uk.

This year's Spalding Symposium is being held in conjunction with **Religions for Peace (UK)**, the **Centre of Religions for Reconciliation and Peace** and the **University of Winchester** from Friday 5 to Sunday 7 April. The Symposium's theme is 'Peacebuilding, Conflict and Non-Violence in Indian Religious Traditions'. The event will be held at Merton College at the University of Oxford and further information can be found online at www.spaldingsymposium.com.

The **Westminster Cathedral Interfaith Group** is holding a series of meetings on 'Faiths and the environment' to consider green teaching from Jews, Christians and Muslims. The group meets every third Wednesday of the month from 4.00pm to 5.00pm at Hinsley Room, Morpeth Terrace on the right of the main entrance to Westminster Cathedral. The next meeting will be on Wednesday 17 April. The authors of the handbook 'Sharing Eden' will be attending some of the sessions and it would be helpful if participants have read the book in advance

(www.sharingeden.org). The event is free and all are welcome. For more details, contact John Woodhouse on 07908 888 586, (preferably by text).

Welwyn Hatfield Inter Faith Group and the **University of Hertfordshire Chaplaincy**, in collaboration with **The Newman Association**, are holding a public meeting at 8.00pm on Tuesday 23 April on the theme of 'Living your Faith in Britain Today - how easy is it to live in Britain today and keep to your faith?' The event will be held in room A154 of the Lindop Building (on the UH College Lane site) and speakers will include the Rt Revd John Sherrington; Shaykh Musa Abubakei Admani; Hon Barney Leith OBE; and Mrs Agnieszka Cahn. The event will be chaired by the Revd Callan Slipper of the Focolare International Research Centre. Admission is free by ticket to be obtained in advance from <http://livingyourfaith2013.eventbrite.co.uk/>.

The Open University will be holding a conference under the broad theme of 'Contemporary religion in historical perspective' from Wednesday 15 to Thursday 16 May in Milton Keynes. The conference will be addressing two parallel streams. The first is 'Engaging with the past to inform the present' and the second is 'The public value of research on contemporary religion'. For further information and to book a place, contact Taj Bilkhu at t.bilkhu@open.ac.uk by 23 March. (The conference is also accepting proposals for panellists – see [Calls for information](#).)

Christian Interfaith Practice in Action will be holding its 2013 conference from Tuesday 21 to Thursday 23 May at Luther King House in Manchester. This year's theme is 'Vulnerability and Risk in an increasingly Secular Society' and the keynote speaker will be Professor Paul Weller, with contributions from the Revd Philip Ind and Professor Dermot Killingley. For further information, visit <http://www.cipa-uk.com/2013consultationprogra.htm>.

Westminster Interfaith's 28th annual Multi Faith Pilgrimage for Peace will take place on Saturday 8 June. Further information will be available in due course.

Note: *The Westminster Faith Debates hosted by the **Religion and Society Programme of AHRC/ESRC** and the **University of Lancaster** are this year being held on themes relating to 'religion and personal life'. The six debates, held between February and May, are now fully booked but video and podcasts will be available to view after each event at http://www.religionandsociety.org.uk/faith_debates-2013.*

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For more information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org

For more information on events and projects in a number of the English regions see:

East of England: www.eefaithscouncil.org.uk

London: www.faithsforum4london.org

North East: www.nerfn.org

South East: www.se-faithforum.net

South West: www.faithnetsouthwest.org.uk

West Midlands: www.wmfaithsforum.org.uk

See also: <http://lbfm.wordpress.com/> (London Boroughs Faiths Network) and [www.
http://www.fbrn.org.uk/news](http://www.fbrn.org.uk/news) (Faith-based Regeneration Network).

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 14 March with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer:

Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH

www.interfaith.org.uk

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IFN e-bulletin

April 2013

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 23 May with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Material may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and projects and future events.

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UK/NATIONAL UPDATES

Catering and Faith Based Dietary Practice – new IFN publication

Following discussion at meetings of the Inter Faith Network for the UK (IFN) Faith Communities Forum and Executive Committee about halal and non-halal provision in catering contexts, a multi faith Working Group was tasked with developing guidance on faith and dietary practice. This guidance note has recently been published by IFN.

The guidance has four sections:

- a) 'Some key principles' concerning faith based dietary practice – which explains both the importance and provenance of the document.
- b) Part 1 'Some general points on catering for a religiously diverse clientele' – which offers points for those catering for or managing the catering of people of different faiths and sets out good practice points on provision and procurement.
- c) Part 2 'Some more detailed points about particular issues' – which goes into more depth about some of the more complex aspects of the dietary practices of different religions including the separate storage and preparation of different types of food and the changes that can occur in faith based diet during religious festivals.
- d) A chart which contains information on faith based dietary practices – which is intended to give caterers a reasonably comprehensive idea of what certain groups are, or are not, likely to consume but is not intended to be an exhaustive list of the dietary requirements of different faiths.

A pdf of the document can be downloaded from

<http://www.interfaith.org.uk/publications/Catering-and-Faith-Based-Dietary-Practice.pdf> For further information, contact ifnet@interfaith.org.uk

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Meeting of national inter faith linking bodies

On 11 April an Inter Faith Network for the UK (IFN), Inter-faith Council for Wales, Interfaith Scotland and Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum meeting took place, arranged by IFN . This year's meeting was hosted in Cardiff by the Inter-faith Council for Wales. The meeting offered an opportunity to share updates and discuss issues of common concern as well as to contribute to a consultative session for IFN's Strategic Review. Information about the work of these bodies can be found at: www.interfaith.org.uk; www.interfaithscotland.org; www.interfaithwales.org; and www.niinterfaithforum.org

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RE Subject Review

Work on Phase 2 of the RE Subject Review being carried out by the Religious Education Council of England and Wales is now underway. Part 1 of an evaluation and analysis of the Phase 1 report has also been produced. Further information about the Review, including members of the Phase 2 Task Group, can be found at <http://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org/content/blogcategory/66/100>.

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Update on the Government Review of the Public Sector Equality Duty: new closing date

In March the Government issued a call for evidence to inform the Review of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). The closing date for evidence to be submitted was extended to 19 April. The Review is expected to be completed by June 2013, rather than the previous announced date of the end of April.

The Review, which was announced by the Home Secretary in May 2012 as part of the outcome of the Red Tape Challenge spotlight on equalities, sets out to establish whether the duty is operating as intended. The review is particularly focusing on the following key themes:

- how well understood is the PSED and guidance;
- what are the costs and benefits of the PSED;
- how organisations are managing legal risk and ensuring compliance with the PSED; and
- what changes, if any, would ensure better equality outcomes (legislative, administrative and/or enforcement changes, for example).

Further details of the Review including the call for evidence, terms of reference, members of the independent steering group appointed to oversee the Review and synopses of their meetings so far can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/policy-advisory-groups/123>.

Evidence about how the PSED works that relate to any or all of the above points, should be submitted to PsedReviewEvidence@geo.gsi.gov.uk.

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Ministerial statement on caste discrimination

On 1 March the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Women and Equalities, Helen Grant MP, announced that the Government has no current plans to add caste to the definition of race in the Equality Act 2010 and is instead to run an educational programme to raise awareness of caste discrimination among affected groups, including employers. The statement was made in response to an amendment tabled to the 'Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Bill' in the House of Lords in March by Lord Harries of Pentregarth that suggested adding 'and caste' after 'race' in the descriptions of the protected characteristics in the Equalities Act 2010.

The Government Equalities Office and the Department for Communities and Local Government have appointed Talk for a Change “to engage with the affected communities to run an educational programme to help tackle this complex and sensitive issue”.

The full ministerial statement can be found online at <http://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-vote-office/March-2013/1st-March/1.DCMS-Caste.pdf>.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has issued a statement about the decision which can be found at <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/news/2013/march/news-tackling-caste-discrimination/>.

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Consultation on equality and human rights in Wales

The Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee of the National Assembly for Wales is undertaking a short inquiry into the future of equality and human rights in Wales. The Committee is considering:

- how well the specific public sector equality duties are functioning in Wales;
- the Equality and Human Rights Commission in Wales;
- the link between poverty and equality and the socio-economic duty; and
- accountability for equality and human rights legislation in Wales.

Further information can be found at: <http://www.senedd.assemblywales.org/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=6256&Opt=0>

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New Hindu Council of Wales has an inter faith role

A newly formed Hindu Council of Wales was launched at the Senedd on 15 April. It will act as a single voice for Wales’ Hindu population. Among its roles is “to represent Hindus in interfaith work that promotes mutual understanding amongst other faith organisations and their members” It will be represented on the Welsh Government’s Faith Communities Forum.

Further information about the launch and the Hindu Council of Wales can be found at: <http://wales.gov.uk/newsroom/equalityanddiversity/2013/130415-hindu-council-wales/?lang=en>

Further information about the Faith Communities Forum of the Welsh Government can be found at:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/equality/rightsequality/faith/faithforum1/?lang=en>

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PROJECTS

Interfaith Scotland refugee story gathering project

Interfaith Scotland is working on a project that aims to identify the 'journey' to Scotland of people from around the world who have been persecuted because of their faith. An information booklet/resource will be produced based on the personal experiences of participants. The booklet will highlight the negative consequences of prejudice and the positive impact of establishing good religion and belief relations.

Two volunteers have been trained by Interfaith Scotland to carry out interviews with people from different faiths who have personal experience of religious persecution. The stories in the booklet will be completely anonymous and all information collected will be treated in the strictest confidence. Interviews are being conducted between March and May 2013 with the aim of launching the booklet during Scottish Refugee Week in June 2013. Please contact Interfaith Scotland if you are interested in sharing your story or know of someone who would be. frances@interfaithscotland.org

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RE Council 40th anniversary sponsored walks

The Religious Education Council for England and Wales (RE Council) is holding 20 sponsored walks around the country in May to celebrate and raise funds to mark its 40th anniversary.

The aim is that fifty participants will take part in each walk, with each participant raising at least £100 in sponsorship. The money raised will be divided 50/50 between the RE Council and another charity chosen by each local team.

People can take part by: volunteering as a member of the national organising team; volunteering as a member of a local organising team; volunteering to take part as a walker; or committing to sponsor someone else. For further information, contact sarah@religiouseducationcouncil.org or visit <http://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org/content/blogsection/19/106/>.

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Religions for Peace (UK) projects

Religions for Peace (UK) is embarking on projects to build:

- a Religions for Peace Multi-faith Disarmament Committee;
- a Religions for Peace UK Interfaith Youth Network; and
- a Religions for Peace Multi-faith Committee on Human Rights – Freedom of Religion and Belief.

Anyone interested can contact Jehangir Sarosh at jehangirsarosh@gmail.com or David Horner dvd.horner@googlemail.com.

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Three Faiths Forum Undergraduate ParliaMentors programme

Applications are now open for the 2013-14 Undergraduate ParliaMentors programme of the Three Faiths Forum.

The programme is open to undergraduates who identify with a faith or belief (religious or non-religious), are keen to work with others of different backgrounds and aspire to be political or community leaders. The Three Faiths Forum is looking for participants who have an interest in making a positive impact on society beyond university, and who take an interest in British politics.

The deadline for applications is 30 April. For further information, visit <http://www.3ff.org.uk/mentoring/apply/>.

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Jubilee Debt Campaign – Faith leaders’ letter

More than 400 faith community leaders signed the Jubilee for Justice letter, that was presented to the Prime Minister at a Parliamentary reception in February as part of the Jubilee Debt Campaign (JDC). The Jubilee for Justice campaign is calling for the cancellation of “unjust debts of the most indebted nations;” the promotion of “just and progressive taxation, rather than excessive borrowing;” and the stopping of “harmful lending which forces countries into debt.”

Further signatures to the faith leaders’ letter are still being accepted. The letter can be found online at <http://www.jubileedebtcampaign.org.uk/Signatories3720to3720the3720Faith3720Leaders3720Letter+7709.twl>.

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Woodland Trust tree packs

The Woodland Trust is offering community groups, youth groups and schools the chance to apply for packs of free trees for delivery in November 2013. The Trust says that whether groups are interested in helping wildlife; creating a faith, or inter faith, green space; a community garden or allotment; or just want to enhance their local area they all are very welcome to apply for the free trees.

There are 4,000 trees to give away and the tree packs come in three sizes – 30 saplings, 105 saplings and 420 saplings in various themes (wildlife, wild harvest, year-round colour, future firewood and wetland). Applications will be accepted until September but the Trust advises groups to apply sooner rather than later as they are usually oversubscribed and may have to close early. Further information can be found online at www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/communitytrees. Any queries can be addressed to Beverley Gormley at beverleygormley@woodlandtrust.org.uk.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Near Neighbours

The Near Neighbours programme is a three-year initiative, run by the Church Urban Fund, which aims to bring people together in diverse communities, helping them build relationships and collaborate to improve the local community in which they live. The programme currently operates in the following areas: East and South East London, the City of Birmingham, Leicester, Bradford, Burnley and Oldham. The scheme has also recently been undertaking some capacity building work in Luton.

Near Neighbours has a grants programme, which at present operates on a rolling basis with no deadlines. It is due to end in March 2014. Grant amounts range from £250-£5000. The fund invests in environmental, social, cultural, artistic and sporting ideas which fulfill the criteria, which can be found at www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/grants. Examples of funded projects can be found at: <http://www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/funded-projects>

The Fund is pleased to receive applications from people of different faith groups or none, working in partnership with people of different faiths and within the criteria. Details on how to apply can be found at www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/grants.

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Heritage Lottery Fund Places of Worship grants

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has a new grant programme for places of worship in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. As previously, the priority remains structural repairs urgently required within the next two years that have been clearly identified and defined in a condition survey such as a Quinquennial Inspection.

The new programme is also designed to encourage a wider range of people to take an interest in their local places of worship and to help care for them in the future. They hope to achieve this by finding new ways in which places of worship can be used by the wider community beyond the primary function of worship and/or by providing new opportunities for people to find out about the heritage of places of worship. They will also fund new capital works, such as toilets or kitchens, improvements to heating or electrical systems, other works to improve energy efficiency, and works to assist with the on-going maintenance of the place of worship.

Decisions are made four times a year by local Committees. The first deadline for submissions was the end of February for the Committee meetings being held in June. For the next Committee meetings, being held in September, the deadline is 31 May. Full guidelines can be found online at http://www.hlf.org.uk/HowToApply/programmes/Pages/Grants_Places_Worship_England.aspx.

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VAF grants for Scottish third sector organisations

The Voluntary Action Fund (VAF) is an independent grant-making body which invests in voluntary organisations and community groups across Scotland. Its Volunteering Support Fund is open to support third sector organisations working in Scotland to create new volunteering projects; increase the diversity of their volunteers (especially those experiencing disadvantage); and improve opportunities, skills and personal development through volunteering. The Fund will also help organisations enhance their services and improve their capacity to deploy, support and train volunteers. Organisations with an annual income of under £250,000 can apply, although priority will be given to those with an income under £100,000. The following two grant programmes are available through the Fund for up to 12 months of activity:

Volunteering Support Grant

- A grant of up to £10,000 for an individual organisation.
- Application deadlines: Friday 10 May 2013 and Friday 28 February 2014.

Volunteering Support Cluster

- A grant of up to £30,000 for a Cluster of four to five organisations.
- Application deadlines: Friday 19 July 2013 and Friday 31 January 2014.

Further information at: <http://www.voluntaryactionfund.org.uk/funding-and-support/>

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The Big Lottery Fund

The Big Lottery Fund give grants from £300 to over £500,000 to organisations ranging from small local groups to major national charities. Information about their various grant schemes can be found at:

<http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/Home/Funding/Funding%20finder>

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RESOURCES AND TRAINING

A Year of Service report

As noted in previous issues of the e-bulletin, a special programme called 'A Year of Service' took place during 2012. All faith communities have within their ethical teachings the values of compassion, care and social justice. One of the ways that their members put these values into everyday practice is through volunteering. In each month of 2012, for A Year of Service, faith communities hosted a day or days of volunteering and invited people of other faiths and non-religious beliefs to join in. A Year of Service was an opportunity for marking in a practical way the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty The Queen – of whose reign service has been a key theme. The end of project report for 'A Year of Service', which has been prepared by Jane Winter of the Faith Based Regeneration Network, is available to download from <http://www.fbrn.org.uk/news/year-service-report>.

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Inter Faith Network for the UK 2012 National Meeting Report

The report on the 2012 National Meeting of the Inter Faith Network for the UK, *Working Together for Inter Faith Understanding and Cooperation: The Changing Face of Inter Faith Engagement*, can be downloaded from http://www.interfaith.org.uk/publications/2012_nat_meeting_report.pdf

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RE: The Truth Unmasked

RE: The Truth Unmasked is the title of the final report of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Religious Education following its investigation of the supply of, and support for, teachers of RE. The report draws on over 400 sources of evidence, and presents both the findings of its investigation and a comprehensive range of recommendations for the DfE as well as for schools, teacher training courses, Local Authorities and Ofsted. The full report, as well as a 1 page summary, can be downloaded from <http://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org/content/blogcategory/0/94>.

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'Making Dialogue Effective'

The Dialogue Society has recently published a document entitled *Making Dialogue Effective*. The booklet brings together key insights and recommendations from a series of discussions exploring the role and value of dialogue and considering how its quality might be improved and its reach extended. The discussions brought together dialogue professionals, religious leaders, conflict resolution specialists, academics and other professionals with relevant experience. The booklet comprises short articles on each of the discussions and a list of recommendations, some taken from the discussions and some based on Dialogue Society experience. It is intended to be a contribution to an ongoing dialogue on dialogue and to the sharing of best practice.

The booklet can be downloaded free of charge from www.dialoguesociety.org/publications.html. A limited number of copies will be printed and distributed to relevant practitioners and researchers. To request a hard copy of the booklet, contact Ilknur Kahraman at ikahraman@dialoguesociety.org or telephone 020 7619 0361.

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WCC Interreligious Summer School

The World Council of Churches is running an interreligious summer school for Christian, Jewish and Muslim participants from 12 to 30 August at the Ecumenical Institute, near Geneva in Switzerland. Participants will be exploring the question "What can we, as people of faith, do to respond and to overcome, the pressing challenges of our time as violence and conflict and build together mutually accountable societies based on respect and cooperation?"

The summer school is aimed at young people up to the age of 35. It is designed to enable participants to encounter each other in mutual respect, to learn together, and to challenge and overcome stereotypes. There is a charge to attend but some bursaries are available. The deadline for applications is 1 May. The brochure can be downloaded from <http://www.oikoumene.org/fileadmin/files/wcc-main/2013pdfs/interfaithsummer2013.pdf> and for further information, contact Dr Clare Amos at Clare.Amos@wcc-coe.org.

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Postgraduate course in Inter-Religious Relations

The St Philip's Centre in Leicester is currently accepting applications for its part-time postgraduate course in Inter Religious Relations. The course looks at the role of religion in modern society, covering the inter relationship between communities of faith and belief in Britain today together with their growth and settlement and is designed to enable students to: deepen their appreciation of religious diversity; consider the challenges which diversity and inter religious dialogue bring to religious communities, civil service and public institutions; and to learn from academics who are also experienced practitioners in the field of dialogue and community praxis.

The course can be studied at MA, Diploma or Certificate level. It is taught at St Philip's Centre in Leicester and validated by De Montfort University. For further information, a brochure or application form for the September 2013 intake, visit www.stphilipscentre.co.uk/study/pg-courses/ or call 0116 273 3459 or email admin@stphilipscentre.co.uk.

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JOBS AND VOLUNTEERING

Faith Network for Manchester – Community Development Worker

The Faith Network for Manchester (FN4M) has recently been successful in obtaining a grant from Manchester City Council's Equalities Funding Programme for the next three years and is now looking to appoint a part-time Community Development Worker and a part-time Administrator to help it fulfil the aims of this project as part of its ongoing work. The Community Development Worker will help FN4M to develop working relationships with communities and organisations; encourage people to work with and learn from each other; work with people in communities to plan for change and take collective action; and evaluate the success of these initiatives.

The job description and person specification for the Community Development Worker can be obtained via the FN4M website, www.fn4m.org, or from Manchester Community Central at www.manchestercommunitycentral.org.

A paper copy of the completed application form must be received by Wednesday 24 April at 12 noon.

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APPG for International Religious Freedom - Part time Parliamentary Assistant

The All Party Parliamentary Group for International Religious Freedom is seeking to recruit a Parliamentary Assistant. The APPG, founded in 2012, seeks to raise the profile of international religious freedom and to ensure that Religious Freedom is seen as a human right for all. Members of the group come from various faith traditions and none.

The role will be based primarily in the office of the Chair person (currently Baroness Berridge). It will involve supporting the Chair of the Group and research work, media relations, parliamentary liaison and public speaking. The position is 20 hours a week, term time only, with working some time from home being actively considered. The salary will be pro rata £30,000.

Applications should be made with CV and covering letter by 22 April. For further information, contact samuel.blainey@whitehouseconsulting.co.uk. Interviews will be in the afternoon of 25 April.

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Inter Faith Network for the UK – Honorary Treasurer

The Inter Faith Network for the UK (IFN) is seeking to recruit an Honorary Treasurer.

If you have strong finance and charity experience, the ability to operate well in a challenging financial environment, and a commitment to the development of good inter faith relations in the UK and would like to find out more about what the role entails, please contact the Director of the Inter Faith Network, Dr Harriet Crabtree, at ifnet@interfaith.org.uk or tel 020 7730 0410 by **Wednesday 8 May**.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS AND TENDERS

Together in Service – Invitation to bid

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has issued an invitation to organisations and consortia to bid for DCLG grant funding to enable them to develop, administer, promote and project-manage one or both elements of a new programme called Together in Service, the aim of which is to celebrate and link up faith based social action in England. The competition is open to any organisation working at a national level with an interest in promoting and supporting faith-based social action in local communities. Bids are invited to be submitted by 10 May.

Further information can be found online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/together-in-service-competition-for-grant-funding>.

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National Diversity Awards 2013

Applications are still open for the National Diversity Awards, which are a celebration of outstanding achievements of positive role models, entrepreneurs and community organisations from across the UK. The Awards aim to: promote equality and diversity; create role models from all sections of society; eliminate discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, religion or age; celebrate the achievements of people, community/charity organisations and companies that strive for a more inclusive society; and highlight how diverse communities have contributed to the economy of the UK.

Nominations for all Awards, including the religion/faith strand, close on 19 July. For further information, visit www.nationaldiversityawards.co.uk.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Sewa Day

Sewa Day will be taking place on **6 October**. The Sanskrit word 'Sewa' means 'selfless service'. The aim of Sewa Day is to provide people a chance to give back to the local community through volunteering on a single day to make a difference. For more information and to get involved visit: www.sewaday.org

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One World Week

One World Week will this year take place from **20 to 27 October**. The theme is 'More Than Enough?', which offers two linked elements:

Firstly, along with the European Global Education Week, it wants to explore issues about consumption of resources and to consider whether people:

- have had *more than enough* of consumer culture getting in the way of relationships with others in our communities and across the globe?
- have had *more than enough* of being defined by what we possess?
- have had *more than enough* of seeing our planet irrevocably consumed?
- take *more than enough* ourselves?

Secondly, it is offering an opportunity to support or organise local events with people and organisations involved to follow up the multi-organisation campaign "Enough Food for everyone IF" which asks the question "Why, if the world produces enough food for everyone, do more than two million children die every year because they can't get enough to eat?" and to ask what needs to be done next.

For more information, visit <http://www.oneworldweek.org>.

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Mitzvah Day

Mitzvah Day will be taking place on **Sunday 17 November**. Mitzvah Day is a Jewish led day of social action – around the world thousands of people take part in hands on projects to support existing charities and to build stronger communities. The goal is to reduce hardship and poverty and to help the environment. People are encouraged to volunteer for projects in their communities and anyone can take part regardless of their background. See www.mitzvahday.org.uk

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Inter Faith Week

Inter Faith Week 2013 in England, Northern Ireland and Wales will take place from **Sunday 17 to Saturday 23 November**.

The aims of the Week are: strengthening good inter faith relations at all levels; increasing awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, in particular celebrating and building on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society; and increasing understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs.

Building good relationships and working partnerships between people of different faiths and beliefs is part of the year-round work of many people and organisations across the UK. Having a special Week provides a focal point, helping to open inter faith activity up to a wider audience so that more and more people are made aware of the importance of this vital work and are able to participate in it.

An online event registration form will be available at www.interfaithweek.org later in 2013.

Scottish Inter Faith Week, which has been running since 2004, will take place from **24 November until 1 December**, including, as usual, St Andrew's Day. More information can be found online at <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/22.html>.

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DIARY DATES

Bristol Inter Faith Group is holding its next meeting on Saturday 20 April. This will begin at 12 noon and will include a visit to the Hindu Temple (163b Church Road, Redfield, Bristol BS5 9LA) to experience and learn something of the celebrations marking the birthday of Rama, the seventh avatar of Vishnu. For further information, contact Graham Davey on graham.davey@bifg.org.uk and 0117 909 3491 or Bernard Omar on bernard.omar@bifg.org.uk and 01454 775454.

Welwyn Hatfield Inter Faith Group and the **University of Hertfordshire Chaplaincy**, in collaboration with **The Newman Association**, are holding a public meeting at 8.00pm on Tuesday 23 April on the theme of 'Living your Faith in Britain Today - how easy is it to live in Britain today and keep to your faith?' The event will be held in room A154 of the Lindop Building (on the UH College Lane site) and speakers will include the Rt Revd John Sherrington; Shaykh Musa Abubakei Admani; Hon Barney Leith OBE; and Mrs Agnieszka Cahn. The event will be chaired by the Revd Callan Slipper of the Focolare International Research Centre. Admission is free by ticket to be obtained in advance from <http://livingyourfaith2013.eventbrite.co.uk/>.

The **University of Southampton** is hosting the 23rd Parkes Lecture at 6.00pm on Tuesday 30 April. The lecture is entitled 'Did ancient Jews and Christians think they belonged to 'Religions'? Why it matters what they thought.' and will be given by Professor Steve Mason of the University of Aberdeen. It takes place in Lecture Theatre A, Avenue Campus at the University of Southampton. To book a place, contact Mrs Hazel Patel on 02380 592261 or at parkes@soton.ac.uk.

The **University of Liverpool** is hosting a one day conference on Thursday 9 May entitled 'The Humanities and Lived Religion: Philosophy, Religious Studies and the Impact Agenda'. This will be the first in a series for the Philosophy and Religious Practices research network, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council under their Connected Communities programme, and will discuss possible models and ways of thinking about the impact that research on religion in the Humanities has on religious practitioners, as well as, conversely, the ways in which practitioners impact research in the academy. For more information, contact Daniel Whistler at daniel.whistler@liv.ac.uk.

The Open University will be holding a conference under the broad theme of 'Contemporary religion in historical perspective' from Wednesday 15 to Thursday 16 May in Milton Keynes. The conference will be addressing two parallel streams. The first is 'Engaging with the past to inform the present' and the second is 'The public value of research on contemporary religion'. For further information and to book a place, contact Taj Bilkhu at t.bilkhu@open.ac.uk by 23 March. (The conference is also accepting proposals for panellists – see [Calls for information](#).)

Faithnetsouthwest is hosting the South West regional launch event of the **Faith to Engage** report on 'Faithfully Meeting Local Need: Lessons from Faith Based Community Projects in England' on Thursday 16 May. The event will take place from 10.15am to 1.30pm at The Reception Room, The Council House, Plymouth City Council, Armada Way, Plymouth, PL1 2AA (lunch is included). Participants will receive a copy of the report. For further information, contact Alistair Beattie at alistair@faithnetsouthwest.org.uk or call 0117 3042298.

Christian Interfaith Practice in Action will be holding its 2013 conference from Tuesday 21 to Thursday 23 May at Luther King House in Manchester. This year's theme is 'Vulnerability and Risk in an increasingly Secular Society' and the keynote speaker will be Professor Paul Weller, with contributions from the Revd Philip Ind and Professor Dermot Killingley. For further information, visit <http://www.cipa-uk.com/2013consultationprogra.htm>.

Bedford Council of Faiths is holding two Farewell Events for the Faith Woodlands Communities project on Saturday 25 May in Bedford Priory Country Park (from 2.00pm to 3.30pm) and on Saturday 2 June in Runley Park Luton (from 2.00pm to 3.30pm). Everyone is welcome and light refreshments will be provided. For the

Bedford event, contact fwc.bedford@gmail.com or 07787 774167; and for the Luton event, contact info@lutonfaiths.org or 01582 416946.

Westminster Interfaith's 28th annual Multi Faith Pilgrimage for Peace will take place on Saturday 8 June in Hertfordshire. The day will include visits to a local church, mosque, monastery, synagogue and gurdwara and also an outdoor Druid ceremony. For a detailed schedule of the day, contact Jon Dal Din on 07527 758729 or at jondaldin@rcdow.org.uk. To book a seat on the coach, a cheque for £12 (made payable to *Westminster Interfaith*) should be sent to Jon Dal Din, Westminster Interfaith, Westminster House, Watford Way, NW4 4TY by Sunday 19 May. Anyone wishing to make their own transport arrangements should also notify Jon of their attendance.

Durham University and **Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust** are hosting a 3 day conference at St John's College in Durham from Wednesday 10 to Friday 12 July on 'Spirituality and good practice in mental health care'. The keynote speaker will be Dr Harold Koenig of Duke University, North Carolina, USA and other speakers will include Professor Douglas Davies and Professor Charles Fernyhough of Durham University and Dr Linda Ross of the University of Glamorgan. Further information can be found online at www.tevv.nhs.uk/spiritualityconference2013. To book a place, visit <http://www.dur.ac.uk/whatson/event/?eventno=15367>. There is a charge for attendance.

The **Network of Buddhist Organisations**, together with the **Centre for Applied Buddhism** and the **Network of Engaged Buddhists** is hosting a conference from Friday 16 to Sunday 18 August on 'Transforming Conflict: Buddhist inspired ideas for personal and social change'. The conference takes place at Taplow Court, Taplow, Berkshire SL6 0ER and there is a fee to attend (early bird rates are available). For more information and to book, visit <http://transformingconflictblog.wordpress.com>.

Horsham Interfaith Forum, the **World Congress of Faiths** and the **International Association of Religious Freedom (British Chapter)** are hosting a conference in Horsham from Tuesday 20 to Friday 23 August on 'Religious Freedom and Responsibility'. Speakers and panellists will be coming from Israel, USA, Germany, Romania, India, the Netherlands and the UK. For further information on ticket prices and accommodation, and to book, visit www.worldfaiths.org/tickets.php or write to World Congress of Faiths, 125 Salisbury Road, London NW6 6RG.

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Note: *The Westminster Faith Debates hosted by the **Religion and Society Programme of AHRC/ESRC** and the **University of Lancaster** are this year being held on themes relating to 'religion and personal life'. The six debates, held between February and May, are now fully booked but video and podcasts are being made available to view after each event at http://www.religionandsociety.org.uk/faith_debates-2013.*

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For more information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org

For more information on events and projects in a number of the English regions see:

East of England: www.eefaithscouncil.org.uk

London: www.faithsforum4london.org

North East: www.nerfn.org

South East: www.se-faithforum.net

South West: www.faithnetsouthwest.org.uk

West Midlands: www.wmfaithsforum.org.uk

See also: <http://lbfm.wordpress.com/> (London Boroughs Faiths Network) and www.fbrn.org.uk/news (Faith-based Regeneration Network).

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 23 May with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer:

Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH

www.interfaith.org.uk

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IFN e-bulletin

August 2013

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 10 September with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Material may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and projects and future events.

Disclaimer: Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

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UK/NATIONAL UPDATES

IFN National Meeting and AGM

IFN's National Meeting and AGM took place on 1 July in Birmingham. Both meetings were an opportunity for discussion and reflection on the report and recommendations of the Strategic Review Working Group which had been carrying out a Strategic Review of IFN.

The National Meeting also included a special session on 'inter faith engagement and solidarity' in the face of hatred and violence which is motivated by, or claims a link to, religious identity. This session was included following the killing of Drummer Lee Rigby in Woolwich on 22 May, in the London Borough of Greenwich, by men who associated their actions with Islam. Local faith leaders of different traditions responded together, alongside the local authority, to encourage a calm and effective cross-community response and to draw together the faith communities of Woolwich in a common expression of sorrow and solidarity. At the National Meeting, Pastor Mike Leader of the Greenwich Faith Leaders group, who was at the heart of this response, shared his reflections on the process and its effects.

After the Woolwich attack, statements from major national Muslim bodies condemned the act in the strongest terms and stressed its lack of connection to – and complete contradiction of – teachings of Islam. Even so, retaliatory attacks took place on mosques and other Muslim premises. At the National Meeting Fiyaz Mughal, Director of Faith Matters and Muslims against Anti-Semitism spoke about TELL MAMA (Measuring Anti-Muslim Attacks), a national project of Faith Matters, and about the importance of ensuring safety for all communities.

Mrs Neelam Aggarwal-Singh, a member of Northampton Inter-Faith Forum, reflected on how local inter faith groups had brought people together to respond, both to the killing of Lee Rigby and to subsequent anti-Muslim attacks.

Note: A wide range of faith and inter faith bodies released statements responding to the Woolwich killing and to subsequent anti-Muslim attacks and a number of inter faith events were held. IFN's Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs issued a widely distributed statement which can be downloaded from the home page of the Inter Faith Network website: <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/index.htm>

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Inter Faith Week 2013 – 100 days to go!

Friday 9 August marks 100 days to go until the start of Inter Faith Week in England and Wales, which runs this year from Sunday 17 to Saturday 23 November.

This will be the fifth year the Week is held in England, Northern Ireland and Wales. In a press release issued on 6 August, IFN Co-Chairs, the Revd Bob Fyffe and Vivian Wineman, together with Communities Secretary Eric Pickles and Faith and Communities Minister Baroness Warsi welcomed the Week and encouraged involvement:

http://www.interfaithweek.org/images/stories/pdfs/ifw2013_press_release_august.pdf

A flyer for Inter Faith Week can be downloaded from the Inter Faith Week website at <http://www.interfaithweek.org> and printed copies are available from the IFN office. Contact interfaithweek@interfaith.org.uk for details. Resources for Week event planners and event registration forms are also available on the site.

Inter Faith Week will again be using the [@IFWeek](#) Twitter account, and the hashtag #IFWeek to talk about the Week. Twitter users are being encouraged to follow this and to use the hashtag to help people find out about events. Inter Faith Week is on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Inter-Faith-Week/194238653936191>

A list of all events known to have taken place to mark Inter Faith Week 2012 is at <http://www.interfaithweek.co.uk/resources/reports>. A huge variety of events took place, and the list provides many examples of this diverse range to inspire event organisers and provide ideas ahead of the 2013 Week. The 2012 photo gallery has had new pictures added.

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Scottish Inter Faith Week

Scottish Inter Faith Week, which has been running since 2004, will take place from 24 November until 1 December, including within it, as usual, St Andrew's Day. More information can be found online at <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/our-activities/scottish-interfaith-week/>.

The theme for Scottish Interfaith Week this year will be **'Values and Visions for the Future of Scotland'** in preparation for the Scottish Referendum in 2014.

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Government response to Riots, Communities and Victims Panel final report

The Government has now published its response to the final report of the Riots, Communities and Victims Panel which was formed by the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Leader of the Official Opposition following the riots in August 2011. Its role was to explore the causes of the riots and how communities can be more socially and economically resilient, in order to prevent future disorder.

The Panel's final report can be found at <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20121003195935/http://riotspanel.independent.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Riots-Panel-Final-Report1.pdf> and the Government response can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/211617/Govt_Response_to_the_Riots_-_Final_Report.pdf

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Legislation on caste

Earlier this year the Government unsuccessfully opposed amendments tabled in the House of Lords to the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Bill requiring the Government to add 'caste' to the current definition of 'race' within the Equality Act 2010. As noted in the April E-bulletin, following the first of these defeats, the Government stated that it had no current plans to take this step. Following the second defeat, the Government announced, on 23 April, that it would now be amending the 2010 Act. The Government said at the time that full consideration would be required, possibly through consultation, on various factors, such as the possible need for specific caste-related exceptions and possible impacts on community relations and businesses

The Government Equalities Office published a note in July on the timetable and process for the introduction of caste legislation. It can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/caste-discrimination-legislation-timetable>.

The note refers to research about the extent of caste discrimination in Britain, to be undertaken by the Equality and Human Rights Commission as a comparative baseline for any future consideration of the effectiveness of caste legislation. It also refers to a public consultation which will include proposals on whether and how 'caste' should be defined in the legislation. The public consultation is expected to be launched in February or March 2014, concluding twelve weeks later. The Government's response to the consultation will be published together with a draft Affirmative Order before legislation is introduced into Parliament, probably during the summer of 2015.

In parallel with the EHRC research, the DCLG and Government Equalities Office are sponsoring community mediation work being undertaken by Talk for a Change.

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Near Neighbours evaluation

An evaluation has been carried out of the Small Grants fund of the Near Neighbours programme. The midway report looks at the progress of the fund over the first 18 months of its operation and the projects it has supported; gauging the success of the programme. It covers areas such as participation in Near Neighbours funded projects as well as faith inclusion, project growth and the longer term impact upon participants and their area.

A copy of the report can be downloaded from <http://www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/evaluation>.

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PROJECTS

The Big Iftar

The Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board is running a project called 'The Big Iftar' encouraging all mosques, community centres and communities to welcome in non-Muslim guests from their local communities to share Iftar during Ramadan <http://www.minab.org.uk/events/upcoming/234-the-big-iftar>.

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New faith and public policy forum

The Centre for Ethnicity at the University of Bristol has set up a new online forum on faith and public policy. The forum, called 'Public Spirit', provides a space for researchers, policymakers, politicians and practitioners from the voluntary and community sectors to access the latest research, engage in current debates and share expertise on key issues of faith and public policy.

In the coming months the forum will feature contributions from a wide range of authors on: the how and who of questions of religious representation; the implications of 'muscular liberalism' for faith and integration; the role of faith groups and values in social action; and finding the right balance between promoting equality and recognising religious difference. The forum is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the project is led by Dr Therese O'Toole working with Dr Stephen Jones and the Centre's Director, Professor Tariq Modood. For further information, visit publicspirit.org.uk.

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One Britain One Nation – Fly with Pride

One Britain One Nation (OBON) is an organisation which aims to "capture the imagination of our nation and bring the people of this country together by cascading our simple message based on a set of shared values where freedom, democracy, fair play, respect and tolerance are celebrated and embraced. We want people to join hands to create a thread of unity and fraternity for them to express their gratitude towards this great nation under our common collective identity of being British".

OBON is currently running a campaign called 'Fly with Pride' in which it is asking individuals and organisations to fly the Union flag on Sunday 11 August. As part of this campaign it is keen to involve places of worship and other religious buildings. For further details, visit <http://onebritainonenation.com/flywithpride.php>.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Inter Faith Youth Trust grant programme for Inter Faith Week

The Inter Faith Youth Trust is running a grant programme for events linked to Inter Faith Week. This programme is specifically for events organised by and for young people (11-25) focussed around Inter Faith Week 17-23 November. The Deadline for applications is **Sunday 8 September**. For further information about the programme, visit <http://www.ifyouthtrust.org.uk/>.

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Near Neighbours

The Near Neighbours programme is a three-year initiative, run by the Church Urban Fund, which aims to bring people together in diverse communities, helping them build relationships and collaborate to improve the local community in which they live. The programme currently operates in the following areas: East and South East London, the City of Birmingham, Leicester, Bradford, Burnley and Oldham. The scheme has also recently been undertaking some capacity building work in Luton.

Near Neighbours has a grants programme, with amounts ranging from £250 to £5,000. The fund invests in environmental, social, cultural, artistic and sporting ideas which fulfill the criteria, which can be found at www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/grants. Examples of funded projects can be found at: <http://www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/funded-projects>

The Fund is pleased to receive applications from people of different faith groups or none, working in partnership with people of different faiths and within the criteria. Details on how to apply can be found at www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/grants.

A note has recently been added to the Near Neighbours website which says: "Please be aware that the Near Neighbours small grants fund is depleting and we intend to have allocated all the funds by December 2013. Therefore early applications are encouraged."

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GEO PROGRESS Scheme

The Government Equalities Office is asking for proposals from non-profit-making organisations which want to bid to run anti-discrimination programmes. It will then choose two projects to be eligible to share up to €250,000 from the European Commission's PROGRESS Scheme.

According to the European Commission, PROGRESS's aims are: "Raising awareness, disseminating information and promoting the debate about the key challenges and policy issues in relation to discrimination and the mainstreaming of anti-discrimination in all Community policies, including among the social partners, NGOs and other stakeholders."

Information about applying, including criteria and required documentation can be found online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/apply-now-for-funding-to-raise-awareness-about-discrimination>. The closing date for proposals is 12 noon on 28

August. For further information on completing a bid, contact either paul.howarth@geo.gsi.gov.uk or charles.ramsden@geo.gsi.gov.uk.

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My Community Rights

The website <http://mycommunityrights.org.uk> is an online hub and advice service, run by Locality, which helps communities to use the community rights which came into effect with the Localism Act (such as the Community Right to Challenge and the Community Right to Bid). These rights are designed to give local communities more control over what happens locally, and have been used by communities wishing to take ownership of an asset which is being sold, take over a service they feel could be run better, or build new facilities. For information on ways to fund projects initiated using the community rights, visit <http://www.communityshares.org.uk/>

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The Big Lottery Fund

The Big Lottery Fund give grants from £300 to over £500,000 to organisations ranging from small local groups to major national charities. Information about their various grant schemes can be found at:

<http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/Home/Funding/Funding%20finder>

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RESOURCES AND TRAINING

Shap Calendar

The Shap Calendar of Religious Festivals for 2013-14 is now available. The Calendar, which is published by the Shap Working Party for World Religions in Education, is available to purchase from

<http://www.shapworkingparty.org.uk/calendar.html>.

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RE Council website

The Religious Education Council has a new website which is now live - www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk. It is designed to reflect the changes in the Council's work, and will include a blog from the Chair and significant sections for the APPG and Young Ambassadors, as well as links to associated microsites for projects. There will be scope for more information about member organisations which will be built up over the next few months.

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London Churches' Group for Social Action report

The London Churches Group for Social Action has published a report of a pilot study into the proportion of voluntary sector welfare projects organised by churches and other faiths. The research found that faith organisations were running 40% of all voluntary sector welfare projects in the borough (35% by Christians and 5% by other faiths) and that an additional 7% of secular projects had been founded by a faith organisation. To access the report, visit [:http://www.londonchurchesgroup.org.uk/Better%20off%20without%20them%20report%20May%202013.pdf](http://www.londonchurchesgroup.org.uk/Better%20off%20without%20them%20report%20May%202013.pdf).

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Faithworks report

Faithworks has recently published a report on research carried out by Oasis College entitled 'Faithfully meeting local need: Lessons from faith-based organisations delivering community services'. This research study involved two main activities: collecting data from participating faith-based projects between October and December 2012 and the dissemination of the research findings at regional Capacity Building events, held as part of the Faith to Engage project, between March and June 2013.

The report recommends investment in the following four areas: "Firstly, faith entrepreneurs, to facilitate and support visionary leaders in their development of innovative community delivery. Secondly, the building of active partnership between faith and non faith-based organisations to enhance the service delivered to clients and maximise scarce resources. Thirdly, through promoting the added value faith-based organisations offer, statutory organisations should be encouraged to commission their services. Fourthly, policy makers should be proactively encouraged to engage with, and listen to, local community organisations (faith-based or otherwise) to establish how they can best support them to meet locally identified need."

A copy of the report (both full and abridged versions) can be found online at <http://www.oasiscollege.org/faithfully-meeting-local-need>.

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Theos report

The Theos Think Tank has produced a report entitled '*Making Multiculturalism Work: enabling practical action across deep difference*'. Drawing on a range of interviews with people involved in two major initiatives – community organising and Near Neighbours – Making multiculturalism work argues that "ordinary relationships across religious and cultural difference are the key to addressing the malaise of the public square and pursuing a meaningful 'multicultural settlement'. These are forged not by adherence to abstract national values or an idea of what multiculturalism should look like in theory, but rather by common action – working side-by side and pursuing common goals."

A copy of the report can be downloaded from <http://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/publications/2013/06/19/making-multiculturalism-work>.

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‘Faith with its sleeves rolled up’

FaithAction has launched a collection of essays entitled *Faith With Its Sleeves Rolled Up*. There are fifteen contributions in total, each of which examines the practical role faith can play in the positive shaping of UK society. The perspectives include academic, political and artistic angles on the value of active faith.

FaithAction hopes that the publication of the book will help to promote the idea that people of faith are making significant, though underappreciated, contributions to UK society. Further information, including details on how to purchase the book, can be found at <http://www.faithaction.net/book>.

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Catering and Faith Based Dietary Practice

Following discussion at meetings of the Inter Faith Network for the UK (IFN) Faith Communities Forum and Executive Committee about *halal* and *non-halal* provision in catering contexts, a multi faith Working Group was tasked with developing guidance on faith and dietary practice. Reference to this guidance note was included in the April 2013 issue of IFN’s e-bulletin. It has now been widely circulated.

The guidance has four sections:

- a) ‘Some key principles’ concerning faith based dietary practice – which explains both the importance and provenance of the document.
- b) Part 1 ‘Some general points on catering for a religiously diverse clientele’ – which offers points for those catering for or managing the catering of people of different faiths and sets out good practice points on provision and procurement.
- c) Part 2 ‘Some more detailed points about particular issues’ – which goes into more depth about some of the more complex aspects of the dietary practices of different religions including the separate storage and preparation of different types of food and the changes that can occur in faith based diet during religious festivals.
- d) A chart which contains information on faith based dietary practices – which is intended to give caterers a reasonably comprehensive idea of what certain groups are, or are not, likely to consume but is not intended to be an exhaustive list of the dietary requirements of different faiths.

A key principle articulated in the guidance is that: “It is not appropriate for choices of food and drink to be imposed on people regardless of their religious, cultural, social or ethnic background. Sensitivity and care should therefore be exercised when catering for those who follow particular dietary practice for reasons of their belief, whether religious or non-religious.”

A pdf of the document can be downloaded from <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/publications/Catering-and-Faith-Based-Dietary-Practice.pdf>. For further information, contact ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

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Queen's Foundation, Birmingham – Postgraduate Certificate in Inter Faith Engagement

The Queen's Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education in Birmingham is running a postgraduate certificate to develop people's skills and understanding as inter faith practitioners. The programme is taught in partnership with the Faithful Neighbours Centre in Birmingham and is validated by Newman University College. During the year participants take two 30 credit modules: 'Theology in Dialogue' and 'Christian Practice in Multi-Faith Contexts'. These are taught on the Queen's campus in Birmingham in two sets of short intensive blocks. Between these sessions there will be tutorial support.

For further information, visit <http://www.queens.ac.uk/programmes/inter-faith-studies/>.

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Woolf Institute - Jewish-Muslim e-learning course

The Woolf Institute (Cambridge), in partnership with the School of International Service at the American University in Washington, has announced that its e-learning course 'Bridging the Great Divide: the Jewish-Muslim Encounter' will be offered again in 2014. This 15-week e-learning course will explore the history, culture and theology of Muslims and Jews, reflecting on similarities as well as the major challenges. Applications are now being accepted for the course starting in the week commencing 13 January. The closing date for applications is 15 November. For further details about costs and the application process, visit <http://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/courses>. Any queries about the course can be emailed to Dr Emma Harris at eth22@cam.ac.uk.

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London Inter Faith Centre - Ecumenical Course for practical inter faith work

The London Inter Faith Centre is running an ecumenical course for lay people and clergy to help equip them for inter faith engagement in their own environment in and around London. The course will be held on one Tuesday each month, beginning on 8 October.

Each participant who completes the course will receive a Certificate in Practical Inter Faith from the London Inter Faith Centre. The course costs £300, which covers travel costs from home (within reason), and lunch as well as speakers' expenses and materials. (Participants are encouraged to apply for denominational grants and bursary help is available for people unable to find the whole cost.) For further information and a registration form, contact the Revd Maggie Hindley at the London Inter Faith Centre, 125 Salusbury Road, London NW6 6LP or on 020 7372 1765 maggie.hindley@londoninterfaith.org.uk.

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Training day on managing major building projects in places of worship

Following a successful pilot in February, Historic Religious Buildings Alliance (HRBA) is hosting a training day on 'Managing Major Buildings Projects in Places of Worship' in Bristol on 8 October.

Full details about the day, including a booking form can be found on the 'News' page of the HRBA website at www.hrballiance.org.uk.

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JOBS AND VOLUNTEERING

MUJU – Co-Directors

MUJU (an inter faith theatre company) is seeking a new Co-Director team to lead the company based at the Tricycle Theatre, London. With a strong devising history, community and arts based connections and a wide support network, MUJU is at an excellent point for two young leaders to come on board and implement their own strategy and to develop existing work in the community and in schools.

Whilst the role is voluntary, there is support for expenses and paid project management work when needed, as well as professional development and references. This role is well suited to an emerging producer, inter faith leader and/or those working in arts management. The job description can be found on the MUJU website, <http://www.muju.org.uk/get-involved/>. For more information, including how to apply, contact Salman Siddiqui and Georgina Bednar by e-mail at info@muju.org.uk.

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3FF Internship Programme

3FF is looking for new interns to join most of their teams, including ParliaMentors, Schools, Media, Training, Fundraising and Volunteer Management. The programme starts in September. Further information and application details can be found at <http://www.3ff.org.uk/internships/>

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS AND TENDERS

Inform: Minority Religions conference – call for papers

Inform is hosting a conference, to mark its 25th anniversary, from 31 January to 2 February on 'Minority Religions: Contemplating the past and anticipating the future'.

Submissions for papers (maximum 200 word abstract and 150 word CV) on topics relevant to the title of the conference are now being accepted. Submissions should be sent to inform@lse.ac.uk by 1 October. (Registration for the conference will open on 1 November. No subsidies can be offered to participants who will be responsible for making their own arrangements for accommodation.)

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Multi-Faith Spaces: Symptoms and Agents of Religious and Social Change

Multi-Faith Spaces project: Symptoms and Agents of Religious and Social Change is a three year research based at the Manchester Architecture research Centre (MARC). The project considers multi faith spaces as both emerging from our multi-cultural and religiously diverse societies, as well as active in the facilitation of community, dialogue and toleration. These processes are researched from a material perspective, viewing multi faith spaces (MFS) as primarily works of architecture, shaped through the actions of many stakeholders such as users, designers, architects, engineers, artists, chaplains, academics, facilities managers, and diversity officers,.

The project has visited over 300 multi faith spaces in the UK and beyond. The research is now drawing to a close, and the project team is writing up its findings. It is still keen to hear views on the multi faith spaces with which people are familiar or have visited and 'multi faith space' more generally. The survey can be found at <http://www.sed.manchester.ac.uk/architecture/research/mfs/>. For further information, contact mfs@manchester.ac.uk.

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Spirit of Womanhood

To mark the 10th anniversary of the Women's Interfaith Network and International Women's Day an exhibition is being held at London's Oxo Tower in March next year.

Entry is now open to all female artists (over 18 years of age) of any culture, belief or non-belief to submit their work for the exhibition at <http://www.win-exhibition.org.uk/>. For further information, contact the Curator, Rosalind Parker, at win.exhibition@gmail.com. The closing date for entries is 30 November.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

European Days of Jewish Culture and Heritage

This year's EDJCH, organised by B'nai B'rith UK, takes place from **15 to 29 September** with the theme of 'Judaism and the Natural World'. This year, Heritage Days fall over *Succot*. Many synagogues will be opening up their *Succah* (ceremonial booths) to the public and providing seasonal refreshments, as well as on site guides to explain about the meaning of the festival and the food that is eaten at this time of year. The week is also associated with the National Heritage Open Days, which runs from 12 to 15 September. For more information, visit www.jewishheritage.org.

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Peace Day 21 September

This year, 2013, the International Day of Peace is on a Saturday, September 21st, and special activities and celebrations will take place all across the world over the 2013 Peace Day Weekend, including festivals, concerts, a global Peace Wave with moments of silence at noon in every time zone, and much more. Further information <http://www.internationaldayofpeace.org/>

The organisation Peace One Day is inviting faith and inter bodies to become part of a coalition <http://peaceoneday.org/faith-coalition-membership-form/> linked to this Day.

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Sewa Day

Sewa Day will be taking place on **6 October**. The Sanskrit word 'Sewa' means 'selfless service'. The aim of Sewa Day is to provide people a chance to give back to the local community through volunteering on a single day to make a difference. For more information and to get involved visit: www.sewaday.org

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One World Week

One World Week will this year take place from **20 to 27 October**. The theme is 'More Than Enough?', which offers two linked elements: 1) along with the European Global Education Week, it wants to explore issues about consumption of resources; and 2) it is offering an opportunity to support or organise local events with people and organisations involved to follow up the multi-organisation campaign "Enough Food for everyone IF" which asks the question "Why, if the world produces enough food for

everyone, do more than two million children die every year because they can't get enough to eat?" and to ask what needs to be done next.

For more information, visit <http://www.oneworldweek.org>.

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Mitzvah Day

Mitzvah Day will be taking place on **Sunday 17 November**. Mitzvah Day is a Jewish led day of social action – around the world thousands of people take part in hands on projects to support existing charities and to build stronger communities. The goal is to reduce hardship and poverty and to help the environment. People are encouraged to volunteer for projects in their communities and anyone can take part regardless of their background. See www.mitzvahday.org.uk

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Inter Faith Week

Inter Faith Week 2013 in England, Northern Ireland and Wales will take place from **Sunday 17 to Saturday 23 November**. Further information is in the [UK/National updates section](#) above.

Scottish Inter Faith Week, which has been running since 2004, will take place from **24 November until 1 December**, including, as usual, St Andrew's Day. More information can be found online at <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/our-activities/scottish-interfaith-week/>.

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DIARY DATES

A Multifaith Forest Gardening Day is taking place at Parkwood Springs, Shirecliffe Road, S5 8XB, Sheffield on Saturday 10 August from 11am-2pm. Further information from Ed Thatcher, tel 07816 596228

The **Network of Buddhist Organisations**, together with the **Centre for Applied Buddhism** and the **Network of Engaged Buddhists** is hosting a conference from Friday 16 to Sunday 18 August on 'Transforming Conflict: Buddhist inspired ideas for personal and social change. The conference takes place at Taplow Court, Taplow, Berkshire SL6 0ER and there is a fee to attend (early bird rates are available). For more information and to book, visit <http://transformingconflictblog.wordpress.com>.

The **World Congress of Faiths** is hosting its annual Younghusband Lecture at 6.30pm on Monday 19 August at the Montagu Centre, 21 Maple Street, London W1T 4BE. (Light refreshments will be available from 6.00pm.) This year's lecture is entitled 'Building Peace in the Holy Land – it can be done!' and will be given by Yehuda Stolov, Founder and Executive Director of the Interfaith Encounter Association. To register attendance, email admin@worldfaiths.org or telephone 01935 864055.

Norwich Interfaith Link will be running a guided walk around historical places of significance for faiths on Tuesday 20 August from 7.30pm. The walk will be led by Chris Wood. For further information contact 01603 667 314 or visit <http://norwichinterfaith.no-ip.org/events.php>.

Horsham Interfaith Forum, the World Congress of Faiths and the International Association of Religious Freedom (British Chapter) are hosting a conference in Horsham from Tuesday 20 to Friday 23 August on 'Religious Freedom and Responsibility'. Speakers and panellists will be coming from Israel, USA, Germany, Romania, India, the Netherlands and the UK. For further information on ticket prices and accommodation, and to book, visit www.worldfaiths.org/tickets.php or write to World Congress of Faiths, 125 Salisbury Road, London NW6 6RG.

Dudley Borough Interfaith Network will be holding an 'Interfaith picnic in the park' on Thursday 29 August from 12pm at Buffrey Park for families and children up to age 13. For further information, call Gillian on 01384 26715.

South London Inter Faith Group will be holding its monthly lunch meeting in August on Thursday 29 August. For further information, email membership@southlondoninterfaith.org.uk or visit <http://www.southlondoninterfaith.org.uk/monthly-lunch-meetings/>

Interfaith Scotland will be holding its annual seminar for local inter faith groups on Thursday 29 August. The seminar will take place from 11.00am to 5.00pm at the Hall of Pollokshields Church of Scotland, 525 Shields Road, Glasgow G41 2RF. The day will include a tour of the local *gurdwara*. For further information or to register attendance, contact Frances Hume at frances@interfaithscotland.org or on 0141 420 6982.

Cheltenham Inter Faith will be visiting the St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace in London on Wednesday 4 September. For further information, contact info@cheltenhaminterfaith.org.uk or phone 01242 602412.

York Interfaith Group will be meeting on Wednesday 4 September from 7.30pm at York Minster. The new Dean of York Minster, the Very Reverend Vivienne Faull will speak on 'The Relevance of the Minster to the city'. For further information, contact Mark Cosens on 07796095152 or email loscosens@yahoo.co.uk.

Faiths Together in Lambeth will be holding an Inter Faith Walk around North Brixton, Kennington and Vauxhall on Saturday 7 September. For more information email ftil@hotmail.co.uk or call 07889 221 847.

Bristol Multi-Faith Forum will be holding a Health Awareness Day on Saturday 7 September at the City Academy. For further details, contact info@bristolmultifaithforum.org.uk or visit <http://bristolmultifaithforum.org.uk>

Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource will be holding its AGM on Monday 9 September at 6.30pm at the Co-op Education Centre. Visitors are welcome to attend. For further information, contact info@sifre.org.uk or visit www.sifre.org.uk.

Westminster Cathedral Interfaith Group will be visiting the Jain temple at Potters Bar in Hertfordshire (which Cardinal Tauran visited in June) on Tuesday 10 September at 12 noon. Participants should meet at Potters Bar station by 11.35 to share taxis to the temple. To register, contact John Woodhouse on 07908 888586 or at woodhousesopten@btinternet.com and check with him about suitable dress.

Hastings and District Interfaith Forum will be hosting guest speaker Rabbi Elizabeth Tikvah Sarah on Tuesday 10 September. For further information, contact Tim Miller on 07717 221 559.

Birmingham Faith Leaders' Group will be holding an 'Interfaith Service for Peace' to mark its 12th Anniversary on Thursday 12 September from 12noon at St Thomas' Peace Garden. For further information, email brumfaith@yahoo.co.uk.

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland is hosting a conference on Thursday 12 September entitled 'In Our Time: an exploration of the dynamic relationship between Christian ecumenism and inter religious dialogue, its opportunities and challenges in the 21st century'. The conference takes place from 11.00am to 4.00pm at Heythrop College, 23 Kensington Square, London W8 5HN. Speakers will include the Revd Dr Keith Clements, Dr Anthony O'Mahony and Professor Peter Riddell. For further information or to register attendance, contact the Revd Peter Colwell at peter.colwell@ctbi.org.uk.

Heritage of London Trust is organising 'Ride and Stride' on Saturday 14 September, a day in which places of worship across the capital open their doors to cyclists and walkers. Those taking part are seeking sponsorship to visit as many places of worship as possible. Funds raised will be split 50/50 between the Heritage of London Trust and the participant's choice of local place of worship. Further information can be found at <http://www.heritageoflondon.com/>

Cambridge Inter-Faith Group will be hosting a talk on Zen Buddhism on Tuesday 17 September from 7pm at the Friends' Meeting House, Jesus Lane, Cambridge CB5 8BA. For further information contact interfaith@home.cam.net.uk

South Shropshire Interfaith Forum will be holding a round-table event on the topic 'Can religions co-exist?', Introduced by Jan Ariens on Thursday 19 September. For further information, visit <http://www.ssif.org.uk/index.html>

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum is organising an Interfaith Pilgrimage of Prayer for Peace for International Peace Day on Saturday 21 September. The walk will begin at 3.30pm at Carlisle Circus in Belfast and will finish at 4.30pm at Belfast City Hall. The walkers will be required to observe silence during the walk. No banners or placards will be carried. There will be no speeches. The walk is an opportunity to pause, reflect, pray and consider how best to work together to move on from cultures of violence and build cultures of hospitality and safety for all. For further information, contact ni.interfaith@gmail.com.

Hounslow Friends of Faith will be holding a women's discussion group on the theme of 'Wealth' on Wednesday 25 September from 7.15pm. For further information, email info@hounslowfriendsoffaith.org or call 020 8560 5887.

Caring for God's Acre is hosting a conference on Saturday 28 September entitled 'The Beautiful Burial Ground'. The conference runs from 10.00am to 4.00pm at Thame Barns Centre, Thame, Oxfordshire and is for anyone who cares about, or is involved in, the management of burial grounds. Places are limited and cost £15 including lunch and refreshments. For further information, visit <http://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/index.php/events/national-conferences>.

The **Interfaith Scotland** AGM will take place on Tuesday 8 October from 6pm in Linlithgow, West Lothian. Further information can be found at <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/events/>

The **Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe** is funding an exhibition at the Brunei Gallery of the School of African and Oriental Studies in London from 11 October to 14 December entitled 'The Everlasting Flame: Zoroastrianism in History and Imagination'. The exhibition will be free to attend and will "provide a visual narrative of the history of Zoroastrianism from its ancient Iranian roots, to its emergence as the foremost religion of the Achaemenid and Parthian empires as well as its consolidation as the state religion under the Sasanians and the establishment of the great regnal fires". For further information, visit <http://www.theeverlastingflame.com>.

Brighton and Hove Inter-Faith Contact Group will be holding a dialogue event on the theme of 'death' on Wednesday 30 October. For further details, contact admin@interfaithcontactgroup.com

Surrey Faith Links will be holding an event on the theme 'Women and Faith – who is the oppressor? Religion or men?', including local perspectives from Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The event will take place on Sunday 17 November, and is open to men and women of all faiths. For further information, contact Kauser.Akhtar@cofeguildford.org.uk.

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For more information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org

For more information on events and projects in a number of the English regions see:

London: www.faithsforum4london.org

North East: www.nerfn.org

South East: www.se-faithforum.net

South West: www.faithnetsouthwest.org.uk

West Midlands: www.wmfaithsforum.org.uk

See also: <http://lbfm.wordpress.com/> (London Boroughs Faiths Network) and <http://www.fbrn.org.uk/news> (Faith-based Regeneration Network).

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 10 September with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer:

Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH
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IFN e-bulletin

October 2013

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 4 November with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Material may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and projects and future events.

Disclaimer: Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

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Inter Faith Network for the UK: Special Appeal

The Inter Faith Network for the UK was founded in 1987 to promote good inter faith relations in the UK. It has made a tremendous difference to relations between different faith communities in the UK and it is a vital resource for inter faith cooperation and understanding in years to come. Its role is unique both in the UK and Europe: linking national faith communities, local, regional and national inter faith bodies, and educational bodies and working with them to deepen inter faith understanding and cooperation as part of working for the common good.

A key IFN led programme is Inter Faith Week (more information on which is in this e-bulletin). The Week is an increasingly significant way of drawing new people of all ages into inter faith activities and cooperative projects.

The Inter Faith Network is part supported by faith communities and by the Government (through the Department for Communities and Local Government) as well as through donations from individuals who see the value of its work. But this year and next, in a difficult economic climate, like a number of organisations, it is facing particularly pressing financial challenges and there is a real danger that without support from those who see the value of IFN's contribution to our society there will be a major impact on its work of building good inter faith relations in the UK and supporting others in doing so.

An Appeal has been launched to support IFN's work. Early supporters have included the Most Revd Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, and other leading faith community figures, as well as inter faith practitioners and other supporters. The e-bulletin has a wide readership and the Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Inter Faith Network and the Appeal Chair hope very much that readers may join them in making a donation to support IFN's work.

Please help support our vital work if you can. Gifts at all levels will be carefully used to help strengthen the vital work of building good relations between people of different faiths and beliefs in Britain, creating a strong basis for positive coexistence and cooperation now and for years to come.

Donations can be made online at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/donations.htm> or by a cheque payable to the Inter Faith Network for the UK. A donations form for those who would prefer to pay by cheque or standing order can be found at the end of this e-bulletin.

Thank you for your support.

Mr Dorab Mistry OBE, Appeal Chair

The Revd Bob Fyffe and Mr Vivian Wineman,(Co-Chairs)

Mr Mohinder Singh Chana, Dr Kishan Manocha, Maulana Shahid Raza OBE, and Dr Jagdish Sharma (Vice-Chairs)

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UK/NATIONAL UPDATES

Inter Faith Week – 40 days to go!

www.interfaithweek.org

National Inter Faith Week 2013 in England, Northern Ireland and Wales runs from Sunday 17 to Saturday 23 November. Its aims are:

- to strengthen good inter faith relations at all levels;
- to increase awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, in particular celebrating and building on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society; and
- to increase understanding between people of religious and non-religious belief.

Faith community organisations, inter faith bodies, non-religious belief groups, local places of worship, local authorities, schools and colleges, universities, hospitals, prisons, police forces, and NGOs are among the many planning events.

Make your event known!

The listings section of the Inter Faith Week website is open for organisers to list events happening in England, Northern Ireland and Wales. If you are holding an event, please do take time to register it so that we can add you to the map and give profile to your event – and so that your event can add to the profile of the Week! You can register your event at <http://www.interfaithweek.org/events/submit-an-event>

Follow Inter Faith Week on Twitter here: <https://twitter.com/IFWeek>. You can use the hashtag #IFWeek to help people find out about your Inter Faith Week event. Like Inter Faith Week on Facebook here: <http://www.facebook.com/ifweek>

Resources

The Inter Faith Week flyer can be downloaded at <http://www.interfaithweek.org> and printed copies of it are available from the IFN office. Contact interfaithweek@interfaith.org.uk for details.

Resources for event organisers, including lists of events which took place in previous years, can be found on the website. These include a list of all events known to have taken place to mark Inter Faith Week 2012, and can be found at <http://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/reports>. A huge variety of events took place, and the list provides many examples of this diverse range to inspire event organisers.

Inter Faith Week is a project of the Inter Faith Network for the UK working with its member bodies and with the support of the Department for Communities and Local Government. Find out more at www.interfaithweek.org.

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Scottish Interfaith Week

Scottish Interfaith Week, which has been running since 2004, will take place from 24 November until 1 December, including within it, as usual, St Andrew's Day on 30 November. More information can be found online at <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/our-activities/scottish-interfaith-week/>.

The theme for Scottish Interfaith Week this year will be '**Values and Visions for the Future of Scotland**' in preparation for the Scottish Referendum in 2014.

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Inter faith response to recent events in Peshawar and Nairobi

There has been an inter faith response in the UK to the recent events in Peshawar and Nairobi. Several organisations have issued statements of solidarity including Birmingham Faith Leaders' Group, Bolton Interfaith Council and the Women's Interfaith Network and an inter faith solidarity event took place at the Al-Khoei Foundation in London. An IFN Circular on 24 September said:

“The work of the Inter Faith Network is focused on the United Kingdom – as is that of most of its member bodies. For this reason, it does not make statements on overseas events – except, from time to time, in terms of their impact or possible impact on inter faith relations here. The siege at Westgate Shopping Mall in Nairobi, Kenya, and the suicide bombing of All Saints Church in Peshawar, Pakistan, at the weekend have affected many people, including some individuals in the UK connected to IFN member bodies who have lost family members. The world is interconnected, and atrocities in other parts of the world resound here – we have both community and personal links across the globe. The Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs of IFN are very much aware of this, and share in the sorrow and concern of those affected. Their thoughts and prayers are with them. They also reflect on the vital importance of retaining trust and openness in the face of events which have the power to undermine this, and the broader ripples such events have in all of our lives.

The Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs would like to draw to member bodies' attention an important reflection this morning on *Thought for the Day* on Radio 4, by the Bishop of Norwich, the Rt Revd Graham James, about the importance of inter faith dialogue in this context. In it, he talks about how atrocities in other parts of the world have the capacity to affect how we relate to each other in our own communities, and about the corrosion of trust that can ensue between, and within, nations and faith communities in such contexts. He underlines the importance of inter faith discussion and friendship in developing and maintaining trust, and as a vital safeguard against gradual, unnoticed erosions of tolerance within ourselves. He speaks, at the close of his piece, about how the Inter Faith Network for the UK has allowed him and many others to have meaningful inter faith encounters, but could equally well be speaking about the work of every inter faith initiative in this country and around the world that contributes to this hugely important work. You may be interested to listen to this piece online at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01hclzx>.”

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New Ministerial Appointments

A number of new Ministerial appointments were made by Prime Minister David Cameron on 7 October. These included the appointments as Parliamentary Under Secretaries of State for Communities and Local Government of Baroness Stowell, Mr Stephen Williams MP, and Mr Kris Hopkins MP. Mr Williams will hold the brief for integration. Baroness Warsi retains her role as Minister for Faith and Communities at the Department.

Mr Don Foster MP, who served for the last year as Communities Minister, moves to become the Chief Whip of the Liberal Democrats.

A full list of appointments can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/ministers>.

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New faith community APPGs

Two new All Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs) for faith communities have been set up.

The APPG on British Jews will be launched on 9 October and the Board of Deputies of British Jews (<http://www.bod.org.uk>) will provide the Secretariat for this.

The APPG on Zoroastrians will be launched on 14 October and the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (<http://www.ztfe.com/>) will provide the Secretariat for this.

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All Party Parliamentary Group for RE

The All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Religious Education will be holding an inquiry during 2013-14 into the contribution of RE to good community relations.

Further information about the APPG, including a list of its members, and a copy of its most recent report "RE: The Truth Unmasked" which examines the supply of, and support for, Religious Education teachers can be found at <http://religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/appg>.

The Religious Education Council for England and Wales provides the Secretariat for the APPG.

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OFSTED report on RE in schools

An OFSTED report, *RE in Schools: Realising the Potential*, published on 6 October has said that "Religious education (RE) makes a significant contribution to pupils' academic and personal development. It also plays a key role in promoting social cohesion and the virtues of respect and empathy, which are important in our diverse society." The authors said, however, that "the potential of RE was not being realised fully in the majority of the schools surveyed for this report." The report says that, while there have been some improvements in Religious Education in schools, more

than half of them are failing pupils on RE. It identifies barriers to better RE and suggests ways in which the subject might be improved. The report is written for those who teach RE, for those who lead the subject, and for headteachers of primary and secondary schools. John Keast, Chair of the RE Council of England and Wales said "The Religious Education Council is disappointed but not surprised by these findings. We have been warning the Department for Education for some time about the poor state of religious education in many schools. The report of the Religious Education Council's own review of religious education is being launched on 23 October in Westminster. It offers a new curriculum for religious education as a benchmark for local authorities, academies and faith schools, and proposes various ways to improve religious education in our schools. It is now vital that the Department for Education works with the Religious Education Council on putting things right. We can do better than this."

The report and a summary can be downloaded from:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/religious-education-realising-potential>

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Religious Education Subject Review

In summer 2012, the RE Council initiated a review of Religious Education in England to run parallel to the government's review of the National Curriculum, as part of its strategic plan. More information can be found online at <http://resubjectreview.recouncil.org.uk/>.

The publication and launch of the report of the RE Subject Review, including a new non-statutory curriculum framework, is due to take place in Westminster on 23 October. A series of dissemination events will be taking place around the country during November, where presenters will speak about the Review report and its contents. There will be opportunity for questions to the panel of speakers and the events will be introduced by teams of Young Ambassadors for RE. The events all run from 5.30pm to 7.30pm and will be held in: London (5 November); York (6 November); Oxford (19 November); Liverpool (21 November); and Bristol (28 November). Events are free of charge but tickets will be allocated on a 'first come, first served' basis due to limited venue capacity. To register and request a ticket, email sophie@religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk.

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Report on the review of the Public Sector Equality Duty

The Report of the Independent Steering Group responsible for carrying out the review of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) was published on 6 September.

The Group was set up following a Ministerial Statement in 2012 by Home Secretary, Ms Theresa May, that there was a need to review the duty to ensure that it was 'operating as intended', following the Red Tape Challenge on equalities which had been completed earlier that year. With the caveat that it did not feel that enough time

had passed since the implementation of the PSED in 2011 for firm judgement to be made on it, the Steering Group broadly supported the PSED in principle but made a number of recommendations regarding its implementation:

- The EHRC should work to produce clearer guidance on the minimum requirements placed on public bodies; should work with sector regulators to ensure compliance; and should not compel public bodies to collect diversity data unless this is necessary.
- Public bodies should comply with the PSED in a proportionate way and reduce unnecessary paperwork; and should aim to reduce pressure on small employers to comply with burdensome equalities paperwork.
- All contractors, companies or charities, should be active in holding public bodies to account under the duty.
- Government should consider the removal of the specific duties which require public bodies regularly to publish PSED compliance data; and should make sure that enforcement of the PSED is proportionate and cost effective.

Further information can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-independent-steering-groups-report-of-the-public-sector-equality-duty-psed-review-and-government-response>

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Ruling on wearing of the niqab when giving evidence in Crown Court and responses

The facial veil or *niqab*, worn by some Muslim women, has received significant media attention in the past few weeks due to a ruling by Mr Justice Peter Murphy at Blackfriars Crown Court on 16 September on the wearing of the *niqab* in the Crown Court.

The judgement by Mr Justice Murphy followed a plea and case management hearing relating to an indictment for witness intimidation at which the defendant declined to remove the *niqab*, or facial veil, when requested to do so for the purposes of identification. Justice Murphy made a number of points regarding the balancing of the primacy of the rule of law in a democratic society on the one hand and the duty placed upon the UK by Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights to uphold freedom of religion and belief on the other. The full text of the judgement can be read here: [http://www.judiciary.gov.uk/Resources/JCO/Documents/Judgments/The%20Queen%20v-%20D%20\(R\).pdf](http://www.judiciary.gov.uk/Resources/JCO/Documents/Judgments/The%20Queen%20v-%20D%20(R).pdf)

Mr Jeremy Browne, then Minister of State at the Home Office, called for a 'national debate' on the issue and Mr Nick Clegg, the Deputy Prime Minister, and Ms Theresa May, the Home Secretary, also responded. Mr Browne's original comments can be read at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/10311469/Jeremy-Browne-Ban-Muslim-women-from-wearing-veils-in-schools-and-public-places.html>. This led to debate about the wearing of the *niqab* by children and staff in schools and colleges, although head teachers' associations have been quick to point out that uniform restrictions are set at the discretion of individual establishments. There has also been discussion about the wearing of the *niqab* in hospitals, with a claim made by the *Telegraph* that 17 NHS trusts do not allow staff to wear full face coverings when dealing with patients. Mr

Dan Poulter, Minister of State for Health, has asked all NHS trusts and NHS employers to clarify their positions regarding the wearing of face coverings including the *niqab*.

Note: In 2007, the Executive Committee of the Inter Faith Network produced a briefing note containing some broad reflections on the wearing of religious clothing and symbols: the deeply held beliefs which can underlie choices about the wearing of these; the need for courteous and sensitive handling of the issues involved; and some of the factors to be taken into account in considering limits on the wearing of particular items for such reasons as security, organisational corporate identity or health and safety. This can be found at: <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/religiousdress.pdf>

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Timetable of implementation of caste discrimination legislation

In late July the Government Equalities Office (GEO) published its timetable for the introduction of caste legislation, following on from the passage into law of the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 in April which contained a provision requiring due regard to be given to caste discrimination when considering race discrimination under the Equality Act 2010. The timetable is set out in *Caste Legislation Introduction: Programme and Timetable*. This explains that:

- a) The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) will be undertaking research into the nature of caste and caste discrimination in the UK. This has started and is due to be completed by the end of 2013 and is to include discussions with groups with an interest in caste discrimination.
- b) Following the completion of this research the Government will undertake a full public consultation on the issue, seeking in particular to understand whether and how “caste” should be defined in the legislation, and to identify any legislative exceptions that may be necessary. This consultation is expected to run for twelve weeks starting in February or March 2014. While analysis on the public consultation is on-going, the Government will undertake some sector specific consultation with stakeholders including employers, local authorities and the judiciary during summer 2014.
- c) The Government’s response to the consultation and a draft order outlining caste legislation are expected to be drawn up by Autumn 2014 with legislation taking effect in early 2015.

For more information and to view the timetable document visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/caste-discrimination-legislation-timetable>

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Issues of planning permission close to religious buildings

Planning permission for premises close to place of worship can be an issue of concern for faith communities. Recent granting of planning permission for a meat processing plant next to the Guru Gobind Singh Gurdwara in Bradford is an example of this.

Sikhs in Bradford, and more widely, have voiced concerns at the decision of Bradford Metropolitan District Council's Planning Committee on 13 August to grant planning permission to food producer and retailer Pakeezah to take over a site sharing a boundary with the *gurdwara* as a meat processing and retail plant. Pakeezah's retail butchers' shop has shared a boundary with the *gurdwara* for nearly twenty years. The planning permission was granted for an expanded site and a new processing plant.

Many Sikhs are vegetarian. Those who do eat meat often find the killing of cows (venerated animals in India) particularly disturbing. In this context, the Sikh community in Bradford has voiced concerns that the granting of planning permission for the meat processing plant shows a lack of awareness of the sensitivities of the Sikh community and respect for these. Their views have been echoed by some others, for example the Hindu Forum of Britain <http://www.hfb.org.uk/Default.aspx?SID=45&cID=534&ctID=43&IID=0>

Pakeezah have said that their business is in lamb, mutton and chicken only, and that their meat will arrive and be stored at refrigerated temperatures, in order to allay fears about smells coming from the plant.

For further information visit: http://www.thetelegraphandargus.co.uk/news/10601847.Sikh_community_opposes_plan_for_meat_plant_next_to_temple_in_Bradford/ and <http://www.pakeezah.com/future-plans.php>

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Transparency of Lobbying Bill

The Transparency of Lobbying, Non-Party Campaigning, and Trade Union Administration Bill (<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2013-14/transparencyoflobbyingnonpartycampaigningandtradeunionadministration.html>) is currently going through Parliament. The House of Commons Committee stage has started. The Bill has its Third Reading on 9 October.

The Bill is primarily aimed at curtailing the influence of lobbyists in Westminster. However, it includes significant provisions on lobbying for political purposes during elections which has caused considerable concern amongst the charitable sector. There are provisions to cap the overall spending of any organisation working for a 'party political aim' during an election at £390,000 and also place further restrictions on the amount of money that can go to projects with any sort of 'political outcome.' A 'political outcome' could be any position on which a political party takes a stance.

It has also been suggested that the proposed legislation might affect faith community and inter faith bodies. Some members of the Select Committee met with the National Council for Voluntary Organisations and other third sector bodies on 3 September and said that they would be interested to gather the opinions of faith community bodies on the proposed legislation. The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), and a number of other faith based organisations met on 27 September to discuss ways to try to ensure that the Bill does not adversely affect faith community organisations and a number signed a letter to the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister about this. The Government announced on 4 October an amendment to Clause 26 of the Bill which deals with the definition of 'controlled expenditure'. Some concerns are still

being expressed by voluntary bodies about the potential impact on their work. An NCVO briefing note can be found at:
<http://blogs.ncvo.org.uk/2013/10/07/lobbying-bill-report-stage-what-we-are-asking-mps-to-do/>

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New Charity Commission guides on public benefit

On 16 September the Charity Commission published three new guides for trustees on 'public benefit.' These explain what is required to show that an organisation is a charity (by having purposes that are for the public benefit); what trustees' duties are in carrying out those purposes for the public benefit; and how trustees should report on the public benefit their charity provides in their Annual Report.

The guides also explain that the trustees of charities which charge fees for services or facilities that the poor cannot afford must make provision for the poor to benefit. It is for trustees - not the Commission or the courts - to decide how to do this, but they must act reasonably and make more than a minimal provision.

See more at: <http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/news/new-public-benefit-guidance/#sthash.ru2KEZZJ.dpuf>

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Beyond 2011 Census consultation

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has launched a consultation into the future of the UK census following on from its 'Beyond 2011' programme of research. The consultation, launched on 23 September, is open to all organisations and members of the public who might wish to respond and runs from now until 13 December. There will be a number of events held in October supporting the consultation, they are:

- 8 October, Cardiff
- 14 October and 22 November, London
- 27 November, Manchester

The first 'Beyond 2011' consultation took place in 2011 and received responses from 266 individuals and organisations, with a similar number attending workshops held around the country. That original consultation identified two possible ways forwards on a national census-like data collection exercise:

- A once a decade census, similar to the 2011 Census but primarily online
- A census compiled of existing administrative data and compulsory annual surveys.
-

Respondents to the latest consultation will be asked to comment on ways forward on one, or both, of these suggestions.

For more information and to respond to the consultation visit: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/about-ons/who-ons-are/programmes-and-projects/beyond-2011/beyond-2011-consultation/index.html>

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Government initiative 'You've got the power'

'You've got the power' is a new Government initiative, which gives communities the legal powers to shape where they live. During October the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) will be writing to all those concerned from MPs to parish councillors to draw this to their attention.

A guide to the new initiative can be downloaded from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/youve-got-the-power-a-quick-and-simple-guide-to-community-rights>.

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PROJECTS

Faiths in harmony – inter faith choirs

A number of organisations have inter faith and multi faith choirs and more are now being set up.

The 'Com.unity Choir' is a multi-cultural, inter-faith singing group in Borehamwood in Hertfordshire. It has been running for 8 years and is religiously and culturally diverse. Information about its work can be found online at <http://www.comdotunity.com>. The St Ethelburga's Centre in London has also been running an inter faith choir for some while. For more details, contact namaah.pinkerfield@gmail.com 01342 826 732

The Three Faiths Forum has launched a new intercultural choir called 'The Mixed Up Chorus!'. The choir is open to people of all backgrounds and beliefs, religious and non-religious and will be directed by Jeremy Haneman, Community Chorus Director for the Royal Opera House. It will be launched at the 'Shoreditch Singathon' event on Sunday 13 October and the first rehearsal takes place on Tuesday 22 October at the Three Faiths Forum office in London. To register an interest in taking part, contact eli@eff.org.uk.

Building Bridges in Burnley has set up a women's inter faith choir, with funding from the Near Neighbours project, called 'Singing for the Soul' (<http://singingforthesoul.net/>). The choir has appeared on BBC's *Songs of Praise* and on BBC Radio Lancashire. The choir members range in age from 18 to 80 and all are welcome to join without auditions. For further information, contact Janet on 01282 414287 or at janet.swan@naturalvoice.net.

The Feast is running a half term inter faith choir for 11 to 18 year olds at the Faithful Neighbourhoods Centre in Birmingham. Rehearsals take place between 28 October and 1 November with a performance at the Feast's Autumn Dinner on 6 November. For further information, contact Natasha on 07722 418525 or at natasha@thefeast.org.uk.

The Berakah Project is starting a new multi faith choir and is keen for people from all faiths and none to be involved. The choir will meet every Tuesday evening from 8 October for 11 weeks at the London Inter Faith Centre in Salusbury Road. Rehearsals will culminate in a special concert in December. For further information, including costs, visit www.theberakahproject.org or email berakahmultifaithchoir@gmail.com.

In East London, a new multi faith male voice choir, 'East End Notes' has been formed by Spitalfields Music, led by Omar Shahryah. The organisers write "Spitalfields itself is a very diverse area, with a long and fascinating history of immigration; from the Irish to the Huguenots to the Bangladeshi community, the residents of Spitalfields come from a broad range of backgrounds and bring with them many rich cultural heritages. In creating East End Notes we wanted to create an opportunity for men from these communities to come together, celebrate their differences yet discover their similarities. In this setting, music is used to form social bonds between people of different spiritual beliefs; you can share your passion for music and singing without having to share religious beliefs. The choir becomes a unique sociable experience where people from various cultural backgrounds can create music together in a friendly environment. EastEnd Notes is about building a choir from an existing community, but that creates a new community in and of itself. Also note that although EastEnd Notes is termed a 'multi-faith' choir, this does of course mean that atheists and agnostics are welcome to join, as all beliefs are welcomed." There is a taster session on 10 October. More information from Laura Fensom on laura.fensom@spitalfieldsmusic.org.uk

Inter faith choirs have also been formed for one off events or for longer programmes in Edinburgh, Exeter, Manchester and other parts of the UK. If you know about one do tell us. We'd love to hear about it: ifnet@interfaith.org.uk

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Faith-Based Conflict Resilience programme

St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace is convening a new programme called the Faith-Based Conflict Resilience Programme. This is looking at the dynamics and process of conflict within faith groups and communities, aiming to bring spiritual practices to bear on community dialogue surrounding conflict and the processes of conflict management. The programme is offering a number of public conferences at the Centre in Bishopsgate as well as a roving participatory workshop entitled *A Conversation about Conflict* that can go directly to a community. This will connect the dialogue surrounding conflict to the faith principles of individual traditions in a context of individual and collective growth and help to give members and leaders alike increased confidence in acknowledging and tackling the challenge of conflict.

For more details and how to get involved, visit <http://www.stethelburgas.org/conflict-resilience> or contact angharad@stethelburgas.org for more information.

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Art and Sacred Places exhibition

Art and Sacred Places is hosting two exhibitions of Nicola Dale's 'Between', an artwork in two forms, one each for Manchester Cathedral and Didsbury's Islamic Centre. The exhibitions will run at both venues from Wednesday 2 October to Wednesday 27 November. For further information, visit

<http://www.artandsacredplaces.org>.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Near Neighbours

The Near Neighbours programme cycle is due to reach its end in March and it intends to have allocated all its funds by the end of December 2013.

The programme is a three-year initiative, run by the Church Urban Fund, which aims to bring people together in diverse communities, helping them build relationships and collaborate to improve the local community in which they live. It currently operates in the following areas: East and South East London, the City of Birmingham, Leicester, Bradford, Burnley and Oldham. The scheme has also recently been undertaking some capacity building work in Luton.

The small grants programme offers grants ranging from £250 to £5,000. The fund invests in environmental, social, cultural, artistic and sporting ideas which fulfill the criteria, which can be found at www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/grants. Examples of funded projects can be found at: <http://www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/funded-projects>

The Fund is pleased to receive applications from people of different faith groups or none, working in partnership with people of different faiths and within the criteria. Details on how to apply can be found at www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/grants.

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My Community Rights

The website <http://mycommunityrights.org.uk> is an online hub and advice service, run by Locality, which helps communities to use the community rights which came into effect with the Localism Act 2011 (such as the Community Right to Challenge and the Community Right to Bid). These rights are designed to give local communities more control over what happens locally, and have been used by communities wishing to take ownership of an asset which is being sold, take over a service they feel could be run better, or build new facilities. For information on ways to fund projects initiated using the community rights, visit

<http://www.communityshares.org.uk/>

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Big Lottery Fund

The Big Lottery Fund give grants from £300 to over £500,000 to organisations ranging from small local groups to major national charities. Information about their various grant schemes can be found at:

<http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/Home/Funding/Funding%20finder>

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Listed places of worship grant scheme update

The Government has announced changes to the scope and operation of the Listed Places of Worship grant scheme which came into effect on 1 October. These changes will enable more listed places of worship to claim for grants through the scheme. More work is now eligible for claims under the scheme, including professional services relating directly to eligible building work, such as architect fees.

Further information is online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/listed-places-of-worship-grant-scheme-extended>.

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RESOURCES AND TRAINING

Christians and Jews Building Bridges

The Revd Marcus Braybrooke, former Director of the Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ) and currently President of the World Congress of Faiths and co-founder of the Three Faiths Forum, has written a new book which provides an overview of the past twenty years of CCJ. The book is a sequel to 'Children of One God', which told the story of the first fifty years of CCJ.

For further information, or to purchase the book, visit

http://www.ccj.org.uk/Groups/212743/The_Council_of/Resources/Recommended_Books/Recommended_Books.aspx

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University of Derby report on 'Religion and Belief discrimination in England and Wales – a decade of change'

A team at the University of Derby has produced a 'research informed policy brief' on religion and belief discrimination in England and Wales that charts the changing attitudes and responses to this over the course of 2001-2011. Published in August, it deals with policy frameworks that have been put in place over that time to seek to overcome issues of discrimination on the grounds of religion and belief. It also

presents a 'three-fold' policy approach structured around the 'Christian' 'Non-religious' and 'religiously pluralistic' aspects of religion and belief equalities.

The report sets out a 'three-dimensional' policy framework to deal with discrimination felt by religion and belief groups from wider society; discrimination by religion and belief groups against others in wider society; and discrimination within/between religion and belief groups.

The report can be downloaded from: http://www.derby.ac.uk/files/policy_brief.pdf

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Report of Demos Inquiry into Faith, Community and Society

The Demos Inquiry into Faith, Community and Society set out to explore the role of faith in British society and politics. It investigated the relationship between religious belief, values and political motivation, and looked at the role that faith groups play in delivering public services. The report brings together the research conducted for the inquiry, and includes a new essay by the Inquiry's chair, Mr Stephen Timms MP.

Further information can be found online at <http://www.demos.co.uk/publications/thefaitcollection>

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Runnymede report on New Muslims

The Runnymede Trust has produced a report entitled *The New Muslims* which finds that dominant perceptions of Muslims are damaging as they do not take into account the vast complexities and differences in British Muslim identities. It examines the wide range of Muslim identities in the UK through looking at a number of factors, including changing demographics, Muslims in the army, Muslims in the media, the unique histories of different Muslim groups in the UK, and youth culture. It makes recommendations based on what it sees as the failure of policy to reflect the lived experiences of British Muslims.

For more information about the report, visit <http://www.runnymedetrust.org/news/499/272/The-New-Muslim-Report-Launched.html>.

The report can be downloaded from http://www.derby.ac.uk/files/policy_brief.pdf.

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Dialogue Theories

A new book by Frances Sleaf and Dr Omer Sener, edited by Professor Paul Weller, will be launched on 8 October. The book, called *Dialogue Theories*, aims to advance theoretical and practical engagement with dialogue by introducing the work of ten individuals who have made important and insightful contributions to thought in this

area. The thinkers, drawn from diverse intellectual and cultural backgrounds, include quantum physicist David Bohm, Jewish philosopher, theologian and educationalist Martin Buber, social theorist Jurgen Habermas and Islamic scholar and peace advocate Fethullah Gulen. Together with the ***Journal of Dialogue Studies*** which will be launched this year, and the Dialogue Studies MA co-delivered with Keele University, it is also intended to contribute to the related goal of the development of "Dialogue Studies" as a distinct academic field.

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Holocaust Memorial Day 2014 Workshops

The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust is running workshops across the UK throughout September and October for anyone interested in marking Holocaust Memorial Day 2014 (27 January). The workshops will explore the theme of 'Journeys' and how Holocaust Memorial Day can be tailored to be relevant for both faith and inter faith audiences. There will be a chance to hear life stories of Holocaust and genocide survivors and network and share best practice with local organisers.

Dates for workshops and booking information can be found online at <http://www.hmd.org.uk/news/book-your-place-our-hmd-2014-workshops> or by telephoning 020 7785 7029.

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JOBS AND VOLUNTEERING

IFN Volunteering

The Inter Faith Network has volunteering opportunities from time to time. These vary from helping with such tasks as mailings and organising the resources library, through to work on the website and supporting such projects as national Inter Faith Week. We are always interested to hear from people with enthusiasm for developing inter faith understanding and cooperation, commitment to the goals of IFN, a positive and diplomatic approach and such skills as:

- good written and verbal communication
- attention to detail
- IT skills
- event organising

If you are interested in volunteering and would like to know more, please email us at ifnet@interfaith.org.uk or ring 020 7730 0410.

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Faiths Forum for London – Interns

The Faiths Forum for London is seeking two part time volunteer Interns: a Communications and Events Intern (14 to 36 hours per week) and a Finance Intern (7 to 14 hours per week). Descriptions of the roles can be found online at <http://www.faithsforum4london.org/about/team/intern-roles/>.

The roles are based in London and travel costs will be paid, together with a lunch allowance. Applications for these roles will close once suitable candidates have been found and the start date will be as soon as possible. To apply, send a CV, covering letter and the names of two referees to mustafa@faithsforum4london.org.

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Three Faiths Forum – Schools Coordinator

The Three Faiths Forum is seeking to recruit a Schools Coordinator to help develop and deliver its education programmes. This is a very varied role which includes leading on curriculum and resource development, delivering inter faith and intercultural training for teachers and educators and working on the strategic development of the team.

Applications are welcomed from people of all backgrounds, with religious or non-religious beliefs. Applications must be made on the official form. CVs and cover letters will not be accepted. The application deadline is 14 October and interviews will be held on 18 October. For further information, visit <http://www.3ff.org.uk/jobs/schools-coordinator.php> or call 0207 485 1475.

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Forum for Discussion of Israel and Palestine – Project Officer

FODIP is seeking to recruit a part time Project Officer to help deliver its 'Women's Voices' project. This is a 2-year project funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation during which women from faith communities and/or traditional backgrounds will learn about aspects of life for women in Israel/Palestine and also learn about examples of cooperative initiatives involving Jewish, Christian and Muslim women.

As it is a genuine occupational requirement, the Trustees are seeking to appoint a woman to this role. The role is 2 days per week and is based in central Manchester. Applications must be made on the official form. The closing date for applications is 10 October and interviews will take place in Manchester on 30 October. For further information, visit <http://www.fodip.org/> or call 01865 787458.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS AND TENDERS

Diversity Champion awards

The Diversity Champion Award is an International Diversity Mark that recognises and promotes excellence and achievement in diversity. The awards highlight those organisations who actively promote diversity in ways that benefit: all employees; the organisation's clients, users or customers; and the wider community. The awards are open to all organisations, irrespective of size, geographical location or sector. Details on how to apply, including registration fees, can be found at <http://www.diversitychampion.org/apply-now-for-2014.html>. (There is a 50% discount on registrations before 31 October.)

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International Theological Conference

The Centre for Inter-religious Dialogue at the Australian Catholic University in Melbourne, Australia, is hosting an international theological conference on Interfaith Dialogue in May 2014.

They are presently accepting proposals for plenary speakers as well as paper presenters. Further information is available at www.acu.edu.au/interfaithconference.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Week of Prayer for World Peace

This year's Week of Prayer for World Peace takes place from **13 to 20** October. Each year, its Committee produces a leaflet of prayers for peace drawn from the major religious traditions of the world. The 2013-14 leaflet can be ordered from <http://www.weekofprayerforworldpeace.com/prayers.html>.

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One World Week

One World Week will this year take place from **20 to 27 October**. The theme is 'More Than Enough?', which offers two linked elements: 1) along with the European Global Education Week, it wants to explore issues about consumption of resources; and 2) it is offering an opportunity to support or organise local events with people and organisations involved to follow up the multi-organisation campaign "Enough Food for

everyone IF” which asks the question “Why, if the world produces enough food for everyone, do more than two million children die every year because they can’t get enough to eat?” and to ask what needs to be done next.

For more information, visit <http://www.oneworldweek.org>.

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Mitzvah Day

Mitzvah Day will be taking place on **Sunday 17 November**. Mitzvah Day is a Jewish led day of social action – around the world thousands of people take part in hands on projects to support existing charities and to build stronger communities. The goal is to reduce hardship and poverty and to help the environment. People are encouraged to volunteer for projects in their communities and anyone can take part regardless of their background. The Day brings people of different faiths together to volunteer.

This year there is a special focus on tackling hunger and raising awareness about what people can do about it.

See www.mitzvahday.org.uk or contact Sophie@mitzvahday.org.uk

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Inter Faith Week 2013

Inter Faith Week 2013 in England, Northern Ireland and Wales will take place from **Sunday 17 to Saturday 23 November**.

Scottish Interfaith Week will take place from **24 November until 1 December**, including, as usual, St Andrew’s Day.

Further information is in the [UK/National updates section](#).

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DIARY DATES

The **Three Faiths Forum** is hosting its fifth ‘Urban Dialogue Exhibition’ from Wednesday 2 October to Monday 14 October at the Red Gallery, 3 Rivington Street, London EC2A 3DT. The mixed-media exhibition features the work of 20 artists and features two specially commissioned collaborations. To celebrate its 5th anniversary several special Urban Dialogue events are being held in the gallery as well: including Female Voices (for women only) on the evening of Thursday 10 October; and Shoreditch Singathon on the afternoon of Sunday 13 October. For further information on all these events and the exhibition, visit <http://www.3ff.org.uk/arts/>.

The **Interfaith Scotland** AGM takes place on Tuesday 8 October from 6.00pm to 8.00pm at Burgh Halls, Linlithgow, West Lothian EH49 7AH. The AGM is preceded by a public talk on ‘New Models of Community Leadership for 21st Century Scotland’, Barbara Simpson, Professor of Leadership and Organisational Dynamics at

Strathclyde University. Further information can be found at <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/events/>.

The **Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby** is hosting a launch event on Tuesday 8 October for 'Dialogue Theories' by Frances Sleaf and Dr Omer Sener, edited by Prof Paul Weller. Also being launched the same evening is 'The Muslim World and Politics in Transition'. The event will take place from 6.00pm to 9.00pm at the Multi Faith Centre at the University of Derby, Kedleston Road, Derby DE22 1GB. For further information, telephone 01332 591285 or visit www.multifaithcentre.org.

Dudley Borough Interfaith Network will be holding its Autumn Open Forum event on Tuesday 8 October from 7.15pm at the Shree Gujarati Hindu Centre on Hope Street. The event will celebrate the festival of *Navratri*. For further information, and to confirm your place, please contact Gillian on interfaith@dudleycvs.org.uk or 01238 267415.

The **Christian Muslim Forum**, together with the **Faith & Khidmah Campaign** (a joint project of the An-Nisa Society and the Radical Middle Way) are hosting an event on Wednesday 9 October on 'Faith in the public space'. This round table event will run from 10.00am to 2.15pm at a London location. For further information, visit <http://www.christianmuslimforum.org/index.php/calendar/forum-events>.

The **St Ethelburga's Centre** is holding an event on Wednesday 9 October on 'Re-imagining the Sacred in Food' as part of its wider series on 'Re-imagining the Sacred'. Faith traditions have often linked food with ritual, celebration and community. The event will consider questions, such as 'How is this relationship between food and the sacred experienced today?' and 'How might this be reflected in farming and food production?' The event will run at the Centre, 78 Bishopsgate, London EC2N 4AG, from 6.30pm. Further information can be found online at <https://www.stethelburgas.org/civcrm/event/info?id=545&reset=1>.

South Shropshire Interfaith Forum will be holding its Annual Lecture, preceded by its AGM, on Wednesday 9 October from 7pm at Ludlow Methodist Church. The title of the lecture, to be given by Symon Hill, is 'Bad news for the poor? The role of religion in a time of austerity.' For further information, visit <http://www.ssif.org.uk/events.html>.

Calderdale Inter-faith Women's Group will be holding its next meeting on Thursday 10 October from 10.00am to 12 noon. The meeting will be held at King Cross Fire Station and will be joined by concert pianist Kay Milon who will be speaking about 'Living abroad but not as a tourist'. The event is open to women only. For further information, contact Margaret Barnes on 01422 345582.

The **Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe** is funding an exhibition at the Brunei Gallery of the School of African and Oriental Studies in London from 11 October to 14 December entitled 'The Everlasting Flame: Zoroastrianism in History and Imagination'. The exhibition will be free to attend and will "provide a visual narrative of the history of Zoroastrianism from its ancient Iranian roots, to its emergence as the foremost religion of the Achaemenid and Parthian empires as well as its consolidation as the state religion under the Sasanians and the establishment of the great regnal fires". For further information, visit <http://www.theeverlastingflame.com>.

The Resurgence Trust is hosting a 'Festival of Wellbeing' on Saturday 12 October. This event will include music, poetry, talks and food and speakers will include Rowan Williams, Alys Fowler, Tony Juniper, Ben Okri. It will be held at Bishopsgate

Institute, 230 Bishopsgate, London EC2M 4QH from 10.00am to 6.00pm. To book a place, telephone 01237 441293 or visit www.resurgence.org/wellbeing.

Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity will be holding an event on the theme 'Life, the Universe and Everything' at Immersive Vision Theatre (Planetarium) at Plymouth University on Saturday 12 and Sunday 13 October. The event will include an opportunity to watch the Planetarium presentation, followed by speakers linking their faith to 'the bigger picture.' For further information email info@pcfcd.co.uk or telephone 01752 254438.

The **St Ethelburga's Centre** is organising a sponsored walk in London on Sunday 13 October at 1.00pm. The walk will cover 9 miles from Barking Abbey to the Centre at Bishopsgate and is likely to take around four hours. Participants will be raising funds for the Centre and there will be storytelling, music and refreshments en route. For further information, visit <http://www.stethelburgas.org/events/public>.

This year's inter faith gathering for the **Week of Prayer for World Peace** will take place on Sunday 13 October at 2.30pm. It is this year being hosted by the UK Baha'i community and will be held at the London Interfaith Centre, 125 Salusbury Road, London NW6 6RG. For further information, visit www.weekofprayerforworldpeace.com/events.html.

Cheltenham Inter Faith will be holding its next meeting on Tuesday 15 October from 7.30pm at the Friends Meeting House, Warwick Place. Celia Blackden, Inter Faith Officer for Churches Together in England, will be giving a talk. For further information, email info@cheltenhaminterfaith.org.uk or telephone 01242 602412.

Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource will be hosting a seminar on the theme 'Living Inter-Faith' on Wednesday 16 October from 7pm at the Inter-Faith Centre. The seminar will be led by the Revd Fergus Capie, former Director of the London Inter Faith Centre. For further information visit http://www.sifre.org.uk/home_page_2.htm.

Welwyn Hatfield Interfaith Group will be holding an open discussion entitled 'the Israel/ Palestine Question' on Thursday 17 October from 7.30pm – 9.30pm at Park Lounge, Campus West, Welwyn Garden City. For further information, email Reynold Rosenberg on reynoldrosenberg@yahoo.co.uk.

The **Hindu Christian Forum** is hosting an event, supported by Near Neighbours, on Saturday 19 October entitled 'Building Faith'. The event takes place from 10.00am to 4.00pm and will include a tour of places of worship in Leicester with George Ballentyne, Voluntary and Community Sector Engagement Manager at Leicester City Council. To book a place or for further information, contact Paresh Solanki at HCFForum@outlook.com or on 07425 173264.

Horsham Interfaith Forum with Faiths in Sussex and South East England Faiths Forum will be a day of talks, workshops and discussions on the theme 'Conflict within Faith Communities' facilitated by St Ethelburga's Centre on Saturday 19 October from 1pm – 6pm. For further information, and to register by 11 October, please contact Alison Schillinger on 01342 710318 or email aschillinger@worth.org.uk.

Lambeth Multi-Faith Action Group is holding a conference on Sunday 20 October on 'Faith and Old Age'. The speakers will include Dr Raza Hashim, a Doctor of Psychiatry, and the Reverend Canon Ivor Smith-Cameron, founder member of the South London Inter Faith Group. The event will take place at the Ahl-UI-Bayt Islamic

Centre, 11-13 Edgeley Road, London SW4 6EH from 2.30pm to 4.30pm. Guests are asked to dress modestly.

Slough Faith Partnership is holding a film festival from Monday 21 to Saturday 26 October as part of One World Week. Each evening will include a film on a particular topic, followed by a panel discussion. The topics include: Autism, LGBT, Mental Health, HIV/AIDS and Disability/Carers. For further information, visit <http://www.sloughfaithpartnership.org.uk/>.

Public Spirit, an online forum on faith and public policy, will be launched on Wednesday 23 October in partnership with FaithAction, the Secretariat to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Faith and Society. The launch event will take place at 4.00pm at the Queen Elizabeth Conference Centre in London and will include a panel debate on faith and finance. To book a place, visit <https://publicspiritlaunch.eventbrite.co.uk>.

Interfaith Vision will be holding a Retreat from 4.00pm on Monday 28 October to 2.30pm on Wednesday 30 October at Glastonbury Abbey House Retreat Centre. For further information, including costs, contact Annie Blampied on 01342 825511 or at annie@annieblampied.co.uk

Brighton and Hove Inter-Faith Contact Group will be holding a dialogue event on the theme of death on Wednesday 30 October. For further details, contact admin@interfaithcontactgroup.com

The **West Midlands Faiths Forum** is celebrating its 10th Anniversary with a series of events on the theme of 'Moving forward'. The events are being held in November, February, March, May and July. For further information, contact info@wmfaithsforum.org.uk.

Surrey Faith Links will be holding an event on the theme 'Women and Faith – who is the oppressor? Religion or men?', including local perspectives from Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The event will take place on Sunday 17 November, and is open to men and women of all faiths. For further information, contact Kauser.Akhtar@cofeguildford.org.uk.

The **Christian Muslim Forum** is holding a day of dialogue at Blackburn Cathedral in Lancashire on Monday 18 November entitled 'Jesus and Muhammad: Relevant today?' Topics will include: Women in Churches and Mosques; Our Youths; Our Economy; and Our Environment. The event will run from 9.00am to 3.00pm and places can be booked online at <http://www.christianmuslimforum.org/index.php/calendar>.

Westminster Cathedral Interfaith Group will be hosting a talk on Zoroastrianism by Phiroza Ghan on Wednesday 20 November from 3.30pm to 5.30pm. The event will be held in the Hinsley Room, Morpeth Terrace, on the right of the main entrance to Westminster Cathedral in London. For further information, contact John Woodhouse by text on 07908 888586.

The **Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter** is hosting the next in its series of seminars on 'Bilateral Dialogue: Engaging with the Other' on Sunday 24 November. The event will be held from 2.30pm to 4.15pm on 'Christian Buddhist Dialogue – Precepts and Virtues' and speakers will include Fr Michael Barnes SJ and Anil Goonewardene. Further information, including booking details can be found online at <http://www.sistersofourladyofsion.org/Events.aspx>.

The **Christian Muslim Forum** is hosting an event on Tuesday 26 November as part of its series of seminars on Christian Muslim Marriage. The aim is to offer exploration of the issues to religious leaders and others working with inter faith couples and provide pastoral support to those who are in inter faith relationships. For The event runs from 10.00am to 1.00pm at the St Philip's Centre in Leicester.

Further information can be found online at

<http://www.christianmuslimforum.org/index.php/calendar/forum-events>.

Inform is hosting its Anniversary Conference from Friday 31 January 2014 to Sunday 2 February 2014 at the London School of Economics in London. The theme is 'Minority Religions: Contemplating the Past and Anticipating the Future'. To register, visit <http://www.inform.ac.uk>. Registration opens on 1 November 2013.

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For more information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org

For more information on events and projects in a number of the English regions see:

London: www.faithsforum4london.org

North East: www.nerfn.org

South East: www.se-faithforum.net

South West: www.faithnetsouthwest.org.uk

West Midlands: www.wmfaithsforum.org.uk

See also: <http://lbfm.wordpress.com/> (London Boroughs Faiths Network) and <http://www.fbrn.org.uk/news> (Faith-based Regeneration Network).

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 4 November with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer:

Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH

www.interfaith.org.uk

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IFN e-bulletin

December 2013

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 23 January with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and projects and future events.

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Inter Faith Network for the UK Appeal

The Inter Faith Network for the UK was founded in 1987 to promote good inter faith relations in the UK. It has made a tremendous difference to relations between different faith communities in the UK and it is a vital resource for inter faith cooperation and understanding in years to come. Its role is unique both in the UK and Europe: linking national faith communities, local, regional and national inter faith bodies, and educational bodies and working with them to deepen inter faith understanding and cooperation as part of working for the common good.

The Inter Faith Network is part supported by faith communities and by the Government (through the Department for Communities and Local Government) as well as through donations from individuals who see the value of its work.

An Appeal was launched earlier this year to support IFN's work. Supporters to date have included the Most Revd Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, and other leading faith community figures, institutions and trusts linked to a number of faith communities, as well as local inter faith practitioners and other supporters. As we come towards the end of the year, we would like to thank warmly those individuals and organisations who have already given generously and to encourage other readers to contribute to the Appeal to offer support towards IFN's work.

Donations can be made online at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/donations.htm> or by a cheque payable to the Inter Faith Network for the UK. A donations form for those who would prefer to pay by cheque or standing order can be found at the end of this e-bulletin.

Gifts at all levels will be carefully used to help strengthen the vital work of building good relations between people of different faiths and beliefs in Britain, creating a strong basis for positive coexistence and cooperation now and for years to come.

Thank you for your support.

Mr Dorab Mistry OBE, Appeal Chair

The Revd Bob Fyffe and Mr Vivian Wineman (Co-Chairs)
Mr Mohinder Singh Chana, Dr Kishan Manocha, Maulana Shahid Raza OBE
and Dr Jagdish Sharma (Vice-Chairs)

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UK/NATIONAL UPDATES

Inter Faith Week

Inter Faith Week 2013 in England, Northern Ireland and Wales drew to a close on 23 November. By the end of the Week over 350 events were known to have taken place and tweets, emails and posts have conveyed a picture of a wide variety of these which have drawn many people into new experiences, new dialogues and new opportunities for learning and cooperation. Details of these can be found on the IFW website: www.interfaithweek.org.uk

The IFN office would be pleased to hear how your event or events went and to be emailed any photographs which you think might be good to include on the website or in future materials about the Week. If you have time, we would be very pleased if you would draw on your experience to help us continue to develop the Week to help increase opportunities for inter faith learning and cooperation, including between those of religious and non-religious beliefs. A short evaluation form can be found on the Inter Faith Week website at <http://www.interfaithweek.org/> or you can simply send an email to Interfaithweek@interfaith.org.uk with your reflections on its questions which are:

- a) We think our event was a successful Inter Faith Week event because:
- b) What surprised us most about the event was:
- c) On reflection, we would have done the following things differently:
- d) We evaluated our event and did so in the following way(s):
- e) We have the following tips for other Inter Faith Week event organisers:
- f) If possible, we would like to see the following additions to the Inter Faith Week website next year:
- g) Any other thoughts.

Inter Faith Week 2014 will run from Sunday 16 November until Saturday 22 November.

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Scottish Interfaith Week

Scottish Interfaith Week took place from 24 November until 1 December, including within it, as usual, St Andrew's Day on 30 November. The theme for Scottish Interfaith Week this year was 'Values and Visions for the Future of Scotland' in preparation for the Scottish Referendum in 2014.

Around 60 events took place. More information can be found online at <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/our-activities/scottish-interfaith-week/>.

Together in Service

The Department for Communities and Local Government is supporting a new programme, Together in Service (<http://www.togetherinservice.net/>), which builds on the legacy of the A Year of Service programme. It aims both to celebrate the contribution of faith communities to society through social action, and to support the emergence of new multi-faith volunteering projects at local level.

Linked to this is a Together in Service Fund, which is administered by FaithAction. Further information can be found in the section on [Funding Opportunities](#).

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All Party Parliamentary Group for RE inquiry

The All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Religious Education is currently holding an inquiry into the contribution of RE to good community relations. The first oral evidence session took place on 10 December.

Further information about the APPG, including a list of its members, and a copy of its most recent report *RE: The Truth Unmasked* which examines the supply of, and support for, Religious Education teachers can be found at <http://religioueducationcouncil.org.uk/appg>.

The Secretariat for the APPG is provided by the Religious Education Council for England and Wales.

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Religious Education Subject Review

In May 2012, the RE Council, as part of its strategic plan, initiated a review of Religious Education in England to run parallel to the Government's review of the National Curriculum. More information can be found online at <http://resubjectreview.recouncil.org.uk/>.

The report of the Review was published on 23 October with a launch event in the House of Commons. The full text, which includes a non-statutory national curriculum framework, can be read at <http://resubjectreview.recouncil.org.uk/re-review-report>.

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New APPG for British Hindus

A new All Party Parliamentary Group for British Hindus was launched on 18 December following an earlier meeting in November. Its Chair is Bob Blackman MP and Vice-Chairs are Virendra Sharma MP Matthew Offord MP and Lord Dholakia. The Hindu Lawyers Association will be providing its Secretariat.

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Extremism Task Force report published

The Government's Extremism Task Force has produced a report setting out proposals to tackle extremism in the UK. Published on 4 December, this can be downloaded at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-extremism-in-the-uk-report-by-the-extremism-taskforce>.

The report's proposals include:

- considering if there is a case for new civil powers, similar to the new anti-social behaviour powers, to target the behaviours extremists use to radicalise others;
- considering if there is a case for new types of order to ban groups which seek to undermine democracy or use hate speech, when necessary to protect the public or prevent crime and disorder;
- consulting on new legislation to strengthen the powers of the Charity Commission;
- working with internet companies to restrict access to terrorist material online which is hosted overseas but illegal under UK law and help them with their continuing efforts to identify what material to include in family-friendly filters;
- improving the process for the public to report extremist content online;
- making delivery of the Channel programme, which supports individuals at risk of being radicalised, a legal requirement in England and Wales; and
- ensuring prisoners who have demonstrated extremist views in prison receive intervention and support on release.

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Beyond 2011 Census consultation

As noted in the October issue of IFN's e-bulletin, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) has been carrying out a consultation into the future of the UK census following on from its 'Beyond 2011' programme of research. The consultation closed on 13 December. ONS hopes to report on the consultation in early 2014.

The first 'Beyond 2011' consultation, which took place from October 2011 to January 2012, identified two possible ways forward on a national census-like data collection exercise:

- A once a decade census, similar to the 2011 Census but primarily online

- A census compiled of existing administrative data and compulsory annual surveys.

Respondents to the latest consultation were asked to comment on ways forward on one, or both, of these suggestions. For more information, visit: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/about-ons/who-ons-are/programmes-and-projects/beyond-2011/beyond-2011-consultation/index.html>

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Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill

Stage 2 of the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill is due to be considered by the Scottish Parliament on 19 December. Stage 1 of the Bill was passed by a large majority (98 to 15) in November. It is understood that the proposal is that religious bodies would 'opt in' to perform same sex marriages in the same way that they would do so under the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 for England and Wales which received Royal Assent in July this year.

As well as the main Bill, Scottish Ministers have also reached an agreement with the UK government for an amendment to the 2010 Equality Act. This aims to protect individual religious celebrants in Scotland who do not wish to conduct same-sex marriages from the threat of court action claiming discrimination.

Information about the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill can be found online at <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/63773.aspx>.

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Supreme Court ruling on Church of Scientology chapel

Overtaking an earlier decision by a lower court, the Supreme Court ruled on 11 December that a chapel of the Church of Scientology is a place of meeting for religious worship where marriages can be solemnised and should be accepted as such by the Registrar General of Births, Marriages and Deaths. The Supreme Court said that a court ruling to the contrary in 1970 was out of date in its definition of religious worship as involving "reverence or veneration of God or of a Supreme Being".

In delivering the Court's judgment, Lord Toulson said that religion could be defined more accurately as a "spiritual or non-secular belief system" which "claims to explain mankind's place in the universe and relationship with the infinite" and give people guidance on life. "Such a belief system may or may not involve belief in a supreme being, but it does involve a belief that there is more to be understood about mankind's nature and relationship to the universe than can be gained from the senses or from science."

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Butler-Sloss Commission

As noted in the October issue of the e-bulletin, the Woolf Institute recently convened a Commission on Multi-Faith Britain. This is chaired by Baroness Elizabeth Butler-Sloss and seeks to: a) consider the place and role of religion, belief and conviction in contemporary Britain and the significance of emerging trends, b) examine how concepts of Britishness may be inclusive of a wide range of faith traditions and beliefs, and may influence self-understanding and a sense of identity; in different traditions and communities; c) explore how shared understandings of the public good may contribute to greater social cohesion and crosscommunity action; and d) make recommendations for public life and policy.

The Commission will continue to meet over a period of two years and will include national and local level public hearings and the publication of two reports: an interim report in late spring/early summer of 2014 to contribute to pre-election debates and manifesto commitments; and a final report in late spring/early summer of 2015 to contribute to debates around the policy and the legislative programme of the new Government following the 2015 general election.

Members are: Bishop Dr Joe Aldred; Dr Ian Bradley; Andrew Copson; Shaunaka Rishi Das; Prof Gwen Griffith-Dickson; Mark Hammond; Dr Jagbir Jhutti-Johal; Prof Francesca Klug; Prof Maleiha Malik; Imam Ibrahim Mogra; Brian Pearce (former Director of the Inter Faith Network for the UK); Canon Dr Angus Ritchie; Rabbi Dr Norman Solomon; and the Revd Dr Robert Tosh. The Patrons are: Lord Bhikhu Parekh (also a member of the Commission); Sir Iqbal Sacranie; Lord Rowan Williams; and Lord Harry Woolf. The Convenor is Dr Edward Kessler. The Advisory Group members (who are also members of the Commission) are: Dr Shana Cohen; Lord Richard Harries; and Prof Tariq Modood. Further information on the Commission is available at <http://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/>.

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Consultation on the Code of Practice for the Human Transplantation (Wales) Act

The Human Tissue Authority (HTA) consultation on the draft Code of Practice for the Human Transplantation (Wales) Act closes on 23 December.

This legislation will make Wales the first country in the UK to introduce a deemed consent system for organ and tissue donation for transplantation after death. The consultation process is vital to the development of the Code of Practice and allows interested parties to contribute to the document and ensure the operational requirements of the legislation are implemented accurately.

Further information on the consultation, including how to submit a response, can be found online at <http://www.hta.gov.uk/consultations/consultationonthecodeofpracticeenglish.cfm>.

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PROJECTS

Women of Faith – Manchester

The Faith Network 4 Manchester has launched a new Women of Faith project which will explore and celebrate different cultures and religions and offer learning opportunities for all. The project was launched on 27 November and builds on the women's events held by the Muslim Jewish Forum in Manchester over recent years. For further information, contact Eve Davidson and Farah Mitha at admin@fn4m.org.

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Devon-wide Faith Network

Are you a young person in the Devon area who's interested in other faiths, and sharing your own with others? The Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity is helping to set up a Devon-wide network, with a hub group in Plymouth to start very soon. Anyone interested in getting involved, should contact Richard Thurley at the Centre to find out more - 01752 254438 or email info@pcfcd.co.uk or visit <http://www.pcfcd.co.uk>.

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'Building Our Futures Together'

Faith Matters has recently launched a new project which is working to ensure that diverse communities have the chance to dialogue with, and engage with, various members of the Armed Forces and their families. The 'Building Our Futures Together' project will provide attendees with a historical insight as to the role of Commonwealth soldiers who fought in the Great Wars and will also provide faith communities with the chance to meet chaplains from different faiths who provide pastoral care to serving soldiers. For further information, contact joanne@faith-matters.org.

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SOAS Interfaith Music Festival

The third Interfaith Music Festival run by the School of African and Oriental Studies at the University of London will take place in February 2014. The Festival is a free day of talks and musical and dance performances from people of diverse religious backgrounds promoting inter faith dialogue. Information on this year's Festival can be found online at <http://www.soas.ac.uk/equalitydiversity/events/28feb2013-interfaith-music-festival.html> and <http://www.youtube.com/SOASIFMF>.

Anyone interested in offering a performance for the Festival, should email Anja Fahlenkamp at interfaith@soas.ac.uk. (In order for SOAS to enable the Festival to be for free for all to attend, performers donate their work for free and no reimbursements can be paid towards travel or performance.)

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Together in Service Fund

The Together in Service Fund, a programme supported by the Department for Communities and Local Government and administered by FaithAction, was launched in November. It will be making available up to £160,000 over two years in small grants of £2,000 or £5,000 to facilitate new multi faith social action at the local level. Grants will be available on a 1:1 match-funding basis to 'constituted bodies'.

The closing date for the next round of applications is 6 February. Further details about funding, including eligibility, how to apply, and the full schedule of closing dates can be found at <http://www.togetherinservice.net/funding/>.

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Church Urban Fund Mustard Seed programme

The Mustard Seed Grant programme run by the Church Urban Fund aims to provide grants of up to £5,000 to enable churches and faith-based organisations to engage in social action, by supporting them to initiate or develop community work. Details on criteria for grants and how to apply can be found online at <http://www.cuf.org.uk/how-apply>.

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Funding Central website

Funding Central - <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/default.aspx> - is a free website for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises that provides access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, together with tools and resources supporting organisations to develop sustainable income strategies appropriate to their needs.

Funding Central is managed by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, in partnership with Idox Information Solutions Ltd, and funded by the Government's Office for Civil Society.

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Comic Relief Stronger Communities grants

Comic Relief's grants programme now has five themes, one of which is 'Stronger Communities'. Grants for the Stronger Communities theme are managed by Local Community Foundations and range in size from £1,000 to £10,000 per year. Priority is given to small, locally-based groups or organisations in areas of disadvantage that have a clear understanding of the needs of their community and are undertaking actions as a means of addressing these needs. Anyone wishing to apply for a Local

Communities grant should contact their local community foundation. Further details can be found online at http://ukcommunityfoundations.org/programmes/comic_relief/.

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Big Lottery Fund

The Big Lottery Fund give grants from £300 to over £500,000 to organisations ranging from small local groups to major national charities. Information about their various grant schemes can be found at <http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/Home/Funding/Funding%20finder>.

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RESOURCES AND TRAINING

Near Neighbours Toolkits

As part of the Near Neighbours programme, a number of toolkits have been produced for grassroots projects on topics such as 'Applications for Fundraising' and 'How to Promote your Project'. These toolkits are likely to be particularly useful for local inter faith projects, and can be downloaded from the Near Neighbours website at <http://www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/Resources>

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Multi Faith Calendars

The 2013-14 Shap Calendar of Religious Festivals, which is used by many schools as well as more widely, published by the Shap Working Party for World Religions in Education, is available to purchase from its website at <http://www.shapworkingparty.org.uk/calendar.html>. This e-calendar includes A4 calendar sheets and photos, together with a booklet giving a brief description of each religious festival. A separate A2 wallchart is also available.

Many inter faith initiatives include a mini calendar of faith festivals and other days of observance in their newsletters or on their websites. Some are now also producing calendars for sale. Two such are the Hampshire Interfaith Network 'Expressions' calendar featuring children's artwork (details of which are available at <http://www.hants-interfaith.org/cal.htm>) and the calendar produced by Leicester Council of Faiths together with Faiths Aware Leicester, entitled 'A Festival Year' (details of which are available from Amanda@christiansaware.co.uk).

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Three Faiths Forum Infographics

The Three Faiths Forum has been producing a series of 'infographics' summarising facts about different belief traditions and religious holidays. The latest sheets include Dussehra (Hindu) and Chanukah (Jewish) and can be found online at Pinterest - <http://www.pinterest.com/pin/339388521890681498/>.

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Westminster Faith Debates book

A book has been produced called *Religion and Personal Life* which presents the series of 2013 Westminster Faith Debates in condensed form, together with additional research findings and teaching materials. The book has been edited by Professor Linda Woodhead with Norman Winter and has commentary by the Rt Hon Charles Clarke.

Religion and Personal Life is available to purchase from <http://www.darton-longman-todd.co.uk/titles/1841-9780232530186-religion-and-personal-life>.

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Religion, Education and Society essays

A new volume of diverse and multidisciplinary essays on 'Religion, Education and Society', edited by Elisabeth Arweck and Robert Jackson, is now available. The book, which was originally published as a special issue of the *Journal of Beliefs & Values*, presents findings from recent research focusing on young people and the way they relate to religion in their education and upbringing. The book is available to purchase from www.routledge.com/9780415824729.

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Three Faiths Forum Interfaith/Intercultural Facilitation

The Three Faiths forum is running an 'Interfaith/Intercultural Facilitation' training day on 10 January at its offices in London. The day's activities are designed to enhance the intercultural skills and confidence of community professionals and volunteers with experience of basic facilitation.

Participants will learn how to: create and maintain safe space in which group processes can flourish; build group identity and investment; design interfaith/intercultural activities for different purposes; encourage positive contributions and challenge unhelpful behaviour; cultivate deeper, more challenging conversations; respond effectively to controversial moments, and use them as learning opportunities; and reflect and help participants learn from group experiences.

To register, visit <http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/interfaith-and-intercultural-facilitation-training-tickets-9579206665>

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A Conversation about Conflict

The Christian Muslim Forum and St Ethelburga's are running a one-day inter faith dialogue workshop on 20 January exploring the faith influences that can be used to tackle difficult issues in a community setting. The workshop forms part of the Conflict Resilience Programme for Faith Communities and there is a small charge to attend. Places are limited and can be booked online at http://www.christianmuslimforum.org/index.php/calendar?task=view_event&event_id=183.

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St Ethelburga's conflict resilience workshop

The St Ethelburga's Centre has a roving conflict resilience workshop which is available free of charge to faith communities who would like to improve their responses to conflict. This workshop aims to change the way communities think about conflict, bringing it into the context of individual and collective growth, and connecting it with faith principles. It will explore which faith practices and principles can be brought to bear on conflict and also help begin the process of working through specific current disagreements.

The workshop is part of the Centre's Conflict Resilience programme which also includes a series of public talks and lectures, a peer learning group and a multi faith conference later in 2014. For more information on the roving workshop or the rest of the programme, contact angharad@stethelburgas.org or visit <http://www.stethelburgas.org/conflict-resilience>.

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Christians Aware Faith Awareness 'Spirituality' programme

The Faith Awareness Committee of Christians Aware is running a programme in Leicester on Monday evenings from 13 January to 7 April on the theme of 'Spirituality'. The programme seeks to enable people to: recognise a number of different definitions of 'spirituality' in use today and in the past; explore approaches to spirituality from within a limited number of faith perspectives; examine how spiritual practice may be deepened through music and the arts; and be mindful of spirituality and difference in spiritual practice amongst people from different backgrounds. For further information, contact Amanda@christiansaware.co.uk or call 0116 254 0770.

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Encompass Trust International Programme

The Encompass Trust is running a residential programme for young people aged 18 to 25 called the 'International Journey of Understanding'. The programme will include 24 young people from a mix of national backgrounds, faiths, cultures, traditions and conflicts. The ten-day programme, which will be held in the Lake District in January, aims to support the young people to understand each other better and to give them the confidence and skills to promote intercultural understanding in their communities.

For further information, visit <http://www.encompassstrust.org/our-work/international-work/> and for an application form, contact Sahdia Khan at sahdia@encompassstrust.org. The closing date for applications is 18 December.

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JOBS AND VOLUNTEERING

IFN Volunteering

The Inter Faith Network has volunteering opportunities from time to time. These vary from helping with such tasks as mailings and organising the resources library, through to work on the website and supporting such projects as national Inter Faith Week. We are always interested to hear from people with enthusiasm for developing inter faith understanding and cooperation, commitment to the goals of IFN, a positive and diplomatic approach and such skills as:

- good written and verbal communication
- attention to detail
- IT skills
- event organising

If you are interested in volunteering and would like to know more, please email us at ifnet@interfaith.org.uk or ring 020 7730 0410.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS AND TENDERS

Together in Service patron programme

Together in Service is looking for Patrons to support the programme and help disseminate information to communities. If you would like to nominate someone to be a Together in Service patron, please get in touch with Felicity Smith at felicity.smith@faithaction.net.

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The Doha International Award for Interfaith Dialogue

The Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue is seeking nominations for the second Doha International Prize for Interfaith Dialogue. The awards will be presented at the Center's conference in March in Doha which is on the theme of 'Enhancing the Value of Dialogue Through Youth'.

The prize will be given this year for work relating to "youth in interfaith dialogue, successful projects accomplished in the field of activity related to dialogue of youth from different religions, the role of youth in religious dialogue, the role of dialogue in strengthening the capacity of youth and directing their creative energies to build a humane society, a spirit of love, tolerance and co-existence". The award is open to individuals and organisations and there is a cash prize.

Further information can be found online at http://www.dicid.org/english/11th_conf_award.php and nominations should be emailed to award2014@dicid.org by 31 December.

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One World Week - Evaluation

One World Week this year took place on the theme of 'More than enough?'. The Week was held in October and the organisers are currently collecting feedback. Two separate evaluation forms are available: one for participants and one for organisers. The forms can be downloaded from <http://www.oneworldweek.org/v2/2010-event-participation-form.html>.

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Audience for 'The Big Questions'

BBC One is looking for audience members for its next series of *The Big Questions*. The show is an ethical and moral debate programme, hosted by Nicky Campbell which broadcasts live on Sunday mornings. The next shows will be filmed in Mile End in London on Sunday 5 January and in Salford on Sunday 9 January. Two shows will be filmed each day, one in the morning broadcast live and one in the afternoon. Further locations and dates will be confirmed shortly. Anyone who would like to apply for a seat in the audience, should contact Jon Mann on 0141 611 9630 or at JMann@mentorn.tv.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Holocaust Memorial Day - 27 January

'Journeys' is the theme for Holocaust Memorial Day 2014. Each year a specific topic is chosen, relevant to survivors and those who perished, which will enable HMD activity organisers to approach their annual activities the interest of their existing participants and engage new audiences. HMD 2014 will be an opportunity to learn how journeys themselves became part of genocide, and how the journeys undertaken were often experiences of persecution and terror for so many people who suffered in the Holocaust, under Nazi persecution and in the subsequent genocides. It is also an opportunity to learn about the journeys that brought survivors to the UK and how, in many instances, journeys of return have been part of the experience of rebuilding. For more information, see <http://www.hmd.org.uk>.

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World Interfaith Harmony Week – first week of February

World Interfaith Harmony Week is a UN recognised Week which takes place each year during the first week of February. The Week was proposed to the UN General Assembly by HM King Abdullah of Jordan, and the first UN World Interfaith Harmony Week took place in February 2011. Further information about the Week, including its aims and objectives, can be found on its website at <http://worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com>.

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Islam Awareness Week – 24 to 30 March

Further information about Islam Awareness Week can be found online at <http://www.iaw.org.uk/pages/page.php?id=home>. The theme for the 2014 Week has not yet been announced.

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DIARY DATES

York Interfaith Group will be holding its AGM on Wednesday 8 January at 7.30pm at the Unitarian Chapel, St Saviourgate. The AGM is open to members only and participants are invited to bring vegetarian food to share. For further information, contact Mark Cosens on 07796 095 152 or at loscosens@yahoo.co.uk.

Interfaith MK will be holding its next meeting on Thursday 9 January from 7.30pm to 9.30pm in The Crypt, Camphill Community, Japonica Lane, Willen Park, Milton Keynes, MK15 9JY. The evening will include prayers, songs and readings to start the New Year offered from the religious tradition of all the participants present. For further information, contact interfaithmk@gmail.com.

Swindon Interfaith Group will be hosting a talk on 'Character Education' at 7.30pm on Wednesday 15 January. The talk will be led by the UK leader of the Unification Church and will take place at the Pilgrim Centre, Regent Circus, Swindon, SN1 1PX. For more information, visit <http://www.swindoninterfaith.org>.

The first event in the 'Faith in the Public Realm' series being organised by the **Faiths and Civil Society Unit at Goldsmiths, University of London** will take place on Wednesday 15 January. Dr Jasjit Singh from the University of Leeds will be speaking on 'Sikhing On-line: are policy-makers looking in the right places?' The event will take place from 5.00pm to 7.00pm in room 137, Richard Hoggart Building, Goldsmiths College, Lewisham Way, London, SE14 6NW. To book a place, email stacsresearch@gold.ac.uk or for more information and a list of all events in the series, visit www.gold.ac.uk/faithsunit.

Inform is hosting its Anniversary Conference from Friday 31 January 2014 to Sunday 2 February 2014 at the London School of Economics in London. The theme is 'Minority Religions: Contemplating the Past and Anticipating the Future'. There is a charge to attend. Discounts apply if places are booked before 6 January. A full programme will be available shortly. To register, visit <http://www.inform.ac.uk>.

Bath Interfaith Group are organising the Mayor of Bath's Multi Faith Event on Sunday 2 February. This event, which is open to all, will take place at 2.45pm in the Guildhall, High Street, Bath, BA1 5AW. The theme is 'vulnerable people'. For more information, contact Jane O' Hara at janeohara@blueyonder.co.uk.

The Berakah Project is running a Girls Interfaith Vocal Workshop from Monday 17 to Wednesday 19 February. This 3-day intensive workshop is an opportunity to join a new workshop for teenage girls (aged 12-18) of different faiths with good singing voices who like to sing harmonised pop music together. The workshop will be facilitated by Mohammed Nazzam and Chantelle Duncan of inter faith band The Berakah Project (www.theberakahproject.org) and will be held from 11am to 5pm each day at the New North London Synagogue on East End Road in London. Any interested girls (or their parents) should contact Rivka Gottlieb at events@npls-masorti.org.uk for more information. There is a charge to attend. Places for the workshop can be booked online at <https://event.bookitbee.com/451/girls-interfaith-vocal-workshop/>

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For more information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org

For more information on events and projects in a number of the English regions see:

London: www.faithsforum4london.org

North East: www.nerfn.org

South East: www.se-faithforum.net

South West: www.faithnetsouthwest.org.uk

West Midlands: www.wmfaithsforum.org.uk

See also: <http://lbfm.wordpress.com/> (London Boroughs Faiths Network) and <http://www.fbrn.org.uk/news> (Faith-based Regeneration Network).

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 23 January with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer:

Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH

www.interfaith.org.uk

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www.interfaith.org.uk www.interfaithweek.org



IFN e-bulletin

February 2014

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For information about the work of the Inter Faith Network for the UK visit:
WWW.INTERFAITH.ORG.UK

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 24 March with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and projects and future events.

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UK/NATIONAL UPDATES

Inter Faith Week

Over 350 events are known to have taken place in last November's Inter Faith Week www.interfaithweek.org. Some were held to mark both Inter Faith Week and Mitzvah Day, reflecting an increasing emphasis on faith and social action. Other types of events included: film screenings; inter faith cricket; family faith trails; 'inter faith talent contests'; short, 'speed-dating' style dialogues between people of different faiths and beliefs; multi faith music making and choirs; fairs and cultural events; charity fundraising events; exhibitions; arts and crafts themed events; classroom activities, and school visits and assemblies. The National Union of Students funded a range of campus projects and week-long programmes took place at a number of universities and colleges, including Liverpool and Leeds Trinity.

A call for feedback on Inter Faith Week 2013 is included in the section on [Calls for information, Competitions and Tenders](#) below.

UN World Interfaith Harmony Week took place in the first week of February. The Committee of IFN sent greetings and a number of inter faith and other bodies in the UK held events. Details can be found at: <http://worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com/events-calendar/?year2=2014>.

Planning for Inter Faith Week 2014

Inter Faith Week 2014 will run from Sunday 16 November until Saturday 22 November. Resources and information can be found at www.interfaithweek.org

Some are already planning for Inter Faith Week 2014! For example, Kirklees Faiths Forum is planning to run an inter faith 'Dragons' Den' competition for secondary schools in Kirklees to coincide with the Week. Young people from secondary schools will be invited to write a business plan which has to be a community based project bringing people from different backgrounds together, to explore and share understanding of: faith, culture, diversity and community. Ideas will pitched by the school before 'faith Dragons.'

Scottish Inter Faith Week will take place from 23-30 November and has a theme this year of 'Journeys'. Further information from Interfaith Scotland: fhume@scottishinterfaithcouncil.org

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Inter Faith Network website

The new Inter Faith Network website has been launched and can be viewed at www.interfaith.org.uk (as before). There are a number of new features on the website such as a 'local inter faith locator', and a more detailed list of member bodies. Working will be going on across the coming months to add new resources.

Ashley Beck, who manages the IFN website and has been in charge of the update project, will be very pleased to receive feedback and suggestions at ashley.beck@interfaith.org.uk.

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Faith communities and flooding

Recent weeks have seen severe flooding in a number of areas of the UK. Faith communities have been working to help those affected and the Church Urban Fund has launched an appeal to assist flood victims. Some have travelled distances to assist, such as volunteer members of Khalsa Aid from Slough and Walsall who went to lend a hand in Somerset.

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Regional faith forums in England

The last two years have seen closure, due to funding difficulties, of regional faith forums in four former Government Regions of England: East of England, East Midlands, North West, and Yorkshire and Humber. Faithnetsouthwest, the regional faith forum for the South West of England has announced that it too will cease operating on 31 March. It will be holding a final event, entitled 'Leaving a Legacy', on 27 March in Taunton. For further information, see the [Diary Dates](#) section. Like the East of England Faiths Council, it has until recently run a very full programme of work, including support to local inter faith bodies. Faiths Forum for London continues, on a staffed basis, to run a programme of work in Greater London. Details about this can be seen at <http://www.faithsforum4london.org/>. The North East Regional Faiths Network <http://www.nerfn.org/>, South East England Faiths Forum <http://www.se-faithforum.net/> and West Midlands Faiths Forum <http://www.wmfaithsforum.org.uk/> continue their work on a voluntary basis.

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Guidance on Transparency of Lobbying, Non-party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Act 2014

The Charity Commission has announced that it will update its guidance on charities, elections and referendums to explain the changes introduced by the Transparency of Lobbying, Non-party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Act 2014 (which received Royal Assent at the end of January).

The Lobbying Act changes the rules for non-party campaigners in the run up to elections. The Electoral Commission has already published an update on the changes the Act makes to the rules on non-party campaigning (campaigning by individuals or organisations not themselves standing for election). A copy of the update is available at http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/165177/npc-update-1.pdf. The changes in the Act will apply from 19 September 2014.

The Charity Commission has said that it will “coordinate its guidance and work closely with the Electoral Commission, which is preparing guidance for all organisations affected by the legislation”. It is encouraging charities to sign up for the campaigner updates that the Electoral Commission will be publishing over the coming months. A copy of the Charity Commission's press release is at <http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/news/charity-regulator-will-update-guidance-to-reflect-changes-introduced-by-lobbying-act/>.

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Appeal ruling on Catholic adoption agency

A Glasgow-based adoption Agency run by the Catholic Church in Scotland has won an appeal against a decision to strip it of its charitable status. The Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator reviewed the practices of the charity in January last year, after a complaint from the National Secular Society and, in a report, found it was breaking the Equality Act 2010. St Margaret's Children and Family Care Society had been told by the Scottish Charity regulator it was to lose its status over its refusal to place children with same-sex couples. This decision has now been overturned by the Scottish Charity Appeals Panel (SCAP). A copy of the decision can be found on the SCAP website at <http://www.scap.gov.uk/appeal/register.html>.

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Civil Partnership update

Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill

Stage 3 of the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill was debated on 4 February and the Scottish Parliament voted overwhelmingly to pass the bill. Information about the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Bill can be found online at <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/63773.aspx>. As noted in the December issue of the e-bulletin, it is understood that religious bodies would 'opt in' to perform same sex marriages in the same way that they would do so under the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 for England and Wales which received Royal Assent in July last year.

Consultation on the future of civil partnerships

The Government has launched a consultation on the future of civil partnerships in England and Wales. This is the full public consultation required by section 15 the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013. Full details can be found online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-the-future-of-civil-partnership-in-england-and-wales> and the closing date for responses is 17 April.

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All Party Parliamentary Group on RE

The second of three oral evidence sessions for the Inquiry into the contribution of Religious Education to good community relations took place at the Palace of Westminster on 27 January. The minutes of this event will be available on the website shortly, along with the minutes for the first session which took place in December. Led by Dr Joyce Miller, the Inquiry enables MPs to hear oral evidence from people with expertise in the field, supplemented by written evidence, and the outcome will be a short publication of good practice recommendations. The third session will take place at Westminster on 24 February from 5.00pm to 7.00pm. For further information, email appg@religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk.

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PROJECTS

Women in focus

A number of events recently have seen a focus on women in faith and inter faith contexts. For example, the City Sikhs Network (<http://www.citysikhs.org.uk>) in partnership with St Paul's Cathedral, hosted an event at the Cathedral earlier this month entitled 'Women in Faith', which highlighted the role that women play in various religions, contemporary issues affecting women in their respective faiths and personal challenges that female faith leaders have encountered whilst practising and preaching their beliefs.

Interfaith Scotland (www.interfaithscotland.org) is holding a women's inter faith dialogue event on 6 March. This is the latest event in a series stretching across many years. Local inter faith bodies are also bringing women together. Redbridge Faith Forum has been running a two year series of workshops to enable women of all ages and from different faith backgrounds to meet together and discuss topics that matter to them. Further information from faith.forum@redbridge.gov.uk. Horsham Interfaith Forum (www.horsham-interfaith.org.uk) is organising a multi-faith panel on 22 February on this topic. Hounslow Friends of Faith (www.hounslowfriendsoffait.org) holds women's discussion groups, the next of which is on 26 February and West Wilts Multi Faith Forum is holding a women's lunch on 19 March. Further information in the [Diary Dates](#) section later in the e-bulletin.

There are also such initiatives as the annual joint prayer event for Christian and Muslim women linked with the Roman Catholic Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle, <http://www.rcdhn.org.uk/interfaith/jesmond13.php> and Luton Council of Faiths' events with women's organisation Ghar se Ghar.

A number of inter faith organisations and projects are focused on the participation of women in inter faith dialogue and activities. Here are just a few from different nations and regions:

The Women's Interfaith Network will be marking its tenth anniversary with an art exhibition at the Oxo Tower in London. The exhibition, which runs from 25 to 30 March, is entitled 'The Spirit of Womanhood' and is described as an opportunity for emerging artists to showcase their work alongside established artists, including works which have been produced specifically for the exhibition in a celebration of creative enterprise and artistic talent. For more information about the exhibition, contact the Curator, Rosalind Parker, at win.exhibition@gmail.com. For further information about WIN, contact marion@wominet.org.uk or visit www.wominet.org.uk.

Religions for Peace has a Global Women's Network <http://www.religionsforpeaceinternational.org/who-we-are/global-women-faith-network>; there is a European Women of Faith Network <http://www.rfpwomenoffaith.eu/>; and Religions for Peace UK is exploring development of a UK Women's Network <http://www.religionsforpeace.org.uk/about/global-women-of-faith-network/> Further details from rknijjar@hotmail.com

The Christian Muslim Forum has an ongoing programme of work focusing on women: <http://www.christianmuslimforum.org/women/>

Edinburgh Women's Interfaith Group is "a safe, organic, open and informal group, welcoming women of all faiths and none". Further information is online at (<http://www.edinwig.org.uk/EWIG/Welcome.html>).

The St Albans Interfaith Women's Group has been running for several years. For further information, contact Ann Scorer at ann@masonscorer.plus.com.

The Women in Faith Group on Merseyside enables "women to share and learn about different faith traditions, stories, festivals and celebrations throughout the year." For further information, contact Irene Hall at Halliml@aol.com.

A Muslim Christian Women's Network was launched in Leicester last year as part of the Christian Muslim Forum. For further information, contact Bonnie Evans-Hills at bonnie.evans-hill@hotmail.co.uk. A dialogue and friendship group for women of these faiths has been running in Leicester since 2002.

Building Bridges Burnley has a project entitled 'Share Food Share Faith' which is a series of events for women only. For further information, contact bbburnley@gmail.com.

A Women's Peace Group, with an inter faith dimension, has met for many years in Birmingham. Further information from: patriciaearle@blueyonder.co.uk

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Council of Christians and Jews Student Presidents

A national initiative has been launched by the Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ) to create a network of CCJ Student Presidents. It is hoped that this will help establish inter faith bodies at a student level, 'foster a value' for the bilateral Jewish-Christian relationship and mutual respect of people of all faiths. The launch took place at Durham University at an inter faith event organised by CCJ, Durham's Jewish Society, the Durham University Ecumenical Christian Council, and the Fayre Share Foundation. Speakers were the Most Revd and Rt Hon John Sentamu, the Archbishop of York and Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis, who issued a call to students across the UK to participate in inter faith activity.

Students participating in the scheme will work with the wider organisation to facilitate regular opportunities for students of different faiths to meet, campaign for religious tolerance and 'promote religious intelligence' within the wider campus community. Students from across the country are invited to join the initiative and implement the programme in their own campus. As CCJSPs, students will be invited to CCJ inter faith events involving key figures in the Christian and Jewish Communities. Other activities and support will include:

- An annual national conference in the UK for CCJ Campus members
- An interactive website, PORTICO, set up by CCJ for its campus members and used as a conduit for information and opinion exchange
- Access to the CCJSP project manager who will offer advice, help, ideas and co-ordinate the work of the campus groups, as well as organise national and regional events and manage the PORTICO site

Each year a one-term scholarship will be offered to one CCJSP to study inter faith relations

Further information from patrick.morrow@ccj.org.uk

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Cornwall Inter Faith Centre

Cornwall Faith Forum continues to fundraise for its new Inter Faith Centre at Penmount. Information about the Centre can be found online at <http://dorkemmyn.org.uk/the-building/>. They are seeking donations, looking for volunteers to research possible donors and also inviting individuals and groups to make earth bricks for the new Centre. Brick making days will take place on Sundays and Mondays during Summer 2014. For information on donation and research contact Andrew Yates at srotruro@btinternet.com and for information on brick making contact mat@build-art.co.uk.

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University of Gloucestershire Faith Space

On 5 February the University of Gloucestershire unveiled its new Faith Space. This Space includes a prayer space for quiet reflection or prayer specific to a particular religion; a new Chaplaincy office where confidential conversations can take place; and a welcoming social space for hospitality so that diverse communities can come together over tea, coffee and a chat. A new stained glass window in the Faith Space has been created using stained glass from the original chapel on the site that has been stored for more than 20 years. It is anticipated that a range of regular events will take place in the Faith Space including Christian discussion groups, Buddhist meditation, inter faith discussions and a Friday International Café. For further information, contact Bobbie Dibden, Communications Support Officer on 01242 714522 or at bdibden@glos.ac.uk.

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Faiths in Harmony

The Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby is looking to start a group called 'Faiths in Harmony' which will bring people from different faiths to sing together. The group will sing about faith in a wide variety of styles to varied audiences, including in places of worship. They are specifically seeking an experienced choir leader, instrumentalists and singers. There will be no auditions.

Anyone interested in hearing more should go to the Centre in Kedleston Road at 7.30pm on Monday 24 February or should email mfc@derby.ac.uk.

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Sacred Music inter faith radio station

A new inter faith radio station has been launched called Sacred Music Radio. The station broadcasts 24 hours a day and includes playlists of music from different faiths as well as sacred music “tied with no particular religion”. The ethos of the station is that “sacred music is beautiful no matter which religions [pieces] are traditionally associated with”. To find out more, visit www.sacredmusicradio.org.

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Hounslow Inter Faith Knitting Group

Hounslow Friends of Faith is now running an informal inter faith knitting group on a Saturday morning once a month, in conjunction with a local church. The group is open to all and meets from 10.30am to 12.30pm at St Mary’s Church in Twickenham. The group is currently knitting squares for blankets for charities in Romania. The next meeting is 15 February. For further details of the knitting group, contact Barbara on 020 8892 1731.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Together in Service Fund

The Together in Service Fund, a programme supported by the Department for Communities and Local Government and administered by FaithAction, was launched in November. It will be making available up to £160,000 over two years in small grants of £2,000 or £5,000 to facilitate new multi faith social action at the local level. Grants will be available on a 1:1 match-funding basis to ‘constituted bodies’.

The closing date for the next round of applications is 5.00pm on Monday 26 May. Further details about funding, including eligibility, how to apply, and the full schedule of closing dates can be found at <http://www.togetherinservice.net/funding/>.

Regional Accelerator Briefings are being held around the country to assist with project applications. The next events are being held in Manchester on 23 April and in Bristol on 20 May. More details online at <http://www.togetherinservice.net/latest/category/events/>.

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Church Urban Fund Mustard Seed programme

The Mustard Seed Grant programme run by the Church Urban Fund aims to provide grants of up to £5,000 to enable churches and faith-based organisations to engage in social action, by supporting them to initiate or develop community work. Details on criteria for grants and how to apply can be found online at <http://www.cuf.org.uk/how-apply>.

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Funding Central website

Funding Central - <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/default.aspx> - is a free website for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises that provides access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, together with tools and resources supporting organisations to develop sustainable income strategies appropriate to their needs.

Funding Central is managed by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, in partnership with Idox Information Solutions Ltd, and funded by the Government's Office for Civil Society.

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Comic Relief Stronger Communities grants

Comic Relief's grants programme now has five themes, one of which is 'Stronger Communities'. Grants for the Stronger Communities theme are managed by Local Community Foundations and range in size from £1,000 to £10,000 per year. Priority is given to small, locally-based groups or organisations in areas of disadvantage that have a clear understanding of the needs of their community and are undertaking actions as a means of addressing these needs. Anyone wishing to apply for a Local Communities grant should contact their local community foundation. Further details can be found online at http://ukcommunityfoundations.org/programmes/comic_relief/.

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Big Lottery Fund

The Big Lottery Fund give grants from £300 to over £500,000 to organisations ranging from small local groups to major national charities. Information about their various grant schemes can be found at <http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/Home/Funding/Funding%20finder>.

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RESOURCES AND TRAINING

Youth On Religion report

New research findings from the Youth On Religion (YOR) study, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Economic and Social Research Council's Religion and Society programme, were published in January. These are based on a survey of more than 10,000 13 to 17-year-olds and interviews with around 160 17 to 18-year-olds. The research was carried out in three multi-faith locations – the London boroughs of Hillingdon and Newham, and Bradford in Yorkshire. Participants came from a range of faith backgrounds and included Christians, Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus and those with no specific faith. Some key findings:

- 6th-formers have a high level of respect and tolerance for peers from different backgrounds.
- Students stress how multi-faith schooling, providing opportunities to get to know other pupils with a range of faith values, is good preparation for later life, including going to university. Mixing at school or college also encourages an interest in diversity and helps to reduce prejudice.
- Although the majority of young people taking part in the research attended multi-faith schools, they were not especially confident in their knowledge and understanding of different faith groups.
- More than three-quarters said that RE lessons were a key source of information on different religions and their traditions. Around 46 per cent said assemblies at school or college were also important, and some 35 per cent said that festivals were also significant.
- Teaching everybody together, and providing a prayer room where everybody felt welcome, were also advocated to enhance shared experiences.
- Promoting understanding and tolerance seemed high on the agenda for most young people in the YOR study.

For further information, contact Professor Nicola Madge at the Centre for Child and Youth Research at Brunel University at nicola.madge@brunel.ac.uk or visit <http://www.sec-ed.co.uk/news/study-reveals-teens-views-on-faith-and-re>.

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Multifaith Spaces project exhibition materials for loan

The project *Multifaith Spaces: Symptoms and Agents of Religious and Social Change* has recently drawn to a close. A number of outputs are currently in preparation, and the website www.multi-faith-spaces.org is still available to view. The project has a multifaith spaces exhibition which has recently completed touring (see link for pictures). The two versions of the exhibition are currently stored at the University of Manchester, and the project team is interested to loan them permanently, free of charge, to any organisation who is able to arrange for their collection. Contact mfs@manchester.ac.uk for further details.

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Cambridge Inter-faith Programme Summer School

Each summer the Cambridge Inter-faith Programme brings together an international group from Islamic, Christian and Jewish backgrounds for three weeks of inter-faith and cross-cultural encounter and to resource practical peacemaking and conflict-transformation efforts. Applications are now being accepted for this year's Summer School which takes place at the University of Cambridge from 30 July to 15 August.

The bedrock of the programme is the practice of inter-faith Scriptural Reasoning (SR), in which students receive intensive training. They are offered a series of lectures delivered by specialist academics and peacemakers; and they are facilitated in a process of teaching one another about aspects of their traditions. Most importantly, students have the opportunity to get to know, and learn from, their fellow participants. For further information and an application form, visit <http://www.interfaith.cam.ac.uk/en/education/summerschool>. A film about the Summer School can be seen online at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x6P5iwWICkU>. Applications are due by 28 February.

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Faith in Maintenance course

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings is offering 'Faith in Maintenance' courses to hosts at a reduced cost until the end of 2015. These one-day courses are for those who care for historic places of worship, regardless of faith or denomination. Anyone interested in holding a 'Faith in Maintenance' course, can obtain further information from Lucy at lucyj@spab.org.uk or on 020 7377 1644 (option 7). Further information is available online at www.spabfim.org.uk.

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Training for Big Lunchers

Big Lunch Extras is a free three-year support programme run by the Eden Project. The programme is for 900 individuals across the UK wishing to start a community initiative or to take existing projects to the next level.

To begin with participants will all take part in a residential 'camp' at Eden in Cornwall for an immersive weekend to get inspiration, practical skills and the confidence to make real, positive changes in their community. They will also get the opportunity to attend regional events in their area. The events always include a range of practical activities, facilitated sessions and networking opportunities which help participants to increase their knowledge of a certain area (for example, funding or social media), offer practical ideas to engage people in the community (such as outdoor play or community art), and give the chance to talk to fellow participants from around the UK.

For further details, including information on how to apply, visit <http://www.biglunchextras.com/>.

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JOBS AND VOLUNTEERING

Training Manager at 3FF

3FF offers a range of training opportunities for professionals, and delivers several partnership programmes with UK-based and international organisations. It is looking for an experienced and energetic training Manager to lead the design, delivery and development of these, generating income and networks for 3FF while working towards 3FF's organisational aims. Salary £28-£30K. Location, London. Further details are available at: <http://www.3ff.org.uk/jobs/training-manager.php> Closing Date: 9am on Monday 3rd March but applications may close before this date. CVs will not be accepted.

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Building Bridges Pendle – Reaching Communities Project

Building Bridges Pendle is recruiting for three posts for its Big Lottery Fund – Reaching Communities Project: a Project Manager (22.5 hrs per week); a Project Development Officer (30 hrs per week); and a Project Officer (22.5 hrs per week).

All posts are fixed term until the end of March 2017. The closing date for applications is 21 February. Application packs can be downloaded from <http://www.buildingbridgespendle.org.uk/>. For further information, contact office@buildingbridgespendle.org.uk.

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Together in Service volunteers

The national Together in Service programme has begun a new feature which aims to enable people to learn about volunteering opportunities in their area. Anyone interested in learning about volunteering projects can find more information at www.togetherinservice.net/fellowship.

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Bristol Civil Justice Centre – Multi faith support volunteers

Bristol's Civil Justice Centre has started a new initiative to provide multi faith support to all those who pass through the doors of the Centre. It is currently looking for volunteers to provide 'support, space and sign posting' for the initiative. Anyone interested in volunteering can contact Sarah Pullin at sarahpullin@btinternet.com or visit http://www.bristolnetworks.org.uk/Articles/391259/Home/Connections/Volunteer_Opportunities/Multi_Faith_Support.aspx.

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Interfaith Scotland – Young volunteers

Interfaith Scotland will be hosting three 'Interfaith Days' in February for S6 pupils at Trinity High School in Cambuslang, St Modan's High School in Stirling and Oban High School. These events would not be possible without the valued assistance of a team of young volunteers who come and speak in each school about what their faith means to them. If you would be interested in being a volunteer on this programme please contact Frances Hume at frances@interfaithscotland.org.

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Three Faiths Forum - Interns

The Three Faiths Forum is now recruiting for interns to start in April. Interns work alongside the dedicated staff members at the London offices on one of their many teams and projects. Interns play an active role in the organisation and are given the opportunity to become involved in all aspects of the work, from organising workshops and events, facilitating the arts activities, to helping run the leadership programme.

For further information on the different roles available and how to apply, visit <http://www.3ff.org.uk/internships/apply.php>.

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Inter Faith Network volunteering

The Inter Faith Network has volunteering opportunities from time to time. These vary from helping with such tasks as mailings and organising the resources library, through to work on the website and supporting such projects as national Inter Faith Week. We are always interested to hear from people with enthusiasm for developing inter faith understanding and cooperation, commitment to the goals of IFN, a positive and diplomatic approach and such skills as:

- good written and verbal communication
- attention to detail
- IT skills
- event organising

If you are interested in volunteering and would like to know more, please email us at ifnet@interfaith.org.uk or ring 020 7730 0410.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS AND TENDERS

2013 Inter Faith Week feedback

The IFN office is still keen to hear how your 2013 Inter Faith Week event or events went and to be emailed any photographs which you think might be good to include on the website or in future materials about the Week. If you have time, we would be very pleased if you would draw on your experience to help us continue to develop the Week to help increase opportunities for inter faith learning and cooperation, including

between those of religious and non-religious beliefs. A short evaluation form can be found on the Inter Faith Week website at <http://www.interfaithweek.org/> or you can simply send an email to Interfaithweek@interfaith.org.uk with your reflections on its questions which are:

- a) We think our event was a successful Inter Faith Week event because:
- b) What surprised us most about the event was:
- c) On reflection, we would have done the following things differently:
- d) We evaluated our event and did so in the following way(s):
- e) We have the following tips for other Inter Faith Week event organisers:
- f) If possible, we would like to see the following additions to the Inter Faith Week website next year:
- g) Any other thoughts.

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National Diversity Awards

Applications are now open for the National Diversity Awards, which are a celebration of outstanding achievements of positive role models, entrepreneurs and community organisations from across the UK.

The Awards for community organisations and positive role models both include 'Race, Religion and Faith' as one of the five categories.

Nominations for all Awards close on 18 July. For further information, visit www.nationaldiversityawards.co.uk.

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NATRE's 'Art in Heaven' Competition

The National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE) is holding its 11th Annual 'Art in Heaven' competition for school pupils aged 4 to 19 years.

Entries can be created using drawing, painting, art, video, sculpture or other media and there are five themes from which to choose: 'Worship', 'Spiritual Journey', 'God: Who are you?', 'The Golden Rule' and 'Heaven Life after Life?'.

There is full, detailed guidance available online at <http://www.natre.org.uk/spiritedarts/2014.php>. Submission of entries, to be considered for an award, must arrive at NATRE on or before 31 July.

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World Interfaith Harmony Week prize

All events that took place to mark World Interfaith Harmony Week earlier this month can be considered for one of three prizes. In order to enter the competition, participations should ensure that their event is registered online at <http://worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com/submit-an-event/> and then submit post-event materials such as photos, press clippings, reports, testimonials and videos. All material must be submitted by 7 March and the prize-giving ceremony will be held in April. For further information, visit <http://worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com/world-interfaith-harmony-week-prize/>.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Fairtrade Fortnight – 24 February to 9 March

Fairtrade is about better prices, decent working conditions, local sustainability and fair terms of trade for farmers and workers in the developing world. The Fairtrade Foundation's vision is of a world in which justice and sustainable development are at the heart of trade structures and practices so that everyone, through their work, can maintain a decent and dignified livelihood and develop their full potential. Information on Fairtrade Fortnight can be found at <http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/>.

The Resources section at <http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/resources/default.aspx> has publications including a *Churches Action Guide*, *Islam and Fairtrade* and the *Jewish Action Guide*.

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Climate Week – 3 to 9 March

Among the national bodies supporting the Week are many faith and inter faith organisations. Organisers are encouraging faith communities to use Climate Week as an opportunity to focus during study groups, discussion events and sermons on the religious basis for environmental care and to use events, exhibitions and coffee mornings to highlight ways faiths are taking steps to help prevent climate change. For more information on Climate Week including this year's Climate Week Challenge, visit www.climateweek.com.

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Islam Awareness Week – 17 to 23 March

The theme for the 2014 Week is 'Charity Begins at Home'.

Further information about Islam Awareness Week can be found online at <http://www.iaw.org.uk/pages/page.php?id=home>.

[Note: the dates for Islam Awareness Week have been changed since the December 2013 issue of the IFN e-bulletin.]

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DIARY DATES

Horsham Interfaith Forum is organising a Multi-faith Panel on Saturday 22 February on the 'Role of Women'. The Panel will start at 1.00pm at St Leonard's Church, Cambridge Road, Horsham RH13 5ED. For further information, visit www.horsham-interfaith.org.uk.

Bath Interfaith Group is holding its AGM on Monday 24 February at 7.30pm. The meeting will be held at the First Church of Christ Scientist, Claverton Street, Widcombe, Bath BA2 4LE. For further information contact Jane O'Hara at janeohara@blueyonder.co.uk.

As part of its "Exploring Our Faiths Together" series of meetings the **Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum** has been invited to the Indian Community Centre and Hindu Temple in Belfast on 23 February at 2pm for the hawan ceremony and prayers followed by a tour of the Centre and a talk on Hinduism. The visit will finish with dinner in the Centre at 4:30pm. Email ni.interfaith@gmail.com or phone/text Norman Richardson at 07711 762571 to enquire about attending..

SOAS Interfaith Music Festival is taking place on Monday 24 February. The Festival runs from 11.00am to 9.00pm in the Brunei Gallery at SOAS on Thornhaugh Street, London WC1H 0XG. There will be performances from different faith groups throughout the day. For further information, contact Anja at interfaith@soas.ac.uk or visit <https://www.facebook.com/events/240659946081321/>.

Bedford Council of Faiths is holding its Annual General Meeting on Monday 24 February at 7.00pm. The meeting will be held at First Church of Christ Scientist, 84 Kimbolton Road, Bedford MK40 2PD. Although only members are entitled to vote, non-members are welcome to attend. For further information, contact Judith Slaymaker at bcof@bcof.org.uk or the Revd Cass Howes on 07920 849742.

Cheltenham Interfaith is holding its next meeting on Tuesday 25 February at 7.30pm. The talk for this month's meeting is entitled 'Abdul Baha – ambassador to humanity!' and will be given by Adam Thorne, a retired teacher who works developing archival resources for the Baha'i Faith. The event will take place at Friends Meeting House, Warwick Place, Cheltenham GL52 2NP. For further information, visit www.cheltenhaminterfaith.org.uk.

Salford Interfaith Network is holding its AGM on Wednesday 26 February from 5pm to 8pm. The theme of the evening is 'We Remember: Historical inter faith links in the year of remembrance of World War I'. It takes place in the Humphrey Booth Lecture Theatre, Mayo Clinic, Salford Royal Hospital (formerly Hope Hospital), Stott Lane, Salford M6 8HD. For further information, contact sin.salfordinterfaith@gmail.com.

Hounslow Friends of Faith is holding its next Women's Discussion Group on Wednesday 26 February from 7.15pm to 9.00pm. The Group offers discussion, support and friendship. The meeting will take place at Hounslow Community Centre, Montague Road, Hounslow TW3 1JY. For further information, visit www.hounslowfriendsoffaith.org.

Leicestershire Inter Faith Forum is holding its next meeting on Monday 3 March at County Hall, Glenfield, Leicester LE3 8RA. The theme of the event is 'Tackling Extremism in the UK' and it will be chaired by Suleman Nagdi. The meeting starts at 6.00pm with a light buffet, with the Forum meeting starting at 6.30pm. Anyone

interested in attending should contact Julian Harrison at julian.harrison@leics.gov.uk or on 0116 305 7018 before 26 February.

York Interfaith Group is holding a meeting on Wednesday 5 March at 7.30pm at the Denham Room, Priory Street Centre, 15 Priory Street, York YO1 6ET. The speaker at the meeting will be Gen Thekchen, a Resident Teacher at the Madhyamaka Centre, who will be speaking on 'Modern Buddhism: A Path to Compassion and Wisdom'. For further information, contact Mark Cosens on 07796 095152 or at loscosens@yahoo.co.uk.

Interfaith Scotland is holding a women's inter faith dialogue event on Thursday 6 March from 2.00pm to 4.00pm. The event will explore 'Values and Visions for Scotland' and will take place at the University of Aberdeen Chaplaincy Centre. The event is open to women only. For more details and to register interest in attending, contact Frances Hume at frances@interfaithscotland.org.

Interfaith MIK (Milton Keynes) holds its meetings on the first Thursday of each month. The next meeting takes place on Thursday 6 March from 7.30pm to 9.30pm. Further details will be available online at www.interfaithmk.org.uk.

The **Avon Branch of the Council of Christians and Jews** will hold its next meeting on Monday 10 March at 7.30pm. The meeting will be looking at Scriptural Reasoning, an established method for facilitating discussion. Texts will be distributed and more information about the method can be found at <http://www.scripturalreasoning.org/>. For information and to join, contact Valerie Emmott at emmottolutions@aol.com.

The **London Interfaith Centre** is holding three Sunday evening talks on the theme of 'Spirituality and Religion in the 21st Century'. The first talk will be given by Mike King on Sunday 9 March on the topic of 'Film and Spirituality in the 21st Century'. All talks take place from 6.00pm to 7.30pm at the London Inter Faith Centre, 125 Salusbury Road, London NW6 6RG. Entrance is free but there is a small suggested donation. Light refreshments are available. Further details can be found online at www.londoninterfaith.org.uk.

The second event in the 'Faith in the Public Realm' series being organised by the **Faiths and Civil Society Unit at Goldsmiths, University of London** will take place on Wednesday 12 March. Warwick Hawkins, Head of Faith Communities Engagement, Department for Communities and Local Government, will be speaking on 'How do governments do God?'. The event will take place from 5.00pm to 7.00pm in room 137, Richard Hoggart Building, Goldsmiths College, Lewisham Way, London, SE14 6NW. To book a place, email stacsresearch@gold.ac.uk or, for more information and a list of all events in the series, visit www.gold.ac.uk/faithsunit.

The second event in the 2014 Westminster Faith Debates series funded by the **Arts and Humanities Research Council and Economic and Social Research Council and Lancaster University** will take place on Wednesday 12 March. The title will be 'Are attempts to promote worldwide religious freedom naïve or necessary?' and the panel will include the Rt Hon Alistair Burt MP, Baroness Elizabeth Berridge, Prof Jørgen Nielsen and Prof Elizabeth Shakman Hurd. The debate will be held at RUSI, 61 Whitehall, London, SW1A 2ET between 5.30pm and 7pm and will be followed by a drinks reception. For further information and a full list of all events in the series, visit <http://faithdebates.org.uk/>.

Cheltenham Interfaith is holding its AGM on Monday 17 March at 7.00pm. The meeting will be followed at 7.30pm by a talk, the speaker for which will be confirmed in due course. The event will take place at Friends Meeting House, Warwick Place, Cheltenham GL52 2NP. For further information, visit www.cheltenhaminterfaith.org.uk.

West Wilts Multi Faith Forum is holding a women-only lunch on Wednesday 19 March. A short talk will start at 12 noon to be followed by food. Participants are invited to bring a small vegetarian dish to share or to make a small donation. The lunch will be held at the United Church, Church Street, Trowbridge, BA14 8DY. For more information, contact Glenys Henriette on 07855 406130 or see <http://wwmf.org.uk/contacts>.

Swindon Interfaith Group is holding its AGM on Wednesday 26 March at 7.30pm. A talk will be given on 'Mindfulness' by Buddhist John Preston. The AGM will be held at the Pilgrim Centre, Regents Circus, Swindon, Wiltshire SN1 1PX. For further information, contact the Secretary, Stephen Aftelak, at stephenaftelak@ntlworld.com.

Faithnetsouthwest will be holding its final event on Thursday 27 March at Taunton Central Library, Paul Street, Taunton TA1 3XZ. The event, entitled 'Leaving a Legacy', will highlight the forum's work and discuss how the profile of faith groups' work in the community can be maintained in the future. The event will take place from 12.30pm to 4.30pm and the guest speaker will be Stephen Timms MP, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Faith and Society. For more information, or to book, contact Alistair Beattie on 0117 304 2298 or at alistair@faithnetsouthwest.org.uk.

De Montford University is holding this year's Provost Derek Hole Keynote Lecture on Thursday 27 March on the theme of 'Faith in the City'. The lecture will be given by the Dean of Leicester, the Very Revd David Monteith, and will start at 6pm in the Hugh Aston Building. Tea and coffee will be available from 5.30pm. Anyone interesting in attending should contact the Events Office on 0116 250 6031 or at eventsoffice@dmu.ac.uk before 20 March.

Horsham Interfaith Forum is holding its AGM on Saturday 29 March at 1.00pm. The afternoon will also include discussion on the future of the Forum. The meeting will be held at the Unitarian Church, Worthing Road, Horsham RH12 1AN.

The **Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby** is holding an evening of music from different faith communities on Tuesday 8 April at 7.00pm. The event will be held at the Centre in Kedleston Road, Derby DE22 1GB and light refreshments will be served. For further information, contact mfc@derby.ac.uk.

The **University of Chester** is holding a two-day conference from Tuesday 8 to Wednesday 9 April on 'Philosophy, Religion and Public Policy'. The conference is part of the Arts and Humanities Research Council Philosophy and Religious Practices Research Network and speakers will include Clayton Crockett of the University of Central Arkansas, Adam Dinham of Goldsmiths College in London and Elaine Graham of the University of Chester. For further information, contact Carly McEvoy at c.mcevoy@chester.ac.uk or on 01244 511031.

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For more information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 24 March with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer:

Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH

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IFN e-bulletin

June 2014

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We apologise for a longer than usual period between issues of the e-bulletin. The next issue will include further IFN updates.

The current issue of the bulletin is accompanied by the recently published Inter Faith Week report: *Inter Faith Week: Celebrating 2013 and Planning for 2014*.

For information about the work of the Inter Faith Network for the UK visit:
www.interfaith.org.uk

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 30 July with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up **new developments and projects and future events**.

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UK/NATIONAL UPDATES

Inter Faith Week report launch

Inter Faith Week: Celebrating 2013 and planning for 2014 was launched on 25 June.

Inter Faith Week takes place in the third week of November and has now become a fixture in the local and national calendar with events to:

- strengthen good inter faith relations at all levels
- increase awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, celebrating and building on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society
- increase understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs

The report looks back at the 2013 and includes planning tips and ideas for 2014.

The 2013 Week saw thousands participate through over 400 events which took place in England, Wales and Northern Ireland to mark the Week – nearly 30% more than the previous year. The number of local faith communities involved with the Week more than doubled – as did local authorities and civic bodies. The spread of activities was wide: from faiths volunteering together on social action projects and fundraising together for charity, to faith trails and open door days at places of worship; from debates and dialogues to multi faith sports matches; from exhibitions and festivals to hands-on workshops to learn more about different faiths.

It is expected that this year many different kinds of organisation will be holding events to mark the Week: faith groups; inter faith organisations; non-religious belief bodies; businesses; sports organisations; local authorities; Police and Fire and Rescue Services; schools and Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACREs); universities and colleges; hospitals; voluntary organisations; chaplaincies; and others. Inter Faith Week 2014 will have a special focus on events involving young people or with an intergenerational dimension, and some ideas for events are included in the short report.

The Officers of the Inter Faith Network said:

“This is a Week that is firing the imagination of more and more people of all ages each year.

In the UK we live side by side as neighbours with people of many different backgrounds. “This is a Week for celebrating the positive aspects of how we coexist and for strengthening our common bonds. It encourages new links and friendship. It enables people to learn more about their neighbours’ faiths and beliefs. It brings people together to volunteer in their local communities. It encourages discussion – including about areas of commonalities and shared values, areas of difference, and also about some of the more difficult questions that face us today.”

A copy of the report and press release can be downloaded from <http://www.interfaithweek.org/>. Hard copies of the report are available from the IFN office.

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Inter Faith Network Membership Admission Policy

At an EGM in London on 20 May, IFN's member bodies agreed a new membership admission policy, including revised membership criteria, and necessary related changes to the Articles of Association. These changes reflected the Executive Committee's unanimous agreement to the relevant recommendations of the Strategic Review Working Group which presented its Report and Recommendations to the Committee last year. The draft policy put to the EGM also took into account discussion by member bodies at IFN's 2013 AGM and further discussion by the Committee in the course of the Autumn and early 2014.

The new Membership Admission Policy and amended Articles are effective from 20 May and information on the IFN website has been updated to reflect this:

<http://www.interfaith.org.uk/members/about-membership>

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First World War commemorations: Lights Out

4 August is the 100th anniversary of the declaration by Britain and its then Empire and Commonwealth of war against Germany, which marked the beginning of the First World War. Information about the Government's programme for marking this can be found at: www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/first-world-war-centenary.

Some funding possibilities linked to this open to faith groups are listed in the Funding section later in the e-bulletin.

One of the national commemorations taking place on 4 August itself will be a Vigil in Westminster Abbey – an act of solemn reflection in the hour leading up to 11pm when war was declared.

At the same time, homes, workplaces and public buildings around the country will be taking part in Lights Out, a project that forms part of 14-18NOW (www.1418now.org.uk) the cultural programme that will be taking place throughout the four years of the centenary. There will be solemnly turning out lights (a reference to the reported comment by Sir Edward Grey, Foreign Secretary in 1914, that "the lamps are going out across Europe, we shall not see them lit again in our lifetime"), and the leaving of just one light burning as a symbol of continuing hope in the darkness of war. The Government hopes that many places of worship of different faiths will want to take part in this symbolic act and – if appropriate – accompany it with an act of worship or reflection. Please get in touch with Warwick Hawkins at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (warwick.hawkins@culture.gsi.gov.uk) if you are aware of places of worship within your tradition that would be interested in taking part.

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Equality and Human Rights Commission

In April the Equality and Human Rights Commission published its Business Plan for 2014/15. The Plan includes three strategic priorities:

- To promote fairness and equality of opportunity in Britain's future economy
- To promote fair access to public services, and autonomy and dignity in service delivery
- To promote dignity and respect and safeguard people's safety.

A copy of the full Business Plan can be found on the EHRC website at <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/about-us/about-the-commission/our-vision-and-mission/our-business-plan>. *What our plans mean for you* – which highlights some of the key issues the Commission has championed and on which it has intervened across the seven protected grounds and human rights over the last 18 months, as well as its future plans – can be downloaded at http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/documents/OurJob/what_our_plans_mean_for_you.pdf.

The Commission has identified several new projects relevant to religion or belief which it plans to undertake this year. These projects are based on its strategy called 'Shared Understandings: a new EHRC strategy to strengthen understanding of religion or belief in public life' which can be found at <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/about-us/about-commission/our-vision-and-mission/our-business-plan/religion-belief-equality/shared-understandings-new-ehrc-strategy-strengthen-understanding-religion-or-belief-public-life>

The Commission updated this month its document Religion or belief in the workplace: An explanation of recent European Court of Human Rights judgments. This can be downloaded from <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/publication/religion-or-belief-workplace-explanation-recent-european-court-human-rights-judgments>

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RE Council Chair open letter on RE

The Chair of the Religious Education Council, John Keast, has issued an open letter on the recent proposal in comments to the Observer by Tristram Hunt MP, Shadow Education Secretary, for a cross-party debate on the role of Religious Education. The letter argues for genuine parliamentary debate on how to ensure good quality RE provision in all schools, and cautions against confusion of RE issues with debates over faith schools and the wider role of religion in education. The letter can be found at <http://religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/public-engagement/news/2014-06-24/cross-party-debate-on-the-role-of-re>

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Law Commission publishes report on hate crime

On 28 May, the Law Commission published a report, *Hate Crime: Should the Current Offences be Extended?* This followed a consultation carried out between June and September 2013. A key recommendation of the Commission is that a wider review be carried out asking questions such as how the criminal justice system can best provide protection for victims of hate crime.

The report and a summary are available at http://lawcommission.justice.gov.uk/areas/hate_crime.htm

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Prime Minister's Holocaust Commission

The Prime Minister's Holocaust Commission, established in January and chaired by Mick Davies of the Jewish Leadership Council, completed its gathering of evidence in May and is now working towards its report which is due by the close of the year. The Commission is working to ensure Britain has a permanent memorial to the Holocaust and educational resources for future generations.

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Britain First 'mosque invasions'

A far right group called 'Britain First' has staged a number of what it has described as 'mosque invasions'. The group, which is a registered political party, has staged a number of public actions including walking into mosques in Bradford, Glasgow, East London and Luton with some members in military-style uniforms and distributing bibles and leaflets to worshippers. The group has used language, such as 'crusade' and 'patrol' and uses the slogan 'Taking Britain Back'. Police investigations into the group are ongoing. A statement issued by Interfaith Scotland following the actions in Glasgow can be found on its website at <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/news/>.

Tell MAMA, a programme monitoring anti-Muslim attacks, advises that any mosque or other organisation subjected to such actions log the issue with the Police using the 101 number (using 999 in the event of an emergency) and log the issue with Tell MAMA via their website <http://tellmamauk.org/> or using their telephone, SMS, iPhone App, Email, Twitter or Facebook details (all available via the website). Tell MAMA has also produced a leaflet with safety advice for Mosques which can be downloaded from <http://tellmamauk.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/mosquesafety3.pdf>.

For all faith communities, the safety and security of their premises and their ability to congregate there and to worship undisturbed is of enormous importance. In 2005, IFN published, with a range of partners, a document *Looking After One Another: The Safety and Security of Our Faith Communities* and work is under way to revise and republish this.

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Equal Marriage guidance

In July 2013, the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act received Parliamentary approval. This act makes the marriage of same sex couples lawful in England and Wales, while protecting and promoting religious freedom. The Equality and Human Rights Commission, as part of its statutory remit under the Equality Act 2010, has produced

guidance to explain the equality and human rights implications of this legislation. The guidance covers 5 main areas: the law; public authorities; the workplace and service delivery; religious organisations; and school education.

The guidance relevant to religious organisations can be downloaded at <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/publication/marriage-same-sex-couples-act-2013-implications-religious-authorities> Other guidance is listed adjacent to this.

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Consultation on Marriages by Non-Religious Belief Organisations

The Ministry of Justice has launched a consultation on Marriages by Non-Religious Belief Organisations. This is part of a review required under Section 14 of the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013.

The consultation runs until 18 September 2014 and can be found at: https://consult.justice.gov.uk/digital-communications/marriages-by-non-religious-belief-organisations/supporting_documents/beliefmarriagesconsultation.pdf.

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FGM, Forced Marriage and ‘Girl Summit’

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage are criminal offences in the UK and Government and civil society organisations are working to bring an end to them.

On 19 June Religious and community leaders from a number of organisations came together at a summit at the Home Office to discuss, with Government Ministers, a joint declaration condemning FGM. A similar declaration condemning forced marriage has also been prepared. These declarations are designed to provide a joint statement by all faiths that FGM and forced marriage are unacceptable practices, and are not condoned by any religious doctrine. Faith leaders are invited to sign the declarations by emailing rachael.crook@communities.qsi.gov.uk.

The declarations will be formally launched at the “Girl Summit” hosted by the Prime Minister on 22 July. This will be a major international summit aimed at mobilising domestic and international efforts to end female genital mutilation (FGM) and child, early and forced marriage (CEFM). It will be hosted by UNICEF.

Further information at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/faith-and-community-leaders-unite-to-condemn-fgm>.

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Northern Ireland inter faith response to anti-Islamic remarks

In Northern Ireland there has been recent publicity about anti-Islamic remarks made by a local fundamentalist Christian pastor, Pastor James McConnell. McConnell was backed by the First Minister, Peter Robinson.

Several bodies issued statements criticising the remarks and promoting strong inter-religious and intercultural relations, including the Executive of the Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum, whose statement is at <http://niinterfaithforum.org/>. The Revd Dr Inderjit Bhogal, former Leader of the Corrymeela Community and former member of the NI Inter-Faith Forum Executive, also issued a statement which appears on the Inter-Faith Forum website. Members of the Belfast Islamic Centre also issued responses.

Pastor McConnell and the First Minister have both since offered public apologies.

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Caste in Britain project

At the end of February the Equality and Human Rights Commission published two new research reports which look into issues surrounding caste in Britain. Both reports are from the Commission's Caste in Britain project which was undertaken at the request of government to help inform the introduction of a new statutory law. This followed the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 requirement that government introduce a statutory prohibition of caste discrimination into British equality law.

Key findings from the report to help inform this process include:

- Caste is a form of identity that is used as a basis for social differentiation, distinct from class, race or religion.
- Discrimination against an individual because of caste, including perception of caste, in education, employment, housing, business or public services cannot be tolerated and should be included in the protections against discrimination and harassment provided in the Equality Act 2010.
- However, the State should not intervene in cultural or social usages which are a matter of private practice. Therefore, in regulating in this area particular regard should be given to individuals' rights under the European Convention on Human Rights.
- The definition of caste should be neither too precise nor too broad. A minimum definition of caste in terms of endogamy (marriage restricted within a specific group) inherited status and social stratification would be useful.
- Businesses and public authorities will need clear and practical information about how the prohibition of caste discrimination will affect them. The Commission's initial view is that the impact will be small given that the straightforward message remains that employers and service providers must not make decisions on the basis of irrelevant considerations such as caste.

Copies of the two reports can be downloaded from <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/publications/our-research/research-reports>. They are Reports 91 and 92.

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Global research and action network focused on youth-oriented hate speech online

The Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University has launched plans to form a "thematic network of experts, educators, practitioners and ambassadors

that will facilitate, promote and strengthen collaboration to counter youth-oriented hate speech online". The initiative builds upon the "Viral Peace" project, which was inspired by the outcomes of a meeting at the Berkman Center in 2008, and seeks to fight hate speech online by enhancing the capabilities of youth, community leaders, social media influencers and civic activists around the world to stand up to hate and violence online.

To form the thematic network, the Berkman Center will be working with partners including, among others, the London-based Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD). The project will benefit from ISD's work on countering extremist propaganda online, including its Against Violent Extremism network of former-extremists and survivors of extremism-turned-advocates, run in partnership with Google Ideas and the GenNext Foundation. Additional information can be found at <http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/research/viralpeace>.

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Court rulings on religious doctrine

The Supreme Court has issued a decision in the case of *Shergill-v-Khaira*. This appeal related to disputes which have arisen within a Sikh sect associated with three Gurdwaras (Sikh temples) in Bradford, Birmingham and High Wycombe. It raises two questions concerning the trusts on which the Gurdwaras are held. The questions are (i) the extent to which it is open to trustees to alter, or restrict, the terms of the trusts upon which they hold property, and (ii) the extent to which the court can and should refuse to determine issues of religion or religious belief in legal proceedings.

The Court of Appeal had previously permanently stayed proceedings on the basis that the Court could not decide on issues of religious doctrine or practice. However, the Supreme Court has decided that where the matter at stake is to do with issues such as ownership or control of property held in trust, these involve interests which the civil law will protect. Therefore, the Court may have to adjudicate on matters of religious doctrine and practice in resolving the civil law case; but the civil court does not resolve the religious dispute itself.

The case has been referred back to the High Court for a full hearing. A press summary issued by the Supreme Court can be found at:

http://www.supremecourt.uk/decided-cases/docs/UKSC_2012_0234_PressSummary.pdf

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PROJECTS

Interfaith Scotland School Inter Faith Days

Interfaith Scotland is expanding its team of volunteers to deliver talks and workshops in schools. The most recent inter faith days have been for primary and secondary schools pupils across Shetland, S4 and S6 pupils at Dumfries High School, S6 pupils at St Modan's High School in Stirling and Oban High School and others are planned.

Further information from admin@interfaithscotland.org.

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Interfaith Scotland Women's Interfaith Dialogue

Interfaith Scotland will be holding a women's interfaith dialogue event in Moray during September (date tbc). This is part of a regular programme of women's dialogues across Scotland, looking at 'Values and Visions for the future of Scotland' in the light of the Scottish referendum in September 2014, and thinking about how women of all faiths and none can contribute to that vision. For further information, contact frances@interfaithscotland.org.

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Friends for Change

The St Ethelburga's Centre in London is launching a new programme of inter faith dialogue for young adults called 'Friends for Change'. The programme is for 18 to 36 year olds who are committed members of a faith community.

The programme takes place over 12 months and will focus on: Exploring identities and sharing stories; Experiencing other communities and places of worship; Understanding each other's beliefs and practices; Building lasting friendships across different cultures; Reflecting on what it means to live one's faith in times of transition; Exploring spiritual aspirations and passions; Asking what contribution the younger generation can make to our communities and wider world; and Exploring the potential for joining forces in the future and generating social action projects in 2015.

There are still a few places available and further information can be found online at <https://www.stethelburgas.org/friends-change> or by contacting Viviana at projects@stethelburgas.org.

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Luton archery project

The Luton Council of Faiths and Grassroots Luton have launched an archery project, enabled by Big Lottery funding. The aims of the project include improving the physical health of disadvantaged minority ethnic people, enabling these groups to be less isolated and better engaged, and strengthening community cohesion, to foster a stronger and safer community. Community archery sessions will be held in local places of worship. For further information, contact admingrassroots@btconnect.com.

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Inter Faith Water Project

Bishop Tony Robinson, Chair of Kirklees Faiths Forum, and Canon Yaqub Masih, a lay Canon at Wakefield Cathedral and Pakistan-born Christian from Huddersfield have recently visited Gojra in Pakistan to lay the foundation stones for an inter faith project to provide clean water for the 3,000 people living locally.

Further information about the project, and the recent trip to Pakistan, can be found online at

http://www.wakefield.anglican.org/news/story/bishop_and_lay_canon_in_pakistan_to_launch_interfaith_water_project_to_prom.

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3FF ParliaMentors

ParliaMentors is a year-long programme, run by 3FF in which trios of university students of different faiths and non-religious beliefs are mentored by parliamentarians and create social action projects with support from leading local and national NGOs. Participants on the programme receive training and attend events that widen their professional and social networks.

3FF is now recruiting for its 2014-15 ParliaMentors programme, which begins in September. To find out more, and to apply, visit

<http://www.3ff.org.uk/mentoring/details/>.

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Community tree planting to commemorate WWI

This August marks the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War. The Woodland Trust is honouring all those who took part in the war effort by planting millions of trees that will stand as a tribute for centuries to come and is encouraging communities to plant a free tree pack in their local area.

Packs come in three sizes – 30 saplings, 105 saplings and 420 saplings in various themes (hedge, copse, wildlife, wild harvest, year-round colour, working wood, wild wood and wetland). For more information, and to apply for packs, visit www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/freetrees. The closing date for applications is 4 September but it may close early if oversubscribed.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Together in Service Fund

The Together in Service Fund, a programme supported by the Department for Communities and Local Government and administered by FaithAction, is available as 1:1 match-funding for small grants between £2,000 and £5,000 to facilitate multi-faith social action projects at a local level. It has so far awarded a total of £72,000 to 25 projects. Funding is available only to organisations and not to individuals.

The next two deadline dates are 3 July and 25 August. Further details about funding, including eligibility, how to apply, and the full schedule of closing dates can be found at <http://www.togetherinservice.net/funding/>.

FaithAction are holding a series of 'Fast Track to Funding' workshops to help organisations with funding applications. A full list of dates and venues can be found online at <http://www.togetherinservice.net/latest/2014/03/fast-track-to-funding-events-by-faithaction/>.

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Near Neighbours programme

The Near Neighbours programme, a partnership between the Church Urban Fund and the Archbishops' Council, has been awarded a further grant by the Department for Communities and Local Government of £3 million to build upon the success of its current projects in bringing together multi faith communities. This additional funding will enable the programme to expand to new areas within the UK and to support existing community projects over the next two years.

The programme has been focused on Leicester, Birmingham, East London, Luton and the northern conurbations of Burnley, Bradford and Oldham. It will now be expanding into Rochdale, Dewsbury, Leeds, Nottingham, North and West London and the Black Country.

The Near Neighbours Fund awards small grants of between £250 and £5,000 to projects that enable people of different faiths or none to work together for the benefit of the community. The Fund has now re-opened and details on how to apply can be found online at <http://www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/grants>.

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Inter Faith Youth Trust grants for Inter Faith Week

The Inter Faith Youth Trust will be making small grants of up to £500 for organisations running events or projects connected with Inter Faith Week 2014.

Grants are awarded for proposals for inter faith activities by children and young people from Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and other faiths and those of no formal faith which encourage understanding and co-operation. The age range for young people is 11 to 25 years. Priority will be given to projects which:

- Actively involve young people in planning, running, and evaluation of the project.
- Promote positive action, ie young people from different backgrounds coming together to address shared problems such as improving green spaces.
- Are run by non-statutory organisations, such as youth clubs, scout/guide groups, local voluntary and community organisations.

The application form can be downloaded from www.ifyouthtrust.org.uk and the closing date for applications is 31 August 2014.

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Support for inter faith WWI commemoration events

A number of organisations are making support available for projects and events to commemorate WW1 this year.

Under the Heritage Lottery Fund's 'First World War, Then and Now' programme grants of up to £10,000 are available for local projects with a permanent learning legacy (grants solely for events are not available). Larger HLF grants may also be available for projects with a national scope. Details are available online at <http://www.hlf.org.uk/HowToApply/programmes/Pages/FirstWorldWarThenandNow.aspx#.U43YIE0U-vE>.

The Near Neighbours fund (<http://www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/grants>) and Together in Service (<http://www.togetherinservice.net/>) are both willing to consider grant funding applications for practical multi-faith projects with a First World War focus.

Projects may also be interested in registering to be part of the First World War Centenary Partnership (<http://www.1914.org/partnership/>), headed by the Imperial War Museum. Although grants are not available, members carry the Centenary Partnership brand and have access to an extensive network of contacts and opportunities.

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Ride and Stride

Ride and Stride is a sponsored bike ride or walk in which people from all over the country walk or cycle between places of worship, enjoying the countryside from Cornwall to Northumberland. The money raised helps to preserve some of Britain's places of worship which are at risk of falling into serious disrepair. Taking part in this fundraising event is open to any church, mosque, synagogue or temple and is a good way to raise awareness.

London's Ride and Stride is taking place on 20 September (www.heritageoflondon.com) and in the rest of England it is taking place on 13 September (www.rideandstrideuk.org).

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Funding Central website

Funding Central - <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/default.aspx> - is a free website for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises that provides access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, together with tools and resources supporting organisations to develop sustainable income strategies appropriate to their needs.

Funding Central is managed by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, in partnership with Idox Information Solutions Ltd, and funded by the Government's Office for Civil Society.

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Comic Relief Stronger Communities grants

Comic Relief's grants programme now has five themes, one of which is 'Stronger Communities'. Grants for the Stronger Communities theme are managed by Local Community Foundations and range in size from £1,000 to £10,000 per year. Priority is given to small, locally-based groups or organisations in areas of disadvantage that have a clear understanding of the needs of their community and are undertaking actions as a means of addressing these needs. Anyone wishing to apply for a Local Communities grant should contact their local community foundation. Further details can be found online at http://ukcommunityfoundations.org/programmes/comic_relief/.

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Big Lottery Fund

The Big Lottery Fund give grants from £300 to over £500,000 to organisations ranging from small local groups to major national charities. Information about their various grant schemes can be found at <http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/Home/Funding/Funding%20finder>.

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RESOURCES AND TRAINING

The Good Society Project

On 21 May, at the Basil Hume Centre in Westminster, London, Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) and Church Action on Poverty launched the 'Good Society' project, with a keynote speech from Cardinal Vincent Nichols.

Over the past two years, Good Society researchers have visited different places in the UK to look at how churches are tackling a wide range of social issues. A report has been produced and this, together with a specially produced toolkit, is designed to be a springboard for wider conversations by communities and churches across the UK about what constitutes a Good Society. CTBI will be gathering these views, and using them as the basis for what the Churches say on a range of issues in the run-up to the 2015 General Election.

To download the free toolkit and for more information, go to www.agoodsociety.org or email info@agoodsociety.org.

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Faithnetsouthwest final event report

Like many organisations, Faithnetsouthwest has been struggling to maintain a secure financial base for some time in a very difficult funding environment. Its Directors decided that regrettably its financial position was not sustainable and its work has now drawn to a close. Its final event, entitled 'Leaving a Legacy' took place on 27 March and was addressed by Stephen Timms MP, Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Faith and Society. A copy of the report can be downloaded from <http://faithnetsouthwest.org.uk/faithnetsouthwest-to-shut-on-31-march-2014/>.

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DVD on Scottish Interfaith Week

A short film with interviews and speeches from the national celebration of Scottish Interfaith Week in Kirkcaldy can be found on the home page of the Interfaith Scotland website at <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/>. Hard copies in DVD format are available from the Interfaith Scotland office.

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'Visiting Faiths' DVD

The Faith Encounter Programme (FEP) in the West Midlands has recently produced a DVD, comprising 6 ten minute films of 6 of the most inspiring places of worship in the region. The films are presented as mini tours by six of the trained Faith Guides, and give an insight into the lives of the people who worship at each place, as well as displaying the beautiful features of the buildings. Buddhist, Christian, Jewish, Hindu,

Muslim and Sikh faiths are featured. The films are intended as a resource for teachers who are unable to take their pupils to visit or who are preparing for a visit, anywhere in the country and teachers' notes are planned. The films can also be used in adult groups, as an introduction to the heritage of faiths in the UK. The films can be previewed briefly at www.faithencounter.org.uk and purchased from FEP Coordinator Ruth Tetlow at 0121 449 4892 or ruthetlow@btinternet.com.

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Faith Initiative

Faith Initiative magazine has been published since 2001. Its publishers see it as helping readers move past 'fear of the unknown' to explore a multitude of issues that are relevant to people of faith and their communities. It seeks, through a variety of themes, to increase mutual understanding by illustrating the similarities between religions, and also the distinct differences on the basis that both have to be valued if inter faith dialogue and action is to have integrity. The publishers also see the magazine as a celebration of faiths in its colour, artwork, poetry and sacred writings. It is published twice a year over 4,500 copies are circulated annually to schools, colleges, universities, chaplaincies, inter faith groups and religious communities, many on a gift basis.

For further information, visit www.faithinitiative.co.uk. For a complimentary copy of the magazine, contact the Editor, Heather Wells, at hf_wells@yahoo.co.uk.

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The Interfaith Observer

The Interfaith Observer is a free monthly electronic journal created to explore inter religious relations and what its publishers term the 'interfaith movement' as a whole. It was started in 2011 and is designed as a resource for the general reader, anyone interested in the subject; but articles are filled with references and links for those who wish to pursue a particular subject. The Interfaith Observer can be downloaded from: <http://theinterfaithobserver.org>.

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Westminster Faith Debates

Full reports of the six 2014 Westminster Faith Debates, which were on the theme of global religious trends, are available at: <http://faithdebates.org.uk/category/debates/2014-debates/global-religious-trends/>.

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Guide to organising voluntary events

As part of its policy on 'Making it easier to set up and run a charity, social enterprise, or voluntary organisation' the Cabinet Office has published a 'Can do' guide to organising a voluntary event. The guide has been developed with a range of civil society and Government organisations and is designed to help people plan and run successful events with a minimum of red tape. A copy of the guide can be found online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/can-do-guide-for-organisers-of-voluntary-events>.

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New Online Short Courses at the Woolf Institute

The Woolf Institute (Cambridge) has announced the introduction of two new Online Short Courses: *Is Interfaith Dialogue Important?* and *'Shakespeare and the Jewish-Christian Encounter: Beyond The Merchant of Venice'*

The Woolf Institute's Short Online Courses are available to join 365 days of the year and are designed as seven-week courses. Those who engage fully in their chosen course will receive a Woolf Institute Certificate of Completion. For further information, contact Dr Emma Harris at eth22@cam.ac.uk or visit <http://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/study/e-learning/short-courses.asp>.

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Certificate in Inter Faith Relations

The London Inter Faith Centre is currently accepting applications for its two-year Certificate Course in Inter Faith Relations, which runs from September 2014 to July 2016. The course runs on Monday evenings from 7.30pm to 9.30pm, termly, beginning on 22 September. There is a fee to participate and the course requires seminar presentations, essays and dialogue assignments.

To find out more about the course, contact one of the Course Tutors, the Revd Maggie Hindley on 020 7372 1765 or at maggie.hindley@londoninterfaith.org.uk.

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Inter faith study tour to Israel and the West Bank

The Council of Christians and Jews is partnering with FODIP (The Forum for Discussion of Israel and Palestine) for its fourth annual Study Tour. The 'Questions Without Borders' Study Tour takes place from 19 to 30 October and all the information about the tour, including an itinerary, can be downloaded at www.fodip.org/study-tour.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS AND TENDERS

Queen's Birthday Honours nominations

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) is seeking nominations for the Queen's Birthday Honours List 2015 which reflect exceptional contributions by individuals from across the full breadth of society. It is keen to see individuals recognised who have contributed to building integrated communities.

To request nomination guidelines and a citation form, contact Mark A Hall at mark1.hall@communities.qsi.gov.uk. The deadline for return of forms is 15 August.

DCLG is also running a series of workshops on citation writing during July and early August. Anyone wishing to attend should contact Julian Matthews at julian.matthews@communities.gsi.gov.uk.

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National Diversity Awards

Nominations for the National Diversity Awards close on 18 July.

The Awards are a celebration of outstanding achievements of positive role models, entrepreneurs and community organisations from across the UK. Awards for community organisations and positive role models both include 'Race, Religion and Faith' as one of the five categories.

For further information, visit www.nationaldiversityawards.co.uk.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Heritage Open Days (11 to 14 September)

Every year for 4 days in September buildings of every age, style and function open their doors. (<http://www.heritageopendays.org.uk/about>) This is a once-a-year chance for people to discover architectural treasures and enjoy a wide range of tours, events and activities that bring local history and culture to life. Places of worship are encouraged to take part by opening to the public free of charge.

Visit the website to register a historic place of worship for the Heritage Open Days:

www.heritageopendays.org.uk/get-involved/can-i-take-part

For Wales the link is <http://cadw.wales.gov.uk/opendoors/?lang=en>

For Scotland the link is <http://www.doorsopendays.org.uk/opendays/>

For Northern Ireland the link is <http://www.discovernorthernireland.com/niea/ehod.aspx>

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Sewa Day (5 October)

The Sanskrit word 'Sewa' means 'selfless service'. The aim of Sewa Day is to provide people a chance to give back to the local community through volunteering on a single day to make a difference. For more information and to get involved visit: www.sewaday.org

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One World Week (19 to 26 October)

Each year One World Week is an opportunity for people from diverse backgrounds to come together to learn about global justice, to spread that learning and to use it to take action for justice locally and globally. The theme for this year's One World Week is 'Living Differently: Breaking Chains – Making change'. This recognises that everyone needs to make changes now to secure a fairer, more satisfying, life for all whilst protecting the planet's resources for future generations. This year OWW is encouraging events around sourcing food differently, reducing wastefulness and using money ethically to support change.

For more information, including guidance for inter faith and inter cultural events, visit <http://www.oneworldweek.org>.

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Mitzvah Day (16 November)

Mitzvah Day is a Jewish led day of social action – around the world thousands of people take part in hands on projects to support existing charities and to build stronger communities. The goal is to reduce hardship and poverty and to help the environment. People are encouraged to volunteer for projects in their communities and anyone can take part regardless of their background. For further information, visit www.mitzvahday.org.uk.

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Inter Faith Week

Inter Faith Week in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, led by IFN, will take place from Sunday 16 to Saturday 22 November. Further information is online at <http://www.interfaithweek.org/>.

Scottish Inter Faith Week, led by Interfaith Scotland, will take place from Sunday 23 to Sunday 30 November. The theme for Scottish Inter Faith Week is 'Journeys'. Further information is online at <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/events/>.

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DIARY DATES

This section includes a sample of some of the events taking place around the UK.

York Interfaith Group is holding a meeting at 7.30pm on Wednesday 2 July at the Clementhorpe Room in the Priory Street Centre in York. The theme for the evening will be 'The Golden Rule – What does it mean to us?' and the speakers will be Hooshmand Badee and Sue Yore. For further information, contact Mark Cosens at loscosens@yahoo.co.uk.

The next meeting of **Interfaith MK (Milton Keynes)** is due to take place on Thursday 3 July and it is anticipated that there will be a presentation by a Buddhist speaker. The event will take place from 7.30pm to 9.30pm in Milton Keynes. For further information, contact interfaithmk@gmail.com.

Bolton Interfaith Council is part of a group of organisations involved in producing this year's 'Spirit of Bolton' event entitled 'One Bolton, One Community, One Spirit' on Saturday 5 July. This is the seventh year in which this event has taken place and it aims to promote positive partnerships to enhance community cohesion and portray the unity that exists in Bolton. The event, which runs from 10.30am to 3.30pm in Victoria Square in Bolton, will include activities, entertainment, community group displays and much more. For further information, or to offer any diverse community entertainment, contact Chan Parmar on 01204 546110 or at chan@boltoninterfaithcouncil.org.uk.

Wolverhampton Inter-Faith and Regeneration Network will be visiting Worcester Cathedral and a local mosque on Saturday 5 July. For further information, contact admin@wifrn.org.uk.

Muslim Jewish Forum Greater Manchester and the **Faith Network for Manchester** are jointly organising an inter faith iftar on Sunday 6 July. The evening begins at 8.30pm and is due to end at 11pm and will be held at the Manchester Multifaith Centre, 2nd Floor, Ada House, 77 Thompson Street, Manchester M4 5FY. The meal served will be vegetarian Asian food. There will also be kosher salads and buns purchased from kosher shops but the Centre is not supervised by any *kashrut* authority. There is no charge to attend but donations are welcome. Booking is essential and should be done by emailing mail@muslimjewish.org.uk before 29 June.

London Boroughs Faiths Network is holding its next meeting on Monday 7 July. The meeting will be held from 3pm to 5pm at New Scotland Yard and will focus on why faith groups should engage with the police. Booking for the meeting is essential. For further information contact Catriona Robertson before 3 July.

Peace Mala is holding a 'Sacred Earth Healing Day' at its headquarters in Swansea on Thursday 10 July. The event features speakers from a number of faiths on the theme of inner peace, and healing both of the self and the planet. Further information is available from info@peacemala.org.uk.

The next seminar organised by **Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource** will be held on Wednesday 16 July at 7.00pm. The seminar is entitled 'Scientific evidence for design in nature' and the speaker will be Fr Evgeny Selensky. All are welcome. There is a small charge for non-SIFRE members to attend. The seminar will be held in the Inter Faith Centre of the West Building of the University Campus Suffolk. For further information, contact cynthia.capey@sifre.org.uk.

St Ethelburga's Centre is holding a social action inter faith workshop for young Christians and Jews at 6.30pm on Wednesday 30 July. The evening will be an opportunity for young Christians and Jews to come together and explore how their faith practices influence their drive for social action, activism and community work. The speakers will include Rabbi Natan Levy and Francis Davis. For further information, contact Marianne@stethelburgas.org.

Leeds Concord Interfaith Group will be holding its Summer Social at 7.30pm on Thursday 31 July. This will include the Diversity Game. The venue is the Quaker Meeting House, Woodhouse Lane, Leeds LS2 9DX. For further information, contact secretary@concord-leeds.org.uk.

Watford Inter Faith Association is involved in organising the Bishop's Cup Interfaith Cricket Tournament on Sunday 3 August. The tournament takes place at the Holywell Community Centre, Tolpits Lane from 1pm. The plan is to have people of at least three different faiths in each team. Participants can be either male or female but must be over 15 years old. The Community Fair will be taking place on the same day so there be lots of activities. For further information, contact info@wifa.org.uk or telephone 01923 774812.

Luton Council of Faiths and **Grassroots Luton** will be jointly organising the annual Luton Peace Walk on Saturday 20 September. Further details to follow.

Horsham Interfaith Forum will be holding a 'Multifaith Reflections' event on at 2pm Saturday 27 September at London Road Methodist Hall, London Road, Horsham RH12 1AN. Further details to follow.

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For more information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 30 July with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer:

Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH
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IFN e-bulletin

October 2014

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For information about the work of the Inter Faith Network for the UK visit:
www.interfaith.org.uk

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 24 November with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and projects and future events.

Disclaimer: Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

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UK/NATIONAL UPDATES

Inter Faith Network update

IFN's National Meeting and AGM were held in Birmingham on 29 September.

National Meeting

The theme of the National Meeting was 'Tough to talk?'. This focused on issues which can be difficult to tackle in inter faith contexts, reflecting on how these are being approached around the UK in different settings.

The following themes were addressed through plenary discussion and in discussion groups: contexts in which it can be 'tough to talk' and ways of approaching difficult issues; maintaining bonds of trust and cooperation when times are tough; charities and due diligence, including in relation to concerns about extremism; addressing difficult issues sensitively in local contexts; conflict resilience skills; motivations and agendas in inter faith contexts; questions of identity and inclusion; inter faith engagement and extremism; learning from dealing with difficult issues in the classroom and in youth inter faith work; and learning from faith communities' engagement with social challenges.

A report of the National Meeting will be available in due course.

New Committee and member bodies

A list of those elected to serve on IFN's Executive Committee for 2014-15 can be found on the IFN website at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/about-ifn/structure>. The following organisations were accepted into membership, under the new Membership Admissions Policy agreed at the May EGM: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Great Britain); Druid Network; Pagan Federation; Spiritualists' National Union; North Lincolnshire Multi Faith Partnership; and Stratford-on-Avon Interfaith Forum.

Other meetings

A meeting of the Faith Communities Forum of IFN was held in London in July and meetings of member local inter faith organisations for exchange of news and good practice were held in Bristol, Leicester, Luton, Newcastle and Preston in August.

A combined meeting for National and Regional Inter Faith Organisations and Educational and Academic Bodies was held in London in August.

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Inter Faith Week

Inter Faith Week in England, Northern Ireland and Wales runs from Sunday 16 to Saturday 22 November.

Many events are now up on the Inter Faith Week website and can be viewed via the interactive map at www.interfaithweek.org/map, and more will be added regularly.

To submit details of an event, go to www.interfaithweek.org/submit and follow the instructions on the page. Listing an event brings free publicity, and helps other people to find out about events happening in their local area. It is also a good way of encouraging everyone else taking part in the Week by making people feel part of the bigger picture.

The range of organisations taking part in the Week looks set to be as wide as in past years, including local, regional and national faith communities and inter faith organisations; schools, colleges and universities; SACREs and local education centres; local authorities and public services such as the Police; libraries, museums and galleries; community organisations, charities and NGOs; student and youth organisations; Chaplaincies; businesses and professional bodies; and hospital and healthcare organisations.

The Week is an important focal point for inter faith activity, and an opportunity to showcase the many excellent projects and programmes taking place year-round. Prime Minister David Cameron has said “there is no better way of celebrating the richness and diversity of faith in our country.”

Mitzvah Day takes place on 16 November. This is a Jewish-led day of social action and volunteering which includes a large number of projects run on a multi-faith basis known as ‘Inter Faith Mitzvah Days’. Inter Faith Week and Mitzvah Day work closely together and Mitzvah Day inter faith events are listed on the IFW website. Further information on Mitzvah Day is included in this E-bulletin [here](#).

For further information about Inter Faith Week or how to take part, contact Ashley Beck at ashley.beck@interfaith.org.uk or on 020 7730 0410.

Scottish Interfaith Week will take place from 23-30 November and has the theme ‘Journeys of Faith’. Further information can be found at <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/events/>.

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EHRC call for evidence on religion or belief in the workplace and service delivery

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has extended to 31 October the closing date for its call to evidence on religion or belief in the workplace and service delivery.

This call for evidence aims to gather as much information as possible from members of the public, employers, providers of services, legal advisors and religion or belief organisations. The work covers all faiths and beliefs and experiences in England, Scotland and Wales. The EHRC is keen to hear about positive and negative experiences since 2010 including:

- How religion or belief has affected the recent experiences of job applicants, employees or customers
- Whether people who hold a religion or belief are aware of their legal rights and if appropriate information and guidance is available to them
- Views on the effectiveness of current equality and human rights legislation on religion or belief

- The recent experiences of employers when these issues arise in the workplace
- The recent experience of organisations providing services to the public when issues around religion or belief are raised.

This research is part of a three-year EHRC programme “to strengthen understanding of religion or belief in public life, improve knowledge about what happens in practice and ensure that the laws that protect everyone’s right to be treated with fairness, dignity and respect are effective”.

The EHRC will be releasing its initial findings in early 2015 and will use the information gathered to develop guidance on any issues which individuals or organisations are finding challenging. It will also inform its assessment of the effectiveness of the current equality and human rights framework relating to religion or belief rights and freedoms.

The call for evidence is being conducted by independent research organisation NatCen Social Research. Questionnaires can be completed on line or by post and all information collected will be in confidence. Full details can be found online at <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/about-us/our-work/key-projects/religion-or-belief-tell-us-about-your-experiences>. Any queries about the EHRC’s work on religion or belief should be sent to religionorbelief@equalityhumanrights.com.

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Consultation on Religion and Belief in British Public Life

The Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life, convened by the Woolf Institute, has launched a public consultation on the role of religion and belief in public life, with particular regard to media coverage of religion and belief issues, social action, developments in UK education systems, civil and criminal law, and dialogue and engagement. Information on the consultation can be found at www.corab.org.uk/national-consultation.

Responses can be of any length and can be accompanied by copies of relevant documents. In its eventual report the Commission will acknowledge all the responses which it receives and may quote from some directly. Enquiries and responses should be sent, by 31 October, to Mohammed Aziz, Head of the Commission Secretariat at maa74@cam.ac.uk or by post to the Woolf Institute, 12-14 Grange Road, Cambridge CB3 9DU.

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Hate crimes in England and Wales, 2013-2014

In October 2014, the Government published statistics on hate crimes and racist incidents in England and Wales recorded by the police in 2013 to 2014. In 2013-14, there were 44,480 hate crimes recorded by the Police, which is an increase of 5% from 2012-13. This includes increases in all five monitored strands. The full statistical breakdowns can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crimes-england-and-wales-2013-to-2014>

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Religious Education updates

The Religious Education Council, National Association of Teachers of RE and Culham St Gabriel's Trust are supporting the development of regional hubs for RE. Five hubs were piloted during the summer term, and five more are in development, as well as some working independently. More information is available on the RE Council website <http://religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/>

The RE Council Learning Outside the Classroom website has now been launched at <http://lotc.recouncil.org.uk/> This website brings together information on RE trails and case study material on running visits to places of worship and other sacred spaces.

The Religious Education Council runs a professional development portal which enables RE teachers to find relevant training, workshops and other professional development opportunities. Organisations can submit details of any opportunities they provide at <http://www.theredirectory.org.uk/pdportal>.

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Impact on inter faith relations in the UK of overseas events

Across recent months, events in the Middle East have had a significant impact on inter faith relations in the UK and they continue to be a focus of prayer and discussion.

Responding to this situation, in early August, the Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs sent two messages to member bodies. The first, on 4 August, was entitled '*Overseas events and inter faith bonds of friendship and trust in the UK*'. This focused on maintaining good relations with people of other faiths in times when the impact of overseas events puts strain on these. The second was entitled '*UK inter faith relations and impact of overseas events, particularly in Iraq and elsewhere in the Middle East*' and focused on ways of responding to overseas events here in the UK. These were also made available more widely through the home page of the Inter Faith Network website at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/>.

There have been a number of national, regional and local inter faith and multi faith responses to events. Just a few examples of inter faith responses are noted below.

The National Council of Imams and Rabbis of the Joseph Interfaith Foundation issued a statement on 13 July. Blackburn with Darwen Inter Faith Forum, Lancashire Council of Mosques and Lancashire Forum of Faiths and Churches Together in Lancashire signed a Plea for Peace on 4 August, which they sent to the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, and local MPs. Led by the Archbishop of Wales and the Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Wales, more than 30 leaders from churches, mosques, temples and synagogues signed a statement on 7 August to express their concern for the plight of Christians who are being forced out of their homes by ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant). They also reaffirmed their friendship to each other and offered prayers for those suffering. The Al-Khoei Foundation, in partnership with the Assyrian Orthodox Church and the Awareness Foundation, held, on 9 August, "an evening of solidarity and support, bringing together the diverse communities of Iraq to show their concern and condemnation of what was happening to the Christian community and all the diverse communities of Iraq". Religions for Peace (UK) issued a statement on 22 August condemning the

acts of ISIL. Some responses are ongoing, for example, Building Bridges in Burnley is holding inter faith prayers for peace in Gaza, Syria and Iraq weekly during October.

On 3 September, a multi-faith peace vigil was held outside Westminster Abbey, attended by the Archbishop of Canterbury, faith leaders and representatives of faith-based NGOs. The vigil, which was jointly organised by Christian Aid, Islamic Relief and World Jewish Relief in partnership with the Church of England, the Muslim Council of Britain and the Movement for Reform Judaism, was an expression of solidarity with the people of Iraq and affirmed the message "We Are All Human".

A multi faith event took place on 12 October at the British Muslim Heritage Centre in Manchester to celebrate the life of a local man, Alan Henning, who had been murdered by ISIL following his kidnapping while delivering humanitarian aid. A memorial service also took place at Perth Congregational Church to celebrate the life of David Haines. The minister who led the service, at which people of other faiths were present, said that it had a "message of peace and reconciliation".

There were also many single faith statements and events. In relation to ISIL, a number of them being strongly worded statements from Muslim organisations deploring the way that Islamic teachings had been misused in seeking to justify acts committed by it. A video statement was released by ImamsOnline.com in which a number of senior British Imams from both Sunni and Shia traditions, including IFN Vice-Chair Maulana M Shahid Raza, emphasised the importance of unity and condemned ISIL as a "vicious group who do not represent Islam in any way". The video can be found at <http://imamsonline.com/blog/2014/07/senior-british-imams-response-to-isis-recruitment-videos/>

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Faith community festivals at Westminster

Across the last few years, there has been a tradition established of key festivals of a number of faith communities being celebrated within the Houses of Parliament and, more recently, of receptions linked to particular festivals held at Downing Street or locations such as Lancaster House.

One of the longest standing is the Diwali event at the House of Commons which took place this month for the 13th year.

There are also a number of annual events which have a link to particular communities, such as Ahimsa Day, arranged by the Institute of Jainology and held this year on 15 October.

These events have a strongly inter faith dimension with communities inviting colleagues of other faiths to participate.

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Welsh inter faith response to Hate Crime Awareness Week

As part of Hate Crime Awareness Week, which took place this month the Welsh Government has produced a video with members of the Inter-faith Council for Wales.

A copy of this can be found on the YouTube channel online at <http://youtu.be/Qr48v5RFllw>.

It has also produced a factsheet on religion or belief hate crime, which can be downloaded from <http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dsjlg/publications/equality/141013-religiously-motivated-hate-crime-factsheet-en.pdf>.

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INTERNATIONAL UPDATES

Inter Faith Declaration on Climate Change

In September, as part of the Interfaith Summit on Climate Change in New York, jointly hosted by the World Council of Churches and Religions for Peace, 30 faith leaders from 21 countries signed a declaration on climate change. A copy of the declaration can be found online at <http://www.interfaithclimate.org/the-statement>.

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Parliament for the World's Religions

The Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions has announced that the 2015 Parliament will take place in Salt Lake City from 15 to 19 October. Information on the Call for Proposals for the 2015 Parliament can be found under [Calls for Information](#).

The Board of Trustees has announced that the Parliament will now take place every two years.

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PROJECTS

RE 4 Real

The Faiths and Civil Society Unit at Goldsmiths, University of London has launched a project entitled 'RE 4 Real – What do school leavers really need to know about religion and belief?'. Schools can play a crucial role in shaping how young people engage with the presence and diversity of religion and belief in the world around them. The project will explore the contours through the views of teachers, parents, pupils and employers on what sorts of knowledge and skills school leavers should develop on religion and belief and why they need them.

The project is being funded by the Culham St Gabriel's Trust and will run until July 2015 conducting over 200 interviews and focus groups in 20 schools across England.

For further information, or to get involved, contact Martha Shaw at m.shaw@gold.ac.uk or visit www.gold.ac.uk/faithsunit.

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Inter Faith Youth Network and Women of Faith Network

Religions for Peace (UK) is working to develop a UK Interfaith Youth Network for faith based youth unions and organisations; and a UK Women of Faith Network for faith based women's organisations.

It is interested in hearing from any organisations and individuals involved in either area of work, particularly with regard to invitations to two conferences being arranged on the subjects. For further information, contact Jehangir Sarosh at jehangirsarosh@me.com.

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Faith: 'Too significant to ignore'

FaithAction is running a campaign entitled 'Too Significant to Ignore' for which it is putting together a list of "everyone that believes faith makes a difference to communities across the UK and that work done by faith groups reached people that nothing else can". People can add their name to the list at <http://www.faithaction.net/areas-of-work/faith-too-significant-to-ignore/>. Entries received may be used on FaithAction's websites and on special printed materials.

This campaign is also the subject of FaithAction's national conference on 19 November, further details of which are in the [Diary Dates](#) section.

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Council of Christians and Jews 'Buddy' project

The Council of Christians and Jews has worked to bring about a "Buddy Scheme" which will pair ten students training for ministry at the Queen's Foundation, Birmingham, with ten Rabbinic students from Leo Baeck College in London during their years of training.

The project will give the Anglican ordinands the opportunity to learn more about Jews and Judaism from a 'buddy' also going through the experience of training for ministry and community leadership. The pairs will be encouraged to meet monthly to share their learning and experiences. In a context where the training curriculum may have limited space for learning about other faiths, the students will be building dialogue into personal experience as they build a relationship with a contemporary. The hope is that the pairings may also lead to long-term friendships which will enrich the training of participants and also their future ministries.

CCJ explain that it is planned that a further cohort of students will be enrolled into the scheme each year from now on, creating a significant new resource in Christian-Jewish understanding for the future.

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Near Neighbours local projects launch

The Near Neighbours programme has been launching locally in a number of places across September: Bury and Prestwich; Dudley; Leeds and Dewsbury; Nottingham; Rochdale; Sandwell; Walsall; West London; and Wolverhampton.

Contacts for all these local hubs can be found online at <http://www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/local-hubs>.

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West Midlands Faith Forum No Place Like Home project

West Midlands Faiths Forum, in partnership with Birmingham City Council's Adoption & Fostering Service, is launching a new project aimed at addressing the needs of adoption and foster care in the city of Birmingham.

The project aims to promote:

- The concept of family and family values
- Faith community support for family as a key building block for society
- Opportunities to build families and change the lives of vulnerable children and young people through fostering and/or adoption.

The project will be launched with an event on 15 November <http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/no-place-like-home-tickets-13162049043>. For further information, contact West Midlands Faiths Forum at info@wmfaithsforum.org.uk.

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Anne Frank Trust diary

The Anne Frank Trust is aiming to build the biggest online diary, Generation Diary, to mark the 85th anniversary of Anne Frank's birth this year. The diary is aimed at 13 to 15 year olds and will be live until 11 June 2015. Teenagers can make as many entries as they wish and can upload filmed entries via Youtube and Vimeo. There are also resources to download for teachers. The Department of Social Psychology at the University of Kent will be analysing the data and it is hoped that Generation Diary will give "a snapshot of the zeitgeist of Britain's young people". For further information, visit www.generationdiary.org.uk.

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Kirklees Faiths Forum Faith Visits (Schools) Project

Kirklees Faiths Forum (KFF) has announced that it will now be delivering faith visits to places of worship for schools itself, through its 'Faith Visits (Schools) Project' which was formerly called 'Interfaith Schools'. All visits are planned to match the

Local Syllabus for RE in Kirklees and Calderdale 2014-19 and are differentiated according to the age of the children. Each visit is led by a volunteer member of the worshipping community trained by KFF to deliver an approved learning package. KFF also provide adult faith visits for staff and parents tailored to meet the needs of a community. To book a visit or find out more, contact info@kirkleesfaithsforum.org.uk or call KFF on 01924 326425.

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Bedford inter faith labyrinth

Bedford Council of Faiths has launched a seven circuit labyrinth which has been created on the Bedford Campus of the University of Bedfordshire. The labyrinth will be used for walks as a meditation, a way of relieving stress and an opportunity to reflect on troublesome issues. Anyone interested in booking a guided walk of the labyrinth should contact the Revd Cassandra Howes at secretary.bcof@gmail.com.

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Multi-Faith Centre 10th Anniversary

The Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby is this year celebrating its 10th anniversary. Details of a special event to celebrate the anniversary can be found in the [Diary Dates](#) section.

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Edinburgh Inter-Faith Association 25th Anniversary

Edinburgh Inter-Faith Association is this year celebrating its 25th anniversary. The Association has published a special edition of its magazine – *Interfaith Matters* – commemorating this milestone. The special edition looks back on its history as Scotland's longest-running inter faith group and can be found on its website at www.eifa.org.uk.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Together in Service Fund

The Together in Service Fund is a programme supported by the Department for Communities and Local Government and administered by FaithAction. Small grants between £2,000 and £5,000 are available on a 1:1 match-funding basis to facilitate

multi-faith social action projects at a local level. Funding is available only to organisations and not to individuals.

The final deadline is 1 December. Further details about funding, including eligibility and how to apply, can be found online at <http://www.togetherinservice.net/funding/>.

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Near Neighbours programme

The Near Neighbours programme, a partnership between the Church Urban Fund and the Archbishops' Council, awards small grants of between £250 and £5,000 to projects that enable people of different faiths or none to work together for the benefit of the community.

This is a rolling programme with no deadlines available in certain parts of England. Its second phase is due to run until March 2016 and it expects the grants programme to close near to this date.

Details on eligibility and how to apply can be found online at <http://www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/grants>.

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Woolf Institute Cambridge Scholarships

The Woolf Institute, in partnership with the Cambridge Commonwealth, European and International Trust, has established the Woolf Institute Cambridge Scholarships. These scholarships are intended "to support outstanding research students at the University of Cambridge who have the potential to become exceptional leaders of the future". Scholars will be selected from applicants in Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences whose research is relevant to the focus of the Woolf Institute – the multi-disciplinary study of relations between Christians, Jews and Muslims. Applicants are encouraged to contact the Woolf Institute prior to application to discuss whether their research proposal is relevant to the Institute's focus.

For further information, visit www.woolf.cam.ac.uk or www.cambridgetrust.org.

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The Last Post project

The Last Post project, partly funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Heritage Lottery Fund, gives communities the chance to remember the impact that World War One had on their communities and to play music from the era as a mark of commemoration.

Superact, a not-for-profit Community Interest Company that uses music and the arts to develop and deliver a wide range of social impact projects, is currently recruiting communities to take part in this commemoration and is keen to involve faith and inter faith organisations. Organisations can register free to receive a toolkit, training sessions, a World War One songbook and cash expenses to cover event costs.

Last Post events will take place across the UK from 4 to 18 November. For further information, visit www.thelastpostproject.org.uk.

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Funding Central website

Funding Central - <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/default.aspx> - is a free website for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises that provides access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, together with tools and resources supporting organisations to develop sustainable income strategies appropriate to their needs.

Funding Central is managed by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, in partnership with Idox Information Solutions Ltd, and funded by the Government's Office for Civil Society.

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Comic Relief Stronger Communities grants

Comic Relief's grants programme now has five themes, one of which is 'Stronger Communities'. Grants for the Stronger Communities theme are managed by Local Community Foundations and range in size from £1,000 to £10,000 per year. Priority is given to small, locally-based groups or organisations in areas of disadvantage that have a clear understanding of the needs of their community and are undertaking actions as a means of addressing these needs. Anyone wishing to apply for a Local Communities grant should contact their local community foundation. Further details can be found online at http://ukcommunityfoundations.org/programmes/comic_relief/.

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Big Lottery Fund

The Big Lottery Fund give grants from £300 to over £500,000 to organisations ranging from small local groups to major national charities. Information about their various grant schemes can be found at <http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/Home/Funding/Funding%20finder>.

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RESOURCES AND TRAINING

Near Neighbours toolkits

As part of the Faith Based Fundraising training that has been provided across the Near Neighbours Programme, a series of guides are available to download from <https://www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/resources>. The guides include toolkits on Faith Based Project Planning, How to Use the Media and Applications for Fundraising.

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Interfaith Scotland publications

Interfaith Scotland is currently revising its *Guidelines to Inclusive Civic Events*, which aims to assist local Councils in their inter faith planning work, and its booklet entitled *A Guide to Faith Communities in Scotland*. It is also compiling a *Directory of Faith and Belief Groups in Scotland* to help groups to network together and communicate effectively. For further information, visit www.interfaithscotland.org.

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Peace Building in the 21st Century

A video is now available of highlights from the Peace Conference organised by the Faith Based Regeneration Network, the Cordoba Foundation and the London Peace Network in September. The video, which is online at www.fbrn.org.uk/factsheets/peace-building-21st-century-video, includes contributions from a diverse group of speakers on the continued importance of faith groups and communities working for peace.

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Holocaust Memorial Day Trust inter faith resource

Holocaust Memorial Day 2015 is asking people to 'Keep the memory alive' by exploring and sharing the powerful stories of survivors in a year that marks two important anniversaries – the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau and the 20th anniversary of the Genocide in Srebrenica, Bosnia. The aim is to reflect on memories of genocide while the survivors are still present in order to leave a legacy for future generations, learn the lessons of their experiences and to challenge hatred and discrimination in the UK today.

Faith and inter faith organisations play a crucial role in fostering understanding and good relationships between different faith groups in the UK. The HMD Trust sees HMD as an opportunity for “people of different faiths and of no faith to come together to celebrate the diversity of their communities, challenge prejudice and intolerance, and create a safer, better future.”

The Trust has produced a range of resources to assist groups in organising an activity to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day. A 'Get Involved Guide' for faith

and inter faith organisations provides ideas and inspiration, and a free Activity Pack with a set of posters to create a display. HMDT is also able to send material to be handed out at events – including stickers, badges, and copies of the booklet which provides an introduction to HMD. For further information, visit www.hmd.org.uk.

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Impact of Faith-Based Organisations on Public Health and Social Capital

FaithAction has recently launched a report entitled *The Impact of Faith-Based Organisations on Public Health and Social Capital*. This report brings together evidence around the reach of faith-based organisations and their impact on health and wellbeing by drawing on published literature.

The report uncovers evidence on the current and potential involvement in public health of faith-based organisations, including highlighting innovative practice that is having an impact. It is intended as a starting point for faith groups to consider how they can help to improve health and wellbeing; and as a support tool for policymakers to broaden their range of approaches with confidence that there is evidence to support the involvement of faith in public health and wellbeing.

A copy of the report can be downloaded from:

<http://www.faithaction.net/2014/09/26/new-faithaction-report-impact-faith-based-organisations-public-health-social-capital/>

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Interfaith Explorers

Interfaith Explorers is a free online learning resource for primary school pupils produced by the Maimonides Interfaith Foundation with Edison Learning Ltd and supported by UNESCO. Learning materials and teacher resources are available on the interactive website at <http://interfaithexplorers.com/>.

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Inter Faith Training Course

The Christian Muslim Forum, in partnership with the St Ethelburga's Centre for Peace and Reconciliation, is running a full day Inter Faith Training Course on 20 October. This pilot training workshop is linked to the Faith Minorities in Action Community Empowerment Champions programme, and is being offered to all seeking to develop a solid foundation for working/volunteering in inter faith initiatives.

The course will cover: scriptures; theology; tradition; ethos; creating safe spaces; maintaining relationships; dialogue; spirituality; and facilitation and group work. There is a charge to attend, with a small number of concessions available; lunch and a training certificate is included. For further information, visit www.christianmuslimforum.org.uk or www.stethelburgas.org.

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Home Office workshop on Ministers of Religion

Following a recent series of workshops in London for faith groups about how to bring religious workers and Ministers of Religion to work in the UK the Home Office has been asked to repeat these events in other parts of the UK. The next workshop will be held in the West Midlands at 2pm on 4 November 2014, hosted by the Guru Nanak Gurdwara in Smethwick. Anyone interested in attending should let Simon Dadd know at simon.dadd@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk by 31 October. Further workshops will be held in the coming months.

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FbRN Training Tuesdays

The Faith Based Regeneration Network is holding a series of Training Tuesdays. The next workshop takes place on 28 October and will be on an 'Introduction to Impact Measurement'. The workshop will help to clarify why impact measurement matters and how to get started.

All workshops run from 1.30pm to 4.30pm at FbRN's new training rooms near Goodge Street in London. There is a charge to attend. For further information, contact stevemiller@fbrn.org.uk.

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3FF training day

3FF is hosting a training day on 28 October for people interested in volunteering for its schools workshops. More information about the volunteering role can be found online at <http://www.3ff.org.uk/volunteer/>.

Anyone interested in applying for the training day should complete the application form on the 3FF website at <http://fs7.formsite.com/3FFSchools/speakers/index.html>.

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Faith Guiding course

The Faith Encounter Programme seeks to train people of all faiths in Birmingham as Faith Guides, so that places of worship are better equipped to offer high quality educational visits.

The aims of the course are achieved through study of the following key three areas:

- Knowledge of and ability to communicate the guide's own faith
- Awareness of, and competence in, tour guiding skills
- Understanding of other faith traditions

The next course is planned to begin in February 2015 and further information will become available at www.faithencounter.org.uk/Train/train_guiding.html.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

Council of Christians and Jews

The Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ) is seeking to recruit a Programme Manager, who will be responsible for the conception and delivery of programmes, focusing specifically but not exclusively on Jewish content, in line with CCJ's mission and strategic priorities. The successful candidate will be part of the programming team led by the Deputy Director. The role is full time and based in London.

A full job description and information on how to apply can be found online at http://www.ccj.org.uk/Groups/172760/The_Council_of/News/News.aspx.

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St Ethelburga's

Jobs

The St Ethelburga's Centre for Peace and Reconciliation is currently recruiting for two positions: an Office and Facilities Manager and a part time Bookkeeper/Accountant. The Office and Facilities Manager role would suit someone with a mature outlook who is grounded, practical and efficient and enjoys being busy. The Bookkeeper/Accountant role is suitable for someone with charity experience. For further details, contact justine@stethelburgas.org with a CV.

Internships

St Ethelburga's runs a rolling internship scheme, accepting applications every three months for a Social Media Manager and a Fundraising Appeal Coordinator. For further details, contact angharad@stethelburgas.org with a CV.

Volunteers

Volunteer roles include marketing, creative design and event support. For further information, contact susan.whitehead@stethelburgas.org.

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3FF

3FF is currently seeking an intern to work with and learn from its busy Communications team. The internship will provide the successful candidate with an

opportunity to put their media and communication skills into practice while gaining a grounding in the charity sector through hands-on experience and training opportunities. The 3FF internship programme is designed to equip interns with practical and transferable skills, allowing them to develop personally and professionally and enhance their employability.

The role is voluntary, initially for 2 months, 3 days a week, starting as soon as possible. Travel and lunch expenses will be reimbursed.

Further information on the role and how to apply is available online at <http://www.3ff.org.uk/internships/apply.php>.

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The Feast

The Feast is a Christian youth work charity which aims “to reshape the conversations and friendships young people have with their peers of a different faith or culture”. It is currently seeking to recruit a Field Development Manager. The purpose of the role is to manage and develop the delivery of The Feast’s distinct approach to youth work in each of its UK locations.

The Field Development Manager will:

- join the leadership team of The Feast;
- supervise our team of youthworkers;
- lead on the expansion of our training initiatives and resources;
- explore ways to enhance our service to schools.

The position is full time and based in Birmingham, with regular travel to regional locations. Applications will only be accepted by post on the official application form. The closing date for applications is 5pm on Monday 24 November. For more information, or to enquire further about the role, contact Hannah Dickson at hannah@thefeast.org.uk or on 0121 675 1158.

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University of East London

The University of East London is seeking an Interfaith Co-ordinator and Chaplaincy Manager to take on a coordinating role with regard to religious societies and all spaces dedicated for religious activities. The Co-ordinator will work to improve the student experience for all those using Chaplaincy services and be responsible for encouraging inter faith dialogue and partnerships both on and off campus.

The successful candidate will be educated to degree level or equivalent with an excellent working knowledge of a variety of religions, including Christianity and Islam. The closing date for applications is 28 October. Further information can be found online at <http://jobs.uel.ac.uk/Vacancy.aspx?ref=SSUP025X>.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS AND TENDERS

Youth inter faith activity and education

Ahead of Inter Faith Week, and as a pre-launch of the Week, IFN is arranging a sharing of good practice event for bodies which have developed inter faith activities and education for and with young people. These include youth organisations, educational bodies, and others with programmes of work in this area. There is a particular focus on work of IFN's member bodies but involvement is wider than this.

If you have examples of innovative and practical youth inter faith activity and education which you would like to draw to the attention of the IFN office, Ashley Beck will be glad to hear from you: Ashley.beck@interfaith.org.uk

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Scriptural reasoning information call from local group

The Stratford-on-Avon Interfaith Forum (SAIF) has been experimenting with Scriptural Reasoning and would be pleased to hear from other inter faith groups who have worked on scriptural reasoning. It writes "IFN members will probably know that this way of studying other people's scriptures began with Jews and Christians, and soon included Muslims. The paucity in our immediate area of Jews and Muslims has led us to try using the method with Buddhist and Baha'i scriptures, as well as the Christian. In December we will approach the *Bhagavad Gita* of Hinduism with the same intent. If any other interfaith group has attempted similar ventures we would be very glad to hear from them."

SAIF's Chair, Canon Christopher Lamb, can be contacted at info@stratfordinterfaith.org.uk.

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2015 Parliament of the World's Religions

The Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions is currently inviting proposals for programmes for presentation at the 2015 Parliament in Salt Lake City, Utah, in October 2015.

Programme types may include: lectures, academic papers, seminars, panel discussions, religious or spiritual observance, workshops, training sessions or artistic

performances. The theme of the 2015 Parliament will be Reclaiming the Heart of Our Humanity: Working Together for a World of Compassion, Peace, Justice, and Sustainability. Most of the programming will be around the following three 'critical issues': Climate Change and Care for Creation; War, Violence and Hate Speech; and The Widening Wealth Gap and Wasteful Consumption; and will be focused on the following three 'constituencies': Women; Indigenous Communities; and Youth.

The closing date for submissions is 15 January 2015. For further information, visit <http://rfp.parliamentofreligions.org>.

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Faith and Fire

Faith and Fire welcomes submissions to the Faith and Fire website. Faith and Fire is a partnership between the Chief Fire Officers Association [UK] and Fire and Rescue Services. It developed from work undertaken by the Chief Fire Officers Association with Buddhist Group of Kendal (Theravada), Ketumati Buddhist Vihara Manchester, and Manchester Buddhist Convention; and from the pilot project run at Kendal Fire Station in 2012 – 2013 by Buddhist Group of Kendal together with Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service. Further information, and a downloadable resource, can be found at:

<http://faithandfire.co.uk/multifaith-fire-chaplaincy-england-uk/>

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

One World Week (19 to 26 October)

Each year One World Week is an opportunity for people from diverse backgrounds to come together to learn about global justice, to spread that learning and to use it to take action for justice locally and globally. The theme for this year's One World Week is 'Living Differently: Breaking Chains – Making change'. This recognises that everyone needs to make changes now to secure a fairer, more satisfying, life for all whilst protecting the planet's resources for future generations. This year OWW is encouraging events around sourcing food differently, reducing wastefulness and using money ethically to support change.

For more information, including guidance for inter faith and inter cultural events, visit <http://www.oneworldweek.org>.

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Mitzvah Day (16 November)

Mitzvah Day is a Jewish led day of social action – around the world thousands of people take part in hands on projects to support existing charities and to build stronger communities. The goal is to reduce hardship and poverty and to help the environment. People are encouraged to volunteer for projects in their communities and anyone can take part regardless of their background. For further information, visit www.mitzvahday.org.uk.

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Inter Faith Week

Inter Faith Week in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, led by IFN, will take place from Sunday 16 to Saturday 22 November. Further information is online at <http://www.interfaithweek.org/>.

Scottish Inter Faith Week, led by Interfaith Scotland, will take place from Sunday 23 to Sunday 30 November. The theme for Scottish Inter Faith Week is 'Journeys'. Further information is online at <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/events/>.

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DIARY DATES

This section includes a sample of some of the events taking place around the UK.

Building Bridges in Burnley in partnership with the **Burnley & Pendle Faith Centre** is holding 'Interfaith Prayers for Peace' every Wednesday in October. Prayers and readings will be used from Christian, Jewish and Muslim traditions at 11.30am at the Faith Centre. For further information, contact Afrasiab Anwar at afrasiab.anwar@lancashire.gov.uk or on 01282 682275.

Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship is holding its Annual Peace Service at 7.30pm on Wednesday 22 October at Leeds Civic Hall. This will be a one-hour programme of readings and music, during which candles for peace will be lit by representatives of the different religious communities in Leeds, and by Councillor David Blackburn of the PeaceLink Group on behalf of the whole population of the city. For further information, visit <http://www.concord-leeds.org.uk/programme1.htm>.

Building Bridges Pendle is holding an event on Thursday 23 October to introduce its new project, The Good Neighbours Project: Developing Tomorrow's Good Citizens Today. The event will be held from 10.00am to 12.30pm in the Council Chamber at Nelson Town Hall, BB9 7LG. The guest speaker will be Dan Silver,

Director of the Social Action & Research Foundation. For further information and to book, contact Afzaal at afzaal@buildingbridgespendle.org.uk.

Kirklees Faiths Forum is holding the next meeting of its North Kirklees Interfaith Book Club on Thursday 23 October. The meeting takes place at 12.30pm at Batley Girls High School and will be discussing the novel *Mary Barton: A Tale of Manchester Life* by Elizabeth Gaskell. Anyone interested in attending should call 01924 326425.

The **Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter** is holding the next in its series of Autumn Lectures on Thursday 23 October. The title is 'The Story of Jewish Christian Dialogue' and the two speakers will be Dr Jonathan Gorsky and Sister Margaret Shepherd. All lectures in the series take place at the Sion Centre, 34 Chepstow Villas, London W11 2QZ, from 7.00pm to 8.30pm, with refreshments available from 6.30pm. There is a suggested donation to attend. For further information, contact the Centre at sioncde@yahoo.co.uk or on 020 7313 8286.

Cheltenham Inter Faith is holding its next meeting on Thursday 23 October at 7.30pm at Friends Meeting House, Warwick Place, Cheltenham, GL52 2NP. The evening will be based around 'A Human Search', a film on the life of Bede Griffiths, including interviews with him and others on Christian Hindu dialogue. For further information, visit www.cheltenhaminterfaith.org.uk.

York Interfaith Group, together with **York Racial Equality Network** and **York Baha'i Community**, is celebrating One World Week on Saturday 25 October by joining in the International Shared Meal. Those attending are asked to bring a dish from their own country or tradition to share and to make a small contribution to the cost of the evening. There will be entertainment after the meal. The Meal is being held at Acomb Parish Church Hall, Front Street, Acomb, York YO24 3BX. For further information, contact Tricia Castle on 01904 641 657 or at tricia.castle@talktalk.net or YREN on 01904 624 600 or at info@yren.co.uk.

Interfaith Scotland is holding its Annual General Meeting and Public Talk on Monday 27 October. The evening begins at 6.00pm with a vegetarian and kosher finger buffet, followed by the Public Talk and Dialogue on 'Just Scotland – Tackling Poverty in a Wealthy Land' with Ian Johnston of Faith in Community Scotland and Luke Devlin of Tackling Poverty Together. The evening ends with the AGM. For further information, contact calum@interfaithscotland.org or telephone 0141 420 6982.

The **South London Inter Faith Group** is holding its next lunch meeting at 12.30pm on Thursday 30 October at Streatham Friends Meeting House, Redlands Way, Roupell Park Estate, Brixton Hill SW2 3LU. For further details, contact secretary@southlondoninterfaith.org.uk.

The **Southwark Feminist Theology Group** is holding an event on Thursday 30 October entitled 'Faithfully Feminist: An Interfaith Dialogue between Professor Tina Beattie and Rabbi Deborah Young-Somers'. The two speakers will discuss the highs and lows of being a feminist woman within their faith tradition. The event will be held at 6.40pm at the Garry Weston Library, Southwark Cathedral, London Bridge, London SE1 9DA. For further information, visit www.southwark.anglican.org/cathedral or email southwark.feminist.theology@gmail.com.

Coventry Multi-Faith Forum is holding its Annual Peace Walk Pilgrimage on Saturday 1 November. The walk will begin at 10am at Priory Visitor Centre, Priory Row, Coventry CV1 5EX before visiting Holy Trinity Church, Noor Ul Islam Mosque, Shree Krishna Temple, and Guru Nanak Parkash Gurdwara. Those taking part should bring a head covering. For further information, contact Harry Hall on 07780 722428 or Saira Khan on 07853077684 or email multi-faith.forum@zen.co.uk.

Hastings and District Interfaith Forum is hosting an event, jointly with **Faiths in Sussex, Bexhill Council of Christians and Jews, Bexhill Islamic Association and Churches Together in Bexhill and Hastings and St Leonards**, on Saturday 1 November on 'Exploring Forgiveness from the Perspective of Faith and Experience'. Speakers include Dr Shakil Malik, Dr Jeremy and Rosemary Goring, Sheikkh Ismail S Yusuf and Dr Harriet Crabtree. There will also be cultural performances and a traditional High Tea. The event takes place from 2.30pm to 5.00pm at Bexhill Youth and Community Centre, 10 Station Road, Bexhill on Sea, East Sussex TN40 1RE and will be followed at 5.00pm by the AGM of Hastings and District Interfaith Forum. For further information, contact Tim Miller at timimiller@hastingsinterfaith.org.

The **London Inter Faith Centre** is holding an event on Sunday 2 November entitled 'From Interfaith to Interspirituality'. The evening will run from 6.00pm to 7.30pm and the speaker will be the Revd Marcus Braybrooke. Light refreshments will be available. For more information, visit <http://londoninterfaith.org.uk>.

Bedford Council of Faiths is holding an event on Monday 3 November on 'Deeds not Words: Walking the Talk'. Participants are invited to bring a text from their own faith or spiritual tradition to share with others; and also some vegetarian food to share. The event takes place at 7.30pm at St Peter's Church, De Parys Avenue, Bedford MK40 2TX. For further information, contact bcof@bcof.org.uk.

The **Faiths and Civil Society Unit at Goldsmiths, University of London**, together with **The Centre for the Study of Global Media and Democracy** is holding a symposium on Tuesday 4 November on 'Misrepresenting Faith: Media Crises, Controversies and Conspiracies'. The symposium aims to bring together academics from media and communications, sociology, anthropology and religious studies and practitioners and campaigners to explore the role of the media in crises, controversies and conspiracies concerning faith in Britain and to discuss practical steps towards building a positive media environment around identities of religion and belief. It will be held from 10.00am to 5.00pm in the Ben Pimlott Lecture Theatre, Goldsmiths, Lewisham Way, London SE14 6NW. Advance registration is essential at <http://bit.ly/misrepresentingfaith>.

The **Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity** is holding its next 'Quiet Time' session on Wednesday 5 November at 12.30pm at the Unitarian Church, Notte Street, Plymouth. This a 10-minute reflection followed by a short period of silence and/or music and then an opportunity for a brief comment from participants. People are welcome to drop in for a few minutes or stay for the whole time. For further information, visit <http://www.pcfcd.co.uk/page/quiet-space.aspx>.

Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource is holding a seminar, in partnership with **Sea of Faith**, on Wednesday 5 November. The topic will be 'Sea of Faith reflections on salvation and religions' and the seminar will take place at 7.15pm at the Inter-Faith Centre, the West Building, University Campus Suffolk, Waterfront Building, Neptune Quay, Ipswich IP4 1QJ. For further information, visit www.sifre.org.uk.

York Interfaith Group will be holding its next meeting at 7.30pm on Wednesday 5 November. The topic for the evening is 'By the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread. Work ethic in Religions – a punishment or source of dignity?' and the speakers will be Maurice Vassie and Joyce Pickard. The event will be held in the Clementhorpe Room, Priory Street Centre, Priory Street, York. For further information, contact Mark Cosens on 07796 095152 or at loscosens@yahoo.co.uk.

The **World Congress of Faiths** is holding its annual Younghusband Lecture on Thursday 6 November. The Lecture, entitled 'The Cultivation of Good Relations with Others' will be given by Abbess Venerable Miao Shiang, head of the Taiwanese Fo Guang Shan Temple in London. The event takes place at the Fo Guang Shan Temple, 84 Margaret Street, London W1W 8TD, from 6.00pm with a tour of the Temple shrines, followed by the Lecture and discussion. For further information, visit www.worldfaiths.org or email tony.reese@worldfaiths.org.

Interfaith MK (Milton Keynes) is holding its next meeting at 7.30pm on Thursday 6 November. The speaker will be Tim Clapton, former IFKM Convenor, who will be sharing some experiences of inter faith work in London. For further information, visit <http://www.interfaithmk.org.uk/>.

INTER FAITH WEEK - 16 to 22 November 2014
Events taking place to mark Inter Faith Week are listed online at
www.interfaithweek.org.uk.

Islington Faiths Forum, in association with **London Metropolitan University Interfaith Chaplaincy**, is holding its Annual Lecture and Debate on Tuesday 18 November. The topic for the evening is 'Religious tensions in the Holy Land and their wider impact' and the guest speakers will be Rabbi David Mason, Muslim Scholar Adil Salahi and the Revd Peter Colwell. The event runs from 6.00pm to 8.30pm in the Henry Thomas Lecture Hall at LMU, Tower Building, 166-220 Holloway Road, London N7 3DB. Advance registration is essential. For further information, visit www.islingtonfaithsforum.org.uk and to register email info@islingtonfaithsforum.org.uk.

FaithAction is holding its national conference on Wednesday 19 November. The title of the conference is 'Faith is Too Significant to Ignore'. The conference runs from 10.30am to 4.30pm at Church House, Westminster, Dean's Yard, London, SW1P 3NZ. There is a fee to attend. For further information, visit <http://www.faithaction.net/events/faith-too-significant-to-ignore/>.

The Centre for Christianity and Interreligious Dialogue at Heythrop College, University of London, together with the **Christian Muslim Forum and Marriage Care**, is holding an event on Wednesday 19 November entitled 'Being Faithful: A study day welcoming the challenges of Catholic-Muslim marriages'. The day runs from 10.30am to 4.00pm at Heythrop College, Kensington Square, London W8 5HN. There is a charge to attend. To register, contact d.howard@heythrop.ac.uk and for further information, visit <http://www.heythrop.ac.uk/events/challenges-muslim-catholic-marriage>.

The **Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby** is holding its 10th Anniversary Annual Lecture on Wednesday 19 November at 7.00pm. The lecture will be given by Professor Paul Weller and the topic will be 'Seeking truth for the common good: the Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby at the intersection of religion, belief and higher education. Critical reflections from the first decade'. For tickets, visit

<http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/mfc-tenth-anniverity-annual-lecture-by-prof-paul-weller-tickets-12897150725>.

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings is organising the first Maintenance Co-operatives project to launch National Maintenance this year on Friday 21 November. The conference is entitled 'From Gutter to Spire: a co-operative approach for volunteers looking after faith buildings' and will feature expert speakers, maintenance surgeries and York walking tours. For more details, visit www.spabmcp.org.uk.

Crawley Interfaith Network is holding its AGM on Friday 21 November at 7.00pm at the Crawley Community & Voluntary Service Building, Gleneagles Court, Brighton Road, Crawley RH10 6AD. The guest speaker will be Dr Harriet Crabtree. For further information, contact Ashwin Soni on 07833 252 551 or at ashel@hotmail.co.uk.

The **Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby** is holding an event on Wednesday 26 November to celebrate its 10th Anniversary. This will be an evening of music, dance, storytelling and food from across cultures supported by friends and colleagues from Derby. For further information, contact Joanna Thornewill at j.thornewill@derby.ac.uk or on 01332 591285.

Inform is holding its Autumn Seminar on Saturday 6 December on 'Minority Religions and Schooling'. Speakers include Farid Panjwani, Ozcan Keles, Nitesh Gor, Jonny Scaramanga and Richy Thompson. This is a full day event running from 9.30am to 4.45pm at the New Academic Building of the London School of Economics, 54 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London WC2A 3LJ. There is a charge to attend, which includes refreshments and lunch. Discounts are available on tickets booked before 10 November. For further information, contact inform@lse.ac.uk.

Advance 2015 diary date: **Westminster Interfaith's** 30th Annual Multi-Faith Pilgrimage for Peace will take place on Saturday 13 June in the Borough of Hounslow.

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For more information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 24 November with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer:

Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of

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Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH

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IFN e-bulletin

December 2014

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For information about the work of the Inter Faith Network for the UK visit:
www.interfaith.org.uk

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 29 January with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and projects and future events.

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UK/NATIONAL UPDATES

Inter Faith Week 2014

Events

The response to Inter Faith Week this year has been very positive. Over 300 events in England, Northern Ireland and Wales were registered on the website at www.interfaithweek.org and more continue to be discovered through monitoring of reports on the internet. The updated map is viewable on the Inter Faith Week website.

This year saw week-long programmes in a number of places which had not held such programmes before. One example was Rugby where the new Mayor, Councillor Ramesh Srivastava, convened a special inter faith working group to put together the programme of events.

Events were, as usual, vary varied – from clergy exchanges, to classroom inter faith dialogues, quizzes, suppers for the homeless cooked by members of different faith communities, tree plantings, faith trails, and much more. This year saw some tough issues taken as discussion subjects, from international political and religious divides to protecting children from abuse.

The Week was marked again by a wide spectrum of organisations and some, such as the National Union of Students, marked both Inter Faith Week and Scottish Interfaith Week (within a 'Faith and Belief Fortnight').

Media

Inter Faith Week gained very good publicity, being picked up widely in everything from blogs to local radio interviews to pieces in the Times and on the BBC website, which featured the awarded photographs from the Congregational Insurance Competition, run in association with IFN and Churches Together in England, Faith Through a Lens. A new section of the Inter Faith Week website has been added which brings together media coverage, and you can find this at <http://www.interfaithweek.org/media/2014-media-coverage>. If your events or activities received coverage, check if this is listed. If not, please do send details to Ashley Beck at interfaithweek@interfaith.org.uk.

Use of Twitter this year was extensive with a high volume of traffic during the Week about events taking place. Tweets about the Week were widely re-tweeted and a carousel of the Twitter feed was placed on the Inter Faith Week website. IFN also used Facebook to profile events and continues to post stories and reflections on the Week. At least one organisation ran a week-long social media campaign.

Feedback

If your organisation held an event for Inter Faith Week in England, Northern Ireland or Wales IFN would very much value your feedback on Inter Faith Week 2014. Your response can help it continue to develop the Week as a highly effective way to profile, and widen involvement in, inter faith activity and cooperation and to add value to the work of the many organisations sharing these important aims. You can let IFN have your feedback by clicking on this link: <http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/139357PKHMF>. There is also a space at the end to use if you would like to send us a short account of your

event. This short electronic questionnaire will remain live until 22 January. If you prefer to have a Word version of this, contact Ashley Beck at Interfaithweek@interfaith.org.uk.

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Scottish Inter Faith Week

Scottish Interfaith Week 2014 took place from 23 to 30 November. The theme for 2014 was 'Journeys of Faith'. Ideas around this theme included people's personal journeys of faith, an inner journey towards greater spiritual understanding, a physical journey of pilgrimage, looking at the theme of 'journeys' in different faith traditions and scriptures and journeys taken by the prophets or founders of a faith tradition. The programme of events that took place during Scottish Interfaith Week 2014 can be found online at <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/scottish-interfaith-week/>.

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Young Voices, Young Agents for Change

Inter Faith Week 2014 had a focus on youth and intergenerational involvement and so IFN arranged a special day event where over 80 inter faith practitioners and young people came together to discuss youth inter faith education and activity. *Young Voices, Young Agents for Change* took place at the Coin Street Neighbourhood Centre in London. It was chaired by IFN's Co-Chairs. The day was sponsored by the Church Urban Fund, Golden Tours Foundation, NASACRE, the Inter Faith Youth Trust and Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe.

There were presentations and participation from young people of different faiths and from those developing inter faith activities and education in organisations such as, to name just a few, the RE Council of England and Wales, the National Association of SACREs, Bolton Inter Faith Youth Ambassadors, Redbridge Ambassadors of Faith and Belief, the Feast, Interfaith Scotland, Mitzvah Day, Near Neighbours, 3FF, the Joseph Interfaith Foundation, the Maimonides Interfaith Foundation, the Nehemiah Foundation, Rowan Arts the St Ethelburga's Centre, the Encompass Trust, NUS and FBFE, the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services, National Citizen Service, Girlguiding, the Jewish Lads and Girls Brigade, the West Midlands Scouting Association as well as others.

Inter faith understanding and cooperation between people of all ages is important. But, at the same time, there are unique factors about involvement of young people. The event was a chance to talk about that, as well as to recognise the great work already under way. It was also a chance to discuss how organisations might work more effectively to enable young people to gain a good level of religious literacy and develop the skills for successful engagement with an increasingly diverse society.

Grant funding helped support videoing and photographing of the day. A microsite within the IFN website to include vox pops and a short video are currently under development.

If your organisation is developing inter faith work with or for young people and you have not already been in touch with the IFN office, it would be glad to hear from you with details: ifnet@interfaith.org.uk

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Extension of Consultation on Religion and Belief in British Public Life

As noted in earlier issues of the e-bulletin, the Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life, convened by the Woolf Institute, has launched a public consultation on the role of religion and belief in public life, with particular regard to media coverage of religion and belief issues, social action, developments in UK education systems, civil and criminal law, and dialogue and engagement. Information on the consultation can be found at www.corab.org.uk/national-consultation. The closing date for responses has been extended to 31 December.

Responses can be of any length and can be accompanied by copies of relevant documents. In its eventual report the Commission will acknowledge all the responses which it receives and may quote from some directly. Enquiries and responses should be sent to Mohammed Aziz, Head of the Commission Secretariat at maa74@cam.ac.uk or by post to the Woolf Institute, 12-14 Grange Road, Cambridge CB3 9DU.

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Integration update from Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

On 18 December Mr Eric Pickles, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, provided an update on integration issues to the House of Commons in the form of a Written Statement. He began by saying that the Government was “committed to confronting and challenging extremism in all its forms, tackling the violence and hatred that seeks to create division. We are championing what unites our country across class, colour and creed, and we are standing up for and supporting British values.” He then drew attention to the Government’s integration strategy which was published in February 2012 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/creating-the-conditions-for-a-more-integrated-society>.

The Written Statement listed the current integration projects and activities which the Department for Communities and Local Government currently supports and noted that DCLG will no longer be funding the Muslim Charities Forum, which was initially awarded the contract to run a Faith Minorities in Action Project; and that it has asked FaithAction to cease its funding of Islamic Help. The Government’s reasons for these decisions and an indication of further plans relating to the work area of FMAP are included in the Written Statement, a full copy of which can be found at: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2014-12-18/HCWS154/>.

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Jewish News Interfaith Channel

The Jewish News has launched a new inter faith channel, dedicated to growing understanding and co-operation between people of faith, and none. The site, hosted on www.jewishnews.co.uk and backed by the Pears Foundation, aims to highlight the work of organisations and initiatives bringing members of different faiths together to break down barriers. Providing news, features, pictures and opinion articles, the section will also offer a platform for discussion on the challenges facing this field. Jewish News editor Richard Ferrer said the section will be a “place for people of all religions and none to celebrate similarities, debate differences and tackle issues of common concern”. The Channel was launched at the House of Commons on 20 November as part of Inter Faith Week. It can be found at <http://www.jewishnews.co.uk/category/interfaith-2/>.

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Faith Covenant

The All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Faith and Society has drafted a Covenant which can be adopted by faith groups and local authorities in cities across the UK. The Covenant is a joint commitment between faith communities and local authorities to a set of principles that guide engagement, aiming to remove some of the mistrust that exists and to promote open, practical working on all levels.

Any local authorities interested in adopting the Covenant should contact FaithAction, (which provides the Secretariat for the APPG), on 0845 094 6350 or at info@faithaction.net, with the aim of working out a local version of the Covenant’s commitments according to the priorities and needs of that locality.

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Consultation on RE GCSE and A level

The Government is seeking views on revised subject content for GCSE and A level religious studies for first teaching from 2016. This is the final consultation on subject content. Further detail can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-academically-rigorous-rs-gcse-backed-by-faith-groups> and details of how to respond can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/gcse-and-a-level-reform-religious-studies>.

The deadline for comment is 5pm on 29 December.

This consultation follows on from the subject content for GCSE and GCE AS and A level that has already been consulted on and published.

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Christian Muslim Forum announces Strategy Review

The Co-Chairs of the Christian Muslim Forum announced on 19 December that, in the context of significant changes both in wider society and in the funding streams available to support this work, “after a decade of outstanding achievements, the Forum is to undergo a significant review and re-structure.” As part of this restructuring, the implementing Director, Julian Bond, will complete his role next month, continuing to serve the Forum in an advisory capacity. During 2015 there will be a major listening exercise and consultation with both Christian and Muslim communities and organisations in order to determine the Forum’s future shape and priorities. The full message from the Co-Chairs of the Christian Muslim Forum is at <http://www.christianmuslimforum.org/index.php/news/514-2015-review>.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Funding for Northern Bridge PhD Studentships

The Northern Bridge, a collaboration between Newcastle University, Durham University and Queen’s University Belfast, is inviting top-calibre applicants to apply to its doctoral studentships competition 2015. More than fifty fully-funded doctoral studentships are available across the full range of arts and humanities subjects, including all areas of theology and religion.

Full details of the application process for the funding, which comes from the Arts and Humanities Research Council, can be found at <https://www.dur.ac.uk/theology.religion/postgrad/funding/>. Any queries should be directed to Dr Mathew Guest on 0191 334 3944 or at m.j.guest@durham.ac.uk.

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Near Neighbours programme

The Near Neighbours programme, a partnership between the Church Urban Fund and the Archbishops’ Council, awards small grants of between £250 and £5,000 to projects that enable people of different faiths or none to work together for the benefit of the community.

This is a rolling programme with no deadlines available in certain parts of England. Its second phase is due to run until March 2016 and it expects the grants programme to close near to this date.

Details on eligibility and how to apply can be found online at <http://www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/grants>.

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Funding Central website

Funding Central - <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/default.aspx> - is a free website for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises that provides access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, together with tools and resources supporting organisations to develop sustainable income strategies appropriate to their needs.

Funding Central is managed by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, in partnership with Idox Information Solutions Ltd, and funded by the Government's Office for Civil Society.

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Comic Relief Stronger Communities grants

Comic Relief's grants programme now has five themes, one of which is 'Stronger Communities'. Grants for the Stronger Communities theme are managed by Local Community Foundations and range in size from £1,000 to £10,000 per year. Priority is given to small, locally-based groups or organisations in areas of disadvantage that have a clear understanding of the needs of their community and are undertaking actions as a means of addressing these needs. Anyone wishing to apply for a Local Communities grant should contact their local community foundation. Further details can be found online at http://ukcommunityfoundations.org/programmes/comic_relief/.

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Big Lottery Fund

The Big Lottery Fund give grants from £300 to over £500,000 to organisations ranging from small local groups to major national charities. Information about their various grant schemes can be found at <http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/Home/Funding/Funding%20finder>.

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RESOURCES AND TRAINING

Interfaith Scotland Annual Report

Interfaith Scotland's Annual Report from October 2013 - October 2014 has recently been published. This can be downloaded from <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/news-events/>. Hard copies are also available from Interfaith Scotland's office by telephoning 0141 4206982.

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Safe Network Multi-faith safeguarding hub

Safe Network is a joint NSPCC and Children England service that provides a wide range of child safeguarding resources and learning opportunities to the voluntary and community sector in England. It is currently funded by the Department for Education and the NSPCC.

In November, during Inter Faith Week, the Safe Network launched a *Multi-faith safeguarding hub* at an event at the St Philips Centre in Leicester at which IFN's Director, Dr Harriet Crabtree, was the keynote speaker.

The resource brings together information, advice and resources relating to some of the faiths practised in the UK today while also promoting the positives of taking a multi-faith approach. It is aimed at the voluntary, community and faith sectors but will also be useful for those groups or organisations who may want to know more about safeguarding in faith groups and communities, including schools, universities and local authorities.

One of the key aims of the hub is to demonstrate the important that all faiths place on safeguarding children and support those individuals or groups who want to ensure they prioritise child safeguarding in all their activity. A range of information and resources are already available and these will be added to in the coming months.

The Hub is online at

<http://www.safenetwork.org.uk/resources/mfsh/interfaith/Pages/default.aspx>.

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Living Together in a Multi Faith World course

The London Inter Faith Centre's new course on 'Living Together in a Multi Faith World' begins on Monday 12 January. The course has five objectives:

1. to give participants first-hand experience of world faiths and their practitioners
2. to reflect on the basis for inter faith work and on questions relating to mission
3. to build up participants' knowledge of resources and contacts so they can continue the work into the future
4. to explore the religious landscape of UK
5. to enable participants to engage in a piece of Inter Faith work of their own

The course will run for two years from January 2015 to December 2016. It will usually run on Monday evenings from 7.30pm to 9.30pm at the London Inter Faith Centre, though there will be some travel to visit places of worship. All those completing all six modules will receive a Certificate in Inter Faith Relations. For further information, including details of course fees, visit <http://londoninterfaith.org.uk/study/certificate-in-inter-faith-relations-introduction/>. For enquiries and registration, contact laurence.hillel@londoninterfaith.org.uk.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

3FF – Programmes Officer

3FF is currently seeking to recruit a new Programmes Officer for its ParliAMentors programme. The role will be full time and based in London. The successful candidate will be able to influence the strategic development of this programme as it grows in scope and influence, while working with the Programmes Manager and other Programmes Officer on all aspects of programme delivery and development.

A job description and application form can be found online at <http://www.3ff.org.uk/jobs/programmes-officer-parliamentors.php>. The closing date for applications is currently 12 January, though this may be brought forward so applicants are encouraged to apply early.

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World Congress of Faiths – Development and Programme Officer

The World Congress of Faiths (WCF) is seeking a part-time Development and Programme Officer who will help to develop the profile, programmes and future direction of the organisation on behalf of its Executive Committee.

The candidate will have: some familiarity with the nature of inter faith relations in Britain, networking skills and organisational ability. The post will be for 15 hours per week, initially for 2 years, and subject to 3 months probationary period. The post-holder will work mainly from home, but some travel will be likely. Application forms for this paid post are available from Tony Reese (tony.reese@mail.com), Administrator for WCF, to whom any enquiries about the post may also be addressed. The closing date for applications is 30 January.

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Near Neighbours and Church Urban Fund - Interns

Near Neighbours (NN) and the Church Urban Fund (CUF) are both currently recruiting for Interns. Further information on the NN Interns, which are to work in Communications and in Grants and Administration, can be found at <http://www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/latest-news>. Further information on the CUF Interns, which are to work in Development and in Fundraising, can be found at <http://www.cuf.org.uk/about-us/work-us>.

These opportunities come with an additional Fellowship of the International Young Leaders Network providing all expenses paid study visits to Brussels and Washington DC and a global network of young and emerging leaders.

All four Intern posts are full time, based in London and paid at the London Living Wage. The closing date for applications is 12 January.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS AND TENDERS

Sandford St Martin Trust awards

The Sandford St Martin Trust is calling for entries for their 2015 broadcast awards for radio, TV and online programmes that explore religious, spiritual or ethical themes. This year it has introduced a new Children's Award for broadcast content specifically aimed at under-18s which improves young people's understanding of religion, moral or ethical issues.

This year the Trust is waiving the entry fee with the aim of drawing in entries from a wider range of individuals and companies. The 2015 Awards, worth around £10,000, will be presented at Lambeth Palace in May 2015.

The deadline for entries is 13 February. For information on how to apply, visit <http://sandfordawards.org.uk/the-awards/2015-awards/>.

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COEXIST Interfaith Music Festival

The 4th COEXIST Interfaith Music Festival will be hosted at SOAS, University of London on 30 March. The organisers are currently accepting performance offers from artists and faith representatives who wish to share their music and/or dance at the upcoming festival, as well as speakers who would like to offer their input at a panel talk.

The Festival will be accompanied, as in previous years, by an inter faith fair, and registrations are also now open for stalls to represent organisations or institutions; as well as caterers to host a catering stall. Details about how to get involved and to submit offers can be found online at <http://www.coexistinterfaith.org/>.

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Youth in Excellence poetry anthology

Youth in Excellence is inviting young residents of the UK, between the ages of 11 and 19, to submit a poem on the theme of 'Identity' for possible inclusion in its poetry anthology to be published early next year.

The aim is to increase the artistic opportunities available to younger members of communities, engage youth within the arts and create a sense of geographical and community cohesion via shared perspectives on the theme of identity and what it means to young people living in the United Kingdom. The anthology will be the start of a celebration of diversity and will culminate in an event for Universal Children's Day in November 2015. The winning entrants will receive special awards for their

contributions as well as the opportunity to perform their poem at the Universal Children's Day event. Entries must be received by 15 January. For a copy of the guidelines, contact info@youthinexcellence.com.

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The Big Questions

The eighth series of the BBC1 television programme, *The Big Questions* begins in London on 11 January. This is a debate show on moral and ethical issues during which speakers discuss topics which are then opened up for wider consideration by the audience. The programme is particularly keen to have an audience comprising of local residents from a wide variety of backgrounds and faiths to get a full spectrum of views.

There will be a morning and an afternoon show filmed on the day. Anyone interested in being in the audience should contact Phoebe Cottam on 0141 611 9624 or at pcottam@mentorn.tv.

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John Betjeman Awards

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings is inviting entries for its annual John Betjeman Award which celebrates excellence in the conservation and repair of places of worship in England and Wales. The Award is made for the repair or conservation of the fabric, fittings or furnishings of historic churches, chapels or other faith buildings that remain in use for worship. The closing date is 24 February. Full details and an application form can be found at <http://www.spab.org.uk/spab-events-awards/john-betjeman-award>.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Holocaust Memorial Day - 27 January

Holocaust Memorial Day provides an opportunity for everyone to learn lessons from the Holocaust, Nazi persecution and subsequent genocides and apply them to the present day to create a safer, better future. The theme for Holocaust Memorial Day 2015 is 'Keep the Memory Alive'.

A list of events taking place throughout the UK can be found on the HMD website at <http://hmd.org.uk/page/activities>. Anyone interested in organising an event to mark HMD can order or download an Activity Pack at <http://hmd.org.uk/campaign-pack>.

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World Interfaith Harmony Week – First week of February

World Interfaith Harmony Week is a UN recognised Week which takes place each year during the first week of February. The Week was proposed to the UN General Assembly by HM King Abdullah of Jordan, and the first UN World Interfaith Harmony Week took place in February 2011. Further information about the Week, including its aims and objectives, can be found on its website at <http://worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com>. A list of events taking place to mark the Week is at <http://worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com/events/>.

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DIARY DATES

This section includes a sample of some of the events taking place around the UK.

Building Bridges in Burnley is holding the next 'Face to Faith - Share Faith Share Food' event on Tuesday 6 January. This is a women-only event. The guest speaker will be Kath Bill who will speak on 12 months on from retirement. The event runs from 7pm to 9pm and women are invited to bring some food to share at the end of the evening. For further information, contact Bea Foster at bea_foster@hotmail.com or on 07875 517043.

London Inter Faith Centre is running a new series of events entitled 'First Hand' designed to help people think and pray about the crisis in the Middle East. The first event in the series will be held on Wednesday 7 January when the speakers will be Dr Amal al-Jubouri, Dr Zara Noor and Archbishop Toma Dawad. Their stories will be told "without comment, judgement or expression of opinion and heard in the same way, framed and followed by simple shared silence". Refreshments will be available. The event runs from 7pm to 9pm at the London Inter Faith Centre, 125 Salusbury Road, London NW6 6RG. For further information, contact the Revd Maggie Hindley on 020 7372 1765 or at maggie.hindley@londoninterfaith.org.uk.

Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource is holding its next seminar on Wednesday 7 January. The theme of the evening will be 'An encounter with Rumi' and the speaker will be Bishop Charles Mugleston of the Independent Liberal Catholic Fellowship. The seminar takes place at 7pm for a 7.15pm start at the Inter-Faith Centre, University Campus Suffolk, Neptune Quay, Ipswich IP4 1QJ. For further information, contact 01379 678615 or email office@sifre.org.uk.

Interfaith MK is holding its next event from 7.30pm to 9.30pm on Thursday 8 January at the Crypt, Camphill Community, Japonica Lane, Willen Park, Milton Keynes MK15 9JY. The meeting will be an inter faith welcoming of the New Year entitled 'Prayers, Poems and Readings for the New Year'. All attending are asked to bring an item from their religious tradition linked to a fresh pledge or determination for moral or spiritual growth. For further information, visit www.interfaithmk.org.uk or email interfaithmk@gmail.com.

York Interfaith Group is holding its AGM Meeting on Wednesday 14 January at 7.30pm at the Unitarian Chapel, St Saviourgate, York YO1 8NQ. All members

attending are asked to bring vegetarian food to share. For further information, contact Mark Cosens on 07796 095 152 or at loscohens@yahoo.co.uk or visit www.yorkinterfaith.org.

St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace together with the **University of Winchester**, is holding a multi-disciplinary day workshop on Thursday 15 January from 11.00am to 4.00pm. The workshop 'Understanding Dialogue – from theory to practice' will explore how theoretical ideas about dialogue can be applied to create powerful new forms of communication and learning. It is part of the University of Winchester MA Reconciliation programme but is open to anyone at the University and the public and will be led by Simon Keyes, Fellow in Reconciliation at St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace and Visiting Professor at the University of Winchester. It will take place at the University of Winchester, Winchester SO22 4NR. There is a charge to attend. For further information, contact Simon Keyes on 07968 440684 or at simon.keyes@winchester.ac.uk.

Devon Interfaith Forum for Youth is holding an event on Saturday 17 January entitled 'Sacred Sounds: Community in Unity'. This is a day event from 10.30am to 4pm which will include a full programme of performances and hands on workshops representing music of different faiths and traditions. A full vegetarian buffet lunch will be provided for young people. Friends and relatives are welcome to attend but are asked to bring their own food. The event will be held at Lupton House, Brixham Road, Churston Ferrers, Devon TQ5 0LD. For further information and to book a place, contact Marc Frank at interfaithyouthproject@gmail.com.

Norwich InterFaith Link, together with the local Baha'i community, is hosting an event to celebrate World Religion Day on Sunday 18 January. The event will be held from 2pm to 4pm at the Friends Meeting House, Upper Goat Lane, Norwich NR2 1EW. For further information, contact Chris Wood at chris@transplan.org.

Westminster Cathedral Interfaith Group will be holding its next meeting on Wednesday 21 January. The speaker will be the Revd Jim Walters, Chaplain to the London School of Economics, who will talk about their pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The meeting will be held from 4pm to 5pm in the Hinsley Room, Morpeth Terrace, SW1, beside Westminster Cathedral. For further information, contact John Woodhouse by text on 07908 888586 or at woodhousesopten@btinternet.com.

St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace is holding a series of events exploring 'how to re-awaken the sacred in life'. The next two events in the series will be held on Wednesday 21 January on Business and Economics and on Wednesday 11 February on Leadership. Both events will be held at the Centre, 78 Bishopsgate, London, EC2N 4AG from 6.30pm. The speakers for the first event will be Jonathan Dawson and Giles Hutchins; and for the second event Tim 'Mac' Macartney and Claire Breeze. For further information, visit <https://www.stethelburgas.org/events>.

Crawley Interfaith Network is holding its next event on Thursday 22 January from 7.00pm to 9.00pm. This will be a talk entitled 'My Practical Faith – Christian Perspective' by Peter Mansfield-Clark MBE, Director of Crawley Open House. The event will be held at The Longley Room, The Orchard, 1-2 Gleneagles Court, Brighton Road, Crawley RH10 6AD. For further information, contact Dr Iyad Daoud at contact@crawleyinterfaith.net.

The Gandhi Foundation is holding a Multifaith Celebration on Saturday 31 January entitled 'Caring for the Future of People and Planet - Different Faiths, Ecology and Spirituality'. The speaker will be Dr Ursula King, Professor Emireta of Theology and

Religious Studies at the University of Bristol. This will be followed by a discussion with representatives of various faith traditions. The celebration will take place at 2.30pm at the London Interfaith Centre, 125 Salusbury Road, West Kilburn, London NW6 6RG. Refreshments will be served. To aid refreshment planning, register with William@gandhifoundation.org. For further information, contact the foundation at contact@gandhifoundation.org or on 0845 313 8419.

The **Christian Muslim Forum**, in partnership with the **Islamic Centre of England** and **St Augustine's, Kilburn**, is holding a day conference on Saturday 7 February on the theme of 'Family – Benefits and Challenges'. The day, which will run from 10am to 4pm, will focus on the importance of family and what it offers to society as well as current challenges. The morning session will be held at St Augustine's, Kilburn NW6 5XB and the afternoon session at the Islamic Centre of England, Maida Vale W9 1QB. There is a charge to attend. For further information and register, visit <http://www.christianmuslimforum.org/index.php/calendar/forum-events>.

Cheltenham Interfaith is holding an event on Monday 23 February. The speaker for the evening will be Dr Chris Hewer, a Christian teacher, lecturer and writer on Islam, who will be addressing the topic of 'Islamic Issues in the News'. The event will begin at 7.30pm at the Friends Meeting House, Warwick Place, (off Portland Street), Cheltenham GL52 2NP. For further information, email info@cheltenhaminterfaith.org.uk or telephone 01242 602412.

York Liberal Jewish Community is holding a special inter faith service on Friday 27 February led by Rabbi Jackie Tabick, the first woman to be ordained as a rabbi in the UK in 1976. The service will be held at Friargate Quaker Meeting House, York, YO1 9RL at 6.30pm. For further information, visit <http://www.jewsinyork.org.uk/events/>.

Horsham Interfaith Forum is holding an event on Saturday 28 February at the Church Centre, Causeway, Horsham RH12 1HE. Simon Clare will be speaking on 'How can humanists get along with religious groups?' The event will begin at 1pm and will be held at the Church Centre, Causeway, Horsham, RH12 1HE. For further information, contact info@horsham-interfaith.org.uk.

SOAS, University of London will be hosting the 4th COEXIST Interfaith Music Festival on Monday 30 March. Information on application to take part can be found under [Calls for Information](#).

Westminster Interfaith's 30th Annual Multi-Faith Pilgrimage for Peace will take place on Saturday 13 June in the Borough of Hounslow. Further details to follow in due course.

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For more information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 29 January with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer:

Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **12 March** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and projects and future events.

If your organisation distributes a programme, newsletter or e-bulletin, please add ifnet@interfaith.org.uk to your mailing list.

Disclaimer: Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Increasingly, IFN is making use of social media, in particular Twitter (www.twitter.com/IFNetUK) and Facebook. (www.facebook.com/IFNetUK) Please take a moment to 'follow' and like IFN and also Inter Faith Week (www.twitter.com/IFWeek and www.facebook.com/IFWeek) and also check in with the IFN website to see new items which are added on a regular basis.

UK/NATIONAL UPDATES

UK inter faith response to events in France and Germany

The murders at the offices of Charlie Hebdo, at the Hyper Cachat Kosher Supermarket and related deaths in the second week of January, have been the focus of vigils, prayers, statements, articles and reflection across the last few weeks in the UK. Links to details of a range of events and statements can be found on IFN's website at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/news>.

IFN's Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs referred in a New Year message to member bodies to the events [<http://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/statements-and-messages/100-message-from-ifn-officers-to-member-bodies-8-jan-2015>] and also issued a statement on 21 January which is reproduced [at the end of this e-bulletin](#) and can be found at: <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/statements-and-messages>

The Government's response to the impact of the events, as well as to growing concerns about a reported rise in anti-Semitic attacks in the UK and Europe more widely, has included a pledge to increase levels of protection for the Jewish community and police support for mosques as well as statements about the importance of all faith communities to British life and to the countering of extremism. Communities Secretary Eric Pickles and Parliamentary Under-Secretary Lord Ahmad wrote a letter to mosques on 18 January https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/396312/160115_Final_Draft_Letter_to_Mosques_PDF.pdf and Home Secretary Theresa May addressed issues relating particularly to anti-Semitism at a commemorative event on 18 January organised by the Board of Deputies of British Jews.

While the principal focus in the UK in terms of community safety has been on the Jewish and Muslim communities, Sikh organisations have expressed concern that the safety of Sikhs is also affected, with a recent serious attack on a Sikh in Mold, Wales taking place in the days following the events in Paris. <http://www.citysikhs.org.uk/2015/01/attack-on-sikh-man-in-north-wales-statement-from-city-sikhs-network/> The Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain wrote to Sikh leaders to express support <http://www.mcb.org.uk/muslim-council-britain-condemns-attack-sikh-man/>

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EHRC to produce new legal guidance on freedom of expression

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has announced that (on 3 February) it will be publishing new legal guidance on freedom of expression. In explaining the context, it says that "Following the recent tragic deaths in Paris, there has been considerable debate both nationally and internationally about free speech. Freedom of expression is a fundamental right which is essential for democracy, a free media and political, artistic and scientific development." The guidance will explain that a) there are legitimate ways the state restrains what can be said but the test for curtailing freedom of expression in law is a stringent one, and much that is offensive is still legal; and b) Freedom of expression can however be restricted in certain circumstances (for example, where it incites violence against others or promotes hatred based on the colour of someone's skin or their sexual orientation or their religion).

Further information can be found at: <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/search/site/freedom%20of%20expression>

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Reconciliation and tolerance a theme in speeches from HM The Queen and HRH the Prince of Wales

HM The Queen's Christmas Speech had a particular focus on reconciliation and included reflection on The Queen's own Christian basis for seeking "to respect and value all people of whatever faith or none."

<http://www.royal.gov.uk/imagesandbroadcasts/thequeenschristmasbroadcasts/christmasbroadcasts/christmasbroadcast2014.aspx>

In a speech to the Institute of Jainology and the Oshwal Association at the Oshwal Centre in Potters Bar on 22 Jan, receiving the Ahimsa Anniversary Award, HRH the Prince of Wales spoke of the importance of religious tolerance, saying: "We all have a duty to work for greater harmony between the religions of the world, especially when, as now, tolerance is being so severely tested."

<http://www.princeofwales.gov.uk/news-and-diary/the-prince-of-wales-marks-the-25th-anniversary-of-the-institute-of-jainology/speech>

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Charity Commission consults on new guidance for trustees

The Charity Commission has launched a consultation on its new guidance for trustees, the closing date for which is 17 February.

The Commission has rewritten guidance note CC3, entitled 'The Essential Trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do'. The new guidance clearly explains what the Commission expects of trustees and the potential consequences if the minimum good practice standards are not met.

The current guidance distinguishes between what trustees must do (i.e. what are legal requirements) and what trustees should do (i.e. what is good practice), but it is unclear whether the good practice standards are optional. The new draft guidance clarifies this position and warns that those who do not meet the minimum standards are at risk of breaching their legal duties as trustees. The new draft follows recent commission guidance on decision making and conflicts of interest. It also reflects other changes such as the introduction of Charitable Incorporated Organisations.

Information about how to respond to the consultation on the draft guidance, including the consultation questions, can be found online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/the-essential-trustee-cc3-new-version>.

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Inter Faith Network meetings

Faith Communities Forum

A meeting of the Inter Faith Network's Faith Communities Forum was held on 28 January. The Forum exists to facilitate discussion between member faith communities at a national level on issues of common concern to them as faith communities and thereby to promote the development of closer working relationships between them. Under discussion were issues such as multi faith healthcare chaplaincy and the Government's integration approach.

Faith communities making their spaces available for inter faith meetings and discussions help enable shared engagement in projects that benefit society. In the spirit, FCF meetings take place, where possible, at venues offered by the bodies represented. This meeting was hosted by IFN member body the Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations at Friends House.

Planned day event for local inter faith practitioners

Save the date: Planning is under way for a day event for local inter faith practitioners on practicalities of their work, focusing on topics highlighted by member groups at their recent IFN link meetings. This event, planned as the first of two, will be open to both IFN member and non-member local inter faith groups. The provisional date for the first meeting is **26 March**. Further information will be circulated in due course.

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MPs express support for high quality Religious Education

MPs from across the main political parties took part in an All Party Parliamentary Group event to publicise their belief that good RE should be available for all young people. They discussed the subject and its value for modern life with a team of Young Ambassadors for RE, students at St Bede's School in Cambridge. Further information can be found on the RE Council website at <http://religioueducationcouncil.org.uk/public-engagement/news/2015-01-28/mps-publicise-their-support-for-high-quality-re>

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INTERNATIONAL UPDATES

Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions

The 2015 Parliament of the World's Religions will take place in Salt Lake City, Utah in the USA from 15 to 19 October. The theme of the 2015 Parliament is *Reclaiming the Heart of Our Humanity: Working Together for a World of Compassion, Peace, Justice, and Sustainability*. The deadline for proposals for the programme has now been extended until 15 March. Proposals can include: lectures, academic papers, seminars, panel discussions, religious or spiritual observances, workshops, training sessions or artistic performances.

Further information about submitting proposals and about registering to attend the Parliament, can be found online at <http://www.parliamentofreligions.org>.

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PROJECTS

Visit My Mosque – Sunday 1 February

On 1 February, a national #VisitMyMosque day is being held, where British mosques will open their doors to the general public. Mosques will be sharing tea and refreshments alongside an insight into the day-to-day goings on of a busy Muslim centre of worship. They

will also be inviting faith leaders to come together to demonstrate unity and solidarity. Participating mosques will be listed at www.mcb.org.uk/visitmymosque.

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New Hindu temple inter faith reach out

Shri Pashupatinath Mandir, a new Hindu Temple in Rowley Regis, is holding an inter faith conference on 7 February with representatives of the different faiths represented in the area. This is an example of how inter faith engagement is increasingly seen as a vital dimension of the life of places of worship in their local communities.

In an interview with the Hereford Times, their spokesperson said: "We thought with everything going on in the world at the moment it is the right time for all the faiths to get together and support each other. We want to bring different faiths and unite the community so we are hosting the first ever Inter-faith awareness day to bring people of various faiths, leaders, the community and local councillors together. We have also invited members of West Midlands Police and Building a Better Blackheath and the Black Country Housing Group. ...Following our first event, a chance for regular get together for community members and representatives from organisations will be held each Sunday during the coming weeks together with a community meal."

The inter-faith day is at the Shri Pashupatinath Mandir Temple, Park Road, Rowley Regis, between 2pm and 4pm on Saturday, February 7.

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Sharing of expertise – pioneering new approaches

Faith communities are increasingly exploring ways to learn from each other's practical experience and good practice. A synagogue in Bradford is exploring one very direct way of doing this through inviting a member of another faith community – a Muslim member of the Friends of the Synagogue - to become one of its governing body.

http://m.thetelegraphandargus.co.uk/news/11750978.City_s_synagogue_council_appoints_first_Muslim_member_as_strikingly_close_relations_between_two_faiths_deepen_further/

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Woolf Institute 'Community Initiative and Austerity' Facebook Group

The Woolf Institute has launched a new 'Community Initiative and Austerity' group on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1403205489975587/>.

This group aims to: provide information about social action initiatives aimed at generating opportunities and diminishing insecurity; create discussion about best practice, impact, and policies; as well as encourage debate about the kinds of social support and communities that people want in Europe. For further information, contact Dr Christina Fuhr at cf404@cam.ac.uk.

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Kendal Peace Garden

South Lakes Interfaith Forum is involved in a Peace Garden that is being planned for Kendal to commemorate the First World War. The idea for the garden, in Abbot Hall Park, was put forward by the town's Mayor, Cllr Tom Clare. It is intended to be "a deliberate and conscious community creation: a signifier of peace and understanding between our communities and those in the rest of the world. In addition it is intended that the Kendal Peace Garden should embody wider symbolism and be something which people will come to the town to see". The symbolism within the garden design currently includes reference to Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism and Paganism. For further information, visit http://www.thewestmorlandgazette.co.uk/news/11714242.Plans_for_Kendal_Peace_Garden_unveiled/ or contact amandareynolds1@me.com.

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Equally Ours

Equally Ours is a campaign run by eight national charities, led by the Equality and Diversity Forum, which talks about the importance of human rights and how they benefit people in everyday life. It does this by collecting stories of people's personal experiences of using human rights to challenge negative treatment or behaviour. The first series of stories can be found on the website at <http://www.equally-ours.org.uk/>. Any human rights stories can be shared via <http://www.equally-ours.org.uk/resources/share-story/>.

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Big Lunch Extras

Following on from the success of The Big Lunch, the Eden Project has begun a new community programme called Big Lunch Extras, which it believes could benefit and encourage inter faith work.

Big Lunch Extras is designed to help people interested in bringing about small, positive changes in their neighbourhoods. At the heart of the programme is a free three day Community Camp at the Eden Project, offering speakers, workshops, tours and the chance to network with others on the programme. This is followed by a series of one-day road-shows across the country, to help develop skills and keep up the momentum. This is a fully funded programme and further information can be found at www.biglunchextras.com.

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Unity in motion

Faith leaders in Redditch will be joining together to take part in a peace walk on Sunday 26 April. Those taking part will visit a church, mosque and gurdwara as part of the event, with information about Hinduism also on display at the Gurdwara. Further information about the event can be found at <http://www.redditchstandard.co.uk/2015/01/25/news-Faith-leaders-walk-the-same-path-125467.html> or by phoning Councillor Bill Hartnett on 01527 534123.

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TRAINING AND RESOURCES

Tackling domestic violence training

KahrmelWellness is holding a training day on Tackling Domestic Violence and Abuse in Faith Communities in Leeds on 12 February. This will be the first in a series of national training days, which are aimed at many constituencies including faith leaders and members of faith communities. Topics covered will include: spiritual abuse; female genital mutilation; behavioural patterns; forced marriage; and child sexual exploitation. Further training days will be held in Nottingham on 14 May and in Birmingham on 9 July. For further information, visit <http://kahrmelwellness.com/2015-national-training/>.

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Cambridge Inter-faith Programme Summer School

In July/August 2015, the Cambridge Inter-faith Programme will bring together an international group from Muslim, Christian and Jewish backgrounds, for three weeks' inter faith and cross-cultural encounter, to resource practical peacemaking and conflict-transformation efforts. Students receive intensive training in Scriptural Reasoning; are offered a series of lectures delivered by specialist academics and peacemakers; and are facilitated in a process of teaching one another about aspects of their traditions.

The cost of tuition, accommodation, on-site meals, activities and visits will be covered by the Cambridge Inter-faith Programme. Students will be asked to pay a deposit - refundable at the end of the Summer School - and will need to source their own funds to cover their travel to and from Cambridge. The closing date for applications is 13 February.

For more information and the Summer School film see <http://www.interfaith.cam.ac.uk/summerschool2015>

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Prevent training workshops

The Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby is running a series of one day interactive workshops about the Prevent programme and developing an understanding of relationships to local communities in Derby, covering questions of risk and threat, vulnerability, susceptibility, safeguarding and the process of radicalisation. The next workshops are on Thursday 19 February, Thursday 26 March and Thursday 23 April. For further information, or to book a place, contact Joanne Thornewill on 01332 591285/592657 or at j.thornewill@derby.ac.uk.

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Building Networks across Difference and Inter Faith and Networking

The Christian Muslim Forum and St Ethelburga's are holding two full-day training workshops on 17 February and 10 March at the St Ethelburga's Centre in London.

The first workshop, entitled 'Building Networks across Difference', will explore networking within and between faith community individual contexts and is aimed at anyone in a position of responsibility or leadership within a faith community. The second workshop, entitled 'Inter

Faith and Networking: Training the Trainers', will build on this, exploring what the training will look like in each individual context.

Refreshments will be served but participants should bring their own lunch. There is a charge for attending. For further information, contact info@christianmuslimforum.org.

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Edinburgh Inter Faith Association video and publication

The Edinburgh Inter Faith Association has recently created two resources:

Faith and I is an educational documentary video which challenges hate crime and racism directed towards people of faith. It follows the lives of three young women from different faith traditions; Islam, Judaism and Sikhism, showing the positive influence of faith in their lives. The project was partly commissioned in response to a rise in hate crime towards Muslims and Jews as an educational tool to tackle prejudice and raise awareness. It highlights hopes and fears which anyone can identify with, regardless of beliefs, values and practices.

Faith and Young People is a publication for schools detailing the needs of young people of faith in terms of requirements for prayer facilities, dietary needs and requirements around religious holidays. It discusses potential uniform/dress code requirements and issues relating to relationships, sexual health, parenthood education, physical education, religious and moral education and religious observance. This document was produced primarily as a resource for those working in schools, but is described as relevant to anyone interested in developing their knowledge to the needs and sensitivities of the various faith adherents and communities.

For further information on these resources, contact Iain Stewart at iain@eifa.org.uk.

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Celebrating Faith video

Lancashire Forum of Faiths has created a video entitled 'Celebrating Faith'. This celebrates the rich diversity of Lancashire's religions and cultures and gives an insight into some of the inter faith taking place across the region. The video can be watched on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-F-FdDj9s0&feature=youtu.be>.

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Interfaith Explorers website

Interfaith Explorers is a free online learning resource supported by UNESCO and designed to add value to RE and PSHE lessons by helping primary school pupils respect and understand religious and cultural diversity. It has recently launched a new website at www.interfaithexplorers.com.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

3FF - Director

3FF is currently recruiting for a Director.

The successful candidate will have at least 5 years' experience in a senior management role in a charity or similar organisation; and be ambitious and motivated to work with the 3FF team to achieve its vision of a connected and cohesive society where people of different faiths, beliefs and cultures have strong, productive and positive relations. People from all backgrounds - those with non-religious or religious beliefs - are welcome to apply.

The role is full time based in London. Applicants must be willing to attend evening and sometimes weekend events and travel – within the UK and abroad. Applications can only be accepted from individuals with the right to work in the UK. The full job description can be found online at <http://www.3ff.org.uk/jobs/3ff-director.php> and the closing date for applications is 23 February. To request an application pack, email apply@3ff.org.uk.

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Cambridge Inter-Faith Programme – Research Associate in Modern Inter-Faith Relations

Cambridge Inter-Faith Programme with the Faculty of Divinity at the University of Cambridge is seeking a Research Associate in Modern Inter-Faith Relations. The successful candidate will be expected to undertake their own research in an area relevant to the interests of CIP, preferably with reference to the modern period and can expect some appropriate mentoring. The appointee will be expected to do some teaching and administration. Candidates should already possess a doctoral degree in a relevant discipline.

Further information and an application pack can be found at <http://www.jobs.cam.ac.uk/job/5985/> and the closing date for applications is 25 February with an anticipated start date of 1 May.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Near Neighbours programme

The Near Neighbours programme, a partnership between the Church Urban Fund and the Archbishops' Council, awards small grants of between £250 and £5,000 to projects that enable people of different faiths or none to work together for the benefit of the community.

This is a rolling programme with no deadlines available in certain parts of England (maps showing eligible areas can be found at <http://www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/grants/eligible-areas>). Its second phase is due to run until March 2016, with the grants programme ending ahead of that.

Details on eligibility and how to apply can be found online at <http://www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/grants>.

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Funding Central website

Funding Central - <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/default.aspx> - is a free website for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises that provides access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, together with tools and resources for supporting organisations to develop sustainable income strategies appropriate to their needs.

Funding Central is managed by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, in partnership with Idox Information Solutions Ltd, and funded by the Government's Office for Civil Society.

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Comic Relief Stronger Communities grants

Comic Relief's grants programme now has five themes, one of which is 'Stronger Communities'. Grants for the Stronger Communities theme are managed by Local Community Foundations and range in size from £1,000 to £10,000 per year. Priority is given to small, locally-based groups or organisations in areas of disadvantage that have a clear understanding of the needs of their community and are undertaking actions as a means of addressing these needs. Anyone wishing to apply for a Local Communities grant should contact their local community foundation. Further details can be found online at http://ukcommunityfoundations.org/programmes/comic_relief/.

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Big Lottery Fund

The Big Lottery Fund give grants from £300 to over £500,000 to organisations ranging from small local groups to major national charities. Information about their various grant schemes can be found at <http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/Home/Funding/Funding%20finder>.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS AND TENDERS

Strengthening Faith Institutions

The Department for Communities and Local Government is inviting bids from organisations to run a £400,000 programme to help strengthen and support faith institutions. The programme aims to help strengthen and support faith institutions in a number of ways including, providing training on key topics for faith institutions and consultancy-style support for those facing specific challenges. Bids are welcomed from 30 January – 2 March. Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-strengthening-faith-institutions-programme-now-open-for-bids>

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Inter Faith Week questionnaire – deadline extended

If your organisation held an event for Inter Faith Week in England, Northern Ireland or Wales in 2014, IFN would very much value your feedback on the Week. Your response can help it continue to develop the Week as a highly effective way to profile, and widen involvement in, inter faith activity and cooperation and to add value to the work of the many organisations sharing these important aims. You can let IFN have your feedback by clicking on this link: <http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/139357PKHMF>. There is also a space at the end to use if you would like to send us a short account of your event.

The closing date for this short electronic questionnaire has been extended until 10 February. If you prefer to have a Word version of this, contact Ashley Beck at Interfaithweek@interfaith.org.uk.

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Equality Act - 5 Years On: Call for Papers

The Forum for Research into Equality and Diversity (University of Chester) in collaboration with the School of Law and Social Justice (University of Liverpool) will be hosting a one-day academic conference on 22 June entitled 'The Equality Act 2010: Five-Years On'. The conference will seek to undertake a review of the implications of the Equality Act 2010 and encourages contributions from those conducting socio-legal and scholarly research in this area. It will offer the opportunity to explore the impact of the Equality Act 2010 and to also consider the way in which this legislation will continue in its purpose to promote equality and protect against discrimination into the 21st Century. For further information on the Call for Papers, the deadline for which is 27 February, visit <http://www.chester.ac.uk/node/28098> or email FRED@chester.ac.uk.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

World Interfaith Harmony Week – first week of February

World Interfaith Harmony Week is a UN recognised Week which takes place each year during the first week of February.

WIFW was proposed at the UN General Assembly on 2010 by HM King Abdullah II of Jordan and adopted by the UN. It is based on the work of the Common Word initiative which started in 2007 and called for Muslim and Christian leaders to engage in a dialogue based on two common fundamental religious Commandments - Love of God, and Love of the Neighbour - without compromising any of their own religious tenets. Events can be registered on the website www.worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com

Note: While the decision was taken to keep Inter Faith Week in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in November for a range of practical reasons and Scotland also continues to mark its Inter Faith Week in November/December, the World Week is marked by a

number of organisations in the UK, including the branches in this country of international inter faith organisations which help raise awareness of, and encourage involvement with, the vital issue of global inter-religious harmony.

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Fairtrade Fortnight – 24 February to 9 March

Fairtrade is about better prices, decent working conditions, local sustainability and fair terms of trade for farmers and workers in the developing world. The Fairtrade Foundation's vision is of "a world in which justice and sustainable development are at the heart of trade structures and practices so that everyone, through their work, can maintain a decent and dignified livelihood and develop their full potential". Information on Fairtrade Fortnight can be found at <http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/>.

Information on how faith communities and places of worship can get involved can be found at <http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/en/get-involved/in-your-community/faith-groups>.

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Islam Awareness Week – 16 to 22 March

The theme for the 2015 Week is 'Give a little of yourself'.

Further information about Islam Awareness Week can be found online at <http://www.iaw.org.uk/pages/page.php?id=home>.

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DIARY DATES

This section includes just a sample of some of the events taking place around the UK.

The Gandhi Foundation is holding a Multifaith Celebration on Saturday 31 January entitled 'Caring for the Future of People and Planet - Different Faiths, Ecology and Spirituality'. The speaker will be Dr Ursula King, Professor Emireta of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Bristol. This will be followed by a discussion with representatives of various faith traditions. The celebration will take place at 2.30pm at the London Interfaith Centre, 125 Salusbury Road, West Kilburn, London NW6 6RG. Refreshments will be served. To aid refreshment planning, register with William@gandhifoundation.org. For further information, contact the foundation at contact@gandhifoundation.org or on 0845 313 8419.

The **International Association for Religious Freedom (British Chapter)** will be co-sponsoring a special World Interfaith Harmony Week service at Golders Green Unitarian Church, London NW11 8BS on Sunday 1 February. The service begins at 11am. The programme will include prayers, readings, classical oboe and choir and the guest preacher will be the Reverend Rana Khan. For further information, contact the Revd Feargus O'Connor at ggunirev@aol.com.

The **St Ethelburga's Centre** is holding the next meeting of its City Forum on Monday 2 February from 5pm to 7.30pm. This brings together organisations which work to make a difference in the City and the Financial Sector and it is exploring the idea of a 'Community of Practice'. The event is entitled 'Stories from the Edge of the New'. For further information, visit <http://www.stethelburgas.org/events/public>.

An event is being held at **Durham Castle** on Tuesday 3 February as part of World Interfaith Harmony Week on 'Meditation: Buddhist and Christian perspectives'. The event will be held at 5.30pm in the Norman Chapel in Durham Castle and will be led by Jacquetta Gomes and Hannah Cleugh. For more information, contact hannah.cleugh@durham.ac.uk.

The **Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints** will be holding an event on 'The sanctity of marriage', featuring presentations and stands from different faiths on Tuesday 3 February as part of World Interfaith Harmony Week. The event will take place at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Rhiwbina, Cardiff. For further information, contact Julie Jones via jjones@maxiom.net.

The **Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity** is holding its next 'Quiet Time' on Wednesday 4 February from 12.30pm to 1.30pm at the Unitarian Church, Notte Street, Plymouth PL1 2HG. The format is a 10-minute reflection followed by a short period of silence and/or music and then an opportunity for a brief comment from participants. People are welcome to drop in for a few minutes or stay for the whole time. It will be led by Yuki Yoshioka in connection with Setsubun, the Japanese Bean Scattering Festival. For further information, visit <http://www.pcfcd.co.uk/page/quiet-space.aspx>.

The **University of Winchester** is holding an 'Interfaith Lecture' from 6.30pm to 8pm on Wednesday 4 February. The speakers will be the Reverend Andrew Ashdown and Imam Ajmal Masroor who will be engaging in dialogue on key issues that Muslims and Christians encounter in Britain today. Their conversation will be followed by a time for questions. The event is being held at the Stripe Building, King Alfred Campus, University of Winchester, Sparkford Road, Winchester, Hampshire SO22 4NR. To book a place, contact Gulya Garside at gulya.garside@winchester.ac.uk.

Faiths Together in Lambeth is holding an Interfaith Harmony Breakfast to mark World Interfaith Harmony Week on Thursday 5 February. The breakfast will be held from 8.30am to 10.00am at South London Synagogue (Orthodox), 45 Leigham Court Road, SW16 2NF. Anyone interested in attending should email ftil@hotmail.co.uk.

Crawley Interfaith Network is holding its next event on Thursday 5 February from 7pm to 9pm. This will be a talk entitled 'The State, Politics and Faith' by Henry Smith, MP for Crawley. The event will be held at The Holy Trinity School, Buckswood Drive, Crawley, West Sussex RH11 8JE. For further information, contact Iyad Daoud at contact@crawleyinterfaith.net or on 01293 883372.

Havering Inter Faith Forum is holding an Inter-Faith Discussion Evening at 8pm on Thursday 5 February. Speakers from different faiths, including Baha'i, Christian and Hindu, will be talking and answering questions on the topic of 'Health and Healing' at the Salvation Army, High Street, Romford RM1 1JJ. For further information, contact John Lester at contact@haveringinterfaith.org.uk.

Interfaith MK is holding its next meeting on Thursday 5 February with a talk on 'Judaism in the Modern World' by Leon Silver, Chair of the East London Central Synagogue. For further information, including timings and venue, contact interfaithmk@gmail.com.

INFORM is holding its Winter Seminar on Saturday 7 February on the theme of 'Innovation, Violence and Paralysis: How do Minority Religions Cope with Uncertainty?' The seminar, which will explore how minority religions and their members work with notions of uncertainty and insecurity, takes place from 9.30am to 5pm in the New Academic Building at the London School of Economics, Houghton Street, London WC2A 2AE. There is a charge to attend. For further information, and to book, visit <http://www.inform.ac/node/1576>.

The **Christian Muslim Forum**, in partnership with the **Islamic Centre of England** and **St Augustine's Church Kilburn**, is organising an inter faith meeting on Saturday 7 February entitled 'The Family: Challenges and Benefits'. The morning session from 10am to 12 noon will be held at St Augustine's Church, Kilburn Park Road, London NW6 5XB and the afternoon session from 12.15pm to 4pm will be held at the Islamic Centre of England, 140 Maida Vale, London W9 1QB. For further information, visit http://www.christianmuslimforum.org/index.php/calendar?task=view_event&event_id=245.

Central Scotland Interfaith is holding its next "Soul Space" at 6.30pm on Sunday 8 February. This will follow the usual format of gathering at 6.15pm for a 'bring and share' vegetarian supper, followed

by gathering to share reflections on the chosen theme, which will be “Light”. For further information contact Jon Cape at jon@cameroncape.net,

The **Council of Christians and Jews** is holding a breakfast seminar entitled ‘Trust and Rust – is the decline of trust irreversible?’ on Tuesday 10 February from 7.45am. The panel discussion will be hosted by CCJ Chairman-Designate the Rt Reverend Michael Ipgrave. The event is being held at Freshfield Bruckhaus Deringer LLP, 26-28 Tudor Street, London EC4Y 0BQ. A continental breakfast will be served and pre-booking is essential. To register, contact ccjseminars@gmail.com.

Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource, in partnership with **Ipswich and Suffolk Muslim Council** will be holding a seminar and debate on ‘Freedom: Rights and Wrongs’ on Tuesday 10 February. The event takes place at 7.30pm at the Cooperative Education Centre, 11 Fore Street, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP4 1JW. For further information, contact cynthia.cahey@sifre.org.uk.

The **Hindu Christian Forum** in association with **Near Neighbours** and **Multi Media Arts & Sports** is organising a workshop on Wednesday 11 February entitled ‘Faith, Photo, Walsall, Action!’ with award winning photographer, Hazel Thompson. There will also be a presentation by Margaret Slater of Faith Through a Lens National Photo Competition. For further details visit <http://www.hinduchristianforum.co.uk/news/inter-faith-update/>.

Keighley Interfaith is hosting its annual Interfaith Meal at 7pm on Thursday 12 February. The Meal, which is an opportunity for people of all faiths in the Keighley area to meet and create understanding and support between faith groups, will be held at Cafe Aamir Khan, 37-39 Bradford Rd, BD21 4BW (next to the fire station). Anyone interested in attending, should contact Keighley Interfaith via <http://keighleyinterfaith.org/contact-us/>.

Belief in Mediation and Arbitration is holding an event entitled ‘Knead for Peace’ on Monday 16 February from 4.30pm to 9pm, at St. James’s Piccadilly, 197 Piccadilly, London W1J 9LL. The afternoon will be based on inter faith bread making and breaking. Spiritual leaders who are looking to reach across religious and community divides are encouraged to join and explore together how a community can move forward. Vegetarian food will be provided. Event registration is by invitation only. To register an interest and check availability, contact info@bimagroup.org.

Leeds Concord Interfaith Group will be holding its next meeting at 7.30 pm on Monday 16 February at the Quaker Meeting House, Woodhouse Lane, Leeds LS2 9DX (opposite the Engineering Building). The theme for the evening is ‘Death and Beyond in Buddhism and Paganism’ and the speakers will be Dennis Hallam & Jay Anderson. For further information, contact secretary@concord-leeds.org.uk.

Watford Inter Faith Association is holding its AGM on Tuesday 17 February at 7.30pm at Friends Meeting House, 150 Church Road, WD17 4QB. The business of the AGM will be followed by an interesting talk. For further information, visit <http://www.wifa.org.uk/coming-events/>.

Westminster Cathedral Interfaith Group meets on the 3rd Wednesday of the month from 4pm to 5pm in the Hinsley Room, Morpeth Terrace, London SW1P 1Q. The next meeting is due to take place on Wednesday 18 February when Stefan Byron will be speaking about yoga. For further information text 0790 8888 586 or email John Woodhouse at woodhousesopten@btinternet.com.

The **Cambridge Coexist Leadership Programme**, an initiative of the Coexist Foundation, in partnership with the **Cambridge Inter-faith Programme**, with the support of other inter faith organisations, is organising a Coexist Pilgrimage on Thursday 19 February entitled ‘People of Faith Walk as People of Peace’. The pilgrimage begins at Regent’s Park Mosque at 11am, moves to the Central Synagogue in Great Portland Street at 12.15pm, to Westminster Abbey at 1.30pm, to the Houses of Parliament at 2.15pm and ends at St Thomas’ Hospital at 3.15pm. For more information, contact pilgrimage@coexistfoundation.org or telephone 07949 538189.

Edinburgh Interfaith Association and the **Alwaleed Centre** are holding the next in a series of meetings for young Christians and Muslims on Saturday 21 February from 10am to 3pm at 19 George Square, Edinburgh EH8 9LD. The theme of the meeting is ‘Breaking Barriers: Scriptural Reasoning’. For further information, contact Tom Lea at tom.lea@ed.ac.uk.

The **Interfaith Forum for Leicestershire** is holding its next meeting on Monday 23 February from 6pm to 8pm in the Sparkenhoe Committee Room at Leicestershire County Council, County Hall, Glenfield, Leicestershire LE3 8RA. The theme of this meeting will be 'Faith and Poverty'. To confirm attendance, contact Lindsey Norman at Lindsey.Norman@leics.gov.uk.

The **William Temple Foundation**, in partnership with the **Church Urban Fund** and the **Joint Public Issues Team of the Baptist, Methodist and United Reformed Churches** is hosting a pre-election conference on Tuesday 24 February entitled 'Building a Politics of Hope'. Three case studies, by the Revd Al Barrett, Salma Ravat and Chris Sunderland, will provide starting points for group discussions and plenary reflection. There is a charge to attend the conference, which ends with a free lecture by Steve Chalke. It will be held at the St Bride Foundation, Fleet Street, London EC4Y 8EQ. For more information and to book tickets, visit <http://williamtemplefoundation.org.uk/politics-of-hope/>.

Bedford Council of Faiths is holding its Annual General Meeting on Tuesday 24 February at The First Church of Christ Scientist, 84 Kimbolton Road, Bedford, MK40 2PD. The meeting starts at 7pm with a 'bring and share' vegetarian meal. At 7.30pm there will be a presentation on 'Hate Crime' followed by the Annual Business Meeting and election of the new Committee. For further information, contact bcof@bcof.org.uk.

York Liberal Jewish Community is holding a special inter faith service on Friday 27 February led by Rabbi Jackie Tabick, the first woman to be ordained as a rabbi in the UK in 1976. The service will be held at Friargate Quaker Meeting House, York, YO1 9RL at 6.30pm. For further information, visit <http://www.jewsinyork.org.uk/events/>.

Religions for Peace UK in partnership with **Quaker Peace & Social Witness**, **The Joint Public Issues Team**, **the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons** and **SGI-UK** is holding a seminar on Saturday 28 February on 'UK Faith Communities – Progress towards a World Free of Nuclear Weapons'. This will explore how nuclear weapons represent a unique threat to humanity. The event runs from 11am to 4pm with lunch being provided at Friends House, 117-177 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ. Spaces are limited. To register interest, email David Horner at dvd.horner@googlemail.com or call 07825 189263.

Horsham Interfaith Forum is hosting an event at 1pm on Saturday 28 February. There will be a talk by Simon Clare on 'How can humanists get along with religious groups?', followed by discussion. The event will take place at The Church Centre, Causeway, Horsham, RH12 1HE. For further information, contact info@horsham-interfaith.org.uk.

The **London Boroughs Faiths Network** is hosting an event on Sunday 1 March entitled 'Fast and Pray'. This is being held in the lead up to the UN conference on climate change later this year. The event will run from 7pm to 9pm at Collaboration House, 77 Charlotte Street, London W1T 4PW. For further information, contact convener@lbfm.org.

Interfaith Scotland will be celebrating International Women's Day with a women's interfaith dialogue event in Perth on Sunday 8 March. Further details will be available at www.interfaithscotland.org in due course.

Cheltenham Inter Faith is holding its Annual General Meeting on Tuesday 10 March at 7pm. The AGM will be followed at 7.30pm by a talk by the Revd Dr Marcus Braybrooke on 'Jesus as seen through the eyes of people of other faiths'. The meeting will be held at Friends Meeting House, Warwick Place, (off Portland Street), Cheltenham GL52 2NP. For further information, visit http://www.cheltenhaminterfaith.org.uk/events_and_news.html.

York Interfaith Group is holding its next meeting from 10am to 12pm on Wednesday 11 March. The meeting is being held as part of International Women's Week and a talk entitled 'From Scarborough to Samye Dzong' will be given by Buddhist nun Ani Tselha. The event takes place at the Friends Meeting House, Friargate, York YO1 9RL. For further information, contact loscosens@yahoo.co.uk.

Northampton Inter Faith Forum is holding its fourth annual Multi Faith Day on Saturday 28 March. The event takes place from 10am to 2pm in the Market Square, Abington Street, Northampton NN1

2DN and is an opportunity to find out about Northamptonshire's faith communities, ask questions, see displays and sample foods. For more information, contact Neelam Aggarwal Singh on 07791 618450 or at northamptonniff@gmail.com.

Wisbech Interfaith Forum will be holding its Annual Meeting on Monday 18 May at the Boathouse Business Centre, Nene Parade, 1 Harbour Square, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire PE13 3XE. The theme of the programme is "Our Peace, Our World" and the speaker will be Dr Rowan Williams, former Archbishop of Canterbury. For further information, contact seanfinlay@aol.co.uk.

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For more information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 12 March with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer: Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH

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SAFETY, SECURITY AND LIVING WELL TOGETHER

A statement by the Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Inter Faith Network for the UK

The recent murders in Paris, as well as reported rises in anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim comments and attacks in the UK and more widely in Europe, have brought in their wake increased anxieties about the safety of Jewish and Muslim communities. In the case of manifestations of violent extremism and terrorism they have brought anxiety about the safety and wellbeing of all communities and of our society overall.

There is, and will be, debate about best ways to respond to these disturbing developments, as well as to the implications of others around the globe. At an immediate practical level, however, where communities feel their very safety is under threat, mutual support is vital. Inter faith initiatives are fundamental to achieving this and play a crucial role alongside that of the emergency services and other secular agencies working to ensure public safety. [The attached principles](#), drawn from the IFN and partners document 'Looking After One Another: The Safety and Security of our Faith Communities' remain very relevant.

Government statements this weekend about the need to re-double efforts to eradicate anti-Semitism, as well as about the need to protect Muslim and other communities, were accompanied by statements from Ministers about the importance of all faith communities to British life and to the countering of extremism.

The Inter Faith Network for the UK works to increase understanding about and between faith communities and to encourage and support good inter faith relations. As part of this it has always underlined the enormous importance of the contribution which faith communities make to British society – and also of their engaging and being engaged with well by wider society.

Among the Government statements made was that of Home Secretary Theresa May: "Without its Jews, Britain would not be Britain, just as without its Muslims, Britain would not be Britain - without its Sikhs, Hindus, Christians and people of other faiths, Britain would not be Britain". We wholly agree. We would add that Britain would also not be Britain without our continuing commitment as people of different faiths, within its four nations, to finding ways to live together well – including with those of non-religious beliefs - and continuing to work together to shape our society in the light of our shared values while retaining the integrity of our religious beliefs and appreciating the positive dimensions of diversity.

There has been fresh discussion in recent times about "values", including in the context of discussion of 'British values'. The Inter Faith Network has, across the years, explored the ideas of 'common values' and 'shared values' in a number of ways, from the seminar The Quest for Common Values <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/quest-for-common-values>, through working with the faith communities on the Act of Commitment for the new Millennium <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/act-of-commitment>, to such documents as 'Living Well Together' www.interfaith.org.uk/living-well-together. Further work on values will be taking place within the Inter Faith Network across the year."

The Rt Revd Richard Atkinson OBE (Co-Chair)
Vivian Wineman (Co-Chair)
Dr Girdari L Bhan (Vice-Chair)
Mohinder Singh Chana (Vice-Chair)
Maulana M Shahid Raza OBE (Vice-Chair)
The Ven Bogoda Seelawimala (Vice-Chair)

21 January 2015



IFN e-bulletin

March/April 2015

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **15 May** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and projects and future events.

If your organisation distributes a programme, newsletter or e-bulletin, please add ifnet@interfaith.org.uk to your mailing list.

Disclaimer: Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Increasingly, IFN is making use of social media, in particular Twitter (www.twitter.com/IFNetUK) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/IFNetUK).

Please take a moment to 'follow' and like IFN and also Inter Faith Week (www.twitter.com/IFWeek and www.facebook.com/IFWeek) and also check in with the IFN website to see new items which are added on a regular basis.

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

General Election – manifestos and hustings

A number of national faith community bodies have produced resources or manifestos or are holding hustings events in the run up to the General Election on 7 May. For example:

- www.churcheselection.org.uk Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI), in collaboration with a number of ecumenical partners.
- <http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/issues/politics-and-elections/election2015/> Joint Public Issues Team (Baptist Union, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church and Church of Scotland) in the area of public issues.
- <http://www.sikhsangat.com/index.php?/topic/76585-the-sikh-manifesto/> The Sikh Network, which brings together a number of Sikh organisations.
- <http://www.bod.org.uk/coming-to-a-shul-near-you-the-general-election-jewish-manifesto-launched-after-six-months-of-community-wide-consultation/> Board of Deputies of British Jews.

A number of inter faith organisations and cross-community bodies are also organising hustings or have produced manifestos, for example:

- The Council of Christians and Jews has produced a Christian-Jewish manifesto discussing topics of importance to both communities and all those involved in interfaith dialogue. This outlines the areas in government and politics that are of concern to the religious communities, both separately and together.
http://www.ccj.org.uk/Articles/431008/The_Council_of/News/Manifesto.aspx.
- The City Hindus Network and the City Sikhs Network, together with the Faiths Forum for London, Square Mile Muslims, Asian Voice and the Emerald Network are jointly organising an event entitled 'Hustings in the City' in London on 9 April. For further information and for tickets, visit <http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/hustings-in-the-city-tickets-15957958684>.
- People Inspired is a project supported by the Association of English Cathedrals, Theos, the Cathedral Innovation Centre and public participation specialists 'Involve' which aims to give people from all communities a voice in UK politics and to make politics more accessible and appealing. Hustings are being held through this project around the country, for instance in the Bradford West Constituency
<http://www.westyorkshiredales.anglican.org/?q=content/bradford-west-hustings-0>
- FaithAction has launched a Faith Manifesto, with input from its member bodies
<http://www.yoursay.faihtaction.net/>
- The Jewish Council for Racial Equality has published 'An Interfaith Manifesto' from a range of faith leaders which calls on political leaders to pursue ethical, moral and fair policies towards migrants, asylum seekers and refugees.
<http://www.migrantsrights.org.uk/news/2015/interfaith-manifesto-just-treatment-refugees-asylum-seekers-and-migrants>

Local inter faith organisations are playing an active role in some areas, for example in London:

- Faiths Together in Lambeth will be holding hustings for the three parliamentary constituencies within Lambeth on Monday 20 April, Tuesday 21 April and Thursday 23 April. For further information, contact ftil@hotmail.co.uk.
- Hillingdon Inter Faith Network is organising three hustings in the run up to the general election in the three parliamentary constituencies within the borough, similar to the events they ran prior to the last election. <https://greenwire.greenpeace.org/uk/en-gb/node/24785>

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Faith communities standing together

The January/February issue of the e-bulletin, published on 30 January, carried an extended piece on UK inter faith response to the murders at the offices of Charlie Hebdo and at the Hyper Cachet Kosher Supermarket and related events in France. It also referred to the impact of the far right, noting the PEGIDA marches in Germany.

February saw faith communities responding again to attacks in Copenhagen and also atrocities in other parts of the world.

Among the responses from faith communities is a campaign called #WeStandTogether which was launched at the London Central Mosque at Regents Park with involvement from a number of faith community leaders and from the Metropolitan Police.

Regents Park Mosque was also the starting point for another expression of solidarity which saw a group of Jewish, Muslim and Christian religious leaders leading a one-day 'pilgrimage' across central London, organised by the Coexist Foundation, to demonstrate inter faith fellowship.

PEGIDA marched in Newcastle on 28 February and faith groups were an active part of 'Newcastle Unites' which rallied to oppose this.

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Home Secretary speech on counter-extremism strategy

Last October, the Home Secretary, the Rt Hon Theresa May announced that the Home Office was taking responsibility within Government for developing a new counter-extremism strategy. This strategy aimed "to tackle the whole spectrum of extremism, violent and non-violent, ideological and non-ideological, Islamist and neo-Nazi – hate and fear in all their forms".

On 23 March Ms May gave, in her role as Home Secretary, a speech outlining the further measures she wished to see implemented after the General Election. These include:

- banning of hate preachers.
- 'banning orders' for groups which do not reach the current threshold to be banned as extremists

- civil ‘extremism disruption orders’ to be used against individuals
- ‘closure orders’ to shut down premises owned or used by extremists
- a ‘positive campaign to promote British values’ to the public
- a review of supplementary schools, which are currently unregulated, to ‘protect children from extremists’
- HM Inspectorate of Constabulary reviewing how police forces have responded to ‘honour crimes’, female genital mutilation and forced marriage
- new ‘extremism officer’ roles in prisons to deal with extremist inmates and gangs
- a full review of citizenship law to ensure successful applicants respect British values
- a ‘sharp reduction’ in funding for translation services and a ‘significant increase’ in money for English language training
- a review of Sharia courts in England and Wales to examine whether they are compatible with British values

The Home Secretary also referred to the Government’s new ‘Extremism Analysis Unit’ which is intended: to help develop a new engagement policy in order to ensure that “nobody unwittingly lends legitimacy or credibility to extremists or extremist organisations”; and also to “inform the development of a counter-entryism strategy”.

She also mentioned plans to create “a place-based, multi-agency, single-pot funding model called the Helping Isolated Communities Programme which will include training and skills projects, help for women to get into work, mentoring schemes, interfaith projects, getting school pupils mixing with children from other backgrounds, and intensive English language training”.

A copy of the full text of her speech, which sets out all her proposals, can be found on the Government website at <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/a-stronger-britain-built-on-our-values>.

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EHRC report: Religion or belief in the workplace and service delivery

As noted in the October 2014 E-bulletin, the Equality and Human Rights Commission launched a call for evidence in August 2014 aiming to explore the direct and personal experiences of employees and service users concerning religion or belief, and also the views and experiences of employers, service providers, relevant organisations and others. A report on the findings of the call for evidence has now been published by the EHRC and can be found at <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/about-us/our-work/key-projects/your-experiences-religion-or-belief> along with summaries of its findings. The EHRC will be drawing on the findings to produce guidance in due course.

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EHRC guidance: Freedom of expression legal framework

The January/February E-bulletin noted that the Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance on freedom of expression was due to be published imminently. This was published on 4 February and can be found at <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/publication/freedom-expression-legal-framework>.

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Government progress report: call to end violence against women and girls

To mark International Women's Day, the Government published a progress report on its activity to end violence against women and girls since 2010. The report, which refers to the role of faith leaders in supporting declarations condemning FGM and forced marriage, can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/call-to-end-violence-against-women-and-girls-progress-report-2010-to-2015>.

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Multi faith call on nuclear weapons

A number of faith leaders from across the UK have signed a statement calling on states with nuclear weapons to join with other states to implement new approaches to eliminate nuclear arsenals. Ahead of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference meeting from 27 April to 22 May 2015, senior representatives from eight faiths in the UK, including Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist, have given their backing to a statement calling for the elimination of nuclear weapons. The statement, which can be found at <http://www.endnuclearweapons.org.uk/>, was developed and co-ordinated by Religions for Peace UK, Pax Christi UK and a range of Churches and other faith groups.

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

Faith and Social Action

Recent weeks have seen faith and multi faith social action highlighted in a number of different contexts.

Sadaqa Day

On Sunday 22 March, Sadaqa Day took place, with events in Bradford, Leeds, London and Manchester and other locations around the UK. It is a new national day of multi faith social action, led by Britain's Muslim community and supported by the Department for Communities and Local Government whose Minister Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon spoke at its launch at Southwark Cathedral. Further details can be found at www.mysadaqaday.org.

Sadaqa Day joins the long established Mitzvah Day and also Sewa Day and the Big Iftar in encouraging volunteering by people of many backgrounds to make a difference in communities. It took place within Islam Awareness Week which this year took as its theme: "Give a little of yourself".

Mitzvah Day 365

Mitzvah Day has now developed Mitzvah Day 365 which supports and encourages hands-on social action throughout the year, building stronger communities and creating relationships

between different faith groups. There is more information about this development online at <http://www.mitzvahday.org.uk/about-us.html>.

Near Neighbours

The Near Neighbours Programme of the Church Urban Fund and the Church of England, with funding from the Department for Communities and Local Government, works to support people of different faiths and ethnicities so that they can get to know each other better, build relationships of trust, and collaborate together on initiatives that improve the local community they live in. Its small grant fund recently awarded its 800th grant to the Larches Trust, connecting Jewish, Christian, Hindu and Muslim residents in Barnet for a community peace project where local people are coming together to build a mosaic in the form of a tree, as a declaration of peace in the area. Further information is at <http://www.cuf.org.uk/blog/800th-grant-award>.

Cinnamon Network

Cinnamon Network invited fifty Local Church Networks to lead a Cinnamon Faith Action Audit to provide evidence for the impact and value of social action delivered by local churches and all other faith groups. In May, they will publish these and present them to their respective local authorities, police and other agencies. In addition, a national Cinnamon Faith Action Audit will be published and presented to Government following the General Election. It is hoped that evidence gathered will strengthen the confidence of local churches and that of local authorities, police and other agencies to work more closely together. Further information is online at <http://www.cinnamonnetwork.co.uk/cinnamon-faith-action-audits/>.

Faith Based Regeneration Network

The Faith Based Regeneration Network, in partnership with Locality, the Community Development Foundation and others is launching a new programme of support for local community action, funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government, called 'First Steps'. The programme is designed to give small community groups the opportunity to think about their area, what they like and don't like and how they would like to change aspects of it. The programme will initially be working to support at least 115 local neighbourhoods or areas to work collaboratively in their communities to create a community action plan by March 2016. The support offered will include consultancy, shared learning and small grants. Information on the grants provided can be found in the [Funding](#) section below. For further information, visit <http://cdf.org.uk/content/funding-programmes/first-steps> or contact Steve Miller at stevemiller@fbrn.org.uk.

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Building good inter faith relations in Cornwall– brick by brick

A new Inter Faith Centre, Dor Kemmyn, is being built in Penmount near Truro Cornwall. Local people are being invited to come to special brick making days to create the bricks to line the inner wall of parts of the Centre. Further information can be found at <http://dorkemmyn.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Dor-Kemmyn-bricking-making-2015.pdf>.

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New website for 'Inter-faith Wales'

'Inter-faith Wales' has recently launched a new website at <http://interfaithwales.org.uk>. The website includes an introduction from the Rt Hon Rhodri Morgan AM, First Minister for Wales, and includes information about three separate bodies covered by the term 'Inter-faith Wales': the Faith Communities Forum (which is an organ of the current Wales Assembly Government), the Interfaith Council for Wales and the emerging Wales Inter-faith Network. The site contains information and news on each body and also contact details for all those involved.

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Multi faith roadshows visit schools and colleges

Inter faith organisations play an important role, alongside professional educators, in bringing faith and inter faith issues into schools and colleges. As well as bodies such as Interfaith Scotland, 3FF and the Maimonides Inter Faith Foundation operating at UK or national level, a number of IFN's member local groups provide speakers for schools and work closely with local schools and SACREs and with colleges to support classroom and whole school learning about different faiths and about inter faith understanding.

The St Philip's Centre has been bringing a special Religion and Belief roadshow to schools and colleges in Leicestershire and Lincolnshire as part of its work to build good inter-faith relations . The most recent visit was to Grantham College where students learned about a range of faiths and had the opportunity to sign a giant card which supported the importance of inter-faith relations and the need for respect, acceptance and understanding in society, which was then presented to the college for display.

<http://www.granthamjournal.co.uk/news/local/multi-faith-roadshow-at-grantham-college-1-6611619>

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Friendly Places

FaithAction is working on a project entitled Friendly Places which aims to help those suffering from mental health problems. It notes that "Mental health problems are common and will affect 1 in 4 people in the UK during their lifetime. Faith groups and faith-based organisations have the capacity to provide places of support and acceptance for those struggling with mental health problems."

On its website at <http://www.faithaction.net/areas-of-work/friendly-places/> are a series of articles and resources to help faith groups make some practical and positive steps towards becoming more mental health friendly. Faith Action is also offering a training session based on the Friendly Places Pledge (<http://www.faithaction.net/areas-of-work/friendly-places/pledge/>). Any faith group interested in hosting or attending a training session, should contact FaithAction at info@faithaction.net or on 0845 094 6350.

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Dudley Interfaith Youth Project

On 2 February the Dudley Interfaith Youth Project was launched at St Thomas' Community Network in Dudley. This new inter faith project brings together young people from all faiths and backgrounds to learn and grow together.

The Project, entitled Fusion, is supported by the Methodist Church alongside Dudley Central Mosque, Dudley Borough Inter-Faith Network, other churches in Dudley and Near Neighbours. Their slogan 'Undivided by Faith' emphasises the mission of encouraging young people to work together.

For further information, contact the Revd Dr Caroline Wickens at caroline.wickens@gmail.com.

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Northampton Unity exhibition

Northampton Inter Faith Forum has organised for the first time an exhibition with seven different faith communities on the theme of 'Unity'. The exhibition is being held at the Northampton Museum and Art Gallery in the People's Gallery from 10 March to 23 May. For further information, contact northamptoniff@gmail.com.

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New Jewish Muslim Women's Network

Funding for a Jewish Muslim Women's Network – Women Leading Together (WLT) has been approved by the Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. Led by Laura Marks, Senior Vice-President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, and Julie Siddiqi, Executive Director of the Islamic Society of Britain, the network aims to strengthen relationships, initially between the Jewish and Muslim communities in the UK, through their women – and to encourage more women into leadership roles in the two communities.

The Network aims to create a safe, inclusive space for women from both faiths to meet, learn from and share skills with each other, as well as working on shared inter faith projects to improve real contact awareness and understanding. WLT will focus on creating unity between the UK Jewish and Muslim communities and will involve other faith groups wherever possible throughout its work.

For further information or to get involved, visit <http://www.womeninjewishleadership.org.uk/women-leading-together-wlt-jewish-muslim-womens-network/> or contact Sam Clifford at sam.clifford@bod.org.uk.

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Weaving Women's Wisdom

The Weaving Women's Wisdom project began through the Kirklees Faiths Forum Book Club and is now supported by Touchstone Bradford. The aim of the project is for women to meet and share important stories from traditions and scriptures and to reflect on the wisdom that they have experienced to inspire a rug design. It has just completed its first design and is

now looking for new craft projects. For further information, contact Jenny Ramsden at Touchstone on 01274 721626 or at faith2faith@touchstone-bradford.org.uk.

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Places of worship and other faiths

Places of worship of different faiths now often host inter faith events and sometimes invite groups to hold events in their buildings. This is a growing feature, for example, of Inter Faith Week which has seen: the Middlesex Reform Synagogue hosting a Harrow Inter Faith Council event on faith festivals; the Vedic Temple in Southampton hosting an inter faith musical event; and York Minister featuring a performance of 'Luminosity', a light-and-sound installation (inspired by Shiva) with live Carnatic singing, Indian-inspired violin, and contemporary music performed by Manasamitra, an Indian performing arts company from Yorkshire.

Not so usual is performers from one faith tradition contributing to the liturgical experience of congregations of a different faith. Chelmsford Cathedral has, however, recently seen this on two separate occasions. Choral Evensong before Christmas saw a group of 26 Bharathanatyam dancers, under the direction of their tutor Shrimathi Susanna, performing three dances to a mixed congregation of Hindus and Christians. Bharathanatyam is a traditional Hindu sacred dance which is performed in the temples of southern India, and the dancers danced the Amrit Vani, and then two Christian dances, one to the words of The Magnificat, and one called Halleluiah. On Mothering Sunday this month dancers from the same group returned to dance three different parts of the Eucharist. The Cathedral's Vice Dean, Canon Ivor Moody, commented on the significance for its engagement with different faith communities in Essex and also for the work of the Mid Essex Inter Faith Forum, which he chairs.

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The Big Lunch

The Big Lunch aims to get as many people as possible across the UK to have a community lunch once a year. Since the project was launched in 2009 thousands of lunches have taken place across a wide range of communities. The Big Lunch this year takes place on Sunday 7 June and the organisers hope that faith communities and inter faith groups will again play a significant role this year – hosting and participating in lunches.

For those wishing to take part, the 2015 packs containing help, ideas and information for planning a lunch or street party are now available and can be obtained at <http://www.thebiglunch.com/join-in/register-2015.php> or by calling 0845 850 8181. Any queries can be addressed to info@thebiglunch.com.

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Collaboration House and Coexist House

Collaboration House

A new space in London called 'Collaboration House' has been established by Maurice Ostro and the Fayre Share Foundation which promotes philanthropy, collaboration, good inter faith relations, and conflict resolution. The building provides office space for a range of inter faith

initiatives, aiming to foster collaborative engagement. Among early occupants are the Council of Christians and Jews, Faiths Forum for London and the Women's Inter Faith Network. Further information can be found at <http://fayresharefoundation.org/priorities/collaboration/collaboration-house/>.

Coexist House

Cambridge Inter Faith Programme and the Coexist Foundation have for some years been working towards establishing a new London institution that will welcome visitors from all religious backgrounds and none, reaching out to audiences across the UK and worldwide: Coexist House. Following a feasibility study, the vision for Coexist House was unveiled last month at the launch of a £20-million fund-raising appeal at which there were speakers from a number of faiths. The Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP, Secretary of State also spoke about the importance of the project.

The planned centre is also supported by the Honourable Society of the Inner Temple, the Corporation of the City of London and the Victoria and Albert Museum. Further information can be found at <http://www.coexisthouse.org.uk/>.

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RESOURCES AND TRAINING

P for Prayer: the deeper roots of interreligious dialogue and collaboration

At the end of February Celia Blackden moved on from her role as Inter Faith Officer for Churches Together in England. Before doing so, she put together a document entitled '*P for Prayer*' which includes contributions from members of different faith traditions sharing what prayer means to them and how they view it in relation to their inter faith work. A copy of the document can be downloaded from <http://www.cte.org.uk/Publisher/File.aspx?ID=148683>.

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Together for the Common Good: towards a national conversation

Together for the Common Good is launching a book entitled 'Towards a national conversation' on 26 March. Information about the book notes that "contributors, Christian, Jewish, Muslim and non-religious highlight that we urgently need a deeper and wider national conversation about how different interests can live and work together for the common good." Further information on the book, and how to order a copy, can be found at <http://togetherforthecommongood.co.uk/resources/the-book.html>.

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Understanding dialogue – from theory to practice

The St Ethelburga's Centre for Peace and Reconciliation is holding a multi-disciplinary workshop exploring how theoretical ideas about dialogue can be applied to create powerful

new forms of communication and learning. The workshop is part of the University of Winchester MA Reconciliation programme but is open to anyone at the University and the public. It is likely to be relevant to anyone with an interest in communication, social sciences, inter-personal psychology or inter-religious encounter. It does not require any specific academic background. It will be led by Simon Keyes, Fellow in Reconciliation at St Ethelburga's and Visiting Professor at the University of Winchester and will run from 10.30am to 4.30pm at the Centre at 78 Bishopsgate, London EC2N 4AG. For further information and to book, visit <https://www.stethelburgas.org/events/training>.

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Starting and sustaining a faith based social enterprise

FaithAction, in association with the Centre for Innovation, Imagination and Inspiration at the University of Greenwich, is holding a workshop entitled 'Starting and sustaining a faith based social enterprise'. The workshop is aimed at helping faith-based organisations who would like to find ways to sustain their community projects or begin social enterprises. It will run from 9.30am to 3pm on Wednesday 25 March at the Centre for Innovation, Imagination and Inspiration, Hamilton House, 15 Park Vista, Greenwich, London SE10 9LZ. For further information and to book, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/starting-and-sustaining-a-faith-based-social-enterprise-tickets-15891765699>.

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Eastern Faiths Scriptural Reasoning Workshop

The London Central Mosque, in partnership with the Cambridge Inter-faith Programme, is planning a 'Three Eastern Faiths Scriptural Reasoning Workshop', bringing together Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists to read and reflect on passages from their sacred texts together. The format will include a panel presenting passages from their sacred texts on a chosen theme and modelling scriptural reasoning. The audience will then have the opportunity to try it out for themselves, facilitated by experienced individuals.

Details will be available closer to the time (currently planned for May). Anyone interested in being a panel member or participant, should contact Jayde Russell, Interfaith and Visits Coordinator at London Central Mosque at visits@iccuk.org or on 0207 725 2212.

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Postgraduate qualifications in Inter Religious Relations

The St Philip's Centre, in association with De Montford University Leicester, offers part time study for an MA/Diploma/Certificate in Inter-religious Relations. The course explores the relationship between religions in the context of a plural society and globalised world. It is ideal for those who wish to deepen their appreciation of religious diversity and enquiry into the challenges which diversity and inter-religious dialogue bring to religious communities, civil service and public institutions. The tutors are experienced practitioners in the field of dialogue and community praxis with a strong profile in teaching and research.

The course offers a flexible part time learning programme. For further information, visit www.stphilipscentre.co.uk/study/pg-courses.

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West Lothian handbook to encourage inter faith working

West Lothian Council has launched a Faith Handbook, a guide which aims to promote inter-faith working in West Lothian. The guide was developed by members of the West Lothian Inter Faith Group, and is supported by the West Lothian Community Planning Partnership. It highlights the needs and influences of different faith communities for local employers, members of the community and those delivering services locally, in order create a deeper sense of understanding of faith groups within West Lothian. Subjects covered in the handbook include an outline of foods, fasting and customs around death, mainly points of sensitivities. The handbook can be found online

http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/media/6339/West-Lothian-Faith-Handbook/pdf/West_Lothian_Faith_Handbook.pdf.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS AND TENDERS

NATRE's 'Art in Heaven' Competition

The National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE) is holding its twelfth Annual 'Art in Heaven' competition for school pupils aged 4 to 19 years.

Entries for the competition, which is also supported by RE Today, can be created using drawing, painting, art, video, sculpture or other media and there are five themes from which to choose: 'Front page: the RE book'; 'Questions: big, bigger, biggest'; 'Faith (or doubt?)'; 'Where is God?'; and 'Stories that change lives'. There is full, detailed guidance available online at <http://www.natre.org.uk/about-natre/projects/spirited-arts/introduction/2015-competition/>. Submission of entries, to be considered for an award, must arrive at NATRE on or before 31 July.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

Mitzvah Day – Chief Executive Officer and Project Officer

Mitzvah Day is looking to recruit an interim Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Expressions of interest should be submitted as soon as possible. Mitzvah Day will then be recruiting for a full time permanent job after a formal recruitment process. The interim CEO may apply for the permanent role. The successful candidate will be based in the new JW3 building in North London.

Mitzvah Day is also looking to appoint a Project Officer as an integral part of the Mitzvah Day team. Responsibilities will include managing its international development as well as other duties. Strong IT skills are a necessity. The role is full time, permanent and based in London

For more information on both roles, email michelle@mitzvahday.org.uk as soon as possible.

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3FF ParliaMentors 2015-16 programme

ParliaMentors is a year-long programme, run by 3FF in which teams of university students of different faiths and non-religious beliefs collaborate to create social change while being mentored by a local MP. During the programme students will: see politics in action; create social change; develop leadership skills; and build new professional and personal networks.

3FF is now recruiting for its 2015-16 ParliaMentors programme, which begins in September and runs through the academic year until June 2016. To find out more, and to apply, visit <http://www.3ff.org.uk/parliamentors>. The closing date for applications is 27 March. Any queries can be addressed to mentoring@3ff.org.uk.

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Equality and Diversity Forum – Chief Executive

The Equality and Diversity Forum (EDF) is seeking to recruit a new Chief Executive, under the direction of its Chair and Trustees, to lead the EDF in achieving its strategic goals and to enhance its role in promoting dialogue, trust and good working relationships amongst organisations contributing to the equality and human rights agenda.

The post is full time and based in London, with some flexibility for home working. A copy of the job description and person specification can be obtained by emailing info@edf.org.uk. Applicants should send a CV and a covering letter setting out concisely how they meet the person specification for the post. The closing date for applications is 24 April. Interviews will take place in the week beginning 4 May.

Anyone wishing to have an informal conversation about the post with EDF's current Chief Executive, Amanda Ariss, should contact her as soon as possible and no later than 13 April at amanda.ariss@edf.org.uk.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Near Neighbours programme

The Near Neighbours programme, a partnership between the Church Urban Fund and the Archbishops' Council, awards small grants of between £250 and £5,000 to projects that enable people of different faiths or none to work together for the benefit of the community.

This is a rolling programme with no deadlines available in certain parts of England (maps showing eligible areas can be found at <http://www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/grants/eligible-areas>). Its second phase is due to run until December 2015.

Details on eligibility and how to apply can be found online at <http://www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/grants>.

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First Steps programme

The Faith Based Regeneration Network, in partnership with Locality, the Community Development Foundation and others is launching a new programme of support for local community action, funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government, called 'First Steps'.

The programme will initially be working to support at least 115 local neighbourhoods or areas to work collaboratively in their communities to create a community action plan by March 2016. Grants of up to £2,500 are available to assist community groups in putting together their first plan. The Starter Pack and Guidance Notes can be downloaded from <http://cdf.org.uk/content/funding-programmes/first-steps>.

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Funding Central website

Funding Central - <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/default.aspx> - is a free website for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises that provides access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, together with tools and resources for supporting organisations to develop sustainable income strategies appropriate to their needs.

Funding Central is managed by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, in partnership with Idox Information Solutions Ltd, and funded by the Government's Office for Civil Society.

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Comic Relief Stronger Communities grants

Comic Relief's grants programme now has five themes, one of which is 'Stronger Communities'. Grants for the Stronger Communities theme are managed by Local Community Foundations and range in size from £1,000 to £10,000 per year. Priority is given to small, locally-based groups or organisations in areas of disadvantage that have a clear understanding of the needs of their community and are undertaking actions as a means of addressing these needs. Anyone wishing to apply for a Local Communities grant should contact their local community foundation. Further details can be found online at http://ukcommunityfoundations.org/programmes/comic_relief/.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Sewa Day will take place on Sunday 4 October.

One World Week will take place from Sunday 18 to Sunday 25 October.

National Inter Faith Week in England, Wales and Northern Ireland will take place from Sunday 15 to Saturday 21 November.

Mitzvah Day will take place on Sunday 22 November.

Scottish Interfaith Week will take place from Monday 23 to Monday 30 November.

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DIARY DATES

Bedford Council of Faiths is currently holding a series of Open Dialogue – Sharing Texts meetings. The next one will be held on Monday 23 March on the theme of ‘Purification’. The meeting takes place at 7pm at St Peter’s Church, De Parys Avenue, Bedford. Participants are invited to bring a text on the theme to share from their faith or spiritual tradition. For further information, visit www.bcof.org.uk or email secretary.bcof@gmail.com.

The **London Inter Faith Centre** is holding a Silent Vigil for the Middle East on Tuesday 24 March. The vigil takes place from 6pm to 7pm at St Anne’s and St Andrew’s, 125 Salusbury Road, London NW6 6RG. For further information, visit <http://londoninterfaith.org.uk/> or contact 07801 286819.

The Inter Faith Network for the UK is holding a day event for local inter practitioners at St Mary’s, Sheffield on Thursday 26 March to share their experiences and discuss issues of common interest and concern. The programme includes focused learning opportunities on practical aspects of setting up, running and sustaining local inter faith initiatives with positive, long term impact. Full details about the event can be found at <http://interfaith.org.uk/take-part/events>.

Kirklees Faiths Forum’s Interfaith Book Club will be holding its next meeting on Thursday 26 March. The meeting will be held at 12.30pm at Hyrstmount Junior School Bungalow in Batley, West Yorkshire. The book under discussion will be *The Unseen* by Katherine Webb. Anyone interested in attending should call 01924 326425.

Burnley and Pendle Faith Centre is hosting an evening, together with **Churches Working Together for Burnley** for Open Doors, a charity working with persecuted Christians, on Thursday 26 March. The evening will include a presentation about Christians throughout the world and also a ‘songs of praise’. It begins at 7.30pm and light refreshments will be available before the meeting. It is being held at the Centre, which is on Burnley Campus, Barden Lane, BB10 1JD.

West Cheshire Interfaith Forum is organising a ‘Faith Peace Walk’ around Chester City Centre on Saturday 28 March. The Faith Peace Walk is intended to demonstrate a

commitment to promoting equality, acceptance and respect in Cheshire West, inspiring people to come together to celebrate understanding and diversity. It will begin in front of the Town Hall Square at 2pm and is expected to last until 4pm. For further details, contact Keith Rycroft at westcheshireinterfaith@gmail.com or on 07590 031388.

Crawley Interfaith Network is holding a Social Evening on Saturday 28 March from 6pm to 9pm at Crawley United Reformed Church Hall, Worth Park Avenue, RH10 3DT. The evening will include the Desert-Island Discs of Father Paul Fleetwood from Worth Abbey, a vegetarian meal, music and singing. There is no charge to attend but booking is required. For further information and to book, visit www.crawleyinterfaith.net or contact Ashwin Soni at ashel@hotmail.co.uk or on 07833 252551.

Horsham Interfaith Forum is holding its AGM at 1pm on Saturday 28 March. This will be followed by a talk by Margaret Symonds on 'Pilgrimage'. The event will take place at London Road Methodist Church, Horsham RH12 1AN. For further information, contact info@horsham-interfaith.org.uk.

Northampton Inter Faith Forum is holding its fourth annual Multi Faith Day on Saturday 28 March. The event takes place from 10am to 2pm in the Market Square, Abington Street, Northampton NN1 2DN and is an opportunity to find out about Northamptonshire's faith communities, ask questions, see displays and sample foods. For more information, contact Neelam Aggarwal Singh on 07791 618450 or at northamptonniff@gmail.com.

Devon Interfaith Forum 4 Youth is holding an event on Sunday 29 March entitled 'Many Faiths, One Earth'. The event will be an opportunity for young people to explore the connection between 'Nature, Spirit, Land and Faith'; to meet young people from diverse faith backgrounds; discover Dartmoor woodlands; experience hands-on workshops and talks; and listen to music and storytelling. For more information, and to book a place, contact Marc Frank at interfaithyoungproject@gmail.com or on 07508 806770.

The Coexist Interfaith Music Festival takes place from 10am to 9pm on Monday 30 March in the Brunei Gallery at SOAS, University of London. Over 20 artists and groups from a variety of faith and inter faith backgrounds are expected to share their music and dance, and speakers will come together for a panel talk on music and conflict resolution. The festival will be accompanied by an Interfaith Fair in the foyer of the Brunei Gallery Lecture Theatre, where faith and interfaith organisations and educational institutions will showcase their work. The fair will also feature an interactive area allowing children to find out more about various religions and their music. For further information, visit <http://www.soas.ac.uk/equalitydiversity/news/30mar2015-4th-coexist-interfaith-music-festival-.html>.

Religions for Peace (UK) is hosting its next event on Monday 30 March on 'Righteous Muslims – Recognising the courage of Muslims who saved Jewish lives during the Holocaust'. The event runs from 7pm to 9pm at the House of Lords in London and aims to show the common bond and link between the Muslim and Jewish faith. The speakers will be Fiyaz Mughal and Rabbi Natan Levy, who will try to broaden the knowledge and awareness of the actions that some Muslims took during the Holocaust. Registration of interest is mandatory to receive an official invitation as spaces are limited. To register an interest and to receive further information, contact David Horner at dvd.horner@googlemail.com.

York Interfaith Group is holding its next meeting on Wednesday 1 April. The theme for the evening is 'No more immigrants, Britain is overcrowded – how should people of faith respond?' The speaker will be Paul Wordsworth, the Chair Joyce Pickard and the Host Patricia Castle. The event will take place at 7.30pm in the Clementhorpe Room, 15 Priory

Street Centre, York YO1 6ET. For further information, visit www.yorkinterfaith.org or contact Mark Cosens at loscosens@yahoo.co.uk or on 07796 095152.

The **Multifaith Chapel and Library at Burngreave Ashram** is holding a series of seminars on the first Monday of each month. The next one will be held on Monday 6 April. The seminars take from 12 noon until 2.30pm and begin with a period of meditation/prayer before lunch and the seminar. For further details, and to book, contact Adnan Khalid on 07800 776 539 or at adnan.khalid@hotmail.co.uk.

Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity is working in partnership with other local organisations on the Lord Mayor's Interfaith Gathering which will take place on Sunday 12 April at 3pm at Plymouth Guildhall. As a direct result of his experience of 2014 Inter Faith Week the Lord Mayor of Plymouth has asked his Chaplain to organise an Interfaith Gathering of Thanksgiving. The theme for the day is 'Standing Together: Face to face and side by side'. Anyone interested in attending or volunteering for the event, should contact the office on 01752 254438 or at info@pcfcd.co.uk.

The **Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life** of the **Woolf Institute** will be holding its fifth public hearing on Monday 13 April at the University of Glasgow. The Commission invites discussion of the role of religion and belief in contemporary Britain in relation to media, education, social action and law. Further information is available at <http://www.corab.org.uk/>.

The **World Congress of Faiths** is holding an event from 5pm to 7.30pm on Tuesday 14 April about the 2015 Parliament of the World's Religions. The event will provide more information about the Parliament and will provide an opportunity for people from all faiths to talk about their own inter faith work and the topics they would like to see addressed at the Parliament. The event will be held at Global Co-operation House, 65-69 Pound Lane, Willesden, London, NW10 2HH. Refreshments will be served from 5pm. For further details, visit <http://www.worldfaiths.org/events.php> and to book, contact Tony Reese at tony.reese@worldfaiths.org.

The **St Philip's Centre** is holding a lecture on Tuesday 14 April entitled 'The current scene – integration and inter faith in Leicester'. The guest speakers will be Professor Eleanor Nesbitt and Mr Daljit Singh Makan. The lecture will begin at 5.30pm, with refreshments available from 5pm, at St Philip's Church, Evington Road, Leicester LE2 1HN. For more information or to register attendance, call 0116 273 3459 or email admin@stphilipscentre.co.uk.

Leeds Concord Interfaith Group is holding its next event on Tuesday 14 April. The theme for the evening will be 'Has inter faith dialogue lost its prophetic voice in the UK?' and the speaker will be Dr Mel Prideaux. The event is being held at 7.30pm at Roscoe Methodist Church, Francis Street, off Harrogate Road, LS7 4BY. For further information, visit <http://www.concord-leeds.org.uk/programme1.htm>.

The **Buddhist Group of Kendal** is holding its next event entitled 'Meditation: Buddhist and Christian Perspectives' on Monday 27 April at 7pm at the Norman Chapel, Durham Castle. The speakers will be Jacquetta Gomes and Hannah Cleugh. For further information, contact Hannah.cleugh@durham.ac.uk or visit www.castlechapel.co.uk/events/.

Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource is holding an event at 3pm on Sunday 3 May, at the St Michael and All Angels Church, Boulge, Suffolk, IP13 6BW, in celebration of the United Nations 2015 Year of Light. The speaker will be Charles Muggleston who will recite 'The Ruba'iyat of Omar Khayya'm', translated by Edward FitzGerald. Refreshments will be provided. There is no charge to attend but donations to Church funds are gratefully received. For further information, visit <http://www.sifre.org.uk/events/events.htm>.

Christians Aware is holding a day event on Saturday 9 May on the theme of 'Understanding Islam'. The day runs from 10.30am to 3.30pm at Christchurch, 105A Clarendon Park, Leicester LE2 3AD. The main speaker for the day will be Dilwar Hussain. For further information, contact Barbara Butler at barbarabutler@christiansaware.co.uk.

Wisbech Interfaith Forum will be holding its Annual Meeting on Monday 18 May at the Boathouse Business Centre, Nene Parade, 1 Harbour Square, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire PE13 3XE. The theme of the programme is "Our Peace, Our World" and the speaker will be Dr Rowan Williams, former Archbishop of Canterbury. For further information, contact seanfinlay@aol.co.uk.

Interfaith Scotland is holding an inter faith week on Iona, within the Iona Community. Participants are invited to engage with one another in exploring inter faith issues such as journeys of faith, common values and issues affecting today's world. There is a cost to attend but an access fund is available. For more information, visit <http://www.scotland.anglican.org/interfaith-week-on-iona-30-may-to-5-june-2/> or contact Frances Hume at frances@interfaithscotland.org or on 0141 420 6982.

Interfaith MK is holding a 'One Voice' event on Saturday 30 May at the Guild Hall, Christ the Cornerstone Church, Milton Keynes MK9 2ES. Registration starts at 5.45pm for a 6.15pm start. The event is to promote cohesion and friendship between the Muslim and Jewish communities in Milton Keynes and will include story telling from Jewish and Muslim traditions, Arabic and Jewish music from Crossroads, Jewish songs by MKDRS Choir and Islamic arts, food from both cultures and a speech by the Mayor. For further information, visit www.interfaithmk.org.uk or email interfaithmk@gmail.com.

York St John University is holding a conference on Wednesday 3 June on 'The Challenge of Leadership: The Contribution of Faith to Reconciliation'. The conference will be held from 10.30am to 4.30pm at Temple Hall, York St John University and the key speaker will be the Rt Revd Dr Toby Howarth, with responses from the Revd Dr Sarah Hills and Dr Ataulhah Siddiqui. For further information contact Canon Malcolm Grundy at mgrundy@yorks.ac.uk or to book a place, visit <http://www.yorks.ac.uk/education--theology/faculty-of-etsr/faculty-news--events/faculty-events/challenge-of-leadership-2015.aspx>.

Inter Faith St Albans, together with **St Albans Cathedral Study Centre**, is holding its inaugural event on Wednesday 3 June at 7.45pm at St Albans Cathedral Library in St Albans, Hertfordshire. The theme for the evening will be 'Jesus in Three Faiths' and the speakers will be Rabbi Danny Rich who will speak on 'Jesus the Jew', the Reverend Bonnie Evan-Hills who will speak on 'The Christian Jesus' and Ali Amla who will speak on 'The Muslim Jesus'. The event will conclude with engagement and discussions, chaired by the Rt Reverend John Sherrington. Donations are gratefully received. To book a place or for further information, contact Clare Coombe on 01727890205 or at studycentre@stalbanscathedral.org.

Westminster Interfaith will now be holding its 30th Annual Multi-Faith Pilgrimage for Peace in Hounslow on Saturday 6 June. Further details to follow.

A programme of events is being organised by the **Human Rights Office** for the week of the 800th Anniversary of the Magna Carta from Monday 15 to Friday 19 June at the Medway Campus of the University of Greenwich, Chatham Maritime, Chatham, Kent ME4 4TB. The purpose of the conference is to link the heritage of the Magna Carta to human and civil rights today. The Magna Carta will be considered from various perspectives, including history, law, religion, humanism, discrimination and freedom of conscience and expression. For more information visit www.magnacarta800medway.org or contact Dr Ingrid van Dooren at

mivandooren@hotmail.com.

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland is hosting a conference from Tuesday 23 June to Thursday 25 June entitled 'Cacophony or Conversation? The Bible and Inter Faith Dialogue'. The conference aims to open up a conversation about the Bible in the context of religious pluralism and among the contributions will be an exploration of other religious traditions reading Christian scripture and Christians reading other scriptures. The keynote speaker will be Professor Hugh Poyer, Professor of Biblical Interpretation at the University of Sheffield. For further information and to book, visit www.ctbi.org.uk/677 or contact Natasha Richmond at natasha.richmond@ctbi.org.uk.

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For more information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **15 May** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer: Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH
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IFN e-bulletin

May/June 2015

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **15 July** with ‘e-bulletin’ in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and projects and future events.

If your organisation distributes a programme, newsletter or e-bulletin, please add ifnet@interfaith.org.uk to your mailing list.

Disclaimer: Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Increasingly, IFN is making use of social media, in particular Twitter (www.twitter.com/IFNetUK) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/IFNetUK). Please take a moment to ‘follow’ and ‘like’ IFN and also Inter Faith Week (www.twitter.com/IFWeek and www.facebook.com/IFWeek) and also check in with the IFN website to see new items which are added on a regular basis.

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

New Ministerial team at DCLG.

The 2015 UK General Election took place on 7 May.

The Department which takes the lead for the Government on faith and inter faith issues, as part of its integration role, is that of Communities and Local Government. Its new Ministers are:

- Rt Hon Greg Clark MP – Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government
- Rt Hon Mark Francois MP – Minister of State for Communities and Local Government
- Brandon Lewis MP – Minister of State for Communities and Local Government
- Marcus Jones MP – Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Local Government)
- James Wharton MP – Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
- Baroness Williams of Trafford – Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Baroness Williams has been given the Integration and Faith portfolio at DCLG. Further information can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/people/susan-williams-of-trafford>.

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New anti extremism legislation

In The Queen’s Speech on 27 May, it was announced that measures would be brought forward to “promote social cohesion and protect people by tackling extremism”. The Anti-Extremism Bill is to include new immigration rules, powers to close down premises used by extremists and the power to make ‘extremism disruption orders’.

A Counter Terrorism and Security Act received Royal Assent in February. This put the Prevent programme on a statutory footing. From 1 July every local authority will have a legal duty, "when exercising its functions, [to] have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". Higher Education institutions will also have to comply with the new Prevent statutory duty, as will schools, Further Education institutions, the health sector ..., prisons and probation and the Police.

Guidance on implementation of the Act was published in March.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/417943/Preve

[nt Duty Guidance England Wales.pdf](#) and https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/417941/Prevent Duty Guidance for Scotland.pdf

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EHRC report: Religion or belief in the workplace and service delivery

As noted in the last E-bulletin, the Equality and Human Rights Commission report on the findings of the call for evidence on religion or belief has now been published and can be found at <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/about-us/our-work/key-projects/your-experiences-religion-or-belief> along with summaries of its findings. The EHRC will be drawing on the findings to produce guidance in due course.

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EHRC Strategic and Business Plan

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has published its Business and Strategic Plans for 2015/16.

At the centre of the Business Plan are three new projects: to address pay gaps in relation to gender, race and disability; to examine the state of access to civil justice; and to assess the relationship between attitudes, values and behaviours. The full Business Plan can be found at <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/about-us/about-commission/our-vision-and-mission/our-business-plan>.

The Strategic Plan has been revised with minor updates and extended for one further year. The Strategic Plan and the revision for 2015/16 can be found at <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/about-us/about-commission/our-vision-and-mission/our-strategic-plan>.

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Office of the Public Guardian

The Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) is a Government agency that registers lasting powers of attorney (LPAs). These important legal documents allow people to choose someone they trust to help manage their affairs should they ever lose capacity. Setting up an LPA is straightforward and can be done online, but the OPG is concerned that too few people are taking this important step.

Every year, 225,000 people in the UK develop dementia. Every 90 seconds someone is admitted to hospital with an acquired brain injury. That's why it is so important to act now and plan ahead to make sure choices count, no matter what the future holds. The OPG wants to understand better what stops people taking out an LPA as well as what might encourage more people, including younger adults as well people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, to plan ahead.

The OPG is particularly keen to learn from the insights and knowledge of faith leaders who have strong links with their communities as well as a deep understanding of them. Anyone interested in assisting should email partnerships@publicguardian.gsi.gov.uk or call Munpreet Kaur Uppal on 0121 631 6814.

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New Year's Honours Nominations

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) is keen to ensure that individuals from the full breadth of society who are making a significant contribution to public life are properly recognised through the Honours system. It is particularly keen to recognise individuals who have contributed to building integrated communities.

All nominations must be made on an official citation form and nominees should not be informed that they have been nominated. Citation forms can be obtained from integration@communities.gsi.gov.uk.

DCLG is holding a series of workshops at its offices in London giving a brief overview of the nominations process and guidance about how to draft a citation. These will be taking place during July and August. For further information contact Abdul Ghaffar at integration@communities.gsi.gov.uk.

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RE Council 'Beyond the Ordinary' campaign

The Religious Education Council of England and Wales has launched a new campaign, entitled 'Beyond the Ordinary', to encourage graduates and career changers to train as RE teachers. The campaign highlights the benefits of a career in RE teaching and includes a short video looking at the experiences of an RE teacher and her students from Redhill Academy in Nottingham, one of the Young Ambassador for RE teams. The film presents RE teaching as a career that is far from ordinary and communicates the breadth and diversity of RE in schools today. For further information, visit www.teachre.co.uk/beyondtheordinary.

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'BRIT' survey

A project called "The Building Resilience through Integration & Trust (BRIT) programme", which is funded from an EU fund – the Radicalisation Leading to Terrorism Programme, has attracted attention for a questionnaire given to Year 5 and 5 pupils in a London school which asked questions such as 'How much do you trust people of another race/religion?' and 'Would you mind if a family of a different race or religion moved next door?' and whether they agree that it is acceptable to marry someone from outside their race or religion. <http://www.theguardian.com/education/2015/may/28/fury-after-primary-pupils-are-asked-to-complete-radicalisation-seeking-surveys>

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INTERNATIONAL UPDATES

Colloquium on preventing and combating anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim hatred in Europe

The European Commission is seeking input to its first Annual Colloquium on fundamental rights in the EU. The Colloquium, being held in October, will aim at improving mutual cooperation and greater political engagement for the promotion and protection of fundamental rights in Europe. It will seek to strengthen dialogue between the EU and international institutions, policy makers, academia and civil society, and deepen the understanding of challenges for fundamental rights on the ground. The central theme will be "Tolerance and respect: preventing and combating anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim hatred in Europe".

The Commission would like to collect input on a number of questions http://ec.europa.eu/justice/events/colloquium-fundamental-rights-2015/files/2015colloquium_questions_en.pdf which will be at the centre of discussions during the Colloquium. The deadline for input is 31 May and contributions can be sent to JUST-Colloquium@ec.europa.eu.

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

UK Women of Faith Network under development

Religions for Peace, a multi-religious coalition which advances common action for peace among the world's religious communities, is facilitating the establishment of a United Kingdom Women of Faith Network (UKWFN).

It is intended that UKWFN will: increase the visibility of religious women as powerful agents of change; create visibility of the leadership role of women of faith; harness the power and showcase the unique models of women of different faiths (and their vast networks) in transforming conflict, advancing just and harmonious societies and protecting the earth; be a mechanism to promote religion as an asset for peace – particularly where historically religion has been seen as a problem; allow women to share experiences and knowledge; be a forum for extended networking – Nationally, Regionally and Internationally; mainstream women of faith into peace building initiatives regionally, nationally and globally; move dialogue to action – Common concerns such as Restoring Dignity – End violence against women initiative; and foster partnerships and alliances with other secular and governmental organisations, such as the United Nations, European Parliament, Council of Europe and civil society.

For further information, contact Ravinder Kaur Nijjar at rknijjar@rfpwomenoffaith.eu or Jehangir Sarosh at executive.director@religionsforpeace.org.uk.

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Like Mother, Like Daughter

The Women's Interfaith Network, 3FF, Inlight Trust, the Goldsmiths' Company and the Joseph Strong Frazer Trust have supported a collaborative project entitled 'Like Mother, Like Daughter'. This was a production created and performed by mothers and daughters from different religions and a celebration of the traditions inherited and passed on. For further information, visit

https://www.bac.org.uk/content/36432/see_whats_on/whats_on/shows/like_mother_like_daughter.

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The Bridge exhibition

The Bridge is an East-West travelling art exhibition organised and curated by CARAVAN, an interreligious and intercultural peacebuilding NGO, which will showcase the work of 47 visual artists from 15 countries. The exhibition is a gathering of international artists focusing on what they hold in common through their cultures and creeds: Christian, Jewish and Muslim. The exhibition will be at venues throughout the world and is being held at St Martin-in-the-Fields in Trafalgar Square in London from 1 June until 31 July. For further information, visit www.oncaravan.org and www.stmartin-in-the-fields.org/visiting/art-and-exhibitions.

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Church opens facilities to Muslims for prayer after Mosque fire

Following a fire at Kingston Mosque on 9 June, the nearby church of St Luke's has welcomed the Muslim community into its facilities in Burton Road and members of the mosque have been praying in the church's music room. Fr Martin Hislop said: "We are happy to rearrange things so the Muslim community can use our music room for everyday prayers. We are just working out what they need." Although the Church cannot accommodate the Friday communal prayer needs, he said "We are going to do as much as we can. It does mean a bit of re-jigging – but that's what neighbours do." The fire, termed 'unsuspicious', caused damage but those in the Mosque were not endangered. Further information can be found at

http://www.surreycomet.co.uk/news/13323141.Love_thy_neighbour_Church_opens_doors_to_Muslim_worshippers_after_Kingston_Mosque_fire/

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JLGB summer inter faith NCS programme

Summer inter faith NCS programme

There are a last 30 spaces left on a special National Citizen Service (NCS) programme, designed for young people to explore their faith and cultural backgrounds.

NCS is a Government initiative being rolled out to every 16 and 17 year old. One of the key areas that NCS promotes is social mixing, and with specifically designed social cohesion sessions, it gives the participants a chance to experience and discuss their own and other people's faith, bringing the participants closer in sharing their cultures.

The Jewish Lads' and Girls' Brigade (JLGB), with other faith organisations, has campaigned for several years to ensure that a faith and culturally sensitive NCS model exists for young people of faith based communities. It will be running an inter faith NCS programme from 10 to 28 August in London and invites interested young people of any background from anywhere in England to apply.

The programme is across three weeks and is residential during the weekdays. The first two weeks take place in Colchester and Redbridge (London); the third can take place anywhere. Week One has a focus on adventure activities. In teams of around 12, participants will have the opportunity to take part in rock climbing, abseiling, archery, swimming and more. Week Two has the focus on learning a particular skill selected by the group such as cookery, graphic design or fitness. Participants will start to plan a social action project that they will carry out during the following week. Week Three: Social action project. Participants will spend 30 hours volunteering in the local community by carrying out a project they designed themselves. During the residential weeks, Kosher, halal and vegetarian food will be provided.

Due to a government grant, the programme can be offered to participants free.

For further information and to apply visit www.interfaithncs.org, or contact the JLGB team on 0208 989 5743.

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United – Faith, Food and Football

'United' is an informal faith dialogue group for young people aged 11 to 18 based in Southall and beyond. Its aim is to get people thinking and talking about the links between Faith, Food and Football. There will be a series of Saturday evening gatherings consisting of cage football, inflatables, team building games and a curry supper. The events will take place at St John's Church, Havelock Road, Southall. For further information, contact the Project Director, Calum Burke on 07748 176183 or at calum@thevibesouthall.co.uk.

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Marie Curie support services

Marie Curie, a national charity that provides care and support for people affected by terminal illness, has recently launched a range of new information and support services to complement its existing nursing and hospice care. These include an information hub

(mariecurie.org.uk/help), an online community (community.mariecurie.org.uk) and a confidential support line on 0800 090 2309.

The services are for anyone living with any terminal illness and their family, friends and carers. Marie Curie is keen to ensure that it supports the diverse needs of faith communities across the UK, and welcomes any guidance that will help it improve its services and help more people. Its information currently includes links to multi-faith pastoral support, and a recognition that spiritual or emotional pain can be a significant experience for people living with terminal illness, regardless of their faith.

Anyone wishing to share any feedback on the new services, should contact the team at infosupport@mariecurie.org.uk.

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Multi faith quiet room at Belfast City airport

George Best Belfast City Airport has opened an in-terminal quiet room to provide a place of prayer and worship for the multi faith communities of Northern Ireland. Representatives of a number of faiths were present in March to officially open the room to the public and each gave a short blessing to the space. For further information, visit <http://niinterfaithforum.org/>.

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Faith and Place Network

The Arts and Humanities Research Council's Faith and Place Network aims to bring people together to inform the critical issues around faith, place and planning, especially for minority faith groups. It is a multi faith and interdisciplinary network, including faith groups' representatives, planners, policymakers and academics. Further details are at <http://faithandplacenetWORK.org>. A key aim of the Faith and Place Network is therefore to produce a policy brief for disseminating to various governmental levels, based on the Network deliberations. It has held two events so far and will be holding its final event on 30 June and 1 July at Grove House at the University of Roehampton in London. Information on the event can be found at <http://faithandplacenetWORK.org/events/futures-event/>.

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Building Bridges theme for European Days of Jewish Culture and Heritage

This year's European Days of Jewish Culture and Heritage, organised by B'nai B'rith UK, will run from 11 to 18 October. It will be on the theme of 'Building Bridges' and will include an inter faith event. For further information, see: <http://www.jewishheritage.org/jh/edjc.php>

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RESOURCES AND TRAINING

Report on national day for local inter faith practitioners

IFN recently held a day event in Sheffield for local inter faith practitioners across the UK to come together for learning and sharing. Open to participants from groups anywhere in the UK, it was an opportunity to share experiences and discuss issues of common interest and concern, with focused learning opportunities on practical aspects of setting up, running and sustaining local inter faith initiatives with positive, long term impact. A copy of the report on the day can be found at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/publications/all-publications/all-publications>.

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Young people and inter faith engagement microsite

In April IFN launched a new youth inter faith engagement 'microsite' linked to its main website: <http://youth.interfaith.org.uk/>.

On this site are materials flowing from a special event, '*Young Voices, Young Agents for Change*', which took place in November and brought together over 80 participants of different ages from a range of organisations to explore aspects of inter faith activity developed by, with and for young people. The aim is to broaden and strengthen this area of activity, enabling even more young people to get involved. In preparation for the event, the IFN office contacted member bodies to ask if they had programmes or projects which were relevant to the day and a number were featured.

On the microsite is an illustrated report on the day and a summary of points made by participants in the course of the day. There are also videos of the presentations by the three young presenters who opened the day: Aamna Alam of Bolton Interfaith Young Ambassadors; Ankit Sinha of Redbridge Ambassadors of Faith and Belief and Megan Wallace of Interfaith Scotland and many more video clips of participants from other organisations and projects such as Rachel Silveira of 3FF; Dr Joyce Miller of the RE Council of England and Wales; Raheed Salam of the National Council of Faiths and Beliefs in Further Education and Isabelle King of the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services.

The work on the microsite and on the event was kindly made possible by support from the Church Urban Fund, Golden Tours Foundation, Inter Faith Youth Trust, National Association of SACREs, and Zoroastrian Trust Funds for Europe as well as through support from the Department for Communities and Local Government for the work programme of which this event formed part.

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“Know Your Neighbour”

The Near Neighbours programme has recently started a new series entitled ‘Know Your Neighbour’ which will provide a short briefing for some of the key religious festivals in the calendar. For information about the series, visit <https://www.cuf.org.uk/blog/know-your-neighbour>.

For further information about the Near Neighbours programme, visit <https://www.cuf.org.uk/how-we-help/near-neighbours>.

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Beyond Forgiving film

Initiatives of Change has produced a documentary on the theme of Beyond Forgiving. The film features a former South African army commander who ordered retaliatory massacres on white civilians during apartheid and Ginn Fourie, whose daughter was killed in one of these massacres. The two of them now work together as peacemakers. The approach to conflict represented in the film is that of trust building, relationship building and respecting differences. Initiatives of Change are interested in partnering with any organisations interested in screening the film or running workshop discussions. For further information, including a trailer, visit <http://uk.iofc.org/Films-to-watch/Post-Apartheid-Beyond-Forgiving>.

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Birmingham Faith Leaders’ Group film

Birmingham Faith Leaders’ Group have produced a film about their visit to India in October. The visit was filmed throughout by a crew from Sangat TV and is an account of the visit and an in-depth exploration of the background, history and nature of the Sikh faith in the context of an inter faith group. It also includes a specially recorded statement of support from the Prime Minister.

It can be seen on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HPQLHbBJ1bY&feature=youtu.be>.

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Guidance leaflets for voluntary sector bodies on equalities law

The Equality and Diversity Forum has produced updated guidance leaflets for voluntary and community sector bodies. The leaflets are designed to help VCS bodies to make use of the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty in their work. There are also leaflets on the meaning of ‘due regard’ and a glossary of key terms in equality law. The leaflets are available at <http://www.edf.org.uk/blog/?p=37062>.

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ONS review of religious Landscape of the UK

The Office for National Statistics recently published online a short overview of the changing religious landscape of the UK, based on the 2011 statistics. This can be found at <http://visual.ons.gov.uk/2011-census-religion/>.

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Interfaith Minute

The Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions has launched a new YouTube series entitled #InterfaithMinute. Each week it will be releasing a new video portraying the power of inter faith relations, the do's and don'ts of engaging in inter faith dialogue and useful information regarding the inter faith movement. The first film can be seen at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aog9LOL9nOc&mc_cid=64d76690cf&mc_eid=bQxmeNgtRw.

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Woolf Institute e-learning course

Applications are now open for the Woolf Institute's e-learning course, *Jews, Christians and Muslims in Europe: Modern Challenges*. This three-part e-learning course focuses on the relationships between Jews, Christians and Muslims in modern Europe. The course examines historical trends, religious and cultural interaction, and issues of contemporary citizenship. The e-learning approach allows participants to study wherever and whenever they choose via the internet. The closing date for applications is 3 August. For further information, contact Dr Emma Harris, Academic Coordinator, at eth22@cam.ac.uk.

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Prevent training in Derby

The Multi Faith Centre at the University of Derby is part of a group of organisations hosting one day training courses on the Prevent programme, exploring radicalisation and terrorism. The courses will explore: risk and threat; safeguarding and vulnerability; statutory duties; and referrals. For further information and future dates, contact Joanna Thornewill on 01332 591285 or at j.thornewill@derby.ac.uk.

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Tackling domestic violence and abuse in faith communities

Kahrmel Wellness is continuing to host specialist training days on 'Tackling domestic violence and abuse in faith communities'. The next one takes place in Birmingham on 9 July. The training is aimed at faith leaders, statutory service workers, academics, survivors of DVA, politicians, professionals working with DVA victims and DVA perpetrators. Detailed

information can be found at <http://kahrmelwellness.com/2015-national-training/>. Any enquiries can be addressed to 0121 231 7465.

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St Ethelburga's community reconciliation conference

The St Ethelburga's Centre for Peace and Reconciliation is holding a day conference on 24 June on 'Community reconciliation – a collaborative enquiry'. This is for all those working in the field of reconciliation to share reflections, build relationships and form possible collaborations for future programmes. At its heart is a transparent process of mutual listening to increase understanding, reduce prejudice and make connections across differences. Further information can be found at <https://www.stethelburgas.org/community-reconciliation-training>. Any enquiries can be addressed to Angharad Thain at angharad@stethelburgas.org.

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Friendly Places workshop

FaithAction is working on a project entitled Friendly Places which aims to help those suffering from mental health problems. As part of the project it is holding workshops to help faith communities make their places of worship welcoming to those suffering from mental health problems. For further information, visit <http://www.faithaction.net/event/friendly-places-training-dudley/> or contact FaithAction at info@faithaction.net or on 0845 094 6350.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS AND TENDERS

IFN call for information

Local inter faith updates

The Inter Faith Network for the UK regularly checks, through desk research, on new local initiatives which are emerging and seeks to keep its local groups list on the website fully up to date. This summer we are embarking on a more in depth updating process and we would be very pleased if local readers would like to check out the details of local groups at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/take-part/find-my-local-inter-faith-group>.

If you spot one that you think is missing, do let us know! You can email Ashley Beck at Ashley.beck@interfaith.org.uk or ring 020 7730 0410.

Short films on religion and belief in the workplace

The IFN office has received some enquiries recently about short films on religion and belief in the workplace. If you have information on resources you have used and found helpful, the IFN office would be interested to have details: ifnet@interfaith.org.uk

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CCJ Snapshots of 1945

The Council of Christians and Jews is compiling a collection of stories, memories and accounts from its members who remember what life was like for Jews and Christians after the Second World War. The project aims to explore questions such as: How was life different for Jews and Christians in 1945? What were Christian-Jewish relations like at the end of the Second World War? What about this time made people interested in inter faith relations and CCJ? Anyone wishing to contribute can contact aron.carr@ccj.org.uk.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

Inter Faith Network for the UK – Summer internship

IFN is offering an opportunity for an 6-8 week summer mini-internship, 4 days per week, to help on projects such as national Inter Faith Week (www.interfaithweek.org), local inter faith support and development of website resources. Further information and an application form can be obtained from the IFN office. The application deadline is 23 June.

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Interfaith Scotland - Volunteer Youth Workshop Facilitators

Interfaith Scotland is looking for fifteen new volunteers to help it deliver a new inter faith initiative for young people in schools and youth groups across Scotland. The closing date for applications is 15 June. For more information, visit <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/news-events/>.

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3FF – Volunteer speakers and Interns

3FF is looking for confident and enthusiastic volunteers from different backgrounds to share their personal experience about faith or belief in schools around London and Birmingham. The workshops are aimed at developing young people's skills of empathy and promoting inter faith dialogue and understanding. For further information, visit <http://www.3ff.org.uk/volunteer/>.

3FF is also currently recruiting for new interns. Each internship lasts three or six months and interns work closely with 3FF's teams and participate in training sessions on different topics. The closing date for applications is 8 June. For further information, visit <http://www.3ff.org.uk/internships/>.

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LSE Faith Centre - Coordinator

The Faith Centre at the London School of Economics and Political Science is seeking to recruit a Coordinator. The Faith Centre opened in January 2014 to provide a home for faith

activities on campus, a centre for interfaith dialogue, and a reflective space for all staff and students. The Coordinator will play a key role in working with the Chaplain to oversee the running of the Centre and develop its programme of activities.

The post is full time for a fixed term of three years and the closing date for applications is 22 June. For more information, including how to apply, visit <http://www.lse.ac.uk/LSEJobs/ProfessionalServices/home.aspx> and search for this vacancy.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Near Neighbours programme

The Near Neighbours programme, a partnership between the Church Urban Fund and the Archbishops' Council, awards small grants of between £250 and £5,000 to projects that enable people of different faiths or none to work together for the benefit of the community. This is a rolling programme with no deadlines available in certain parts of England (maps showing eligible areas can be found at <http://www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/grants/eligible-areas>). Its second phase is due to run until December 2015.

Details on eligibility and how to apply can be found online at <http://www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/grants>.

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First Steps programme

The Faith Based Regeneration Network, in partnership with Locality, the Community Development Foundation and others is launching a new programme of support for local community action, funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government, called 'First Steps'. The programme will initially be working to support at least 115 local neighbourhoods or areas to work collaboratively in their communities to create a community action plan by March 2016. Grants of up to £2,500 are available to assist community groups in putting together their first plan. The Starter Pack and Guidance Notes can be downloaded from <http://cdf.org.uk/content/funding-programmes/first-steps>.

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Funding Central website

Funding Central - <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/default.aspx> - is a free website for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises that provides access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, together with tools and resources for supporting organisations to develop sustainable income strategies appropriate to their needs.

Funding Central is managed by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, in partnership with Idox Information Solutions Ltd, and funded by the Government's Office for Civil Society.

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Comic Relief Stronger Communities grants

Comic Relief's grants programme now has five themes, one of which is 'Stronger Communities'. Grants for the Stronger Communities theme are managed by Local Community Foundations and range in size from £1,000 to £10,000 per year. Priority is given to small, locally-based groups or organisations in areas of disadvantage that have a clear understanding of the needs of their community and are undertaking actions as a means of addressing these needs. Anyone wishing to apply for a Local Communities grant should contact their local community foundation. Further details can be found online at http://ukcommunityfoundations.org/programmes/comic_relief/.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Sewa Day - Sunday 4 October.

The Sanskrit word 'Sewa' means 'selfless service'. The aim of Sewa Day is to provide people a chance to give back to the local community through volunteering on a single day to make a difference. For more information and to get involved visit: www.sewaday.org

One World Week - Sunday 18 to Sunday 25 October.

Each year One World Week is an opportunity for people from diverse backgrounds to come together to learn about global justice, to spread that learning and to use it to take action for justice locally and globally. The theme for this year's One World Week is 'Hope in Action'. This aims to inspire a culture of hope to build a more equal and peaceful world. For more information, including guidance for inter faith and inter cultural events, visit <http://www.oneworldweek.org>.

National Inter Faith Week in England, Wales and Northern Ireland - Sunday 15 to Saturday 21 November.

National Inter Faith Week is a programme of the Inter Faith Network for the UK. Its aims are:

- Strengthening good inter faith relations at all levels
- Increasing awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, celebrating and building on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society
- Increasing understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs

Many different kinds of organisation will be holding events to mark the Week: faith community bodies; inter faith organisations; non-religious belief bodies; schools and Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACREs); universities and colleges; local authorities and Police and Fire and Rescue Services; hospitals; businesses; voluntary organisations; chaplaincies; and others.

Just a few possible ways of marking the Week are:

- Faith trails and open door days – opportunities to visit places of worship
- Highlighting an inter faith project or programme of your organisation
- Launching a new inter faith project or resource
- A social media inter faith awareness campaign
- Joint social action – like a community litter-pick or charity fundraising
- Dialogues, debates and talks
- Quizzes, poster and photography competitions
- Inter faith sports events
- Hands-on learning activities and exhibitions
- Exchange visits between members of different places of worship
- Whole school and classroom activities
- A young people's inter faith forum event
- Arts and cultural events
- Faith and food events

This year, why not consider a hands on social action project – from treeplanting to volunteering together in another way that helps the local community. Or hold a discussion about how living well together as people of different faiths and beliefs and how we contribute to our shared society.

For further ideas, resources, event information and to register your own event and put it on the map, go to www.interfaithweek.org

Mitzvah Day - Sunday 22 November.

Mitzvah Day is a Jewish led day of social action – around the world thousands of people take part in hands on projects to support existing charities and to build stronger communities. People are encouraged to volunteer for projects in their communities and anyone can take part regardless of their background. This year, Mitzvah Day takes place on the day following Inter Faith Week but the Week is delighted to include its events as part of the calendar.

Mitzvah Day 365 takes place year round and is a catalyst in building local communities by bringing together over 37,000 people each year, to take part in collective, hands-on social action projects which make a real difference to local issues. For further information, visit www.mitzvahday.org.uk.

Scottish Interfaith Week - Sunday 22 to Monday 30 November.

Scottish Inter Faith Week is led by Interfaith Scotland. The theme this year is 'Care for Creation'. Further information is online at <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/events/>.

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DIARY DATES

The **Woolf Institute** and **SOAS, University of London** are hosting a workshop on Friday 12 and Saturday 13 June on 'Minorities and Popular Culture in the Modern Middle East'. The workshop will explore the contribution to popular culture of religious and ethnic minorities from the Middle East and analyse how minorities are represented from the late nineteenth century to the present day. The workshop will be held at SOAS. For further information, visit <http://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/events>.

Christians Aware, in partnership with the **St Philip's Centre**, is hosting a conference on Saturday 13 June on 'Meeting of Opposites? Hindus and Christians'. The conference runs from 10am to 4.30pm and includes a visit to the ISKCON Temple. It will be held at the St Philip's Centre, 2A Stoughton Drive North, Leicester LE5 5UB. There is a charge to attend. For further information, contact Barbara Butler at barbarabutler@christiansaware.co.uk.

Faith in Sussex is holding a summer conference entitled 'The State, Politics & Faith' on Saturday 13 June. The conference will present Historical Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Secular perspectives and speakers will include the Revd Dr Marcus Braybrooke, Sanjay Jagatia, Iyad Daoud and Dr Robert Stovold. The conference runs from 1pm to 6pm at the Performance Arts Centre, Worth Abbey, Turners Hill, Crawley RH10 4SB. To book a place contact Iyad Daoud on 01293 883372 or at contact@crawleyinterfaith.net by 7 June. For further information, visit www.horsham-interfaith.org.uk or www.crawleyinterfaith.net.

Nottingham Inter Faith Council will have a stall/display at the Broxtowe Celebration on Saturday 13 June. For further information, contact office@interfaithnottingham.org.uk.

The **London Peace Pagoda** will be holding an event to mark its 30th anniversary on Saturday 13 June. The event will include chanting from Buddhist traditions, multi faith prayers, speakers and multi cultural celebrations. Further information from Ven G Nagase, c/o Park Manager's Officer, Battersea Park, Albert Bridge Rd, London SW11 4NJ or on 020 7228 9620.

Welwyn Hatfield Inter Faith Group is holding its next meeting on Monday 15 June at the Jim Macdonald Centre, Hatfield AL10 8HR. The event will run from 7.30pm to 9.30pm and will be on the theme of 'Vision'. For further information, contact Theresa McCrave at theresa.whifg@gmail.com.

Hull and East Riding Interfaith is holding its next event on Tuesday 16 June on the theme of 'Iconoclasm'. The event begins at 5pm in Committee Room 1 of the Guildhall in Hull with refreshments available from 4.30pm. Speakers will include the Revd James Hargreave and Dr Khaled Sultan. For further information, contact Kath Beal at kath.beal@heri.org.uk or on 01482 445728.

A programme of events is being organised by the **Human Rights Office** for the week of the 800th Anniversary of the Magna Carta from Monday 15 to Friday 19 June at the Medway Campus of the University of Greenwich, Chatham Maritime, Chatham, Kent ME4 4TB. The purpose of the conference is to link the heritage of the Magna Carta to human and civil rights today. The Magna Carta will be considered from various perspectives, including history, law, religion, humanism, discrimination and freedom of conscience and expression. For more information visit www.magnacarta800medway.org or contact Dr Ingrid van Dooren at mivandooren@hotmail.com.

Interfaith Scotland, Interfaith Glasgow, Scottish Refugee Council and **Women of Faith (Glasgow)** are jointly hosting a Women's Interfaith Fair on Wednesday 17 June from 11.30am – 2pm at St Francis Centre, 405 Cumberland Street, Glasgow, G5 0SE. The event

is to celebrate 'Refugee Festival Scotland 2015' and is open to women of all faiths and none and their children. There will be a variety of stalls and optional workshops ranging from dialogue to arts and crafts, singing, exploring religious objects and trying on clothes from different cultures and faiths. A lunch and a crèche are provided but booking is essential as spaces are limited. Email frances@interfaithscotland.org or call 0141 420 6982 to book.

The **University of Chester**, in collaboration with the **University of Liverpool**, is holding a conference on Monday 22 June on 'The Equality Act 2010: Five years on'. Papers will be presented on a range of themes including race discrimination, religion and belief discrimination, age discrimination, positive action and the Public Sector Equality Duty. There is a charge to attend. For further information, contact FRED@chester.ac.uk.

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland is hosting a conference from Tuesday 23 June to Thursday 25 June entitled 'Cacophony or Conversation? The Bible and Inter Faith Dialogue'. The conference aims to open up a conversation about the Bible in the context of religious pluralism and among the contributions will be an exploration of other religious traditions reading Christian scripture and Christians reading other scriptures. The keynote speaker will be Professor Hugh Poyer, Professor of Biblical Interpretation at the University of Sheffield. For further information and to book, visit www.ctbi.org.uk/677 or contact Natasha Richmond at natasha.richmond@ctbi.org.uk.

The **Historic Religious Buildings Alliance** is holding a workshop on 'Managing major building projects in places of worship' on Thursday 25 June. The day will deal with the management of all stages of a building project in a place of worship from start up to long term benefits, no matter what the size of the project. The workshop is being held at 9.30am at St Mary's Church, Bramall Lane, Sheffield S2 4QZ. There is a charge to attend. For further information and to book a place, contact Alison Brown on 01904 644001 or at HRBArsvp@purcelluk.com.

The **European Network of Buddhist-Christian Studies** is holding this year's conference at the Archabbey of St Ottilien near Munich in Germany from Thursday 25 to Monday 29 June. The theme will be Buddhist Christian Relations in Asia and will cover China, Korea, Japan, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand with 3 speakers for each country. For further information, contact Dr Elizabeth Harris on 0151 291 3037 or at harries@hope.ac.uk.

York Interfaith Group is holding a meeting on Wednesday 8 July on the theme of 'Marriage – a brief history of the institution'. The speaker will be Maurice Vassie and the meeting will include an open review and discussion by members of marriage laws, rites and ceremonies in different faiths. It will take place at 7.30pm in the Clementhorpe Room, Priory Street Community Centre, York YO1 6ET. For further information and to book, contact Mark Cosens on 07796 095152 or at loscosens@yahoo.co.uk.

Suffolk Inter Faith Resource is hosting a conference on Thursday 9 July on 'Human Rights, Religious Rights and British Values'. Further details will be available at www.sifre.org.uk in due course.

The **Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB)** and **Historic England** are holding a one-day Faith in Maintenance course on Friday 10 July at Manor Farm and St Mary's Church, Sullington, Essex. The course is for volunteers who look after historic places of worship; providing training to help them understand how their building works and how to fix problems as well as when to call on professional support. To book a place, contact Becky Payne on 020 7233 0900 or visit www.spab.org.uk.

The **Ammerdown Centre** is holding a Jewish-Christian Dialogue Weekend on 'Visions of the Other' from Friday 10 to Sunday 12 July at the Ammerdown Centre, Ammerdown Park,

Radstock, Somerset. The weekend is being led by Fiona Hulbert and Rabbi Mark Solomon and will explore the ways both religions have been portrayed by one another and how a connection can be created for a more open dialogue for fruitful co-existence in the future. For further information or to book a place, visit <http://ammerdown.org/Jewish-Christian-Dialogue-Weekend-2015> or email centre@ammerdown.org or call 01761433709.

The **Lincoln and Leeds branch of the Council of Christians and Jews** will be holding its next gathering on Tuesday 21 July when it will be visiting the Anglican and Catholic Cathedrals in Sheffield. The day will begin at the Anglican Cathedral in Church Street at 10.45am and will end at 4pm. For further information, contact topdore@gmail.com or telephone 0114 2362758.

Quaker Peace and Social Witness is organising an inter faith service of commemoration and commitment to a nuclear-free world on Thursday 6 August. The date marks the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The service will be held from 2.30pm to 3.30pm at Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ and will be followed by refreshments and exhibitions. To reserve a place, complete the form at <https://forms.quaker.org.uk/hiroshima> or contact Kristin Skarsholt at kristins@quaker.org.uk or on 020 7663 1121.

The **Council of Christians and Jews** is holding its CCJ Branch Conference from 2 to 3 September. The conference will take place at College Court in Leicester and aims to enable CCJ members to meet, network and share ideas. Non-CCJ members may attend and there is a fee to do so. For further information, contact Dr Joy Barrow at joy.barrow@ccj.org.uk.

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For more information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **15 July** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer: Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH
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IFN e-bulletin

July/August 2015

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 15 September with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and projects and future events.

If your organisation distributes a programme, newsletter or e-bulletin, please add ifnet@interfaith.org.uk to your mailing list.

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Increasingly, IFN is making use of social media, in particular Twitter (www.twitter.com/IFNetUK) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/IFNetUK).

Please take a moment to 'follow' and 'like' IFN and also Inter Faith Week (www.twitter.com/IFWeek and www.facebook.com/IFWeek) and also check in with the IFN website to see new items which are added on a regular basis.

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

Speech by Prime Minister on addressing extremism

On 20 July Prime Minister David Cameron made a speech setting out his plans to address extremism. This included: an announcement of a review to be led by Louise Casey to produce "a comprehensive review into boosting opportunity and integration to bring Britain together as one nation" and other plans including:

- Strengthen communications watchdog Ofcom role to take action against foreign TV channels broadcasting extremist messages
- 'Incentivise' schools to become more integrated
- Demand that internet service providers do more to remove extremist material and identify those responsible for it
- Overhaul the strategy to tackle extremism in prisons
- Consult on introducing lifetime anonymity for the victims of forced marriages
- Urge universities to do more to challenge the views of extremist speakers
- Set up a new engagement forum
- Launch a study looking at how extremism spreads

A copy of the full speech can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/extremism-pm-speech>.

Note: The May/June issue of the e-bulletin contained an update on recent legislation and guidance relating to anti-extremism.

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National youth consultation on extremism

Faith Matters and British Muslim Youth launched a National Youth Consultation on 7 July in London, the 10th anniversary of the London bombings. The Consultation will take evidence from youth groups, academics, youth work practitioners and young people, with a view to assessing the accessibility and impact of extremist material on-line on young people. The Consultation will begin work in September and will visit Birmingham, Bristol, Manchester, Leeds and London. For further information, visit <http://faith-matters.org/2015/07/16/faith-matters-and-british-muslim-youth-launch-national-youth-consultation-on-extremism/>.

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Far Right rally moved

A rally against the Shomrim, a Jewish neighbourhood watch group, in Golders Green in Barnet, North London timed for the Sabbath, was later moved, following high levels of concern, by Police order and took place instead in Whitehall.

http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2015/07/04/neo-nazi-london-protest_n_7726658.html

Significant in the protest against the plans were Golders Green Together and the Barnet Multi Faith Forum. Local inter faith bodies in a number of areas of the UK, together with faith communities, continue to play an important role in seeking to defuse community tensions and tackle bigotry and extreme voices.

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Cremation and coroner services

In the Summer Budget, presented on 8 July, Chancellor George Osborne announced that the Government will conduct a review into the size and provision of crematoria facilities to make sure that they are fit for purpose and sensitive to the needs of all users and faiths. This review will be carried out by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

The Chancellor was quoted in a press release from Hindu Forum of Britain of the same day as having said that over the past year, a number of British Hindus and Sikhs had raised with him their concerns about cremation facilities for their communities and told him that often the facilities were not large enough for everyone from the community to pay their respects and did not always pay enough regard to cultural sensitivities.

Separately, the Ministry of Justice will be carrying out a consultation on changes to rules for cremations and a review of the out-of-hours services provided by coroners in England and Wales to make sure they are sensitive to the needs of the whole community, including those whose beliefs require burials to take place quickly. The latter Review follows meetings Justice Secretary Michael Gove has had with faith groups on improving coroner services.

Further information is at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/summer-budget-2015> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/bereaved-to-benefit-from-action-on-cremation-and-coroner-services>.

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Review of Marriage Law

The Government has asked the Law Commission to conduct a review of the law governing how and where people can marry in England and Wales. The question underlying the review is whether the current law, which has evolved over a long period of time, provides a fair and coherent legal framework for enabling people to marry in a way which meets their needs and wishes while recognising the interests of society and the state in protecting the status of marriage.

The Law Commission has recently begun an initial piece of work to prepare the way for the potential future reform. This includes a preliminary study involving research of domestic and comparative law, and engagement with key stakeholders including faith communities. The aim will be to identify and provide an initial analysis of the issues that need to be addressed in order to develop proposals for the reform of marriage law. It expects to publish its findings by the end of 2015 when, with Government, it will consider next steps, including the possible involvement of the Commission.

The review will not include questions of who can be married; whether or not religious groups should be obliged to solemnize marriages of same sex couples which was recently decided by Parliament; or of the rights or responsibilities which marriage imparts, such as the financial entitlements of surviving spouses or consequences of divorce.

For further information see <http://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/marriage-law/> or contact propertyandtrust@lawcommission.gsi.gov.uk.

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Public consultation starts on the 2021 Census in England and Wales

The next Census in England and Wales will be in 2021. As part of the census research programme, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) has launched a public consultation asking users for their views on the topics that the 2021 Census questionnaire might cover. It is encouraging people to respond online to its current proposals. Anyone can take part in this public consultation which closes on Thursday 27 August and users' feedback will inform further research, development of questions, and consultations.

The consultation survey can be found at <https://consultations.ons.gov.uk/census/2021-census-topics-consultation/consultation>.

Further information is at <https://consultations.ons.gov.uk/census/2021-census-topics-consultation>.

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Religion and belief in school – a Westminster Faith Debates report

A Westminster Faith Debates report ‘A New Settlement: Religion and Belief in Schools’ by former Minister Charles Clarke and Professor Linda Woodhead was published in June. 18 policy recommendations are made by them, covering the act of collective worship, the content and formation of the legally required RE curriculum and the operation of faith schools. Among these there are proposals that: the requirement for schools to have an Act of Collective Worship should be abolished; consideration be given to using the phrase ‘Religious and Moral Education’ rather than ‘Religious Education’ in describing this part of the statutory curriculum; and the Religious Education syllabus in county and voluntary controlled schools should no longer be set by a system of locally agreed syllabuses, but be an agreed national syllabus which would have a similar legal status to the requirements of other subjects in the National Curriculum.

The full report can be downloaded at: <http://faithdebates.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/A-New-Settlement-for-Religion-and-Belief-in-schools.pdf>.

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

Local inter faith practitioners day

The Inter Faith Network for the UK has, since it was established in 1987, advocated strongly for the importance of local inter faith activity. As foreshadowed in the previous E-bulletin, IFN held a day event in London on 30 July for local inter faith practitioners across the UK to come together for learning and sharing. The day was one of two such days being held this year, the first of which was held in March in Sheffield. A copy of the report on the Sheffield day can be found at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/publications/all-publications/all-publications>.

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Community, Commemoration and the First World War

The Centre for Hidden Histories is interested in developing commemorative projects with national, faith and other emerging communities whose histories are rarely considered, and for whom the traditional Armistice Day celebrations may have strikingly different meanings.

Further information on the research project is available at <http://hiddenhistorieswwi.ac.uk/research-themes-2/>.

VJ Day commemorations will be happening on and around 15 August across the country. The Government is hosting a ceremony for veterans and their families in London. Further information is at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/get-involved-in-vj-day-70>

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It's summer: it must be inter faith cricket!

Inter faith cricket has become something of a phenomenon. 'Imams versus vicars' matches have taken place for some years in Leicester (organised by the St Philips Centre and the Community Football Academy), and Birmingham (Solihull Building Bridges Islamic Initiative). An annual tournament, 'The Bishop's Cup', has taken place between St Albans, Watford and Luton since 2011 when it was set up by the Inter Faith Adviser to the Diocese of St Albans.

There have also been inter faith cricket matches in cities such as Bradford and Leeds and in a number of other areas. For example the seventh annual inter faith cricket tournament recently took place at Boyne Hill Cricket Club in Maidenhead. This was organised by the Windsor and Maidenhead Community Forum and the Guru Nanak Sat Sang Sabha Sikh Temple, in Rutland Road. About 100 people of all ages and faiths took part and the money raised went to Slough-based charity Khalsa Aid to distribute to support projects in Nepal. <http://www.maidenhead-advertiser.co.uk/News/Areas/Maidenhead/In-pictures-Inter-faith-cricket-tournament-to-support-victims-of-Nepalese-earthquake-07072015.htm>

A number of local inter faith bodies such as Huddersfield Inter Faith Council, Swindon Interfaith Group and Woking People of Faith have held inter faith matches and some, such as Bolton Inter Faith Council, have been involved in holding tournaments for young people of different faiths:

http://www.theboltonnews.co.uk/news/11621476.In_pictures_Bolton_s_interfaith_cricket_tournament/ Girls as well as boys took part. Upcoming on 31 August in North Shields is an Interfaith Cricket Match and Family Fun Day - <http://www.newcastle.anglican.org/whatson-details.aspx?id=3804>

The Yorkshire Cricket Board runs a special Leeds Inter Faith Project, the aim of which is to use cricket as a vehicle for bringing together communities of different faiths and those from a disadvantaged background in order to break down perceived barriers and encourage friendship.

<http://www.yorkshirecricketboard.org.uk/index.php/en/development/inter-faith-project/115-leeds-inter-faith-project>

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Fathers and Sons football project

Fathers and Sons is a project which aims to bring together fathers and sons to play football together weekly during the weekends. The project is supported by Near Neighbours and one of its main objectives is to get people of many religious backgrounds involved. The games take place every Saturday at 1pm at Paddington Recreation Ground in West London. The minimum age limit for sons is 9 years and there is a small charge to play, which includes refreshments. Further information can be found online at <http://www.fitcial.com/events/upcoming> or by telephoning 07722 446318.

Information about some of the other NN Funder projects can be found at: <https://www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/grants/funded-projects>

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Rooted Visionaries project

St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace and West London Synagogue are launching a new Christian-Jewish social action programme for young adults called Rooted Visionaries. The programme is running from October to December, and seeks to energise the next generation of Christians and Jews for faith based social action. It aims to inspire active and conscious reflection on the role of faith in daily life and to give participants the skills and confidence to articulate their vision for change in their community and provide ongoing mentorship and support to make this vision a reality. The focal point will be a residential held at Ammerdown Retreat Centre in Somerset, and there will also be an introductory evening and a number of follow-up sessions.

St Ethelburga's is looking for 'passionate, dynamic young Christians and Jews' who want to translate their faith into action, and would benefit from sharing experiences and learning across traditions. Further information from: Angharad at angharad@stethelburgas.org or phone 07973 446846.

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RESOURCES AND TRAINING

Faith and Domestic Abuse: Recommendations for faith leaders

In July faith leaders gathered at the House of Lords for the launch of a Faith Leaders' Declaration on Domestic Abuse. The event was hosted by Lord McColl of Dulwich with FaithAction and Restored.

Faith Action launched a publication which is a collection of recommendations for faith leaders on how to deal with domestic abuse in their communities, aimed at starting an oft-neglected but vital conversation. The recommendations included in the publication come from a series of interviews held with faith leaders, faith-based organisations and domestic abuse organisations. A copy of the Recommendations can be downloaded from <http://www.faithaction.net/portal/faith-and-health/our-projects/domestic-abuse/>.

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Near Neighbours app

The Near Neighbours project has recently launched a new app. The app allows people to share project information and photos and also to offer feedback through a short questionnaire. The mobile app is available on iOS and Android and can be found in the App/Play Store. For further information, visit <https://www.cuf.org.uk/blog/near-neighbours-app>.

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Young people and inter faith engagement microsite

A youth inter faith engagement ‘microsite’ linked to the Inter Faith Network’s main website can be found at: <http://youth.interfaith.org.uk/>. On this site are materials arising from an IFN event, ‘Young Voices, Young Agents for Change’, which brought together over 80 participants of different ages from a range of organisations to explore aspects of inter faith activity developed by, with and for young people. The aim is to broaden and strengthen this area of activity, enabling even more young people to get involved.

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Northern Ireland Foundation

The Northern Ireland Foundation is an organisation that works to secure a durable peace in Northern Ireland. Its priorities include: increasing an awareness and understanding of the themes identified in the Stormont House Agreement — civic conversation, economic renewal, integrated education, mixed housing, women in public life, reconciliation and a shared future; and promoting conflict transformation through projects such as the Forum for Cities in Transition. The Foundation’s website, <http://nifoundation.net/>, contains useful information about other projects working for reconciliation in Northern Ireland, including the Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum.

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Faith communities and inter faith engagement - SCJC

Faith communities continue to develop ways to equip their clergy, staff and volunteers to engage with those of other faiths. For example, the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities (www.scojec.org) has recently launched a volunteer training course which aims to help people who wish to represent Judaism in the local community including through working with inter faith groups. The course focuses on particular areas of Jewish life such as festivals, food, the life cycle, as well as information about the Religious and Moral Education syllabus in the Curriculum for Excellence, presentation skills, session planning and preparation, and how to be mindful of each faith and practice at an inter faith event.

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Faith Guiding

The Faith Encounter Programme offers training to people of all faiths in Birmingham as Faith Guides, so that places of worship can be better equipped to offer high quality educational visits.

The Faith Guiding course is an opportunity to:

- Get to know and understand people of different faiths
- Gain valuable skills in presenting your place of worship to visitors
- Help visitors, mainly schoolchildren, to understand and respect people of all faiths
- Receive and accredited qualification from the Institute of Tourist Guiding

The next course will begin in September and will take place on Wednesday evenings at the Faithful Neighbourhoods Centre in Birmingham. There is a registration fee to take part.

Further information is available at

http://www.faithencounter.org.uk/Train/train_guiding.html and any queries can be directed to Ruth Tetlow on 0121 449 4892 or at ruthtetlow@btinternet.com.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby – Youth Work Manager

The Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby is seeking to employ a Youth Work Manager with strategic skills in a full time fixed term contact at 37.5 hours a week.

The successful candidate will support the Director of the Multi-Faith Centre with the management of other youth workers in the team as a key member of a small but dynamic team working within and across diverse faith and cultural boundaries. The closing date for applications is 12 noon on 14 August.

For an application form and further information, contact the Multi-Faith Centre at mfc@derby.ac.uk or telephone 01332 591285.

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Inter Faith Network for the UK – Honorary Treasurer

The Inter Faith Network for the UK is seeking an Honorary Treasurer to take up role from mid October. This is a voluntary role which is supported by an in-office part-time Bookkeeper and external accounting advice where necessary. The role calls for strong finance and charity experience, including an accountancy background; the ability to operate well in a challenging financial environment; and a commitment to the development of good inter faith relations in the UK.

The role of Honorary Treasurer is an elected one and the name of the proposed person will be put forward at the Inter Faith Network for the UK's AGM in October.

Anyone interested in applying should contact IFN's Director, Harriet Crabtree, at ifnet@interfaith.org.uk or on 020 7 730 0410 by 11 August. Further details on the application process will be provided to them.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS, AND NOMINATIONS

Faith Through a Lens photography competition

Faith Through a Lens is an annual photography competition, linked to Inter Faith Week, held by Congregational and General Insurance. It aims to profile the positive effects of faith within a diverse range of communities.

This year's competition is now open and will close on 12 October. Entry is only open to amateur photographers and will be judged based on emotional connection, creativity and originality. The judges will be looking for the photograph that best encapsulates faith and the community and the organisers suggest considering the following:

- A moment of faith - Try capturing one of those special moments that really demonstrates that faith exists, whether it is a planned event or a one off snapshot that catches the eye and imagination.
- Community spirit against the odds - A photograph which conveys how your community has united despite specific challenges could make a great shot.
- A community hero - Is there a certain individual in your area who has represented faith in the community? Why not capture a shot of them doing what they do best.

For further information, visit www.faiththroughalens.co.uk.

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Faith and Spirituality photography competition in Derbyshire

The Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby is holding a photography competition entitled 'Faith and Spirituality'. The competition is an opportunity to capture a snapshot of faith and spirituality in Derbyshire that conveys 'Something which seems to point beyond itself'. Winning and highly recommended photographs will be displayed at the Multi-Faith Centre in Derby. Some may also appear in *The Derby Telegraph* as part of coverage for Inter Faith Week 2015.

There are prizes in two categories: 17 and under and 18 and over. Entries must be submitted between 1 September and 16 October.

For further information, including an entry form, contact mfc@derby.ac.uk.

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Honours List nominations

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) is keen to ensure that individuals from the full breadth of society who are making a significant contribution to public life are properly recognised through the Honours system. It is particularly keen to recognise individuals who have contributed to building integrated communities and notes

that nominees can come from all levels; being in a junior role is not a barrier to a nomination.

DCLG is holding a series of workshops during August at its offices in London giving a brief overview of the nominations process and guidance about how to draft a citation. All nominations must be made on an official citation form before 4 September and nominees should not be informed that they have been nominated. Citation forms, as well as further information about workshops, can be obtained from integration@communities.gsi.gov.uk.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Near Neighbours programme

The Near Neighbours programme, a partnership between the Church Urban Fund and the Archbishops' Council, awards small grants of between £250 and £5,000 to projects that enable people of different faiths or none to work together for the benefit of the community. This is a rolling programme with no deadlines available in certain parts of England (maps showing eligible areas can be found at <http://www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/grants/eligible-areas>). Its second phase is due to run until December 2015.

Details on eligibility and how to apply can be found online at <http://www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/grants>.

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First Steps programme

The Faith Based Regeneration Network, in partnership with Locality, the Community Development Foundation and others has launched a new programme of support for local community action, funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government, called 'First Steps'. The programme will initially be working to support at least 115 local neighbourhoods or areas to work collaboratively in their communities to create a community action plan by March 2016. Grants of up to £2,500 are available to assist community groups in putting together their first plan. The Starter Pack and Guidance Notes can be downloaded from <http://cdf.org.uk/content/funding-programmes/first-steps>.

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Funding Central website

Funding Central - <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/default.aspx> - is a free website for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises that provides access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, together with tools and resources for supporting organisations to develop sustainable income strategies appropriate to their needs.

Funding Central is managed by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, in partnership with Idox Information Solutions Ltd, and funded by the Government's Office for Civil Society.

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Comic Relief Stronger Communities grants

Comic Relief's grants programme now has five themes, one of which is 'Stronger Communities'. Grants for the Stronger Communities theme are managed by Local Community Foundations and range in size from £1,000 to £10,000 per year. Priority is given to small, locally-based groups or organisations in areas of disadvantage that have a clear understanding of the needs of their community and are undertaking actions as a means of addressing these needs. Anyone wishing to apply for a Local Communities grant should contact their local community foundation. Further details can be found online at http://ukcommunityfoundations.org/programmes/comic_relief/.

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Interfaith Youth Trust

The Interfaith Youth Trust will again be making available a special programme of grants for Inter Faith Week this year. Grants of up to £500 are awarded for proposals for inter faith activities by children and young people from Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and other faiths and those of no formal faith. The age range for young people is 11-25 years. Priority will be given to projects which:

- Actively involve young people in planning, running, and evaluation of the project.
- Promote positive action, ie young people from different backgrounds coming together to address shared problems, eg improving green spaces.
- Are run by non-statutory organisations, such as youth clubs, scout/guide groups, local voluntary and community organisations.

Further information at: <http://www.ifyouthtrust.org.uk>

SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Sewa Day - Sunday 4 October

The Sanskrit word 'Sewa' means 'selfless service'. The aim of Sewa Day is to provide people with a chance to give back to the local community through volunteering on a single day to make a difference. For more information and to get involved visit: www.sewaday.org

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One World Week - Sunday 18 to Sunday 25 October

One World Week is an opportunity for people from diverse backgrounds to come together to learn about global justice, to spread that learning and to use it to take action for justice locally and globally. The theme for this year's One World Week is 'Hope in Action'. For more information, including guidance for inter faith and inter cultural events, visit <http://www.oneworldweek.org>.

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National Inter Faith Week in England, Wales and Northern Ireland - Sunday 15 to Saturday 21 November.

National Inter Faith Week is a programme of the Inter Faith Network for the UK. Its aims are:

- Strengthening good inter faith relations at all levels
- Increasing awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, celebrating and building on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society
- Increasing understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs

Many different kinds of organisation will be holding events to mark the Week: faith community bodies; inter faith organisations; non-religious belief bodies; schools and Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACREs); universities and colleges; local authorities and Police and Fire and Rescue Services; hospitals; businesses; voluntary organisations; chaplaincies; and others.

Just a few possible ways of marking the Week are:

- Faith trails and open door days – opportunities to visit places of worship

- Highlighting an inter faith project or programme of your organisation
- Launching a new inter faith project or resource
- A social media inter faith awareness campaign
- Joint social action – like a community litter-pick or charity fundraising
- Dialogues, debates and talks
- Quizzes, poster and photography competitions
- Inter faith sports events
- Hands-on learning activities and exhibitions
- Exchange visits between members of different places of worship
- Whole school and classroom activities
- A young people's inter faith forum event
- Arts and cultural events
- Faith and food events

This year, why not consider a hands-on social action project – from tree planting to volunteering together in another way that helps the local community. Or hold a discussion about how living well together as people of different faiths and beliefs and how we contribute to our shared society.

The listing form for events for 2015 goes live on 31 July. If you are holding an event, please take a few minutes to register it to that the IFN office can add it to the map so that it can inspire others to take part and to hold events too.

For further ideas, resources, event information and to register your own event and put it on the map, go to www.interfaithweek.org

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Mitzvah Day - Sunday 22 November

Mitzvah Day is a Jewish led day of social action – around the world thousands of people take part in hands on projects to support existing charities and to build stronger communities. People are encouraged to volunteer for projects in their communities and anyone can take part regardless of their background. This year, Mitzvah Day takes place on the day following Inter Faith Week but the Week is delighted to include its events as part of the calendar.

Mitzvah Day 365 takes place year round and is a catalyst in building local communities by bringing together over 37,000 people each year, to take part in collective, hands-on social action projects which make a real difference to local issues. For further information, visit www.mitzvahday.org.uk.

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Scottish Interfaith Week - Sunday 22 to Monday 30 November

Scottish Inter Faith Week is led by Interfaith Scotland. The theme this year is 'Care for Creation'. Further information is online at <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/events/>.

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DIARY DATES

Spectrum of Spirituality is holding an inter faith event on Thursday 30 July as part of the Liverpool Pride festival. The event is entitled 'Love in the Dock: a Compendium of Contemplation and Celebration'. The evening is cabaret-style – guests will sit at café tables and watch a performance, share experience of traditions from different faiths, listen to live music performed by Liverpool LGBT Choir, and share a free two course meal together. The event takes place at 7pm at Ullet Road Unitarian Church Hall, Ullet Road, Liverpool. For further information and tickets, visit <http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/love-in-the-dock-liverpool-pride-2015-tickets-17418128090?aff=es2>.

Bolton Interfaith Council is leading on the organisation of 'Spirit of Bolton' which takes place on Saturday 1 August in Victoria Square in Bolton. This is the 8th event of this kind and is about celebrating the many partnership workings and diversity of Bolton. There will be displays from community groups, traditional cultural activities and music and dance shows. It runs from 10.45am until 3.30pm. For further information, contact Chan Parmar on 01204 546110 or at chan@boltoninterfaithcouncil.org.uk

The **Multifaith Chapel and Library at the Burngreave Ashram** will be holding its next Meditation/Prayer Lunch and Open Forum on Monday 3 August. The event takes place from 12 noon until 2.30pm at the Ashram at 86 Spital Hill, Sheffield S4 7LG. For further information, contact Nirmal Fernando on 07932 017929 or at curlsu@hotmail.com.

Quaker Peace and Social Witness is organising an inter faith service of commemoration and commitment to a nuclear-free world on Thursday 6 August. The date marks the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The service will be held from 2.30pm to 3.30pm at Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ and will be followed by refreshments and exhibitions. To reserve a place, complete the form at <https://forms.quaker.org.uk/hiroshima> or contact Kristin Skarsholt at kristins@quaker.org.uk or on 020 7663 1121.

Interfaith Scotland will be holding a Members Dialogue Event on Sunday 9 August. This will be held from 1.30pm to 6pm at the Thistle Hotel in Inverness and is open to member bodies of Interfaith Scotland. For further information contact Maureen@interfaithscotland.org.

The **London Peace Pagoda** is organising an Interfaith Peace Walk on Sunday 9 August. The walk will take place at 7.30pm from the Sacred Heart Chapel to the London Peace Pagoda in Battersea Park, London. The Walk will conclude with a Floating Lantern

Ceremony to commemorate the 70th anniversary for victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and all wars. All are welcome to join and offer flowers and incense. For further information, contact Nipponzan Myohoji on 020 7228 9620.

Hounslow Friends of Faith Women's Group meets monthly for discussion and friendship. Its next event on Sunday 16 August will be a picnic at 1.30pm at Chiswick House Gardens, Burlington Lane, London W4 2RP. For further information, visit <http://www.hounslowfriendsofffaith.org/events/event/womens-group-picnic/> or contact Divya on 07931 944790.

Interfaith Wolverhampton is hosting a 'Bring and share' lunch on Tuesday 18 August. This will be held from 12.45pm until 2pm at 24 School Street, Wolverhampton WV1 4LF. For further information, contact admin@ifwton.org.uk or telephone 01902 427601.

Norwich Interfaith Link will be holding its annual guided walk on Tuesday 18 August. It will begin at 6pm opposite the Playhouse Theatre on St. Gregory's Street and will end with refreshments at Martineau Hall on Colegate. For further information, visit www.norwichinterfaith.co.uk or contact Chris Wood on 01603 667314.

Cheltenham Interfaith will be meeting on Tuesday 18 August at the Presbytery, Chandos Street, Winchcombe GL54 5HX. Members will be meeting to enjoy the Diversity Board Game that explores what people know about the world's religions. There will be a 'bring and share' supper from 6.30pm and games from 7.30pm. For further information, contact info@cheltenhaminterfaith.org.uk or visit http://www.cheltenhaminterfaith.org.uk/events_and_news.html.

Bolton Interfaith Council is holding the next meeting of its Networking Forum on Tuesday 18 August. The Networking Forum is a platform for anyone interested in inter faith engagement issues to come together and share any work or events happening in the local community which could be shared and supported by others. The meeting will be held in the third floor conference room at The Hub, Bold Street, Bolton BL3 4XP. The guest speaker will be Jim Battle, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for Greater Manchester. For further information, contact chan@boltoninterfaithcouncil.org.uk.

Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship will be holding its next meeting on Monday 24 August. The theme for the evening will be 'Leeds – City of Sanctuary' and the speaker will be Matthew Neil of the Meet and Travel Together Asylum Support Project. The meeting begins at 7.30pm at Friends' Meeting House, Woodhouse Lane, Leeds LS2 9DX. For further information, contact chair@concord-leeds.org.uk.

York Interfaith Group will be holding its next event on Wednesday 2 September at 7.30pm. This will be a visit to the Rock Church on Priory Street. For further information, contact yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com.

The **Council of Christians and Jews** is holding its CCJ Branch Conference from Wednesday 2 to Thursday 3 September. The conference will take place at College Court in

Leicester and aims to enable CCJ members to meet, network and share ideas. Non-CCJ members may attend and there is a fee to do so. For further information, contact Dr Joy Barrow at joy.barrow@ccj.org.uk.

South East England Faiths Forum, in conjunction with the **National Association of SACREs** and the **University of Winchester**, is holding a day conference on Thursday 3 September on 'The Role of Faith in British Schools/Education'. The event will be held from 10am to 4pm at the Stripe Building, University of Winchester SO22 4NR. The keynote speaker will be Alan Brine, former RE lead at OFSTED and the day will end with the SEEFF AGM at 4pm. There is a charge to attend, which includes a vegetarian lunch. For further information, contact elizabeth.jenkerson@btopenworld.com or visit <http://se-faithforum.net/>.

Cheltenham Interfaith will be meeting on Thursday 3 September at 7.30pm at Friends Meeting House, Warwick Place, (off Portland Street), Cheltenham GL52 2NP. During the evening a film will be shown entitled 'To Light a Candle'. This is a documentary film about the courage of Baha'is in Iran in a time of persecution. For further information, contact info@cheltenhaminterfaith.org.uk or visit http://www.cheltenhaminterfaith.org.uk/events_and_news.html.

Interfaith MK (Milton Keynes) is holding its AGM on Thursday 3 September. This will be held at 7.30pm at Christ the Cornerstone, 300 Saxon Gate, Milton Keynes MK9 2ES. For further information, contact interfaithmk@gmail.com.

Faiths Together in Lambeth is holding the annual Lambeth Inter Faith Walk on Saturday 5 September. The Walk will visit six places of worship and will begin at 10.30am at the Shree Swaminarayan Hindu Temple, 72 Colmer Road, SW16 5JZ (near Norbury train station), finishing at St Leonard's Church on Streatham High Road at 4pm. For further information, contact 07889 221 847 or ftil@hotmail.co.uk.

The **Forum for Research into Equality and Diversity** is holding a seminar on Wednesday 9 September exploring the Equality and Human Rights Commission's policy, research and legal work on religion or belief. The seminar will be held at the University of Chester and will be led by Dr Dave Perfect. For further details and to register, visit <http://www.chester.ac.uk/fred/events> or email chantal.davies@chester.ac.uk.

Westminster Cathedral Interfaith Group will be meeting on Tuesday 15 September. The meeting will run from 4pm to 5pm in the Hinsley Room, Morpeth Terrace, close to Westminster Cathedral. The speaker will be Karanodakasayi Visnu Dasa Adhikari (Man Mohan Gupta) who will be talking on Vedic culture and civilisation. For further information contact John Woodhouse at woodhousesopten@btinternet.com or text him on 07908 888 586.

Interfaith Wolverhampton will be holding its AGM on Tuesday 15 September. The evening will begin at 6pm and will include a talk about Thomas Merton by Stephen Dunhill, co-editor of the Merton Journal. Thomas Merton was a Christian mystic and a

keen proponent of inter faith understanding - this year is the 100th anniversary of his birth. For further information, including venue details, contact admin@ifwton.org.uk or telephone 01902 427601.

Building Bridges in Burnley next Face to Face – Share Faith Share Food event will be held on Tuesday 15 September at the Burnley and Pendle Faith Centre. These events are open to women of all ages from all faith backgrounds and none. They offer an opportunity to learn about each other, build friendships and share food, to which everyone contributes. For further information, contact Farah Naheem at farahnaem@hotmail.com or Bea Foster at bea_foster@hotmail.com.

Interfaith Scotland is holding a Women's Interfaith Dialogue event on Wednesday 16 September at the Punjabi Junction Sikh Sanjog Café in Edinburgh. The event takes place from 6.30pm to 8.30pm. For further information, contact frances@interfaithscotland.org.

Nottingham Inter Faith Council is holding its AGM on Wednesday 16 September at the Nottingham Mechanics Institute. It will take place at 7pm and will include a guest speaker. For further information, contact office@interfaithnottingham.org.uk.

The **Multi Faith Centre at the University of Derby** is continuing its series of Conversations Across Faiths. The next session will be held on Thursday 17 September and will be on the Swedenborg Faith. The discussions take place at the Centre at 7pm. For further details, contact Pam on 01332 841486.

Medway Inter Faith Action will be holding the annual Medway Inter Faith Pilgrimage on Sunday 20 September. The Pilgrimage will begin at 8.45am outside the Quaker Meeting House, Northgate, Rochester ME1 1LS and will include visits to Rochester Cathedral, Gillingham Mosque and the Hindu Sabha Mandir. There will be an evening event with food and entertainment from 6pm at the Sunlight Centre on Richmond Road in Gillingham. For further information, contact Hugh Hawkins on 01634 843307 or at julihugh@tiscali.co.uk.

Grassroots and **Luton Council of Faiths** are holding a Peace Walk on Saturday 26 September in Lewsey, Luton. The Walk will begin at Lewsey Community Centre, Landrace Road, LU4 0SW at 2.30pm. Further information will be available nearer the time.

Hull and East Riding Interfaith will be holding its AGM on Tuesday 29 September. This will take place at 5pm in Committee Room 1, The Guildhall, Hull HU1 2AA. It will be followed at 5.30pm by an 'Open Space' for anyone to raise relevant issues. For further information contact Jackie on 01482 445728 or Kath at Kath.Beal@heri.org.uk.

London Boroughs Faiths Network is holding an event on Thursday 8 October on 'Safety & Security: Places & People'. The event will offer expert advice on keeping places of worship and communities safe and secure and will be held at New Scotland Yard in London with the Metropolitan Police, Tell Mama, the Community Security Trust and Ecclesiastical

Insurance. Booking is essential. For further information, contact Catriona Robertson at convener@lbfm.org or on 07903 682 142.

INFORM is holding a seminar on Saturday 17 October entitled 'Children, Minority Religions and the Law'. It will take place from 9.30am to 4.30pm at Clement House at the London School of Economics and will concentrate on legal issues surrounding children in minority religious communities, from a variety of perspectives. There is a charge to attend. A full copy of the programme and how to book can be found at <http://www.inform.ac/node/1576>.

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For more information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org.uk

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **15 September** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer: Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH
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IFN e-bulletin

October/November 2015

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by 24 November with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and projects and future events. If your organisation distributes a programme, newsletter or e-bulletin, please add ifnet@interfaith.org.uk to your mailing list.

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Increasingly, IFN is making use of social media, in particular Twitter (www.twitter.com/IFNetUK) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/IFNetUK).

Please take a moment to 'follow' and 'like' IFN and also Inter Faith Week (www.twitter.com/IFWeek and www.facebook.com/IFWeek) and also check in with the IFN website to see new items, which are added on a regular basis.

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

Faith and inter faith response to Refugee crisis

Faith and inter faith groups are often in the forefront of reaching out to respond to the needs of asylum seekers and refugees with both practical and spiritual support.

In recent months, it is the Syrian refugee crisis which has been the main focus of much faith community response although there has also been stepped up engagement by a number with the issues more widely. See, for example, the many stories linked to at: <https://ctbi.org.uk/how-the-churches-are-responding-to-the-refugee-crisis/> and releases such as that from the Muslim Council of Britain <http://www.mcb.org.uk/british-muslims-join-calls-for-compassionate-response-to-refugee-crisis/>. A number of faith responses have also been made in the context of their links across Europe, for example <https://thebuddhistcentre.com/news/european-buddhist-union-calls-compassionate-refugees>.

There has also been widespread response at the local level from faith groups and also from inter faith bodies as the examples of Luton and Preston demonstrate: <http://www.itv.com/news/anglia/update/2015-10-14/community-leaders-come-together-to-respond-to-refugee-crisis/> and <http://www.prestonfaithforum.org.uk/>

The City of Sanctuary movement has been playing an active role with faith groups in Leeds, Newcastle and a number of other 'cities of sanctuary' responding.

Inter faith prayer vigils have taken place in a number of areas. One took place outside Westminster Cathedral organised by CitizensUK and in Wisbech, people of different faiths came together "in solidarity with the Syrian refugees in their desperate and dangerous journey into Europe".

Faith groups in a number of areas have offered practical assistance. For example in Southend, church and other faith leaders wrote to the local paper saying that they and community groups would host people in their own homes and fund school places and offer help and advice to Syrian refugees who may be resettled in Southend <http://www.echo-news.co.uk/news/>. At Surrey University, Jewish, Muslim and Christian students worked together to raise funds towards providing tents in Calais and support for refugees on the Greek Island of Kos. Volunteers from Woking Mosque will deliver the Interfaith Aid. <http://www.jewishnews.co.uk/surrey-jsocs-pop-up-succah-inspires-interfaith-action-for-refugees/>

The topic was reflected at IFN's National Meeting, which took place on 14 October, both in presentations in plenary by Mustafa Field of Faiths Forum for London and MINAB and Nadine Daniel of Hope+ in Liverpool, and also in a special focus discussion group on 'welcoming the stranger' with contributions from the Revd Fleur Houston of the Churches Refugee Network and David Walsh of the Board of Deputies of British Jews. Interfaith Scotland's AGM on 4 November will be accompanied by a public talk on Scotland's Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis.

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Report on First Minister's interfaith summit in Scotland

The First Minister of Scotland, the Rt Hon Nicola Sturgeon MSP, called an Interfaith Summit in September to find out more about the work being done by inter faith organisations and faith communities in Scotland. She met with a cross-section of religious leaders from diverse faith traditions along with the Director of Interfaith Scotland and project managers of Interfaith Glasgow and the Edinburgh Inter-faith Association. She said, "Inter faith work and the contribution of faith groups is essential in transforming lives and building a strong, fairer and equal Scotland. By working together with all communities I want to see a safer, stronger and more inclusive society which we are all able to fully contribute to and benefit from".

Further information can be found at <https://firstminister.gov.scot/first-minister-welcomes-faith-groups/>.

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Counter Extremism Strategy

On 19 October, Home Office Secretary Theresa May announced a counter-extremism strategy described as "aiming to tackle the full spectrum of harms caused by extremism: violent and non-violent, Islamist and neo-Nazi – hate and fear in all their forms". The release speaks of partnership at the heart of the strategy between government and individuals, groups and communities, who want to see extremism defeated - "a partnership that will not only seek to counter the ideology spread by extremists, but will stand up for the shared values that unite us as a country: values that include democracy, free speech, mutual respect, and opportunity for all."

The strategy sets out four areas in which action will be taken:

- confronting the extremist ideology head-on
- actively supporting those who want to fight extremism, but are too often disempowered or drowned out of the debate
- disrupting extremists, aggressively pursuing the key radicalisers who do so much damage

- building stronger and more cohesive communities, tackling the segregation and feelings of alienation that can help provide fertile ground for extremist messages to take root

The Strategy can be downloaded from:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/470088/51859_Cm9148_Accessible.pdf

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Community Engagement Forum

A Community Engagement Forum, foreshadowed in the Prime Minister's announcements of 20 July, met at Downing Street on 13 October to discuss countering extremism. This Forum is described at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-i-want-to-build-a-national-coalition-to-challenge-and-speak-out-against-extremism>.

In a holding Written Answer in the House of Commons, Home Office Security Minister John Hays said that "Attendance at forum meetings would rotate to allow ministers to hear directly from a wide range of individuals and groups taking a leading role in challenging extremism in our communities."

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Separate recording of anti-Muslim hate crimes

According to the Home Office report, *Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2014/15*, in 2014/15, there were 52,528 hate crimes recorded by the police, an increase of 18 per cent compared with the 44,471 hate crimes recorded in 2013/14, of which: 42,930 (82%) were race hate crimes; 5,597 (11%) were sexual orientation hate crimes; 3,254 (6%) were religion hate crimes; 2,508 (5%) were disability hate crimes; and 605 (1%) were transgender hate crimes. There was an overall increase of 18% on the previous year.

Prime Minister David Cameron announced at the first meeting of the Community Engagement Forum that for the first time, police forces in England and Wales will be asked to record anti-Muslim hate crimes as a specific category in the recorded crime statistics, bringing them in line with reporting of anti-Semitic attacks. Creating a separate category is intended to enable police, prosecutors, local authorities and the communities they serve to have a better understanding of the prevalence of anti-Muslim hate crime and allocate resources accordingly and to provide the first accurate picture of the extent of anti-Muslim hate crime in England and Wales.

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Funding for security of faith establishments

The Prime Minister announced on 13 October that new funding will be made available for the security of all faith establishments.

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Review of Coroner Services

When the coroner reforms in the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 (“the 2009 Act”) came into effect in July 2013, the Government made a commitment to review their impact after they had been in place for 18 months. The aims of the 2009 Act were described by Government as being to put the needs of bereaved people at the heart of the coroner service; for coroner services to be locally delivered within a framework of national standards; and to enable a more efficient system of investigations and inquests.

This review seeks to find out whether the coroner reforms are operating as planned and whether there have been any unintended consequences. The Ministry of Justice is interested in hearing about people’s experiences of aspects of coroner services that were reformed under the 2009 Act.

This review will run from 15 October 2015 to 10 December 2015. The Government’s response will be published in early 2016.

The consultation survey can be accessed at: <https://consult.justice.gov.uk/digital-communications/post-implementation-review-of-coroner-reforms>

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EHRC report on Review of equality and human rights law relating to religion or belief

Earlier this year the EHRC published the results of its consultation on how religion or belief affected experiences at work or when using services. It commissioned Oxford Brookes University to build on the findings of its consultation by reviewing the legal framework in Great Britain, the way courts have developed case law, and how experts have analysed this. The review looks at such key issues as how religion and belief are defined in the law, the legal protection for religion or belief, the balancing of competing rights, and the idea of a duty of reasonable accommodation, which is part of the law in Canada and America. The review takes a neutral approach and considers different views on these issues.

The review finds that the legislation and case law protects people with a religion or a belief and those who lack a religion or belief, but that several areas need more thought. These include the definition of belief and the position of the religious employer and religious service provider, and areas where the law is unclear such as the relationship between individual and group rights.

Further information can be found at <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/publication/research-report-97-review-equality-and-human-rights-law-relating-religion-or-belief>.

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EHRC guide to increasing diversity in television broadcasting

The EHRC has produced a guide intended to increase diversity in television broadcasting. Figures show that some groups may be experiencing barriers to getting into the sector and progressing when they get there. The television industry has long been aware of the need to increase diversity, both on- and off-screen so that the industry can attract the best talent, but also because of the unique role television broadcasting has in shaping and reflecting society's values. The guide is aimed at decision-makers within the industry, at independent production companies as well as broadcasters, talent suppliers and others – from production managers to legal and business affairs executives, directors and commissioning editors.

The guide can be downloaded from <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/publication/thinking-outside-box-supporting-television-broadcasting-industry-5>.

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

Inter Faith Week

A wide array of events are being held this year: open door days at places of worship in many areas; social action projects including collections for local food banks; reflection events such as a 'Space for Peace' at the Vedic Temple in Southampton with dancers, singers and musicians from various faiths; youth-led events such as 3FF Parliamentors led 'Interfaith Summit; tree plantings in a number of cities - this year also a multi faith spring bulb planting at Shenley Park in Hertfordshire; talks on topics from 'welcoming the stranger' to religious freedom to faith in the work place, as well as exhibitions, competitions, quizzes and special programmes of events within particular institutions such as in the Royal Hospital in Truro where the Cornwall Faith Forum will be running a special programme of events.

Details of events registered so far can be found on the Inter Faith Week website: www.interfaithweek.org but, to whet your appetite: check out what those at the Royal Hospital in Truro may be experiencing: <http://dorkemmyrn.org.uk/interfaith-week-15-21comes-to-the-royal-cornwall-hospital/>

If you are planning an event or activity to mark Inter Faith Week, do take a few minutes to register it so that we can give it good profile on the Inter Faith Week website and let the public and the media know about it.

The event submission form can be found on the IFW website. There is also a downloadable pdf form for those who prefer that and if you would like help, just ring and one of our Inter Faith Week volunteers will be happy to help!

Facebook posts about the Week are proving popular. Check out and 'like' our Facebook Page at: www.facebook.com/IFWeek so do take a look and 'Like' the page.

If you are using Facebook or Twitter in ways linked to your Inter Faith Week events or activities, please do connect with us. The FB link is above and we are on Twitter [@IFWeek](#) and using the hashtag #IFWeek.

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Inter Faith Network National Meeting and AGM

IFN held its National Meeting and AGM on 14 October at the Bond Co in Birmingham.

The National Meeting was on the theme of 'Living Well Together'. 'Living well together' is an ongoing project: a journey, and learning from one another along the way is part of this. The meeting was a chance to explore many different dimensions of this and how inter faith cooperation can contribute to this yet further.

During the plenary session, Mustafa Field of the Faiths Forum for London spoke on 'Interconnecting in inter faith contexts for the common good'; Dr Karen Jochelson of the Equality and Human Rights Commission spoke on 'Equality and diversity'; Nadine Daniel of Hope+ and Merseyside Council of Faiths spoke on 'Reaching out at times of need'; Dr Maureen Sier of Interfaith Scotland spoke on 'Appreciating diversity; negotiating difference'; and Reflections on themes of the day were offered by Krishan Kant Attri of Newcastle Council of Faiths and Hindu Chaplain to the Armed Forces; Julie Jones of the Inter-faith Council for Wales and Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Wales; Dr Norman Richardson of the Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum; and Jatinder Singh Birdi of Warwick District Faiths Forum.

Discussion groups were held on: 'Living well together: cooperating for community benefit', with a presentation by Mgr Daniel McHugh and colleagues (Khalid Mohammed and Mauricio Silva) from the Communitas wellbeing project at BIRINUS Birmingham; 'Living well together as neighbours', with a presentation from the Revd Mark Poulson of the Church of England and Near Neighbours; 'Living well together: faith communities and responding well to refugees and asylum seekers as part of our shared life', with presentations from the Revd Fleur Houston of the Churches Refugee Network and David Walsh of the Board of Deputies of British Jews; 'Living well together: snapshot from campus', with a presentation from Sukhi Kainth of the National Union of Students; 'Living well together within the workplace', with a presentation from Dr David Perfect of the Equality and Human Rights Commission and reflections from Dr Shuja Shafi of the Muslim Council of Britain; and 'Equipping us to live together well: religious literacy and chaplaincy', with presentations from Prudence Jones of the East of England Faiths Agency and the Revd Prebendary Michael Metcalf of the National Association of SACRES and Stafford and District Friends of Faith.

A report on the Meeting will be published in due course.

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Report on day event for local inter faith practitioners

As noted in the July/August issue of the e-bulletin, on 30 July IFN held a day event for local inter faith practitioners in London. This was the second of two such events held this year. The first was held in Sheffield in March.

The report of the July event was published in September and includes a summary of the plenary presentations and discussions and the workshop discussions as well as some images from the day. A copy of the PowerPoint presentations is available, together with the report, on the IFN website (www.interfaith.org.uk).

Many topics were discussed, including:

- Local inter faith relations and cooperation
- The contribution of local inter faith organisations to our shared society
- Developing programmes with impact
- Communicating the message well
- Dialogue, friendship and trust
- Inter faith cooperation, social action and social justice
- Women and local inter faith activity
- Active involvement of young people
- Responding together at times of tension
- Using Inter Faith Week to raise profile and widen engagement
- The value of different approaches - from grassroots dialogue and community projects to consultation and partnership with public agencies and other bodies
- The importance of initiatives that work with many faiths and also of those working with two faiths or three
- Resourcing the work
- The future of local inter faith - possibilities and challenges
- The vital importance of the work

National and regional faith, inter faith and academic and educational bodies in IFN's membership also make a vital contribution to the development of local inter faith understanding and cooperation. Some of the important ways that they do this have been covered in National Meetings and category meetings.

Local inter faith practitioners often comment on the significant impact that there can be from encouragement by national faith community organisations and other national and regional bodies to their local members to play an active role in local inter faith initiatives. It is hoped that the reports of the two day events may be useful in this work.

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Inter faith and educational and academic bodies meet

A combined meeting for member National and Regional Inter Faith Organisations and Educational and Academic bodies took place in London on 8 September. The meeting included discussion on some of the outcomes of the November 2014 Young Voices, Young Agents for Change meeting; and the question of 'religious literacy' and different programmes that are being developed to address this (at all ages) as part of increasing understanding about and between faiths.

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Westhill NASACRE awards – an inter faith dimension

The Westhill/NASACRE Awards have, for a number of years, been encouraging schools to engage with diversity through projects which will generate compelling learning experiences in RE for young people, relevant to today's context. Each year grants of up to £4,000 have been awarded to support suitable projects submitted by schools through their Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACREs). At IFN's Young Voices, Young Agents of Change event last Autumn, young people from one such project – Redbridge Ambassadors of Faith and Belief – spoke about their project which is about RE and also has a strong inter faith dimension. Among the 2015-16 grant recipients is a Faith Ambassador scheme in Barnet and Enfield where secondary School students are being trained as Faith Ambassadors, and delivering presentations in their local Primary Schools, and a digital project with secondary pupils, exploring Middlesbrough's religious heritage and connecting with faith communities today.

Further information at: <http://www.nasacre.org.uk/westhill-nasacre-awards>

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Nisa-Nashim Jewish-Muslim Women's Network launched

A new initiative bringing together Jewish and Muslim women aimed at breaking down barriers and enabling joint work on projects helping wider society was launched at the Islamic Girls School in London this month. It is called Nisa-Nashim - made up of the word for women in Hebrew and Arabic. It also aims to promote women's leadership. The project received a start-up grant from the Department from Communities and Local Government.

Early activities have included visits to mosques and synagogues, hosted kosher-halal meals, the launch of a business network and support for programmes to help refugees.

For further information see: <http://www.womeninjewishleadership.org.uk/how-to-get-involved/nisa-nashim-jewish-muslim-womens-network/> or email: sam.clifford@bod.org.uk

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St Ethelburga's project on 'No wealth but life'

St Ethelburga's is running a 5 part series of events in November exploring how people can strengthen their capacity for peace building through new economic models that create systemic change.

This series of practical and participatory events will focus on five interconnected themes: participatory economics, not-for-profit/social enterprise models, re-inventing organisations, alternative finance and the co-operative and commons movement.

The series will give participants the opportunity to: learn from leading practitioners and case studies; explore how learning can be applied in your own work; engage in a community case study; and participate in a vibrant community of practice.

For further information, visit <https://www.stethelburgas.org/no-wealth-life-sharing-resources-key-peace>.

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Multi cultural cookbook

York Racial Equality Network is collating recipes from different backgrounds and cultures to create a multi-cultural cookbook. They are looking for a mix of recipes and are interested in hearing from anyone who would like to contribute. For further information, contact info@yren.co.uk or write to YREN, 20 Falsgrave Crescent, York YO30 7AZ.

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Network Rail Multi Faith Network

The Network Rail Multi Faith Network (MFN) is Network Rail's newest employee network open to thousands of staff across the company across all faith groups. Having launched earlier this year in April, the MFN's membership has grown into the hundreds, with staff from Glasgow to London, across many faiths.

The MFN arranges staff networking events, publishes periodic newsletters and Intranet articles on faith matters relevant to staff, advises Diversity & Inclusion Employee policy on faith issues, and arranges training workshops for staff in faith awareness in the workplace. The MFN is looking to increase membership and to work more closely with senior leadership to advise on faith issues that affect employees and branch out to other faith networks in different companies and industries.

For further information, contact Hasan.Ahmed@networkrail.co.uk or telephone him on 07711 602483.

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Sussex Police appoint 'Interfaith Champion'

Sussex Police have appointed an 'Interfaith Champion'. Sergeant Simon Kind holds this role alongside his full-time job as a response team sergeant. He describes his purpose as to assist Sussex Police meet its public sector equality duties of eliminating unlawful discrimination and fostering good relations between people with and without protected characteristics, including religion and belief. He chairs an internal Interfaith Forum where staff of any faith or belief can raise issues on how force policies may be affecting them. During Inter Faith Week they are hoping to host a series of blog posts on the force website where staff members describe how their faith or belief assists them in an often-difficult job.

The force also has four faith champions for Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism and Sikhism. They tend to be 'outward facing', dealing with groups in the community. Sergeant Kind is also responsible for engagement with other religions and beliefs, including Paganism and Humanism.

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3FF Mixed Up Chorus

3FF's 'Mixed Up Chorus' is an "intercultural and intergenerational 80-voice choir [which] unites members and audiences through a love of music with regular performances, a global repertoire and exciting collaborations with other artists."

It sings music from all traditions, old music, new music, commissions, improvisations and collaborations; and is led by Jeremy Haneman, conductor and director of the Royal Opera House's Community Chorus.

The choir is open to new members three times a year, in January, May and September. The next opportunity to join will be in January.

Further information is at <http://www.3ff.org.uk/mixed-up-chorus> and any questions can be addressed to MixedUpChorus@3ff.org.uk.

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Inter faith cricket heads to the Vatican

This summer the e-bulletin contained a special feature on inter faith cricket. The Vatican's cricket club has just played a Yorkshire squad made up of Muslim players. The St Peter's XI, which was formed in 2013, played Mount Cricket Club from Batley, West Yorkshire, in Rome, in its latest bid to build bridges with sportsmen from other faiths. Huddersfield Examiner reports that the home team clinched a narrow win in the last over. It is hoped that the Vatican team will come for a return match at Headingley.

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RESOURCES AND TRAINING

Interfaith Scotland resources for school, youth and community groups

Interfaith Scotland has a wide range of resources to download from its website, including resources for this year's Scottish Interfaith Week on the theme of 'Care for the Environment'. It also has ideas of activities to run in local communities; possible talks to give in schools or communities about inter faith dialogue; inter faith videos and workshops created by Interfaith Scotland. They can all be downloaded from:

<http://www.interfaithscotland.org/scottish-interfaith-week/resources-for-school-youth-and-community-groups/>.

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Maimonides Interfaith Foundation – Interfaith Explorers

The Maimonides Interfaith Foundation has a free resource entitled Interfaith Explorers, www.interfaithexplorers.com, which offers guidance and support for how inter faith dialogue, RE as well as PSHE and Citizenship learning can be used to support teachers in these areas.

This resource, supported by UNESCO, aims to help pupils at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 respect cultural and religious diversity. With a focus on the three Abrahamic faiths – Judaism, Christianity and Islam – it supports core personal and social skills development as well as self-directed, exploratory learning. Designed to compliment RE and PSHE teaching, alongside citizenship education it promotes universal core values and the development of ethical thinking. It also responds to the new Prevent Duty.

For further information, visit <http://interfaithexplorers.com/>.

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Holocaust Memorial Day 2016 resources

Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) has launched its resources for 2016, the theme for which is 'Don't stand by'.

There are many resources including activity packs, ways to take action, guides for workplaces, libraries, local authorities, trade unions, faith and inter faith settings, universities, museums and galleries, emergency services and cinemas on how to get involved, and activity templates for different length activities.

National and Regional Resources provide tailored advice for marking HMD in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Each guide features specific local experiences to help in planning an HMD event.

In partnership with Diversity Role Models HMD has also produced a guide exploring LGBT themes related to HMD. This explores the Nazi Persecution of LGBT people and offers contemporary perspectives on discrimination.

For further information and to download the resources, visit

<http://hmd.org.uk/resources/theme-papers/hmd-2016-dont-stand>.

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Faith and Place Network policy briefing: Faith Groups and the Planning System

The Faith and Place Network policy briefing on ‘Faith Groups and the Planning System’ was launched at the House of Commons in October. The evening was opened by Stephen Timms MP reflecting on faith and place, followed by the Network leaders giving an overview of the briefing recommendations. Responding to the briefing were Mustafa Field MBE (Faiths Forum for London) and the Revd Katei Kirby (Ruach City Church). A panel was convened to discuss ways in which the recommendations will be taken forward.

The briefing can be downloaded from <http://faithandplacenetworg.org/>

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

Equality and Human Rights Commission - Chair

The Equality and Human Rights Commission is seeking to appoint a new Chair to succeed Baroness Onora O’Neill from April 2016.

The closing date for applications is 30 November full details of the role, including how to apply, can be found at

<http://publicappointments.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/appointment/chair/> .

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS, AND NOMINATIONS

FaithAction – Call for information on end of life care

FaithAction is looking for examples of faith and community places and groups that provide good spiritual care at the end of life. It was recently announced that end-of-life care in the UK has been ranked as the best in the world. The UK was praised, in a study of 80 countries, for both the availability of services here, and the quality of them. The hospice movement in particular was singled out – a movement which has its roots in faith – and it is often faith that motivates people to provide care and comfort for others as they come to

the end of their lives.

FaithAction would like to highlight the care provided by faith communities and groups and would be interested to hear from anyone providing this kind of care. Anyone with information to share, should contact Rodie Garland at rodie.garland@faithaction.net or on 0845 094 6350.

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Excellence in Diversity Awards

The Excellence in Diversity Awards aims to recognise the nation's most inclusive organisations and those that lead in equality, diversity and fairness, in all aspects of business. Corporations, charities, organisations and individuals can be nominated for their commitment to promoting diversity and making a positive difference to other people's lives. The nominations are now open and further information can be found at

<http://www.excellenceindiversity.co.uk/nominate/>.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Heritage Lottery Fund grants to commemorate First World War

The Heritage Lottery Fund has made an additional £4million of funding available so that more communities can get involved in projects marking the Centenary of the First World War.

Projects applying for funding must be able to meet one of a number of successful outcomes based on heritage, people and communities. Grants can be given between £3,000 and £10,000. There is no current deadline for applications.

Further information can be found at <https://www.hlf.org.uk/looking-funding/our-grant-programmes/first-world-war-then-and-now>.

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Near Neighbours programme

The Near Neighbours programme, a partnership between the Church Urban Fund and the Archbishops' Council, awards small grants of between £250 and £5,000 to projects that enable people of different faiths or none to work together for the benefit of the community. This is a rolling programme with no deadlines available in certain parts of England (maps showing eligible areas can be found at <http://www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/grants/eligible-areas>). Its second phase is due to run until December 2015.

Details on eligibility and how to apply can be found online at <http://www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/grants>.

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First Steps programme

The Faith Based Regeneration Network, in partnership with Locality, the Community Development Foundation and others has launched a new programme of support for local community action, funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government, called 'First Steps'. The programme will initially be working to support at least 115 local neighbourhoods or areas to work collaboratively in their communities to create a community action plan by March 2016. Grants of up to £2,500 are available to assist community groups in putting together their first plan. The Starter Pack and Guidance Notes can be downloaded from <http://cdf.org.uk/content/funding-programmes/first-steps>.

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Funding Central website

Funding Central - <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/default.aspx> - is a free website for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises that provides access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, together with tools and resources for supporting organisations to develop sustainable income strategies appropriate to their needs.

Funding Central is managed by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, in partnership with Idox Information Solutions Ltd, and funded by the Government's Office for Civil Society.

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Comic Relief Stronger Communities grants

Comic Relief's grants programme now has five themes, one of which is 'Stronger Communities'. Grants for the Stronger Communities theme are managed by Local Community Foundations and range in size from £1,000 to £10,000 per year. Priority is given to small, locally-based groups or organisations in areas of disadvantage that have a clear understanding of the needs of their community and are undertaking actions as a means of addressing these needs. Anyone wishing to apply for a Local Communities grant should contact their local community foundation. Further details can be found online at http://ukcommunityfoundations.org/programmes/comic_relief/.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

National Inter Faith Week in England, Wales and Northern Ireland - Sunday 15 to Saturday 21 November.

National Inter Faith Week is a programme of the Inter Faith Network for the UK. Its aims are:

- Strengthening good inter faith relations at all levels
- Increasing awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, celebrating and building on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society
- Increasing understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs

Many different kinds of organisation will be holding events to mark the Week: faith community bodies; inter faith organisations; non-religious belief bodies; schools and Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACREs); universities and colleges; local authorities and Police and Fire and Rescue Services; hospitals; businesses; voluntary organisations; chaplaincies; and others.

Just a few possible ways of marking the Week are:

- Faith trails and open door days – opportunities to visit places of worship
- Highlighting an inter faith project or programme of your organisation
- Launching a new inter faith project or resource
- A social media inter faith awareness campaign
- Joint social action – like a community litter-pick or charity fundraising
- Dialogues, debates and talks
- Quizzes, poster and photography competitions
- Inter faith sports events
- Hands-on learning activities and exhibitions
- Exchange visits between members of different places of worship
- Whole school and classroom activities
- A young people's inter faith forum event
- Arts and cultural events
- Faith and food events

This year, why not consider a hands-on social action project – from tree planting to volunteering together in another way that helps the local community. Or hold a discussion about how living well together as people of different faiths and beliefs and how we contribute to our shared society.

The listing form for events for 2015 went live on 31 July. If you are holding an event, please take a few minutes to register it so that the IFN office can add it to the map and it can inspire others to take part and to hold events too.

For further ideas, resources, event information and to register your own event and put it on the map, go to www.interfaithweek.org

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Mitzvah Day - Sunday 22 November

Mitzvah Day is a Jewish led day of social action – around the world thousands of people take part in hands on projects to support existing charities and to build stronger communities. People are encouraged to volunteer for projects in their communities and anyone can take part regardless of their background. This year, Mitzvah Day takes place on the day following Inter Faith Week but the Week is delighted to include its events as part of the calendar.

Mitzvah Day 365 takes place year round and is a catalyst in building local communities by bringing together over 37,000 people each year, to take part in collective, hands-on social action projects which make a real difference to local issues. For further information, visit www.mitzvahday.org.uk.

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Scottish Interfaith Week - Sunday 22 to Monday 30 November

Scottish Inter Faith Week is led by Interfaith Scotland. The theme this year is ‘Care for Creation’. Further information is online at <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/events/>.

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Holocaust Memorial Day – 27 January

Holocaust Memorial Day provides an opportunity for everyone to learn lessons from the Holocaust, Nazi persecution and subsequent genocides and apply them to the present day to create a safer, better future. The theme for Holocaust Memorial Day 2016 is ‘Don’t Stand By’.

A list of events taking place throughout the UK can be found on the HMD website at <http://hmd.org.uk/page/activities>. Anyone interested in organising an event to mark HMD can order or download an Activity Pack at <http://hmd.org.uk/campaign-pack>.

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World Interfaith Harmony Week – First week of February

World Interfaith Harmony Week is a UN recognised Week which takes place each year during the first week of February. The Week was proposed to the UN General Assembly by HM King Abdullah of Jordan, and the first UN World Interfaith Harmony Week took place in

February 2011. Further information about the Week, including its aims and objectives, can be found on its website at <http://worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com>.

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DIARY DATES

This section includes some of the events taking place around the UK.

IFN has been trialling the inclusion of diary date information received between e-bulletins on its website at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/take-part/events>. Your feedback on that is welcome.

Events taking place for Inter Faith Week, 15 to 21 November are listed separately on the Inter Faith Week website at www.interfaithweek.org.

Norwich Inter Faith Link is holding an event, with **Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust**, on Tuesday 27 October on 'Faith Leaders and Mental Health: Supporting people in your community with mental health problems'. The event is being held from 2pm to 4.30pm in the Dereham Room, Hellesdon Hospital, Drayton High Road, Norwich, NR6 5BE. To book, visit www.surveymonkey.com/r/flmh2015Oct.

Interfaith Wolverhampton is holding a series of talks, each from a different faith perspective. The first of these will be held on Wednesday 28 October and will be a talk on 'Jewish Spirituality' by Rabbi Natan Levy. The events will all take place at 7pm at the Newman Centre, Haywood Drive, Tettenhall, Wolverhampton WV6 8RF. In case of queries, ring Erik on 01902 750440. Further details and a booking form can be downloaded at <http://ifwton.org.uk/SpiritualityTalksBookingForm2015.pdf>

Horsham Interfaith Forum is holding a joint 'Faiths in Sussex' meeting on Saturday 31 October. The theme of the meeting, which takes place from 1.30pm to 5.30pm will be 'Conversations about Life & Death'. It is being held at Hove Methodist Church, Portland Road, Hove, BN3 5DR. For further information, contact info@horsham-interfaith.org.uk.

York Interfaith Group is holding its next event on Saturday 31 October. This will be an International Shared Meal arranged jointly with the York Baha'i Community and York Racial Equality Network. The Meal takes place at 6pm at Acomb Parish Hall, Acomb, York YO24 3BX. For further information, contact yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com.

Building Bridges Burnley is holding its next Share Faith Share Food event on Tuesday 3 November. This event is open to women only and is a place to share friendship, fun, food and faith. It begins at 7pm and is being held at the Burnley and Pendle Faith Centre,

Barden Lane Campus, Burnley BB10 1JD. For further information, contact buildingbridgesburnley@gmail.com.

Interfaith Scotland is holding its Annual General Meeting and Public Talk on Wednesday 4 November. This theme of this year's talk is 'Scotland's Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis' and the speaker will be John Wilkes of the Scottish Refugee Council. The event begins at 6pm, with the Public Talk at 6.30pm and the AGM at 7.30pm. It all takes place at Linlithgow Burgh Halls, Cross House, Linlithgow EH49 7AH. To confirm attendance, contact calum@interfaithscotland.org or telephone 0141 420 6982.

South London Inter Faith Group and the **Christian Muslim Forum** are continuing their series of Conversations for the Soul, which include one to one inter faith conversations about beliefs and practice. The next event takes place on Wednesday 4 November at the SGI UK Buddhist South London National Centre, 1 Bernays Grove, London SW9 8DF. The event runs from 6.45pm to 8.30pm with light refreshments from 6.30pm. For further information, text John Woodhouse on 07908 888586 or email woodhousesopten@btinternet.com.

York Interfaith Group is holding its next event on Wednesday 4 November on 'Progressive versus Fundamentalist Religion: The 21st Century Battleground'. The speaker will be Ben Rich, who will be presenting a Jewish case study. The event is being held at 7.30pm at the Priory Street Community Centre, York YO1 6ET. For further information, contact Mark Cosens at yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com.

Heythrop College and the **Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales** are holding an international conference from Thursday 5 to Saturday 7 November entitled 'Celebrating Nostra Aetate'. The conference will focus on achievements and challenges in the Church's relations with non-Christian religions in the fifty years since the Second Vatican Council. The conference takes place from 10.30am on Thursday until 4.30pm on Saturday, with an earlier finish time on the Friday for those leaving for Shabbat, at Heythrop College, University of London, Kensington Square, London W8 5HN. For further information and to book tickets, visit <http://www.heythrop.ac.uk/events/celebrating-nostra-aetate-international-conference>.

The Feast youth project is holding an event from Friday 6 to Sunday 8 November on 'Faith and Friendship: faith based youth work in a multi faith society'. The conference will offer: the chance to meet youth workers from different faith backgrounds and different countries; the opportunity to see a multi-faith youth encounter taking place; practical help on multi-faith youth work; time to talk to young people about their experiences of encountering peers of different faiths; and space to consider multi-faith youth work in the light of people's own faith or beliefs. For further information, and to book, visit <http://www.thefeast.org.uk/events/>.

The **Avon branch of the Council of Christians and Jews** is holding its next meeting on Monday 9 November on the theme of 'Made in the Image of God'. The discussion will focus on 'How do we experience ourselves and others in the light of this description of humankind?'. It will be held at 7.30pm at Bristol Multi-Faith Chaplaincy, 1 Woodland Road, Bristol BS8 1AU. For further information, contact avonccj@gmail.com.

The Council of Christians and Jews is holding an event on Tuesday 10 November entitled 'In Our Time: What is the Future of Christian-Jewish Relations?'. Panellists include the Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave OBE, Rabbi Dr Michael Hilton, Sister Teresa Brittan, Dr Stephen Innes and Rabbi David Mason. The event takes place at 7pm at The Jewish Museum, London, Raymond Burton House, 129-131 Albert St, London NW1 7NB. Tickets should be obtained in advance from the Jewish Museum website at <http://www.jewishmuseum.org.uk/whats-on?item=658>.

Bristol Multi-Faith Forum will be holding its AGM and Conference on Tuesday 10 November. The conference will discuss and explore the City of Sanctuary. Details on time and venue will be published when available.

The Arts and Humanities Research Council, University of Leicester and University of Bangor are holding a conference on Friday 13 November on 'Collective Worship and Religious Observance in Schools: An Evaluation of Law and Policy in the UK'. The conference aims to present findings and recommendations to a wide audience, and to involve interested parties from beyond academia in the debates around collective worship and religious observance in schools. The conference will also feature presentations from a number of influential figures from the UK and overseas. The conference will be held from 10am to 4pm at the University of Leicester's main conference centre, College Court. Registration is essential by contacting Ms Teresa Rowe at teresa.rowe@le.ac.uk.

The **Media Society** in collaboration with **BBC Religion and Ethics** is holding a seminar on Monday 16 November on faith communities' responses to the refugee crisis. The Panel of Aaqil Ahmed, Peter Hitchens and Claire Fox will be chaired by Roger Bolton. The seminar is being held at 6pm for 6.30pm at the Council Chamber, Old Broadcasting House, London W1A 1AA.

Culham St Gabriel's Trust and Goldsmiths, University of London are holding an event on Thursday 26 November entitled 'What should young people leave school knowing about religion and belief?'. This is the question posed by a new national study of teaching and learning about religion and belief in schools in England, being carried out by the Faiths and Civil Society Unit at Goldsmiths and funded by the Culham St Gabriel's Trust. The event will launch the report of the research study and speakers will include Professor Grace Davie, Daniel Hugill and Mark Chater. It runs from 5pm to 6.30pm at Grey Coat Hospital School, St Andrew's Building, Greycoat Place, London SW1P 2DY. Places should be booked in advance with Tim Stacey at t.stacey@gold.ac.uk.

Elmbridge Multi Faith Forum will be holding its Annual Gala Evening on Saturday 28 November. This will take place at 7pm for 7.30pm at the Grenfell Centre, Claremont Fancourt School, Claremont, Cobham, KT11 2JL. The evening will include a buffet supper and intercultural entertainment. For further information, including costs, contact Geoffrey Morris at geoffreymorris@emas-bc.co.uk or on 01932 868454.

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For more information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org.uk

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **24 November** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer: Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH
www.interfaith.org.uk www.facebook.com/IFNetUK www.twitter.com/IFNetUK
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IFN e-bulletin

December 2015/January 2016

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **20 January** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and projects and future events. If your organisation distributes a programme, newsletter or e-bulletin, please add ifnet@interfaith.org.uk to your mailing list.

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Increasingly, IFN is making use of social media, in particular Twitter (www.twitter.com/IFNetUK) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/IFNetUK).

Please take a moment to 'follow' and 'like' IFN and also Inter Faith Week (www.twitter.com/IFWeek and www.facebook.com/IFWeek) and also check in with the IFN website to see new items, which are added on a regular basis.

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

Refugees and migrants – faith and inter faith responses

With Syrian refugees arriving in a number of areas of the UK, faith groups and inter faith bodies are continuing to respond to assist. In Nottingham, for example, the Nottingham Post reports that refugees were warmly welcomed, with faith leaders in the city leading the way. A statement from Christian, Muslim, Jewish, orthodox and liberal groups was released. It begins: "We, the leaders of the faith communities in Nottinghamshire, wish to add our voices, and the voices of the people we serve, to those of good will everywhere who seek to provide compassion and practical help to those most affected by the current refugee crisis. We urge people of faith, and none, to come together to show the best of Nottinghamshire's proud heritage of welcome and care for those who have faced persecution and loss. We welcome those refugees and asylum seekers arriving in our county and pledge to continue to offer them our hospitality and support."

Read more: <http://www.nottinghampost.com/Faith-leaders-welcome-Syrian-refugees/story-28363341-detail/story.html#ixzz3v2hROYiX>

In many other areas help is being given or has been pledged. For example Fife Interfaith Group has written to the Chief Executive of Fife Council to state that its members stand ready to assist with this process in any way they can and that representatives from its various faiths have offered to convene at reception centres to welcome refugees and signpost them to their various faith communities, saying " In doing so we will not only make them feel welcome but will demonstrate to them that religious faiths can live in harmony and offer each other support as we have done since our group was founded ten years ago. There can be no better way of letting these families know that they have truly arrived at a safe haven."

The City of Sanctuary movement, involving people of many different faiths and none, continues to respond and has been chosen as an Observer/Guardian Christmas appeal charity <https://cityofsanctuary.org/2015/12/03/city-of-sanctuary-included-in-the-guardian-observer-christmas-charity-appeal/>

Citizens UK has launched an inter faith initiative to sponsor Syrian refugees to help them settle in the UK <http://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/151238/jewish-groups-join-call-sponsorship-scheme-syrian-refugees>
http://www.citizensuk.org/save_lives_by_helping_resettle_refugees

Faith and inter faith groups in a number of towns and cities have also been arranging or providing support for refugees and migrants in Calais. The London Churches Group and Faiths Forum for London arranged a delegation to Calais to see the conditions at the migrant camp on the outskirts of the city. The visit aimed to see how communities in the capital can provide support or assistance for the migrant crisis in Europe.
<http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/jasvir-singh/the-migrant-crisis-wont->

[disappear_b_8718420.html](#) There has also been assistance offered elsewhere by bodies such as the St Ethelburga's Centre, whose team recently went out to Lesbos to volunteer.

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland reports that Churches, Church leaders and aid organisations across Britain and Ireland are responding to the refugee crisis by calling on their governments to take action, encouraging donations from church members and providing support where possible, often through partner organisations.

<https://ctbi.org.uk/how-the-churches-are-responding-to-the-refugee-crisis/> During Advent and Christmas this is a special focus for many, with the Churches' Refugee Network holding a special Advent Vigil at St Margaret's Westminster.

The Joint Public Affairs Team has issued an FAQ sheet:

<http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/FAQs.pdf>

Many faith based international aid initiatives are involved in response to the crisis on the international front, such as Christian Aid; Islamic Relief; Muslim Aid; Khalsa Aid; and World Jewish Relief, the UK Jewish community's international humanitarian agency. There are, of course, refugee crises in a number of parts of the world and these and other faith and non-faith based agencies such as Sewa International also work to assist in many areas with these and other humanitarian causes.

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Faith and inter faith response to terrorist attacks in Paris

On the evening of 13 November a series of coordinated terrorist attacks occurred in Paris, France. The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) claimed responsibility for these.

In the UK faith and inter faith groups responded with prayers, vigils and statements. Many used already planned Inter Faith Week events to stand together in solidarity and remembrance. 'The terrorist attacks in Paris and inter faith relations in the UK: Statement from the Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Inter Faith Network for the UK' was issued on 14 November. <http://interfaith.org.uk/resources/statements-and-messages> Links to a number of responses can be found on the website of IFN at: <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/news>.

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Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life - report

The Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life, chaired by Baroness Butler-Sloss, published its report on 7 December. The report is entitled 'Living with Difference: Community, Diversity and the Common Good'.

The Commission was convened in 2013 by the Woolf Institute to consider the place and role of religion and belief in contemporary Britain; to consider the significance of emerging trends; and to make recommendations for public life and policy. The report draws on a public consultation process including over 200 submissions, as well as research evidence. It describes the changing religion and belief landscape, before exploring six broad themes. It makes 12 detailed recommendations covering such issues as religion and belief literacy; a curriculum about religion, philosophy and ethics in schools; admissions and employment policies in schools with a religious character; the promotion of opportunities for interreligious and inter-worldview encounter and dialogue; compliance by religious and cultural tribunals with UK standards of gender equality and judicial independence; and counter-terrorism legislation.

The report is available at www.corab.org.uk. The Commission has also published a selection of the submissions it received during its national consultation, 2013-15. These can be accessed from <http://corablivingwithdifference.com>.

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Government review of the Muslim Brotherhood

In April 2014 the Prime Minister commissioned an internal review of the Muslim Brotherhood. The main findings were published on 17 October and can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/muslim-brotherhood-review-main-findings>.

A written statement made by Prime Minister David Cameron when the report was laid before both Houses of Parliament is at <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2015-12-17/HCWS418/>.

The statement concludes with the intent that the Government will “keep under review the views that are promoted and activities that are undertaken by Muslim Brotherhood associates in the UK in Arabic as well as English. We will consider whether any action under the Counter Extremism Strategy or as part of our wider work may be appropriate, including action in line with the new engagement policy the Government will develop to ensure central and local government does not inadvertently provide legitimacy or a platform for extremists. We will challenge extremists’ poisonous narratives and promote positive alternatives that show vulnerable people that there are better ways to get on in life”.

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Law Commission Review of marriage law

As noted in the July/August issue of the e-bulletin, in December 2014 the Government asked the Law Commission to conduct a review of the law governing how and where people can marry in England and Wales. The question underlying the Review was whether the current law, which has evolved over a long period of time, provides a fair and coherent legal framework for enabling people to marry.

The Law Commission has carried out an initial piece of work, including a preliminary study involving research of domestic and comparative law, and engagement with key stakeholders, to identify and provide an initial analysis of the issues that need to be addressed in order to develop proposals for the reform of marriage law.

The resulting scoping paper, 'Getting Married' was published on 17 December and can be downloaded from <http://lawcom.gov.uk/project/marriage-law/> together with an executive summary. The next step is for Government to respond to the recommendations for further work.

For further information, contact propertyandtrust@lawcommission.gsi.gov.uk.

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Consultation on cremation

The Ministry of Justice has launched a consultation on cremation, which seeks views on proposals for a number of changes to the Cremation (England and Wales) Regulations 2008, and for improving other aspects of cremation practice. In writing the consultation document the Ministry of Justice has worked with the Department of Health, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Department for Communities and Local Government as well as the Human Tissue Authority and the Welsh and Scottish Governments.

The consultation document and details on how to respond are available at <https://consult.justice.gov.uk/digital-communications/consultation-on-cremation>. The consultation can be completed online or using a word document of the questionnaire submitted to coroners@justice.gsi.gov.uk. The consultation closes on 9 March. A consultation response is due to be published next year which will set out the changes that the Ministry plans to make.

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National Faith Community Representative Bodies meet

A meeting for member National Faith Community Representative Bodies took place in London on 5 November. There was a special focus session on chaplaincy in prisons, with presentations by the Revd Canon Michael Kavanagh, Chaplain-General and Head of Chaplaincy and Faith Services for the National Offender Management Service, and Mr Mohinder Singh Chana, Network of Sikh Organisations and Sikh Chaplaincy Services UK - Area Manager, Yorkshire, Humberside and the North East region. This was the third in a series of FCF sessions looking at multi faith chaplaincy, following earlier sessions on health care chaplaincy and Higher Education chaplaincy.

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Collective Worship and Religious Observance in Schools: An Evaluation of Law and Policy in the UK

The AHRC Research Network on Collective Worship published on 13 November a report entitled 'Collective Worship and Religious Observance in Schools: An Evaluation of Law and Policy in the UK'.

The report aims to stimulate fresh thinking on collective worship and religious observance in schools. It sets out the law and educational concerns relating to each country, and considers the merits of a range of options available to policy makers. While many of the observations made in the report apply to all schools, the report "restricts the majority of its recommendations to schools without a religious character, on the basis that separate and distinct consideration should be given to those schools with a designated religious character".

The report is available at <http://collectiveschoolworship.com>.

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RE for Real report

The Faiths & Civil Society Unit at Goldsmiths, University of London published a report on 29 November, with funding from the Culham St Gabriel's Trust, entitled 'RE for Real'. It focuses on RE in Secondary Schools, and highlights broad support for RE among parents, pupils and employers. The report makes a number of recommendations, including – echoing both the report of the Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life and Charles Clarke and Linda Woodhead's 'A New Settlement' – development of a national framework for religion and belief learning, and continued investment in training opportunities for teachers, including CPD.

The report can be found at <http://www.gold.ac.uk/media/goldsmiths/169-images/departments/research-units/faiths-unit/REforREal-web-b.pdf>.

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House of Commons Briefing Paper on RE

The House of Commons published a Briefing Paper on 11 December entitled 'Religious Education in Schools (England)'. The Paper gives an overview of the rules surrounding RE and Collective Worship in England for all types of school, summarises some concerns that have been raised in relation to the teaching and inspection of RE in schools, and refers to the recent CORAB, Goldsmiths and Clarke/Woodhead reports.

It can be downloaded from

<http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-7167>

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

Inter Faith Week

www.interfaithweek.org

An amazing range of different kinds of events and projects took place during Inter Faith Week in England, Wales and Northern Ireland – all 400+ of them making a contribution to understanding and cooperation between people of different faiths and beliefs and raising the profile of the contribution that faith groups make to society. It was a Week when the importance of 'living well together' was highlighted including – in the wake of the terrorist attacks in Paris – many raising their voices together to affirm what they value in our shared society and against terrorism and other forces of destruction and division.

The Week saw good media coverage, including a segment on Songs of Praise during Day 1 (also featuring Mitzvah Day), and an extended article in the Huffington Post published toward the end of the Week. A number of community papers and on-line media such as Jewish News and The Asian Today featured the Week. The Week saw considerable use of social media, including a planned campaign running up to the start of the Week. Tweets linked to the Week reached the accounts of over 3.4million unique Twitter users, with over 11million impressions. Facebook activity had a reach of over 42,000 users. A number of bodies ran Twitter campaigns linked to the Week, including Near Neighbours, The Feast, DCLG and Faith Matters.

Mitzvah Day took place on 22 November this year and its events formed an official part of Inter Faith Week in England, Northern Ireland and Wales. As in previous years, many social action projects were run with participants from different faiths, and over 50 'Inter Faith Mitzvah Day' projects were listed on the Inter Faith Week website. For further information, visit <http://www.mitzvahday.org.uk/>.

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Scottish Interfaith Week

<http://www.interfaithscotland.org/scottish-interfaith-week/>

Over 70 events took place across Scotland to mark Scottish Interfaith Week. The theme was 'Care for the Environment'. The theme was chosen partly because of the Climate Change Summit taking place in Paris in December as a time to focus on what faiths have to say about caring for the environment and protecting it for future generations.

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'Extending Hand of Friendship' project

An initiative called 'Extending Hand of Friendship' took place during Hanukkah (6 to 14 December). It was an initiative of the Joseph Interfaith Foundation which seeks to build stronger ties between British Jews and Muslims.

The aim of the initiative was "to give the chance to individual Muslims who want to extend their hand of friendship towards the Jewish community through a safe forum". There was a greater than anticipated response to the project which saw over 200 cards sent from Muslims to Jewish synagogues during Hanukkah. The cards were sent online either giving a name or anonymously as a well-wishing Muslim neighbour.

Information about the project, which has now closed, can be found at https://www.launchgood.com/project/send_the_jewish_community_a_message_of_friendship#.

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Inter faith musical festival in London and Berlin

Faiths in Tune, an inter faith musical festival, will for the first time be held next year at the British Museum. The Festival, now in its fifth year, will be held on 22 May and will include classic music performances in the British Museum's lecture theatre, interactive music sessions in various museum galleries as well as an Interfaith Fair. Funding from the Berlin Lottery Foundation has also just been approved for the festival to be held in Berlin, entitled 'Fest der Religionen', in July. For further information, visit <http://coexistifmf.wix.com/coexist>.

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Birmingham Soup Kitchen

I Am Birmingham reports that Birmingham Central Mosque will be welcoming the homeless and hungry over the festive period, providing them with food during an open soup kitchen every evening between Christmas Eve and New Year's Day. Hundreds of homeless and vulnerable individuals and families are expected to attend the mass soup kitchen, which has been organised by the Birmingham Soup Kitchen, a new project aiming to regularly provide food to those in need at the Muslim faith centre. It is hoped this will become a regular fixture to complement the many already established food distribution and outreach services taking place daily and weekly in the city, many run by Christian, Muslim, Sikh and inter faith groups. Further information can be found at <http://iambirmingham.co.uk/2015/12/21/birmingham-mosque-to-feed-city-homeless-on-christmas-day/>

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Cambridge Inter-faith Programme appoints new director

Dr Ankur Barua, specialist in Hinduism and the comparative philosophy of religion, has been appointed as the new Director of the Cambridge Inter-faith Programme following the retirement of Professor David Ford.

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RESOURCES AND TRAINING

'Faiths working together' toolkit

On 19 November, Near Neighbours and the Inter Faith Network for the UK launched, at the Vauxhall Gardens Community Centre in London, the *Faiths Working Together* toolkit.

Published in Inter Faith Week, the toolkit's aims are to support positive cross-faith engagement for the common good and inter faith understanding and help people to

- reach out and engage with people of different faiths in their local area;
- create a successful project that engages people of different religious backgrounds;
- develop and deepen cross-faith understanding and relationships; and
- support people of different faiths as they engage in social action for the good of their neighbourhoods.

The toolkit includes practical pointers for making contact and for planning and publicising initiatives, as well as advice on key principles to consider, such as the importance of looking for shared values and experiences while working well with difference.

The launch was opened with words from Baroness Eaton, Chairman of Near Neighbours, and the Co-Chairs of the Inter Faith Network for the UK, the Rt Revd Richard Atkinson and

Vivian Wineman. There were presentations from three local projects in Luton and Hounslow followed by discussion of the importance of working together between different faith communities.

Copies of the *Faiths Working Together: Connecting for the Common Good* toolkit can be downloaded from <https://www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours/resources> and <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/publications/all-publications/all-publications>.

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Northern Ireland guidance on inter faith and multi faith events

'Threads of Compassion' is the title of guidance published in November by the Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum. The booklet, which was launched during Inter Faith Week, provides advice on arranging multi faith and inter faith events.

The publication was supported by the Northern Ireland Community Relations Council and offers practical planning advice as well as a list of 'dos' and 'don'ts'. It can be found online at <http://niinterfaithforum.org/index.php/news/113-threads-of-compassion-guidelines-for-multifaith-and-interfaith-events>.

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Local inter faith group calendars

One of the best known multi faith calendars is that produced by the Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education: <http://www.shapworkingparty.org.uk/calendar.html>.

A number of local inter faith groups also produce inter faith calendars each year. Two examples of 2016 calendars which are now available are below.

Hampshire Interfaith Network produces a calendar each year which includes drawings made by schools students. Each year the Children and young people whose work has been chosen for inclusion attend a celebratory launch event at Hampshire County Councils headquarters in Winchester. The 2016 Interfaith Calendar produced by Hampshire County Council is now available for sale online at <https://hants.gov.uk/shop/product.php?productid=18616&cat=257&page=&featured=Y>.

Warwick District Faiths Forum produces a calendar each year which is supported by Warwick District Council, Warwickshire County Council and Warwickshire Police. The calendar includes photographs of religious artefacts and places of worship throughout Warwickshire and can be downloaded online from <http://www.wdfaithsforum.org.uk/>.

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CCJ Snapshot 1945 Booklet

In the May/June issue of IFN's e-bulletin information was provided about a project being run by the Council of Christians and Jews entitled Snapshot 1945. This sought to understand what life was like for Jews and Christians living in Britain at the end of the Second World War.

The booklet has now been published and anyone interested in purchasing a copy can contact cjrelations@ccj.org.uk or call the office on 0203 515 3003.

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Holocaust Memorial Day resources

Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) has launched its resources for 2016, the theme for which is 'Don't stand by'.

There are many resources including activity packs, ways to take action, guides for workplaces, libraries, local authorities, trade unions, faith and inter faith settings, universities, museums and galleries, emergency services and cinemas on how to get involved, and activity templates for different length activities.

National and Regional Resources provide tailored advice for marking HMD in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Each guide features specific local experiences to help in planning an HMD event.

In partnership with Diversity Role Models HMD has also produced a guide exploring LGBT themes related to HMD. This explores the Nazi Persecution of LGBT people and offers contemporary perspectives on discrimination.

For further information and to download the resources, visit <http://hmd.org.uk/resources/theme-papers/hmd-2016-dont-stand>.

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Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations – PhD studentships and scholarships

The Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations at Coventry University is offering three full time PhD studentships and additional scholarships

They are seeking proposals for PhD research projects in distinct and cross disciplinary areas related to their current research themes: *integrated peace building*, *living side by side* and *trust matters*. For further information about potential supervisors interests and expertise, visit the CTPSR website at <http://www.coventry.ac.uk/research/areas-of-research/trust-peace-social-relations/>

The three studentships will cover the equivalence of UK/EU or overseas fee, plus the current Research Council (UK) stipend level at the point of commencement. The fee only scholarships will cover tuition fee only. In addition, the university will offer competitive two year post docs to enable the most successful of these PhD students to be retained and develop further as an early career professional within the Centre. For further information, visit <https://jobs.ac.uk/job/AMN412/phd-studentship-integrated-peace-building-living-side-by-side-and-trust-matters>.

Enquiries should be addressed to Professor Gordon Crawford, Postgraduate Research Director at gordon.crawford@coventry.ac.uk.

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Lessons from Srebrenica

Remembering Srebrenica is continuing to take British citizens to Srebrenica as part of its educational visits programme to Bosnia & Herzegovina called 'Lessons from Srebrenica'.

The programme includes learning from the survivors and the mothers of those killed in the genocide in 1995. Remembering Srebrenica arranges all aspects of the four-day visit, including flights, accommodation, guide, transport in Bosnia and food. Participants are asked to make their way to Heathrow and to make a donation to Remembering Srebrenica.

Every participant is asked to make a pledge to do something concrete in the UK on their return to tackle hatred and promote social cohesion. The pledge should help to achieve real change and applications will be based on the strength of each pledge.

The 2016 programme is particularly encouraging young people to apply. Applicants must be UK citizens aged 18 years and over. For further information, and to apply, visit <http://www.srebrenica.org.uk/lessons-from-srebrenica/interested-becoming-delegate/>. Enquiries can be addressed to visits@srebrenica.org.uk.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS, AND NOMINATIONS

Public Faith and Finance

Public Spirit and the Centre for the Study of Ethnicity and Citizenship has announced a new project on 'Public Faith and Finance'. Funded by the Barrow Cadbury

Trust's 'Resources and Resilience' programme, the research explores the role of faith-based organisations in addressing financial insecurity, developing alternatives to market-based financial services or models, and building sustainable and socially just economic systems.

They are conducting a short survey on the ways in which organisations engage with financial issues and would like to hear from any faith groups and civil society organisations which:

- is providing advice on how to deal with personal debts and money concerns
- is engaged in running financial activities or campaigns aimed at developing alternative financial products or promoting responsible finance
- has provided or is involved in providing food or financial assistance to those experiencing financial hardship

For more information and to complete the survey, visit www.publicspirit.org.uk/faith-and-finance. Any queries should be addressed to Katya Braginskaia on 0117 33 10477 or at katya.braginskaia@bristol.ac.uk.

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Faith trails – your stories and images

Many local inter faith bodies run an annual inter faith pilgrimage, peace walk or faith trail. A number, such as Watford, have done so for many years:
<http://www.wifa.org.uk/interfaith-pilgrimages/>

If you hold, or have held, a walk or pilgrimage of faith trail, what are your top 3 tips for a positive and successful event? You can tell us by emailing ifnet@interfaith.org.uk. We will be working with volunteers over the next couple of months on some pointers to help organisers.

If you have photographs of a recent walk, trail or pilgrimage that you think capture its spirit well, we would also be pleased to have copies, together with details of who took them and permission to use them.

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Faith and social action

Is your local inter faith organisation involved in social action projects such as assisting on winter shelters for the homeless or assisting refugees and asylum seekers? Or are you aware of local projects involving different faith groups working together on social action and social justice issues and projects?

If you have details to share please email ifnet@interfaith.org.uk. We plan to include a feature on this in a future e-bulletin and will also be adding information to the IFN website.

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Perceptions of science and religion

A team of researchers from universities in Britain and Canada are looking for participants for a new study looking at perceptions of religious belief and evolutionary science. Over the next two years, they will be carrying out surveys, interviews, focus groups and experimental research with adults from a range of religious and non-religious backgrounds.

For further information and the opportunity to complete the survey, visit <http://us10.campaign-archive2.com/?u=6955d1bc689f44f71fcb3e448&id=549e585b63&e=>

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Sandford St Martin Trust Awards

The 2016 Sandford St Martin Trust Awards are now open for entries. The awards are for radio, TV and online content exploring religious, spiritual or ethical themes and this year there is a new Interview of the Year category.

Entries are welcome from people working across the broadcast media – producers, broadcasters, online content creators and publishers. The new Interview of the Year Award category is for a broadcast TV, Radio or online interview that explores religion, spirituality or ethics from a personal perspective. This could be with a leading religious figure or an ordinary person.

The 2016 Awards, worth around £10,000, will be presented at Lambeth Palace in June. The closing date for entries is 5 February. For details on how to apply, visit www.sandfordawards.org.uk and for further information, contact Sarah Parfitt on 07900 4117 15 or at sarah.parfitt@sandfordawards.org.uk.

Honours List nominations

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has said that it is keen to ensure that individuals from the full breadth of society who are making a significant contribution to public life are properly recognised through the Honours system. It is particularly keen to recognise individuals who have contributed to building integrated communities and notes that nominees can come from all levels; being in a junior role is not a barrier to a nomination.

DCLG is holding a series of workshops during January, February and March at its offices in London, giving a brief overview of the nominations process and guidance about how to draft a citation. All nominations must be made on an official citation form before 4 February and nominees should not be informed that they have been nominated. Citation forms, as well as further information about workshops, can be obtained from integration@communities.gsi.gov.uk.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Heritage Lottery Fund grants to commemorate First World War

The Heritage Lottery Fund has made an additional £4million of funding available so that more communities can get involved in projects marking the Centenary of the First World War.

Projects applying for funding must be able to meet one of a number of successful outcomes based on heritage, people and communities. Grants can be given between £3,000 and £10,000. There is no current deadline for applications.

Further information can be found at <https://www.hlf.org.uk/looking-funding/our-grant-programmes/first-world-war-then-and-now>.

Community foundations

Community foundations are impartial, local, grant-making organisations to which local community organisations can apply for funding. There are 48 community foundations in the UK, covering Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England. They provide donors with information about local needs, what groups are tackling which issues, and how donations can be strategic and best support the community. A map of community

foundations across the UK and how to contact them, can be found at http://ukcommunityfoundations.org/community_foundations/map.

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Funding Central website

Funding Central - <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/default.aspx> - is a free website for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises that provides access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, together with tools and resources for supporting organisations to develop sustainable income strategies appropriate to their needs.

Funding Central is managed by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, in partnership with Idox Information Solutions Ltd, and funded by the Government's Office for Civil Society.

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Comic Relief Stronger Communities grants

Comic Relief's grants programme now has five themes, one of which is 'Stronger Communities'. Grants for the Stronger Communities theme are managed by Local Community Foundations and range in size from £1,000 to £10,000 per year. Priority is given to small, locally-based groups or organisations in areas of disadvantage that have a clear understanding of the needs of their community and are undertaking actions as a means of addressing these needs. Anyone wishing to apply for a Local Communities grant should contact their local community foundation. Further details can be found online at http://ukcommunityfoundations.org/programmes/comic_relief/.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Holocaust Memorial Day – 27 January

Holocaust Memorial Day provides an opportunity for everyone to learn lessons from the Holocaust, Nazi persecution and subsequent genocides and apply them to the present day to create a safer, better future. The theme for Holocaust Memorial Day 2016 is 'Don't Stand By'.

A list of events taking place throughout the UK can be found on the HMD website at <http://hmd.org.uk/page/activities>. Anyone interested in organising an event to mark HMD can order or download an Activity Pack at <http://hmd.org.uk/campaign-pack>.

World Interfaith Harmony Week – First week of February

World Interfaith Harmony Week is a UN recognised Week which takes place each year during the first week of February. The Week was proposed to the UN General Assembly by HM King Abdullah of Jordan, and the first UN World Interfaith Harmony Week took place in February 2011. Further information about the Week, including its aims and objectives, can be found on its website at <http://worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com>.

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DIARY DATES

This section includes some of the events taking place around the UK.

IFN has been trialling the inclusion of diary date information received between e-bulletins on its website at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/take-part/events>. Your feedback on that is welcome.

Interfaith Glasgow is holding a ‘Festivals Exchange’ event on Thursday 24 December. This will be a Christmas Eve Celebration at Gorbals Parish Church, 1 Errol Gardens, Glasgow G5 0RA from 6.45pm to 8.30pm. It will be an evening of reflection on the story of Christmas through narrations, song, and prayer and will be a unique opportunity for people of all faiths and none to witness a Christian celebration. Those attending will be met at the entrance and hosted by members of the Christian community. Registration is essential. Anyone interested in attending should email Kemal at projects@interfaithglasgow.org.

York Interfaith Group will be holding its AGM on Tuesday 12 January. This will be held at 7.30pm at the York Medical Society Rooms, 23 Stonegate, York YO1 8AW. Participants are invited to bring vegetarian food to share. For further information, contact Mark Cosens at yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com. Its full programme of events for 2016 is available on its website at <http://www.yorkinterfaith.org/>.

Building Bridges Burnley is holding its next Share Faith Food meeting on Tuesday 12 January. This is a women only event and will be on the theme of the response to the refugee crisis. It takes place from 7.10pm to 8.30pm at the Burnley and Pendle Faith Centre, Burnley Campus, Barden Lane, Burnley BB10 1JD. For more information, contact Farah Naheem at farahnaeem@hotmail.com or bea_foster@hotmail.com or telephone 07875 517043.

The British Academy is holding a lecture on Tuesday 19 January entitled ‘Why No Religion is the New Religion’. The lecture is being given by Professor Linda Woodhead, Co-Director of the Institute for Social Futures at Lancaster University and Co-Founder of the Westminster Faith Debates. The lecture takes place at 6pm at the British Academy, 10-11

Carlton Terrace, London SW1Y 5AH. For further information, visit http://www.britac.ac.uk/events/2016/Why_no_religion_is_the_new_religion.cfm.

Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship is holding its next meeting on Monday 25 January. This will be exploring 'Pagan ethics in contemporary society' and the speaker will be Helen Holmes. The meeting takes place at 7.30pm at Friends' Meeting House, 188 Woodhouse Lane, Leeds LS2 9DX. For further information, contact Dr Simon Phillips at chair@concord-leeds.org.uk or on 07786 798929.

Near Neighbours is holding a conference in Leeds on Tuesday 26 January entitled 'Learning for our Future'. The day will feature several key speakers experienced in cross-faith community work and from different faith perspectives. There will also be seminars and workshops on a range of subjects including 'The arts and interfaith' and 'Refugees and migrants: what are we learning from the current crisis'. For further information and to book visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/near-neighbours-learning-for-our-future-tickets-19011648352>.

Guildford and Godalming Interfaith Forum will be holding its next event on Tuesday 2 February entitled 'Refugees: Faith perspectives'. Participants will have the opportunity to hear from different faith perspectives as well as some refugees, followed by discussion. The event starts at 7pm for 7.30pm and is being held at the United Reformed Church, 83 Portsmouth Road, Guildford GU2 4BS. For further information, contact them via <http://www.spanglefish.com/gginterfaithforum/>.

Cheltenham Inter Faith is holding a meeting on Thursday 4 February on the theme of 'Integrity and Integration'. The speaker will be Richard McKay. The meeting will be held at The Friends Meeting House, Warwick Place, Portland Street, Cheltenham GL52 2NP at 7.30pm. For further information, contact Fr Peter Slocombe on 01242 602412 or at slocombe415@btinternet.com.

Hull and East Riding Interfaith is holding its next meeting on Tuesday 23 February. This will be held at 4.30pm in Committee Room 1, Ground Floor, The Guildhall, Hull HU1 2AA. PC Sharon Houfe MBE, Humberside Police and PC Gary Hass, Community Cohesion Officer, Hull City Council, will open a discussion of 'Prevent', the Government's 'counter-terrorism strategy' and Dr Phiri Partson will speak on 'Human Rights and Civil Liberties: Experiences and Reflections'. For further information contact Jackie on 01482 445728 or Kath at Kath.Beal@heri.org.uk.

FaithAction is holding an event on Wednesday 24 February on 'Faith and Health'. The event will bring together faith based organisations and those from both a national and local public health perspective to discuss how these two areas can work effectively in partnership to improve health outcomes within communities throughout the country, particularly those who are considered hardest to reach. Rt Hon Alistair Burt MP, Minister of State for Community and Social Care, will be the keynote speaker. For further information and to book, visit <http://www.faithaction.net/faith-and-health/>.

Bristol Multi Faith Forum is holding its next Diverse Doors Open Day on Sunday 28 February. This annual event offers the opportunity to visit a range of places of worship and gives a flavour of the many faiths in the Bristol.’ A range of photos from this year’s event can be seen at <http://bristolmultifaithforum.org.uk/galleries/bristol-diverse-doors-open-days-2015> where further information can also be found.

Leeds Faiths Forum is holding the next in its series of Scriptural Reasoning events on Wednesday 2 March during which small groups of people from different faiths gather to read short passages from their scriptures. The event takes place at the GNNSJ Sikh Gurdwara, 78 Lady Pitt Lane, Beeston, Leeds LS11 6DP. Copies of the texts to be studied will be available nearer the time from Jocelyn Brooks on jocelyn21@ntlworld.com.

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For more information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org.uk

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **20 January** with ‘e-bulletin’ in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer: Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH
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IFN e-bulletin

February/March 2016

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **15 April** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and projects and future events. If your organisation distributes a programme, newsletter or e-bulletin, please add ifnet@interfaith.org.uk to your mailing list.

Disclaimer: Information in this e-bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Increasingly, IFN is making use of social media, in particular Twitter (www.twitter.com/IFNetUK) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/IFNetUK).

Please take a moment to 'follow' and 'like' IFN and also Inter Faith Week (www.twitter.com/IFWeek and www.facebook.com/IFWeek) and also check in with the IFN website to see new items, which are added on a regular basis.

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

National Faith Community Representative Bodies meet

A meeting for member National Faith Community Representative Bodies took place in London on 8 February. There was a special focus session on the safety and security of faith communities, with input from Inspector Andy Burton of the Metropolitan Police and an opening reflection from Mr Satya Minhas of the Hindu Council (UK) who is also Deputy Chair of the Hindu Association of the Metropolitan Police.

There was also discussion of the inter faith engagement of faith communities, including reflections on the inter faith relations and multi faith social cooperation aspects of the work of national faith communities. Canon John O'Toole, National Ecumenical Officer and Secretary to the Department for Dialogue and Unity of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, gave a short opening report on recent activities marking the 50th anniversary of Nostra Aetate, which continues to inform Catholic inter religious engagement. An agenda item on extremism, radicalisation and 'British Values' was opened with a short reflection from Dr Shuja Shafi of the Muslim Council of Britain, including on the recent Government consultation on 'out-of-school education settings'.

Note: The Faith Communities for Forum was set up within the framework of the Inter Faith Network for the UK by its Executive Committee to facilitate discussion between member faith communities at a national level on issues of common concern to them as faith communities and thereby to promote the development of closer working relationships between Britain's faith communities. In the coming months among the issues it will be looking at is religious literacy. Reflecting the commitment to that in its own work, this year sees inclusion of opening reflections for each item from a member of a different faith community with bodies in IFN membership.

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Educate Against Hate

The Rt Hon Nicky Morgan MP, Education Secretary, launched a new website called Educate Against Hate on 19 January. It contains information for schools and parents on tackling extremism as part of a drive to protect children from the "spell of twisted ideologies". The website includes information for parents, teachers and school leaders and can be found at <http://www.educateagainsthate.com/>. This was part of a number of announcements made on that day: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/nicky-morgan-speaks-about-tackling-extremism>.

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Faith Communities continue to respond to refugee crisis

The last two editions of the e-bulletin have contained extended coverage of ways that faith and inter faith bodies have been responding to asylum seeker and refugee needs. This important work continues.

A regular update on Church responses across the UK can be found at <https://ctbi.org.uk/how-the-churches-are-responding-to-the-refugee-crisis/> and other communities also continue to respond. The link includes reference to a statement that has been issued calling for coordinated action following the World Council of Churches/UN high level conference on the refugee crisis in Europe in January. IFN assisted in arranging a UK inter faith input to the conference and provided information on UK inter faith responses. Participant, Faith Forum for London Co-Chair Jasvir Singh's reflections can be seen at http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/jasvir-singh/we-must-collaborate-to-so_b_9068756.html.

Local inter faith initiatives are also continue to focus reflection on the issue. For example, at the Salford Interfaith Network AGM on 24 February the theme of the event was 'refugees, hospitality and security, bringing faiths together discuss the current global crisis around refugees'.

There have also been a number of significant one off inter faith initiatives. A group of Orthodox rabbis and imams has recently visited the Calais refugee camp in a joint initiative – organised by the Board of Deputies' Rabbi Natan Levy and Mustafa Field of the Faiths Forum for London - <http://www.jewishnews.co.uk/rabbis-and-imams-unite-to-help-calais-refugees/>.

The Annual Human Rights Lecture of the Equality and Human Rights Commission Wales is being given by the Revd Aled Edwards, Secretary of the Inter-faith Council for Wales, on 10 March on 'Asylum Seekers, Migrants and Refugees and the key human rights challenges for Wales' - <http://www.participationcymru.org.uk/about-us/news/2016/01/migrants-to-wales-what-about-human-rights>.

In Scotland, a Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees website has been launched <http://www.sfar.org.uk/>. Information on the Interfaith Glasgow Weekend Club for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants that has been set up can be found [below](#).

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National Voter Registration Drive

The National Voter Registration Drive, which took place in the first week of February, is an annual campaign, working together with thousands of people around the UK coordinating local activities which engage, inform and encourage communities to register to vote. Further information can be found at <http://bitetheballot.co.uk/nvrd/>. You can register to vote at <https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>.

Events encouraging people to register to vote thus far have included one at which Faiths Forum for London invited John Penrose MP, the Minister for Constitutional Reform, to discuss the importance of democratic participation and electoral registration and to hear from others on how to motivate communities to run voter registration campaigns. He was joined by several representatives of faith based and inter faith organisations.

Events are still taking place around the UK and the Democratic Engagement Team at the Cabinet Office would be pleased to hear from any faith or inter faith groups holding democratic engagement related events - DemocraticEngagement@cabinetoffice.gov.uk or tweet [@signup2vote](https://twitter.com/signup2vote).

The Cabinet Office has a number of resources which may be relevant: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/democratic-engagement-resources>.

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Consultation on cremation

As noted in the December/January issue of the e-bulletin, the Ministry of Justice has launched a consultation on cremation, which seeks views on proposals for a number of changes to the Cremation (England and Wales) Regulations 2008, and for improving other aspects of cremation practice. In writing the consultation document the Ministry of Justice has worked with the Department of Health, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Department for Communities and Local Government as well as the Human Tissue Authority and the Welsh and Scottish Governments.

The consultation document and details on how to respond are available at <https://consult.justice.gov.uk/digital-communications/consultation-on-cremation>. The consultation can be completed online or using a word document of the questionnaire submitted to coroners@justice.gsi.gov.uk. The consultation closes on 9 March.

On Monday 29 February, from 12 noon to 1pm, the Department of Justice is hosting a web chat at <https://www.justice.gov.uk/ministry-of-justice-webchats/>. It is particularly interested to hear views on: a definition of ashes; the cremation of babies of less than 24 weeks' gestation; a national cremation working group; inspectors; and the collection of

ashes. Views or questions can be submitted until Sunday 28 February, by emailing coroners@justice.gsi.gov.uk (and should indicate how you wish your name to be displayed in the web chat). Following the event, comments and suggestions will be fed into the consultation to help inform the way forward.

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Surge in graduates wanting to teach RE

Religious Education is one very important way that many people come to know about other religions and beliefs.

The RE Council for England and Wales has been running a campaign, Beyond the Ordinary, to encourage more to train as RE teachers. *The Times* newspaper reported on 22 February that this is linked to a 31 per cent rise in trainee teacher applications for RE - up from 650 a year ago to 850. This was also featured at <http://schoolsImprovement.net/surge-in-graduates-who-want-to-teach-religious-education/> and in an IFN Facebook post at <https://www.facebook.com/ifnetuk>.

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New curriculum for Wales - RE

A new curriculum for Wales will be developed with educational professionals across Wales for 3 to 16 year olds. The aim is that it will be available to schools and settings by September 2018. The curriculum will include 6 'learning and experience' areas. One of these areas, Humanities, will include RE, which will continue to be compulsory up until age 16. Further information is available at <http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/curriculum-for-wales-curriculum-for-life/?lang=en>.

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RE PD portal

The RE PD portal includes a database of professional development courses for RE teachers across the UK and online. The Portal is administered by the RE Council of England and Wales. The RE Council would be pleased to hear from organisations offering any PD courses, workshops, or other provisions over the next academic year - <http://www.theredirectory.org.uk/pdportal/submit-pd>.

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Organ donation and faith communities

Since the UK organ donation taskforce reported in 2008, faith communities have been involved in helping find ways to increase levels of organ donation. A publicly available paper produced for the Church of England's Synod earlier this month gives an overview of relevant legislation and guidance. Synod backed the call for all 16,000 Church of England churches to encourage their congregations to consider becoming blood donors or registering as organ donors. The relevant paper can be downloaded from [https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2442638/gs_2022b -
_blood and organ donation.pdf](https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2442638/gs_2022b_-_blood_and_organ_donation.pdf).

Other denominations and faith communities have also taken a proactive approach. See <https://www.organdonation.nhs.uk/faq/religion/>.

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

International Women's Day

On 8 March, many bodies around the UK will be marking International Women's Day with programs designed to celebrate and engage women of faith or no faith in dialogue and reflection. Among these will be a number of faith and inter faith organisations.

The United Kingdom Women of Faith Network (UKWFN), facilitated by Religions for Peace (<http://www.religionsforpeace.org.uk/>), will be launched on that day at the House of Lords. The occasion will include an opportunity to visit an exhibition entitled "The Dignity of Women: Scriptural Reflection." The goal of UKWFN will be to "increase and empower women as powerful agents for change, highlight examples of women from different faiths that are galvanizing change and promoting just and harmonious societies" and "to create a network for women to engage and share knowledge on ways to promote religion as an asset of peace." For further information on the group or launch event, contact Ravinder Kaur Nijjar at rknijjar@rfpwomenoffaith.eu.

The Women's Interfaith Network (<http://www.wominet.org.uk/index.php>) is promoting a talk on March 8 by Ruth Barnett on her experience as one of the Kinderchildren in the 1940s put on by the East Sussex Fire and Rescue Services. Further details from eastsussexwin@gmail.com.

Several inter faith organisations are taking this time to organise or promote events related to women's issues and women in faith communities. Here are just a few from around the UK:

Interfaith Scotland will mark IWD with a second annual women's inter faith dialogue tea at the Stirling Hotel on March 8 from 2-4pm. The theme for this event is 'Health and Wellbeing for Body and Soul.' More information from frances@interfaithscotland.org.

Edinburgh Women's Interfaith Group is hosting an afternoon of 'colour and insight and action' on 8 March to mark IWD and celebrate the volunteers who support their organisation. Details can be found on their website at <http://www.eifa.org.uk/>.

St Philip's Centre (<http://www.stphilipscentre.co.uk>) is promoting an event organised by the Leicestershire Police celebrating women in the community and encouraging dialogue about important issues like hate crimes. Information about the event is available from Michelle Wilson at michelle.wilson@leicestershire.pnn.police.uk.

JW3 (Jewish Community Centre London) is hosting a Sacred Voices Festival (www.jw3.org.uk/sacredvoices) in Finchley, London, to showcase female performers and artists from around the world over three days, including an art exhibition titled 'What Women Believe' and a Gala Concert.

St. John's Parish Centre in Southall has planned a women's-only celebratory event that will include creative activities, fitness class, and dancing. More information can be found from Kiran of Sri Guru Singh Sabha at 07951 772 215 or Rachel of St John's Church at 07507 786 182.

As noted in the [Diary Dates](#) section, Herefordshire Interfaith Group will be launching a Faith to Faith, Women to Women's project to encourage and strengthen bonds among women of faith. Further information from Ven Tenzin Choesang on 01568 750082 or at june@the-hermit-online.co.uk.

Many inter faith organisations in the UK have women's groups or focus specifically on women's issues. Just a few examples:

The Women's Interfaith Network, founded in 2003, "brings together women from all walks of life from different ethnic, religious and non-religious backgrounds. It supports them in joining and creating local groups that undertake a diverse range of activities of mutual interest." <http://www.wominet.org.uk/>

The Women's Peace Group of Birmingham has an inter faith dimension and has met for many years. Contact Patricia Earle at patriciaearle@blueyonder.co.uk for additional details.

Leicester's Christian Muslim Forum features a women's network designed to "unite faith communities, promote community cohesion and connect women of differing religions." Information can be found at <http://www.christianmuslimforum.org/women/>.

Merseyside Women in Faith Group (WING) is a group and a network of women from all faiths who come together to "break down the walls of ignorance that lead to conflict, hatred and mistrust between the many religions of the world. We teach each other and share with one another our faiths to help move towards understanding and solidarity in faith."

There are also a growing number of inter faith initiatives run by women – some particularly for women and some also including men. Examples of the former include a women-only sports program returning for a second term put on by an Interfaith Women's Sports Group organised by the Council of Christians and Jews in Manchester (<http://www.ccj.org.uk/>). The Near Neighbours programme has supported a significant number of women's projects in recent years including a women's inter faith choir in Burnley: <http://bbburnley.co.uk/2013/02/13/interfaith-choir-for-women/>.

Note: International Women's Day is a campaign sponsored by a number of governments, NGOs, charities, corporations, academic institutions, women's networks and media hubs to highlight the contribution of women to social, economic, cultural, and political achievement in light of this year's theme: making progress towards gender parity. More information from <http://www.internationalwomensday.com/>.

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Inter Faith Week and Scottish Interfaith Week

www.interfaithweek.org

www.interfaithscotland.org/scottish-interfaith-week/

Inter Faith Week 2016 in England, Northern and Ireland and Wales, now in its eighth year, will run from Sunday 13 to Sunday 20 November.

Why an '8 day week'? This year, the Week begins on Remembrance Sunday and many people of different faiths and beliefs will be marking that in some way. The additional Sunday will provide additional opportunity for weekend events to take place.

Scottish Interfaith Week will run from 27 November until 4 December.

IFN is due to begin work shortly on an Inter Faith Week toolkit. More information on this can be found [below](#).

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Jain Centre to have a multi faith centre

Plans are well under way to build a new Jain Centre in Colindale, North London. Plans for the Centre can be seen at <http://jainnetwork.com/jaincentreondon.php#>. It is expected to be completed by 2018. In addition to providing a place of worship for Jain traditions, the Centre also aims “to provide sustainable community services such as advocacy, educational, environmental, employment, health, social, travel, spiritual, civic and cultural services, youth and women empowerment and to work with Voluntary Community Organisations, Social Enterprises and Charities.” One of its key features will be a multi faith centre for use by other faith communities.

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World Congress of Faiths 80th Anniversary

The World Congress of Faiths this year reaches its 80th anniversary. It was founded in 1936 by explorer Sir Francis Younghusband and each year holds a lecture in his memory. Further information about the history of the organisation can be found at <http://www.worldfaiths.org/our-history/>.

To celebrate its anniversary this year WCF is holding a number of events. It began with a symposium at Sarum College in Salisbury in February on ‘Promoting spiritual life: and interfaith perspective’. The topic leaders were Revd Dr James Woodward, Principal of Sarum College; Marianne Rankin, Director of Communications for The Alister Hardy Trust; Desmond Biddulph, President and Chairman of the Buddhist Society; and Dr Jonathan Rowson, Director of the Social Brain Centre at the RSA. In July it will be holding a Summer Garden Party in London and plans are underway for an Autumn conference in Cambridge on ‘Interfaith past and present: learning for the future’. More details can be found on the WCF website at <http://www.worldfaiths.org/future-events/>.

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EU Spirit project

The EU Spirit project engages faith based organisations to promote energy efficient behaviour and energy saving activities in homes, supporting members of these organisations to become Energy Champions who share energy advice with their friends, families and local communities. Through this, the project aims to achieve measurable energy savings, CO₂ emissions reduction and lasting behaviour change. The project is co-funded by the European Union’s Intelligent Energy Europe programme, and is being delivered by a partnership of 8 organisations in 8 EU member states – coordinated by Groundwork London.

Further information can be found at www.spirit-project.eu. The project is still looking for more faith communities to work with. Anyone interested, should contact Boglarka Meixner at spirit.volunteering@groundwork.org.uk or on 0300 365 9900.

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Fire Fighters Charity Multifaith Chaplaincy and Faith and Fire

The Fire Fighters Charity provides rehabilitation, recuperation and support services to members of the fire community across the UK at Jubilee House near Penrith in Cumbria and at their centres in Devon and West Sussex. The Fire Fighters Charity multi faith chaplaincy was launched during National Inter Faith Week at Jubilee House, which is the Charity's first Centre to introduce multi faith chaplaincy support. Working with the Fire and Rescue Service Chaplains' Association the Charity also hopes to introduce a similar service at its other centres in the near future.

Further information can be found at <http://www.firefighterscharity.org.uk>.

Faith and Fire is a partnership between the Chief Fire Officers Association, Fire and Rescue Services and faith communities to develop mutual respect. It also increases the awareness of faiths to FRS staff and volunteers. Further information is at <http://faithandfire.co.uk/>.

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Interfaith Glasgow Weekend Club for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants

Interfaith Glasgow has launched a new initiative, delivered by a team of volunteers from different religion and belief backgrounds. The Weekend Club will be delivering a programme of monthly low cost and accessible activities to tackle the social poverty experienced by refugees, asylum seekers, and new migrants; and to help new arrivals participate fully in society.

Anyone interested in volunteering or in further information should contact Mohamed Omar at weekendclub@interfaithglasgow.org.

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Patron's Lunch to mark HM The Queen's 90th Birthday

This year marks the 90th Birthday of Her Majesty The Queen. A number of official celebrations will be taking place to mark the occasion and information on these can be found at

<http://www.royal.gov.uk/LatestNewsandDiary/Pressreleases/2015/EventstomarkTheQueens90thbirthday.aspx>.

As for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012, Beacons are being lit across the UK and the Queen will be lighting the Principal Beacon on 21 April. Many faith communities were involved in the beacon ceremonies in 2012 and information on how communities can take part this year can be found in the guide at

<https://www.cla.org.uk/sites/default/files/Queen%E2%80%99s%2090th%20birthday%20beacons.pdf>.

One of the main celebration events will be the Patron's Lunch, taking place on 12 June. This is a ticketed event in The Mall in London for people from the over 600 charities across the Commonwealth of which the Queen is Patron. In addition to the event in the Mall the organisers hope that street parties and lunches will take place across the UK to celebrate Her Majesty's birthday and to raise money for local initiatives. They say that they hope it will "re-ignite the famous British 'community spirit' and have villages, towns and cities all over the UK and across the Commonwealth to hold their own street parties. It is hoped these local 'Patron's Lunches' will help raise money for their own communities and local initiatives. In addition to the fundraising generated at a local level, the event will also serve as a unique platform for the charitable organisations to which The Queen acts as Patron, to maximize their own fundraising efforts."

Further information can be found at <http://www.thepatronslunch.com/how-to-get-involved/>.

The Big Lunch in which many faith communities and inter faith organisations have taken part since it began is also being held on 12 June and it is anticipated that many will be using this as a birthday celebration – www.thebiglunch.com.

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Peace Mala Interfaith Dove of Peace

The Wales-based Peace Mala project works "to educate and empower children, young people and adults, and especially those who are marginalised because of their 'perceived difference'." It has begun a new project called the Symbolic Interfaith Dove of Peace which was launched with faith representatives at Swansea. In the project, Peace Dove 13 is travelling around the world promoting greater understanding between people of all

faiths and none. It has already visited several places in the UK as well as Jerusalem and Makkah.

Further information about the project can be found at <http://www.peacemala.org.uk/doves.html>.

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LGBT History Month

LGBT History Month has been taking place throughout February in the UK. A number of organisations held events to mark the week. For example, 3FF (<http://www.3ff.org.uk/>) held its first LGBT-themed ‘Encountering People and Beliefs’ workshop to engage diverse groups in discuss personal experiences of faith in relation to gender identity and sexuality; and an inter faith Shabbat celebration is due to be held on 26 February (<http://camdenlgbtforum.org.uk/2016/02/24/twilight-people-and-the-jewish-gay-and-lesbian-group-lgbtq-interfaith-service/>) at the Islington Museum in London.

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Leadership, Religion and Society

A new project has begun at the University of Sheffield called ‘Leadership, Religion and Society’. The project and proposed course aim to engage with leaders from many areas of public and professional life interested in the equalities area of Religion and Belief, including, Social Policy & Politics; Health and Social Care; Education; Arts and Culture; Religion and Belief; Journalism and the Media; Law and Criminal Justice. The project team is inviting people to indicate, via a short survey, interest in a proposed course (from taster days through to Masters level). Further information about the project can be found at <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/siibs/sresearch/lrs>.

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Research Group: Faith and Peaceful Relations

The Faith and Peaceful Relations Group at the University of Coventry explores the role religion can play in achieving more peaceful and just societies. It notes that “Faith can be a driver of peace, reconciliation and social justice, yet it can also be a source of violence, exclusion and misunderstanding. Our research explores the positive difference faith and belief can make in today’s world and how conflicts relating to religion can be overcome.”

It promotes religious literacy in academic fields, especially politics, international relations, sociology and theology; carries out international research; runs an MA in Peace and Conflict Studies and a PhD programme; and delivers projects with and for organisations including the Anglican Communion, the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the British Council, Department for International Development, the Economic and Social Research Council, the International Society for the Sociology of Religion, Norwegian People's Aid, the Church Urban Fund and a range of international universities. It has particular expertise in faith-based conflict resolution, inter-faith dialogue, religion in conflict, contextual theology, gender and religious leadership.

Further information can be found at http://www.coventry.ac.uk/research/areas-of-research/trust-peace-social-relations/our-research/Faith_peaceful_relations/.

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

Faith at the end of Life

In January Public Health England (PHE) published a resource entitled 'Faith at end of life'. PHE describes it as a resource which aims to help frontline professionals and providers working in community settings and commissioners maintain a holistic approach to the people dying, caring or bereaved. It provides information "to help ensure that commissioning and delivery of services and practice takes account of spiritual needs of the largest 6 faith groups in England and remains appropriate to the community setting in which they work." The resource can be downloaded from https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/496231/Faith_at_end_of_life_-_a_resource.pdf.

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The Forgiveness Project book

Examining themes of forgiveness, reconciliation and conflict transformation, *The Forgiveness Project – Stories for a Vengeful Age* brings together the personal testimonies of both survivors and perpetrators of crime and violence. The real life stories collected by The Forgiveness Project come from ordinary people around the world in a diverse range of situations, including those who have transformed aggression into a driving force for peace.

The book can be purchased at <http://www.jkp.com/uk/the-forgiveness-project.html> or by contacting hello@jkp.com or 020 7833 2307. All royalties from the sale of the book will go to The Forgiveness Project. A 10% discount is available by quoting the code Y16.

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Inter faith marriage

Religious, belief and cultural practice varies between, and in some cases within, communities in relation to marriage to a person from outside their tradition.

Radio 4's *Beyond Belief* programme, that was recently re-aired, discussed the challenges faced by those involved in inter faith relationships -

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b06ptddk>.

Among those interviewed was the Co-Founder of the Interfaith Marriage Network which is a relevant resource <http://www.interfaithmarriage.org.uk/>.

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Spiritual Ecology Fellowship

The St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace has launched a Spiritual Ecology Fellowship which will offer a nine month experience of study, reflection and practical project development integrating the principles of Spiritual Ecology. It is seeking ten 'emerging leaders' between the ages of 22 and 30, who have the potential to be future catalysts for change. They are looking for participants from a diverse range of backgrounds to apply, and the fellowship is open to individuals living in the UK and Europe. The fellowship follows a nine month programme. The selected participants will receive full scholarships for programme tuition, accommodation for the retreats, and a stipend for travel and food expenses.

For further information, including how to apply, visit

<https://www.stethelburgas.org/spiritual-ecology-youth-fellowship>. The closing date for applications is 30 April.

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Near Neighbours

The current Near Neighbours grant programme has now closed but its work continues and its website carries a number of useful resources: <https://www.cuf.org.uk/how-we-help/near-neighbours>. At a special event in Leeds at the end of January, bringing people from funded and supported projects together, an inter faith song was added to these. The song, entitled *Lost in Peace*, was composed and performed by Sam Slatcher and Bhuvanewari Balasubramanian - <https://samandbhuvi.bandcamp.com/album/lost-in-peace>.

3FF ParliaMentors programme

ParliaMentors is a 3FF programme where teams of university students of different faiths and non-religious beliefs collaborate to create real social change while being mentored by MPs. The programme aims, through expert-led training, support from local and national NGOs and access to Westminster, to give students the networks and skills they need to affect real change in their communities, in their careers and in the political arena.

Students on the programme:

- See politics in action: Gain a unique insight into the political process while being mentored by MPs and Peers.
- Create social change: Work in mixed-belief teams to create social action projects with support from leading charities.
- Develop leadership skills: Learn through direct experience, expert-led training workshops and events.
- Build networks: Create new professional and personal links with institutions and organisations and by joining our Alumni Network.

Applications for the 2016/17 academic year are now open, to students from nine specific universities: SOAS University; Queen Mary; University of Manchester; Salford University; University of Nottingham; Nottingham Trent University; University of Birmingham; Birmingham City University; and Coventry University.

Further details about the programme and eligibility are at <http://www.3ff.org.uk/parliamentors>.

Building an Interfaith Community WCC summer course

The World Council of Churches is hosting its Bossey Interreligious Course this year from 25 July to 12 August in Switzerland. The theme for it is 'People and Faith on the Move: Migration in Judaism, Christianity and Islam'. Organisers describe the aim of the course as to 'Build an Interfaith Community' and at the same time explore a key theme of importance in the Abrahamic religions. It is open to Christians, Jews and Muslims between the ages of 20 and 35 years. This year the course will be accredited by the University of Geneva which may enable some students to be sent supportively by their universities. Scholarship support is available and religious and dietary requirements can be met. The closing date for applications is 18 March.

For further information, visit <https://institute.oikoumene.org/en/study-at-bossey/study-courses/certificate-of-advanced-studies-cas-in-interreligious-studies>. Applications should be sent to Bossey_Admissions@wcc-coe.org.

Ariane de Rothschild Fellowship

The Ariane de Rothschild Fellowship aims to harness the entrepreneurial drive of mainly Jewish and Muslim social entrepreneurs from across Europe to build sustainable impact and at the same time develop a new brand of dialogue and leadership. It is open to those of a Jewish/Muslim cultural background but others with an interest in cross-cultural dialogue are welcome. This year it takes place from 24 July to 5 August at the University of Cambridge and is likely to be followed by a business bootcamp in the Winter of 2017.

Further information, including how to apply, can be found at <http://adrfellowship.org/>. The closing date for applications is 18 March.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS, AND NOMINATIONS

Inter Faith Week Toolkit – Your tips and ideas

The Inter Faith Network will shortly be developing a toolkit with tips for Inter Faith Week event planners to help them develop successful events and engage with new audiences; publicise these; and afterwards, evaluate and report on them and follow up so that the outcomes have a lasting impact. Work will be beginning shortly on the toolkit. It would be helpful to hear reflections from local, regional and national faith and inter faith bodies on whether there are any particular kinds of tips and stories it would be good to include. Any ideas and comments can be sent to Mr Ashley Beck ashley.beck@interfaith.org.uk by 21 March.

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National Diversity Awards

The National Diversity Awards celebrate the achievements of grassroots communities tackling issues in society. There are six strands for the Positive Role Model Award and the Community Organisation Award, one of which is 'Race, Religion and Faith'. The nomination process is now open and more details can be found at <http://www.nationaldiversityawards.co.uk/>.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

Inter Faith Network for the UK volunteers and interns

The Inter Faith Network for the UK has regular volunteering opportunities. Further information about these can be found on IFN's website at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/take-part/volunteering-with-ifn>.

IFN also occasionally has internship opportunities. More information about this, including IFN's Internship Policy, can be found at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/about-ifn/vacancies>. If you are interested in an internship with IFN please contact us at ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Heritage Lottery Fund grants to commemorate First World War

The Heritage Lottery Fund has made an additional £4million of funding available so that more communities can get involved in projects marking the Centenary of the First World War. Projects applying for funding must be able to meet one of a number of successful outcomes based on heritage, people and communities. Grants can be given between £3,000 and £10,000. There is no current deadline for applications.

Further information can be found at <https://www.hlf.org.uk/looking-funding/our-grant-programmes/first-world-war-then-and-now>.

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Community foundations

Community foundations are local, grant-making organisations to which local community organisations can apply for funding. There are 48 community foundations in the UK, covering Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England. They provide donors with information about local needs, what groups are tackling which issues, and how donations can be strategic and best support the community. A map of community foundations across the UK and how to contact them, can be found at http://ukcommunityfoundations.org/community_foundations/map.

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Funding Central website

Funding Central - <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/default.aspx> - is a free website for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises that provides access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, together with tools and resources for supporting organisations to develop sustainable income strategies appropriate to their needs.

Funding Central is managed by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, in partnership with Idox Information Solutions Ltd, and funded by the Government's Office for Civil Society.

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Comic Relief Stronger Communities grants

Comic Relief's grants programme now has five themes, one of which is 'Stronger Communities'. Grants for the Stronger Communities theme are managed by Local Community Foundations and range in size from £1,000 to £10,000 per year. Priority is given to small, locally-based groups or organisations in areas of disadvantage that have a clear understanding of the needs of their community and are undertaking actions as a means of addressing these needs. Anyone wishing to apply for a Local Communities grant should contact their local community foundation. Further details can be found online at http://ukcommunityfoundations.org/programmes/comic_relief/.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Sadaqa Day will take place on Sunday 20 March <http://mysadaqaday.org>

Islam Awareness Week will take place from 23 to 29 May www.iaw.org.uk

The Big Lunch will take place on 12 June www.thebiglunch.com

Srebrenica Memorial Day will take place on 11 July www.srebrenica.org.uk

Peace One Day takes place on 21 September www.peaceoneday.org

Sewa Day will take place on 16 October www.sewaday.org

One World Week will take place from Sunday 23 to Sunday 30 October www.oneworldweek.org

National Inter Faith Week in England, Wales and Northern Ireland will be an '8 day week' this year taking place from Sunday 13 to Sunday 20 November. See more [above](#).
www.interfaithweek.org

Mitzvah Day will take place on Sunday 27 November www.mitzvahday.org.uk/

Scottish Interfaith Week will take place from Monday 27 November to 4 December
www.interfaithscotland.org/scottish-interfaith-week/

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DIARY DATES

This section includes some of the events taking place around the UK.

IFN has been trialling the inclusion of diary date information received between e-bulletins on its website at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/take-part/events>. Your feedback on that is welcome.

Dudley Borough Interfaith Network is holding a seminar entitled 'Developing Confidence & Skills in Fundraising for Faith Based Social & Community Action' on Monday 29 February from 9.30am to 3pm. The training led by John McCallum, Leicester and Nottingham Near Neighbours Coordinator, will look at sources of funding for faith based groups, how to apply, how to develop application information and how to fundraise. Lunch will be provided. The seminar will be held at the Brasshouse Community Centre, Brasshouse Lane, Smethwick, West Midlands B66 1BA. For further information contact Ruth Burgess at ruth.burgess@tctogether.org.uk.

York Interfaith Group holds meetings on the first Tuesday of each month. The next meeting is on Tuesday 1 March at 7.30pm at the York Medical Society Rooms, 23 Stonegate, York, YO1 8AW. The speaker will be the Revd Rory Daghiesh and University students will discuss issues around faiths and young adults. For further information, email Mark Cosens on yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com.

Centre of Religion Reconciliation and Peace at the **University of Winchester** is holding a peace talk on Tuesday 1 March at 6.30pm. This will be held at the Stripe Lecture Room, King Alfred Campus, The University of Winchester, Sparkford Road, SO22 4NR. Professor Anat Schoniov (University of Winchester) and Kishan Manocha of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe will present and discuss the subject of Freedom of Religion with particular reference to the Migration crisis. To book for the event, visit <http://www.winchester.ac.uk/peacetalks>.

Swansea University is hosting an exhibition on Thursday 3 March as part of its Swansea Faith Week celebrations. For further information, contact the Revd Nigel John, Swansea University Chaplaincy, at n.john@swansea.ac.uk.

Interfaith MK holds meetings on the first Thursday of each month. The next meeting is on Thursday 3 March from 7.30pm to 9.30pm at Central Jamia Masjid, 14/16 Church Street, Wolverton, Milton Keynes, MK12 5JN. The meeting will focus on whether Religious Education in schools lead to cultural integration and understanding or cultural separation. For further information, visit <http://www.interfaithmk.org.uk/page.php?pageid=calendar#563de08d8491d>

Norwich InterFaith Link and the **University of East Anglia's Interdisciplinary Institute for the Humanities** are holding an event on Thursday 3 March entitled 'I'm Okay – You're Okay: Religion in the Public Square'. The speaker will be Lee Marsden, Professor of International Relations and Head of School of Politics, Philosophy, Language and Communication Studies. It takes place at 6.30pm in the Thomas Paine Study Centre lecture theatre at UEA. For further information, visit <http://www.norwichinterfaith.co.uk/main.php>.

Interfaith Scotland is holding a workshop entitled 'The Right to Freedom of Thought and Religion' on Friday 4 March from 10.30am to 12pm. The workshop will be led by Jamie and Frances of Interfaith Scotland at 'DeclarationFest', a weekend event taking place at the Centre of Contemporary Arts, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, G2 3JD. The workshop event is free to all members of the public, but booking is essential. To register, visit <http://article18.eventbrite.co.uk>, or for further information, visit <http://declarationfest.com/events/18-right-to-freedom-of-thought-and-religion>.

Herefordshire Interfaith Group is launching a Faith to Faith, Women to Women's project on Saturday 5 March from 9.30am to 4pm at the Kindle Centre, Asda Stores, Belmont Ct, Hereford HR2 7JE. The informal day will include sharing of foods and interests, through the medium of Art, Craft, Music and Dance. Individual cards and gifts will be made to send to 'friends and loved ones' to maintain and create bonds among women of faith. Crafting packets will be provided. For further information, contact the Chairman, Ven Tenzin Choesang on 01568 750082 or at june@the-hermit-online.co.uk.

The **Lauriston Jesuit Centre** in Edinburgh is hosting three Lent Talks, which offer Interfaith Perspectives for the Year of Mercy. The second of these takes place on Monday 7 March and is by Shayk Sayed Razawi on Mercy and Islam. He is Director-General of the Scottish Ahlul Bayt Society and Chair of External Affairs for the European Council of Scholars. The third talk will be given by Fr Dan Madigan SJ on Monday 14 March. Fr Madigan was founder director of the Institute for Interreligious Relations and Culture at the Gregorian University in Rome and now teaches at Georgetown University in Washington DC. The subject of his talk will be Mercy and Interreligious Dialogue. All talks will start at 7.30pm and admission will be by donation. The Centre is at 28 Lauriston Street, Edinburgh EH3 9DJ. Further information is at <https://www.jesuit.org.uk/lenten-interfaith-talks-edinburgh>.

City Sikhs Network in partnership with **Birmingham Cathedral** is holding an inter faith event entitled 'Religion in the 21st Century – challenges ahead' on Tuesday 8 March from 6pm to 7.30pm. This will be held at the Impact Hub, 58 Oxford Street, Birmingham, B5 5NR. The evening will include short talks and a panel discussion exploring religion in the 21st century and the challenges ahead. Panel members will include people from the Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities. The event is open to people of all faiths and none. For further information, visit www.citysikhs.org.uk.

Interfaith Scotland is holding its next women's interfaith dialogue on Tuesday 8 March, International Women's Day. The event will be held from 2pm to 4pm at the Highland Hotel in Stirling. For more details, contact frances@interfaithscotland.org.

Sheffield Interfaith is holding an event entitled 'Bring and Share Music from Faiths' on Wednesday 9 March from 7.30pm to 9.30pm at Shirley House Interfaith Centre, 31 Psalter Lane, Sheffield, S11 8YL. Do you sing, chant, dance, play the organ or listen to instrumental music as part of your private or congregational worship? Is there a tradition of classical Eastern or Western music in your faith? Or does lively, contemporary folk, pop or jazz feature in your religion? Bring a CD, your guitar or hand drums, or come to listen or sing along. For further information, visit <http://sheffieldinterfaith.org.uk/category/events/>.

The **Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby** is running a series of one-day interactive workshops examining the Prevent programme and its relationship to local communities in Derby. The workshops will explore questions of risk and threat, vulnerability, susceptibility, safeguarding and the process of radicalisation. Workshops will take place throughout March, April and May, beginning with the first one on Thursday 10 March. For further information, contact Joanna Thornewill on j.thornewill@derby.ac.uk.

Cambridge Inter-faith Programme is a partner organisation for an event on Thursday 10 March entitled 'Refugees in Art and Religion'. There will be a viewing of the Sea of Colour followed by an interview with the artist Guler Ates and a Scriptural Reasoning Workshop. It takes place at 5pm at the Salvation Army International Headquarters, 101 Queen Victoria Street, London EC4V 4EH. Further information is at <http://www.coexisthouse.org.uk/events.html>.

Equality and Human Rights Commission Wales is holding its Annual Human Rights Lecture on Thursday 10 March. The lecture will be given by the Revd Aled Edwards, Chief Executive of Cytun (Churches Together in Wales), Secretary of the Inter-faith Council for Wales and a member of the Commission's Wales Committee. He will be exploring the experience of Asylum Seekers, Migrants and Refugees and the key human rights challenges for Wales. It will be held at 6.15pm at the Principality Stadium (formerly the Millennium Stadium) in Cardiff. For further information, visit <http://www.participationcymru.org.uk/about-us/news/2016/01/migrants-to-wales-what-about-human-rights>.

Cheltenham Inter Faith is holding its AGM on Thursday 10 March at 7pm. The meeting will be followed by a talk by IFN's Director. This will be held at Friends Meeting House, Warwick Place Cheltenham, GL52 2NP. For further information, visit http://www.cheltenhaminterfaith.org.uk/events_and_news.html

Herefordshire Interfaith Group is holding its AGM on Thursday 10 March from 7pm to 9pm. This will be held at the Kindle Centre, Asda Stores, Belmont Ct, Hereford HR2 7JE. For further information, contact the Chairman, Venerable Tenzin Choesang on 01568 750082 or email June@the-hermit-online.co.uk.

Building Bridges in Burnley is holding its next community event 'In Your Faith' with the **Jinnah Trust** on Sunday 13 March from 2pm to 4pm. This will be held at the St James Church Hall, Brougham Street, Burnley BB12 0AS. The speakers are the Bishop of Burnley, young people from 'Faith Friends', young people from the Burnley Campus, Thomas Whitham 6th Form Social Action Group and Afrasiab Anwar, Burnley and Pendle Faith Centre's Co-ordinator. There will be displays and activity stalls, food, video presentations and much more. For further information, visit <http://bbburnley.co.uk/>

Avon Council of Christians and Jews is holding a series of Scriptural Reasoning sessions. The next session on 'Lent and Easter' is on Monday 14 March at 7.15pm at Bristol University Multi-faith Chaplaincy, 1 Woodland Road, Bristol, BS8 1AU. There is a fee to attend. For further information and to join, email avonccj@gmail.com.

St Ethelburga's and the **Christian Muslim Forum** are holding a two-day workshop on Tuesday 15 and Wednesday 16 March entitled 'Re-inventing interfaith: Young people, faith and the future'. The workshop will explore what youth-led inter faith work can tell us about how faith communities might relate to each other in the future; what new skills are emerging; and how to learn from the best examples in the field. The workshop is for people of any generation. Speakers and trainers include Catriona Robertson, Amrita Bhohi, Julian Bond, Angharad Thain and Viviana Esse. There is a charge to attend. For further information, visit <https://www.stethelburgas.org/civicrm/event/info?reset=1&id=819>.

The next meeting of **Westminster Cathedral Interfaith Group** takes place on Wednesday 16 March. The meeting will be continuing to look at *Laudato Si' Our care for our common home* by Pope Francis. The speaker at this session will be Brian Cuthbertson, Head of Environment and Sustainability for the Anglican Diocese of London. The meeting takes place from 4pm to 5pm in the Hinsley Room, Morpeth Terrace, London SW1P 1EP. For further information text John Woodhouse at 07908 888 586.

Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship is holding the Peter Bell Memorial lecture on Wednesday 16 March at 7.30pm at the East Room, Leeds Civic Hall, Calverley St, Leeds LS1 1UR. The lecture will be given by Dr Shahin Fatheazam, who will be discussing whether science and religion can be reconciled from a Baha'i point of view. For further information, contact Dr Simon Philips on 07786798929 or at chair@concord-leeds.org.uk.

Northampton Inter Faith Forum is holding its next Question Time seminar on Wednesday 16 March from 6.30pm to 9pm. The seminar is focused on the topic of ‘Does religion cause wars?’ and is being held at the Northampton Quaker Meeting House, Wellington Street, Northampton NN1 3AS. Further information will be available at www.niff.org.uk.

Bristol Multi-Faith Forum is holding its next open forum meeting on Thursday 17 March from 6.30pm to 8.30pm. The meeting will hear feedback from two previous partnership meetings with St Peter’s Hospice and Dhek Bhal, on issues including hospices, older people, isolation and loneliness. It will be held in the Terrace room at the Barton Hill Settlement, 43 Ducie Road, Bristol, BS5 0AX. For more information or to book a place, call Lily Khandker on 07789040267 or email info@bristolmultifaithforum.org.uk.

The **Royal College of Psychiatrists** is running a conference on Friday 18 March entitled ‘Interfaith and Interface: The Contribution of Faith Groups to Mental Health’. The aim of the conference is to showcase the work of faith communities in the UK in addressing mental health problems, with particular emphasis on how they relate to mental health services. There is a charge to attend. Further information, including booking details, can be found at <http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/traininpsychiatry/conferencetraining/conferences/interfaithandinterface-spi.aspx>.

The **London School of Jewish Studies** is running a course on Judaism and Christianity to mark the 50th anniversary of the Vatican document, *Nostra Aetate*. The next event takes place on Tuesday 22 March. The lecture is entitled ‘Wrestling together’ and will be given by Rabbi David Mason, of Muswell Hill, and Dr Steve Innes, Scholar in Residence, Council of Christians and Jews. This session will sketch out a model that promotes a more constructive and relational kind of dialogue. The lectures are being held from 8pm to 9.30pm. For further information, visit <http://www.lsjjs.ac.uk/events/judaism-christianity/>.

Boarbank Hall is hosting an ‘Inter-Faith Conversation’ on Saturday 9 April. This inter faith day is part of a weekend on the theme of Mercy and Compassion and will include speakers from Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish and Muslim traditions. The event takes place from 9.30am to 5pm at Boarbank Hall, Allithwaite, Grange over Sands, Cumbria LA11 7NH. There is a charge to attend which includes refreshments. For further information, visit <http://www.boarbankhall.org.uk/index.php/whats-on/an-inter-faith-conversation>. To book, email Sister Margaret Atkins margaret@boarbankhall.org.uk or ring Boarbank on 015395 32288.

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For more information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org.uk

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **15 April** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

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Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH
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IFN e-bulletin

May 2016

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **13 June** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and projects and future events. If your organisation distributes a programme, newsletter or e-bulletin, please add ifnet@interfaith.org.uk to your mailing list.

Disclaimer: Information in this e-bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Increasingly, IFN is making use of social media, in particular Twitter (www.twitter.com/IFNetUK) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/IFNetUK).

Please take a moment to 'follow' and 'like' IFN and also Inter Faith Week (www.twitter.com/IFWeek and www.facebook.com/IFWeek) and also check in with the IFN website to see new items, which are added on a regular basis.

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance on freedom of expression

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has published legal guidance on freedom of expression. The guide explains the legal framework which protects freedom of expression and the circumstances in which that freedom may be restricted in order to prevent violence, abuse or discrimination. It explores the boundaries between freedom of expression, unlawful discrimination and harassment, and hate speech. It also considers various contexts in which freedom of expression is curtailed. The guidance is available from <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/freedom-expression-legal-framework>

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Responding to the refugee crisis

Faith communities and inter faith organisations continue to respond to the current refugee crisis. A new website dedicated to covering the crisis in Europe has been launched by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. This aims to be “a one-stop source of information covering news, policy, practical action and resources for those in the faith community interested in refugee and asylum issues”. The website is at www.focusonrefugees.org.

The Christian Muslim Forum is encouraging churches and mosques to work to welcome refugees arriving from areas of conflict, to assist those already in the UK and to pool resources when sending humanitarian aid to those overseas. More information is at <http://www.christianmuslimforum.org/index.php/news/572-refugees-migrants-churches-mosques-working-together>.

Khalsa Aid is one of a number of UK faith based aid agencies offering support on the ground - <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/may/05/first-laugh-since-syria-the-clowns-getting-refugee-children-smiling>.

A number of local authorities have pledged to take refugees and faith groups have been playing an active role, as in Birmingham where they have done so through Citizens UK:

<http://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/birmingham-commits-taking-500-syrian-11188796>. Citizens UK runs a 'Refugees Welcome' campaign, which has a website at <http://www.refugees-welcome.org.uk/>.

IFN's 2015 National Meeting report, available at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/publications/all-publications> carries several contributions about faith groups and refugees.

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Local and devolved national elections

People across the UK last week took part in local and devolved national elections. Many faith communities were involved in volunteering on Election Day, such as this multi faith team in Cardiff - <http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/volunteers-who-taking-day-work-11281822>.

One of the elections that took place was for Mayor of London. The Rt Hon Sadiq Khan was elected as Mayor of London and was sworn in on 7 May. His swearing in ceremony was held at Southwark Cathedral rather than City Hall at his request and included people from many different faiths. In his speech, he said that he had asked for it be there because he wanted to start his mayoralty as he intended to go on, representing every single community and every single part of the city as a mayor for all Londoners.

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Referendum on membership of the European Union

A referendum is being held on 23 June to decide whether Britain should leave or remain in the European Union.

General information about the referendum has been produced by a number of bodies such as the BBC at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-32810887>. The Government's information can be found at <https://www.eureferendum.gov.uk/>. Its information leaflet is based on a 'remain' position.

A number of faith community bodies have been providing resources and opportunities for informed discussion and decision making, such as <https://ctbi.org.uk/eu-referendum-resources/> and <https://www.bod.org.uk/board-of-deputies-hosts-eu-referendum-debate-for-the-jewish-community/> and others, such as the Sikh Council UK, are encouraging debate <http://bit.ly/21NBAbY>.

The Electoral Commission is keen to ensure that as many people as possible are registered to vote by 7 June ahead of the European Union referendum on 23 June. It takes just a few minutes to register online at <https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>. Anyone who will be

away on 23 June and unable to vote in person can apply for a postal vote or a proxy vote. The Commission has asked that communities disseminate information about registering to vote as widely as possible.

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Statement on Religious Freedom

On 29 March, following the murder of shopkeeper Asad Shah in Glasgow, stated at the time by the Police to be likely to be linked to the expression of his beliefs, the IFN Officers issued a statement on Religious Freedom. This can be found at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/statements-and-messages>. The Statement makes clear the importance of IFN's principles to this issue and to living well and harmoniously together, without resort to violence where there is difference of belief. It also noted how faith communities in the UK seek to respond to incidents here and also to support those around the world whose religious freedom is truncated, often brutally, including through murders and terrorist attacks, such as, just before the issuing of the statement, the Easter day attacks in Lahore, and in other parts of the world.

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RE Council Commission on RE to be established

The Religious Education Council of England and Wales is working to establish a Commission on RE. Following a consultation with its members in February and March, the REC has set four tasks for the Commission:

- To consider the nature, purposes, and scope of religious education.
- To identify the enabling factors that currently promote high quality RE, and the barriers that currently limit it.
- To identify what changes are needed to ensure the highest quality provision of RE.
- To ensure that recommendations focus on realistic and specific proposals aimed at both immediate and long-term implementation in the context of continuing educational reform.

For further information, contact the RE Council at info@religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk.

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Religious Literacy

The All Party Parliamentary Group on Religious Education, chaired by Fiona Bruce MP, announced on 15 March an inquiry into religious literacy. The inquiry aims to “assess how Religious Literacy can be improved through a range of means including, but not limited to, schools and other formal and informal education settings such as workplace training

schemes, life-long learning, media and literature, sports and other leisure activities and community forums.” The period for written submissions ended in mid April and there have subsequently been two Oral Evidence Sessions on 25 April and 3 May. The APPG plans to publish a report on present its findings to Government.

For further information, visit http://fionabruce.mp/campaigns/appg_re/.

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Inquiry into anti-Semitism

The Home Affairs Select Committee of the House of Commons has announced an inquiry into anti-Semitism, looking at whether prejudice against the Jewish community has increased and the particular dangers facing Jewish people arising from terrorism. For further information, visit <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/home-affairs-committee/news-parliament-2015/140412-anti-semitism-launch/>.

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Consultation on reforms to death certification process

On 10 March the Department of Health launched a consultation on its proposed reforms to the death certification process. The consultation document describes how the new death certification process and medical examiner system will work. It seeks views about the system and on the accompanying draft regulations, which will provide the framework for death certification in England and Wales. The consultation is aimed at local authorities who will establish a medical examiner service, health and care professionals involved in the process as well as members of the public and all service providers involved when a death occurs.

The consultation and supporting documents are at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/death-certification-reforms>. Enquiries or responses to the consultation should be sent by email to deathcertificationconsultation@dh.gsi.gov.uk. The consultation runs until 15 June.

The Department of Health has advised that the Welsh Government will consult separately on the arrangements for appointing and funding medical examiners in Wales, after the forthcoming National Assembly for Wales elections.

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Faith based service providers

A Commons debate on 4 May saw wide-ranging inputs on the contribution that faith organisations make to the voluntary sector as well as to faith-based social activism more generally. In the course of the debate, the Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Faith and Society, chaired by the Rt Hon Stephen Timms MP, pressed for national support and uptake of the Faith Covenant. The Covenant, developed after hearing evidence from faith groups across the country, was the idea of David Lammy MP, who was keen to develop a set of principles that faith groups and local authorities could adopt to promote joint working. For further information, visit Hansard at <http://goo.gl/L6sn7I> and <http://www.faithandsociety.org/>.

Early this year Theos and the Centre for Theology and Community published a short practical guide for faith-based organisations intended to “support decision makers and practitioners as they shape high quality and effective services which are consistent with their values”: <http://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/publications/2016/01/20/keeping-the-faith-a-guide-for-faith-based-organisations>. This follows its earlier publication *The Problem of Proselytism* <http://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/publications/2015/10/20/the-problem-of-proselytism> which explores three areas where it says that faith-based organisations need to exercise caution: prioritising the public good, respecting the dignity of religious and other minorities and protecting vulnerable service users. It argues that faith-based organisations do not need to secularise in order to head off these concerns.

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

Inter Faith Week and Scottish Interfaith Week

Inter Faith Week 2016 in England, Northern and Ireland and Wales, now in its eighth year, will run from Sunday 13 to Sunday 20 November. Why an ‘8 day Week’? This year, the Week begins on Remembrance Sunday and many people of different faiths and beliefs will be marking that in some way. The additional Sunday will provide additional opportunity for weekend events to take place. For further information, visit www.interfaithweek.org

Scottish Interfaith Week has announced that from 2016 its dates will be the same as for the Week in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The theme for the Week in Scotland will be ‘Religion and the media’. For further information, visit www.interfaithscotland.org/scottish-interfaith-week/.

As noted [below](#) IFN will shortly be launching a Toolkit on developing successful Inter Faith Week activities.

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HM The Queen's 90th Birthday

Over 900 beacons were lit throughout the UK, including at a number of places of worship, to mark the 90th Birthday of Her Majesty the Queen on 21 April.

Information on official celebrations to mark the occasion during the rest of the year are at <http://www.royal.gov.uk/LatestNewsandDiary/Pressreleases/2015/EventstomarkTheQueens90thbirthday.aspx>.

One of the main celebration events will be the Patron's Lunch, taking place on 12 June. This is a ticketed event in The Mall in London for people from the over 600 charities across the Commonwealth of which the Queen is Patron. In addition to the event in the Mall the organisers hope that street parties and lunches will take place across the UK to celebrate Her Majesty's birthday and to raise money for local initiatives. They say that they hope it will "re-ignite the famous British 'community spirit' and have villages, towns and cities all over the UK and across the Commonwealth to hold their own street parties. It is hoped these local 'Patron's Lunches' will help raise money for their own communities and local initiatives. In addition to the fundraising generated at a local level, the event will also serve as a unique platform for the charitable organisations to which The Queen acts as Patron, to maximize their own fundraising efforts."

Further information can be found at <http://www.thepatrons-lunch.com/how-to-get-involved/>.

The Big Lunch in which many faith communities and inter faith organisations have taken part since it began is also being held on 12 June and it is anticipated that many will be using this as a birthday celebration – www.thebiglunch.com.

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Interfaith Scotland

Interfaith Scotland has moved to new premises at Flemington House in Glasgow. It has created a Dialogue Centre at the new offices and held a training day for volunteers there in April.

For further information on Interfaith Scotland and its member bodies, visit <http://www.interfaithscotland.org>, where you can also download its latest newsletter.

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Inter faith social enterprises

Social enterprises trade to tackle social problems, improve communities, people's life chances, or the environment. They make their money from selling goods and services in the open market, but they reinvest their profits back into the business or the local community.

A number of social enterprises with a faith or inter faith focus exist. A recently established one is a social enterprise called Faith in Society which was started in April "dedicated to bridging the gap between faith communities wanting to become more involved in civil society locally or nationally, and those in the public, private and charitable sectors wishing to engage more effectively with religion and belief". Further information can be found at: www.faithinsociety.org.uk.

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Faith Walks

With the warmer weather, many faith walks, both new and well established, are now underway.

Redditch recently held its 2nd Annual Faith Walk. Walkers included the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Worcestershire, the Mayor of Redditch and other civic leaders. At the heart of this was a pledge stating "We as people of Redditch, pledge ourselves as one united community, respecting all races, faiths and beliefs, to build on our common values to achieve happiness and progress for all." <http://redditchstandard.co.uk/news/magnificent-hundreds-throng-second-redditch-faith-walk-sign-redditch-pledge/>.

This year marks the 31st Multi-Faith Pilgrimage for Peace held by Westminster Interfaith (an inter faith agency of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Westminster). It is held in different London boroughs each year and this year will be held on 21 May in the boroughs of Knightsbridge and Kensington. Further information is available from Jon Dal Din at jondaldin@rcdow.org.uk.

Other forthcoming Walks include Lewisham Inter Faith Walk, which will take place on 31 May http://content.met.police.uk/Event/Interfaith-walk--Lewisham/1400031247923/1257246745828?scope_id=1257246764187, Northampton Inter Faith Forum Unity Walk on 22 May <http://www.niff.org.uk/events.html> and Bristol Multi Faith Trail which takes place as part of Bristol Walk Fest during May <http://bristolmultifaithforum.org.uk/bristol-walk-fest-2016-multi-faith-trail/>.

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Faith in Birmingham

Birmingham Museums has created a new gallery called Faith in Birmingham, which is now open to the public at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery.

The gallery development involved nearly a year of consultation with faith groups and communities across Birmingham. Birmingham Museums says that “The groups and individuals identified objects in our collection, and from further afield, to enable them to tell stories about their beliefs to other people. The gallery contains objects, images and film to tell the stories of faith practice in the city. Initially the gallery focuses on the six main faith groups in Birmingham; Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism and Judaism. Over the next two years the Birmingham Museums will work with other faiths to incorporate more voices and communities into the gallery.”

The gallery contains insight into each faith through a significant ‘gateway object’ to demonstrate the individuality of each faith. Other areas of the gallery are organised into themes that demonstrate the similarities and shared beliefs between faiths. These themes are: Faith and History; Spiritual Life; Life’s Journey; and Faith and Community.

For further information, visit

<http://www.birminghammuseums.org.uk/bmag/highlights/faith-in-birmingham>.

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De Montfort University and St Philip’s Centre partnership

The St Philips Centre in Leicester, which celebrates its 10th anniversary this year, is dedicated to building understanding and friendships between different faiths and cultures. In April the St Philip’s Centre signed a new agreement with De Montfort University for the two organisations to work more closely together. Students will be able to volunteer for community projects while Frontrunners – DMU’s paid internships which give experience to students – will offer roles in inter faith work as part of #DMUlocal, the university's programme to support work to benefit people across Leicester.

DMU will also work alongside the St Philip’s Centre on its Near Neighbours project, which offers funding to communities to develop joint projects, while academic research will strengthen future funding bids. A programme of joint lectures will examine key issues for society and faith. For further information, visit <http://www.dmu.ac.uk/about-dmu/news/2016/april/new-partnership-to-celebrate-interfaith-work-in-leicester.aspx>.

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'Footsteps - Faiths for a Low Carbon Future'

Following a successful pilgrimage and gathering in the city centre in November, an inter faith group has been formed in Birmingham to take forward the climate change agenda.

The group includes Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh members, and is chaired by a Senior Adviser to Birmingham Council of Faiths (BCF). It has been accepted as a project of BCF, and is founded on the Lambeth Declaration signed by Faith Leaders in June 2015. There are plans for several events during the coming year, starting with a multi faith panel discussion on 15 May, with speakers from Operation Noah, Eco Islam and an Eco Sikh group. There are also plans for a series of workshops for young people during the summer and a multi faith walk to highlight environmental actions being taken by different places of worship in the city. Any similar groups in other parts of the country are invited to get in touch at ruthtetlow@btinternet.com to share ideas.

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

Inter Faith Week Toolkit

It was noted in the February/March issue of the e-bulletin that the Inter Faith Network would shortly be developing a toolkit with tips for Inter Faith Week event planners to help them develop successful events and engage with new audiences; publicise these; and afterwards, evaluate and report on them and follow up so that the outcomes have a lasting impact. The toolkit will be launched on 16 May and available from the Inter Faith Week website at www.interfaithweek.org.

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Inter Faith Network National Meeting report and 2014-15 Annual Review

The Inter Faith Network for the UK has recently published its 2014-15 Annual Review. A pdf of this can be downloaded from <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/publications/annual-reviews>.

The Report of the 2015 National Meeting on 'Living Well Together' is also available to download from the IFN website at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/publications/all-publications>.

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Concord Leeds Interfaith Fellowship 40th anniversary

To celebrate its 40th anniversary this year Concord Leeds Interfaith Fellowship has produced a book entitled 'A Leeds Interfaith Story 1946-2016'. The book, written by a team of people including Concord members, tells the story of the different faith communities in Leeds and of the key individuals who have promoted inter faith relationships.

The book can be purchased online or by downloading an order form from <http://www.concord-leeds.org.uk/index.php>.

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Tony Blair Faith Foundation – Essentials of Dialogue

The Tony Blair Faith Foundation (TBFF) has developed a resource for use in the classroom entitled 'Essentials of Dialogue'. The resource is part of the Face to Faith project and focuses on the core concept of respectful dialogue.

The TBFF website says "It is imperative that we give students the tools to build societies that welcome diversity rather than fearing it. That encourage an open-minded approach to the other, rather than the cultivation of prejudice; that includes rather than excludes."

The resource is free to download from <http://tonyblairfaithfoundation.org/projects/supporting-next-generation/supporting-next-generation-essentials-dialogue-0>

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British Library Sacred Texts course

The British Library is running a course during May on 'Sacred Texts of Judaism, Christianity and Islam'. The course runs on Wednesday afternoons and explores the origins and development of the Hebrew Bible, the Christian Bible, and the Qur'an. It also offers an opportunity to see original manuscripts from the three faiths dating back to the 3rd century.

The course is led by leading academics and British Library curators and will focus each week on a single religious tradition through its manuscript heritage, culminating in a collective session that will further illustrate the concept that the books of the three faiths form one linked textual tradition.

For further information, visit <http://bit.ly/1XRrAvz>.

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PhD opportunity to research the impact of 3FF's work

The Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations at Coventry University is now offering a PhD studentship to research the impact of 3FF's work. The successful candidate will work closely with the 3FF team over three years. The opportunity is fully funded and includes a bursary plus tuition fees.

Coventry University is inviting proposals for a PhD project exploring the role and impact of 3FF in fostering peaceful relations. It welcomes proposals that are interdisciplinary, innovative and use participatory research methods. Proposals should challenge existing ideas, expand current thinking and contribute to change within 3FF and the communities it works with. The PhD studentship will be based within the Faith and Peaceful Relations Research Group, one of six research groups in the Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations. The closing date for applications is 20 May. For further information, visit <http://www.jobs.ac.uk/job/ANJ926/phd-studentship-in-the-role-and-impact-of-3-faiths-forum-in-fostering-peaceful-relations-funded/>.

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Woolf Institute e-learning course

Applications are now being accepted for the Woolf Institute's e-learning course on 'Jews, Christians and Muslims in Europe: Modern Challenges'.

The course is multidisciplinary and examines historical trends, religious and cultural interaction, and issues of contemporary citizenship. It will be led and co-taught by Dr Gorazd Andrejč, Dr Sami Everett, and Dr Esther-Miriam Wagner. The e-learning approach allows participants from all over the world to study wherever and whenever they choose via the internet.

More information on the topics covered, the structure of the course, and the application details, can be found at <http://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/study/e-learning/jcme.asp>. A limited number of bursaries are available. The course begins on 5 September and the closing date for applications is 2 August. Any queries can be addressed to Dr Emma Harris, Academic Coordinator, at eth22@cam.ac.uk.

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Oxford Symposium on Religious Studies

Registration for the August session of the Oxford Symposium on Religious Studies is now open. The meeting will be held at The Old Library in the Oxford University Church of St Mary from 1 to 3 August. The symposium is inter-disciplinary and has a broad-based theme. Participants are invited to attend as observers or to present a paper. The closing date for proposals is 8 July and for attendance registration is 11 July. There is a discount for registration by 1 June. For further information, visit www.oxfordsymposiumonreligiousstudies.com.

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Managing Major Buildings Projects in Places of Worship

The Historic Religious Buildings alliance is holding a training day on 9 June on Managing Major Building Projects in Places of Worship. This will be taking place at Hexham Abbey and is an opportunity for anyone thinking about or starting to plan a major building project for their place of worship.

The day deals with the management of all stages of a building project in a place of worship, from start up through to making sure benefits are achieved over the long term. There will also be a session from the Heritage Lottery Fund as well as lunchtime surgeries where individual cases can be discussed. Booking is open at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/managing-major-building-projects-in-places-of-worship-tickets-22414716019>.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS, AND NOMINATIONS

Sandford St Martin Awards and Radio Times Faith Award

The Sandford St Martin Trust promotes “thought-provoking, distinctive programming that engages with religion of all faiths, ethics or morality”. Each year it holds runs an Awards programme that celebrates excellence in religious, spiritual and ethical broadcasting. The shortlist for this year’s Awards has been announced - <http://sandfordawards.org.uk/the-awards/2016-awards/> - and the ceremony will be held at Lambeth Palace on 8 June.

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Westminster Faith Exchange annual art competition

The Westminster Faith Exchange art competition is open to children and young people from any faith community in Westminster, London, as well as those who do not follow a religion. The closing date for entries has now been extended to 13 May.

The theme for this year's competition is 'What Prayer Means to Me'. Artwork should be a painting or drawing no bigger than A2 and must be submitted with an official form. The prize giving ceremony, sponsored by CityWest Homes, will be hosted at The Central London Mosque and Islamic Cultural Centre on 26 May. For more information, contact the Faith Exchange team at faithexchange@westminster.gov.uk or on 020 7641 3255 or visit <https://www.westminster.gov.uk/faith-exchange>.

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National Diversity Awards

The National Diversity Awards celebrate the achievements of grassroots communities tackling issues in society. There are six strands for the Positive Role Model Award and the Community Organisation Award, one of which is 'Race, Religion and Faith'. The nomination process is still open and more details can be found at <http://www.nationaldiversityawards.co.uk/>. The awards ceremony will take place in Liverpool on 16 September.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

Inter Faith Network for the UK - Assistant Director

The Inter Faith Network for the UK (IFN) is seeking to appoint an Assistant Director. The successful candidate will be a graduate or equivalent, and have significant experience of working in the field of inter faith relations or in another closely related field. The role is full time and office-based in London. It is a temporary fixed term post to 31 March 2017. Possible renewal of contract subject to funding.

A full job description, including a person specification, and an application form, can be found at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/about-ifn/vacancies>. Applications should be made on the official application form and sent by post. Applications will be acknowledged on receipt.

The closing date for receipt of applications is 12 May. Interviews are due to take place in the week commencing 23 May. The role is due to commence in June/July.

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University of Westminster – Assistant Interfaith Adviser and Secular Adviser

The University of Westminster is seeking to appoint an Assistant Interfaith Adviser to provide assistance and encouragement to students and staff of all faiths and none across this diverse student and academic body. This will include assisting the Interfaith Adviser in complying with statutory duties, with pastoral care and chaplaincy support. Further information can be found at

<https://vacancies.westminster.ac.uk/Hrvacancies/default.aspx?id=50044892>.

The University of Westminster is seeking to appoint a Secular Adviser to complement the existing provision of faith-based and spiritual care. Further information can be found at

<https://vacancies.westminster.ac.uk/Hrvacancies/default.aspx?id=50044891>.

The closing date for both posts is 16 May. Any general enquiries can be directed to recruitment@westminster.ac.uk.

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Inter Faith Network for the UK volunteers and interns

The Inter Faith Network for the UK has regular volunteering opportunities. Further information about these can be found on IFN's website at

<http://www.interfaith.org.uk/take-part/volunteering-with-ifn>.

IFN also occasionally has internship opportunities. More information about this, including IFN's Internship Policy, can be found at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/about-ifn/vacancies>.

If you are interested in an internship with IFN please contact us at ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Funding websites

Funding Central - <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/default.aspx> - is a free website for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises in England that provides access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, together with tools and resources for supporting organisations to develop sustainable income strategies appropriate to their needs.

Similar websites for funding in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at Funding Scotland - <http://www.fundingscotland.com/> - Wales Council for Voluntary Action - <http://www.wcva.org.uk/funding/search> - and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland - <https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

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Heritage Lottery Fund grants to commemorate First World War

The Heritage Lottery Fund has made an additional £4million of funding available so that more communities can get involved in projects marking the Centenary of the First World War. Projects applying for funding must be able to meet one of a number of successful outcomes based on heritage, people and communities. Grants can be given between £3,000 and £10,000. There is no current deadline for applications.

Further information can be found at <https://www.hlf.org.uk/looking-funding/our-grant-programmes/first-world-war-then-and-now>.

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Community foundations

Community foundations are local, grant-making organisations to which local community organisations can apply for funding. There are 48 community foundations in the UK, covering Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England. They provide donors with information about local needs, what groups are tackling which issues, and how donations can be strategic and best support the community. A map of community foundations across the UK and how to contact them, can be found at http://ukcommunityfoundations.org/community_foundations/map.

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Small Charities Fundraising Training Programme

The Foundation for Social Improvement is providing free delegate places at fundraising training events for charities throughout 2016. Events are being held in London, Glasgow, Nottingham, Preston and Sheffield

The programme is supported by the Cabinet Office Small Charities Fundraising Training Programme and will provide training opportunities for small charities, from face-to-face training, to intensive one-to-one advice sessions, skilled volunteering matches and webinars. For further information and to sign up for any events, visit <http://www.thefsi.org/services/training/>.

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Comic Relief Stronger Communities grants

Comic Relief's grants programme now has five themes, one of which is 'Stronger Communities'. Grants for the Stronger Communities theme are managed by Local Community Foundations and range in size from £1,000 to £10,000 per year. Priority is given to small, locally-based groups or organisations in areas of disadvantage that have a clear understanding of the needs of their community and are undertaking actions as a means of addressing these needs. Anyone wishing to apply for a Local Communities grant should contact their local community foundation. Further details can be found online at http://ukcommunityfoundations.org/programmes/comic_relief/.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Islam Awareness Week runs from 23 to 29 May www.iaw.org.uk

The Big Lunch will take place on 12 June www.thebiglunch.com

UK Refugee Week takes place from 20 to 26 June. This year's theme is 'Welcome'. www.refugeeweek.org.uk

Srebrenica Memorial Day is on 11 July www.srebrenica.org.uk

Peace One Day takes place on 21 September www.peaceoneday.org

Sewa Day will take place on 16 October www.sewaday.org

Week of Prayer for World Peace will take place from 16 to 23 October <http://www.weekofprayerforworldpeace.com/>

One World Week will take place from Sunday 23 to Sunday 30 October www.oneworldweek.org

National Inter Faith Week in England, Wales and Northern Ireland will be an '8 day week' this year taking place from Sunday 13 to Sunday 20 November. See more [above](#). www.interfaithweek.org

Scottish Interfaith Week will also take place from Sunday 13 to Sunday 20 November www.interfaithscotland.org/scottish-interfaith-week/

Mitzvah Day will take place on Sunday 27 November www.mitzvahday.org.uk/

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DIARY DATES

This section includes some of the events taking place around the UK. IFN includes information on diary dates between e-bulletins on its website at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/take-part/events>.

Bristol Multi Faith Forum is holding a Multi-Faith Trail as part of Bristol Walk Fest on Thursday 12 May at 9.30am. Visit places of worship in East Bristol and greet members of six different religions on this Multifaith trail. The trail includes five times 15 minute walks, with 40 minute visits. The duration of the trail is 2.5 miles. It will start at the Hindu Temple, Church Road, Bristol, BS5 9LA and end at the Bristol Sikh Temple, Fishponds Road, BS5 6SF. For further information or to book a place, contact Lily Khandker on 07789040267, or email on info@bristolmultifaithforum.org.uk. View the whole programme on www.bristol.gov.uk/streets-travel/bristol-walking-festival.

Religions for Peace in the UK and **Quakers in Britain** are holding an event entitled 'A Noiseless Flash – a chance to hear first-hand the testimony of Hiroshima survivor Setsuko Thurlow' on Thursday 12 May at 6pm. This will be held at Friends House, 173-177 Euston Road, London, NW1 2BJ. To register for the event, email Stephen Herman on drsaherman@gmail.com or call on 07825189263.

The Parkes Institute at the **University of Southampton** along with **The Council of Christian and Jews** and **Three Faiths Forum** are holding a panel debate discussion on the future of interfaith dialogue on Thursday 12 May at 6pm to 8.30pm. The debate is celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Parkes Library being transferred to the University of Southampton and the creation of the Parkes Institute for Jewish/non-Jewish Relations. The guest speakers are Baroness Julia Neuberger, Lord Richard Harries and Imam Monowar Hussain and the Chair will be Naomi Gryn, writer and film maker. A light buffet and drinks will follow the debate, which is being held at West London Synagogue, 33 Seymour Place, London, W1H 5AU. To register for a place or for further information, email Parkes Institute on parkes@Southampton.ac.uk.

Northampton Inter Faith Forum will be holding a Conference entitled 'Faith Uniting Northampton Faith Communities – improving local lives' on Sunday 15 May from 2pm to 6pm. This will be an afternoon for everyone to come together, make new friends and celebrate faith groups' contributions to life in Northampton. All ages are welcome. It will be held at the High School, Newport Pagnell Road, Hardington, Northampton NN4 6UU. For further information and to register, visit <http://www.niff.org.uk/events.html> or call [07914237216](tel:07914237216).

World Congress of Faith (WCF) is holding an event to mark its 80th Anniversary on Tuesday 17 May. The event is being chaired by Michael Harris and the panel of speakers include Rabbi Jackie Tabick, Sheik Dr Hojjart Ramzy, Vijay Mehta and the Revd Dr Marcus Braybrooke. It begins at 6pm and is being held at the Congress Suite (adjoining The Winter Garden), Devonshire Park, Carlisle Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN21 4BP. There is an entrance fee to attend. For further information and to register, contact Michael Harris on 01323 729390 or email m.harris33@talk21.com.

Westminster Interfaith will be holding its 31st Annual Multi-Faith Pilgrimage for Peace on Saturday 21 May in the Royal Borough of Kensington in London. It begins at 9am at the Holocaust Memorial Garden in Hyde Park and includes trips to Westminster Synagogue, the National Baha'i Centre, the Ismail Centre, St Mark's Coptic Orthodox Church, Our Lady of Victories Roman Catholic Church, Kensington United Reformed Church, the Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre and ends at the Central Gurdwara (Khalsa Jatha) at 6pm. Further details are available when booking or by contact Jon Dal Din at jondaldin@rcdow.org.uk.

INFORM will be holding its Spring Seminar on Saturday 21 May from 9.30am to 5.00pm at the London School of Economics. The theme will be 'New Religious Radicalisms'. For further information and to book, visit <http://inform.ac/node/1576>

Woking People of Faith is holding a 2016 Football Tournament on Saturday 21 May from 10am to 4pm. Six-a-side teams (plus one substitute) will play in group games as they work their way towards the quarter and semis before the finals. This is being held at Winston Churchill School Sports Centre, Winston Churchill School, Hermitage Road, Woking, GU21 8TL. For further information, contact Garry Shore on coordinator@wpof.org.uk.

Cambridge Inter-faith Programme and the **Woolf Institute** are two of the organisations supporting an interdisciplinary conference on Saturday 21 May entitled 'Reconsidering Religious Radicalism'. The conference, also supported by the Kirby Laing Institute for Christian Ethics, is being hosted by the Cambridge Institute on Religion and International Studies. It is being held from 9.30am to 5.30pm at Memorial Court, Clare College, Cambridge, and keynote speakers will include Lord Maurice Glasman, Professor Peter Mandaville, Professor Nicholas Adams and Professor Mona Siddiqui. For further information and to register, visit <http://ciris.org.uk/2016/04/13/registration-now-open-reconsidering-religious-radicalism-conference-at-clare-college-21st-may/>. The closing date for registrations is 12 May.

Faiths in Tune is hosting the 5th London Interfaith Music Festival on Sunday 22 May. Over 15 different faiths and spiritual traditions will be represented and the festival will feature 12 interactive singing, chanting and meditation sessions. The Festival is being held in the BP Lecture Theatre, British Museum, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG. To register for the event, visit <http://www.faithsintune.org/#!/tickets/c18ww>.

Northampton Inter Faith Forum is holding its second Unity Interfaith walk on Sunday 22 May from 1.45pm to 5pm. The walk of unity and friendship will highlight the diversity and history of Nottingham. Participants will walk through the streets of Northampton visiting several places of worship. Refreshment will be provided at the end of the walk. Suitable footwear is recommended and head scarf is essential as it may be needed at some locations. The walk starts outside All Saints Church, Northampton Town Centre and will end at The Quaker Meeting House. To register for the walk, email Sue on sueward80@hotmail.com or call on 07799273556, or call Ken on 07930644027.

The Centre of Religion, Reconciliation and Peace at the University of Winchester is holding an event on Tuesday 24 May on 'Understanding Dialogue - from Theory to Practice'. This is a multi-disciplinary day workshop, led by Professor Simon Keyes, that will explore how theoretical ideas about dialogue can be applied to create powerful new forms of communication and learning. The workshop is likely to be relevant to anyone with an interest in communication, social sciences, inter-personal psychology or inter-religious encounter. It is being held from 10am to 4.30pm at the University of Winchester. A donation towards refreshments is requested but there is no charge for the workshop. To register, visit <http://goo.gl/forms/hlU9gQQ5ZD> or for more information, contact rebecca.bellamy@winchester.ac.uk.

Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter is holding a series exploring Jewish Feasts throughout the year. The next Shavuot and Pentecost talk led by Rabbi Michael Hilton, Kol Chai Hatch End Jewish Community, and Fr Desmond Banister, Vicar of All Saints North Hillingdon, will be on Wednesday 1 June from 10am to 3.15pm at 34 Chepstow Villas, London W11 1QZ. There is a suggested donation. For further information, email sioncentrefordialogue@gmail.com or visit www.sioncentre.org.

Faiths Together in Croydon will be holding its annual Inter Faith Bike Ride on Sunday 5 June. The bike ride will be starting at the arena and visiting a Hindu Temple, a Church and a Mosque on the way to the annual picnic in Parkhill park. The picnic will be starting at 2pm. Funds are being raised through Spacehive (<https://www.spacehive.com/FTICbikeride>). For further information, visit www.faithstogetherincroydon.org.uk or contact sarah.burns@cvalive.org.uk.

YouthLink in Northern Ireland is holding a series of events on Cultural Sensitivity in Youth Work. On Monday 6 June the theme will be 'Working in an interfaith context' and it will be run by the **Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum**. The workshop is from 1pm to 4pm at Youth Link, Farset Enterprise Park, 638 Springfield Road, Belfast BT12 7DY. There is no charge to attend but booking is essential. Further information can be found at <http://www.youthlink.org.uk/uncategorized/cultural-sensitivity-in-youth-work-training/>.

The **Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter** is holding a Cardinal Bea Memorial lecture on Thursday 9 June. The lecture entitled 'To Heal the World – The Role of Mercy' will be led by Sr Gemma Simmonds CJ and Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg. It is being held from 7pm to 9pm at 34 Chepstow Villas, London W11 1QZ. For further information, email sioncentrefordialogue@gmail.com or visit www.sioncentre.org.

Herefordshire Interfaith Group is holding a 'Face to Faith' event on Thursday 9 June at 7pm. This will be held at the Methodist Hall, Beaumont/Stockenhill Rd, Leominster HR6 8PP. For further information, contact the Chairman, Venerable Tenzin Choesang on 01568 750082 or email June@the-hermit-online.co.uk.

Westminster Cathedral Interfaith Group is considering during 2016 Laudata Si' Our care for our common home by Pope Francis. Its next meeting will be on Wednesday 15 June and will be led by Jewish journalist, Carol Gould. The group meets from 4pm to 5pm

in the Hinsley Room, Morpeth Terrace, London SW1P 1EP. For further information, contact John Woodhouse by text on 07908 888586 or at woodhouseopten@btinternet.com.

St Philip's Centre is holding its AGM on Thursday 16 June at St Philip's Church, Evington Road, Leicester LE2 1HN. Refreshments will be available at 5.00 pm, with the business meeting at 5.30 pm followed at 6.00 pm by a facilitated discussion on 'learning to live well together'. For further information or to register attendance, contact admin@stphilipscentre.co.uk or ring 0116 2733459.

Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship is holding an event at 2pm on Sunday 26 June in co-operation with Leeds Quakers, T4P and Bradford Peace Museum to launch the Courage, Conscience and Creativity Exhibition. The exhibition will include the peace cloth, rug and banner created by Concord Women's Peace-ing Together Project, which will go on display at the museum till December. The event is being held in the Brodrick Hall, Leeds City Museum, Millennium Square, Leeds LS2 8BH For further information, contact Dr Simon Philips on 07786798929 or at chair@concord-leeds.org.uk.

Hull and East Riding Interfaith (HERI) is holding its next meeting on Tuesday 28 June at 5pm with 4.30pm refreshments. The meeting is a wide open discussion led by HERI Chair Dr Khaled Sultan. The evening will focus on the following questions: Do you want an interfaith group for Hull and the East Riding? If so, what do you want it to do, and how, by who, when, how often, where? This is being held in the ground floor room 1, The Guildhall, Hull HU1 2AA. For further information, contact Jackie on 01482 445728 or Kath at Kath.Beal@heri.org.uk.

The **World Congress of Faiths** will be holding a day conference in Cambridge entitled Religious Pluralism and Interfaith Dialogue: Learning for the Future on Friday 23 September. For further information and to book, visit <http://www.worldfaiths.org/conference-2016/>.

For more information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org.uk

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **13 June** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer: Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH
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IFN e-bulletin

June/July 2016

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **13 August** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and projects and future events. If your organisation distributes a programme, newsletter or e-bulletin, please add ifnet@interfaith.org.uk to your mailing list.

Disclaimer: Information in this e-bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Increasingly, IFN is making use of social media, in particular Twitter (www.twitter.com/IFNetUK) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/IFNetUK).

Please take a moment to 'follow' and 'like' IFN and also Inter Faith Week (www.twitter.com/IFWeek and www.facebook.com/IFWeek) and also check in with the IFN website to see new items, which are added on a regular basis.

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATE

UK vote to leave European Union

On 24 June, the results of the European Union Referendum were announced. The UK voted, by a majority of overall numbers of votes cast, to leave the European Union. The vote was close, with the majority of people in Northern Ireland and Scotland voting to remain, and deep divisions of view were evident throughout the UK. Among those calling for unity following the outcome of the Referendum were faith leaders such as the Archbishops of York and Canterbury whose statement of 24 June called on people to “unite in a common task to build a generous and forward looking country, contributing to human flourishing around the world” -

<http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/5743/eu-referendum-statement-by-archbishops-of-canterbury-and-york>. See also <https://ctbi.org.uk/eu-referendum-church-reactions/>

During the following politically and economically turbulent days, there were reports of abuse and attacks on some members of minority groups.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/brexit-eu-referendum-racial-racism-abuse-hate-crime-reported-latest-leave-immigration-a7104191.html>

The Inter Faith Network’s Co-Chairs and Vice-Chair made the following statement:

“On Friday, the results of the European Union Referendum were announced. The UK has voted, by a majority of overall numbers of votes cast, to leave the European Union.

There are rapidly moving discussions and strongly held views on the issue.

An immediate need is extending support to those who have been targeted with abuse in the wake of the vote, including some members of the Polish community and also people from other ethnicities and of a number of faiths, including Muslim and Sikh.

This abuse and hostility is entirely at odds with the values of tolerance, valuing of diversity, and mutual respect. IFN’s member bodies, like many others around the UK, will no doubt be finding ways to reach out and to be supportive at this difficult time.

We are entering a period when the need for bridge building within society will be more important than ever. Faith and inter faith organisations have an extremely important role to play in this as well as in contributing to the debate about future identity of the UK.”

Faith and inter faith groups are already playing an active role in reaching out to those affected and also in thinking about what the referendum outcome may mean for the future of their local community as well as the UK more widely. Information on some of the responses, events and statements of IFN member bodies and others are on IFN's website at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/news>.

Note: There is no implication in this piece that the hate incidents from relatively small groups and individuals in any sense reflect the views or attitude of the majority who voted to Leave.

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Rise in reported hate crimes linked to race and religion

According to Home Office figures, reported racially and religiously motivated crimes have increased in level by 40% since 2012. In England and Wales 39,672 instances of racially or religiously motivated crimes were recorded in 2015. The figure for 2015 was a 16% increase on the 34,270 such crimes in 2014 and 44% higher than the 27,489 in 2012.

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2014-to-2015>)

The figures are understood by Government to reflect both increase in incidents and also greater willingness to report.

A Tell MAMA report, 'A Geography of Anti-Muslim Hatred', published on 29 June, says that in 2015 there was a 326% increase from 2014 in street based anti-Muslim incidents reported directly to Tell MAMA, such as verbal abuse in the street, and women's veils being pulled away, with 437 incidents reported to Tell MAMA. Murdered MP for Batley and Spennings, Jo Cox, concerned about the impact on young women in her own constituency, had been due to help launch the report and present it and it has been dedicated to her by its publishers.

The National Council for Hindu Temples (UK) has announced that, following a spate of racist incidents and reports of other similar Hate crimes, it has set up a monitoring project "to gather data on the degree to which the British Hindu Community are being targeted by extremists and criminals." More information is at <http://www.nchtuk.org/index.php/8-news/latest-news/438-post-referendum-hate-crimes>.

Police forces across England and Wales are asked to report religious hate crime according to religion. This began voluntarily in April 2016, with all police forces disaggregating their hate crime data by religion from April 2017. This will mean that it is possible to know how many incidents have been reported relating to particular faith communities.

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Tackling hate crime

Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Greg Clark, addressed issues of community cohesion since the EU referendum, while visiting Dar Al Islam Mosque in London for the Big Iftar. As well as speaking about the importance of upholding values of religious freedom, respect for others, pleasure and strength from diversity, he underlined the importance facing down discrimination and bigotry and stamping out hate crime. Key points from his speech are at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/communities-secretary-visits-dar-al-islam-mosque>

On 29 June the Prime Minister announced that there would shortly be a new action plan on tackling hate crimes, wanting new steps to boost reporting of hate crime and supporting victims. Home Office Minister Karen Bradley MP subsequently made a statement that the Home Office would be providing extra funding in order to tackle hate crime and that it will also take steps to boost reporting of hate crime and to support victims, issue new CPS guidance to prosecutors on racially aggravated crime, provide a new fund for protective security measures at potentially vulnerable institutions and also offer additional funding to community organisations so they can tackle hate crime.

How to report hate crime

The police and Crown Prosecution Service define as hate incidents where the victim or anyone else thinks the incident was motivated by hostility or prejudice based disability; race; religion; transgender identity; or sexual orientation. Hate crime can be any criminal or non-criminal act such as vandalism to a property, name calling, assault or online abuse using social media.

Hate incidents can be reported directly to the Police. They can also be reported via the True Vision website at www.report-it.org.uk/home and, in some areas, to the Stop Hate website at www.stophateuk.org/report-hate-crime. In Scotland, hate crime can be reported at <https://www.scotland.police.uk/secureforms/hate-crime/>.

Additionally, the Community Security Trust of the Jewish community records and reports on anti-Semitic incidents at <https://cst.org.uk/antisemitism/report-antisemitism> and Tell Mama <http://tellmamauk.org> supports victims of anti-Muslim hate and is a public service which also measures and monitors anti-Muslim incidents.

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Europe wide compendium of good practice on hate crime

The European Union Fundamental Rights Agency recently launched a compendium of Good Practice for Hate Crime including a number of UK based initiatives. The online compendium (<http://fra.europa.eu/en/theme/hate-crime/compendium-practices>)

contains measures that EU countries are using to combat hate crime, with details on their implementation and evaluation.

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Code of Conduct on illegal online hate speech

The European Commission together with Facebook, Twitter and YouTube (collectively the “IT Companies”) have unveiled a code of conduct that includes a series of commitments to combat the spread of illegal hate speech online in Europe.

The Commission’s website notes that “the Commission and the IT Companies recognise that the spread of illegal hate speech online not only negatively affects the groups or individuals that it targets, it also negatively impacts those who speak out for freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination in our open societies and has a chilling effect on the democratic discourse on online platforms. By signing this code of conduct, the IT companies commit to continuing their efforts to tackle illegal hate speech online. This will include the continued development of internal procedures and staff training to guarantee that they review the majority of valid notifications for removal of illegal hate speech in less than 24 hours and remove or disable access to such content, if necessary.”

Further information can be found at http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/fundamental-rights/news/160531_en.htm.

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Fleeing Persecution: Asylum Claims in the UK on Religious Grounds

Earlier this month the All Party Parliamentary Group on Religious Freedom and the Asylum Advocacy Group published ‘Fleeing Persecution: Asylum Claims in the UK on Religious Grounds’. This explores how the Home Office handles applications for asylum by individuals on the grounds of religious persecution and makes a number of recommendations.

The report notes that while the law is clear that religious persecution constitutes grounds for asylum, assessment of religion-based asylum applications is complex and challenging due to the inherently internal and personal nature of religion and belief. This is compounded by the fact that persecution on the basis of religion or belief encompasses a wide range of human rights violations and relates to complex dynamics of communal identities, politics, conflicts and radical organisations.

The report explores what it sees as disparity between Home Office policy guidelines and what is actually happening in practice.. Its recommendations include training for greater

religious literacy on the part of officials. It says that all such individuals should be trained to have adequate knowledge of different forms of religious persecution and the right to freedom of religion or belief, the specific religious terminology of different religious groups as well as the cultural contexts of applicants, especially if the applicant identifies as a member of a religious group perceived as ‘heretical’ by others adhering to the same religion. It says that this depth of knowledge is needed so that the religious and cultural contextual meaning of the asylum applicants’ words can be understood and clearly conveyed.

Further information is online at <https://freedomdeclared.org/news/asylum-report/>.

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Office for National Statistics – Census consultation full response

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has published *The 2021 Census – Assessment of initial user requirements on content for England and Wales: Response to consultation in May*. Among other items, it sets out the topics the ONS intends to include within the 2021 Census. Page 20 of the report notes that the ONS intends to include the same religion question as in the 2001 and 2011 Censuses, following the consultation. The report can be found at

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/censustransformationprogramme/consultations/the2021censusinitialviewoncontentforenglandandwales>.

In Scotland, users were asked for their views on the topics to be included. The consultation ran from 8 October 2015 – 15 January 2016 (<http://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/consultation-2021>) and the responses from it are currently being analysed with a report due this summer.

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Joint Committee for Human Rights – Priority Bills 2016-17 call for evidence

The Joint Committee for Human Rights scrutinises Government Bills for compatibility with human rights. The Committee is encouraging written submissions from civil society and other bodies on human rights issues arising in relation to the Bills it has identified as priorities. Further information can be found at

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/joint-select/human-rights-committee/news-parliament-2015/priority-bills-for-2016-17-call-for-evidence-16-17/>.

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Foster carers

Fosterline has highlighted that carers are needed from all ethnic origins with varying faiths, cultures and languages. It says: “The diversity of the population in England is represented by many different beliefs and faiths, from all sections of the community, and this needs to be reflected in the people coming forward to be assessed to enter the fostering population. Every child deserves the right to allow their own heritage and faith to be explored and developed whether in the care system or not. It is vitally important that children are placed with foster carers who can meet their needs and they are more likely to thrive if their religious and/or ethnic background is taken into consideration. The Fostering community desperately requires more potential foster carers to come forward for assessment from as many varied backgrounds as possible. It does not matter what your religion is, this should not affect your application to foster.”

For free impartial information, support and advice, contact Fosterline on 0800 040 7675 or visit www.fosterline.info.

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Charity Commission Consultation on independent examination

The Charity Commission is consulting on updating the framework for independent examination. Independent examination is the alternative form of scrutiny to an audit which is available to smaller charities. A new style of examiners’ reports is proposed along with revised guidance on when to report matters directly to the commission.

The consultation is open until 30 September and the revised framework for independent examination is proposed to take effect for reporting periods (financial years) ending on or after 31 March 2017. For further information, visit

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-updating-the-framework-for-independent-examination>.

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Charity Commission consultation on approach to using new statutory power

The Charities (Protection and Social Investment) Act 2016 gives the Commission a power to disqualify individuals from acting as trustees. While a person is disqualified under this power they are also disqualified from holding senior management positions in the charity

or charities concerned. The power will enable the commission to disqualify, for a proportionate period, individuals who are unfit to be a trustee in order to protect a charity or charities generally, other trustees and the public. This is a significant new power and the commission is seeking views on its proposed approach set out in the policy paper.

The consultation closes on 22 August and the policy document and further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-power-to-disqualify-from-acting-as-a-trustee>.

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

Inter Faith Week and Scottish Interfaith Week

Inter Faith Week 2016 in England, Northern and Ireland and Wales, now in its eighth year, will run from Sunday 13 to Sunday 20 November. Why an '8 day Week'? This year, the Week begins on Remembrance Sunday and many people of different faiths and beliefs will be marking that in some way. The additional Sunday will provide additional opportunity for weekend events to take place. For further information, visit www.interfaithweek.org

As noted in the May issue of IFN's e-bulletin, Scottish Interfaith Week has announced that from 2016 its dates will be the same as for the Week in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Events for Scottish Inter Faith Week will be listed on the interactive map at www.interfaithweek.org. The theme for the Week in Scotland will be 'Religion and the media'. For further information, visit www.interfaithscotland.org/scottish-interfaith-week/.

As noted [below](#) IFN launched a Toolkit on Developing Successful Activities on 16 May.

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Northern Ireland guidelines on involvement of young people

The Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum is involved, with the Community Relations Council and YouthLink (an inter church youth body), in preparing guidelines for young people's involvement in inter faith issues. Further information will be given when these are available.

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Day event for local inter faith practitioners – 28 July Coventry

On 28 July in Coventry IFN will be holding a day event for local inter faith practitioners from local inter faith groups anywhere in the UK to share their experiences, discuss issues of common interest and concern and have focused learning opportunities about practical aspects of developing successful inter faith programmes. There will also be two special issue strands - one on local inter faith response to the vulnerability of some communities following the referendum vote to exit the EU and the other on religious literacy.

In 2015 IFN held two day events in Sheffield and London for local inter faith practitioners. Reports from those events can be found at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/publications/all-publications/all-publications>.

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St Ethelburga's Sacred Activists programme

'Sacred Activists: Leadership & spirituality in action' is a new 9 month programme of the St Ethelburga's Centre. It will bring together "young people who want to create a more beautiful world and empowers them to bring it into being" and "calls those with the spark of the future in their hearts, with committed spiritual lives and the impulse to act and lead".

The programme is based in London and will include: workshops with teaching input from leaders in the field; fieldtrips to inspiring communities where faith and action are combined in innovative ways; one to one mentoring from leaders involved in faith-based social change; building community through shared devotional practice, inner work and celebration; ongoing support to develop youth-led projects; a week volunteering at a refugee camp in Europe; a closing retreat and 'vision quest'.

Sacred Activists will involve the following themes and explorations:

- Sacred activism and the inter-spiritual manifesto
- Worldview and a 'new story' of inter-being
- The inner dimension of sacred activism
- Action learning

For further information and to download an application form, visit <https://www.stethelburgas.org/sacred-activists-leadership-spirituality-action>.

The closing date for applications is 30 July.

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Inter faith gardening

There has been a growing interest (excuse the pun) in inter faith gardens. In this issue we include a special feature about these with some examples.

Watford Interfaith Association and the Rangers of Cassiobury Park are working with members of the faith communities in Watford to create “The Watford Peace Garden”, a shared space for quiet contemplation, meditation or meeting together. A dedicated page gives regular updates on stages of the journey, <http://www.wifa.org.uk/the-watford-peace-garden/>.

A special Holocaust Memorial Garden at Edgware and District Reform Synagogue in London is an example of how a garden space can be created both as a space to remember and to renew commitment to peace and cooperation. It has been created as a communal space where people across the community and from different faiths can come together for inter faith work and discussion. Communities Minister Baroness Williams unveiled a new plaque at the Holocaust Memorial Garden which has at its centre a 'tree of life' sculpture representing the six million Jews whose lives were lost in the Holocaust. More information is at <http://jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/communities-minister-unveils-plaque-at-edgware-holocaust-memorial-garden/>.

Some faith gardens have been planted for quite a time. For example, in Swindon, TWIGS garden developed a ‘Faith Garden’ several years ago with the help of Swindon Interfaith Group. TWIGS, which is a charity which operates on land of the Borough Council, held a series of workshops both at TWIGS and out in the community to pull together garden features which had relevance and meaning to several different faith groups. Contributions for the garden came from Buddhist, Christian, Sikh, Hindu, Muslim, Baha’i and Pagan faiths, though all faith groups were invited and encouraged to contribute to the garden. Garden designers then worked with them to make the faith garden a reality. In the garden is to be found a bench provided by the Swindon Inter Faith Group in honour of the 20 years of service to it of Vernon and the late Margaret Griffiths.

In Fife, members of the Inter Faith Group planted a tree in Beveridge Park, Kirkcaldy, to commemorate the formation of the group. This led to the vision for an Interfaith Peace Garden. At the heart of the garden is the Peace Pole. About 100,000 Peace Poles have been erected world-wide and can be made from any material and usually about 2 metres high. The pole is four-sided, and on each side, in a different language, are the words "May peace prevail on earth". The labour and engraving were donated by local tradesmen and the four languages chosen were the four most widely spoken in Fife: English, Polish, Urdu and Arabic. The garden was opened in 2012, supported through ‘Awards for All Scotland’, the Fife Environment Trust and local business people.

At Oakwell Hall in Birstall, Kirklees, is a faith garden designed to provide 'a special place', inspired by the world's major faiths and the natural environment of the park, which can be

used for quiet reflection and as an outdoor classroom where children will learn about common themes of faith and understanding between different communities. The garden incorporates themes of faith such as circles and the points of the compass. It comprises a circular stone seating area with turfed surround, a circle of standing stones which represent the points of the compass and, to give a different perspective to the circle theme, a grass mound. It was partly funded by the Area Committee for Birstall and Birkenshaw, the ward of the councillor who inspired the project while Mayor. It also received funding from the Kirklees Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE).

In Sheffield, there is a Multifaith Forest Garden at Parkwood Springs which is being developed by Sheffield city Council with volunteers. Just outside the city centre, it relies on committed volunteers for maintenance and people of many faiths and none help take care of it. For more information, contact sheffieldinterfaith@hotmail.com.

Weymouth has a Peace Garden which is a multi-faith community garden created to promote a commitment to peace and understanding in the local area. The garden lies on the secluded site of an old burial ground, once owned by the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). Visitors can experience walking the labyrinth, enjoy a time of silence amongst the landscaped garden or prefer a moment of reflection by the peace pole. The garden is managed by a dedicated group of volunteers with the support of Weymouth and Portland Borough Council. Further information is at <https://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/article/408672/Weymouth-Peace-Garden>.

Faith and inter faith gardens are popular with schools too. For example Pupils at Bryntirion Infants School in Bridgend helped created a faith garden which includes religious symbols and multi-sensory plants, will help to stimulate and develop children's learning. Further information can be found at <http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/local-news/school-plants-faith-garden-1916480>.

The Near Neighbours grants programme has made grants supporting a number of inter faith gardening and allotment projects. Examples of these are a peace garden in Luton, created by renovating an overgrown area into allotments for community members to grow healthy food - <http://www.cuf.org.uk/News/near-neighbours-blogs-changing-the-face-of-englands-communities>; a community garden in East Ham in London holding events to mark faith festivals - <http://www.bonnydowns.org/inter-faith-events>; and an 'edible garden' soon to launch in the London Borough of Brent - <https://www.brent.gov.uk/services-for-residents/sport-leisure-and-parks/allotments/food-growing-conservation-and-gardening-projects/st-raphael-s-edible-garden/> .

If you know of inter faith gardens – or indeed are designing or planting one – do let us know: ifnet@interfaith.org.uk

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Big Iftar

The Big Iftar is a volunteer-led project where mosques, churches, synagogues, community centres, and schools invite the community to join the fast-breaking meal during Ramadan, called the 'iftar'. It was launched in 2013 to help explain the Islamic faith and to bring communities of all faiths closer together. A number of this year's inter faith Big Iftars, such as those at the West London Synagogue and London Central Mosque, are 'Royal Iftars', in honour of the 90th birthday of Her Majesty The Queen.

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Exchange greetings project

In 2015 imams and other members of the Muslim community were invited by the Joseph Interfaith Foundation to send Happy Chanukah cards to the synagogues and Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis. Following the success of that, the Jewish community is reciprocating by extending their hand of friendship towards the Muslim community by sending Eid Mubarak cards. The aim of the initiative is to create further social interaction and extend good relations between the Jewish and Muslim communities nationally.

Further information from: info@josephinterfaithfoundation.org

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Update on Inter Faith Network for the UK meetings

The Inter Faith Network for the UK works throughout the UK to promote good relations between people of different faiths and beliefs and it has in membership the national inter faith linking bodies of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales – the Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum, Interfaith Scotland and the Inter-faith Council for Wales. Each year these bodies meet together with IFN staff and the meetings rotate between countries in the UK. This year's meeting took place on 24 May in Cardiff, hosted by the Inter-faith Council for Wales. In addition to the usual round up of key developments since the last meeting, the meeting discussed: the development of local inter faith activity, including Inter Faith Week; IFN's changing governance – the devolved nations trustee nomination and appointment process; and integration and anti-extremism and inter faith work in the different nations.

On 14 June an Inter Faith Network meeting was held for member bodies in the Educational and Academic category and for National Faith Community Representative Bodies (which usually meet as the Faith Communities Forum). The meeting had a special focus discussion on religious literacy, including Religious Education. There will be further information on religious literacy in the next issue of the e-bulletin.

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

Inter Faith Week Toolkit – get ready for Inter Faith Week 2016!

On 16 May the Inter Faith Network launched an Inter Faith Week Toolkit on Developing Successful Activities. Speakers at the launch event included Ashley Beck and Sofi Hersher, IFN office; the Revd Alan Bayes, Inter-faith Council for Wales; Riaz Ravat, St Philip's Centre Leicester and Minou Cortazzi, Leicester Baha'i community; Ben Shapiro, 3FF; Chan Parmar, Bolton Inter Faith Council and Meera Solanki, Bolton Interfaith Young Ambassadors; and Suzanne Kochanowski, Head of Race and Faith, Integration Division, Department of Communities and Local Government.

The Toolkit is packed with suggestions for marking the Week and examples and illustrations drawn from the many successful activities held for the Week to date. It also includes practical guidance and links to further information. You can download it from the Inter Faith Week website at www.interfaithweek.org Hard copies are available from the IFN office.

An electronic copy of the Toolkit and the 2016 Week flyer are being circulated with this e-bulletin.

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Working Together in Faith

The Working Together in Faith conference in Edinburgh examined how individuals and groups could grasp policy, advocacy and practical action as they exercised their faith. It was organised by Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees and included first hand experiences of someone going through UK's asylum process.

Videos of the presentations can be found at: <http://focusonrefugees.org/looking-back-at-the-working-together-in-faith-conference-in-edinburgh-sfarconference/>.

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Charity Commission guidance on Protecting Charities from Harm

The recent period has seen the introduction of legislation and guidance relating to prevention of violent extremism and counter extremism and there are implications for charities.

Many charities further their charitable aims by arranging meetings involving invited speakers and by distributing literature and other educational materials. Charities, by the nature of their work and the issues they deal with, will raise issues which some people find emotive or which may be controversial. In most cases, this causes no problems.

However, terrorists and those who encourage terrorism have been known to use charities to make their views known. The Charity Commission has guidance on how trustees, staff and volunteers can protect their charity from abuse by those encouraging extremism, terrorism or illegal activity.

This can be found in Chapter 5 of the commission's Compliance Toolkit, entitled 'Protecting Charities from abuse for extremist purposes and managing the risks at events and in activities' which is online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protecting-charities-from-abuse-for-extremist-purposes>.

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Woolf Institute e-learning course

Applications are still being accepted for the Woolf Institute's e-learning course on 'Jews, Christians and Muslims in Europe: Modern Challenges'. The e-learning approach allows participants from all over the world to study wherever and whenever they choose via the internet. The course is multidisciplinary and examines historical trends, religious and cultural interaction, and issues of contemporary citizenship. More information on the topics covered, the structure of the course, and the application details, can be found at <http://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/study/e-learning/jcme.asp>. A limited number of bursaries are available. The course begins on 5 September and the closing date for applications is 2 August. Any queries can be addressed to Dr Emma Harris, Academic Coordinator, at eth22@cam.ac.uk.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS, AND NOMINATIONS

NATRE's 'Art in Heaven' Competition

The National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE) is holding its 13th Annual 'Art in Heaven' competition for school pupils aged 4 to 19 years.

Entries for the competition, which is also supported by RE Today, can be created using drawing, painting, art, video, sculpture or other media and there are five themes from which to choose: Visions and Prophecy; Could Britain be a Rainbow Nation?; It's not Fair! Faith and Justice; Where is God today?; and Seeing Jesus. The choice of theme is dependent on whether the submission is from primary or secondary school pupils.

There is full, detailed guidance available online at <http://www.natre.org.uk/about-natre/projects/spirited-arts/introduction/2015-competition/>. Submission of entries, to be considered for an award, must arrive at NATRE on or before 31 July.

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Jewish Award for Interfaith Volunteering

This year's Jewish Volunteering Awards have ten categories, including an Award for Interfaith Volunteering. Nominations are open at www.jvn.org.uk and will close on 25 July. The Awards Ceremony will be held in London on 1 November.

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Faiths Together in Lambeth – call for artwork

Faiths Together in Lambeth is calling out to all artists, amateurs or professionals, to donate artworks on the theme of 'Living Together in Harmony' and welcoming artworks in any medium, with the only limitation being the size of the stand.

All artworks donated will be sold to raise funds for the work of the charity. The theme 'Living Together in Harmony' was selected to highlight the mission statement for the charity, which works to promote religious harmony for the benefit of the public, improving knowledge and facilitating mutual understanding and respect of the beliefs and practices of different religious faiths.

Artwork can be donated by 2 July to Faiths Together in Lambeth, 24 Holmewood Gardens, London SW2 3RS.

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Faith Through a Lens photography competition

Faith Through a Lens is an annual photography competition, linked to Inter Faith Week, held by Congregational and General Insurance. It aims to profile the positive effects of faith within a diverse range of communities. The competition encourages amateur photographers from across the UK to capture what faith means to them. It is funded by Congregational & General Insurance and supported by the Inter Faith Network and Churches Together in England.

This year's competition is now open and will close on 3 October. Entry is only open to amateur photographers and will be judged based on emotional connection, creativity and originality. For further information, visit www.faiththroughalens.co.uk.

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Honours List nominations

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) is keen to ensure that individuals from the full breadth of society who are making a significant contribution to public life are properly recognised through the Honours system. It is particularly keen to

recognise individuals who have contributed to building integrated communities and notes that nominees can come from all levels; being in a junior role is not a barrier to a nomination.

DCLG is holding a series of workshops from July to September at its offices in London giving a brief overview of the nominations process and guidance about how to draft a citation. All nominations must be made on an official citation form and nominees should not be informed that they have been nominated. Citation forms, as well as further information about workshops, can be obtained from integration@communities.gsi.gov.uk.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

Inter Faith Network for the UK - Internship

IFN is offering an opportunity for a 6 month internship to help on projects such as national Inter Faith Week (www.interfaithweek.org) local inter faith support and engagement, the development of materials sharing case studies and good practice, and a range of other projects.

This is a fulltime, paid, internship at the London Living Wage from 15 September 2016 until 15 March 2017. For a copy of the full information and application form, contact Hannah Cassidy at ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

The closing date for receipt of application forms is 5 July.

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Inter Faith Network for the UK - Volunteers

The Inter Faith Network for the UK has regular volunteering opportunities. Further information about these can be found on IFN's website at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/take-part/volunteering-with-ifn>.

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Christian Muslim Forum – Volunteers

Based at its central London office (or at home for online work), the Christian Muslim Forum is looking for talented people of any age who are interested in this expanding area of work and who would like to get some part-time, hands-on experience.

A commitment of two to three months is requested. To apply, send in a brief CV/biography and reasons for wishing to work with the Forum to volunteer@christianmuslimforum.org. Interviews will then be held.

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3FF – Programmes Coordinator (Schools)

3FF is seeking to recruit a Programme Coordinator to establish 3FF’s successful Schools work in Birmingham and the surrounding areas. This is a full time job, based in London with regular travel in and around Birmingham.

Further information including an application form and how to apply can be found at <http://www.3ff.org.uk/jobs/programmes-coordinator-schools.php>. The closing date for applications is 11 July.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Funding websites

Funding Central - <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/default.aspx> - is a free website for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises in England that provides access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, together with tools and resources for supporting organisations to develop sustainable income strategies appropriate to their needs.

Similar websites for funding in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at Funding Scotland - <http://www.fundingscotland.com/> - Wales Council for Voluntary Action - <http://www.wcva.org.uk/funding/search> - and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland - <https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

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Heritage Lottery Fund grants to commemorate First World War

The Heritage Lottery Fund has made an additional £4million of funding available so that more communities can get involved in projects marking the Centenary of the First World War. Projects applying for funding must be able to meet one of a number of successful outcomes based on heritage, people and communities. Grants can be given between £3,000 and £10,000. There is no current deadline for applications.

Further information can be found at <https://www.hlf.org.uk/looking-funding/our-grant-programmes/first-world-war-then-and-now>.

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Near Neighbours grants programme

The Near Neighbours programme offers small grants of between £250 and £5,000, as seed funding for local groups and organisations working to bring together neighbours, and to develop relationships across diverse faiths and ethnicities to improve their communities.

As part of the criteria, projects should:

- Bring together peoples of two or more different faiths and/or ethnicities, to build friendships and develop relationships of trust.
- Work locally. We want to see people who are living very locally (i.e. in the same street, estate or neighbourhood) come together.
- Work sustainably. We want to see long term and natural relationships grow, that will last beyond the period of funding.
- Work to improve the community. We want to see people working to make their communities a better place to live.
- Involve diverse people in planning and implementation. People from more than one faith group and/or ethnicity are involved in planning and implementing the proposal.

The full criteria, information on areas in which the grants are available and information on how to apply can be found at <http://www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours-grants>. For general enquiries, contact near.neighbours@cuf.org.uk.

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Community foundations

Community foundations are local, grant-making organisations to which local community organisations can apply for funding. There are 48 community foundations in the UK, covering Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England. They provide donors with information about local needs, what groups are tackling which issues, and how donations can be strategic and best support the community. A map of community foundations across the UK and how to contact them, can be found at http://ukcommunityfoundations.org/community_foundations/map.

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Small Charities Fundraising Training Programme

The Foundation for Social Improvement is providing free delegate places at fundraising training events for charities throughout 2016. Events are being held in London, Glasgow, Nottingham, Preston and Sheffield

The programme is supported by the Cabinet Office Small Charities Fundraising Training Programme and will provide training opportunities for small charities, from face-to-face training, to intensive one-to-one advice sessions, skilled volunteering matches and webinars. For further information and to sign up for any events, visit <http://www.thefsi.org/services/training/>.

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Comic Relief Stronger Communities grants

Comic Relief's grants programme now has five themes, one of which is 'Stronger Communities'. Grants for the Stronger Communities theme are managed by Local Community Foundations and range in size from £1,000 to £10,000 per year. Priority is given to small, locally-based groups or organisations in areas of disadvantage that have a clear understanding of the needs of their community and are undertaking actions as a means of addressing these needs. Anyone wishing to apply for a Local Communities grant should contact their local community foundation. Further details can be found online at http://ukcommunityfoundations.org/programmes/comic_relief/.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Srebrenica Memorial Week will take place from 10 to 17 July www.srebrenica.org.uk

Peace One Day will take place on 21 September www.peaceoneday.org

Sewa Day will take place on 16 October www.sewaday.org

Week of Prayer for World Peace will take place from 16 to 23 October <http://www.weekofprayerforworldpeace.com/>

One World Week will take place from Sunday 23 to Sunday 30 October www.oneworldweek.org

National Inter Faith Week in England, Wales and Northern Ireland will be an '8 day week' this year taking place from Sunday 13 to Sunday 20 November. See more [above](#). www.interfaithweek.org

Scottish Interfaith Week will also take place from Sunday 13 to Sunday 20 November www.interfaithscotland.org/scottish-interfaith-week/

Mitzvah Day will take place on Sunday 27 November www.mitzvahday.org.uk/

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DIARY DATES

This section includes some of the events taking place around the UK. IFN includes information on diary dates between e-bulletins on its website at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/take-part/events>.

The **St Ethelburga's Centre** is holding an event on Thursday 30 June entitled 'Opening listening: after the Referendum'. Open listening "is a model that enables a diverse community to gather and share perspectives in response to an event of global significance. It allows everyone to speak their truth, to listen and be heard, but without generating argument or assigning judgement." The event is to enable people to share concerns and responses to the result of the EU Referendum. It will be held in the St Ethelburga's Tent in London from 4.30pm to 6pm. For those who wish to stay, the dialogue will be followed by half an hour of prayer and silent meditation. For further information, visit <https://www.stethelburgas.org/civicrm/event/info?reset=1&id=804>.

Salaam Shalom will be hosting its British Muslim and Jewish Art exhibition across Bristol from 3 June to 3 July. There is a programme of visual art, performance and interaction centring on an exhibition of contemporary art by British Muslim and Jewish Artists. For further information, visit www.sharedspacesfestival.co.uk.

Medway Inter Faith Action is holding a 'Walk for Peace' on Saturday 2 July from 10am to 12pm. The festive launch and speeches will take place at Gillingham High Street, opposite Co-operative passage and will finish with speeches at the War Memorial in Rochester High Street and Kundalini Yoga meditation by Sarah March. For further information, call on 07947259910 or visit www.peacewalkmedway.uk.

Bedford Council of Faiths is one of a number of organisations involved in organising a Peace Rally in Bedford town centre on Monday 4 July at 4pm. This will be a celebratory get together to demonstrate that Bedford is proud of the diversity of its residents. It has been organised in the wake of the EU referendum result. For further information, contact the Revd Cass Howes at secretary.bcof@gmail.com.

AREIAC is holding a conference entitled 'RE: 'A Design for Life' on Monday 4 July – Tuesday 5 July. The theme for this year is focussed on reviewing 'RE for Real' with Martha Shaw, Researcher at Goldsmith's University and Co-Author of RE for Real, and Barrie Philips, Business Innovation & Skills HE/FE Prevent Coordinator (Wales) and Getting on Together Project Director. It will also be exploring the challenges for young people in Islamic communities. There are a range of workshops relating to these themes and other aspects of RE. There is a fee to attend. This is being held at the Village Hotel, Langdon Rd, Swansea

SA1 8QY. Booking is essential. To book a place or for further information, visit <http://www.arei.ac.org.uk/public/conf2016.html>.

York Interfaith Group holds meetings on the first Tuesday of each month. The next meeting is on Tuesday 5 July at 7.30pm. The speakers will be Maurice Vassier (Chair), Abid Salik, and Jerry Karlin. There will be a discussion on Faiths and the Status of Animals: husbandry, conservation, and food. This is being held at the York Medical Society Rooms, 23 Stonegate, York, YO1 8AW. For further information, email Mark Cosens on yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com.

FaithAction is holding an event on Thursday 7 July entitled 'How can we create dementia-friendly places of worship?'. The event takes place from 1pm to 3pm at the Nishkam Centre in Birmingham and further details, including booking, can be found at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/how-can-we-create-dementia-friendly-places-of-worship-registration-26076696100?aff=event>.

Concord Leeds Interfaith Fellowship is holding a 'Walk of Friendship' on Saturday 9 July from 9.45am to 1pm. The walk will commence at the Quaker Meeting House, Woodhouse Lane, LS2 9DX, and end with lunch at the Hindu Mandir. For further information, contact John Summerwill on 01132697895 or email membership@concord-leeds.org.uk.

Events will be taking place throughout the UK to mark **Srebrenica Memorial Week** from Sunday 10 July to Sunday 17 July. The theme for this year's Remembering Srebrenica Week, marking the 21st anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide, will be '21: Coming of Age – Time to Act' with a particular focus on inspiring young people to challenge hatred and create a better future. For further information, visit www.srebrenica.org.uk.

Bournemouth CCJ is holding an event entitled 'Interfaith Conversations Serving the Common Good' on Sunday 10 July at 3pm. The speaker will be the Right Reverend Dr Michael Iprgrave OBE, Bishop of Lichfield, Chair of CCJ. Refreshments will be provided. There is a cost to attend. This is being held at the Menorah Suite, Murray Muscat Centre, Glen Fern Road, Bournemouth, BH1 1PW. For further information, call on 0203 515 3003 or visit <http://www.ccj.org.uk/contact/>.

Faith Action in partnership with the **University of Bristol** and **Public Spirit** is holding a 'Faith and Finance' Fair on Monday 11 July from 1.15pm to 5pm. The fair will bring together faith-based and community organisations, researchers and others to share information that can help shape delivery locally. A series of policy considerations and suggestions will be collected during the fair and presented to the All-Party Parliamentary group on Faith and Society. Booking is essential – lunch provided to those who book a place. This is being held at the Main Hall, Woburn House, London WC1H 9HQ. To book a place or for further information, contact Katya Braginskaia on 0117 331 0477 or email katya.braginskaia@bristol.ac.uk.

Building Bridges in Burnley is holding a Celebration week from Sunday 10 July to Sunday 17 July. There are a range of events open to all including a Faith Walk, a Young People's

event, the AGM, an 'In the Park' family event, a vigil of silent prayer and a Share Food Share Faith event. For a full list of events, visit <https://bbburnley.co.uk/>. For further information, contact Colin Wills on colin@wills77.plus or call him on 01282 436665.

The **London Inter Faith Centre** is organising an event, in response to the EU Referendum result, on Tuesday 12 July for local Christian, Jewish and Muslim leaders to meet and talk about Islamophobia and anti-Semitism. This is a by invitation event. For further information, contact, the Revd Laurence Hillel at laurence.hillel@londoninterfaith.org.uk.

Elmbridge Multi Faith Forum is holding its AGM on Tuesday 12 July at 7pm. The AGM will be followed by refreshments and brief presentations by representatives of Christian, Hindu, Jewish and Muslim religions on practices surrounding the birth of a child and his or her introduction to faith. There will be an opportunity for questions and discussion. This is being held at the EMF Centre, Mercer Close, Thames Ditton, KT7 0BS. For further information, visit www.elmbridgemultifaith.org.uk/.

Nottingham Inter Faith Council is holding a stall at the 'Summer Fair' organised by Broxtowe Celebration Group on Saturday 16 July. This is an all-day event, being held from 11am to 4pm. All are welcome. The fair is being held at the Roundhill School, Foster Ave, Nottingham, Beeston NG9 1AE. For further information, call on 07445893 641 or email via <http://www.interfaithnottingham.org.uk/formmail/>.

Marylebone Scriptural Reasoning is holding an event focused on Asylum and Refugees on Thursday 21 July from 6pm to 8.30pm. The speakers will be Reverend Val Reid from Hind St, Rabbi Natan Levy from the Board of Deputies of British Jews and a Muslim speaker. Kosher/halal refreshments will be provided, as will text packs. For further information, visit <http://www.wls.org.uk/event/marylebone-scriptural-reasoning-3/>. Spaces are limited so pre-booking is essential at marylebonesr@gmail.com.

Guildford and Godalming Interfaith Forum is holding an Interfaith Walk and Talk on Thursday 21 July from 7pm to 9.30pm. There will be visits to the outside of the Undercroft on the High Street, St Catherine's URC Church, St Nicholas school and the English Orthodox church at the Mount Cemetery on route. Accommodations will be made for those who find walking/steps difficult. The walk will start at the Friends Meeting House, 3 Ward Street, Guildford, GU1 4LH and end at St Nicholas Church. For more information, contact Bernard Jones on 01483424257, or email Tony.Oakden@cofeguildford.org.uk.

Crawley Interfaith Network is holding a talk entitled 'Defining Divine in Hinduism' on Friday 22 July from 7pm to 9pm. The speaker will be Dhruv Chhatralia, an international corporate lawyer and author. The event is being held at the Longley Room, The Orchard, 1-2 Gleneagles Court, Brighton Road, Crawley, RH10 6AD. For further information, contact Iyad Daoud on contact@crawleyinterfaith.net or call 01293 883372.

Bolton Interfaith Council is holding an 'Interfaith Cricket' Tournament on Saturday 23 July. All are invited to take part in this family-community event open to everyone. There will be young and senior matches taking place at Deane & Derby Cricket Ground,

Sunnyside Park, Chelsea Road, Bolton, BL3 3BA. For further information, contact Chan Parmar on 01204 546 110 or email on chan@boltoninterfaithcouncil.org.uk.

Faiths Together in Croydon is hosting an inter faith event in Kemnal Park in Chislehurst, Kent, on Saturday 30 July. The event runs from 12 noon until 3pm and will include refreshments, speakers and a tour of the park. For further information and to RSVP, contact asif.hassanali@kemnalpark.org or telephone 020 8300 9790 or 07795 325 446.

Bolton Interfaith Council is supporting an event entitled 'Changing faces of our communities' on Saturday 6 August. This is a diverse event involving local communities and schools in the area. There will be henna and face painting; sari wearing; Bollywood dancing; fashion show; singing and much more. Ambassadors and volunteer support is sought. This is taking place at St Andrews Methodist Church, Tonge Moor Road, Bolton, BL2 3BJ. For further information, contact Chan Parmar on 01204 546 110 or email on chan@boltoninterfaithcouncil.org.uk.

Concord Leeds Interfaith Fellowship is holding its 40th Anniversary Dinner on Thursday 11 August at 6pm. The guest speaker will be the former MP John Battle. The dinner is being held at Guru Nanak NNSJ Gurdwara, 78 Lady Pit Lane, Leeds LS11 6DP. Advance booking is essential, contact John Summerwill on 01132697895 or email on membership@concord-leeds.org.uk.

Interfaith Scotland's Annual Networking Seminar for local interfaith groups will take place on Monday 22 August at Interfaith Scotland's Dialogue Centre at Flemington House in Glasgow. For further information and to book a place, contact admin@interfaithscotland.org.

Elmbridge Multi Faith Forum is holding an event entitled 'Difficult Relationships: Muslims in Germany Today and in the Past' on Tuesday 23 August at 7pm. The evening will look into German attitudes to Islam and the Middle East in the 19th, 20th and 21st Centuries. The discussion is being led by Professor James Hodgkinson of Warwick University. This is being held at the EMF Centre, Mercer Close, Thames Ditton, KT7 0BS. For further information, visit www.elmbridgemultifaith.org.uk/.

Barnet Multi Faith Forum is holding a celebration event with the **Barnet Council, Community Barnet, The Unity of Faiths Foundation, Saracens, JVN** and **Groundwork** on Monday 29 August. The event entitled 'Celebration Barnet Unity in the Community' will take place from 12pm to 6pm. There will be a festival of music, dance, sport, food and culture to promote the positive nature of faith organisation belief and practices and an enhanced understanding of Faith in the Community. This will be held at the Allianz Stadium, Greenlands Lane, Hendon, London NW4 1RL. For further information, visit www.theunityoffaiths.org or email info@barnetmultifaithforum.org.

South East England Faiths Forum is holding a day conference and AGM entitled 'Living with Difference – Religion in a Diverse Society' on Thursday 1 September from 10am to 5pm. The conference will be looking at the implications of the Butler-Sloss report into 'The

Place of Belief and Faith in British Society', which "sets out recommendations for improving and carrying forward the relationship of Britain's Faith and Belief communities with Civic Society". There is a fee to attend. A vegan buffet lunch and refreshments during the day will be provided. For further information or to register, email seeffchair@gmail.com or call on 01865512126, or visit www.se-faithforum.net.

Interfaith Scotland will be holding a networking seminar for women's inter faith groups in Scotland on Thursday 15 September at Interfaith Scotland's Dialogue Centre at Flemington House in Glasgow. For further information and to book a place, contact frances@interfaithscotland.org.

St Philip's Centre is holding a seminar on Saturday 17 September from 9.30am to 4pm on Islam & Christian-Muslim Engagement. The seminar is being led by The Revd Dr Tom Wilson, Director of St Philip's Centre, and Mr Dilwar Hussain, Chair of New Horizons in British Islam. Booking is essential as numbers are limited and places will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. Participants are invited to bring in their own lunch. This is being held at St Philip's Centre, 2A Stoughton Drive North, Leicester LE5 5UB. For further information or to register, email at admin@stphilipscentre.co.uk or call 0116 2733459.

Elmbridge Multi Faith Forum and **Surrey Faith Links** are holding an event entitled 'Faith and Inner Peace' on Monday 19 September at 7pm. The event aims to enable people to learn about faith perspectives on mental health and how faith communities help people suffering from mental health. The speakers are Suzette Jones, Ujala Ilyas, Kruawan Sookcharoen, Jennifer Jankel and Dr Phil Ferreira-Lay. Charities working with people suffering from mental health illnesses who would like a stall are suggested to get in touch. For further information, contact Kauser Akhtar on Kauser.Akhtar@cofeguildford.org.uk.

Crawley Interfaith Network is holding a talk entitled 'My Faith as a Christian Jew' on Friday 23 September from 7pm to 9pm. The speaker will be Canon Doris Staniford, the first female Church of England priest in Crawley, Chaplain at the Crawley Hospital & St Catherine's Hospice, and Priest at St Albans Church, Gossops Green till 2012. For further information, contact Iyad Daoud on contact@crawleyinterfaith.net or call on 01293 883372.

The **World Congress of Faiths** is marking its 80th Anniversary with an academic conference on 'Religious pluralism and interfaith: learning for the future' to be held on Friday 23 September in Emmanuel College, Cambridge. Discussion will cover themes including the variety of responses to the growth of religious pluralism in the UK and the role of inter faith dialogue in society; and will be led by a range of speakers including: Professor Chris Baker, William Temple Professor of Religion and Public Life, University of Chester; Dr Ankur Barua, Director of Cambridge Inter-Faith Programme; Rabbi Tony Bayfield, Professor of Jewish Theology, Leo Baeck College; Professor Ursula King, inter faith scholar and feminist theologian; and Revd Dr Alan Race, author, theologian and Chair of WCF. For booking forms and enquiries email jenny@worldfaiths.org or call on 01223 781781; or visit www.worldfaiths.org/conference-2016.

Woking People of Faith is holding an Annual International Day of Peace event on Saturday 24 September from 11am to 12pm. Primary school children will be taking part in a poster or poem competition. This is being held at Mercia Walk, Woking, Surrey GU21 6XS. For further information, contact Garry Shore on coordinator@wpof.org.uk or visit www.wpof.org.uk.

Herefordshire Interfaith Group is holding an International Peace Day Service on Sunday 25 September. This will be held at the Hereford Cathedral, 5 College Cloisters, Cathedral Close, Hereford HR1 2NG. For further information, contact the Chairman, Venerable Tenzin Choesang on 01568 750082 or email June@the-hermit-online.co.uk.

Concord Leeds Interfaith Fellowship is holding a talk on 'Pagan and Interfaith' on Monday 26 September at 7.30pm. The speaker will be Prudence Jones, Interfaith liaison officer of the Pagan Federation, and co-author of *A History of Pagan Europe*'. This is being held at the Friends' Meeting House, Woodhouse Lane, 188 Woodhouse Lane, Leeds LS2 9DX. For further information, contact John Summerwill on 01132697895 or email on membership@concord-leeds.org.uk.

For more information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org.uk

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **13 August** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer: Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH
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IFN e-bulletin

August/September 2016

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **14 October** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and projects and future events. If your organisation distributes a programme, newsletter or e-bulletin, please add ifnet@interfaith.org.uk to your mailing list.

Disclaimer: Information in this e-bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Increasingly, IFN is making use of social media, in particular Twitter (www.twitter.com/IFNetUK) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/IFNetUK).

Please take a moment to 'follow' and 'like' IFN and also Inter Faith Week (www.twitter.com/IFWeek and www.facebook.com/IFWeek) and also check in with the IFN website to see new items, which are added on a regular basis.

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

Faith and inter faith responses to events in France and elsewhere

Attacks in a number of places around the world have continued to reverberate here.

A copy of the statement made by IFN's Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs in response to the Bastille Day attack in Nice on 14 July can be seen at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/statements-and-messages/387-bastille-day-attack-in-nice>. Many faith and inter faith groups in the UK responded to that attack and also to the murder of Fr Jacques Hamel, a Catholic Priest, during Mass in Normandy on 26 July. A number of the responses to the attack on Fr Hamel, including a message to member bodies from IFN's Co-Chairs, can be found at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/news>.

In the context of such impacts and also other recent events, the All Party Parliamentary Group of Faith and Society issued, in July, a 'Statement of Hope'. This can be found at <http://www.faihandsociety.org/news/2016/07/statement-of-hope/>.

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Continuing work with refugees

The Government has launched a new scheme under which community and faith groups will be able to sponsor Syrian refugee families who are being resettled in the UK. Further information about this can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/community-sponsorship-scheme-launched-for-refugees-in-the-uk>. The scheme was launched by the Home Secretary and the Archbishop of Canterbury at Lambeth Palace in July. Guidance for prospective sponsors can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/538794/Full-Community-Sponsorship-guidance-for-prospective-sponsors.pdf.

An online service has also been set up by the Government at <https://www.gov.uk/help-refugees>. This enables people to note any support that they are able to provide to refugees, such as housing, fostering or donations of goods such as clothes and toys. It is initially being piloted in 9 local authorities and has been designed to enable local

authorities to specify the type of donations they most require to support refugees in their area.

Faith and inter faith groups around the country are continuing to work to support refugees through projects, such as the Cooking Together initiative in Nottingham. This is a programme of the Rainbow Project, funded by a grant from Near Neighbours, which is aimed at improving self-confidence, employability and health and wellbeing. The initiative provides refugees and asylum-seekers with Level 2 Food Safety training as well as healthy cooking skills and nutritional and healthy eating advice. Upon completion of the training, participants are offered work experience in preparing, cooking and facilitating weekly meals at various kitchens and communities across the city. More information can be found at <http://www.nottinghampost.com/cooking-up-a-future-for-nottingham-s-asylum-seekers-and-refugees/story-29655727-detail/story.html#AILRkJeeTFW6EUFr.99>

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New Communities Minister with responsibility for faith

In July Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth was appointed Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Communities and Local Government, in place of Baroness Williams of Trafford who has now moved to a role in the Home Office.

Lord Bourne is now the Minister responsible for faith and integration and community cohesion. At the beginning of August he visited a number of places of worship in London including Acton Masjid, the Shree Ram Mandir in Southall, Hampstead Synagogue, St James' Church in Hampstead, Our Lady of Lourdes Roman Catholic Church in Acton, the Buddhist Society, the Sri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara in Southall, the Jain Temple at Potters Bar and the Zoroastrian Centre in Harrow. Lord Bourne wrote about these visits and the urgency of increasing religious understanding and respect on his blog at <http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/my-faith-tour-day/>.

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Commission on RE

The Religious Education Council for England and Wales launched an independent Commission on RE on 8 July.

The Commission has a remit to review the legal, education and policy frameworks for religious education in all primary schools, secondary schools and further education colleges in England. Its tasks are to:

- consider the nature, purposes, and scope of religious education;
- identify the enabling factors that currently promote high quality RE, and the barriers that currently limit it;

- identify what changes are needed to ensure the highest quality provision of RE; and
- ensure that recommendations focus on realistic and specific proposals aimed at both immediate and long-term implementation in the context of continuing educational reform.

Further information about the Commission, including its members, can be found at <http://religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/commission-on-re/news/2016-07-08/commission-on-re-press-release>.

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APPG report on Improving Religious Literacy

The All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Religious Education published in July a report entitled 'Improving Religious Literacy: A Contribution to the Debate'. This was the fruit of its inquiry over 5 months which received evidence from teachers, academics, faith groups, faith leaders and other individuals.

The APPG's next event in the Autumn, entitled 'From Improving to Including: Mainstreaming Religious Literacy', will celebrate the launch of the report and will also seek to look forward by discussing the next steps for Parliament, Government, civil society and the RE community in improving religious literacy.

A digital copy of the full report and a summary can be accessed at [http://www.fionabruce.mp/resources/APPG-on-RE-%E2%80%93-Improving-Religious-Literacy-\(full-report\).pdf](http://www.fionabruce.mp/resources/APPG-on-RE-%E2%80%93-Improving-Religious-Literacy-(full-report).pdf) and www.fionabruce.mp/resources/Summary.pdf.

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Report on Public Faith and Finance

The Centre for the Study of Ethnicity and Citizenship and Public Spirit, both at the University of Bristol, have, with the support of the Barrow Cadbury Trust, published a report entitled 'Public Faith and Finance: Faith Responses to the Financial Crisis'.

The report is based on research carried out by Dr Therese O'Toole and Dr Ekaterina Braginskaia. It considers how, in a context of welfare cuts and what it describes as increasing financial exclusion, faith organisations are plugging the gaps and also setting out alternative and often innovative approaches to welfare and economic justice.

The report can be downloaded at <http://www.publicspirit.org.uk/assets/PubFaithFin-Report-Final.pdf> and a summary at <http://www.publicspirit.org.uk/assets/PubFaithFin-Summary.pdf>.

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Home Affairs Committee inquiry into hate crime

The Home Affairs Select Committee is accepting written submissions for its inquiry into ‘Hate crimes and its violent consequences’ until September 1, 2016. The inquiry will assess “how well the current system of prevention and prosecution is functioning, the influence of the internet and the role of community and mental health services.”

Further information and submission instructions can be found at <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/home-affairs-committee/inquiries/parliament-2015/inquiry7/>

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Equality and Human Rights Commission research reports

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has published two new research reports (numbers 101 and 102). The first, ‘Prejudice and Unlawful Behaviour: Exploring Levers for Change’, has chapters on each of the different protected characteristics, as well as a section on ‘intersectionalities’. The section on Religion and Belief (chapter 6) makes a number of observations about the nature of prejudice and its relationships with behaviour. It also notes that “interventions focusing on education through [inter-religion] contact may provide a means of reducing prejudice and discrimination based on religion.” The full report can be found at

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/research-report-101-prejudice-and-unlawful-behaviour.pdf>

The second, ‘Causes and Motivations of Hate Crime’, draws on evidence to explore the causes and motivations of Hate Crime linked to the five protected characteristics currently protected by hate crime law. It can be found at

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/research-report-102-causes-and-motivations-of-hate-crime.pdf>

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Race Equality Foundation report calling for national strategy on race and religious hate crime

The Race Equality Foundation has published a report calling for a national strategy to address rising race and religious hate crime in the aftermath of hate crimes following the EU Referendum. The report can be found at

<http://www.raceequalityfoundation.org.uk/resources/downloads/calling-national-strategy-race-and-religious-hate-crime-england-wales> and a supporting infographic at http://www.raceequalityfoundation.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/downloads/Infographic%20-%20Racist%20and%20religiously%20motivated%20incidents%20and%20hate%20crimes_0.pdf

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Home Affairs Committee report on radicalisation

The House of Commons Home Affairs Select Committee has published a report on 'Radicalisation: the counter-narrative and identifying the tipping point'. The report, which awaits Government response, comes out of the Committee's counter extremism inquiry. The Report makes wide-ranging recommendations concerning Government policy, policing and security services, the role of media and technology companies. It raises concerns about a number of specific policy areas, including Prevent. The report can be found at

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmhaff/135/135.pdf>

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IFN meeting for local inter faith practitioners

IFN held a day event for local inter faith practitioners in Coventry on 28 July. This event was for practitioners from local inter faith groups anywhere in the UK to share their experiences, discuss issues of common interest and concern and have focused learning opportunities about practical aspects of developing successful inter faith programmes.

Mehru Fitter MBE, of Coventry Multi Faith Forum, welcomed participants to Coventry. The Rt Revd Richard Atkinson OBE, Co-Chair of IFN, spoke about how local inter faith organisations are a vital resource in our communities; Narendra Waghela of Leicester Council of Faiths and an IFN Trustee gave a picture of how Leicester came together in the days following the EU Referendum outcome; Sally Sealey OBE, Senior Policy Adviser on Hate Crime, Integration and Faith Directorate, Department for Communities and Local Government, spoke about how local inter faith groups can respond to tensions and hate crime and encourage unity; Mohamed Omar, Project Officer at Interfaith Glasgow gave an overview of the Weekend Club set up by Interfaith Glasgow as their response to the social isolation experienced by asylum seekers, refugees and new migrants; and Rabbi Dr Robert Ash from Preston Faiths Forum talked about how the Forum had been using week long programmes for Inter Faith Week and other routes to expand involvement in inter faith activity in Preston. Reflections on themes of the day were offered by the Revd Andy

Williams of Faiths Network For Manchester, Sean Finlay of Wisbech Interfaith Forum and Jaskiran Kaur Mehmi of Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship.

Six workshops took place during the day, with participants each taking part in two of these. The workshop topics were 'Working for united communities - tackling prejudice, tensions and hate crime' with opening reflections from Alistair Beattie and Duncan Struthers of Bristol Multi Faith Forum; 'Working in partnership for the common good' with opening reflections from Dr Peter Rookes of Birmingham Council of Faiths; 'Religious literacy' with opening reflections from Jatinder Singh Birdi of Warwick District Faiths Forum and Pat Stevens of Harrow Interfaith; 'Change and opportunity' with opening reflections from Reynold Rosenberg and Valerie Skottowe of Welwyn Hatfield Interfaith Group and Canon Andrew Pratt of Lancashire Forum of Faiths. There were also workshops on Social Media run by Social B and on Funding and resourcing by Coventry Voluntary Action.

In 2015 IFN held two day events in Sheffield and London for local inter faith practitioners. Reports from those events can be found at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/publications/all-publications/all-publications>. A report on the Coventry event is also being produced.

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Beaches – safety and attire

This summer has seen a number of deaths and narrow escapes along Britain's coastline. People from faith groups in urban areas often go for day trips to the beach, either as faith groups or on inter faith outings. The responsibility for safety on individual beaches is devolved to local councils but the NHS has a page on beach safety on its website - <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Healthyholidays/Pages/Beachsafety.aspx> and there are other helpful short guidelines such as <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-37152592>.

Beach attire has also been in the news recently with bans in some French cities of the 'burkini'. *The Telegraph* newspaper reported on 26 August that a spokesperson for the Government Equalities Office said: "The Government sees no need for measures restricting what people can wear in public places" and that "We support the rights of individuals in keeping with Britain's tradition of freedom and fairness." The full article can be found at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/08/26/britain-will-not-introduce-a-ban-on-women-wearing-burkinis-says/>.

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

Inter Faith Week and Scottish Interfaith Week

Inter Faith Week 2016 runs from Sunday 13 to Sunday 20 November.

The activity registration form is now live on the Inter Faith Week website. The map and other event lists will go live soon. If you are holding an activity linked to the Week, please do take a moment to register it on the website: www.interfaithweek.org/submit. Registering and including detail about activities helps IFN to give them profile, and also to tell the story of the Week and continue to grow its impact.

You can also connect with the Week on Twitter at www.twitter.com/IFWeek and Facebook at www.facebook.com/IFWeek. We will be using the hashtag #IFWeek again.

If you are looking for activity ideas, the Inter Faith Week toolkit can be downloaded from www.interfaithweek.org/toolkit and hard copies are available on request.

Scottish Interfaith Week will also run from 13 to 20 November. It is led by Interfaith Scotland. Scottish Interfaith Week events will also be listed on the Inter Faith Week website this year. For further information, visit <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/scottish-interfaith-week/>.

As noted [below](#), grants are available for Inter Faith Week projects from the Inter Faith Youth Trust.

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More Tea Less Hate

Faith and inter faith groups are among those joining in a 'More Tea Less Hate' tea party across the August Bank Holiday Weekend -

<https://worryingsigns.com/moretealesshate/your-tea-party/>.

Worrying Signs is a group that was set up following the rise in hate crime after the outcome of the EU Referendum. Further information about its work is at <https://worryingsigns.com/>.

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One World Week

The theme for this year's One World Week is 'Including You – Acting Together for One World in Peace'. It was conceived in response to reactions to terrorist attacks and to the arrival of refugees in Europe over the last couple of years.

The OWW website already has some useful ideas and resources including guidelines for interpreting the theme and ideas on involving some different organisations. There are also copies of the 2016 leaflet and poster.

Further information can be found at www.oneworldweek.org or by emailing oww@oneworldweek.org.

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FoodCycle faith partners

FoodCycle is a national charity which takes surplus food from supermarkets and cooks healthy, three-course meals for vulnerable people. For example, it currently runs seven projects in London which have served over 5,000 meals in the last six months to some of London's most vulnerable individuals: those who are homeless, who have mental health issues, are living with HIV or who have disabilities.

A number of its projects are run at or in collaboration with centres of faith. For further information, visit <http://foodcycle.org.uk/get-stuck-in/partner-with-us/> or contact franchise@foodcycle.org.uk or 020 7729 2775.

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Big Lunch Extras Community Camp

Many faith communities and inter faith groups took part in this year's Big Lunch in June. The organisers behind the Lunch know that afterwards many people involved start thinking more about projects or initiatives for helping their local communities or their environment. The Big Lunch is therefore running a Big Lunch Extras Community Camp for three days in Cornwall from 23 to 26 September for people at the start of their journey in setting up a community initiative, and for those who want to take existing projects to the next level. The Camp offers a mix of practical activities, facilitated sessions and networking opportunities with like-minded people.

Applications are currently open for this year's camp. The focus this year will be on food and community. For further information, visit <http://www.biglunchextras.com/events/feeding-community-spirit-future-food-community-0%20>.

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Nisa-Nashim

Nisa-Nashim is a Jewish-Muslim Women's national network, focusing on projects in 4 key areas - business, culture, social action and sports and well-being. Since it began last year, branches have begun in different parts of the UK - <http://www.nisanashim.org/get-involved/local-groups/>.

Events across the Summer have included family picnics, sports tournaments, garden parties and evening walks. As well as the local groups, it is also in the process of launching a group of young professionals in the City of London and a book group. It will be holding its first National Conference on 11 December. The day will feature a range of speakers and workshops and aims to create connections, build confidence and encourage more women to take part. The organisers would be pleased to hear from anyone with ideas for the day or who would like to get involved. For further information, contact leah.warren@bod.org.uk.

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Young Ambassadors for RE

The Religious Education Council for England and Wales brought together six teams of Young Ambassadors for RE in July to present to a conference on different worldviews they had been researching. A full write-up on the day can be found at <http://religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/young-ambassadors/news/2016-06-14/young-ambassadors-conference-report-by-amery-hill-school>

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Remembering World War One soldiers of all faiths

Soldiers from many faith backgrounds fought during World War One and a number of initiatives have been set up to profile these during the centenary commemorations.

The India 1914 website is part of the 'Remembering Indian Soldiers' project supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the GoldenTours Foundation. The project is looking at Indian soldiers from all communities and regions regardless of their race or religion. One of its primary aims is to share the heritage with the various ethnic communities, in particular with Buddhist, Hindu, Jain and Zoroastrian communities in the UK. In September a symposium took place in the Houses of Parliament entitled 'The Meeting of the Minds – Reconnect', which was attended by academics, presenters, and historians. A further symposium is planned for October. More information about the project can be found at <http://www.india1914.com/>.

The Forgotten Heroes 14-19 Foundation is a non-profit, non-governmental, non-political, non-religious organisation, which "hopes to foster dialogues which are truly transnational, multicultural and interfaith, between peoples of different nations, religions, languages

and identities, with the aim of finding a common humanity based on universal values”. The Foundation has been researching how soldiers from different religious backgrounds fought united, side-by-side during World War One; sharing their experiences in accommodating each other’s cultures, music, gastronomy and religious practices, despite the difficult conditions in the trenches. Further information is at <https://forgottenheroes1419.wordpress.com/> and <https://www.facebook.com/FHF1419/>.

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

Religious Literacy

IFN has added a new section to its website, entitled ‘Learning together’, which includes information about the contours of Religious Education provision in the UK, including information about different types of schools and about SACREs. It can be found at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/uk-activity/learning-together>.

Information about a Religious Literacy Partnership, which was founded last year “to meet the increasing demand for better understanding of religion in the private and public sector and society at large”, can be found at <https://religiousliteracy.org/>.

The Religious Literacy Leadership Programme is a partnership between the Faiths & Civil Society Unit at Goldsmiths, University of London and the Cambridge Inter-Faith Programme at the University of Cambridge. It is funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England. Further information can be found at <http://religiousliteracyhe.org/about/#.V3PpfdlrLGI>.

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Faith Network for Manchester Report

The Faith Network for Manchester (FN4M) has launched a report entitled ‘Understanding Needs and Improving Services for Minority Communities in Manchester’.

The findings of the report covered the following 5 themes: Demographics; Worries and Needs; Demographic Change; Racism; and Barriers to Accessing Services. It concludes with 24 recommendations for Statutory Services, Training and Development, Faith and Voluntary Sector Innovation, FN4M and Further Research. The report is based on the responses of 312 people in to a questionnaire survey carried out last year in partnership with two other organisations, the Women’s Solidarity Forum and Saheli, as part of research towards which FN4M received funding from the Equalities Programme of the City Council. It presents a picture of needs of different communities in Manchester; views on

the City's changing demographic make-up; an understanding of the issues that impact on different groups; and perspectives on why BME women do, or do not, access specialist services. The latter issue will be covered in more detail in a separate report being developed by research partners. It also makes recommendations on improving community relations, with a view to influencing service design and delivery in Manchester City.

Electronic copies of the full report are available on request from Faith Network for Manchester. For further information contact mail@fn4m.org or telephone 0161 833 8822.

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Faith at the end of Life

Public Health England's resource on 'Faith at the end of Life' aims to help frontline professionals and providers working in community settings and commissioners maintain a holistic approach to the people dying, caring or bereaved.

It provides information to help ensure that commissioning and delivery of services and practice takes account of spiritual needs of six faith groups in England and remains appropriate to the community setting in which they work. The resource can be downloaded at

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/496231/Faith_at_end_of_life_-_a_resource.pdf

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Senior Faith Leadership Programme

The Cambridge Inter-Faith Programme is now accepting applications for its next Senior Faith Leadership Programme, taking place in January 2017. Further information about the programme can be found at

<http://www.interfaith.cam.ac.uk/publiceducationprojects/SFLP/sflp>.

The closing date for registrations is 1 November. Guidelines on how to apply can be found at <http://www.interfaith.cam.ac.uk/publiceducationprojects/SFLP/Howtoapplyforsflp>.

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Prevent Training

The Multi Faith Centre at the University of Derby is running a series of one day training workshops on the 'Prevent' policy. The workshops are designed for those involved in education, statutory bodies or community and voluntary sector groups. They will explore

questions of risk and threat, vulnerability, susceptibility, safeguarding and the process of radicalisation. There is now a statutory duty attached to Prevent which the training will examine for the benefit of public, private and community and voluntary sectors.

Bookings are now being taken for dates from September through to March. For further information, contact mfc@derby.ac.uk.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS, AND NOMINATIONS

House of Lords Call for Evidence on charity sector sustainability

In May this year a House of Lords Select Committee on Charities was established to consider issues relating to sustaining the charity sector and the challenges of charity governance. The Select Committee has now published a Call for Evidence.

The Committee is looking to understand the pressures faced across the sector by charities. Recommendations will be made to the UK Government, and to others, which the Committee hopes will help ease these pressures, and make sure that the charitable sector in England and Wales is sustainable for many years to come. The Committee considers sustainability to be charities having the appropriate resources available to them to meet their charitable purposes. As the regulation of charities is a devolved matter in Northern Ireland and Scotland, the Committee will be focusing its inquiry on the experiences of charities in England and Wales. It also, however, wants to learn about the experience of charities in Northern Ireland and Scotland, as well as in other countries.

The inquiry is intended to be an opportunity to engage positively with charities and the voluntary sector. The Committee is looking for examples of best practice, innovation and ideas to bring the sector together to make sure that it can thrive. Further information on the Call for Evidence, including how to respond, can be found at <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/lords-select/charities-committee/news-parliament-2015/call-for-evidence/>. The deadline for responses is 5 September.

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FaithAction survey on out of hospital care

FaithAction is researching the role that the faith sector plays in what the health system calls 'out of hospital care'. This includes every kind of care that takes place outside of hospitals. In particular this means social care or support that takes pressure off hospitals – either because it prevents people from needing hospital care in the first place, or because it supports their transition from hospital to the community. This could be formal

types of care such as residential social care or very informal types of care such as befriending, ‘dementia cafés’ and help with shopping.

For further information and to complete the short survey, contact Faith Action on 0845 094 6350, or email rodie.garlan@faithaction.net.

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Westminster Community Cohesion Commission

Westminster City Council has launched a Community Cohesion Commission to better understand cohesion in Westminster and how to address the possible root causes of radicalisation and other related issues. The Commission will be conducting a review of Westminster City Council's and partners' policies and practices relating to community cohesion and a full report on the commission's findings will be published in November.

There is a dedicated public page where anyone can contribute their thoughts and views on community cohesion. This includes space to include stories or examples of work which support community cohesion. This can be found at <https://openforum.westminster.gov.uk/community-cohesion-commission>.

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Faith Through a Lens photography competition

Faith Through a Lens is an annual photography competition, linked to Inter Faith Week, held by Congregational and General Insurance with the Inter Faith Network for the UK and Churches Together in England. It aims to profile the positive effects of faith within a diverse range of communities. The competition encourages amateur photographers from across the UK to capture what faith means to them

The closing date for this year’s entries is 3 October. Entry is only open to amateur photographers and will be judged based on emotional connection, creativity and originality. For further information, visit www.faiththroughalens.co.uk.

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The Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service

In 2002, to celebrate HM The Queen's Golden Jubilee, the Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service (QAVS) was established. The Award acknowledges outstanding work undertaken by voluntary groups in their own communities, recognising commitment, dedication and

unselfishness, resulting in public service for the benefit of others, normally of a social, welfare, economic or environmental nature.

Any UK based group, consisting of two or more volunteers, can be nominated, so long as they have been in existence, carrying out the same voluntary work, for at least three years. The group must be nominated by an external person who has first-hand knowledge of the voluntary organisation and of the beneficial work undertaken; and two other people prepared to support the nomination in writing.

Award recipients are entitled to use the Queen's Award emblem on their website, stationary and other printed material. It is a benchmark of outstanding achievement in the voluntary sector.

Nominations must be submitted online by 30 September in any year for consideration at the next meeting of the Awards Panel. Details, including how to register in order to proceed, can be found at <https://qavs.direct.gov.uk/>.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

Inter Faith Network for the UK - Volunteers and interns

The Inter Faith Network for the UK has regular volunteering opportunities and occasional internships. Further information about these can be found on IFN's website.

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3FF - Internships

3FF is seeking to recruit six people to its Internship Programme for the following roles: Admin, Operations and Volunteer Management; Intercultural Arts; Education and Schools; Fundraising and Development; Political Leadership (Parliamentors); and Media and Communications.

Further information including how to apply can be found at <http://www.3ff.org.uk/interns/>. The closing time for applications is 9am on 29 August.

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University of Aberdeen – Student Inter-faith Co-ordinator

The University of Aberdeen is seeking to recruit a part time Student Inter-faith Co-ordinator to work as part of the Multi-Faith Chaplaincy team. The Student Inter-faith Co-ordinator will work with the different faith societies and faiths represented within the University of Aberdeen community, helping the Multi-faith Chaplaincy to promote and develop good relationships and dialogue between the different faith groups.

Further information including how to apply can be found at <https://www.abdnjobs.co.uk/vacancy/interfaith-coordinator-part-time-273531.html>. The closing date for applications is 7 September.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Inter Faith Week grants

The Interfaith Youth Trust has announced that it will again be making available a special programme of grants for Inter Faith Week this year.

Grants are awarded for proposals “for inter faith activities by children and young people from Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and other faiths and those of no formal faith in understanding and co-operation”. The age range for young people is 11-25 years. Priority will be given to projects which:

- Actively involve young people in planning, running, and evaluation of the project.
- Promote positive action, ie young people from different backgrounds coming together to address shared problems like improving green spaces.
- Are run by non-statutory organisations, such as youth clubs, scout/guide groups, local voluntary and community organisations.

Completed applications must be received by email by 9 September.

Further information on eligibility and the application form are online at <http://www.ifyouthtrust.org.uk/>.

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Near Neighbours grants programme

The Near Neighbours programme offers small grants of between £250 and £5,000, as seed funding for local groups and organisations working to bring together neighbours, and to develop relationships across diverse faiths and ethnicities to improve their communities.

As part of the criteria, projects should:

- Bring together peoples of two or more different faiths and/or ethnicities, to build friendships and develop relationships of trust.
- Work locally. We want to see people who are living very locally (ie in the same street, estate or neighbourhood) come together.
- Work sustainably. We want to see long term and natural relationships grow, that will last beyond the period of funding.
- Work to improve the community. We want to see people working to make their communities a better place to live.
- Involve diverse people in planning and implementation. People from more than one faith group and/or ethnicity are involved in planning and implementing the proposal.

The full criteria, information on areas in which the grants are available and information on how to apply can be found at <http://www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours-grants>. For general enquiries, contact near.neighbours@cuf.org.uk.

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Funding websites

Funding Central - <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/default.aspx> - is a free website for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises in England that provides access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, together with tools and resources for supporting organisations to develop sustainable income strategies appropriate to their needs.

Similar websites for funding in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at Funding Scotland - <http://www.fundingscotland.com/> - Wales Council for Voluntary Action - <http://www.wcva.org.uk/funding/search> - and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland - <https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

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Heritage Lottery Fund grants to commemorate First World War

The Heritage Lottery Fund has made an additional £4million of funding available so that more communities can get involved in projects marking the Centenary of the First World War. Projects applying for funding must be able to meet one of a number of successful outcomes based on heritage, people and communities. Grants can be given between £3,000 and £10,000. There is no current deadline for applications.

Further information can be found at <https://www.hlf.org.uk/looking-funding/our-grant-programmes/first-world-war-then-and-now>.

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Community foundations

Community foundations are local, grant-making organisations to which local community organisations can apply for funding. There are 48 community foundations in the UK, covering Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England. They provide donors with information about local needs, what groups are tackling which issues, and how donations can be strategic and best support the community. A map of community foundations across the UK and how to contact them, can be found at http://ukcommunityfoundations.org/community_foundations/map.

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Small Charities Fundraising Training Programme

The Foundation for Social Improvement is providing free delegate places at fundraising training events for charities throughout 2016. Events are being held in London, Glasgow, Nottingham, Preston and Sheffield. The programme is supported by the Cabinet Office Small Charities Fundraising Training Programme and will provide training opportunities for small charities, from face-to-face training, to intensive one-to-one advice sessions, skilled volunteering matches and webinars. For further information and to sign up for any events, visit <http://www.thefsi.org/services/training/>.

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Comic Relief Stronger Communities grants

Comic Relief's grants programme now has five themes, one of which is 'Stronger Communities'. Grants for the Stronger Communities theme are managed by Local Community Foundations and range in size from £1,000 to £10,000 per year. Priority is given to small, locally-based groups or organisations in areas of disadvantage that have a clear understanding of the needs of their community and are undertaking actions as a means of addressing these needs. Anyone wishing to apply for a Local Communities grant should contact their local community foundation. Further details can be found online at http://ukcommunityfoundations.org/programmes/comic_relief/.

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Transform Foundation

The Transform Foundation is offering funding to charities to help with new website builds. Grants of £18,000 are available. For further information and to apply, visit www.transformfoundation.org.uk.

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SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK TO INCREASE INTER FAITH UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION

THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUR SUPPORT

We need your help to ensure that the Inter Faith Network for the UK's work to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation continues and grows, helping people of all backgrounds to live and work together with mutual respect and shared commitment to the common good.

Please consider making a gift today to support the work of the Inter Faith Network. Gifts at all levels are valued and make a difference. You can donate by credit card or PayPal online at www.interfaith.org.uk/donate or by sending a cheque to The Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH.

REMEMBERING A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND

From time to time we receive an 'in memoriam' gift after an individual has passed away, funded from a collection following their death or through a donation from their heirs. Such gifts provide a living memorial to a loved one, supporting inter faith understanding in this country – for now and for the future. If you would like to make a gift in memory of a loved one, please get in touch by emailing remember@interfaith.org.uk or call us on 0207 730 0410.

A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

By leaving a gift in your will to the Inter Faith Network for the UK, you can leave a living inheritance to help deepen and strengthen inter faith understanding and cooperation in this country – for now and for the future. If you are thinking about making a will, the best thing to do is to get in touch with a professional will writer, such as a solicitor or advocate; they can help to ensure it is legally correct and that your wishes are met. If you have already made a will, you can still make an addition or amendment in the form of a codicil. If you would like to pledge a gift, please provide our name and address, along with our registered charity number 1068934.

Please get in touch with us if you have any queries. You can call Hannah Cassidy, on 0207 730 0410 or contact us at remember@interfaith.org.uk.

Thank you!

SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Peace One Day will take place on 21 September www.peaceoneday.org

National Hate Crime Awareness Week will take place from 8 to 15 October
<http://www.stophateuk.org/hate-crime-awareness-week/>

Sewa Day will take place on 16 October www.sewaday.org

Week of Prayer for World Peace will take place from 16 to 23 October
<http://www.weekofprayerforworldpeace.com/>

One World Week will take place from Sunday 23 to Sunday 30 October
www.oneworldweek.org

National Inter Faith Week in England, Wales and Northern Ireland will be an '8 day week' this year taking place from Sunday 13 to Sunday 20 November. See more [above](#).
www.interfaithweek.org

Scottish Interfaith Week will also take place from Sunday 13 to Sunday 20 November
www.interfaithscotland.org/scottish-interfaith-week/

Mitzvah Day will take place on Sunday 27 November www.mitzvahday.org.uk/

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DIARY DATES

This section includes some of the events taking place around the UK. IFN includes information on diary dates between e-bulletins on its website at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/take-part/events>.

South East England Faiths Forum is holding its AGM and a conference entitled 'Living with Difference – Religion in a Diverse Society' on Thursday 1 September from 10am to 5pm. The conference will be looking at the implications of the Butler-Sloss report on Living with Difference: Community, Diversity and the Common Good. There is a fee to attend. A vegan buffet lunch and refreshments during the day will be provided. For further information or to register, email seffchair@gmail.com, or call on 01865512126, or visit www.se-faithforum.net.

Interfaith Glasgow is holding an event on Wednesday 7 September entitled 'Flourishing into the Future'. It will be an evening of inter faith networking, including discussion on the shaping the future of Interfaith Glasgow and brainstorming for Inter Faith Week events. It takes place from 6.00pm to 8.30pm at Flemington House, 2nd Floor, 110 Flemington Street, Glasgow G21 4BF. For further information, contact

development@interfaithglasgow.org or ring 0141 558 0778. Booking is essential at <http://flourishingfuture.eventbrite.com>.

Norwich InterFaith Link is holding a talk entitled 'The Kindertransport' on Tuesday 13 September at 7.30pm. The speaker will be Phyllida Scrivens, a Biographer and Freelance writer, who wrote the biography 'Escaping Hitler: A Jewish Boy's Quest for Freedom and His Future'. There is a fee to attend. This is being held at the Martineau Memorial Hall, 21 Colegate, Norwich, Norfolk, NR3 1BN. For further information, contact Chris on 01603 667314 or visit <http://norwichinterfaith.co.uk/contact.php>.

Belfast Council of Christians and Jews is hosting the Fr Gerry Reynolds Memorial Lecture on Wednesday 14 September. The Revd Dr Ken Newell, Bishop Noel Treanor and Rabbi David Singer will be speaking on the theme of 'Reconciliation and Forgiveness'. For details of the timing and location, email ccj.belfast@gmail.com.

Nottingham Inter Faith Council is holding its AGM on Thursday 15 September. This will be followed by a talk and discussion on 'Faith in Education'. It is being held at 7.15pm at Nottingham Mechanics Institute, South Sherwood Street, Nottingham NG1 4EZ. For further information, email office@interfaithnottingham.org.uk.

The **Multi Faith Centre at the University of Derby** is leading a Faith Walk on Saturday 17 September. This will be a morning guided tour of some of the places of worship in Normanton. It begins at 9.45am at the St James's Centre, Malcolm Street, Derby DE23 8LU and ends at 1pm. Places are limited. For further information and to book, visit www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/faith-walk-tickets-26897773966.

St Philip's Centre is holding a seminar on Saturday 17 September from 9.30am to 4pm on Islam & Christian-Muslim Engagement. The seminar is being led by The Revd Dr Tom Wilson, Director of St Philip's Centre, and Mr Dilwar Hussain, Chair of New Horizons in British Islam. Booking is essential as numbers are limited and places will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. Participants are invited to bring in their own lunch. This is being held at St Philip's Centre, 2A Stoughton Drive North, Leicester LE5 5UB. For further information or to register, email admin@stphilipscentre.co.uk or call 0116 2733459.

Hertsmere Forum of Faiths is hosting a Celebration of Faith event on Sunday 18 September. The theme of the event is 'Travelling together in peace' and during the afternoon local faith groups will tell of their religious and spiritual journeys then meet over refreshments. It takes place from 3pm to 5pm in the Council Chamber at the Civic Offices, Elstree Way, Borehamwood WD6 1WA.

Elmbridge Multi Faith Forum and **Surrey Faith Links** are holding an event entitled 'Faith and Inner Peace' on Monday 19 September at 7pm. The event aims to enable people to learn about faith perspectives on mental health and how faith communities help people suffering from mental health. The speakers are Suzette Jones, Ujala Ilyas, Kruawan Sookcharoen, Jennifer Jankel and Dr Phil Ferreira-Lay. Charities working with people

suffering from mental health illnesses who would like a stall are suggested to get in touch. For further information, contact Kauser Akhtar on Kauser.Akhtar@cofeguildford.org.uk.

Waltham Forest Faith Communities Forum is holding its Annual General Meeting on Monday 19 September. The Meeting will include guest speakers, Laura Harrison and Hannagh Calpin, who will speak on the theme of 'Resilience'. It takes place from 7.15pm to 9.15pm in the Council Chambers at Waltham Forest Town Hall, Forest Row, London E17 4JF. For further information, contact the Chair, Canon Steven Saxby, at chair@faithcommunities.org.uk.

Inter Faith North/West is holding the next in its series of 'Listening and Learning' Open Meeting on Wednesday 21 September. The topic for the meeting is 'The Freedom of Openness: A South African Story of Encountering 'The Other'' and the speakers will be Weiers and Simone Coetser. It takes place from 7pm at The Playhouse, Artillery Street, Londonderry, Northern Ireland BT48 6RG. For further information, contact info@interfaith-nw.org.uk.

Interfaith Wolverhampton is holding its next AGM on Wednesday 21 September. The speaker will be the Rt Reverend Clive Gregory. This is being held at the Ravidassi Temple and Centre, Dudley Road, Wolverhampton, WV2 3DR. For further information, contact on admin@ifwton.org.uk or call on 01902 427601.

The **Women's Interfaith Network** is holding a Writer's event on Wednesday 21 September from 6pm to 9pm. The event will open up a conversation facilitated by Shami Chakrabarti, followed by questions from the audience. There are going to be three writers - Bahiyyig Nakhjanvani, an Iranian writer, Elif Safak, a Turkish writer, and Saurav Dutt, a young man born in England but from Bangladeshi parents. The focus of the event will be on the role of women in trying to end conflict and change society. There is a fee to attend and is a ticket only event. This is being held at Berwin Leighton Paisner, Adelaide House, London, EC4R 9HA. To book a ticket, or for further information, visit <https://billetto.co.uk/women-in-conflict-from-a-writers-perspective>.

Balham and Tooting Community Association is holding its annual Multi-faith Peace Ceremony on Thursday 22 September from 6pm to 7pm. At the peace prayers, faith and civic leaders gather to pray for peace in the local community and the wider world. The event brings together people from many faiths, civic leaders and the general public in a demonstration of the values of peace and community. It is being held outside Tooting Broadway tube station, Tooting High St, London SW17 0SU. For further information, contact Andrew Davey on ap.davey@btinternet.com or Kate Allan on kateallan00@gmail.com or call on 07966 690308.

The **World Congress of Faiths** is marking its 80th Anniversary with an academic conference on 'Religious pluralism and interfaith: learning for the future' to be held on Friday 23 September in Emmanuel College, Cambridge. Discussion will cover themes including the variety of responses to the growth of religious pluralism in the UK and the role of inter faith dialogue in society; and will be led by a range of speakers including:

Professor Chris Baker, William Temple Professor of Religion and Public Life, University of Chester; Dr Ankur Barua, Director of Cambridge Inter-Faith Programme; Rabbi Tony Bayfield, Professor of Jewish Theology, Leo Baeck College; Professor Ursula King, interfaith scholar and feminist theologian; and Revd Dr Alan Race, author, theologian and Chair of WCF. For booking forms and enquiries email jenny@worldfaiths.org or call on 01223 781781; or visit www.worldfaiths.org/conference-2016.

The Nehru Centre will be holding an event at 6.30pm on Friday 23 September entitled 'Drawing the circles of unity together'. This will be an inter faith discussion about faith, dialogue and the betterment of society and the programme will feature an interactive panel discussion between the Reverend Rana Khan, Dr Wendi Momen, Mr Jasvir Singh and Acharya Modgala Duguid. The Sacred Sounds, an inter faith choir, will perform during the event, which will be presented by poet and playwright Lord Mereworth. The session will be introduced and moderated by Dr Kishan Manocha, Senior Adviser on Freedom of Religion or Belief at the Organisation of Security and Co-operation in Europe Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. For further information, visit <http://www.nehrucentre.org.uk/events/details/article/drawing-the-circles-of-unity-together-an-interfaith-discussion-about-faith-dialogue-and-the-betterm.html>.

Crawley Interfaith Network is holding a talk entitled 'My Faith as a Christian Jew' on Friday 23 September from 7pm to 9pm. The speaker will be Canon Doris Staniford, the first female Church of England priest in Crawley, Chaplain at the Crawley Hospital and St Catherine's Hospice, and Priest at St Albans Church, Gossops Green till 2012. For further information, contact Iyad Daoud on contact@crawleyinterfaith.net or call on 01293 883372.

Woking People of Faith is holding an Annual International Day of Peace event on Saturday 24 September from 11am to 12pm. Primary school children will be taking part in a poster or poem competition. This is being held at Mercia Walk, Woking, Surrey GU21 6XS. For further information, contact Garry Shore on coordinator@wpof.org.uk or visit www.wpof.org.uk.

Choir of the 21st Century is holding a concert entitled 'Karuna - an oratorio of our time' on Saturday 24 September at 7.30pm. The multi-faith oratorio, Karuna, by Andrew Wilson-Dickson, is described as "an ardent and sometimes fierce call for compassion – the broad meaning of the Sanskrit title – in a world rife with injustice and atrocities of all kinds". The concert is being held at St John's Church, Waterloo, SE1 8TY. To book a place, visit <http://www.cadoganhall.com/event/choir-of-the-21st-century-160924/> or call on 020 7730 4500 or at the door. For further information, visit <http://www.cc21.org.uk/contact/>.

Herefordshire Interfaith Group is holding an International Peace Day Service on Sunday 25 September. This will be held at the Hereford Cathedral, 5 College Cloisters, Cathedral Close, Hereford HR1 2NG. For further information, contact the Chairman, Venerable Tenzin Choesang on 01568 750082 or email June@the-hermit-online.co.uk.

Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship is holding a talk on 'Pagan and Interfaith' on Monday 26 September at 7.30pm. The speaker will be Prudence Jones, Interfaith Liaison Officer of the Pagan Federation, and co-author of 'A History of Pagan Europe'. This is being held at the Friends' Meeting House, Woodhouse Lane, 188 Woodhouse Lane, Leeds LS2 9DX. For further information, contact John Summerwill on 01132697895 or email on membership@concord-leeds.org.uk.

Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter is holding a series of talks exploring Jewish Feasts throughout the year. The next talk on Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot and Simchat Torah, led by Jonathan Gorsky, Lecturer in Judaism at Heythrop College, will be on Tuesday 27 September from 10am to 3.15pm at 34 Chepstow Villas, London W11 1QZ. There is a suggested donation. For further information, email sioncentrefordialogue@gmail.com or visit www.sioncentre.org.

Bristol Multi-Faith Forum is holding its next Open Forum meeting on Tuesday 27 September from 6.30pm to 8.30pm. Refreshments will be provided. This is being held at the Barton Hill Settlement, 43 Ducie Road, Bristol, BS5 0AX. For further information or to book a place, contact Lily Khandker on info@bristolmultifaithforum.org.uk or call on 07789040267.

Leeds Council of Christians and Jews is holding an event, in partnership with **Near Neighbours**, on Thursday 29 September on 'Tackling Antisemitism and Islamophobia'. This will be a panel discussion on how to build communities and tackle growing antisemitism and islamophobia locally and nationally. The event takes place at Leeds Makka Mosque, 36 Thornville Road, Leeds LS6 1JY. Admission is by pre-booking only. To register, email cjrelations@ccj.org.uk.

National Association of Teachers Religious Education is holding a joint conference with **Association of University Lecturers in Religion and Education** and **Association of RE Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants** on Saturday 8 – Sunday 9 October. The conference entitled 'Words beyond Words: Inspiring Religious Literacy' is designed to bring together the wider RE community. There will be an exploration of religious literacy, good practice in RE, and address subject knowledge needs for all key stages. This is being held at the Mercure Blackburn Dunkenhalgh Hotel and Spa, Blackburn Rd, Clayton-le-Moors, Accrington, Lancashire BB5 5JP. There is cost to attend. Booking is essential. For further information, visit <http://www.natre.org.uk/courses-events/upcoming-courses-events/words-beyond-words-inspiring-religious-literacy-conference/>.

Westminster Cathedral Interfaith Group is considering during 2016 Laudato Si' Our care for our common home by Pope Francis. Its next meeting will be on Wednesday 19 October and will be led by Farhan Mayer, Senior Researcher in Islamic Studies, Quilliam Foundation. The group meets from 4pm to 5pm in the Hinsley Room, Morpeth Terrace, London SW1P 1EP. For further information, contact John Woodhouse by text on 07908 888586 or at woodhouseopten@btinternet.com.

For more information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org.uk

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **14 October** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer: Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH
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IFN e-bulletin

November/December 2016

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **13 January** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and projects and future events. If your organisation distributes a programme, newsletter or e-bulletin, please add ifnet@interfaith.org.uk to your mailing list.

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Increasingly, IFN is making use of social media, in particular Twitter (www.twitter.com/IFNetUK) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/IFNetUK).

Please take a moment to 'follow' and 'like' IFN and also Inter Faith Week (www.twitter.com/IFWeek and www.facebook.com/IFWeek) and also check in with the IFN website to see new items, which are added on a regular basis.

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Note: This is an extended issue of the e-bulletin which covers October to December due to work on IFN's National Meeting and AGM and on Inter Faith Week.

FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

Continuing work with refugees

Faith and inter faith organisations and communities are continuing to respond to the refugee crisis.

As noted [above](#), this was a key item on the Agenda of a meeting of IFN's Faith Communities Forum on 8 November. At that meeting a short opening reflection was given by Rabbi David Mason on bases within the Jewish tradition for responding to refugees and a presentation was made by Hannah Gregory, Head of Partnership Team, Resettlement Programmes, Home Office, on the Government's response to the Syrian refugee crisis and the development of the community sponsorship programme. This included information about the Government's refugee resettlement programme; the 'Help Refugees' website <https://www.gov.uk/helprefugees>; and the Community Sponsorship Scheme <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apply-for-full-community-sponsorship> which enables community groups, such as faith groups and charities, to directly support refugees arriving locally.

During Inter Faith Week the Joseph Interfaith Foundation launched an initiative for young refugees entitled 'Introduction to Social Culture of Britain'. The project will begin in January 2017 and is aimed at refugees aged between 16 and 26. "Many of our young refugees come from war-torn countries where either they have witnessed or been personally affected by horrific violence. When they arrive in this country they don't have necessary language skills or knowledge of our laws and social mores. The aim of this project is to inform these young people and offer them support from various professional and religious bodies to help them build resilience to being misled, and help them to integrate more easily into the community and society." For further information, to participate, or recommend individuals, visit <http://www.josephinterfaithfoundation.org/forthcoming.php>.

The Multi Faith Centre at the University of Derby has partnered with the British Red Cross and Upbeat Communities to deliver a project supporting refugees and asylum seekers in

Derby called 'Survive and Thrive'. More information about the project is at <http://multifaithcentre.org/projects/>. One of its aims is to give refugees and asylum seekers increased opportunity to belong and to find purpose within the community. As part of this project the Centre is offering free training on 'Getting the Story Straight: Refugees and Asylum Seekers'. Further information is [below](#).

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Equality and Human Rights Commission materials on Religion or Belief

The EHRC will shortly be concluding its three-year programme of work - Shared understandings: a new EHRC strategy to strengthen understanding of religion or belief in public life – by publishing three final products. These are: Religion or belief – is the law working? (an evaluation of the effectiveness of the religion and belief legal framework); online guidance for employers on key religion or belief topics including a user-friendly step-by-step guide to handling employee requests; and online training modules on religion or belief for line managers (developed with ACAS) and trade union representatives (developed with the TUC).

For more information, view the EHRC website after Friday 2 December at <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en>.

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BBC review of religious affairs coverage

It has been reported that a review of religious affairs coverage at the BBC will be taking place and that the Director General of the BBC, Lord Hall, will head discussions with faith leaders in the New Year with the aim of making religious affairs programming more reflective of modern, multi-faith Britain. This will include a drive to produce high quality content on a wider variety of faiths and beliefs, including Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Judaism and Humanism. For further information, see <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/bbc-christian-bias-plans-diversify-faith-programming-a7416141.html> and <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/11/28/bbc-coming-short-religious-broadcasting-does-not-take-faith/>.

The BBC has announced that the former Labour minister James Purnell will assume responsibility for religious affairs programming and that Religious affairs correspondent Martin Bashir has been promoted to the more senior role of 'religious editor'. This is reported at <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2016/nov/23/james-purnell-to-head-bbc-religious-affairs-programming>.

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Caste discrimination consultation

In September the Government announced that it will be undertaking “a full public consultation on the issue of caste and the Equality Act 2010”. Further details and timings for the consultation will be set out in due course. The announcement can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/caste-discrimination-consultation>.

On 27 October a question was raised in Parliament about the consultation process: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2016-10-27/debates/2EEDAD3B-164B-448B-AE4F-A7918E044974/CasteDiscriminationConsultation>.

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Religious Education Commission

As noted in the August-September E-bulletin, the Religious Education Council of England and Wales – which shares reciprocal membership with IFN – launched a new Religious Education Commission in July. The Commission was established by the REC, which set its Terms of Reference and provides its secretariat. However, it is independent, and has responsibility for its own reports and recommendations. It now has its own website at <http://www.commissiononre.org.uk/> and Twitter account [@CommissonOnRE](#) and those interested in engaging with the Commission are advised to follow these. The website includes an email sign-up form. It is envisaged that the Commission will launch public evidence-gathering consultations in due course, but the website also includes the ability to make contributions ahead of that.

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Update on places of worship security funding scheme

Further to the Government’s announcement of funding for security at places of worship in July, the Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP, Home Secretary, has awarded a total of £700,000 to 9 community projects and 59 places of worship. The community projects will receive £300,000 pounds between them to fund ‘innovative schemes’ to tackle hate crime. The 59 places of worship will benefit from over £400,000 to assist with the installation of security measures, such as CCTV cameras or protective fencing. The Home Secretary said that “this funding is the latest step in this government’s mission to stamp out all types of hate crime, which has absolutely no place in a Britain that works for everyone.”

For further information, visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-awards-700k-to-tackle-hate-crime>.

A second round of bids for the fund is due to open in Spring 2017 - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/places-of-worship-security-funding-scheme>.

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EHRC letter to political parties

On 25 November the Chair and Chief Executive of the Equality and Human Rights Commission published an open letter to all political parties in Westminster encouraging them to engage with the Commission and calling upon them to do more to heal divisions which have emerged following the EU referendum earlier this year and states "Politicians of all sides should be aware of the effect on national mood of their words and policies, even when they are not enacted." The letter can be read at <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-work/news/letter-all-political-parties-westminster>

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Inter faith friendship theme for latest Amazon advert

In consultation with the Church of England, Christian Muslim Forum and Muslim Council of Britain, Amazon UK launched an advert, during Inter Faith Week in November which takes inter faith friendship as its theme. The advert shows a vicar and an imam in friendly conversation before exchanging gifts.

A spokesman for Amazon said that they wished to portray the figures accurately and sensitively: "Our casting reflects this: the gentleman playing the vicar is a practising vicar in London, the gentleman playing the imam is a devout Muslim and the principal of a Muslim school. We used an actual church and mosque for our scenes within the places of worship." Harun Khan, Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain, said: "The video from Amazon Prime is a brilliant advert highlighting an example of the strong friendships that exist between many Christians and Muslims across the country. The symbolism of gift-giving adds to the advert's power, especially during seasonal festivities." A Church of England spokesman said: "Fostering interfaith dialogue and community cohesion is a daily part of our work. In many parts of the country the Church of England is the guarantor and convenor of much interfaith dialogue, and this advert reflects that reality."

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New £5 banknote and animal products

Following a question from a Twitter user on 28 November, the Bank of England confirmed that the new polymer £5 banknotes contain 'a trace' of tallow, a product derived from

animal fat. The news has sparked concern among vegetarian and vegan groups, and it is likely that this will have relevance for those who avoid animal products for religious reasons. A Hindu temple in Leicester, for example, is encouraging people not to bring the notes into the temple as charitable donations - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leicestershire-38156650>. This is a breaking story, and more information is likely to become available in due course. News coverage can be found at <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2016/nov/29/bank-of-england-urged-to-make-new-5-note-vegan-friendly> and <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/11/29/new-5-notes-contain-animal-fat-says-bank-england-drawing-anger/>. A Change.org petition calling upon the Bank of England to use alternatives has already attracted over 100,000 signatures, and mentions religious objections to animal products in its leader text. It can be found at https://www.change.org/p/bank-of-england-remove-tallow-from-bank-notes?recruiter=12006801&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=copylink

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INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK NEWS

Inter Faith Week and Scottish Interfaith Week

Inter Faith Week in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and Scottish Interfaith Week both drew to a close on 20 November.

The Inter Faith Network for the UK leads on the Week in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and its Co-Chairs, Bishop Richard Atkinson and Jatinder Singh Birdi have said:

“The 500+ events that have taken part around the UK have sent a powerful signal about people of different faiths and beliefs working together for the good of our shared society and about the importance of positive inter faith relations. The Week has also highlighted the enormous contribution that those of all faith and belief communities make – in most cases through volunteering – to their local communities.”

The Week saw an astonishing range of events and activities: multi faith remembrance events; faith trails and open door days; conferences and seminars on topics from tackling hate crime, to health and faith, and different faiths’ and beliefs’ understandings of particular issues; social action initiatives from help for refugees and the homeless to river cleaning and tree planting; football matches; music, dance, poetry and arts and craft workshops; school activities; quizzes; the launch of new initiatives; cookery sessions; exchange visits between places of worship of different faiths; a youth 'Interfaith Summit'; blog series; exhibitions; photographic and art competitions; campus programmes; dialogues on a wide range of topics; celebrations; and more.

Faith communities took part across the UK. They hosted those of other faiths, journeyed with each other to visit each other’s places of worship; discussed responses to the

challenging issues of the moment; contributed to social action projects to help their local communities; and taken active roles in civic and other markings of the Week. Locally, an increasing number of churches, gurdwaras, mandirs, mosques, synagogues, temples and viharas have thrown open their doors. People of non-religious beliefs were also actively involved in many events.

Inter faith organisations also played a significant role in the Week, from the UK's 250+ local inter faith groups, through to national inter faith bodies. A special event held at the Houses of Parliament by the All Party Parliamentary Interfaith Group with the Inter Faith Network for the UK on 15 November explored local inter faith work and the importance of local inter faith bodies with inputs from Interfaith Glasgow, Faith Network for Manchester and the Redbridge Faith Forum. There was cross-party participation in the Week at both national and local levels. Both Communities Secretary Sajid Javid and Communities Minister Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth attended events.

This year saw many public agencies getting involved in the Week: from local authorities, to emergency services. It also had energetic involvement from a range of organisations from other sectors such as Sporting Equals and participation from many youth bodies such as Girlguiding and the Scouting Association. It saw wide-scale involvement from schools, colleges and universities, museums and libraries, youth organisations, other voluntary and community bodies, and many more. A list giving examples of the range of events that took place can be found at https://www.interfaithweek.org/uploads/Selection_of_events_held_for_Inter_Faith_Week_2016.pdf.

Many event organisers and participants tweeted about the Inter Faith Week activities they took part in, and tweets about the Week have had a potential reach of over 5.5million Twitter users with over 18.5million impressions. Many tweets linked to the Week can be seen on the @IFWeek twitter feed.

To assist people who have attended an Inter Faith Week event and would like to get more involved, the Inter Faith Network published a new booklet at the end of Inter Faith Week, *Inter faith learning, dialogue and cooperation: Next steps*. Further information is [below](#).

This year Scottish Interfaith Week, which has taken place since 2004, took place on the same dates as Inter Faith Week. It, too, has had a very high impact week, with over 50 events taking place. Inter Faith Week, which owes its inspiration to Scottish Interfaith Week, was represented at its launch and Interfaith Glasgow took part in the APPG and IFN event at the Houses of Parliament.

Frances Hume of Interfaith Scotland gave an address on 15 November at the Time for Reflection in the Scottish Parliament opening with the words "I am particularly delighted to be able to address you during Scottish interfaith week, for which more than 50 events have been organised by local people, faith communities, interfaith groups, educational bodies and organisations, to promote and celebrate the multifaith and multicultural nature of Scottish society." In her speech she refers to the important meeting of the First

Minister Nicola Sturgeon with faith leaders which had taken place in the preceding week in the run up to Inter Faith Week.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=10626&i=97682&c=1947365>

More information about Scottish Interfaith Week, which this year, took as its theme 'Religion and the Media', can be found at <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/scottish-interfaith-week/>

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New IFN resource – Next Steps

The Inter Faith Network for the UK has published a new resource to help people to get involved in inter faith activity: *Inter Faith Learning, Dialogue and Cooperation: Next Steps*.

During Inter Faith Week, and at other times in the year, many people will have engaged with inter faith activity for the first time, either by meeting others of different faiths, or learning more about those with whom they share their communities. Some people's experiences prompt them to want to get further involved in inter faith learning, discussion and practical cooperation.

Next Steps is designed to help those wanting to get involved, or further involved, in inter faith learning, dialogue and cooperation. The booklet includes information and pointers about the different ways people can engage with those of other faiths and beliefs.

The resource can be downloaded from the Inter Faith Network and Inter Faith Week websites at www.interfaith.org.uk and www.interfaithweek.org respectively, and hard copies are available on request.

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IFN National Meeting

IFN held its National Meeting on 19 October in Peterborough.

The National Meeting was on the theme of 'Faith and Cohesive Communities'. The question of how communities 'cohere' and what common values and expectations they share has come increasingly to the fore in recent months. Partly, this has been triggered by the impact upon communities in this country of international terrorist attacks and persecutions and the refugee crisis. Other factors have included the increase in hate crime in some areas following the EU referendum. There also continue to be many other reasons that faith and cohesion are a focus of attention: the positive contribution of faith communities to community wellbeing; the role of educators about religion (and non-

religious beliefs) and the manifold community affirming dimensions of inter faith engagement. The meeting was an opportunity to explore a wide range of aspects of what makes for 'cohesive communities' in the most positive sense of that term.

Participants were welcomed to the day by IFN's then Co-Chairs, the Rt Revd Richard Atkinson and Vivian Wineman, and also by Jaspal Singh, Chair, Peterborough Inter-Faith Council. During the plenary session Bishop Dr Joe Aldred, Multicultural and Pentecostal Relations, Churches Together in England, spoke on 'What are the signs of a 'cohesive community' and what role do faith communities play in this?'; Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Department for Communities and Local Government offered reflections in his role as Minister with responsibilities including cohesion and faith; Councillor Saima Mahmud and Canon Steven Saxby, Waltham Forest Faith Communities Forum, spoke about the work of the Forum; Gillian Merron, Chief Executive, Board of Deputies of British Jews, spoke on 'Supporting a faith community in creating and contributing to cohesive communities'; Trupti Patel, President, Hindu Forum of Britain, spoke on 'Mutual respect and understanding as a keystone of cohesive communities'; and Reflections on themes of the day were offered by Dr Norman Richardson, Executive Member, Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum and Abid Khan, Chair, North Lincolnshire Multi Faith Partnership.

Discussion groups were held on: 'Cohesive communities: compassion and social action' with presentations from Jaspal Singh, Sajjad Jivraj and Rajni Reddi, Chair and colleagues, Peterborough Inter-Faith Council, and Keith Bishop, Interfaith Advisor, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; 'Cohesive communities: a place for those of all abilities and disabilities' with presentations from Christine Hardy, Advocacy, Rights and Awareness Manager, DeafBlind UK, and Dr Dale Dishon, Principal Inspector of Historic Buildings & Areas, Historic England; 'Cohesive communities: creating connections across generations' with presentations from Aishah Mehmood, Graduate of Near Neighbours' Catalyst Programme and now Communications and Media Officer, Near Neighbours, and Lynsey Wilkinson, Redhill Academy Nottingham and Coordinator of the RE Ambassadors Programme of the RE Council of England and Wales and Qaa'Sim Uhuru and Laura Norris, RE Ambassadors and students at Redhill; 'Cohesive communities: equality within society as a vital dimension' with a presentation from Jamie Spurway, Religious Equality Officer, Interfaith Scotland; 'Cohesive communities: diversity and commonality' with presentations from Ngakma Nor'dzin Pamo, Buddhist member, Inter-faith Council for Wales, and Fazal Rahim, Project Coordinator, Oldham Inter Faith Forum; 'Cohesive communities: the importance of learning and dialogue' with presentations from Dr Avijit Datta, Chair, York Interfaith Group, and Dr Jane Clements, Director, Council of Christians and Jews; and on 'Cohesive communities: the impact of the web and social media on cohesion' with presentations from Natasha Blank, More Tea Less Hate campaign, 'Worrying Signs' and Dr Harshad Sanghrajka, Deputy Chairman, Institute of Jainology.

A report on the Meeting will be published in due course.

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IFN governance update

IFN has been undertaking a review of its governance structures across the last two years. Following agreement on a new governance structure at the 2016 EGM in May, this was implemented at the 2016 AGM, held in Peterborough on 19 October following the National Meeting.

One of the major changes that has taken place is a streamlining of the Board from 35 to 22 Trustees. The new Board of Trustees was elected at the AGM. This is co-chaired by the Rt Revd Richard Atkinson and Jatinder Singh Birdi. A number of longstanding IFN Trustees, including Dr Natubhai Shah and Vivian Wineman retired at the AGM and presentations were made to them.

Another change is the introduction of Moderators of the Faith Communities Forum, comprising 2 Co-Moderators and 8 Vice-Moderators. The Moderators have been elected by the National Faith Community Representative Bodies in IFN membership. The Co-Moderators for the coming year are the Rt Revd Richard Atkinson and Malcolm Deboo of the Zoroastrian community.

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IFN Faith Communities Forum meetings

In the wake of recent concerns about a rise in hate crime and of the publication of the Government's Hate Crime Action Plan, arrangements were made for a meeting of the Faith Communities Forum on 27 September with this as a key item on the agenda. A short opening reflection was given by Acharya Modgala Duguid on Buddhist bases for responding to crimes motivated by hate. A presentation was made by Sally Sealey, Senior Policy Adviser on Hate Crime, Integration and Faith Directorate, Department for Communities and Local Government. This included reference to the Plan – entitled Action Against Hate – copies of which were distributed. Lord Singh of Wimbledon also made a formal contribution about the need for the Government to reflect adequately the problem of hate crimes targeting Hindus, Sikhs and other members of non-Abrahamic groups, including to the issue of attackers mistaking their religious identity. Wider discussion covered aspects of possible reasons for, and responses to, hate crime.

A meeting of IFN's Faith Communities Forum was also held on 8 November. This included items on the resettlement of refugees and social action days and inter faith cooperation. A short opening reflection was given by Rabbi David Mason on bases within the Jewish tradition for responding to refugees. A presentation was made by Hannah Gregory, Head of Partnership Team, Resettlement Programmes, Home Office, on the Government's response to the Syrian refugee crisis and the development of the community sponsorship

programme. For the item on Social action days, Ms Vinaya Sharma, General Secretary of Vishwa Hindu Parishad UK, spoke about Sewa Day, which took place most recently on 16 October and Ms Daniella Pears, Interfaith Chair, Mitzvah Day, spoke about Mitzvah Day, on 27 November, and Mitzvah 365.

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Focus on women at IFN meeting of National and Regional Inter Faith Organisations

A meeting for National and Regional Inter Faith Organisations in IFN membership took place in London on 19 September.

The morning session had a special focus on women and inter faith engagement. Speakers included Dr Maureen Sier of Interfaith Scotland and Ms Jackie Goymour of the Women's Interfaith Network. A presentation by Ravinder Kaur Nijjar of the Women of Faith Network of Religions for Peace (UK) was circulated. Printed copies of her presentation were circulated. In the afternoon, there was an opportunity for sharing of news and discussion about issues of common concern; discussion of IFN matters; and a session on the post Brexit landscape.

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

Sewa Day and Mitzvah Day

Two major days of faith-based social action took place in October and November, either side of Inter Faith Week. Both saw people of different faiths and beliefs coming together to do good in their communities.

People across the UK came together for Sewa Day on Sunday 16 October to volunteer at a range of social action projects. The term 'Sewa' equates to 'selfless service', and the day saw people of different backgrounds planting trees, litter picking, cooking for the homeless and collecting for food banks among many other things. This year, Sewa Day also featured in Diwali celebrations on Trafalgar Square, where hundreds of people gathered to mark the festival. Sewa Day said that "2016 has been a massive success with projects leaving a lasting legacy in their communities".

Mitzvah Day took place on Sunday 27 November. This Jewish-led day of faith-based social action encourages an inter faith dimension, and brought together people of many backgrounds to do good in their local communities. 'Mitzvah' translates as a good deed or act of kindness, and people responded by visiting care homes, holding sporting events,

working in schools and improving public spaces just to name a few. A number of special early events were held to coincide with Inter Faith Week.

Sadaqa Day, another day of faith-based social action, led by the Muslim community, takes place on Sunday 26 March 2017.

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Chief Rabbi and Archbishop of Canterbury launch inter faith project

The Archbishop of Canterbury was joined at Lambeth Palace during Inter Faith Week by the Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis to launch a new inter faith project, 'In Good Faith'. The project hopes to further Jewish-Christian dialogue by encouraging priests and rabbis to work together over the coming year to address matters of common concern. Topics discussed during the day included religious extremism. Rabbi Mirvis said that "it is in the everyday conversations, the grassroots initiatives and the building of local bridges between Christians and Jews, our synagogues and churches, that we will see real change and the hope for a divided world and nation."

For more information, see <http://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/166061/chief-rabbi-launches-interfaith-project-archbishop-canterbury> and <http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/5806/archbishop-and-chief-rabbi-launch-rabbis-and-priests-social-action-initiative>.

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Church-Mosque Twinning programme

The Christian Muslim Forum is continuing to expand its Church-Mosque Twinning programme and is working with Near Neighbours to roll this out.

An illustrated report on the programme that has so far taken place in South West London can be found at http://www.christianmuslimforum.org/images/uploads/Twinning_Report.pdf.

Anyone interested in doing something similar in their area, should contact Siriol Davies at info@christianmuslimforum.org.

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

Inter faith learning, dialogue and cooperation: Next Steps

As noted [above](#), at the end of Inter Faith Week, IFN published a new resource entitled *Inter faith learning, dialogue and cooperation: Next steps*.

The booklet is intended to assist people who have attended an Inter Faith Week event and would like to get more involved. It can be downloaded from <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/publications/all-publications/all-publications>.

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Interfaith Scotland Media Guide

The theme for Scottish Interfaith Week this year was ‘Religion and the Media’. The media plays an increasingly important role in people's lives, whether through newspapers, TV, radio or social media and many people are influenced by what they read, see and hear. Media reporting can have a powerful effect on people of different faiths, both positive and negative. The theme provided an opportunity to explore complex relationships with the media, how positive stories of faith and interfaith work can be shared and how some of the negative reporting and stereotypes about people of different faiths in the media can be challenged.

One of the resources produced by Interfaith Scotland for the work was a ‘Media Guide’ to assist groups in promoting their good stories via social and traditional media. It includes tips on using Facebook, Twitter and the web; as well as press releases, letters and TV and radio.

An electronic copy of the Guide can be downloaded from <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/scottish-interfaith-week/religion-and-the-media-resources-for-scottish-interfaith-week-2016/>.

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Thinktank report on faith-based charities

The New Philanthropy Capital thinktank has launched a report on the value and distinctive role that faith-based charities and voluntary organisations play in the

charitable sector. The report, 'What a Difference a Faith Makes', concludes an 18 month study into suspicion of faith-based charities and in particular accusations of proselytism against them. The report concluded that faith-based charities were undervalued in the sector, and made an immense contribution, collectively raising over £16 billion a year for good causes.

For more information, and to download the report, visit <http://www.thinknpc.org/publications/what-a-difference-faith-makes/>.

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Woolf Institute e-learning course

The Woolf Institute is running an e-learning course entitled 'Bridging the Great Divide: the Jewish-Muslim Encounter'. It will explore the history, culture and theology of Muslims and Jews, reflecting on similarities and differences as well as the major challenges. The e-learning approach allows students to participate throughout the world.

The course begins with Induction Week on 17 January and runs for 15 weeks. The application deadline is 20 December. For further information, visit <http://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/study/e-learning/mj.asp>.

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Funded doctoral studentship at the Centre of Religion, Reconciliation and Peace

The Centre of Religion, Reconciliation and Peace at the University of Winchester is offering a fully funded doctoral studentship in 'Radicalisation, extremism and prison'.

This is for three years full time commencing in April 2017. Further information can be downloaded from <http://www.winchester.ac.uk/research/postgraduate-research/Documents/PhD%20Studentship%20Radicalisation%20Extremism%20and%20Prison%20final.pdf>.

For more information about the Centre, visit www.winchester.ac.uk/wcrpp. Contact PGAdmin@winchester.ac.uk for more information about the studentship.

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Workshop on Safeguarding in faith organisations

As part of the Strengthening Faith Institutions programme, Near Neighbours and Grassroots Luton are holding a workshop on ‘Safeguarding in Faith Organisations’. The workshop looks at how people can work together to ensure the well-being of children and vulnerable adults in places of worship and faith-based community organisations.

It will include: an introduction to safeguarding and good practice; who to contact for advice and reporting; case studies and toolkits; and resources.

It is being held from 6pm to 8.30pm on Thursday 1 December at All Saints Hall, Shaftesbury Road, Luton LU4 8AH. For more information, or to book a place, contact Kim Greig at near.neighbours-luton@btconnect.com or call 07930 501640.

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Training on Refugees and Asylum Seekers

The Multi Faith Centre at the University of Derby has partnered with the British Red Cross and Upbeat Communities to deliver a project supporting refugees and asylum seekers in Derby called ‘Survive and Thrive’. More information about the project is at <http://multifaithcentre.org/projects/>. One of its aims is to give refugees and asylum seekers increased opportunity to belong and to find purpose within the community.

As part of this project the Centre is offering free training on ‘Getting the Story Straight: Refugees and Asylum Seekers’. This training can be tailored to meet an individual organisation’s needs but the standard training offered is 2 hours and can be delivered at the Multi-Faith Centre or a venue of choice. For further information, or to book, contact mfc@derby.ac.uk or call 01332 591285.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS, AND NOMINATIONS

Citizens Commission on Islam, Participation & Public Life

The Citizens Commission on Islam, Participation & Public Life, co-ordinated by Citizens UK and chaired by Dominic Grieve QC MP (http://www.citizensuk.org/islam_public_life_commission), brings together 20

Commissioners drawn from a wide cross section of British society to consider how the Muslim community could better engage and participate in public life.

The Commission has been touring the UK, holding hearings in a number of towns and cities. It is keen to hear from as broad a range of voices as possible and so is encouraging all sectors of our society to contribute by submitting written evidence. It is seeking to hear about the key challenges for Muslim communities in Britain, but also looking for practical recommendations that might be implemented by the state, business sector and broader civil society. It is also interested in positive examples that can be viewed as best practise.

The deadline for submitting evidence is 16 December. Evidence can be submitted online at http://www.citizensuk.org/submit_evidence, via email to islamcommission@citizensuk.org or via post to: Ms Esmat Jeraj, Secretariat Citizens Commission on Islam, Participation & Public Life, Citizens UK, 112 Cavell Street, London E1 2JA.

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Welcoming the Stranger short story competition

The Multi Faith Centre at the University of Derby is running a Short Story Competition entitled 'Welcoming the Stranger'.

Participants are invited to submit a short story, which is a work of fiction, on the theme of the stranger being welcomed. The competition is open to all. For those under 18 years of age, the story should be 1,000 to 1,500 words; for those over 18 years, it should be between 2,000 and 2,500 words.

Winning and highly recommended stories will be read aloud at a Prize Evening in May at the Multi Faith Centre in Derby. Entries must be submitted between 1 January and 3 March. For further information, including terms and conditions, visit www.multifaithcentre.org.

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Sandford St Martin Trust Awards

The 2017 Sandford St Martin Trust Awards are now open for entries. The awards are for radio, TV and online content exploring religious, spiritual or ethical themes.

Applications are encouraged from news, current affairs, drama, music, arts, children's and comedy genres, as well as from specifically 'religious' commissions. Programmes that

challenge as well as support faith are among those that have been previously recognised by the Awards.

The 2017 Awards will be presented at Lambeth Palace in June. The closing date for entries is 3 February. For details on how to apply, visit www.sandfordawards.org.uk and for further information, contact Anna McNamee on 07899 800758 or at anna.mcnamee@sandfordawards.org.uk.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

Inter Faith Network for the UK - Volunteers and interns

The Inter Faith Network for the UK has regular volunteering opportunities and occasional internships. Further information about these can be found on IFN's website.

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Nisa-Nashim - Project Manager

Nisa-Nashim, a Jewish Muslim Women's Network, is seeking to recruit a Project Manager. The ideal candidate will be a dynamic, proactive and creative person with excellent communication skills and event management experience, to take forward its new phase.

One of the main areas of responsibility will be the development and production of its Conference, taking place in March 2017, as well as nurturing and continuing to develop our local groups across the UK. This is a full time role, based in London, though flexible working is welcomed. The job description can be viewed at <http://www.nisanashim.org/nisa-nashim-looking-project-manager/>. The closing date for applications is 1 December. For further details, email info@nisanashim.org.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Common Good funding programme

On 14 November the Department for Communities and Local Government announced £250,000 of 'small grants funding' through its 'Common Good' programme. The

programme will be offering grants between £250 and £5,000 and will be managed by the Church Urban Fund. It will be funding projects that bring together diverse communities and different faiths through a range of activities from cookery classes to teaching computer coding.

A DCLG press release containing further details, and including quotes from Communities Minister Lord Bourne, is at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-funding-to-boost-diverse-communities-during-inter-faith-week>.

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Building a Stronger Britain Together programme

In September, the Home Office announced the Building a Stronger Britain Together programme, which will provide “funding and support for groups involved in counter-extremism projects in their communities”. The programme is offering two kinds of support:

- in-kind support (such as social media training, technical assistance to help a group improve their website, or capacity building work to help a group protect more vulnerable individuals)
- grants: targeted funding for specific projects with demonstrable outcomes which provide a positive alternative to extremist voices

The deadline for grants and combined in-kind/grant applications has now passed. However, the deadline for in-kind support applications is 5pm on 9 December. Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/building-a-stronger-britain-together>.

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Funding websites

Funding Central - <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/default.aspx> - is a free website for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises in England that provides access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, together with tools and resources for supporting organisations to develop sustainable income strategies appropriate to their needs.

Similar websites for funding in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at Funding Scotland - <http://www.fundingscotland.com/> - Wales Council for Voluntary Action - <http://www.wcva.org.uk/funding/search> - and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland - <https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

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Heritage Lottery Fund grants to commemorate First World War

The Heritage Lottery Fund has made an additional £4million of funding available so that more communities can get involved in projects marking the Centenary of the First World War. Projects applying for funding must be able to meet one of a number of successful outcomes based on heritage, people and communities. Grants can be given between £3,000 and £10,000. There is no current deadline for applications.

Further information can be found at <https://www.hlf.org.uk/looking-funding/our-grant-programmes/first-world-war-then-and-now>.

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Community foundations

Community foundations are local, grant-making organisations to which local community organisations can apply for funding. There are 48 community foundations in the UK, covering Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England. They provide donors with information about local needs, what groups are tackling which issues, and how donations can be strategic and best support the community. A map of community foundations across the UK and how to contact them, can be found at http://ukcommunityfoundations.org/community_foundations/map.

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Comic Relief Stronger Communities grants

Comic Relief's grants programme now has five themes, one of which is 'Stronger Communities'. Grants for the Stronger Communities theme are managed by Local Community Foundations and range in size from £1,000 to £10,000 per year. Priority is given to small, locally-based groups or organisations in areas of disadvantage that have a clear understanding of the needs of their community and are undertaking actions as a means of addressing these needs. Anyone wishing to apply for a Local Communities grant should contact their local community foundation. Further details can be found online at http://ukcommunityfoundations.org/programmes/comic_relief/.

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Transform Foundation

The Transform Foundation is offering funding to charities to help with new website builds. Grants of £18,000 are available. For further information and to apply, visit www.transformfoundation.org.uk.

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SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK TO INCREASE INTER FAITH UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION

THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUR SUPPORT

We need your help to ensure that the Inter Faith Network for the UK's work to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation continues and grows, helping people of all backgrounds to live and work together with mutual respect and shared commitment to the common good.

Please consider making a gift today to support the work of the Inter Faith Network. Gifts at all levels are valued and make a difference. You can donate by credit card or PayPal online at www.interfaith.org.uk/donate or by sending a cheque to The Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH.

REMEMBERING A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND

From time to time we receive an 'in memoriam' gift after an individual has passed away, funded from a collection following their death or through a donation from their heirs. Such gifts provide a living memorial to a loved one, supporting inter faith understanding in this country – for now and for the future. If you would like to make a gift in memory of a loved one, please get in touch by emailing remember@interfaith.org.uk or call us on 0207 730 0410.

A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

By leaving a gift in your will to the Inter Faith Network for the UK, you can leave a living inheritance to help deepen and strengthen inter faith understanding and cooperation in this country – for now and for the future. If you are thinking about making a will, the best thing to do is to get in touch with a professional will writer, such as a solicitor or advocate; they can help to ensure it is legally correct and that your wishes are met. If you have already made a will, you can still make an addition or amendment in the form of a codicil. If you would like to pledge a gift, please provide our name and address, along with our registered charity number 1068934.

Please get in touch with us if you have any queries. You can call Hannah Cassidy, on 0207 730 0410 or contact us at remember@interfaith.org.uk.

Every gift, however large or small, makes a difference.

Thank you!

SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Holocaust Memorial Day will take place on 27 January <http://hmd.org.uk>

World Interfaith Harmony Week will take place in the first week of February <http://worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com>

Sadaqa Day will take place on 26 March <http://mysadaqaday.org>

DIARY DATES

This section includes some of the events taking place around the UK. IFN includes information on diary dates between e-bulletins on its website at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/take-part/events>.

Bristol Inter-Faith Group will be holding its next meeting on Thursday 1 December. The meeting will consider the subject of 'Mysticism'. Those who attend will be invited to tackle questions such as: Do you believe in a divine being which has an absolute existence beyond and separate from human imagination or in a force for goodness and creativity that pervades the whole universe in so far as humans allow it to? Is it possible to believe in both? What is the role of prayer and worship in your faith community? Do you see the need for an intermediary between yourself and the Divine being or force for goodness? The meeting takes place at 7.30pm with refreshments from 7pm, at Central Quaker Meeting House, Champion Square, Cabot Circus, Bristol BS2 9DB. For more information, visit <http://www.bifg.org.uk/> or email info@bifg.org.uk.

The **Muslim Council of Wales** with **Dar Ul Isra Mosque** is holding an inter faith talk on Thursday 1 December. The talk is entitled 'Refugees in Religion' and there will be 3 speakers representing 3 faiths, each talking about the concept of refugees within their faith. Confirmed speakers so far are the Revd Aled Edwards of CYTUN/Churches Together in Wales and Sheikh Ali Hammuda, co-Imam of Al Manar Mosque. The event takes place from 7.30pm to 9.15pm at the Darul Isra Mosque, 21-23 Wyverne Road, Cardiff CF24 4BG. For further information, contact Mohammed Alamgir at mohammeda535@gmail.com or on 07788 310255.

Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter is holding a day of reflection for Advent on Saturday 3 December from 11am to 3.15pm. The speaker will be Sr Teresa Brittain nds who will give reflections for Advent on Light and Darkness. Refreshments will be served from 10.30am. There is no charge but any donation will be sent to CAFOD. There is a request to bring in a packed lunch or some food to share. For further information, contact sioncentrefordialogue@gmail.com or call 020 73138286.

Crawley Interfaith Network is holding a Christmas Party on Sunday 4 December. This will include inter faith carol singing, food and networking. For further information, contact lyad Daoud at contact@crawleyinterfaith.net or call 01293 883372.

Burngreave Ashram Multifaith Chapel & Library is hosting its next Meditation/Prayer lunch and seminar on Monday 5 December from 12pm to 2.30pm. The theme for this month's seminar is 'Non-Violence/Harmony/Peace' and will be led by Sandra Dutton. The meditation and prayer will be led by Shelly Hinson. It is being held at 86 Spital Hill, Sheffield S4 7LG. For further information, contact BAMCL@outlook.com or call 07932017929 or 01142436688.

York Interfaith Group is holding an event on Tuesday 6 December. It will begin with a 'Bring and Share' Meal with Music from 5.30pm and will then be followed at 7.30pm by its Monthly Meeting, for which the theme is 'Judaism in Three Yorkshire Cities'. It is being held at the York Medical Society Rooms, 23 Stonegate, York YO1 8AW. For further information, contact yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com.

The Multi Faith Centre at the University of Derby is holding its Annual Lecture on Wednesday 7 December from 6.30pm to 8.30pm. The guest speaker will be Zaki Cooper, an inter-faith activist and communications professional. There will be a talk on "God in Government: The Faith of Prime Ministers", followed by Q&A and refreshments. This event is being held at the Multi-Faith Centre, University of Derby, Derby, DE22 1GB. Register for this event using the following link: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/multi-faith-centre-annual-lecture-god-in-government-the-faith-of-prime-ministers-tickets-27989923615>. For further information, contact on mfc@derby.ac.uk or call 01332 591.

Sheffield Interfaith is holding a Quiz Night and Party on Wednesday 7 December at 7.30pm. Bring a team, or join one on the night, for a light-hearted introduction to some beliefs and traditions of some faiths, and maybe dispel some misconceptions. Refreshments will be available. This is being held at the Shirley House, 31 Psalter Lane, Sheffield, S11 8YL. For further information, contact office@standrewspsalterlane.org.uk or call 0114 267 8289.

Faith in Lancaster is holding its next Faithshare on Tuesday 8 December at 7.30pm. The theme for the meeting will be 'Winter Festivals and Celebrations'. This meeting provides an opportunity to meet together in a safe and respectful space in which to share and learn about each other's beliefs, understandings, experiences, traditions and practices. It is being held in Room 4, Quaker Meeting House, Lancaster, LA1 1TX. For further information, email info@faithinlancaster.org.uk or visit www.faithinlancaster.org.uk.

Building Bridges in Burnley is organising an Ecumenical Advent Celebration on Thursday 8 December 2016 at 7pm. This is being held at the Burnley & Pendle Faith Centre, Burnley Campus, Barden Lane, BB10 1JD. For further information, email Colin Wills at colin@wills77.plus.com.

Barnet Multi Faith Forum together with the **United Nations Association** and **Rene Cassin** is holding a Multi-Faith Human Rights Celebration evening on Saturday 10 December at 6.30pm. The event will feature Sacred Sounds Interfaith Choir, faith organisations across Barnet and a presentation on the Challenge of Human Trafficking and Modern Day Slavery. This is being held at Middlesex University, The Burroughs, Hendon NW4 4BT. To register for the event, contact info@barnetmultifaithforum.org.

Policy-UK is holding a forum entitled 'Faith in the Media: Realistic Portrayals, Realistic Headlines and Freedom to Believe' on Wednesday 14 December from 8.30am to 1pm. The speakers include Aaqil Ahmed, Head of Religion & Ethics - BBC, and Dr Edward Kessler MBE, Vice-Chair - Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life, and Ruth Gledhill, Contributing Editor – Christian Today. A year on from the publication of The Commission on Religion and Belief in Public Life report, *Living with Difference: Community, Diversity and the Common Good*, the event will provide an opportunity for delegates to discuss depictions of religion on screen. It will be held at the Royal Society of Chemistry, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London, W1J 0BA. For further information and to book, visit [http://www.policy-uk.com/event/2221/Faith and the Media Realistic Portrayals Realistic Headlines and Freedom to Believe](http://www.policy-uk.com/event/2221/Faith_and_the_Media_Realistic_Portrayals_Realistic_Headlines_and_Freedom_to_Believe).

Interfaith Wolverhampton is holding an Open Day on Tuesday 13 December from 11am to 2pm. Light refreshments will be provided. This is being held at the Darlington Street Methodist Centre, 24 School Street, WV1 4LF. For further information, contact on admin@ifwton.org.uk or call 01902427601.

Interfaith Wolverhampton is holding a 'Bring and Share Lunch' event on Tuesday 17 December from 12.45pm to 2pm. The speaker will be the Revd Ray Gaston, vicar of the Church of St Chad and St Mark in Penn Fields, and author of the book, "A Heart Broken Open". This is being held at Darlington Street Methodist Centre, 24 School Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 4LF. For further information, contact admin@ifwton.org.uk or call 01902427601.

Westminster Cathedral Interfaith Group is considering during 2016 Laudato Si' Our care for our common home by Pope Francis. Its next meeting will be on Wednesday 21 December and will be led by Vedic, Man Mohan Gupta. The group meets from 4pm to 5pm in the Hinsley Room, Morpeth Terrace, London SW1P 1EP. For further information, contact John Woodhouse by text on 07908 888586 or at woodhouseopten@btinternet.com.

For more information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org.uk

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **13 January** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer: Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

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IFN e-bulletin

January/February 2017

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **15 March** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and projects and future events. If your organisation distributes a programme, newsletter or e-bulletin, please add ifnet@interfaith.org.uk to your mailing list.

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Increasingly, IFN is making use of social media, in particular Twitter (www.twitter.com/IFNetUK) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/IFNetUK).

Please take a moment to 'follow' and 'like' IFN and also Inter Faith Week (www.twitter.com/IFWeek and www.facebook.com/IFWeek) and also check in with the IFN website to see new items, which are added on a regular basis.

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

Report of the Casey Review into integration and opportunity

In 2015, at the request of the then Prime Minister and Home Secretary, Dame Louise Casey was asked to undertake a review into integration and opportunity in the UK’s most isolated and deprived communities. On 5 December a report setting out the findings of that review was published. This can be downloaded from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-casey-review-a-review-into-opportunity-and-integration>.

Although commissioned by government, the Review was an independent one. It makes a number of recommendations, including to Government.

The Department for Communities and Local Government has a lead on faith and integration issues for Government and its Secretary of State, Sajid Javid MP, was reported as having said he would study the report's findings and outline policies in response to it in the Spring. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/sajid-javid-integration-louse-casey-review-integration-immigration-a7459006.html>

The House of Commons Communities and Local Government Select Committee, ahead of its session on the report, summarised thus: “The report found that segregation and social exclusion are at worrying levels and fuelling inequality in some areas of the country. Public bodies were accused of ignoring and even condoning divisive religious practices for fear of being called racists. But critics said the review was too critical of Britain's Muslim communities, exaggerated the lack of loyalty and English language skills among migrants and did not focus enough on factors such as poverty, poor housing and limited access to good education and skills training.” The Select Committee examined some of Dame Casey’s conclusions and recommendations and sought her view of how the Government has responded to the findings so far and what more she would like to see happen. It also put to her some of the criticism of her review, including concerns that it focuses too much on Britain's Muslim communities and that it overlooked wider social problems. <http://www.parliamentlive.tv/Event/Index/7eb156b3-e651-461f-b705-552221c4d341>

A number of IFN member bodies have offered initial responses to the report, such as the Muslim Council of Britain <http://www.mcb.org.uk/casey-integration-review-muslim-council-of-britains-initial-response/>; Board of Deputies of British Jews <https://www.bod.org.uk/board-of-deputies-welcomes-general-direction-of-casey-review/>; Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales [http://www.catholicnews.org.uk/Home/News/2016/Casey-Review/\(language\)/eng-GB](http://www.catholicnews.org.uk/Home/News/2016/Casey-Review/(language)/eng-GB;); and Christian Muslim Forum <http://www.yorkshirepost.stfi.re/news/opinion/toby-howarth-and-qari-asim-it-is-the-duty-of-all-of-us-to-help-build-cohesive-society-1-8278844?sf=vwxayzv#aa>. Lord Singh of Wimbledon, Director of the Network of Sikh Organisations, made comments in the context of a Parliamentary debate, which can be read at <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2016-12-06/debates/A3DD98D0-7182-4810-9DA0-5467BC97F261/CaseyReport#contribution-070455D1-08B3-4E7F-B115-03749518B441>.

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Holocaust Memorial Day

Many faith and inter bodies around the UK have been taking part in Holocaust Memorial Day events and projects. This year’s theme is ‘How can life go on?’ The UK HMD event took place on 26 January in London with contributions from Holocaust and other genocide survivors, as well as others, including Communities Secretary, Sajid Javid.

Work on such events is a significant part of the year of many local groups such as Bedford Council of Faiths, Harrow Interfaith, Faiths in Lancaster and Interfaith Wolverhampton. In

Scotland, Interfaith Scotland worked in partnership with East Dunbartonshire Council to arrange the Scottish National Holocaust Memorial Day commemorative event and IFS's Director, Dr Maureen Sier, gave a special reflection. A recording of her presentation can be seen at http://www.scottishparliament.tv/20170117_reflection. Saleem Kidwai of the Interfaith Council of Wales laid a wreath at the Holocaust Memorial Day service at Llandaff Cathedral - <http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/llandaff-cathedral-marks-holocaust-memorial-10796960>. Members of the Northern Ireland Inter Forum attended the national Northern Ireland Commemorative event which this year took place in Armagh - <http://hmd.org.uk/events/2016/northern-ireland-commemorative-event-armagh/fri-06012017-1444>.

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Prince of Wales speaks on reaching across boundaries of faith

On 30 January the Prince of Wales spoke at the Annual Dinner of World Jewish Relief. He spoke of how people of faith had shaped his life and expressed concern that “the horrific lessons of the last War seem to be in increasing danger of being forgotten”. He said “I have always thought that our own particular Faith is something that empowers and liberates us, not something that constrains us. That is why, in my own life, I have always tried to reach across the boundaries of faith and community; to extend a helping hand wherever one might be needed.” The full text of his speech can be found at <http://www.princeofwales.gov.uk/media/speeches/speech-hrh-the-prince-of-wales-the-world-jewish-relief-dinner>.

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US President Executive Order with repercussions globally

An Executive Order issued by US President Trump on 27 January halted the entire US refugee programme for 120 days, indefinitely banned Syrian refugees, and suspended entry into the United States for 90 days of those from countries of particular concern referred to in the Immigration and Nationality Act (section 217(a)(12)). There has been concern within the UK about the impact on those affected and there have been a number of demonstrations <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-38790629> and statements, nationally and locally, such as those of the Muslim Council of Britain, the Board of Deputies of British Jews and Birmingham Faith Leaders' Group: <http://www.mcb.org.uk/trumps-muslim-ban-time-for-our-government-to-stand-up-for-british-values/>; <https://www.bod.org.uk/board-of-deputies-president-condemns-trump-bans-on-refugees/>. The Order was issued on 27 January which is Holocaust Memorial Day and a number of genocide charities also made statements: <http://www.srebrenica.org.uk/news/genocide-charities-condemn-president-trumps-muslim-ban/>.

Text of a debate held on the issue in the House of Commons on 30 January can be seen at <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2017-01-30/debates/448738C3-927F-481B-8340-809810F30595/ChangesInUSImmigrationPolicy#contribution-AE0DB10F-98CC-4903-8CFF-3E74967DDAE2>.

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Equality and Human Rights Commission materials on Religion or Belief

As foreshadowed in the last issue, in December the Equality and Human Rights Commission published a report and guidance from its 3-year programme of work on religion or belief – ‘Shared understandings: a new EHRC strategy to strengthen understanding of religion or belief in public life’.

The report, ‘Religion or belief: is the law working?’ looks at how well the law in Great Britain protects individuals with a religion or belief, or lack of religion or belief. It focuses on four areas: definitions of religion or belief; exceptions in the Equality Act; the law protecting employees; and the law protecting service users and service providers. It can be found at <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/religion-or-belief-frequently-asked-questions>.

The religion or belief guidance material includes ‘Religion or Belief: A guide to the law’, which provides an overview of the protections offered by the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998 of people with or without a religion or belief. It answers commonly asked questions such as those about what is indirect discrimination and can it ever be justified, and how much employers are expected to know about religion or belief in order to fulfil their legal obligations. The guidance can be found at www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/religion-or-belief.

There is also a section on ‘Religion or belief: how do I handle employee requests?’ which provides a decision-making tool for employers; and a section on ‘Frequently asked questions’ which focuses on some of the common questions facing employers today.

The EHRC has also produced a training module for line managers, which can be found at <https://elearning.acas.org.uk/course/> and a training course for trade union representatives, which can be found at <https://www.tuceducation.org.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=51438>.

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Increasing support for anti-hatred and anti-prejudice work

On 26 January Communities Secretary Sajid Javid announced £375,000 of new funding to further encourage the reporting and prevention of hate crime. The extra support will build

upon work the government is already doing to reduce hate crime, increase reporting and improve support for victims.

The new package is targeted at a range of existing organisations, working with faith and minority communities that have historically faced challenges in reporting hate crime. This includes funding to True Vision, the police reporting portal for hate crime, which will help encourage groups that face challenges in reporting hate crime including Sikh and Hindu communities and recent arrivals from Eastern Europe; True Vision will also work with National Churchwatch, an organisation which works to counter hate crime against the Christian community. Additional funding will go to National Hate Crime Awareness Week that takes place each October to develop the scope and depth of the programme and to encourage collaboration between anti-hate crime charities across the country.

For further information, visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-hate-crime-package-to-target-groups-at-need>.

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Anti-Prejudice Interventions - Building Capability and Evaluating ‘What Works’

In July 2016, the Equality and Human Rights Commission published a report called ‘Prejudice and unlawful behaviour: exploring levers for change’, setting out how prejudice relates to unlawful discrimination, harassment and identity-based violence. The report (<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/cy/node/5696>) identified a need for better evaluation on which anti-prejudice interventions are effective and why.

In late 2016, the Commission asked the Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights (CRER) to develop guidance and training which will focus on identifying a minimum or ‘good enough’ standard of evaluation that allows organisations to evaluate interventions in a way that is proportionate and realistic, taking into account the various barriers to evaluation that some organisations may encounter.

Capacity building sessions on evaluating anti-prejudice work will take place on 16 February in Glasgow, 21 February in London and 22 February in Cardiff. These sessions will focus on developing effective, proportionate approaches to evaluating anti-prejudice projects or interventions, and will be especially useful for organisations with more limited experience of evaluation. Feedback from participants will be used to inform the detailed content of the guidance. Booking is available through <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/coalition-for-racial-equality-and-rights-12665798278>.

To ensure that that the guidance and training is appropriately informed, CRER also wish to learn from organisations with experience of evaluating (including self-evaluating) interventions that are intended to tackle prejudice, discrimination, identity based harassment and violence. Anyone with experience of this should contact carol@crer.org.uk.

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Extra funding boost to community projects

Minister for Faith and Integration Lord Bourne announced on 24 January a £210,000 funding boost to be shared among Near Neighbours community projects in England.

Near Neighbours funding brings together diverse communities and different faiths, through a range of activities that improve their lives and the local community in which they live. The first projects to benefit from the new funding include those improving employability through basic literacy and numeracy classes, and those bring communities together in unique ways to build personal skills like sewing classes and hospitality training to improve local relationships. For further information, visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/210000-funding-boost-to-community-projects>.

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Faith leaders call on Government to make the Istanbul Convention law in the UK

On 5 December a number of leaders from Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh communities came together at the House of Lords to launch a public call for the UK Government to make the Istanbul Convention on violence against women law in the UK. As part of their statement, faith leaders also called on MPs to support a Private Members Bill which would require the Government to ratify the Convention. The event was organised by IC Change, Faith Action and Restored, and was hosted by Lord McColl. A copy of the statement made by faith leaders is at <http://icchange.co.uk/faithcall>.

The Bill had its second reading in the House of Commons on 16 December and will now go to Committee Stage in the House of Commons on 30 January. Information on the passage of the Bill can be found at <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/preventingandcombatingviolenceagainstwomenanddomesticviolenceratificationofconvention.html>.

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APPG on RE

The August/September 2016 e-bulletin included an article on a report published by the All Party Parliamentary Group on Religious Education entitled *Improving Religious Literacy: A Contribution to the Debate*. A copy of the report and an executive summary can be found at: [http://www.fionabruce.mp/resources/APPG-on-RE-%E2%80%93-Improving-Religious-Literacy-\(full-report\).pdf](http://www.fionabruce.mp/resources/APPG-on-RE-%E2%80%93-Improving-Religious-Literacy-(full-report).pdf) and <http://fionabruce.mp/resources/Executive-Summary---All-Party-Parliamentary-Group-on-Religious-Education---Improving-Religious-Literacy---A-Contribution-to-the-Debate.pdf>.

The APPG is holding a series of meetings exploring the recommendations set out in that report. The most recent of these took place on 31 January and explored three areas: religious literacy and post-Brexit security; religious literacy for those involved in health and social care, and religious literacy in the work place.

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ResPublica report - Beyond Belief: Defending religious liberty through the British Bill of Rights

ResPublica has published a report entitled *Beyond Belief: Defending religious liberty through the British Bill of Rights*. The report argues that the new British Bill of Rights offers ‘a rare opportunity’ to do more to protect the freedoms of people of faith and ‘freedom to express religious belief.’-0- Further information is at <http://www.respublica.org.uk/our-work/publications/beyond-belief-defending-religious-liberty-british-bill-rights/>.

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Preliminary findings of An Exploration of Knowledge about Child Abuse Linked to Faith or Belief

Preliminary findings of research entitled *An Exploration of Knowledge about Child Abuse Linked to Faith or Belief* have been published. The research was commissioned by the Government’s National Working Group on Child Abuse Linked to Faith and Belief and has been carried out by Manchester Metropolitan University in partnership with The Victoria Climbié Foundation UK and Churches Child Protection Advisory Service. Further information is at <https://vcf-uk.org/new-research-child-abuse-linked-to-faith-and-belief/>.

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British Religion in Numbers 2016 report

British Religion in Numbers is an online religious data resource hosted by the University of Manchester. The latest statistics can be found at <http://www.brin.ac.uk/2017/counting-religion-in-britain-december-2016/>.

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Lammy Review findings and recommendations

The findings and recommendations of the Lammy Review are due to be announced shortly. The Review, chaired by David Lammy MP, is an independent review of the treatment of, and outcomes for, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals in the Criminal Justice System. For further information, visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/lammy-review/about>.

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INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK NEWS

Inter Faith Week and Scottish Interfaith Week

2017 Dates: 12 to 19 November

Inter Faith Week 2017 will take place in England, Wales and Northern Ireland from **Sunday 12 November to Sunday 19 November**. This year, as in 2016, the Week begins on Remembrance Sunday and many people of different faiths and beliefs will be marking that in some way. It is hoped that the additional Sunday will provide the opportunity for other weekend events to take place.

Scottish Interfaith Week will again be taking place on the same dates as Inter Faith Week. For further information, contact admin@interfaithscotland.org.

2016 Snapshots

New to the Inter Faith Week website is a series of 'snapshots' of different types of events held during the 2016 Week: from dialogue, to youth events, arts and cultures, social action and more. These can be found at: <https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/2016-snapshots>.

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

Launch of Religions for Peace UK Interfaith Youth Network

In December the Religions for Peace European Interfaith Youth Network's annual summit took place in Buckinghamshire. The theme of the weekend was 'Welcoming the Other: Multi-religious Youth Unite Against Extremism'.

A number of youth faith organisations from UK present at the Summit, including Soka Gakkai-UK, Coexister London, Focolare UK, Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha, National Hindu Student Forum UK, Pandava Sena and UK Students Christian Movement, held two separate meetings during the Summit. During these they discussed the need for a country-based youth interfaith network in UK, building on some previous work on this. A strategic plan has been initiated and a core planning group and a UK Interfaith Youth Network was launched. For further information, visit <http://eiyn.eu/what-we-do/welcoming-the-other/38-rfp-eiyn-summit-and-training-multireligious-youth-against-religious-extremism>.

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Multi faith projects in Wales

The Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board aims to provide a comprehensive spiritual care service which encompasses those of different faiths as well as the spiritual needs of those of no faith. Pivotal to this service is the development of multi faith centres within its main hospitals. As part of this, a new development in its planning stage is the building of a multi faith centre as Ysbycy Glan Clwyd Hospital in partnership faith groups within the community. It is hoped that the new centre will be of pastoral and spiritual use to the diverse community.

The multi faith chaplaincy centre at Ysbycy Gwynedd in Bangor is working with a number of local schools in developing and understanding both the similarities and differences between world faiths. As part of this, the chaplaincy centre is running a series of visits for local schoolchildren to the chaplaincy, where they are welcomed by representatives of both the Christian and Muslim faiths. The children get to experience some of the main beliefs and practices of both faiths and develop an understanding of some of the common features which unite us on our particular faith journey. The project is also open to local community groups.

For more information about either project, contact the Rev Wynne Roberts at wynne.roberts@wales.nhs.uk.

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World Interfaith Harmony Week

World Interfaith Harmony Week is a UN recognised Week which takes place each year during the first week of February. The Week was proposed to the UN General Assembly by HM King Abdullah of Jordan, and the first UN World Interfaith Harmony Week took place in February 2011. Further information about the Week, including its aims and objectives, can be found on its website at <http://worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com>.

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VisitMyMosque Day

VisitMyMosque is taking place on Sunday 5 February. It is a national initiative facilitated by the Muslim Council of Britain during which mosques across the UK organise open days, inviting in their neighbours and local community to share hospitality and to learn more about Islam and Muslims in the UK. This year the Day will be highlighting how ‘British Mosques are helping their Local Communities’ from supporting food banks and the economically vulnerable, to volunteers cleaning up local streets or visiting the elderly and sick in their neighbourhood. For further information and to find mosques taking part, visit <http://www.visitmymosque.org/>.

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3FF ParliaMentors Recruitment

Recruitment for the next cohort of 3FF’s UN award-winning leadership programme for students opens in 2 weeks. The programme provides the opportunity for university students to work in a diverse team, gain the skills to create social change and be mentored by an MP. For further information, visit www.3ff.org.uk/parliamentors.

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Stonewall Faith Role Models

Stonewall is running a Role Models Programme to give LGBT people of faith the opportunity to explore what it means to be an LGBT role model and the space to identify how they are going to create an inclusive environment for other LGBT people within their faith communities.

Stonewalls says: “The Role Models Programme is one of many empowerment programmes we have at Stonewall. We are striving to take these further and use them as a real force for social change. As part of that work, we are delighted to offer a free Role Models Programme specifically for people of faith.” For further information, visit <http://www.stonewall.org.uk/get-involved/get-involved-ind-and-comm/faith-role-models>.

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Faith communities and inter faith engagement

Across the coming months, IFN will be highlighting on social media some of the ways that national faith communities are working to increase inter faith understanding and cooperation. The first of the posts highlighted the Board of Deputies of British Jews Limmud Interfaith Tour which took participants to a number of places of worship in Birmingham - <https://www.bod.org.uk/interfaith-tour-provided-an-uplifting-end-to-the-year/>. The post features its visit to Guru Nanak Nishkam Sevak Jatha.

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

Inter Faith Learning, Dialogue and Cooperation: Next Steps

In November the Inter Faith Network for the UK published a new resource to help people to get involved in inter faith activity: *Inter Faith Learning, Dialogue and Cooperation: Next Steps*.

During Inter Faith Week, and at other times in the year, many people will have engaged with inter faith activity for the first time, either by meeting others of different faiths, or learning more about those with whom they share their communities. Some people's experiences prompt them to want to get further involved in inter faith learning, discussion and practical cooperation.

Next Steps is designed to help those wanting to get involved, or further involved, in inter faith learning, dialogue and cooperation. The booklet includes information and pointers about the different ways people can engage with those of other faiths and beliefs.

The resource can be downloaded from the Inter Faith Network and Inter Faith Week websites at www.interfaith.org.uk and www.interfaithweek.org respectively, and hard copies are available from the IFN office on request.

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Educational and Academic bodies in IFN membership

In November, as previously reported, IFN published a new resource: *Inter Faith Learning and Dialogue: Next Steps*. Further details are above. It can be downloaded at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/publications/all-publications/all-publications/165-inter-faith-learning-dialogue-and-cooperation-next-steps/file>.

Next Steps includes information on how to get in touch with its member bodies. It also includes a chart showing some of the ways that our member bodies in the National and Regional Inter Faith and Educational and Academic categories of membership might be able to assist them.

In this issue of the e-bulletin we are profiling member Educational and Academic Bodies to give readers an idea of their work and the resource that they offer. Profiles for each body are included as a [supplement](#) at the end of this bulletin.

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Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource Library

The work of Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource (SIFRE) as a single body has come to an end after many years in which it has made a significant contribution to understanding about and between different faiths and beliefs in its area and beyond. The work will be continuing through a number of other organisations in the area.

SIFRE is keen to keep its library of books together and would be interested to know whether any IFN member bodies would be interested in acquiring it. There are 3,000 books in total, all of which are catalogued online at www.sifre.org.uk/lib/Library.htm, and shelving. Anyone interested should contact David Capey at office@eefa.net before 10 February.

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SPiRiT project materials on faith communities and energy

A project about faith communities and energy efficiency, co-funded by the European Union's Intelligent Energy Europe programme, has produced two summary sheets on the project in December: one sharing the key results of the project and another sharing the resources available to support others in engaging faith communities on energy efficiency. Both are available to view at <http://www.spirit-project.eu/spirit-summary-of-resources/>.

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Zutshi-Smith Symposium on The Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life

A year after the publication of the report of the Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life a symposium was held under the Zutshi-Smith benefaction at the

University of Bristol, which exists to advance discussion to promote peace and understanding amongst religions on the 15 and 16th December, 2016. At the symposium papers were presented on the themes of the report and reflecting on its findings and recommendations.

Public Spirit is publishing blogs based on some of the presentations. It has so far published blogs on legal themes and will shortly be publishing another set on education and on more general perspectives. They can be found at <http://www.publicspirit.org.uk/zutshi-smith-symposium-on-the-commission-on-religion-and-belief-in-british-public-life-introduction/>.

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Guide to insuring faith based organisations

CaSE Insurance was set up and remains part-owned by the charity NCVO and the charity lawyers, Bates Wells Braithwaite and an insurance specialist called aQmen Underwriting. It has been going for ten years and has over 4,000 charity, faith and not for profit clients.

It has developed its own Faith insurance policy in partnership with Aviva, and is offering a free guide on 'Insuring your faith based organisation' to members of the Inter Faith Network for the UK. For further information, visit <http://caseinsurance.co.uk/inter-faith-network-guide/>.

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Global NGO Online Technology report

The 2017 Global NGO Online Technology Report is a research project that seeks to gain a better understanding of how non-governmental organisations (NGOs) worldwide use online technology to engage their supporters and donors.

Sponsored by the Public Interest Registry and researched by Nonprofit Tech for Good, the report summarises how NGOs worldwide use web and email communications, online and mobile fundraising tools, and social and mobile media. The report can be downloaded from <http://techreport.ngo/english.html>.

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Religious Diversity and Anti-Discrimination workshops

The Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby is offering a range of tailor-made workshops to address issues surrounding diversity and discrimination related to religion,

gender and sexuality. Programmes include: Religious Diversity and Ant-Discrimination; Religious Literacy; Islamophobia; Anti-Semitism; and Religion, Gender and Sexual Orientation.

For further information, visit <http://multifaithcentre.org/training/> or contact the Centre on 01332 591285 or at mfc@derby.ac.uk.

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Registering, managing and accessing funding for faith charities

The Charity Commission and the Strengthening Faith Institutions Network is hosting a seminar on 'Registering, Managing, and Accessing Funding for Your Faith Charity' in London at 6pm on 9 February at Al Medina Mosque in Barking.

Charity Commission trainers will cover the essential elements concerning the registration and management of your faith organisation. In addition, an expert fundraiser will provide a short workshop covering: 1) Basic guidance on how to register your faith organisation as a charity; 2) effective charity management in different areas: such as governance, trustee duties, and financial reporting; and 3) practical methods of accessing mainstream funding for faith based projects and institutions.

Entry is free with advance registration only. To register, visit barking-dagenham.eventbrite.co.uk, or for further information, contact Rabbi Natan Levy, Head of Operations, Strengthening Faith Institutions, on 07590 028 823 or at natan@sfitogether.org.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS, AND NOMINATIONS

2016 Inter Faith Week overview

An overview report on Inter Faith Week 2016 is being put together. This will draw on survey responses, information on registered events and photographs of events.

Thank you to all event holders who have responded to the survey. If you have not yet responded and would like to do so this will remain open until Friday 3 February and can be found at <http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/Y3TC3>.

We would also welcome jpegs of photographs of events and copies of any reports on events that member bodies have held. These can be sent to Zac.Intern@interfaith.org.uk.

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Inter faith work of faith communities

The IFN office is always glad to receive information about faith communities' inter faith work – locally, regionally and nationally. If you have examples of work which you think might be a helpful template for others, email details to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

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Modern Places of Worship survey

The Baroness Warsi Foundation's 'Modern Places of Worship' project, explores the interplay between architecture, faith and identity from both an historic and a modern perspective. Empowering Design Practices is a research project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and explores how community-led design can help empower those who look after historic places of worship to create more open, vibrant and sustainable places that respect and enhance their heritage.

As part of these projects, a survey is being undertaken to inform understanding of how individuals and communities view the future of places of worship in the UK and their place in society. The survey is available at www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/designpow.

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Welcoming the Stranger short story competition

A reminder that the Multi Faith Centre at the University of Derby is running a Short Story Competition entitled 'Welcoming the Stranger'.

Participants are invited to submit a short story, which is a work of fiction, on the theme of the stranger being welcomed. The competition is open to all. For those under 18 years of age, the story should be 1,000 to 1,500 words; for those over 18 years, it should be between 2,000 and 2,500 words. Winning and highly recommended stories will be read aloud at a Prize Evening in May at the Multi Faith Centre in Derby. Entries must be submitted between 1 January and 3 March. For further information, including terms and conditions, visit www.multifaithcentre.org.

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Sandford St Martin Trust Awards

The 2017 Sandford St Martin Trust Awards is still open for entries. The awards are for radio, TV and online content exploring religious, spiritual or ethical themes.

Applications are encouraged from news, current affairs, drama, music, arts, children's and comedy genres, as well as from specifically 'religious' commissions. Programmes that challenge as well as support faith are among those that have been previously recognised by the Awards.

The 2017 Awards will be presented at Lambeth Palace in June. The closing date for entries is 3 February. For details on how to apply, visit www.sandfordawards.org.uk and for further information, contact Anna McNamee on 07899 800758 or at anna.mcnamee@sandfordawards.org.uk.

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Oxford Symposium on Religious Studies

The Oxford Symposium on Religious Studies is taking place from 15 to 17 March in the Oxford University Church of St Mary. Papers on any aspect of religious studies are invited. The deadline for proposals is 20 February. For further information, visit <https://www.oxfordsymposiumonreligiousstudies.com/>.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

Inter Faith Network for the UK - Volunteers and interns

The Inter Faith Network for the UK has regular volunteering opportunities and occasional internships. Further information about these can be found on IFN's website.

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Interfaith Glasgow – Volunteers

Female volunteers

Interfaith Glasgow is looking to recruit a small group of female volunteers from diverse traditions to share their stories on head coverings. Sharing Stories volunteers will participate in 4 free storytelling workshops during February and March 2017 and will have the opportunity to share their story at a special event during Islam Awareness week (27 March to 2 April). Any females interested, should visit www.interfaithglasgow.org/get-

[involved](#) or contact Magdalen at magdalen.lambkin@interfaithglasgow.org or on 0141 5580778.

Weekend Club

Interfaith Glasgow's Weekend Club for refugees and asylum seekers continues to grow and is looking for volunteers to join its team delivering fun and engaging activities for people new to the city and in need of a warm welcome. For further information, contact Mohamed at weekendclub@interfaithglasgow.org.

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St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace – IT consultant and Digital Design and Communications Intern

The St Ethelburga's Centre will shortly be recruiting an IT consultant to maintain and update its IT systems. For further information and a job description, email adam@stethelburgas.org. It is also seeking to recruit an Intern to help with work including publicity design, website, social media and images and written publications; and to support the Director with research, logistics and administration. For a full role outline and details on how to apply, visit <https://www.stethelburgas.org/digital-design-and-communications-4-month-internship>. The Centre also has volunteer opportunities for a Health and Safety Advisor and for Fundraising support. For further information, visit <https://www.stethelburgas.org/current-opportunities>.

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INFORM - Researcher

Inform is a small educational charity housed at the London School of Economics, which “collects, evaluates and disseminates information about minority religions”. It is seeking a Researcher on a full-time or part-time basis.

The Researcher will be responsible for contributing to particular research projects and for helping to enhance Inform's capacity to monitor and analyse minority religions and public responses to them. For more information, including how to apply, visit www.inform.ac. The closing date for applications is Friday 24 February.

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Beyond the Ordinary RE Teacher recruitment campaign

The Religious Education Council of England and Wales is now into the third year of its Beyond the Ordinary RE Teacher recruitment campaign.

It has posted on its website five ways that people can get involved in supporting RE teacher recruitment <http://religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/public-engagement/news/2017-01-18/five-ways-you-can-support-re-teacher-recruitment>; and also created a YouTube video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SzvZTFmp6qc>. The Teach RE website gives more information about the campaign and about RE teaching as a career - <http://www.teachre.co.uk/beyondtheordinary/>.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Common Good funding programme

The Department for Communities and Local Government is providing £250,000 of ‘small grants funding’ through its ‘Common Good’ programme, managed by the Church Urban Fund. The programme is offering grants between £250 and £5,000.

The Church Urban Fund notes that the purpose of grants is to “address recent and long entrenched tensions in local areas between faith and ethnic communities, where there are reported incidents of intolerance, to build connections and increase levels of trust and mutual support, as well as encouraging people to develop practical activities to bring about change. Applications are particularly encouraged “from areas where there has been significant migration from European countries and settlement of asylum seekers and refugees, and areas where our networks and/or news reports have indicated that there are tensions.”

Grants from the Common Good Fund are available across England, except for the areas where Near Neighbours Small Grants are available. The deadline for applications is Monday 27 February. For further information, visit <https://www.cuf.org.uk/common-good-fund>.

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Building a Stronger Britain Together programme

The Home Office has recently announced the second release of grants from its Building a Stronger Britain Together programme, which provides “funding and support for groups involved in counter-extremism projects in their communities”. The programme is offering two kinds of support:

- in-kind support (such as social media training, technical assistance to help a group improve their website, or capacity building work to help a group protect more vulnerable individuals)
- grants: targeted funding for specific projects with demonstrable outcomes which provide a positive alternative to extremist voices

The deadline for grants is 5pm on 6 February. It is open to bodies in England and Wales. There is a fixed amount of funding available and bids will be considered on a first-come-first-served basis. The call for in-kind support will remain open all year.

Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/building-a-stronger-britain-together>.

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Faiths in Scotland Community Action Fund

Faiths in Scotland Community Action Fund awards grants to support Scotland's most fragile urban and rural communities. Its first grants in 2017 will focus exclusively on projects focusing on work with children and young adults and it is calling for applications from faith-based registered charities, which either work with, or aim to begin working with people under the age of 18. It is offering awards for one year of up to £5,000 and all funds must be spent within 12 months of the Award Date.

The deadline for applications is 10 February. It is open to all charities which meet its criteria and have never received funding from the STV Children's Appeal. For more information call Chris on 0141 221 4544 or visit

<http://www.faithincommunityscotland.org/faith-in-community-scotland-action-fund/>.

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Tesco Bags of Help

Bags of Help is Tesco's local community grant scheme where the money raised from the 5p bag levy in Tesco stores is being used to fund community projects across the UK. The projects must meet the criteria of promoting community participation in the development and use of outdoor spaces. Bags of Help is administered by Groundwork in England and Wales and supported in Scotland by Greenspace Scotland. (It is not available in Northern Ireland where carrier bag money is managed centrally.)

Three local community projects will be voted on in Tesco stores each month across Tesco regions throughout England, Scotland and Wales. In each region, the project that received the most votes from all stores in their region will receive a grant of up to £5,000. The second placed project receives up to £2,000 and third placed up to £1,000. Every year, over 7,000 projects will receive funding through this scheme.

Grants are awarded to voluntary or community organisations (including registered charities/companies), schools, health bodies (eg Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), NHS Hospital Trust, Foundation Trust), Parish/Town Councils, local authorities and social housing providers. For detailed information on criteria and how to apply, visit

<http://www.groundwork.org.uk/Sites/tescocommunityscheme/pages/Category/the-tesco-bags-of-help-programme-tes2>.

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Funding websites

Funding Central - <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/default.aspx> - is a free website for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises in England that provides access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, together with tools and resources for supporting organisations to develop sustainable income strategies appropriate to their needs.

Similar websites for funding in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at Funding Scotland - <http://www.fundingscotland.com/> - Wales Council for Voluntary Action - <http://www.wcva.org.uk/funding/search> - and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland - <https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

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Heritage Lottery Fund grants to commemorate First World War

The Heritage Lottery Fund has made an additional £4million of funding available so that more communities can get involved in projects marking the Centenary of the First World War. Projects applying for funding must be able to meet one of a number of successful outcomes based on heritage, people and communities. Grants can be given between £3,000 and £10,000. There is no current deadline for applications.

Further information can be found at <https://www.hlf.org.uk/looking-funding/our-grant-programmes/first-world-war-then-and-now>.

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Community foundations

Community foundations are local, grant-making organisations to which local community organisations can apply for funding. There are 48 community foundations in the UK, covering Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England. They provide donors with information about local needs, what groups are tackling which issues, and how donations can be strategic and best support the community. A map of community foundations across the UK and how to contact them, can be found at http://ukcommunityfoundations.org/community_foundations/map.

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Comic Relief Stronger Communities grants

Comic Relief's grants programme now has five themes, one of which is 'Stronger Communities'. Grants for the Stronger Communities theme are managed by Local Community Foundations and range in size from £1,000 to £10,000 per year. Priority is given to small, locally-based groups or organisations in areas of disadvantage that have a clear understanding of the needs of their community and are undertaking actions as a means of addressing these needs. Anyone wishing to apply for a Local Communities grant should contact their local community foundation. Further details can be found online at http://ukcommunityfoundations.org/programmes/comic_relief/.

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Transform Foundation

The Transform Foundation is offering funding to charities to help with new website builds. Grants of £18,000 are available. For further information and to apply, visit www.transformfoundation.org.uk.

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Google, Microsoft and charities

The internet search engine Google is offering a service to registered charities which brings: Google Ad Grants: Free AdWords advertising to promote your website on Google through keyword targeting; YouTube Nonprofit Programme: Access exclusive resources, features and programs designed to maximise your organisation's impact on YouTube; and Google Apps for Non-profit: Free version of the Google Apps business productivity suite, including Gmail, Docs, Calendar and more. For further information, visit www.google.co.uk/intl/en/nonprofits/join.

Google is one among a number of companies and some others also have programmes to work with charities. See, for example, <https://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/about/charities-communities/charity-support/>.

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SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK TO INCREASE INTER FAITH UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION

THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUR SUPPORT

We need your help to ensure that the Inter Faith Network for the UK's work to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation continues and grows, helping people of all backgrounds to live and work together with mutual respect and shared commitment to the common good.

Please consider making a gift today to support the work of the Inter Faith Network. Gifts at all levels are valued and make a difference. You can donate by credit card or PayPal online at www.interfaith.org.uk/donate or by sending a cheque to The Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH.

REMEMBERING A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND

From time to time we receive an 'in memoriam' gift after an individual has passed away, funded from a collection following their death or through a donation from their heirs. Such gifts provide a living memorial to a loved one, supporting inter faith understanding in this country – for now and for the future. If you would like to make a gift in memory of a loved one, please get in touch by emailing remember@interfaith.org.uk or call us on 0207 730 0410.

A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

By leaving a gift in your will to the Inter Faith Network for the UK, you can leave a living inheritance to help deepen and strengthen inter faith understanding and cooperation in this country – for now and for the future. If you are thinking about making a will, the best thing to do is to get in touch with a professional will writer, such as a solicitor or advocate; they can help to ensure it is legally correct and that your wishes are met. If you have already made a will, you can still make an addition or amendment in the form of a codicil. If you would like to pledge a gift, please provide our name and address, along with our registered charity number 1068934.

Please get in touch with us if you have any queries. You can call Hannah Cassidy, on 0207 730 0410 or contact us at remember@interfaith.org.uk.

Every gift, however large or small, makes a difference.

Thank you!

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

VisitMyMosque Day takes place on 5 February www.visitmymosque.org

World Interfaith Harmony Week takes place in the first week of February <http://worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com>

Sadaqa Day will take place on 26 March <http://mysadaqaday.org>

Islam Awareness Week will take place from 27 March to 2 April www.iaw.org.uk

Srebrenica Memorial Day will take place on 11 July www.srebrenica.org.uk

Peace One Day takes place on 21 September www.peaceoneday.org

Sewa Day will take place on 1 October www.sewaday.org

One World Week will take place from 22 to 29 October www.oneworldweek.org

National Inter Faith Week in England, Wales and Northern Ireland will be an ‘8 day week’ this year taking place from 12 to 19 November. www.interfaithweek.org

Scottish Interfaith Week will also take place from 12 to 19 November www.interfaithscotland.org/scottish-interfaith-week/

See more [above](#).

Mitzvah Day will take place on 19 November www.mitzvahday.org.uk/

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DIARY DATES

This section includes some of the events taking place around the UK. IFN includes information on diary dates between e-bulletins on its website at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/take-part/events>.

The **Southbank Centre** in London is running a festival throughout 2017 entitled ‘Belief and Beyond Belief’. The festival asks “what it means to be human by exploring the outpouring of music, art, science, philosophy and ritual stimulated by religion”. The second section of the festival, running from 1 to 25 February, focuses on ‘Science versus Religion: Do We Need to Choose?’. For further information, visit <http://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whats-on/festivals-series/belief-and-beyond-belief>.

InterFaith MK is holding an event on Thursday 2 February on “Opportunity, Integration and Combatting Hatred” (breaking down the barriers of suspicion and ignorance). There will be a presentation and discussion led by Bulraj Bassral,

Project Director of the Equalities Council MK, which, in the light of the Casey Review on Integration and the Government's Anti-Hatred Strategy, will consider what can be done to create a more cohesive and compassionate community in Milton Keynes. The event is being held at 7.30pm at Gurdwara Baba Zorawar Singh ji Baba Fateh Singh ji, Phoenix Drive, Leadenhall, Milton Keynes MK6 5LU. Those wanting a guided tour of the Gurdwara should arrive 15 minutes early. For further information, contact interfaithmk@gmail.com.

Burngreave Ashram Multifaith Chapel & Library is hosting a Meditation/Prayer lunch and seminar on Monday 6 February from 12pm to 2.30pm. This will be led by Sara Clayton and Ruth Bird. It is being held at 86 Spital Hill, Sheffield S4 7LG. For further information, contact on BAMCL@outlook.com or call on 07932017929 or 01142436688.

York Interfaith Group is organising a visit on Tuesday 7 February to the Samye Dzong Buddhist Centre. The Centre is based at Londesborough Lodge, The Crescent, Scarborough YO11 2PW. Transport will be co-ordinated. For further information, contact yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com.

The **Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum** is holding an event on Tuesday 7 February as part of the 4 Corners Festival Belfast and World Interfaith Harmony Week. The festival seeks to 'inspire people from across the city to transform it for the peace and prosperity of all'. The event is an evening of encounter in music, song and story on the theme of 'Harmony and Healing' and will bring together people of different faiths, including representatives from the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish and Muslim faiths from Belfast and beyond. The event is being held at 7.30pm at Grosvenor Hall, 5 Glengall Street, BT12 5AD. For more information, visit www.4cornersfestival.com or www.niinterfaithforum.org or email info@4cornersfestival.com.

Building Bridges in Burnley is holding its next 'Share Faith Share Food' event for women on Tuesday 7 February. The programme for the evening is a sharing of skills by various women. Anyone interested in sharing a skill or seeking further information, should contact bea_foster@hotmail.com or call 07875 517043. Participants are invited to bring food to share. This event is for women only. It takes place from 7pm to 9pm at the Faith Centre, Barden Lane Campus, Barden Lane, Burnley.

St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace is holding an event entitled 'Tales of Refugees' on Tuesday 7 February at 6.30pm. Writer and traveller along the migrant trail, Bruna Kadletz will talk about her experiences and of building relationships with Syrian refugees in her home-town in Brazil. There will also be a screening of a new film from the Global Oneness Project about the arrival of Syrian refugees in Canada, with the Executive Director, Emmanuel Vaughan-Lee. There is a fee to attend. The event is being held at St Ethelburga's Centre, 78 Bishopsgate, London, EC2N 4AG. For further information, contact Jo Winsloe Slater on jowinsloe@stethelburgas.org or call on 07725954005.

Northampton Inter Faith Forum is holding a 'Cake and Debate' event on Saturday 11 February. The event, on the theme 'Brexit and uncertainty; faith and the future', is being held from 3 to 4pm as part of an event to mark the opening of the new Meditation Centre.

It will include debate, art, music and henna painting. It is being held at The Market Sanctuary, Simon de Senlis Court, Northampton, NN1 3AE. For further information, email contact@niff.org.uk.

Windsor and Maidenhead Community Forum is holding a series of inter faith dialogue events across the coming months. The next one takes place on Tuesday 14 February and will be asking 'What advice would we give to our younger self?' It is being held from 7pm to 9pm at St Mark's Catholic Church, Dedworth Road, Dedworth, SL4 4JS. For more information, visit www.wamcf.org.

The Women's Federation for World Peace is hosting an 'Interfaith Peace Blessing' on Saturday 18 February. The theme will be 'Renewing our families and nation' and there will be talks and prayers from different faith traditions, as well as music and refreshments. It takes place at 2.30pm for 3pm until 6pm at Arya Samaj, 178 Inkerman Street, Nechells, Birmingham B7 4SA. For further information contact Patricia Earle on 07540 998 724.

The London Inter Faith Centre and **Christian-Muslim Forum** are holding an afternoon seminar on Sunday 19 February on 'Can we call ourselves one faith?' Lunch will be provided. It takes place from 1pm to 4pm at the London Inter Faith Centre, 125 Salusbury Road, London NW6 6RG. For further information, visit <http://londoninterfaith.org.uk>.

Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship is holding a talk on Tuesday 21 February on 'Brahma Kumari Ethics in Contemporary Society'. The speaker will be Dr David Goodman. This is being held at 7.30pm at the Brahma Kumari Centre, 241 Otley Road, Leeds LS16 5LQ. For further information, contact John Summerwill on 0113 2697895 or email membership@concord-leeds.org.uk.

Interfaith Wolverhampton is holding a 'Bring and Share Lunch' event on Tuesday 21 February. The speaker will be Will Foster, Minister, and Dean of Staffordshire at Wolverhampton University. This is being held from 12.45pm to 2pm at Darlington Street Methodist Centre, 24 School Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 4LF. For further information, contact admin@ifwton.org.uk or call 01902 427601.

Norwich InterFaith Link is holding a discussion on Tuesday 21 February entitled 'Cover Up – Modesty, the Body and Show'. This is being held at 7.30pm at the Martineau Memorial Hall, 21 Colegate, Norwich, Norfolk, NR3 1BN. There is a fee to attend. For further information, contact Chris on 01603 667314 or visit <http://norwichinterfaith.co.uk/contact.php>.

Crawley Interfaith Network is holding a talk on Thursday 23 February entitled 'Britishness Today'. The speaker will be Henry Smith, MP for Crawley and member of the Conservative Party. The event is being held from 7pm to 9pm at the Crawley Library, Southgate Avenue, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 6HG. For further information, contact Iyad Daoud on contact@crawleyinterfaith.net or call on 01293 883372.

Bedford Council of Faiths is holding its AGM on Thursday 23rd February. The evening begins at 7pm with a finger buffet followed by a talk by Ben Salmonds, Break the Stigma Lead, Bedfordshire and Luton East London HNS Trust. The talk will be followed by the EGM where the new Constitution will be voted upon, and then the AGM. The meeting will be held at First Church of Christ, Scientist, Bedford, 84 Kimbolton Road, Bedford MK40 2PD. For further information, contact secretary.bcof@gmail.com.

Bristol Multi-Faith Forum is organising Bristol Diverse Doors Open Day on Sunday 26 February from 10.30am to 4pm. This annual event offers the opportunity to visit a range of places of worship in order to give the flavour of the many faiths in the city of Bristol. For those who do not want to do the trail on their own, there will be the option of joining a mini-bus tour of a few key places of worship. To book a seat on the mini-bus or for further information, contact Lily Khandker on 07789040267 (Available Tue, Thur and Fri) or email on info@bristolmultifaithforum.org.uk.

Faith in Lancaster is holding its next Faithshare meeting on Monday 27 February. The theme will be 'Fasting and Faith' because on the day after the Faithshare meeting, the Christian period of Lent begins. The event is being held at 7.30pm in Room 2, Quaker Meeting House, Lancaster, LA1 1TX. For further information, email info@faithinlancaster.org.uk or visit www.faithinlancaster.org.uk.

Windsor and Maidenhead Community Forum is holding a series of inter faith dialogue events across the coming months. The next one takes place on Tuesday 28 February and will be asking 'How can we be happy?' It is being held from 7pm to 9pm at Maidenhead Synagogue, Grenfell Lodge, Ray Park Rd, Maidenhead SL6 8QX. For more information, visit www.wamcf.org.

The **Southbank Centre, London** is running a festival throughout 2017 entitled 'Belief and Beyond Belief'. The festival aims to question "what it means to be human by exploring the outpouring of music, art, science, philosophy and ritual stimulated by religion". The third section of the festival, running from 4 to 25 March, focuses on 'How Do We Live with Death'. For further information, visit <https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whats-on/festivals-series/belief-and-beyond-belief>.

Nisa-Nashim is holding its Inaugural Conference entitled 'Challenging the Narrative' on Sunday 5 March from 9am to 5pm. The event will bring together Jewish and Muslim women of all ages from across the UK. The speakers will be the National Co-Chairs Laura Marks and Julie Siddiqi, as well as Members of Parliament, academics, and representatives of the media, business, and charity and community organisations. There is a fee to attend. The conference is being held at the University of Westminster, 101 New Cavendish Street, London, W1W 6XH. To register for the event, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/register-to-attend-inaugural-nisa-nashim-conference-challenging-the-narrative-tickets-30552630741>. For further information, contact info@nisanashim.org.

Burngreave Ashram Multifaith Chapel & Library is hosting its next Meditation/Prayer lunch and seminar on Monday 6 March from 12pm to 2.30pm. The meditation and prayer

will be led by Sandra Dutson and Shelly Hinson. It is being held at 86 Spital Hill, Sheffield S4 7LG. For further information, email BAMCL@outlook.com or call 07932017929 or 01142436688.

Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship is holding a talk on 'The Workplace, Spirituality and Interfaith Dialogue' on Tuesday 7 March at 7.30pm. The speaker will be Revd Dr David Randolph-Horn. This is being held at the All Hallows Church, 24 Regent Terrace, Leeds, LS6 1NP. For further information, contact John Summerwill on 01132697895 or email membership@concord-leeds.org.uk.

The **Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter** is running a Study Day on Wednesday 8 March entitled 'I have forgiven according to your word (Numbers 14:20) Repentance in the Bible and in Jewish Tradition'. The day runs from 11am to 3.15pm and the speaker will be Rabbi Rachel Montagu. There is a suggested donation. This is being held at the Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter, 34 Chepstow Villas, London, W11 2QZ. For further information, visit <https://sioncentre.org/> or email sioncentrefordialogue@gmail.com.

York Interfaith Group is holding an event on Tuesday 14 March. It will begin with a 'Bring and Share' Meal with Music from 5.30pm to 7.30pm and will then be followed at 7.30pm by its Monthly Meeting, for which the theme is 'Six Interfaith Principles from the Bhagavad-Gita'. It is being held from 5.30pm to 7.30pm at the York Medical Society Rooms, 23 Stonegate, York YO1 8AW. For further information, contact yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com.

Windsor and Maidenhead Community Forum is holding a series of inter faith dialogue events across the coming months. The next one takes place on Tuesday 14 March and will be asking 'What makes life meaningful?' It is being held from 7pm to 9pm at Maidenhead Mosque, Holmanleaze, Maidenhead SL6 8AW. For more information, visit www.wamcf.org.

Norwich InterFaith Link is holding a talk entitled 'Pocahontas: Propaganda, Legend, Hope' on Tuesday 21 March at 7.30pm. The speaker will be Chris Wood and the event will mark the 400th anniversary of Pocahontas' death. There is a fee to attend. This is being held at the Martineau Memorial Hall, 21 Colegate, Norwich, Norfolk, NR3 1BN. For further information, contact Chris on 01603 667314 or visit <http://norwichinterfaith.co.uk/contact.php>.

Faith in Lancaster is holding its next Faithshare on Tuesday 21 March at 7.30pm. The theme for the meeting will be 'Life Beyond Death'. The meeting provides an opportunity to meet together in a safe and respectful space in which to share and learn about each other's beliefs, understandings, experiences, traditions and practices. This is being held in the William Stout Room, Quaker Meeting House, Lancaster, LA1 1TX. For further information, email info@faithinlancaster.org.uk or visit www.faithinlancaster.org.uk.

Crawley Interfaith Network is holding a talk entitled 'Spirituality and Religion' on Thursday 23 March from 7pm to 9pm. The speaker will be Dr Roger Prentice, founder of 'One Garden: Living Inter-Spirituality, realising oneness'. This is being held at the Civic Hall

Crawley, The Boulevard, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 1UZ. For further information, contact Iyad Daoud at contact@crawleyinterfaith.net or call on 01293 883372.

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For more information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org.uk

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **15 March** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer: Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH
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EDUCATIONAL AND ACADEMIC BODIES IN IFN MEMBERSHIP

Cambridge Inter-Faith Programme (CIP)

CIP was founded in 2002 to explore the relationship between Jews, Christians and Muslims and to pursue research and public education projects that would:

- bring together Jewish, Christian and Muslim participants, and others;
- be responsible to the religious communities, to society more generally, and to the academic disciplines;
- embed long-term inter-faith learning, collaboration and collegiality into Cambridge University and other institutions; and
- emphasise face to face discussion and joint study and research, including study of each other's scriptures.

Its four priorities are described as: Scriptural Reasoning, Public Education, Research and Resources. Key to its work is enabling the development of participants 'critical love for their own traditions'. Part of its work is drawing together and initiating academic research in relevant fields and making resources available to other academics and the wider public.

It works closely with Coexist House, is describes as a sister project. For further details see: <http://www.interfaith.cam.ac.uk/>

Community Religions Project (CRP) University of Leeds

CRP was established in 1976 with a remit to conduct research into religion in locality in Leeds and beyond. Since 2014 it has moved its emphasis to learning and teaching, supporting undergraduate courses and postgraduate programmes at the University. This includes engaging undergraduate students in research, as can be seen from the Religious Mapping of Leeds project, the reports of which can be found on the Project's website.

CRP retains a research archive that can be accessed through its website. An interesting part of this is a photographic archive which was started in the 1970s, with a focus on five prominent traditions within the city of Leeds: Sikhism, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and Christianity. Photographs from the 1970s and updated in 2011 show the changes that have occurred over nearly half a century in Leeds.

For further details see: <http://arts.leeds.ac.uk/crp/>

Institute of Jainology (IoJ)

The IoJ has its origins in the 1980s when it became apparent that there was a need to coordinate Jain affairs across the Jain diaspora. Its objects are described as to:

- Provide a platform for interaction between different Jain communities and organisations, where all traditions jointly promote the faith and engage in discussions amongst themselves.

- Promote inter faith relationships to create a better understanding of the Jain faith and to acquaint the Jain community with other faiths.
- Create an awareness of the history, art, philosophy, and practices of Jain faith, including its relevance to today's world, particularly with regard to the respect for all living beings and environment.
- Provide opportunities for study of the faith, both at the community level and at institutions of higher learning. Offer lectures in Jainism, on request.
- Facilitate scholarly research on Jainism through the establishment of scholarships.
- Undertake the cataloguing and digitisation of Jain manuscripts and artefacts

Companies House recognises the organisation formally as an 'Institute'.

The Institute has a number of projects, of which two are Ahimsa Day and Jainpedia <http://www.jainpedia.org/>.

For further details see: <http://www.jainology.org/>

Islamic Foundation (IF)

The Islamic Foundation established in 1973, specialises in research, education and publications on different aspects of Islam, including contemporary issues. In the year 2000, the Islamic Foundation established The Markfield Institute of Higher Education specialising in graduate and post-graduate education, operating as an independent entity. (www.mihe.org.uk)

Part of the Foundation's mission is 'to act as a bridge between Muslim communities and non-Muslims' and it has regularly engaged in inter-faith dialogue. Its inter-faith work involves hosting conferences and seminars on inter-faith relations and dialogue including topics, such as, Islam and religious pluralism.

The IF has a policy research centre and conference centre at Markfield, Leicestershire. It runs courses for those who want to learn more about Islam, especially Islam in Britain. It has previously published the peer reviewed journal: *Encounters: Journal of Inter-Cultural Perspectives* which 'promotes a spirit of dialogue and mutual understanding between people of different religions and persuasions.'

For the last thirty-seven years IF has regularly published a quarterly journal entitled *The Muslim World Book Review*. The Foundation's unique library of 40,000 plus books and journals also provide facilities to access e-resources.

For further details see: <http://www.islamic-foundation.org.uk/>

The National Association of Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (NASACRE)

NASACRE was founded in March 1993 in the context of the changes to SACREs brought about by the 1988 Education Reform Act. It exists to support and strengthen SACREs and to represent SACREs on bodies such as the RE Council of England and Wales, as well as liaising directly with parliamentarians through the All Party Parliamentary Group on Religious Education, Department for Education and others.

Membership is open to SACREs in England (Wales having its own body and Scotland and Northern Ireland not having SACREs). It has a website with an area accessible to the public but many of its resources are restricted to paid-up member SACREs. NASACRE has an annual conference in May for SACREs.

NASACRE also collaborates with the Westhill Trust in mounting an annual programme of Awards to SACREs for projects educating pupils into diversity, as can be seen on its website. Projects should promote the skills needed to live in an increasingly diverse society, and help young people “to be able to encounter and talk with those who have beliefs and views different from their own, to break down barriers constructed through ignorance and fear of the unknown, and to challenge the resulting stereotypes which emerge in popular culture.”

For further details see: <http://www.nasacre.org.uk/>

Religious Education Council of England and Wales (REC)

The REC was established in 1973 to represent the collective interests of a wide variety of professional associations and faith and belief communities in deepening and strengthening provision for Religious Education in England and Wales. It provides a forum where national organisations with an interest in supporting and promoting Religious Education in schools and colleges can share matters of common concern. As such it does not have individual members.

The RE Council has a programme of political engagement and develops resources to support religious educators. It also seeks to be an advocate for religious education and engages with the media to promote the subject.

One of the REC’s projects is its Young Ambassadors Scheme, which ‘gives students aged 11 - 18 opportunities to share their enthusiasm and interest for RE’.

In 2016 the REC established an independent Commission on RE, which aims to review the legal, education and policy frameworks for RE in English schools and colleges. The Commission will report in 2018 on its findings and make recommendations to Government about the future of RE.

For further details see: <http://religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/>

Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education (Shap)

In the spring of 1969 a conference on 'Comparative Religion in Education' was held at a hotel in the Cumbrian village of Shap. From that meeting the Shap Working Party of World Religions in Education developed. Of particular concern to it is accurate representation of beliefs and practices and how these relate to the lives of people of faith.

Shap is committed to:

- promoting excellence in the study of religions at all levels and in all types of education
- bringing together people who have expertise in both religious studies and religious education
- working with all in education
- supporting those in other spheres of professional life who work with different religious communities

Shap's best known contribution to supporting religious educators and others is through the eighteen month Shap Calendar of Religious Festivals. This can be purchased through its website.

The Working Party also offers an Advisory Service through its website and works with its contacts to provide answers.

Until 2009 Shap published a journal, all editions of which are freely available through its website.

For further details see: <http://www.shapworkingparty.org.uk/>

Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter (SCDE)

SCDE, located in the heart of London, provides a setting for study and growth in mutual understanding between Christians and Jews, as well as between other faiths and cultures. It is a place to listen to 'the other', to learn, reflect and respect. We offer a wide range of courses and lectures, as well as times for reflection and prayer. There is the opportunity to read and do research in our specialist library. We are also pleased to welcome outside groups who can use our conference facilities for their own seminars, training and meetings. SCDE is run by the Sisters of Our Lady of Sion, a Roman Catholic Congregation whose main task is to foster good relations between Christians and Jews as well as those of other faiths.

For further details see: www.sioncentre.org

The Woolf Institute (WI)

The WI was established in 1998 and is located in Cambridge.

The Institute studies how relations between Jews, Christians and Muslims can ‘enhance understanding of concepts of public life: community and identity, mutual respect, personal responsibility, and social solidarity. Combining theology with the social sciences and the humanities, it seeks to strengthen the ethical framework that is needed for political, economic and social life.’

The Institute engages in research with practical implications, post-graduate teaching and study, and offers a wide variety of tailored public education programmes, including leadership training, end-of-life courses (specifically for healthcare sector) and faith literacy programmes. It also offers e-learning packages, details of which are on its website. WI has recently engaged in the area of policy, including convening and supporting the independent Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life, chaired by Lady Butler-Sloss (see: <http://www.corab.org.uk/>) which produced the report: *Living with difference: community, diversity and the common good*. Students are culturally, religiously diverse and international.

The WI has a staff team of 15 as well as a number of affiliated tutors, lecturers, researchers and professors.

For further details see: <http://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/>

Wales Association of SACREs (WASACRE)

WASACRE was founded in 1995 to support the twenty-two SACREs in Wales in helping them fulfil their role as a result of the Education Reform Act 1988 and the *Circular for Religious Education and Collective Worship* in 1994 (published in Wales as Circular 10/94). It fulfils its remit by:

- member SACREs sending representation to the termly meetings of WASACRE
- organising relevant national initiatives and projects in the areas of religious education and collective worship
- speaking on behalf of all SACREs in Wales through engaging with relevant bodies and agencies, including the Welsh Government
- collating relevant key SACRE documents
- maintaining working relationships with equivalent bodies in England

WASACRE undertakes a number of projects and has contributed to the development of the curriculum by engaging with the Welsh Assembly Government. It provides a single point of reference for SACREs.

WASACRE also provides support for individual SACRE members through resources that it publishes. All of WASACREs publications and minutes are freely available through the website, as is relevant guidance that has been developed over the years by the Welsh government. Also available through its website are individual SACREs’ annual reports

For further details see: <http://www.wasacre.org.uk/index.html>



IFN e-bulletin

March/April 2017

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **17 May** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and projects and future events. If your organisation distributes a programme, newsletter or e-bulletin, please add ifnet@interfaith.org.uk to your mailing list.

Disclaimer: Information in this e-bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Increasingly, IFN is making use of social media, in particular Twitter (www.twitter.com/IFNetUK) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/IFNetUK).

Please take a moment to 'follow' and 'like' IFN and also Inter Faith Week (www.twitter.com/IFWeek and www.facebook.com/IFWeek) and also check in with the IFN website to see new items, which are added on a regular basis.

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

Westminster attack and faith and inter faith responses

On 22 March a terrorist attack took place on Westminster Bridge and at the Houses of Parliament.

A number of faith and inter faith organisations issued statements or came together to hold vigils or ceremonies to remember all those affected by the attack and to show solidarity.

A list of a number of these can be found at

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/westminster-attacks-responses-by-faith-and-inter-faith-bodies>. Many also took part in We Stand Together events on 29 March which were arranged with the lead of the Metropolitan Police.

On 23 March IFN's Co-Chairs and the Moderators of IFN's Faith Communities Forum issued the following statement in response to the terrorist attack in Westminster the previous day: *"Yesterday's attack at Westminster on police and members of the public exemplified the cowardly and destructive nature of the actions of terrorists. We hold in our prayers all whose lives have been lost or forever changed through the murderous acts of its perpetrator. Terrorism is profoundly at odds with the values of our faith traditions and of the values at the heart of British society. We deplore and condemn it.*

Attacks of this kind are designed to disrupt our society and to undermine the relationships within it. Let us resist this at all costs and stand together in unity.

Let us also watch out for the wellbeing of any groups who may be targeted because of terrorist actions which claim, or are perceived by some, as having a link to them. There is no place for prejudice and hatred of that kind and where it is found, let us redouble efforts to combat it."

A copy of the statement is on the IFN website at

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/westminster-attacks>.

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Looking After One Another: The Safety and Security of our Faith Communities

Looking after one another: the safety and security of our faith communities has today been published by the Inter Faith Network for the UK in partnership with the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Home Office, the Crown Prosecution Service, the National Fire Chiefs' Council and the National Police Chiefs' Council.

IFN's Co-Chairs, the Rt Revd Richard Atkinson and Jatinder Singh Birdi, said "These guidelines give practical guidance to faith communities on preventing and responding to hate motivated attacks and also send a strong signal of faith community solidarity and commitment to mutual support at times of difficulty."

The document contains guidance on responding jointly to attacks on places of worship; working for calm at times of tension; and working to build on and strengthen existing good inter faith relations. It contains material about how and where to report hate incidents, cyber attacks, and actual or suspected terrorist activity; where to find information on strengthening the security of buildings; and where to find information about working to build – and strengthen – good inter faith relations locally. These practical pointers for responding in solidarity have particular resonance at the present time when there is a need to watch out for the wellbeing of any groups who may be targeted because of terrorist actions which claim, or are perceived by some, as having a link to them.

Faith and Integration Minister, Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth, said: "This week we saw people of all faiths make clear in a moving act of solidarity that hate and intolerance is entirely unacceptable in this country. This practical guidance will give people of all faiths confidence to stand up to the perpetrators of hate crime. We need to work together to tackle all forms of prejudice." Cdr Mak Chishti, National Police Chiefs' Council, said: "Looking After One Another is an excellent guide to ensuring that we all look after each other and all stand together."

Sarah Newton, Minister for Vulnerability, Safeguarding and Countering Extremism, said: "Hate crime is not and never will be acceptable. It has no place in a Britain that works for everyone, and this Government is determined to stamp it out. Last year we published a new action plan which focuses on reducing hate crime, increasing reporting and improving support for victims, and we have committed £2.4 million to protect places of worship from hate crime attacks. It is important that Britain's many communities work in partnership, particularly in times of difficulty such as after a terrorist attack - so the Inter Faith Network's timely advice is very welcome."

The document can be found at: <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/looking-after-one-another-the-safety-and-security-of-our-faith-communities-2017>.

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Development of a new integration strategy

A new integration policy is understood to be in early stages of development, for which Secretary of State for Communities, Sajid Javid MP, has responsibility. Government will be responding to the Casey Review Report as part of that process. Among the questions which officials are advising faith communities to consider are:

- How can faith communities and faith leaders promote shared British values and challenge attitudes and behaviours of those who promote inequality and intolerance?
- How can there be a reaching out through faith to isolated individuals and communities?
- How can Government promote the values of tolerance and equality in a way that is compatible with faith communities' freedom of belief?
- Are there examples of projects, etc which work in helping communities tackle difficult conversations?

These questions were considered by IFN's Faith Communities Forum when it met on 7 March and also by a number of faith leaders at a roundtable on 13 March hosted by Lord Bourne, Minister for Communities and Local Government

<https://twitter.com/lordnickbourne/status/841431319922016258>.

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European Court of Justice preliminary rulings on wearing of religious articles of faith

On 14 March, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) issued two judgements concerning the wearing of religious articles of faith. The judgements were made in response to separate requests for preliminary rulings from the national courts of Belgium and France. References for preliminary rulings allow tribunals and courts within EU member states to refer questions to the Court of Justice about the interpretation of EU law or the validity of a European Union act. The ECJ does not decide the cases itself, but the referring court must dispose of the case in accordance with the ECJ's decision, which also binds courts within other member states. The ECJ is an instrument of the European Union, and is distinct from the European Court of Human Rights, which is not.

Both cases involved women who were dismissed from their jobs for wearing a Muslim head scarf. The thrust of the ruling in the Belgian case was that workplace regulations which prohibit the wearing of visible signs of all political, philosophical or religious beliefs are not directly discriminatory as they treat all employees the same, noting that there was no evidence that the employer applied the rule differently to employees of a particular political, philosophical or religious belief. The ruling also noted that such regulations may constitute indirect discrimination if "the apparently neutral obligation it imposes results, in fact, in persons adhering to a particular religion or belief being put at a particular

disadvantage.” Indirect discrimination may be lawful where it is considered an appropriate and necessary means of achieving a legitimate aim, “such as the pursuit by the employer, in its relations with its customers, of a policy of political, philosophical and religious neutrality.” The Belgian court will need to apply these tests when considering the case.

The French case differed in a number of respects, chiefly that the employee was dismissed because a customer of the employer complained that their account had been assigned to an employee who wore a head scarf, and it was unclear to the ECJ whether there was an internal rule which regulated the wearing of visible signs of all forms of political, philosophical or religious beliefs. It noted that if such a rule existed, then the same tests as in the Belgian case would need to be applied by the French court. The ruling also stated “the willingness of an employer to take account of the wishes of a customer no longer to have the services of that employer provided by a worker wearing an Islamic headscarf cannot be considered a genuine and determining occupational requirement within the meaning of the directive.”

A copy of the ECJ press release about both rulings can be seen at <http://curia.europa.eu/jcms/upload/docs/application/pdf/2017-03/cp170030en.pdf> it includes links to the full judgements.

A transcript of the Parliamentary question which took place in the UK Parliament following the ruling can be found at <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/debates/?id=2017-03-15c.408.10&s=speaker%3A10958>.

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Public consultation on Caste in Great Britain and Equality Law

On 28 March the Government Equalities Office (GEO) launched a public consultation on ‘Caste in Great Britain and Equality Law’.

The consultation is described as seeking views on how best to ensure that there is appropriate legal protection against caste discrimination. The consultation website notes that “This ban could be applied: a) by formally making caste an aspect of race in the Equality Act 2010 or b) through developing case law in the courts and employment tribunals. In either case, businesses and public authorities would have to consider caste discrimination in the same way they consider other aspects of race discrimination when dealing with employees, customers or service users.”

Full details of the consultation and how to respond are at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/caste-in-great-britain-and-equality-law-a-public-consultation>. The consultation closes on 18 July.

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UK faith communities celebrate International Women's Day

A number of faith communities and inter faith organisations across the UK celebrated International Women's Day on 8 March. Examples of events include one at the House of Lords hosted by the Network of Sikh Organisations in aid of the charity Billion Women – (nsouk.co.uk/2017/03/), one hosted by the Board of Deputies of British Jews focusing on domestic abuse (<https://www.bod.org.uk/director-of-public-prosecutions-we-are-talking-to-faith-communities-on-domestic-abuse/>), one organised by the Women's Forum of the BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha at the Swaminarayan Mandir (<http://londonmandir.baps.org/forthcoming-events/international-womens-day/>) and one held by the Religions for Peace UK Women of Faith Network on Feminine Wisdom for Peace and Security (<https://www.facebook.com/UKWFN/>).

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Bank of England consultation on new bank notes

The November/December issue of the IFN e-bulletin reported that a number of faith communities were concerned that the new polymer £5 bank notes issued by the Bank of England contain a trace of tallow, a product derived from animal fat. On 15 February the Bank of England issued a statement about the matter - <http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/publications/Pages/news/2017/024.aspx> and a document setting out the key factors behind its decision to continue to use the new £5 notes, and to continue with production of the new £10 note due for release in September - <http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/publications/Documents/other/polymerassessment.pdf>

The tender for production of the £20 note has been put on hold to accommodate a decision on the future composition of the polymer used. On 30 March the Bank of England launched a consultation on Polymer Additives. The closing date for responses is 12 May. For further information on the consultation, including how to respond, visit <http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/banknotes/polymer/Pages/pc2017.aspx>.

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Brexit

On 30 March, the Prime Minister May wrote formally triggering Article 50, beginning the formal process of withdrawal from the European Union by the UK.

Faith communities and inter faith bodies have been among those encouraging conversation about life 'post Brexit' including 3FF dialogue training on Brexit, faith and identity and St Ethelburga's intergenerational dialogue event on Envisioning a post-Brexit

future together. One example is a recent joint prayer developed by five faith representatives who “are encouraging their communities to love, rather than fear, the differences we find in our country”. This can be found at <http://www.reformjudaism.org.uk/interfaith-prayer-brexit-process-begins/> and <https://www.london.anglican.org/articles/interfaith-leaders-join-in-sharing-brexit-prayer-for-uks-new-chapter/>.

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INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK NEWS

Let’s Talk: Practical pointers for inter faith dialogue

IFN is publishing a new resource entitled *Let’s Talk: Practical pointers for inter faith dialogue*.

The resource draws on existing IFN materials and contributions from member bodies to provide tips and ideas for productive dialogue and conversation between people of different faiths and beliefs in a range of different contexts.

This will be available shortly at www.interfaith.org.uk.

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Meeting of IFN’s Faith Communities Forum

A meeting of IFN’s Faith Communities Forum was held on 7 March. The main focus was an item hearing from national faith community bodies about their activity in the area of inter faith relations and the variety of ways in which they engage with this. There was discussion of the Casey Review report and a presentation by Dr Karen Jochelson Director, Economy and Employment programme, and Kathleen Jameson, Project Manager, Equality and Human Rights Commission, on the Commission’s workplace guidance on religion or belief (see [below](#)).

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Day event for local inter faith practitioners

On 22 March IFN held a day event in Bristol for local inter faith practitioners from anywhere in the UK. This was an opportunity to share experiences and news; discuss issues of common interest and concern; share tips for developing successful inter faith programmes; hear about some projects being run by local groups and to take part in workshops about using social media to get the message across; resourcing the work; and reviewing work and planning for the future.

The day opened with a presentation from Jatinder Singh Birdi, Co-Chair of IFN and Chair of Warwick District Faith Forum, about the importance of local inter faith work and its UK context. This was followed by a team presentation from Canon Dr John Hall, Devon Faith and Belief Group and IFN Trustee; Cllr Chaz Singh, Plymouth Council of Faiths and the Turban Project; and Ravindra Nathwani, Exeter Interfaith and Belief Group schools programme. There were also presentations from Farzana Saker of West Wiltshire Multi Faith Forum and from the Revd Tracey Lewis, Chair of the Bristol Multi Faith Forum and BMFF colleagues. The afternoon included short reports on the use of Inter Faith Week as a platform for cooperation and outreach from the Revd Dr Mark Dimond, South Cardiff Interfaith Network, Sarah Mar, Cheltenham Interfaith, and Michael Berkson, Cambridge Inter Faith Group, and the day ended with reflections from Dr Abdalla Yassin Mohamed OBE, Newport Inter Faith Group and Patricia Stoa, Nottingham InterFaith Council.

A report of the event will be produced. The last three such days were held in Sheffield, London and Coventry. Reports from those events can be found at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/publications/all-publications/all-publications>.

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Inter Faith Week and Scottish Interfaith Week

Inter Faith Week 2017 will take place in England, Wales and Northern Ireland from **Sunday 12 November to Sunday 19 November** – www.interfaith.org. This year, as in 2016, the Week begins on Remembrance Sunday and many people of different faiths and beliefs will be marking that in some way. It is hoped that the additional Sunday will provide the opportunity for other weekend events to take place.

Scottish Interfaith Week will again be taking place on the same dates as Inter Faith Week. For further information, contact admin@interfaithscotland.org.

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

The Great Get Together

The Great Get Together is a project inspired by Jo Cox MP, who was killed on 16 June 2016. It is being organised by the Jo Cox Foundation with the backing of the Big Lunch, the Big Iftar and a number of other organisations. It takes place on 17 and 18 June when communities across the UK are invited to get together with their neighbours to share food and celebrate all that they hold in common. Material for the project notes that “Jo’s killing was meant to divide us and we think the best response is to show how united we are. We believe there is a groundswell of people who reject divisive politics and simply

want to bring our communities together and celebrate all that unites us. This is our chance.”

For further information and to take part, visit www.greatgettogether.org.

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Srebrenica Memorial Day

This year marks the 22nd year since the genocide took place in Srebrenica, Bosnia-Herzegovina. 11 July is the designated international day that marks the Srebrenica genocide. This year, the UK charitable initiative Remembering Srebrenica is calling upon all those of faiths, to bring their communities together to mark Srebrenica through an inter faith event or faith based service on that date to “remember the victims, honour the continual struggle of the survivors and stand united against hatred and intolerance”.

For further information, visit <http://www.srebrenica.org.uk/information/faith-interfaith-and-multifaith-groups/> and for advice on how to hold an event, contact events@srebrenica.org.uk or

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The Great British Chai Party

The Great British Chai Party was launched at the House of Lords on 6 March - <http://www.greatbritishchaiparty.org.uk/media-library/launch-of-the-great-british-chai-party/>. The Party, which was founded by Sushma Bhanot and Kiran Bhanaut, aims to address loneliness and social isolation amongst the elderly by arranging regular tea parties of small groups of elderly people in different areas; and to enhance social cohesion between people of different communities by ensuring elderly people from all communities are invited. Further information can be found at www.greatbritishchaiparty.org.uk.

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Faiths in Tune Inter Faith Music Festival

The 6th London Interfaith Music Festival, organised by Faiths in Tune, is being held at the British Museum on 21 May. The festival will feature a diverse stage music and dance programme as well as an inter faith community fair where visitors can learn about and get in touch with various faith and cultural communities from all over London. The Interfaith Music Festival encourages visitors “to look at the museum's exhibition not just in terms of cultural diversity and archaeology, but through the glasses of faith and inter faith traditions. At the same time, the festival's main objective remains, as in previous years, the promotion of interfaith understanding, respect and dialogue by bringing people of all different faith backgrounds together through the universal language of music.” For further information, visit <http://www.faithsintune.org/london-2017-british-museum>.

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

National Faith Community Representative Body profiles

The January/February issue of IFN's e-bulletin included profiles of the Educational and Academic Bodies in IFN membership to give readers an idea of their work and the resource that they offer.

In March and early April IFN has been profiling the work of the National Faith Community Representative Bodies in its membership. Each profile includes a brief description of the body's overall role and work and of its inter faith engagement. The profiles are being posted on IFN's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/IFNetUK each day.

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Interfaith Scotland blog

Interfaith Scotland has a new blog on which you can read stories from its staff and volunteers - <https://interfaithscotland.wordpress.com/>.

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Equality and Human Rights Commission materials on Religion or Belief

As noted above, at the meeting of IFN's Faith Communities Forum on 7 March there was a presentation from the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) on its workplace guidance on religion or belief. Details of the guidance were included in the January/February issue of IFN's e-bulletin. The EHRC is keen for them to be distributed to faith and inter faith organisations and they are therefore included again here for ease of reference.

The report, 'Religion or belief: is the law working?' looks at how well the law in Great Britain protects individuals with a religion or belief, or lack of religion or belief. It focuses on four areas: definitions of religion or belief; exceptions in the Equality Act; the law protecting employees; and the law protecting service users and service providers. It can be found at <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/religion-or-belief-frequently-asked-questions>.

The religion or belief guidance material includes 'Religion or Belief: A guide to the law', which provides an overview of the protections offered by the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998 of people with or without a religion or belief. It answers commonly asked questions such as those about what is indirect discrimination and can it ever be

justified, and how much employers are expected to know about religion or belief in order to fulfil their legal obligations. The guidance can be found at www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/religion-or-belief.

There is also a section on ‘Religion or belief: how do I handle employee requests?’ which provides a decision-making tool for employers; and a section on ‘Frequently asked questions’ which focuses on some of the common questions facing employers today.

The EHRC has also produced a training module for line managers, which can be found at <https://elearning.acas.org.uk/course/> and a training course for trade union representatives, which can be found at <https://www.tuceducation.org.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=51438>.

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FaithAction and LGA report on faith and health

FaithAction and the Local Government Association have jointly produced a report entitled *Working with faith groups to promote health and wellbeing*. The report website notes that “Faith groups make an important contribution to this work through their commitment to service, both with their own members and with wider communities. In particular, faith groups are often able to utilise the enthusiasm of their members as volunteers. Also, some faith groups have members who face health inequalities through a higher risk of some diseases or through difficulties in accessing healthcare. These groups are, therefore, well placed to have an active role in tackling health problems in the communities they serve.”

A copy of the report can be downloaded from http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/publications/-/journal_content/56/10180/8220302/PUBLICATION.

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Mitzvah Day report and video

Mitzvah Day has published an Impact Report on its activities in 2016 - <http://mitzvahday.org.uk/vision-mission/annual-reports/> and also created a video about the Day - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sLwZeQOTFA>.

This year’s Mitzvah Day takes place on 19 November.

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Brighton and Hove Interfaith Service DVD

Brighton and Hove Interfaith Contact Group has released a DVD of its Annual Interfaith Service, at which speakers included Caroline Lucas MP, Cllr Peter West, Mayor of Brighton

and Hove and the Deputy Lord Lieutenant, Mrs Marion Shepherd. Anyone interested in a DVD should contact Anthea Ballam at admin@interfaithcontactgroup.com. Clips of the speakers are also available on the Group's YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMEwt4RM5nGmb0ePYsESM2Q>.

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Directory of Social Change publications

The Directory of Social Change supports charities by providing training courses, publications, online funding databases and other resources. More information about its work can be found at <https://www.dsc.org.uk/>. It is currently offering two of its publications, *The Charity Trustee's Handbook* and *The Guide to New Trusts*, at half price. To claim the offer, quote OFFER50.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS, AND NOMINATIONS

Faith Initiative magazine

Faith Initiative magazine (www.faithinitiative.co.uk) is currently collating materials for the next issue of its magazine which will be giving focus to the rise in racism and religious discrimination in the UK by asking inter faith groups, religious communities and people in workplaces what action they are taking to counter such threats to peace.

The copy deadline is 20 May and pieces should be between 600 and 800 words. Anyone interested in contributing should contact Heather Wells at hf_wells@yahoo.co.uk.

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World Congress of Faiths Essay competition

The World Congress of Faiths Essay competition is now open to UK students. Entries must be on the topic 'If one faith is true, does that mean all others are false?' and should be approximately 3,000 words. The closing date for entries is 31 July.

The winner will be awarded £300 and their work will be published in the *Interreligious Insight* journal. All entrants will get a year's free membership of the World Congress of Faiths. For full details visit www.worldfaiths.org/2017-Essay-Award.

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National Diversity Awards

Nominations are now open for the National Diversity Awards which celebrate “the excellent achievements of grass- root communities that tackle the issues in today’s society, giving them recognition for their dedication and hard work”. The Awards include Positive Role Model and Community Organisation in the category of ‘Race/faith/religion’. For further information, visit <https://nominate.nationaldiversityawards.co.uk/>.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

Inter Faith Network for the UK - Volunteers and interns

The Inter Faith Network for the UK has regular volunteering opportunities and occasional internships. Further information about these can be found on IFN’s website.

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Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby

The Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby is seeking to recruit to three roles: a Project Officer for the Survive and Thrive project; a Youth Worker; and a Sessional Youth Worker. The deadline for applications is 28 April. For further information, visit <http://multifaithcentre.org/2017/03/job-opportunities-at-the-mfc/>.

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Beyond the Ordinary RE Teacher recruitment campaign

The Religious Education Council of England and Wales is in the third year of its Beyond the Ordinary RE Teacher recruitment campaign.

It has posted on its website five ways that people can get involved in supporting RE teacher recruitment <http://religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/public-engagement/news/2017-01-18/five-ways-you-can-support-re-teacher-recruitment>; and also created a YouTube video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SzvZTFmp6qc>. The Teach RE website gives more information about the campaign and about RE teaching as a career - <http://www.teachre.co.uk/beyondtheordinary/>.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Building a Stronger Britain Together programme

The Home Office programme Building a Stronger Britain Together is continuing to offer in-kind support such as social media training, technical assistance to help a group improve their website, or capacity building work to help a group protect more vulnerable individuals. It is open to bodies in England and Wales. Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/building-a-stronger-britain-together>.

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Faiths in Scotland Community Action Fund

Faiths in Scotland Community Action Fund awards grants to support Scotland's most fragile urban and rural communities. Its 2017 grants will focus exclusively on projects focusing on work with children and young adults and it is calling for applications from faith-based registered charities, which either work with, or aim to begin working with people under the age of 18. It is offering awards for one year of up to £5,000 and all funds must be spent within 12 months of the Award Date.

The next deadline is 7 April (and there will also be one on 29 September). It is open to all charities which meet its criteria and have never received funding from the STV Children's Appeal. For more information call Chris on 0141 221 4544 or visit <http://www.faithincommunityscotland.org/faith-in-community-scotland-action-fund/>.

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Tesco Bags of Help

Bags of Help is Tesco's local community grant scheme where the money raised from the 5p bag levy in Tesco stores is being used to fund community projects across the UK. The projects must meet the criteria of promoting community participation in the development and use of outdoor spaces. Bags of Help is administered by Groundwork in England and Wales and supported in Scotland by Greenspace Scotland. (It is not available in Northern Ireland where carrier bag money is managed centrally.)

Three local community projects will be voted on in Tesco stores each month across Tesco regions throughout England, Scotland and Wales. In each region, the project that received the most votes from all stores in their region will receive a grant of up to £5,000. The second placed project receives up to £2,000 and third placed up to £1,000. Every year, over 7,000 projects will receive funding through this scheme.

Grants are awarded to voluntary or community organisations (including registered charities/companies), schools, health bodies (eg Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), NHS Hospital Trust, Foundation Trust), Parish/Town Councils, local authorities and social housing providers. For detailed information on criteria and how to apply, visit <http://www.groundwork.org.uk/Sites/tescocommunityscheme/pages/Category/the-tesco-bags-of-help-programme-tes2>.

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Funding websites

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations offers advice on fundraising and grants on its Knowhow Nonprofit site at <https://knowhownonprofit.org/funding>.

Funding Central - <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/default.aspx> - is a free website for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises in England that provides access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, together with tools and resources for supporting organisations to develop sustainable income strategies appropriate to their needs. Similar websites for funding in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at Funding Scotland - <http://www.fundingscotland.com/> - Wales Council for Voluntary Action - <http://www.wcva.org.uk/funding/search> - and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland - <https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

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Heritage Lottery Fund grants to commemorate First World War

The Heritage Lottery Fund has made an additional £4million of funding available so that more communities can get involved in projects marking the Centenary of the First World War. Projects applying for funding must be able to meet one of a number of successful outcomes based on heritage, people and communities. Grants can be given between £3,000 and £10,000. There is no current deadline for applications as grants are considered on a monthly basis.

Further information can be found at <https://www.hlf.org.uk/looking-funding/our-grant-programmes/first-world-war-then-and-now>.

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Community foundations

Community foundations are local, grant-making organisations to which local community organisations can apply for funding. There are 46 community foundations in the UK, covering Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and most of England. A map of community

foundations across the UK and how to contact them, can be found at <http://www.ukcommunityfoundations.org/our-network>.

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Transform Foundation

The Transform Foundation is offering funding to charities to help with new website builds. Grants of £18,000 are available. For further information and to apply, visit www.transformfoundation.org.uk.

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Google, Microsoft and charities

The internet search engine Google is offering a service to registered charities which brings: Google Ad Grants: Free AdWords advertising to promote your website on Google through keyword targeting; YouTube Nonprofit Programme: Access exclusive resources, features and programs designed to maximise your organisation's impact on YouTube; and Google Apps for Non-profit: Free version of the Google Apps business productivity suite, including Gmail, Docs, Calendar and more. For further information, visit www.google.co.uk/intl/en/nonprofits/join.

Google is one among a number of companies and some others also have programmes to work with charities. See, for example, <https://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/about/charities-communities/charity-support/>.

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Subsidised fundraising workshops

The Foundation for Social Improvement offers heavily subsidised training programmes for small charities across the UK. The courses cover a wide range of subjects from event planning to leadership but the majority of their training courses are focused on helping charities learn the skills to raise and earn income. Further information can be found at <http://www.thefsi.org/services/training/>.

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SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK TO INCREASE INTER FAITH UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION

THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUR SUPPORT

We need your help to ensure that the Inter Faith Network for the UK's work to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation continues and grows, helping people of all backgrounds to live and work together with mutual respect and shared commitment to the common good.

Please consider making a gift today to support the work of the Inter Faith Network. Gifts at all levels are valued and make a difference. You can donate by credit card or PayPal online at www.interfaith.org.uk/donate or by sending a cheque to The Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH.

REMEMBERING A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND

From time to time we receive an 'in memoriam' gift after an individual has passed away, funded from a collection following their death or through a donation from their heirs. Such gifts provide a living memorial to a loved one, supporting inter faith understanding in this country – for now and for the future. If you would like to make a gift in memory of a loved one, please get in touch by emailing remember@interfaith.org.uk or call us on 0207 730 0410.

A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

By leaving a gift in your will to the Inter Faith Network for the UK, you can leave a living inheritance to help deepen and strengthen inter faith understanding and cooperation in this country – for now and for the future. If you are thinking about making a will, the best thing to do is to get in touch with a professional will writer, such as a solicitor or advocate; they can help to ensure it is legally correct and that your wishes are met. If you have already made a will, you can still make an addition or amendment in the form of a codicil. If you would like to pledge a gift, please provide our name and address, along with our registered charity number 1068934.

Please get in touch with us if you have any queries. You can call Hannah Cassidy, on 0207 730 0410 or contact us at remember@interfaith.org.uk.

Every gift, however large or small, makes a difference.

Thank you!

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Islam Awareness Week is taking place from 27 March to 2 April www.iaw.org.uk

Srebrenica Memorial Day will take place on 11 July www.srebrenica.org.uk

Peace One Day takes place on 21 September www.peaceoneday.org

Sewa Day will take place on 1 October www.sewaday.org

One World Week will take place from 22 to 29 October www.oneworldweek.org

National Inter Faith Week in England, Wales and Northern Ireland will be an '8 day week' this year taking place from 12 to 19 November. www.interfaithweek.org

Scottish Interfaith Week will also take place from 12 to 19 November www.interfaithscotland.org/scottish-interfaith-week/

See more [above](#).

Mitzvah Day will take place on 19 November www.mitzvahday.org.uk/

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DIARY DATES

This section includes some of the events taking place around the UK. IFN includes information on diary dates between e-bulletins on its website at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/take-part/events>.

Wisbech Interfaith Forum and **Peterborough Inter Faith Council** are organising their second inter-faith pilgrimage to Walsingham on Saturday 1 April. The day runs from 11.30am to 4pm starting at the Roman Catholic Shrine (at Houghton St Giles, Walsingham, Norfolk, NR22 6AL) and includes a pilgrim mass, walk and blessing. Refreshments are provided and coach seats can be booked by contacting Zahid Akbar at zakbarq@yahoo.co.uk or on 07711 31178. For further information, visit www.wisbechinterfaith.btck.co.uk.

Inverness Interfaith Group is holding its AGM on Saturday 1 April. There will be a topical presentation at the beginning of the meeting. This is being held at 3pm at the Crown Church in Inverness. For further information, email invernessinterfaith@gmail.com.

North Kent Council for Inter-Faith Relations is holding a training day for faith communities on Saturday 1 April on Mental Health Awareness and Guidance. The event takes place from 9.30am to 12 noon and will be led by psychiatrist Dr Saliha Nazir and Mental Health Care Chaplain the Revd Ruth Bierbaum. It is being held in Asda's

Community Room, Thames Way, Northfleet, Gravesend DA11 0DQ. For further information, contact 01622 722180.

Burngreave Ashram Multifaith Chapel & Library is hosting its next Meditation/Prayer lunch and seminar on Monday 3 April from 12pm to 2.30pm. The meditation will be led by Shelly Hinson and the seminar on 'Methodism and Buddhism' will be led by Nirmal Fernando. It is being held at 86 Spital Hill, Sheffield S4 7LG. For further information, contact on BAMCL@outlook.com or call 07932017929 or 01142436688.

London Inter Faith Centre is holding the next meeting of its Abrahamic Texts Group on Monday 3 April. There will be a discussion of texts from the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament and the Quran on the subject of 'What is Prayer?' The presenters are Rabbi Janet Burden, Father Kevin Mowbray and Sayed Jaffer Milani. This is being held from 10.15am to 12pm at the London Inter Faith Centre, St Anne's & St Andrew's Church, 125 Salusbury Rd, London NW6 6RG. For further information, contact Reverend Laurence Hillel at laurence.hillel@londoninterfaith.org.uk.

Interfaith North-West is holding its next open meeting on Tuesday 4 April at 7pm. The theme of the meeting will be 'Seeing Islam – Muslims in a Diverse Community'. The guest speaker is Dr Chris Hewer, a theologian with a background in Christian-Muslim relations and dialogue. This is being held at the Playhouse, 5-7 Artillery St, Londonderry, Northern Ireland BT48 6RG. For further information, visit www.interfaith-nw.org.uk/.

University of Winchester and Religions for Peace is hosting the Inaugural Lecture by Professor Anna King on Wednesday 5 April at 6pm. Professor King, Professor of Religious Studies and Social Anthropology, will be focusing on 'Sacred Violence, Sacred Peace: Religion in an Age of Conflict'. She will be evaluating the impact of the University of Winchester's collaborative projects that bring together religious leaders, politicians, academics, civil society organisations and both victims and perpetrators of violence, as part of ongoing peace processes. Booking is essential. It is being held at the Stripe Auditorium, King Alfred Campus, The University of Winchester, Sparkford Road, Winchester, SO22 4NR. To book a place, or for further information, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/sacred-violence-sacred-peace-religion-in-an-age-of-conflict-lecture-tickets-32255523138> or <https://winchester.hobsonsradius.com/ssc/eform/Max68GzC67020x670c0xK.ssc>.

Hull and East Riding Interfaith is holding its next meeting on Tuesday 4 April at 5pm (refreshments from 4.30pm). There will be a debate about populism, its appeal and the risks it entails. This will be held at The Guildhall, 77 Lowgate, Hull HU1 2AA Lowgate, Hull HU1 2AA. For further information, contact Jackie on 01482 445728 or email Kath at Kath.Beal@heri.org.uk.

York Interfaith Group is holding an event on Tuesday 4 April. It will begin with a 'Bring and Share' Meal with Music from 5.30pm to 7.30pm and will then be followed at 7.30pm by its Monthly Meeting, for which the theme is Pilgrimage. It is being held at the York Medical

Society Rooms, 23 Stonegate, York YO1 8AW. For further information, contact yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com.

The **Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter** is running a Study Day Series on Jewish Feasts. The next one, on Pesach, will be held on Thursday 6 April. The day runs from 11am to 3.15pm and the speaker will be Rabbi Mark Solomon, Edinburgh and Leicester Progressive Jewish Communities, Interfaith Consultant, Liberal Judaism. There is a suggested donation. This is being held at the Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter, 34 Chepstow Villas, London, W11 2QZ. For further information, visit <https://sioncentre.org/> or email sioncentrefordialogue@gmail.com.

Interfaith Milton Keynes is holding a meeting on Thursday 6 April. There will be a presentation given by Mr Bob White of St Michael's Priory on the topic of 'The Crescent and the Crown: the Muslim Presence in the UK'. Refreshments will be served at the end of the meeting. This is being held at 7.30pm at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, St Paul's School Campus, Moorgate, Leadenhall, Milton Keynes MK6 5EN. For further information, email interfaithmk@gmail.com.

Fife Interfaith Group and **The Baha'is of Edinburgh** are holding a talk on Friday 7 April. The theme of the talk is 'Christianity and Islam – Points of Unity and Misunderstanding' and the guest speaker will be Dr Lameh Fananapazir. This is being held at 7pm at the Baha'i Centre, 44 Albany Street, Edinburgh EH1 3QR. For further information, contact on fifeinterfaith@live.co.uk.

The **Southbank Centre** is running a festival throughout 2017 entitled 'Belief and Beyond Belief'. The festival aims to question "what it means to be human by exploring the outpouring of music, art, science, philosophy and ritual stimulated by religion". The fourth section of the festival, running from 8 to 30 April, focuses on 'Prophets, Visionaries and Power'. For further information, visit <https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whats-on/festivals-series/belief-and-beyond-belief>.

Torbay Interfaith Forum is holding a series of talks on every second Wednesday of the month. The next talk is on Wednesday 12 April at 7.30pm entitled 'Stolen Images – Pagan Symbolism and Christianity' and will be followed by refreshments. The speaker will be Peter Knight. This is being held at the Friends' Meeting House, 48 Tor Hill Road, Torquay, TQ2 SRT. For further information, email moiraptatem@gmail.com.

St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace is holding a participatory dialogue event on Wednesday 12 April from 6pm to 8.30pm. The event will investigate and challenge the understanding of a post-Brexit future together. There will be an opportunity to join in, listen, share and understand diverse perspectives through a generational lens. This is being held at the St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace, 78 Bishopsgate, London EC2N 4AG. For further information, contact Claire Chou Doran on 020 74961612 or at Claire.doran@stethelburgas.org.

Faith in Lancaster is holding its next Faithshare meeting on Wednesday 19 April at 7.30pm. The theme for the meeting will be 'Nationalism, Patriotism and Faith'. This meeting provides an opportunity to meet together in a safe and respectful space in which to share and learn about each other's beliefs, understandings, experiences, traditions and practices. This is being held in the William Stout Room, Quaker Meeting House, Lancaster, LA1 1TX. For further information, email info@faithinlancaster.org.uk or visit www.faithinlancaster.org.uk.

World Congress of Faith and **The Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe** are jointly organising a talk on Sunday 23 April from 3pm to 7pm. The speakers are religious practitioners and scientists in the field of natural or social sciences. They will be exploring insights into existential questions based on science and religion (including their relationships), through the talks and answering questions. There is an opportunity to hear a talk on the Zoroastrian religion and have a tour of the centre as a pre-event from 2pm to 3pm. This is being held at the Zoroastrian Centre, Zartoshty Brothers Hall, 440 Alexandra Avenue, Harrow, HA2 9TL. For registration and further information, contact Pejman Khojasteh on pejman_khojasteh@btinternet.com.

Waveney Interfaith Circle is holding themed 'talking' meetings every month for anyone interested in learning about the beliefs and traditions of other faiths through friendly informal contact with those who are familiar with them. The next meeting is on Monday 24 April at 7.30pm. The theme of the meeting is on 'Where do you turn for Spiritual sustenance?' and members will share a prayer, poem, music or reading that feeds their soul. This is being held at St Margaret's Church Centre, 147 Hollingsworth Rd, Lowestoft NR32 4BW. For further information, contact Rose Norgate on 01502712369.

Interfaith Scotland is holding a members' dialogue event entitled 'Spiritual Care for People Living with Dementia in Scotland' on Wednesday 26 April. Lunch will be provided. This is being held from 10am to 1pm at the Interfaith Scotland Dialogue Centre, Flemington House, 110 Flemington Street, Glasgow, G21 4BF. Booking is essential. To book a place or for further information, email admin@interfaithscotland.org.

Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship is holding a talk on 'Muslim Life in Britain' on Thursday 27 April at 7.30pm. The speaker will be Dr Hakan Gok. This is being held at the Leeds Language Academy, 14A Woodsley Road, LS3 1DT. For further information, contact John Summerwill on 01132697895 or email on membership@concord-leeds.org.uk.

Crawley Interfaith Network is holding a talk entitled 'The Beliefs of East Asian Faiths' on Thursday 27 April from 7pm to 9pm. The speaker will be Satish K Sharma, General Secretary of the National Council of Hindu Temples (UK). This is being held at the Orchard, 1-2 Gleneagles Courts, Brighton Road, Crawley, RH10 6AD. For further information, contact Iyad Daoud on contact@crawleyinterfaith.net or call on 01293 883372.

A '**Face to Faith Turban Awareness Day**' is being held in Exeter on Saturday 29 April from 10am to 4.30pm. There will be an opportunity to learn about who the Sikhs are, the contributions they have made, ask questions, and have a turban tied male or female. This

is a family event to experience and learn about the Sikh religion, heritage, history and culture, supported by the Church Urban Fund and local Diocese. It is being held at the Exeter Guildhall, High Street, Exeter, Devon EX4 3EB. For further information, visit <https://www.facebook.com/events/177435659429973/> or contact Cllr Chaz Singh.

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For more information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org.uk

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **17 May** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer: Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH
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IFN e-bulletin

May/June 2017

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **19 July** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and projects and future events. If your organisation distributes a programme, newsletter or e-bulletin, please add ifnet@interfaith.org.uk to your mailing list.

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Increasingly, IFN is making use of social media, in particular Twitter (www.twitter.com/IFNetUK) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/IFNetUK).

Please take a moment to 'follow' and 'like' IFN and also Inter Faith Week (www.twitter.com/IFWeek and www.facebook.com/IFWeek) and also check in with the IFN website to see new items, which are added on a regular basis.

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

Manchester Arena terrorist attack and faith and inter faith responses

On the evening of 22 May 22 people were killed and over 100 people injured in a terrorist attack at the Manchester Arena.

Manchester and Greater Manchester's faith and inter initiatives have played a very significant part in the city's response including in the vigils in Albert Square and St Ann's Square.

Around the UK, many other faith and inter faith organisations have been among those who have responded through messages, statements vigils, services, prayers and silences; and in some cases responding with offers of practical help. A list of responses by faith and inter faith bodies of which IFN is aware can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/manchester-arena-attack-responses-by-faith-and-inter-faith-bodies>.

On 23 May IFN's Co-Chairs and the Moderators of IFN's Faith Communities Forum issued the following statement in response to the bombing:

“Our thoughts and prayers are with those who lost their lives or were injured in last night's terrorist murders at the Manchester Arena, as they are with their families, all others affected and those responding with assistance.

We deplore and condemn this wanton, brutal and cowardly taking of the lives of young and old.

Let us stand together to oppose terrorism and the ideologies that promote it. Let us also uphold and strengthen the unity of our society and work to ensure that it is a positive and harmonious one where all children and young people can grow up safely and without fear.

It is vital that we all – of every age and background - work to build bridges and positive relationships and to enable difficult issues to be addressed and worked on – always seeking to avoid the use of violence to resolve issues.

We know that each time a terrorist attack occurs, groups within society become the target of abuse or even attack because of terrorist actions which claim, or are perceived by some, as having a link to them. We must stand, likewise, against this. An attack on one is an attack on all.

We remember at this time, in this context, particularly the many in the Greater Manchester area working for good relations.”

A copy of this statement is also on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/manchester-arena-attack-statement>.

The Muslim community condemned repeatedly the atrocity and the actions of the attacker. Statements were issued by the British Muslim Forum (<http://www.britishmuslimforum.co.uk/2017/05/23/manchester-attack-the-bmf-condemns-act-of-cowardice/>), the Muslim Council of Britain (<http://www.mcb.org.uk/manchester-attack-muslim-council-of-britain-statement/>), the Islamic Society of Britain (<https://twitter.com/BritIslam/status/866950172177289216>) and the British Muslim Scholars (<https://www.facebook.com/1487320954821958/photos/a.1514903692063684.1073741829.1487320954821958/1774314242789293/?type=3&theater>). A number of local Muslim groups also issued statements (<http://www.mcb.org.uk/collation-of-responses-to-manchester-attack/>) and a group of 30 imams gathered in St Ann’s Square (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-40076591>).

A statement by the Prime Minister, Theresa May, can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-statement-following-terrorist-attack-in-manchester-23-may-2017>.

The Department for Communities and Local Government issued advice, in the wake of the Manchester attack, for community leaders on managing tensions. A copy of this can be found online at: <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/advice-and-support-for-community-leaders-on-managing-tensions>.

Advice was also issued about safe giving to Manchester related appeals which can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/generous-public-should-make-sure-donations-go-to-genuine-charities-supporting-the-victims-in-manchester-says-charity-regulator>

The Daily Mail newspaper, with Carphone Warehouse, is running an appeal called Mobiles for Manchester. The appeal says: “The bulk of the money raised will go to support victims of the attack. But the Mail also believes that if the social dislocation which can lead to extremism is not tackled, the problem will never go away. So we aim to give some of the money to local inter-faith youth initiatives. Bishop Richard Atkinson and Jatinder Singh Birdi, co-chairs of the Inter Faith Network for the UK, said: ‘Local inter-faith initiatives play a vital role in bringing people of different faith backgrounds together, tackling prejudice and hatred. Young people are a vital part of that.’ The Inter Faith Youth Trust, a registered

charity which provides small grants to local voluntary organisations, will receive some of the money. Trust chairman Neil Martin said: ‘We help bring young people together through community projects so they realise how much they have in common.’”

People can drop off old mobile phones – whether working or not – at branches of Carphone Warehouse (<https://www.carphonewarehouse.com/store-locator.html>). Carphone Warehouse will donate all money raised from the donations to the Daily Mail appeal. Even a very old phone raises a £15 donation.
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4546512/Daily-Mail-launches-Mobiles-Manchester-appeal.html>

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General Election – manifestos, hustings and campaigning

A number of faith bodies have been holding Hustings. Examples include a ‘Hustings in the City’ event held in London by the City Hindus Network and City Sikhs Network, in association with the Association of Asian Women Lawyers, Emerald, the Association of Muslim Lawyers, Faiths Forum for London, the Hindu Lawyers Association, the National Hindu Students’ Forum (UK) and the Society of Asian Lawyers (<http://faithsforum.com/events/hustings-in-the-city/>).

A number of faith bodies have been publicising and updating their own manifestos including the Board of Deputies of British Jews (<https://www.bod.org.uk/board-of-deputies-launches-revised-and-updated-jewish-manifesto-to-boost-communal-advocacy-around-the-country/>) and the Muslim Council of Britain (<http://www.mcb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/fairnessnotfavours-MCB.pdf>).

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland has set up a website for the General Election at <https://www.churcheselection.org.uk/>. This provides: information on how Christian organisations are responding to the Election; details on local hustings being held throughout the UK; and a number of resources including how to hold hustings and possible questions for candidates.

A ‘Values Manifesto’ has also been launched, which has been supported by a number of leading individuals from a range of communities. More information on this can be found at <http://www.valuesmanifesto.org.uk/>.

On 15 May the Department for Communities and Local Government organised a day long ‘Tweet Storm’ during which faith leaders/organisations/individuals were invited to tweet to encourage voter registration. The hashtag to take part was #MyFaithMyVote and IFN took part in this.

There are a number of rules regarding campaigning during General Elections. IFN has produced a document entitled ‘The law relating to General Elections, charities and undue spiritual influence’, which is available at

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/charities-elections-law>. If your organisation is a charity, the following may be relevant:

<https://blogs.ncvo.org.uk/2017/04/18/a-snap-general-election-what-should-charities-be-doing/>

<https://blogs.ncvo.org.uk/2017/05/26/charities-and-the-lobbying-act-the-electoral-commissions-view/>

<https://www.ncvo.org.uk/practical-support/information/campaigning/general-election-2017>

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Tributes to Rhodri Morgan

Rhodri Morgan, former First Minister of Wales, died on 18 May. Mr Morgan played a key role in establishing the Faith Communities Forum of the Welsh Government and his significant contribution to inter faith relationships in Wales has been remembered in a tribute by the Church in Wales: "We are particularly grateful for his commitment to interfaith relations. He set up the Faith Communities Forum in response to 9/11 and that has been pivotal in nurturing today's strong relationships both between Wales' diverse faiths and between those faiths and the Welsh Government."

[\(http://www.churchinwales.org.uk/news/2017/05/tribute-to-rhodri-morgan/\)](http://www.churchinwales.org.uk/news/2017/05/tribute-to-rhodri-morgan/)

Mr Morgan was a Patron of the British Humanist Association, which has also paid tribute to him. A copy of this can be found at

<https://humanism.org.uk/2017/05/18/rhodri-morgan-1939-2017-humanist-first-first-minister-of-wales-and-father-of-welsh-devolution/>.

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Public consultation on Caste in Great Britain and Equality Law

The public consultation on 'Caste in Great Britain and Equality Law', launched by the Government Equalities Office (GEO) in March, is still open. The deadline for responses is 11.45pm on 18 July.

The consultation is described as seeking views on how best to ensure that there is appropriate legal protection against caste discrimination. The consultation website notes that "This ban could be applied: a) by formally making caste an aspect of race in the Equality Act 2010 or b) through developing case law in the courts and employment tribunals. In either case, businesses and public authorities would have to consider caste discrimination in the same way they consider other aspects of race discrimination when dealing with employees, customers or service users." Full details of the consultation and

how to respond are at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/caste-in-great-britain-and-equality-law-a-public-consulation>.

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Report on Hate Crime

The House of Commons Home Affairs Committee published a report on 25 April entitled ‘Hate crime: abuse, hate and extremism online’. The report is the outcome of an inquiry launched by the Committee in July 2016, which invited written submission of evidence. The Committee limited the scope of the report to the issue of online hate because of the calling of an early election, but notes “we hope that our successor committee in the next Parliament will return to this highly significant topic and will draw on the wide-ranging and valuable evidence that we have gathered in this inquiry to inform broader recommendations across the spectrum of challenges which tackling hate crime presents.”

The report is available at <https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmhaff/609/609.pdf>.

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INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK NEWS

Inter Faith Week and Scottish Interfaith Week

2017

As notified in previous e-bulletins, Inter Faith Week 2017 will take place from Sunday 12 to Sunday 19 November.

A flyer advertising the Week is now available at www.interfaithweek.org/flyer and hard copies will shortly be available from the IFN office. Last year’s was the biggest Week to date and it would be tremendous to get even more people involved. If you know of organisations or individuals who might find the Week a helpful platform, please do pass on the [flyer](#) and/or a link to the [website](#)

Scottish Interfaith Week will again be taking place on the same dates as Inter Faith Week in 2017. Its theme will be ‘Religion, the Arts and Creativity’. For further information, contact admin@interfaithscotland.org.

2018

At its meeting in May, IFN’s Board of Trustees agreed that in future years, Inter Faith Week would begin on Remembrance Sunday and run until the following Sunday. The dates for 2018 will therefore be Sunday 11 to Sunday 18 November in England, Northern Ireland and Wales.

Scottish Interfaith Week in 2018 will also run across these dates.

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Meeting of IFN’s Faith Communities Forum

A meeting of IFN’s Faith Communities Forum took place on 3 May. On the Agenda were: the General Election; The Government’s consultation on Caste in Great Britain and Equality Law; Developing Dialogues; The Great Get Together, with a presentation by Mr Mike Buckley; an update on faith communities and response to refugees; and a number of IFN matters.

Officials from Government Departments invited to attend and offer reflections for Agenda Items relating to the consultation on ‘Caste in Great Britain and equality law’ and to the development of the planned integration policy were no longer able to attend due to restrictions ahead of the snap General Election.

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

The Great Get Together

As noted in the March/April issue of the IFN e-bulletin, on the weekend of 16-18 June, the anniversary weekend of the murder of Jo Cox, former MP for Batley and Spennings, the Jo Cox Foundation is organising what it hopes will be the biggest street party since the Jubilee: The Great Get Together (GGT).

Organisers say “Jo’s killing was meant to divide us and we think the best response is to show how united we are. We believe there is a groundswell of people who reject divisive politics and simply want to bring our communities together and celebrate all that unites us. This is our chance.” Their hope is that this weekend of community events will demonstrate how united people are.

The GGT is being supported by the Big Lunch, the Big Iftar, the Eden Project, the Inter Faith Network for the UK, the Church Urban Fund, and organisations of a range of different faiths and beliefs as well from across the broad spectrum of society.

The GGT gives faith communities an opportunity to celebrate their work and to meet with others in their community. If you are a faith or inter faith organisation interested in getting involved and supporting the Great Get Together, here are just a few ideas that you might like to consider:

- Encourage your members to get involved or, if you are a local organisation, plan an event together
- Open your church, gurdwara, mandir, mosque, synagogue, temple, vihara or other place of worship, inviting in people of different faiths and beliefs
- Hold a special Great Get Together breakfast, lunch, or supper for guests of different backgrounds
- If you're fasting for Ramadan you could hold an interfaith Iftar
- Take part in other Great Get Together events near you – meals, sports events, bake-offs, and more
- Work with other faiths or a local inter faith group to write a Great Get Together message of unity for use in local media

Your event can be held at any time over the three days. For further information visit <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/the-great-get-together> and to take part, visit pledge.greatgettogether.org. You'll then be sent an information pack. You can also email Mike Buckley at the Jo Cox Foundation at mike@moreincommon.co.

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Inter faith iftars

The period of Ramadan observed by Muslims began on the evening 26/27 May. Throughout the UK many Muslim communities are inviting their neighbours and people of other faiths to join them as they break their fast at the end of the day at an inter faith iftar meal.

A number of mosques and Muslim organisations and some other faith communities are hosting inter faith events as part of the Big Iftar and the Great Get Together. Lots of these are listed on the Big Iftar's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/TheBigIftar/>. Local inter faith organisations, such as Building Bridges in Burnley, are also hosting inter faith events including iftars throughout June. Cardinal Vincent Nichols is inviting young people to Archbishop's House in Westminster for an inter faith iftar, with the Chief Rabbi and the Mayor of London Sadiq Khan, in partnership with the Naz Legacy Foundation. More on this can be found at <http://dowym.com/voices/archbishops-house-interfaith-iftar/>.

Another example is the Ramadan Tent Project, an initiative founded by students at SOAS, University of London, which aims to participate in social change by creating bridges between individuals, bringing together communities and fostering inter faith dialogue through its project Open Iftar - <https://ramadantentproject.wordpress.com/>.

Strengthening Faith Institutions, together with the International Centre for Integration & Cohesion, is offering grants for faith bodies to organise a Big Iftar event in their community. (See [below](#).)

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The Grand Trunk Project

2017 will mark 70 years since the independence of India and the creation of modern day Pakistan and Bangladesh. The Grand Trunk Project has been developed in partnership with faith leaders, community activists and facilitated by the Faiths Forum for London. Seeking inspiration from the ancient and unifying Grand Trunk Road which runs across the subcontinent, it aims “to build common ground and open up a much needed dialogue”.

The project’s website notes that “The happenings of 1947 are an important part of the cultural memory of the faith communities disproportionately affected, yet very little has been done to explore the impact. Despite being a divisive and emotional time for many, stories of altruism, bravery and courage have often been underrepresented. Living in one of the most diverse societies in the world, much has been done to build bridges and develop lasting inter community relations. However, the historical, political and religious divides in the British Asian Faith communities have not yet been explored in a relevant manner. The Grand Trunk Project is about opening up dialogue, rediscovering crucial stories of coexistence and developing lasting relationships in our communities that have been fractured.”

For further information, visit <http://tgtp.co.uk/>.

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Interfaith Scotland exhibition for Scottish Refugee Festival

As part of the Scottish Refugee Festival, Interfaith Scotland is holding an art exhibition from 20 June to 22 June at the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh. The exhibition will be by the artist Hannah Rose Thomas and will take place in a secure part of the Parliament building so anyone wishing to attend should contact their MSP to arrange admittance.

As part of the exhibition there will be an event entitled The Art of Connection, sponsored by Bill Kidd MSP, on the evening of 21 June. Hannah Rose Thomas will be speaking about her exhibition and there will be an opportunity to connect through her art with refugees in

Jordan and Calais, view refugee art, find out more about the mental health foundation's refugee programme and explore how your community can connect with the global refugee crisis. Pre-registration is essential. Anyone interested in attending should contact the Interfaith Scotland office at admin@interfaithscotland.org.

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Amplify project

Amplify is an arts-based youth-led programme run by 3FF for Sixth Forms and Further Education colleges. It seeks to create and strengthen safe spaces within educational institutions for exploring issues relating to faith, belief, identity, belonging, social trends and community in a rapidly interconnected and globalised world. The programme focusses on three active principles: Critical investigation, Creative expression and Access to Platforms. The platforms range from arts and community spaces, to educational institutions, to corridors of power where young people can make their voices heard.

3FF is piloting its first project with Westminster Academy to deliver Amplify as part of their Creative Action and Service Learning curricula. For further information, visit <http://www.3ff.org.uk/amplify/>.

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Forum for Islam-Christian Dialogue

The Benedict XVI Centre for Religion and Society at St Mary's University, Twickenham and the Centre for Islamic Finance at the University of Bolton have launched the 'Forum for Islam-Christian Dialogue'.

The Forum will hold regular events designed to promote a greater understanding of the tenets of the two faiths and their impact on important areas such as public policy and business ethics. It will also focus on reaching out to academics and opinion formers with the intention that, in the long term, promoting greater understanding at this level in society will permeate into public policy and into communities more generally. For further information, visit

https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/news/2017/05/st_marys_bolton_forum_islam_christian_dialogue?filtered=1.

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One World Week

One World Week has launched a new website at <http://www.oneworldweek.org/>. The theme of this year's Week, which runs from 22 to 29 October, is 'Good Neighbours: My World Depends on Us'. The theme aims to raise awareness of how our everyday lives,

actions and decisions impact upon our global neighbours – often adversely - and what we need to do to improve that impact by being good neighbours.

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Remembering Srebrenica

11 July is the designated international day that marks the Srebrenica genocide. This year the theme is ‘Breaking the Silence: Gender and Genocide’, and the charity Remembering Srebrenica is focusing on the stories of women and the atrocities perpetrated against them that occurred in Bosnia. Remembering Srebrenica hopes that 2017 will be an opportunity not only to remember the impact that conflict has on women, and continues to do so, but also to think about how women are vital contributors to society at all levels.

Resources have been developed for groups to reflect on the impact of war on women and these can be found at: <http://www.srebrenica.org.uk/resources/gender-and-genocide-resources/>.

There are a number of resources on the website and inter faith groups may be interested in the ‘interfaith speech’ link on the Faith Resources page: <http://www.srebrenica.org.uk/resources/faith-resources/>. There are also three case studies that can be found at: <http://www.srebrenica.org.uk/category/case-studies/remembering-through-faith/> which may prove useful for planning inter faith events to mark the Bosnian genocide.

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

Let’s Talk: Practical pointers for inter faith dialogue

The March/April issue of IFN’s e-bulletin noted that IFN was publishing a new resource entitled *Let’s Talk: Practical pointers for inter faith dialogue*. This is now available to download at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/publications>.

The resource draws on existing IFN materials and contributions from member bodies to provide tips and ideas for productive dialogue and conversation between people of different faiths and beliefs in a range of different contexts. Hard copies can be supplied by the IFN office. If you would like a copy, please contact ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

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Looking After One Another: The Safety and Security of our Faith Communities

Looking after one another: the safety and security of our faith communities was published, as previously reported, in March by the Inter Faith Network for the UK in partnership with the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Home Office, the Crown Prosecution Service, the National Fire Chiefs' Council and the National Police Chiefs' Council. The guidance has been drawn to the attention of a range of bodies, including in the wake of the Manchester attack.

The document contains guidance on responding jointly to attacks on places of worship; working for calm at times of tension; and working to build on and strengthen existing good inter faith relations. It contains material about how and where to report hate incidents, cyber attacks, and actual or suspected terrorist activity; where to find information on strengthening the security of buildings; and where to find information about working to build – and strengthen – good inter faith relations locally. These practical pointers for responding in solidarity have particular resonance at the present time when there is a need to watch out for the wellbeing of any groups who may be targeted because of terrorist actions which claim, or are perceived by some, as having a link to them.

The document can be found at: <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/looking-after-one-another-the-safety-and-security-of-our-faith-communities-2017>.

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Faith Festivals – guidance on sending greetings

In the UK today a range of festivals are celebrated by different faith communities. The Inter Faith Network office often receives enquiries about the most appropriate festivals on which to send greetings and the form of greeting to use and a guidance document has been produced with the IFN's Faith Communities Forum which can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/faith-festivals-guidance-on-sending-greetings-2017>. Each faith community has many different festivals but has chosen two festivals on which greetings from those of other faiths and none would be particularly appreciated. These are included in a table with greetings that the faith community bodies suggest.

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Church Urban Fund Impact Report

The Church Urban Fund has published its impact report 2016, called: Changing Lives and Communities Together. The report can be found at <https://www.cuf.org.uk/our-impact-in-2016>. Near Neighbours projects are looked at under four headings:

- Living together well and handling differences – bringing people from different faith and belief communities together

- Working with hard to reach social groups – a small grants scheme intended to reach those who are often excluded from traditional community initiatives
- Common Good Fund – launched in 2016 in response to the rise of community tensions in the wake of the Brexit vote
- Catalyst – Developing young leaders, a programme that emphasises the contribution that multi-faith and multi-ethnic diversity make to society

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NCVO guidance on cyber security

Following the recent ransomware attacks across the world, including at several sites in the UK, the National Council for Voluntary Organisations has drawn attention to the best practice guides available on its Knowhow Nonprofit website:

- ‘How to protect your charity’s IT systems’, which gives practical steps on using anti-virus software - <https://knowhownonprofit.org/organisation/how-to/safeguarding-your-charity-with-ict>
- ‘How to stay safe from email scammers’, which gives tips for individuals to implement in their every day work - <https://knowhownonprofit.org/how-to/how-to-avoid-email-hackers-and-scammers-1>
- ‘How to use more secure IT systems’, which gives advice on measures that should be carried out to protect an organisation, including establishing good practice policies - <https://knowhownonprofit.org/how-to/how-to-secure-your-it-systems>

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS, AND NOMINATIONS

Commission on Religious Education

The Commission on Religious Education continues to gather evidence from individuals and organisations, both from within and outside of the RE community. Written evidence can be submitted via the website, and the Commission is also holding evidence gathering sessions around England (the Commission’s remit extends only to England). The next sessions will be in Manchester on 13 June and in Exeter on 20 June.

The 2017 AGM of the Religious Education Council of England and Wales, held at the BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Neasden, focused particularly on the Commission.

For further information on the Commission, visit <http://www.commissiononre.org.uk>.

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Interfaith Voices

3FF has launched a new platform for people to make their voices heard on different topics. The platform, entitled Interfaith Voices, will be sharing stories, ideas and opinions, including blog posts, reflections and videos. Each month a different question will be posed and people are invited to share their responses.

The theme for May was Politics, Faith and Belief and the theme for June is Brexit, Belief and Identity': How do you feel Brexit has impacted communal relations in the past year?

Contributors are invited to send their content to comms@3ff.org.uk with 'Interfaith Voices' in the subject line. Each month a few will be published on the blog and in the 3FF newsletter.

For further information, visit <http://www.3ff.org.uk/blog/3ff-wants-hear-voices/>.

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Belief at Work Awards

The ComRes Belief at Work awards are a new scheme to celebrate best practice in diversity and inclusion which will be judged by a panel of business, media, community and faith leaders.

The Awards have been set up following the recently published Belief At Work study into faith in the British workplace, which can be found at www.comresglobal.com/belief-at-work.

Award nominations are invited for employers in the private, public and non-profit sector in England, Wales and Scotland before 16 June. For further information on how to nominate, visit <http://www.comresglobal.com/faith/belief-at-work-awards-2017/>.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

IFN's website lists job and internship opportunities with a significant inter faith dimension with IFN member organisations at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/jobs>.

3FF – Head of Programmes

3FF is seeking to recruit a new Head of Programmes to lead the “next phase of development for 3FF's ground-breaking, award-winning programmes in schools, universities and community spaces.” The closing date for applications is 19 June.

Further information, including details on how to apply, can be found at <http://www.3ff.org.uk/jobs/head-of-programmes.php>.

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Inter Faith Network for the UK – Media Support – Invitation to Tender

IFN is inviting media agencies to tender for targeted support to boost engagement and to raise the profile of IFN and inter faith issues through print and through broadcast media more generally. IFN will be following an open tender process. The deadline for applications is 5 June.

A copy of the tender document can be downloaded at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/jobs>.

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Inter Faith Network for the UK - Volunteers and interns

The Inter Faith Network for the UK has regular volunteering opportunities and occasional internships. Further information about these can be found on IFN’s website.

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One World Week – Trustees and Volunteers

One World Week is currently looking for a number of new Trustees. Further information can be found in its Trustee Recruitment Pack at <http://www.oneworldweek.org/about-oww/recruitment>.

It is also looking for volunteers to help with resources for this year’s Week. A list of the type of activities involved and the time needed, can be found at <http://www.oneworldweek.org/about-oww/recruitment>.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Grants for Big Iftar events

Strengthening Faith Institutions, together with the International Centre for Integration & Cohesion, is offering grants of up to £500 for faith institutions to organise a Big Iftar event in their community during Ramadan (approximately 26 May to 25 June).

Further information can be found at <http://faithsforum.com/new-grant-host-big-iftar/>. The grant application form should be completed and sent to muhammad@faithsforum4london.org by the closing date of 3 June.

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Building a Stronger Britain Together programme

The Home Office programme Building a Stronger Britain Together is continuing to offer in-kind support such as social media training, technical assistance to help a group improve their website, or capacity building work to help a group protect more vulnerable individuals. It is open to bodies in England and Wales. Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/building-a-stronger-britain-together>.

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Faiths in Scotland Community Action Fund

Faiths in Scotland Community Action Fund awards grants to support Scotland's most fragile urban and rural communities. Its 2017 grants will focus exclusively on projects focusing on work with children and young adults and it is calling for applications from faith-based registered charities, which either work with, or aim to begin working with people under the age of 18. It is offering awards for one year of up to £5,000 and all funds must be spent within 12 months of the Award Date.

The next deadline is 29 September. It is open to all charities which meet its criteria and have never received funding from the STV Children's Appeal. For more information call Chris on 0141 221 4544 or visit <http://www.faithincommunityscotland.org/faith-in-community-scotland-action-fund/>.

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Tesco Bags of Help

Bags of Help is Tesco's local community grant scheme where the money raised from the 5p bag levy in Tesco stores is being used to fund community projects across the UK. The projects must meet the criteria of promoting community participation in the development and use of outdoor spaces. Bags of Help is administered by Groundwork in England and Wales and supported in Scotland by Greenspace Scotland. (It is not available in Northern Ireland where carrier bag money is managed centrally.)

Three local community projects will be voted on in Tesco stores each month across Tesco regions throughout England, Scotland and Wales. In each region, the project that received the most votes from all stores in their region will receive a grant of up to £5,000. The second placed project receives up to £2,000 and third placed up to £1,000. Every year, over 7,000 projects will receive funding through this scheme.

Grants are awarded to voluntary or community organisations (including registered charities/companies), schools, health bodies (eg Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), NHS Hospital Trust, Foundation Trust), Parish/Town Councils, local authorities and social housing providers. For detailed information on criteria and how to apply, visit <http://www.groundwork.org.uk/Sites/tescocommunityscheme/pages/Category/the-tesco-bags-of-help-programme-tes2>.

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Funding websites

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations offers advice on fundraising and grants on its Knowhow Nonprofit site at <https://knowhownonprofit.org/funding>.

Funding Central - <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/default.aspx> - is a free website for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises in England that provides access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, together with tools and resources for supporting organisations to develop sustainable income strategies appropriate to their needs. Similar websites for funding in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at Funding Scotland - <http://www.fundingscotland.com/> - Wales Council for Voluntary Action - <http://www.wcva.org.uk/funding/search> - and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland - <https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

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Heritage Lottery Fund grants to commemorate First World War

The Heritage Lottery Fund has made an additional £4million of funding available so that more communities can get involved in projects marking the Centenary of the First World War. Projects applying for funding must be able to meet one of a number of successful outcomes based on heritage, people and communities. Grants can be given between £3,000 and £10,000. There is no current deadline for applications as grants are considered on a monthly basis.

Further information can be found at <https://www.hlf.org.uk/looking-funding/our-grant-programmes/first-world-war-then-and-now>.

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Community foundations

Community foundations are local, grant-making organisations to which local community organisations can apply for funding. There are 46 community foundations in the UK, covering Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and most of England. A map of community foundations across the UK and how to contact them, can be found at <http://www.ukcommunityfoundations.org/our-network>.

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Transform Foundation

The Transform Foundation is offering funding to charities to help with new website builds. Grants of £18,000 are available. For further information and to apply, visit www.transformfoundation.org.uk.

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Google, Microsoft and charities

The internet search engine Google is offering a service to registered charities which brings: Google Ad Grants: Free AdWords advertising to promote your website on Google through keyword targeting; YouTube Nonprofit Programme: Access exclusive resources, features and programs designed to maximise your organisation's impact on YouTube; and Google Apps for Non-profit: Free version of the Google Apps business productivity suite, including Gmail, Docs, Calendar and more. For further information, visit www.google.co.uk/intl/en/nonprofits/join.

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Subsidised fundraising workshops

The Foundation for Social Improvement offers heavily subsidised training programmes for small charities across the UK. The courses cover a wide range of subjects from event planning to leadership but the majority of their training courses are focused on helping charities learn the skills to raise and earn income. Further information can be found at <http://www.thefsi.org/services/training/>.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Srebrenica Memorial Day will take place on 11 July www.srebrenica.org.uk

Peace One Day takes place on 21 September www.peaceoneday.org

Sewa Day will take place on 1 October www.sewaday.org

One World Week will take place from 22 to 29 October www.oneworldweek.org

National Inter Faith Week in England, Wales and Northern Ireland will be an '8 day week' this year taking place from 12 to 19 November. www.interfaithweek.org

Scottish Interfaith Week will also take place from 12 to 19 November www.interfaithscotland.org/scottish-interfaith-week/

See more [above](#).

Mitzvah Day will take place on 19 November www.mitzvahday.org.uk/

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SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK TO INCREASE INTER FAITH UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION

THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUR SUPPORT

We need your help to ensure that the Inter Faith Network for the UK's work to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation continues and grows, helping people of all backgrounds to live and work together with mutual respect and shared commitment to the common good.

Please consider making a gift today to support the work of the Inter Faith Network. Gifts at all levels are valued and make a difference. You can donate on our website at www.interfaith.org.uk/donate or via PayPal or JustGiving at <https://www.justgiving.com/interfaithnetwork-uk> or by sending a cheque to The Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH.

REMEMBERING A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND

From time to time we receive an ‘in memoriam’ gift after an individual has passed away, funded from a collection following their death or through a donation from their heirs. Such gifts provide a living memorial to a loved one, supporting inter faith understanding in this country – for now and for the future. If you would like to make a gift in memory of a loved one, please get in touch by emailing remember@interfaith.org.uk or call us on 0207 730 0410.

A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

By leaving a gift in your will to the Inter Faith Network for the UK, you can leave a living inheritance to help deepen and strengthen inter faith understanding and cooperation in this country – for now and for the future. If you are thinking about making a will, the best thing to do is to get in touch with a professional will writer, such as a solicitor or advocate; they can help to ensure it is legally correct and that your wishes are met. If you have already made a will, you can still make an addition or amendment in the form of a codicil. If you would like to pledge a gift, please provide our name and address, along with our registered charity number 1068934.

Please get in touch with us if you have any queries. You can call Hannah Cassidy, on 0207 730 0410 or contact us at remember@interfaith.org.uk.

Every gift, however large or small, makes a difference.

Thank you!

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DIARY DATES

This section includes some of the events taking place around the UK during June. IFN includes information on diary dates between e-bulletins on its website at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/take-part/events>.

Interfaith MK is holding its next meeting on Thursday 1 June. This will be an Open Discussion on the topic of ‘An Interfaith Response to Terrorism’ discussing how we can best play our part in combatting violence in society. It is being held at 6.30pm at the Freeman Memoria Methodist Church, Buckingham Road, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, MK3 5HH. For further information, contact Ken Harris on 01296 720454 or email interfaithmk@gmail.com.

The City Circle and **St James’s Church** are holding an Interfaith Iftar: Bringing Communities Together on Saturday 3 June. The Iftar aims to bring Britons of all faiths and

none, together to celebrate Ramadan and shared values. The keynote speaker this year will be Baroness Sayeeda Warsi. There will also be a discussion on the importance of building strong inter faith communities, followed by the breaking of the fast, evening prayers and dinner. Booking is essential. This is being held from 7.30pm to 10.30pm at St James's Church, 197 Piccadilly, London W1J 9LL. To book a place or for further information, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/interfaith-iftar-bringing-communities-together-tickets-34620652303?aff=es2>.

Burngreave Ashram Multifaith Chapel & Library is hosting its next Meditation/Prayer lunch and seminar on Monday 5 June from 12pm to 2.30pm. The meditation and prayer will be led by John Vincent. It is being held at 86 Spital Hill, Sheffield S4 7LG. For further information, contact on BAMCL@outlook.com or call on 07932 017929 or 0114 2436688.

York Interfaith Group is holding an event on Tuesday 6 June. It will begin with a 'Bring and Share' Meal with Music from 5.30pm to 7.30pm and will then be followed at 7.30pm by its Monthly Meeting, for which the theme is Linkages between Dharmic and Abrahamic Faiths, with a particular emphasis on Buddhism. It is being held at the York Medical Society Rooms, 23 Stonegate, York YO1 8AW. For further information, contact yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com.

South Lakeland Interfaith Forum and South Lakeland Mind are holding an informal launch party on Tuesday 6 June for their collaborative booklet 'Spiritual Links' to raise awareness of mental health issues. Booking is essential. This is being held at 4pm at Stricklandgate House, Kendal, LA9 4PU. For further information, contact Rev. Amanda Reynolds at amandareynolds1@me.com.

St Philip's Centre is holding its AGM and a Book Launch on Wednesday 7 June. The book launch will be of Riaz Ravat and Tom Wilson's book, which has been co-authored on the theme of *Learning to Live Well Together: Case Studies in Interfaith Diversity*. The book uses the Centre's aim of learning to live together and the four criteria by which they evaluate their work (encounter, understanding, trust and co-operation). Proceeds from discounted copies of the book will go to support the work of the Centre. This is being held at 5pm at St Philip's Centre, 2A Stoughton Drive North, Leicester, LE5 5UB. For further information, contact on maureen@stphilipscentre.co.uk.

The Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter is holding the 47th Cardinal Bea Memorial Lecture on Wednesday 7 June. The event entitled 'Jews, Christians and the Reformation', will be commemorating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in the context of the Jewish Christian relationship. The speakers will be Rabbi Sybil Sheridan and Dr Volker Haarmann. Places are limited so booking is essential. This is being held at 7pm, with a wine reception from 6pm, at the Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter, 34 Chepstow Villas, London, W11 2QZ. For further information contact sioncentrefordialogue@gmail.com or telephone 02073138286, or alternatively visit www.sioncentre.org.

Faith in Lancaster is holding its next Faithshare meeting on Monday 12 June. The theme for the meeting will be ‘Exploring Faith Through Reading (and perhaps also writing) Novels, Poetry and Plays’. This meeting provides an opportunity to meet together in a safe and respectful space in which to share and learn about each other’s beliefs, understandings, experiences, traditions and practices. This is being held at 7.30pm in the William Stout Room, Quaker Meeting House, Lancaster, LA1 1TX. For further information, email info@faithinlancaster.org.uk or visit www.faithinlancaster.org.uk.

Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby is holding a Faith Trail on Thursday 15 June. This is an opportunity to explore places of faith in close proximity to each other. The visit will start at 9.45am for 10am at the Hindu Temple Geeta Bhawan Derby, 102 Pear Tree Road, Derby, DE23 6QA, followed by visits to Derby Jamia Mosque, Guru Arjan Dev Gurdwara and finish at the Baptist church, 154 Pear Tree Road, Derby DE23 6QD. Booking is essential. For further information, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/refugee-week-faith-trail-tickets--33488715650> or visit www.multifaithcentre.org.

Building Bridges in Burnley is holding its AGM on Thursday 15 June at 8pm. This will be followed by the closing of the Ramadan fast at approximately 9.45pm. This is being held at the Ghosia Masjid, Abel Street, Burnley, Lancashire, BB10 1QX. For further information, contact Bea Foster on 07875517043 or on bea_foster@hotmail.com.

Nipponzan Myohoji, The London Peace Pagoda is holding the 32nd Annual Celebration of the London Peace Pagoda on Saturday 17 June. There will be an annual ceremony of Nipponzan Myohoji with various Buddhist traditions; inter faith prayers for peace messages and speeches; and devotional music and dance. The programme will be followed by an offering of tea and light refreshments. Everyone is welcome to offer incense, flowers, candles, etc. This is being held at 2pm at the Nipponzan Myohoji, The London Peace Pagoda, Battersea Park, Albert Bridge Road, London, SW11 4NJ. For further information, contact on 02072289620 or email on londonpeacepagoda@gmail.com.

Waveney Interfaith Circle is holding themed ‘talking’ meetings every month for anyone interested in learning about the beliefs and traditions of other faiths through friendly informal contact with those who are familiar with them. The next meeting is on Monday 19 June at 7.30pm. The theme of the meeting is ‘Fasting’ and the speaker Nora Hassan will talk about the Islamic fast of Ramadan before the group shares how fasting features in other traditions. This is being held at St Margaret’s Church Centre, 147 Hollingsworth Rd, Lowestoft NR32 4BW. For further information, contact Rose Norgate on 01502712369.

London Inter Faith Centre is holding a talk entitled ‘Contemporary challenges in Hindu-Christian relations – India and UK’ on Monday 26 June. The speaker, Dr Andrew Wingate OBE will be reflecting on his experience of inter faith encounter, in Britain, in India, and in Sweden, with special emphasis on the encounter with Hindus. A donation has been requested, with concessions available. This is being held from 7.30pm to 9pm at the London Inter Faith Centre, 125 Salusbury Road, NW6 6RG. For further information, visit <http://londoninterfaith.org.uk/>.

St Philip's Centre, Leicester is holding a Scriptural Reasoning event on the theme of food on Monday 26 June. These sessions give the opportunity to engage with different world faith scriptures alongside The Bible, with people of those faiths. Each of these sessions will look at a different thematic approach, with the first looking at Food. This is being held from 7pm to 8.30pm at the St Philip's Centre, 2A Stoughton Drive North, Leicester, LE5 5UB. For more information, and to book a place, contact maureen@stphilipscentre.co.uk.

Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship is holding a talk and discussion on 'Baha'i Ethics in Contemporary Society' on Thursday 29 June. The speaker will be Dr Shahin Fatheazam. This is being held at 7.30pm at the Leeds Language Academy, 14A Woodsley Road, LS3 1DT. For further information, contact John Summerwill on 01132697895 or email on membership@concord-leeds.org.uk.

Christian Aid Scotland and **Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees** are organising an inter faith pilgrimage called Shoulder to Shoulder on Sunday 2 July. This 10km walk on the paths of the mountain of Ben Ledik, near Callander, will take in sights including Rock of Embers and a panoramic view of the Highlands, and will be themed around sanctuary and refugees. It is free to take part in this pilgrimage, however participants are encouraged to raise funds for a project or charity which works with refugees, especially one with a faith basis. To register, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/shoulder-to-shoulder-tickets-34318446397> or for more information visit www.christianaid.org.uk/scotland-events or contact events@christian-aid.org or 0141 221 7475.

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For more information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org.uk

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **19 July** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer: Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within

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IFN e-bulletin

July/August 2017

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **18 September** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and projects and future events. If your organisation distributes a programme, newsletter or e-bulletin, please add ifnet@interfaith.org.uk to your mailing list.

Disclaimer: Information in this e-bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Increasingly, IFN is making use of social media, in particular Twitter (www.twitter.com/IFNetUK) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/IFNetUK).

Please take a moment to 'follow' and 'like' IFN and also Inter Faith Week (www.twitter.com/IFWeek and www.facebook.com/IFWeek) and also check in with the IFN website to see new items, which are added on a regular basis.

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

London Bridge and Finsbury Park attacks - Faith and inter faith responses

On the evening of Saturday 3 June 8 people were killed and 48 people injured in a terrorist attack on London Bridge and nearby Borough Market. Later, on Monday 19 June, another terrorist attack occurred outside Finsbury Park Mosque in London, in which one person died and a further 10 were injured.

Faith and inter faith organisations played a significant role in responding to both events in a variety of ways.

Around the UK, faith and inter faith bodies offered prayers and messages of support. Vigils were organised following both incidents and ‘services of hope’ were held at Southwark Cathedral on 16 June following the London Bridge attack and at Finsbury Park Mosque on 3 July following the attack nearby.

A list of faith and inter faith responses to both incidents of which IFN is aware can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/london-bridge-attack-responses-by-faith-and-inter-faith-bodies> and <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/finsbury-park-attack-responses-by-faith-and-inter-faith-bodies>, respectively.

On 4 June IFN’s Co-Chairs and the Moderators of IFN’s Faith Communities Forum issued the following statement in response to the London Bridge attack:

“We hold in our thoughts and prayers those who have lost their lives or been injured in the attacks at London Bridge, and also their families and friends.

We give thanks for the bravery and commitment of all who went to their assistance.

This was a further brutal attempt to undermine the stability of British society and to sow suspicion and fear – one that must be met by continuing to stand resolutely together as people of all faiths and none to uphold the values of an open democratic society.

We must continue to work together for a respectful and positive society where people feel valued and included and safe and where all can flourish free from fear.

Attacks such as these can bring scapegoating and acts of hatred in their wake. Let us work to try and prevent that and respond together to assist whenever necessary.

We know that, just as following the recent attack in Manchester, inter faith organisations in London will be playing an important role in the days and weeks to come. They are also in our thoughts at this time.

Two weekends from now the anniversary of the murder of the late Jo Cox MP by an extremist of a different kind will be marked by the Great Get Together. People around the UK will be coming together in their communities in a spirit of neighbourliness to highlight and celebrate what unites. Let us seize that moment to strengthen our bonds of friendship and create new relationships and to remember and affirm that we have, in her words, “far more in common with each other than things that divide us”.

On 19 June IFN’s Co-Chairs and the Moderators of the Faith Communities Forum also issued a statement in response to the Finsbury Park attack:

“Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims of the horrific terrorist attack in the early hours of this morning at Finsbury Park and with their families and all others involved.

The attack took place just outside Muslim Welfare House where, this weekend, a Great Get Together event was held, like other GGT events, “celebrating all that we hold in common”. That event, like the mosque open days, other cross-communal events at Muslim Welfare House and nearby Finsbury Park Mosque and active engagement in the Islington Faiths Forum, has highlights the extensive work of those bodies to create positive links, as well as the good relations that others locally have with them.

Where terrorism seeks to wear the face of religion, or where innocent people connected to mosques or other places of worship are the subject of hatred and

attack because of perceived links to terrorism, we must stand up for their safety and their right to live free from prejudice, suspicion and hatred.

We must continue to stand together, support each other and work together for the common good.

Earlier this year IFN, with Government, the Crown Prosecution Service, the National Police Chiefs Council and the National Fire Chiefs Council published short guidelines: Looking After One Another: The Safety and Security of our Faith Communities. As we say in this “As faith communities we ... have a role in responding to emergency situations and to inter-community tensions, both as individual communities and – very importantly – together. In our shared society we are deeply interconnected. An attack on one is an attack on all.”

We close, as we began, with thoughts and prayers for those affected and remember also those killed, injured and bereaved in other recent attacks.”

These statements can also be found on IFN’s website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/statements-and-messages>.

Statements from the Prime Minister on both attacks can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-statement-following-london-terror-attack-4-june-2017> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-statement-following-terror-attack-in-finsbury-park-19-june-2017>, respectively.

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Battle of Passchendaele - Centenary

Monday 31 July marked the centenary of the beginning of the Battle of Passchendaele in which British soldiers fought alongside soldiers from Australia, Canada, India, pre-partition Ireland, Newfoundland, New Zealand and South Africa and from France and Belgium.

The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge were joined by the Prime Minister and many others to mark the occasion with a special service at Menin Gate in Ypres. (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-40669719>).

The service marked the beginning of a three month-long programme of events linked to the centenary of the Battle, including commemorations to remember forty-three soldiers who were awarded the Victoria Cross for bravery during the battle. Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/britain-remembers-the-heroes-of-passchendaele-with-community-ceremonies>.

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Grenfell Tower Fire - Faith and inter faith responses

In the early hours of 14 June a fire engulfed Grenfell Tower, a residential tower block in Kensington, West London. The Metropolitan Police has estimated that around 80 people died in the fire.

Faith and inter faith bodies have played a major role in responding to the tragic events of the fire. This has included offering prayers and organising services and vigils. It has also included responding on the ground, both in the immediate aftermath of the fire and during the weeks that have followed.

Services and vigils were held in the wake of the fire including a special service of prayer at St Peter's Church Notting Hill and a multi faith vigil at Westway Sports Centre.

A range of local places of worship close to the site of the fire opened their doors to survivors and local residents, providing food, shelter and other urgently needed items, as well as offering emotional and spiritual care (<https://lbfm.org/tag/grenfell-tower-fire/>) and faith based agencies such as Caritas Westminster and local churches and other places of worship played a vital role, as well as faith groups visiting and sending support from further afield.

A number of national faith based bodies launched or supported appeals to aid victims of the fire, such as the Salvation Army (<http://news.salvationarmy.org.uk/salvation-army-grenfell-fire-emergency-response-london>) and the Muslim Council of Britain (www.mcb.org.uk/support-and-donations-needed-for-grenfell-tower-victims).

Inter faith organisations such as Faiths Forum for London and the London Boroughs Faiths Network also offered practical support to victims.

Many faith and inter faith organisations also issued statements and messages, such as those that can be seen at: <https://ctbi.org.uk/appeal-and-prayers-after-grenfell-tower-fire>; www.hinducounciluk.org/2017/06/15/hindu-council-uk-statement-on-the-grenfell-tower-fire-in-north-kensington-london/; <http://faithsforum.com/response-grenfell-tower-fire/>; and <http://www.ccj.org.uk/response-from-bishop-michael-to-the-grenfell-tower-fire/>.

Faith communities have also been involved in mediating between local residents and authorities in the weeks since the fire - <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/jul/19/grenfell-faith-groups-step-in-to-mediate-between-officials-and-community>.

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Continuing faith and inter faith work with refugees, asylum seekers and migrants

On 19 July a new £1 million funding pot to help community groups support refugees fleeing the war in Syria to settle in the UK was announced. The funding was announced by the Home Secretary to mark the one year anniversary of the Community Sponsorship Scheme. This scheme, which was launched by the Home Secretary at Lambeth Palace last year, enables community groups to take on the role of supporting refugees who have been resettled from the camps in the countries surrounding Syria in the UK.

Since the scheme launched last year, 53 refugees have been welcomed by 10 community groups across the UK. Community sponsors, including charities and faith groups, provide housing for the refugee families, as well as helping them to integrate into life in the UK, access medical and social services, arranging English language tuition and supporting them towards employment and self-sufficiency. The new 2 year £1 million fund will provide training and support for groups signing up to the scheme.

Those responding to the scheme are not just from areas of high diversity. For example the Fishguard Refugee Sponsorship Group was one of the first to respond to the UK scheme: <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/message-wales-refugees-people-are-very-keen-help>.

Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-secretary-announces-1-million-to-help-communities-support-refugees>.

Faith and inter faith organisations and communities are continuing to respond to the needs of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants.

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI), in conjunction with the National Justice and Peace Network and Christians Aware, has produced a leaflet entitled 'Facts about refugees' to assist churches and others in offering responses. The leaflet sets out the 1951 United Nations Convention definition of a refugee, points to the most recent facts and figures about refugees, links to stories of refugees and gives pointers as to action that can be taken, as well as providing follow-up contacts. The leaflet can be downloaded from the CTBI website at <https://ctbi.org.uk/facts-about-refugees-leaflet/>. In April, CTBI also organised a fact-finding trip to Italian refugee projects. For more information about the trip, and CTBI's other work with refugees, migrants and asylum seekers, visit <http://focusonrefugees.org/>.

An Edinburgh Weekend Club for refugees has started. It is based on a successful model run by Interfaith Glasgow (reported on previously) and is run by Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees. The project tackles social isolation to support integration and is also an opportunity to demonstrate the shared values of different faith traditions. For further information about Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees, visit <http://www.sfar.org.uk>.

Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees organised an inter faith pilgrimage to the mountain of Ben Ledi near Callander. The pilgrimage was held on the theme of ‘Sanctuary and Refugees’.

The Joseph Interfaith Foundation is running an initiative for young refugees entitled ‘Introduction to the Social Culture of Britain’. As part of its aim to assist young refugees with realising their full potential whilst living in the UK, the Foundation has released nine short videos. The videos are on such themes as ‘Women’s Equality and Domestic Abuse’; ‘The Rule of Law and Equality before the Law’; and ‘Accessing the National Health Service and Mental Health Issues’. The videos contain advice from professionals in these fields. The videos are free to access on the Joseph Interfaith Foundation website at <http://www.josephinterfaithfoundation.org/ongoing.php>. To find out more about the project, or to participate or recommend someone for participation, email info@josephinterfaithfoundation.org.

St Ethelburga’s Centre for Reconciliation and Peace ‘People of the Earth’ project has a refugee related dimension, reflected in an event it held this month on the theme of ‘People of the Earth: sowing seeds of human connection’. The event brought together refugees, asylum seekers, organisations and Londoners for a day of connection, community and fun. More information about St Ethelburga’s ‘People of the Earth’ project can be found at <https://stethelburgas.org/projects/people-of-the-earth/>.

Locally, faith and inter faith groups continue to raise funds and develop practical forms of support. For example, this month the community at Ealing Liberal Synagogue raised over £5,000 at a special fun day event, with the money going to the Abraham’s Tent Project to turn a former caretaker’s flat at South London Liberal Synagogue into a home for a refugee family. A Faiths in Action showcase, held earlier this month at Bradford’s Faith Centre in Oakwood Court, City Road, aimed to show how faith and non-faith groups are all pitching in to help and encouraging more people to join them. Further information is at http://www.thetelegraphandargus.co.uk/news/local/localbrad/15414303.Refugees_speak_of_their_experiences_as_faith_groups_unite_to_help/.

Migration Exchange has commissioned a piece of work looking at the role of faith networks in service delivery and advocacy for refugees, migrants and asylum seekers. The report is due to be launched this Autumn. For further information, contact mike@mikebuckley.org.uk.

Note: Other initiatives have been reported on in earlier issues of the e-bulletin.

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Hate Crime

Figures from the Community Security Trust show an increase in the number of reported anti-Semitic incidents between January and June 2017 by a third compared to the same period in 2016. This reflects the highest number of incidents recorded for a January to

June period since records began in 1984 (<https://cst.org.uk/news/blog/2017/07/27/cst-antisemitic-incidents-report-reveals-record-number-of-antisemitic-hate-incidents-in-first-six-months-of-2017>).

The number of Islamophobic attacks in Manchester went up fivefold in the week after the Arena bombing on 22 May, with 139 incidents reported to Tell Mama, the group recording Islamophobic crimes, compared to 25 incidents the previous week <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/jun/20/anti-muslim-hate-surges-after-manchester-and-london-bridge-attacks>. Figures released in June by Greater Manchester Police showed hate crimes linked to religion had leapt from 92 to 366 since the arena attack <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/jun/22/islamophobic-attacks-manchester-increase-arena-attack> There was also a spike in anti-Muslim attacks following the London Bridge and Finsbury Park Mosque attacks.

Members of other faith and ethnic groups also continue to suffer hate attacks.

In this context, the work of faith communities, inter faith organisations and all who work to bring together people of different backgrounds to grow in understanding and build relationships is vital. Issues around hate crime and tackling prejudice have been prominent on the agendas of recent IFN meetings for local inter faith practitioners, meetings of IFN's Faith Communities Forum and on IFN's National Meetings, as well as through highlighting relevant items within e-bulletins.

The Government announced last September funding to support community projects that prevent hate crime. Details can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/preventing-hate-crime-funding-for-community-projects>. The deadline for applications is 15 September 2017.

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Vulnerable Faith Institutions Scheme

The Home Office announced on 7 July the opening of a new funding scheme for places of worship that require extra security to protect themselves from attacks on racial, religious or ideological grounds. This was announced following the terrorist attack near Muslim Welfare House and Finsbury Park Mosque.

The Vulnerable Faith Institutions Scheme, which is an extension of the Places of Worship Security Scheme, will pay for places of worship to install security measures such as CCTV cameras, alarms, bollards or strengthened fencing. Applications close on 17 August. Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/vulnerable-faith-institutions-scheme>.

As noted in the March/April e-bulletin, IFN recently published relevant updated and expanded guidance: *Looking After One Another: The Safety and Security of Our Faith Communities*. This can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/looking-after->

[one-another-the-safety-and-security-of-our-faith-communities-2017](#) and hard copies are available on request. It was published in partnership with the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Home Office, the Crown Prosecution Service, the National Police Chiefs' Council and the National Fire Chiefs' Council.

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Extension of public consultation on Caste in Great Britain and Equality Law

The public consultation on 'Caste in Great Britain and Equality Law', launched by the Government Equalities Office (GEO) in March was extended, following the General Election for a further 8 weeks until 18 September.

The consultation is described as seeking views on how best to ensure that there is appropriate legal protection against caste discrimination. The consultation website notes that "This ban could be applied: a) by formally making caste an aspect of race in the Equality Act 2010 or b) through developing case law in the courts and employment tribunals. In either case, businesses and public authorities would have to consider caste discrimination in the same way they consider other aspects of race discrimination when dealing with employees, customers or service users." Full details of the consultation and how to respond are at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/caste-in-great-britain-and-equality-law-a-public-consultation>.

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Srebrenica Memorial Week

Events took place across the UK between Sunday 9 and Sunday 16 July to mark Srebrenica Memorial Week. The theme for the week, which marked the 22nd Anniversary of the Srebrenica Genocide, was 'Breaking the Silence: Gender and Genocide'. The theme explored the gendered nature of the genocide in Bosnia and remembered its hidden victims, particularly victims of sexual violence. The week also explored the untold stories of women's acts of courage during and after the Bosnian war and the genocide and the contributions of those women seeking truth and justice for the victims of the genocide, and challenging denial.

An event was held at the Guildhall in London, which included addresses from survivors, Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth, Minister for Faith and Integration at the Department for Communities and Local Government and Nicola Sturgeon, First Minister of Scotland. A National Commemoration for Wales was also held at The Pierhead in Cardiff, as well as a commemoration for Northern Ireland at Belfast City Hall. People of many faiths and beliefs, and many IFN member bodies, were involved in marking the anniversary in some

way. Srebrenica Memorial Week is coordinated by Remembering Srebrenica. To find out more, visit www.screbrenica.org.uk.

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Citizens Commission on Islam, Participation and Public Life

The Citizens Commission on Islam, Participation and Public Life has published its report and recommendations, *The Missing Muslims – Unlocking British Muslim Potential for the Benefit of All*. Its recommendations are directed primarily to community and faith institutions, but are also for businesses and Government. Further information can be found at http://www.citizensuk.org/missing_muslims.

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Amnesty International paper on tackling hate crime

Amnesty International has produced a background briefing paper called ‘Tackling hate crime in the UK’. The report looks at many aspects of hate crime in the UK, including perceived religion or belief of victims. The report can be found at <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/files/Against-Hate-Briefing-AIUK.pdf>.

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House of Lords Select Committee on Citizenship and Civic Engagement

The House of Lords Select Committee on Citizenship and Civic Engagement published its Call for Evidence in July.

The Committee is keen to hear from a wide range of individuals, groups and organisations in order to “understand the nature of the citizenship challenge for different parts of society; the aim being to identify new ways of building bridges within and between communities, and to support civic engagement”.

The deadline for submitting written evidence is 8 September. Further information is at <http://www.parliament.uk/documents/lords-committees/Citizenship-civic-engagement/Citizenship-civic-engagement-call-for-evidence.pdf>.

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INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK NEWS

IFN 30th Anniversary National Meeting

IFN's 30th Anniversary was marked at its National Meeting in London on 5 July. 140 representatives of member bodies from across the UK and of many faiths attended, exploring the theme of 'Moving Forward Together'. The meeting looked forwards and outwards, taking some of the key publications and projects of IFN as a basis for discussion of the future of inter faith relations in the UK and of how we live well together as people of different faiths – as well as with people of non-religious beliefs. It explored questions on what the things are that unite us and how we respect and celebrate difference while building on what we share.

Participants were welcomed to the morning session by IFN's Co-Chair, the Rt Revd Richard Atkinson and to the afternoon session by Co-Chair Jatinder Singh Birdi. A minute's silence was held to remember all who had lost their lives or been injured in recent terrorist attacks and also to remember the many of different faiths and none who have responded by redoubling their efforts to work for understanding, peace and justice.

During the plenary session Dr Harriet Crabtree, Executive Director, Inter Faith Network for the UK, spoke on 'Past, present, future' and the contribution of IFN and its member bodies over the last thirty years; Rabbi Warren Elf, Development Officer, Faith Network for Manchester, offered reflections on 'Extremism, hatred and inter faith relations'; Jaskiran Kaur Mehmi, a student at the London School of Economics and Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship, Rudi Elliott Lockhart, Chief Executive, RE Council for England and Wales and Maulana M Shahid Raza, Chair, British Muslim Forum and MINAB and IFN Trustee, spoke on the value of 'Education and dialogue' to positive inter faith engagement; Zoe Amar, Zoe Amar Communications, spoke on 'Communicating in the digital world'; Vinaya Sharma, General Secretary, Vishwa Hindu Parishad UK and Committee member, Redbridge Faith Forum and Andrzej Wdowiak, Assistant Director, Caritas Westminster, offered reflections on 'Cooperation for the common good'; and reflections on the themes of the day were offered by the Venerable Bogoda Seelawimala, Sri Lankan Sangha Sabha and Vice-Moderator, IFN Faith Communities Forum, the Revd James Breslin, United Reformed Church, Newcastle Council of Faiths and IFN Trustee, Mohinder Singh Chana, Bradford Concord Interfaith Society, Network of Sikh Organisations and Vice-Moderator, IFN Faith Communities Forum and Dr Maureen Sier, Director, Interfaith Scotland and IFN Trustee.

Discussion groups were held on: 'Engaging faith communities on social issues' with presentations from Kirit Mistry, Co-Chair, National Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Transplant Alliance (NBTA) and Angela Ditchfield, Diversity Lead Nurse-Organ Donation and Transplantation, NHS; 'Youth and inter faith engagement', with a presentation from Sean Turnbull, ParliaMentors Programme, 3FF; 'Opening up difficult dialogues, engaging with tough topics', with a presentation by Dr Justine Huxley, Director, St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace; 'The safety and security of our faith communities', with a presentation from Edit Bori, Deputy Head of Security and Emergency Planning,

Westminster Abbey and Faith Sector Lead, National Counter Terrorism Security Office; 'Developing guidance to reflect and support the vital work of local inter faith organisations', with presentations from Sarah Mar, Cheltenham Interfaith, Tarang Shelat, Birmingham Council of Faiths, John Marder, Crawley Interfaith Network, Bessie White, Hounslow Friends of Faith, Elizabeth Chappell, Islington Faiths Forum and William Duncan, Northampton Inter Faith Forum; 'Social media', with a presentation from Zoe Amar, Zoe Amar Communications; and 'Sharing of good practice internationally', with a presentation from Dr Samuel Everett, Co-lead researcher on the Woolf Institute 'Trust in Crisis' research project. The groups were facilitated by: Patricia Stoa, Nottingham Inter Faith Council; Ashley Beck, Inter Faith Development Officer, Inter Faith Network for the UK; Dr Justine Huxley, Director, St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace; Rabbi David Mason, Board of Deputies for British Jews and Co-Moderator, IFN Faith Communities Forum; The Revd Canon Dr John Hall, Devon Faith and Belief Forum and IFN Trustee; Mike Stygal, Vice President, Pagan Federation and IFN Trustee; and Vijay Krishnarayan, Director, Commonwealth Foundation.

A report on the meeting will be published in due course.

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Inter Faith Week and Scottish Interfaith Week

Inter Faith Week

Inter Faith Week 2017 will run from Sunday 12 to Sunday 19 November.

The activity registration form for Inter Faith Week is now live on the Inter Faith Week website. The map and other events lists are due to go live in late August. If you are organising an Inter Faith Week activity, please do take a moment to register it on the website: www.interfaithweek.org/submit.

IFN has published a short illustrated report on Inter Faith Week 2016, *Stories from 2016, Inspiration for 2017*. It reflects the ways in which participants chose to mark the Week in 2016, and concludes with a section looking forward to the Week in 2017. The report can be downloaded at www.interfaithweek.org/resources/reports.

If you are looking for further activity ideas or other practical pointers, the Inter Faith Week Toolkit is available to download on the Inter Faith Week website at www.interfaithweek.org/resources/toolkit.

You can also connect with the Week on Twitter at www.twitter.com/IFWeek or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/IFWeek. IFN will again be using the hashtag #IFWeek across all social platforms it is engaging. Using the hashtag or tagging our accounts helps us to find and share what you are doing.

Scottish Inter Faith Week

Scottish Interfaith Week will also run from Sunday 12 to Sunday 19 November. It is led by Interfaith Scotland. Its theme this year will be “Creativity and the Arts.” For further information, visit <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/scottish-interfaith-week/>.

Interfaith Scotland is launching a dedicated Scottish Interfaith Week website and Scottish events can be listed on this. For further information, contact admin@interfaithscotland.org.

Funding

As noted [below](#), grants are available from the Inter Faith Youth Trust for young people aged 11-25 towards Inter Faith Week projects.

The Near Neighbours programme of the Church of England ([below](#)) also makes available relevant funding and encourages its supported projects to participate in Inter Faith Week.

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

The Grand Trunk Project

The Grand Trunk Project, launched on 4 July, seeks inspiration from the Grand Trunk Road, which runs across the Indian subcontinent. 2017 marks 70 years since Indian independence and the partition that led to the creation of Pakistan and later Bangladesh, and the project will also seek to explore the legacy of these events among faith communities in the UK. 11 events will be held across the UK during the summer of 2017 as part of the project, and an exhibition will also tour the country.

The project aims to bring together British Asian faith communities to build bridges and develop lasting inter community relations. It has been developed in partnership with faith leaders and community activists, and is facilitated by the Faiths Forum for London. Other faith organisations, such as the City Sikhs Network, are also involved.

For further information, visit <http://tgtp.co.uk/> or email hello@tgtp.co.uk.

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Sacred Sounds concerts

Throughout the summer and autumn of 2017, Alchemy and South Asian Arts, in association with the Network of Sikh Organisations, are touring the UK with a special concert on the theme of ‘Sacred Sounds: Sikh music traditions and the First World War’. The concert tells some of the stories of Sikh soldiers that fought in the First World War, and

showcases the music that these soldiers took with them to the battlefield. The concert includes vocals, music, spoken word, visuals and animation. A number of seminars and conferences are also being held as part of the project. The final performance will take place in Leeds on Wednesday 15 November.

For more information on the concerts, including tour dates and locations, and for booking information, visit <http://alchemyanew.com/sacred-sounds/>, or email info@saa-uk.org/.

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‘All of us’ film

The Women’s Interfaith Network is developing an educational film aimed at children and young people on the theme of ‘All of us’. The short animated film is being created as a resource for a wide reaching campaign to promote religious and cultural tolerance. The project aims “to create a vision of how different belief systems, cultural and racial diversities could positively co-exist” and will be promoted nationally and internationally to schools, communities and members of the public.

For further information, contact info@wominet.org.uk.

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Inter faith walks

The summer months are a time when many organisations choose to hold faith walks, trails and pilgrimages. These events enable members of the public to visit places of worship in their neighbourhoods, to increase religious literacy, to meet people of different faiths and beliefs, or to unite in support of a common cause, such as expressing solidarity or working for peace.

Examples of recent faith walks, trails or pilgrimages include those held by: Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees <http://www.sfar.org.uk/shoulder-to-shoulder/>; Hounslow Friends of Faith <http://www.hounslowfriendsoffaiith.org/2017/06/walk-of-peace-and-friendship/>; Medway Inter Faith Action <http://www.kentonline.co.uk/medway/news/peace-walk-aiming-to-unite-127969/> Oxford Council of Faiths; [http://www.oxfordtimes.co.uk/NEWS/15382958.Hundreds unite for interfaith walk with 39 friendship at its heart 39 /](http://www.oxfordtimes.co.uk/NEWS/15382958.Hundreds_unite_for_interfaith_walk_with_39_friendship_at_its_heart_39_/); and West Cheshire Interfaith Forum (<http://www.chesterchronicle.co.uk/news/chester-cheshire-news/ellesmere-port-stages-historic-walk-13379149>)

Details of upcoming faith walks in London and Luton can be found in the ‘[Diary dates](#)’ section of the E-Bulletin.

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Friday, Saturday, Sunday

Friday, Saturday, Sunday is an architect-led proposal to create a unique building: a single place of worship containing a church, a synagogue and a mosque. Three architects, one Christian, one Jewish and one Muslim – are exploring the possibility of bringing these three faiths together physically, but serving each of them distinctly. The shared space would function as a mosque on a Friday, a synagogue on a Friday evening and Saturday and a church on a Sunday, and would contain all of the practical functions of each.

The architects are exploring whether such a building can be built, and if so, where, along with discussion of the theological, social and aesthetic questions that the project raises. A steering group has been established to discuss how the project might be realised, possibly in the context of a temporary space. For further information, contact Matthew Lloyd at matthew.lloyd@matthewlloyd.co.uk.

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The Great Get Together

From 16 to 18 June the Great Get Together encouraged people around the UK to come together with their neighbours to share food and celebrate all that we hold in common. The Inter Faith Network for the UK was a partner on the project, as were a number of faith bodies and inter faith organisations and the Near Neighbours Programme.

The GGT was widely marked and the organisers are now considering how to build on its success. Stories, comments and ideas welcomed at: <http://www.greatgettogether.org/join-in/>.

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Ethical finance project

The Church of Scotland and the Islamic Finance Council UK are running an ongoing project to produce a financial product which would help to tackle financial exclusion based upon the shared values of faith communities. The creation of ethical financial services will draw on how the Christian and Muslim communities have supported ethical finance in the past. A series of inter faith workshops have taken place, including at the House of Lords, to determine the direction of the project, which is now entering a phase of research and development. The final product will be open to members of all faith communities to use.

The project most recently presented to the 13th Edinburgh Ethical Finance Round Table on 15 June this year, which was held on the theme of faith-based finance and faith-based perspectives on ethical investment. For further information, contact the Islamic Finance Council UK at info@ukifc.com or the Church of Scotland Church and Society Council at churchandsociety@cofscotland.org.uk.

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

Let's Talk: Practical pointers for inter faith dialogue

Earlier this year IFN published a resource on dialogue: *Let's Talk: Practical pointers for inter faith dialogue*. This is available to download at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/publications>. The resource draws on existing IFN materials and contributions from member bodies to provide tips and ideas for productive dialogue and conversation between people of different faiths and beliefs in a range of different contexts. Hard copies can be supplied by the IFN office. If you would like a copy, contact ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

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Faith and cohesive communities

The report of IFN's 2016 National Meeting on 'Faith and Cohesive Communities' is available to download from <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/publications>. Hard copies are available from the IFN office by contacting ifnet@interfaith.org.uk or telephoning 020 7730 0410.

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Crossing the Threshold

'Crossing the Threshold' is a booklet produced by the Faith Encounter Programme in Birmingham, describing the Faith Guiding course that has now been extended to 5 other cities in addition to Birmingham.

Over 150 people of 8 different faiths have been trained as Faith Guides for their own places of worship, through the 12 week course. Copies of the booklet (price £2.00 plus postage) are available from Nasrin Shah, Co-ordinator, Faith Encounter Programme, 10, Court Rd Birmingham B11 4LX. For further information, email nasrin_faithencounter@post.com.

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Woolf Institute 'Trust in Crisis' report

The Woolf Institute has released the report of a project 'Trust in Crisis – The Emergence of the Quiet Citizen'. The report is the conclusion of a two year ethnographic research project across London, Berlin, Paris and Rome. The report examines civil society initiatives across

the four cities, in particular where faith and minority communities have responded to crisis situations, whether social, political or economic.

The report includes a series of recommendations, primarily to faith communities and institutions themselves, as well as a call to local government to play a “more important role in building social cohesion”, and some “key areas for action” by central Government.

The executive summary of the report can be downloaded at <http://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/uploads/Trust%20in%20Crisis%20Exec%20Summary.pdf>, and the full report can be downloaded at <http://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/uploads/Trust%20in%20Crisis%20Report.pdf>.

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Faith Action Progress Tour

Faith Action is running a series of ‘Progress Tour’ events to provide networking opportunities for local faith-based and community organisations. The events are designed to help bring groups in local communities together to identify solutions to issues of common concern.

If your organisation is interested in hosting one of these events, Faith Action is able to help arrange the day and to facilitate discussion. For further information contact Emily Yillah at emily.yillah@faithaction.net.

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Woolf Institute online courses

The Woolf Institute is currently accepting applications for two online courses. ‘Jews, Christians and Muslims in Europe: Modern Challenges’ begins on 4 September and ‘Representations of Jewish-Christian Relations in Literature’ begins on 16 October.

Further information is at <http://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/study/e-learning/rjcl.asp> and the closing date for applications is 18 September. For further information on either course, contact Dr Emma Harris at eth22@cam.ac.uk.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS, AND NOMINATIONS

New local inter faith initiatives

Local inter faith initiatives continue to come into existence in new areas. Most recently, for example, a new inter faith forum in Epsom and Ewell held its first meeting.

[http://www.epsomguardian.co.uk/news/15382318.First Epsom and Ewell interfaith forum meets this weekend/](http://www.epsomguardian.co.uk/news/15382318.First_Epsom_and_Ewell_interfaith_forum_meets_this_weekend/).

IFN carries listings for known local inter faith bodies on its website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/groups>. If you are involved in a local inter faith body, do take a look to see if it is listed and let us know if you hear of any new ones emerging that we might not already know about.

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Involvement of faith communities in World War One and Remembrance Sunday

IFN's Board of Trustees agreed earlier this year that Inter Faith Week will continue to begin on Remembrance Sunday and run for 8 days, finishing on the following Sunday, until agreed otherwise. The overlap with Remembrance Sunday enables greater coming together of people of different faiths to remember at that time.

It is planned to prepare some materials about faith communities' involvement in World War One and in Remembrance Sunday. Links to relevant materials or initiatives would be welcomed. Please send to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk marked 'WW1 and Remembrance'.

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Faith Togetherness Photography Competition

Faiths Together in Croydon is holding a photography competition on the theme of 'Faith Togetherness'. The competition will be judged by a panel of professional photographers and all of the photographs will feature in an exhibition during Inter Faith Week in November. The best twelve will feature in a calendar for 2018. There will be three age categories; 5-10 years; 11-18 years; 19 years upwards.

Photographs should be submitted to fticroydon@gmail.com with the subject line *FTiC photography competition* and should include your name, age and address. The deadline for submissions is 30 September.

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World Congress of Faiths Essay competition

The World Congress of Faiths is inviting students to submit entries for its 2017 essay competition.

The title of the essay is 'If one faith is true, does this mean all others are false?'. The text should be approximately 3,000 words, and:

- discuss how the question arises through experience/encounter
- make some reference to the literature on the topic
- engage in analysis and state a clear conclusion

The winner will receive £300 in cash and publication of their winning entry in *Interreligious Insight*. Entrants must be undergraduate or postgraduate students of a UK university at the time of submission.

The closing date for submissions is 29 August. For further information, visit <http://www.worldfaiths.org/2017-essay-award/>. Enquiries can be addressed to Jenny Kartupelis at jenny@worldfaiths.org.

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Blogging Carnival for Nonviolence

The Blogging Carnival for Nonviolence will be held from 15 October to 23 October as part of the Week of Nonviolence hosted by Black Women for Positive Change. Organisers are inviting submissions to the festival of blog posts relating to experience of using nonviolence, particularly from an inter faith perspective. The deadline for submissions is 11 September.

For further information, go to <http://blognonviolence.weebly.com/about.html> or contact email zhana635@gmail.com.

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Mayor of London's vision for a diverse and inclusive city

The Mayor of London has published in draft 'The Mayor's vision for a diverse and inclusive city' as a basis for consultation. The document looks at many areas of diversity and inclusion, including those relating to religion and belief. Responses to the consultation are welcomed from individuals and organisations until the closing date of 11 September. Further information can be found at <https://www.london.gov.uk/get-involved/have-your-say/all-consultations/consultation-mayors-vision-diverse-and-inclusive-city>.

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Inter faith sports projects

IFN is collecting examples of how member bodies or others are using sport to help people develop inter faith understanding and cooperation. This is part of the 'Play Together' strand of IFN's work.

If you have examples of a project or event involving sport which has taken place within the last two years or is ongoing we would love to hear from you. Examples of inter faith projects involving sport can be emailed to David Hampshire at david.hampshire@interfaith.org.uk.

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Honours List nominations

The Department for Communities and Local Government is keen to ensure that individuals from the full breadth of society who are making a significant contribution to public life are properly recognised through the Honours system. It is particularly keen to recognise individuals who have contributed to building integrated communities and notes that nominees can come from all levels; being in a junior role is not a barrier to a nomination.

All nominations must be made on an official citation form and nominees should not be informed that they have been nominated. Citation forms, as well as further information, can be obtained from Abdul Ghaffar integration@communities.gsi.gov.uk.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

IFN's website lists job and internship opportunities with a significant inter faith dimension with IFN member organisations at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/jobs>.

Inter Faith Network for the UK - Volunteers and interns

The Inter Faith Network for the UK has regular volunteering opportunities and occasional internships. Further information about these can be found on IFN's website.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Inter Faith Week grants

As in previous years, the Inter Faith Youth Trust will be making available a special programme of grants for Inter Faith Week 2017. The Trust will be awarding grants of up to £500 for organisations running events or projects.

Grants are awarded to successful “proposals for inter-faith activities by children and young people from Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and other faiths and those of no formal faith in understanding and co-operation”. The age range for young people is 11-25 years. Priority will be given to projects which:

- actively involve young people in planning, running, and evaluation of the project;
- promote positive action ie young people from different backgrounds coming together to address shared problems like improving green spaces; and
- are run by non-statutory organisations, such as youth clubs, scout/guide groups, local voluntary and community organisations.

The application form can be downloaded at www.ifyouthtrust.org.uk/. The deadline for the submission of forms is 15 September.

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Vulnerable Faith Institutions Scheme

The Home Office has announced the opening of a new funding scheme for places of worship that require extra security to protect themselves from attacks on racial, religious or ideological grounds.

The Vulnerable Faith Institutions Scheme, which is an extension of the Places of Worship Security Scheme, will pay for places of worship to install security measures such as CCTV cameras, alarms, bollards or strengthened fencing.

The scheme is considering bids from places of worship in England and Wales, such as mosques, gurdwaras, temples, churches and associated faith community centres. Faith schools, educational institutions, general community centres, NHS establishments (including chapels and prayer rooms) are not eligible to apply. The Jewish community will be exempt from this scheme as a similar commitment was made to fund Jewish community sites through a grant administered by the [Community Security Trust](#).

Applications close on 17 August. For further information, visit <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/vulnerable-faith-institutions-scheme>.

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Near Neighbours grants programme

The [Near Neighbours](#) programme offers small grants of between £250 and £5,000, as seed funding for local groups and organisations working to bring together neighbours, and to develop relationships across diverse faiths and ethnicities to improve their communities.

As part of the criteria, projects should:

- Bring together peoples of two or more different faiths and/or ethnicities, to build friendships and develop relationships of trust.
- Work locally. We want to see people who are living very locally (ie in the same street, estate or neighbourhood) come together.
- Work sustainably. We want to see long term and natural relationships grow, that will last beyond the period of funding.
- Work to improve the community. We want to see people working to make their communities a better place to live.
- Involve diverse people in planning and implementation. People from more than one faith group and/or ethnicity are involved in planning and implementing the proposal.

The closing date for applications is 17 November. The full criteria, information on areas in which the grants are available and information on how to apply can be found at <http://www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours-grants>. For general enquiries, contact near.neighbours@cuf.org.uk.

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Building a Stronger Britain Together programme

The Home Office programme Building a Stronger Britain Together is continuing to offer in-kind support such as social media training, technical assistance to help a group improve their website, or capacity building work to help a group protect more vulnerable individuals. It is open to bodies in England and Wales. Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/building-a-stronger-britain-together>.

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Faiths in Scotland Community Action Fund

Faiths in Scotland Community Action Fund awards grants to support Scotland's most fragile urban and rural communities. Its 2017 grants will focus exclusively on projects focusing on work with children and young adults and it is calling for applications from faith-based registered charities, which either work with, or aim to begin working with people under the age of 18. It is offering awards for one year of up to £5,000 and all funds must be spent within 12 months of the Award Date.

The next deadline is 29 September. It is open to all charities which meet its criteria and have never received funding from the STV Children's Appeal. For more information call Chris on 0141 221 4544 or visit <http://www.faithincommunityscotland.org/faith-in-community-scotland-action-fund/>.

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Tesco Bags of Help

Bags of Help is Tesco's local community grant scheme where the money raised from the 5p bag levy in Tesco stores is being used to fund community projects across the UK. The projects must meet the criteria of promoting community participation in the development and use of outdoor spaces. Bags of Help is administered by Groundwork in England and Wales and supported in Scotland by Greenspace Scotland. (It is not available in Northern Ireland where carrier bag money is managed centrally.)

Three local community projects will be voted on in Tesco stores each month across Tesco regions throughout England, Scotland and Wales. In each region, the project that received the most votes from all stores in their region will receive a grant of up to £5,000. The second placed project receives up to £2,000 and third placed up to £1,000. Every year, over 7,000 projects will receive funding through this scheme.

Grants are awarded to voluntary or community organisations (including registered charities/companies), schools, health bodies (eg Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), NHS Hospital Trust, Foundation Trust), Parish/Town Councils, local authorities and social housing providers. For detailed information on criteria and how to apply, visit <http://www.groundwork.org.uk/Sites/tescocommunityscheme/pages/Category/the-tesco-bags-of-help-programme-tes2>.

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Funding websites

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations offers advice on fundraising and grants on its Knowhow Nonprofit site at <https://knowhownonprofit.org/funding>.

Funding Central - <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/default.aspx> - is a free website for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises in England that provides access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, together with tools and resources for supporting organisations to develop sustainable income strategies appropriate to their needs. Similar websites for funding in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at Funding Scotland - <http://www.fundingscotland.com/> - Wales Council for Voluntary Action - <http://www.wcva.org.uk/funding/search> - and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland - <https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

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Heritage Lottery Fund grants to commemorate First World War

The Heritage Lottery Fund has made an additional £4million of funding available so that more communities can get involved in projects marking the Centenary of the First World War. Projects applying for funding must be able to meet one of a number of successful outcomes based on heritage, people and communities. Grants can be given between £3,000 and £10,000. There is no current deadline for applications as grants are considered on a monthly basis.

Further information can be found at <https://www.hlf.org.uk/looking-funding/our-grant-programmes/first-world-war-then-and-now>.

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Community foundations

Community foundations are local, grant-making organisations to which local community organisations can apply for funding. There are 46 community foundations in the UK, covering Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and most of England. A map of community foundations across the UK and how to contact them, can be found at <http://www.ukcommunityfoundations.org/our-network>.

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Transform Foundation

The Transform Foundation is offering funding to charities to help with new website builds. Grants of £18,000 are available. For further information and to apply, visit www.transformfoundation.org.uk.

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Google, Microsoft and charities

The internet search engine Google is offering a service to registered charities which brings: Google Ad Grants: Free AdWords advertising to promote your website on Google through keyword targeting; YouTube Nonprofit Programme: Access exclusive resources, features and programs designed to maximise your organisation's impact on YouTube; and Google Apps for Non-profit: Free version of the Google Apps business productivity suite, including Gmail, Docs, Calendar and more. For further information, visit www.google.co.uk/intl/en/nonprofits/join.

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Subsidised fundraising workshops

The Foundation for Social Improvement offers heavily subsidised training programmes for small charities across the UK. The courses cover a wide range of subjects from event planning to leadership but the majority of their training courses are focused on helping charities learn the skills to raise and earn income. Further information can be found at <http://www.thefsi.org/services/training/>.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Peace One Day takes place on 21 September www.peaceoneday.org

Sewa Day will take place on 1 October www.sewaday.org

One World Week will take place from 22 to 29 October. Its theme this year is 'Good Neighbours: My world depends on us'. www.oneworldweek.org

National Inter Faith Week in England, Wales and Northern Ireland will be an '8 day week' this year taking place from 12 to 19 November. www.interfaithweek.org

Scottish Interfaith Week will take place from 12 to 19 November www.interfaithscotland.org/scottish-interfaith-week/

See more [above](#).

Mitzvah Day will take place on 19 November www.mitzvahday.org.uk/

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**SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK
TO INCREASE INTER FAITH UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION**

THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUR SUPPORT

We need your help to ensure that the Inter Faith Network for the UK's work to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation continues and grows, helping people of all backgrounds to live and work together with mutual respect and shared commitment to the common good. Please consider making a gift today to support the work of the Inter Faith Network. Gifts at all levels are valued and make a difference. You can donate on our website at www.interfaith.org.uk/donate or via PayPal or JustGiving at <https://www.justgiving.com/interfaithnetwork-uk> or by sending a cheque to The Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH.

REMEMBERING A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND

From time to time we receive an 'in memoriam' gift after an individual has passed away, funded from a collection following their death or through a donation from their heirs. Such gifts provide a living memorial to a loved one, supporting inter faith understanding in this country – for now and for the future. If you would like to make a gift in memory of a loved one, please get in touch by emailing remember@interfaith.org.uk or call us on 0207 730 0410.

A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

By leaving a gift in your will to the Inter Faith Network for the UK, you can leave a living inheritance to help deepen and strengthen inter faith understanding and cooperation in this country – for now and for the future. If you are thinking about making a will, the best thing to do is to get in touch with a professional will writer, such as a solicitor or advocate; they can help to ensure it is legally correct and that your wishes are met. If you have already made a will, you can still make an addition or amendment in the form of a codicil. If you would like to pledge a gift, please provide our name and address, along with our registered charity number 1068934.

Please get in touch with us if you have any queries.

You can call us on 0207 730 0410 or contact us at remember@interfaith.org.uk

Thank you!

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DIARY DATES

This section includes some of the events taking place around the UK during August and September. IFN includes information on diary dates between e-bulletins on its website at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/take-part/events>.

Sheffield Interfaith is supporting a Hiroshima Day Remembrance Event and Peace Picnic on Sunday 6 August. This annual event remembers all victims of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. The event will include a ceremony and the signing of a declaration by the Lord Mayor of Sheffield, and will conclude with a peace picnic. The event is organised by Sheffield Creative Action for Peace, Sheffield Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and Meersbrook Park Users Trust. The day is being held at the walled garden in Meersbrook Park, S8 9FL. For further information, contact Hilary on 07818040982 or email scraptridentnow@gmail.com.

Burngreave Ashram Multifaith Chapel and Library is hosting its next Meditation/Prayer lunch and seminar on Monday 7 August from 12pm to 2.30pm. The meditation and prayer will be led by John Vincent. It is being held at 86 Spital Hill, Sheffield S4 7LG. For further information, contact on BAMCL@outlook.com or call on 07932017929 or 01142436688.

Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship is holding a talk and discussion on 'Baha'i Ethics in Contemporary Society' on Wednesday 9 August. The speaker will be Dr Shahin Fatheazam. This is being held at 7.30pm at the Leeds Language Academy, 14A Woodsley Road, LS3 1DT. For further information, contact John Summerwill on 01132697895 or email on membership@concord-leeds.org.uk.

The **London Peace Pagoda** is organising an 'Interfaith Peace Walk' on Wednesday 9 August. The walk will begin at the Crypt Chapel, Westminster Cathedral, and end at the London Peace pagoda in Battersea Park where there will be a floating lantern ceremony. The ceremony will commemorate victims of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs and all wars in the 72nd Anniversary of these events. The event will be preceded by an ecumenical service organised by **Pax Christi** from 6.30pm to 7.30 pm, in memory of the 74th Anniversary of Blessed Franz Jagerstatter's execution. The service will take place at the Crypt Chapel, Westminster Cathedral, 42 Francis St, Westminster, London SW1P 1QW. For further information, contact Nipponzan Myohoji on 020 7228 9620.

Faiths Together in Croydon is holding an event on the theme of 'Friendship First: Promoting cohesion between interfaith groups in Croydon' on Thursday 17 August at 6pm. The event is an opportunity to share news and build relationships. There will be exhibitions, talks and music. The event is being organised by Fr Lee at Croydon Minster and the Lighthouse Educational Society, and will be held in the Church Hall at Croydon Minster, Church Street, Croydon, CR0 1RN. For more information, contact enquiries@croydonminster.org.

Interfaith Scotland is holding a local interfaith groups networking seminar on Thursday 21 August. Registration is open to any members of a local interfaith group. This is being held from 11am to 4.30pm at The Interfaith Scotland Dialogue Centre, Flemington House,

110 Flemington Street, Glasgow G21 4TD. To book a place or for further information, contact on frances@interfaithscotland.org.

York Interfaith Group is holding an event on Tuesday 5 September. It will begin with a 'Bring and Share' Meal with Music from 5.30pm to 7.30pm and will then be followed at 7.30pm by its Monthly Meeting, for which the theme is From Hermits to Fanatics: religious loners. It is being held from 5.30pm to 7.30pm at the York Medical Society Rooms, 23 Stonegate, York YO1 8AW. For further information, contact yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com.

World Congress of Faith will be holding a conference entitled 'Familiarity and alienation: interfaith encounter under a different spotlight' on Thursday 7 September. This will be a full day cross-disciplinary conference with several presentations and discussions. There will be an exploration of difficult questions of interfaith theory and practice, seeking fresh insights from practitioners and academics in the fields of behavioural and social studies; psychology; reconciliation and intra-faith as well as interfaith work. This is being held at Goldsmiths University of London, 8 Lewisham Way, New Cross, London SE14 6NW. For further information, contact Jenny Kartupelis on jenny@worldfaith.org.

Westminster Interfaith is holding the 10th Brother Daniel Faivre Memorial Service on Saturday 9 September. For further information, contact Jon Dal Din on 02079316028.

Nottingham InterFaith Council is holding its Annual Meeting on Tuesday 19 September. The meeting will include a report of activities over the last year, and will include light refreshments and a discussion on the theme of 'Peace and Diversity'. For further information, contact Mel Gotheridge at melgotheridge39@aol.com.

Blackpool Faith Forum will be holding a meeting on Tuesday 19 September which will include the launch of its local Partnership Agreement. It is being held at 11am in the Discovery Room at the Solaris Centre in Blackpool. Local civic leaders and representatives from the All Party Parliamentary group on Faith and Society will also be present. For further information, contact Andy Divall at andy.divall@blackpool.gov.uk.

Luton Council of Faiths is holding its annual Peace Walk on Saturday 23 September from 1.30pm to 5.30pm. The walk will visit four places of worship in Luton and will begin with the launch of a new peace garden at High Town Methodist Church. There will also be a number of other events and activities throughout the afternoon. The walk begins at High Town Methodist Church, 47 High Town Road, Luton, LU2 0BW. For more information, call 01582 416946 or email info@lutonfaiths.org.

Voices of Faith is holding an event on Wednesday 27 September on 'Faith and Care in Mental Health' from 6pm to 8.30pm. For further information, and to confirm attendance, contact Josie Pinnegar on 0191 270 4142 or at j.pinnegar@newcastle.anglican.org.

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For more information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org.uk

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **18 September** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer: Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

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IFN e-bulletin

September/October 2017

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **20 November** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and projects and future events. If your organisation distributes a programme, newsletter or e-bulletin, please add ifnet@interfaith.org.uk to your mailing list.

Disclaimer: Information in this e-bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Increasingly, IFN is making use of social media, in particular Twitter (www.twitter.com/IFNetUK) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/IFNetUK).

Please take a moment to 'follow' and 'like' IFN and also Inter Faith Week (www.twitter.com/IFWeek and www.facebook.com/IFWeek) and also check in with the IFN website to see new items, which are added on a regular basis.

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

Responses to terrorist attacks

On Friday 15 September 30 people were injured in a terrorist attack on a train at Parsons Green underground station in London during rush hour. Local residents from many different backgrounds came to assist those affected by the attack and at national level a number of faith bodies responded including the President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews <https://www.bod.org.uk/board-of-deputies-statement-on-terrorist-attack-at-parsons-green-station/> and the Muslim Council of Britain <http://www.mcb.org.uk/parsons-green-attack/>. IFN's Co-Chairs and the Moderators of IFN's Faith Communities Forum issued a statement in response to the attack, which concluded:

"We re-state in the strongest terms our condemnation of terrorism, noting the toxicity of spurious justifications by terrorists on the basis of religious beliefs which they claim to espouse.

In recent months, people of all faiths and none have stood together in the face of this kind of cowardly aggression. Let us continue to do so, and let us work with vigour to counter narratives of hatred and also to resist division and support all those who face hatred and the fear of discrimination due to ignorant or prejudiced minds linking them with terrorist attackers."

Last month, on 17 August there was a major terrorist attack in Barcelona and a related attack in Cambrils the following morning. IFN's Co-Chairs and the Moderators of IFN's Faith Communities Forum issued a statement in response to these in the context of UK inter faith relations. The following day 2 people were killed and 8 wounded in a knife attack in the Finnish city of Turku. IFN's Co-Chairs included a message about this in a

Circular to member bodies. The statements and messages can be seen at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/statements-and-messages>.

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Hate crime

In the July/August edition of IFN's E-Bulletin it was noted that there had been an increase in reported hate crime attacks in the wake of terrorist attacks in Manchester and London in the preceding months.

Levels of hate crime remain at very concerning levels affecting Jewish, Muslim and other communities such as the Hindu and Sikh communities. On 24 September there was a knife attack on lay imam Dr Nasser Kurdy near the Altrincham Islamic Cultural Centre. This is still being investigated but is being treated by the police as a hate crime. A multi faith vigil was held at the mosque that evening and there were expressions of support from around the UK.

In August, the Crown Prosecution Service published new public statements on how it will prosecute hate crime and support victims in England and Wales. This follows consultation with community groups and criminal justice partners. In addition to the public statements the CPS has also published revised legal guidance that sets out how prosecutors should handle hate crime cases in court and make charging decisions.

To mark the publication of the documents, the CPS has also launched a social media campaign, #HateCrimeMatters to encourage people to come forward and report hate crimes. The new documents can be viewed on the hate crime homepage of the CPS website at http://www.cps.gov.uk/news/latest_news/cps-publishes-new-public-statements.

Also in August, the Community Security Trust in partnership with the Crown Prosecution Service and Tell MAMA, and supported by the Department for Communities and Local Government, published 'Hate Crime: A guide for those affected'. The guide provides victims of hate crime with guidance and advice on reacting to and reporting hate crime, as well as navigating the criminal justice system and understanding the UK courts. The guide can be downloaded on the Community Security Trust website at <https://cst.org.uk/news/blog/2017/08/23/hate-crime-a-guide-to-those-affected>.

National Hate Crime Awareness Week takes place from 14 to 21 October. For information about the Week, events taking place to mark the Week, and to find out about other ways to get involved, visit <https://www.stophateuk.org/hate-crime-awareness-week/>.

The ceremony of the National No2H8 Crime Awards 2017 takes place on Tuesday 10 October. The awards aim to highlight the work of those combatting hate crime, and are supported by a range of national hate crime agencies. The theme for 2017 is 'Upstanders

not bystanders'. More information about the awards can be found at <http://no2h8crimeawards.org/>.

The Inter-faith Council for Wales has been looking at the challenges faced by faith communities. One of these was that many people were too scared to report hate crimes. IfCW will be holding a meeting to show religious communities what they can do when they face hate crime.

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Bank of England decision on polymer bank notes

The March/April issue of IFN's e-bulletin noted that the Bank of England had launched a consultation on the new polymer £20 and future print runs of polymer £5 and £10 note in the light of concerns by a number of organisations, including Hindu and some other faith community bodies, about the manufacturing methods which contained trace amounts of chemicals derived from animal products.

The consultation ran until 12 May and the Bank of England published its response on 10 August. It said that "after careful and serious consideration and extensive public consultation there will be no change to the composition of polymer used for future banknotes. The new polymer £20 note and future print runs of £5 and £10 notes will continue to be made from polymer manufactured using trace amounts of chemicals, typically less than 0.05%, ultimately derived from animal products."

The full response can be found at <http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/banknotes/Documents/consultationdecision.pdf> and the press release at <http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/publications/Pages/news/2017/052.aspx>.

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National Association of Teachers of RE report expresses concern about state of RE

On 17 September the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education, in collaboration with the RE Council of England and Wales and RE Today Services, published its annual 'State of the Nation' report.

The report focuses on the provision of RE in England's secondary schools against the backdrop of increased 'academisation' of schools – making them independent of their local authorities. All state-funded schools, including academies and free schools, are legally required by the 1998 School Standards and Framework Act to provide Religious Education as part of a balanced curriculum. Whilst community and voluntary controlled maintained schools have to follow the locally agreed syllabus, schools that have become

academies do not. Academies, though, do have to provide RE in accordance with their funding agreement.

The report has twelve key findings which highlight a number of issues. These can be summarised under the following headings: Provision - pupils in schools with a religious character are likely to have more RE than those in schools or academies without a religious character. Pupils in academies are least likely to have RE as part of their curriculum; Teachers - in schools and academies with a religious character teachers are more likely to be qualified to teach RE. Those in academies without a religious character were most likely not to be qualified to teach RE; and Qualifications - the number of schools not offering GCSE Religious Studies has risen on the previous year's figures. Those not following an accredited course in RS at Key Stage 4 are unlikely to have any RE at all.

The report makes a number of recommendations for the Department of Education, school leaders, including headteachers and governors; Ofsted and one for Parents and Carers. The key recommendation is that schools should be held to account by the Department for Education and that this should be supported by Ofsted. Schools should ensure that they have suitably qualified teachers and that all pupils should have a meaningful entitlement to RE in both key stages. Parents and carers should be more proactive in holding their children's schools to account if RE appears to be missing from their curriculum.

The full report can be found, with the press release at <https://www.natre.org.uk/news/latest-news/800-000-secondary-pupils-lose-out-on-religious-literacy/>.

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Commission on Religious Education – Interim report

In July 2016 the Religious Education Council of England and Wales established an independent Commission on Religious Education (RE) to review the legal, education, and policy frameworks for RE in England. Its aim is to propose a new settlement for RE.

On 20 September the Commission published its Interim Report entitled 'Religious Education for All'. Among its recommendations are that there should be a national entitlement statement for RE which sets out clearly the aims and purpose of RE and what pupils should experience in the course of their study of the subject. A draft statement for consultation is included in the report.

There are three ways to respond to the Interim Report:

- An online consultation process will run from mid-October to mid-December 2017. Details will be published at www.commissiononre.org.uk and on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/Commissiononre>.
- A consultation event will take place in late November or early December 2017. Further details of this event will be publicised in due course.

- Views can be emailed to evidence@commissiononre.org.uk throughout the next year up until the publication of the final report.

There is also a call for case studies in paragraphs 273 to 275 which may be of interest to inter faith groups and practitioners.

The Interim Report can be found at <http://www.commissiononre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Commission-on-Religious-Education-Interim-Report-2017.pdf> and the Executive Summary of the Report at <http://www.commissiononre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Executive-Summary-FINAL.pdf>

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Equalities updates

Rt Hon David Lammy MP has published his final report following his independent review into the treatment of, and outcomes for, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic individuals in the criminal justice system. The report can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/lammy-review-final-report> in both English and Welsh.

The Equality and Diversity Forum, on which IFN has Observer status, has produced a number of briefings on the possible impact of Brexit and the European Union (Withdrawal Bill) on equality and human rights law in the UK. The Briefings emphasise both the positive aspects and areas where change may be helpful to ensure that relevant protections are not undermined. The briefings can be found at <http://www.edf.org.uk/our-policy-work/brexit-equality-and-human-rights/>.

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Lord Bourne tour of places of worship

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth, Minister for Faith at the Department of Communities and Local Government, this month completed, with a visit to Canterbury Cathedral, a year-long tour of England's 42 cathedrals, which he began last October.

Throughout his tour, Lord Bourne noted that he had found many faith communities working in partnership. Just some examples were: Peterborough Cathedral, which has been working collaboratively with Peterborough Interfaith Council; Liverpool Metropolitan Catholic Cathedral's engagement with Inter Faith Week, hosting part of a faith tour of Edge Hill University students; and Coventry Cathedral, which hosted a Big Iftar in 2016. The Minister also met faith leaders of Manchester in the city's Cathedral following the terrorist attack earlier this year. The Cathedral has been a key place where different communities and faiths have met to discuss how to move forward together as part of the process of response and healing.

Lord Bourne will shortly be starting a new tour of other faith community places of worship. If communities have suggestions for places to visit that are doing good inter faith work, particularly in rural areas, they can contact: philip.davies@communities.gsi.gov.uk.

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INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK NEWS

Inter Faith Week

Inter Faith Week 2017 will run from Sunday 12 to Sunday 19 November.

- Inter Faith Week begins on Remembrance Sunday and run for 8 days, finishing on the following Sunday. The overlap with Remembrance Sunday enables greater coming together of people of different faiths to remember at that time.
- The map showing activities taking place is now live at www.interfaithweek.org/map and more activities are being added regularly. If you are organising an activity to mark the Week, you can add it to the map at www.interfaithweek.org/submit or send details to the IFN office.
- A ‘2 months to go’ press release was circulated on 12 September, which included quotes of support from IFN’s Co-Chairs and Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth, Minister for Faith at DCLG (both repeated below). The press release can be found at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/2-months-to-go-press-release>
- IFN’s Co-Chairs, Bishop Richard Atkinson and Jatinder Singh Birdi say:

“Amid challenging times, the Week is a powerful opportunity to create and demonstrate friendship and solidarity and to continue to work towards a society rooted in shared values and cooperation.”

We invite you to hold an activity for the Week – large or small. Be part of making new connections and friendships, learning about the faiths and beliefs of other people you share your daily life with, or volunteering with people of other faiths on a project to help your local community.”

- Minister for Faith Lord Bourne said:

“In recent months we have seen how faith communities have come together to offer help to people caught up in appalling incidents and tragedies – literally throwing open their doors to offer sanctuary. They have been superb.”

“Inter Faith Week gives us an opportunity to celebrate the contribution that faith communities make and show how that can be strengthened by working together.”

- The Inter Faith Week Toolkit provides ideas for activities. It can be found at: www.interfaithweek.org/resources/toolkit.
- You can connect with the Week on Twitter at www.twitter.com/IFWeek or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/IFWeek. IFN will again be using the hashtags #IFWeek and #InterFaithWeek across all social platforms it is using. Tagging our accounts and using the hashtags helps us to find and share what you are doing.
- The homepage of the Inter Faith Week website has been updated to include an image of two of IFN’s Faith Communities Forum members – Julie Jones of the Inter-faith Council for Wales and Smita Oza of BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha – holding a card with a message about the Week. The IFN office has produced a series of these and will be posting them on Twitter and Instagram (www.instagram.com/ifweek) in the run-up to the Week. If you would like to join in, print-at-home cards will be available on the website soon.
- Flyers about Inter Faith Week can be downloaded from www.interfaithweek.org/flyer. If you are holding an activity, or would like to raise awareness of the Week, please contact us and ask for some flyers and we will be happy to post some to you!

Scottish Interfaith Week will also run from Sunday 12 to Sunday 19 November. More details under [Special Weeks/Days](#).

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Meeting of IFN’s Faith Communities Forum

A meeting of IFN’s Faith Communities Forum was held on 5 September. On the Agenda were:

- current issues of interest or concern to faith communities, including in particular UK inter faith relations and terrorism and extremism and the need for responsible journalism which avoids compounding or stirring up prejudice;
- emergency planning, response and recovery and faith communities, with a short reflection from Major Alan Dixon of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland on bases within the Christian tradition for coming to the aid of those affected by emergencies and disasters and presentations from Mr Max Brodie, Community Resilience Lead, Civil Contingencies Secretariat, Cabinet Office and Dr Jo Gillespie, Head of Resilience (North) and Recovery, Resilience and Emergencies Division, Department for Communities and Local Government;
- the Inter faith engagement of faith communities;
- Inter Faith Week;

- inter faith work with young people and the update of IFN’s Connect guide, with a short presentation by Ashley Beck; and
- preliminary discussion on ways in which the work of the FCF can be highlighted and that the FCF can best contribute to the overall engagement of faith communities in public life.

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Arts and culture profiles

In August-September IFN published a series of Facebook profiles on the theme of ‘Arts, culture and inter faith encounter’. These highlighted recent examples of the work of member bodies that have used arts and culture to help people develop inter faith understanding and cooperation, and to engage with one another. The profiles can be seen at www.facebook.com/IFNetUK.

Scottish Interfaith Week (SIW) this year has as its theme ‘Creativity and the Arts’. More about SIW is at <http://scottishinterfaithweek.org/>.

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Day event for local inter faith practitioners

In October IFN will be holding a day event in Manchester for local inter faith practitioners from inter faith groups across the UK to share their experiences, discuss issues of common interest and concern and have focused learning opportunities about practical aspects of developing successful inter faith programmes.

Reports on previous day events for local inter faith practitioners held in Bristol, Coventry, London and Sheffield can be found at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/publications/all-publications/all-publications>.

For further information, email ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

Sexuality, Gender Identity and Belief: The Leicester Approach

Trade Sexual Health and the St Philip’s Centre Leicester have concluded a year-long project: ‘Sexuality, Gender Identity and Belief: The Leicester Approach’. The project, launched in November 2016, explored the intersection between faith and issues of sexuality and gender identity, and aimed to bring individuals and communities together to discuss these subjects and build bridges. Several shared conversations have taken place,

along with one-to-one conversation with faith leaders from a range of faith communities in Leicester. The project culminated in the launch of a guidance document, on which there is more [below](#) in the Resources section.

The project hopes to be a platform for further work in this area. For more information, visit www.tradesexualhealth.com/ or email info@tradesexualhealth.com.

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Interfaith Scotland Rwanda exchange and youth programme

Interfaith Scotland has been working in partnership with the Church of Scotland on a Muslim/Christian youth exchange to Rwanda. In September five young Muslim and five young Christians along with four Church of Scotland and Interfaith Scotland leaders travelled to Rwanda to engage with young Rwandan Christians and Muslims. A full programme of inter faith learning took place and the young participants are now back in Scotland where they are continuing their inter faith dialogue work over the next year. 2018 is the Year of Young People in Scotland and so there are many opportunities for inter faith engagement for young people. The Rwandan participants will be undertaking many engagements including;

- In October 2017 engaging with Scotland's Religious Leaders Forum, sharing with the Leaders what they learnt from their trip
- In November 2017 they will assist with the launch of Scottish Interfaith Week, host an event at the Al Maktoum Institute in Dundee and speak to 20 European Youth workers on a learning exchange to Scotland
- In January 2018 at the Holocaust Memorial National Scottish event, two of the young people will share their experience of visiting the Rwandan Genocide Museum
- In April 2018 they will assist with the organisation of, and will speak at, the National Interfaith Youth Conference taking place in St Andrews. This conference is co-organised by Interfaith Scotland and the St. Andrews Co-existence team of young people.
- In May 2018 they will speak at the Church of Scotland Youth Assembly

Many other engagements are planned and the above is just a flavour of what these young people have committed to for the Year of Young People and in commitment to inter faith dialogue and engagement.

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Inter faith charity shop at Selfridges

Selfridges department store in London is hosting an inter faith charity shop in its store until 22 October as part of a commission by arts organisation Artangel. The shop is run and staffed jointly by four religious charities chosen by the artist, Miranda July. The

charities are Islamic Relief, Jewish charity Norwood, the London Buddhist Centre and the Spitalfields Crypt Trust. The proceeds will be shared equally between the four partners, all of whom run their own charity shops. Items for sale are typical of those traditionally sold in charity shops at charity prices. More information is at <https://thebuddhistcentre.com/londonbuddhistcentre/london-buddhist-centre-part-new-artwork-miranda-july-and-artangel-which-takes>.

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Local authorities and local faith communities

The relationship between local authorities and local faith communities is an important one. A number have been exploring and agreeing new methods of joint working, in some cases using the term Faith Covenants. The idea of a 'Faith Covenant' was the fruit of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Social Action and Faith Action. These 'covenants' are designed to enable a joint commitment between faith communities and local authorities based on a set of principles that guide engagement, aiming to remove some of the mistrust that exists and to promote open, practical working on all levels. More information about faith covenants is at <http://www.faithandsociety.org/covenant/>.

This month Blackpool Council together with key faith leaders across the town met to sign up to a new partnership framework. The idea is to work to promote better partnership between the Council and Faith groups. The process has been led by Together Lancashire, which has coordinated initiatives to map the extensive day to day work that local faith groups do to help serve need in their communities. A copy of the partnership agreement can be seen at <http://www.faithandsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/blackpool-faith-partnership-agreement.pdf>.

A proposal for Basildon to sign up to the Essex Faith Covenant signed by Essex County Council last year can be seen at http://www.echo-news.co.uk/news/local_news/15515492.Different_faith_groups_to_work_together_to_reduce_isolation/.

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

Sexuality, Gender Identity and Belief – Guidance for faith communities

To conclude a year-long project (see [above](#)), Trade Sexual Health and the St Philip's Centre Leicester have launched *Sexuality, Gender Identity and Belief: The Leicester Approach – Guidance for faith communities*. The guidance document explores issues surrounding issues of faith, sexuality and gender identity and can be used by faith communities, LGB&T organisations and others to discuss explore and action how to make

communities, groups and places of worship more LGB&T inclusive. The guidance also contains case studies and links to resources for LGB&T organisations, as well as support organisations from a variety of faith communities. The document can be downloaded at www.tradesexualhealth.com/.

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Local resources

Three new resources have been added to the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/local-1>. These are part of a series of planned items looking at different themes in inter faith engagement. They are primarily focussed on local activity, but some will be of interest more widely.

The first three are 1) Inter faith engagement in social action; 2) Standing together; and 3) Local inter faith organisations and schools. If you have any suggestions for future themes that might form part of this series, please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

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Report on IFN day event for local inter faith practitioners

In March IFN held a day event in Bristol for local inter faith practitioners across the UK to share their experiences, discuss issues of common interest and concern and have focused learning opportunities about practical aspects of developing successful inter faith programmes. The report of the day will be available shortly at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/publications>.

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Looking After One Another: The Safety and Security of our Faith Communities

As previously reported, earlier this year IFN published *Looking after one another: the safety and security of our faith communities* in partnership with the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Home Office, the Crown Prosecution Service, the National Fire Chiefs' Council and the National Police Chiefs' Council.

Looking After One Another gives guidance on:

- responding jointly to attacks on places of worship;
- working for calm at times of tension; and
- working to build on and strengthen existing good inter faith relations.

and contains material about:

- how and where to report hate incidents, cyber attacks, and actual or suspected terrorist activity;

- where to find information on strengthening the security of buildings;
- and where to find information about working to build – and strengthen – good inter faith relations locally.

These practical pointers for responding in solidarity have particular resonance at the present time when there is a need to watch out for the wellbeing of any groups who may be targeted because of terrorist actions which claim, or are perceived by some, as having a link to them.

The document can be found at: <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/looking-after-one-another-the-safety-and-security-of-our-faith-communities-2017>.

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Let's Talk: Practical pointers for inter faith dialogue

Earlier this year IFN published a resource on dialogue: *Let's Talk: Practical pointers for inter faith dialogue*. This is available to download at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/publications>. The resource draws on existing IFN materials and contributions from member bodies to provide tips and ideas for productive dialogue and conversation between people of different faiths and beliefs in a range of different contexts. Hard copies can be supplied by the IFN office. If you would like a copy, contact ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

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Festival dates

September has been a month with many key festivals. October will be similarly rich in festivals.

IFN carries a list of festivals on its website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/religious-festivals> which are included in the form kindly provided by the Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education whose calendar can be purchased from <http://www.shapworkingparty.org.uk/calendar.html>.

IFN's short guidance note, produced in consultation with its Faith Communities Forum, on which of their religious festivals faith communities would appreciate receiving greetings from people of other faiths and beliefs, and suggested forms of greeting can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/faith-festivals-guidance-on-sending-greetings-2017>.

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St Ethelburga's Young leaders programmes

The St Ethelburga's Centre in London is currently recruiting for two programmes for young adults.

The Spiritual Ecology programme brings together “the next generation of leaders who will build a future rooted in interconnectedness, stewardship and reverence for nature”. It is open to 20-32 year olds and is an 8 month programme during 2018 including retreats and workshops. The programme is fully funded so participants only pay travel costs. The closing date for applications is 31 October. For further information, including how to apply, visit <https://stethelburgas.org/projects/spiritual-ecology/>.

Interfaith Activists is a 6 month leadership programme, beginning in November, designed to offer young people an opportunity “to explore alternative solutions to global issues, engage their own faith community and grow resilience and leadership skills for turbulent times”. This programme draws on the philosophy of sacred activism – “a non-oppositional movement for societal change rooted in prayer and a worldview of interdependence”. It is open to 18-36 year olds and runs on weekend dates. For further information, including how to apply, visit <https://stethelburgas.org/projects/interfaith-activists-leadership-turbulent-times/>.

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London Inter Faith Centre course

The London Inter Faith Centre is running a six week course from 4 October on ‘Religion and the Nation’. The course, being held on Wednesday afternoons, will look at how religion is affecting politics and society in the UK today. For further information, contact laurence.hillel@londoninterfaith.org.uk.

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Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter course

The Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter is running a 3 day course on ‘Belief and Unbelief’. The 3 study days will be on ‘Secularisation’ (10 October), ‘The Assault on Tradition’ (24 October) and ‘Religion and Science’ (7 November). The course will be led by Jonathan Gorsky, Lecturer in Jewish Studies at Heythrop College. For further information, email sioncentrefordialogue@gmail.com.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS, AND NOMINATIONS

Faith communities' work on Sustainable Development Goals

The United Society Partners in the Gospel is carrying out a survey into how faith communities are already addressing the Sustainable Development Goals agreed by the United Nations (<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>). They would be pleased to hear from as many faith communities as possible. The survey can be found at <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/RC6ZY33>.

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Faith recognition and celebration

In November 3FF, with the support of Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London's Council on Faith, will be holding an event to recognise the good work of faith communities building bridges in London. During the event 3FF will recognise projects with small monetary rewards. Nominees should be based in Greater London and should be involved in initiatives which seek to increase a sense of belonging across London's diverse communities, particularly the marginalised communities, and/or; Nominees should work with groups from different faiths or none to build bridges and impact on increasing life chances or wellbeing. The nomination deadline has now been extended to 9 October. For further information, visit <http://www.3ff.org.uk/celebration> or contact Jess Hazrati at councilonfaith@3ff.org.uk.

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Involvement of faith communities in World War One and Remembrance Sunday

It is planned to prepare some materials about faith communities' involvement in World War One and in Remembrance Sunday. IFN would welcome information about relevant materials. Please send to zac.lloyd@interfaith.org.uk with 'WW1 and Remembrance' in the subject line.

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Inter faith sports projects

If you have examples of a project or event involving sport which has taken place within the last two years or is ongoing we would love to hear from you. Examples of inter faith projects involving sport can be emailed to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk Please mark these 'inter faith and sport' in the subject line.

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Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service – changes to Courts in England and Wales

Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Services (HMCTS) is holding a Public Community Event that will take place on the 2nd November 2017, at Ministry of Justice, 102 Petty France, London SW1P 9AJ. The event is 10am – 1pm (registration from 9.30am).

The event will give participants an overview of progress made so far in reforming the court system. There will be an opportunity to test both HMCTS newest services and view those under development as well as a discussion on the Government's plans for the future.

HMCTS is keen to hear from faith communities. If you are interested in attending the Public Community Event or would like further information, please contact nicola.kefford@Justice.gov.uk.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

IFN's website lists job and internship opportunities with a significant inter faith dimension with IFN member organisations at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/jobs>.

Inter Faith Network for the UK – Clerical Assistant

Each year the Inter Faith Network for the UK employs a Clerical Assistant for 8 hours per week to assist with office administration. The role is flexible and ideally fits around university studies. The closing date for this year's applications is 3 October. For an application form, contact ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

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Woolf Institute – Alumni and Support Relations Manager

The Woolf Institute, which has this month moved into new purpose built premises, combines teaching, scholarship and outreach, focussing on Jews, Christians and Muslims, to build tolerance and foster understanding between people of different beliefs around the world. It is currently seeking an Alumni and Support Relations Manager. The role is full time and based in Cambridge. For further information, the job description and how to apply, visit <http://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/news/detail.asp?ItemID=1235>.

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Home Office – Lead Commissioner for Countering Extremism

The Commission for Counter Extremism, for which the Home Office has lead responsibility, is seeking a Lead Commissioner.

The Lead Commissioner will “be an independent voice on countering extremism and promoting British values. Where issues of integration arise, the Commissioner will engage with the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, and will have the opportunity to discuss findings that may benefit the wider integration agenda. S/he will work with a diverse group of commissioners with expertise across the public sector, law enforcement, online industry, civil society, faith, and equality and integration issues, among others.” The role is part time up to 3 days per week, based in London, with UK travel. It is a fixed term appointment for 3 years. The closing date for applications is 15 October. For further information, visit

<https://publicappointments.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/appointment/lead-commissioner-countering-extremism/>.

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3FF roles

3FF is seeking to recruit to three roles:

Programme Lead – Workplace and Community Learning and Development

A full time role based in London. Closing time for application is 9am on 16 October. More information is at <http://www.3ff.org.uk/blog/3ff-programmes-coordinator-workplace-community/>.

Finance Manager

A full time role based in London. Closing time for application is 9am on 30 October. More information is at <http://www.3ff.org.uk/blog/finance-manager/>.

Programme Officer, Schools (West Midlands)

Full time, home based with travel to London and around the West Midlands. Closing time for application is 9am on 6 November. More information is at

<http://www.3ff.org.uk/blog/programme-officer-schools-west-midlands/>.

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Heritage Lottery Fund – Committee members

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) is looking for people to join its committee to help make decisions on where to invest funds from the National Lottery. HLF is particularly keen to reach out to as many communities as possible and to draw on expertise from many cultural backgrounds. It currently has vacancies for the London and South East England committees. Applicants need to have a good knowledge of the region to which they are

applying. The closing date for applications is 9 October. For further information, visit https://forms.hlf.org.uk/applications/HLFCommittees_PublicPortal.ofml.

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Inter Faith Network for the UK - Volunteers and interns

The Inter Faith Network for the UK has regular volunteering opportunities and occasional internships. Further information about these can be found on IFN's website.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Near Neighbours grants programme

The Near Neighbours grants programme, administered by the Church Urban Fund, offers small grants of between £250 and £5,000, as seed funding for local groups and organisations working to bring together neighbours, and to develop relationships across diverse faiths and ethnicities to improve their communities.

As part of the criteria, projects should:

- Bring together peoples of two or more different faiths and/or ethnicities, to build friendships and develop relationships of trust.
- Work locally. We want to see people who are living very locally (ie in the same street, estate or neighbourhood) come together.
- Work sustainably. We want to see long term and natural relationships grow, that will last beyond the period of funding.
- Work to improve the community. We want to see people working to make their communities a better place to live.
- Involve diverse people in planning and implementation. People from more than one faith group and/or ethnicity are involved in planning and implementing the proposal.

The closing date for applications is 17 November. The full criteria, information on areas in which the grants are available and information on how to apply can be found at <https://www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours-small-grants>. For general enquiries, contact near.neighbours@cuf.org.uk.

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Building a Stronger Britain Together programme

The Home Office programme Building a Stronger Britain Together is continuing to offer in-kind support such as social media training, technical assistance to help a group improve their website, or capacity building work to help a group protect more vulnerable individuals. It is open to bodies in England and Wales. Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/building-a-stronger-britain-together>.

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Faiths in Scotland Community Action Fund

Faiths in Scotland Community Action Fund is open for applications to its new rolling small grants scheme. Small grants of up to £750 are available to faith based anti-poverty projects with an annual turnover of £30,000 or less and can be applied for at any time. For more information call Chris on 0141 221 4544 or visit <https://www.faithincommunityscotland.org/faith-in-community-scotland-action-fund/our-grants/smallgrants/>.

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Supermarket grant schemes

Bags of Help is Tesco's local community grant scheme where the money raised from the 5p bag levy in Tesco stores is being used to fund community projects across the UK. The projects must meet the criteria of promoting community participation in the development and use of outdoor spaces. Bags of Help is administered by Groundwork in England and Wales and supported in Scotland by Greenspace Scotland. (It is not available in Northern Ireland where carrier bag money is managed centrally.) Further information is at <http://www.groundwork.org.uk/Sites/tescocommunityscheme/pages/Category/the-tesco-bags-of-help-programme-tes2>.

Waitrose supports charities through its Community Matters scheme. Local branches are each given £1,000 to share out between three local good causes each month such as welfare organisations, community groups and schools. To apply, fill in a Community Matters form at a local branch or contact the branch champion for community giving at a local branch, using their branch finder tool at: <http://www.waitrose.com/branches/index.aspx>.

Sainsbury's stores each partner with a Local Charity of the Year voted on by the local people. To apply, fill in a nomination form at your local store. More information is at <https://www.sainsburyslocalcharity.co.uk/>.

The Asda Foundation offers grants for local community projects which will “make a real long term difference, benefitting the wider community with [its] vision to ‘Transform Communities, improving lives locally.’” Further details are at <https://www.asdafoundation.org/applying-for-funding/significant-local-community-projects>.

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Aviva’s UK Community Fund

Aviva has made around £1.7 million available for its 2017 Community Fund. Funding is available to voluntary and community organisations for projects that will make a real difference to local residents. The grants support all kinds of projects providing they are causes that the community really cares about and are charitable in nature. Not-for-profit organisations and groups that are operating for the good of their local community and have been in existence for at least six months and have an income of £1 million or less can apply. For further information, visit <https://www.aviva.co.uk/good-thinking/community-fund/>.

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Comic Relief’s Core Strength Grants Programme

This programme offers grants to help cover the day to day costs of small locally led and based voluntary and community sector groups that are doing ‘much needed’ work in their local communities. Grants of between £1,000 and £5,000 or between £1,000 and £10,000 (depending on the local community foundation) are to be used to support groups that can evidence a sustained beneficial impact on people’s lives who are excluded or disadvantaged. For further information, visit <http://www.comicrelief.com/apply-for-grants/open-grants-initiatives/core-strength-local-communities>.

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Funding websites

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations offers advice on fundraising and grants on its Knowhow Nonprofit site at <https://knowhownonprofit.org/funding>.

Funding Central - <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/default.aspx> - is a free website for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises in England that provides access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, together with tools and resources for supporting organisations to develop sustainable income strategies appropriate to their needs. Similar websites for funding in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found

at Funding Scotland - <http://www.fundingscotland.com/> - Wales Council for Voluntary Action - <http://www.wcva.org.uk/funding/search> - and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland - <https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

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Heritage Lottery Fund grants to commemorate First World War

The Heritage Lottery Fund has £4million of funding available for communities to get involved in projects marking the Centenary of the First World War. Projects applying for funding must be able to meet one of a number of successful outcomes based on heritage, people and communities. Grants can be given between £3,000 and £10,000. There is no current deadline for applications as grants are considered on a monthly basis up to 2019.

Further information can be found at <https://www.hlf.org.uk/looking-funding/our-grant-programmes/first-world-war-then-and-now>.

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Community foundations

Community foundations are local, grant-making organisations to which local community organisations can apply for funding. There are 46 community foundations in the UK, covering Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and most of England. A map of community foundations across the UK and how to contact them, can be found at

<http://www.ukcommunityfoundations.org/our-network>.

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Transform Foundation

The Transform Foundation is offering funding to charities to help with new website builds. Grants of £18,000 are available. For further information and to apply, visit www.transformfoundation.org.uk.

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Google, Microsoft and charities

The internet search engine Google is offering a service to registered charities which brings: Google Ad Grants: Free AdWords advertising to promote your website on Google through keyword targeting; YouTube Nonprofit Programme: Access exclusive resources, features and programs designed to maximise your organisation's impact on YouTube; and Google Apps for Non-profit: Free version of the Google Apps business productivity suite, including Gmail, Docs, Calendar and more. For further information, visit www.google.co.uk/intl/en/nonprofits/join.

Subsidised fundraising workshops

The Foundation for Social Improvement offers heavily subsidised training programmes for small charities across the UK. The courses cover a wide range of subjects from event planning to leadership but the majority of their training courses are focused on helping charities learn the skills to raise and earn income. Further information can be found at <http://www.thefsi.org/services/training>.

SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Sewa Day takes place on Sunday 1 October. Sewa Day is an international faith-based day of social action rooted in the traditions of the Dharmic faiths. Sewa Day projects will be taking place across the UK, including volunteering in old people's homes, homeless shelters, schools in disadvantaged areas, hospitals and hospices, country parks, conservation areas and city farms – all with an aim of making a positive difference to individuals and communities. For more information about Sewa Day, visit to www.sewaday.org/about-sewa-day/. To find out more about how to get involved, visit www.sewaday.org/get-involved/.

National Hate Crime Awareness Week runs from 14 to 21 October. The Week is organised by the '17-24-30 No To Hate Crime Campaign' in partnership with Stop Hate UK. It aims to bring people together, to stand with those affected by hate crime, to remember those who have been lost, and support those who need ongoing support. Further information can be found at <https://www.nationalhcaw.uk/>.

Hate crimes are any crimes that are targeted at a person because of hostility or prejudice towards that person's:

- disability
- race or ethnicity
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation
- transgender identity

This can be committed against a person or property.

Hate crimes can be reported at <http://www.report-it.org.uk/home>.

One World Week will take place from 22 to 29 October. Its theme this year is 'Good Neighbours: My world depends on us'. One World Week seeks to raise people's awareness and understanding of the injustices which cause poverty and conflict across the planet

and in local communities and threaten a bleak future for future generations. www.oneworldweek.org

National Inter Faith Week in England, Wales and Northern Ireland will be an '8 day week' this year taking place from 12 to 19 November. www.interfaithweek.org
See more [above](#).

Scottish Interfaith Week will take place from 12 to 19 November. It is led by Interfaith Scotland. Its theme this year will be "Creativity and the Arts." A new Scottish Interfaith Week website has been launched at <http://scottishinterfaithweek.org/> and events in Scotland can be listed on this. The Week in Scotland also has its own Twitter (<https://twitter.com/FollowSIFW>) and Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/FollowSIFW>) and is using the hashtag #SIFW17.

Mitzvah Day will take place on 19 November. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Jewish community. On Mitzvah Day, people give their time, not their money, to make a difference to the community around them. Many events and projects held for the day have an inter faith focus. www.mitzvahday.org.uk/

Holocaust Memorial Day will take place on 27 January. Its theme in 2018 is The Power of Words: - Words can make a difference – both for good and evil. Holocaust Memorial Day is a time for everyone to pause to remember the millions of people who have been murdered or whose lives have been changed beyond recognition during the Holocaust, Nazi Persecution and in subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur. It honours the survivors of these regimes and challenges everyone to use the lessons of their experience to inform their lives today. www.hmd.org.uk/

The Muslim Council of Britain has announced that **VisitMyMosque Day** 2018 will take place on Sunday 18 February. In 2017 over 150 mosques across the UK held open days to welcome in their neighbours from other communities. Registrations are now open to take part in the 2018 event. For further information, visit www.visitmymosque.org.

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**SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK
TO INCREASE INTER FAITH UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION**

We need your help to ensure that the Inter Faith Network for the UK's work to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation continues and grows, helping people of all backgrounds to live and work together with mutual respect and shared commitment to the common good.

Gifts at all levels are much valued and make a real difference. You can donate directly at www.interfaith.org.uk/donate or via PayPal or JustGiving at <https://www.justgiving.com/interfaithnetwork-uk>

Donations can also be made by sending a cheque to The Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH.

REMEMBERING A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND

If you would like to make a gift in memory of a loved one, please get in touch by emailing remember@interfaith.org.uk or call us on 0207 730 0410.

A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

By leaving a gift in your will to the Inter Faith Network for the UK, you can leave a living inheritance to help deepen and strengthen inter faith understanding and cooperation in this country – for now and for the future. If you are thinking about making a will, the best thing to do is to get in touch with a professional will writer, such as a solicitor or advocate; they can help to ensure it is legally correct and that your wishes are met. If you have already made a will, you can still make an addition or amendment in the form of a codicil. If you would like to pledge a gift, please provide our name and address, along with our registered charity number 1068934.

Please get in touch with us if you have any queries.

You can call us on 0207 730 0410 or contact us at remember@interfaith.org.uk

Thank you!

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DIARY DATES

This section includes some of the events taking place around the UK during from October to November. We also include information on diary dates between e-bulletins on its website at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/take-part/events>.

The **Open University** is leading on an exhibition, entitled 'At the Heart of the Nation' which documents the diverse histories which make up the shared heritage of India and Britain from 1870, the earliest image in the exhibition, to the present day. The images show the wide-ranging contributions that Indians from many faith backgrounds have long made to Britain's cultural, economic, intellectual, political and social life. The project is led by the Open University, in collaboration with the Indian High Commission, the Nehru Centre, and the University of Exeter. It is in Edinburgh until 1 October; in London from 8 to 15 October; and in Leeds from 16 to 26 October. For further information, visit <http://www.open.ac.uk/arts/research/asianbritain/india-britain>.

York Interfaith Group is holding an event on Tuesday 3 October. It will begin with a 'Bring and Share' Meal with Music from 5.30pm to 7.30pm and will then be followed at 7.30pm by its Monthly Meeting, for which the theme is Conflict Resolution: the Place of the Faiths. It is being held from 5.30pm to 7.30pm at the York Medical Society Rooms, 23 Stonegate, York YO1 8AW. For further information, contact yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com.

St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace is holding a dialogue on the theme of 'Hot Topics: Race and Faith' on Tuesday 3 October from 6.30 to 9.30pm. This participatory evening dialogue creates a space for activists, scholars, policymakers and faith communities to engage questions of race and faith together. The event will be held at St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace, 78 Bishopsgate, London, EC2N 4AG. For further information, contact [020 7496 1610](tel:02074961610) or visit <https://stethelburgas.org/event/race-faith-oct-2017/>.

Interfaith MK (Milton Keynes) is holding a lecture on the subject of 'The Spirituality of Sufism, a way to create greater inclusiveness and harmony in society' on Thursday 5 October from 7.30pm to 9.30pm. The speaker will be Mrs Sandra Ortiz. The event is being held at St James Ecumenical Church, Church Street, New Bradwell, MK13 0DA. For more information, email interfaithmk@gmail.com.

Interfaith Glasgow, in partnership with **St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art**, is holding the second of a monthly dialogue series on the theme of 'Faith to Faith' on Sunday 8 October from 2 to 4pm. The second dialogue is on the theme of 'Reflections on Ahura'. The event will feature keynote speakers, dialogue and a question and answer session. The event will be held at St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art, 2 Castle Street, Glasgow, G4 0RH. For further information, contact development@interfaithglasgow.org.

London Interfaith Centre is holding a talk on Monday 9 October by Dr Mike King entitled 'Why Secularism Matters for Peace in the Middle East'. The event will be held from 7.30pm to 9pm at St Anne's and St Andrew's Church, 125 Salusbury Road, London NW6 6RG.

There is a charge to attend. For more information, visit <http://londoninterfaith.org.uk> or contact Laurence Hillel at 07801 286819 or email laurence.hillel@londoninterfaith.org.uk.

Nottingham Inter Faith Council is hosting a 'Come Dine With Us' dinner on Wednesday 11 October at 7pm. The event will feature home-cooked food and opportunities for conversation with people of other faiths and cultures. The event is free of charge, but donations to the local food bank are welcome. The event is being held at Friends Meeting House, Clarendon Street, Nottingham, NG1 5JD. For further information, please email melgotheridge39@aol.com.

Bridges for Communities and **Darul Isra Mosque** are holding their annual inter faith event on the theme of 'Hear about Hajj' on Thursday 12 October from 7pm to 9pm. The event is an opportunity to learn more about the Muslim pilgrimage of Hajj, and will include a short presentation and a shared meal, including the opportunity for attendees to talk and learn from one another. The event is being held at Grammen Juboraj, 195 Rochmond Road, Cardiff, CF24 3BT. There is a fee to attend. For more information, and to book tickets, go to cardiff.carpediem.cd/events/4655474-hear-about-hajj-at-grameen-juboraj/.

Newcastle Council of Faiths is holding its 'Annual Walk for Peace' on Sunday 15 October at 12.30pm. The Walk will visit the Hindu Temple, the Church of the Venerable Bede, the Central Mosque, the Sikh Gurdwara and the Synagogue. Prayers, refreshments and short talks will be offered along the way. Participants should meet at the Hindu Temple, West Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 9QB. For further information, contact Hari Shukla on 01912433620 or Church House on 0191 2704100.

Waltham Forest Faith Communities Forum is holding its Annual General Meeting on Monday 16 October from 6.45pm to 9pm. The meeting will report on the previous year, and will include contributions from a range of speakers on topics including marking Hate Crime Awareness Week. The meeting is being held in the Council Chamber at Waltham Forest Town Hall, Forest Road, Walthamstow, E17 4HF. For further information, email communications@faithcommunities.org.uk.

Avon Council of Christians and Jews is holding an event on Monday 16 October on 'Gender and Faith: Women and the Church'. There will be a talk by Carlotta Kramskoy, Interfaith Officer at Clifton Catholic Diocese, followed by a discussion. It is being held at Bristol University Multi-faith Chaplaincy, 1 Woodland Road, Bristol, BS8 1AU, at 7.15pm for 7.30pm. All are welcome. The event is free and contributions are welcome. For more information, contact avonccj@gmail.com.

The Inter Faith Network for the UK is holding a day event in Manchester on Tuesday 17 October for local inter faith practitioners from inter faith groups across the UK to share their experiences, discuss issues of common interest and concern and have focused learning opportunities about practical aspects of developing successful inter faith programmes. For further information, email ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

South East England Faiths Forum is holding its annual conference and AGM on Tuesday 17 October on the theme of ‘Chaplaincy in a Plural Society: Faiths in Service’. The event will run from 9.30am to 5.00pm. The conference will feature speakers and workshops covering chaplaincy work in hospitals, in crisis, in education and the workplace from a variety of faith traditions. The conference will be held at Worth Abbey, Turners Hill, Crawley, RH10 4SB in the Performance Arts Centre. There is a registration fee which includes lunch. To register, and for further information, contact Rabbi Wallach on 07909506506 or at rabiwallach@gmail.com.

Interfaith Wolverhampton is holding a ‘Bring and Share’ lunch on Tuesday 17 October from 12.45pm to 2.00pm. The lunch will feature a presentation from Kamran Fazil on Faith-based environmental concerns. The lunch is being held at Darlington Street Methodist Centre, 24 School Street, WV1 4LF. For further information, contact admin@ifwton.org.uk.

Interfaith Scotland, Faith in Older People, Edinburgh University Chaplaincy and Stonewall Scotland are holding a members dialogue event on Tuesday 17 October from 10am to 4pm. The theme of the event is ‘Identity and Belonging’ and this will take the format of a civic café. For further information, contact Else Kek by email at else.kek@interfaithscotland.org.

Building Bridges in Burnley is hosting an event on the theme of ‘Sacred Sounds from different faith traditions’ on Sunday 22 October from 2pm to 4pm. The event will feature performances from The Free Spiritual Centre Sufi Group, Fr Brian Keeley as well other individuals and choirs. The event is being held at Mezbaan Superstore, Colne Road, Burnley, BB10 1AS. For further information, email bea_foster@hotmail.com.

The **Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby** is holding an event on the theme of ‘Hinduism: Enlightenment through cause and change’ on Tuesday 24 October from 6pm to 8pm. The event will explore growth and change in Hinduism. The speaker will be Vijay Hirani. Booking is required. The event is being held at The Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby, Kedleston Road, Derby, DE22 1GB. For further information, go to www.multifaithcentre.com.

Religions for Peace (UK) is holding a seminar on Wednesday 25 October entitled ‘Towards a world free of nuclear weapons – what faith communities can do next’. The seminar is designed to provide the tools needed to talk to others in your faith community about the Nuclear Ban Treaty. It is being held at 6.30pm at Friends House, 173-177 Euston Road, London NW1 2BJ. For further information, contact 07825 189263. To book a place, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/nuclear-ban-treaty-what-next-tickets-37413008315>.

The **Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter** is holding an event on Thursday 2 November entitled ‘Jewish Christian Relations: Significant New Beginnings’. The event will mark the 70th Anniversary of the Seelisburg Conference of 1947 and explore its enduring legacy. It will take place from 11.00am to 3.15pm at the Sion Centre, 34

Chepstow Villas, London, W11 2QZ. For further information, contact sioncentrefordialogue@gmail.com.

York Interfaith Group is holding an event on Tuesday 7 November. It will begin with a 'Bring and Share' Meal with Music from 5.30pm to 7.30pm and will then be followed at 7.30pm by its Monthly Meeting, for which the theme is Faith in the Armed Forces. It is being held from 5.30pm to 7.30pm at the York Medical Society Rooms, 23 Stonegate, York YO1 8AW. For further information, contact yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com.

The **Employers Network for Equality & Inclusion** is holding an event on the theme of 'Pride & Prejudice: Faith and Sectarianism in Scotland' on Wednesday 15 November from 1pm to 3pm. The event will explore issues of demographics, hate crime and sectarianism in Scotland and will provide an opportunity for employers to network with others on these issues. The event is by invitation only. It is being held in Edinburgh. For further information, email info@enei.org.uk.

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For more information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org.uk

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk **by 20 November** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer: Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH
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IFN e-bulletin

November/December 2017

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **19 January** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and projects and future events. If your organisation distributes a programme, newsletter or e-bulletin, please add ifnet@interfaith.org.uk to your mailing list.

Disclaimer: Information in this e-bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Increasingly, IFN is making use of social media, in particular Twitter (www.twitter.com/IFNetUK) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/IFNetUK).

Please take a moment to 'follow' and 'like' IFN and also Inter Faith Week (www.twitter.com/IFWeek and www.facebook.com/IFWeek) and also check in with the IFN website to see new items, which are added on a regular basis.

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

Faiths responding to the needs of the homeless

In the Autumn Budget statement, on 22 November, the Chancellor pledged to invest £20m in schemes to support people on the brink of homelessness and end rough-sleeping by 2027. Communities Secretary Sajid Javid, on 30 November, set out details of a new Rough Sleeping Advisory Panel that will help develop a national strategy as part of the government's commitment to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminate it altogether by 2027.

Throughout the year, faith communities and faith-based bodies work to address homelessness through their own programmes as part of their commitment to social justice and to service. The winter months bring increased hardship for many who are homeless and faith communities and their members respond accordingly.

Churches in many parts of the UK run winter night shelters – often ecumenically – and there are many denominational initiatives such as those of the Salvation Army. A number have volunteers from other faiths or none.

The Merton Winter Night Shelter is now in its seventh year, operating with various faith groups in the area. It is led by YMCA London South West (LSW) and supported by Wimbledon Foundation and Merton Council. <https://www.ymcalsw.org/merton-winter-night-shelter-3/> Many who use it are referred through the Merton Faith in Action Homeless Project which also provides drop in support throughout the year. There are also a number of initiatives involving two or more faith communities that run year round, such as the

Hope for Southall Homeless project with Christian and Sikh involvement.

<http://www.hssh.org.uk/who-we-are/>

The Leicester Winter Night Shelter is a multi-faith night shelter organised by One Roof Leicester. It rotates around seven places of worship in the city. Open from December until January, the shelter provides emergency accommodation and food to homeless people in the city during the winter period. The shelter is run by volunteers from diverse faith backgrounds. www.oneroof.org.uk/2-uncategorised/194-about-the-winter-shelter

Faith groups are also involved in other winter linked initiatives to support people who are homeless, as well as other groups such as the elderly. For example, the Independent reports on Human Appeal, a Muslim faith-based charity which has been collecting clothing and donating it to homeless people living on the streets of Manchester, Birmingham and Glasgow as part of the Wrap Up Campaign. Coats will also be donated to rough sleepers in London via the organisation Hands On London, who launched the annual Wrap Up campaigns, starting in London. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/muslim-charity-human-appeal-homeless-thousands-coats-winter-london-manchester-wrap-up-campaign-a8058366.html>

Muslim Aid is holding a UK Winter Campaign, helping to feed the hungry and homeless with their Food Drive programme, distributing essential items to the homeless with the Rucksack Challenge, and also helping the elderly in the UK to keep warm. For more information, visit www.muslimaid.org/uk-winter-campaign.

Mitzvah Day, a Jewish-led 'day of good deeds' on 20 November saw hundreds support the elderly and homeless, as well as refugees and others from poor or vulnerable backgrounds. For example, as part of their activities, members of St Albans Masorti Synagogue knitted woolly hats and scarves, cooked an evening meal at a local homeless shelter, and collected household and baby items for Syrian refugees and baked biscuits. At a Mitzvah Day activity in conjunction with Scottish Interfaith Week, volunteers from Glasgow Reform Synagogue helped out at the Kagyu Samye Dzong Buddhist Centre soup kitchen on Sunday evening, preparing food and distributing it to the homeless in Glasgow City Centre <http://www.grs.org.uk/2017/11/>. Greek Orthodox Christian, Jewish, Muslim Sikh and Zoroastrian, and volunteers from across London came to JW3 in North London to prepare a meal for those in need at Ashford Place in Cricklewood. <http://mitzvahday.org.uk/a-taste-of-mitzvah-day-at-cooking-event>

Volunteers from other faith linked charities have also been contributing through many different routes. For example, connected to Sewa Day, volunteers from City Hindus Network worked in partnership with three other charities at Lincoln's Inn Fields in London to serve hot food to London's homeless and also collaborated with Wrap Up London to sort 4,816 donated coats, of which 1,600 were delivered to those in need within 24 hours.

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Faith communities and refugees

On 1 November A £1 million fund for organisations and communities wanting to support refugees coming to the UK opened. The fund is for the community sponsorship scheme which enables community groups to take on the role of welcoming and supporting refugee families in the UK. Sponsor groups can include charities, businesses, local authorities, community groups and third sector organisations. The fund is designed to give experienced organisations the resources to provide training and support to groups who want to sponsor refugees. It aims to bring people together from across society to support vulnerable refugees through community sponsorship. Further information is at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/1-million-community-sponsorship-capacity-building-fund-opens-for-bids>. The closing date for applications is 15 December 2017.

Citizens UK, which has a wide range of faith organisations involved in its work, continues to run its Refugees Welcome campaign and to encourage people to welcome refugees in their local community.

http://www.citizensuk.org/save_lives_by_helping_resettle_refugees

The City of Sanctuary is an ongoing project, which began in Sheffield in 2005 and now has a network of groups across the UK. Many different faith groups are involved <https://cityofsanctuary.org/by-theme/faiths/ideas-to-support-asylum-seekers-in-your-congregation/>

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland carries information about Church and other refugee related news and initiatives, including the Churches Refugee Network, on its website at <https://ctbi.org.uk/how-the-churches-are-responding-to-the-refugee-crisis/> and through <http://focusonrefugees.org/>. A recent one is Welcome Churches <https://www.welcomechurches.org/> which provides training and resources to churches to help them provide help and support to refugees arriving in their neighbourhood. Another recent initiative is Church Response for Refugees <http://www.forrefugees.uk/about-us/>.

Within other communities there are also resources for engagement. For example, the Muslim Council of Britain carries information about relevant initiatives <http://www.mcb.org.uk/refugee-aid-and-relief-information/> and the Jewish Council for Racial Equality continues its work in this area, recently launching Coats4Calais, an appeal for warm coats for refugees sleeping rough in Calais www.jcore.org.uk/news. UK faith based bodies also continue to work around the world in support of refugees, for example Khalsa Aid's work to help Rohingya refugees <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/11/16/sikh-volunteers-give-aid-rohingya-muslims-fleeing-persecution/>.

Many individual places of worship around the UK continue to offer support. For example, since March 2012 volunteers from the Alyth Synagogue in London have been running a monthly drop-in for refugees who have recently arrived in the UK. It now regularly welcomes over 60 refugees each month. It was recently recognised for its work in 3FF's

awards for faith and belief groups in London which make London a welcoming place for all <http://www.3ff.org.uk/blog/2017-awards/>.

A number of UK faith leaders joined together on a multi faith basis during Inter Faith Week to urge action to end statelessness as part of a new initiative calling for improved rights and better support for 'stateless' people. Their statement urged the UK Government to do more to welcome those who no longer have a country to call their home and to review its policies towards stateless people. 'Stateless' people without legal status cannot leave the UK because no country will accept them but do not have permission to work in the UK. Signatories called for alternatives to detention and better support for access to rights and advice and help with integration. The move is part of the #LockedInLimbo campaign which is led by the European Network on Statelessness and seeks to end the detention of people who end up locked in limbo because they have no country that they can return to. The statement, which remains open for signature, is at <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdPu1UIrSnqBZc84RQ-iH-9xopdvknow9bEwoaTF51lGQwFg/viewform>.

The St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace held a roundtable event in November, 'Multifaith Approaches to Refugee Integration in the UK', with the University of Winchester Centre of Religion, Reconciliation and Peace and with Faith in Society.

Inter Faith Week saw a number of refugee related events, for example Together We Grow taking 50 refugees to visit the Jamia Mosque Madni in Halifax and the Halifax Minster. <https://www.halifaxcourier.co.uk/news/a-tour-around-different-places-of-worship-for-group-of-refugees-1-8885295>

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Impact of US Government policy change on status of Jerusalem

The Trump Administration's change of foreign policy to recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel has been followed by strong statements from different perspectives, both there and in many places around the world.

In Europe there have been some protests. In Amsterdam a man with a Palestinian flag yelling 'Allahu Akbar' (God is great) was detained by police after smashing the windows of a kosher Jewish restaurant. <http://metro.co.uk/2017/12/08/jewish-restaurant-vandalised-religious-attack-trumps-jerusalem-declaration-7142432/> There was a firebombing of a synagogue in Sweden and violently anti-Semitic chanting at one protest in that country. <http://www.itv.com/news/2017-12-10/three-arrests-after-synagogue-in-sweden-firebombed-by-masked-attackers/>

The Scottish newspaper *The National* reported that an unnamed leader of Scotland's Jewish community had expressed fears about the consequences for inter faith relations

there

http://www.thenational.scot/news/15709275.Jewish_and_Muslim_communities_in_Scotland_express_fears_over_tensions_after_Trump_39_s_Jerusalem_declaration/. There have not been comparable reports elsewhere in the press.

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Faith Leaders' Declaration on Female Genital Mutilation

A Faith Leaders' Declaration on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) was signed as part of the 'Girl Summit' in 2014 to reinforce the message that FGM is not a religious requirement. This is currently being updated ahead of a reaffirmation of commitment to end this practice which is illegal in the UK.

As part of this process, which is being supported by the Department for Communities and Local Government, views are being sought, including on how best to spread the message that FGM is not tolerated in the UK. Views can be contributed through the following DCLG survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/GDL6H2H>. The deadline is 29 December.

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Religious dress and symbols

The wearing of religious dress and symbols in contexts such as the workplace has been something which has received increasing attention in the last few years. The Inter Faith Network's Trustees produced, in 2007, a briefing note on the wearing of religious dress and symbols which can be downloaded from

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/wearing-of-religious-dress-and-symbols-briefing-note>. IFN, alongside national faith community bodies and others, was represented on the advisory group which contributed to the Equality and Human Rights Commission's guidance to Employers on Religion or Belief in the Workplace which contains material about a number of aspects of religious dress and symbols in the workplace:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/religion-or-belief>.

On 5 December, the European Court of Human Rights press service published a new fact sheet, Religious Symbols and Clothing, as part of the ongoing series of factsheets which cover themes in the Court's case law and pending cases:

http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/FS_Religious_Symbols_ENG.pdf.

In November a woman customer entering a North London branch of McDonalds was told by a security guard to remove her hijab <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-42242272>. McDonalds made it clear that this was contrary to its policy.

At its meeting on 5 December, IFN's Board of Trustees noted with concern the continuing impact of religious illiteracy and prejudice on people from different faith backgrounds,

including incidents such as demands for removal of items of clothing or symbols worn for religious reasons. Also noted was that its Briefing on Religious Dress and Symbols (see the first paragraph above) has relevance, as, sadly, because prejudice sometimes spills over into hatred, was the document <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/looking-after-one-another-the-safety-and-security-of-our-faith-communities-2017>.

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Development of Government's integration strategy

In 2015 the then Prime Minister, David Cameron, commissioned Dame Louise Casey to carry out an independent review on “how to boost opportunity and integration in isolated and deprived communities”. The report of that Review was published at the end of 2016. In April 2017 a General Election was called for June and the Conservative manifesto included a commitment to bring forward a new integration strategy. That integration strategy is now under development by the Department for Communities and Local Government. The Casey Review report made 12 recommendations and these are being considered alongside other factors in the development of the Government's new integration strategy. As noted [below](#), Ms Penny Hobman Deputy Director, Integration Strategy, DCLG, came to speak to IFN's Faith Communities Forum about the developing strategy at its meeting on 9 November.

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Lord Bourne begins Faith Tour

During Inter Faith Week, Minister for Faith at the Department for Communities and Local Government, Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth, began a Faith Tour to highlight England's diverse landscape of faith communities and places of worship. The new tour follows on from his tour of all 42 Anglican cathedrals in England, “which highlighted their success in adapting to the modern world in addition to championing their role as custodians of England's rich Christian heritage”. Over the next year, Lord Bourne plans to visit 42 places of worship that support the many other denominations and faiths in England. The tour will highlight the role of these places of worship in the community and especially their work in bringing people of different faiths and backgrounds together. Many of the places of worship the Minister will visit were suggested by members of those local communities.

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Ensuring strong equalities legislation after Brexit

In February 2017, the House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee published a report on ensuring the continuation of strong equalities legislation after the UK leaves the European Union. This relates to all protected characteristics, including religion or belief. The Government issued a response to this report in October, including to four key recommendations:

- That the Government should bring forward an amendment to the Equality Act 2010 to allow Parliament and the Courts to make judgements on the compatibility of new legislation with UK principles of equality
- To amend the ‘Great Repeal Bill’ to include a clause affirming a commitment to present levels of equalities legislation after the UK’s exit from the European Union
- To develop a cross-departmental strategy for taking action on equality, as well as consolidating links with civil society organisations
- To take measures to ensure that research on equalities continues uninterrupted after the UK’s exit from the European Union

The full text of the Government’s response, on a point-by-point basis, can be found at <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmwomeq/385/385.pdf>.

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Hate Crime

New national online hate crime hub

In October, the Home Secretary announced the creation of a new national hub to tackle the emerging threat of online hate crime. The creation of the hub is intended to offer better support for victims, and to help increase the number of prosecutions by streamlining current processes and allocating resources more effectively. The hub will be managed by the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC). Home Secretary Amber Rudd said:

“Online hate crime is completely unacceptable. What is illegal offline is illegal online, and those who commit these cowardly crimes should be met with the full force of the law. The national online hate crime hub that we are funding is an important step to ensure more victims have the confidence to come forward and report the vile abuse to which they are being subjected.”

It is expected that the new hub will be operational by the end of the year. More information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-secretary-announces-new-national-online-hate-crime-hub>

APPG on Hate Crime

A new All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Hate Crime was launched on Wednesday 6 December at the Houses of Parliament. The APPG will explore the challenges and impacts of all forms of hate crime, including those involving religion and belief. The APPG will also work with key anti-hate crime organisations across the public and voluntary sectors to achieve its aims.

For further information about the work of the APPG, including the beginning of its first enquiry in the New Year, email info@appghatecrime.org.

Home office statistics

In October the Home Office published its annual statistics on hate crimes and racist incidents recorded by the Police. The statistics cover the extent and trends in levels of hate crime for all police forces in England and Wales. Hate crimes are recorded using five centrally monitored strands, one of which is 'religion and beliefs'.

The official statistics, and the accompanying report can be downloaded at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2016-to-2017>.

CPS annual report

The Crown Prosecution Service has published its 'Hate Crime Annual Report 2016-17'. The report is an analysis of the key prosecutions across a number of classified 'strands' of hate crime offences, including race and religion. With regard to religiously aggravated hate crime, a number of key findings emerged:

- The volume of religiously aggravated hate crime referrals from police to the CPS decreased in 2016-17
- The volume of completed prosecutions decreased significantly in 2016-17
- The conviction rate and guilty pleas remained steady
- The proportion of successfully completed prosecutions with an announced and recorded sentence uplift increased significantly

It was also announced that in 2016-17, the CPS provided prosecutors with mandatory training on racially and religiously aggravated hate crimes which focused on developing strategies to obtain a recorded sentence uplift. The full annual report can be downloaded at http://www.cps.gov.uk/publications/docs/cps_hate_crime_report_2017.pdf.

National hate crime awareness week

The September/October edition of IFN's E-Bulletin looked ahead to National Hate Crime Awareness Week. The Week took place from 14 to 21 October, with events and activities taking place across the country. More information about the Week, including the dates for 2018, can be found at: <http://www.stophateuk.org/hate-crime-awareness-week/>.

Tell MAMA annual report

In November, Tell MAMA published its annual report: 'A Constructed Threat: Identity, Prejudice and the Impact of Anti-Muslim Hatred'. Among the key findings highlighted in the report is a significant rise in recorded anti-Muslim hate crime incidents at 'street-level' or in public places. The report also highlighted the increasingly gendered nature of anti-Muslim hate crime in the UK. The full report can be downloaded at: <https://tellmamauk.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/A-Constructed-Threat-Identity-Intolerance-and-the-Impact-of-Anti-Muslim-Hatred-Web.pdf>.

In December Faith Matters published ‘From antisemitism to anti-Muslim racism: the evolving face of the far-right in Poland’, which it describes as highlighting how extremist groups like Britain First have continued to sow division by exploiting the religious sentiments of Poles in Britain to further their anti-Muslim agenda. <https://www.faith-matters.org/2017/12/08/changing-face-hate-poland-antisemitism-anti-muslim-hatred/>

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Law of marriage in the UK

The Government has confirmed that it does not currently support a full review of the law of marriage in the UK. An initial scoping report carried out by the Law Commission and published in December 2015 identified key issues and questions to be considered in a full review. These included how the ability to solemnise marriages might be extended beyond religious groups and the state; whether the current rules could be made more coherent; and what the process of registration of marriage should entail.

More details can be found at <http://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/marriage-law/>.

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Meeting with Scotland’s First Minister of Religious Leaders of Scotland

The annual meeting with the First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon and the religious leaders of Scotland took place on 7 November in Edinburgh. The meeting was facilitated by the Director of Interfaith Scotland.

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Inter Faith Week

Inter Faith Week is the Inter Faith Network’s largest programme, and this year it took place from 12 to 19 November. Over 600 activities took place in England, Northern Ireland and Wales to mark the Week – more than ever before.

Strong support was offered from within national faith community bodies with messages from leading figures such as Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis and from many faith and denominational bodies. Key public figures showed their support, including Prime Minister Theresa May; Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth, Minister for Faith at the Department for Communities and Local Government; other MPs; Mayor of London Sadiq Khan; and mayors and councillors across the country.

The Co-Chairs of the Inter Faith Network for the UK, which leads on the Week, the Rt Revd Richard Atkinson and Jatinder Singh Birdi, said:

“Inter Faith Week 2017 has seen an incredible array of activities taking place, involving many thousands of people of different backgrounds. These have contributed to developing even stronger inter faith relations in local communities and in our shared society.”

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

“Inter Faith Week 2017 was an inspiring effort across all neighbourhoods and faiths across the United Kingdom, in building understanding, tolerance and a sense of community. These sentiments are so important as we build a country where everyone has the chance to succeed and where no one suffers discrimination because of their background, ethnicity, religion or belief.”

Faith communities have contributed in ever-increasing numbers. They opened their doors and welcomed others in, discussed commonalities as well as challenging and difficult issues, celebrated with their neighbours, took part in joint social action projects, and have been active in civil society in existing and new ways. Inter faith organisations have also played a vital role in the Week, highlighting and providing a focus for the important work that they do year-round.

More activities took place than in any previous year since Inter Faith Week began in 2009. The hundreds of organisations that took part have included: faith communities and inter faith bodies; non-religious belief bodies; local authorities; schools, SACRES, universities and FE colleges; businesses; youth organisations; sports organisations; police and other emergency services; the Armed Services; hospitals and hospices; Government departments, and many more.

IFN has a long-standing relationship with Mitzvah Day, a day of social action and volunteering led by the Jewish community. The Day fell within the Week again this year (having, for the first time, come slightly outside of it in 2016) and over 70 ‘interfaith Mitzvah Day’ events were held jointly to mark both. These events were also listed on the Inter Faith Week website.

The geographical spread was huge: Bangor, Belfast, Bristol, Carlisle, Durham, Exeter, Fermanagh and Omagh, Great Yarmouth, Leeds, London, Manchester, Medway, Oxford, Penryn, Northampton, Newcastle, Waltham Forest and Wolverhampton, are just a few of the places that took part. Week-long programmes took place in a number of cities and towns such as Birmingham, Bolton, Kendal, Leicester, Preston, and York. The Week’s activities can be seen at www.interfaithweek.org/map.

The Week is timed to begin on Remembrance Sunday, remembering the service of soldiers and civilians of many faiths and beliefs. That was reflected in participation in civic commemorations and a number of moving events. Across the Week there were: sporting events; school activities; social action projects such as meals for the homeless and tree

plantings; dialogues; cultural events; open door days held by faith groups around the country; faith trails; talks; women's events; events for young people; events bringing religious and non-religious people together; and many more.

The Week saw many new partnerships and launches of a number of new projects as well as signalling the start of a tour of faith communities' places of worship by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth, Minister for Faith at the Department for Communities and Local Government.

The Inter Faith Network for the UK held a joint symposium with Sporting Equals UK: 'The Power of Sport to Build Good Inter Faith Relations'. [See below.](#)

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum held an event on 'Human rights, Pluralism and Freedom of religion' and one on 'Faith in the Environment – Caring for our Common Home'. The Inter-faith Council for Wales held an event entitled 'Hate Crime – What it is and how to report it' and the Muslim Council of Wales held its annual Inter Faith Week dinner earlier this month.

The Near Neighbours Programme of the Church Urban Fund and the Inter Faith Youth Trust supported a number of events during the Week.

The impact of the Week also spread further than ever before on social media, with many organisers, participants and supporters tweeting about the Week. Tweets about the Week have so far had a potential reach of 12.6 million Twitter users with over 40 million impressions.

Reporting on the Week

The Inter Faith Week team of staff and volunteers at the IFN office has been posting photos of events on our Inter Faith Week [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts, sharing many of those that activity holders posted. If you organised or were at an event and have good photographs the team would love to see them. Please email them with any details to Interfaithweek@interfaith.org.uk or post them and tag us either on Instagram (www.instagram.com/IFWeek) or Twitter (www.twitter.com/IFWeek), or both.

It is important for IFN to learn what worked well about the Week and what worked less well, so that we can keep developing Inter Faith Week. Activity organisers have been asked to complete a short survey. This can be found at <http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/InterFaithWeek2017/>.

Scottish Interfaith Week

This year Scottish Interfaith Week, which has taken place since 2004, took place on the same dates as Inter Faith Week in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Its theme for 2017 was 'Creativity and the Arts'; it was also a very high impact week.

Inter Faith Week 2018 – 10th Anniversary!

Inter Faith Week 2018 will take place from Sunday 11 to Sunday 18 November. This will be the 10th Anniversary of the Week.

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INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK NEWS

Using the Power of Sport to Build Good Inter Faith Relations

On 14 November IFN held an event, in partnership with Sporting Equals UK, entitled ‘Using the Power of Sport to Build Good Inter Faith Relations’. The event was held at the Leicester Tigers rugby stadium in Leicester and participants came from national sports organisations, regional sports clubs and faith and inter faith organisations. It was held as part of national Inter Faith Week.

The day opened with a welcome from the Rt Revd Richard Atkinson, IFN Co-Chair, and an opening presentation by Mr Arun Kang, CEO of Sporting Equals UK. Presentations followed by Mr Tim Mathias, Inclusion and Equalities Executive for Premiership Rugby; Mr Matt Parish, Director of Education and Inclusion, Burnley Football Club and Mr Afrasiab Anwar, Community Faith Coordinator, Building Bridges in Burnley; Ms Sadia Akram, Women in Sport project, Manchester; the Revd Canon Paul Hackwood, Executive Chair of the Church Urban Fund and Director of Near Neighbours; Ms Shaheen Bi, Head of Projects at Sporting Equals; and Mr Arfan Akram, East London Cricket Co-Coordinator and Tour Captain and team member, Cllr Mukesh Patel, members of the East London multi faith team arranged by Essex County Cricket Club which had recently played the Vatican XI in Rome. The speakers on the closing panel were Professor John Williams, Co-Director, University of Leicester Unit for Diversity, Inclusion and Community Engagement; Mr Rehan Haidar, Senior Policy Officer, Department for Communities and Local Government, who is supporting development of a new integration strategy; and IFN’s Executive Director, Dr Harriet Crabtree.

There were 3 workshops during the programme: Creating opportunities for engagement between single faith based bodies, with presentations by Mr Wasim Riaz, Project Manager, and Ms Shana Khan, Association of Muslim Schools Inter Faith Games Programme, and Mr Alan Sefton, Head, Arsenal in the Community; Working with sport and physical exercise as part of developing local inter faith initiatives, with a presentation by Mr Trip Pannu, Windsor and Maidenhead Community Forum; and Sport and inter faith engagement in a wider inclusion context, with presentations from Ms Helen Derby of the English Federation of Disability Sport and Ms Kathryn Wall of Gwent Police Multi Faith Panel.

The Islam Channel attended to film a number of interviews and parts of the day. Its programme on the event was shown later in November.

IFN will be building on this event with further work on this area.

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Meeting of Faith Communities Forum

A meeting of IFN's Faith Communities Forum was held on 9 November. On the Agenda were:

- the Government's Integration Strategy, with a short opening reflection from Ervad Yazad T Bhadha on bases in the Zoroastrian tradition for thinking about integration and its importance to society and a presentation from Ms Penny Hobman, Deputy Director, Integration Strategy, Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) about the Government's new Integration Strategy which DCLG is currently developing;
- the establishment of a Religion Media Centre, with a presentation from Mr Ben Rich, one of its Trustees;
- current issues of interest or concern to faith communities;
- the inter faith engagement of faith communities; and
- some IFN updates.

The launch of Inter Faith Week 2017 took place as the last item of the meeting.

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Day event in Manchester for local inter faith practitioners

In October IFN held a day event in Manchester for local inter faith practitioners from inter faith groups across the UK to share their experiences, discuss issues of common interest and concern and have focused learning opportunities about practical aspects of developing successful inter faith programmes.

This was an opportunity to share experiences and news; discuss issues of common interest and concern; share tips for developing successful inter faith programmes; hear about some projects being run by local groups; and to take part in discussion groups about supporting RE and inter faith engagement in schools; developing programmes with impact; getting to grips with Facebook and Twitter; and women and inter faith engagement.

The day opened with a presentation from Jatinder Singh Birdi, Co-Chair of IFN and Chair of Warwick District Faith Forum, about the importance of local inter faith work and its UK context and a welcome to Manchester from the Revd Charles Kwaku-Odoi on behalf of the

Faith Network for Manchester. During the morning session there were presentations by Rabbi Warren Elf of Faith Network for Manchester and Elinor Chohan of Altrincham Interfaith Group and Altrincham Muslim Association. In the afternoon the speakers included Dr Peter Rookes and Ms Shenaz Sajan of Birmingham Council of Faiths, Mr Ashley Beck of IFN and Mr Chan Parmar of Bolton Interfaith Council and Miss Puja Solanki, a Bolton Youth Interfaith Ambassador from Bolton Interfaith Council's Young Ambassadors programme. Closing reflections were offered by Sister Patricia Harriss of York Interfaith Group and Mr Chirag Khajuria of Blackpool Faith Forum.

A report of the event is being produced. The last four such days were held in Sheffield, London, Coventry and Bristol. Reports from those events can be found at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/publications/all-publications/all-publications>

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

Council of Christians and Jews 75th anniversary

Sunday 1 October marked 75 years since the establishment of the Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ) and the start of its year-long anniversary celebrations. A number of events will be held over the next 10 months to mark the anniversary, including:

- the launch of an alumni network for over 200 graduates of CCJ's Yad Vashem Clergy Seminar and a conference at the National Holocaust Centre in April 2018;
- a national Rabbi/Clergy training conference that will bring together rabbis and clergy from across the UK to build stronger connections at a local level in March 2018;
- the launch of a young CCJ network incorporating CCJ's campus leadership alumni as well as young stakeholders involved in CCJ's work.

Further information about CCJ is at www.ccj.org.uk.

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UK's first 'Mayoral Faith Summit' in Birmingham

On 27 November the University of Birmingham hosted the first UK 'Mayoral Faith Summit', bringing communities together to shape and advance the priorities of the new City Region Mayor, Andy Street. The University's College of Arts and Law and its Edward Cadbury Centre for the Public Understanding of Religion worked with community stakeholders to design the process of the event in the weeks leading up to it. Its aim was to provide a space for a wide range of voices to be heard, and to build towards a shared action plan to address social and community issues, such as building new leadership networks for young

people, reducing homelessness and social need, keeping communities safer by mitigating hate crime and discrimination, and finding concrete ways of working together to make the economy work better for the whole community.

Following the event, Francis Davis, Professor of Religion, Communities and Public Policy, Director of Policy at Edward Cadbury Centre and co-chair of the Faith Summit, will be developing a special edition of an international journal. He will also carry out more research to support emerging themes of focus and produce a pamphlet with think-tank Localis, which will assess the West Midlands' progress in these areas in an international context. More information about the project is available at <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/thebirminghambrief/items/2017/11/higher-education-anchor-institution-at-work-the-mayors-faith-summit.aspx>.

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Invest in Peace Board of Deputies and CTBI initiative

Invest in Peace is an ongoing joint initiative of the Board of Deputies of British Jews and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. The initiative invites Christian and Jewish communities in Britain to come together in support of Israeli-Palestinian peacebuilding projects. Three events took place in May in London, each being locally led by a church and synagogue partnership. Christians, Jews and others sat alongside one another to hear from two bereaved parents, one Israeli and one Palestinian, who promote reconciliation as an alternative to revenge. Speakers Robi Damelin and Bassam Aramin, members of the Parents Circle – Families Forum, travelled to London especially for the three events. A further three similar events were held during Inter Faith Week in November in Glasgow, Leeds and Manchester. For further information about the project, contact CTBI Deputy General Secretary the Revd Peter Colwell peter.colwell@ctbi.org.uk or Board of Deputies Interfaith and Social Action Officer, Anthony Silkoff anthony.silkoff@bod.org.uk.

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The Great Christmas Get Together

Following on from the Great Get Together in June, organisers are encouraging people to get involved with 'Mince Pie Moments', by getting together this Christmas to build closer communities and positive connections through sharing mince pies. Participants are encouraged to make or buy mince pies and share them with neighbours or their communities any time between 24 and 26 December. More information and resources for hosting a Great Christmas Get Together are available at <https://www.greatgettogether.org/how-to/>.

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Hindu Christian dialogue resources under development

A number of meetings have taken place this month to develop further some resources that will equip Hindus and Christians to engage in Scriptural Reasoning together. Working in partnership with the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies, the St Philip's Centre in Leicester has been engaged in a dialogue project throughout 2017 with a view to building sufficient trust between the different parties so that meaningful scriptural reasoning can take place. The work has been funded through grants from the Spalding and Teape Trusts and has enabled it to develop a pocket guide for those engaged in first encounters between Hindus and Christians, as well as some "text bundles" on themes such as "divine descent," "what happens after death" and "food and drink." The Centre will be using these resources in its work in 2018, including in a major conference planned for June 2018. Further information from admin@stphilipscentre.co.uk.

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3FF projects – Pizza & Plays and Amplify

3FF is launching a new project for people aged 18 to 35 as part of a two-year partnership with the National Theatre. 'Pizza & Plays' will involve weekly workshops led by a professional writer and director from the National Theatre. Participants will read and discuss some of the past century's most iconic plays, focusing on themes of faith, belief and identity, all whilst sharing pizza. There will also be opportunities for participants to write their own plays, inspired by their life stories and experiences. Following the workshops, there will be a chance to rehearse and perform a brand new play at the National Theatre in the summer of 2018, alongside leading professional actors and community performers from all over London. No experience is necessary and further information is available from 3FF at <http://www.3ff.org.uk/blog/pizza-plays/>.

Amplify is an arts-based youth-led programme of 3FF for Sixth Forms and Further Education colleges that creates and strengthens safe spaces within educational institutions, for exploring issues relating to faith, belief, identity, belonging, social trends and community in the increasingly globalised and interconnected world. A pioneering group of 'Amplifiers' from Westminster Academy have come together to combine creative forces, challenge divisive narratives and amplify their vision for a better world. Further information and the video manifesto is available here <http://www.3ff.org.uk/blog/amplify/>.

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Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery – Finding Faith

Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, in partnership with the British Museum, launched in November a project on the theme of 'Finding Faith'. This will feature a programme of

performances, live debates and panel discussion exploring the role that faith plays in the world today. These will include a discussion on being a young person of faith in Birmingham today; a talk on faith and disability; arts installations; and ‘The Birmingham Conversation’, a series of panel discussions between faith leaders in the city.

‘Finding Faith’ will celebrate the positive role that faith communities play in Birmingham, as well as encouraging visitors to learn more about faith and belief around the world and to reflect on their own beliefs. The project will run until March 2018, and further information can be found at <http://www.birminghammuseums.org.uk/bmag/whats-on/finding-faith-launch>.

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Inter Faith Tree Planting

The Faiths Forum for London has been awarded a grant by the Mayor of London to plant 32 trees across ten London boroughs at diverse places of worship. Each place of worship will work in partnership with other faith groups in their area to develop special tree planting events that promote community cohesion. For more information about the project, including to find out which places of worship are taking part, contact Faiths Forum for London at info@faithsforum4london.org.

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

A new resource from CTBI

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland has published a new guide, *Acting in God’s Love: Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World*. Using real-life case studies, the guide builds on recommendations for conduct published by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, the World Council of Churches and the World Evangelical Alliance and aims to foster a ‘practical understanding towards the application of the guidelines, provide a wider UK context, and develop deeper theological reflection on interfaith engagement’. As well as the case studies, the guide also includes questions for reflection that can be used to prompt discussion, and links to other recommended resources. It is available for download from <https://ctbi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Acting-in-Gods-Love-Christian-Witness-in-a-Multi-Religious-World.pdf>.

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Religion in Public Life: Levelling the Ground

Think tank Theos has published a new report, *Religion in Public Life: Levelling the Ground*, by sociologist of religion Grace Davie, Professor Emeritus at the University of Exeter. The

report is based on her 2016 Edward Cadbury Lectures and explores the renewed visibility of religion in public life, through analysis of different ‘levels’ ranging from the local to the global.

The report can be downloaded from

<https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/research/2017/10/28/religion-in-public-life-levelling-the-ground>.

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Inter faith prayer room and Muslim Certificate in Religious Studies

Faith leaders joined together on 5 December at St Mary’s University, Twickenham, to open a new Inter Faith Prayer Room and launch a Muslim Certificate in Religious Studies. The new certificate will aim to develop the religious literacy of teachers and to enhance the contribution that religion can make as referenced in the Professional Standards for Qualified Teacher Status. It will primarily be aimed at those teaching RE in Muslim schools and will support teaching in line with the National Curriculum. The programme will now be developed in more detail, and will complement the University’s Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies. Further information about the project can be found at <https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/news/2017/12/muslim-certificate-2017>.

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Online course: ‘Bridging the Great Divide: the Jewish-Muslim Encounter’

‘Bridging the Great Divide: the Jewish-Muslim Encounter’ is a 15-week online course created through collaboration between Dr Edward Kessler of the Woolf Institute, Cambridge and Professor Akbar Ahmed of the American University in Washington. The course explores the history, culture and theology of Muslims and Jews, reflecting on similarities, differences and major challenges and also offers strategies for building bridges between communities.

The course begins on 16 January and participants can study wherever and whenever they choose, via the internet. The deadline for applications is 20 December and the course fee is £465. A limited number of bursaries are available. For more information about the course, visit <http://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/study/online-courses/bridging-the-great-divide-the-jewish-muslim-encounter>.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS, AND NOMINATIONS

Mitzvah Day Awards

Nominations are now open for the first ever Mitzvah Day Awards, to be presented by the Mitzvah Day Charitable Trust in partnership with the Jewish Chronicle on 30 January 2018, hosted at JW3. Participants and members of the public can nominate individuals or groups in a number of categories, including 'Outstanding Interfaith Partnership'. Nominations close on 2 January 2018. For more information and details of how to nominate, visit <http://mitzvahday.org.uk/news/mitzvah-day-awards/>.

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2018 Sandford St Martin Awards

The Sandford St Martin Trust is calling for entries to its annual broadcasting awards for radio/audio, TV and online content exploring religious, spiritual or ethical themes, in what will be the 40th year of both the Trust and the Awards. To be eligible to enter, programmes must have been broadcast for the first time during 2017 and have been available to general UK audiences. Applications are encouraged from all programme genres as well as from specifically 'religious' commissions.

The deadline for entries is 31 January and winners will be announced at a special ceremony at Lambeth Palace on 7 June. For more information and details on how to enter, visit <http://sandfordawards.org.uk/>.

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Faith and dementia stories

The Faith Communities Action Group of the Prime Minister's 2020 Challenge on Dementia is currently looking for stories from different faith communities, of people living with dementia and/or their family members. In particular, the group is interested in the impact on people's faith of a diagnosis of dementia and its earlier stages, as well as the impact on living with dementia that their faith has had. The stories will be shared publicly as a way of helping others to be more understanding, and encouraging people to share their concerns more openly. They will not include any information that could identify people. Those that have a story to share are invited to contact rodie.garland@faithaction.net.

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Religion Media Centre

A new Religion Media Centre is expected to launch next year as an advisory service to journalists and others to help them to understand, without prejudice or agenda, news stories related to religion. It aims to promote accurate and knowledgeable reporting and commentary on all matters related to religion in national, specialist and social media; and to help journalists to identify and speak with qualified experts on religious matters, and promote informed and intelligent commentary and debate. The Centre is currently compiling a database of experts and journalists. For further information contact one of its Trustees, Ben Rich, at ben@benrich.co.uk.

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Research Excellence Framework expert panels

The Research Excellence Framework (REF) is seeking nominations of potential panel members to participate in the next REF exercise, to be completed in 2021. Whilst the four main panel chairs have been appointed, nominations are invited for additional main panel members and for sub-panel members and assessors. Nominations are welcome in respect of both individuals who have served previously on REF panels and those who have not, and nominations of candidates from underrepresented groups and faith communities are particularly welcomed. Guidance and information about the roles, responsibilities and workload are available here:

<http://www.ref.ac.uk/publications/2017/rolesandrecruitmentoftheexpertpanels.html>.

Nominations must be completed online at <http://www.ref.ac.uk/about/nompan/> by 12 noon on Wednesday 20 December.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

IFN's website lists job and internship opportunities with a significant inter faith dimension with IFN member organisations at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/jobs>.

3FF – Finance Manager

3FF is seeking to recruit a Finance Manager. Full or part-time and flexible working options will be considered for this role, based in London. 3FF is looking to fill the role as soon as possible and will be conducting interviews on an ongoing basis, so applications are encouraged as early as possible. More information is available here:

<http://www.3ff.org.uk/blog/finance-manager-2017/>.

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Woolf Institute – Junior Research Fellow and Director of Services and Administration

The Woolf Institute is currently seeking applications for two positions:

- A Junior Research Fellow for a forthcoming two-year research project concerned with religious fundamentalism
- A Director of Services and Administration

For more information about both vacancies, including requirements and how to apply, visit <http://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/about/vacancies/current-vacancies>.

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Tell MAMA – Parliamentary Officer

Tell MAMA is seeking to recruit a Parliamentary Officer. The role includes hosting events, engaging with MPS across the political spectrum and employing strong partnership work with other key hate crime agencies. The closing date is 7 December. More information is available at <https://www.charityjob.co.uk/jobs/faith-matters/parliamentary-officer/538196>.

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St Ethelburga’s Centre for Reconciliation and Peace - Volunteers

The St Ethelburga’s Centre is looking to recruit the following volunteers: Arabic and Farsi Interpreters, a Marketing Mentor and a Fundraising Support volunteer. More information about the roles and how to apply is available at <https://stethelburgas.org/get-involved/vacancies-and-volunteering/>.

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One World Week – Volunteers and Trustees

The team at One World Week is seeking volunteers and Trustees to assist it with its work. In particular, they are in urgent need of someone to collate feedback, with their support. For more information, visit <https://www.oneworldweek.org/> or email oww@oneworldweek.org.

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Inter Faith Network for the UK - Volunteers and interns

The Inter Faith Network for the UK has regular volunteering opportunities and occasional internships. Further information about these can be found on IFN's website.

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Goods for Good charity - Volunteers

Goods for Good is a small charity that delivers overstock donated by British Industry and second hand goods from the local community to refugees and vulnerable communities overseas. It has delivered to 12 countries in the last year, including Northern Iraq, Syria, South Sudan, Ukraine and Moldova and works with charity partners on the ground to ensure goods go to those in need. They hold weekly inter faith packing sessions during which local volunteers of many different faiths sort and pack the goods together, and they hope to get more people involved more frequently. Packing sessions take place at Unit 1, Borehamwood Enterprise Centre, Theobald Street, Borehamwood, WD6 4RQ and sessions will take place on Wednesday 13 December and Wednesday 20 December from 10am to 12.30pm. For more information or to get involved, contact Mia Hamburger at mia@goodsforgood.org.uk or on 07785 800 500.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Building a Stronger Britain Together programme

The Home Office programme Building a Stronger Britain Together is continuing to offer in-kind support such as social media training, technical assistance to help a group improve their website, or capacity building work to help a group protect more vulnerable individuals. It is open to bodies in England and Wales. Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/building-a-stronger-britain-together>.

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Faiths in Scotland Community Action Fund

Faiths in Scotland Community Action Fund is open for applications to its new rolling small grants scheme. Small grants of up to £750 are available to faith based anti-poverty projects with an annual turnover of £30,000 or less and can be applied for at any time. For more information call Chris on 0141 221 4544 or visit <https://www.faithincommunityscotland.org/faith-in-community-scotland-action-fund/our-grants/smallgrants/>.

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Supermarket grant schemes

Bags of Help is Tesco's local community grant scheme where the money raised from the 5p bag levy in Tesco stores is being used to fund community projects across the UK. The projects must meet the criteria of promoting community participation in the development and use of outdoor spaces. Bags of Help is administered by Groundwork in England and Wales and supported in Scotland by Greenspace Scotland. (It is not available in Northern Ireland where carrier bag money is managed centrally.) Further information is at <http://www.groundwork.org.uk/Sites/tescocommunityscheme/pages/Category/the-tesco-bags-of-help-programme-tes2>.

Waitrose supports charities through its Community Matters scheme. Local branches are each given £1,000 to share out between three local good causes each month such as welfare organisations, community groups and schools. To apply, fill in a Community Matters form at a local branch or contact the branch champion for community giving at a local branch, using their branch finder tool at <http://www.waitrose.com/branches/index.aspx>.

Sainsbury's stores each partner with a Local Charity of the Year voted on by the local people. To apply, fill in a nomination form at your local store. More information is at <https://www.sainsburyslocalcharity.co.uk/>.

The Asda Foundation offers grants for local community projects which will "make a real long term difference, benefitting the wider community with [its] vision to 'Transform Communities, improving lives locally.'" Further details are at <https://www.asdafoundation.org/applying-for-funding/significant-local-community-projects>.

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Aviva's UK Community Fund

Aviva has made around £1.7 million available for its 2017 Community Fund. Funding is available to voluntary and community organisations for projects that will make a real difference to local residents. The grants support all kinds of projects providing they are causes that the community really cares about and are charitable in nature. Not-for-profit organisations and groups that are operating for the good of their local community and have been in existence for at least six months and have an income of £1 million or less can apply. For further information, visit <https://www.aviva.co.uk/good-thinking/community-fund/>.

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Comic Relief's Core Strength Grants Programme

This programme offers grants to help cover the day to day costs of small locally led and based voluntary and community sector groups that are doing 'much needed' work in their local communities. Grants of between £1,000 and £5,000 or between £1,000 and £10,000 (depending on the local community foundation) are to be used to support groups that can evidence a sustained beneficial impact on people's lives who are excluded or disadvantaged. For further information, visit <http://www.comicrelief.com/apply-for-grants/open-grants-initiatives/core-strength-local-communities>.

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Funding websites

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations offers advice on fundraising and grants on its Knowhow Nonprofit site at <https://knowhownonprofit.org/funding>.

Funding Central - <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/default.aspx> - is a free website for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises in England that provides access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, together with tools and resources for supporting organisations to develop sustainable income strategies appropriate to their needs. Similar websites for funding in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at Funding Scotland - <http://www.fundingscotland.com/> - Wales Council for Voluntary Action - <http://www.wcva.org.uk/funding/search> - and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland - <https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

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Heritage Lottery Fund grants to commemorate First World War

The Heritage Lottery Fund has £4million of funding available for communities to get involved in projects marking the Centenary of the First World War. Projects applying for funding must be able to meet one of a number of successful outcomes based on heritage, people and communities. Grants can be given between £3,000 and £10,000. There is no current deadline for applications as grants are considered on a monthly basis up to 2019.

Further information can be found at <https://www.hlf.org.uk/looking-funding/our-grant-programmes/first-world-war-then-and-now>.

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Community foundations

Community foundations are local, grant-making organisations to which local community organisations can apply for funding. There are 46 community foundations in the UK, covering Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and most of England. A map of community foundations across the UK and how to contact them, can be found at <http://www.ukcommunityfoundations.org/our-network>.

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Transform Foundation

The Transform Foundation is offering funding to charities to help with new website builds. Grants of £18,000 are available. For further information and to apply, visit www.transformfoundation.org.uk.

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Google and charities

The internet search engine Google is offering a service to registered charities which brings: Google Ad Grants: Free AdWords advertising to promote your website on Google through keyword targeting; YouTube Nonprofit Programme: Access exclusive resources, features and programs designed to maximise your organisation's impact on YouTube; and Google Apps for Non-profit: Free version of the Google Apps business productivity suite, including Gmail, Docs, Calendar and more. For further information, visit www.google.co.uk/intl/en/nonprofits/join.

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Subsidised fundraising workshops

The Foundation for Social Improvement offers heavily subsidised training programmes for small charities across the UK. The courses cover a wide range of subjects from event planning to leadership but the majority of their training courses are focused on helping charities learn the skills to raise and earn income. Further information can be found at <http://www.thefsi.org/services/training>.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Holocaust Memorial Day will take place on 27 January. Its theme in 2018 is The Power of Words: - Words can make a difference – both for good and evil. Holocaust Memorial Day is

a time for everyone to pause to remember the millions of people who have been murdered or whose lives have been changed beyond recognition during the Holocaust, Nazi Persecution and in subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur. It honours the survivors of these regimes and challenges everyone to use the lessons of their experience to inform their lives today. www.hmd.org.uk/

World Interfaith Harmony Week takes place in the first week of February. It is a UN recognised Week which was proposed to the UN General Assembly by HM King Abdullah of Jordan. The first UN World Interfaith Harmony Week took place in February 2011. <http://worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com>

VisitMyMosque Day 2018 will take place on Sunday 18 February. In 2017 over 150 mosques across the UK held open days to welcome in their neighbours from other communities. Registrations are now open to take part in the 2018 event. For further information, visit www.visitmymosque.org.

The date, in March, for **Sadaqa Day** awaits announcement. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Muslim community. mysadaqaday.org

The Big Lunch 10th anniversary will be held on Sunday 3 June. Across the years millions of people from different faith backgrounds have joined together to take part through street parties, BBQs, iftars and picnics. <https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/thebiglunchhomepage>

The date for **Sewa Day**, usually in early Autumn, awaits announcement.

Inter Faith Week in England, Wales and Northern Ireland will take place from 11 to 18 November. It is led by the Inter Faith Network for the UK www.interfaithweek.org See more [above](#).

Scottish Interfaith Week will take place from 11 to 18 November. It is led by Interfaith Scotland. <http://scottishinterfaithweek.org/>

Mitzvah Day will take place on 18 November. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Jewish community. On Mitzvah Day, people give their time, not their money, to make a difference to the community around them. Many events and projects held for the day have an inter faith focus. www.mitzvahday.org.uk/

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**SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK
TO INCREASE INTER FAITH UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION**

We need your help to ensure that the Inter Faith Network for the UK's work to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation continues and grows, helping people of all backgrounds to live and work together with mutual respect and shared commitment to the common good.

Gifts at all levels are much valued and make a real difference. You can donate directly at www.interfaith.org.uk/donate or via PayPal or JustGiving at <https://www.justgiving.com/interfaithnetwork-uk>

Donations can also be made by sending a cheque to The Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH.

REMEMBERING A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND

If you would like to make a gift in memory of a loved one, please get in touch by emailing remember@interfaith.org.uk or call us on 0207 730 0410.

A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

By leaving a gift in your will to the Inter Faith Network for the UK, you can leave a living inheritance to help deepen and strengthen inter faith understanding and cooperation in this country – for now and for the future. If you are thinking about making a will, the best thing to do is to get in touch with a professional will writer, such as a solicitor or advocate; they can help to ensure it is legally correct and that your wishes are met. If you have already made a will, you can still make an addition or amendment in the form of a codicil. If you would like to pledge a gift, please provide our name and address, along with our registered charity number 1068934.

Please get in touch with us if you have any queries.

You can call us on 0207 730 0410 or contact us at remember@interfaith.org.uk

Thank you!

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DIARY DATES

This section includes some of the events taking place around the UK during from December to January. We also include information on diary dates between e-bulletins on its website at <http://www.interfaith.org.uk/take-part/events>.

The **Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby** is holding its next monthly Conversations Across Faiths event on Thursday 14 December. An invited speaker will lead on a topic, followed by questions and discussion amongst the group, which is made up of people from a variety of faiths, beliefs and world views. It is being held from 7pm to 8.30pm at the Multi-Faith Centre, University of Derby, Kedleston Road, Derby, Derbyshire, DE22 1GB. More information is available at <http://multifaithcentre.org/events/event/conversations-across-faiths-4/>.

Interfaith Wolverhampton is organising a trip to the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, to see an exhibition entitled 'Imagining the Divine – Art in the Rise of World Religions' on Friday 5 January. The exhibition showcases some of the world's oldest religious art from around the globe. The trip will last from approximately 9.30am to 6.30pm and the day may also include a visit to one of the Oxford Colleges. Those who are interested should contact Erik Pearse at erik@pearse227.eclipse.co.uk or on 01902 750 440 by 8 December at the latest. More information about the exhibition is available at <https://www.ashmolean.org/imaginingthedivine>.

The **London Interfaith Centre's** Book Group will hold its first meeting of 2018 on Tuesday 9 January from 12.30pm-2pm. The theme for the group will be 'Boundaries and Frontiers', starting with a discussion of Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan*. It will be held at the London Inter Faith Centre, St Annes & St Andrews Church, 125 Salusbury Road, London, NW6 6RG.

Interfaith Glasgow, in partnership with **St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art**, is holding the fifth of a monthly dialogue series on the theme of 'Faith to Faith' on Sunday 14 January from 2 to 4pm. The fifth dialogue is on the theme of 'St Mungo – the son of a refugee'. The event will feature keynote speakers, dialogue and a question and answer session. The event will be held at St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art, 2 Castle Street, Glasgow, G4 0RH. For further information, contact development@interfaithglasgow.org.

Heythrop College is holding an event on Tuesday 16 January entitled 'The Jordan, the Tiber and the Ganges'. This will be a celebration of the life and work of Raimon Panikkar, a key figure in the inter faith field, on the occasion of the centenary of his birth, including the launch of his Opera Omnia, the new collected edition of his work, by the editor, Milena Pavan; a film of one of the last interviews Panikkar gave before his death, introduced by film-maker Andrea Andriotto; plus contributions and discussion led by Professor Michael Barnes SJ, Professor Ursula King and the Rt Revd Michael Ipgrave. It is being held at 4.30pm at Heythrop College, 23 Kensington Square, London W8. To register for the event, contact Annabel Clarkson at events@heythrop.ac.uk.

Woking People of Faith, in partnership with **Surrey Faith Links**, **Woking Action for Peace** and others, is organising the 'Woking Debates 2018'. The first debate on Saturday 20 January from 11am to 12.30pm will be held on the theme of 'Is privacy a luxury or necessity?'. The debates are held at Christ Church, Jubilee Square, Woking, GU21 6YG. For further information, email Keith Scott at keithsc.2000@yahoo.com.

Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship is organising a series of dialogues as part of its Spring programme. The first event in the series on Wednesday 24 January is on the theme of 'Violence: Its Causes and Cure'. The dialogue will focus on religious perspectives on the many aspects of violence in private and public life, and will hear Buddhist and Jewish perspectives. The event is being held at 7.30pm at the Jamyang Buddhist Centre, 21 St Paul's Street, Leeds, LS1 2JG. For more information contact John Summerwill on 01132697895 or email chair@concord-leeds.org.uk.

Cytun, Churches Together in Wales is hosting a seminar on the theme of 'Faith and Politics' on Tuesday 30 January from 1.30pm to 4.30pm. The seminar will be delivered by Matthew Rees, who has completed a doctoral thesis looking at how faith-based organisations in the UK have engaged with devolved institutions. The research specifically looked at the structures, strategies and effectiveness of faith-based organisations in Wales and Northern Ireland. The seminar will take place in the Baptist College, Cardiff, CF24 3AT. To attend, contact Gethin Rhys by email at gethin@cytun.cymru.

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For more information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org.uk

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **19 January** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer: Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH
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IFN e-bulletin

January/February 2018

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **22 March** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and projects and future events. If your organisation distributes a programme, newsletter or e-bulletin, please add ifnet@interfaith.org.uk to your mailing list.

Disclaimer: Information in this e-bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Increasingly, IFN is making use of social media, in particular Twitter (www.twitter.com/IFNetUK) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/IFNetUK).

Please take a moment to 'follow' and 'like' IFN and also Inter Faith Week (www.twitter.com/IFWeek and www.facebook.com/IFWeek) and also check in with the IFN website to see new items, which are added on a regular basis.

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- Consultation on the review of the OISC Equality Scheme [Read more](#)
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- Honours Nominations [Read more](#)

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Information on some of the inter faith events taking place around the UK [Read more](#)

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

Housing, Communities and Local Government

Following Prime Minister Theresa May's Cabinet and Ministerial reshuffle in early January the Department for Communities and Local Government has been renamed the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Its website is <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-housing-communities-and-local-government>.

The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP remains the Secretary of State and Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth remains the Minister for Faith.

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BBC Religion and Ethics review

In December the BBC published a review of its Religion and Ethics programming and output, with the aim of re-assessing its role and strategy in this area, and reconsidering how best to deliver its public service mission in this respect. This includes a new commitment to reflect better the diversity and plurality of faith and belief in the UK today. Among its key recommendations are:

- to help the public develop its religious literacy;
- to expand coverage of religion in News output; and
- to broaden the reach of Religion and Ethics content to diverse audiences, including those aged under 45.

The report also says that the BBC will partner with other organisations to host a summit discussing the role that belief plays in British society, to be held every two years, and that it will be designating 2019 'A Year of Beliefs' when special programming and content will be featured.

The full report of the review can be downloaded from http://www.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc/insidethebbc/howwework/reports/religion_and_ethics_2017.

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Holocaust Memorial Day

Many faith and inter bodies around the UK marked Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January with events and projects. This year's theme is 'The Power of Words'.

The UK HMD event took place on 25 January in London with contributions from Holocaust and other genocide survivors, as well as others.

Interfaith Scotland, together with the HMD Trust and Glasgow City Council, organised the national Scottish annual Holocaust Memorial Day event on 24 January at Glasgow Caledonian University.

<http://hmd.org.uk/events/2016/holocaust-memorial-national-event-scotland/thu-11012018-1011>

Representatives of the Inter-faith Council for Wales attended the national commemoration in Wales on 29 January. <https://www.wired.gov.net/wg/news.nsf/print/First+Minister+remembers+victims+of+Holocaust+at+service+27012018071000>

A number of events took place in Northern Ireland including the regional Northern Ireland Commemorative event which this year took place in Derry.

<http://www.hmd.org.uk/events/2016/northern-ireland-regional-commemoration/wed-03012018-1104>.

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Government report on Cathedrals and their communities

In December the then Department for Communities and Local Government published, 'Cathedrals and their Communities: A report on the diverse roles of cathedrals in modern England'. This followed a tour during 2017 of all 42 English Anglican cathedrals by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth, Minister for Faith and Integration.

The report aims to highlight the positive contributions that cathedrals make to their communities in a range of ways. Inter faith work is among those aspects of cathedrals' contributions prominently highlighted. Examples include the holding of inter faith events, collaboration with other faith communities on social issues, and participation in programmes of inter faith work, such as Inter Faith Week.

The full report can be downloaded from <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-report-highlights-english-cathedrals-community-spirit>.

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The Sussex Hate Crime Project – final report

The Sussex Hate Crime Project, carried out by the University of Sussex and funded by the Leverhulme Trust, has published its final report. The project examined the indirect impact of hate crimes, including “how hate attacks on members of a community affect the thoughts, emotions and behaviours of other members of that community.”

Across 2013-2018 the project worked with individuals and organisations from two commonly targeted groups, Muslim people and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT) people, in an attempt to understand how indirect experiences of hate crimes impact on individuals, communities, and society in general. Among key findings in the report are: an increased sense of vulnerability in communities whose members had been affected by hate crimes; a build-up of anger and frustration; and a distrust of the criminal justice system. It also notes that the effect of hate crime goes beyond those who suffer directly, including in faith communities.

The report can be downloaded at <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/psychology/sussexhatecrimeproject/>.

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2021 Census

The Office for National Statistics organised a 'Census, Population & Public Policy Forum' on 13 December to gauge views in the areas of ethnicity, gender identity and sexual orientation ahead of the 2021 Census. Among the topics discussed was whether the question about ethnicity should include tick-box options for Sikhs and/or Jews – with views offered in both directions – and the importance of ethnicity and religion data being collected by service providers across central and local government to ensure that the needs of different communities are met at all levels.

Further information about the forum event can be found in a blog post by Iain Bell, Deputy National Statistician and Director General for Population and Public Policy, at <https://blog.ons.gov.uk/2017/12/14/reflecting-views-on-the-2021-census/>.

The Office for National Statistics is carrying out a wide range of activity in preparation for the 2021 Census. This includes a range of consultative exercises alongside ongoing meetings of its Census Advisory Groups.

‘Opt-out’ consent for organ donation

People who donate their organs and tissue after they die help save many lives in England each year. However, 3 people die a day because of a lack of suitable organs.

There has been significant work with and by faith communities about organ donation, including development of materials about this and campaigns to raise awareness of the importance of donation.

In 2013 a ‘Faith Action Plan’ was launched <http://www.nbta-uk.org.uk/2013/12/all-major-uk-faiths-come-together-to-promote-new-organ-donation-strategy/> and further work has been done on this issue.

IFN has highlighted the issues in various contexts, most recently the inclusion of a dedicated workshop at its National Meeting last July with Angela Ditchfield, Diversity Lead Nurse, Organ Donation & Transplantation, NHS and Kirit Mistry, Co-Chair, National Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Transplant Alliance and NHS Blood and Transplant used Inter Faith Week 2017 to campaign to raise awareness

<https://www.organdonation.nhs.uk0/news-and-campaigns/news/nhs-blood-and-transplant-encourages-people-to-talk-about-organ-donation-during-interfaith-week/>

Although 8 out of 10 people say they would want to donate their organs and tissue after their death, most people never register to be organ donors. Under current rules in England, a person who has died can only be an organ donor if they have agreed to it when they were alive or has appointed a person to make a decision after their death. This is called giving consent. The government believes that it would increase the number of organs donated and save more lives if the law was changed so that people who do not want to donate their organs after their death would have to opt out. It plans to change the law in England.

On 12 December the Department of Health launched a consultation to find out what people think about proposed changes in which people are considered willing to be an organ donor after their death, unless they have ‘opted out’. It is particularly interested in views on:

- how much say families have in their deceased relative’s decision to donate their organs;
- when exemptions to ‘opt-out’ would be needed, and what safeguards would be necessary; and
- how a new system might affect certain groups depending on age, disability, race or faith.

The consultation notes, at Section 4.3, that the Organ Donation Taskforce considered the attitudes of different faith and belief groups towards an opt-out system of consent and that its work highlighted significant reservations from people of certain faiths about the impact of moving to an opt-out system of consent, particularly for people less comfortable with the prospect of the change. It includes a question about whether the intended change could have a negative impact on people from some religious groups or ethnic backgrounds.

The consultation can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/introducing-opt-out-consent-for-organ-and-tissue-donation-in-england>.

The deadline for responses is **6 March**. To submit a response, go to https://engage.dh.gov.uk/organdonation/?utm_source=DHTwitter&utm_content=Launchtweetwithanimation.

In Wales, an ‘opt out’ system has been in place since 2015. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-42213813>

Scotland is also planning to move to an ‘opt out’ system, with the next step being for the Scottish Parliament to consider legislation in the coming parliamentary year <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-42521772>

Following a detailed examination of all aspects of soft opt-out systems the Northern Ireland Assembly decided in 2016 not to proceed with specific legislation to introduce a soft opt-out system as a possible means of increasing levels of organ donation in Northern Ireland. However, the Assembly in recognition of the importance of promoting organ donation, passed legislation which places a statutory duty on the relevant Department to promote transplantation and increase awareness about transplantation and the donation of human organs.

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Faith and Mental health

A number of faith and inter faith organisations are also involved in work relating to mental health issues, including dementia. Some examples of this work are included here.

South London Inter Faith Group, with the assistance of Faith in Society, launched a 3 year faith-based mental health project at an event in November. <http://faithinsociety.org.uk/faith-based-mental-health-project/>

FaithAction has collated studies about how faith communities are becoming ‘dementia friendly’ and produced resources for faith communities to use to help support those suffering from dementia. <http://www.faithaction.net/portal/our-projects/dementia/>

Thrive LDN campaign is working with faith communities to improve mental health for all Londoners. It is holding an inter faith event on 15 February to discuss this <http://thrivedn.co.uk/events/thrive-together-interfaith-event/> and has also produced an information pack. <http://thrivedn.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Thrive-Together-conversations-information-pack.pdf>

The Dementia Trust has produced a guide to helping people with dementia in local churches, which can also be used by other places of worship. http://dementiatrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/04160-Resource-for-churchgoers-inserts_31.pdf

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Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting

The Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting will take place in London and Windsor in the week of 16 April.

Leaders from more than 50 countries are expected to attend the summit, coming together to reaffirm common values, address global challenges and agree how to work to create a better future for the citizens of the Commonwealth, particularly young people. The Cabinet Office is supporting the meeting. It is in conversation with faith communities about the CHOGM programme and would like to encourage widespread involvement from faith and inter faith bodies as part of the wider involvement across society.

Suggested activities include:

- Sharing your Commonwealth story with CHOGM. Including family stories, business connections, charitable links or other Commonwealth connections. Upload a 1-2 minute video and email it to commonwealthsummitmedia@cabinetoffice.gov.uk.
- Hosting a Commonwealth Big Lunch. CHOGM is partnering with the Eden Project – founders of the Big Lunch initiative – to launch ‘Commonwealth Bug Lunches’ in February 2018. The lunches will run from Commonwealth Day on 12 March until the end of the summit on 22 April. Interest can be registered at <https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/youre-invited> or by emailing getinvolved@chogm2018.org.uk.
- Planning a Commonwealth-themed event. The CHOGM website will act as a guide to events taking place across the Commonwealth. If you plan to organise an event, email getinvolved@chogm2018.org.uk for website and social media advertising.

Updates can be found on CHOGM’s dedicated website, www.chogm18.org.uk, on Twitter @Commonwealth18 and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/Commonwealth2018/.

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INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK NEWS

Inter Faith Week

2017

Inter Faith Week 2017 took place between 12 and 19 November, and featured the largest number of events and activities to date. The last edition of this E-bulletin contained a substantial report on the 2017 Week and can be found at

https://www.interfaith.org.uk/uploads/Inter_Faith_Network_for_the_UK_e-bulletin_-_November-December_2017.pdf#page=11.

An illustrated report on the Week is being produced, timed as usual to also point forward to the coming Week. If you have any photographs or stories from activities you were involved with, please do keep sending these to the IFN office.

2018

Inter Faith Week 2018 will take place from 11 – 18 November.

Last year for the first time, IFN made available Inter Faith Week branded pin badges to buy via the Inter Faith Week website. These proved to be popular, and it is planned to do this again in 2018. If there are other items which you think would be particularly helpful in spreading the word and raising awareness about the Week, please let the IFN office know and we will explore it.

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Connecting across the generations: inter faith engagement of young people

This Inter Faith Network programme was begun in October 2017 and will lead in July 2018 to publication of a new edition of IFN's youth inter faith action guide *Connect: Different Faiths, Shared Values* <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/connect-different-faiths-shared-values>. It will also feed into a special youth-focused National Meeting of IFN in July.

The programme is being carried out with the help of an Advisory Group, co-facilitated by IFN Trustee Padideh Sabeti and youth co-facilitator, Jaskiran Kaur Mehmi.

The new guide will be full of ideas and case studies to inspire young people wanting to get involved in inter faith activity – or to deepen their existing involvement. It will cover a wide range of activity: from dialogue and social action to sport, arts and culture and more.

Key to the programme will be hearing the views of young people. IFN will be holding small focus group sessions in Birmingham, Leeds, Glasgow, Cardiff and London for young people aged 16-25. If you or someone you know are in that age range and may be interested in

taking part, please contact Ashley Beck at the IFN office for more information (Ashley.beck@interfaith.org.uk). The sessions will take place between 20 February and 31 March.

IFN is also keen to hear from organisations which run inter faith initiatives – large and small – with young people. If you have ideas, best-practice examples or resources to share, please take a moment to complete the short questionnaire at <http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/3556485OWI8> Printable versions can also be provided if helpful for consultation or discussion.

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IFN resources for local inter faith organisations

In recent months IFN has been adding to its website a number of resources for local groups on particular themes. Three are currently listed on IFN’s website:

- Inter faith engagement in social action
<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/inter-faith-engagement-in-social-action>
- Standing together
<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/standing-together>
- Local inter faith organisations and schools
<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/local-inter-faith-organisations-and-schools>

Each resource includes information which local groups may find helpful, including case studies and examples of good practice from existing local inter faith organisations.

A fourth resource on ‘Faith trails and open door days’ will shortly be uploaded and available at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/local-1>.

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

Ariane de Rothschild Fellowship

The mission of the Ariane de Rothschild Fellowship is to “forge bridges across boundaries between minority communities in Europe and North America, particularly (but not exclusively) Jewish and Muslim”. Over time, this is being achieved through building a network of entrepreneurs and community leaders invested in empowering pluralistic societies, nurturing wisdom and collaborative leadership. The Fellowship is now open for applications from entrepreneurs, social innovators, or those in business who demonstrate a commitment towards inclusion and forging bridges between communities whilst strengthening the sustainability of their organisation. The Fellowship provides an all-

expenses-paid week at Windsor Castle, St George's House from 29 July to 4 August, to network and work on the fellow's project with other entrepreneurs.

The deadline for applications is Sunday 4 March at midnight EST. For further information and to apply, visit <http://adrfellowship.org/program/application-form/>.

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

'Moral and Spiritual Dilemmas in Challenging Times' – a CCJ Resource

The Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ) has published a new resource in collaboration with Cumberland Lodge, 'Moral and Spiritual Dilemmas in Challenging Times'. The resource addresses how faith communities can tackle 'rising extremism, nationalism and populism' in six short chapters.

The resource accompanies a new edition of Amy Buller's 1943 book *Darkness over Germany: A Warning from History*. The resource can be downloaded from the CCJ website at <http://www.ccj.org.uk/moral-and-spiritual-dilemmas-in-challenging-times/>.

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Christian Jewish resources for Holocaust Memorial Day

The Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ) and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland partnered to produce liturgical and homiletic resources for use by Christians when observing Holocaust Memorial Day which took place on 27 January. The resources can still be downloaded from the CCJ website at <http://www.ccj.org.uk/ccj-ctbi-liturgical-and-homiletic-material-for-christians-on-hmd/> or from the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust website here <http://hmd.org.uk/page/faith-resources>.

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Strengthening Faith Institutions – new website

Strengthening Faith Institutions (SFI) is an organisation which 'professionalises places of worship'. Organisations which join the SFI network receive a free health check with one of SFI's regional consultants as a basis for a bespoke action plan. The individualised action plans "serve to maximise your organisational objectives and provide a course of focused training for your leadership team, trustees, and members in core areas of

safeguarding, security, governance, funding and other areas of need”. The package is provided free of charge to faith institutions.

SFI has recently launched a new website at <https://www.sfitogether.org/> where there is more information about its work and also a library of resources for faith institutions.

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‘Faith, Media and Power’ training

3FF is holding a free two-day training course on ‘Faith, Media and Power’ on Sunday 11 and Sunday 18 March. The training will bring together young people and media experts, and will provide an opportunity to: learn how the news media works and how to challenge misrepresentation; gain skills from DIY media experts, campaigners and journalists; become part of an inter faith movement for media justice. Places are free but limited, and a short application is required. Applications are open to anyone aged 18-30 wanting to tackle misrepresentation in the media alongside people from different faith and belief backgrounds. For more information and to apply, visit <http://www.3ff.org.uk/blog/faith-media-power/>.

The closing date for applications is midnight on 2 February.

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Faithful Organisations governance training

St Philip’s Centre Leicester and Near Neighbours Birmingham are running a half day workshop on 8 February on the role of governance in faith based community organisations and places of worship. It is being held at 10am at Balsall Heath Church Centre in Birmingham.

The workshop will explore topics of interest including: What is an Accountable Body; Understanding Organisational Language; Choosing a Legal Structure; The Charitable Context; Ensuring Trust and Credibility; Why Risk Management; Showing Who's Involved; Visionary Thinking; Operational Planning; Policy & Procedure; The Good Committee; Clear Budgeting; and Involving and Sharing Work. It will be supported by examples and good practice handouts using real life experience of a national and local situations from a wide range of organisations and communities. For further information, and to register, contact rabiyah@nearneighbours.com.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS, AND NOMINATIONS

Heritage Lottery Fund Consultation on Strategic Funding Framework 2019-2024

The Heritage Lottery Fund uses money raised by National Lottery to invest in the full breadth of the UK's heritage. It is seeking thoughts on its strategic direction and proposals from as wide a range of stakeholders as possible, to help it set its priorities for how to use National Lottery Good Causes income for the period 2019-2024.

The consultation will opening shortly. For more information, visit <https://www.hlf.org.uk/about-us/our-strategy/future-funding-heritage-and-people>. For queries about the consultation, contact Alice Ralston at ComRes on 020 7872 8660 or alice.ralston@comresglobal.com.

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Consultation on the Review of the OISC Equality Scheme

The Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) is consulting on its Review of the OISC Equality Scheme, with responses assisting in the development of a revised Equality Scheme. In order to ensure that the OISC provide services that treat people with protected characteristics in a fair and professional manner and show respect and understanding for their particular needs, the OISC would like to obtain views from those who have a protected characteristic themselves and know and understand the issues that affect people with a protected characteristic. Religion or belief is one of the protected characteristics.

The consultation ends on 21 March. For further information and to request a copy of the consultation document, contact Ayodele Odumade, Corporate Support Officer, OISC, at ayodele.odumade@oisc.gov.uk or on 020 7211 1525.

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HMCTS consultation - Fit for the future: transforming the Court and Tribunal Estate

Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service began a consultation on 18 January about the transformation of the court system. The consultation is called: Fit for the future: transforming the Court and Tribunal Estate and closes on 29 March.

There are ten questions over all and one that specifically relates to people of religion and belief. Question 9 asks: "What is your view on how these proposals are likely to impact on groups of court and tribunal users with particular protected characteristics as defined in

the Equality Act 2010? Are there any sources of evidence or research that you think we should consider?”.

Communities or individuals may respond to this as part of the wider consultation to ensure that where members of their faith communities have to go to court their religious requirements are met appropriately and with sensitivity. This may include, for example, access to an appropriate Sacred Text when it comes to taking an oath or access to facilities for prayer.

More information about the consultation can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/calls-for-views-on-transforming-court-estate> and the online survey at <https://consult.justice.gov.uk/digital-communications/transforming-court-tribunal-estate/>.

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Honours nominations

A number of people received Honours in this year’s New Year’s Honours list for services to inter faith work or community cohesion.

<https://www.facebook.com/ifnetuk/posts/1717634661620435>

The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government is always keen to ensure that individuals from the full breadth of society who are making a significant contribution to public life are properly recognised through the Honours system. It is particularly keen to recognise individuals who have contributed to building integrated communities and notes that nominees can come from all levels; being in a junior role is not a barrier to a nomination.

All nominations must be made on an official citation form and nominees should not be informed that they have been nominated. Citation forms, as well as further information, can be obtained by emailing integration@communities.gsi.gov.uk.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

IFN’s website lists job and internship opportunities with a significant inter faith dimension with IFN member organisations at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/jobs>.

St Ethelburga’s – Stories, Videos and Youth Coordinator

The St Ethelburga’s Centre for Peace and Reconciliation is seeking to recruit a full time Stories, Video and Youth Coordinator to work across all its programmes, combining engaging with story and heritage with supporting its emerging young leaders and

alumni. The role will involve helping to make short videos about how the history of its building relates to its work; hosting events and gatherings for young emerging leaders; supporting and mentoring young Associate Fellows of its leadership programmes; and recruiting and developing 'heritage volunteers' and making exhibition material.

The closing date for applications is 22 February. The job description can be found at <https://stethelburgas.org/get-involved/vacancies-and-volunteering/>. Enquiries can be addressed to Justine Huxley at justine@stethelburgas.org.

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European Network on Religion and Belief – Director

The European Network on Religion and Belief is seeking to appoint a Director to manage and further develop the organisation as the EU Equalities and Anti-Discrimination Network responsible for combating discrimination and hate crime, and promoting mutual understanding in the field of religion and belief. The vacancy is for 3 days per week and is based in Brussels. The deadline for applications is 2 February at 6pm. More information including a full job description and person specification can be found at <http://enorb.eu/job/director/>.

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Inter Faith Network for the UK – Mini Internship

The Inter Faith Network for the UK is advertising a 6-week mini internship. This will be for 4 days per week based at the IFN office in London from mid February to the end of March. For further information, email ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

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Inter Faith Network for the UK - Volunteers

The Inter Faith Network for the UK has regular volunteering opportunities. Further information about these can be found on IFN's website.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Building a Stronger Britain Together programme

The Home Office programme Building a Stronger Britain Together has opened its latest call for grant funding. Applications are welcome from those who applied for funding in rounds 1 and 2, and those who have been or who are in receipt of in-kind support. The

application deadline is 5pm on Friday 16 February and applicants are advised that the guidance and application form for grants have changed since the last funding round.

The programme is continuing to offer in-kind support such as social media training, technical assistance to help a group improve their website, or capacity building work to help a group protect more vulnerable individuals. It is open to bodies in England and Wales. Applications for in-kind support can be submitted at any time.

Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/building-a-stronger-britain-together>.

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Faiths in Scotland Community Action Fund

Faiths in Scotland Community Action Fund continues to be open for applications to its rolling small grants scheme. Small grants of up to £750 are available to faith based anti-poverty projects with an annual turnover of £30,000 or less and can be applied for at any time. For more information call 0141 221 4576 or visit

<https://www.faithincommunityscotland.org/faith-in-community-scotland-action-fund/our-grants/smallgrants/>.

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Supermarket grant schemes

Bags of Help is Tesco's local community grant scheme where the money raised from the 5p bag levy in Tesco stores is being used to fund community projects across the UK. The projects must meet the criteria of promoting community participation in the development and use of outdoor spaces. Bags of Help is administered by Groundwork in England and Wales and supported in Scotland by Greenspace Scotland. (It is not available in Northern Ireland where carrier bag money is managed centrally.) Further information is at

<http://www.groundwork.org.uk/Sites/tescocommunityscheme/pages/Category/the-tesco-bags-of-help-programme-tes2>.

Waitrose supports charities through its Community Matters scheme. Local branches are each given £1,000 to share out between three local good causes each month such as welfare organisations, community groups and schools. To apply, fill in a Community Matters form at a local branch or contact the branch champion for community giving at a local branch, using their branch finder tool at

<http://www.waitrose.com/branches/index.aspx>.

Sainsbury's stores each partner with a Local Charity of the Year voted on by the local people. To apply, fill in a nomination form at your local store. More information is at

<https://www.sainsburyslocalcharity.co.uk/>.

The Asda Foundation offers grants for local community projects which will “make a real long term difference, benefitting the wider community with [its] vision to ‘Transform Communities, improving lives locally.’” Further details are at <https://www.asdafoundation.org/applying-for-funding/significant-local-community-projects>.

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Comic Relief’s Core Strength Grants Programme

This programme offers grants to help cover the day to day costs of small locally led and based voluntary and community sector groups that are doing ‘much needed’ work in their local communities. Grants of between £1,000 and £5,000 or between £1,000 and £10,000 (depending on the local community foundation) are to be used to support groups that can evidence a sustained beneficial impact on people’s lives who are excluded or disadvantaged. The guidance notes “We recognise that faith-based organisations undertake valuable work in supporting disadvantaged and marginalised communities both in the UK and internationally, and we are able to support their work. We would expect these organisations to be able to evidence the practical implementation of their diversity policy, so that people from all faiths or none can become a member of staff, board member, volunteer, or benefit from the work.” For further information, visit <http://www.comicrelief.com/apply-for-grants/open-grants-initiatives/core-strength-local-communities>.

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Funding websites

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations offers advice on fundraising and grants on its Knowhow Nonprofit site at <https://knowhownonprofit.org/funding>.

Funding Central - <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/default.aspx> - is a free website for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises in England that provides access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, together with tools and resources for supporting organisations to develop sustainable income strategies appropriate to their needs. Similar websites for funding in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at Funding Scotland - <http://www.fundingscotland.com/> - Wales Council for Voluntary Action - <http://www.wcva.org.uk/funding/search> - and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland - <https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

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Heritage Lottery Fund grants to commemorate First World War

The Heritage Lottery Fund has £4million of funding available for communities to get involved in projects marking the Centenary of the First World War. Projects applying for funding must be able to meet one of a number of successful outcomes based on heritage, people and communities. Grants can be given between £3,000 and £10,000. There is no current deadline for applications as grants are considered on a monthly basis up to 2019.

Further information can be found at <https://www.hlf.org.uk/looking-funding/our-grant-programmes/first-world-war-then-and-now>.

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Community foundations

Community foundations are local, grant-making organisations to which local community organisations can apply for funding. There are 46 community foundations in the UK, covering Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and most of England. A map of community foundations across the UK and how to contact them, can be found at

<http://www.ukcommunityfoundations.org/our-network> .

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Website and Facebook grants

The Transform Foundation is offering funding to charities to help with new website builds. Grants of £18,000 are available. It is also offering grants towards Facebook advertising of £5,000. For further information and to apply, visit www.transformfoundation.org.uk.

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Google and charities

The internet search engine Google is offering a service to registered charities which brings: Google Ad Grants: Free AdWords advertising to promote your website on Google through keyword targeting; YouTube Nonprofit Programme: Access exclusive resources, features and programs designed to maximise your organisation's impact on YouTube; and Google Apps for Non-profit: Free version of the Google Apps business productivity suite, including Gmail, Docs, Calendar and more. For further information, visit

www.google.co.uk/intl/en/nonprofits/join.

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Subsidised fundraising workshops

The Foundation for Social Improvement offers heavily subsidised training programmes for small charities across the UK. The courses cover a wide range of subjects from event planning to leadership but the majority of their training courses are focused on helping charities learn the skills to raise and earn income. Further information can be found at <http://www.thefsi.org/services/training>.

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Funding for projects improving the outcomes of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Communities

The Integration and Faith Division of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is looking for six pilot projects in the areas of community cohesion, educational attainment and health outcomes that will improve the outcomes of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Communities. The pilot programme will be run in collaboration with the Department for Education and the Department of Health.

To be eligible for funding, an organisation must be a registered charity or have a charitable purpose, and to be successful bidders will need a demonstrable record in delivering projects, working with Gypsy, Roma or Traveller communities and a credible community presence. The deadline for applications is 18 February. All bidders will have the opportunity to receive impartial feedback on one draft application from officials in one of the three Departments if submitted by 4 February. For an application form and the programme specification document, email integration@communities.gsi.gov.uk with 'GRT' in the subject line.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

World Interfaith Harmony Week takes place from 1 to 7 February. It is a UN recognised Week which was proposed to the UN General Assembly by HM King Abdullah of Jordan. The first UN World Interfaith Harmony Week took place in February 2011. <http://worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com>

VisitMyMosque Day 2018 will take place on Sunday 18 February. In 2017 over 150 mosques across the UK held open days to welcome in their neighbours from other communities. For further information, visit www.visitmymosque.org.

Sadaqa Day will take place on Sunday 18 March. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Muslim community. mysadaqaday.org

The Big Lunch 10th anniversary will be held on Sunday 3 June. Across the years millions of people from different faith backgrounds have joined together to take part through street parties, BBQs, iftars and picnics.

<https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/thebiglunchhomepage>

The Great Get Together, inspired by the late Jo Cox MP, is taking place from Friday 22 to Sunday 24 June. <https://www.greatgettogether.org/>.

The **European Days of Jewish Culture and Heritage**, run by B'nai B'rith UK, will be on Sunday 2 September and from Sunday 7 to Sunday 14 October. The theme for this year will be 'Storytelling'. <http://bnaibrithuk.org/heritage-days/>

Sewa Day will take place this year on Sunday 14 October. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Hindu community. <http://www.sewaday.org/>

Inter Faith Week in England, Wales and Northern Ireland will take place from Sunday 11 to Sunday 18 November. It is led by the Inter Faith Network for the UK

www.interfaithweek.org See more [above](#).

Scottish Interfaith Week will take place from Sunday 11 to Sunday 18 November. It is led by Interfaith Scotland. <http://scottishinterfaithweek.org/>

Mitzvah Day will take place on Sunday 18 November. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Jewish community. On Mitzvah Day, people give their time, not their money, to make a difference to the community around them. Many events and projects held for the day have an inter faith focus. www.mitzvahday.org.uk/

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**SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK
TO INCREASE INTER FAITH UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION**

We need your help to ensure that the Inter Faith Network for the UK's work to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation continues and grows, helping people of all backgrounds to live and work together with mutual respect and shared commitment to the common good.

Gifts at all levels are much valued and make a real difference. You can donate directly at www.interfaith.org.uk/donate or via PayPal or JustGiving at <https://www.justgiving.com/interfaithnetwork-uk>

Donations can also be made by sending a cheque to The Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH.

REMEMBERING A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND

If you would like to make a gift in memory of a loved one, please get in touch by emailing remember@interfaith.org.uk or call us on 0207 730 0410.

A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

By leaving a gift in your will to the Inter Faith Network for the UK, you can leave a living inheritance to help deepen and strengthen inter faith understanding and cooperation in this country – for now and for the future. If you are thinking about making a will, the best thing to do is to get in touch with a professional will writer, such as a solicitor or advocate; they can help to ensure it is legally correct and that your wishes are met. If you have already made a will, you can still make an addition or amendment in the form of a codicil. If you would like to pledge a gift, please provide our name and address, along with our registered charity number 1068934.

Please get in touch with us if you have any queries.

You can call us on 0207 730 0410 or contact us at remember@interfaith.org.uk

Thank you!

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DIARY DATES

This section includes some of the events taking place around the UK during February. We also include information on diary dates between e-bulletins on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/events>.

Cambridge Inter-Faith Programme is holding a seminar on Thursday 1 February. This will be the first in its new Senior Seminar series in Inter-Religious Relations. The speaker, Dr Holger Zellentin, will be speaking on "Divine Law and Human Intervention: Judaism, Christianity, Islam and the US Constitutional Debate". Responses will be given by Dr Daniel Weiss and Dr Sophie Lunn-Rockliffe. The seminar will take place from 11am to 1pm in the Lightfoot Room, Faculty of Divinity, University of Cambridge and will be followed by an informal lunch. All are welcome. Anyone interested in attending, should email team@interfaith.cam.ac.uk.

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum is holding its next meeting on Thursday 1 February. This will be a discussion between Rabbi David Singer and Sheikh Anwar Mady, facilitated by Peter Osborne of the NI Community Relations Council. In their four overlapping years in Belfast Rabbi Singer and Sheikh Anwar have built a positive relationship at a time when religious intolerance has been on the increase. This meeting provides an opportunity to hear them reflect on their experiences of Belfast and the contribution that interfaith dialogue has made to their lives. It is being held from 7.30pm to 9.30pm and is being hosted by the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs at their offices in Belfast: 29 Notting Hill (off the Malone Road), Belfast BT9 5NS. To register attendance, email edwin.graham21@gmail.com.

Guildford and Godalming Interfaith Forum is holding a peace vigil to mark UN Interfaith Harmony Week on Thursday 1 February. The vigil will be held at St Joseph's Church, 12 Eastgate Gardens, Guildford, GU1 4AZ and attendees are invited to arrive at 7pm for a 7.30pm start. For further information, contact Carolyn Neogi on 01483 415773 or Bernard Jones on 01483 424257.

Interfaith MK is holding its next monthly meeting on Thursday 1 February when Wendi Momen will be speaking on 'The Bicentenary of the Birth of Baha'u'llah and an introduction to the Baha'i Faith'. The meeting is being held from 7.30pm to 9.30pm at St. Michael's Priory (formerly The Well), Newport Road, Willen, Milton Keynes MK15 9AA. Tea and refreshments will be provided at the end of the event. For further information, contact interfaithmk@gmail.com.

Woking People of Faith is hosting a members' tea party on Saturday 3 February for those interested in helping the group with events. The tea will be held at 3pm at St Dunstan's Church, Shaftesbury Road, Woking, GU22 7DT. For more information, contact Marian Nash at secretary@wpof.org.uk or visit www.wpof.org.uk.

The **Gandhi Foundation** is organising a Multifaith Celebration for Mahatma Gandhi on Saturday 3 February from 6pm to 8pm at the Bhavan, 4A Castletown Road, West Kensington, W14 9HE. The theme will be music, art and drama and more information is

available here: <https://gandhifoundation.org/2017/12/17/gandhi-foundation-multi-faith-celebration-2018/>.

The **Multifaith Chapel and Library at Burngreave Ashram** is hosting monthly informal sharing, lunch and seminar events on the first (occasionally second) Monday of the month. The next event is on Monday 5 February when Ruth Bird will be speaking on the theme of the seminars, which is 'My difficulties with faiths and cultures'. The programme is: 12 Noon informal sharing; 12.30pm bring and share lunch; 1.15pm Seminar. The Chapel is at 86 Spital Hill, Sheffield, S4 7LG. For further information contact 07932 017 929 or 0114 243 6688 or email BAMCL@outlook.com.

Interfaith Glasgow is holding a dialogue event on Monday 5 February entitled 'Scriptural Reasoning: Why should Jews, Christians and Muslims engage in Interfaith Dialogue?' to mark World Interfaith Harmony Week. The event will take place between 6pm and 8.30pm at the Interfaith Scotland Dialogue Centre, 110 Flemington Street, Glasgow, G21 4BF. This is a dialogue specifically for Muslims, Jews and Christians to explore together texts from their scriptures and shared heritage – attendees need not be experts in their tradition, just enthusiastic and willing to learn more about their own faith and those of others. The event is free and light refreshments will be provided. For further information, contact info@interfaithglasgow.org.

Tower Hamlets Inter Faith Forum is hosting its Manifesto Launch on Tuesday 6 February. Confirmed speakers include the Mayor of Tower Hamlets, John Biggs, and the Deputy Young Mayor, Sadia Ahmed. The launch takes place from 3pm to 6pm at Tower Hamlets Professional Development Centre, 229 Bethnal Green Road, Bethnal Green, London E2 6AB. For further information, email info@faithintowerhamlets.org or visit www.faithintowerhamlets.org.

Faith in Lancaster is holding its next Faithshare on Tuesday 6 February on the theme of 'Order and Structure in our living'. It is being held from 7.30pm to 9pm at Room 2, Friends Meeting House, Meeting House Lane, Lancaster. Teas and other hot drinks will be available and donations will be accepted towards the cost of the room. For further information, email info@faithinlancaster.org.uk.

Epsom and Ewell Inter Faith Forum is holding its Annual General Meeting and an Inter faith lunch on Wednesday 7 February at All Saints Church, West Ewell, from 12.30-2pm. For more information or to confirm your attendance, email lynescholefield@gmail.com.

Faith for the Climate is holding its next inter faith symposium on Wednesday 7 February entitled 'From Local to Global'. This will include workshops and talks to explore how faith traditions in the UK can help to tackle an issue that affects millions worldwide. Speakers include Ashok Sinha of the London Sustainability Commission, Lord Deben of the UK Committee on Climate Change, Shaykh Ibrahim Mogra of the Muslim Council of Britain and the Rt Revd Richard Cheetham, Bishop of Kingston and Rabbi Alexandra Wright of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue. It is being held at 5.30pm at The

Liberal Jewish Synagogue, 28 St John's Wood Road, London NW8 7HA. Further information and ticket booking at <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/event/FDIMDM>.

Brighton and Hove Interfaith Contact Group is holding a day event on Saturday 10 February. This is being called 'Angel Day' and will be an opportunity to hear, see and learn about angels in many faiths and cultures and also those to be found in Brighton. It will be a free family drop-in day with art, music, workshops, storytelling, poetry, an angel trail and more. It is being held from 11am to 4pm at Brighton Museum, Royal Pavilion Gardens, Brighton BN1 1EE. For further information, visit www.interfaithcontactgroup.com.

Interfaith Glasgow, in partnership with St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art, is holding the last of a monthly dialogue series on the theme of 'Faith to Faith' on Sunday 11 February from 2 to 4pm. The dialogue is on the theme of 'Faith and activism'. The event will feature keynote speakers, dialogue and a question and answer session. The event will be held at St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art, 2 Castle Street, Glasgow, G4 0RH. For further information, contact development@interfaithglasgow.org.

Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship is holding an event on the theme of 'Faith in Elderly People: The Leeds Experience' on Monday 12 February at 7.30pm. Speakers include The Rev Dr Albert Jewell and the Revd Canon Alan Griggs. The event is being held at the Friends' Meeting House, 188 Woodhouse Lane, Leeds, LS2 9DX. For more information contact John Summerwill on 01132697895 or email chair@concord-leeds.org.uk.

Windsor and Maidenhead Community Forum continues its dialogue series on Tuesday 13 February at 7pm with the theme 'What is True Strength?'. The event will end with refreshments at 8.30pm and will take place at Dedworth Green Baptist Church, Smiths Lane, Windsor, SL4 5PE. The full programme of upcoming dialogues is available at <http://www.wamcf.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/WAMCF-2018-DIALOGUES.pdf>.

York Interfaith Group is holding its next monthly meeting on Tuesday 13 February. The theme will be 'What people most misunderstand about my faith'. Speakers will be Imam Abid Salik, Mark Cosens and Dr Avtar Matharu and the evening is being chaired by Dr Harriet Crabtree, Executive Director of IFN. It is being held at 7.30pm at The Hudson Room, City of York Council, West Offices, Station Rise, York, YO1 6HT. For further information, contact Mark Cosens on 07796095152 or email yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com.

Woking People of Faith, in partnership with **Surrey Faith Links**, **Woking Action for Peace** and others, is organising the 'Woking Debates 2018'. The second debate will be held on Saturday 17 February from 11am to 12.30pm on the theme of 'Is our democracy breaking down?'. The debates are held at Christ Church, Jubilee Square, Woking GU21 6YG. For further information, email Keith Scott at keithsc_2000@yahoo.com.

Sheffield Interfaith is holding a seminar on Tuesday 20 February at 6.00pm when Daryoush Mehrshahi will be speaking about Zoroastrianism. The meeting is being held at Shirley House, 31 Psalter Lane, Sheffield S11 8YL and refreshments will be provided. The

event is open to all faiths and everybody. For further information, contact office@standrewspalterlane.org.uk or telephone 0114 267 8289.

The **London Inter Faith Centre** is beginning a new occasional series on food and festivals in world religions at 2pm on Wednesday 21 February. The first talk is by Anne Sardeson on 'Lent and Fasting in the Christian tradition'. For more information, visit http://londoninterfaith.org.uk/event/food-and-festivals-in-religious-traditions-lent-and-fasting/?instance_id=3446.

Bristol Multi-Faith Forum is holding its annual Diverse Doors Open Day on Sunday 25 February. Attendees will be able to visit a range of places of worship and discover the different faith communities that exist in Bristol. There will also be a 'Faith Trail'. For more information about what is planned for the day or to book tickets for the mini-bus 'Faith Trail', contact Lily Khandker on 07789 040 267 or email info@bristolmultifaithforum.org.uk.

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For more information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales see:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org.uk

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **22 March** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer: Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH
www.interfaith.org.uk www.facebook.com/IFNetUK www.twitter.com/IFNetUK

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IFN e-bulletin

March/April 2018

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **14 May** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and projects and future events.

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IFN also highlights news and projects of interest through Twitter (www.twitter.com/IFNetUK) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/IFNetUK) and, where about Inter Faith Week, through (www.twitter.com/IFWeek and www.facebook.com/IFWeek).

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

Integration

Government Green Paper on Integrated Communities Strategy

On 14 March Communities Secretary Sajid Javid announced the publication of a Green Paper consulting on the Government's proposed Integrated Communities Strategy.

The Green Paper invites views on the Government's vision for building strong integrated communities "where people – whatever their background – live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities". It sets out a programme of actions that it is proposed to take across Government to deliver this vision at the local and national level.

Key proposals in the Green Paper include:

- identifying priority policies and services to review across government to determine how they can drive integration;
- testing a package of information for recent migrants to support them to integrate into their communities and to build understanding of life in Britain;
- addressing the segregation of schools along ethnic or faith lines that exists in some places, even where the local population is very diverse, for example by promoting mixing and twinning arrangements between schools in areas of high segregation;
- developing a new strategy for English Language in England, to improve the coordination of provision to learners and help improve their outcomes;
- trialling new approaches through Jobcentre Plus to break down the barriers to employment and support people from isolated communities into work; and
- empowering marginalised women, including exploring the legal and practical challenges of limited reform of the law on marriage so that civil marriages are conducted before or at the same time as religious ceremonies.

The Green Paper also sets out "a new localised approach to delivering these policy priorities". It says that this approach recognises that integration challenges are not uniform throughout the country so tailored local plans and interventions are needed to address the issues that are specific to a particular place. This local approach will be trialled initially in five Integration Areas: Blackburn with Darwen, Bradford, Peterborough, Walsall and Waltham Forest.

In the Paper, the Government says that it will "engage directly with individuals, communities, businesses, voluntary and faith organisations and local government" to "shape and deliver" its proposals. It notes that "Religion has played an important role in our society for many hundreds of years and has contributed to the formation of many of our shared values. The government is firmly committed to the principle of freedom of religion and belief. More than this, we understand that faith communities make a valuable contribution to our society by creating strong social networks, supporting vulnerable people, undertaking charitable work, and providing education". Faith communities religious organisations and inter faith engagement are mentioned at a number of points in relation to such issues as community cohesion, schools, marriage law and balance between freedom to practise religion and the rights and freedom of others.

The document makes reference to inter faith engagement, saying "We support interfaith work as a means of breaking down barriers between communities, building greater trust and understanding, and removing the conditions which can allow intolerance and unequal treatment to flourish" and gives a number examples of inter faith engagement, including the Inter Faith Network for the UK

The strategy is for England and the majority of the policy proposals set out in the Green Paper are in areas where responsibility is devolved to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. There are some proposals on the immigration system, which are reserved matters. The Government has said that it will work closely with the devolved administrations to share learning about the integration challenges and our learning of what works in tackling them

The Green Paper can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/integrated-communities-strategy-green-paper>. The consultation period will end on Tuesday 5 June.

Mayor of London's Social Integration Strategy

On 16 March Mayor of London Sadiq Khan launched a new social integration strategy for London. He emphasised the need to tackle divisions along lines of social class, age, gender, sexuality and employment status.

The strategy focuses on a number of areas, including bringing together families from different backgrounds through the London Family Fund; incentivising volunteering; using sport to build relationships between different communities; addressing the underrepresentation of different groups in the workforce; improving accessibility to English for Speakers of Other Languages courses; and exploring new ways of measuring social integration in the capital.

The full press release is available at <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/sadiq-launches-the-london-family-fund>.

MCB report on Muslims and integration in the UK

On 14 March the Muslim Council of Britain launched a report entitled 'Our Shared British Future: Muslims and integration in the UK'. The report includes a collection of diverse voices on integration in Britain and sets out a number of expectations for the Government's approach to integration.

<http://www.mcb.org.uk/we-need-an-equal-integration-strategy-for-all-britons-muslim-council-of-britain/>

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Commonwealth

During the week of 16 April, the UK Government will be holding the biggest meeting of Heads of Government the country has ever hosted. Up to 53 leaders from across the Commonwealth and thousands of people from across business and civil society will be attending the summit, which will be attended by the UK Prime Minister and members of The Royal Family. It will take place across a range of venues including Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle. The week begins with four forum events - a Youth Forum, a Women's Forum, a People's Forum and a Business Forum - across three days, bringing together representatives from the worlds of business, civil society and government. The forums will offer an opportunity for Commonwealth dialogue and provide a platform for wider debate of some of the key issues and challenges, in advance of discussions by leaders during the summit.

The summit's overall theme is 'Towards a common future', which is focused on building on the strengths of the Commonwealth to ensure that the organisation is responsive to global challenges and can deliver "a more prosperous, secure, sustainable and fair future for all its citizens, particularly its young people".

Parliamentarians and religious leaders from around the Commonwealth will gather at Lambeth Palace to discuss ways to strengthen religious liberty. Details of the event were given by the Bishop of Rochester, James Langstaff, during a debate in the House of Lords – on 22 March. <http://www.anglicannews.org/news/2018/03/lambeth-palace-gathering-to-strengthen-religious-liberty-as-commonwealth-leaders-meet.aspx>

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Hate crime and extremism

Across the last month there have been a number of disturbing incidents and the level of reported hate incidents, more generally, continues to be high.

IFN's Co-Chairs sent the message below to member bodies on 12 March:

“The last few days have seen a number of disturbing incidents, from hate-filled letters to a number of Muslims headed 'Punish a Muslim Day', to a Sikh being asked by a venue in Nottingham to remove his turban or leave, and racist chanting outside a student's room at Nottingham Trent University. There was also recently a report of a Sikh having their turban dislodged while waiting for a meeting outside Portcullis House, Houses of Parliament, apparently by someone who thought the Sikh was Muslim. The level of reported hate incidents, more generally, continues to be high.

The climate is a disturbing one and responding to hate and religious illiteracy will be on the agendas of both the IFN local inter faith practitioner day in London next Monday and the Faith Communities Forum's meeting this week.

These circumstances underline the importance of effective prevention and response, including, very significantly, that of faith and inter faith bodies. You may wish to circulate or recirculate to your members the document Looking after One Another: The Safety and Security of our Faith Communities <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/looking-after-one-another-the-safety-and-security-of-our-faith-communities-2017>. If you are among the bodies which are working with their local authorities on protocols for preventing and responding to hate crime, or if you are involved in other faith-based or inter faith responses to this issue, it would be helpful if you could let the IFN office have details.”

Bishop Richard Atkinson and Jatinder Singh Birdi, Co-Chairs, Inter Faith Network for the UK

The Punish a Muslim letters have been strongly condemned and police forces have been taking action to reassure communities in their areas. In some areas counter action is taking place, such as a solidarity gathering being organised by the North Kirklees Inter-Faith Council on Saturday 30 March outside Dewsbury Town Hall

<https://www.examiner.co.uk/news/people-faiths-stage-show-solidarity-14461731>

Hindu and Sikh communities and some Christian groups have expressed concern about attacks on members of their communities and their premises – in some cases due to mistaken identity. Conversation is ongoing between them and the Government about availability of relevant data.

The NSPCC noted on 20 March that: ‘Recent figures from UK police forces show 5,349 hate crimes were recorded against under-18s with a racial, religious or faith-based element, a 14% increase in 1 year’ and has launched a new programme in response.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-we-do/news-opinion/childline-discrimination-understand-me/>.

There has also been growing concern about the rise of extreme voices on the far right. Recently release figures to March 2017 show that while the majority of referrals to Prevent, continue to relate to Islamist extremism, the number of people referred to a UK government counter-extremism programme because of concerns about right wing extremism has risen by more than a quarter, official figures show. 968 such individuals were referred to Prevent, an increase of 28% from the previous year. The proportion of referrals for right wing extremism rose in the year to 16% of all referrals, up from 10% in the previous period. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/mar/27/far-right-referrals-prevent-programme-up-by-more-than-a-quarter-counter-extremism>.

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Anti-Semitism

The Community Security Trust, a charity that protects British Jews from anti-Semitism and related threat, published last month its report on anti-Semitic incidents in 2017. The report notes that it recorded 1,382 anti-Semitic incidents in 2017, the highest annual total CST has ever recorded and a 3% increase on 2016. It also notes that there was a 34% increase in the number of anti-Semitic incidents recorded in the category of Assaults. The full report can be found at <https://cst.org.uk/data/file/a/b/IR17.1517308734.pdf>.

On 26 March the Board of Deputies and the Jewish Leadership Council presented an open letter to the Parliamentary Labour Party Chair John Cryer, expressing their strong concerns about anti-Semitism within the Labour Party. A protest gathering took place on Parliament Green that evening to protest against the stance of the Labour Leader, Mr Jeremy Corbyn. The full text of the letter and Mr Corbyn's response can be found at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-43540795>.

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Commission for Countering Extremism

On 15 March the Lead Commissioner for Countering Extremism, Sara Khan, set out her plans to engage and consult, produce a comprehensive study and make recommendations to government. She will spend the coming weeks sharing her plans in a series of meetings, visits and roundtables.

Commission plan for 2018:

- The Commission will be seeking input to its work from the full range of voices required to tackle a problem that affects so much of society. This will include public consultation, discussions with government bodies, and insights from experts, academics and think tanks. The Commission will publish a regular update which will summarise its engagement activity.

- The Commission will produce a comprehensive study that exposes the scale and consequences of extremism in this country alongside the great work already being done to tackle it.
- The Commission will challenge the whole of society on what more can be done, and publish recommendations to the Home Secretary by the end of its first year on what the future structure and priorities of the Commission should be.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/extremism-commissioner-confirms-plans-for-2018>

Also on 15 March, the Home Office published the Charter for the Commission which sets out the Government's commitment to the Commission for Countering Extremism including its purpose, priorities, accountabilities, and its outputs in its early months of operation. The Charter also confirms how the Government will work with the Commission. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/charter-for-the-commission-for-countering-extremism/charter-for-the-commission-for-countering-extremism>

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Safeguarding

Charities have responsibilities to ensure that they safeguard children and young people as well as vulnerable adults. Information from the government on how charities can protect children and adults at risk can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/charities-how-to-protect-vulnerable-groups-including-children>. The Strengthening Faith Institutions programme, supported by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, provides training on this issue for faith communities: <http://faithsforum.com/strengthening-faith-institutions-3/>.

More widely, sexual abuse of young people continues to draw focus. The Truth Project was set up for victims and survivors of child sexual abuse to share their experiences in a supportive and confidential setting. It is part of the [Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse](#) (IICSA) which was set up in 2015 to investigate organisations and institutions that have failed to protect children from sexual abuse, see: <https://www.iicsa.org.uk/>. By sharing their experiences, victims and survivors make an important contribution to the work of the Inquiry and their experiences will feed into and influence IICSA's findings and recommendations.

IICSA is examining institutional failures in the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches and considering whether to conduct a separate investigation into the Jehovah's Witnesses UK. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/mar/08/child-sex-abuse-inquiry-considers-separate-jehovahs-witnesses-uk-investigation>

The problem of grooming by gangs has been again in the news. Further arrests have recently been made as part of the National Crime Agency's investigation into [child sexual exploitation](#) in Rotherham. The investigation is continuing and IICSA will be holding

sessions in Telford in the next few months about abuse since the 1980s. These, and other similar, cases have caused great concern.

The different background of the victims (predominantly white working class) and of the majority of the male perpetrators (predominantly of Pakistani or Bangladeshi heritage) in the particular grooming cases mentioned has become the focus of at times Islamophobic material and campaigning in some quarters, including the far right. There has also been concern expressed within the Hindu and Sikh communities about young women from their communities and grooming.

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Sport and inter faith relations

In November the Inter Faith Network for the UK, in partnership with Sporting Equals, held an Inter Faith Week event on 'Using the power of sport to build good inter faith relations'. The report on this has been published this month and can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/publications>.

One of the projects that presented at the event was an inter faith sports programme for women in Manchester, linked to FODIP, and with early support from Near Neighbours and the Council of Christians and Jews, and this was the winner of the BEDSA Connecting Communities Award - Spirit of 2012 .

At the BEDSA awards BEDSA announced a £1.8 million programme Breaking Boundaries, set to bring together young people, their families and communities through regular engagement in cricket: as players, fans and volunteers. Breaking Boundaries is a three-year project (2018 – 2021) developed in partnership with the English Cricket Board, Professor Ted Cante and the Institute of Community Cohesion (iCoCo). The programme will be delivered by the Youth Sport Trust and Sporting Equals, and will make the most of cricket's potential to bring different ethnic and faith communities closer together, fostering mutual respect and friendships. <http://www.sportingequals.org.uk/news-blogs/launch-of-breaking-boundaries-project-at-the-2018-bedsa-awards.html>

The Mayor of London announced on 21 March a new flagship community sports programme, Sport Unites. This will invest in initiatives that use sport to bring people from different backgrounds together, strengthen local communities and improve the physical and mental health of all Londoners. For further information, visit <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/sports/sport-unites>.

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Places of worship

In December, Historic England published the latest edition of Places of Worship Selected Listings Guide <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/dlsg-places-worship/>. This selection guide provides first a summary historical overview of the various Christian churches down to the end of the nineteenth century – Anglican (Church of England), Catholic and Nonconformist (Dissenting) – and collectively churches and chapels of the twentieth century. Then follows a section of the buildings of Judaism, the mosque in England and buildings of other faiths. A final section sets out some general principles guiding the listing of places of worship concerning - among others - group value, fixtures and fittings, alteration and degree of survival, churchyard structures and grading.

Historic England has been working with partners over recent years to develop and deepen an understanding of the landscape of faith buildings in 20th century England, including the long-standing traditions of Christianity and Judaism. An event this month focused on those faith groups which arrived in the UK in the late 19th and 20th centuries, and have since made a significant contribution to the heritage of a modern and multicultural historic environment. Historic England and Public Spirit brought together at that a new body of research on Buddhist, Hindu, Jain, Muslim, Sikh, and Zoroastrian places of worship with heritage practitioners, researchers and theorists for a discussion on issues of heritage practice and heritage discourse in the field of multiculturalism, multiple identities and the historic environment. Talks from the day are available at <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLGOCpw7BaRwW8IgJAY4fCaxxH9FFIV-gx>.

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Jewish Armed Forces chaplains with multi faith role

The Armed Forces all have multi faith chaplaincies and have developed this work across the last decade. Earlier this month the historic Bevis Marks Synagogue hosted the instalment of the Army's first Jewish commissioned Padres as Chaplains with a multi-faith role. The event coincided with the 350th anniversary of Jewish military service to the Crown and 126 years of Jewish Chaplaincy in the British Armed Forces.

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INTERNATIONAL

Parliament of the World's Religions

The 7th international convening of the Parliament of the World's Religions will take place in Toronto, Ontario from 1-7 November 2018, to coincide with the 125th anniversary of the inaugural World Parliament of Religions. The theme of the conference will be 'The Promise of Inclusion, the Power of Love: Pursuing Global Understanding, Reconciliation and

Change' and sub-themes include 'Women's Dignity Across the World's Wisdom Traditions and Society'; 'Interfaith Has No Age – Youth Voices for Change' and 'Peace and Love: Not War, Hate and Violence', among others. Further information is at <https://parliamentofreligions.org/>.

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World Interfaith Harmony Week

Interfaith Glasgow received a prize in the awards for events held for the 2018 World Interfaith Harmony Week (WIHW). For more information about that and about WIHW more generally see: <http://worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com/2018-winners/>.

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INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK NEWS

Meeting of IFN's Faith Communities Forum

A meeting of IFN's Faith Communities Forum was held on 15 March. On the agenda, as well as IFN matters, were:

- youth inter faith engagement, including:
 - an overview of the work of the National Citizens Service (NCS) programme and its significance for young people, inter faith engagement and faith communities' involvement by Naim Moukarzel of the NCS Trust;
 - a presentation by Padideh Sabeti of the Office of External Affairs of the UK Baha'i Community and Co-Facilitator of IFN's Youth Inter Faith Engagement Advisory Group on IFN's current work with young people, its member bodies and others to develop a new edition of the Connect youth inter faith guide and a discussion paper for the youth focused National Meeting;
- current issues of interest or concern to faith communities, including a discussion on hate crime in light of recent events; and
- the inter faith engagement of faith communities.

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Day event for local inter faith practitioners

On 19 March IFN held a day event in London for local inter faith practitioners from inter faith groups across the UK to share their experiences, discuss issues of common interest and concern, and provide focused learning opportunities about practical aspects of developing successful inter faith programmes. This followed on from similar meetings held in Bristol, Coventry, Manchester and Sheffield in recent years.

The day opened with a presentation from Jatinder Singh Birdi, Co-Chair of IFN, followed by reflections on the importance of local inter faith organisations and local authorities working in partnership by the Revd Alan Green, Chair of Tower Hamlets Inter Faith Forum and George Ballantyne, Voluntary and Community Sector Engagement Manager at Leicester City Council. During the rest of the morning session there were presentations by Santosh Kundi of Warwick District Faiths Forum about the Forum's religious literacy work and Ryad Khodabocus of Luton Council of Faiths with a focus on that Council's work with schools. Speakers in the afternoon included Elliot Steinberg, Policy Officer at the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, who talked about the work of the Faith and Integration Team at MHCLG on tackling hatred and tensions and its Hate Crime Action Plan, Sister Elizabeth O'Donohoe of Islington Faiths Forum, who spoke about the response of the Forum to the attack at Finsbury Park Mosque and the importance of building local links and Chris Wood of Norwich InterFaith Link who spoke about the Link's Inter Faith Week activities. Closing reflections were offered by Narendra Waghela, IFN Trustee and member of Leicester Council of Faiths, and Dr Harriet Crabtree, IFN's Executive Director.

There was an opportunity to take part in discussion groups on working with schools to enhance the learning and inter faith experience of students; using social media to increase the impact of local inter faith work; developing successful programmes and widening the circle of engagement; initiating new local inter faith bodies and reviewing the work and direction of existing ones in changing times; increasing engagement with and by young people; and partnership working with other bodies such as local authorities in pursuit of common aims such as inter faith understanding, cooperation and integration.

Reports from previous IFN Day Events for Local Inter Faith Practitioners can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/publications>.

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Local inter faith Twitter campaign

IFN is running a short Twitter campaign across the end of March and early April, with an #localinterfaith hashtag. The aim is to raise the profile of local inter faith organisations, highlight positive stories about local inter faith initiatives and share good practice and ideas.

If you are a member of a multi faith local inter faith organisation which is undertaking activity such as meetings, dialogues, festival celebrations or school visits during one of the weeks, or which has current projects that you would like to be considered for inclusion, please email ifnet@interfaith.org.uk with 'Local inter faith tweets' in the subject line. Please include information up to 240 characters including spaces and up to 3 photographs that you think would be good to use.

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Young people and inter faith engagement

IFN is continuing its programme of work on youth inter faith engagement, entitled 'Connect: the inter faith engagement of young people'. This will lead to publication of a new edition of IFN's youth inter faith action guide *Connect: Different Faiths, Shared Values* <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/connect> and also feed into a special youth-focused National Meeting of IFN in July. The programme is being carried out with the help of an Advisory Group, co-facilitated by IFN Trustee Padideh Sabeti and youth co-facilitator, Jaskiran Kaur Mehmi.

IFN has been consulting in a number of ways. Key to the programme is hearing the views of young people. IFN has therefore held focus group sessions in Birmingham, Cardiff, Glasgow, Leeds and London for young people aged 16-25 across February and March. For further information about the project, please contact Ashley Beck at the IFN office (Ashley.beck@interfaith.org.uk).

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Inter Faith Week

Inter Faith Week 2018 will take place from 11 – 18 November. It will be the 10th Inter Faith Week.

Inter Faith Week begins on Remembrance Sunday each year and runs until the following Sunday. The Week begins on Remembrance Sunday and many people of different faiths and beliefs will be marking that in some way. The additional Sunday provides the opportunity for other weekend events to take place.

Civic remembrance activities are often held on a multi faith basis, recognising the contributions made by people of all faiths and beliefs during armed conflicts – whether through military service or work for peace. This year, Remembrance Sunday will also be Armistice Day, and the centenary of the end of World War One.

Inter Faith Week is a week about respect, understanding, relationship building and genuine discussion about issues - about 'living well together'. It is a tremendous opportunity to reach out, learn, make new connections and develop friendships and working partnerships which help make for greater neighbourliness and more integrated and cohesive communities. It is also a great platform for all who want to increase religious literacy and understanding of diversity.

Last year for the first time, IFN made available Inter Faith Week branded pin badges to buy via the Inter Faith Week website. These proved to be very popular, and it is planned to do this again in 2018. If there are other items which you think would be particularly helpful in spreading the word and raising awareness about the Week, please let the IFN office know and we will explore these.

Scottish Interfaith Week's dates will also be 11 to 18 November. Further information from admin@interfaithscotland.org.

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

3FF LGBT+ Faith programme

3FF has launched a new LGBT+ faith programme, inviting LGBT+ organisations to join them for tailored training and support. The aim of the project is to help LGBT+ groups be more confident, skilled and inclusive in their work with people from different belief backgrounds. Participants will be offered a one-day training session and follow-up coaching and support meeting a month later, to ensure the training has been implemented and to discuss any challenges specific to particular organisations or groups. For more information and to register interest, visit <http://www.3ff.org.uk/blog/lgbt-faith/>.

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Interfaith Food Justice Network

Interfaith Glasgow, in partnership with Faith in Community Scotland's Transformation Team is supporting the Interfaith Food Justice Network to create opportunities for networking, collaboration, and sharing of best practice between diverse religious and non-religious groups in Glasgow who work in the area of food justice. The network is a growing group of local groups and organisations in and around Glasgow who are tackling food poverty. More information about the Network can be found here <https://www.facebook.com/interfaithfoodjustice/>. For more information or to get involved, email Magdalen Lambkin at development@interfaithglasgow.org.

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

IFN publications

The report of IFN's 30th Anniversary National Meeting is available at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/moving-forward-together-report-of-the-30th-anniversary-national-meeting-of->.

The report of the IFN Day Event for Local Inter Faith Practitioners held in October in Manchester is available at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/ifn-day-event-for-local-inter-faith-practitioners-a-short-report-manchester>

The report of the Inter Faith Week event that IFN held in partnership with Sporting Equals UK on 'Using the power of sport to build good inter faith relations' is available at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/publications>

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Religious festivals and calendars

The pattern of religious festivals in different faith communities changes throughout the year. A number have recently taken place such as Naw Ruz (Baha'i) and NoRuz (Zoroastrian), and Rama Navami (Hindu). Others are taking place now or shortly, including Mahavira Jayanti (Jain); Good Friday and Easter (Christian) and Pesach/Passover (Jewish).

The Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education, an IFN member body, produces a calendar of religious festivals, which is available in electronic format, and also a wallchart which can be purchased in hard copy.

<http://www.shapworkingparty.org.uk/calendar.html>

A number of local inter faith organisations produce calendars each year. Examples include Warwick District Faiths Forum (<http://www.wdfaithsforum.org.uk/faiths-calendar/faiths-calendar-2017-2/>) which produces a desk top calendar, Islington Faiths Forum (http://www.islingtonfaithsforum.org.uk/?page_id=132) which produces a wall calendar populated with artwork created by schoolchildren, and the Royal Borough of Kingston-upon-Thames Inter-Faith Forum which has supported Kingston Race Equalities Council in producing a wall calendar.

IFN has also produced, in consultation with its Faith Communities Forum, guidance on greetings for different religious festivals. Each faith community chose two festivals on which it would be pleased to receive greetings. A list of the dates and greetings for these is available at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/faith-festivals-guidance-on-sending-greetings>.

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General Data Protection Regulation

Data protection legislation will be changing with the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which takes effect from 25 May.

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations has produced guidance for charities on how to prepare for GDPR. This can be found at

<https://knowhownonprofit.org/organisation/operations/dataprotection>.

The Inter Faith Network has been writing to individuals on its database to check whether they are content for their details to be held by IFN and to receive IFN mailings. Anyone receiving this e-bulletin who wishes to have their details deleted from IFN's database should contact ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

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Interfaith Scotland training – Tackling Hate Speech in Youth Work

Interfaith Scotland is holding a number of free one-day training courses on tackling hate speech in a youth setting. The training aims to equip those working with young people in a professional or voluntary capacity with tools for identifying hate speech, managing a situation when it occurs, and supporting transformation of the beliefs and attitudes that underpin the behaviour. The next courses will take place on 12 April, 8 May and 21 June in Glasgow, and on 17 July in Edinburgh. For further information or to discuss arranging an in-house training session for staff, visit <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/what-we-do/outside-in-free-training-on-tackling-hate-speech-in-youth-work/> or contact Jamie Spurway at jamie@interfaithscotland.org or on 07921 439 952.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS, AND NOMINATIONS

World Congress of Faiths Essay Award

Submissions are now open for the World Congress of Faiths Essay Award 2018. Undergraduate and postgraduate students at UK universities are invited to submit a maximum of 3,000 words on the question 'Can inter faith dialogue achieve any lasting value for society?' by 28 August. The winner will receive £300 and have their essay published in *Interreligious Insight*. All entrants will receive free membership to World Congress of Faiths for a year. For further details, visit <http://www.worldfaiths.org/2018-essay-award/>.

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FaithAction Faith and Health Award

FaithAction has launched the FaithAction Health Award, to highlight work undertaken by faith groups to improve health and care. It is looking for nominations of projects that have a clear purpose, can show how they benefit local people, work in partnership with other health or care organisations and will inspire others to action. The first prize is a short film promoting the winner's work and a new laptop, and the second and third prize winners will receive a tablet computer and an hour's consultancy with a senior mentor of the FaithAction team. Applications close at 5pm on Thursday 29 March. For further details

and information on how to enter, visit <http://www.faihaction.net/news/2018/02/08/celebrating-your-work/>.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

IFN's website lists job and internship opportunities with a significant inter faith dimension with IFN member organisations at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/jobs>.

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St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace – various roles

St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace is recruiting for three paid positions:

- Youth Leadership Projects & Events Coordinator: Spiritual Activism - this role is for 3 days per week and the deadline for applications is 9am on Monday 9 April.
- Programme Manager: Christian Reconciliation Programmes – this is a full-time role and the deadline for applications is Friday 6 April.
- Venue hire assistants – these are part-time, casual roles paid on an hourly basis.

They are also looking for a Communications and Design Intern.

For more details about each of the roles and how to apply, visit <https://stethelburgas.org/get-involved/vacancies-and-volunteering/>.

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Joseph Interfaith Foundation - Project Coordinator

The Joseph Interfaith Foundation (www.josephinterfaithfoundation.org), a national Muslim-Jewish inter faith organisation, is seeking a new Muslim Project Coordinator to start work in May. It is interested to hear from Muslim first or second year undergraduates with close connections to Isocs and the Muslim community. The role will be an opportunity to learn about inter faith and social action.

It is a paid role for 3 hours per week. For full details, send an email to Mehri Niknam, Executive Director, at info@josephinterfaithfoundation.org, including a short CV in the body of the email.

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Welwyn Hatfield Interfaith Schools' Peace Education Resource - Volunteers

Welwyn Hatfield Interfaith Schools' Peace Education Resource (Whisper) is seeking volunteers to support RE lessons in Welwyn and Hatfield, to enable children to meet people from the different faiths they study and to see peace between faiths in action. Volunteers may talk about a festival or day-to-day faith practices, tell religious stories and answer children's questions. The opportunity is open to anyone who is actively practising their faith or has a strong understanding of their faith heritage. Expenses are paid. For more information, google 'Whisper Interfaith' or contact Wendy on 07904 517 384 or Wendy.Lidgate@outlook.com.

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Inter Faith Network for the UK - Volunteers

IFN has a new volunteering opportunity beginning in April for 4 to 8 hours per week to help on projects such as national Inter Faith Week (www.interfaithweek.org). If you have good organisational, social media and communications skills and would like to know more, please email Hannah Cassidy at ifnet@interfaith.org.uk with a copy of your CV, marking it 'volunteering' and we will let you have further information.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Building a Stronger Britain Together programme

The Home Office programme Building a Stronger Britain Together closed its latest call for grants on 16 February. However, the programme is continuing to offer in-kind support such as social media training, technical assistance to help a group improve their website, or capacity building work to help a group protect more vulnerable individuals. It is open to bodies in England and Wales. Applications for in-kind support can be submitted at any time.

Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/building-a-stronger-britain-together>.

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Faiths in Scotland Community Action Fund

Faiths in Scotland Community Action Fund continues to be open for applications to its rolling small grants scheme. Small grants of up to £750 are available to faith based anti - poverty projects with an annual turnover of £30,000 or less and can be applied for at any

time. For more information call 0141 221 4576 or visit <https://www.faithincommunityscotland.org/faith-in-community-scotland-action-fund/our-grants/smallgrants/>.

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Supermarket grant schemes

Bags of Help is Tesco's local community grant scheme where the money raised from the 5p bag levy in Tesco stores is being used to fund community projects across the UK. The projects must meet the criteria of promoting community participation in the development and use of outdoor spaces. Bags of Help is administered by Groundwork in England and Wales and supported in Scotland by Greenspace Scotland. (It is not available in Northern Ireland where carrier bag money is managed centrally.) Further information is at <http://www.groundwork.org.uk/Sites/tescocommunityscheme/pages/Category/the-tesco-bags-of-help-programme-tes2>.

Waitrose supports charities through its Community Matters scheme. Local branches are each given £1,000 to share out between three local good causes each month such as welfare organisations, community groups and schools. To apply, fill in a Community Matters form at a local branch or contact the branch champion for community giving at a local branch, using their branch finder tool at <http://www.waitrose.com/branches/index.aspx>.

Sainsbury's stores each partner with a Local Charity of the Year voted on by the local people. To apply, fill in a nomination form at your local store. More information is at <https://www.sainsburyslocalcharity.co.uk/>.

The Asda Foundation offers grants for local community projects which will "make a real long term difference, benefitting the wider community with [its] vision to 'Transform Communities, improving lives locally.'" Further details are at <https://www.asdafoundation.org/applying-for-funding/significant-local-community-projects>.

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Comic Relief's Core Strength Grants Programme

This programme offers grants to help cover the day to day costs of small locally led and based voluntary and community sector groups that are doing 'much needed' work in their local communities. Grants of between £1,000 and £5,000 or between £1,000 and £10,000 (depending on the local community foundation) are to be used to support groups that can evidence a sustained beneficial impact on people's lives who are excluded or disadvantaged. The guidance notes "We recognise that faith-based organisations undertake valuable work in supporting disadvantaged and marginalised communities both in the UK and internationally, and we are able to support their work. We would expect

these organisations to be able to evidence the practical implementation of their diversity policy, so that people from all faiths or none can become a member of staff, board member, volunteer, or benefit from the work.” For further information, visit <http://www.comicrelief.com/apply-for-grants/open-grants-initiatives/core-strength-local-communities>.

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Funding websites

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) offers advice on fundraising and grants on its Knowhow Nonprofit site at <https://knowhownonprofit.org/funding>.

Funding Central - <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/default.aspx> - is a free website for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises in England that provides access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, together with tools and resources for supporting organisations to develop sustainable income strategies appropriate to their needs. Similar websites for funding in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at Funding Scotland - <http://www.fundingscotland.com/> - Wales Council for Voluntary Action - <http://www.wcva.org.uk/funding/search> - and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland - <https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

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Heritage Lottery Fund grants to commemorate First World War

The Heritage Lottery Fund has £4million of funding available for communities to get involved in projects marking the Centenary of the First World War. Projects applying for funding must be able to meet one of a number of successful outcomes based on heritage, people and communities. Grants can be given between £3,000 and £10,000. There is no current deadline for applications as grants are considered on a monthly basis up to 2019.

Further information can be found at <https://www.hlf.org.uk/looking-funding/our-grant-programmes/first-world-war-then-and-now>.

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Community foundations

Community foundations are local, grant-making organisations to which local community organisations can apply for funding. There are 46 community foundations in the UK, covering Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and most of England. A map of community foundations across the UK and how to contact them, can be found at <http://www.ukcommunityfoundations.org/our-network>.

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Website and Facebook grants

The Transform Foundation is offering funding to charities to help with new website builds. Grants of £18,000 are available. It is also offering grants towards Facebook advertising of £5,000. For further information and to apply, visit www.transformfoundation.org.uk.

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Google and charities

The internet search engine Google is offering a service to registered charities which brings: Google Ad Grants: Free AdWords advertising to promote your website on Google through keyword targeting; YouTube Nonprofit Programme: Access exclusive resources, features and programs designed to maximise your organisation's impact on YouTube; and Google Apps for Non-profit: Free version of the Google Apps business productivity suite, including Gmail, Docs, Calendar and more. For further information, visit www.google.co.uk/intl/en/nonprofits/join.

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Subsidised fundraising workshops

The Foundation for Social Improvement offers heavily subsidised training programmes for small charities across the UK. The courses cover a wide range of subjects from event planning to leadership but the majority of their training courses are focused on helping charities learn the skills to raise and earn income. Further information can be found at <http://www.thefsi.org/services/training>. Upcoming courses are in Ipswich, Liverpool and Leeds in April and May.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

The Big Lunch 10th anniversary will be held on Sunday 3 June. Across the years millions of people from different faith backgrounds have joined together to take part through street parties, BBQs, iftars and picnics.

<https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/thebiglunchhomepage>

Refugee Week is taking place from Monday 18 to Sunday 24 June. It will be celebrating its 20th anniversary. <http://refugeeweek.org.uk/refugee-week-2018-celebrating-20-years/>

The Great Get Together, inspired by the late Jo Cox MP, is taking place from Friday 22 to Sunday 24 June. <https://www.greatgettogether.org/>

Remembering Srebrenica Memorial Week will be held between 8 and 15 July. The theme this year is 'Acts of Courage'. <https://www.srebrenica.org.uk/>

The **European Days of Jewish Culture and Heritage**, run by B'nai B'rith UK, will be on Sunday 2 September and from Sunday 7 to Sunday 14 October. The theme for this year will be 'Storytelling'. <http://bnaibrithuk.org/heritage-days/>

Sewa Day will take place this year on Sunday 14 October. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Hindu community. <http://www.sewaday.org/>

One World Week takes place from Sunday 21 to Sunday 28 October. This year is its 40th anniversary and its theme is 'The World is Changing – How about us?'. www.oneworldweek.org

Inter Faith Week in England, Wales and Northern Ireland will take place from Sunday 11 to Sunday 18 November. It is led by the Inter Faith Network for the UK www.interfaithweek.org See more [above](#).

Scottish Interfaith Week will take place from Sunday 11 to Sunday 18 November. It is led by Interfaith Scotland. <http://scottishinterfaithweek.org/>

Mitzvah Day will take place on Sunday 18 November. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Jewish community. On Mitzvah Day, people give their time, not their money, to make a difference to the community around them. Many events and projects held for the day have an inter faith focus. www.mitzvahday.org.uk/

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**SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK
TO INCREASE INTER FAITH UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION**

We need your help to ensure that the Inter Faith Network for the UK's work to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation continues and grows, helping people of all backgrounds to live and work together with mutual respect and shared commitment to the common good.

Gifts at all levels are much valued and make a real difference. You can donate directly at www.interfaith.org.uk/donate or via PayPal or JustGiving at <https://www.justgiving.com/interfaithnetwork-uk>

Donations can also be made by sending a cheque to The Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH.

REMEMBERING A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND

If you would like to make a gift in memory of a loved one, please get in touch by emailing remember@interfaith.org.uk or call us on 0207 730 0410.

A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

By leaving a gift in your will to the Inter Faith Network for the UK, you can leave a living inheritance to help deepen and strengthen inter faith understanding and cooperation in this country – for now and for the future. If you are thinking about making a will, the best thing to do is to get in touch with a professional will writer, such as a solicitor or advocate; they can help to ensure it is legally correct and that your wishes are met. If you have already made a will, you can still make an addition or amendment in the form of a codicil. If you would like to pledge a gift, please provide our name and address, along with our registered charity number 1068934.

Please get in touch with us if you have any queries.

You can call us on 0207 730 0410 or contact us at remember@interfaith.org.uk

Thank you!

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DIARY DATES

This section includes some of the events taking place around the UK during April. We also include information on diary dates between e-bulletins on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/events>.

Interfaith MK is holding its next event on Thursday 5 April. This will include a talk on ‘Hajj - journey of a lifetime - my personal perspective!’ by Kurshida Mirza. It will take place from 7:30pm to 9:30 pm at The Church of St James, , Church Street, New Bradwell, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK13 0DA. Teas and refreshments will be served at the end of the evening. For further information, contact the Convener of Interfaith MK at interfaithmk@gmail.com.

Warwick District Faiths Forum is organising a Faiths Trail on Saturday 7 April. The meeting point is Leamington and Warwick Gurdwara Sahib on Tachbrook Park Drive, Warwick, CV34 6RH at 9am. From there a coach will take attendees to St Michael’s House at Coventry Cathedral for a session entitled ‘Together for Hope’, a tour of the Cathedral and Litany of Reconciliation, before returning to the Gurdwara Sahib for a tour and vegetarian lunch (langar). Attendees will be required to cover their heads whilst inside the Gurdwara Sahib. The event is free and it is possible to join at any venue, but registration is

required at wdfaitsforum@yahoo.com. For further information, contact Jatinder Singh Birdi on 07958 589 464.

Building Bridges in Burnley's (BBB's) Men's Fellowship of Faith will be holding its next meeting on Sunday 8 April at 7.30pm. This will be the meeting postponed from Sunday 4 March due to adverse weather. The group will be discussing the activities it wants to carry out in 2018 and how it might support the BBB programme for the year. For further information, email colin@wills77.plus.com.

The Multifaith Chapel and Library at Burngreave Ashram is hosting monthly informal sharing, lunch and seminar events on the first (occasionally second) Monday of the month. On Monday 9 April Dr Vithal Patel will be speaking on the theme of the seminars, which is 'My difficulties with faiths and cultures'. The programme is: 12 Noon informal sharing; 12.30pm bring and share lunch; 1.15pm Seminar. The Chapel is at 86 Spital Hill, Sheffield, S4 7LG. For further information contact 07932 017 929 or 0114 243 6688 or email BAMCL@outlook.com.

Glasgow Women of Faith and Community is holding a discussion on Faith Schools on Monday 9 April from 9.30am to 12pm at 39 Napiers Hall Street, G20 6EZ. All women are welcome.

Epsom and Ewell Inter Faith Forum is organising a visit to Epsom Methodist Church on Tuesday 10 April from 7.30pm to 9.30pm. For more information or to confirm attendance, email lynescholefield@gmail.com.

Newcastle Council of Faiths is holding an open meeting at 6pm on Tuesday 10 April at The Hindu Temple, West Road, Newcastle (downstairs in the hall). Smajo Beso will be speaking about the Srebrenica Genocide. Members of the open meeting are invited to stay and join the Hindu Community for a meal after they have finished prayers. For more information, email Carol Hepple at c.hepple@newcastle.anglican.org.

Woking People of Faith, in partnership with **Surrey Faith Links**, **Woking Action for Peace** and others, is organising the 'Woking Debates 2018'. A debate will be held on the theme of 'What is the future of work?' on Saturday 14 April from 11am to 12.30pm. The debates are held at Christ Church, Jubilee Square, Woking, GU21 6YG. For further information, email Keith Scott at keithsc_2000@yahoo.com.

Norwich InterFaith Link is organising a talk by Chris Wood at 7.30pm on Tuesday 17 April entitled 'St George: Does a well-travelled dragon-slayer still have spiritual meaning in a multi-faith England?'. There is a charge to attend which includes refreshments. The talk will be held at Martineau Hall, Colegate, Norwich. For more information, contact Chris on 01603 667314.

The **Woolf Institute** is holding an interdisciplinary conference on 'Emergent Religious Pluralism(s)' on Tuesday 17 and Wednesday 18 April at the Woolf Institute, Madingley Road, Cambridge, CB3 0UB. The keynote speaker is Professor Nasar Meer of the University

of Edinburgh and the conference is convened by John Fahy, Jan-Jonathan Bock and Sami Everett. For more information visit <http://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/whats-on/events/emergent-religious-pluralisms> or email Jan at jjb71@cam.ac.uk.

Interfaith Scotland is holding its annual National Interfaith Youth Conference on Saturday 21 April from 10.45am to 4.30pm, in partnership with the **Coexist Initiative at the University of St Andrews**. The theme of this year's conference is 'Radicalisation and Reconciliation'. It will feature a wide range of speakers from around the UK. The conference is free and there is some financial help available for transport costs. For more information visit <http://www.interfaithscotland.org/events/> and to book a place, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/radicalisation-and-reconciliation-scottish-interfaith-youth-conference-tickets-43161500209>.

The **Ammerdown Centre** is holding a day long workshop entitled 'Scriptural Reasoning: Exploring Christianity and Islam together through Sacred Scriptures' on Saturday 21 April from 9.30am to 4pm at The Ammerdown Centre, Radstock, Bath, BA3 5SW. The workshop will be facilitated by Dr Hilary Marlow, Trustee of the Rose Castle Foundation, and Ms Nadiya Takolia, former manager of Scriptural Reasoning for the Cambridge Inter-Faith Programme. It is open to people of any faith and none, and participants will learn about the ways the two faith traditions approach their scriptures, then spend time in grounds reading texts, discussing and learning from each other. There is a cost to attend, which includes coffee, lunch and afternoon tea. For more information or to book a place, contact the centre on 01761 433 709, centre@ammerdown.org, or visit <http://www.ammerdown.org/Scriptural-Reasoning-Workshop-with-Hilary-Marlow-2018?date=2018-04-21>.

Nisa-Nashim is holding its annual conference on Sunday 22 April from 10.30am to 4.30pm in central London on the theme of 'Change Makers'. Speakers and further details are to be announced shortly. Tickets include access for the full day and lunch, and are available now from <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/nisa-nashim-annual-conference-2018-change-makers-tickets-42077422704?aff=estw>.

Interfaith Glasgow and **St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art** are holding their next 'Faith to Faith' event on Sunday 22 April from 2pm to 4pm at St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art, 2 Castle Street, Glasgow, G4 0RH. The title of the event is "Where Angels Fear to Tread", The Controversial Origins of St Mungo Museum'. To mark 25 years since the opening of the museum, there will be a range of speakers from diverse backgrounds, who were part of the beginnings of the museum and who worked against much opposition to convince people of its value and importance. There will be time for questions and dialogue as well as tea and cake. All are welcome. For more information and to book a place, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/where-angels-fear-to-tread-the-controversial-origins-of-st-mungos-tickets-42676889726>.

3FF is holding a free one-day workshop on Faith, Identity and Security on Sunday 22 April from 11am to 6pm at its office at Star House, 104 Grafton Road, London, NW4 5BA. The event will be facilitated by Phil Champain of 3FF and Diana Francis of ReThinking Security,

and will provide the opportunity to explore what security means to people of different faiths and beliefs and how it can be improved both in the UK and globally. Places are free but limited and a short application is necessary; places will be allocated based on people's interest in the issues and the ability to commit to the whole day (no prior knowledge or experience is needed). The deadline for applications is Friday 6 April but they will be considered on a rolling basis so early applications are encouraged. For more information and to apply, visit <http://www.3ff.org.uk/blog/faith-identity-security-conversation-3ff/>.

Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship is hosting the Peter Bell Memorial lecture on the theme of 'Interfaith – A Beacon of Hope' on Wednesday 25 April at 7.30pm. The lecture will be delivered by the Revd Dr Marcus Braybrooke, President of the World Congress of Faiths. The lecture is being held in the Banqueting Room at Leeds Civic Hall, Calverley St, Leeds LS1 1UR. For more information contact John Summerwill on 01132697895 or email chair@concord-leeds.org.uk.

Crawley Interfaith Network is holding a talk entitled 'Why Interfaith? A Muslim's Perspective' on Wednesday 25 April from 7pm to 9pm. Imam Dr Abduljalil Sajid, who has extensive experience in interfaith work at local, national and international levels, will be speaking. The event will take place at The Orchard, 1-2 Gleneagles Court, Brighton Road, Crawley, RH10 6AD. For further details email or call Iyad Daoud on iyadhdaoud@yahoo.co.uk or 01293 883 372.

Herefordshire Interfaith Group is organising an Inter Faith Spiritual Day on Saturday 28 April. This will be held at Adhithana Buddhist Centre and will include meditations, chants from around the world, spiritual dance and philosophical discussion. There is a suggested donation to attend and participants are asked to bring vegetarian food to share for lunch. Advance booking can be made through Venerable Choesang on 01568 750082 or at choesang@the-hermit-online-co.uk. Further details are at www.facebook.com/pg/herefordshireInterfaith/events.

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More information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org.uk

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **14 May** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer: Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH
www.interfaith.org.uk www.facebook.com/IFNetUK www.twitter.com/IFNetUK

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IFN e-bulletin

May/June 2018

General Data Protection Regulation

As you will be aware, data protection legislation changed with the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) from Friday, 25 May. IFN takes very seriously its data protection duties, and has been writing to individuals on its database to check whether they are content for their details to be held by IFN and to receive IFN mailings. We are grateful to all those who have taken the time to respond. You can also sign up at any time by using the form on IFN's website at: www.interfaith.org.uk/news/gdpr.

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **13 July** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and projects and future events.

IFN also highlights news and projects of interest through Twitter (www.twitter.com/IFNetUK) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/IFNetUK) and, where about Inter Faith Week, through (www.twitter.com/IFWeek and www.facebook.com/IFWeek).

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

Remembering the Manchester Arena attack – standing together one year on

22 May marked a year since the terrorist attack at the Ariana Grande concert in the Manchester Arena. Among the events held to mark the anniversary was a service at Manchester Cathedral. HRH Prince William and Prime Minister Theresa May joined families of victims in remembrance. The Dean of the Cathedral spoke of how people of all faiths and none had come together and there were also short addresses from Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh leaders and from a Humanist. This reflected the strong multi faith response to the attack and in supporting those affected.

The BBC reported that a multi-faith group holding banners reading "Manchester City United" and "Total Love" were met with applause by those outside the cathedral.
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-enWgland-manchester-44197949>

Among the speakers at the Cathedral Service was Rabbi Warren Elf, whose reflections on the multi faith response to the attack have been offered at IFN meetings in London and Manchester and can be read at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/moving-forward-together-report-of-the-30th-anniversary-national-meeting-of-> and [https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/ifn-day-event-for-local-inter-faith-practitioners-a-short-report-manchester.](https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/ifn-day-event-for-local-inter-faith-practitioners-a-short-report-manchester)

Integrated Communities Strategy consultation

The consultation on the Green Paper on the proposed Integrated Communities Strategy that was launched in March by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government remains open for another week until Tuesday 5 June. As noted in the March/April issue of the e-bulletin, the Green Paper invites views on the Government's vision for building strong integrated communities "where people – whatever their background – live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities". It sets out a programme of actions that it is proposed to take across Government to deliver this vision at the local and national level.

Key proposals in the Green Paper include:

- identifying priority policies and services to review across government to determine how they can drive integration;
- testing a package of information for recent migrants to support them to integrate into their communities and to build understanding of life in Britain;
- addressing the segregation of schools along ethnic or faith lines that exists in some places, even where the local population is very diverse, for example by promoting mixing and twinning arrangements between schools in areas of high segregation;
- developing a new strategy for English Language in England, to improve the coordination of provision to learners and help improve their outcomes;
- trialling new approaches through Jobcentre Plus to break down the barriers to employment and support people from isolated communities into work; and
- empowering marginalised women, including exploring the legal and practical challenges of limited reform of the law on marriage so that civil marriages are conducted before or at the same time as religious ceremonies.

The Green Paper can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/integrated-communities-strategy-green-paper>.

Muslims Against Anti-Semitism

On 17 May a group called 'Muslims Against Anti-Semitism' took out a full-page advert in the Telegraph.

Further information at: <http://jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/british-muslims-write-letter-opposing-anti-semitism-the-time-has-come-to-speak-out/>.

Minister's 'faith tour' continues

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth, Minister for Faith at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, is completing the second part of his 'Faith Tour'. The tour aims to highlight the UK's 'diverse landscape of faith communities and places of worship'. This part of the tour has included visits to Manchester to a mosque for an Iftar meal to mark the beginning of Ramadan, a gurdwara and a Chinese Buddhist temple; Bradford, to the Hindu Cultural Society; and to Blackburn, with a meeting with local authority and community leaders. The tour has a link with the Government's Integrated Communities Strategy consultation (see [above](#)).

The faith tour can be followed on Twitter at [@lordnickbourne](#), and by searching the hashtag #faithtour2.

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New guidance for coroners – respect for religious and cultural wishes

At the end of April, the High Court ruled illegal the 'cab rank' system of burials operated by North London Coroner Mary Hassell. Following this judgement, in R (Adath Yisroel Burial Society & Anor) v HM Senior Coroner for Inner North London, the Chief Coroner, HHJ Mark Lucraft QC, issued in May guidance for coroners: <https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/guidance-no-28-report-of-death-to-the-coroner-2010517.pdf>.

Guidance No. 28, 'Report of death to the Coroner: decision making and expedited decisions' is "intended to be a practical guide to assist coroners in situations where (a) a bereaved family has made a request to the coroner for urgent consideration of the death of a loved one and/or early release of the body or (b) the coroner or coroner's officers otherwise become aware of features of a particular death which may justify treating it as especially urgent".

The guidance underlines that proper respect should be given to representations based on religious belief including wording that "The Chief Coroner understands and is sensitive to the fact that some faith groups, particularly Jewish and Muslim, have religious and cultural wishes about treatment of a body and burial following a death. Coroners should pay appropriate respect to those wishes, within the framework of their legal duties and in the context of their other responsibilities."

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Humanism and SACREs in Wales

The Welsh Government's Cabinet Secretary for Education, Kirsty Williams AM, wrote to Directors of Education in Wales' 22 local authorities saying that "It is the view of the Welsh Government that: to ensure compatibility with the Human Rights Act 1998 the provisions relating to the constitution of SACREs [Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education] and ASCs [Agreed Syllabus Conferences]... are to be interpreted as permitting the appointment of persons who represent holders of non-religious beliefs in the same way as they permit the appointment of persons who represent holders of religious beliefs." The letter also said that that the new guidance supersedes paragraph 103 of Circular 10/94 which precluded humanist membership on the same basis as membership by religious representatives.

This followed a legal challenge after Vale of Glamorgan Council would not admit humanist representative Kathy Riddick to its SACRE group on the grounds only religious representatives could join. The local authority later withdrew its decision after Humanists UK was granted permission for a judicial review.

Further information is at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-44054815>.

The National Association of SACREs, an IFN member body, has made a statement in response. This can be seen at <http://www.nasacre.org.uk/file/nasacre/1-659-response-to-welsh-guidance.pdf>.

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25th Anniversary of the National Association of SACREs

The National Association of Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (NASACRE) works to support, strengthen and promote the work done by local SACREs and represents the interests of members at a national level. In May it celebrated its 25th anniversary with a conference and AGM in London focussed on 'Standing Together – Celebrating the Power of Community'. Details of the anniversary event are at <http://www.nasacre.org.uk/conference-and-agm/2018>.

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Inter faith participation in launch of new Hindu temple

There is a growing trend for faith community places of worship to invite other communities at special moments such as opening of new places of worship and key festivals.

An example of this was the launch of North Kent's first Hindu temple in May. This reflected the inter faith engagement of the Gravesend Hindu community with guests from many

faiths and the local inter faith body as well, of course, as leading figures from their own community and civic leaders. <http://www.gravesendreporter.co.uk/news/first-hindu-temple-in-north-kent-opens-1-5513262>

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Taylor Review Pilot for Places of Worship

The Taylor Review was commissioned in 2016 to examine the funding and sustainability of listed Church of England buildings and ensure that they are conserved for future generations. The Review's report was published in December and it has now been announced that the Taylor Review Pilot, administered by Historic England on behalf of the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, will run in Greater Manchester and Suffolk from September 2018 until March 2020.

The pilot will fund: a project manager (based in Manchester, Cambridge or London); 2 x fabric support officers (one each in Manchester and Suffolk); 2 x community development advisers (one each in Manchester and Suffolk); and a minor repairs fund in the two pilot areas. It aims to test the impact of fabric support officers focussing on maintenance and repair of historic fabric and community development advisers helping to increase engagement beyond the worshipping community in both an urban and rural context.

It is open to all faith groups who manage listed places of worship and meet the eligibility criteria. For further information, visit <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/caring-for-heritage/places-of-worship/churches-sustainability-review/>.

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Faiths invited to mark 10th Anniversary of the Climate Change Act

The 10th anniversary of the Climate Change Act will be marked in November. The Act made the UK the first country to set legally binding targets for reducing carbon emissions.

The Committee on Climate Change, an independent committee created by the Act, is encouraging organisations to celebrate this milestone as a chance to talk about the decarbonisation of society, and the importance of the UK continuing to lead on climate change internationally. It has particularly reached out to encourage faith and inter faith organisations to get involved.

For further information on the Anniversary, visit <https://www.theccc.org.uk/our-impact/ten-years-of-the-climate-change-act/>.

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Interfaith Scotland visit of UN prevention of genocide adviser

Adama Dieng, the UN Secretary-General's Special Adviser for the Prevention of Genocide, visited Interfaith Scotland in May for a dialogue event. He presented the UN's Plan of Action for the Prevention of Genocide which has been developed for 'Religious Leaders and Actors' to prevent incitement to violence that could lead to atrocity crimes. This can be found at www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/Plan_of_Action_Religious_Prevent_Incited.pdf.

More information about the visit is at <https://interfaithscotland.wordpress.com/author/simoninterfaithscotland/>

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West Midlands Faith Action Plan

Diverse faith communities in the West Midlands are supporting an action plan launched in early May by West Midlands Mayor Andy Street to tackle key issues like youth unemployment and homelessness. This follows a number of months of engagement between the Mayor and different communities.

Action Plan recommendations include:

- Offering faith communities the opportunity to bid for social programmes tendered by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), such as skills contracts
- Rolling out the Mayor's Mentors programme through faith groups to provide young people with mentoring in and around places of worship
- Working with faith organisations to prevent and deal with homelessness, providing ideas and practical advice for those who want to help but are not sure how

One proposal under the plan is to work with the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner to explore proposals for an anti-hate crime campaign similar to the successful 'Kick it Out' initiative used to tackle racism in football.

The Faith Action Plan is a result of the Mayor and Faith Conference, staged at the University of Birmingham in November, which saw more than 400 individuals from different faiths come together to discuss issues like reducing hate crime, increasing job opportunities and tackling homelessness.

Further information can be found at <https://www.wmca.org.uk/news/faiths-unite-to-help-mayor-launch-action-plan/>.

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Campaign honouring WWI soldiers of different faiths

The *Jewish News* reports that a campaign to honour First World War soldiers of different faiths in synagogues, mosques, temples and churches has had a £2 million boost from a Government fund. ‘There But Not There’, an initiative led by Lord Dannatt, former Chief of the General Staff, and backed by Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis, includes artistic silhouettes placed throughout places of worship in the UK.

<http://jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/campaign-honouring-first-world-war-soldiers-of-different-faiths-gets-2m-boost/>

Venues where the silhouettes had already been installed at the time of the article were Arundel Cathedral; Alyth Synagogue, Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha and Palmers Green Mosque in London; a Belfast classroom; a Welsh church; and the Indian Army Memorial Room at the Royal Academy Sandhurst.

The £2 million in extra roll-out money, from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund, will be made available to faith schools, community centres and places of worship in the form of £500 micro-grants, with application accepted until 30 June.

Further information about the installation project is at www.therebutnotthere.org.uk/.

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INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK NEWS

Inter Faith Week – 6 months to go!

This year Inter Faith Week takes place from 11-18 November. We hope that all our readers will take part and encourage their organisations to do so.

The 6 months to go press release is at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/press-release-inter-faith-week-2018-6-months-to-go>. The flyer for the 2018 week can be downloaded from www.interfaithweek.org/resources/flyer.

This year’s is the 10th such Week. www.interfaithweek.org Inter Faith Week has grown steadily ever since its launch. It is a fantastic opportunity for people of all faiths and beliefs to mix and learn; visit places of worship of your neighbours and find out why their faith matters to them; get past stereotypes and misunderstandings and increase religious literacy; celebrate; dialogue; and volunteer together to help their local community.

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth, Minister for Faith at the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, said, in the press release: *“Inter Faith Week is a great way to recognise the amazing contributions of communities of all faiths and none from across the country. It’s important that we celebrate the great efforts of those who come together and build valuable relationships to the benefit of British life.”*

In May IFN published a report on last year's Week, *Stories from 2017, Inspiration for 2018* www.interfaithweek.org/resources/inter-faith-week-stories-from-2017-inspiration-for-2018. Many illustrated examples from IFW 2017 can be found in this.

IFN's [Inter Faith Week Toolkit](#) is packed with suggestions for marking the Week and examples and illustrations drawn from the many successful activities held for the Week to date by faith and belief bodies, local inter faith organisations, community and voluntary organisations, businesses, local authorities, emergency services, SACREs, schools, colleges, universities, chaplaincies, sports organisations, and others. It also includes practical guidance and links to further information. The Inter Faith Week team at the Inter Faith Network Office will be happy to assist.

Inter Faith Week is timed to begin on Remembrance Sunday, which this year is the Centenary Armistice Day. This supports and encourages remembering of the service of soldiers and civilians of different faiths and beliefs. It is also an opportunity for events focussing on peace.

Sunday 18 November will be Mitzvah Day (www.mitzvahday.org.uk) - a Jewish-led day of social action involving people of all faiths and none working together in their local communities. Many events are being jointly held to mark both Inter Faith Week and Mitzvah Day and these will form a part of Inter Faith Week.

Inter Faith Week is a programme of the Inter Faith Network for the UK (www.interfaith.org.uk), which manages the Inter Faith Week website: www.interfaithweek.org, working with the Inter-faith Council for Wales (<http://interfaithwales.org.uk>), and the Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum (<http://niinterfaithforum.org>) in relation to Wales and Northern Ireland.

Follow Inter Faith Week on Twitter at @IFWeek and on Facebook at @IFWeek. If tweeting or posting, the hashtag is #interfaithweek.

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Scottish Interfaith Week

Scottish Inter Faith Week (SIFW) has taken place with great success since 2004 and is led by Interfaith Scotland (www.interfaithscotland.org). The dates of SIFW 2018 are 11 to 18 November. More details are at <http://scottishinterfaithweek.org>.

The Scottish Government has declared 2018 the 'Year of Young People'. One of the main aims of the Year is to develop better understanding, co-operation and respect between generations. The fact that faith communities have an important role to play in providing opportunities for people of different generations to dialogue and engage in activities together is reflected in the theme for this year's SIFW which is 'Connecting Generations'.

Follow Scottish Interfaith Week on Twitter at: @followsifw and on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/FollowSIFW>.

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Meeting of IFN's Faith Communities Forum

A special session of IFN's Faith Communities Forum was held on 8 May to discuss the Green Paper on the Integrated Communities Strategy. Mr Hardip Begol, Director, Integration and Communities, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government attended the meeting to make a presentation and answer questions.

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Meeting of IFN member National and Regional Inter Faith Organisations and Educational and Academic Bodies

A joint category meeting for National and Regional Inter Faith Organisations and Educational and Academic Bodies was held on 28 March. The two main Agenda Items were: Youth Inter Faith Engagement and Tackling Hate Crime and Prejudice. In the first of these there were presentations from Ashley Beck about IFN's youth inter faith engagement programme and from Phil Champain of 3FF about its youth engagement. In the second of these there were reflections on the hate crime related section of the Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper and on the role of inter faith organisations and educational and academic bodies in providing resources and skills for tackling hate and prejudice and how they are currently engaged with these topics. There were also round table updates on member bodies' current inter faith work and issues of concern to them and a number of IFN matters including membership fees and ways of working.

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Working for solidarity

IFN's Co-Chairs wrote to IFN's member bodies on 18 May underlining the importance of standing up for each other saying, "The significance of faith communities standing up for each other to oppose prejudice and hatred has been underlined in a number of contexts this week. In a context where events here or overseas can have impact on inter faith relations, solidarity and continued extending of the hand of neighbourly friendship are particularly important. IFN member bodies' work in this regard continues to be vital" and drawing attention to some IFN's publications with particular relevance, especially Looking After One Another <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/looking-after-one-another-the-safety-and-security-of-our-faith-communities-2017> and <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/lets-talk-practical-pointers-for-inter-faith-dialogue>.

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

Sport and inter faith relations

In recent e-bulletins there has been information about the event that IFN held with Sporting Equals on ‘Using the Power of Sport to Build Good Inter Faith Relations’ in Inter Faith Week last year. For the report on this event, see <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/using-the-power-of-sport-to-build-good-inter-faith-relations>.

Sport and physical activity are enjoyable and important in their own right. They can also be valuable tools for creating and deepening understanding between people of different Backgrounds – young and old. During May IFN has been profiling some of the many ways that sport and physical activity can help build inter faith understanding and cooperation on Twitter and Facebook. www.twitter.com/ifnetuk www.facebook.com/ifnetuk

The IFN office, in consultation with Sporting Equals, circulated member bodies in May with ideas for using sport as a catalyst for building bridges and supporting greater integration. These can be seen at www.interfaith.org.uk/activity/sport.

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Faith and Belief Inclusion Charter

The Three Faiths Forum relaunched at the beginning of May as the Faith and Belief Forum. It has produced a new Faith and Belief Inclusion Charter intended to “establish a supportive network of those who believe in a diverse society which is welcoming to all people, of all backgrounds and beliefs”. Its principles are outlined thus:

- “We believe in an inclusive society where people of different faiths and beliefs have strong and positive relations. We believe that intolerance has no place in our communities or workplaces, and that diversity adds value to our society.
- By connecting people of different faiths and beliefs, we can create a society which is fair to people of all backgrounds – religious and non-religious. We encourage people to engage more across differences and learn to understand each other better.
- We recognise the need to create a more positive conversation about faith and belief in our communities and in all of the UK. We will have these conversations in a spirit of mutual respect and curiosity, and be open to different perspectives.”

Signatories of the Charter will commit “to working together in a spirit of partnership to promote good relations between people of different beliefs in our communities, workplaces and wider society.” To read more, including how to sign up, visit <https://faithbeliefforum.org/>.

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Inter faith iftars

The period of Ramadan observed by Muslims began on the evening 16/17 May. Throughout the UK many Muslim communities are inviting their neighbours and people of other faiths to join them as they break their fast at the end of the day at an inter faith iftar meal. For example, Christian, Hindu and Sikh guests and others joined Muslims in breaking the fast at the invitation of the Maidenhead Mosque. <https://www.maidenhead-advertiser.co.uk/gallery/maidenhead/131720/people-of-different-faiths-gather-to-break-ramadan-fast.html>

A number of mosques and other bodies are hosting inter faith events as part of the Big Iftar. Many of these are listed at <http://www.thebigiftar.org/events/> Some places of worship of other faith communities are also holding iftars with their Muslim friends, such as the Alyth Synagogue in London which is holding a 'kosher iftar' for the fifth year in a row, <http://www.thebigiftar.org/event/alyth-synagogue/>.

Local inter faith organisations, such as Barnet Multi Faith Forum and Epsom and Ewell Inter Faith Forum, are also hosting inter faith events including iftars throughout June. This is as part of their overall programmes which also see marking of other key faith community periods and festivals such as Diwali.

This year, Ramadan and the Jewish festival of Shavuot coincided and a special joint gathering was held by young Jews and Muslims at Moishe House in London. <https://faithbeliefforum.org/moishe-house-shavout-iftar/>

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21 for 21 – Abrahamic Inter faith youth project

The *Church Times*, British Muslim TV and *Jewish News*, together with Coexist House, have launched a competition to find 21 young inter faith leaders who have worked to break down barriers between Christians, Muslims and Jews. The project hopes to highlight the value of inter faith dialogue and activity, and the winners' work will be showcased in print and on air across the three media organisations. The project will conclude with an awards ceremony hosted by the Archbishop of Canterbury at Lambeth Palace during Inter Faith Week in November.

For more information, and to nominate a person aged under 35 to become one of the 21 young leaders, visit <https://21421.co.uk/>. Nominations close on 29 June, and will be selected by a panel of faith leaders, inter faith practitioners and others from across the three faith traditions.

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Women Peace-ing Together

Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship's women's group have been making letter-flags that will spell out 'Women Peace-ing Together'. They will be contributing to a display in Leeds City Museum's Broderick Hall later in the year, commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the WWI Armistice with symbols of peace.

A number of the group are also featured in an exhibition entitled 'A Woman's Place' at Abbey House Museum, which features stories and objects from strong, pioneering women from 1860 to the present day.

For more information about the group and its work, email concordwomen@phoncoop.coop.

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Rabbi Clergy Action Network

The Council of Christians and Jews' recently launched Rabbi Clergy Action Network aims to facilitate partnerships and opportunities for both rabbis and clergy to work together on social action and to foster dialogue. With rabbis and clergy signed up all around the UK, it operates locally and nationally.

Further information is at <http://www.ccj.org.uk/our-work/rabbi-clergy-action-network/>.

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Watford Interfaith Association Peace Garden

Watford Interfaith Association's Peace Garden has been opened to the public by the Mayor Dorothy Thornhill, who is a patron, at a multi faith ceremony. It contains a labyrinth with grassed seating, flower beds, special trees and a specially donated bench. It was initiated by the Watford Interfaith Association (WIFA) five years ago starting from a half acre plot of rough ground in the Orchard. Volunteers from various faith groups and others have worked hard to create the labyrinth from scratch and dug flower beds and mowed the long grass. Last Autumn many members of different faiths came together over two days to plant 2,000 bulbs in the garden.

For further information on the Peace Garden, visit <http://www.wifa.org.uk/the-watford-peace-garden/>.

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

ACAS guidance on religion or belief and the workplace

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) has published *Religion or belief: key points for the workplace*. The guidance offers employers, managers, HR professionals, employees, trade union representatives and job applicants advice on how to avoid discrimination taking place in the workplace on the grounds of religion or belief. It also offers good practice advice on dealing with these matters should they arise. The guidance advises on how to create inclusive workplaces, where religion and belief are respected, and where people of different faiths and beliefs feel they belong. It can be downloaded from <http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/a/p/Religion-or-belief-discrimination-key-points-for-the-workplace.pdf>.

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GEO guidance on workplace dress codes

The Government Equalities Office (GEO) has published a guidance document, *Dress codes and sex discrimination: what you need to know*, for employers who set dress codes and employees and job applicants who may have to abide by them.

Among its findings, the report notes that employers should be flexible and not set dress codes which prohibit religious symbols that do not interfere with an employee's work; and that if an employer wants to implement a dress code or uniform policy, it must ensure that this does not directly or indirectly discriminate against employees with a particular religion or belief or no religion or belief. The guidance document can be downloaded from <http://www.edf.org.uk/government-equalities-office-guidance-dress-codes-and-sex-discrimination-what-you-need-to-know/>.

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Inter Faith Week: Stories from 2017, Inspiration for 2018

IFN has recently published its report on last year's Inter Faith Week, entitled *Inter Faith Week: Stories from 2017, Inspiration for 2018*. As well as telling the story of the 2017 Week, this gives lots of examples and ideas for 2018. The report can be found on the Inter Faith Week website at www.interfaithweek.org/resources/inter-faith-week-stories-from-2017-inspiration-for-2018.

The flyer for the 2018 week is also available at www.interfaithweek.org/resources/flyer.

For further information, see [above](#).

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Using the Power of Sport to Build Good Inter Faith Relations

As noted [above](#), the report on the event held by IFN, with Sporting Equals UK, on 14 November at Leicester Tigers rugby stadium on 'Using the Power of Sport to Build Good Inter Faith Relations' is available at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/publications>. It contains many ideas useful for those wanting to develop sports inter faith activities. Hard copies are available from the IFN office.

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IFN 30th Anniversary National Meeting report

The report of IFN's 30th Anniversary National Meeting, Moving Forward Together, is available on IFN's website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/moving-forward-together-report-of-the-30th-anniversary-national-meeting-of->. Hard copies are available from the IFN office.

The report may be useful for those concerned with topics such as: extremism, hatred and inter faith engagement; education and dialogue; communicating in the digital world; social cooperation for the common good; youth and inter faith engagement; opening up difficult dialogues, engaging with tough topics; the safety and security of our faith communities; developing guidance to reflect and support the vital work of local inter faith organisations; social media; and sharing of good practice internationally.

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Report on Day event for local inter faith practitioners

The report of the IFN Day Event for local inter faith practitioners from around the UK held in Manchester in October is on IFN's website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/ifn-day-event-for-local-inter-faith-practitioners-a-short-report-manchester>. It contains useful summary style material about topics such as: responding to terrorism, extremism and hatred; using smaller friendship circles within the wider work of a local faith body; bringing young people together for inter faith encounter; Inter Faith Week and other special days and weeks; supporting RE and inter faith engagement in schools; women and inter faith engagement; getting to grips with Facebook and Twitter; and developing programmes with impact.

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Reflection document on faith and forced migration

Christian Aid Scotland and Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees have published a new theological reflection on migration. *Becoming Human Together* is the name of a new resource exploring Christian theology from the Reformed tradition as it relates to faith and forced migration. It is interspersed with real life stories of people who have direct experience of forced migration, and examples of how churches and faith groups in Scotland can respond.

It can be downloaded at <http://www.sfar.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Becoming-Human-Together.pdf>.

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Prisons and the role of faith-based organisations

‘What works in prisons? Contributions of the Faith and Voluntary Sector to Prisoners and their Families’, was launched this week at an event in Parliament with the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Faith and Society and the APPG on Penal Affairs. The report highlights the different kinds of support that faith-based organisations provide for prisoners, whether by supporting them with their individual faith, or with other practical and emotional needs. It illustrates the often innovative approaches they take – approaches which also offer considerable value for money. And it also considers the important work of the wider voluntary sector.

The report was produced by FaithAction for the APPG on Faith and Society, which is chaired by the Rt Hon Stephen Timms MP, and for which FaithAction provides the secretariat. Further information, including the full report is available at <http://www.faithaction.net/news/2018/05/17/new-from-faithaction-what-works-in-prisons/>.

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Historic England – recordings and podcasts

Historic England and the Society of Antiquaries held a one-day conference on 12 March entitled ‘The Heritage of Minority Faith Buildings in the 20th Century’. Recordings of all the talks are now available online, at <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLGOCpw7BaRwW8IgJAY4fCaxxH9FFIV-gx>.

Historic England is also releasing podcasts for its ‘A History of England in 100 Places’ project, including on the top ten Faith and Belief sites. The podcasts are available here: <https://soundcloud.com/historicengland/sets/100places>.

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RE Council – Religious Literacy quiz

The Religious Education Council has released a new ‘religious literacy’ quiz. It is available on the Council’s Facebook page at

https://www.facebook.com/religiouseducationcouncil/app/489107954569299/?app_data=%7B%7D.

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Faith Awareness course, Leicester

Christians Aware is holding its next Faith Awareness course on Monday evenings from 4 June to 2 July. The course offers “opportunities for encounter between members of all faiths in the hope that participants will seek to develop mutual understanding, trust and respect, not hiding difference, and recognising the uniqueness and special contribution of each faith to its people and to the world”. Participants will visit a different place of worship each week and will involve meeting and talking with members of different communities, and finding out how the spaces are used for special occasions. For more information including the full programme, visit <https://www.stphilipscentre.co.uk/faith-awareness-summer-course-visiting-places-of-worship> or contact Eliam Ngoma on 01162 540 770 or at eliam@christiansaware.f9.co.uk.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS, AND NOMINATIONS

FaithAction – Anti-human trafficking survey

FaithAction is seeking responses to a survey about the level of interest in, and knowledge of, human trafficking and modern slavery among faith-based organisations in the UK. It is part of a research project carried out in conjunction with the Universities of Sheffield and Leeds, and funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

The responses gathered will contribute to the design of workshops and activities for faith-based organisations interested in getting more involved in anti-trafficking. The information may be used to contribute to research findings on faith-based responses to anti-trafficking.

The survey will be open until 15 June. For more information, contact info@faithaction.net.

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NATRE - Spirited Arts Competition

The National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE)'s annual Spirited Arts competition is open for entries until 31 July. Entries should be artwork based on this year's RE-related themes, which are: Holy Space?; Pray!; Doubt and Faith; Looking For God; and Making Peace. The competition will be judged in August by RE Today Advisers and students. Winners will be announced in the new academic year. For full details of the competition and how to enter, visit <https://www.natre.org.uk/about-natre/projects/spirited-arts/spirited-arts-2018/>.

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Brighton and Hove Interfaith Contact Group – ‘Angels in Our City’ competition

Brighton and Hove Interfaith Contact Group is holding a competition as part of its ‘Angels in Our City’ project. Entrants are invited to create an angel representing the spirit of Brighton and Hove. This can be any form of artwork (including words). Winners will receive £50 and an ‘Angel award’, and the winners’ work will be displayed at the Jubilee Library. The competition is open to all ages, and entries will be judged in four age groups (10 years and under; 11-16; 17-25; and 26 and over). The competition closes on 1 September and winners will be announced on 15 October.

As part of the wider project, libraries throughout the city will be holding Angel craft and fun workshops throughout half term, and the Jubilee Library will be holding a week-long Angel Exhibition in its foyer from 4 June.

For more information and to enter the competition, visit <http://interfaithcontactgroup.com/angels-competition/>.

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National Diversity Awards

Nominations are open until 1 June for the 2018 National Diversity Awards. The Awards celebrate the achievements of grass-roots communities tackling the issues in today's society; recognise their dedication and hard work; and aim to empower and inspire the wide breadth of diverse communities across the UK. The categories for Community Organisation and Positive Role Model both include sections for Race, Religion and Faith. The awards ceremony will take place on 14 September in Liverpool.

For more information about the awards and how to make a nomination, visit <http://www.nationaldiversityawards.co.uk/>.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

IFN's website lists job and internship opportunities with a significant inter faith dimension with IFN member organisations at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/jobs>.

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Inter Faith Network for the UK - Volunteers

The Inter Faith Network for the UK has regular volunteering opportunities. Further information about these can be found on IFN's website.

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Women's Interfaith Network - Trustees

The Women's Interfaith Network is looking for "passionate people who have an interest in inter faith work" to join its Board of Trustees. The closing date for applications is 6 August. For more information, visit <https://www.charityjob.co.uk/volunteer-jobs/women-s-interfaith-network/trustees/569124>.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Near Neighbours grants programme re-opening in June

The Near Neighbours programme is reopening in June. It will again be offering small grants of between £250 and £5,000, as seed funding for local groups and organisations working in a number of areas of England to bring together neighbours, and to develop relationships across diverse faiths and ethnicities to improve their communities.

As part of the criteria, projects should:

- Bring together peoples of two or more different faiths and/or ethnicities, to build friendships and develop relationships of trust.
- Work locally - the programme wants to see people who are living very locally (ie in the same street, estate or neighbourhood) come together.
- Work sustainably - the programme wants to see long term and natural relationships grow, that will last beyond the period of funding.
- Work to improve the community – the programme wants to see people working to make their communities a better place to live.

- Involve diverse people in planning and implementation. People from more than one faith group and/or ethnicity are involved in planning and implementing the proposal.

For more information, visit <https://www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours-small-grants> or email near.neighbours@cuf.org.uk with general enquiries.

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Building a Stronger Britain Together programme

The Home Office programme Building a Stronger Britain Together closed its latest call for grants on 16 February. However, the programme is continuing to offer in-kind support such as social media training, technical assistance to help a group improve their website, or capacity building work to help a group protect more vulnerable individuals. It is open to bodies in England and Wales. Applications for in-kind support can be submitted at any time.

Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/building-a-stronger-britain-together>.

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Faiths in Scotland Community Action Fund

Faiths in Scotland Community Action Fund continues to be open for applications to its rolling small grants scheme. Small grants of up to £750 are available to faith based anti-poverty projects with an annual turnover of £30,000 or less and can be applied for at any time. For more information call 0141 221 4576 or visit <https://www.faithincommunityscotland.org/faith-in-community-scotland-action-fund/our-grants/smallgrants/>.

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Supermarket grant schemes

Bags of Help is Tesco's local community grant scheme where the money raised from the 5p bag levy in Tesco stores is being used to fund community projects across the UK. The projects must meet the criteria of promoting community participation in the development and use of outdoor spaces. Bags of Help is administered by Groundwork in England and Wales and supported in Scotland by Greenspace Scotland. (It is not available in Northern Ireland where carrier bag money is managed centrally.) Further information is at <http://www.groundwork.org.uk/Sites/tescocommunityscheme/pages/Category/the-tesco-bags-of-help-programme-tes2>.

Waitrose supports charities through its Community Matters scheme. Local branches are each given £1,000 to share out between three local good causes each month such as welfare organisations, community groups and schools. To apply, fill in a Community Matters form at a local branch or contact the branch champion for community giving at a local branch, using their branch finder tool at <http://www.waitrose.com/branches/index.aspx>.

Sainsbury's stores each partner with a Local Charity of the Year voted on by the local people. To apply, fill in a nomination form at your local store. More information is at <https://www.sainsburyslocalcharity.co.uk/>.

The Asda Foundation offers grants for local community projects which will “make a real long term difference, benefitting the wider community with [its] vision to ‘Transform Communities, improving lives locally.’” Further details are at <https://www.asdafoundation.org/applying-for-funding/significant-local-community-projects>.

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Community foundations

Community foundations are local, grant-making organisations to which local community organisations can apply for funding. There are 46 community foundations in the UK, covering Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and most of England. A map of community foundations across the UK and how to contact them, can be found at <http://www.ukcommunityfoundations.org/our-network>.

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Comic Relief's Core Strength Grants Programme

This programme offers grants to help cover the day to day costs of small locally led and based voluntary and community sector groups that are doing ‘much needed’ work in their local communities. Grants of between £1,000 and £5,000 or between £1,000 and £10,000 (depending on the local community foundation) are to be used to support groups that can evidence a sustained beneficial impact on people's lives who are excluded or disadvantaged. For further information, visit <http://www.comicrelief.com/apply-for-grants/open-grants-initiatives/core-strength-local-communities>.

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Funding websites

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) offers advice on fundraising and grants on its Knowhow Nonprofit site at <https://knowhownonprofit.org/funding>.

Funding Central - <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/default.aspx> - is a free website for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises in England that provides access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, together with tools and resources for supporting organisations to develop sustainable income strategies appropriate to their needs. Similar websites for funding in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at Funding Scotland - <http://www.fundingscotland.com/> - Wales Council for Voluntary Action - <http://www.wcva.org.uk/funding/search> - and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland - <https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

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Heritage Lottery Fund grants to commemorate First World War

The Heritage Lottery Fund has £4million of funding available for communities to get involved in projects marking the Centenary of the First World War. Projects applying for funding must be able to meet one of a number of successful outcomes based on heritage, people and communities. Grants can be given between £3,000 and £10,000. There is no current deadline for applications as grants are considered on a monthly basis up to 2019.

Further information can be found at <https://www.hlf.org.uk/looking-funding/our-grant-programmes/first-world-war-then-and-now>.

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Website and Facebook grants

The Transform Foundation is offering funding to charities to help with new website builds. Grants of £18,000 are available. It is also offering grants towards Facebook advertising of £5,000. For further information and to apply, visit www.transformfoundation.org.uk.

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Google and charities

The internet search engine Google is offering a service to registered charities which brings: Google Ad Grants: Free AdWords advertising to promote their websites on Google through keyword targeting; YouTube Nonprofit Programme: Access exclusive resources, features and programs designed to maximise their organisations' impact on YouTube; and Google Apps for Non-profit: Free version of the Google Apps business productivity suite, including Gmail, Docs, Calendar and more. For further information, visit www.google.co.uk/intl/en/nonprofits/join.

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Subsidised fundraising workshops

The Foundation for Social Improvement offers heavily subsidised training programmes for small charities across the UK. The courses cover a wide range of subjects from event planning to leadership but the majority of their training courses are focused on helping charities learn the skills to raise and earn income. Further information can be found at <http://www.thefsi.org/services/training>. Upcoming courses are in London and Peterborough in June.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

The Big Lunch 10th anniversary will be held on Sunday 3 June. Across the years millions of people from different faiths have joined together to take part through street parties, BBQs, iftars and picnics. www.edenprojectcommunities.com/thebiglunchhomepage

Refugee Week is taking place from Monday 18 to Sunday 24 June. It will be celebrating its 20th anniversary. <http://refugeeweek.org.uk/refugee-week-2018-celebrating-20-years/>

The Great Get Together, inspired by the late Jo Cox MP, is taking place from Friday 22 to Sunday 24 June. <https://www.greatgettogether.org/>

Remembering Srebrenica Memorial Week will be held between 8 and 15 July. The theme this year is 'Acts of Courage'. <https://www.srebrenica.org.uk/>

The **European Days of Jewish Culture and Heritage**, run by B'nai B'rith UK, will be on Sunday 2 September and from Sunday 7 to Sunday 14 October. The theme for this year will be 'Storytelling'. <http://bnaibrithuk.org/heritage-days/>

Sewa Day will take place this year on Sunday 14 October. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Hindu community. <http://www.sewaday.org/>

One World Week 40th anniversary takes place from Sunday 21 to Sunday 28 October. Its theme is 'The World is Changing – How about us?'. www.oneworldweek.org

Inter Faith Week in England, Wales and Northern Ireland will take place from Sunday 11 to Sunday 18 November. It is led by the Inter Faith Network for the UK www.interfaithweek.org See more [above](#).

Scottish Interfaith Week will take place from Sunday 11 to Sunday 18 November. It is led by Interfaith Scotland. <http://scottishinterfaithweek.org/>

Mitzvah Day will take place on Sunday 18 November. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Jewish community. On Mitzvah Day, people give their time, not their money, to make a difference to the community around them. Many events and projects held for the day have an inter faith focus. www.mitzvahday.org.uk/

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**SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK
TO INCREASE INTER FAITH UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION**

We need your help to ensure that the Inter Faith Network for the UK's work to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation continues and grows, helping people of all backgrounds to live and work together with mutual respect and shared commitment to the common good.

Gifts at all levels are much valued and make a real difference. You can donate directly at www.interfaith.org.uk/donate or via PayPal or JustGiving at <https://www.justgiving.com/interfaithnetwork-uk>

Donations can also be made by sending a cheque to The Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH.

REMEMBERING A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND

If you would like to make a gift in memory of a loved one, please get in touch by emailing remember@interfaith.org.uk or call us on 0207 730 0410.

A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

By leaving a gift in your will to the Inter Faith Network for the UK, you can leave a living inheritance to help deepen and strengthen inter faith understanding and cooperation in this country – for now and for the future. If you are thinking about making a will, the best thing to do is to get in touch with a professional will writer, such as a solicitor or advocate; they can help to ensure it is legally correct and that your wishes are met. If you have already made a will, you can still make an addition or amendment in the form of a codicil. If you would like to pledge a gift, please provide our name and address, along with our registered charity number 1068934.

Please get in touch with us if you have any queries.
You can call us on 0207 730 0410 or contact us at remember@interfaith.org.uk

Thank you!

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DIARY DATES

This section includes some of the events taking place around the UK during June. We also include information on diary dates between e-bulletins on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/events>.

Epsom and Ewell Inter Faith Forum is organising a Hindu Chariot Festival in Stoneleigh on Sunday 3 June from 10am to 1pm. For more information or to confirm your attendance, email lynescholefield@gmail.com.

The **Multifaith Chapel and Library at Burngreave Ashram** is hosting monthly informal sharing, lunch and seminar events on the first (occasionally second) Monday of the month. On Monday 4 June Rev Dr John Vincent will be speaking on the theme of the seminars, which is 'My difficulties with faiths and cultures'. The programme is: 12 Noon informal sharing; 12.30pm bring and share lunch; 1.15pm Seminar. The Chapel is at 86 Spital Hill, Sheffield, S4 7LG. For further information contact 07932 017 929 or 0114 243 6688 or email BAMCL@outlook.com.

Bristol Inter-Faith Group will be holding its next meeting on Monday 4 June. This is the first of two meetings on overcoming prejudice and will be looking at the subject of Anti-Semitism. There will be a panel of Jewish speakers responding to questions and comments. The meeting takes place at 7.30pm (refreshments from 7pm) and is being held at the Unitarian Meeting House, Brunswick Square, BS2 8PE. For further information, email graham.davey29@yahoo.co.uk.

The **London Inter Faith Centre** is holding the next in its series of events on Food and Festivals in World Religions on Wednesday 6 June. Yousif Al Khoei will be speaking about 'Food and Fasting in Islam' linked to the month of Ramadan. It is being held at 2pm at the London Inter Faith Centre, 125 Salusbury Road, London NW6 6RG. For further information, contact Laurence Hillel laurence.hillel@londoninterfaith.org.uk.

Interfaith MK is holding its next event on Thursday 7 June. The topic will be 'The Principles of Hinduism' and the speaker will be Graceful Siva Sowpakia Sasikumar Kurukkal. It is being held from 7.30pm to 9.30pm at Christ the Vine Community Church, Jonathans, Coffee Hall, Milton Keynes MK6 5EG. For further information, contact interfaithmk@gmail.com.

Epsom and Ewell Inter Faith Forum is holding an Iftar, sharing the breaking of the Ramadan fast, on Saturday 9 June at the Islamic Centre, Epsom. For more information or to confirm your attendance, email lynescholefield@gmail.com.

Barnet Multi Faith Forum, in association with the North Finchley Mosque, is hosting an open iftar on Sunday 10 June. There will be an opportunity to learn about Ramadan and to celebrate the iftar (breaking of fast) together. It is being held from 8.30pm to 9.30pm at the Islamic Association of North London, 685 High Road, North Finchley, London N12 0DA. To attend, email hamid.queshi@ianl.org.uk with any dietary requirements.

Interfaith Glasgow and **St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art** are holding a 'Faith to Faith' event on Sunday 10 June from 2pm to 4pm at St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art, 2 Castle Street, Glasgow, G4 0RH. The theme of the event is 'Heaven and Hell' and there will be a speaker as well as time for dialogue, tea and cake. It is free and all are welcome. Further details to follow. For more information, email info@interfaithglasgow.org.

The **Faith and Civil Society Unit** at Goldsmiths, University of London, is hosting a lecture entitled 'Spirituality and religion: Sustaining individuals and communities or replicating colonisation?' on Tuesday 12 June from 5.30pm to 7pm in the Richard Hoggart Building (Room 137a), Goldsmiths, University of London, SE14. Beth Crisp, Professor of Health and Social Development at Deakin University, Australia, will explore the role of religion and spirituality in sustaining individuals and communities, rather than replicating colonisation. The lecture is part of the 2018 Fellows' Public Seminar Series on the theme of 'Faith and the Future of Civil Society'. All events in the series are free and booking is not required. For more information, visit <https://www.gold.ac.uk/faithsunit/news/>.

Building Bridges in Burnley is holding 'Come DATE with me' from Wednesday 16 May to Thursday 14 June, throughout the month of Ramadan. Mosques throughout Burnley will invite people of other faiths and none to breakfast with them at their mosque. For further information, visit <https://bbburnley.wordpress.com/>.

The London Peace Pagoda is holding its 33rd Annual Celebration on Saturday 16 June at 2pm. There will be an annual ceremony of Nipponzan Myohiji with various Buddhist traditions, inter faith prayers for peace, speeches and music and dance. The programme will be followed by an offering of tea and light refreshments, ending by 5pm. Contact the London Dojo at londonpeacepagoda@gmail.com or 020 7228 9620 prior to attending, in case of changes in the programme.

Welwyn Hatfield Inter Faith Group is holding an afternoon of storytelling on Sunday 17 June. The stories will be told by the Khayall Theatre Company on the theme of 'Tales of Wisdom'. There will be stories from different faiths and the event will appeal to all ages and to all faiths and those who just enjoy good stories. It is being held from 3pm to 6pm at The Focolare Centre for Unity, 69, Parkway, Welwyn Garden City, AL8 6JG. Tickets are available from Valerie Skottowe on 01707 324828.

Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship is holding a Summer Solstice Ritual on Monday 18 June. The group will meet at All Hallows Church at 7pm for a brief introduction by Cynthia Dickinson then walk to the Rosebank Stone Spiral where Jay Anderson will lead a short solstice celebration at 7.30pm. Refreshments will be provided at All Hallows. For more information, contact John Summerwill on 01132 697 895 or at chair@concord-leeds.org.uk.

Woking People of Faith is holding an event for Refugee Week on Tuesday 19 June from 6.30pm to 8.30pm at the HG Wells Centre, Church Street East, Woking. For more information contact Kerry Barry at administrator@wpof.org.uk.

Voices of Faith is holding an away day on Holy Island on Tuesday 19 June at Marygate House. The theme of the day is 'Pilgrimage: are some places holier than others?', and Buddhist, Christian, Jewish, and Muslim Pilgrimage sites will be explored. A minibus will depart from the Church of the Holy Cross in Fenham at 9.45am and return at 6.15pm. To book a place, contact Lesley Hillary on 0191 270 4148 or at l.hillary@newcastle.anglican.org.

Westminster Cathedral Interfaith Group is holding a meeting on Wednesday 20 June from 4pm to 5pm in the Hinsley Room, Morpeth Terrace, SW1P 1EP, led by Dr Jeremy Rodell of the British Humanist Association. The group will be studying *Amoris Laetitia* The Joy of Love, Pope Francis's encyclical on the family and the encyclical *Evangelium Gaudii* The Joy of the Gospel throughout its meetings this year. For more information, contact John Woodhouse by text on 07908 888 586 or by email on woodhousesopten@btinternet.com.

The London Inter Faith Centre is holding a talk by Dr Megan Dent entitled 'Race or Religion? The case of Disraeli' on Wednesday 20 June from 2pm to 3.30pm at St Annes & St Andrews Church, 125 Salusbury Road, NW6 6RG. The talk will explore the interplay of race and religion in Disraeli's thought and the extent to which his views are still present in society today. For more information, visit http://londoninterfaith.org.uk/event/disraeli-and-his-relationship-with-judaism-two-talks-by-megan-dent-2/?instance_id=3471.

The Multi Faith Centre at the University of Derby is supporting a multi-faith tour for Refugee week on Thursday 21 June, starting at 9.30am at The Open Centre, 152 Pear Tree Road, DE23 6QD. The walk will visit a Hindu Temple, Mosque, Baptist Church and Sikh Gurdwara and is designed to help visitors understand the beliefs of others from different communities represented in Derby. For more information and to register, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/multi-faith-tour-for-refugee-week-tickets-43973761705>.

Westminster Interfaith is holding its 33rd Annual Multifaith Pilgrimage for Peace on Saturday 23 June. Call 020 7931 6028 for more information.

Westminster Cathedral Interfaith Group is planning a trip to 'The Life of Christ' at Wintershall, Surrey, on Saturday 23 June. For more information, contact John Woodhouse by text on 07908 888 586 or by email on woodhousesopten@btinternet.com.

Crawley Interfaith and **Faiths in Sussex** are holding an Interfaith Summer Conference entitled 'Ocean of Love – Sacred Readings, Poems, Chants, Music and Dance', from 2.30pm to 5.30pm on Saturday 23 June at Langley Green Community Centre, Stagelands, Langley Green, Crawley, RH11 7PG. For further details, contact Iyad Daoud at iyadhdaoud@yahoo.co.uk or on 01293 883 372.

Building Bridges in Burnley is holding an event for the 'Great Get Together' in memory of Jo Cox MP on Saturday 23 June at 8pm. There will be a sponsored circular walk from the car park at the Singing Ringing Tree finishing with a sunset feast and the launch of the

Community Cohesion statement for Burnley. For further information, visit <https://bbburnley.wordpress.com/>.

Faiths Together in Croydon is holding its annual Interfaith Bike Ride and Big Picnic on Sunday 24 June from 2pm at Park Hill Park. The Bike Ride will begin at 11am from either Old Coulsdon Congregational Church, The Croydon Arena, or another starting point to be confirmed, and will finish at Park Hill Park. Bikes can be borrowed. There is no need to participate in the bike ride to attend the park gathering. Tickets will be available online shortly. For more information, visit <https://faithstogetherincroydon.org.uk/>.

Elmbridge Multi Faith Forum is holding its Annual General Meeting and Conference on Tuesday 26 June at St Christopher's Church, Claygate Lane, Esher, KT10 0AQ. Kauser Akhtar, representative of the Shah Jahan Mosque in Woking will give a talk on 'The True Face of Islam'. This will be a myth-busting talk followed by a Q&A session. Attendees are asked to arrive at 7pm for a 7.30pm start For more information contact Margaret Hicks at margarethicks2@hotmail.co.uk.

Hull and East Riding Interfaith is holding its next meeting on Tuesday 26 June from 4.30pm for a 5pm start at Hull Guildhall. The theme of the meeting is 'Celebrating Women in our Culture and our Faith' and the lead speaker will be The Right Reverend Alison White, Bishop of Hull (supporting speakers of other faiths will also be invited). The meeting will seek to move beyond stereotypes and clichés to better understand how women of faith perceive their own situations and the event will be structured to allow and encourage audience involvement. For more information, visit <http://www.heri.org.uk/>.

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More information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org.uk

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **13 July** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer: Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH
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IFN e-bulletin

July/August 2018

General Data Protection Regulation

As you will be aware, data protection legislation changed with the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) from Friday, 25 May. IFN takes very seriously its data protection duties, and wrote to individuals on its database to check whether they were content for their details to be held by IFN and to receive IFN mailings. We are grateful to all those who have taken the time to respond. You can also sign up to other IFN mailings at any time by using the form on IFN's website at: www.interfaith.org.uk/news/gdpr.

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **14 September** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and projects and future events.

IFN also highlights news and projects of interest through Twitter (www.twitter.com/IFNetUK) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/IFNetUK) and, where about Inter Faith Week, through (www.twitter.com/IFWeek and www.facebook.com/IFWeek).

Disclaimer: Information in this e-bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

Government response to consultation on Caste in Great Britain and equality law

The Government published on 23 July its response to the public consultation on Caste in Great Britain and equality law.

As the result of a 2013 amendment to section 9 (5) (a) of the Equality Act 2010, a duty exists to introduce specific legal protection against discrimination because of caste, by making caste an aspect of race for the purposes of the Act. However, the subsequent judgment of an Employment Appeal Tribunal [EAT] in the *Tirkey v Chandhok* case in 2014 established that many of the facts relevant in considering caste in many of its forms might be equally capable of being considered as part of a person's ethnic origins, which is already part of the existing race provisions within the Act.

The consultation invited views on whether suitable legal protection against caste discrimination is better ensured by exercising the duty or by relying on emerging case-law under the Act as developed by courts and tribunals. Following the consultation, which received over 16,000 responses, the Government's response concludes "Having given careful and detailed consideration to the findings of the consultation, Government believes that the best way to provide the necessary protection against unlawful discrimination because of caste is by relying on emerging case-law as developed by courts and tribunals. In particular, we feel this is the more proportionate approach given the

extremely low numbers of cases involved and the clearly controversial nature of introducing ‘caste’, as a self-standing element, into British domestic law”.

“The duty that currently appears in section 9 (5) (a) of the Equality Act 2010 requires Government to take action to include caste as an aspect of race for the purposes of the Act. The decision to rely on emerging case-law renders that duty redundant and we will identify the most suitable legislative vehicle that can be used to repeal it at an early opportunity.”

The full response is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/caste-in-great-britain-and-equality-law-a-public-consultation>.

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Political parties, Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia

The importance of respectful and fair engagement of political parties with people of all backgrounds has relevance to good inter faith relations in the UK.

The March-April edition of the e-bulletin noted that the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Jewish Leadership Council had expressed strong concerns about anti-Semitism within the Labour Party, through both an open-letter to the Chair of the Parliamentary Labour Party and a public protest in Parliament Square.

Debate about anti-Semitism within the Labour Party, and how allegations have been handled, has continued. The Labour Party’s ruling National Executive Committee adopted a Code of Conduct on Anti-Semitism in early July which adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of anti-Semitism, but omitted from the list of examples of what might constitute anti-Semitism four that had been in the IHRA’s definition. Party spokespersons said that these were covered in the Code in a different way and that the Code went further than the IHRA definition.

68 rabbis from across the spectrum of the Jewish community published an open letter on 16 July condemning the Party’s decision to omit the 4 IHRA examples and what they saw as its mis-handling of anti-Semitism. Separately, Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis issued a statement.

The inclusion in the Code of Conduct of the full IHRA definition, including all of its examples, was backed unanimously by Labour MPs following a vote on an emergency motion on 23 July, and the full Parliamentary Labour Party will be balloted on this in September. The Labour NEC has pledged to consult the Jewish community on its Code of Conduct, which in the meantime will be used in its present form.

The Jewish Chronicle, Jewish News and Jewish Telegraph issued the same front page on 25 July, saying that a Government led by Jeremy Corbyn would pose an ‘existential threat to Jewish life’ with a joint editorial ‘United we stand.’

Further issues have arisen surrounding the suggestion of Mr Peter Willsman, a member of Labour’s National Executive Committee, that Jewish "Trump fanatics" were behind accusations of anti-Semitism in Labour ranks and reporting of Mr Corbyn’s hosting of a 2010 event at which a Holocaust survivor compared Israel to Nazism, following which an apology was issued.

On 31 July, the Campaign Against Antisemitism referred the Labour Party to the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

Baroness Warsi and Lord Sheikh, Conservative Party peers, have called for an inquiry into Islamophobia within the Conservative Party. The Muslim Council of Britain, Tell MAMA and the Runnymede Trust have made similar demands, with the MCB writing to party Chair Brandon Lewis on 31 May and again in June in the absence of a formal response. As reported in the Independent, Baroness Warsi said some of her party’s own campaigning had relied on promoting anti-Muslim rhetoric. She highlighted the 2016 London mayoral campaign, during which the Conservatives were criticised for portraying Labour’s Sadiq Khan, who is Muslim, as “extremist”.

In response to a question at Prime Minister’s Question Time, Prime Minister May said the party was taking action, adding: "Anti-Muslim discrimination is wrong. There is no place for it in our society." In response to a question from Afzal Khan MP, she said "Within the party, we've introduced a new code of conduct ... we investigate any allegations of Islamophobia that are made relating to members of the party.”

"Those are investigated, action is taken, and in some cases members have been suspended or expelled from the party as a result."

Dr Edie Friedman, Executive Director of the Jewish Council for Racial Equality, said JCORE welcomed the call for Islamophobia to be investigated within the Conservative Party. “In the same way as there is a focus on combatting antisemitism including within the Labour Party, it is incumbent on all groups and communities to come together to look at how we can be more effective in combatting hate speech and behaviour across the entire political spectrum.”

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2021 Census

The Office for National Statistics is currently engaged in a testing and development phase for the 2021 Census questionnaire. It is planned that the religion question will be the same as in 2011, but consideration is being given to the ethnicity question, including possible

inclusion of additional response options such as ‘Jewish’, ‘Roma’, ‘Sikh’ and ‘Somali’. This follows extensive public consultation.

Part of the testing and development process includes testing terminology and presentation of response options, and redesigning questions for use online on different devices. The 2021 Census will be the first where online response is the default response mechanism.

It is anticipated that a Census White Paper will be considered by Parliament and that a Census Rehearsal will be carried out, both during 2019. The White Paper will include the ONS’ recommendation on Census questions, including the ethnicity question. Following these, legislation will be passed for the carrying out of the 2021 Census.

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Windrush compensation scheme consultation

The Government is consulting on its proposed compensation scheme for the ‘Windrush generation’, many of whom have faced difficulties in demonstrating their lawful status under the immigration system. The consultation seeks respondents’ views on proposed eligibility, levels of compensation, and operation of the scheme.

The Government previously met with a number of individuals and organisations with links to affected communities, including representatives of faith communities, as part of an earlier call for evidence.

Full details of the consultation and how to respond are available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/windrush-compensation-scheme>. The consultation closes at midday on 11 October.

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Faith Minister’s Faith Tour

Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth, Minister for Faith at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, has been continuing his tour of faith communities and places of worship hearing about work bringing people of different faiths and backgrounds together. During July he visited the South West, including Bath and Bristol and the North East, including Newcastle, Middlesbrough, Sunderland and Holy Island. The faith tour can be followed on Twitter using the hashtag #FaithTour2.

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Truth Project - Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse

The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse recently published fifty accounts of child sexual abuse and institutional failure at a wide range of organisations. The experiences were shared with the Inquiry's Truth Project, which has made significant efforts to engage with faith groups.

The publication can be viewed online or downloaded from <https://www.iicsa.org.uk/victims-and-survivors/experiences-shared>, and more information about the Truth Project is available at www.truthproject.org.uk.

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Commission on Religious Education – update

The final meeting of the Commission on Religious Education took place on 20 July. It is due to publish its final report in September. More information about the Commission can be found at <http://www.commissiononre.org.uk/>

The Commission on Religious Education was established to review the legal, education, and policy frameworks for religious education (RE). The review has aimed to be a wide-ranging, inclusive and evidence-based process designed to inform policy makers. Its ultimate aim is described as to improve the quality and rigour of religious education and its capacity to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.

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All Party Parliamentary Groups

Recent years have seen an increase in the number of All-Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs) with relevance to inter faith engagement.

There are a number of APPGs about individual faith communities such as: Baha'i Faith; Hindu; Jain; Jewish; Muslim; Sikh; and Zoroastrian, mainly with a British focus. These are often involved in raising the profile of individual faith communities in the UK. This is sometimes done through holding events at the Houses of Parliament to mark festivals, for example the events held by the APPG on Jainism with the Institute of Jainology to mark Mahavir Jayanti. It is also done by holding events on themes, such as those held recently by the APPG on Hindus, with the Hindu Forum of Britain, on 'Dharma, the Individual and Society'.

There are also APPGs which focus on subjects such as: Counter-Extremism; Faith and Society; Hate Crime; Inter-Faith; International Freedom of Religion or Belief; Social Integration; and Religious Education.

The APPG on Inter-Faith, for example has as its purpose “To raise awareness amongst parliamentarians of the religious dimension to current issues.” It was with the APPG on Inter-Faith that IFN held an event in the Houses of Parliament during Inter Faith Week 2016 on ‘Sharing local inter faith experience and good practice’.

APPGs are informal cross-party groups run by and for Members of the Commons and Lords, though many choose to involve individuals and organisations from outside Parliament in their administration and activities. <https://www.parliament.uk/about/mps-and-lords/members/apg/> They do not have an official status and the rules state that groups must be transparent about their nature, membership and funding. In particular, they must avoid presenting themselves in a way which could lead to confusion with Select Committees.

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Hate crime and security

On 22 July Tell MAMA published its 2017 Annual Report - <https://tellmamauk.org/tell-mamas-annual-report-for-2017-shows-highest-number-of-anti-muslim-incidents/> - which shows a rise in anti-Muslim incidents since the last reporting period. Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, the Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP, spoke at the launch of the report the following day.

The Community Security Trust has just published its report on anti-Semitic incidents from January to June 2018. <https://cst.org.uk/data/file/e/5/Incidents%20Report%20January-June%202018.1532518541.pdf> This reports a small fall in the number of incidents compared with the same period in 2017, but notes that it was still the second highest ever-recorded in a 6 month period.

The Home Office Places of worship: security funding scheme remains open for bids until 10 August. The scheme is one of the main commitments contained within the Government Hate Crime Action Plan. It provides funding for protective security measures to places of worship that are vulnerable to hate crime. Places of worship can submit bids for projects costing up to £70,000 for protective security measures and are required to contribute at least 20 percent of the total cost of the project. The Home Office will award funding on a discretionary basis up to a maximum of £56,000 per place of worship. Funding is not available for improvements, lead theft, security upgrades or measures to tackle anti-social behaviour or other criminality unconnected with hate crime.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/places-of-worship-security-funding-scheme>

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Commission for Countering Extremism

On 11 July the independent Commission for Countering Extremism launched a period of evidence gathering as part of a study into all forms of extremism. It will be reviewing existing academic evidence on extremism, commissioning bespoke research and issuing a public call for evidence. It wants to hear from victims, their families and all those that counter extremism. Further information is at -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/commission-for-countering-extremism-launches-evidence-drive>

It was announced on the same day that the Commission for Countering Extremism had formed a new Expert Group. The purpose of that is to provide Ms Khan with 'constructive advice and challenge' in the first 12 months of the Commission on gathering evidence, publishing a comprehensive study and making recommendations to the Home Secretary, including a workplan for the Commission in future years. Further information is at <https://extremismcommission.blog.gov.uk/2018/07/11/the-commission-for-countering-extremism-has-formed-a-new-expert-group/>.

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INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK NEWS

Inter Faith Week – 100 days go!

Friday 3 August marks 100 days to go to Inter Faith Week, which this year takes place from 11-18 November.

We very much hope that all our readers will take part and encourage their organisations to do so.

This year is the 10th Inter Faith Week. It is timed to begin on Remembrance Sunday, which this year is the Centenary Armistice Day, marking 100 years since the end of World War One. This supports and encourages remembering of the service of soldiers and civilians of different faiths and beliefs. It is also an opportunity for events focussing on peace.

Follow Inter Faith Week on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram at @IFWeek. If tweeting or posting, the hashtag is #interfaithweek.

There are a number of resources which you might find helpful in planning for the Week:

- Inter Faith Week 2018 flyer www.interfaithweek.org/resources/flyer
- *Stories from 2017, Inspiration for 2018* www.interfaithweek.org/resources/inter-faith-week-stories-from-2017-inspiration-for-2018 - containing many illustrated examples from IFW 2017

- The *Inter Faith Week Toolkit* <https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/toolkit> - packed with suggestions for marking the Week and examples and illustrations drawn from the many successful activities held for the Week to date
- Events list from Inter Faith Week 2017 <https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/inter-faith-week-2017-list-of-activities> - a full list giving you ideas for your next activity

If you already have details of your planned events, these can be submitted online at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/events/submit>. They will begin to be published from September onwards. Those registering their activities will be eligible to receive a free 'registration pack' with some branded items such as balloons and stickers. Further details about the pack will be added to the website in the second half of August.

The Inter Faith Youth Trust is offering grants for youth Inter Faith Week events. More information is [below](#).

Inter Faith Week is a programme of the Inter Faith Network for the UK (www.interfaith.org.uk), which manages the Inter Faith Week website www.interfaithweek.org. The Week in Wales and Northern Ireland is supported in conversation with the Inter-faith Council for Wales / Cyngor Cyd-Ffydd Cymru (<http://interfaithwales.org.uk>), and the Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum (<http://niinterfaithforum.org>).

Sunday 18 November will be Mitzvah Day (www.mitzvahday.org.uk) - a Jewish-led day of social action involving people of all faiths and none working together in their local communities. Many events are being jointly held to mark both Inter Faith Week and Mitzvah Day and these will form a part of Inter Faith Week.

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Scottish Interfaith Week

Scottish Inter Faith Week (SIFW) has taken place with great success since 2004 and is led by Interfaith Scotland (www.interfaithscotland.org). The dates of SIFW 2018 are 11 to 18 November. More details are at <http://scottishinterfaithweek.org>.

The Scottish Government has declared 2018 the 'Year of Young People'. One of the main aims of the Year is to develop better understanding, co-operation and respect between generations. The fact that faith communities have an important role to play in providing opportunities for people of different generations to dialogue and engage in activities together is reflected in the theme for this year's SIFW which is 'Connecting Generations'. The launch event will take place on Monday 12 November in Aberdeen.

Follow Scottish Interfaith Week on Twitter at: @followsifw and on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/FollowSIFW>.

IFN National Meeting 2018 – ‘Young People and Inter Faith Engagement: Making a Difference Together’

IFN’s 2018 National Meeting took place at Derby County Football Club on 4 July. Its theme was ‘Young People and Inter Faith Engagement: Making a Difference Together’. The meeting focused on young people’s engagement in activities which promote inter faith cooperation and understanding. It was the culmination of a programme of work across 8 months looking at: different ways that young people are taking part in inter faith activities; what the key questions and challenges are in developing this; ideas and perspectives of young people about inter faith activity and how this contributes to a more harmonious and just world; new approaches that could be valuable; and what youth-related strand IFN should consider including in its 2019-2021 Strategic Plan. The meeting also provided the occasion for the launch of the expanded and updated edition of IFN’s youth inter faith action guide, *Connect* ([see below](#)).

A short report on the day can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/ifn-national-meeting-2018>. A full report will be produced in due course.

Reports on National Meetings from previous years can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/publications>.

Meeting of national inter faith linking bodies in the devolved nations

The Inter Faith Network links in membership the national inter faith linking bodies of the devolved nations: Interfaith Scotland, the Inter-Faith Council for Wales, and the Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum. These are represented on IFN’s Board. IFN works closely with these bodies and each year convenes a meeting with them to enable sharing of news and good practice.

The annual meetings rotate between Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The 2018 meeting took place in late June, hosted by Interfaith Scotland at its Inter Faith Dialogue Centre in Glasgow.

Issues on the agenda included: Inter Faith Week, in particular the forthcoming 10th Inter Faith Week and 15th Scottish Interfaith Week and the roles of the different national bodies; the planned update of *The Local Inter Faith Guide*; matters of interest and concern, such as the Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper in England and possible developments in the devolved nations, hate crime and Brexit; and a brief round-up of key developments within each organisation since the last meeting.

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

Remembering Srebrenica

Srebrenica Memorial Week took place from 8 to 15 July. The theme this year was ‘Acts of Courage’.

Faith and inter faith organisations throughout the UK took part. National commemorations took place at the St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art, Glasgow on 2 July, at Belfast City Hall on 10 July, at the Guildhall in London on 11 July and at Cardiff University on 13 July. A full list of events can be found at <http://www.srebrenica.org.uk/events/find-your-nearest-memorial-week-events-in-2018/>.

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Peace at the Crease

Commonwealth Secretary-General Patricia Scotland launched a new Commonwealth peacebuilding initiative called “Peace at the Crease” at Lord’s cricket ground in London in July. She was joined at the launch by diplomats, renowned cricketers and religious and community leaders. A range of cricket-based peace building programmes “will build foundations of respect and understanding as the basis for greater inclusiveness and cooperation within and among communities”. The first match under the initiative was between the Vatican XI and a multi-faith Commonwealth team at the Indian Gymkhana Club on 9 July. For more information, visit <http://thecommonwealth.org/media/news/peace-crease-launched-build-bridges-through-cricket>.

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Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service is celebrating 15 years. It is the highest award given to volunteer groups across the UK. Local inter faith organisations Islington Faiths Forum and Wolverhampton Interfaith have been recent recipients of the Award.

Nominations can be made online at <https://www.gov.uk/queens-award-for-voluntary-service>.

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New Multi-faith Centre for the East of England Faiths Agency

East of England Faiths Agency has recently opened a multi-faith centre that includes two offices, a seminar room, a meeting room and library/reading room. Occasional or regular use of the rooms is available to groups and individuals sympathetic to inter-faith dialogue, and a number of local groups have already used the space for a variety of purposes. The centre is located at 47 St Helen's Street, Ipswich, IP4 2JL. For more information about the centre, visit http://www.eefa.net/index_f.htm# .

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Faith community immigration stories

Heather Wells, editor of 'Faith Initiative: Embracing Diversity' is compiling unique immigration stories of people from different faith communities.

The first instalment of 'Immigration Stories' (Issue 37) included the stories of Mr Jehangir Sarosh of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe and Ms Bharti Tailor of the Hindu Forum of Britain coming to Britain.

Anyone interested in contributing to a future instalment should contact Heather Wells at hf_wells@yahoo.co.uk. More information about Faith Initiative is at <https://www.faithinitiative.co.uk/>.

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Inter faith Council for Wales joins Twitter

In July the Inter faith Council for Wales launched its Twitter account, InterfaithCymru, using the handle @CymruInterfaith.

<https://twitter.com/CymruInterfaith/status/1018967089862840321>

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Social media and Charity Digital Code of Practice

IFN is continuing to encourage its member bodies to use social media and to set up Facebook and Twitter accounts if these are not already in place. The NCVO provides advice for groups and charities on setting up Facebook accounts <https://knowhownonprofit.org/how-to/how-to-use-facebook> and organisational pages <https://knowhownonprofit.org/how-to/how-to-set-up-a-facebook-presence-for-your-organisation-guide> . It also offers advice on using Twitter organisationally <https://knowhownonprofit.org/how-to/how-to-use-twitter>.

If your inter faith organisation has any queries on setting up Twitter or Facebook accounts contact ashley.beck@interfaith.org.uk.

A consultation on the first Charity Digital Code of Practice has opened. The draft Code has been developed by The Charity Digital Code of Practice Steering Group following user research and testing with more than 30 organisations across the UK.

Information on the consultation, which closes on 25 September, can be found at <https://doit.life/charity-digital-code>.

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Emerging Peacemakers Forum

In July the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, in cooperation with Al-Azhar Al-Sharif university and the Council of Muslim Elders organised an Emerging Peacemakers Forum. 50 young Christians and Muslims aged 20-25 attended and participated in training in peacemaking and reconciliation at Churchill College, Cambridge. Attendees also met with international religious leaders, including the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar and Prof Dr Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, president of the Muslim Council of Elders. The Forum's aim was to strengthen the role of young people in society and promote a culture of coexistence and integration. More information about the Forum can be found at <https://ctbi.org.uk/emerging-peacemakers-forum> and <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/young-peacemakers-christian-and-muslim-meet-religious-leaders-during-uk-forum>.

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Faith and Food in Edinburgh

Edinburgh Inter-Faith Association (EIFA) is launching a new Community Meal series a 'Taste of Faith'. It is looking for faith organisations to hold an open doors community meal. EIFA says, "We want to bring about real change and break down barriers, and nothing brings people together more than food!" The flyer can be downloaded from [https://mailchi.mp/5ab2fbb4ee20/eifa-newsletter-update-july-2018?e=\[UNIQID\]](https://mailchi.mp/5ab2fbb4ee20/eifa-newsletter-update-july-2018?e=[UNIQID]).

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New projects at Touchstone Bradford

Touchstone in Bradford has two new projects <http://www.touchstone-bradford.org.uk/news-events>

The first is “Baking a difference”. This project brings together on Monday mornings women from different faiths and backgrounds to bake different breads from around the world. It involves sharing stories, forming friendships, increasing understanding and trust. For more details email faith2faith@touchstone-bradford.org.uk.

The second is Roots and shoots, which is an inter faith inter-generational project in partnership with The Feast. It involves women and girls across the Bradford district, listening, sharing and empowering each other through fun activities. For more details email uzma@thefeast.org.uk.

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

Connect: a youth inter faith action guide

IFN’s latest publication is called *Connect: a youth inter faith action guide*. It can be downloaded from <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/connect> and printed copies are available from the Inter Faith Network office.

This practical illustrated booklet, developed with and by young people of different backgrounds, includes information on the different kinds of inter faith activity, ways to get involved, planning tips and practicalities, and links to further information.

The development of the guide was informed by an Advisory Group, a range of consultations, including a questionnaire sent to organisations working on inter faith initiatives with young people; focus group sessions in different parts of the UK for young people aged 16-25; meetings of IFN member bodies; visits to 3 secondary schools in England and Wales; and some social media polls.

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CCJ Safe Car Wash resource to tackle modern slavery

The Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ) is working in partnership with the Clewer Initiative to end modern slavery at hand car washes. The Clewer Initiative has created the Safe Car Wash app, which helps members of the public to spot the signs of forced labour, and CCJ has produced a resource for Christian and Jewish communities to raise awareness of modern slavery and publicise the app. CCJ’s Safe Car Wash Resource contains sermon ideas, religious sources on slavery, activities for children and young people, and ways to involve local communities and CCJ branches in ending modern slavery. The resource is available to download from <http://www.ccj.org.uk/safe-car-wash-resource/>.

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‘A New Settlement Revised: Religion and Belief in Schools’

Charles Clarke and Linda Woodhead have published a policy pamphlet entitled ‘A New Settlement Revised: Religion and Belief in Schools’.

This policy pamphlet, which updates an earlier one published by the same authors in 2015 as part of the Westminster Faith Debates, examines Religious Education in the school curriculum, the act of collective worship and faith schools. It argues that the current legal relationship between religion, belief and schools is outdated in such a way that the law itself has become a barrier to schools’ ability to help their children understand their own situation and the world in which they are growing up. It calls for a reform of the law that undergirds the way religion is handled in schools and makes 16 detailed recommendations about the curriculum, collective worship and faith schools. The pamphlet is available at: <http://faithdebates.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Clarke-Woodhead-A-New-Settlement-Revised.pdf>.

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NHS organ donation information pack for faith leaders

Following the Government’s recent consultation on introducing an opt-out system for organ donation in England, NHS Blood and Transplant has produced an information pack for faith leaders that may be useful when engaging with faith communities about organ donation.

To request a copy of the pack, email marketing.comms@nhsbt.nhs.uk and Geraldine.parker@nhsbt.nhs.uk. Suggestions on improving the resources and ideas on how to work together during Organ Donation Week (3-9 September) and/or Inter Faith Week (11-18 November) are also welcomed by the NHSBT.

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Report - Manchester Commission on Preventing Hateful Extremism and Promoting Social Cohesion

On 30 July the Manchester Commission on Preventing Hateful Extremism and Promoting Social Cohesion published its report.

The report said that the evidence was that there is no single cause of individuals becoming radicalised, but the behavioural patterns caused by situation or emotional changes can be an early indicator. It said that there is a need for people to have the opportunity and safe places to have difficult and challenging conversations. In their response, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Manchester have pledged to adopt the Commission’s analysis and findings into the development of a new Greater Manchester approach to tackling

extremism and promoting social cohesion. They have called on all communities and parts of society to play a part in developing new solutions. More information is at <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/news/article/358/greater-manchester-to-consider-new-whole-society-approach-to-tackling-violent-extremism>.

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Interfaith Scotland Youth Leadership Residential

Interfaith Scotland, in partnership with Dare2Lead, is hosting a fully-funded residential from Friday 7 to Sunday 9 September, for young people who are active in their faith communities. The programme is looking to find out what inter faith dialogue means to those aged 16-26, and also provides an opportunity to develop personal skills in leadership, communication and social action. The residential is open to participants in Scotland only. For more information, contact michael@interfaithscotland.org.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS, AND NOMINATIONS

Honours List nominations

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is keen to ensure that individuals from the full breadth of society who are making a significant contribution to public life are properly recognised through the Honours system, and is therefore seeking nominations for the Queen's Birthday honours list. It is particularly keen that individuals be recognised who have contributed to building integrated communities and notes that nominees can come from all levels; being in a junior role is not a barrier to a nomination.

All nominations must be made on an official citation form and nominees should not be informed that they have been nominated. Citation forms, as well as further information, can be obtained from Abdul Ghaffar at abdul.ghaffar@communities.gsi.gov.uk. The deadline for nominations is Friday 7 September.

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Inspirational Women of faith in the Suffragette Movement

The Religions for Peace UK Women of Faith Network, in partnership with Interfaith Scotland, has secured funding for a multi-faith project which seeks to explore the role of women of faith in the Suffragette Movement. In 2018 and 2019 they will be celebrating both the anniversary and the significance of women's suffrage to all women, from all religion and belief backgrounds. There is currently no easily accessible information on the role that women from ethnic minority and faith communities played in the movement. The project aims to gather stories that demonstrate the diversity of women involved both

nationally and internationally, and to bring people together to celebrate women's suffrage through research and dialogue events.

For more information about the project, and/or to get involved, contact Dr Maureen Sier, Director of Interfaith Scotland at maureen@interfaithscotland.org, or Ravinder Kaur Nijjar, Chair of Religions for Peace UK Women of Faith Network at rknijjar@UKWFN.org.

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Faith groups' participation in Remembrance Sunday

In the centenary year of the end of World War I, the Government is seeking to make faith and belief representation at the National Remembrance Service more reflective of modern Britain, both now and in the future.

In his or her capacity as Dean of Her Majesty The Queen's Chapels Royal, the Bishop of London leads the National Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph in Whitehall in London. Other faith leaders are also present. There are currently 15 faith and belief denominations represented at the Remembrance Service (Anglican, Catholic, Church of Scotland, Methodist, United Reformed Church, Unitarian, Free Christian Churches, the Salvation Army, Baptist, Greek Orthodox Church, Jewish (United Hebrew Congregations), Jewish (Reform), Islam, Hindu and Sikh. These representatives attend the service to pay their respects on behalf of their communities, but do not lay a wreath.

This year the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has asked Faiths Forum for London to run an open application process inviting organisations representing different faith/denomination and belief groups across Great Britain, who are not currently represented, to be part of the annual commemoration service.

<http://faithsforum.com/faith-belief-groups-participation-remembrance-sunday/>

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No2H8 award nominations

The No2H8 awards celebrate individuals and organisations countering racism, hatred and prejudice. This includes religious hatred.

This year's awards ceremony will be held on 13 September, presented by June Sarpong MBE. The coalition of partners involved includes Tell MAMA, the Community Security Trust, GALOP, Stonewall and the 'No to Hate Crime' campaign. Nominations are open until midnight on Friday 10 August and can be made in a number of categories. For more information and details of how to nominate, visit <http://no2h8crimeawards.org/terms-and-conditions/>.

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World Congress of Faiths Essay Award

Submissions remain open for the World Congress of Faiths Essay Award 2018. Undergraduate and postgraduate students at UK universities are invited to submit a maximum of 3,000 words on the question ‘Can inter faith dialogue achieve any lasting value for society?’ by 28 August. The winner will receive £300 and have their essay published in *Interreligious Insight*. All entrants will receive free membership to World Congress of Faiths for a year. For further details, visit <http://www.worldfaiths.org/2018-essay-award/>.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

IFN’s website lists job and internship opportunities with a significant inter faith dimension with IFN member organisations at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/jobs>.

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Inter Faith Network for the UK – Intern and Project Assistant

The Inter Faith Network for the UK will shortly be advertising for an Intern and a Project Assistant. More details will be available in due course at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/jobs>.

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Inter Faith Network for the UK - Volunteers

The Inter Faith Network for the UK has regular volunteering opportunities. Further information about these can be found on IFN’s website.

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St Ethelburga’s – Volunteers and Interns

St Ethelburga’s Centre for Reconciliation and Peace is looking to recruit the following volunteers/interns: a videos and stories intern; media volunteers; a communications and design intern; maintenance volunteers; a marketing mentor; and Arabic and Farsi interpreters.

More information about the roles and how to apply is available at <https://stethelburgas.org/get-involved/vacancies-and-volunteering/>.

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Faith and Belief Forum – Internships

The Faith and Belief Forum is accepting applications for its latest round of Internships. The Internships are for 3 days a week for 3-6 months, and are available across a range of programmes including Admin, Operations and Volunteer Management; Education and Schools; Fundraising and Events; Political Leadership (ParliaMentors Programme) and Media and Communications. The closing date for applications is 20 August. More information about the internships and how to apply is available at <https://faithbeliefforum.org/programme/fbf-internship-programme>.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Integrated Communities Innovation Fund

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, in partnership with Sport England, is inviting initial expressions of interest to its new Integrated Communities Innovation Fund. The fund is intended to help drive forward proposals to tackle the key causes of poor integration set out in the government's Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper. It will provide support to projects that are innovative in how they tackle systemic integration challenges and help build integrated communities, including through sports-based activities.

Further information about the fund and assessment criteria is at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/integrated-communities-innovation-fund>. Expressions of interest must be sent on an official form to integrationstrategy@communities.gsi.gov.uk by 11.45pm on 20 August.

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Government funding to promote integration through youth groups

Communities Minister Lord Bourne has recently announced funding of £250,000 to give young people from diverse backgrounds more opportunities to join national youth groups like the Scouts, Police Cadets, and Guiding. The funding will go to the Youth United Foundation, a charity that supports 11 uniformed youth volunteering organisations. It will be used to promote integration by building a national network of youth integration champions, and rolling out long-term approaches to developing lasting relationships between young people from different backgrounds.

This funding is part of the Government's ongoing integration work including the recent launch of the Integrated Communities Innovation Fund (see [above](#)). Further information is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/more-funding-for-youth-groups-to-help-youngsters-unlock-their-full-potential>.

Inter Faith Youth Trust grants

The Inter Faith Youth Trust is making available grants of up to £500 for organisations running events or projects for Inter Faith Week. The age range for young people is 11-25 years. Priority will be given to projects which:

- actively involve young people in planning, running, and evaluation of the project;
- promote positive action ie young people from different backgrounds coming together to address shared problems like improving green spaces; and
- are run by non-statutory organisations, such as youth clubs, scout/guide groups, local voluntary and community organisations.

Grants are awarded for successful “proposals for inter-faith activities by children and young people from Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and other faiths and those of no formal faith in understanding and co-operation”.

Applications can be made online. The closing date is 14 September. Further information and the application form can be found at www.ifyouthtrust.org.uk.

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Near Neighbours grants programme

The Near Neighbours small grants programme is funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and administered by the Church Urban Fund. It is currently offering small grants of between £250 and £5,000, as seed funding for local groups and organisations working in a number of areas of England to bring together neighbours, and to develop relationships across diverse faiths and ethnicities to improve their communities.

As part of the criteria, projects should:

- bring together peoples of two or more different faiths and/or ethnicities, to build friendships and develop relationships of trust.
- work locally - the programme wants to see people who are living very locally (ie in the same street, estate or neighbourhood) come together.
- work sustainably - the programme wants to see long term and natural relationships grow, that will last beyond the period of funding.
- work to improve the community – the programme wants to see people working to make their communities a better place to live.
- involve diverse people in planning and implementation. People from more than one faith group and/or ethnicity are involved in planning and implementing the proposal.

For information on the eligible areas and other criteria, visit <https://www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours-small-grants> or email near.neighbours@cuf.org.uk with general enquiries.

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Building a Stronger Britain Together programme

The Home Office programme Building a Stronger Britain Together is continuing to offer in-kind support such as social media training, technical assistance to help a group improve their website, or capacity building work to help a group protect more vulnerable individuals. It is open to bodies in England and Wales. Applications for in-kind support can be submitted at any time.

Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/building-a-stronger-britain-together>.

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Faiths in Scotland Community Action Fund

Faiths in Scotland Community Action Fund continues to be open for applications to its rolling small grants scheme. Small grants of up to £750 are available to faith based anti-poverty projects with an annual turnover of £30,000 or less and can be applied for at any time. For more information call 0141 221 4576 or visit

<https://www.faithincommunityscotland.org/faith-in-community-scotland-action-fund/our-grants/smallgrants/>.

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Funding websites

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) offers advice on fundraising and grants on its Knowhow Nonprofit site at <https://knowhownonprofit.org/funding>.

Funding Central - <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/default.aspx> - is a free website for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises in England that provides access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, together with tools and resources for supporting organisations to develop sustainable income strategies appropriate to their needs. Similar websites for funding in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at Funding Scotland - <http://www.fundingscotland.com/> - Wales Council for Voluntary Action - <http://www.wcva.org.uk/funding/search> - and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland - <https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

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Heritage Lottery Fund grants to commemorate First World War

The Heritage Lottery Fund has £4million of funding available for communities to get involved in projects marking the Centenary of the First World War. Projects applying for funding must be able to meet one of a number of successful outcomes based on heritage, people and communities. Grants can be given between £3,000 and £10,000. Grants are being considered up until 18 January 2019.

Further information can be found at <https://www.hlf.org.uk/looking-funding/our-grant-programmes/first-world-war-then-and-now>.

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Website and Facebook grants

The Transform Foundation is offering funding to charities to help with new website builds. Grants of £18,000 are available. It is also offering grants towards Facebook advertising of £5,000. For further information and to apply, visit www.transformfoundation.org.uk.

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Google and charities

Google is offering a service to registered charities which brings: Google Ad Grants: Free AdWords advertising to promote their websites on Google through keyword targeting; YouTube Nonprofit Programme: Access exclusive resources, features and programs designed to maximise their organisations' impact on YouTube; and Google Apps for Non-profit: Free version of the Google Apps business productivity suite, including Gmail, Docs, Calendar and more. For further information, visit www.google.co.uk/intl/en/nonprofits/join.

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Subsidised fundraising workshops

The Foundation for Social Improvement offers heavily subsidised training programmes for small charities across the UK. The courses cover a wide range of subjects from event planning to leadership. Many of the courses focus on fundraising and sustainability skills in particular. Further information and dates for upcoming courses in September can be found at <http://www.thefsi.org/services/training>.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

UN International Day of Peace is on Friday 21 September. The UN General Assembly has declared this as a day devoted to strengthening the ideals of peace, both within and among all nations and peoples. <http://www.un.org/en/events/peaceday/>

Hate Crime Awareness Week will take place this year from Saturday 13 to Saturday 20 October. <https://nationalhcaw.uk/>

Sewa Day will take place this year on Sunday 14 October. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Hindu community. <http://www.sewaday.org/>

One World Week takes place from Sunday 21 to Sunday 28 October. Its theme is 'The World is Changing – How about us?'. This is the 40th anniversary of the Week. www.oneworldweek.org

Inter Faith Week in England, Wales and Northern Ireland will take place from Sunday 11 to Sunday 18 November. It is led by the Inter Faith Network for the UK www.interfaithweek.org See more [above](#).

Scottish Interfaith Week will take place from Sunday 11 to Sunday 18 November. It is led by Interfaith Scotland. <http://scottishinterfaithweek.org/> See more [above](#).

Mitzvah Day will take place on Sunday 18 November. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Jewish community. On Mitzvah Day, people give their time, not their money, to make a difference to the community around them. Many events and projects held for the day have an inter faith focus. www.mitzvahday.org.uk/

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DIARY DATES

This section includes a sample of some of the events taking place around the UK during August and September. We also include information on diary dates between e-bulletins on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/events>.

Bolton Interfaith Council is holding its Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 1 August from 4.30pm to 6.30pm at St Andrews and St Georges URC, St Georges Road, BL1 2BS. Those wishing to attend are asked to contact Chan Parmar on 01204 546 110 or at chan@boltoninterfaithcouncil.org.uk.

Waltham Forest Faith Communities Forum is holding its annual 'Waltham Forest Faith Fayre' on Saturday 4 August from 11am to 3pm. The event is an opportunity for people to come together in friendship and to learn about each other's faith and faith communities. The event is being held in Walthamstow Town Square. For further information, including about participating by setting up a stall, email communications@faithcommunities.org.uk.

**SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK
TO INCREASE INTER FAITH UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION**

We need your help to ensure that the Inter Faith Network for the UK's work to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation continues and grows, helping people of all backgrounds to live and work together with mutual respect and shared commitment to the common good.

Gifts at all levels are much valued and make a real difference. You can donate directly at www.interfaith.org.uk/donate or via PayPal or JustGiving at <https://www.justgiving.com/interfaithnetwork-uk>.

Donations can also be made by sending a cheque to The Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH.

Thank you!

REMEMBERING A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND

If you would like to make a gift in memory of a loved one, please get in touch by emailing remember@interfaith.org.uk or call us on 0207 730 0410.

A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

By leaving a gift in your will to the Inter Faith Network for the UK, you can leave a living inheritance to help deepen and strengthen inter faith understanding and cooperation in this country – for now and for the future. If you are thinking about making a will, the best thing to do is to get in touch with a professional will writer, such as a solicitor or advocate; they can help to ensure it is legally correct and that your wishes are met. If you have already made a will, you can still make an addition or amendment in the form of a codicil. If you would like to pledge a gift, please provide our name and address, along with our registered charity number 1068934.

Please get in touch with us if you have any queries.
You can call us on 0207 730 0410 or contact us at remember@interfaith.org.uk

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Woking People of Faith is holding a multi faith service and tour around Brookwood Military Cemetery with a last post on Sunday 5 August at 3pm. For more information contact Kerry Barry at administrator@wpof.org.uk.

The Multifaith Chapel & Library at Burngreave Ashram is holding an open forum on Monday 6 August to plan themes, presenters and meals from September 2018 onwards. The meeting will take place at 86 Spital Hill, Sheffield, S4 7LG. Lunch will be provided at 12.30pm and the forum will begin at 1.15pm. All are welcome. For further details contact 0114 272 7144, 0114 243 6688 or BAMCL@outlook.com.

LEAP Sports Scotland is holding an event entitled 'How Queer is Religion?' from 3pm-4pm on Monday 6 August at Pride House, Trongate, Glasgow. A number of panellists will discuss issues around being an LGBTIQ person of faith and whether the two things are mutually exclusive or whether there is an intersectional space where they can co-exist. For further information, visit <https://www.facebook.com/events/189671151721458/>.

York Interfaith will be holding its next meeting on Tuesday 7 August. The topic will be 'Faith and Civic Responsibility' and the guest speaker will be Rachael Maskell, MP for York Central. It will be held at 7.30pm in the Hudson Room, City of York Council, West Offices, Station Rise, York YO1 6GA. For further information, contact York Interfaith Group yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com.

Interfaith Glasgow and **St Mungo Museum** are holding their next 'Faith to Faith' informal dialogue event on Sunday 12 August from 2pm – 4pm at the St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art, 2 Castle Street, G4 0RH, Glasgow. The theme is 'Interfaith Pilgrims in the Holy Land: Ten Years On'. 10 years ago 32 Scots from 7 faith traditions spent a week in the 'Holy Land' visiting places of religious significance and meeting peace activists. Some of the pilgrims from diverse traditions will be sharing their reflections on their experiences and their hopes for the future. There will be time for questions and dialogue as well as tea and cake. For more information and to register, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/interfaith-pilgrims-in-the-holy-land-ten-years-on-tickets-47770946186>.

Building Bridges in Burnley is holding a Faith Journey on the Canal on Saturday 25 and Sunday 26 August at Burnley Canal Festival. The event will start at 10am and provide an opportunity to find out more about the group's faith work.

Law and Justice: The Christian Law Review is holding a conference entitled of 'Charity, religion and the State: an uneasy relationship' on Wednesday 12 September from 2pm to 5pm at the London Campus, University of Liverpool in London, 33 Finsbury Square, London, EC2A 1AG. The conference will explore the tensions in the relationship between religious charities and the State, with an emphasis on current issues. Presentations will explore public benefit and religion; the Catholic adoption case; Faith schools and the admission cap; and Limits on the Court and Charity Commission looking at religious doctrine when deciding charitable status. For further information and to book a place, visit <http://www.lawandjustice.org.uk/conference.pdf>.

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Interfaith Glasgow is holding a series of woodland explorations as part of its 'Interfaith Outdoors' programme, designed for adults from all faith backgrounds and none who have little or no experience of Scottish woodlands and who would like to engage in woodland activities and build friendships with people of other faiths. Eight people will be invited to participate in each session, and video footage and participant feedback will be used to produce a short film promoting outdoor and interfaith activity. The final session focuses on outdoor cooking and will be held on Sunday 16 September. For further information and to register, email Project Officer Kemal Okan at projects@interfaithglasgow.org.

Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship is holding an event entitled 'Baha'i and Christian attitudes towards violence' at 7.30pm on Monday 24 September at the Friends' Meeting House, 188 Woodhouse Lane, Leeds, LS2 9DX. Speakers include Mehran Nassiri and the Reverend Sam Corley. For more information, contact John Summerwill on 01132 697 895 or at chair@concord-leeds.org.uk.

Crawley Interfaith Network is holding a talk on 'Abrahamic Re-Union – Promoting Peace and Harmony in Difficult Areas' from 7pm to 9pm on Wednesday 26 September at The Orchard, 1-2 Gleneagles Court, Brighton Road, Crawley, RH10 6AD. Sue Malpas, Senior Lecturer at St Vincent College and Equalities and Diversity Consultant, will be speaking. For further details, contact Iyad Daoud at iyadhdaoud@yahoo.co.uk or on 01293 883 372.

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More information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org.uk

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **14 September** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer: Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH
www.interfaith.org.uk www.facebook.com/IFNetUK www.twitter.com/IFNetUK

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IFN e-bulletin

September/October 2018

General Data Protection Regulation

As you will be aware, data protection legislation changed with the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) from 25 May. IFN takes very seriously its data protection duties, and wrote to individuals on its database to check whether they were content for their details to be held by IFN and to receive IFN mailings. We are grateful to all those who have taken the time to respond. You can also sign up to other IFN mailings at any time by using the form on IFN's website at: www.interfaith.org.uk/news/gdpr.

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **16 November** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and projects and future events.

IFN also highlights news and projects of interest through Twitter (www.twitter.com/IFNetUK) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/IFNetUK) and, where about Inter Faith Week, through (www.twitter.com/IFWeek and www.facebook.com/IFWeek).

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

Political parties – modelling respectful engagement

In the last issue of the IFN e-bulletin there was an item on ‘Political Parties, Antisemitism and Islamophobia’. A copy of this item can be found at

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/ifn-e-bulletin-july-august-2018#1.2>.

On 7 September IFN’s Co-Chairs and Moderators of the Faith Communities Forum issued the following statement on ‘Political parties - modelling respectful engagement’.

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/political-parties-modelling-respectful-engagement-statement>

“As the party conference season approaches, we call on all political parties to model and encourage through their words and actions an open, fair and respectful engagement with people of different faiths and beliefs.

The last few months have seen concerns expressed in relation to the processes of political parties about Antisemitism and Islamophobia and perceived slow or limited response to handling allegations about this.

This comes in the context of concerns within wider society about extremism and hate incidents which have affected, among others, a number of faith communities.

Freedom of speech and the parameters of UK law permit a wide spectrum of views to be voiced. At the same time, principles of respect and tolerance are vital, as is finding ways to deal well with disagreement.

We commend the principles in the Inter Faith Network's guidelines [*Building Good Relations with People of Different Faiths and Beliefs*](#).

Religious literacy is also vital, in relation to all faiths. We hope that it will be the case that the coming months will see informed and helpful engagement reflecting the best of all the parties' visions of an integrated and harmonious society.

From 11-18 November, national Inter Faith Week will be marked. We hope that all parties will find ways to mark Inter Faith Week, highlighting their commitment to engaging well with those of all faiths and beliefs and to serving well the needs of all faiths and none at national, regional and local levels.”

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Final report of the Commission on Religious Education

On 9 September the Commission on Religious Education published its final report: *Religion and Worldviews: the way forward. A national plan for RE*.

The Religious Education Council for England and Wales launched the Commission in July 2016 as an independent body. It was chaired by the Very Revd Dr John Hall, Dean of Westminster. The fourteen Commissioners included academics, head teachers, teachers, school governors and a broadcaster. The Commission published an interim report in July 2017.

The final report makes 11 recommendations, which include changing the name of the subject RE to 'Religion and Worldviews'. It sets out a 'national entitlement' for RE that would apply to all state funded schools. It calls for a special body to be formed by the Government to write programmes of study for Religion and Worldviews based on the 'national entitlement' which would act in a similar way to the National Curriculum for other subjects.

The full report and the executive summary can be found at: <https://www.commissiononre.org.uk/final-report-religion-and-worldviews-the-way-forward-a-national-plan-for-re/> where there is also a short video explaining why the Commission believes there is the need for change.

The Commission has now ended its work. Any queries or comments about the report can be sent to the RE Council of England and Wales using the email address: enquiries@commissiononre.org.uk.

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Board of Deputies of British Jews and Sikh Council UK – a new partnership for the common good

The Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Sikh Council UK have instituted a new partnership to bring their communities together through pursuing the common good. Jewish and Sikh volunteers collaborated at the West London Synagogue's Drop-In Centre for families seeking asylum in August, and at a Sikh-led event at Charing Cross to help the homeless in September. The partnership follows a meeting between the two organisations earlier in the year, at which they agreed to work together on a range of activities including social action.

For more information about the partnership, visit <https://www.bod.org.uk/jews-and-sikhs-look-for-the-common-good/>. Those interested in participating should email anthony.silkoff@bod.org.uk.

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Hate Crime

There have continued to be reports of hate crimes linked to religious identity, affecting both individuals and places of worship.

On 28 August there was a petrol bomb attack on a Sikh Gurdwara in Leith, Edinburgh. Government and Interfaith Scotland responses to this can be seen at <https://twitter.com/JBrokenshire/status/1034554562634555393> and <https://www.facebook.com/interfaithscotland>. There was a strong cross-community response. A suspect has been arrested for that attack, as well as for an attack earlier that day on a Methodist church nearby. <http://www.scotland.police.uk/whats-happening/news/2018/august/man-charged-following-fires-at-sikh-temple-and-methodist-church>

On 19 September, just before Ashura, three people were injured after a car ploughed into a crowd outside the Al-Majlis Al-Hussaini mosque on Edgware Road in North London, in an incident that is being treated as a hate crime. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/sep/19/brent-mosque-london-three-injured-in-hit-and-run> There was also in this instance strong cross-community support including visits from members of two local

synagogues even though it was Yom Kippur. <https://jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/jewish-communities-visit-muslim-neighbours-on-yom-kippur-after-mosque-attack/>

The National No2H8 Crime Awards 2018 took place in London on 13 September. The Awards are made by a coalition of partners including [Tell MAMA](#), the [Community Security Trust](#), [GALOP](#), [Stonewall](#) and the ‘[No to Hate Crime](#)’ campaign. The Awards “honour those individuals and organisations who stand against hatred, prejudice and intolerance.” Further information is at <https://no2h8crimeawards.org/>.

National Hate Crime Awareness Week will be taking place this year from Saturday 13 to Saturday 20 October. Further information is at <https://nationalhcaw.uk/>.

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Armistice100

Remembrance Sunday is marked from the smallest villages to the largest cities. Hundreds of thousands of people participate in services and other events commemorating the contribution of British and Commonwealth military servicemen and women and non-combatants in the two World Wars and later conflicts. People from all faith backgrounds and none took part in these conflicts.

Remembrance Sunday falls on the second Sunday in November, the one nearest to 11 November which is Armistice Day, the anniversary of the end of World War I at 11 am in 1918. A two minute silence is held at that time.

The march past the cenotaph in Whitehall, London on Remembrance Sunday is a major focus of the day, with the ‘march past’ of British and Commonwealth former military and civilian service personnel and wreath laying.

Because 11 November 2018 marks the Centenary of the end of World War 1 there will this year be many special additional activities for Remembrance Sunday and the period leading up to that. Among these will be a ‘People’s march’ past the Cenotaph and special bell ringing. More about these and other events and activities can be found at: <https://armistice100.org.uk/>.

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Commemorating the Suffrage Movement

In the last issue of the e-bulletin there was an article about the multi faith project being jointly run by the Religions for Peace UK Women of Faith Network and Interfaith Scotland to explore during 2018 and 2019 the role of women of faith in the Suffrage Movement. <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/ifn-e-bulletin-july-august-2018#5.2>

Faith communities are continuing to commemorate the anniversary of the Suffrage Movement. Most recently, the Zoroastrian All Party Parliamentary Group held an event in the House of Lords on 12 September at which Dr Sumita Mukerjee, Historian and Senior Lecturer at the University of Bristol, gave a talk on 'Zoroastrian and Indian women in the British and Indian Suffrage movement'. For more information, contact secretary@ztfе.com.

As part of the Vote100 celebrations during UK Parliament Week (12 to 18 November), the Houses of Parliament, in partnership with the Church of England, has published a booklet summarising the workings of parliament, democracy, and the history behind the Representation of the People Act 1918, which paved the way for women to vote in a General Election. The booklet also contains activities for children, such as holding mock parliamentary debates, campaigns, feasting, prayers, and a quiz. It can be downloaded from the Vote100 website (<https://www.ukparliamentweek.org/blog/vote-100/>), along with a ballot box for children to hold mock elections, a “Votes for Women” sash, and a UK Parliament Week placard, bunting, and posters to promote events. UK Parliament Week this year takes place at the same time as Inter Faith Week and Scottish Interfaith Week (see [below](#)).

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Reset Communities and Refugees

Reset Communities and Refugees is a new, national charity, funded by the Home Office and philanthropic foundations in order to promote and grow community sponsorship in the UK.

Community sponsorship provides a practical way for groups to support refugees affected by the Syrian crisis to build a new life in the UK. Through community sponsorship, groups come together to welcome families into their local area and support them to find housing, jobs, English lessons, schools and doctors. Communities also offer friendship and advice – whether it is helping the children with their homework or explaining some of the idiosyncrasies of British culture. Communities empower refugees to become self-sufficient as they settle into their new lives. Faith groups are often among those acting as community sponsors.

Further information can be found at <http://www.resetuk.org.uk> and in the video at <https://youtu.be/85DRSAcKF4>.

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Taylor Review Pilot – listed places of worship

The Taylor Review Pilot was launched on 3 September and will run until March 2020 in the pilot areas of Manchester and St Edmundsbury and Ipswich. It is being administered by Historic England on behalf of the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and is restricted to Greater Manchester and Suffolk. The Taylor Review was commissioned in April 2016, with the aim of examining the funding and sustainability of listed Church of England buildings to ensure they are conserved for future generations.

It is open to all faith groups who manage listed places of worship and meet the eligibility criteria in those areas. In each area, the pilot consists of:

- a Fabric Support Officer, who will focus on helping congregations with maintenance and repair of historic fabric, and will work with those applying for a minor repairs fund grant;
- a Community Development Adviser, who will help to increase engagement beyond the worshipping community in both urban and rural contexts;
- workshops, which will promote best practice in the maintenance of historic buildings and the value of developing strong links with the local community; and
- a minor repairs fund, which aims to reduce the physical deterioration of historic fabric by encouraging a ‘stitch in time’ approach to urgent minor repairs, to reduce the likelihood of a building becoming ‘at risk’.

For further information about the Pilot, or to sign up for email updates, visit <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/caring-for-heritage/places-of-worship/churches-sustainability-review/> or email taylorpilot@HistoricEngland.org.uk.

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Training of faith leaders

In March the Government published a Green Paper on its Integrated Communities Strategy. This invited views on its vision for building strong integrated communities where people – whatever their background – live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities. In the Green Paper, the Government committed to supporting the training of faith leaders to strengthen ministering in the British context.

This commitment ties in with the Government’s ambition “for all faith leaders to be confident, well-qualified and outward-looking, and to demonstrate an ability to resist, and help their congregations to resist, intolerant or extremist arguments”.

The Government's expectation is that faith institutions will themselves address these questions, but has indicated that it is looking to help by ensuring that suitable voluntary training is available to religious ministers to ensure they understand their rights and responsibilities, including relevant aspects of the British legal system, to help them deal confidently with the spectrum of issues faced by their congregations.

A survey was sent to faith community organisations for them to complete during September on this topic.

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INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK NEWS

Inter Faith Week

Inter Faith Week 2018 runs from Sunday 11 to Sunday 18 November. This year is the 10th Inter Faith Week.

Inter Faith Week is timed to begin on Remembrance Sunday, which this year is the Centenary Armistice Day, marking 100 years since the end of World War One. This is to give people of different backgrounds opportunity to remember together and to highlight the diversity of those who have served – both from the UK and from the countries that became the Commonwealth. Those who were conscientious objectors also came from different backgrounds and often acted in the light of their beliefs. The Week also enables reflection on this.

A short resource linked to this will be available on the Inter Faith Week website soon.

The first Inter Faith Week activities have now been published on the Inter Faith Week website map at www.interfaithweek.org/map, and activities will continue to be added on a rolling basis. The website also lists this [by date](#) and [by town](#).

If you are organising an activity to mark the Week, you can submit this to the website at www.interfaithweek.org/submit. There are a number of reasons to submit your activity, including:

- The central website helps members of the public and the media to find out about your activity;
- The map enables people to see at a glance the wide range of activities taking place and feel part of something bigger than their locality;
- It helps the Inter Faith Network for the UK to accurately report on the Week each year;
- You will be eligible to receive a free Registration Pack (see below).

Organisations registering their activities on the Inter Faith Week website will be eligible to receive a free Registration Pack. The packs contain a poster, flyers, tips and information, balloons, stickers, a pen, badges, a copy of *Inter faith learning, dialogue and cooperation: Next Steps*, and a social media message card (see below).

A major way to raise awareness of and participation in Inter Faith Week each year is through social media. Last year, tweets about the Week reached the feeds of over 13 million Twitter users alone. The Registration Packs contain an A3 card with the Inter Faith Week logo, hashtag and username on, and a blank space for messages about the Week's themes. People are encouraged to take pictures of themselves – or themselves with someone of another faith or belief – and to post these on social media during November using #InterFaithWeek. Contact the IFN office for further cards, or visit <https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/social-media> to download and print yourself.

The Inter Faith Week social media accounts are:

- Twitter – www.twitter.com/ifweek
- Facebook – www.facebook.com/ifweek
- Instagram - www.instagram.com/ifweek

Inter Faith Week is a programme of the Inter Faith Network for the UK (www.interfaith.org.uk), which manages the Inter Faith Week website www.interfaithweek.org. The Week in Wales and Northern Ireland is supported in conversation with the Inter-faith Council for Wales / Cyngor Cyd-Ffydd Cymru (<http://interfaithwales.org.uk>), and the Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum (<http://niinterfaithforum.org>).

Sunday 18 November will be Mitzvah Day (www.mitzvahday.org.uk) - a Jewish-led day of social action involving people of all faiths and none working together in their local communities. Many events are being jointly held to mark both Inter Faith Week and Mitzvah Day and these will form a part of Inter Faith Week. (See more below)

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Scottish Interfaith Week

Scottish Interfaith Week (SIFW) has taken place with great success since 2004 and is led by Interfaith Scotland (www.interfaithscotland.org). The dates of SIFW 2018 are 11 to 18 November. More details are at <http://scottishinterfaithweek.org>.

The Scottish Government has declared 2018 the 'Year of Young People'. One of the main aims of the Year is to develop better understanding, co-operation and respect between generations. The fact that faith communities have an important role to play in providing

opportunities for people of different generations to dialogue and engage in activities together is reflected in the theme for this year's SIFW which is 'Connecting Generations'. The launch event will take place on Monday 12 November in Aberdeen.

Follow Scottish Interfaith Week on Twitter at: @followsifw and on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/FollowSIFW>.

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Day event for local inter faith practitioners

IFN is holding its next day event for local inter faith practitioners in Bradford on Tuesday 16 October. The event is an opportunity for people from local inter faith groups anywhere in the UK to come together to share their experiences, discuss issues of common interest and concern and discuss practical aspects of developing successful inter faith programmes as well as the challenges. There is no charge to attend. For further information, contact the IFN office at ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

Reports from previous events held for local inter faith practitioners in Bristol, Coventry, London, Manchester and Sheffield can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/publications>.

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

New Glasgow LGBT+ Interfaith Network

Glasgow LGBT+ Interfaith Network (GLIN) is a new group starting in Glasgow for LGBT+ people of faith and their allies. It has been set up to “promote the visibility and acceptance of LGBT+ people of faith; encourage meeting people from different faith backgrounds; share experiences, give advice, and offer support; provide a space for non-LGBT+ people to ask questions and grow in their understanding; and to provide themed seminars, cultural exchanges and creative exercises”. The group is open to anyone of any gender, sexuality, faith, religion or belief background and is currently looking for organisers, volunteers and members. For more information, visit www.facebook.com/glasgowLGBTinterfaith or email glasgowlgbtinterfaith@outlook.com.

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Campus inter faith engagement

Goldsmiths, University of London this year includes a special alcohol free faith and inter faith event for students beginning the new year. Their ad, complete with an image of large

pink milkshakes, read “If you’re religious or curious about religion, sit down and grab a frothy milkshake at our interfaith milkshake extravaganza. All faith communities will be at the event to promote themselves and answer questions. It’s the perfect evening to meet new people and see how to get involved in Goldsmiths’ diverse faith-based societies. This event is alcohol free and open to all religions.”

<https://www.goldsmithssu.org/ents/event/1564/>

On other campuses around the UK, chaplaincies, student faith and belief societies and others also encouraged students to engage. Some universities, such as Cardiff University, now have special pages about inter faith activity:

<https://www.facebook.com/InterFaithCardiff>

The Council of Christians and Jews held a special inter faith training residential for student inter faith leaders on its programme. For more about the programme see:

<http://www.ccj.org.uk/campus-leadership-scheme/>

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Faith and Belief Forum Book Club

The Faith and Belief Forum has recently set up a book club to discuss literature, fiction, poetry and non-fiction. For further information, visit

https://www.facebook.com/events/428973530927322/?active_tab=about.

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Time to Change Campaign – challenging mental health stigma

Waltham Forest Faith Communities Forum (WFFCF) is supporting the Time to Change Campaign, challenging the stigma surrounding mental health. At the heart of the campaign is the recruitment of ‘Champions’: people with lived experience of mental health problems who can use their experience to promote mental health awareness, and to change the way people in their community think about mental health. Funding is available for Champions to run an anti-stigma event in their community. WFFCF is happy to offer help and support to those who register as Champions and wish to plan an event. For more information and/or to register, visit <https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/>.

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Community Café – Arboretum Park, Derby

The Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby has recently re-opened the café in Arboretum Park, Derby, with the aim of bringing communities together and providing a

safe space for all. The area has very high levels of deprivation, with many different cultures living in a small area but rarely interacting. The Centre hopes to change that by providing a safe space for people of all faiths, beliefs and none and from all walks of life to come together and celebrate their diversity.

For more information, visit <http://multifaithcentre.org/2018/08/arboretum-park-cafe/>.

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The Feast – In Faith, We Dare to Imagine

The Feast has been bringing young people of different faiths and cultures together in youth encounters since 2009. On 5 September, it launched its new strategy, “In Faith, We Dare to Imagine”. Over the next five years, The Feast aims to work with 10,000 young people of different faiths and cultures across the UK in their Developing Identity, Youth Encounter and Game Changers Leadership Programmes which are designed to help support young people to be peacemakers. To help achieve this, the “In Faith, We Dare to Imagine” strategy invites everyone who works with young people to join a movement committed to embedding The Feast’s Guidelines for Dialogue and approach across society as a model of hope. The Feast will facilitate this by expanding its work with schools, faith and community groups, and other youth organisations to provide the training and resources in supporting young people to develop genuine friendships and dialogue across even deep social divides. Further information can be found at <https://www.thefeast.org.uk/news/press-release-in-faith-we-dare-to-imagine/>.

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Walking for Peace

The International Day of Peace is 21 September each year and the month has become one associated with peace. Around the UK it is a time that many peace walks take place. Just a few of these are mentioned below.

On 15 September the annual peace walk took place in Newcastle, taking in Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh places of worship with faith leaders and civic and police representatives. <https://www.chroniclive.co.uk/news/north-east-news/hundreds-unite-walk-peace-newcastle-15156281>

Luton Council of Faiths held its 22nd annual peace walk on 22 September. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y3w7FtOesGs>

Redbridge Faith Forum’s 10th annual peace walk took place on 23 September. They said: "This year it is more important than ever for us to walk together in a spirit of harmony

valuing our common precepts by showing our understanding and respect for each other.” The walk set off from the Holocaust Memorial Garden and continued to Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Christian and Sikh places of worship.

<http://www.ilfordrecorder.co.uk/news/redbridge-faith-forum-peace-walk-1-5710062>

The following day in Brent, a multi faith walk organised by Brent Multi Faith Forum took place in the Wembley Islamic Cultural Centre, the BAPS Sri Swaminarayan Mandir and Harlesdon Methodist Church as well as a special multi faith tree planting, supported by Faiths Forum for London and Near Neighbours.

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

Connect: a youth inter faith action guide

A reminder that IFN’s latest publication *Connect: a youth inter faith action guide* can be downloaded from <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/connect> and printed copies are available from the Inter Faith Network office.

This practical illustrated booklet, developed with and by young people of different backgrounds, includes information on the different kinds of inter faith activity, ways to get involved, planning tips and practicalities, and links to further information.

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Local inter faith resource material

IFN has recently added two more case studies to its website as resource material for local inter faith practitioners. One is on ‘Local inter faith organisations and the environment’ and one is on ‘Local inter faith organisations and sport’. These can both be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/local-1>.

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Faith and Belief Forum podcasts on media, hate crime and inclusion

The Faith and Belief Forum recently held three round-table discussions to explore the role of media, hate crime and inclusion in London. Local organisations, academics and policy experts discussed factors for exclusion for Londoners from different faiths and beliefs, and to share good practice on inclusion. Podcasts have been produced from each of the round-table discussions, on ‘Media in Faith, Belief and Belonging in London’; ‘Hate Crime, Faith and Belonging in London’; and ‘Faith, Belief and Inclusion in London’. They are available at: <https://faithbeliefforum.org/category/podcast/>.

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East of England Faiths Agency library

After having to let go of a large number of books when it moved premises, the East of England Faiths Agency has now rebuilt its library and will shortly be making the catalogue available online. It welcomes those who wish to read or study at its new Multi-Faith Centre, based at 47 St Helen's Street, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP4 2JL. For more information and to arrange a time to use the library, email c.capey@eefa.net.

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Advance HE Guidance on Religion and Belief

Advance HE has issued new guidance to higher education institutions across the UK, and Colleges in Scotland, on how to support the inclusion of staff and students of different faiths and beliefs including those with no religious beliefs. The guidance provides practical recommendations for institutions, developed following consultation with organisations and individuals representing a range of different religions and non-religious groups. The full guidance and executive summary can be downloaded from <https://www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/religion-and-belief/>.

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Counting Religion in Numbers

'Counting Religion in Numbers' is a monthly bulletin on British religious statistics prepared by British Religion in Numbers, an online religious data source. The August 2018 issue includes information about a number of recent opinion polls, such as responses to comments by Boris Johnson on the burka; the role of 'Thought for the Day'; and religious prejudice and political parties. It also contains summaries of new publications, including the annual survey by Tell MAMA of Islamophobic incidents and new sources of official statistics.

The bulletin is available to read and download at <http://www.brin.ac.uk/2018/counting-religion-in-britain-august-2018/>.

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CCJ training to tackle Modern Slavery

The Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ) is helping churches and synagogues to come together by holding inter faith training events on how to tackle modern slavery. These will

aim to teach people what modern slavery looks like and how to help stop it. The events are being held to coincide with Mitzvah Day, a day of social action led by the Jewish community.

For those interested in holding an event in their community, one volunteer from each faith community must attend a training session in either London or Manchester in October. For more information and to sign up, email jessica.spencer@ccj.org.uk.

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LGBT+Faith Training Days

The Faith and Belief Forum is running a project to provide a space to reflect, learn, and build good practice for working with and supporting LGBT+ people of faith.

There are spaces available on two upcoming LGBT+Faith training days: 22 November in London, and 24 January in Liverpool. Organisations working with LGBT+ people that are interested in learning more about the experiences of LGBT+ people of faith, can find out more at <https://faithbeliefforum.org/programme/lgbtfait/>.

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Reporting religion in Britain – training for journalists

The Religion Media Centre is holding training for journalists on ‘Reporting Religion in Britain’. The training session will aim to enable journalists to gain an understanding of religion in Britain; explore the editorial voice and challenge stereotypes or default narratives when reporting on religious and non-religious world views; and provide an accessible but thorough introduction, giving an overview of the variety of beliefs, to build knowledge and awareness. The training will take place on Thursday 18 October from 9.30am to 4pm at The Board Room, 77 Great Peter Street, London, SW1P 2EZ. There is a charge to attend.

For further information and to register, visit <https://religionmediacentre.org.uk/journalists-training/reporting-religion-in-britain/> or email info@religionmediacentre.org.uk.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS, AND NOMINATIONS

Government consultation on the Gender Recognition Act – Religious and Faith Perspectives

The Government is currently holding a consultation on reform of the Gender Recognition Act (GRA). It will consider potential changes to the current legal process that enables transgender people to gain legal recognition of their gender.

As part of the consultation, the Government Equalities Office is reaching out to religious and faith organisations to understand their perspectives and answer any questions in person. Those interested in such a meeting can email gra.consultation@geo.gov.uk to arrange this.

For more information about the consultation, and to respond online, visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/reform-of-the-gender-recognition-act-2004>. The consultation closes on Friday 19 October.

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Women and Equalities Committee Inquiry into enforcement of the Equality Act 2010

Religion and belief are protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. It says that it is unlawful to discriminate against people because of their religion or belief. The Women and Equalities Committee launched an inquiry in July into enforcement of the Equality Act 2010. As part of this, the Committee has invited written submission of views on areas including: how easy it is for people to understand and enforce their rights; how well enforcement action under the Act works for achieving widespread change; how effective and accessible tribunals and legal means of redress are; and the effectiveness of the Equality and Human Rights Commission as an enforcement body. Further information about the Inquiry and further detail on the areas on which written submissions are invited can be found at https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/women-and-equalities-committee/news-parliament-2017/enforcing-the-equality-act-launch-17-19/?utm_source=Members%2C+Associates%2C+Observers%2C+Funders&utm_campaign=7176321c87-WEC+inquiry+Equality+Act+280918&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_04dd2b7f3e-7176321c87-61711113 The deadline for responses is Friday 5 October.

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Connecting Generations Art Competition

As part of Scottish Interfaith Week (see [above](#)) Interfaith Scotland is running an arts competition. Participants are invited to create a piece of artwork on the theme of 'Connecting Generations'. This can be a drawing, poem, video, piece of writing, music, song or drama. The closing date for entries is 22 October. More information, including the entry form, can be found at <https://interfaithscotland.org/connecting-generations-art-competition>.

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Staging Posts on the Journey of Life – Call for poems and readings

The East of England Faiths Agency (EEFA) is developing a new game called 'Staging Posts on the Journey of Life'. It has been successfully trialled in a variety of situations, including care homes. One of the aspects of the game is the inclusion of readings and poems on different themes. The themes are: Heritage, Conception and Birth, Childhood and Schooldays, Education and Training, Friendship and Love, Family, Community, Meaning and Purpose, Work / Life Balance, Retirement and Old Age, Death and Bereavement and Legacy. EEFA is keen to include readings and poems from different faith traditions and would welcome suggestions on these. For further information contact Cynthia Capey at c.capey@eefa.net.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

IFN's website lists job and internship opportunities with a significant inter faith dimension with IFN member organisations at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/jobs>.

Inter Faith Network for the UK – Clerical Assistant

The Inter Faith Network for the UK is currently advertising for a Clerical Assistant for 8 hours per week. The closing date for applications is Thursday 4 October. Applications must be submitted on the official application form which can be obtained by emailing ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

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Inter Faith Network for the UK - Volunteers

The Inter Faith Network for the UK has regular volunteering opportunities. Further information about these can be found on IFN's website.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Places of Worship: Inspiring Ideas

The Heritage Lottery Fund, in partnership with the Pilgrim Trust, the Plunkett Foundation and the National Churches Trust, has launched a new UK-wide funding initiative. 'Places of Worship: Inspiring Ideas' will support projects that explore new ways of helping places of worship become more resilient and adapt to a challenging and changeable environment. Grants of between £10,000 and £250,000 are available, and are intended to support the groups who care for historic places of worship of any faith or denomination.

Applicants must initially submit a short expression of interest form outlining their idea by Sunday 14 October. Those submitting the strongest expressions of interest will then be invited to submit a full application.

For more information, including how to submit an expression of interest, visit <https://www.hlf.org.uk/looking-funding/what-we-fund/buildings-and-monuments/places-worship>.

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Arts Council Funding - Creative People and Places

The Creative People and Places fund focuses on supporting communities to access arts and cultural opportunities, in 79 areas with below average participation in the arts. A new round of funding opens in January 2019, and will be available for community organisations or groups that can partner with cultural organisations. The Arts Council is holding a number of information events throughout October and November for those interested in applying.

For more information about the fund, and to book a place at an information event, visit <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/creative-people-and-places/creative-people-and-places-programme-2019#section-2>.

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Heritage Lottery Fund grants to commemorate First World War

The Heritage Lottery Fund has £4million of funding available for communities to get involved in projects marking the Centenary of the First World War. Projects applying for funding must be able to meet one of a number of successful outcomes based on heritage,

people and communities. Grants can be given between £3,000 and £10,000. Grants are being considered up until 18 January 2019.

Further information can be found at <https://www.hlf.org.uk/looking-funding/our-grant-programmes/first-world-war-then-and-now>.

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Near Neighbours grants programme

The Near Neighbours small grants programme is funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and administered by the Church Urban Fund. It is currently offering small grants of between £250 and £5,000, as seed funding for local groups and organisations working in a number of areas of England to bring together neighbours, and to develop relationships across diverse faiths and ethnicities to improve their communities. The next deadline for applications is Friday 12 October.

As part of the criteria, projects should:

- bring together peoples of two or more different faiths and/or ethnicities, to build friendships and develop relationships of trust.
- work locally - the programme wants to see people who are living very locally (ie in the same street, estate or neighbourhood) come together.
- work sustainably - the programme wants to see long term and natural relationships grow, that will last beyond the period of funding.
- work to improve the community – the programme wants to see people working to make their communities a better place to live.
- involve diverse people in planning and implementation. People from more than one faith group and/or ethnicity are involved in planning and implementing the proposal.

For information on the eligible areas and other criteria, visit <https://www.cuf.org.uk/near-neighbours-small-grants> or email near.neighbours@cuf.org.uk with general enquiries.

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Building a Stronger Britain Together programme

The Home Office programme Building a Stronger Britain Together is continuing to offer in-kind support such as social media training, technical assistance to help a group improve their website, or capacity building work to help a group protect more vulnerable

individuals. It is open to bodies in England and Wales. Applications for in-kind support can be submitted at any time.

Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/building-a-stronger-britain-together>.

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Faiths in Scotland Community Action Fund

Faiths in Scotland Community Action Fund continues to be open for applications to its rolling small grants scheme. Small grants of up to £750 are available to faith based anti-poverty projects with an annual turnover of £30,000 or less and can be applied for at any time. For more information call 0141 221 4576 or visit <https://www.faithincommunityscotland.org/faith-in-community-scotland-action-fund/our-grants/smallgrants/>.

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Funding websites

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) offers advice on fundraising and grants on its Knowhow Nonprofit site at <https://knowhownonprofit.org/funding>.

Funding Central - <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/default.aspx> - is a free website for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises in England that provides access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, together with tools and resources for supporting organisations to develop sustainable income strategies appropriate to their needs. Similar websites for funding in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at Funding Scotland - <http://www.fundingscotland.com/> - Wales Council for Voluntary Action - <http://www.wcva.org.uk/funding/search> - and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland - <https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

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Website and Facebook grants

The Transform Foundation is offering funding to charities to help with new website builds. Grants of £18,000 are available. It is also offering grants towards Facebook advertising of £5,000. For further information and to apply, visit www.transformfoundation.org.uk.

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Google and charities

Google is offering a service to registered charities which brings: Google Ad Grants: Free AdWords advertising to promote their websites on Google through keyword targeting; YouTube Nonprofit Programme: Access exclusive resources, features and programs designed to maximise their organisations' impact on YouTube; and Google Apps for Non-profit: Free version of the Google Apps business productivity suite, including Gmail, Docs, Calendar and more. For further information, visit www.google.co.uk/intl/en/nonprofits/join.

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Subsidised fundraising workshops

The Foundation for Social Improvement offers heavily subsidised training programmes for small charities across the UK. The courses cover a wide range of subjects from event planning to leadership. Many of the courses focus on fundraising and sustainability skills in particular. Further information and dates for upcoming courses in September can be found at <http://www.thefsi.org/services/training>.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Hate Crime Awareness Week will take place this year from Saturday 13 to Saturday 20 October. <https://nationalhcaw.uk/>

Sewa Day is an annual day of faith-based social action. 'Sewa' is a Sanskrit word which means 'service'. Sewa Day will take place on Sunday 14 October. Further information can be found at <http://www.sewaday.org/>. Many faith and inter faith groups take part and organise Sewa Day volunteering projects in places such as old people's homes, homeless shelters, schools in disadvantaged areas, hospitals and hospices, country parks, conservation areas and city farms – all with an aim of making a positive difference to someone else's happiness and prosperity. Each project organised is based on at least one of the guiding principles:

- Help relieve hardship
- Bring a little joy to others
- Help the environment

There is a project finder on the website to find out about events taking place during the week - <https://sewaday.org/event/>.

Week of Prayer for World Peace takes place this year from Sunday 14 October to Sunday 21 October. <http://weekofprayerforworldpeace.com/events.html>

One World Week ('OWW') is taking place from 21 to 28 October. It is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. Each year many faith and inter faith organisations take part. The theme for 2018 is 'The World is Changing – How About Us?', focusing on how all peoples can work together to build a sustainable future. Throughout the week there will be a range of events organised and hosted by volunteers across the country, with the common purpose being to 'share understanding about some of the global issues that affect us all and to recognise we can all make a difference.' Those organising events are encouraged to register them on the website, where resources are available for worship, publicity, discussions and other events. For further information, including an events calendar, visit <https://www.oneworldweek.org/>.

Inter Faith Week in England, Wales and Northern Ireland will take place from Sunday 11 to Sunday 18 November. It is led by the Inter Faith Network for the UK www.interfaithweek.org See more [above](#).

Scottish Interfaith Week will take place from Sunday 11 to Sunday 18 November. It is led by Interfaith Scotland. <http://scottishinterfaithweek.org/> See more [above](#).

Mitzvah Day will take place on Sunday 18 November. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Jewish community. On Mitzvah Day, people give their time, not their money, to make a difference to the community around them. Many events and projects held for the day have an inter faith focus. www.mitzvahday.org.uk/

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DIARY DATES

This section includes a sample of some of the events taking place around the UK during October. We also include information on diary dates between e-bulletins on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/events>.

York Interfaith Group is holding its next monthly meeting on Tuesday 2 October at 7.30pm in the Hudson Room, City of York Council, West Offices, Station Rise, York, YO1 6GA. The theme of the meeting is 'Teaching RE Today'. The two speakers will be Olivia Seymour, Assistant Director of Education at Diocese of York and an active member of York Standing Advisory Committee for Religious Education (SACRE); and Dr James Holt, Senior Lecturer in Religious Education at the University of Chester. Their presentations will highlight the impact on inter faith dialogue of new developments in Religious Education. For more information, visit www.yorkinterfaith.org, email yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com, or call Mark Cosens on 07796 095 152.

The Philosophy Department, University of Sheffield in partnership with **Sheffield Cathedral** is holding a talk entitled 'Diatribes, dialogue and difference: reflections on

Christian-Muslim relations' on Tuesday 2 October from 7.30pm to 9pm. Mona Siddiqui will give a lecture exploring how doctrinal differences on a range of issues have led to serious intellectual engagement between Christian and Muslim scholars, but also a gradual cultural and civilizational distance. This will be the first event in its new series of talks: 'God and the Good: Thinking Religion and Ethics'. The series is intended for a general audience, and will consider the relation between religious thinking and traditions, and ethics. It is being held at Sheffield Cathedral, Church Street, S1 1HA. All are welcome and there is no need to register. For more information, visit <https://sheffieldinterfaith.org.uk/category/events/>.

Voices of Faith is holding an evening of inter faith dialogue entitled 'The Nurture and Welfare of Children and Young People in Faith Communities' on Wednesday 3 October from 6pm to 8.30pm. Cloud Singh, Kirtida dasi and Kim Johnstone will be speaking, and refreshments will be provided. The event will be held at Newcastle Sikh Gurdwara, Cottenham Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 5QU. Confirmation of attendance is requested by phone on 0191 270 4100 or by email at info@newcastle.anglican.org.

The Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby and **The Open Centre** in Derby are holding a one day conference on religious and cultural educational training for schools. The conference will be held on Thursday 4 October from 9.30am to 4pm at the Derby Multi-Faith Centre, University of Derby, Kedleston Road, Derby, DE22 1GB. The conference will include a religion and culture experiential session, a critical exploration of religion in contemporary UK, and a discussion and planning session. The guest speaker is Emeritus Professor Brian Gates, head of the department of Religion and Ethics at St Martin's College/University of Cumbria. For more information and to book a place, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/religiouscultural-educational-training-for-schools-tickets-48368287851>.

InterFaith Milton Keynes is holding its next monthly meeting on Thursday 4 October from 7.30pm to 9.30pm at the Nipponzan Myohoji Peace Pagoda and Temple, Brickhill Street, Willen Lake, Milton Keynes, MK15 0BG. Mr William Rhind, Volunteer Outreach Worker to the Gandhi Foundation in the UK will give a lecture entitled 'Are MK Gandhi's ideas relevant to today's multi-religious society?'. There will be a Q&A session following the lecture, and teas and refreshments will be served at the end of the evening. For more information, contact David Rennie at interfaithmk@gmail.com.

Epsom and Ewell Inter Faith Forum is holding a mental health week inter faith panel at 3pm on Sunday 7 October, at St Barnabas Church, Epsom. For more information, contact Lynne Schofield, Secretary, at lynneschofield@gmail.com.

Interfaith Glasgow and the St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art are holding their next 'Faith to Faith' event on Sunday 7 October. The theme will be 'Exploring Solutions Not Sides in the Israeli - Palestinian Conflict' and the speakers will be Netta, an

Israeli, and Noor, a Palestinian, both young women from Jerusalem. Their life experiences have differed but they share a commitment to building a peaceful future. It is being held from 2pm to 4pm at the Museum at 2 Castle Street, Glasgow G4 0RH. For further information, and to register to attend, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/exploring-solutions-not-sides-in-the-israeli-palestinian-conflict-tickets-50264518528>.

Sheffield Interfaith is holding a talk on 'The Sikhism Life' at 7.30pm on Monday 8 October at Shirley House Interfaith Centre, 31 Psalter Lane, Sheffield, S11 8YL. Suki Singh, Sikhism representative for inter faith relations in South Yorkshire, will talk about the beliefs and practices of Sikhism. Refreshments will be provided and the talk is open to everyone. For further details, contact office@standrewspsalterlane.org.uk or telephone 0114 267 8289.

The **Faith and Civil Society Unit** at Goldsmiths, University of London, is hosting a lecture entitled 'Future directions and challenges for law, religion and belief in the public space' on Tuesday 9 October from 5.30pm to 7pm. Lucy Vickers, Professor of Law at Oxford Brookes University, will explore how law tackles some of the challenges involving religion and belief in public space, and consider what the future holds for the relationship between law, religion and the public space. The lecture is part of the 2018 Fellows' Public Seminar Series on the theme of 'Faith and the Future of Civil Society'. All events in the series are free and booking is not required. For more information, visit <https://www.gold.ac.uk/faithsunit/news/>.

Marylebone Scriptural Reasoning is holding a session on Tuesday 9 October from 6.30pm to 8.30pm in the Jerusalem Chamber in Westminster Abbey. Speakers will be the Revd Dr Anders Bergquist of St John's Wood Church; Student Rabbi Peter Luijendijk of Leo Baeck College; and Nadiya Takolia of SOAS, formerly of Cambridge Interfaith Programme. For more information and to sign up, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/sr-at-westminster-abbey-tickets-48563429525?aff=ebapi>.

Watford Interfaith Association is holding a 'Plant for Peace' event on Wednesday 10 October from 10am to 1pm, on the occasion of the Week of Prayer for World Peace. All are invited to join the group in planting bulbs and plants in the Peace Garden in Cassiobury Park, Watford. Attendees are welcome to bring their own bulbs or plants. There will also be a second event on Sunday 14 October from 2pm to 4pm, followed by prayers and inspirational words for Peace in the labyrinth. For more information, contact Jeff on 07973 316 689 or at wifasec@aol.com, or visit the 'Watford Peace Garden' Facebook page.

Balham and Tooting Community Association is holding its annual Multi Faith Peace Ceremony on Wednesday 10 October. It takes place from 6pm to 7pm outside Tooting Broadway tube station in South London. The Peace Ceremony is a vivid affirmation of Tooting's diversity and resilience. Faith leaders in traditional robes gather outside the tube station to say short prayers for peace. Civic leaders and business people respond,

emphasising Tooting's strength and resilience in challenging times. Members of the public gather round and light candles as the light falls. Leaders of the Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh faiths are expected to be present. For further information, contact secretary@batca.org.

The East of England Faiths Agency is holding a regional conference entitled 'Reimagining Interfaith Cooperation' on Thursday 11 October from 10.30am to 3.30pm at the Multi Faith Centre, 47 St Helen's Street, Ipswich, IP4 2JL. For more information including a full programme, and to book a place, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/reimagining-interfaith-cooperation-tickets-49982400706>. Further details are also available from Cynthia Capey at c.capey@eefa.net or on 01379 678 615.

The **Women's Interfaith Network** is holding its AGM on Tuesday 16 October from 2pm to 5pm in the Regents Room, First Floor, ORT House, 126 Albert Street, London, NW1 7NE. This will include a screening of the group's 'All of Us' film and a presentation on the 'All of Us' Educational Programme. Refreshments will be served. Those able to attend are asked to email marion@wominet.org.uk to confirm.

The Council of Christians and Jews is holding its Annual General Meeting on Tuesday 16 October, at a North London venue to be confirmed. Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis will be speaking. There will be a members' meeting at 11am followed by the AGM at 1pm. A light kosher lunch will be provided. To register your interest in attending, email cjrelations@ccj.org.uk or call 020 3515 3003.

Nottingham Interfaith Council is holding a 'Come Dine' event on Wednesday 17 October. For further information, contact interfaithnottingham@outlook.com.

Westminster Cathedral Interfaith Group is holding a meeting on Wednesday 17 October from 4pm to 5pm in the Hinsley Room, Morpeth Terrace, SW1P 1EP, led by Qaisra Khan of the Christian/Muslim forum. The meeting will focus on Health and Wellbeing. The group will be studying *Amoris Laetitia* The Joy of Love, Pope Francis's encyclical on the family and the encyclical *Evangelium Gaudii* The Joy of the Gospel throughout its meetings this year. For more information, contact John Woodhouse by text on 07908 888 586 or by email on woodhousesopten@btinternet.com.

Epsom and Ewell Inter Faith Forum is holding an Interfaith gathering to pray for peace at 3pm on Sunday 21 October at Clayhill Green, Epsom. There will be a simple order of service with readings and prayers from different religious traditions, lasting about 30 minutes. There will be refreshments at Christ Church following the gathering. Registration is not required. For more information, contact Lynne Schofield, Secretary, at lynnescholefield@gmail.com.

Sheffield Interfaith is holding a Food and Friendship dinner on Tuesday 23 October from 6pm to 8pm at Shirley House Interfaith Centre, 31 Psalter Lane, S11 8YL. The event is a bring and share dinner, and there is no need to book or inform anybody of which dish will be brought. A kettle, microwave and oven are available. For more information, visit <https://sheffieldinterfaith.org.uk/category/events/>.

St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace is holding its annual Feast Day on Tuesday 23 October from 6pm to 8pm. All are invited for an evening of celebration including music, discussion and worship. The event is free but registration is essential. For more information and to register, visit <https://stethelburgas.org/event/st-ethelburgas-feast-day-2/> or email jane.morton@stethelburgas.org.

The South East England Faiths Forum is holding its annual one-day conference on Thursday 25 October at Newbold College, Binfield, RG42 4AN. The theme of the conference is 'Engaging with Intolerance' and it will be chaired by Mrs Margaret Lenton, former Head Teacher, Magistrate and former Mayoress of Windsor and Maidenhead. For more information including a full programme, and to book, visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/engaging-with-intolerance-seeff-annual-conference-2018-tickets-50684100509> or contact Emel Soylu at emel@art-beyond-belief.com.

Crawley Interfaith Network is holding an Away Day on Saturday 27 October. For further details, contact Iyad Daoud at iyadhdaoud@yahoo.co.uk.

The **Council of Christians and Jews** and **Near Neighbours** are holding a two-day workshop on Monday 4 and Tuesday 5 February 2019, to learn and form inter faith responses to the refugee crisis. Those wishing to attend should apply by Friday 19 October by completing the form at: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfK99ELfRdPhLcsKvFOEnL-ddm_ELKmccEUj2Y9A5lAaGWvhQ/viewform.

More information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org.uk

**SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK
TO INCREASE INTER FAITH UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION**

We need your help to ensure that the Inter Faith Network for the UK's work to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation continues and grows, helping people of all backgrounds to live and work together with mutual respect and shared commitment to the common good.

Gifts at all levels are much valued and make a real difference. You can donate directly at www.interfaith.org.uk/donate or via PayPal.

Donations can also be made by sending a cheque to The Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH.

Thank you!

REMEMBERING A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND

If you would like to make a gift in memory of a loved one, please get in touch by emailing remember@interfaith.org.uk or call us on 0207 730 0410.

A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

By leaving a gift in your will to the Inter Faith Network for the UK, you can leave a living inheritance to help deepen and strengthen inter faith understanding and cooperation in this country – for now and for the future. If you are thinking about making a will, the best thing to do is to get in touch with a professional will writer, such as a solicitor or advocate; they can help to ensure it is legally correct and that your wishes are met. If you have already made a will, you can still make an addition or amendment in the form of a codicil. If you would like to pledge a gift, please provide our name and address, along with our registered charity number 1068934.

Please get in touch with us if you have any queries.
You can call us on 0207 730 0410 or contact us at remember@interfaith.org.uk

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **16 November** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer: Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

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www.interfaith.org.uk www.facebook.com/IFNetUK www.twitter.com/IFNetUK

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IFN e-bulletin

November/December 2018

General Data Protection Regulation

As you will be aware, data protection legislation changed with the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) from 25 May. IFN takes very seriously its data protection duties, and wrote to individuals on its database to check whether they were content for their details to be held by IFN and to receive IFN mailings. We are grateful to all those who have taken the time to respond. You can also sign up to other IFN mailings at any time by using the form on IFN's website at: www.interfaith.org.uk/news/gdpr.

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **18 January** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and projects and future events.

IFN also highlights news and projects of interest through Twitter (www.twitter.com/IFNetUK) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/IFNetUK) and, where about Inter Faith Week, through (www.twitter.com/IFWeek and www.facebook.com/IFWeek).

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

More faith and belief groups now permanently represented at the National Service of Remembrance

This year Baha’is, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Coptic Christians, Jains, Spiritualists, Zoroastrians and also Humanists were represented for the first time at the National Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph.

When announcing the additional representation, which will be permanent, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), said that this would “reflect the significant but little-known contribution made by minority ethnic communities to Britain’s war efforts. It also sends a strong signal throughout Britain and the world that this country values the contribution of its diverse communities.”

The full press release is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/more-faith-and-belief-groups-to-join-the-national-service-of-remembrance>.

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Marking of Armistice100

The UK marked Remembrance Sunday this year with special events to mark the Centenary of the end of the First World War. #Armistice100 was used as the hashtag for social media and a special website set up for national coverage <https://armistice100.org.uk/>.

11 November was also the first day of Inter Faith Week and IFN produced a short resource to help those wishing to mark both. This can be found at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/armistice-100>

10,000 members of the public had the opportunity to form a procession past the Cenotaph in central London on 11 November and, as noted [above](#), more faith communities were represented at the Cenotaph service.

In Wales faith leaders attended the National Service of Remembrance at Llandaff Cathedral led by the Archbishop of Wales. <https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/live-updates-remembrance-sunday-across-15398098>

In Edinburgh representatives of faith organisations were among those laying over 100 wreaths at a service organised by Legion Scotland at the Stone of Remembrance outside Edinburgh's city chambers. <https://www.scotsman.com/news/communities-across-scotland-mark-100-years-since-first-world-war-armistice-1-4827866>

Belfast hosted one of the six Royal British Legion Fields of Remembrance in the UK where small remembrance crosses stood alongside the Muslim crescent, star of David, Sikh khanda and Hindu orn to honour those who died. <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/crosses-laid-at-belfast-city-hall-to-commemorate-war-dead-37493424.html>

Many faith communities and inter faith groups organised commemorations. Just a few of these are below.

A service was led by Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis at the Cenotaph for the Association of Jewish Ex-servicemen and women to honour the community's contribution to the Armed Forces <https://www.thejc.com/community/community-news/ajex-remembrance-parade-hundreds-pay-tribute-to-jewish-military-service-1.472695>

A special inter faith assembly to pay tribute to soldiers from India and the Commonwealth who served during the First World War was held at BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in London <http://londonmandir.baps.org/2018/11/interfaith-remembrance-marking-armistice-centenary/>

In the West Midlands a sculpture called 'Lions of the Great War' was unveiled outside the Guru Nanak Gurdwara in Smethwick which honours service personnel of all faiths from the Indian subcontinent who fought for Britain during WW1 and other conflicts. <http://www.sikhchannel.tv/uk-stature-of-sikh-soldier-unveiled-to-honour-100-years-since-end-of-world-war-i/>

Oasis partnered with Coventry Cathedral, Corrymeela, Quakers in Britain, Facing History and Ourselves, Cymru Dros Heddwch and Wales for Peace on a project called Inspire which engaged thousands of schoolchildren.

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/news-and-events/news/remembrance-is-just-the-beginning>

The chaplaincy at Edge Hill University held a Remembrance vigil.

<https://www.interfaithweek.org/events/Faith-Fair-and-Remembrance-Vigil-2255>

The Forgotten Heroes 14-19 Foundation, in association with Uthink and ArtsFest, presented an exhibition called 'Singularity of Peace' honouring the role of Muslims in World War One. <https://www.lbhf.gov.uk/articles/news/2018/09/exhibition-honour-role-muslims-first-world-war>

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Report by Lord Bourne – Belief in communities: bridging the divide

On 14 November, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government published a report by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth, Minister for Faith called *Belief in communities: bridging the divide*.

The report is based on Lord Bourne's recent Faith in Communities tour on which he visited over 55 places of worship, across over 20 beliefs and denominations across the country. It talks about how faith communities are helping to make strong neighbourhoods and highlights some of the work to create 'cohesive and resilient inter faith communities'. It also makes recommendations to ensure these ideas are shared and replicated more widely.

The report can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/belief-in-communities-bridging-the-divide>.

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Debate on Religious holidays

A debate was held at Westminster Hall on 29 October on the subject of public holidays on religious occasions. It was held in response to two separate e-petitions, one of which concerned the Hindu festivals of Diwali and Dussera, and the other of which concerned the Muslim festivals of Eid ul Fitr and Eid ul Adha.

Usually, Westminster Hall debates are only held where there are more than 100,000 signatures to a petition, and the combined total for these two petitions was under 60,000. The debate was, however, moved by Martyn Day, SNP MP for Linlithgow and East Falkirk, who is a member of the Petitions Committee. In doing so, he noted that there were no

petitions over the threshold to be considered at that time; that when combined, these two petitions had the largest number of signatures of any under consideration; that they represented “issues that primarily affect minority groups who may find it difficult to attract 100,000 signatures”; and that the issue was of “interest to a significant number of people in the wider public”.

The record of the debate can be found at <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2018-10-29/debates/6EF118AA-489B-4ADC-B915-FFE29C922C4E/PublicHolidaysOnReligiousOccasions> and a summary, and commentary with background information here <https://www.lawandreligionuk.com/2018/10/31/mps-debate-additional-religious-holidays/>

Government’s response in both cases was that creation of additional public holidays was not desirable on economic grounds, although it “encourage[s] employers to respond flexibly and sympathetically to any requests for leave, including requests for religious holidays, bearing in mind business needs.”

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Supreme Court judgment

Judgment was handed down by the Supreme Court on 10 October in the case of Lee v Ashers Baking Company Ltd. The case concerned a bakery in Northern Ireland (Ashers) which offered a bespoke cake service, and a gay man (Mr Lee) who asked the bakery to produce a cake iced with the slogan ‘Support Gay Marriage’ which he wished to take to a campaign event. The bakery was owned by a Christian couple (Mr and Mrs McArthur) who hold the religious belief that the only form of marriage consistent with Biblical teaching and acceptable to God is that between a man and a woman. Mrs McArthur initially took the order, but later advised Mr Lee that she could not in conscience produce such a cake.

Mr Lee brought a case against the McArthurs of direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, and/ or grounds of religious belief or political opinion. The county court held that there was direct discrimination, both on grounds of sexual orientation and on grounds of religious belief or political opinion. An appeal was brought to the Northern Ireland Court of Appeal, which held that there was direct discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation, but did not answer all of the questions brought with the appeal. The case was then referred to the Supreme Court.

The Judgement ruled by the Supreme Court was that there was no discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in the case, as the case concerned a message rather than the actual or perceived sexual orientation of the customer. The Court also judged that because the objection was to their being required to promote a message with which they disagreed, rather than to Mr Lee, the situation was not comparable with people being refused jobs or services simply because of their religious faith. It further judged that the

legislation should not be read or given effect in such a way as to compel the appellants to promote a message with which they profoundly disagreed.

The case had generated much attention at all stages, and is a significant one concerning freedom of thought, conscience and religion and freedom of expression.

The full judgement and a press summary are available at <https://www.supremecourt.uk/cases/uksc-2017-0020.html>

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Review of marriage law

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has announced that the Government will ask the Law Commission to review marriage law in England and Wales. The project will look to propose options for a simpler and fairer system to give modern couples meaningful choice. The terms of reference are yet to be set.

This step follows the Law Commission's scoping Paper of 2015 outlining a range of problems with the existing law governing how and where people can marry.

<https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/government-asks-law-commission-to-conduct-a-full-review-of-weddings-law/>

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Safeguarding and faith communities

A new All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Safeguarding in Faith Settings was launched in September; and its web page in November: <https://thirtyoneeight.org/news-and-events/appg/>.

The APPG's purpose is to "focus on safeguarding concerns relevant to any community of faith, belief or religion. To raise awareness and improve policy and practice in relation to safeguarding in faith settings and to encourage both the opportunity and responsibility of those faith groups and communities in creating safer places for all". The Group is co-chaired by Sarah Champion (Lab, Rotherham) and Michael Tomlinson (Con, Mid Dorset and North Poole), and the Secretariat is provided by Thirtyone:eight.

Safeguarding was a topic of discussion at the last meeting of IFN's Faith Communities Forum in October, at which there was a presentation by Mustafa Field of Strengthening Faith Institutions about its work in this area.

The Social Care Institute for Excellence is working with a number of faith groups on safeguarding issues. Information on an inter faith breakfast that it recently held for faith leaders can be found at <https://www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding/faith-groups/communities>.

Security of places of worship and hate crime

Concerns about security of places of worship remain and for the Jewish community became the more acute following the terrible attack on the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh on 27 October. The following day the Co-Chairs and Faith Communities Forum Moderators of IFN put out a statement which included the words:

“Like attacks on churches, gurdwaras, mosques, temples and other places of worship of different faiths here and around the world, it is a reminder of the need to condemn extremist violence in the strongest terms and to stand together and to continue to work together with ever greater urgency against ignorance, prejudice and hatred.

There is no place in civilised society for Antisemitism.

Nor is there a place for Islamophobia and hatreds targeting communities of other faiths and beliefs.

All communities must be able to exist in safety and to practise their faith freely and without fear.”

On 31 October, a new nationwide hate crime campaign aimed at increasing awareness and understanding of what constitutes a hate crime was launched by the government following consultation on it with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), the Independent Advisory Group on Hate Crime and other organisations.

The strapline of the campaign is: ‘If you target anyone with verbal, online or physical abuse because of their religion, race, sexual orientation, disability or transgender identity – you may be committing a hate crime. It’s not just offensive. It’s an offence.’ Adverts are running on video-on-demand sites, social media and posters across the country. Each video or poster features a different offender, represented by an e-fit, and a hate crime taking place.

The campaign website also signposts organisations where victims and witnesses can get the support they need.

The campaign forms part of the Government’s wider programme of work to tackle hate crime. On 16 October it published its updated Hate Crime Action Plan relating to England and Wales. That outlines actions the government will take to: prevent hate crime; respond to hate crime; increase reporting of hate crimes; improve support for victims and build an understanding of hate crime. The Government is also: asking the Law Commission to

review hate crime legislation; making available further funding for community groups to tackle hate crime; and extending the Places of Worship Security Scheme for a fourth year.

The Home Office is running a grant programme to work with affected communities to fund the development of projects that prevent hate crime. More information on this is [below](#).

Tell MAMA has published its 2018 6-month Interim Report, Gendered Anti-Muslim Hatred and Islamophobia. Tell MAMA recorded a total of 685 reports. Of these reports, 608 were verified as being anti-Muslim or Islamophobic in nature and as having occurred in the UK between January and June 2018. A higher proportion of attacks were directed towards women. <https://tellmamauk.org/gendered-anti-muslim-hatred-and-islamophobia-street-based-aggression-in-cases-reported-to-tell-mama-is-alarming>

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All Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims and ‘a working definition of Islamophobia’

On 27 November, the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on British Muslims launched their latest report: Islamophobia Defined- The inquiry into a working definition of Islamophobia.

The APPG on British Muslims was established on 18 July 2017, to build on the work of the APPG on Islamophobia. The group is co-chaired by Anna Soubry MP and Wes Streeting MP. The core aims of the Group are to highlight the aspirations and challenges facing British Muslims; to celebrate the contributions of Muslim communities to Britain and to investigate prejudice, discrimination and hatred against Muslims in the UK. An inquiry into a working definition of Islamophobia was opened in April 2018.

Following consultation with academics, lawyers, local and nationally elected officials, Muslim organisation, activists, campaigners and local Muslim communities, the definition recommended by the report is as follows: “Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness.”

The full report, along with the executive summary can be found at: <https://appgbritishmuslims.org/s/Islamophobia-Defined.pdf>

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Religious Education Council statement on Commission on RE report

As reported in the last issue of the e-bulletin, on 9 September the Commission on Religious Education published its final report: *Religion and Worldviews: the way forward. A national*

plan for RE. The same day the Religious Education Council of England and Wales (REC) made a statement which can be found at <https://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/news/rec-comment-on-the-final-report-from-commission-on-re/>.

At a meeting on 16 October the Board of the REC authorised the REC and the RE Policy Unit to proceed with work towards securing the full implementation of the Report. In addition it made the following public statement:

“The Religious Education Council –

- Fully and wholeheartedly endorses the vision of the report
- Affirms the usefulness of all 11 recommendations, phased as suggested in the timeline
- Intends to engage urgently with the DfE, all our member organisations, and other RE stakeholders in implementation.”

<https://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/news/rec-statement-on-the-final-report-from-commission-on-re/>

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Decline in number of RE teacher training entrants

On 29 November the Department for Education published figures showing the Initial Teacher Training (ITT) Census for the academic year 2018 to 2019, England. This shows that the number of new entrants to postgraduate initial teacher training for the academic year 2018-19 is 375 (58% of the Government’s target). This is a fall from the 2017-18 year for which it was 400 (62% of the Government’s target). Further information is at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/initial-teacher-training-trainee-number-census-2018-to-2019>.

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‘Is Britain Fairer’ - Equality and Human Rights Commission reports

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has recently launched its ‘Is Britain Fairer?’ ‘Is Scotland Fairer?’ and ‘Is Wales Fairer?’ reports. ‘Is Britain Fairer’ is a three-yearly project by the EHRC to review the state of equality and human rights in England, Scotland and Wales. Across the reports it examines six areas of everyday life to assess how much progress has been made towards a fairer Britain over the past three years.

The reports highlight trends, emerging issues and the action that needs to be taken now to improve the life chances of the next generation. They also make a number of recommendations to Governments and other organisations and will inform the EHRC’s programme of work for the next three years. The executive summary of the reports highlight some improvements in education, political participation and work, but also

focus on an increase in poverty, 'forgotten' groups and regressions in justice and personal security.

More information, including the full reports and supporting data, is available at <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/britain-fairer>.

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Religious festivals

The pattern of religious festivals in different faith communities changes throughout the year. A number have recently taken place such as Navaratri (Hindu), Bandi Chhor Divas (Sikh), Diwali (Hindu, Jain and Sikh), the Birth of the Bab and the Birth of Baha'u'llah (Baha'i), the Birthday of Guru Nanak (Sikh) and the Birthday of the Prophet Muhammad (Muslim). Advent (Christian) and Chanukah (Jewish) are taking place now.

The Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education, an IFN member body, produces a calendar of religious festivals, which is available in electronic format, and also a wallchart which can be purchased in hard copy.

<http://www.shapworkingparty.org.uk/calendar.html>

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Faith communities and Organ donation

During Inter Faith Week NHS Blood and Transplant encouraged people across different faith communities to help dispel myths and misconceptions by talking about organ donation. The aim was to increase understanding of organ donation and the stances of different faiths as well as be an opportunity for people to publicly show their support for donation. Discussions were encouraged, including on social media using the hashtags #InterFaithWeek and #YesIDonate. <https://www.organdonation.nhs.uk/news-and-campaigns/news/talk-about-organ-donation-and-help-to-save-lives-this-inter-faith-week/>

Organ donation laws vary in different countries across the United Kingdom.

The current legislation for England is to opt in to organ and tissue donation. In the Summer the Government published a response to its consultation into the organ donation system in England and confirmed that under the proposed new system (commonly known as 'deemed consent' or 'opt out') everybody would be considered a potential organ donor unless they have added their details to the NHS Organ Donor Register to say that they do not wish to donate their organs or are in one of the excluded groups. They have provisionally indicated that the system may be in place in April 2020.

The current legislation for Scotland is to opt in to organ and tissue donation. The Human Tissue (Authorisation) (Scotland) Bill, which includes provision for a 'deemed

authorisation system', was published by the Scottish Government in June for consideration by the Scottish Parliament. The date for the change to legislation is not known but could be spring 2020.

The current legislation for Northern Ireland is to opt in to organ and tissue donation. Following detailed consideration of the issue, the Northern Ireland Assembly decided in 2016 not to proceed with any changes to the basis of consent for organ donation. However, they introduced a new statutory requirement for the Department of Health to promote organ donation as a means of increasing the number of organs available for transplantation.

The legislation for Wales is 'deemed consent'. This means that if you haven't registered an organ and tissue donation decision (opt in or opt out), you will be considered to have no objection to becoming a donor.

More information on the legislation is at <https://www.organdonation.nhs.uk/faq/is-organ-donation-law-changing/>. Information on the NHS Organ Donor Register and how to join is at <https://www.organdonation.nhs.uk/>.

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INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK NEWS

Inter Faith Week

The 10th Inter Faith Week took place from 11 to 18 November. Over 600 activities are thus far known to have taken place across the UK. More on these can be found at www.interfaithweek.org. If you held an event for Inter Faith Week, please take time to respond to IFN's survey about the Week at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/feedback> so that the Week can be further strengthened for the future.

The Co-Chairs of the Inter Faith Network for the UK, which leads on the Week, said:

"Inter Faith Week 2018 has been an enormously energetic and positive Week. There have been hundreds of events involving thousands of people of different backgrounds, young and old. It has been wonderful to see faith communities leading in activities in many areas and first time participants from primary schools through to major national employers entering into the annual opportunity to deepen understanding, respect and cooperation."

The Week begins each year on Remembrance Sunday to enable people of different backgrounds to remember together the service of soldiers and civilians of all faiths and

beliefs and to reflect on peace. This year, Remembrance Sunday was also the centenary of Armistice Day, which brought an additional dimension.

Churches, gurdwaras, mandirs, synagogues, mosques, temples, viharas, schools, sports grounds, parks, council chambers, museums and galleries, libraries, community centres, hospitals and hospices, concourses of major rail stations - just a few of the places that events were held. There were practical projects such as tree planting by groups of different faiths and collections for those in need, discussions and dialogues, arts and cultural events, and much more. Tough issues were tackled, as well as commonalities and friendship celebrated.

In the course of the Week, the Government's Minister for Faith, Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth, launched his report 'Belief in communities: bridging the divide', about which more is said [above](#). Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, the Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP, attended, as the local MP, the London Borough of Bexley's Faith in the Community Awards.

Wales saw a special event supported by the Welsh Government and arranged by the Inter-faith Council for Wales, 'Walking alongside our Communities' with Welsh Government Minister Julie James AM. In Belfast, Inter Faith Week was marked with a reception for the Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum at City Hall.

National inter faith initiatives and local inter faith groups have been showcased through the Week, organising dialogues, workshops, concerts, festivals, fairs, exhibitions, faith trails and many other kinds of activity. Remembrance events of many kinds were part of this, such as at Dor Kemmyn Field near Truro.

National faith communities played a key role in the Week. Some held events linked to both the Week and #Armistice100, for example the BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha which held an event at Neasden Temple in London, honouring the contribution of Indian and Commonwealth soldiers in World War 1. Others, such as the Muslim Council of Britain, held discussion events or, like the Baptist Union of Great Britain, used the Week to launch new resources. Faith leaders also contributed to other events, for example, Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis at the Inter Faith Week event of the Indian Jewish Association.

The Week saw participation from a growing number of companies and employers, such as Network Rail and the UK Civil Service, and was also the platform for awareness-raising by bodies such as NHS Blood and Transplant and a number of National Health Trusts. Fire and Rescue Services and Police joined in many local events.

In schools such as Gorsey Bank primary in Wilmslow and Polam Hall School Darlington, pupils have used the Week as an opportunity to learn about other traditions, as well as to celebrate the diversity of their communities and those who live and worship in them.

In colleges and universities, students ran activities from sport, health and exercise sessions to 'speed faithing', quizzes and competitions to acts of service and charitable collections. They have been supported and encouraged in doing so by the NUS, by chaplaincies and faith centres, by national faith-based student bodies, and by national inter faith organisations. Youth engagement, more generally, in the Week has been high. The Faith and Belief Forum's Interfaith Summit brought together many young people to discuss key issues and young people also played a significant role in events in areas such as Bolton as well as through youth bodies like the Girls Brigade and Scouts.

Local authorities in a number of areas have played a key role with some supporting and encouraging extensive programmes, for example a cross-Kent Open Door series arranged by Kent County Council, or supporting particular events such as Middlesbrough City of Kindness.

Full week programmes were held in several places such as Birmingham, Bolton, Kirklees, Leicester, Preston and York as well as a number of campuses such as University of Leeds.

The Near Neighbours and Presence and Engagement programmes of the Church of England have played an active support role in many areas and grants from the Inter Faith Youth Trust have enabled a number of special youth events.

There was a social action focus to a number of events such as Brighton and Hove Faith in Action and Brighton and Hove City Council's event celebrating social welfare and community development projects delivered by the city's faith communities.

Inter Faith Week concluded with the social action focused Mitzvah Day, with which it has a strong link. This is a special Jewish-led day of service focussed on bringing communities together in 'acts of loving kindness'. Many of these were run on an inter faith basis, including the 'chicken soup challenge' in which Jews and Muslims cooked over 1,000 portions of soup together at the East London Mosque before distributing these to those in need in the local community.

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Scottish Interfaith Week

Scottish Interfaith Week also took place from 11 to 18 November, and its theme this year was 'Connecting Generations'.

Interfaith Scotland, which leads on the Week, estimates that 80 events and activities took place to mark the Week. A launch event was held by Interfaith Scotland in Aberdeen. Among the other events and activities were the Interfaith Summit hosted by the First Minister at the Scottish Parliament, a Civic Reception hosted by Glasgow City Council with

Interfaith Glasgow at Glasgow City Chambers and Edinburgh Inter Faith Association launching a national website resource called 'The Ground We Share'. Lots of Scottish local inter faith groups held events on themes from domestic abuse to taking care of the planet to remembrance.

Further information about the Week can be found at www.scottishinterfaithweek.org or by contacting Interfaith Scotland at admin@interfaithscotland.org.

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Day event for local inter faith practitioners

On 16 October IFN held a day event in Bradford for local inter faith practitioners. The event was an opportunity for people from local inter faith groups anywhere in the UK to come together to share their experiences, discuss issues of common interest and concern and discuss practical aspects of developing successful inter faith programmes as well as the challenges.

Participants were welcomed to Bradford by Mohinder Singh Chana, and Balu Lad, Chair and Vice-Chair of Bradford Concord Interfaith Society and Denise Raby, Secretary of the Keighley Interfaith Group. This was followed by reflections from Rt Revd Dr Toby Howarth, Bishop of Bradford, on the importance of local inter faith engagement.

The morning session focussed on standing together to tackle prejudice and hatred. Dr Harriet Crabtree, Executive Director of IFN talked about ways in which prejudice and hateful speech and action are affecting communities and individuals and why local inter faith response is crucial. Mufti Helal Uddin Mahmood, from the Oldham Interfaith Forum, and Es Rosen, from Barnet Multi Faith Forum, talked about their respective forums work on these issues.

In the afternoon participants heard from Amria Khatun, Integration Lead for the Bradford area, Ministry of Communities, Housing and Local Government, who spoke about the significance of local inter faith engagement in the Government's integration strategy. There was then discussion on what the future looks like for local inter faith engagement.

There were discussion groups on: developing local inter faith organisation programmes with impact; engaging young people in local inter faith activity; exploring funding and resources for local inter faith work; Twitter as a tool for local inter faith groups; dialogue about challenging issues; and Inter Faith Week and other special days/weeks as a platform for developing local inter faith work.

The event was drawn to a close by final reflections from Jatinder Singh Birdi, Co-Chair of IFN who had chaired the day.

Reports from previous events held for local inter faith practitioners in Bristol, Coventry, London, Manchester and Sheffield can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/publications>.

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

Competitions and Award Schemes

Competitions and award schemes are becoming an ever more popular way of highlighting contributions to such goals as standing up to hate crime; developing good inter faith relations; and contributing in other ways to local communities.

Inter Faith Week saw a number of awards ceremonies taking place, such as 21 for 21 where the Church Times, The Jewish News and BritishMuslimTV, with Coexist House gave awards to 21 Christian, Jewish and Muslim "inspiring individuals aged under 40 who are increasing dialogue and breaking down barriers – particularly as volunteers but also in their working lives." <https://jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/interfaith-21-faith-leaders-for-the-21st-century/>

Locally, award ceremonies took place in Bristol: <http://bristolmultifaithforum.org.uk/love-your-neighbour-awards/> (sponsored and hosted by Bristol Rovers) and in Bexley, where over 200 local people of different faiths were invited to the Civic Offices in Bexleyheath to celebrate the hard work and achievements of the borough's faith groups. <https://www.bexley.gov.uk/news/bexleys-first-ever-faith-community-awards>

Later in November, The Faith & Belief Forum supported by Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Greater London's Council on Faith, held an awards ceremony to recognise Londoners working to serve their communities and bring people from different backgrounds together <https://faithbeliefforum.org/faith-belief-community-awards-celebrate-londons-unsung-heroes>

The Mitzvah Day 2018 Awards are open for nominations. More information on this is [below](#).

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Multi faith tree planting

The Faiths Forum for London is running an annual tree planting initiative, with funding from the Mayor of London. They are challenging faith communities and organisations to plant at least one tree. IFN member bodies Barnet Multi Faith Forum and Barking & Dagenham Faith Forum have participated in the initiative.

Trees symbolise different things to people of diverse faiths and none. People of all faiths and beliefs can unite and plant trees together to show solidarity. London organisations that are interested in planting a tree as a symbol of inter faith unity can email ali@faithsforum4london.org to receive their free tree planting toolkit. For further information on the project, visit <http://faithsforum.com/trees-of-london> www.london.gov.uk/plant-a-tree.

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Woolf Institute 20th Anniversary

The Woolf Institute was founded in 1998. Their aim was “to provide an academic framework and space in which people could tackle issues of religious difference constructively”. This year it is celebrating its 20th Anniversary with a series of events and activities. The most recent of these was a research day in Cambridge which offered an opportunity to evaluate and further develop their research into contemporary religion and society.

Following the 20th Anniversary Research Day, the Woolf Institute opened its third photographic exhibition, ‘Jewish Worship, European Spaces’. The exhibition, displayed throughout the Woolf Institute Building, features synagogues of Europe, past and present.

The exhibition is open to all. For further details, see <https://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/whats-on/news> and to arrange a visit contact enquiries@woolf.cam.ac.uk.

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Great Get Together – Mince Pie Moments

The Great Get Together has just launched the second year of its #MincePieMoments campaign.

It is asking everyone who is part of The Great Get Together to reach out to their community this Christmas, to help tackle loneliness and bring people closer together. This can be through, for example, organising a community meal, setting an extra place at the table or knocking on a neighbour’s door. There is a guide on how to get involved, and lots of resources, at <http://www.greatgettogether.org/mince-pie-moments-resources-skipsignup>.

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

Skills workshop for young leaders

St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace is organising a skills workshop on 'Telling stories about spirituality and social change' for young adults (18-36 years old) who are engaged in some form of social action, and who are also rooted in a particular faith or spiritual commitment on 12 and 13 January 2019.

To apply, fill out the form at <https://stethelburgas.org/event/skills-workshop-for-young-leaders-telling-stories-about-spirituality-and-social-change/>. For more information, contact kishan.shah@stethelburgas.org.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS, AND NOMINATIONS

Mitzvah Day Awards

Nominations for the 2018-2019 Mitzvah Day Awards are now open. One of the categories is *Outstanding Interfaith Partnership* for the best collaborative project between Jews and another faith group/s, with an emphasis on bringing people of different faiths together.

Guidance on how to nominate a person or project, can be found at <https://mitzvahday.org.uk/mitzvah-day-2018-awards-nominate-your-favourite-project-now/>. The closing date is Sunday 16 December.

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Young Sacred Activist of the Year Award

St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace is seeking nominations for extraordinary young people of 38 years or under who are making an innovative contribution to social change from a place rooted in faith or spiritual values.

Nominations should be submitted by 5pm on 14 February 2019 through <https://stethelburgas.org/projects/young-sacred-activist-of-the-year-award/>. For more information, email Justine Huxley at justine@stethelburgas.org.

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Spirited Arts and Poetry competitions

The National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE) has opened its annual arts and poetry competitions.

This year's themes are: Pilgrimages and journeys; Questions, questions; Where is God?; Window to the soul; and Mystery of life.

Full details of how to enter along with terms and conditions can be found on the NATRE website at <https://www.natre.org.uk/about-natre/projects/spirited-arts/spirited-arts-gallery/2018/>. The competitions will run until 31 July 2019.

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'Open doors' days and visits to places of worship

An important way to help people learn about faith traditions and to dispel negative stereotypes is for communities to invite them into their places of worship – for example for guided visits or to join in particular social or other events.

Over the years, the Inter Faith Network has highlighted many positive example of this, showcasing openings as part of local inter faith walks and trails and special days.

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/open-door-days>
<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/multi-faith-walks-and-pilgrimages-and-faith-trails>

As part of some further resource work that the IFN office is doing on this, we would be very glad to hear from places of worship about their experiences The kinds of questions where reflections would be helpful are:

- Does your place of worship hold open door days where the public can visit?
- Do you accept visits from, eg, schools?
- Why do you think this is important?
- Are there particular challenges you face, such as ensuring security?
- Do you have a training process for your guides?

We would also be pleased to hear from local inter faith bodies about their experience of working with local places of worship to enable openings of these for faith trails, Inter Faith Week etc.

Please email ifnet@interfaith.org.uk If you prefer to talk on the phone, just let us have a number for that purpose and we will give you a ring. Responses can be attributed or anonymised as preferred.

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Support for Windrush generation and Commonwealth citizens

The Commonwealth Taskforce, set up by the Home Office, has been carrying out a consultation on the Compensation Scheme for those “who have struggled to confirm their rightful status under the immigration system”, including in particular the Windrush generation.

They are keen to reach as many people as possible who might have concerns about their immigration status. Anyone who settled in the UK before 1988 from any country could be helped by the Taskforce. The team could provide documents to demonstrate the right to be in the UK and people who settled before 1973 might be eligible for a free citizenship application. Further information can be found at www.gov.uk/windrush or by calling Freephone 0800 678 1925.

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Call for papers - The Faith Lives of Women and Girls: Identities, Experiences, Practices, and Beliefs

The Queen’s Foundation, Birmingham is holding a two day conference in March 2019 exploring the diverse faith lives, identities, experiences, practices, and beliefs of self-identifying girls and women, in their individual, community, and institutional contexts. It welcomes postgraduates, early-career researchers, academics and grassroots practitioners. The conference examines gender and feminism in religions, spiritualities, and theologies. For more information about The Faith Lives of Women and Girls, see <http://www.queens.ac.uk/the-faith-lives-of-women-and-girls>.

Abstracts (200-300 words) for 20 minute papers should be submitted to Professor Nicola Slee (sleen@queens.ac.uk) and Dr Dawn Llewellyn (d.llewellyn@chester.ac.uk) by 14 December. Abstracts should be submitted as a word document including name, address, affiliation, title of paper, and email address.

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Call for Papers – European Network of Buddhist-Christian Studies

The European Network of Buddhist-Christian Studies is holding its 13th conference in June 2019 at the Archabbey of St Ottilien near Munich, and is extending an invitation to the conference and a call for papers. The theme of this conference concerns the ENCBS’ vision for Buddhist-Christian encounter. A variety of topics will be addressed, including ‘May popular religion alter the course of dialogue?’ and ‘May dialogue change our understanding of the human being?’. Further details about the conference programme and registration details are available at <http://www.buddhist-christian-studies.org>.

Proposals for papers should be emailed to Dr Elizabeth Harris, President of the Network, by 28 February 2019, at E.harris.2@bham.ac.uk.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

IFN's website lists job and internship opportunities with a significant inter faith dimension with IFN member organisations at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/jobs>.

Inter Faith Network for the UK - Mini Internship

The Inter Faith Network is seeking to recruit an Intern to work for a 10-week period from January to March to help on projects such as national Inter Faith Week (www.interfaithweek.org), local inter faith support and development of website resources.

The role is 4 days per week and is based at the IFN office in London. For an application form, contact ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

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Inter Faith Network for the UK - Volunteers

The Inter Faith Network for the UK has regular volunteering opportunities. Further information about these can be found on IFN's website.

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Interfaith Scotland - Volunteers

Inter Faith Scotland offers a number of volunteer opportunities, including helping their staff at the office and at events. It also runs a volunteer programme called 'Face to Faith' where volunteers have the opportunity to share their faith with school pupils of all ages. For further details contact admin@interfaithscotland.org.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Faith Leader Training

The last issue of the e-bulletin noted that in the Green Paper on the Integrated Communities Strategy the Government committed to supporting the training of faith leaders to strengthen ministering in the British context and that a survey about this had been sent by The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to faith community organisations.

MHCLG has now published a call for prospective training providers interested in delivering non-theological, voluntary training for faith leaders in England. The prospectus says “We want to ensure that suitable training is available for religious ministers across all faiths to help broaden their understanding of (and relationship between) a suite of safeguarding topics, relevant legal frameworks and shared values, such as the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect, democracy and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs.”

It explains that ‘at a minimum’ the Government expects the training provision “to ensure faith leaders are well-equipped and well-positioned to teach their congregations about their rights and responsibilities in the following areas, as well as to be able to identify issues, support affected individuals and signpost people to relevant guidance, legislation and support services in the following areas: Domestic Abuse; Forced Marriage; Female Genital Mutilation; Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation; Mental Health. Training programmes should also cover: Marriage legislation; Equalities legislation; Hate crime legislation and how to respond to / report hate crime; Shared values.” Among the restrictions on the funding is that “Activities promoting a religious faith or belief, acquisition of religious objects or the cost of supporting religiously-employed personnel.”

The full prospectus, application form and evaluation and scoring guide are available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/faith-leader-training-prospectus-and-application-form> . To apply, prospective training providers should send a completed application form to FaithLeaderTraining@communities.gov.uk by 5pm on Thursday 20 December.

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Preventing hate crime: funding for community projects

The Home Office is running a grant programme to work with affected communities to fund the development of projects that: “prevent hate crime, respond to hate crime in our communities, increase the reporting of hate crime, improve the support for the victims of hate crime, and build our understanding of hate crime”.

The guidance for applicants, including the application form and further information, is available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/preventing-hate-crime-funding-for-community-projects#history>. The programme opened earlier this Autumn and the closing date for applications is 7 December.

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Manchester Arena Memorial Grants Programme

The Inter Faith Youth Trust is launching a new grant programme for young people's organisations to hold inter faith events or activities in the Greater Manchester area. May 2019 will mark two years since the bombing at the Manchester Arena. The focus of the project is to highlight the good that can come from different communities working together in friendship.

Grants will be awarded for projects or activities held in the Greater Manchester Area from April to June 2019. Projects must include learning by children and young people (11-25 years old) from different faiths about different faiths, through social action. Projects must include more than one faith and show how the social action will promote learning about faiths.

Grants will only be given to organisations/groups, not to individuals. Grants are for between £200 and £1,000. Applications must reach IFYT by Friday 9 February 2019 on the official online application form at <http://www.ifyouthtrust.org.uk>.

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Arts Council Funding - Creative People and Places

The Creative People and Places fund focuses on supporting communities to access arts and cultural opportunities, in 79 areas with below average participation in the arts. A new round of funding opens in January 2019, and will be available for community organisations or groups that can partner with cultural organisations. The Arts Council is holding a number of information events throughout October and November for those interested in applying.

For more information about the fund, and to book a place at an information event, visit <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/creative-people-and-places/creative-people-and-places-programme-2019#section-2>.

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Heritage Lottery Fund grants to commemorate First World War

The Heritage Lottery Fund has £4million of funding available for communities to get involved in projects marking the Centenary of the First World War. Projects applying for funding must be able to meet one of a number of successful outcomes based on heritage, people and communities. Grants can be given between £3,000 and £10,000. Grants are still being considered up until 18 January 2019.

Further information can be found at <https://www.hlf.org.uk/looking-funding/our-grant-programmes/first-world-war-then-and-now>.

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Building a Stronger Britain Together programme

The Home Office programme Building a Stronger Britain Together is continuing to offer in-kind support such as social media training, technical assistance to help a group improve their website, or capacity building work to help a group protect more vulnerable individuals. It is open to bodies in England and Wales. Applications for in-kind support can be submitted at any time.

Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/building-a-stronger-britain-together>.

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Faiths in Scotland Community Action Fund

Faiths in Scotland Community Action Fund continues to be open for applications to its rolling small grants scheme. Small grants of up to £750 are available to faith based anti-poverty projects with an annual turnover of £30,000 or less and can be applied for at any time. For more information call 0141 221 4576 or visit

<https://www.faithincommunityscotland.org/faith-in-community-scotland-action-fund/our-grants/smallgrants/>.

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Funding websites

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) offers advice on fundraising and grants on its Knowhow Nonprofit site at <https://knowhownonprofit.org/funding>.

Funding Central - <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/default.aspx> - is a free website for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises in England that provides access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, together with tools and resources for supporting organisations to develop sustainable income strategies appropriate to their needs. Similar websites for funding in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at Funding Scotland - <http://www.fundingscotland.com/> - Wales Council for Voluntary Action - <http://www.wcva.org.uk/funding/search> - and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland - <https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

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Website and Facebook grants

The Transform Foundation is offering funding to charities to help with new website builds. Grants of £18,000 are available. It is also offering grants towards Facebook advertising of £5,000. For further information and to apply, visit www.transformfoundation.org.uk.

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Google and charities

Google is offering a service to registered charities which brings: Google Ad Grants: Free AdWords advertising to promote their websites on Google through keyword targeting; YouTube Nonprofit Programme: Access exclusive resources, features and programs designed to maximise their organisations' impact on YouTube; and Google Apps for Non-profit: Free version of the Google Apps business productivity suite, including Gmail, Docs, Calendar and more. For further information, visit www.google.co.uk/intl/en/nonprofits/join.

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Subsidised fundraising workshops

The Foundation for Social Improvement offers heavily subsidised training programmes for small charities across the UK. The courses cover a wide range of subjects from event planning to leadership. Many of the courses focus on fundraising and sustainability skills in particular.

Further information and dates for upcoming courses in December (York) and January (Reading and Newcastle) can be found at <http://www.thefsi.org/services/training>.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Holocaust Memorial Day will take place on 27 January. Its theme in 2019 is 'Torn from home'. Holocaust Memorial Day is the day for everyone to remember the millions of people murdered in the Holocaust, under Nazi Persecution, and in the genocides which followed in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur. It honours the survivors of these regimes and challenges everyone to use the lessons of their experience to inform their lives today. www.hmd.org.uk/

World Interfaith Harmony Week takes place in the first week of February. It is a UN recognised Week which was proposed to the UN General Assembly by HM King Abdullah of Jordan. The first UN World Interfaith Harmony Week took place in February 2011. <http://worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com>

VisitMyMosque Day 2019 will take place on Sunday 3 March. In 2018 over 200 mosques across the UK held open days to welcome in their neighbours from other communities. Registrations are now open to take part in the 2019 event. For further information, visit www.visitmymosque.org.

Sadaqa Day will take place on Sunday 24 March. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Muslim community. mysadaqaday.org

The Big Lunch will be taking place across the weekend of 1-2 June. Across the years millions of people from different faith backgrounds have joined together to take part through street parties, BBQs, iftars and picnics.

<https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/thebiglunchhomepage>

The Great Get Together will be taking place across the weekend of 21-23 June. The initiative was set up in 2017 inspired by Jo Cox MP who died the previous year. It encourages communities to come together through activities such as street parties, sports days, BBQs, picnics and coffee mornings. <https://www.greatgettogether.org/>

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DIARY DATES

This section includes a sample of some of the events taking place around the UK during December and January. We also include information on diary dates between e-bulletins on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/events>.

Interfaith Scotland is hosting the Cross-Party Group on Freedom of Religion or Belief at the Scottish Parliament on Wednesday 5 December. Register with maureen@interfaithscotland.org to attend and hear from the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

Crawley Interfaith Network is holding a Christmas social on Saturday 8 December from 6pm to 9pm at Crawley URC Church, Worth Park Avenue, Crawley, RH10 3DT. Details to be confirmed. For further details, contact Iyad Daoud at iyadhdaoud@yahoo.co.uk or on 01293 883 372.

The **Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby** is hosting the first of the Leverhulme Lectures on Tuesday 11 December. The lecture will be on 'Religion, Conflict and Peace-building in the Balkans' and the speaker will be Dr Ina Merdjanova, Leverhulme Visiting Professor Coventry University and Adjunct Professor Irish School of Ecumenics/Trinity College Dublin. It is being held from 6pm to 8pm at the Centre in Derby. For further information, visit www.multifaithcentre.org.

Wellingborough Inter Faith is holding a meeting on Tuesday 11 December for which the guest speaker will be Malcolm Deboo of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe. He will be speaking on 'The Zoroastrians – Beliefs and Practices'. It is being held at 7.30pm at Victoria Centre, 46-50 Palk Road, Wellingborough NN8 1HR. For further information, contact Cynthia Bailey at info@wellingboroughinterfaith.org.

Epsom and Ewell Inter Faith Forum is organising a visit to St Martin's Church, Epsom, KT17 54PX at 6pm on Sunday 16 December for Nine Lessons and Carols, followed by refreshments. For more information, contact Lynne Schofield, Secretary, at lynnescholefield@gmail.com.

Interfaith Wolverhampton is holding its Christmas Bring and Share Lunch on Tuesday 18 December. It will be held from 11am to 1pm at the Darlington Street Methodist Centre in Wolverhampton. For further information, email admin@ifwton.org.uk or visit www.ifwton.org.uk.

Sheffield Interfaith is holding a Food and Friendship dinner on Wednesday 19 December from 6pm to 8pm at Shirley House Interfaith Centre, 31 Psalter Lane, S11 8YL. The event is a bring and share dinner. For more information, visit <https://sheffieldinterfaith.org.uk/category/events/>.

The **Centre for Islamic Enlightening** is holding a 'Love Your Neighbour Exhibit' on Sunday 6 January. The topic will be 'BESA 'The Promise': A Code of Honour. Muslims Who Rescued Jews During the Holocaust'. It is being held from 4pm to 6pm at the Centre for Islamic Enlightenment, the Hippodrome, north End Road, Golders Green, London, NW11 7RP. To RSVP, contact Rabbi Natan Levy at natan@sfitogether.org or 07590 028 823.

The **Multifaith Chapel and Library at the Burngreave Ashram** is holding its next inter faith session on Monday 7 January. The theme will be 'New Year – What Do You Think?' and the presenter will be John Barnabas. There is a bring and share lunch at 12.30pm followed by the seminar from 1.15pm to 2.30pm. It is being held at Burngreave Ashram, 86 Spital Hill, Sheffield S4 7LG. For further information, contact BAMCL@outlook.com or 0114 272 7144.

York Interfaith Group is holding its Annual General Meeting on Tuesday 8 January. The meeting will be chaired by Daryoush Mazloum. It is being held from 7.30pm to 9pm in the Hudson Room, City of York Council, West Offices, Station Rise, York, YO1 6GA. For more information, email yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com or visit www.yorkinterfaith.org.

Westminster Cathedral Interfaith Group is holding its next meeting on Wednesday 16 January. The meeting will be led by Ahmad Achar, a Muslim scholar, who will be speaking on Mary in the Qu'ran. It is being held from 4pm to 5pm in the Hinsley Room, Morpeth Terrace, SW1P 1EP. For more information, contact John Woodhouse by text on 07908 888 586 or by email on woodhousesopten@btinternet.com.

The **All of Us Schools' Campaign** and **Women's Interfaith Network (WIN)** are holding a panel on the topic 'Bringing All of Us Together' on Tuesday 22 January. It will take place from 5.30pm to 7.30pm at the London Living Room, City Hall, The Queen's Walk, London SE1 2AA. For further information, contact Ruth Wilkinson at ruthw@allofuscampaign.com

or book your ticket at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/bringing-all-of-us-together-building-bridges-tickets-51517715875?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>

Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship is holding a talk on ‘Brahma Kumari and Sikh Attitudes to Violence’ on Wednesday 23 January. Dr Jane Kay and Dr Jasjit Singh, both of the University of Leeds, will be speaking. It is being held at 7.30pm at the Brahma Kumari Administration Centre, 241 Otley Road, Leeds, LS16 5LQ. For more information, contact John Summerwill on 0113 269 7895 or at chair@concord-leeds.org.uk.

More information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org.uk

**SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK’S WORK
TO INCREASE INTER FAITH UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION**

We need your help to ensure that the Inter Faith Network for the UK’s work to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation continues and grows, helping people of all backgrounds to live and work together with mutual respect and shared commitment to the common good.

Gifts at all levels are much valued and make a real difference. You can donate directly at www.interfaith.org.uk/donate or via PayPal.

Donations can also be made by sending a cheque to: The Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH.

Thank you!

REMEMBERING A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND

If you would like to make a gift in memory of a loved one, please get in touch by emailing remember@interfaith.org.uk or call us on 0207 730 0410.

A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

By leaving a gift in your will to the Inter Faith Network for the UK, you can leave a living inheritance to help deepen and strengthen inter faith understanding and cooperation in this country – for now and for the future. If you are thinking about making a will, the best thing to do is to get in touch with a professional will writer, such as a solicitor or advocate; they can help to ensure it is legally correct and that your wishes are met. If you have already made a will, you can still make an addition or amendment in the form of a codicil. If you would like to pledge a gift, please provide our name and address, along with our registered charity number 1068934.

Please get in touch with us if you have any queries.

You can call us on 0207 730 0410 or contact us at remember@interfaith.org.uk

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **18 January** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer: Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH

www.interfaith.org.uk www.facebook.com/IFNetUK www.twitter.com/IFNetUK

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IFN e-bulletin

February 2019

General Data Protection Regulation

As you will be aware, data protection legislation changed with the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) from 25 May 2018. IFN takes very seriously its data protection duties, and wrote to individuals on its database to check whether they were content for their details to be held by IFN and to receive IFN mailings. We are grateful to all those who have taken the time to respond. You can also sign up to other IFN mailings at any time by using the form on IFN's website at: www.interfaith.org.uk/news/gdpr.

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The e-bulletin is published every two months. If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the April e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **18 March** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and projects and future events.

IFN also highlights news and projects of interest through Twitter (www.twitter.com/IFNetUK) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/IFNetUK) and, where about Inter Faith Week, through (www.twitter.com/IFWeek and www.facebook.com/IFWeek).

Disclaimer: Information in this e-bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

Holocaust Memorial Day

Holocaust Memorial Day took place on 27 January. Holocaust Memorial Day is the day for everyone to remember the millions of people murdered in the Holocaust, under Nazi Persecution, and in the genocides which followed in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur. It honours the survivors of these regimes and challenges everyone to use the lessons of their experience to inform their lives today. Its theme for 2019 is 'Torn from home'. Further information is at www.hmd.org.uk/.

Faith and inter faith groups across the UK marked HMD. IFN highlighted some of these through Tweets and a series of posts on its Facebook page in the week leading up to HMD, including events in Welwyn Hatfield, Llanpumsaint, Loughborough, Rochdale and Shropshire.

The UK Commemorative Event was held in London on 27 January. The Ceremony featured personal testimonies from survivors of genocide, films, readings and music. <https://www.hmd.org.uk/news/uk-commemorative-ceremony-for-holocaust-memorial-day-2019/> An event was held in Belfast City Hall on 24 January. The event was hosted by The Executive Office in Northern Ireland in collaboration with the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust and Belfast City Council. <https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/articles/holocaust-memorial-day> The Wales national HMD event, led by Cardiff Council, took place at Cardiff City Hall on 25 January. <https://www.hmd.org.uk/activity/wales-national-hmd-event/> Candles were lit to mark

HMD at a Scottish national event attended by school pupils from across the west of Scotland. The event in Giffnock was held together with Interfaith Scotland, the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust and the Scottish Government.

<https://www.eveningexpress.co.uk/news/scotland/candles-lit-to-mark-holocaust-memorial-day/>

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Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre

A planning application for the UK's new Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre in London was submitted in December by the Holocaust Memorial Foundation (HMF), which is part of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. Information about the HMF can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-holocaust-memorial-foundation/about>.

The design for the Memorial and Learning Centre has been developed by HMF over the past year in consultation with “Holocaust and other genocide survivors, communities of a range of faiths and backgrounds, local residents, businesses and key experts from landscape design to Holocaust education”. Further information is at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/planning-application-submitted-for-holocaust-memorial-proposed-for-next-to-parliament>.

Comments on the planning application can be submitted to Westminster Council at <https://idoxpa.westminster.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=PL0CVYRP27000&activeTab=summary>.

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Faith-based and inter faith emergency winter shelters

As the temperatures plummeted at the end of January across the UK, Langar Aid (a project of Khalsa Aid), Under One Roof (Leicester) and other faith-based and inter faith initiatives such as those of the Cardiff Churches and West London Synagogue have been among those offering emergency shelter.

https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/homelessness/temporary_housing_if_you_re_homeless/winter_shelters

The scale of provision has been increasing. For example, the Church of England reported in December that more than 2,000 of its congregations would be running or supporting night shelters this winter as homelessness projects expand to cope with rising demand.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/news/church-england-parishes-set-support-winter-shelters>

Faith based bodies also run year round programmes to offer support. For example, the Passage, a Vincentian Catholic organisation, runs London's largest voluntary sector resource centre for homeless and vulnerable people: each day helping up to 200 men and women.

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Amendments to Visa arrangements for Ministers of Religion and Religious Workers

On 6 December, the Home Secretary presented to Parliament a Statement of Changes to the Immigration Rules which included amendments to the Tier 5 visa arrangements for religious workers. The changes set out took effect on 10 January.

Tier 5 visas are designed to facilitate short periods of knowledge sharing and cultural exchange for those undertaking non-pastoral roles supporting the activities of religious institutions. The changes to the Immigration Rules introduce a 'cooling off period', preventing Tier 5 Religious Worker and Tier 5 Charity Worker visa holders from returning to the UK, via these immigration routes, for 12 months after their visa expires. This approach underpins the Government's intention that these are temporary visas.

Rule changes will also see Ministers of Religion having to apply through the Tier 2 visa Minister of Religion sub-category instead of the Tier 5 Religious Workers category. Applicants will become subject to the English language requirement and have to demonstrate they speak English to an acceptable standard.

Further detailed information can be found in the updated guidance document at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/770691/2019-01-11_Tier-2-5-sponsor-guidance_01-2019_v1.0_FINAL.PDF.

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New faith and beliefs declaration for organ donation

In summer 2018, the Government published a response to its consultation into the organ donation system in England. It confirmed that under the proposed new system (commonly known as 'deemed consent' or 'opt out') everybody would be considered a potential organ donor unless they have added their details to the NHS Organ Donor Register to say that they do not wish to donate their organs or are in one of the excluded groups. It has been provisionally indicated that the system may be in place in April 2020.

A new option added to the NHS Organ Donor Register has been developed to give reassurance about how organ donation in England can go ahead in line with a person's faith or beliefs. People signing up to the NHS Organ Donor Register will now be asked an optional question about whether or not they want their faith or beliefs to be discussed with their family, or anyone else they consider appropriate, such as a faith leader.

Working with faith leaders and other organisations, NHS Blood and Transplant has developed a selection of downloadable faith and belief-specific donor cards so people can show their support for donation alongside their own faith or beliefs as well as share with family and friends. The cards can be found here: <https://www.nhsbt.nhs.uk/how-you-can-help/get-involved/download-digital-materials/faith-and-belief-donor-cards/>.

Information about organ donation and the position of individual faith and belief systems is at <https://www.organdonation.nhs.uk/about-donation/organ-donation-and-my-beliefs/>.

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Cohesion and Integration

Cohesion and Integration are under discussion within a number of faith communities. The Free Churches Group recently commissioned an eighteen-month research project looking at the relationship between the Church and social cohesion in England. The project is being conducted by Theos, the UK's leading think tank on religion and society issues. <https://www.freechurches.org.uk/free-churches-commission/>

In March 2018 the Government published a Green Paper consulting on the Government's proposed Integrated Communities Strategy. The Paper set out a programme of actions to take across Government to deliver this vision at the local and national level. The Green Paper also set out a new localised approach to delivering policy. It said that this approach recognised that integration challenges are not uniform throughout the country so tailored local plans and interventions are needed to address the issues that are specific to a particular place. This local approach is being trialled initially in five Integration Areas: Blackburn with Darwen, Bradford, Peterborough, Walsall and Waltham Forest.

On 6 December, Blackburn with Darwen launched its Integration Strategy. Walsall Council launched its Strategy on 31 January. In both areas, there has been wide engagement with faith and inter faith bodies and initiatives as part of development of the plans and the Government's Faith Minister, Lord Bourne, spoke.

On 24 January a new Cohesion and Integration Network was profiled at a special reception ahead of formal launch in Manchester later in the year. <https://cohesionintegration.net/news-events/>

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Independent review of Prevent

On 22 January the Government announced that there will be an independent review of the Prevent programme, which aims to stop vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism. The announcement was made by Security Minister, Ben Wallace. The press release can be found at <https://homeofficemedia.blog.gov.uk/2019/01/22/government-announces-independent-review-of-prevent/>.

Further details of the review will be set out in due course. It will begin within 6 months of the legislation receiving Royal Assent and will report to Parliament within 18 months.

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Welsh Government and RE

The Welsh Government has launched a consultation on its White Paper, 'Our National Mission: A Transformational Curriculum.' The White Paper includes a number of proposed changes to Religious Education in Wales, including on inclusion of non-religious world views, whether RE should continue to be compulsory for sixth-form students, and several changes concerning the parental right to withdraw pupils from RE and RSE. The consultation can be found at <https://beta.gov.wales/our-national-mission-transformational-curriculum> and the White Paper at <https://beta.gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2019-01/consultation-document-transformational-curriculum.pdf>

The deadline for comment is 25 March.

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Consultation on Out-of-school-settings providers

The Department for Education's consultation on a draft voluntary safeguarding code of practice for out-of-school settings (OOSS) providers and accompanying guidance for parents closes on 24 February. Information on the consultation is at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/out-of-school-settings-voluntary-safeguarding-code-of-practice>.

An OOSS is any institution which provides tuition, training, instruction, or activities to children in England without their parents' or carers' supervision, and that is not a: school, college, 16-19 academy or provider caring for children under 8 years old, which is registered with Ofsted or a childminder agency. Some events and classes run by faith communities are classed as OOSS.

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Faith Minister's national tour

The Government's Faith Minister, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Lord Bourne, is undertaking a new national tour to celebrate the role of faith communities in the UK. The tour – 'Belief in communities: bridging divides and strengthening communities' – began with a visit to the Highway of Holiness Church in Tottenham and is being followed by monthly visits across the country. Its aim is "to shine a spotlight on the central role faith institutions play in building strong, resilient communities".

The full press release is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/faith-minister-launches-national-tour-to-celebrate-the-role-of-faith-communities>.

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Equally Ours

The Equality and Diversity Forum (EDF) is a national network of organisations working across all areas of equality and human rights. It brings together organisations from a range of disciplines, sharing knowledge and expertise. On 26 February it will be changing its name to Equally Ours.

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Taylor Review Pilots

The Taylor Review Pilot is a project funded by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and run by Historic England. Pilot projects began in September in Greater Manchester and Suffolk to test some of the recommendations of the '2017 Taylor Review: Sustainability of English Churches and Cathedrals' and to provide free support and advice for listed places of worship of all faiths and denominations.

The website has recently been updated to include Frequently Asked Questions <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/caring-for-heritage/places-of-worship/churches-sustainability-review/#Section2Text>.

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Response of ONS to Census consultation

On 14 December, the Office for National Statistics published 'Help Shape our Future' which sets out the UK Statistics Authority's proposals, in the light of consultation, for conducting the 2021 Census in England and Wales. Within this is a section which details its planned approach to data relating to Jews and Sikhs, including its decision not to include a question on ethnicity relating to Sikhs.

Help Shape our Future can be found at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/765089/Census2021WhitePaper.pdf.

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BBC ‘Year of Beliefs’

The BBC has announced that in 2019 there will be a special emphasis on Religion and Ethics programming with a whole year of programming across television, radio and digital which will explore ‘Britain’s beliefs and values’.

More information is at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/mediapacks/yearofbeliefs>.

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INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK NEWS

Inter Faith Week 2019

Inter Faith Week 2019 will take place between **Sunday 10 and Sunday 17 November**. The Week begins each year on Remembrance Sunday to enable people of different backgrounds to remember together the service of soldiers and civilians of all faiths and beliefs and to reflect on peace.

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Local inter faith visits and sharing of good practice

IFN Assistant Director visited Blackburn, Burnley and Pendle in January to talk with local inter faith bodies there about their work. This is part of an ongoing programme of visits.

IFN’s next practitioner day event for local inter faith groups anywhere in the UK will be taking place in Peterborough on 27 March. Further information from ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

Women's Interfaith Network new groups

The Women's Interfaith Network (WIN) is preparing to start three new groups this year. These are the Professional Women's Group London, South London WIN Group and Birmingham WIN Group. To find out more or to join a group, contact Marion Waruguru at marion@wominet.org.uk.

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Christian Muslim Forum website

The Christian Muslim Forum, one of IFN's member bodies, has redeveloped its website. The newly launched version can be found at <http://www.christianmuslimforum.org/>.

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Capital city inter faith bodies

A meeting is being held in Edinburgh on 4 February during World Interfaith Harmony Week bringing together capital city inter faith organisations of London, Belfast, Cardiff, Dublin and Edinburgh.

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Places of Welcome – A Network of Hospitality

Places of Welcome is a growing network of local community groups that aim to provide their neighbourhoods with places where all people feel safe to belong, connect and contribute. The idea was developed during Birmingham's Social Inclusion Inquiry 'Giving Hope Changing Lives' in 2012 and is now a Together Network initiative supported by Near Neighbours.

Currently, there are over 200 Places of Welcome at a variety of venues including churches, community centres, libraries, mosques, temples and other community group buildings across the UK. Each of them is slightly different from each other but open to everyone regardless of their circumstances or situation.

For further information, visit <https://www.placesofwelcome.org.uk/>.

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Community seed kits

Grow Wild is inviting applications for its free wildflower seed kits, in preparation for the coming spring. The idea is to bring communities together by encouraging them to connect through nature, and by providing communities with the resources and skills to transform spaces.

Grow Wild is a national outreach programme of the Royal Botanic Gardens (Kew). The Grow Wild initiative brings communities around the UK together “to transform shared spaces with beautiful, blooming UK native wildflowers”. The kits are available to all, irrespective of prior gardening experience. The seeds may be sown at home, school, workplaces, community spaces etc. in containers, gardens or even in unloved urban spaces. For further information, including the application form, visit <https://www.growwilduk.com/content/grow-wildflowers-us-spring>.

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

Generation Y, Spirituality and Social Change – A Collection of Stories

St Ethelburga’s Centre for Reconciliation and Peace is launching a book called ‘Generation Y, Spirituality and Social Change’, edited by Justine Huxley, on 7 March.

The book is a collection of stories and interviews with young adults. It focusses on how the younger generation are engaging with faith, spirituality and social action, reflecting both the energy and inspiration of the generation and the tremendous challenges they face. For more information, visit <https://stethelburgas.org/projects/walking-talk-faith-spirituality-next-generation/> or contact Justine Huxley at justine@stethelburgas.org.

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Report on Understanding Hate Incident Patterns

On 4 December, Tell MAMA (Measuring anti-Muslim Attacks) published a report on ‘Understanding Hate Incident Patterns After the Westminster Terrorist Attack of March 2017: Building a Pattern of Community Resilience Against Hate – Reflecting on What Worked?’.

The overall aim of this report is to understand post ‘trigger event’ hate incident patterns with a specific focus on the Westminster terror attack through a detailed discourse analysis and semi-structured interviews. The report concludes with a list of recommendations that have been devised following interviews with key professionals.

The full report can be found at <https://tellmamauk.org/wp-content/uploads/resources/Tell%20MAMA%20-%20Report.pdf>.

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Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse resource

On 14 January, the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse launched a television awareness campaign to help ensure victims and survivors are aware that they can come forward to the Truth Project. The Truth Project gives victims and survivors the opportunity to share their experiences in a confidential setting and make recommendations to help keep children safer in future. By sharing their experiences, victims and survivors make an important contribution to the work of the Inquiry.

The Stakeholder Engagement Toolkit, available on the Inquiry's website at <https://www.iicsa.org.uk/victims-and-survivors/stakeholder-engagement-toolkit>, offers different ways in which to support the campaign, including imagery and clips of the advert to use as social media content and also the full 60 second version of the television advert. For further information, contact the Inquiry's Engagement Team at engagement@iicsa.org.uk.

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The Diversity Game

The East of England Faith Agency (EEFA) has overstock of 'The Diversity Game' and 'The Diversity Game Playing Mat'. For details of the game, see <http://www.eefa.net/reslib/diversity.htm>. For information on reduced prices and to purchase any copies, contact office@eefa.net.

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Working with People from Diverse Religion and Belief Backgrounds

Interfaith Scotland is holding a half day training course on Working with People from Diverse Religion and Belief Backgrounds on 5 March. Delegates will improve their confidence in working with the religion and belief of those they work with. The course addresses the core beliefs and cultural practices of the main faiths, and the individual needs that may arise from a person's faith or belief identity. It is designed for those who work directly with users of services, but is also relevant to HR staff, equality officers and managers who may need to respond to the needs of staff from diverse religion or belief backgrounds. For more information and registration, contact Jamie Spurway at 0141 558 0778 or jamie@interfaithscotland.org.

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Transforming Conversations between Jews and Christians

The Liberal Jewish Synagogue and the London Society of Jews and Christians are holding an eight week course on 'Deep Calls to Deep – Transforming conversations between Jews and Christians'. The course is based on a new volume of essays of inter-religious learning and dialogues edited by Rabbi Tony Bayfield. It will take place on Tuesday evenings between 5 March and 21 May at the Liberal Jewish Synagogue in London.

For further information, including costs, visit <http://ljs.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Deep-calls-to-Deep-publicity-2-1.pdf> or contact Debi Penhey at the LJS at education@ljs.org or 0207 432 1284.

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Faith and Belief Forum LGBT+Faith Training days

The Faith and Belief Forum is hosting a series of LGBT+Faith training days. These are free to attend. The training is for LGBT organisations, faith-based organisations, and individuals interested in LGBT and faith inclusion. Travel grants are available.

The next training day takes place in Aberystwyth on 19 March and the next on 14 September in London. In order to maximise impact, places on these open sessions are restricted to one person per organisation or group. For more information and to register, visit <https://faithbeliefforum.org/programme/lgbtfaith/>. For any queries, contact Siobhán Anderson at siobhan@faithbeliefforum.org or on 0207 482 9549.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS, AND NOMINATIONS

Mitzvah Day Awards

The closing date for voting for the 2018 Mitzvah Day Awards is 4 February. One of the categories is *Outstanding Interfaith Partnership* for the best collaborative project between Jews and another faith group/s, with an emphasis on bringing people of different faiths together. The finalists are: South Manchester Synagogue (Bowdon Shul), #ChickenSoupChallenge at East London Mosque, Muswell Hill Synagogue and LICC Wightman Road Mosque, Caritas Westminster and The Friendship Circle, Manchester.

To cast a vote, visit <https://mitzvahday.org.uk/mitzvah-day-2018-awards/>.

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National Diversity Awards

Nominations for the 2019 National Diversity Awards will open on 20 February. The categories celebrating positive role models and community organisations, among others highlight the theme of race, religion and faith.

Nominations can be submitted at <http://www.nationaldiversityawards.co.uk/>.

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Honours nominations

A number of people received Honours in this year's New Year's Honours list for services to inter faith work or community cohesion.

<https://www.facebook.com/ifnetuk/posts/2174473662603197>

The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is always keen to ensure that individuals from the full breadth of society who are making a significant contribution to public life are properly recognised through the Honours system. It is particularly keen to recognise individuals who have contributed to building integrated communities and notes that nominees can come from all levels; being in a junior role is not a barrier to a nomination.

All nominations must be made on an official citation form and nominees should not be informed that they have been nominated. MHCLG is running workshops on Honours citations during February and early March. Places can be booked at

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/honours-workshop-tickets-54585392378>.

Citation forms, as well as further information, can be obtained by emailing integration@communities.gsi.gov.uk.

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Call for National Curriculum Test development group members

As part of the National Curriculum Test development, the Standards and Testing Agency (part of the Department for Education), has a group who review test materials from a representation, diversity and inclusion perspective. It is about to start a procurement process to identify people / organisations who have some knowledge, expertise and / or prior experience of promoting inclusion and diversity. Anyone interested in applying for a role should contact the Procurement team on TendersTD.STA@education.gov.uk.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

IFN's website lists job and internship opportunities with a significant inter faith dimension with IFN member organisations at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/jobs>.

Inter Faith Network for the UK - Volunteers

The Inter Faith Network for the UK currently has volunteering opportunities. For an application form, contact ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

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Bristol Multi-Faith Forum – Board members

Bristol Multi-Faith Forum is recruiting new Board members. It is actively recruiting competent community leaders to join the BMFF steering group. Anyone interested can contact Paul Hazelden for more information or an informal chat, at info@bristolmultifaithforum.org.uk.

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Interfaith Scotland – Volunteers

Interfaith Scotland currently has volunteering roles available: Office Assistant, Community Development, Schools and Youth Work and Events Management. For more information, visit <https://interfaithscotland.org/get-involved/volunteering> or email admin@interfaithscotland.org.

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St Ethelburga's – Volunteer Design, Archive and Exhibitions Intern

St Ethelburga's is seeking a Design, Archive and Exhibitions Intern. This 4 month internship will be to work on a new archiving and exhibitions project. It is 2 days per week from February to May. For more information, visit <https://stethelburgas.org/get-involved/vacancies-and-volunteering/> or contact ioannis@stethelburgas.org.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Manchester Arena Memorial Grants Programme

The Inter Faith Youth Trust is launching a new grant programme for young people's organisations to hold inter faith events or activities in the Greater Manchester area. The deadline for grant applications is 9 February.

May 2019 will mark two years since the bombing at the Manchester Arena. The focus of the project is to highlight the good that can come from different communities working together in friendship. Grants will be awarded for projects or activities held in the Greater Manchester Area from April to June 2019. Projects must include learning by children and young people (11-25 years old) from different faiths about different faiths, through social action. Projects must include more than one faith and show how the social action will promote learning about faiths.

Grants will only be given to organisations/groups, not to individuals. Grants are for between £200 and £1,000. Applications must be on the official online application form which is available at <http://www.ifyouthtrust.org.uk>.

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Arts Council Funding - Creative People and Places

The Creative People and Places fund focuses on supporting communities to access arts and cultural opportunities, in 79 areas with below average participation in the arts. A new round of funding opened in January and is available for community organisations or groups that can partner with cultural organisations. For more information about the fund, visit <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/creative-people-and-places/creative-people-and-places-programme-2019#section-2>.

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The M B Reckitt Trust

The M B Reckitt Trust is a grant-giving organisation. An important strand in its aims is supporting constructive communication and understanding between Christianity and other principal faith traditions. The Trust funds projects concerned with social thought and action. It aims to “promote researches and activities that evaluate and develop social structures, processes and attitudes in order to release energies for change, from the perspective of Christianity and the other principal faith traditions”.

The Trustees meet once a year in June, and the deadline for applications this year is 27 May. To find out more, visit <https://mbreckitttrust.org/>.

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Building a Stronger Britain Together programme

The Home Office programme Building a Stronger Britain Together is continuing to offer in-kind support such as social media training, technical assistance to help a group improve their website, or capacity building work to help a group protect more vulnerable

individuals. It is open to bodies in England and Wales. Applications for in-kind support can be submitted at any time.

Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/building-a-stronger-britain-together>.

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Faiths in Scotland Community Action Fund

Following a period of review Faiths in Scotland Community Action Fund is now open for applications for grants of up to £2,000 over 1 year. Its next deadline is 13 February 13. Further information is at <https://www.faithincommunityscotland.org/faith-in-community-scotland-action-fund/>. For any queries email andrew@faithincommunityscotland.org or telephone 0141 221 4576.

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Funding websites

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) offers advice on fundraising and grants on its Knowhow Nonprofit site at <https://knowhownonprofit.org/funding>.

Funding Central - <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/default.aspx> - is a free website for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises in England that provides access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, together with tools and resources for supporting organisations to develop sustainable income strategies appropriate to their needs. Similar websites for funding in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at Funding Scotland - <http://www.fundingscotland.com/> - Wales Council for Voluntary Action - <http://www.wcva.org.uk/funding/search> - and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland - <https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

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Website and Facebook grants

The Transform Foundation is offering funding to charities to help with new website builds. Grants of £18,000 are available. It is also offering grants towards Facebook advertising of £5,000. For further information and to apply, visit www.transformfoundation.org.uk.

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Google and charities

Google is offering a service to registered charities which brings: Google Ad Grants: Free AdWords advertising to promote their websites on Google through keyword targeting; YouTube Nonprofit Programme: Access exclusive resources, features and programs designed to maximise their organisations' impact on YouTube; and Google Apps for Non-profit: Free version of the Google Apps business productivity suite, including Gmail, Docs, Calendar and more. For further information, visit

www.google.co.uk/intl/en/nonprofits/join.

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Subsidised fundraising workshops

The Foundation for Social Improvement offers heavily subsidised training programmes for small charities across the UK. The courses cover a wide range of subjects from event planning to leadership. Many of the courses focus on fundraising and sustainability skills in particular.

Further information and dates for upcoming courses in February and March can be found at <http://www.thefsi.org/services/training>.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

World Interfaith Harmony Week takes place in the first week of February. It is a UN recognised Week which was proposed to the UN General Assembly by HM King Abdullah of Jordan. The first UN World Interfaith Harmony Week took place in February 2011.

<http://worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com>

VisitMyMosque Day 2019 will take place on Sunday 3 March. In 2018 over 200 mosques across the UK held open days to welcome in their neighbours from other communities. This year, to mark its 5th Anniversary, VisitMyMosque Day is working in collaboration with the national environment charity Keep Britain Tidy to celebrate mosques that have been going green and encouraging street cleans. For further information, visit

www.visitmymosque.org.

Sadaqa Day will take place on Sunday 24 March. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Muslim community. mysadaqaday.org

The Big Lunch will be taking place across the weekend of 1-2 June. Across the years millions of people from different faith backgrounds have joined together to take part through street parties, BBQs, iftars and picnics.

<https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/thebiglunchhomepage>

Refugee Week is taking place from Monday 17 to Sunday 23 June. Two conferences are being held in February in Coventry and London to prepare for the Week.

<http://refugeeweek.org.uk/>

The Great Get Together will be taking place across the weekend of 21-23 June. The initiative was set up in 2017 inspired by Jo Cox MP who died the previous year. It encourages communities to come together through activities such as street parties, sports days, BBQs, picnics and coffee mornings. <https://www.greatgettogether.org/>

Remembering Srebrenica Memorial Week will be held from Sunday 7 to Sunday 14 July. <https://www.srebrenica.org.uk/>

Sewa Day will take place on Sunday 6 October. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Hindu community. <http://www.sewaday.org/>

One World Week 40th anniversary takes place from Sunday 20 to Sunday 27 October. Its theme for this year is currently being developed and they would welcome ideas. www.oneworldweek.org

Inter Faith Week will take place from Sunday 10 to Sunday 17 November. It is led by the Inter Faith Network for the UK. www.interfaithweek.org

Scottish Interfaith Week will take place from Sunday 10 to Sunday 17 November. Scottish Interfaith Week is led by Interfaith Scotland. www.scottishinterfaithweek.org

Mitzvah Day will take place on Sunday 17 November. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Jewish community. On Mitzvah Day, people give their time, not their money, to make a difference to the community around them. Many events and projects held for the day have an inter faith focus. www.mitzvahday.org.uk/

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DIARY DATES

This section includes a sample of some of the events taking place around the UK during February. We also include information on diary dates between e-bulletins on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/events>.

Edinburgh Interfaith Association is holding a special inter faith community meal and lecture called 'News from the Earth' on Monday 4 February. The lecture will be given by the Rev David Coleman, Environmental Chaplain for Eco-Congregation Scotland which is "a movement of Scottish church congregations, of all denominations and none, committed to addressing environmental issues through their life and mission". It is being

held at 6pm at the City of Edinburgh Methodist Church, 25 Nicolson Square, Edinburgh EH8 9BX. For further information and to register, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/news-from-the-earth-a-community-meal-tickets-54833149426>.

St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace is holding an evening 'On Forgiveness and reconciliation: learning and growing in our human abilities for peace' with Dr Juanma Robles on Tuesday 5 February. The event will take place at St Ethelburga's Centre, 78 Bishopsgate, London, EC2N 4AG from 7.00pm to 9.00pm. There is a fee to attend. For more information visit <https://stethelburgas.org/event/on-forgiveness-and-reconciliation-learning-and-growing-in-our-human-abilities-for-peace/> or call 020 7496 1610.

York Interfaith Group is holding a meeting on 'Faiths and Ageing' on Tuesday 5 February. The meeting will be chaired by the Revd Dr Michael Chester, and the Revd Dr Keith R Albans, Superintendent Minister on the York Circuit of Methodist Churches, will be speaking. It will be held in the Hudson Room, City of York Council, West Offices, Station Rise, York, YO1 6GA from 7.30pm to 9pm. For more information email yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com or visit www.yorkinterfaith.org.

The **South Lakeland Equality & Diversity Partnership (SLEDP)** is holding an event on Tuesday 5 February for World Interfaith Harmony Week, presenting the Cumbrian launch of the third edition (2018) and first Cumbria supplement (2019) of *Religion, Belief and Culture in our Community: Understanding, respecting and valuing the diverse cultures of the United Kingdom*. The event includes a number of speakers and will take place at Kendal Town Hall, Highgate, Kendal, Cumbria LA9 4ED from 10am to 11 am. Light refreshments will be available. For more information, contact sledp2016@gmail.com.

The **London Inter Faith Centre** is holding the second seminar of a six week series around the question "Does Religion Have a Place in the 21st Century?" on Wednesday 6 February. The event will take place at St Anne's and St Andrew's Church, 125 Salusbury Road, NW6 6RG from 2 - 3.30pm. There is a fee to attend. For more information, contact laurence.hillel@londoninterfaith.org.uk or visit <http://londoninterfaith.org.uk/>

Religions for Peace UK Women of Faith Network is holding an Interfaith Event on "Women of Faith: Working for Peace and Human Rights" on Wednesday 6 February in celebration of the World Interfaith Harmony Week. The event will take place from 12.30 to 3.30pm at the Interfaith Scotland Dialogue Centre, Flemington House, 110 Flemington Street, Springburn, Glasgow, G21 4BF. Vegetarian lunch will be provided. To register, contact admin@interfaithscotland.org.

Guildford and Godalming Interfaith Forum is holding an event on Thursday 7 February to mark UN Interfaith Harmony Week. The topic will be "Can female leadership be a force

for change and renewal in religion?”. It will be held at St Nicholas Church, Guildford at 7pm. For more information, contact Carolyn Neogi at carolynneogi@aol.com or on 01483 415 773.

The **Gandhi Foundation** is holding its annual Multifaith Celebration for Mahatma Gandhi on Saturday 9 February. The event will celebrate the 70th anniversary of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and commemorate the 71st anniversary of the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi. It will include performances by Sacred Sounds, a capella group, poetry by Dennis Evans and talks by the minister of the Unitarian Church Feargus O'Connor, Rev Nagase (of the Battersea Park Peace Pagoda and Human Rights campaigner Dr Kishan Manocha. The event will take place at 6.30pm at the Golders Green Unitarian Church, 31 Hoop Lane, London NW11 8BS. For further information and to register, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/gandhi-foundation-multi-faith-celebration-2019-tickets-55134077510>.

Woking Action for Peace, Friends of the Earth, Surrey Faith Links, Woking LA21, Woking Quakers and Woking People of Faith are holding a Woking Debate on “Modern Slavery: What is it and is it happening in Woking?” on Saturday 9 February. The event will take place at Christ Church, Jubilee Square, Woking, GU21 6YG from 11am to 12.30pm with refreshments available from 10.30am. For more information, contact Ketih Scott at ketihsc_2000@yahoo.com or 01483 824980.

The **Women’s Interfaith Forum** in Sheffield is holding an event on Sunday 10 February on ‘Faith and Society: The Common Good’. The event will be held from 1pm to 3pm at St Mary’s, Bramall Lane, Sheffield, S2 4QZ. Participants are invited to bring vegetarian food to share. Refreshments will be provided. For more information contact Rev Claire Dawson at Claire.dawson@sheffield.anglican.org or Maryam Akhtar at minhajsisterssheffield@gmail.com.

Interfaith Glasgow and **St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art** are holding their next Faith to Faith dialogue series event on Sunday 10 February on ‘Coping with Death and Dying’. Speakers from the Humanist and Muslim communities will discuss their experiences of conducting funeral ceremonies and their respective approaches to death. It is being held from 2pm to 4pm at St Mungo Museum. To register, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/faith-to-faith-coping-with-death-and-dying-tickets-54583932010>.

Woking People of Faith is holding a discussion on ‘Can Faith Institutions Save Our Planet?’ on Tuesday 12 February, at 7pm, at HG Wells Conference Centre, Woking. Bishop of Guildford, Andrew Watson will speak from a Christian perspective and Shaukat Warraich, Founder and CEO of Faith Associates, will speak from the Islamic perspective. To book a ticket, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/can-faith-institutions-save-our-planet-tickets-53534072853> or email administrator@wpof.org.uk for more information.

Building Bridges in Burnley is holding an event entitled “Bridge Builder” on Tuesday 12 February. The event is being held from 7.30pm to 8.00pm in Bishop Philip North’s home at Dean House in Burnley. For more information, contact Bea Foster at bea_foster@hotmail.com or on 07875 517043.

The **Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter** is holding a day of Muslim/Jewish Dialogue on ‘Keeping the Lay in a Secular Society’ on Wednesday 13 February. The dialogue will be led by Humeral Kahn and Rabbi Rachel Montagu. It will take place from 11am to 3.15pm at the Sion Centre, 34 Chepstow Villas, London W11 2QZ. Tea and coffee will already be available from 10.30am. Participants are kindly requested to bring a packed lunch. For more information, contact sioncentrefordialogue@gmail.com.

The **London Inter Faith Centre** is holding the third seminar of a six week series around the question “Does Religion Have a Place in the 21st Century?” on Wednesday 13 February. The event will take place at St Anne’s and St Andrew’s Church, 125 Salusbury Road, NW6 6RG from 2pm to 3.30pm. There is a fee to attend. For more information, contact laurence.hillel@londoninterfaith.org.uk or visit <http://londoninterfaith.org.uk/>.

Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship is holding an evening of ‘Poetry and Praise’ on Monday 18 February at 7.30pm at the Quaker Meeting House, Woodhouse Lane, LS2 9DX. Those attending are asked to bring their favourite passages of spiritually uplifting poetry or prose to share. For more information, contact John Summerwill on 0113 269 7895 or at chair@concord-leeds.org.uk.

Elmbridge Multi-Faith is organising a visit to the West London Synagogue on Tuesday 19 February. The coach leaves Thames Ditton Centre, Mercer Close, Thames Dittion, KT7 0BS at 9.30am and arrives back to the centre at 4pm. The number of seats is limited and there is a fee for transportation. For more information or to register, contact Geoffrey Morris at geoffreymorris@emas-bc.co.uk or call 01932 868454.

The Philosophy Department, University of Sheffield in partnership with **Sheffield Cathedral** is holding a talk entitled ‘Religion, atheism and the varieties of the good life’ on Tuesday 19 February 2019 from 7.30pm to 9pm, at Sheffield Cathedral, Church Street, S1 1HA. John Gray will give a lecture examining the history of atheism over the past several centuries, and asking which morality atheists should follow. This will be the second event in the series of talks: ‘God and the Good: Thinking Religion and Ethics’. The series is intended for a general audience, and will consider the relation between religious thinking and traditions, and ethics. All are welcome and there is no need to register. For more information, visit <https://sheffieldinterfaith.org.uk/category/events/>.

Watford Interfaith Association (WIFA) is holding its annual general meeting on Tuesday 19 February from 7pm. The Chief Inspector of the Watford area of Hertfordshire Constabulary will speak. Frances Novillo, the town centre chaplain, will also give a short

address. All are welcome and the event includes refreshments. For more information, contact brunijh@aol.com.

Westminster Cathedral Interfaith Group is holding its next meeting on Wednesday 20 February. The meeting will be led by Jewish scholar, Jonathan Gorsky. It is being held from 4pm to 5pm in the Hinsley Room, Morpeth Terrace, SW1P 1EP. For more information, contact John Woodhouse by text on 07908 888 586 or by email on woodhousesopten@btinternet.com.

The **Bristol Multi-Faith Forum** is holding a Diverse Doors Open Day on Sunday 24 February. This day offers the opportunity to visit a range of places of worship and discover the many faith communities that exist in Bristol. To take part, please contact info@bristolmultifaithforum.org.uk, or call 07789 04267.

Crawley Interfaith Network is hosting a talk on Thursday 28 February on 'Happy science connects global religions'. The talk will be given by Remigijus Jakulevicius, MA and will be followed by a Q&A session. It will be held from 7pm to 9pm at the Orchard, 1-2 Gleneagles Court, Brighton Road, Crawley, RH10 6AD. For further details, contact Iyad Daoud at iyadhdaoud@yahoo.co.uk or 01293 883372.

More information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org.uk

**SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK
TO INCREASE INTER FAITH UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION**

We need your help to ensure that the Inter Faith Network for the UK's work to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation continues and grows, helping people of all backgrounds to live and work together with mutual respect and shared commitment to the common good.

Gifts at all levels are much valued and make a real difference. You can donate directly at www.interfaith.org.uk/donate or via PayPal.

Donations can also be made by sending a cheque to: The Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH.

Thank you!

REMEMBERING A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND

If you would like to make a gift in memory of a loved one, please get in touch by emailing remember@interfaith.org.uk or call us on 0207 730 0410.

A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

By leaving a gift in your will to the Inter Faith Network for the UK, you can leave a living inheritance to help deepen and strengthen inter faith understanding and cooperation in this country – for now and for the future. If you are thinking about making a will, the best thing to do is to get in touch with a professional will writer, such as a solicitor or advocate; they can help to ensure it is legally correct and that your wishes are met. If you have already made a will, you can still make an addition or amendment in the form of a codicil. If you would like to pledge a gift, please provide our name and address, along with our registered charity number 1068934.

Please get in touch with us if you have any queries.

You can call us on 0207 730 0410 or contact us at remember@interfaith.org.uk

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **18 March** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer: Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

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IFN e-bulletin

April 2019

[General Data Protection Regulation](#)

As you will be aware, data protection legislation changed with the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) from 25 May 2018. You can sign up to IFN mailings at any time by using the form on IFN's website at: www.interfaith.org.uk/news/gdpr.

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The e-bulletin is published every two months. If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the June e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **17 May** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and projects and future events.

IFN also highlights news and projects of interest through Twitter (www.twitter.com/IFNetUK) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/IFNetUK) and, where about Inter Faith Week, through (www.twitter.com/IFWeek and www.facebook.com/IFWeek).

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

Exit from the European Union

The period since the last e-bulletin has seen complicated and at times fractious debate within Parliament, within political parties and within society more widely about the process of exit from the European Union. There have been calls from within faith communities for unity and healing of division, for example by the General Synod of the Church of England in February.

At a meeting of the IFN Faith Communities Forum on 5 February, officials from the Department for Exiting the European Union (DExEU) and from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) talked about the EU Exit and faith communities.

DExEU has a website which makes available information about Exit:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-exiting-the-european-union>

An issue of particular concern for those communities with members from the European Union is their status post Exit. Information about the EU Settlement Scheme is at <https://www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families>. The UK and Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein have signed an agreement to protect the rights of citizens in each other's countries in the event that a withdrawal agreement is not reached with the EU.

Guidance for local authorities has been published by MHCLG. This guidance aims to provide local authorities with support on the ways in which they can understand, engage and reassure their communities in the lead up to and following EU exit as part of their work to build stronger, better integrated communities. It is part of the package of support being offered to local authorities. It stresses the importance of community engagement which it says “offers a means of building links with communities, challenging

misconceptions and offering reassurance, including with vulnerable groups. In this way it can be an effective method to reduce any risks of community tensions and quickly addressing these should they occur.” The material includes detailed guidance in relation to potential tensions and hate crime.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/community-engagement-and-eu-exit-guidance-for-local-authorities>

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Government’s Integrated Communities Action Plan

On 9 February, the UK Government published its Integrated Communities Action Plan. This contains a range of cross-government measures “to support the Government’s commitment to build strong integrated communities where people – whatever their background – live, work, learn and socialise together, based on shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities.” It builds upon the proposals set out in the Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper and responses to the consultation. The plan has an England focus.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/integrated-communities-action-plan?fbclid=IwAR3cPobuU-l167lmq3yp2_txmT8YwldWKIG2LCRIXvbTqSHW2olmRLkMF0E

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Hate Crime

In February a number of reports were issued which relate to hate crime. The Community Security Trust published its 2018 Antisemitic Incidents Report <https://cst.org.uk/data/file/2/9/Incidents%20Report%202018%20-%20web.1549538710.pdf> which recorded a further increase in such incidents; the All Party Parliamentary Group on Hate Crime its report ‘How can we build community cohesion when hate crime is on the rise?’ <http://www.appghatecrime.org/publications/>; and Hope Not Hate its report ‘State of Hate’ <https://www.hopenothate.org.uk/2019/02/17/state-hate-2019/>

Faith and inter faith bodies offer important support in contexts where there are, for example, attacks on places of worship or other faith community sites, such as cemeteries – as well as more widely. This assistance is both practical and an important witness to solidarity, as reflected in the publication *Looking After One Another: The Safety and Security of our Faith Communities* (IFN with the the Home Office, MHCLG, the Crown Prosecution Service, National Police Chiefs’ Council and National Fire Chiefs Council): <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/looking-after-one-another-the-safety-and-security-of-our-faith-communities-2017> .

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Christchurch terrorist attack and faith and inter faith responses

Around the UK, many faith and inter faith organisations have been among those who have responded through messages, statements vigils, services, prayers and times of silence to the 15 March terrorist attacks on two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand. 50 people died and many more were injured.

A list of responses by IFN member faith and inter faith bodies can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/christchurch-mosque-attacks-responses-by-faith-and-inter-faith-bodies>.

On 15 March IFN's Co-Chairs and the Moderators of IFN's Faith Communities Forum issued the following statement in response to the attacks:

“Today's appalling terrorist attacks on two mosques in Christchurch New Zealand have been responded to here in the UK with prayers, condemnation and demonstrations of solidarity with the Muslim community, including at the Friday prayer.

As we said after the murderous attack on the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh USA last year, attacks on churches, gurdwaras, mosques, temples and other places of worship of different faiths here and around the world are a reminder of the need to condemn extremist violence in the strongest terms and to stand together and to continue to work together with ever greater urgency against ignorance, prejudice and hatred.

Hatred targeting any community because of its faith and belief is a scourge that cannot be tolerated. There must be freedom to worship and practise our faith freely and without fear.”

A copy of this statement is also on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/terrorist-attack-on-mosques-in-chistchurch-nz-statement>. IFN's Policy on the making of statements is at https://www.interfaith.org.uk/uploads/Policy_on_making_of_statements.pdf.

On 18 March IFN's Co-Chairs sent the following message to IFN member bodies:

“In the three days since the New Zealand terrorist attacks there have been a number of incidents in the UK, including an extreme right wing ‘terror attack’ in Surrey and extreme right wing graffiti on an Oxford school. This has been followed by news of an attack from a gunman in Utrecht in the Netherlands, thought at this time possibly to be a terrorist attack. Past statements from us and from the FCF

Moderators make clear the condemnation of both extremist hate incidents and terrorist attacks.”

Friday’s statement by the Co-Chairs and Moderators can be seen at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/terrorist-attack-on-mosques-in-christchurch-nz-statement> and was also circulated by email under Circular 08/19. The office continues to put on the IFN website links to those statements made and vigils held by member bodies of which it is aware <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/christchurch-mosque-attacks-responses-by-faith-and-inter-faith-bodies>. Many vigils and meetings have been taking place around the UK. While it is important to take active steps to tackle hatred and attacks, these opportunities to come together are important in their own right.

The work of all IFN’s member bodies to build bridges, to encourage conversation, to stand in solidarity is very important at this time. Please do continue to keep the IFN office in touch with what you are doing.”

On 21 March five mosques in Birmingham were targeted in a string of attacks overnight and into the morning. A local man subsequently handed himself in to police and was detained under the Mental Health Act.

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Places of worship security funding boost

On 19 March the Home Secretary announced an increase in the Places of Worship Fund to £1.6 million and announced a new £5 million fund to be opened to provide security training.

The Places of Worship Fund, established in 2016 as part of the Government’s Hate Crime Action Plan, provides financial support for physical protective security such as fencing, lighting and CCTV. To increase uptake in the Fund and ensure it reaches those most vulnerable to hate crime, the bidding process will be simplified. Organisations no longer have to prove they have previously experienced a hate crime incident directly.

Places of worship will also benefit from a new £5 million fund over 3 years to provide protective security training. The scheme is currently under development and is set to start delivering in 2019/2020.

For more information, visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/places-of-worship-to-get-security-funding-boost>.

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Faith leaders joint call to respond to the DEC Cyclone Idai Appeal

UK faith leaders and the faith-based charities CAFOD, Christian Aid, Islamic Relief, Tearfund and World Vision UK, which are among 14 UK aid agency members of the Disasters Emergency Committee, have urged 'Christians, Muslims and people of other faiths and none' to support DEC's Cyclone Idai Appeal to help those affected.

Cyclone Idai swept through Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe in March, killing at least 750 people and leaving 2.5 million people in need of help.

For more information, visit <https://www.dec.org.uk/press-release/urgent-call-from-faith-leaders-to-respond-generously-to-the-dec-cyclone-idai-appeal>.

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Facebook, white nationalism, separatism, and terrorist material

Facebook has said it will block 'praise, support and representation of white nationalism and separatism' on Facebook and Instagram from the beginning of April.

The BBC reported on 28 March that Facebook has also pledged to improve its ability to identify and block material from terrorist groups and that Facebook users searching for offending terms will be directed to a charity which combats far-right extremism.

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-47728471?fbclid=IwAR0XMiD90GDp_xSoV3QAgs9SZ0kYGtG0qezznetsXvIHVRc1JDKT-r2lSTA#

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Multi faith response to refugees

A new project has been launched to support the integration of refugees and asylum seekers into Scottish communities. It is called the New Scots Integration Programme. The multi-faith partnership, Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees, is offering tailor made events, workshops and information sessions to congregations and faith groups to increase awareness and understanding of refugees, and work with them as they support people in rebuilding their lives. For more information, contact Sabine Chalmers, National Faith Groups Refugee Integration Co-ordinator, on schalmers@churchofscotland.org.uk.

https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/news_and_events/news/2019/new_support_programme_to_help_congregations_welcome_refugees_and_asylum_seekers

A number of local inter faith groups and faith communities continue to respond in different ways to support refugees as this article about Cornwall Faith Forum reflects <https://www.opendemocracy.net/.../sh.../living-refugee-cornwall/> Cornwall Faith Forum - Dor Kemmyn Refugee Council #refugees #interfaith.

Refugee Week takes place from 17-23 June. Each year many faith inter faith bodies take part. For those wishing to do so this year, resources can be found at <http://refugeeweek.org.uk/resources/>.

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MCW Annual Interfaith Dinner

On 26 March, the Muslim Council of Wales held its Annual Interfaith Dinner 2019 with the Rt Revd and Rt Hon Rowan Williams, Baron Williams of Oystermouth and former Archbishop of Canterbury, and Professor Wajih Kalso, Director of the Royal Institute of Inter-faith Studies as its keynote speakers. Mark Drakeford was the chief guest.

<https://www.facebook.com/muslimcouncilwales/posts/2855418824682219>

For general information about inter faith activity in Wales contact the Inter Faith Council for Wales - aled@cytun.org.uk.

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Faith Leader Training Programme

Faith Minister Lord Bourne confirmed on 8 February that over 300 faith leaders will have access to a new training programme established to support their roles within communities. The programme will have a focus on improving the capacity of faith leaders to identify issues like domestic and sexual abuse, mental health concerns. The programme will also seek to educate the leaders on equalities legislation and UK marriage law. It is described as part of the Government's commitment to support and listen to faith communities, presented in the Integrated Communities Strategy Green paper and as having been developed following direct consultation with faith leaders. The programme seeks to "empower faith leaders with the confidence and knowledge to meet the changing needs of their congregations." The training is voluntary and will be delivered in person and online.

Further information is at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/training-introduced-to-help-faith-leaders-support-their-communities>.

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VisitMyMosque Day and Sadaqa Day

VisitMyMosque Day took place on Sunday 3 March. Over 250 mosques across the UK held open days to welcome in their neighbours from other communities. In the lead up to the Day, on 26 February Muslim faith leaders from England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland visited churches, synagogues, mandirs and gurdwaras across the country. More information is at <https://mcb.org.uk/press-releases/muslims-say-thank-you-as-over-250-mosques-open-their-doors-to-the-public/>.

Sadaqa Day took place on Sunday 24 March. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Muslim community. More information is at mysadaqaday.org.

Both VisitMyMosque Day and Sadaqa Day supported Keep Britain Tidy's Great British Spring Clean.

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RE:ONLINE blog series on the Commission on RE report

The Commission on Religious Education's final report 'Religion and Worldviews: The Way Forward' was published in September 2018 (see e-bulletin issue [September/October 2018](#)). It has generated much discussion, including through a debate in the House of Lords in December.

Views on the Commission's recommendations have varied. RE:ONLINE has recently launched a blog series in which a range of guest bloggers make their case in support of the recommendations of the Commission on Religious Education's Final Report. These can be viewed online at: <http://www.reonline.org.uk/supporting/re-matters/?term=Commission%20on%20Religious%20Education&taxonomy=news-tags> and more are being added throughout April.

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INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK NEWS

Meeting of IFN's Faith Communities Forum

A meeting of IFN's Faith Communities Forum was held on 5 February. On the agenda, as well as IFN matters, were:

- Organ donation and faith communities, with a short opening reflection from Dr Natubhai Shah MBE on the theme of blood and organ donation and saving life in the Jain tradition and a presentation from Claire Williment, Head of Transplant

Development NHS Blood and Transplant, and Andrea Ttofa, Head of Organ Donation Marketing, NHSBT;

- Faith communities and the UK's Exit from the European Union, with a presentation from officials from the Department for Exiting the European Union and MHCLG;
- current issues of interest or concern to faith communities; and
- the inter faith engagement of faith communities.

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Meeting for National Inter Faith Organisations and Educational and Academic Bodies

Among IFN's member bodies are inter faith organisations and programmes whose work is carried out at UK or national level or which, while regionally focused, are used by people across the country. They are important resources for people who want to get involved in inter faith activity. A number of these work primarily with particular religious traditions; others work with people of any religion or belief. Some of the organisations have a particular focus for their work, such as peace or education. (UK).

A meeting of these bodies was held on 4 March in London by IFN. On the agenda were: Communicating inter faith activity (with presentations by Ashley Beck, Inter Faith Development Officer, IFN, and Catriona Robertson, Director, Christian Muslim Forum); Issues of current interest and concern, including polarisation of political and communal narratives in the context of exit from the European Union and continued high levels of hate crime; Updates on the various bodies' current inter faith work; and Youth Inter Faith Engagement.

To find out more about the work of these organisations, you can find their contact details at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/members/list>.

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Day event for local inter faith practitioners

On 27 March IFN held a day event in Peterborough for local inter faith practitioners from inter faith groups across the UK to share their experiences, discuss issues of common interest and concern, and provide focused learning opportunities about practical aspects of developing successful inter faith programmes. This followed on from similar meetings held in Bradford, Bristol, Coventry, London, Manchester and Sheffield in recent years.

The day was chaired by Jatinder Singh Birdi, Co-Chair of IFN. It opened with reflections on the importance of local inter faith organisations and local authorities working in partnership from Gillian Beasley, Chief Executive of Peterborough Council, with a response from Es Rosen, Co-Chair of the Barnet Multi Faith Forum. The morning also saw

presentations about open door days, inter faith walks and ‘pilgrimages’ by Zahraa Ahmed of the Muslim Council of Britain reflecting on the Visit My Mosque Project, and Judith Bruni, Yogesh Joshi and Francoise Murphy of the Watford Interfaith Association focussing on the Association’s annual inter faith pilgrimage. Afternoon presentations followed on: local inter faith organisations using social media and messaging platforms and traditional media, Ashley Beck of IFN; response at both national and local level to terrorism and hate crime, the Rt Revd Richard Atkinson, Co-Chair at IFN and Bishop of Bedford , and Chris Turner, Policy Adviser, Faith, Race and Integration, MHCLG.

Discussion groups explored developing local inter faith organisation programmes with impact; open doors and faith trails: creating opportunities for inter faith learning; local inter faith groups connecting with young people (including through schools and colleges); dialogue amid division; making the case for the importance of local inter faith organisations’ work; and working in partnership with other organisations towards shared social goals.

Reports from previous IFN Day Events for Local Inter Faith Practitioners can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/publications>.

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Inter Faith Week 2019

Inter Faith Week 2019 will take place between **Sunday 10 and Sunday 17 November**. The Week begins each year on Remembrance Sunday to enable people of different backgrounds to remember together the service of soldiers and civilians of all faiths and beliefs and to reflect on peace.

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

Youth inter faith engagement

A number of local inter faith bodies are developing new youth initiatives. For example, in London, Barnet Multi Faith Forum is developing a Youth Forum and is holding its first meeting about this on 11 April: <http://barnetmultifaithforum.org/index.php/event/barnet-youth-forum/>

If you are interested in youth inter faith engagement, check out the Inter Faith Network’s publication *Connect: a youth inter faith action guide* at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/connect>.

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Faith and the environment

In February, IFN highlighted on social media a range of different ways that faith communities in the UK, with others around the world, are working to combat climate change and on other environmental issues. See, for example, <https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1096083884251533312>

The Faith for the Climate Network, an inter faith network of 130 faith-based organisations and individuals working on climate change, was among those which took part in the Climate Coalition's 'Share the Love' day on 14 February. Faith organisations are also members of the Coalition: <https://www.theclimatecoalition.org/faith-members>

For some IFN member bodies, such as the St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace, with its Sacred Activist and Spiritual Ecology programmes, environmental issues are at the heart of their work. This is reflected in the stories in the recently published Generation Y, Spirituality and Social Change, edited by the Centre's Director, Dr Justine Huxley. A video about that can be seen at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MOe4Fua_QKo.

At local level an example of inter faith engagement on environmental issues is Birmingham Council of Faiths's Footsteps (Faiths for a low carbon future) project <https://footstepsbcf.org.uk/> which is organising events to explore responses to the high carbon present, and take action towards a low carbon future.

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Re-imagining Religion and Belief for Public Policy and Practice

Re-imagining Religion and Belief is a new initiative of Goldsmiths, University of London, with the support from the Arts and Humanities Research Council. The programme is designed to improve the effectiveness of central and local government, statutory bodies and service providers in engaging with religion and belief among service users, especially in the areas of welfare, community cohesion and security.

The programme seeks to develop new framework to support policy-making as well as dedicated online resources, an annual conference and a national policy.

Further information is available at <https://www.gold.ac.uk/faithsunit/current-projects/reimaginingreligion> and from Adam Dinham (a.dinham@gold.ac.uk).

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Religious London

Theos is carrying out a research project called 'Religious London'. Theos notes that existing research suggests that people in London are not just more likely to belong to a particular religion, but to actively participate. The main objective of this new project is to offer evidence-based recommendations to decision makers on accommodating, practically responding to and making the most of religious diversity in London. Further information is available at

<https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/research/2019/02/19/religious-london>.

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CCJ and CTBI joint project on anti-Judaism

In March the Council of Christians and Jews and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland held a further joint working meeting in preparation for their planned joint resource for Christians on how to identify and avoid anti-Judaism. Christian and Jewish educators joined them to explore some of the key issues for Christian-Jewish relations, sharing their reflections on how Christians can approach their teaching, liturgy, hymnody, and practice in a way which avoids anti-Judaism and enables a mutually-flourishing relationship between Jews and Christians. There will be another such roundtable meeting in the next few months, following which CCJ and CTBI will work together to produce a resource to be widely shared.

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

IFN Annual Review and Bradford event report

IFN's 2017-18 Annual Review is now available online at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/annual-reviews>. Hard copies can be ordered from the IFN office.

The report of IFN's Day Event for Local Inter Faith Practitioners held in Bradford in October is available on IFN's website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/publications>.

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Untold Stories: Women of Faith

A new resource, developed by Interfaith Scotland and Religions for Peace UK Women of Faith Network has been launched. Entitled 'Untold Stories: Women of Faith' it tells the

story of the involvement of women of faith in 'Suffrage, Peace and Human Rights'. It can be downloaded at

<https://interfaithscotland.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Women-of-Faith-Document.pdf>.

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Angels in our City - film

Last year Brighton and Hove Inter Faith Contact Group held a competition to celebrate 'Angels in Our City'. The competition resulted in various suggestions of what the Angel of Brighton and Hove would look like. The film of the project has now been released and can be found at <http://interfaithcontactgroup.com>.

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Confidently Addressing Radicalisation and Extremism – St Philip's Centre

The St Phillip's Centre in Leicester is holding certified one-day silver (level 2) courses on 'Confidently Addressing Radicalisation and Extremism' (CARE) for health, social care, local authority, probation, education, prisons, police, youth & community workforces.

Course dates for 2019 are 2 May, 20 June, 12 September and 7 November. For more information, visit <https://www.stphilipscentre.co.uk/prevent-care-course-silver-enquiry-form> or contact Gail Kenney at gailkenney@stphilipscentre.co.uk.

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Faith and Cultural Awareness Training for Staff and Volunteers

Surrey Faith Links offers training sessions to give employers a basic level of knowledge of different faiths in order to have a better understanding of staff/customer needs and requirements. The training sessions are also available for staff in order to give them some knowledge and awareness of faiths and cultures of their colleagues. For more information or to organise a training session, contact Kauser Akhtar, Faith Links Adviser, at 01483790334 or at Kauser.Akhtar@cofeguildford.org.uk.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS, AND NOMINATIONS

National Diversity Awards

Nominations for the 2019 National Diversity Awards are now open. The categories celebrating positive role models and community organisations, among others highlight the theme of race, religion and faith. The closing date for nominations is 31 May.

Nominations can be submitted at <http://www.nationaldiversityawards.co.uk/>.

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Interfaith Food Justice Network – Good Food Nation consultation

The Interfaith Food Justice Network is encouraging responses to the Good Food Nation consultation being run by the Scottish Government <https://consult.gov.scot/food-and-drink/good-food-nation/consultation/subpage.2016-07-07.1474135251/>.
<http://www.foodcoalition.scot/guide-to-responding.html>

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

IFN's website lists job and internship opportunities with a significant inter faith dimension with IFN member organisations at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/jobs>.

Inter Faith Network for the UK - Volunteers

The Inter Faith Network for the UK currently has volunteering opportunities. For an application form, contact ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

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Interfaith Scotland – Volunteers

Interfaith Scotland currently has volunteering roles available: Office Assistant, Community Development, Schools and Youth Work and Events Management. For more information, visit <https://interfaithscotland.org/get-involved/volunteering> or email admin@interfaithscotland.org.

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Council for Christians and Jews – Jewish Programme Manager and Programming Assistant

The Council of Christians and Jews is seeking to appoint a full-time Jewish Programme Manager to work alongside its Christian Programme Manager. For more information and the full job description, visit www.ccj.org.uk or contact director@ccj.org.uk. Applications close at 9am on Monday 15 April.

CCJ is also seeking to appoint a part-time Programming Assistant. This is a paid internship for 10-14 hours a week. Applications are being considered on a rolling basis.

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Faith & Belief Forum – Major Donor Fundraiser

The Faith & Belief Forum is currently recruiting a Major Donor Fundraiser. This is a maternity cover contract (6-12 months). Interviews are being conducted on a rolling basis and the role is to begin as soon as possible.

For more information, visit <https://faithbeliefforum.org/career/major-donor-fundraiser>.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Windrush compensation scheme

On 3 April the Home Secretary opened a scheme to compensate “members of the Windrush generation who have suffered losses due to their inability to prove their right to live in the UK”. The compensation scheme will provide payments to individuals who suffered losses as a result of not being able to evidence their lawful status in the UK. These could range from a loss of employment or access to housing, benefits, education or NHS healthcare to emotional distress or a deterioration in mental and physical health.

The Scheme is open to those who settled in the UK from a Commonwealth country before 1973, and in certain circumstances their children and grandchildren. Additionally, it is open to all nationalities who arrived to live in the UK before 31 December 1988 and are settled here. Claim forms can be downloaded and guidance on completing the application can be found at www.gov.uk/windrush-compensation. Claimants can also request a form to be sent by post by calling our helpline on 0800 678 1925 or via email WindrushCompensationScheme@homeoffice.gov.uk where they can also request a call back if they are overseas.

A series of open events around the country are being held for those affected, as well as for key faith and community leaders. The events will explain the detail of the Scheme and give everyone who is eligible, from any nationality or background, the opportunity to hear about the scheme, and ask questions. The first event is in Brixton, London, on Friday 5 April and will be open to the public. The schedule of future events will be available on Gov.UK shortly.

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The M B Reckitt Trust

The M B Reckitt Trust funds projects concerned with social thought and action. It aims to “promote research and activities that evaluate and develop social structures, processes and attitudes in order to release energies for change, from the perspective of Christianity and the other principal faith traditions”.

The Trustees meet once a year in June, and the deadline for applications this year is 27 May. To find out more, visit <https://mbreckitttrust.org/>.

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Faiths in Scotland Community Action Fund

Following a period of review Faiths in Scotland Community Action Fund is now open for applications for grants of up to £2,000 over 1 year. Its next deadline is 26 July. Further information is at <https://www.faithincommunityscotland.org/faith-in-community-scotland-action-fund/>. For any queries email andrew@faithincommunityscotland.org or telephone 0141 221 4576.

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Funding websites

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) offers advice on fundraising and grants on its Knowhow Nonprofit site at <https://knowhownonprofit.org/funding>.

Funding Central - <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/default.aspx> - is a free website for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises in England that provides access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, together with tools and resources for supporting organisations to develop sustainable income strategies appropriate to their needs. Similar websites for funding in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at Funding Scotland - <http://www.fundingscotland.com/> - Wales Council for Voluntary Action - <http://www.wcva.org.uk/funding/search> - and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland - <https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

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Website and Facebook grants

The Transform Foundation is offering funding to charities to help with new website builds. Grants of £18,000 are available. It is also offering grants towards Facebook advertising of £5,000. For further information and to apply, visit www.transformfoundation.org.uk.

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Google and charities

Google is offering a service to registered charities which brings: Google Ad Grants: Free AdWords advertising to promote their websites on Google through keyword targeting; YouTube Nonprofit Programme: Access exclusive resources, features and programs designed to maximise their organisations' impact on YouTube; and Google Apps for Non-profit: Free version of the Google Apps business productivity suite, including Gmail, Docs, Calendar and more. For further information, visit www.google.co.uk/intl/en/nonprofits/join.

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Subsidised fundraising workshops

The Foundation for Social Improvement offers heavily subsidised training programmes for small charities across the UK. The courses cover a wide range of subjects from event planning to leadership. Many of the courses focus on fundraising and sustainability skills in particular.

Further information and dates for upcoming courses in April and May can be found at <http://www.thefsi.org/services/training>.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

The Big Lunch will be taking place across the weekend of 1-2 June. Across the years millions of people from different faith backgrounds have joined together to take part through street parties, BBQs, iftars and picnics.

<https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/thebiglunchhomepage>

Refugee Week is taking place from Monday 17 to Sunday 23 June. Two conferences are being held in February in Coventry and London to prepare for the Week.

<http://refugeeweek.org.uk/>

The Great Get Together will be taking place across the weekend of 21-23 June. The initiative was set up in 2017 inspired by Jo Cox MP who had been murdered by an

extremist the previous year. It encourages communities to come together through activities such as street parties, sports days, BBQs, picnics and coffee mornings.

<https://www.greatgettogether.org/>

Remembering Srebrenica Memorial Week will be held from Sunday 7 to Sunday 14 July. This year's theme is 'Bridging the Divide: Confronting Hate'.

<https://www.srebrenica.org.uk/>

Sewa Day will take place on Sunday 6 October. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Hindu community. <http://www.sewaday.org/>

One World Week will take place from Sunday 20 to Sunday 27 October. This is its 40th anniversary year. The theme for this year is currently being developed and they would welcome ideas. www.oneworldweek.org

Inter Faith Week will take place from Sunday 10 to Sunday 17 November. It is led by the Inter Faith Network for the UK. www.interfaithweek.org

Scottish Interfaith Week will take place from Sunday 10 to Sunday 17 November. Scottish Interfaith Week is led by Interfaith Scotland. www.scottishinterfaithweek.org

Mitzvah Day will take place on Sunday 17 November. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Jewish community. On Mitzvah Day, people give their time, not their money, to make a difference to the community around them. Many events and projects held for the day have an inter faith focus. www.mitzvahday.org.uk/

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DIARY DATES

This section includes a sample of some of the events taking place around the UK during April. We also include information on diary dates between e-bulletins on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/events>.

Hillingdon Inter Faith Network is hosting a talk on Sunday 7 April. The topic of discussion will be the "Kindertransport", an organised rescue effort that took place during the nine months prior to the outbreak of the Second World War. This talk is open to all and will be taking place from 6.15pm to 9.15pm at Our Lady of Lourdes & St Michael RC Church, 1 Osborn Road, Uxbridge, UB8 1LP. For further information, visit <https://www.facebook.com/pg/hillingdonifn/posts/>.

Nisa-Nashim is holding its annual conference on Sunday 7 April. The theme of the conference will be "Faith and Friendship: Shaping the Future Together". It is being held from 10am to 4pm at The University of Westminster, Marylebone Road, NW1 5LS. For

further information, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/nisa-nashim-annual-conference-2019-faith-and-friendship-tickets-53727142329>.

The Brighton & Hove Interfaith Contact Group is holding a Spring Concert on Monday 8 April. The concert is taking place to raise money for Sussex Nightstop Charity. Doors open at 7.30pm and the concert will begin at 8pm. The event will be taking place at the Hove Methodist Church BN3 5DR. For more information on the event, visit www.songbirdsbrighton.wordpress.com and to book tickets, visit <https://charityconcert19.eventbrite.com>

The Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby is hosting the next Leverhulme Lecture on Monday 8 April. The theme will be 'Eastern Orthodoxy and the Challenges of Pluralism' and the lecture will be given by Dr Ina Merdjanova. It is being held from 6pm to 8pm at the University of Derby, Kedleston Road, Derby, DE22 1GB. For more information, contact the Multi-Faith Centre at mfc@derby.ac.uk or 01332 591 285.

Dacorum Interfaith Network is holding its next Annual General Meeting on Monday 8 April. The meeting will start at 7.30pm and will be taking place at the Hemel Hempstead Quaker Meeting House, 1 The Alleys, Hemel Hempstead HP2 5ZB. For further information, contact dacoruminterfaithnetwork@gmail.com.

Westminster Cathedral Interfaith Group is holding a meeting on Wednesday 10 April from 4pm to 5pm in the Hinsley Room, Morpeth Terrace, SW1P 1EP. The meeting will be led by Alan Rainer, who will be speaking on the Assumption of Mary. For more information, contact John Woodhouse by text on 07908 888 586 or by email on woodhousesopten@btinternet.com.

Barnet Multi Faith Forum is holding an initial meeting for young people of Barnet for the Barnet Multi Faith Youth Forum on Thursday 11 April. BMMF is inviting young people aged 16-25 years old, living, studying, working and worshipping in Barnet to represent their faith community and to be part of the Barnet Multi Faith Youth Forum. The session will be facilitated by the Youth Council of the Faith and Belief Forum and is taking place from 6.30pm to 8.30pm at Room C, 106 Middlesex University, Hendon Campus, The Burroughs, NW4 4BT. For further information, contact info@barnetmultifaithforum.org.

The Islamic Cultural Centre and London Central Mosque, in partnership with the **US Embassy**, are holding an inter faith event on Thursday 11 April to bring business and youth together. The event will include dinner and speeches and will be held at 146 Park Road, London, NW8 7RG. For more information, contact visits@iccuk.org.

Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship is holding an "Interactive Musical Interfaith Workshop for Young People Aged 15-22 on Exploring my Spirituality/Faith" on Thursday 11 April. It features musician, poet and songwriter Pariss Elektra and other spoken word

artists. The workshop is being held at Priestley Hall, Mill Hill Chapel, City Square, Leeds LS1 5EB from 5.30pm to 8pm. Refreshments are provided. For details contact Adam Aslam at mmaaslam2015@gmail.com or 0747 5976 745.

Interfaith Scotland is holding its Annual Interfaith Youth Conference on Saturday 13 April. The theme will be “What is Justice?”. The event is free and a vegetarian lunch will be provided. Interfaith Scotland also have a free bus from Glasgow arranged. For more information, visit <https://interfaithscotland.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Poster-for-Interfaith-Youth-Conference-2019.pdf>

Woking Action for Peace, Friends of the Earth, Surrey Faith Links, Woking LA21, Woking Quakers and Woking People of Faith are holding the next in their series of Woking Debates on Saturday 13 April. This will be a play called “Over the Top”, by the Journeymen Theatre about militarism in schools. It will take place at Christ Church, Jubilee Square, Woking, GU21 6YG from 11am to 12.30pm with refreshments available from 10.30am. For more information, contact Keith Scott at kethsc_2000@yahoo.com or 01483 824980.

Interfaith Glasgow and **St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art** are holding the next event of their Faith to Faith series on Sunday 14 April. The event will be on “Challenging Sectarianism: how far have we come and where do we need to go?”. It will be held from 2.00 to 4.00pm at St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art, 2 Castle Street, Glasgow, G4 0RH. For more information, contact development@interfaithglasgow.org.

Hounslow Friends of Faith is holding a Bring and Share Lunch on Tuesday 16 April. Hannah Pawley, Community Safety Officer with Wolverhampton City Council, will talk about her work around Community Cohesion and Hate Crime. The lunch will run from 12.45pm to 2pm at Darlington Street Methodist Centre, 24 School Street, WV1 4LF. For more information, visit <https://www.hounslowfriendsoffaith.org/>.

Windsor & Maidenhead Community Forum is hosting a talk on “Proposal for Peace” on Wednesday 17 April. The talk will be on the 2019 Peace Proposal presented to the United Nations by SGI President Daisaku Ikeda and will be given by Robert Harrap. Doors open at 6.30pm with refreshments provided. The event will run from 7pm to 9pm at SGI-UK, Taplow Court Grand Culture Centre, Cliveden Road, Taplow, SL6 0ER. For more information, see <http://www.wamcf.org/news/>.

Interfaith Wolverhampton is holding a screening of ‘Finding your feet’ at the Lighthouse Cinema, Wolverhampton, on Monday 29 April 2019. This is IFW’s annual fundraiser event and there is a fee for tickets, which includes light refreshments. The screening will begin at 5pm at the Lighthouse cinema, Chubb Buildings, Fryer Street, WV1 1 HT. To reserve tickets, telephone 01902 427601 or email admin@ifwton.org.uk.

Elmbridge Multi Faith Forum is holding an event on ‘Refugees: Support and Welcome’ on Monday 29 April. This will be held at North West Surrey Synagogue, Horvath Close, Oatlands Drive, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 9QZ. Guests are requested to come at 7.00pm for a 7.30pm start. For further information, contact elmbridgemultifaith@emas-bc.co.uk.

The Liberal Jewish Synagogue and **the London Society of Jews and Christians** are holding an eight week course inspired by a new volume of essays edited by Rabbi Tony Bayfield titled ‘Deep Calls to Deep: Transforming Conversations between Jews and Christians’. The fifth event of this course will take place on Tuesday 30 April and will be around the topic ‘The Third Dialogue Partner: How do we experience modern Western culture?’. Rabbi Elli Tikvah Sarah and Revd Dr Steve Williams will be speaking. The course is free for members and Friends of the LJS and members of the London Society for Jews and Christians. There is a fee for guests. The event will be taking place from 8pm to 9.30pm at The Liberal Jewish synagogue, 28 St John’s Wood Road, London, NW8 7HA. To register, contact Debi Penhey at education@ljs.orh or call 02074321284.

More information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org.uk

**SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK’S WORK
TO INCREASE INTER FAITH UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION**

We need your help to ensure that the Inter Faith Network for the UK’s work to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation continues and grows, helping people of all backgrounds to live and work together with mutual respect and shared commitment to the common good.

Gifts at all levels are much valued and make a real difference. You can donate directly at www.interfaith.org.uk/donate or via PayPal.

Donations can also be made by sending a cheque to: The Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH.

Thank you!

REMEMBERING A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND

If you would like to make a gift in memory of a loved one, please get in touch by emailing remember@interfaith.org.uk or call us on 0207 730 0410.

A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

By leaving a gift in your will to the Inter Faith Network for the UK, you can leave a living inheritance to help deepen and strengthen inter faith understanding and cooperation in this country – for now and for the future. If you are thinking about making a will, the best thing to do is to get in touch with a professional will writer, such as a solicitor or advocate; they can help to ensure it is legally correct and that your wishes are met. If you have already made a will, you can still make an addition or amendment in the form of a codicil. If you would like to pledge a gift, please provide our name and address, along with our registered charity number 1068934.

Please get in touch with us if you have any queries.

You can call us on 0207 730 0410 or contact us at remember@interfaith.org.uk

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If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **17 May** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer: Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

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IFN e-bulletin

June 2019

[General Data Protection Regulation](#)

As you will be aware, data protection legislation changed with the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) from 25 May 2018. You can sign up to IFN mailings at any time by using the form on IFN's website at: www.interfaith.org.uk/news/gdpr.

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The e-bulletin is published every two months. If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the June e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **22 July** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and projects and future events.

IFN also highlights news and projects of interest through Twitter (www.twitter.com/IFNetUK) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/IFNetUK) and, where about Inter Faith Week, through (www.twitter.com/IFWeek and www.facebook.com/IFWeek).

Disclaimer: Information in this e-bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

Faith and inter faith responses to attacks in Sri Lanka and California

Many faith and inter faith organisations in the UK were among those who responded through messages, statements, vigils, services, prayers and times of silence to the 21 April Easter Day terrorist attacks in Sri Lanka. A list of responses by IFN member faith and inter faith bodies can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/sri-lanka-easter-day-terrorist-attacks-responses-by-faith-and-inter-faith-bodies>.

On 22 April IFN's Co-Chairs and the Moderators of IFN's Faith Communities Forum issued the following statement in response to the attacks:

“Following the barbaric Easter Day terrorist attacks on churches and other properties in Sri Lanka, many people in the UK have been coming together to express their condolences and stand in solidarity.

As we said after the terrorist attacks in Pittsburgh USA and Christchurch New Zealand – such attacks on places of worship are a reminder of the need to condemn extremist violence in the strongest terms and to stand together and to continue to work together with ever greater urgency against ignorance, prejudice and hatred. Hatred targeting any community because of its faith and belief is a scourge that cannot be tolerated. There must be freedom for all communities to worship and practise their faith freely and without fear.”

A copy of this statement is also on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/standing-together-statement-following-easter-day-terrorist-attacks-in-sri-lanka>. IFN's Policy on the making of statements is at https://www.interfaith.org.uk/uploads/Policy_on_making_of_statements.pdf.

Following the attack on the Chabad of Poway Synagogue in California on 27 April, IFN's Co-Chairs sent a message to IFN member bodies repeating the points in the Sri Lanka statement and saying that their thoughts and prayers were with those killed and injured in the murderous attack.

A copy of this message is also on IFN's website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/message-from-the-co-chairs-responding-together-following-chabad-of-poway-at>.

Relevant in this context is *Looking After One Another: The Safety and Security of our Faith Communities* published by IFN in partnership with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, the Home Office, the Crown Prosecution Service, the National Police Chiefs' Council and the National Fire Chiefs' Council. It contains guidance on responding jointly to attacks on places of worship; working for calm at times of tension; and working to build on and strengthen existing good inter faith relations. It also contains material about how and where to report hate incidents, cyber-attacks, and actual or suspected terrorist activity; where to find information on strengthening the security of buildings; and where to find information about working to build – and strengthen – good inter faith relations locally.

A useful short guide, *Security for Places of Worship*, is produced by the Community Security Trust and can be found at <https://cst.org.uk/publications/cst-publications>.

Also relevant is the National Counter Terrorism Security Office' Crowded Places Guidance, which is at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/crowded-places-guidance>.

Information on the Government's Places of Worship Security funding scheme is [below](#).

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EHRC investigation into Antisemitism allegations and filing of complaint with EHRC about allegations of Islamophobia

On 28 May the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) launched an investigation into allegations of Antisemitism in The Labour Party, saying "We contacted The Labour Party after receiving a number of complaints about allegations of antisemitism in the Party. We have carefully considered the response we have received from the Party and

have opened a formal investigation.” Once the investigation has finished the EHRC will publish a report of its findings, which may include recommendations. Further information, including the full Terms of Reference of the investigation, is at <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/inquiries-and-investigations/investigation-labour-party>.

On the same day the Muslim Council of Britain filed a formal complaint to the EHRC about Islamophobia in the Conservative Party. An EHRC spokesperson said: “We have received complaints regarding the Conservative party and are considering them in line with our usual processes. As part of our standard process, we have written to the Conservative party to ask for information in order to help assess the complaints.” <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-48434202>

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Government rejects APPG definition of Islamophobia

The Government has rejected the working definition of Islamophobia developed by the All Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims, published in Autumn 2018, and has said that it will instead be appointing two advisers to examine the issue further. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-48283337> The House of Commons debated the definition on 16 May <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2019-05-16/debates/CF834846-65CA-46CD-B955-CDEF42BAFB26/DefinitionOfIslamophobia>.

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Integrated Communities Innovation Fund – projects announced

On 20 May Lord Bourne, Communities Minister, announced 16 projects which will be receiving £3million of new funding to support innovative approaches to integration. The Innovation Fund, delivered in partnership with Sport England, is supporting projects “using innovative approaches to tackle the barriers to integration and build integrated communities” and has given funding to projects working with people from different backgrounds. Further information is at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/tens-of-thousands-to-benefit-from-integrated-communities-innovation-fund>.

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Faith Leader Training Initiative for England

In its Integrated Communities Action Plan the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government said that it would commission/develop training for faith leaders “to help those who do not have access to institutional support to better understand their rights

and responsibilities and their shared values, as well as navigating the greater demands being placed on faith leaders by the changing and growing needs of congregations”.

The Faith Leader Training Initiative for England is now available. It is provided free of charge and is led by the Edward Cadbury Centre for the Public Understanding of Religion. The programme is described as suitable for anyone with leadership responsibilities in a faith community. It comprises four non-consecutive training days beginning in June in Manchester, Birmingham and London (with Leeds to follow in the Autumn). Alternatively, faith leaders can take the online version of course.

For more information, or to book a place, visit <https://spark.adobe.com/page/NuyVB2k73JSn7/> or www.birmingham.ac.uk/FLTI. Any queries can be sent to fti@contacts.bham.ac.uk, or the programme co-ordinator at A.Davies.4@bham.ac.uk.

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Government measures to update crematoria provisions

On 8 April, the Government announced a package of measures to reflect the needs of different cultures and faiths in modern Britain. This announcement followed its review of crematoria provisions and facilities, which received around 150 responses from faith and belief groups.

The package includes a consultation to revise national guidance on the siting and design of crematoria, and an offer to support community groups interested in operating their own. Further information and the full consultation response can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-government-measures-to-update-crematoria-provisions>.

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Consultation on Coronial Investigations of Stillbirths

The Ministry of Justice and Department of Health and Social Care are holding a public consultation on coronial investigations of stillbirths in England and Wales. The consultation seeks views on the merits of coroners inquiring into the causes of stillbirths and contains proposals as to when and how those investigations should take place. Given the very sensitive nature of the issue, they would like to hear from a diverse range of individuals and communities.

The consultation closes on 18 June and is available at <https://consult.justice.gov.uk/digital-communications/coronial-investigations-of-stillbirths/>. Any queries can be emailed to CoronerReview@justice.gov.uk.

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Investigation into Child Protection in Religious Organisations and Settings

On 2 May the Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse announced a new investigation into Child Protection in Religious Organisations and Settings. The Definition of Scope of the new investigation has been published on the Inquiry's website at <https://www.iicsa.org.uk/investigation/child-protection-religious-organisations-and-settings>.

There are a number of ways in which an individual or organisation may contribute to the work of the Inquiry, including providing documentary or witness evidence to the Inquiry. The Inquiry may contact individuals or organisations with a request for evidence. For those who may wish to apply for core participant status, further information about the role of core participants and how to apply for core participant status is available on the Inquiry's website. The Inquiry is inviting individuals and organisations who wish to apply to be designated as core participants in this new investigation to do so as soon as possible and in any event by 4pm on 13 June.

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Windrush Day

As part of the celebrations to mark the 70th anniversary of the arrival of the MV Empire Windrush, the Prime Minister announced last year that the Government will mark Windrush Day on 22 June each year. This day marks the service and sacrifice of the Windrush generation and their descendants.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/annual-day-of-celebrations-for-the-windrush-generation>

A £500,000 fund is available each year to educate, commemorate and celebrate their contribution. £350,000 is exclusively provided to local authorities, whilst £150,000 is available for charities and community groups. An Advisory Panel, made up of community representatives from locations around the country, provides advice directly to government. Its key focus is ensuring that winning bids are appropriate and resonate with Caribbean communities. Information on grants allocated this year can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/communities-across-the-country-given-500000-to-commemorate-windrush-generation>.

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Inter faith iftars

Ramadan, which will shortly be ending, has seen inter faith and open iftars taking place across the UK. These have been in mosques, cathedrals, synagogues and other places of worship; on streets; in schools; in markets; and in many other places. People of all faiths and none have been coming together and eating in fellowship. Links for many of these, from Barnet to Bolton and Peterborough to Portsmouth, were highlighted on IFN's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/ifnetuk/posts/2410045682379326>.

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INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK NEWS

Meeting of IFN's Faith Communities Forum

A meeting of IFN's Faith Communities Forum was held on 14 May. On the agenda, as well as IFN matters, were:

- Faith communities and climate change, with a short opening reflection from Mohinder Singh Chana, Network of Sikh Organisations, on the theme of care for the planet in the Sikh tradition and a presentation from Paul Parker, Recording Clerk, Quakers in Britain;
- Faith communities and security of places of worship, with a presentation from Home Office Hate Crime Team Policy Advisers;
- current issues of interest or concern to faith communities; and
- the inter faith engagement of faith communities.

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Meeting of national inter faith linking bodies in the devolved nations

The Inter Faith Network links in membership the national inter faith linking bodies of the devolved nations: Interfaith Scotland, the Inter-Faith Council for Wales, and the Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum. These are represented on IFN's Board. IFN works closely with these bodies and each year convenes a meeting with them to enable sharing of news and good practice.

The annual meetings rotate between Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The 2019 meeting took place on 7 May, hosted by the Inter-faith Council for Wales in Cardiff.

Issues on the agenda included: Inter Faith Week; Matters of interest and concern, such as responding to terrorist/extremist attacks, domestic and international – thinking about the role of national inter faith linking bodies in this, hate crime, hate incidents and faith communities - reflecting on national inter faith linking bodies role in supporting response, climate change and youth engagement; and a brief round-up of key developments within each organisation since the last meeting.

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Inter Faith Week 2019

Inter Faith Week 2019 will take place between **Sunday 10 and Sunday 17 November**. The Week begins each year on Remembrance Sunday to enable people of different backgrounds to remember together the service of soldiers and civilians of all faiths and beliefs and to reflect on peace.

The flyer for the 2019 Week can be downloaded at www.interfaithweek.org/flyer. Please do circulate this to your networks. Printed copies can be ordered from the IFN office by emailing ashley.beck@interfaith.org.uk.

To subscribe to the Inter Faith Week mailing list, submit your details at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/static/sign-up>.

The Inter Faith Youth Trust is offering grants of up to £800 for Inter Faith Week projects and events with young people. Further information is [below](#).

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

Faith communities and the environment – Lobby of Parliament

The Climate Coalition is a group of over 130 organisations including a number of faith bodies. <https://www.theclimatecoalition.org/faith-members>
It will be holding a mass lobby of parliament on climate change on the afternoon of 26 June. <https://www.theclimatecoalition.org/thetimeisnow>

Represented on it is the Faith for the Climate Network, an inter faith network of 90 faith based organisations and individuals working on climate change involving the Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh traditions. St John's Waterloo provides the secretariat. <https://www.stjohnswaterloo.org/climate>

On 26 June, the Faith for the Climate Network will be running inter faith climate workshops and organising a procession through central London to join the mass rally

outside parliament at 1pm. For details, see www.thetimeisnowfaithevents.eventbrite.com.

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Inter faith developments in Wales

The Interfaith Council for Wales (Cyngor Rhyngffydd Cymru) has a new website: <https://www.interfaithcouncilwales.cymru/welcome/>.

On 20 May the Rev Aled Edwards, Secretary of the Interfaith Council for Wales, gave the 2019 Gethin Abraham-Williams Memorial Lecture on 'Faith, Devolution and Global Politics' in the Senedd, Cardiff. The lecture will be published in due course. For further information, email post@cytun.cymru.

The Church in Wales is sponsoring a large tent to host inter faith activities at the 'Gower Shower' on 4 August. For further information, visit the Swansea Inter-Faith Forum Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/SwanseaInterfaith/>.

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#ActiveAllies Campaign – Nisa-Nashim

Nisa-Nashim is running a campaign focussing on Jewish and Muslim women standing together against Antisemitism and Islamophobia. It has developed a Charter, which is called 'A Commitment to being #ActiveAllies'. To read the Charter and for more information on the campaign, visit <https://www.nisanashim.org/activeallies-campaign/>.

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Faith in Diversity: Cultural sensitivity and spiritual care

The East of England Faiths Agency has been running a course entitled 'Faith in Diversity: Cultural sensitivity and spiritual care'. Participants will be continuing meet to explore further the subject of faith and spirituality and a charity is being established as a framework for this work. The constitution of this new group can be seen on <http://www.eefa.net/fsns>. Anyone interested in becoming involved with the group can register interest by sending their name, address and telephone number to fsns@eefa.net.

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Innovative Approaches to Education about Religion

The Faiths & Civil Society Unit (FCSU), Goldsmiths, University of London and the Education for Social Justice Research group at London South Bank University have launched a new

project exploring and showcasing innovative approaches to education about religion, belief and worldviews in schools. The project seeks to highlight examples of good practice and to complement debates about change in policy and practice.

The project builds on the FCSU's 2015 Report *RE for REal - The Future of Teaching and Learning about Religion and Belief* (<https://www.gold.ac.uk/media/documents-by-section/departments/research-centres-and-units/research-units/faiths-and-civil-society/REforREal-web-b.pdf>). It will focus on the study of the category of religion and belief, as well exploring the real religious landscape instead of the landscape imagined in traditional RE. Further information is available from Adam Dinham at a.dinham@gold.ac.uk.

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

For Refugees, With Refugees: Advancing Interfaith Responses – CCJ resource

The Council of Christians and Jews has created a resource for communities and faith leaders, which provides guidance on launching inter faith projects to help refugees. It contains ideas for projects, Christian and Jewish reflections and further resources that provide additional help.

To download the resource, visit <http://www.ccj.org.uk/for-refugees-with-refugees-advancing-interfaith-responses/>.

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Report on 'Faith, Belief and Inclusion'

The Faith & Belief Forum and the Department of Psychosocial Studies at Birkbeck, University of London has released a report, 'Faith, Belief and Inclusion'. This draws on finding from a roundtable discussion from June 2018, which brought together local organisations, academics and policy experts to look at factors for exclusion for Londoners of different faiths and beliefs and good practice on inclusion. To download the report, visit <https://faithbeliefforum.org/report>.

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Faith & Belief Forum - LGBT+Faith training

The Faith & Belief Forum LGBT+Faith programme has regional training days coming up in Glasgow, Bristol, Norwich, Leeds and London. The training provides a space to reflect, learn, and build practice for working with and supporting LGBT+ people of faith.

For further information and to register, visit <https://faithbeliefforum.org/programme/lgbtfaith/>.

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Woolf Institute course - Jews, Christians and Muslims in Europe: Modern Challenges

The Woolf Institute in Cambridge is now accepting applications for its online course *Jews, Christians and Muslims in Europe: Modern Challenges*. This multidisciplinary course looks at historical trends, religious and cultural interaction and issues of contemporary citizenship.

The course begins on 2 September and applications close on 1 August 2019. More information can be found at <https://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/study/online-courses/jews-christians-and-muslims-in-europe-modern-challenges>.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS, AND NOMINATIONS

Modest fashion in UK women's working life – Call for research participants

The University of the Arts, London, is leading on a project looking at how religiously-related modest fashion and associated behaviours impact on UK women's working lives – regardless of their own religious or secular community or beliefs. The research uses two comparative case studies: women who work for UK faith-based employers, such as faith-based schools, businesses, and charities; and women who work for secular UK employers whose work takes them to Saudi Arabia, where they need to adjust to religious codes of dress and gender segregation.

As part of the project, the research team is looking to interview in confidence people from a wide range of backgrounds, religions and beliefs, including non-religious:

- Women employed by secular companies and organisations in the UK who have worn an abaya (long outwear robe, sometimes with a headscarf) when their work took them to Saudi Arabia
- Women who have had experiences of adapting their dress when working for and with faith-based organisations (e.g. businesses, schools, charities and publicly-funded organisations with a religious ethos)
- HR professionals who have experience dealing with religiously related codes of modest dress and behaviour in the workplace

Anyone interested in taking part should email modestfashionworkwear@arts.ac.uk. Further information on the project is at <https://www.arts.ac.uk/research/current-research-and-projects/curation-and-culture/modest-fashion>.

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Religions for Peace UK – call for information on conflict and the environment

Religions for Peace UK is currently developing its strategy for transforming conflict and protecting the environment over the coming five years.

It has set up a survey to enable it to better understand work that other organisations are already undertaking on conflict and the environment, in order to assess what work it can do in the future and how it can work with others for maximum impact. The survey can be found at <https://forms.gle/9FCLw7gpv5QAe9ibA> and the closing date is 7 June.

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World Congress of Faiths – Call for papers on conflict, reconciliation and inter faith relations

The World Congress of Faiths is seeking papers to be presented at its forthcoming conference, 'Meetings of Minds: Conflict, Reconciliation and Inter Faith Relations', at Coventry Cathedral in September. It is considering papers on questions such as: What can faith communities learn from studies in reconciliation? Can there be mutual benefit between education for reconciliation and spiritual encounter between faiths? What might a polarised society expect from inter faith relations? It is also considering papers on topics such as preparing young people for faith diversity and navigating prejudice, toleration, and reconciliation in the global context of inter faith relations and thought

For further information, contact Jenny Kartupelis at jenny@worldfaiths.org.

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Future of Legal Gender: Interviews on implications of legal reform for religious communities

The Future of Legal Gender project, a three year research project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and based at King's College London, would like to interview organisations or individuals who can help them explore the implications of gender-related

law reform for religious communities. The project explores questions to do with how gender is treated in law.

At this stage in the project, it is focusing on the implications of different gender-related reform options for religious communities, particularly those which cross-over with minority ethnic communities, and for faiths which, in orthodox form, distinguish between men and women in their religious and every day practice.

Further information on the project is available at <https://futureoflegalgender.kcl.ac.uk/>. Anyone willing to participate through an interview, or who would like to discuss this further, should email Robyn Emerton at robyn.emerton@kcl.ac.uk.

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NATRE Spirited Arts competition

The National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE)'s annual Spirited Arts competition is open for entries until 31 July. Entries should be artwork based on this year's RE-related themes. The competition is open to school pupils and will be judged in August by RE Today Advisers and students. Winners will be announced in the new academic year. For full details of the competition, including the themes and how to enter, visit <https://www.natre.org.uk/about-natre/projects/spirited-arts/spirited-arts-2019/>.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

IFN's website lists job and internship opportunities with a significant inter faith dimension with IFN member organisations at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/jobs>.

Inter Faith Network for the UK – Summer Internship and Project Officer

The Inter Faith Network for the UK is currently advertising two roles:

- Summer Internship
July to September, 4 days per week, closing date 14 June
- Project Officer
July to March, 5 days per week, closing date 28 June

Further information about both, including job descriptions and application forms can be found on our website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/jobs>.

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Council of Christians and Jews - Programmes Internship and Assistant to Programmes

CCJ is seeking to appoint a Programmes Intern to assist with CCJ's Campus Leadership Programme. This is a paid internship, 2 days per week during July. Further information, including a role description and information on how to apply is online. The closing date is 9am on 14 June.

CCJ is also seeking to appoint a part-time programming assistant to deliver projects which contribute towards positive relationships between Christians and Jews in the UK. This is a paid internship of 10-14 hours per week. Applications will be considered on a rolling basis.

For further information on both roles, visit http://www.ccj.org.uk/contact_ccj/recruitment.

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Faith & Belief Forum – Major Donor Fundraiser

The Faith & Belief Forum (FBF) is seeking to appoint a Major Donor Fundraiser to lead on the delivery of its Major Donor Fundraising Strategy. The role is full time, based in London. FBF is looking to fill this role as soon as possible and will be conducting interviews on an ongoing basis. Further information, including a job description and application form, is at <https://faithbeliefforum.org/career/major-donor-fundraiser/>.

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Interfaith Glasgow – Volunteers

Interfaith Glasgow has a number of volunteering opportunities to assist with various projects. For further information, contact info@interfaithglasgow.org.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Places of Worship – Security funding scheme

The Places of Worship Fund, established in 2016 as part of the Government's Hate Crime Action Plan, provides financial support for physical protective security such as fencing, lighting and CCTV. The Government at that time committed funding of £2.4 million over 3 years. A further £1.6 million was announced after the New Zealand mosque attacks.

Organisations no longer have to prove, in order to be eligible, that they have previously experienced a hate crime incident directly.

For more information, visit <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/places-of-worship-security-funding-scheme>.

There is also a separate £5 million fund being made available over 3 years to provide protective security training to build on some of the positive work already happening in communities. The Home Office will be working closely with communities and faith leaders to develop this new scheme.

Further information is at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/places-of-worship-to-get-security-funding-boost> with further details to be published.

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Inter Faith Youth Trust - Inter Faith Week grants

As in previous years, the Inter Faith Youth Trust will be making available a special programme of grants for Inter Faith Week 2019. This year the Trust will be awarding grants of up to £800. Grants are awarded for proposals for inter-faith activities by children and young people from Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and other faiths and those of no formal faith. The age range for young people is 11-25 years. Priority will be given to projects which actively involve young people in planning, running, and evaluation of the project; promote positive action; and are run by non-statutory organisations, such as youth clubs, scout/guide groups, local voluntary and community organisations.

The application form can be downloaded at www.ifyouthtrust.org.uk/. The deadline for the submission of forms is 24 August.

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Windrush compensation scheme

The Windrush Compensation Scheme is open to those who settled in the UK from a Commonwealth country before 1973, and in certain circumstances their children and grandchildren. It provides payments to individuals who suffered losses as a result of not being able to evidence their lawful status in the UK. These could range from a loss of employment or access to housing, benefits, education or NHS healthcare to emotional distress or deterioration in mental and physical health. Additionally, it is open to all nationalities who arrived to live in the UK before 31 December 1988 and are settled here. Claim forms can be downloaded and guidance on completing the application can be

found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/windrush-compensation-scheme>. Claimants can also request a form to be sent by post by calling our helpline on 0800 678 1925 or via email WindrushCompensationScheme@homeoffice.gov.uk where they can also request a call back if they are overseas.

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Sport England: The Workforce Diversity Great Ideas Fund

Sport England has launched a new fund to support the diversity of the sport and physical activity workforce. Its ambition is ‘to help ensure people working in sport and physical activity are skilled, motivated, valued, equipped for their role, are enjoying a positive experience and is representative of our diverse nation’.

It is making up to £1 million available to ‘diversify coaches and volunteers’ in the sport and physical activity sector. The Workforce Diversity Great Ideas Fund will be open for a month, from 3 June, and they want to hear from anyone wanting to engage women and/or BAME communities in volunteering or coaching opportunities.

Details can be found at <https://www.sportengland.org/news-and-features/news/2019/june/03/workforce-diversity-great-ideas-fund-launched/>.

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Faiths in Scotland Community Action Fund

Following a period of review, Faiths in Scotland Community Action Fund is now open for applications for grants of up to £2,000 over 1 year. Its next deadline is 26 July. Further information is at <https://www.faithincommunityscotland.org/faith-in-community-scotland-action-fund/>. For any queries email andrew@faithincommunityscotland.org or telephone 0141 221 4576.

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Funding websites

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) offers advice on fundraising and grants on its Knowhow Nonprofit site at <https://knowhownonprofit.org/funding>.

Funding Central - <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/default.aspx> - is a free website for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises in England that provides access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, together with tools and resources for supporting organisations to develop sustainable income strategies appropriate to their

needs. Similar websites for funding in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at Funding Scotland - <http://www.fundingscotland.com/> - Wales Council for Voluntary Action - <http://www.wcva.org.uk/funding/search> - and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland - <https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

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Website and Facebook grants

The Transform Foundation is offering funding to charities to help with new website builds. Grants of £18,000 are available. It is also offering grants towards Facebook advertising of £5,000. For further information and to apply, visit www.transformfoundation.org.uk.

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Google and charities

Google is offering a service to registered charities which brings: Google Ad Grants: Free AdWords advertising to promote their websites on Google through keyword targeting; YouTube Nonprofit Programme: Access exclusive resources, features and programs designed to maximise their organisations' impact on YouTube; and Google Apps for Non-profit: Free version of the Google Apps business productivity suite, including Gmail, Docs, Calendar and more. For further information, visit www.google.co.uk/intl/en/nonprofits/join.

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Subsidised fundraising workshops

The Foundation for Social Improvement offers heavily subsidised training programmes for small charities across the UK. The courses cover a wide range of subjects from event planning to leadership. Many of the courses focus on fundraising and sustainability skills in particular.

Further information and dates for upcoming courses in April and May can be found at <http://www.thefsi.org/services/training>.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Refugee Week is taking place from Monday 17 to Sunday 23 June. The theme for this year's week is 'You, me and those who came before'. <http://refugeeweek.org.uk/>

The Great Get Together will be taking place across the weekend of 21-23 June. The initiative was set up in 2017 inspired by Jo Cox MP who had been murdered by an

extremist the previous year. It encourages communities to come together through activities such as street parties, sports days, BBQs, picnics and coffee mornings.

<https://www.greatgettogether.org/>

Remembering Srebrenica Memorial Week will be held from Sunday 7 to Sunday 14 July. This year's theme is 'Bridging the Divide: Confronting Hate'.

<https://www.srebrenica.org.uk/>

Sewa Day will take place on Sunday 6 October. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Hindu community. <http://www.sewaday.org/>

National Hate Crime Awareness Week will take place from Saturday 12 to Saturday 19 October. <https://nationalhcaw.uk/>

One World Week will take place from Sunday 20 to Sunday 27 October. This is its 40th anniversary year. www.oneworldweek.org

Inter Faith Week will take place from Sunday 10 to Sunday 17 November. It is led by the Inter Faith Network for the UK. www.interfaithweek.org

Scottish Interfaith Week will take place from Sunday 10 to Sunday 17 November. Scottish Interfaith Week is led by Interfaith Scotland. www.scottishinterfaithweek.org

Mitzvah Day will take place on Sunday 17 November. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Jewish community. On Mitzvah Day, people give their time, not their money, to make a difference to the community around them. Many events and projects held for the day have an inter faith focus. www.mitzvahday.org.uk/

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DIARY DATES

This section includes a sample of some of the events taking place around the UK during June. Only one event per organisation is included. We also include information on diary dates between e-bulletins on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/events>.

York Interfaith Group is holding its next meeting on Tuesday 4 June. The theme will be 'Expressing Faith in Clothes and Symbols – Why do some faiths do it, and how do outsiders react?'. With a multi faith panel of speakers from the group, chaired by Sr Patricia Harriss CJ. It is being held from 7.30pm to 9pm in the Hudson Room, City of York Council, West Offices, Station Rise, York, YO1 6GA. For more information email yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com or visit www.yorkinterfaith.org.

The **Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter** is holding the 49th Annual Cardinal Bea Memorial Lecture on Wednesday 5 June. This year will mark the 10th anniversary of the document 'A time for Recommitment: 12 Points of Berlin'. Speakers will be Dr Debbi Weissman and Fr Peter Cullen. The event will take place at 7pm at the Sion Centre, 34 Chepstow Villas, London W11 2QZ. For more information, contact sioncentrefordialogue@gmail.com.

The Council of Christians and Jews together with the **CCJ Central London branch** and the **Abraham Initiatives UK** is holding an event on Thursday 6 June on 'The Role of the Media in Building a Shared Society in Israel'. Ms Eman Safady will be in conversation with Mr Eran Singer. The event will be chaired by Dr Alice Wood. It will be taking place from 4pm to 6pm at a Central London location. For the venue information and to register, contact cjrelations@ccj.org.uk.

Westminster Interfaith is holding its 34th Annual Multi-Faith Pilgrimage for Peace on Saturday 8 June. This year's Pilgrimage will take place in the London Borough of Merton. It begins at Morden station at 9.25am and ends at Shree Ghanapathy Temple at 4.45pm with visits to a number of places of worship during the day. For more information, and to register, contact Westminster Interfaith at 020 7931 6028 or jondaldin@rcdow.org.uk.

Interfaith Glasgow in partnership with **St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art** is holding the next 'Faith to Faith' event on Sunday 9 June. The topic will be 'Science and Religion'. It is being held from 2pm to 4pm at Flemington House, 110 Flemington Street, Glasgow G21 4TD. For further information, contact info@interfaithglasgow.org.

Faiths Together in Croydon is holding its 5th annual Interfaith Bike Ride and Big Picnic on Sunday 9 June. There two bike rides on offer: starting at 10am at Croydon Sports Arena and visiting 4 different places of worship; or starting at 10.30am at the Smooth Bean Café and 'beating the bounds of the borough'. Both rides end at 2pm at Park Hill Recreation Ground for a picnic. There is no need to participate in the bike ride to attend the park gathering. For more information, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/interfaith-bike-rides-picnic-in-the-park-tickets-17015123693>.

Torbay Interfaith Forum is holding a talk on Wednesday 12 June entitled 'Spiritualism- a Personal Journey'. Minister David Hopkins will be speaking. The talk will begin at 7.30pm, followed by refreshments, at The Friends' Meeting house, 48 Tor Hill Road Torquay, TQ2 5RT. For more information, see <http://torbayinterfaith.org.uk/>.

Windsor and Maidenhead Community Forum is holding a Women's Group Meeting on Wednesday 12 June. The theme will be 'Christian Pilgrimage'. Women of all faiths or none are welcome and there will be refreshments and speakers. It is being held from 1.30pm to 3.00pm on at the Maidenhead Synagogue, Grenfell Lodge, Ray Park Rd, Maidenhead SL6 8QX. For more information, visit <http://www.wamcf.org/womens-group/>.

The **East London Three Faiths Forum** is holding an event on Thursday 13 June on 'Teaching by parable'. For more information, visit <http://www.eastlondon3faiths.org/>.

Faiths in Sussex and Crawley Interfaith Network are holding a Summer Gathering on Saturday 15 June. The theme will be 'Peace & Harmony for Humankind' and there will be readings, chants, music and dance. The event is free of charge, open to all and will include refreshments. The gathering will run from 2.30pm to 5.30pm at the Langley Green Community Centre, Stagelands, Langley Green, Crawley, RH11 7PG. For more details, contact Iyad Daoud at iyadhdaoud@yahoo.co.uk or on 01293 883372.

Woking People of Faith is holding an inter faith football tournament on Saturday 15 June. The tournament is being held from 10am to 4pm at Winston Churchill School, Woking. To enter the tournament, or for further information, contact Zafar Iqbal at Zafar.Iqbal@woking.gov.uk or John West at john.west63@ntlworld.com.

Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship is organising a Walk of Friendship on Sunday 16 June. Meet at 12pm at Beeston Hill United Free Church, Malvern Road, Leeds LS11 8PD for coffee and talk. 12.45pm, the walk will continue to Guru Nanak Gurdwara, 78 Lady Pit Lane, Beeston, LS11 6DP for a talk and lunch. At 2.10pm, the walk will go on to the new Abu Huraira Masjid, Lodge Lane, Leeds, LS11 6LU, for a talk and refreshments. For more information, visit www.concord-leeds.org.uk.

The **St Philip's Centre, Leicester** is holding its AGM on Wednesday 19 June. The Rt Revd Dr Francis-Dehqani, Bishop of Loughborough, will be speaking on the topic of 'Learning to Live well Together'. Refreshments will be available from 5.00pm, with the speaker presenting at 5.30pm. The business meeting will start at 6.30pm and will be taking place at St Philip's Church, Evington Road, Leicester, LE2 1HN. For further information, contact admin@stphilipscentre.co.uk.

Westminster Cathedral Interfaith Group is holding its next meeting on Wednesday 19 June. The meeting will be led by Jeremy Rodell of Humanists UK, who will be speaking on Secularism and our plural society. It is being held from 4pm to 5pm in the Hinsley Room, Morpeth Terrace, SW1P 1EP. For more information, contact John Woodhouse by text on 07908 888 586 or by email on woodhousesopten@btinternet.com.

Nipponzan Myohoji, The London Peace Pagoda, is holding its 34th Annual Celebration on Saturday 22 June. The event takes place at 2pm at Battersea Park, Albert Bridge Road, London SW11 4NJ. To register, contact the London Dojo (Temple) on 020 7228 9620 or londonpeacepagoda@gmail.com.

Hounslow Friends of Faith is holding its annual Walk of Peace and Friendship on Saturday 22 June. The walk will pass through various places of worship in Feltham,

Hounslow and Bedfont. For further details, visit <https://www.hounslowfriendsoffaith.org/events/event/annual-interfaith-walk-of-peace-and-friendship/>.

Lewisham Interfaith is holding a Walk for Peace on Sunday 23 June. It begins at 2pm at the Sivan Hindu Temple, 4A Clarendon Rise, Lewisham, London SE13 5ES. For details of the full Walk, visit <https://www.lewishaminterfaithforum.org.uk/> or email Megan Mellor at megan.mellor@lewisham.gov.uk.

Elmbridge Multi Faith Forum is holding its AGM on Tuesday 25 June. The conference will be on the topic of 'Connecting with God - different faith perspectives'. This will be also be a 'bring and share' vegetarian finger food event. The meeting will start at 7pm at St John's Church, 1 The Furrows, Walton-on Thames, Surrey, KT12 3JQ. For more information, visit <https://www.elmbridgemultifaith.org.uk/>.

Building Bridges in Burnley is holding its Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 26 June. The event will start at 7.00pm and will include a speaker. It will be taking place at the IMAM organisation, Danehouse Road, Burnley, BB10 1AF.

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle is holding its annual Christian-Muslim women's Prayer Event on Saturday 29 June. The event is open to women of all faiths and none and children. Readings from the Bible and the Qur'an on Mary will be shared, followed by some hymns and prayers for peace. The event will then proceed to the Holy Name parish hall for vegetarian refreshments and to share ideas, half a mile away from the shrine. The event will begin at 2.30pm and will be taking place at the ruined chapel of Our Lady, Jesmond Dene, at the bottom of Reid Park Road off Osborne Road, NE2. For more information or for help with travel arrangements, contact Maria Mackenzie on 07796372316, Hengameh Ashraf Emami on 07912749017 or Mary McLoughlin on 01912850391 or email interreligious.relations@diocesehn.org.uk.

More information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org.uk

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **22 July** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

**SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK
TO INCREASE INTER FAITH UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION**

We need your help to ensure that the Inter Faith Network for the UK's work to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation continues and grows, helping people of all backgrounds to live and work together with mutual respect and shared commitment to the common good.

Gifts at all levels are much valued and make a real difference. You can donate directly at www.interfaith.org.uk/donate or via PayPal.

Donations can also be made by sending a cheque to: The Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH.

Thank you!

REMEMBERING A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND

If you would like to make a gift in memory of a loved one, please get in touch by emailing remember@interfaith.org.uk or call us on 0207 730 0410.

A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

By leaving a gift in your will to the Inter Faith Network for the UK, you can leave a living inheritance to help deepen and strengthen inter faith understanding and cooperation in this country – for now and for the future. If you are thinking about making a will, the best thing to do is to get in touch with a professional will writer, such as a solicitor or advocate; they can help to ensure it is legally correct and that your wishes are met. If you have already made a will, you can still make an addition or amendment in the form of a codicil. If you would like to pledge a gift, please provide our name and address, along with our registered charity number 1068934.

Please get in touch with us if you have any queries.

You can call us on 0207 730 0410 or contact us at remember@interfaith.org.uk

Disclaimer: Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

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IFN e-bulletin

August 2019

[General Data Protection Regulation](#)

As you will be aware, data protection legislation changed with the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) from 25 May 2018. You can sign up to IFN mailings at any time by using the form on IFN's website at: www.interfaith.org.uk/news/gdpr.

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The e-bulletin is published every two months. If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the June e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **23 September** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and projects and future events.

IFN also highlights news and projects of interest through Twitter (www.twitter.com/IFNetUK) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/IFNetUK) and, where about Inter Faith Week, through (www.twitter.com/IFWeek and www.facebook.com/IFWeek).

Disclaimer: Information in this e-bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

New Government

On 23 July, the Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP was elected leader of the Conservative Party and became Prime Minister the following day.

The Government department that has a central role in relation to faith and belief is the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). The Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP has become the new Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

Viscount Younger of Leckie was appointed Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at MHCLG and has taken on the role of Minister for Faith and Communities.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon has been reappointed as the Prime Minister's Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief. Global religious freedom issues are on the agenda of a number of UK faith communities and the focus of a dedicated All Party Parliamentary Group – the APPG for International Freedom of Religion or Belief.

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Faith communities and refugees

In a letter of 26 July - supported by Safe Passage, the Refugee Council and the Red Cross - over 100 faith leaders wrote to Prime Minister Boris Johnson, asking him to commit his government to offering refugees a sanctuary in the UK:

http://safepassage.org.uk/news_posts/faith-leaders-call-on-boris-johnson-to-welcome-refugees/

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/jul/26/faith-leaders-urge-boris-johnson-to-commit-to-offering-refugees-sanctuary>.

Faith communities continue, separately and together, to work nationally and locally to respond to the needs of refugees and asylum seekers, as do a number of local inter faith bodies.

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Security of faith communities

Concerns continue about the safety and security of faith communities and their premises. Recent incidents in the news include vandal attacks on religious statues outside the Shree Ram Mandir in Walsall <https://metro.co.uk/2019/07/06/vandals-smash-religious-statues-outside-hindu-temple-10125136/>.

The Home Office has a Places of Worship (POW) Protective Security Funding scheme which provides funding for protective security measures for places of worship and associated faith community centres that are vulnerable to hate crime. The £1.6 million scheme will fund security measures including CCTV, alarms and improved locks at buildings vulnerable to attacks. Further information is in the [Funding section below](#). There have been calls on the Scottish Government to operate a comparable scheme: <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1158773/SNP-fund-protect-places-worship-security>.

Useful resources for faith communities include:

- *Looking After One Another: The Safety and Security of Our Faith Communities* - published by the Inter Faith Network for the UK (IFN) in partnership with the then Department for Communities and Local Government, the Home Office, the Crown Prosecution Service, the National Police Chiefs' Council and the National Fire Chiefs' Council: <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/looking-after-one-another-the-safety-and-security-of-our-faith-communities-2017>
- The National Counter Terrorism Security Office's Crowded Places Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/crowded-places-guidance>.
- A guide produced by the Community Security Trust: <https://cst.org.uk/publications/cst-publications>.

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Antisemitism and Islamophobia

Government appointment of independent adviser on Antisemitism

On 23 July the Government announced that it had appointed John Mann MP as an independent adviser on Antisemitism. Mr Mann, who chairs the All Party Parliamentary Group Against Antisemitism, will be responsible for providing the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) with independent advice on the most effective methods to tackle Antisemitism. He will collaborate with Lord Pickles, the UK's Special Envoy for Post-Holocaust Issues, and with Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon, the Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion and Belief, to ensure a consistent approach. Further information on the appointment is at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/john-mann-appointed-as-independent-adviser-on-antisemitism>.

Government appointment of independent adviser for advice on definition of Islamophobia

The June issue of the e-bulletin noted that the Government had rejected the working definition of Islamophobia developed by the All Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims, published in Autumn 2018, and had said that it would instead by appointing two advisers to examine the issue further. On 23 July the Government announced that it had appointed Imam Qari Asim MBE, Deputy Chair of the Anti-Muslim Hatred Working Group, to lead a process for establishing a definition of Islamophobia. He will be joined by a second adviser who is expected to be confirmed shortly. The new work will build on the definitions of Islamophobia currently under consideration, including the definition produced by the APPG on British Muslims. Further information on the appointment is at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/independent-expert-appointed-to-tackle-islamophobia>.

These appointments come at a time when concern about hate crime, discrimination and prejudice in relation to many religion and belief groups is high, including in the context of 'mistaken identity'. The January-June 2019 Antisemitic Incidents Report published by the CST on 1 August records the highest number of incidents CST has ever recorded in the January to June period of any year: 892. This is a 10% cent increase on the 810 incidents recorded by CST during the same period in 2018 (which was itself a record high for that six month period, and formed part of a record annual total of 1,688 Antisemitic incidents for the whole of 2018).

https://cst.org.uk/public/data/file/3/d/IR_Jan-Jun_2019.pdf

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'Faith-based bigotry' and sport and inter faith understanding

According to a report in *The Telegraph* reports of Antisemitism, Islamophobia and other faith-based bigotry in professional and grassroots football increased by 75 per cent from the previous year, according to the latest Kick it Out statistics.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/football/2019/07/24/incidents-racism-football-double-just-five-years-kick-chief/>

At the same time, there is an increasing focus on the power of sport to encourage understanding and cooperation between people of different backgrounds. This was illustrated in coverage of the Cricket World Cup and the diversity and team spirit of the England team - <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2019/jul/15/diversity-strength-england-win-cricket-world-cup> - as it has been in events such as those of Spirit of 2012's Breaking Boundaries programme, exemplified by events such as a festival on 31 July in Slough opened by Monty Panessar - <https://twitter.com/aiksaath?lang=en>.

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Equality and Human Rights Commission updates

Access to legal aid for discrimination cases

In June the EHRC published the report of its inquiry into whether legal aid enables victims of discrimination in England and Wales to get justice. This included whether some individuals experience specific difficulties in accessing legal aid because of a protected characteristic, such as religion or belief. The full inquiry report and the two supporting research reports are available at <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/access-legal-aid-discrimination-cases>.

Business Plan

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has published its 2019/20 Business Plan which covers the first year of its new three-year Strategic Plan. Its priorities include: equal access to the labour market and fair treatment at work; inclusion in public transport; access to justice; equality and human rights in the education system; institutions respecting equality and human rights standards.

The full plan is available at

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/business-plan-2019-2020.pdf>.

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2021 Census

As noted in previous e-bulletins, in December, the Government published its White Paper outlining the recommendations for the 2021 Census. The Census (Return Particulars and Removal of Penalties) Bill, to amend the Census Act 1920, had its first reading in the House of Lords on 1 May and its second reading on 17 July.

Some groups within the Sikh community have been lobbying for there to be a separate tick box for 'Sikh' in the ethnic group category. Other groups within the Sikh community have been arguing against this. The Office for National Statistics has said that there are no plans for a separate tick box in the ethnic group category; there will continue to be a tick box in the religion category.

In July the Jain community, through OneJain, represented by the Institute of Jainology, submitted a petition to Downing Street, requesting that there be a separate tick box for the Jain community in the religion category.

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Relationships and Sex Education guidance

The Government published on 25 June 2019 ‘Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education’, statutory guidance for governing bodies, proprietors, head teachers, principals, senior leadership teams, teachers. It can be found at; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>.

The curriculum becomes mandatory for all maintained schools in England, including Academies and Free Schools, from September 2020. Schools, though, are being encouraged by Government to adopt it from this September. If doing so, however, they will still need to meet the current Sex and Relationship Education statutory guidance.

Sex and Relationship Education has been a focus of protests at a school in Birmingham, linked to the use of the ‘No Outsiders’ programme, as reported widely in the media.

On 16 July a joint meeting of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Religious Education and the APPG on Faith and Society explored the issue of ‘Compliance, Assessment and Enforcement: Promoting Positive Outcomes in Religious Education and Relationships and Sex Education’. The meeting was attended by the Minister of State for School Standards, Nick Gibb MP, who has been overseeing the development of the guidance. The meeting highlighted the work of Newham SACRE, which has looked at the issue of faith communities and the response to the new guidance.

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Faith communities responding to climate change

A wide range of faith community bodies and faith based organisations joined the ‘The Time Is Now’ mass lobby against climate change in Westminster on 26 June organised by the Climate Coalition and Greener UK. A number of faith leaders then led the ‘Walk of Witness’ from the National Gallery down Whitehall.

Many of the faith bodies are part of the Climate Coalition and/or Faith for the Climate: <https://www.faithfortheclimate.org.uk>

Environmental issues are increasingly at the forefront of faith community agendas and places of worship are also taking them up. For example on 7 July synagogues across the country celebrated the first Green Shabbat, organised by Eco Synagogue.

<https://ecosynagogue.org/green-shabbat-5-6th-july/>

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MHCLG's vision for stronger communities

On 20 July, the Government published 'By deeds and their results: how we will strengthen our communities and nation'. The document sets out the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government's vision for "stronger communities, why communities matter, what strong communities look like, and what government and partners can do to support their creation". It sets out the 4 pillars which will shape the Ministry's work across Government, focused on supporting: trust, connectedness and local pride; active citizenship and local control; shared community spaces; and shared prosperity, with no community left behind.

The full report can be downloaded at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/by-deeds-and-their-results-strengthening-our-communities-and-nation>.

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HTA consultation on organ donation

The Human Tissue Authority (HTA) has launched a consultation on the changes proposed to the Code of Practice for organ donation and transplant professionals in England. The HTA has engaged with representatives from faith and cultural organisations, as well as professionals working in this area of healthcare to revise the Code, to bring it in line with the Human Tissue Act 2004, which was amended as a result of the Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Act 2019. The consultation is asking for views on the draft version of the Code and will run for 12 weeks, closing on 26 September. Further information, including how to respond, is at <https://www.hta.gov.uk/consultation-on-code-of-practice-f-2019>.

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INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK NEWS

IFN National Meeting – 'The Changing Face of Local Inter Faith Dialogue and Cooperation'

IFN's 2019 National Meeting took place at the Coin Street Neighbourhood Centre in London on 4 July. Its theme was 'The Changing Face of Local Inter Faith Dialogue and Cooperation'. The meeting focussed on some of the possibilities and challenges of working locally for inter faith understanding and cooperation.

The day began with a welcome and opening remarks from Co-Chair Jatinder Singh Birdi and the then Co-Chair, Rt Revd Richard Atkinson. This was followed by a short overview of grassroots inter faith engagement in the UK today by IFN Executive Director, Dr Harriet Crabtree. Rabbi Warren Elf and the Revd Charles Kwaku-Odoi, Director and Co-Chair of Faith Network for Manchester (FN4M), then reflected on the impact for local inter faith organisations of seeking to respond to recurrent atrocities and hate crime issues, as well as some other challenges and opportunities of the present times. Geetha Maheshwaran from London Boroughs Faiths Network (LBFN) and Dr Maureen Sier, Director of Interfaith Scotland and IFN Trustee, offered perspectives on the variety of initiatives and the importance of the involvement of faith groups. In the afternoon, the Revd David Herbert, Chair of Newcastle Council of Faiths, reflected on how inter faith engagement has evolved across the years, as well as the importance of continuing to develop relationships of trust and mutuality; and the Revd Liz Carnelley, National Project Director of The Church Urban Fund's Near Neighbours Programme, reflected on how small grants and programmes such as those offered by the programme can benefit in the long term.

During the day discussion groups were held on: 'Tackling social problems - working together and with statutory agencies', with a presentation from Penny Smith-Orr of Faiths Together in Croydon; 'Creative Collaboration – using arts and culture to stimulate inter faith understanding and build relationships' with a 10 minute film about 'Angels in our City' and a presentation from Charlotte Gravestock, Secretary of Brighton and Hove Interfaith Contact Group and Sarah West, filmmaker; 'Inter faith engagement as part of the community cohesion agenda' with a presentation from Rauf Bashir, Project Director, Shabaz Ahmed and Katie Nolan, Community Workers at Building Bridges in Pendle; 'Local inter faith engagement with environmental issues' with presentations from John Marder, Interfaith Officer of the Network of Buddhist Organisations and member of Crawley Interfaith Network and Kauser Akhtar, Chair of the South East England Faiths Forum; 'Faith Communities and local inter faith engagement' with a presentation from Rajnish Kashyap, General Secretary of the Hindu Council UK and member of Council of Dharmic Faiths and Faiths Forum for London; 'Amplifying impact- maximising your local connections and highlighting your work' with a presentation from Sheikh Irfan Soni and the Revd Simon Cash of North Kirklees Inter Faith Council; and 'Bilateral and multi faith inter faith engagement at local level' with a presentation from the Revd Patrick Moriarty, Trustee and Hon Christian Secretary of the Council of Christians and Jews.

A full report will be produced in due course. Reports on National Meetings from previous years can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/publications>.

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Royal British Legion faith community roundtable

IFN assisted the Royal British Legion (RBL) on a Roundtable that it held on 25 June for faith communities on Remembrance and inclusion.

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Inter Faith Week 2019 10-17 November

Inter Faith Week www.interfaithweek.org is a major programme within the work of the Inter Faith Network for the UK. The 2019 programme was launched at IFN's 2019 National Meeting. At that, Julie Jones, Vice-Chair of Interfaith Council for Wales/Cyngor Rhyngffydd Cymru and IFN Trustee, talked about the platform the Week offers for increasing inter faith understanding and cooperation, and increasing religious literacy. The booklet *Inter Faith Week: Stories from 2018, Inspiration for 2019* was launched by Cllr Tom Aditya, Chair of Bristol Multi-Faith Forum; Trupti Patel, President of the Hindu Forum of Britain; Dr Norman Richardson of Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum; and Sheikh Irfan Soni, teacher and member of North Kirklees Interfaith Council.

2 August marks 100 days to go until Inter Faith Week 2019. IFN will be posting about this on social media on that day (Friday). Please do follow the Week on Facebook (www.facebook.com/ifweek), Twitter (www.twitter.com/ifweek) and Instagram (www.instagram.com/ifweek) to keep up to date with the Week.

Inter Faith Week: Stories from 2018, inspiration for 2019 is packed with images and stories from the 2018 Week and ideas for 2019. To download your copy, visit <https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/inter-faith-week-stories-from-2018-inspiration-for-2019>. If you would like a hard copy, please contact the IFN office. Inter Faith Week posters and flyers are also available.

Free registration packs are available to those who submit details of their Inter Faith Week activities to the website at www.interfaithweek.org/submit, while stocks last.

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

Muslim Christian refugee partnership

Mosques in North East London have partnered with churches and Christian groups to sponsor a Syrian refugee family who will be starting their new life in the UK. The Redbridge Community Sponsorship project is a partnership between South Woodford Mosque, Balfour Road Mosque, Ilford Methodist Church, Ilford Salvation Army, St Thomas of Canterbury RC Church and Wanstead Quakers. A group of residents and faith communities, with the support of Redbridge Council and Citizen UK's Sponsor Refugees project, developed a detailed Community Sponsorship plan outlining how they will support the family and fundraised £9,000 to help cover the family's expenses for an initial 18-month period. For more information about the Redbridge Community Sponsorship project, visit <https://www.facebook.com/RedbridgeSponsorRefugees>.

The Community Sponsorship scheme was launched by the government in 2016, allowing groups of UK residents the opportunity to take the lead in welcoming a refugee family. Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-sponsorship-how-you-can-make-it-happen>.

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Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees

Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees is currently developing and piloting a volunteer holiday hosting programme, where members of receiving communities can welcome refugees in their homes for short breaks, and receive reciprocal hospitality, in order to facilitate social connections, strengthen inter faith and intercultural dialogue and wider cultural orientation beyond refugees' localities. Further information is at <https://nacom.org.uk/members/scottish-faiths-action-for-refugees-sfar/>.

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Interfaith Council for Wales Choir

The Interfaith Council for Wales/Cyngor Rhyngffydd Cymru is seeking people from all faiths to join the Inter-faith Council Choir. All are welcome and its first performance will be in November. For more information, visit <https://www.interfaithcouncilwales.cymru/news/>.

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Trees for Life – Interfaith Scotland

To mark its 20th anniversary, and in response to the climate emergency, Interfaith Scotland has sponsored a grove of trees in the Scottish Highlands to which all faith communities, inter faith groups, organisations and individuals dedicated to tackling climate change can contribute.

‘The World Interfaith Harmony Grove’ can be found at <https://treesforlife.org.uk/plant-trees/grove/8922>.

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Interfaith Trip to Taizé for Young People

Near Neighbours is organising a trip for a dozen young people, between the ages of 18-35 to the Taizé Community in France for their Muslim/Christian Friendship weekend, from Wednesday 21 to Sunday 25 August. All expenses will be paid by Near Neighbours including train fares, accommodation and food.

The weekend will focus on Christian/Muslim relations, with Muslim and Christian speakers, but people of any faith, background or gender can apply. For more information and the application form, visit <https://www.near-neighbours.org.uk/taize>.

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

Faith Leader Training Initiative

Sessions for the Government’s free Faith Leader Training Initiative are taking place in Birmingham, London and Manchester. These can still be joined. Sessions begin in Leeds in September. The training is for anyone who is in a recognised leadership role in their faith community and is designed to support them in the task of “ministering effectively in the contemporary UK”. It aims to help them “navigate the challenges of public life constructively and sensitively from a perspective that understands committed and conservative religious faith”. For more information, or to book a place, visit www.birmingham.ac.uk/FLTI or contact Programme Director Andrew Davies at A.Davies.4@bham.ac.uk.

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Two training days – Interfaith Scotland

Interfaith Scotland is running a workshop on 8 August entitled ‘3 Mottos for Guiding our Approach to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Communication’. For more information and to register, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/3-mottos-for-guiding-our-approach-to-equality-diversity-and-inclusion-tickets-63340609468>. It is also running a training day on 21 August on ‘Interpreting Culture – Improving Cross-Cultural Communication’. For more information, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/interpreting-culture-improving-cross-cultural-communication-tickets-63341463021/amp>.

Both courses will run from 9.30am to 1pm at Interfaith Scotland, Dialogue Room, Flemington House, 110 Flemington Street, Glasgow, G21 4BF.

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Chaplains on Campus report

In May the University of Coventry launched a report on ‘Chaplains on Campus’, which looked at the factors affecting “the development, variation and effectiveness of chaplaincy offerings”. <https://pureportal.coventry.ac.uk/en/publications/chaplains-on-campus-understanding-chaplaincy-in-uk-universities>.

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New report on faith and belief on Campus

‘Faith and Belief on Campus: Division and Cohesion. Exploring Student Faith and Belief Societies’ was published by Theos in July. Written by Simon Perfect, Ben Ryan and Kristin Aune, it draws on research conducted in a partnership between Theos and Dr Kristin Aune of the Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations at Coventry University.

<https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/cmsfiles/Reportfiles/Theos---Faith-and-Belief-on-Campus---Division-and-Cohesion.pdf>

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Right Up Your Street – Report on faith groups tackling loneliness

On 2 July FaithAction and the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Faith and Society launched ‘Right Up Your Street’, a report on how faith groups are working to tackle loneliness. The report calls for more links between faith groups and other organisations as part of a national drive to end loneliness. To download a copy of the report, visit <https://www.faithaction.net/working-with-you/tackling-loneliness/>.

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Hate Crime, Faith and Belonging

In July a report was published by the Faith & Belief Forum and the Department of Psychosocial Studies at Birkbeck, *Hate Crime, Faith and Belonging*.

<https://faithbeliefforum.org/religious-hate-crime-report-calls-on-communities-to-challenge-hateful-messages-together/>

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One World Week leaflet – Climate Changes Everything

One World Week has published its new leaflet for 2019, inspired by climate activist Greta Thunberg’s emphasis on the urgency for action in tackling climate change. The leaflet contains a graphic outlining the likely impacts of climate change, and is available to download at: <https://www.oneworldweek.org/uploads/resources/OWW2019-WEB.pdf>. For printed copies, contact Ingrid at oww@oneworldweek.org.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS, AND NOMINATIONS

World Congress of Faiths Essay Award

The World Congress of Faiths is holding an essay competition on the theme ‘Is Interfaith Worship a Desirable Practice?’. The competition is open to undergraduate and postgraduate students studying in the UK. Entries should be a maximum of 3,000 words.

The winner will receive £300 and their essay will be published in the journal *Interreligious Insight*. All entrants will receive free World Congress of Faiths membership. The deadline for submission is 27 August. For more information, visit www.worldfaiths.org/2019-essay-award.

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Honours List nominations

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is keen to ensure that individuals from the full breadth of society who are making a significant contribution to public life are properly recognised through the Honours system, and so is seeking nominations for the Queen’s Birthday Honours list. It is particularly keen that individuals

be recognised who have contributed to building integrated communities and notes that nominees can come from all levels; being in a junior role is not a barrier to a nomination.

All nominations must be made on an official citation form and nominees should not be informed that they have been nominated. Citation forms, as well as further information, can be obtained from Abdul Ghaffar at Abdul.Ghaffar@communities.gov.uk. The deadline for nominations is Monday 16 September.

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Research England survey on funding

Research England distributes funding to universities based on their research performance. This is known as Quality-related Research, or QR funding. To support its commitment to improving equality, diversity and inclusion, it undertakes Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) of its functions and policy. It is currently undertaking an EIA of its QR and formula research capital funding.

The EIA will look at the impact of our funding not only on staff at universities but also at the research it supports and the potential beneficiaries of research. To do this, it is gathering views and evidence from groups of people with protected characteristics, including religion and belief, who might benefit from research and may therefore be affected by its funding decisions.

The online survey can be found at <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/ResearchEnglandEIA/>. Further information can be found in the [survey guidance](#) and in the [EIA background document](#), which sets out how it allocates our funding. This information will be important to take into consideration when responding to the survey.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

IFN's website lists job and internship opportunities with a significant inter faith dimension with IFN member organisations at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/jobs>.

Inter Faith Network for the UK – Volunteers

The Inter Faith Network for the UK is seeking volunteers to help with various projects in the IFN office from September onwards. For further information and an application form, contact ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Places of Worship – Security funding scheme

The Places of Worship Fund, established in 2016 as part of the Government's Hate Crime Action Plan, provides financial support for physical protective security such as fencing, lighting and CCTV. The Government at that time committed funding of £2.4 million over 3 years. A further £1.6 million was announced after the New Zealand mosque attacks.

Organisations no longer have to prove, in order to be eligible, that they have previously experienced a hate crime incident directly. For more information, visit <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/places-of-worship-security-funding-scheme>. The closing date for the current round of funding applications is 31 August.

There is also a separate £5 million fund being made available over 3 years to provide protective security training to build on some of the positive work already happening in communities. The Home Office will be working closely with communities and faith leaders to develop this new scheme. Further information is at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/places-of-worship-to-get-security-funding-boost> with further details to be published.

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Inter Faith Youth Trust - Inter Faith Week grants

As in previous years, the Inter Faith Youth Trust will be making available a special programme of grants for Inter Faith Week 2019. This year the Trust will be awarding grants of up to £800. Grants are awarded for proposals for inter-faith activities by children and young people from Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and other faiths and those of no formal faith. The age range for young people is 11-25 years. Priority will be given to projects which actively involve young people in planning, running, and evaluation of the project; promote positive action; and are run by non-statutory organisations, such as youth clubs, scout/guide groups, local voluntary and community organisations.

The application form can be downloaded at www.ifyouthtrust.org.uk/. The deadline for the submission of forms is 24 August.

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Funding to promote organ donation

NHS Blood and Transplant is offering funding to help organisations promote deceased organ donation among black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities in England and Wales. They are looking for applications that will deliver projects to reach these BAME communities and/or engage people around their faith/beliefs.

Successful programmes for activity in England will need to demonstrate how they will help contribute to awareness and understanding of the new opt-out system in England. They should also address myths and barriers and increase support for organ donation among the target audience(s) of their project. Funding is available for projects in England and/or Wales. In Wales it is funded by the Welsh Government and the Department of Health and Social Care. Organisations applying for funds can apply for one of two options: funds up to £2,499 or between £2,500 and £10,000. The deadline for applications is 1 September. Further information about the application process is at www.nhsbt.nhs.uk/bamefundingcall.

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Grants to address intolerance

The St Ethelburga's Centre is planning to deploy £60,000 of its resources towards projects which address different forms of intolerance in society. It is specifically seeking Jewish-Christian collaborations to deliver the project. There will be an event at the St Ethelburga's Centre in London on 4 September which will set out the aims and aspirations for this funding stream and there will be an opportunity to network and explore collaborations and partnerships. For more information, visit, <https://stethelburgas.org/event/transforming-intolerance-apply-for-a-grant/>.

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Windrush compensation scheme

The Windrush Compensation Scheme is open to those who settled in the UK from a Commonwealth country before 1973, and in certain circumstances their children and grandchildren. It provides payments to individuals who suffered losses as a result of not being able to evidence their lawful status in the UK. These could range from a loss of employment or access to housing, benefits, education or NHS healthcare to emotional distress or deterioration in mental and physical health. Additionally, it is open to all nationalities who arrived to live in the UK before 31 December 1988 and are settled here. Claim forms can be downloaded and guidance on completing the application can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/windrush-compensation-scheme>. Claimants can

also request a form to be sent by post by calling our helpline on 0800 678 1925 or via email WindrushCompensationScheme@homeoffice.gov.uk where they can also request a call back if they are overseas.

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Faiths in Scotland Community Action Fund

Faiths in Scotland Community Action Fund is open for applications for grants of up to £2,000 over 1 year. Further information is at <https://www.faithincommunityscotland.org/faith-in-community-scotland-action-fund/>. For any queries email andrew@faithincommunityscotland.org or telephone 0141 221 4576.

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Funding websites

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) offers advice on fundraising and grants on its Knowhow Nonprofit site at <https://knowhownonprofit.org/funding>.

Funding Central - <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/default.aspx> - is a free website for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises in England that provides access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, together with tools and resources for supporting organisations to develop sustainable income strategies appropriate to their needs. Similar websites for funding in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at Funding Scotland - <http://www.fundingscotland.com/> - Wales Council for Voluntary Action - <http://www.wcva.org.uk/funding/search> - and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland - <https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

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Website and Facebook grants

The Transform Foundation is offering funding to charities to help with new website builds. Grants of £18,000 are available. It is also offering grants towards Facebook advertising of £5,000. For further information and to apply, visit www.transformfoundation.org.uk.

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Google and charities

Google is offering a service to registered charities which brings: Google Ad Grants: Free AdWords advertising to promote their websites on Google through keyword targeting; YouTube Nonprofit Programme: Access exclusive resources, features and programs designed to maximise their organisations' impact on YouTube; and Google Apps for Non-profit: Free version of the Google Apps business productivity suite, including Gmail, Docs,

Calendar and more. For further information, visit www.google.co.uk/intl/en/nonprofits/join.

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Subsidised fundraising workshops

The Foundation for Social Improvement offers heavily subsidised training programmes for small charities across the UK. The courses cover a wide range of subjects from event planning to leadership. Many of the courses focus on fundraising and sustainability skills in particular.

Further information and dates for upcoming courses in April and May can be found at <http://www.thefsi.org/services/training>.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Sewa Day will take place on Sunday 6 October. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Hindu community. <http://www.sewaday.org/>

National Hate Crime Awareness Week will take place from Saturday 12 to Saturday 19 October. <https://nationalhcaw.uk/>

One World Week will take place from Sunday 20 to Sunday 27 October. This is its 40th anniversary year. www.oneworldweek.org

Inter Faith Week will take place from Sunday 10 to Sunday 17 November. It is led by the Inter Faith Network for the UK. www.interfaithweek.org See [above](#).

Scottish Interfaith Week will take place from Sunday 10 to Sunday 17 November. Scottish Interfaith Week is led by Interfaith Scotland. www.scottishinterfaithweek.org

Mitzvah Day will take place on Sunday 17 November. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Jewish community. On Mitzvah Day, people give their time, not their money, to make a difference to the community around them. Many events and projects held for the day have an inter faith focus. www.mitzvahday.org.uk/

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DIARY DATES

This section includes a sample of some of the events taking place around the UK during August and September. Only one event per organisation is included. We also include information on diary dates between e-bulletins on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/events>.

Woking People of Faith is holding a Last Post Multi-Faith Service on Sunday 4 August. The service will start at 2.00pm at the Brookwood Cemetery, Dawney Hill, GU24 0JB. For more information contact administrator@wpof.org.uk or visit www.wpof.org.uk

Swansea Interfaith Forum will be at the Gower Show on Sunday 4 August. The Show is being held in the grounds of Penrice Castle in Gower. For more information Visit <https://www.facebook.com/events/880671938943918/>.

Horsham Interfaith Forum is holding its annual Hiroshima Remembrance event on Tuesday 6 August for the last time. The event will be held at 8.00am at the Peace Garden, Denne Road Cemetery, Horsham RH12 1JA. It will be followed by an optional breakfast at Cote or Commodore, to bid farewell to Dr Richard Boeke. Those intending to join the breakfast should email msymonds241@btinternet.com or send a text message or voicemail to 07760 275612 by 31 July.

York Interfaith Group is holding its annual planning meeting on Tuesday 6 August. The group will discuss ideas for Inter Faith Week in November and put forward ideas for the YIG 2020 programme. Shared vegetarian refreshments will be available. The event will run from 7.30pm to 9.00pm at the Hudson Room, City of York Council, West Offices, Station Rise, York, YO1 6GA. For more information, email yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com or visit www.yorkinterfaith.org.

Interfaith Scotland will be hosting its annual networking seminar for local inter faith groups in Scotland on Monday 19 August. The meeting will take place in the Interfaith Scotland Dialogue Centre in Glasgow and will focus on a number of key issues identified by the local groups of Scotland. For more information, visit <https://interfaithscotland.org/>.

The Ammerdown Centre is holding a Christian Jewish event from Monday 19 August to Wednesday 21 August. The title of the event is 'Environmental Spirituality in Judaism and Christianity'. It will be exploring *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis' encyclical on the environment in light of Jewish and Christian spirituality. The event will be led by Sr Margaret Shepherd and Jonathan Gorsky. The event will take place at The Ammerdown Centre, Ammerdown Park, Radstock, Somerset, BA3 5SW. To book a place, contact The Ammerdown Centre on 01761 433709 or at centre@ammerdown.org.

The Windsor and Maidenhead Community Forum is holding its next Women's Group meeting on Wednesday 21 August. Ladies of all faiths or none are welcome. For more information, visit <http://www.wamcf.org/womens-group/>.

The Board of Deputies of British Jews is holding a half-day event on Sunday 8 September to address topical questions in inter faith relations, including how the Israeli-Palestinian conflict should be spoken about and how people can act together for social justice. The event will include speakers such as Imam Qari Asim MBE, Rabbi Helen Freeman, HOPE not Hate and Nisa Nashim. It will begin at 11.45am, at a North West London location. Tickets include a kosher lunch. To book in advance, visit <http://bodinterfaith.eventbrite.co.uk>.

The Brighton & Hove Interfaith Contact Group is holding a 'Tree of Life' event on Sunday 8 September. This will be an inter faith and intercommunal celebration, with stalls, talks, photographic exhibitions, music, acts of commemoration and refreshments. It will take place from 2.00pm to 6.00pm at the Brighton & Hove Progressive Synagogue, 6 Lansdowne Road, Hove BN3 1FF. Entry is free for those registering at members@interfaithcontactgroup.com.

The World Congress of Faiths is holding a conference on Tuesday 10 September on 'Meetings of Minds: Conflict, Reconciliation and Interfaith Relations'. The keynote speaker will be Dr Kristin Aune, Professor of Sociology of Religion at Coventry University. The event is being held from 10am to 4pm at St Michael's House, Coventry CV1 5EX. For further information, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/meetings-of-minds-conflict-reconciliation-and-inter-faith-relations-tickets-62563425891>.

Torbay Interfaith Forum is holding a talk on Wednesday 11 September. The talk is on 'Dartmoor Mindscapes – Re-Visioning a Sacred Landscape'. Peter Knight will be speaking. Refreshments will be available after the talk. The talk will begin at 7.30pm at The Friends' Meeting house, 48 Tor Hill Road Torquay, TQ2 5RT. For more information, visit <http://torbayinterfaith.org.uk/>

Newcastle Council of Faiths is holding its Annual Walk for Peace on Sunday 15 September. Participants are invited to meet at 10.00am at the Hindu Temple, West Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 9QB. The Walk will begin at 11.00am. For more information, contact Hari Shukla on 0191 2433620.

South East England Faiths Forum is holding its annual conference on Monday 16 September. The theme will be '12 Years to Save the Planet? - Faith and belief perspectives on our common environment and responsibility for our planet'. The event is being held from 10.30am to 3.30pm at the University of Surrey, Stag Hill, Guildford. Registration and refreshments from 9.30am. For details and registration, visit <http://se-faithforum.net>.

Building Bridges in Burnley is holding its next ‘Share Faith Share Food’ event on Tuesday 17 September. The event will be running from 7pm, at the Faith Centre, Barden La, Burnley BB10 1JD. For further information, visit <https://bbburnley.wordpress.com/>.

Bexley Interfaith Forum is holding an event on Saturday 21 September. This will be a social and a fundraiser. The event is free with a suggested donation. It will start at 6pm at Kemnal Park Cemetery, Sidcup By Pass, Chislehurst, BR7 6RR. To book, email bexleyinterfaith@gmail.com or text Sabrina on 07708 945434.

Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship is holding a talk on Tuesday 24 September. The talk will be on ‘Muslim and Pagan Attitudes towards Violence’. Adam Aslam and Jay Anderson will be speaking. The talk will begin at 7.30pm at the Baab ul Ilm Islamic Centre, 166 Shadwell Lane, Leeds, LS17 8AD. For more information, visit www.concord-leeds.org.uk.

The **Woolf Institute** is holding an Afternoon Tea event on Saturday 22 September for Alumni, Friends and Supporters. It is being held from 2.00pm to 3.30pm at the Woolf Institute, Madingley Road, Cambridge, CB3 0UB. For more information, visit <https://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/whats-on/events/tea19>.

More information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org.uk

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **23 September** with ‘e-bulletin’ in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

**SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK
TO INCREASE INTER FAITH UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION**

We need your help to ensure that the Inter Faith Network for the UK's work to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation continues and grows, helping people of all backgrounds to live and work together with mutual respect and shared commitment to the common good.

Gifts at all levels are much valued and make a real difference. You can donate directly at www.interfaith.org.uk/donate or via PayPal.

Donations can also be made by sending a cheque to: The Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH.

Thank you!

REMEMBERING A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND

If you would like to make a gift in memory of a loved one, please get in touch by emailing remember@interfaith.org.uk or call us on 0207 730 0410.

A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

By leaving a gift in your will to the Inter Faith Network for the UK, you can leave a living inheritance to help deepen and strengthen inter faith understanding and cooperation in this country – for now and for the future. If you are thinking about making a will, the best thing to do is to get in touch with a professional will writer, such as a solicitor or advocate; they can help to ensure it is legally correct and that your wishes are met. If you have already made a will, you can still make an addition or amendment in the form of a codicil. If you would like to pledge a gift, please provide our name and address, along with our registered charity number 1068934.

Please get in touch with us if you have any queries.

You can call us on 0207 730 0410 or contact us at remember@interfaith.org.uk

Disclaimer: Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH
www.interfaith.org.uk www.facebook.com/IFNetUK www.twitter.com/IFNetUK
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IFN e-bulletin

October 2019

General Data Protection Regulation

As you will be aware, data protection legislation changed with the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) from 25 May 2018. You can sign up to IFN mailings at any time by using the form on IFN's website at: www.interfaith.org.uk/news/gdpr.

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The e-bulletin is published every two months. If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the June e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **22 November** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style. The e-bulletin is designed primarily to flag up new developments and projects and future events.

IFN also highlights news and projects of interest through Twitter (www.twitter.com/IFNetUK) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/IFNetUK) and, where about Inter Faith Week, through (www.twitter.com/IFWeek and www.facebook.com/IFWeek).

Disclaimer: Information in this e-bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

Faith Communities and Exiting the EU

On 23 June 2016 a referendum took place where a majority of voters voted for the UK to leave the European Union. The UK was originally scheduled to leave the EU on 29 March 2019. The date has been delayed twice. The ‘Benn Act’ (European Union (Withdrawal) (No. 2) Act 2019 for which Royal Assent was received on 9 September) requires the Prime Minister to seek a further extension to the withdrawal date if a withdrawal agreement has not been agreed with the EU, and approved by the House of Commons, by 19 October. There is an exception to that which is if MPs vote for a no-deal Exit. The position of Prime Minister Boris Johnson continues to be that the UK must leave on 31 October.

The Supreme Court’s judgment on 24 September that the Prime Minister’s decision to prorogue Parliament was unlawful rendered the prorogation null, and the Parliamentary session has resumed. This, together with the possibility of a General Election in the near future, are among the additional factors which render the actual date of EU exit unpredictable and planning for it the more complex. However, talks between UK Government officials continue and so, too, does planning by Government – both for deal and no-deal Exit scenarios. On 3 October the Prime Minister set out his proposals for a Brexit deal in Parliament.

Faith communities have a role to play in the time of transition, helping to bridge divides, and there may also be an impact on them. These issues were discussed at the recent meeting of IFN’s Faith Communities Forum (see [below](#)).

A group of business executives, faith leaders and charities have met to discuss a new grassroots campaign to help bring communities back together.

<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/brexit/9885911/britain-brexit-divide-campaign/>

Information about preparation for EU Exit can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-exiting-the-european-union>.

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Political Parties and Moderation of language

The Speaker of the House of Commons, Rt Hon John Bercow MP, summoned party leaders to an emergency meeting on 30 September about the growing use of inflammatory language in Westminster, amid concerns that MPs are facing an increasing safety risk. During the meeting at the Speaker's House in Parliament, a statement was drawn up about the responsibility of leaders "to try to use moderate language". The pledge was signed by Mark Spencer, the government chief whip, on behalf of the Prime Minister, and by the Leader of the Opposition, Rt Hon Jeremy Corbyn MP as well as signatories for other parties and the Speaker himself. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-49884047>.

The Jo Cox Foundation has called on all political parties to agree to a code of conduct to help protect MPs, and is working with the Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) to develop a Joint Standard of Conduct to help protect election candidates.

A joint statement issued on behalf of the Church of England's College of Bishops called for a new tone of listening and respect in debates.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/news/bishops-call-respect-all-sides-amid-brexit-debate>

A little over a year ago, IFN's Co-Chairs and Faith Communities Forum Moderators issued a statement on 'Political Parties – Modelling Respectful Engagement'. A copy of this can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/political-parties-modelling-respectful-engagement-statement>. That statement was made in a context of continuing concerns about Antisemitism and Islamophobia and about extremism and hate incidents which have affected, among others, a number of faith communities.

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Government funding to tackle online Antisemitism

Communities Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP announced on 15 September that the Government is to provide £100,000 of funding to tackle online Antisemitism. Mr Jenrick

said “This funding will support the Antisemitism Policy Trust’s ongoing work to tackle the spread of antisemitic tropes online and challenge harmful narratives about the Jewish community.” <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/communities-secretary-commits-funding-to-tackle-online-hate>

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Safeguarding in Faith Settings

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Safeguarding in Faith Settings has been gathering evidence for its second Inquiry, which will focus on whether there should be a change in legislation relating to ‘Positions of Trust’ within faith settings. Under the current legislation, it is illegal for groups of professionals such as teachers, care workers and youth justice staff to be involved in sexual activity with a 16 or 17-year-old under their supervision. However, other adults who hold similar positions of power within settings such as faith and religious organisations and sports teams are not covered by the provisions.

The next evidence session will be in the Houses of Parliament on 22 October and the report on their findings is due to be published in November. Further information is at <https://thirtyoneeight.org/news-and-events/appg/appg-2018/appg-launches-new-inquiry/>.

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NATRE report on Religious Education in English Secondary Schools

In September the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE) published its 2019 report outlining trends in secondary Religious Education in schools funded by the state in England. <https://www.natre.org.uk/news/latest-news/number-of-schools-flouting-religious-education-laws-rises/> An infographic highlighting the key issues from the survey, undertaken in May/June this year, can be found at <https://www.natre.org.uk/news/latest-news/number-of-schools-flouting-religious-education-laws-rises/>.

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Special Envoy on Freedom of Religion or Belief

On 12 September the Prime Minister appointed Rehman Chishti MP as his new Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief. Mr Chishti’s role, based in the Foreign Office, will be to “bring together efforts across the UK Government, with faith actors and civil society to promote the UK’s firm stance on religious tolerance abroad”. Further information is

available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-appoints-new-pm-envoy-for-freedom-of-religion-belief>.

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Anglican Inter Faith Commission hosted in Wales

Wales' First Minister, Mark Drakeford, and the Archbishop of Wales, the Most Revd John Davies, were among those speaking at a meeting of the Anglican Inter Faith Commission in Wales on 9 September. The event, which was held at Cardiff's Pierhead building, was chaired by the Archbishop of Dublin, the Most Revd Dr Michael Jackson, and attended by inter faith specialists from Anglican churches in Europe and North America and also representatives from other faiths and church denominations.

The event was an opportunity to hear about the Welsh Government's work with faith communities; and also the relationship that faith groups in Wales have with the Government and with each other. There were also presentations from the Vice-Chair of the Inter-faith Council for Wales, Julie Jones; the Revd Dean Atkins, Chair of South Cardiff Interfaith Network; and the Revd Canon Aled Edwards, Chief Executive of Cytûn, Churches Together in Wales. For further information, see <https://www.churchinwales.org.uk/news/2019/09/wales-hosts-interfaith-commission>.

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Faith communities and climate change

Faith communities and inter faith groups continue to work on climate change issues. Across the last month there has been increasing inter faith engagement involving the Faith for the Climate Network and its members, the Climate Coalition, faith communities, and initiatives such as Faiths4Change and the Birmingham Council of Faiths Footsteps programme. A number of faith communities and inter faith bodies held activities linked to the Climate Strike on 27 September.

Extinction Rebellion has called a second 'international week of rebellion' starting on 7 October. Faith for the Climate report that a number of people of faith will come together to occupy and hold Lambeth Bridge from 7 – 19 October as a Faith Bridge, with activity including daily Christian prayer and eucharists, the Muslim call to prayer, Buddhist meditation, Quaker meeting for worship, and Jewish teaching in a succah, along with inter faith prayer flag making, candlelit vigils, talks, and moments to mark Yom Kippur, and the birthdays of Gandhi and Thich Nhat Hanh.

See also: <https://www.facebook.com/events/411365226172686>
<https://rebellion.earth/event/faith-bridge-at-the-xr-international-rebellion-uk/>

<https://blog.cafod.org.uk/2019/09/20/bridge-of-faith-why-are-extinction-rebellion-taking-over-a-london-bridge/>

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Community Resilience framework and guidance

Faith communities are often at the forefront of volunteering and offering assistance in emergencies. This support is invaluable because community networks and expertise can reduce the demand on emergency responder resources and enable more effective targeted help to be provided to the most vulnerable. On 3 September the Government published two documents on Community Resilience: *Community Resilience Development Framework* and guidance on *Planning the coordination of spontaneous volunteers in emergencies*.

The documents, which have been produced in consultation with emergency responders, Government departments and voluntary sector organisations can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-resilience-development-framework> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-the-coordination-of-spontaneous-volunteers>.

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Welsh Government consultation on RE and Relationships and Sexuality Education in the curriculum

On 3 October the Welsh Government launched a consultation seeking views on plans to ensure that all children have access to the full curriculum including Religious Education and Relationships and Sexuality Education. Education Minister Kirsty Williams has said that she is “minded to ensure all children and young people are required to study RE and RSE in the new curriculum” as opposed to the current practice where parents can prevent their children from attending RE and RSE lessons.

The 8-week consultation will gather a broad range of views from parents, learners and interested groups across Wales before a final decision is taken.

Explaining the proposed change, Ms Williams said: “Pupils will explore the range of spiritual, philosophical, moral, social and cultural beliefs within their community, across Wales, and throughout the world. ‘Religions and Worldviews’ better reflects teaching practice within the new curriculum, and allows for the exploration of a range of religious and philosophical beliefs, as well as other beliefs and world views, including non-religious world views.”

The consultation runs until 28 November. For more information, visit <https://gov.wales/welsh-government-working-teachers-parents-and-students-ensure-learners-have-access-broad-and>.

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INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK NEWS

Inter Faith Week 2019 10-17 November

The Inter Faith Week www.interfaithweek.org 2019 programme was launched at IFN's National Meeting in July.

Many activities are being planned for Inter Faith Week – and for Scottish Interfaith Week which takes place at the same time (www.scottishinterfaithweek.org). These include events in places of worship and schools, programmes of activities at NHS hospitals, cultural events in museums, galleries and local community spaces, campus activities and much more. Events are being added regularly to the Inter Faith Week map: <https://www.interfaithweek.org/events/map>

If you are planning activities to mark the Week in England, Northern Ireland or Wales, please do take a moment to register your activity at www.interfaithweek.org/submit. This will add your activity to the map (www.interfaithweek.org/map), enabling other people to find out about it and adding to the overall impact of the Week. Registering bodies are also eligible for a free registration pack.

If you are interested to take part but don't yet have an activity planned, you can find ideas and planning tips in the Inter Faith Week Toolkit (www.interfaithweek.org/toolkit) and quick-plan activities can be found at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/quick-plan-activities>.

IFN is encouraging people to post photos on social media in the run-up to and during the Week using the hashtag #InterFaithWeek, holding IFW message cards. Printable blank message cards can be downloaded from <https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/social-media> and an A3 card is included in each Week registration pack. You can also request them from the IFN office.

Please do follow the Inter Faith Week accounts on social media:

- Facebook – www.facebook.com/ifweek
- Twitter – www.twitter.com/IFWeek
- Instagram – www.instagram.com/IFWeek

and share posts about the Week with your followers. IFN will be working to amplify posts about Inter Faith Week activities during the Week, and using the hashtag and/ or tagging the Inter Faith Week accounts helps us to do this.

If you are planning to blog or write articles about the Week, or to talk about it on the Radio or TV, you might find the following media ‘Key messages’ helpful:

(<https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/key-messages>). The IFN office is also happy to provide longer briefing, assist with drafting, or try to help find people willing to be interviewed about the Week – please do get in touch.

To sign up to the Inter Faith Week mailing list, visit

<https://www.interfaithweek.org/news/mailling-list-sign-up>.

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Meeting of Faith Communities Forum

A meeting of IFN’s Faith Communities Forum was held on 3 October. The main item on the Agenda was Exiting the EU. Officials from the Department for Exiting the European Union (DExEU) and from the Engagement, Integration and Communities Directorate Brexit Team, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) spoke about different aspects of EU Exit planning with a particular reference to faith communities. This was followed by a wider discussion about faith communities and EU Exit, considering such questions as: the role of faith communities in this time of transition and the potential impact on faith communities of EU Exit.

The meeting also discussed: the inter faith engagement and joint work of faith communities; freedom of religion and the safety of faith communities; other current issues of interest or concern to faith communities; and a number of IFN Matters.

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Social media series on local inter faith dialogue and social action

In August IFN ran a social media series on Twitter twitter.com/ifnetuk and Facebook facebook.com/ifnetuk highlighting the work of local inter faith bodies on inter faith dialogue and social action. It also included examples of their work during a series of tweets and posts for Communities Week which ran between 9 and 13 September.

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Response to mosque attack in Oslo

On 10 August there was an attack at the Al-Noor Islamic Centre in Oslo. IFN's Co-Chairs posted the following message on Facebook and Twitter the following day:

‘Our thoughts are with those affected by the attack at the mosque at the Al-Noor Islamic Centre in Oslo this weekend, just ahead of Eid Al-Adha. Statements of IFN's Co-Chairs and Faith Communities Forum Moderators following recent attacks on places of worship have spoken of "the need to condemn extremist violence in the strongest terms and to stand together and to continue to work together with ever greater urgency against ignorance, prejudice and hatred" and have said that "Hatred targeting any community because of its faith and belief is a scourge that cannot be tolerated. There must be freedom for all communities to worship and practise their faith freely and without fear.”

IFN Co-Chairs Jatinder Singh Birdi and Rt Revd Jonathan Clark

Copies of this and previous Statements and Messages can be found on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/statements-and-messages>.

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Inter faith relations and polarisation

IFN Co-Chair Jatinder Birdi spoke on 12 September at a special day conference for faith-based charities. The Faith Charities Forum, organised by Civil Society, looked at ‘What difference does faith make?’. It provided an opportunity to discuss the role that faith plays in furthering many charities’ mission, as well as looking at the key challenges facing this unique group of organisations. Mr Birdi spoke on the following theme: ‘As the world becomes increasingly polarised, how can inter faith relationships build a strong and united society?’ More information about the conference is at

<https://www.civilsociety.co.uk/voices/highlights-from-the-faith-forum-tackling-division-and-declining-resources.html>.

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Bishop Roy Williamson

IFN was sad to learn of the death on 17 September of the Rt Revd Roy Williamson. Bishop Williamson (‘Bishop Roy’, as he was known to many) was Co-Chair of IFN from 1995 to 2000, having served as a Vice-Chair from 1992 to 1994. He made an enormous contribution to IFN's work and to inter faith relations in the UK.

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

Barnet Multi Faith Youth Forum

A Barnet Multi Faith Youth Forum has just been launched. It aims to be “a safe space, where young people aged 15 to 25 can feel comfortable and confident to represent their own faith and beliefs” and to “enable young people to discuss any issues that concern them, as well as creating opportunities to interact, work alongside and learn from each other and to be united as a community that is richly diverse.” Further information about the launch event, hosted at Middlesex University, can be found at <http://barnetmultifaithforum.org/exciting-launch-of-barnet-multi-faith-youth-forum/>. The Youth Forum’s next event will be held on 17 October. To find out more, contact Tahseen at barnetmultifaithyouthforum@gmail.com.

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‘Facing Faiths’ schools programme

The St Philip’s Centre, Leicester has developed a ‘Facing Faiths’ programme for schools, using interactive technology. The programme includes a series of 10 large boards, each reflecting a different religion or belief, which come to life when a child places a tablet or mobile phone in front of them. The information on the boards is supplemented by smaller cards which describe a sacred place, a festival and a book designed in conjunction with RE Curriculum requirements. A video explaining more can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=myNwUP011Qo&feature=youtu.be>. For further information, contact education@stphilipscentre.co.uk or telephone 0116 273 3459.

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The Big Lunch

The Big Lunch, an idea from Eden Project, takes place on the first weekend in June every year. Over the years millions of people from different backgrounds have taken part across thousands of neighbourhood events. It offers an opportunity to engage with your wider community while sharing food and building friendships.

In 2020 The Big Lunch takes place across the weekend of 6-7 June. For a free organiser pack and to find out more, visit www.thebiglunch.com. The Big Lunch is keen for faith groups to take part. To explore options or discuss further, please contact Claire at ccrook@edenproject.com.

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Faiths for Forests

'Faiths for Forests' is a programme of the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative. It is described as a "a global call to action to all faith-based organisations, networks and places of worship around the world to join the movement to end the destruction of the planet's rainforests and advocate for climate justice". More about the programme, including information on the declaration to sign, toolkits and fact sheets, can be found at <https://faithsforforests.com/>.

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Marking the 150th Anniversary of Gandhi's birth

2 October was the 150th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's birth. It is being marked in the UK in a number of ways. These include the unveiling of a new statue in Ayr and a 'Planting for Peace' tree-planting project to create an Ahimsa Peace Forest and Peace Garden in Kenton, Harrow. <https://www.ayrshiredailynews.co.uk/post/statue-of-gandhi-unveiled-at-ayr-town-hall>

The tree planting project was initiated by Shrimad Rajchandra Mission Dharampur (SRMD) and is being taken forward by member bodies of OneJAIN. It is supported by the India High Commission and Harrow Council. The first phase will involve the planting of 1,500 trees in November and the second phase will be the creation of Peace Garden commencing next spring. The project hopes that community groups, faith groups and inter faith groups across the UK will take part by planting peace trees across the country. It notes that November to March is the best time to plant many types of trees so Inter Faith Week (10 – 17 November) and National Tree Week (23 November - 1 December) are good times to get involved. <https://www.plantingforpeace.org/>

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Cities Faith and Community Forum

A new European 'Cities Faith and Community Forum' is being developed. Next steps for it were discussed at a seminar on 3 October in London, with input from the Rt Revd Sarah Mullally, Bishop of London, and the Local Government Association, designed to share good practice and hear from practitioners about how the faith sector responds to current challenges in cities across Europe.

For further information, contact mustafa@faithsforum4london.org.

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

IFN Peterborough local inter faith practitioner day event report

The report of IFN's Day Event for Local Inter Faith Practitioners held in Peterborough in March is available on IFN's website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/ifn-day-event-for-local-inter-faith-practitioners-a-report-peterborough-march-2019>.

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Shap Calendar of Religious Festivals

The Shap Calendar of Religious Festivals for 2019-20 is available to order from <http://www.shapcalendar.org.uk/>. The e-calendar provides: 3 A4 calendar sheets, 12 images of people celebrating festivals, a booklet giving a brief description of each religious festival in 12 of the world's faiths and traditions, from Baha'i to Zoroastrian, including Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Pagan festivals and editorial notes by members of the Shap Working Party. A hard copy wallchart is also available.

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Faith and Football Calendar

The Football Association has produced a new 'Faith & Football Calendar' for the 2019-20 season. The calendar is designed for use across football to raise awareness of faith across the game. This season's calendar also includes guidance on appropriate social media messages around faith dates. The Calendar can be downloaded at <http://www.thefa.com/-/media/files/thefaportal/governance-docs/equality/faith-in-football/faith-and-football-calendar-2019-20.ashx>.

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British Library Discovering Sacred Texts online

In September the British Library launched its latest online learning resource, Discovering Sacred Texts, which invites visitors to explore the world's major faiths through the Library's extensive collections. The new website includes over 250 digitised collection items, teachers' resources, short films and articles.

Further information can be found at <https://blogs.bl.uk/digitisedmanuscripts/2019/09/discovering-sacred-texts-launch.html> and the resource itself is at <https://www.bl.uk/sacred-texts>.

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Network for Pastoral, Spiritual and Religious Care in Health reports

The Network for Pastoral, Spiritual, and Religious Care in Health (formerly the Healthcare Chaplaincy Faith & Belief Group) has published guidance on the authorisation, registration, and endorsement procedures of ‘the mainstream chaplaincy religion and belief organisations in the NHS’ and a practical toolkit for NHS pastoral support and chaplaincy teams on ensuring their recruitment is in line with the Equality Act 2010. The documents are available at <http://network-health.org.uk/documents/NHS%20Pastoral,%20Spiritual,%20and%20Religious%20Care%20Endorsement%20Guide.pdf> and <http://network-health.org.uk/index.php/pages/recruitment>.

A new report on health inequalities in chaplaincy services by the Network for Pastoral, Spiritual, and Religious Care in Health is due to be published in November 2019.

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Religion or Belief legal case summaries

The Equality and Human Rights Commission updates on a regular basis a document containing one-page summaries of legal cases relating to religion or belief. For each case, there are links to online commentaries and analysis and (where available) to the full judgments. The most recent update took place in September. Anyone interested in receiving a copy of the document should contact Dr David Perfect at david.perfect@equalityhumanrights.com.

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Bridging the Great Divide: the Jewish-Muslim Encounter

The Woolf Institute is running a 15-week online course, beginning in January, ‘Bridging the Great Divide: the Jewish-Muslim Encounter’. The course will explore the history, culture and theology of Muslims and Jews, reflecting both on similarities and differences as well as discussing the major challenges. Run in partnership with the School of International Service at the American University in Washington DC, the course will also offer strategies for building bridges between the communities. For more information, visit <https://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/whats-on/news/apply-now-for-online-course-bridging-the-great-divide-the-jewish-muslim-encounter-1>. The closing date for applications is 15 December.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS, AND NOMINATIONS

Scottish Interfaith Week Creative Competition

To celebrate Scottish Interfaith Week 2019 Interfaith Scotland is holding an art competition on the theme of 'Eat Share Love'. Entries can include drawings or paintings, photo montages, poems, videos or animations, pieces of writing, songs, music or drama. There is a top prize of £50 and winning entries will have their work displayed at the launch of Scottish Interfaith Week in Perth on 10 November. Entries are open to individuals and groups of all ages. The closing date for entries is 29 October.

For an entry form, flyer and advice sheet, visit <http://scottishinterfaithweek.org/resources>. For more information, contact Frances Hume at frances@interfaithscotland.org or on 0141 558 0778.

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London College of Fashion – Call for research participants

Researchers at the London College of Fashion, University of the Arts London, and Coventry University are keen to hear from women interested in discussing their experiences of adapting their dress when working for and with faith-based organisations (for example schools, charities, businesses and publicly-funded organisations with a religious ethos) in a confidential interview. This research is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC).

Interviews will be audio-recorded, last around an hour, and explore experiences and feelings about 'modest' dress in the workplace. The researchers are interested in talking to people from a wide range of backgrounds, religions and beliefs, including non-religious women. At this point in the project, they would welcome especially, but not exclusively, responses from women who work in Jewish, Hindu, Jain and Sikh organisations.

Anyone interested in taking part should email modestfashionworkwear@arts.ac.uk saying where they are based and what sort of organisation they work at. For more information on the project, visit <https://www.arts.ac.uk/research/research-and-projects/curation-and-culture/modest-fashion>.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

IFN's website lists job and internship opportunities with a significant inter faith dimension with IFN member organisations at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/jobs>.

Inter Faith Network for the UK – Volunteers

The Inter Faith Network for the UK is seeking volunteers to help with various projects in the IFN office from October onwards. For further information and an application form, contact ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

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Faith & Belief Forum – Programmes Officer, Fundraising Officer and Volunteer speakers

The Faith & Belief Forum (FBF) is seeking a Programmes Officer, West Midlands - <https://faithbeliefforum.org/career/programmes-officer-west-midlands/>. This is a full time role and the closing date for applications is 12pm on 14 October.

FBF is also seeking a Fundraising Officer - <https://faithbeliefforum.org/career/fundraising-officer/>. The closing date for applications is 9am on 21 October.

FBF is also looking for confident and enthusiastic volunteers from different backgrounds to take part in its Encountering Faiths and Beliefs workshops for schools. The Volunteers will share their beliefs and experiences in the form of a short story and also participate in a Q&A panel. The next Volunteer Speaker Training is scheduled for 7 November. For further information, visit <https://faithbeliefforum.org/about/careers/volunteer-speaker-programme/>.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Near Neighbours small grants programme

The Near Neighbours small grants programme is funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and administered by the Church Urban Fund. It is currently offering small grants of between £250 and £5,000, as seed funding for local groups and organisations working in a number of areas of England to bring together neighbours, and to develop relationships across diverse faiths and ethnicities to improve their communities. To be eligible, projects should meet the following criteria: bringing

people together, working locally, working sustainably, committing to diversity, and improving the community.

The next deadline for applications is Friday 11 October. For information on the eligible areas and to apply, visit <https://www.near-neighbours.org.uk/small-grants>.

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Westhill NASACRE Awards 2020–2021

The National Association of Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (NASACRE) is inviting individual SACREs, or SACREs in partnership, to apply for a Westhill/NASACRE Award for 2020-21. Applications are considered for awards of up to £4,000. Projects should offer pupils at school opportunities to engage in compelling learning experiences in RE, or collective worship, within the broad theme of ‘education into diversity’. For further details visit, <http://www.nasacre.org.uk/westhill-nasacre-awards/awards-2020-21>.

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FCC Community Action Fund

The FCC Communities Foundation is offering grants between £2,000 and £100,000 for projects which involve the provision, maintenance or improvement of public amenities including community spaces in places of worship, which are registered charities. Projects must be based within 10 miles of an eligible FCC Environment waste facility. The closing date for applications is 11 December. For more information, visit <https://fcccommunitiesfoundation.org.uk/funds/fcc-community-action-fund>.

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Windrush Compensation Scheme

The Windrush Compensation Scheme is open to those who settled in the UK from a Commonwealth country before 1973, and in certain circumstances their children and grandchildren. It provides payments to individuals who suffered losses as a result of not being able to evidence their lawful status in the UK. These could range from a loss of employment or access to housing, benefits, education or NHS healthcare to emotional distress or deterioration in mental and physical health. Additionally, it is open to all nationalities who arrived to live in the UK before 31 December 1988 and are settled here. Claim forms can be downloaded and guidance on completing the application can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/windrush-compensation-scheme>. Claimants can also request a form to be sent by post by calling our helpline on 0800 678 1925 or via email

WindrushCompensationScheme@homeoffice.gov.uk where they can also request a call back if they are overseas.

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Faiths in Scotland Community Action Fund

Faiths in Scotland Community Action Fund is open for applications for grants of up to £2,000 over 1 year. Further information is at <https://www.faithincommunityscotland.org/faith-in-community-scotland-action-fund/>. For any queries email andrew@faithincommunityscotland.org or telephone 0141 221 4576.

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Funding websites

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) offers advice on fundraising and grants on its Knowhow Nonprofit site at <https://knowhownonprofit.org/funding>.

Funding Central - <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/default.aspx> - is a free website for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises in England. It provides access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, together with tools and resources to develop sustainable income strategies. Similar websites for funding in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at Funding Scotland - <http://www.fundingscotland.com/> - Wales Council for Voluntary Action - <http://www.wcva.org.uk/funding/search> - and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland - <https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

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Website and Facebook grants

The Transform Foundation is offering funding to charities to help with new website builds. Grants of £18,000 are available. It is also offering grants towards Facebook advertising of £5,000. For further information and to apply, visit www.transformfoundation.org.uk.

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Google and charities

Google is offering a service to registered charities which brings: Google Ad Grants: Free AdWords advertising to promote their websites on Google through keyword targeting; YouTube Nonprofit Programme: Access exclusive resources, features and programs

designed to maximise their organisations' impact on YouTube; and Google Apps for Non-profit: Free version of the Google Apps business productivity suite, including Gmail, Docs, Calendar and more. For further information, visit www.google.co.uk/intl/en/nonprofits/join.

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Subsidised fundraising workshops

The Foundation for Social Improvement offers subsidised training programmes for small charities across the UK. The courses cover a wide range of subjects from event planning to leadership. Many of the courses focus on fundraising and sustainability skills in particular.

Further information and dates for upcoming courses in April and May can be found at <http://www.thefsi.org/services/training>.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Sewa Day takes place on Sunday 6 October. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Hindu community. <http://www.sewaday.org/>
<https://www.facebook.com/sewaday/>

National Hate Crime Awareness Week will take place from Saturday 12 to Saturday 19 October. <https://nationalhcaw.uk/>

One World Week will take place from Sunday 20 to Sunday 27 October. This is its 40th anniversary year. www.oneworldweek.org

Inter Faith Week will take place from Sunday 10 to Sunday 17 November. It is led by the Inter Faith Network for the UK. www.interfaithweek.org See [above](#).

Scottish Interfaith Week will take place from Sunday 10 to Sunday 17 November. Scottish Interfaith Week is led by Interfaith Scotland. www.scottishinterfaithweek.org

Mitzvah Day will take place on Sunday 17 November. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Jewish community. On Mitzvah Day, people give their time, not their money, to make a difference to the community around them. Many events and projects held for the day have an inter faith focus. www.mitzvahday.org.uk/

Holocaust Memorial Day will take place on 27 January. Its theme in 2020 is 'Stand Together'. Holocaust Memorial Day is the day for everyone to remember the millions of

people murdered in the Holocaust, under Nazi Persecution, and in the genocides which followed in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur. It honours the survivors of these regimes and challenges everyone to use the lessons of their experience to inform their lives today. www.hmd.org.uk/

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DIARY DATES

This section includes a sample of some of the events taking place around the UK during October. Only one event per organisation is included. We also include information on diary dates between e-bulletins on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/events>.

InterfaithMK is holding its next monthly meeting on Thursday 3 October. Mrs Wendi Momen will be giving an illustrated lecture on the Bicentenaries of the Birth of Baha'u'llah (1817/2017) and of the Birth of the Bab. The meeting will be held from 7.30pm to 9:30 pm at All Saints' Church, Pitcher Lane, Loughton, Milton Keynes MK5 8AS. Teas and refreshments will be served at the end of the evening. For further information, contact the Convenor at interfaithmk@gmail.com.

The Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter and **Power and Baker Consultants** are organising a workshop exploring the role of faith and ethics in the workplace on Saturday 5 October. The workshop is entitled 'Exploring our belief, values and worldviews in the workplace' and will include plenary presentations, case studies and group discussions. Speakers include Professor Nicole Busy, University of Strathclyde, Dr Alison Mawhinney, Bangor University, Dr Catriona Cannon, University of Glasgow, Frank Cranmer, Centre for Law and Religion, Cardiff University and St Chad's College, Durham and Felicity Belton, University of Glasgow. The workshop will begin at 10.00am at the Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter, 34 Chepstow Villas, London, W11 2QZ. Tickets and further information can be found at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/exploring-our-beliefs-values-and-worldviews-in-the-workplace-tickets-58986933506?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>.

The Church of England Benefice of Matlaske is holding an inter faith event on Sunday 6 October on 'Loving God and Loving your Neighbour in Jerusalem'. The speakers will be Sheikh Ibrahim Mogra, Rabbi Natan Levy and the Revd Dr Yazid Said. The Rt Revd David Gillett, Interfaith Adviser for the Diocese of Norwich, will conclude the discussions. The event is being held at 3.30pm at Hole Farm Barn, Hempstead NR25 6TT. There is a fee to attend, which includes afternoon tea. To book, contact Corinne Youngs at corinne@avyoungs.com.

Torbay Interfaith Forum is holding a talk on Wednesday 9 October on 'Exploring Interfaith Diversity...?' The speaker will be Val Rose. The event will begin at 7.30pm and

will be followed by refreshments. It is being held at the Friends' Meeting House, 48 Tor Hill Road Torquay, TQ2 5RT. For more information, see <http://torbayinterfaith.org.uk/>.

The **Woolf Institute** is holding an evening of comedy on Thursday 10 October. Two stand-up comedian friends, one Jewish and one Muslim, Ashley Blaker and Imran Yusuf will be performing their latest show, Prophet Sharing. The evening will begin at 7.30pm and is being held at the Woolf Institute, Madingley Road, Cambridge CB3 0UB. For further information and to book tickets, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/prophet-sharing-stand-up-comedy-tickets-63764159317>.

The Three Faiths Forum East London Branch is holding an event on Thursday 10 October. The topic of the event will be "Welcoming the Stranger". The speakers will be Allama Sadiq Qureshi, the Revd Tom Britt and Rabbi Lisa Barratt. It is being held at 8pm at Al Madina Mosque, Barking (www.barkingmosque.org.uk), at the junction of Ilford Lane with Victoria Road, IG11 8PY (not far from Barking station). For more information, visit <http://www.eastlondon3faiths.org/>.

The **St Ethelburga's Centre** is holding an event to mark its Feast Day on Thursday 10 October. This special evening of celebration will include discussion, worship and music from the St Botolph's-without-Bishopsgate singers. The event is being held from 6pm to 7.30pm at the Centre, 78 Bishopsgate, London EC2N 4AG. Registration is essential as seats are limited. For more information, visit <https://stethelburgas.org/events>.

Elmbridge Multi Faith Forum is holding an Evening Gala/Cultural Celebration on Saturday 12 October. The event will begin at 6.00pm at St John's Church, 1 The Furrows, Walton-on Thames, Surrey, KT12 3JQ. For more information, email kauser.akhtar@cofefguildford.org.uk or visit <https://www.elmbridgemultifaith.org.uk/>.

Building Bridges in Burnley is holding a 'Walk of Faith with Feast' on Sunday 13 October. The walk will take place from 2pm to 4pm, starting at St Catherines, Todmorden Road, BB10 4AB and ending Abu Bakr Mosque, Brougham Street, BB12 0AS. For more information, see <https://bbburnley.wordpress.com/> or contact Bea Foster on 07875 517043 or bea_foster@hotmail.com.

Interfaith Glasgow and **St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art** are holding their next 'Faith to Faith' Dialogue event on Sunday 13 October. This will be on the theme of 'Faith and Music'. The event will hear from two musicians about the place of music within the worship of Sikh and Turkish Alevi communities. It runs from 2pm to 4pm at St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art, 2 Castle Street, Glasgow, G4 0RH. For further information, email info@interfaithglasgow.org.

Woking People of Faith is holding a Prayer Vigil for Refugees on Sunday 13 October. Faith leaders from across the borough will lead the prayers and each person will pray in their

own tradition. It is being held at 4pm at Woking Reformed Church, White Rose Lane. To confirm attendance, email treasurer@wpof.org.uk.

The **World Congress of Faiths** is supporting the launch of a new book entitled 'Interfaith Worship and Prayer' on Tuesday 15 October. The book contains a series of contributions from representatives of twelve different religions: Hinduism, African Traditional Religion, Judaism, Jainism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Shintoism, Christianity, Islam, Sikhism, Unitarianism and Baha'i. The launch is taking place from 6pm to 7.30pm at St Mary Abbots Parish Church, Kensington, London. For further information and to book a place, email cohsherbok@gmail.com.

The **Faiths and Civil Society Unit, Goldsmiths, University of London** is continuing its series on Religion, Belief and Brexit with a seminar on Wednesday 16 October on 'Grassroots faith movements and partnerships of hope'. Speakers on the panel include Matthew Barber, Spaces of Hope, Martin Hasani, London Queer Muslims, Julie Siddiqui, Sadaqa Day and Laura Marks, Mitzvah Day. The seminar will begin at 5.30pm at Goldsmiths, University of London, New Cross, London, SE14 6NW. For more information, contact K.Guindi@gold.ac.uk.

Sheffield Interfaith is holding an inter faith panel discussion on Wednesday 16 October on 'Prayer – how do you do it?'. All are welcome. The event takes place at 7.30pm at Shirley House, 31 Psalter Lane, Sheffield S11 8YL. For further information, visit <http://sheffieldinterfaith.org.uk/category/events/>.

The Windsor and Maidenhead Community Forum is holding its next Women's Group meeting on Wednesday 16 October. Ladies of all faiths or none are welcome. For more information, visit <http://www.wamcf.org/womens-group/>

Westminster Cathedral Interfaith Group is holding its next meeting on Wednesday 16 October. The Revd John Parry will speak on a Sikh poem about Jesus. The meeting will begin at 4.00pm in the Hinsley Room at Westminster Cathedral, Ambroseden Ave, London, SW1P 1QW. For more information, contact John Woodhouse by text on 07908 888586.

North Herts Inter Faith Forum is holding its AGM on Thursday 17 October. Following the AGM, Don de Silva, will be speaking on 'Beyond Religion to Tackle Climate Change and Climate Refugees'. The event takes place at Our Lady Immaculate & St Andrew Catholic Church, 16 Nightingale Rd, Hitchin SG5 1QS and the talk will begin at 8pm. For more information, contact snorthhertsinterfaithforum@yahoo.co.uk.

Interfaith Scotland is holding a meeting on Monday 21 October to discuss the Scottish Government's new Youth Strategy for 2020. The meeting is for young people aged 16 to 26, youth work practitioners and Interfaith Scotland volunteers. It will be held from 5pm

to 7pm at the Dialogue Centre, Flemmington House, 110 Flemmington Street, Glasgow G21 4BF. For more information, contact Frances Hume at frances@interfaithscotland.org.

Concord Leeds Interfaith Fellowship in conjunction with Leeds City Peacelink is holding a peace service on Wednesday 23 October. The Annual Peace Service will be attended by the Lord Mayor, with music by the Wesley Singers and youth contribution by the Leeds Street Team. Attendees are asked to arrive at 7.15pm for a 7.30pm start at the Banqueting Room, Leeds Civic Hall, Calverley St, Leeds LS1 1UR. For more information, visit www.concord-leeds.org.uk

Crawley Interfaith is holding a faith symposium on 'Religious symbols' on Wednesday 25 September. Buddhist, Christians, Hindu and Muslim speakers will attend the event. The event will take place from 7.00pm to 9.00pm at Crawley Museum, The Tree, 103 High Street, Crawley RH10 1DD. For more information, see <https://en-gb.facebook.com/pages/category/Community/Crawley-Interfaith-Network-527183677396243/>.

Barnet Multi Faith Forum and **Middlesex University** are holding an inter faith bulb planting ceremony on Tuesday 29 October. This is to celebrate the establishment and growth of inter faith relationships in Barnet and the commitment to a peaceful and inclusive community. The ceremony will begin at 11.00am at Middlesex University, The Burroughs, NW4 4BT. For more information, visit <http://barnetmultifaithforum.org/index.php/event/interfaith-tree-planting-ceremony/>.

Inter Faith Week 10 to 17 November

Inter Faith Week event listings can be found at www.interfaithweek.org.

More information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org.uk

If you have items which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **22 November** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

**SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK
TO INCREASE INTER FAITH UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION**

We need your help to ensure that the Inter Faith Network for the UK's work to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation continues and grows, helping people of all backgrounds to live and work together with mutual respect and shared commitment to the common good.

Gifts at all levels are much valued and make a real difference. You can donate directly at www.interfaith.org.uk/donate or via PayPal.

Donations can also be made by sending a cheque to: The Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH.

Thank you!

REMEMBERING A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND

If you would like to make a gift in memory of a loved one, please get in touch by emailing remember@interfaith.org.uk or call us on 0207 730 0410.

A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

By leaving a gift in your will to the Inter Faith Network for the UK, you can leave a living inheritance to help deepen and strengthen inter faith understanding and cooperation in this country – for now and for the future. If you are thinking about making a will, the best thing to do is to get in touch with a professional will writer, such as a solicitor or advocate; they can help to ensure it is legally correct and that your wishes are met. If you have already made a will, you can still make an addition or amendment in the form of a codicil. If you would like to pledge a gift, please provide our name and address, along with our registered charity number 1068934.

Please get in touch with us if you have any queries.

You can call us on 0207 730 0410 or contact us at remember@interfaith.org.uk

Disclaimer: Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH
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IFN e-bulletin

December 2019

Welcome to the e-bulletin of the Inter Faith Network for the UK www.interfaith.org.uk
It is published every two months and it highlights primarily new developments, projects and future events. You can read by scrolling through or you can go directly to an individual section or item by clicking on the 'Read more' link in the Sections and Contents lists below.

IFN also carries news and information at www.twitter.com/IFNetUK
www.facebook.com/IFNetUK) and, about Inter Faith Week, at <https://twitter.com/IFweek>
and www.facebook.com/IFWeek.

You can sign up to IFN mailings at any time by using the form on IFN's website at: www.interfaith.org.uk/news/gdpr or let us know that you would like to unsubscribe by using the links at the bottom of the cover email.

Submissions for next issue

If you have items about projects or future events which you would like considered for inclusion in the February e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **22 January** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

General Election and faith communities

The General Election on 12 December saw the Conservative Party gain a significant parliamentary majority, with just under 44% of the popular vote. It will therefore form the new UK Government.

The vote followed an election period during which faith community organisations held hustings, and in some cases produced manifestos and/or guidance on the election for members of their faith communities. Local inter faith organisations in a number of areas were also involved in holding hustings. Nearly all of the major parties included in their manifestos commitments relating to religion and belief. A digest can be seen at:

<https://religionmediacentre.org.uk/factsheets/faith-manifestos/>

In some instances, members of particular communities were urged not to vote for certain parties. For example, some Hindus were urged not to vote for the Labour Party following the passing of a conference floor motion criticising India's actions in Kashmir at its party conference in September <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/election-2019-50382791>. Ephraim

Mirvis, Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth, wrote in The Times criticising the Labour Party over its record on Antisemitism and urging people to “vote with their conscience” <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/election-2019-50552068>. There were also campaigns through messaging apps to encourage particular faith groups to vote in a particular direction.

The Muslim Council of Britain reiterated, in the context of the run up to the General Election, its concerns about Islamophobia within the Conservative Party <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/election-2019-50561043> and, following the announcement of the election result, issued a press release in which it referred to “a palpable sense of fear amongst Muslim communities” and called for renewed “efforts to heal the country and bring communities together” <https://mcb.org.uk/press-releases/mcb-responds-to-general-election-result/>

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Exiting the EU – the important role of faith communities

A note, ‘Exiting the EU – the important role of faith communities at a time of transition’ was circulated to member bodies and put up on IFN’s website on 31 October. It highlights faith communities’ trusted role in signposting information and as providers of community support and their vital work to unite communities, promote good relations and tackle hatred.

The note was developed by the IFN office in the light of discussion earlier that month at IFN’s Faith Communities Forum (FCF) meeting and subsequent correspondence with FCF members. The Department for Exiting the EU and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government were also consulted in the development of the note.

The note can be found on IFN’s website at:

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/leaving-the-eu-the-important-role-of-faith-communities-at-a-time-of-transition>.

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London Bridge terrorist attack

On 29 November two people were murdered and a number of others injured in a terrorist stabbing attack at London Bridge by a convicted terrorist out on licence.

Faith and inter faith organisations in the UK responded through messages, statements and prayers. On 1 December IFN's Co-Chairs and the Moderators of IFN's Faith Communities Forum issued the following statement in response to the attack:

“Our thoughts and prayers are with all affected by the terrorist stabbing attack at London Bridge on Friday afternoon in which two were killed by the attacker and several injured.

We condemn, in the strongest terms, terrorism and the extremist ideologies that underpin it and we call on all to stand together and speak out in the strongest terms against them.

With each terrorist attack in recent years, there has been horror and anger at the atrocity; condemnation; prayers and sympathies for those killed or injured; admiration for courage and resilience displayed; and a call to ‘stand together’. And where terrorists or extremists have drawn selectively on religious writings and history, there has been disavowal by faith communities of this evil twisting of elements of their traditions into distorted and dangerous forms to justify the unjustifiable.

It is a matter of profound sadness and concern that voices of faith communities have to be heard again and again in the context of responses to terrorist attacks and also hate crime. There are so many important social justice issues on which their voices need to be heard as well as broader issues such about how we live together well as people of different faiths and beliefs in the UK.

Yet we cannot remain silent in the face of terrible actions, with their impacts both on those directly affected and on our society more generally. We end, as we began, with thoughts and prayers for those killed, injured, bereaved and otherwise affected by the attack on Friday and a call to all to stand together in the face of terrorism and to speak out in the strongest terms against it and against the extremist ideologies that underpin it.”

A copy of this statement is also on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/statement-following-attack-at-london-bridge>.

IFN's Policy on the making of statements is at https://www.interfaith.org.uk/uploads/Policy_on_making_of_statements.pdf.

Relevant in this context is [*Looking After One Another: The Safety and Security of our Faith Communities*](#), published by IFN in partnership with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Home Office, Crown Prosecution Service, National Police Chiefs' Council and National Fire Chiefs' Council. It contains guidance on responding jointly to attacks on places of worship; working for calm at times of tension; and working to build on

and strengthen existing good inter faith relations. It also contains material about how and where to report hate incidents, cyber-attacks, and actual or suspected terrorist activity; where to find information on strengthening the security of buildings; and where to find information about working to build – and strengthen – good inter faith relations locally.

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Preventing and responding to terrorist attacks

There is a Government website for anyone affected by terrorist attacks: <https://victimsofterrorism.campaign.gov.uk/>. This contains information on where to seek advice and assistance following a terrorist attack. It also provides details of official helplines and support services available to victims, survivors, witnesses, family members, and all those affected.

This month, Counter Terrorism Policing made available free online training for the public on how to react to a terrorism incident. Called ACT Awareness, the training comprises seven modules and takes 45 minutes to complete. Counter Terrorism Policing is inviting people to take the course and become so-called ‘CT Citizens’.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-50708637>

Another useful resource is the National Counter Terrorism Security Office’ Crowded Places Guidance, which is at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/crowded-places-guidance>.

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Religiously motivated hate crime

In October the Home Office published Hate Crime, England and Wales, 2018/19, containing statistics about hate crime offences recorded by the police in England and Wales from April 2018 to March 2019: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2018-to-2019> There were 103,379 hate crimes recorded in England and Wales in 2018-19, with increases seen in all categories. 47% of attacks were targeted at Muslims and 18% at Jews (a doubling of anti-Semitic attacks since the previous year).

Sikhs and Hindus continue to raise concerns about hate crimes affecting their communities. See, for example, <http://www.thesikhnetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/The-Sikh-Manifesto-2020-2025.pdf>

The Guardian reports that a survey of faith and community groups by Citizens UK suggested that the Home Office figures potentially showed only the tip of the iceberg, after

seven in 10 participants said they never reported hate crimes to the police.

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2019/oct/15/hate-crimes-double-england-wales>

During November there were reports of religiously motivated hate crime in a number of areas, including Antisemitic incidents in Brighton and Canvey Island and a report of a serious attack on a rabbi in London. <https://jewishnews.timesofisrael.com/red-substance-daubed-on-brighton-synagogue/> <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7670697/Swastikas-anti-Semitic-graffiti-Remembrance-Sunday-Canvey-Island-Essex.html> <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/dec/04/police-release-cctv-footage-of-attack-on-rabbi-in-north-london>

The vulnerability of communities and individuals in the face of hate and prejudice was underlined at the No2H8 Crime Awards on 7 November, as was the vital importance of being an 'upstander'. <https://no2h8crimeawards.org/>

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MHCLG Faith Engagement Adviser appointed

In October it was announced that Colin Bloom has been appointed as Faith Engagement Adviser at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. He will “make recommendations to the Communities Secretary about how the government can best celebrate and support the contribution of faith groups, break down barriers and promote acceptance between faiths, and promote shared values while tackling cultures and practices that are harmful.”

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/faith-engagement-adviser-appointed>

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Church of England teaching document on Christian-Jewish relations

In November, the Faith and Order Commission of the Church of England published a teaching document on Christian-Jewish relations entitled ‘God’s unfailing word’. The document encourages Christians to rediscover the relationship of “unique significance” between the two faiths, worshipping one God, with scriptures shared in common. It speaks of attitudes towards Judaism over many centuries as providing a “fertile seed-bed for murderous antisemitism”.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/news/church-england-teaching-document-calls-repentance-over-role-christians>

The Council of Christians and Jews has welcomed the document. A copy of its statement is at <http://www.ccj.org.uk/ccj-statement-on-gods-unfailing-word/>.

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550th Birth Anniversary of Guru Nanak

The 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak was marked in gurdwaras and many other places around the UK during November. A number of these had an inter faith dimension, for example a celebration at London's City Hall led by City Sikhs; an event at Bradford Cathedral where the Bishop of Bradford, Rt Revd Dr Toby Howarth, welcomed speaker Lord Singh of Wimbledon; and the unveiling at Glasgow Gurdwara of tapestries created by a multi faith team of volunteers (about which see more [below](#)).

The official anniversary date, 12 November, happened to be during national Inter Faith Week this year and so a number of activities marked both occasions, for example a visit by a Board of Deputies of British Jews delegation, led by Vice-President Edwin Shuker, to the Khalsa Jatha Central Gurdwara in London.

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INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK NEWS

Come Together Appeal

On 3 December the Inter Faith Network for the UK launched the 'Come Together Appeal'.

In these often divided times, it is vital for people to stand together against prejudice and hatred and to come together in respect, understanding and cooperation for the common good. www.interfaith.org.uk/news/appeal

The Inter Faith Network works in many different ways to support the development of greater inter faith understanding and cooperation and to enable people to come together.

On behalf of the Board of IFN, Co-Chairs Jatinder Singh Birdi and Bishop Jonathan Clark encourage all readers to consider a donation to support IFN's vital work. Every gift will be carefully used to make a real difference.

It is easy to donate by clicking on this link: www.interfaith.org.uk/donate, by PayPal or by sending a cheque to: the Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH.

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Inter Faith Week 2019

Inter Faith Week took place from 10 to 17 November. 750+ activities are known to have taken place across England, Northern Ireland and Wales – and details of further events continue to come in. Many thousands of people from different backgrounds and of all ages took part.

Churches, gurdwaras, mandirs, mosques, synagogues, temples, viharas, schools, colleges and universities, sports grounds, parks, council chambers, museums, galleries, libraries, community centres, hospitals, hospices, workplaces and online platforms were the locations of an amazing range of activities. These included celebrations; faith trails; cultural activities; dialogues; volunteering to help local communities; Remembrance events; conferences and talks; tree plantings and litter picks; classroom activities; theatre productions; poetry readings; food festivals; sports tournaments; events linked to both the Week and Mitzvah Day (17 November) and more. The environment and the climate crisis featured strongly.

During the Week, Inter Faith Network staff and a number of Trustees and Faith Communities Forum Moderators visited and spoke at events around England, Northern Ireland and Wales.

The Co-Chairs of the Inter Faith Network, Jatinder Singh Birdi and Bishop Jonathan Clark said:

“This has been a fantastic Week. It has showcased the contribution faith communities make to society, helped increase inter faith understanding and sparked new conversations. We have been delighted to see so many local initiatives and also many organisations getting involved for the first time.

At this time so often characterised by division, it has been very good to witness people coming together in such a positive way. There are key values that we share and Inter Faith Week provides a chance to envision ways that we can all draw on them to strengthen our common life and to work together to address such issues as climate change, homelessness, and hate crime”.

The end of Week press release can be found at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/news/press-release-inter-faith-week-2019>

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IFN Inter Faith Week linked blog and resources for primary age pupils

This year, IFN topped and tailed the Week with two resources to help primary school age children. It collaborated with anti-bullying charity Kidscape to provide a special blog for 'Friendship Friday' (FF) on the Friday immediately before the Week. This year the theme for FF was about people finding ways to be kinder and friendlier. Kidscape invited IFN's Executive Director to write a blog for parents and carers of primary age children to share some pointers about the importance of faith and belief; encouraging respectful inter faith engagement; and working to prevent faith and belief-linked bullying. The blog was highlighted by both organisations during the Week, and widely circulated. It can be seen at www.interfaithweek.org/news/inter-faith-week-and-friendship-friday.

Toward the end of the Week, IFN launched its resource for primary schools, about which more information appears [below](#).

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Feedback sought

The Inter Faith Network, which leads on Inter Faith Week, develops the Week further each year as an increasingly valuable platform for building inter faith understanding and cooperation and religious literacy. To do that, it is very much helped by people who have held or attended events completing and submitting a survey telling us about their experiences and views.

The wider the range of responses, the more IFN is able to learn and develop the Week in the future. This year's survey can be found at: <https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/feedback>. If you took part in the Week, please do take 10 minutes to respond! Thank you.

IFN also welcomes photos taken at events, drawing on these for reporting, publications and social media. You can upload photos at <https://dropevent.com/gallery/IFW19> or email them to ashley.beck@interfaith.org.uk.

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Scottish Interfaith Week

Scottish Interfaith Week also took place between 10-17 November, and its theme this year was 'Eat Share Love'. Further information about the many activities that took place to mark it can be found at www.scottishinterfaithweek.org or by contacting Interfaith Scotland, which leads on the Week.

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

Faiths working to support the homeless

Faith community leaders in a number of cities supported the World's Big Sleep Out which took place across the globe on 7 December <https://www.bigsleepout.com/>. In London's Trafalgar Square a multi faith delegation organised by Faiths Forum for London took part.

Many places of worship are opening their doors to provide warm and safe shelter to homeless guests during the coldest months of the year. Some schemes are single faith led, for example that of Church groups in Southend https://www.southend.gov.uk/news/article/1807/southend_churches_winter_night_shelters_to_open_2_december Others are multi faith, for example the One Roof Winter Night Shelter project (Leicester) which will again see seven different faith venues providing, in rotation, shelter, food and companionship <https://www.oneroof.org.uk/our-work/about-the-winter-shelter/> and Basildon Emergency Night Shelter, which is run by five different faith groups in seven locations <https://www.basildon.gov.uk/article/7768/In-the-news-Basildon-night-shelter-set-to-open-for-winter>.

In some areas, groups are working to provide food - for example, Northampton Inter Faith Forum collaborated with the Hope Centre earlier this month to provide and serve food to the guests of that community charity.

A number of other faith groups run programmes throughout the year to offer support to the homeless. For instance, volunteers from the Sikh community have helped hundreds of homeless people through the Midland Langar Seva Society (MLSS) by offering hot food, drinks and company every week <https://www.coventrytelegraph.net/news/local-news/how-friday-night-food-drop-17300369>. A similar facility is offered by Who Is Hussain, a Muslim charity that hosts weekly food drives for the homeless. They also offer free haircuts, free CV workshops in conjunction with local charities to help find employment, and distribute care packages such as hygiene kits and winter essentials <https://whoishussain.org/>.

Faith communities also work for housing justice through their ongoing social welfare work.

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Online faith map of Wolverhampton

An online faith map of Wolverhampton has been created by Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council and Interfaith Wolverhampton - bit.ly/wtonfaithmap. It features more than 250 faith groups and its purpose is to highlight the rich diversity of faith groups

worshipping in, and serving local communities. It evolved from work with local faith groups that was initiated, supported and funded by Wolverhampton Safeguarding Boards.

For further information, contact admin@ifwton.org.uk.

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Glasgow gurdwara multi faith tapestry for peace

In November, as part of Scottish Interfaith Week, the Glasgow Gurdwara unveiled the city's first ever multi faith tapestries. The three ceiling-to-floor hand-stitched tapestries depict the three principles of the Sikh faith – pray, work, share. They were unveiled in as part of the celebrations of the 550th anniversary of the birth of Guru Nanak, and will later be toured around different venues in the UK. The Tapestry Project was founded by Manjit Kaur Jheeta, 65 from Pollokshields, who along with Paula Hope, a 52 year old Art Teacher, led a volunteer group of 90 women from different faiths and communities to weave the tapestries over 18 months. <https://www.eveningtimes.co.uk/news/18060070.multi-faith-tapestry-peace-created-glasgow-gurdwara/>

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Local inter faith groups

Local inter faith organisations play a very important role in encouraging inter faith understanding and cooperation in their areas. Some local organisations are relatively new. Others have been operating for a long time. In November, Edinburgh Interfaith Association celebrated its 40th anniversary and York Interfaith its 30th Anniversary.

If you would like to get involved in or to support your local inter faith organisation, you can find your nearest group at: <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/groups>.

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Learning About Religions through Dialogue Programme

The Learning About Religions through Dialogue programme is a research project funded by All Saints Educational Trust that links faith practitioners with schools where the practitioner's religion is not represented in the school. Faith practitioners and teachers receive training as part of their involvement with the project. Training for faith practitioners was provided by St Philip's Centre, Leicester; training for teachers was led by Bishop Grosseteste University, Lincoln.

The main purpose of the programme is for staff and pupils to be able to learn about the person's religion and culture. It is predicated on the assumption, which will be tested

through the research process, that the best way to learn about a religious tradition is by meeting someone from that tradition in the context of dialogue. Currently, there are six Lincolnshire schools involved in the project - three primary and three secondary.

The research will be evaluated in June 2020 and the results published. Further research is planned if the project is successful and there may be an opportunity for a funded PhD at Bishop Grosseteste University.

Further information can be found at <https://www.bishopg.ac.uk/bgu-team-win-15000-grant-to-support-new-re-learning-initiative/>.

For further information contact Mark Plater at Bishop Grosseteste University at mark.plater@bishopg.ac.uk.

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Climate Change

Faiths for the Climate continues to develop its work with faith communities to respond to Climate Change. Its website carries updates on actions by these. The latest news can be seen at <https://faithfortheclimate.org.uk/news>.

Glasgow will be hosting the next UN Climate Change Summit (COP26) at the end of 2020 and some faith and inter faith bodies are already planning work towards that. See, for example, <https://bit.ly/34h6bom>.

A significant number of Inter Faith Week events this year had a focus on climate change and other environmental issues.

<https://www.interfaithweek.org/events/calendar/environment-climate-event/>

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Charter for faith and belief inclusion signed in Manchester

In November, Manchester's Mayor Andy Burnham and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority signed a Charter for Faith & Belief Inclusion at Manchester Cathedral in the presence of the Bishop of Manchester, David Walker, and other faith leaders of Greater Manchester.

The Charter for Faith & Belief Inclusion is an initiative of the Faith & Belief Forum. Signatories of the Charter commit to working together to promote good relations between people of different faiths and beliefs in their communities, workplaces and wider society. Further information at: <https://faithbeliefforum.org/about/the-charter-for-faith-belief-inclusion/>

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

New IFN inter faith resource for primary schools

In the course of Inter Faith Week the Inter Faith Network launched a new primary school resource designed to help increase pupils' understanding of, and skills for, inter faith encounter, dialogue and action. It focuses on learning about real examples of inter faith engagement, including in their areas.

The resource is for Upper Key Stage 2 pupils. It consists of a teachers' introduction and four units, which are: 1a Religious Diversity in the UK and the Importance of Inter Faith Activity, 1b Introducing Inter Faith Activity, 2 Let's Talk – Inter Faith Dialogue, 3 Making a Difference in the Community: Inter Faith Social Action, and 4 Team Spirit – Inter Faith Sport.

The resource can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/learning-about-inter-faith-activity-a-primary-resource>.

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CCJ Holocaust Memorial Day resource

Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January 2020 will mark the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. The Council of Christians and Jews has produced a resource to reflect this year's theme, *Stand Together*. It encourages churches in the UK to mark Holocaust Memorial Day in their services and in their communities and includes suggested prayers and commentaries on the readings set for the Sunday closest to Holocaust Memorial Day.

The resource can be downloaded at <http://www.ccj.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/HMD-Resource-2020.pdf>.

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Faith & Belief Forum online resources for secondary schools

The Faith & Belief Forum's education and learning team has been working, supported by Dangoor Education, to make its resources accessible to more schools and young people by putting its resources online. The first set of lessons is now ready to pilot in schools. The first topic is Safe Space, exploring the principles and skills needed to have meaningful encounters and dialogues with others. The package includes 6 lesson plans with the

lessons aimed at Key Stage 3, particularly Years 7 to 9. Any school wishing to be involved, should contact Sarah Koster, Education and Learning Manager by email at sarah@faithbeliefforum.org.

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70th Anniversary of journal of the World Congress of Faiths

The World Congress of Faiths (WCF) is marking the 70th anniversary of its journal, *Interreligious Insight*. The journal is now available also online and there is an almost complete set of journals with the WCF archives at Southampton University Library. For more information, or to subscribe, visit <http://www.worldfaiths.org/whats-on-offer/>.

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Woolf Institute Summer School 2020

The Woolf Institute has opened applications for its 2020 Summer School, offering a programme of study on Religion and Society from the Medieval to the Modern. Led by Dr-Esther-Miriam Wagner the course introduces students to different aspects of past and present inter faith relations in Europe and in the Middle East, and aims to equip them with the required analytical tools, bibliographical background and objectivity for the study of inter faith relations. The programme runs from 22 June to 3 July and the deadline for applications is 3 May.

For more information, visit <https://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/study/summer-schools>.

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Why Religion Matters: Religion Literacy, Culture and Diversity

The Religious Studies department at the Open University has developed a new free course on its FutureLearn site entitled 'Why Religion Matters: Religious Literacy, Culture and Diversity'. The course aims to provide an understanding of why religion matters in society and in different cultures and is for anyone who may interact with a religiously diverse public in their personal or professional lives. This includes police, civil servants, teachers, journalists, council workers and parents. The duration of the course is 4 weeks, with 3 hours of weekly study time.

For further details, visit <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/why-religion-matters>.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS, AND NOMINATIONS

Westminster Interfaith Photo Competition

Westminster Interfaith is bringing out a revised edition in 2021 of *Transcendence: Prayer of People of Faith*, a collection of about 140 prayers and readings coming from a wide selection of world faiths. As part of the development of this, it is holding a photograph competition. People are invited to send in their best photographs on the theme of “Interfaith / My Faith / Religions of the World”. The winning images will be included in the new edition. All winners will be acknowledged by name and receive a free copy of the book. For further information, email westminsterinterfaith@rcdow.org.uk.

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Sandford St Martin Trust Awards

The 2020 Sandford St Martin Awards, the UK’s annual broadcasting awards for content exploring religious, spiritual or ethical themes, are open for entry. The deadline for entries is 31 January. Winners will be announced at a special ceremony at Lambeth Palace in June 2020.

For details on how to enter, visit <https://sandfordawards.org.uk/the-awards/enter-the-2020-awards/>. For more information, contact Anna McNamee (Executive Director) or Colette Cunningham (Awards Administrator) on 020 7898 1796 or by email at info@sandfordawards.org.uk.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

IFN’s website lists job and internship opportunities with a significant inter faith dimension with IFN member organisations at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/jobs>.

Inter Faith Network for the UK – Volunteers

The Inter Faith Network for the UK is seeking volunteers to help with various projects in the IFN office from January 2020 onwards. For further information and an application form, contact ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

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Council of Christians and Jews – Part-time programming assistant

The Council of Christians and Jews is seeking a part-time programming assistant. This is a paid internship of between 10 to 14 hours per week. Applications will be considered on a rolling basis. For more information, visit http://www.ccj.org.uk/contact_ccj/recruitment/.

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Interfaith Scotland - Volunteers

Interfaith Scotland is currently looking for volunteers. To find out more, email admin@interfaithscotland.org.

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St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace – various roles

St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace is advertising a number of positions, paid and voluntary. For more information, visit <https://stethelburgas.org/get-involved/vacancies-and-volunteering/>.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Near Neighbours small grants programme

The Near Neighbours small grants programme is funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and administered by the Church Urban Fund. It is currently offering small grants of between £250 and £5,000 as seed funding for local groups and organisations working in a number of areas of England to bring together neighbours, and to develop relationships across diverse faiths and ethnicities to improve their communities. To be eligible, projects should meet the following criteria: bringing people together, working locally, working sustainably, committing to diversity, and improving the community.

For information on the eligible areas and to be updated when the next round of funding opens, visit <https://www.near-neighbours.org.uk/small-grants>.

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Westhill NASACRE Awards 2020–2021

The National Association of Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (NASACRE) is inviting individual SACREs, or SACREs in partnership, to apply for a Westhill/NASACRE Award for 2020-21. Applications are considered for awards of up to £4,000. Projects should offer pupils at school opportunities to engage in compelling learning experiences in RE, or collective worship, within the broad theme of ‘education into diversity’. The closing date is 31 March. For further details, visit <http://www.nasacre.org.uk/westhill-nasacre-awards/awards-2020-21>.

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FCC Community Action Fund

The FCC Communities Foundation is offering grants between £2,000 and £100,000 for projects which involve the provision, maintenance or improvement of public amenities including community spaces in places of worship, which are registered charities. Projects must be based within 10 miles of an eligible FCC Environment waste facility. The next round opens on 18 December and closes on 4 March. For more information, visit <https://fcccommunitiesfoundation.org.uk/funds/fcc-community-action-fund>.

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Windrush Compensation Scheme

The Windrush Compensation Scheme is open to those who settled in the UK from a Commonwealth country before 1973, and in certain circumstances their children and grandchildren. It provides payments to individuals who suffered losses as a result of not being able to evidence their lawful status in the UK. These could range from a loss of employment or access to housing, benefits, education or NHS healthcare to emotional distress or deterioration in mental and physical health. Additionally, it is open to all nationalities who arrived to live in the UK before 31 December 1988 and are settled here. Claim forms can be downloaded and guidance on completing the application can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/windrush-compensation-scheme>. Claimants can also request a form to be sent by post by calling the helpline on 0800 678 1925 or via email WindrushCompensationScheme@homeoffice.gov.uk where they can also request a call back if they are overseas.

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Faith in Community Scotland

Faith in Community Scotland is an anti-poverty charity founded in 2005. They support individuals and faith groups in Scotland's poorest neighbourhoods to achieve the difference that they are capable of. They do this through training, resources and funding which helps to build people's skill and to increase their confidence. It has a small grants programme which has distributed over £1 million over the past ten years to urban and rural faith groups tackling poverty. For more information about eligibility and how to apply for a grant, email andrew@faithincommunity.scot.

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Funding websites

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) offers advice on fundraising and grants on its Knowhow Nonprofit site at <https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/funding>.

Funding Central - <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/default.aspx> - is a free website for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises in England. It provides access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, together with tools and resources to develop sustainable income strategies. Similar websites for funding in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at Funding Scotland - <http://www.fundingscotland.com/> - Wales Council for Voluntary Action - <http://www.wcva.org.uk/funding/search> - and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland - <https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

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Website and Facebook grants

The Transform Foundation offers funding to charities to help with new website builds. Grants of £18,000 are available. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. For further information and to apply, visit <https://www.transformfoundation.org.uk/funded-website-programme>.

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Google and charities

Google is offering a service to registered charities which brings: Google Ad Grants: Free AdWords advertising to promote their websites on Google through keyword targeting; YouTube Nonprofit Programme: Access exclusive resources, features and programs designed to maximise their organisations' impact on YouTube; and Google Apps for Non-

profit: Free version of the Google Apps business productivity suite, including Gmail, Docs, Calendar and more. For further information, visit www.google.co.uk/intl/en/nonprofits/join.

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Subsidised fundraising workshops

The Foundation for Social Improvement offers subsidised training programmes for small charities across the UK. The courses cover a wide range of subjects from event planning to leadership. Many of the courses focus on fundraising and sustainability skills in particular. Further information and dates for upcoming courses in January and February can be found at <http://www.thefsi.org/services/training>.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Holocaust Memorial Day will take place on 27 January. Its theme in 2020 is 'Stand Together'. Holocaust Memorial Day is the day for everyone to remember the millions of people murdered in the Holocaust, under Nazi Persecution, and in the genocides which followed in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur. It honours the survivors of these regimes and challenges everyone to use the lessons of their experience to inform their lives today. www.hmd.org.uk/

World Interfaith Harmony Week takes place from 1 to 7 February. It is a UN recognised Week which was proposed to the UN General Assembly by HM King Abdullah of Jordan. The first UN World Interfaith Harmony Week took place in February 2011. <http://worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com>

Sadaqa Day will take place on Sunday 22 March. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Muslim community. mysadaqaday.org

The Big Lunch will be held on Saturday 6 and Sunday 7 June. Across the years millions of people from different faith backgrounds have joined together to take part through street parties, BBQs, iftars and picnics. <https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/thebiglunchhomepage>

Refugee Week will take place from 15-21 June. Refugee Week is a nationwide programme of arts, cultural and educational events that celebrate the contribution of refugees to the UK, and encourages a better understanding between communities.

VisitMyMosque Day will take place on Sunday 21 June. It is a national campaign facilitated by the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) that encourages mosques across the UK to hold an open day to welcome in their neighbours from all faiths and none. www.visitmymosque.org

The Great Get Together, inspired by the late Jo Cox MP, is taking place from Friday 19 to Sunday 21 June. <https://www.greatgettogether.org/>

Sewa Day takes place in October (2020 date tbc). It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Hindu community. <http://www.sewaday.org/>
<https://www.facebook.com/sewaday/>

National Hate Crime Awareness Week takes place from Saturday 10 October to Saturday 17 October. <https://nationalhcaw.uk/>

One World Week will take place from Sunday 18 to Sunday 25 October. www.oneworldweek.org

Inter Faith Week will take place from Sunday 8 to Sunday 15 November. www.interfaithweek.org See [above](#).

Scottish Interfaith Week will take place from Sunday 8 to Sunday 15 November. Scottish Interfaith Week is led by Interfaith Scotland. www.scottishinterfaithweek.org

Mitzvah Day will take place on Sunday 15 November. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Jewish community. On Mitzvah Day, people give their time, not their money, to make a difference to the community around them. Many events and projects held for the day have an inter faith focus. www.mitzvahday.org.uk/

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DIARY DATES

This section includes a sample of some of the events taking place around the UK during December and January. Only one event per organisation is included. We also include information on diary dates between e-bulletins on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/events>.

South London Inter Faith Group, with the support of **Faiths Together in Lambeth**, is holding an event on Sunday 15 December entitled 'People of Faith Celebrating Together: Christmas, Milad and Gurburab'. It is being held from 1.45pm to 5.15pm at St Matthew's Roman Catholic Church, 37 Norwood High Street, West Norwood, London, SE27 9JU. For

more information, visit <http://www.faithstogetherinlambeth.org/about-us/events/18-ftil-events/87-ftil-events> or <http://www.southlondoninterfaith.org.uk/>.

Norwich InterFaith Link is holding its next event on Tuesday 17 December. The topic will be "How do we stop the dying of the light?" Gayatri Verma will talk about the festival of Diwali. It is being held at 7.30 pm at the Martineau Hall, Colegate, Norwich. For more information, visit <http://www.norwichinterfaith.co.uk/main.php>.

Building Bridges in Burnley is holding its next event on Thursday 19 December. The theme will be 'Christ in Islam' and the speaker will be the Rt Revd Philip North, Bishop of Burnley. This will be an opportunity to learn about the similarities and differences between Islam and Christianity and to ask questions. It is being held from 1.30pm to 4pm at 160 Grey Street Burnley BB10 1PX. For more information, visit <https://bbburnley.wordpress.com/>.

Barnet Multi-Faith Forum is holding an event on Sunday 22 December to celebrate the Jewish festival of Chanukah, with an explanation of the 'importance, history and ritual of this ancient candle lighting festival'. It is being held at 7.45pm at Woodside Park Synagogue. For further information, visit <http://barnetmultifaithforum.org/event/celebrate-the-jewish-festival-of-chanukah/>.

Interfaith Milton Keynes is holding an event entitled 'My New Year Spiritual Resolution' on Thursday 2 January. This will include prayers, promises and readings. It is being held from 7.30pm to 9.30pm at The Crypt, Camphill Community, Japonica Lane, Willen Park, Milton Keynes MK15 9JY. Teas and Refreshments will be served at the end of the evening. For further information, contact the Convenor at interfaithmk@gmail.com.

Concord Leeds Interfaith Fellowship is organising a visit to the new Jamyang Buddhist Centre, Clyde Works, Ingram Road, Leeds LS11 9RQ on Monday 6 January at 7.45pm. For more information call John Summerwill on 0113 2697895, visit www.concord-leeds.org.uk or email chair@concord-leeds.org.uk.

York Interfaith Group is holding an event on Tuesday 7 January to explore the topic 'Why don't we all have the same New Year?'. A panel of its members from different faiths will explore what happens for each faith community and why. It is being held from 7.30pm to 9pm in the Snow Room at the City of York Council, West Offices, Station Rise, York YO1 6GA. For more information, visit http://www.yorkinterfaith.org/YIG_2020_Programme.pdf.

Woking Action for Peace, Friends of the Earth, Surrey Faith Links, Woking LA21, Woking Quakers and **Woking People of Faith** are holding the next Woking Debate on Saturday 11 January. The theme will be "Climate emergency – what can we do?" The debate will take place from 11am to 12.30pm, with refreshments available from 10.30am,

at Christ Church, Jubilee Square, Woking, GU21 6YG. For more information, contact Keith Scott at [ketihsc_2000@yahoo.com](mailto:ketihscc_2000@yahoo.com) or 01483 824980.

Dacorum Interfaith Network will be holding its next meeting on Monday 13 January. This will be a planning meeting for Inter Faith Week 2020. The meeting will take place at 7.30pm at the Hemel Hampstead Quaker Meeting House, 1 The Alleys, (between George Street and St Mary's road) Hemel Hampstead HP2 5ZB. For more information, contact Norman Spink at normanspink@hotmail.com.

Westminster Cathedral Interfaith Group will next be meeting on Wednesday 15 January. Sister Emmanuel Bac Nguyen will be speaking on "The challenges and hopes for the Church in Vietnam." The meeting is being held in the Hinsley Room, Morpeth Terrace SW1P 1EP from 4.00 to 5.00pm. For more information contact John Woodhouse on 0790 8888 586 (by text) or email woodhousesopten@btinternet.com.

The **Focolare Movement** is holding an inter faith event on Saturday 18 January titled 'Journeying In Dialogue' at which local, national and international contributors will share their experiences of building unity. The event will welcome three keynote speakers: Archbishop Bernard Longley of Birmingham, Dr Mohammad Ali Shomali, Director of the International Institute for Islamic Studies and Bhai Sahib Ji, leader of the GNNSJ Sikh Community. To book, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/journeying-in-dialogue-tickets-76427999203?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>.

Interfaith Wolverhampton is holding its next 'Bring and Share Lunch' on Tuesday 21 January. Navi Aulkh, an 'urban missionary' working for the All Nations Church, will be speaking about this and also about the associated 'Eden: Whitmore Reans'. It is being held from 12.45pm to 2pm. For further information, including the venue, visit <http://www.ifwton.org.uk/diary.html>.

Stratford-on-Avon Interfaith Forum is holding a meeting on Tuesday 21 January. This will be presentations on faith and culture, and how faiths have changed in accordance with the societies they have taken root in, with reference to Christianity, Buddhism and Islam. It is being held at 7.30pm. For more information, including the venue, contact info@stratfordinterfaith.org.uk at or visit <https://www.stratfordinterfaith.org.uk/index.php/events>.

More information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org.uk

INTER FAITH NETWORK 'COME TOGETHER' APPEAL

This month the Inter Faith Network for the UK launched the 'Come Together Appeal'. In these often divided times, it is vital for people to stand together against prejudice and hatred and to come together in respect, understanding and cooperation for the common good. www.interfaith.org.uk/news/appeal

The Inter Faith Network works in many different ways to support the development of greater inter faith understanding and cooperation and to enable people to come together.

On behalf of the Board of IFN, Co-Chairs Jatinder Singh Birdi and Bishop Jonathan Clark encourage all readers to consider a donation to support IFN's vital work. Every gift will be carefully used to make a real difference.

It is easy to donate by clicking on this link: www.interfaith.org.uk/donate, by PayPal or by sending a cheque to: the Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH.

Disclaimer: Information in this bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH
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2020–2024

Newsletters of the Inter Faith Network for the UK



IFN e-bulletin

February/March 2020

Welcome to the e-bulletin of the Inter Faith Network for the UK www.interfaith.org.uk
It is published every two months and it highlights primarily new developments, projects and future events. You can read by scrolling through or you can go directly to an individual section or item by clicking on the 'Read more' link in the Sections and Contents lists below.

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E-BULLETIN SURVEY

With this issue comes a special survey about the e-bulletin.

https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/IFN_E-bulletin/

We would be very grateful if you could take a few minutes to complete this. *Thank you!*

FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

Exiting the EU – the important role of faith communities

On 31 January the UK left the European Union.

For Government information relating to EU Exit, see <https://www.gov.uk/transition>. A useful short overview of what will change at this time and what will stay the same can be found at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-51194363>.

An IFN briefing note, ‘Exiting the EU – the important role of faith communities at a time of transition’ highlights faith communities’ trusted role in signposting information and as providers of community support and their vital work to unite communities, promote good relations and tackle hatred. The note, originally published on 31 October, was developed by the IFN office in the light of discussion by IFN’s Faith Communities Forum (FCF) and subsequent correspondence with FCF members. The Department for Exiting the EU (now closed) and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government were also consulted in the development of the note. It was recirculated and shared on social media on 31 January. It can be found on IFN’s website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/leaving-the-eu-the-important-role-of-faith-communities-at-a-time-of-transition>.

As well as Government sources of information and support, there are a number of organisations and initiatives working to campaign for/and or support particular groups, such as <https://www.the3million.org.uk/> in relation to European citizens in the UK.

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Cabinet reshuffle

On 14 February Prime Minister Boris Johnson carried out a Cabinet reshuffle. A full list of new Cabinet members can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/latest-updates-on-ministerial-appointments-13-february-2020>.

The Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP remains the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government. The previous Minister for Faith, Viscount Younger of Leckie, has now been made a Government Whip. No announcement has yet been made on who will hold this portfolio.

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VE and VJ Day 75th anniversary Commemorations

As noted in the August 2019 issue, IFN worked with the Royal British Legion (RBL) to arrange a roundtable last June for faith communities to explore understandings of Remembrance and to reflect on inclusion and Remembrance.

<https://www.facebook.com/ifnetuk/posts/2452842664766294>

This year is the 75th anniversary of both Victory in Europe Day (VE Day) and Victory in Japan Day (VJ Day) and the RBL will be “paying tribute to the men and women of the Second World War generation from Britain, the Commonwealth and Allied nations who came home and rebuilt our world at the end of WW2.” It will be celebrating “the peace that reunited them, and the democracy and freedoms they secured for us”.

<https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-involved/remembrance/what-were-remembering-this-year>

A special programme of events marking VE 75 will take place over the Early May Bank Holiday in London and has been designed to be of particular interest to all from the Second World War generation who served at home and overseas across the European theatre. More information on this and how to get involved is at

<https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-involved/remembrance/remembrance-events/ve-day-75>.

The UK’s VJ Day national event will take place at the National Memorial Arboretum on 15 August. The event will form part of a three-day public programme of events from 14 to 16 August, which will include a national service of Remembrance. More information on this and how to get involved is at <https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-involved/remembrance/remembrance-events/vj-day-75>.

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Streatham and Hanau attacks

On 2 February two people were stabbed in a terrorist attack in Streatham, South London. The assailant, Sudesh Amman, was shot dead.

IFN's Co-Chairs put out the following message: "Our thoughts and prayers are with all affected by today's terrorist stabbing attack in Streatham, London. As past statements by IFN's Co-Chairs and Moderators have underlined, we must stand together to oppose terrorism and the ideologies that promote it."

Local communities came together for a peace vigil in Streatham the following week. They were joined by the local MP, Bell Ribeiro-Addy, and by the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan.

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/feb/08/a-week-on-streatham-attack-marked-by-march-and-peace-vigil>

The Co-Chairs issued a similar message following the shootings in Hanau, Germany, on 19 February, which are believed to have been terrorist attacks carried out by a far right extremist.

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Security at places of worship

On 27 January the Scottish Government announced funding of £500,000 to help places of worship in Scotland install security measures. Religious groups will be consulted in the coming months to help develop the scheme. The fund will be launched later this year. More information can be found at <https://www.gov.scot/news/fund-announced-for-security-measures-at-places-of-worship/>.

In September last year the Chancellor announced that the Places of Worship Protective Security Funding Scheme in England and Wales would be doubled to £3.2 million for 2020-21. There is no further information yet available on this. Synagogues are covered separately by the Jewish Community Protective Security Grant.

On 8 January Gareth Thomas, MP for Harrow West, asked Home Secretary Rt Hon Priti Patel the following Written Question: "How much financial assistance she has made available to improve security for people attending (a) Hindu Temples, (b) Synagogues, (c) Churches, (d) Mosques, (e) Gurdwaras and (f) other places of worship in the 2019-20 financial year?" The answer, given on 16 January, can be found at <https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-01-08/1266/>.

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Hate crime and incidents

Extensive Antisemitic graffitiing was found in North London at the end of December <https://www.hamhigh.co.uk/news/crime-court/hampstead-antisemitic-graffiti-an-affront-to-our-borough-say-interfaith-forum-chairs-1-6444221> Antisemitic graffiti was also sprayed on a bank in London on the eve of Holocaust Memorial Day. Over the New Year, anti-Muslim slogans were reported on a building near North Brixton Islamic Cultural Centre in London. In Larne, Northern Ireland, a paint bomb attack on a Catholic church is being treated by police as a sectarian hate crime. <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/larne-church-targeted-in-sectarian-hate-crime-38961133.html>

The Community Security Trust reports that 2019 was the worst year on record, with a total of 1,805 incidents deemed Antisemitic. This is 7% higher than the 2018 total of 1,690 incidents and is the fourth successive year in which a new annual high has been recorded. For the second successive year, CST recorded over 100 incidents in every calendar month. <https://cst.org.uk/data/file/9/0/IncidentsReport2019.1580815723.pdf>

Social media also continues to be used to inflame anger about particular groups. For example, Tell Mama reports that “A viral and inflammatory falsehood about ‘Muslim-only housing’ in London exemplifies the need for Twitter to fix an enduring problem: removing content designed to deceive and pass as news”. <https://tellmamauk.org/how-far-right-fake-news-continues-to-go-viral-on-twitter/>

On 8 January a public consultation into Hate Crime in Northern Ireland was launched. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2020/01/08/news/public-consultation-on-hate-crime-launched-as-eight-incidents-a-day-reported-to-psni-1808297/> The consultation paper can be found at <https://www.hatecrimereviewni.org.uk/news/consultation-paper> and the closing date for submissions is 31 March.

On 21 January, Viscount Younger of Leckie, then Minister for Faith, replied to a Written Question from Lord Vinson asking the Government “what steps they are taking to ensure that criticism of any religion is not regarded as a hate crime”. The response can be seen at <https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-questions-answers>. See also: <https://www.lawandreligionuk.com/2020/02/07/prosecuting-hate-speech-against-religion/>.

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Tackling Antisemitism

On 28 January Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick announced £500,000 of new funding for a programme supporting universities in tackling Antisemitism on campus over 3 years. Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-funding-to-help-universities-tackle-antisemitism-announced-on-holocaust-memorial-day>.

Chelsea Football Club has an ongoing 'Say No To Antisemitism' campaign which was launched in January 2018. It has just announced that it will be partnering with The Jerusalem Post to host a conference at its stadium to further highlight the importance of tackling the rise of Antisemitism. <https://www.jpost.com/Diaspora/Antisemitism/Chelsea-Football-Jerusalem-Post-partner-to-tackle-antisemitism-618059>

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Countering Extremism

The Government's current Counter Extremism Strategy, published in 2015, comes to an end this year. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counter-extremism-strategy> The previous Home Secretary announced on 17 July last year that the Home Office would be working on developing a new strategy but that the timing and nature of this would need to be considered by the current Government. The timetable is not yet known.

The Home Office is currently considering the recommendations of a report published by the independent Commission for Countering-Extremism in October, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/challenging-hateful-extremism>.

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Political parties and faith community concerns

There continue to be concerns among faith communities about allegations of faith-based discrimination, including Antisemitism and Islamophobia, in political parties. There have also been some concerns expressed by some about the Labour Party about positions seen as anti Hindu.

The EHRC is due to report in May on its Investigation into Antisemitism in the Labour Party. <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/inquiries-and-investigations/investigation-labour-party> The Prime Minister announced in December that the Conservative Party would be holding "an independent inquiry into Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, every manner of prejudice and discrimination". <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/boris-johnson-apologises-for-hurt-and-offence-caused-by-islamophobia-in-conservative-party-a4298091.html>

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APPG on Safeguarding in Faith Settings

On 28 January the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Safeguarding in Faith Settings published the report of its Inquiry into “the effectiveness of current definitions of ‘positions of trust’ in safeguarding young people within faith settings”. This was produced following a Call for Evidence in August 2019 which received evidence from a wide variety of individuals and organisations, including faith groups/denominations and communities, professional safeguarding agencies, law firms and academics and also oral evidence provided by a range of respondents at evidence sessions in Parliament in October.

The report calls on the Government to close the loophole in the law that allows adults in ‘positions of trust’ to legally engage in sexual activity with the young people they are working with. The full report can be found at <https://thirtyoneeight.org/get-help/resources/appg-report-pot/>.

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Faith communities and loneliness

Faith communities play an important role in combatting loneliness. In January the Government published its Loneliness Annual Report. This includes case study material about work done by faith communities.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/loneliness-annual-report-the-first-year/loneliness-annual-report-january-2020--2>

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Faith communities and blood and organ donation

Faith communities are continuing to support blood donation drives. For example, in December, Faiths Forum for London coordinated an inter faith blood donation drive at a mosque in Golders Green where Jews, Muslims and people of all faiths and none were invited to donate blood. <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/golders-green-mosque-welcomes-jews-and-muslims-for-interfaith-blood-drive-1.494802>

As noted in previous e-bulletins, under the new organ donation system in England everybody will be considered a potential organ donor unless they add their details to the NHS Organ Donor Register to say that they do not wish to donate their organs or are in one of the excluded groups. The new system is due to begin in Spring 2020, though the exact date has not yet been confirmed. People are free to register their decision before or after the change in the law. There has recently been some misinformation circulating online about the date for the system to begin. NHS Blood and Transport has created a webpage to address the misinformation <https://www.organdonation.nhs.uk/get-involved/news/fake-news/>.

Information about organ donation and the position of individual faith and belief systems is at <https://www.organdonation.nhs.uk/about-donation/organ-donation-and-my-beliefs/> and a selection of downloadable faith and belief-specific donor cards can be found at <https://www.nhsbt.nhs.uk/how-you-can-help/get-involved/download-digital-materials/faith-and-belief-donor-cards/>.

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Holocaust Memorial Day

Holocaust Memorial Day took place on 27 January. Its theme was ‘Stand Together’. Holocaust Memorial Day is the day for everyone to remember the millions of people murdered in the Holocaust, under Nazi Persecution, and in the genocides which followed in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur. It honours the survivors of these regimes and challenges everyone to use the lessons of survivors’ experience to inform their lives today. This year there were particular commemorations to mark the 75th Anniversary of the Liberation of Auschwitz. The approaching 25th anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide was also remembered. The London event was broadcast in full by the BBC. For more information, visit www.hmd.org.uk/.

The Interfaith Council for Wales/ Cyngor Rhyngffydd Rhyng-ffydd Cymru was involved in the National Service of Commemoration for Wales at Cardiff City Hall, Interfaith Scotland hosted the National Memorial for Scotland at the Scottish Parliament and the Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum was involved in the Holocaust commemoration event at Belfast City Hall.

During January IFN published a resource on its website about Annual Memorial Days and Weeks including Holocaust Memorial Day and Remembering Srebrenica. See [below](#).

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RE in Northern Ireland

The Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum has been invited to sit on the Religious Studies Subject Advisory Board for GCSE and A Level, under the aegis of Northern Ireland’s Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment. It is also undertaking research into parental attitudes to RE in Northern Ireland among those from minority faith and belief backgrounds.

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INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK NEWS

Meeting of Faith Communities Forum

A meeting of IFN's Faith Communities Forum was held on 12 February. The two main items on the Agenda were Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education, with a presentation from an official from the Department for Education; and Speaking together peacefully to counter extremism and hate crime.

As well as IFN matters, the meeting discussed: the inter faith engagement and joint work of faith communities and other current issues of interest or concern to faith communities. As part of the latter session, they heard a short presentation from a staff member of Keep Britain Tidy about its Annual Spring Clean, and how faith communities can get involved.

The Forum also agreed a statement on 'Cooperation and positive coexistence: Faith communities in the UK'. This focuses on the commitment of faith communities to respectful and positive engagement. It can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/cooperation-and-positive-coexistence-faith-communities-in-the-uk>.

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IFN Social Media Photography Competition

On 24 February IFN will be launching a Social Media Photography Competition. It will have a local inter faith focus. For more, see [below](#).

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IFN UK-wide local inter faith practitioner day 24 March

Among IFN's meetings are special days for people from local inter faith groups anywhere in the UK to come to share their experiences, discuss issues of common interest and concern and discuss practical aspects of developing successful inter faith programmes as well as the challenges. The next such day event will be held in Reading on 24 March.

For any queries, please contact Project Assistant Ruth Foster at ruth.foster@interfaith.org.uk.

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IFN local link meetings in Kent and the North West of England

From time to time IFN also holds smaller meetings, such as regional or county-wide links. It will be holding a link meeting in Maidstone on 27 February for local inter faith bodies in Kent and in Preston on 5 March for local inter faith bodies in the North West of England.

For any queries, please contact Project Assistant Ruth Foster at ruth.foster@interfaith.org.uk.

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New online resources

During January IFN published a resource on its website about Annual Memorial Days and Weeks including Holocaust Memorial Day and Remembering Srebrenica. This includes examples of events held by local inter faith organisations. It can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/annual-memorial-days-and-weeks>.

In February, it published a resource about local inter faith organisations and environmental social action: <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/local-inter-faith-organisations-and-environmental-social-action>.

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The Act of Reflection and Commitment by Faith Communities of the UK – 20 years on

January marked 20 years since faith communities of the UK came together in the Royal Gallery at the Houses of Parliament in the Shared Act of Reflection and Commitment, arranged by Government with assistance from IFN. As part of this, a short 'Act of Commitment' was developed by the faith communities with IFN which continues to be widely used today in contexts such as civic services and inter faith events. The idea for the event arose from the work of the 'Lambeth Group' (the Churches and Other Faiths Sub-group of the Millennium Coordinating Group of DCMS), which met at Lambeth Palace and on which IFN and a range of faiths and denominations were represented. The event was in part inspired by a suggestion from one of its members, Lord Singh of Wimbledon of the Network of Sikh Organisations. The 'Act of Commitment' can be found at <https://interfaith.org.uk/resources/act-of-commitment>.

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Inter Faith Network 'Come Together' Appeal

The Inter Faith Network for the UK recently launched the 'Come Together Appeal'. www.interfaith.org.uk/news/appeal In these often divided times, it is vital for people to stand together against prejudice and hatred and to come together in respect, understanding and cooperation for the common good. The Inter Faith Network works in many different ways to support the development of greater inter faith understanding and cooperation and to enable people to come together.

On behalf of the Board of IFN, Co-Chairs Jatinder Singh Birdi and Bishop Jonathan Clark encourage all readers to consider a donation to support IFN's vital work. Every gift will be carefully used to make a real difference.

It is easy to donate by clicking on this link: <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/appeal>, by PayPal or by sending a cheque to: The Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH.

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

Special feature – Faith communities and the environment

COP26, the 2020 UN Climate Change Conference will take place in Glasgow from 9 to 19 November. Many faith and inter faith organisations are already gearing up to hold activities related to it. The conference is at the same time as Inter Faith Week and Scottish Interfaith Week.

A number of faith communities and faith-based organisations have ongoing programmes of work on environmental issues and a number of linked initiatives have been developed, such as: the Bhumi Project (<http://www.bhumiproject.org/>); Eco-Church (<https://ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/>); Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences (<http://www.ifees.org.uk/>); Eco-Sikh (<http://www.ecosikh.org/about/>); Eco-Synagogue (<https://ecosynagogue.org/about/>) and Operation Noah (<https://operationnoah.org/>). An Eco-Dharma working group has recently been set up (<https://www.nbo.org.uk/new-eco-dharma-network/>).

Examples of local inter faith activities can be found in IFN's latest online resource on 'Local inter faith organisations and environmental social action'. This includes case studies from Birmingham Council of Faiths, Devon Faith and Belief Forum, Harrow Interfaith and Redbridge faith Forum. <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/local-inter-faith-organisations-and-environmental-social-action>

Faiths4Change is an inter faith organisation working to connect the health and wellbeing of people and the environment across the North West through the use of arts, health and wellbeing activities. <https://www.faiths4change.org.uk/>

Faith for the Climate (FftC) is a network of over 150 faith-based organisations and individuals working on climate change. It exists to encourage, inspire and equip faith in their work on climate change. Its website lists many faith-based campaigns and resources that inter faith groups can use and encourage their members to engage in. FftC also distributes a monthly e-news bulletin to its members, which can be signed up to at <https://faithfortheclimate.org.uk/>.

The Climate Coalition links 140 organisations of many different kinds. Its vision is of a future where the UK no longer contribute to climate change. Every February it encourages people to get involved in conversations about climate change through its Show the Love campaign: <https://www.theclimatecoalition.org/show-the-love> . This includes 'faith packs', faith-based resources created to enable greater grassroots faith participation in tackling climate change.

There are also international inter faith environmental initiatives such as the Interfaith Rainforest Initiative <https://www.interfaithrainforest.org>. Religions for Peace (RfP) has a Resource Guide on Climate Change for religious communities. <https://rfp.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/RfP-Resource-Guide-on-Climate-Change.pdf> Religions for Peace UK has a particular interest in this topic and is providing some support to Faith for the Climate and encouraging faith community conversations.

Interfaith Scotland has a guidance booklet, developed with its Youth Committee, to help faith communities become more eco-friendly. <https://interfaithscotland.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Our-Sacred-Earth-a-guide-for-becoming-more-eco-friendly-in-your-faith-community.pdf>

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Hindu Muslim dine together project

Hindus and Muslims dined together recently as part of a scheme to encourage inter faith friendships in Leicester. The St Philip's Centre, whose work includes promoting inter faith harmony, has launched 'Come Dine Together' inspired by the Channel 4 series *Come Dine With Me*. People from different faiths of all ages will meet to share a meal, either in their homes or at a restaurant and get to know each other.

<https://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/news/leicester-news/hindus-muslims-dine-together-part-3786625>

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Coventry Sacred Space Initiative

On 22 January a summit was held in Coventry to begin development of a new Coventry Sacred Space Initiative (CSSI). It was organised by the Coventry Safety and Security working group with representatives of the local community and supported by the Council and included representatives from Coventry's diverse religious and cultural communities. They were joined by representatives of West Midlands Police, the Home Office, Council and other statutory bodies and agencies.

The new initiative will see communities working with partners to transform an area which is in-need of repair and regeneration, with many local people having few opportunities

and facing mental and physical health challenges. Organisers say that it is planned to include at least one place of worship from the different religions present in Coventry and to ensure the minority religious/cultural communities feel a sense of past or present ownership, appreciation and care and that visitors, guests and students gain a deeper understanding of different religions, belief systems including nature and the environment. <https://tiacommunity.com/coventry-sacred-space-initiative/>

Faith in Society is supporting the initiative and is writing a report on the Summit. <https://faithinsociety.org.uk/the-coventry-sacred-space-initiative/>.

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London Interfaith Fun Run

In September the Faith and Belief Forum, in partnership with Maccabi GB and others, will be hosting London's first Interfaith Fun Run – *Running for a Connected London*.

As well as a 1k and a 5k Fun Run there will be an afternoon of performances, activities and games, a charity fair, a family fun zone and food. The event is about “having fun, challenging yourself and raising money for London's amazing charities. Above all it is about spreading an uplifting and positive message about how great London's diverse faiths, beliefs and cultures are and how we can work together for a better connected London.” For more information and to register an interest in taking part in any way, visit <https://faithbeliefforum.org/form/interfaith-fun-run-register-interest/>.

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Religions for Peace (UK) Interfaith Youth Network

The Religions for Peace (UK) Interfaith Youth Network, launched in 2016, is looking to set up a Core Group to develop its vision and mission, to invite UK religious and inter-religious youth organisations to meet and discuss the way forward. For more information, updates and how to get involved, visit <https://www.facebook.com/rfp.ukiyn> and <https://www.rfpuk.org/about/uk-interfaith-youth-network/>.

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Building Bridges Pendle - People and the Community

Building Bridges Pendle's has begun a new project called 'People and the Community', through which it is to seek engagement with Syrian families.

<https://www.facebook.com/buildingbridgespendle/photos/a.273714356101901/1596146210525369/?type=3&theater>

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Brent Shelter of Sanctuary

Brent Multi Faith Forum has co-ordinated the ‘Brent Shelter of Sanctuary’ which is a winter night shelter that offers bed space for up to 15 men experiencing homelessness in Brent. It is running for 12 weeks until the end of March 2020. They are looking for volunteers to help run the shelter, and also provide training. <https://brent.cityofsanctuary.org/partners-of-sanctuary/bmff>

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LGBT Interfaith Glasgow

LGBT Interfaith Glasgow is a joint project between Glasgow LGBT+ Interfaith Network and Hidayah. It “aims to be a supportive environment to share experiences of being LGBT+ within different faith communities, and to explore how faith and LGBT+ identities can interact.” Its evening events are held on the first Wednesday of every month and are open to people from all faiths and none. For more information, visit <https://www.lgbthealth.org.uk/event/lgbt-interfaith-glasgow/2020-02-05/> or contact development@interfaithglasgow.org.

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Gwent Police Faith Community Forum

The Interfaith Council for Wales/ Cyngor Rhyngffydd Cymru is working with Heddlu Gwent Police to form a Faith Community Forum for the force area. It will be exploring different forms of inter faith engagement that can be facilitated by the Heddlu/Police to help build and cement community cohesion.

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

Media, Faith and Belonging report

In January the Faith & Belief Forum and the Department of Psychosocial Studies at Birkbeck, University of London, published ‘Media, Faith and Belonging’ drawing on discussion at a 2018, roundtable involving local organisations, academics and policy experts. This is the third and final report in a series supported by a grant from Dangoor Education which looked at different aspects of belief and belonging. The report finds that “inaccurate, sensationalised and simplistic media coverage reinforces negative stereotypes of religious groups, increasing the potential for suspicion, fear and communal violence” and offers several recommendations to address these issues. It can be downloaded from <https://faithbeliefforum.org/report>. For more information, email philip@faithbeliefforum.org or telephone 0207 482 9535.

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Interfaith Scotland University Chaplaincy report

Interfaith Scotland (IfS) has published the results of its research with university chaplains at the campuses of Glasgow, Strathclyde, Edinburgh, Heriot-Watt, Aberdeen, Dundee, Stirling, St Andrews and the University of the Highlands and Islands (Moray campus). The purpose of the research, carried out by IfS and Interfaith Glasgow, was “to ascertain how good interfaith relations are currently being promoted on university campuses and to identify best practice and future opportunities for ongoing collaboration”.

The document looks at the roles and aims of the chaplains and chaplaincy centres, what buildings and spaces they use, their paid chaplaincy teams and their honorary chaplains who are unpaid and represent many different faith communities; and ways that the centres link in with other university bodies and Equality and Diversity officers, local inter faith groups, faith communities and IfS. The report can be downloaded from <https://interfaithscotland.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/INTERFAITH-UNIVERSITY-CHAPLAINCY-RESEARCH-PROJECT.pdf>.

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Supporting Faith and Belief Student Societies

Theos has produced a guidance booklet, aimed at students’ unions, to advise them on how to support their faith and belief societies better. The guidance is available at <https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/research/2020/01/17/supporting-faith-and-belief-student-societies-a-guide-for-students-unions>. It draws on findings from Theos’ report (produced in partnership with the Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations at Coventry University), [Faith and Belief on Campus: Division and Cohesion \(2019\)](#).

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Faith and Police Together toolkit

Faith and Police Together is a collaboration of faith based organisations which actively work on Police Related Priorities in partnership with Police and Police and Crime Commissioners. It is part of the charity Redeeming Our Communities and is supported by the National Police Chiefs' Council and College of Policing. It has produced a Toolkit called a ‘Faith Communities Guide to Engaging with Police’. This can be downloaded from https://www.faithandpolicetogether.org.uk/uploads/4/9/5/4/4954631/faith_communities_guide_to_engaging_with_police_30.01.20_.pdf.

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Armistice Now portal

Professor Brian Gates MBE has created a portal called Armistice Now, which focuses on the religious diversity of the troops in the First World War and in the Empire and the Commonwealth. It also explores the different views and debates within and between faiths about violence and non-violence. The portal can be found at <http://armisticenow.net/>.

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Faiths Forum for London Community Roots report

The Faiths Forum for London has published a report on the Community Roots gardening project that it led between November 2018 and January 2020. This can be found at <http://faithsforum.com/community-roots-final-report-2018-2020/>.

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Faith and Belief Forum Interfaith Toolkit for London

In January the Faith and Belief Forum launched a new Interfaith toolkit, 'Working Together for a More Connected London: a Toolkit of Interfaith Skills'. For more information, contact Jessica Hazrati at jessica@faithbeliefforum.org.

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Interfaith Milton Keynes DVD

Interfaith Milton Keynes (IFMK) has produced a DVD containing a short, edited film from a Multifaith Service that it held in November. <https://www.interfaithmk.org.uk/projects>

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IFN inter faith resource for primary schools

As noted in the December e-bulletin, in the course of Inter Faith Week the Inter Faith Network launched a new primary school resource designed to help increase pupils' understanding of, and skills for, inter faith encounter, dialogue and action. It focuses on learning about real examples of inter faith engagement, including in their areas.

The resource is for Upper Key Stage 2 pupils. It consists of a teachers' introduction and four units, which are: 1a Religious Diversity in the UK and the Importance of Inter Faith Activity, 1b Introducing Inter Faith Activity, 2 Let's Talk – Inter Faith Dialogue, 3 Making a Difference in the Community: Inter Faith Social Action, and 4 Team Spirit – Inter Faith Sport.

The resource can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/learning-about-inter-faith-activity-a-primary-resource>.

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Cumberland Lodge webinar on Interfaith Harmony

Cumberland Lodge is holding a series of monthly webinars. The most recent webinar on ‘Dialogue and Debate: Enabling Interfaith Harmony’ can be found at <https://www.cumberlandlodge.ac.uk/read-watch-listen/dialogue-debate-enabling-interfaith-harmony>.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS, AND NOMINATIONS

IFN Social Media Photography Competition

On 24 February IFN will be launching a Social Media Photography Competition on different aspects of local inter faith activity: local inter faith dialogue; local inter faith social action; and local inter faith youth activity (including on campus). Details of how to enter and terms and conditions will be available on IFN’s website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/competition>.

Entries will be via Facebook or Instagram. For guidance on how to set up an Instagram account or a Facebook page visit <https://help.instagram.com/155940534568753> or <https://www.facebook.com/help/135275340210354>.

Follow IFN on Instagram @IFNetUK or Facebook for announcements and details about the competition.

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Honours Nominations

A number of people received Honours in this year’s New Year’s Honours list for services to inter faith work or community cohesion.

The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is keen to recognise individuals who have contributed to building integrated communities and notes that nominees can come from all levels; being in a junior role is not a barrier to a nomination.

All nominations must be made on an official citation form and nominees should not be informed that they have been nominated. MHCLG is running workshops on Honours citations during March. Places can be booked at

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/honours-workshop-new-year-2021-tickets-90296117117>.

Citation forms, as well as further information, can be obtained by emailing integration@communities.gsi.gov.uk.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

IFN's website lists job and internship opportunities with a significant inter faith dimension with IFN member organisations at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/jobs>.

Inter Faith Network for the UK – Volunteers

The Inter Faith Network for the UK is seeking volunteers to help with various projects in the IFN office. For further information and an application form, contact ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

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Council of Christians and Jews – Internship

The Council of Christian and Jews is seeking a part-time assistant to CCJ Programmes. This is a paid internship between 10 to 14 hours per week. Applications will be considered on a rolling basis. For more information, visit http://www.ccj.org.uk/contact_ccj/recruitment.

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St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace – various

St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace is advertising a number of positions, paid and voluntary. For more information, visit <https://stethelburgas.org/get-involved/vacancies-and-volunteering/>.

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Women's Interfaith Network – Interns and Volunteers

Women's Interfaith Network is looking for volunteers, including interns to work alongside them in a number of varied roles including event organisation, meeting local groups and research and development. If you are interested in an internship at win, email Tara Corry at tara@wominet.org.uk. For more information visit <https://wominet.org.uk/get-involved/>.

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Cornwall Faith Forum – Volunteers

Cornwall Faith Forum is seeking volunteers in the areas of Education, Fundraising and its Refugee Community Link Project. For more information, contact Rita Stephen on 07775 937485 or visit <https://dorkemmyn.org.uk/get-involved/>.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Near Neighbours small grants programme

The Near Neighbours small grants programme is funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and administered by the Church Urban Fund. It is currently offering small grants of between £250 and £5,000 as seed funding for local groups and organisations working in a number of areas of England to bring together neighbours, and to develop relationships across diverse faiths and ethnicities to improve their communities. To be eligible, projects should meet the following criteria: bringing people together, working locally, working sustainably, committing to diversity, and improving the community.

For information on the eligible areas and to be updated when the next round of funding opens, visit <https://www.near-neighbours.org.uk/small-grants>.

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FCC Community Action Fund

The FCC Communities Foundation is offering grants between £2,000 and £100,000 for projects which involve the provision, maintenance or improvement of public amenities including community spaces in places of worship, which are registered charities. Projects must be based within 10 miles of an eligible FCC Environment waste facility. The next round opens on 18 March and closes on 3 June. For more information, visit <https://fcccommunitiesfoundation.org.uk/funds/fcc-community-action-fund>.

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Windrush Compensation Scheme

The Windrush Compensation Scheme is open to those who settled in the UK from a Commonwealth country before 1973, and in certain circumstances their children and grandchildren. Claim forms can be downloaded and guidance on completing the application can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/windrush-compensation-scheme>. Claimants can also request a form to be sent by post by calling the helpline on

0800 678 1925 or via email WindrushCompensationScheme@homeoffice.gov.uk where they can also request a call back if they are overseas.

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Faith in Community Scotland

Faith in Community Scotland is an anti-poverty charity founded in 2005. They support individuals and faith groups in Scotland's poorest neighbourhoods to achieve the difference that they are capable of. They do this through training, resources and funding which helps to build people's skill and to increase their confidence. It has a small grants programme which has distributed over £1 million over the past ten years to urban and rural faith groups tackling poverty. For more information about eligibility and how to apply for a grant, including the next application deadline date, email andrew@faithincommunity.scot.

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Veolia Environmental Trust community funding

The Veolia Environmental Trust is now accepting applications for projects that will start between 23 June and 22 September. Not-for-profit organisations can apply for funding for environmental or community-based projects that are located within five miles of an operating Veolia site in England. The closing date for Stage 1 Application Forms is 5 March. For more information, visit <https://www.veoliatrust.org/funding/>.

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Funding websites

Funding Central <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk>, supported by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, is a free website for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises in England. It provides access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, together with tools and resources to develop sustainable income strategies. Similar websites for funding in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at Funding Scotland - <http://www.fundingscotland.com/> - Wales Council for Voluntary Action - <http://www.wcva.org.uk/funding/search> - and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland - <https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

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Website and Facebook grants

The Transform Foundation offers funding to charities to help with new website builds. Grants of £18,000 are available. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. For further information and to apply, visit <https://www.transformfoundation.org.uk/funded-website-programme>.

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Subsidised fundraising workshops

The Foundation for Social Improvement offers subsidised training programmes for small charities across the UK. The courses cover a wide range of subjects from event planning to leadership. Many of the courses focus on fundraising and sustainability skills in particular. Further information and dates for upcoming courses in March and April can be found at <http://www.thefsi.org/services/training>.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Sewa Day will now be taking place 4 times a year – Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter. The first Sewa Day this year will be held on Saturday 29 February. These are days of faith-based social action led by the Hindu community. <http://www.sewaday.org/>
<https://www.facebook.com/sewaday/>

Sadaqa Day will take place on Sunday 22 March. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Muslim community. mysadaqaday.org

The Big Lunch will be held on Saturday 6 and Sunday 7 June. Across the years millions of people from different faith backgrounds have joined together to take part through street parties, BBQs, iftars and picnics.
<https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/thebiglunchhomepage>

Refugee Week will take place from 15 to 21 June. Refugee Week is a nationwide programme of arts, cultural and educational events that celebrate the contribution of refugees to the UK, and encourages a better understanding between communities.
<https://refugeeweek.org.uk/>

VisitMyMosque Day will take place on Sunday 21 June. It is a national campaign facilitated by the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) that encourages mosques across the UK to hold an open day to welcome in their neighbours from all faiths and none.
www.visitmosque.org

The Great Get Together, inspired by the late Jo Cox MP, is taking place from Friday 19 to Sunday 21 June. <https://www.greatgettogether.org/>

Srebrenica Memorial Day takes place on Saturday 11 July. This year's theme is 'Every Action Matters'. <http://www.srebrenica.org.uk/> It is organised by Remembering Srebrenica. It has recently launched some new resources for marking of the week by faith communities: <http://www.srebrenica.org.uk/resources/faith-resources/>

National Hate Crime Awareness Week takes place from Saturday 10 October to Saturday 17 October. <https://nationalhcaw.uk/>

One World Week will take place from Sunday 18 to Sunday 25 October. www.oneworldweek.org

Inter Faith Week will take place from Sunday 8 to Sunday 15 November. www.interfaithweek.org

Scottish Interfaith Week will take place from Sunday 8 to Sunday 15 November. Scottish Interfaith Week is led by Interfaith Scotland. www.scottishinterfaithweek.org

Mitzvah Day will take place on Sunday 15 November. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Jewish community where people give their time to make a difference to the community around them. Many events and projects held for the day have an inter faith focus. www.mitzvahday.org.uk/

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DIARY DATES

This section includes a sample of some of the events taking place around the UK during February and March. Only one event per organisation is included. We also include information on diary dates between e-bulletins on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/events>.

The Council of Christians and Jews is holding an Interfaith Refugee Training Workshop on Thursday 20 February. Refugee expert Emily Bowerman will be speaking on what faith communities can do to support refugees today. The event will be held from 10.00am to 12.30pm at Westminster Abbey. Supervised kosher refreshments are included. For more information, email esther.sills@ccj.org.uk.

Bristol Multi Faith Forum is holding this year's Bristol Diverse Open Doors Day on Sunday 23 February. This year, 12 places of worship will open their doors and 6 of these will be formed as a designated 'Faith Trail', each representing a different faith. The day runs from 10am to 4:30pm. The faith trail can be undertaken in specially provided buses. For further information, visit <http://bristolmultifaithforum.org.uk/diverse-doors/> or email support@bristolmultifaithforum.org.uk.

The **Inter Faith Theological Advisory Group** within Churches Together in Britain and Ireland is holding a residential conference in Glasgow from Tuesday 3 March to Thursday 5 March. The title of the conference is 'Towards a Christian Theological Understanding of Inter-Ritual Participation: Challenges, Risks and Opportunities'. Keynote Speakers include Dr Rose Drew, CEO of Interfaith Glasgow and former Lecturer in Buddhism and Interfaith

Studies at Glasgow University, The Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave, Bishop of Lichfield and Professor Marianne Moyaert, Professor in the Faculty of Religion, Theology, Beliefs and Practices at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. For further information, and to book, visit <https://ctbi.org.uk/crossing-boundaries-of-faith-conference-3-5-march-2020/>.

The East of England Faiths Agency is holding a course on Monday 24 February, Monday 9 March and Monday 23 March on 'Religious Literacy: Contemporary Beliefs and Ethical Issues'. This will be led by David Sharp. The aim of the course is to develop a deeper understanding of the religious traditions which are present in this diverse society and become better equipped at being able to build meaningful relationships within it. It will run from 2pm to 4pm at The Multi Faith Centre, 47 St Helen's Street, Ipswich, IP4 2JL. For more information, visit <http://www.eefa.net/>.

Hertfordshire County Council is hosting an Interfaith Conference entitled 'Stronger Together' on Tuesday 3 March. It is being held from 10am to 4pm (registration from 09.30am) at Focolare Centre for Unity, 69 Parkway, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire AL8 6JG. For more information, contact Charulata Joshi at charulata.joshi@hertfordshire.gov.uk.

Guildford and Godalming Interfaith Forum will be holding an event addressing the Climate Emergency – Extinction Rebellion on Tuesday 3 March. For more information, contact Bernard Jones at Bernard.jones10@btinternet.com or Carolyn Neogi at carolynneogi@aol.com or on 01483 415 773.

Cornwall Faith Forum is holding a tree planting event on Saturday 7 March. This year one of the trees will be donated by the Hindu Community and will sit alongside trees previously donated by other faith communities. The event will begin at 2pm and be held at the Dor Kemmyan Peace Field, Penmount, Truro TR4 9AA. Refreshments will be served. For more information contact Rita Stephen at dorkemmyan.rita@btinternet.com or on 07775 937485.

The **Edinburgh Coexistence Initiative**, in collaboration with the **Edinburgh Inter Faith Association** and **Interfaith Scotland**, is holding its inaugural conference on Sunday 15 March. The theme is 'Conflict and Peacebuilding in the world today: an Interfaith Perspective'. The conference will be held from 2.30pm to 6pm and will take place at The Chaplaincy, University of Edinburgh, Chaplaincy Centre, 1 Bristo Pl, Edinburgh EH8 9A. For further information and to book, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/conflict-peacebuilding-inaugural-coexistence-conference-tickets-95236642361>.

Interfaith Scotland is hosting its next women's event on Monday 16 March. This will be a workshop on the theme of 'Women and Leadership' with Professor Susan Madsen. It is being held from 10.30am to 1.00pm at Interfaith Scotland's office in Glasgow. For more information, and to register, email admin@interfaithscotland.org.

Windsor & Maidenhead Community Forum will be holding its next Women's Group Meeting on Monday 16 March. The speaker, Father Liam will be talking about his work with a Women's Prison. The event will take place from 7.30pm-9.00pm at St Edmund Campion Church 40A Altwood Rd, Maidenhead, SL6 4PY. For more information, visit <http://www.wamcf.org/next-wamcf-womens-meeting-monday-16th-march/>.

Hull and East Riding Interfaith will be holding an event on Tuesday 17 March entitled 'Welcoming the Stranger.' The event will begin between 4.30pm and 5.00pm and take place at Hull Guildhall. For more information, email Martin A Pliener at mapliener@pliener.karoo.co.uk.

Ipswich Faith and Community Forum is holding its next lecture on Wednesday 18 March. Dr Ed Kessler MBE will be speaking on 'The Changing Landscape of Religion and Belief: Standing at the Crossroads'. The lecture will be held at 6pm at the Waterfront building, University of Suffolk, Ipswich, IP4 1QJ. For more information, visit www.ipswichfaithandcommunityforum.org.uk/images/PDF_Files/University_of_Suffolk_2020_Faith_Lecture_Text-1.pdf.

The Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum is planning an event for the end of March looking at responding to prejudice against faith/belief minority groups in Northern Ireland and further afield. For details of the event check the Forum's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ni.interfaith/>.

Churches Together in Wales will be holding the Gethin Abraham-Williams Lecture/ Eglwysi Ynghyd yng Nghymru Darlith Gethin Abraham-Williams on Thursday 2 April. The lecture will be given by Edgardo Colón-Emeric of The Archbishop Romero Trust on 'Archbishop Oscar Romero 40 Years On: Inspirational Ecumenism'. All are welcome. It will be held at 6pm at Saint Joseph's Cathedral, Convent Street, Swansea. For further information and to attend, email post@cytun.cymru.

More information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org.uk

IFN also carries news and information at www.twitter.com/IFNetUK www.facebook.com/IFNetUK and, about Inter Faith Week, at <https://twitter.com/IFweek> and www.facebook.com/IFWeek.

You can sign up to IFN mailings at any time by using the form on IFN's website at: www.interfaith.org.uk/news/gdpr or let us know that you would like to unsubscribe by using the links at the bottom of the cover email.

E-BULLETIN SURVEY

With this issue comes a special survey about the e-bulletin.

https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/IFN_E-bulletin/

We would be very grateful if you could take a few minutes to complete this. *Thank you!*

Submissions for next issue

If you have items about projects or future events which you would like considered for inclusion in the February e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **24 March** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer: Information in this e-bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

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Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH
www.interfaith.org.uk www.facebook.com/IFNetUK www.twitter.com/IFNetUK

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IFN e-bulletin

May/June 2020

Welcome to the e-bulletin of the Inter Faith Network for the UK www.interfaith.org.uk
It is published every two months and it highlights primarily new developments, projects and future events. You can read by scrolling through or you can go directly to an individual section or item by clicking on the 'Read more' link in the Sections and Contents lists below.

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Note: in place of the usual section on INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS we are this time carrying a special section on [COVID-19](#).

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

UK/national response to COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

On 31 December 2019, Chinese authorities notified the World Health Organization (WHO) of an outbreak of pneumonia in Wuhan City, which was later classified as a new disease: COVID-19. On 12 January, the World Health Organisation confirmed that a new coronavirus had affected a number of people in Wuhan in the Chinese province of Hubei. On 30 January 2020, WHO declared the outbreak of COVID-19 a “Public Health Emergency of International Concern” (PHEIC). By 1 March, cases had been detected in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

On 3 March the UK Government published a Coronavirus Action Plan.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-action-plan/coronavirus-action-plan-a-guide-to-what-you-can-expect-across-the-uk> On 12 March the Government moved to the 'delay' phase of its approach to tackling the virus. On 23 March the Prime Minister announced more stringent measures to stem the pandemic, including closing places of worship. <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

On 26 March the Coronavirus Act 2020 was passed into law. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2020/7/contents/enacted/data.htm> and <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-bill-what-it-will-do>

Some powers to determine the approach to Coronavirus policy are held by the individual nations of the UK and, as the Institute for Government explains, powers to deal with the spread of infection are set out in different pieces of legislation for the four nations. In England and Wales, powers are provided by the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 (as amended by the Health Protection Act 2008). Similar powers are provided by the Public Health etc. (Scotland) Act 2008 and the Public Health Act (Northern Ireland) 1967. <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainers/coronavirus-and-devolution>

On 26 March the Government also released guidance outlining how members of the public can help in the fight against coronavirus, and how they can do this safely. The full guidance, as updated in April, can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-how-to-help-safely--2>.

On 11 May, the UK Government published its plans for the next steps on responding to COVID-19 in England. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/our-plan-to-rebuild-the-uk-governments-covid-19-recovery-strategy> A number of task forces to assist on this were announced. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-roadmap-taskforces/covid-19-roadmap-taskforces>

On 12 May the Northern Ireland Executive set out its plan for relaxing restrictions. <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-recovery-plan> On 15 May the Welsh Government announced a roadmap for easing the lockdown in Wales. <https://gov.wales/unlocking-our-society-and-economy-wales-roadmap-published> On 21 May the Scottish Government set out a route map for changing its current restrictions. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-framework-decision-making-scotlands-route-map-through-out-crisis/>

A useful summary of the lockdown easing approach across the different nations of the UK can be found at: <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainers/coronavirus-lockdown-rules-four-nations-uk>

Across the period, a major emergency response framework has been created, with local resilience forums, community hubs and other mechanisms assisting on different fronts,

together with vital frontline responders such as the NHS, the emergency services, carers and many others.

On 31 March, the IFN's Co-Chairs and Faith Communities Forum Moderators issued a statement which opened with the words:

“As faith communities of the UK we are united in our commitment to working for the wellbeing of all affected by COVID-19.

We thank and support those who are working so hard to enable us to get through this testing time: NHS and care workers; emergency response services; providers of food, medicine and other vital goods; those in government and officials; and the many others who may not be classed as ‘essential workers’ but make all the difference to our daily lives.

We know that around the UK faith organisations and their ministers, members, staff and volunteers are among those helping ensure that support is provided to people, providing spiritual and pastoral care; a listening ear; much needed provisions; and other practical assistance of many kinds.

In a number of areas, people of different faiths are working together to respond to needs of groups such as the homeless and refugees and others. Faith and inter faith bodies are also feeding into local resilience forum and other contexts, helping ensure that faith is taken into account in planning. All of this is vital work. So, too, is the prayer and spiritual support that each faith offers....”

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/faith-communities-and-coronavirus-a-statement>.

Throughout the crisis faith and inter faith organisations have been assisting those affected. Faith communities themselves have been greatly impacted by issues including, for example, the closure of places of worship and arrangements for funerals. More information on this, and more, is in the [special section on COVID-19](#) below which replaces the usual section on inter faith projects.

The NHS guidance on COVID-19 can be found at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>.

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New UK Government Faith Minister

Lord Stephen Greenhalgh was appointed in March as a Minister of State at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). He subsequently received the faith portfolio and so became the UK Government's new 'Faith Minister' in succession to Lord Younger, who moved to a new role after the last election.

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COVID-19 and BAME communities

COVID-19 has been causing many deaths. These have been across the population and affecting people of all backgrounds. There is, however, a markedly higher death rate among those of BAME backgrounds. There is significant overlap between BAME groups and particular faith communities and sections of those and some are seeing a sharply increased rate of deaths – particularly among NHS doctors, nurses and other staff and other health workers. Among these were the first four doctors to die (all Muslim), a Sikh A and E Consultant and a Hindu neonatal specialist as well as those of other backgrounds. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/articles/coronavirusrelateddeathsbyethnicgroupenglandandwales/2march2020to10april2020>

On 16 April the Government announced a review looking at how different factors can impact on people's health outcomes from COVID-19. This is being led by Professor Kevin Fenton, Public Health Director for London. The review has been holding a number of virtual roundtables, including with faith groups. Its report is anticipated by early June. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/review-into-factors-impacting-health-outcomes-from-covid-19>

In Wales an advisory group has been set up to examine the issue. <https://gov.wales/wales-bame-covid-19-health-advisory-group-takes-cross-government-approach> The Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights in Scotland (CRER) has written to the Scottish Government asking it to publish the number of people from BAME backgrounds who have died from COVID-19 in Scotland. <https://www.thenational.scot/news/18444409.coronavirus-scottish-government-urged-publish-bame-deaths-data/>

On 24 April the Labour Party announced that it would be holding an enquiry, led by Baroness Lawrence of Clarence.

Faith leaders were among 70 signatories who wrote a letter to the Prime Minister on 10 May asking for an independent public inquiry. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-52602467> <https://www.ubele.org/weneedanswers>

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New Labour Party leader

On 4 April, the Rt Hon Sir Kier Starmer KCB QC MP was elected as leader of the Labour Party. Appointed to his team as Shadow Communities Secretary was Steve Reed OBE MP and as Faith Minister was Janet Daby MP.

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Protecting places of worship – consultation and funding scheme

The Home Office consultation on ‘Protecting places of worship’ has been extended to 28 June. The consultation is being carried out by the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen), on behalf of the Home Office. Full details are at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/protecting-places-of-worship-consultation>.

The Home Office has announced that 27 mosques, 13 churches, 5 gurdwaras and 4 Hindu temples in England and Wales would benefit from £1.6 million of the Home Office Places of Worship Protective Security Funding Scheme this year. Next year’s scheme is due to double, with £3.2 million earmarked for 2020 to 2021. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/places-of-worship-scheme-provides-record-levels-of-funding>

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Extremism and terrorism

The COVID-19 pandemic has seen a rise in online extremism. For example the BBC reported on 4 May on the far-right spreading a Covid-19 'infodemic' on Facebook <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-52490430> The IFN Co-Chairs and Moderators’ statement of 31 March noted that “We have a concern that in isolation some individuals may become increasingly affected by misinformation, particularly on social media – and also by extreme views including coronavirus conspiracy theories that have been targeting particular groups such as Jews or East Asians. We call on Government and relevant agencies to do all that they can to tackle this.” Conspiracy theories have been widely distributed and many target particular groups such as Muslims <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/coronavirus-muslim-lockdown-conspiracy-theories-tommy-robinson-katie-hopkins-a9471516.html> or those of Chinese background or Jews <https://www.thejc.com/news/uk-news/covid-19-pandemic-sees-jewish-and-chinese-communities-targeted-1.499315>.

The threat of terrorism remains and has evolved during the crisis. *The Independent* reported on 21 April that protective security advice is being distributed to NHS trusts by counterterrorism officers, amid warnings that extremists are exploiting the pandemic to radicalise new recruits. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/coronavirus-lockdown-hospitals-nhs-terror-threat-5g-conspiracy-theory-a9476066.html>

In April, an updated version of the Action Counters Terrorism Awareness e-Learning course was launched with the latest advice from security experts and a simplified registration system so anyone wanting to take part can help keep the UK safe. The course explains how to spot the signs of suspicious behaviour and what to do to help yourself, others and the emergency responders if an attack should take place. It takes less than an hour to work through the six sections and can be done in one session or one module at a time. It can be found at <https://ct.highfieldelearning.com/>.

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Implementation of Organ Donation opt out system in England

Following the passing of the Organ Donation (Deemed Consent) Act last year a new opt out system for organ donation came into law in England on 20 May. All adults in England will now be considered as having agreed to donate their own organs when they die unless they record a decision not to donate (also known as ‘opt out’), or are in one of the excluded groups.

Information about organ donation and the position of individual faith and belief systems is at <https://www.organdonation.nhs.uk/about-donation/organ-donation-and-my-beliefs/>.

There is also a selection of downloadable faith and belief-specific donor cards so people can show their support for donation alongside their own faith or beliefs as well as share with family and friends. The cards can be found at <https://www.nhsbt.nhs.uk/how-you-can-help/get-involved/download-digital-materials/faith-and-belief-donor-cards/>.

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Census Order comes into force

The next ten-yearly census is due to take place in 2021. Information the census provides on the population helps to inform policy, plan services, and is used in consideration of distribution of resources.

Delivering the census in England and Wales is the statutory responsibility of the UK Statistics Authority, which operates through the Office for National Statistics (ONS). In Northern Ireland it is the responsibility of the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research

Agency, and in Scotland the National Records of Scotland. These three offices work closely to ensure the three censuses provide comparable statistics on the UK population.

The Census Order is used to direct that a census is carried out. The Order specifies: the date the census will take place; the question topics to be included; the people who need to fill in the forms; and the people to be included on the forms.

Following the approval by the House of Commons of the draft Census Order (England and Wales) it came into force on 20 May. It is noted in <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8531/> that almost all of the topics asked about in 2011 will appear again in 2021, although the way in which some questions are asked will change. The ethnicity question will include a new tick-box for people of Roma ethnicity, alongside the existing 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' tick-box. The Explanatory Memorandum to the Order notes that "A large number of new response option tick-boxes were requested but did not meet the threshold for inclusion in the census following this process of engagement, research and testing." These non-inclusions include a 'Sikh' tick-box in the ethnic group question (there will continue to be a 'Sikh' religion tick box as in 2011) and a 'Jain' tick-box in the religion question. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2020/532/memorandum/contents>

Legislative responsibility for the censuses in Scotland and Northern Ireland is devolved to the respective legislatures. Following the agreement of the draft Census Order by the Scottish Parliament, the Census Order came into force in Scotland on 12 March 2020. In Northern Ireland, following the agreement of the draft Census Order, it came into force on 5 May.

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Faith communities and climate change

42 faith institutions from 14 countries, including 21 from the UK, have announced their divestment from fossil fuels – the largest-ever joint announcement of divestment from fossil fuels from faith institutions. <https://ctbi.org.uk/42-faith-institutions-divest-from-fossil-fuels/>

Faith communities also marked Earth Day in April. For example, an inter faith climate gathering, planned for Birmingham and the West Midlands by Footsteps Faiths for a Low Carbon Future and partners, took place online – <https://footstepsbcf.org.uk/2020/04/30/reflections-on-earth-day/> - and Faiths Leaders in Manchester issued a joint statement - <https://www.manchester.anglican.org/news/2020/04/22/faith-leaders-statement-earth-day-2020/>.

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APPG on Religion in the Media

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Religion in the Media is currently running an inquiry into religious literacy in print and broadcast media. It put out a call for written evidence which is open to the public. Alongside taking written submissions, the APPG is also holding oral evidence sessions with panels of industry experts and faith leaders during May. Further information can be found at <https://www.appgreligioninmedia.uk/inquiries>.

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Welsh Government consultation on RVE

On 5 May the Welsh Government issued a consultation on changes to legislation to support religion, values and ethics (RVE) as a mandatory part of the Curriculum for Wales. The deadline for response is 28 July. <https://gov.wales/legislative-proposals-religion-values-and-ethics>

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Rise in number of RE trainee teachers

The number of new religious education trainee teachers in England has risen by 30 per cent compared with last year – to its highest level in almost a decade. The rise is mostly being attributed to a new government grant allowing graduates in other humanities subjects to do an eight-week subject knowledge enhancement course (SKE) in RE.

<https://www.tes.com/news/re-popularity-boost-30-rise-trainee-teachers>

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VE Day 75th anniversary Commemorations

This year marked the 75th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day (VE Day). To mark VE Day 75 on Friday 8 May, the Royal British Legion encouraged people across the UK to come together remotely and honour the Second World War generation – recognising the service and sacrifice of men and women from many different faiths and backgrounds in inclusive Remembrance. Information on the activities that took place, as well as a learning resource, are available at www.rbl.org.uk/veday75.

IFN posted on social media during the day, using #veday75, @RoyalBritishLegion and @PoppyLegion, including a story of a Parsi Zoroastrian who served in the Navy <https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1258721553329643520> and photos of Muslim soldiers at Eid prayers in East London <https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1258883752492765184> and Sikh soldiers at a VE Day party in Reading <https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1258713535842070528>.

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COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS)

In place of the usual section on Inter Faith Projects, Programmes and Developments we are carrying a special section on COVID-19 and faith communities.

UK Government information on COVID-19 is at: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
The NHS guidance can be found at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>.

Advice is available on the following websites in the devolved nations:

<https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://gov.wales/coronavirus>

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus>

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus>

<https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/>

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COVID-19 and faith communities

The impact of COVID-19 has many implications for faith communities. Among these are: the need to provide guidance to members, including signposting of relevant Government guidance; operating with places of worship closed, necessitating use of online and telephone worship and pastoral services; restrictions on attendance of funerals and postponement of some other rites; potential difficulties in cremation or burial requirements being met; closure or truncation of some charitable services; putting service into action on behalf of the vulnerable and those in need; and significant operational and financial issues.

One of the key roles of the Inter Faith Network for the UK is sharing information and good practice. Since the crisis began IFN has been regularly sharing faith and inter faith responses on social media and sending regular updates by email to its member bodies. It has also created a special section on its website about faith and inter faith responses: <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/covid-19>.

As noted in the IFN News section below, IFN has held extra meetings, with a special focus on COVID-19, of its Faith Communities Forum; and also a special focus meeting for its member National and Regional Inter Faith Organisations. It has also been in touch, offering help and support, to Local Inter Faith Organisations and will shortly be holding a special focus meeting for its member Educational and Academic Bodies.

As noted above, on 31 March IFN's Co-Chairs and Faith Communities Forum Moderators issued a statement on 'Faith Communities and Coronavirus'. This can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/faith-communities-and-coronavirus-a-statement>.

Guidance from faith communities

Most faith communities have issued guidance for their communities and are updating this on a regular basis. IFN has been collating and updating a list of these on its website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/faith-communities-and-coronavirus>.

Places of worship

Places of worship were among the premises closed when the 'lockdown' phase began on 23 March. The UK Government's guidance of that time, as shortly thereafter updated, can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close-guidance>

As step 3 of its plans for the next steps on responding to COVID-19 in England <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/our-plan-to-rebuild-the-uk-governments-covid-19-recovery-strategy> the UK Government speaks of an ambition to reopen places of worship. However, this is expected to be no earlier than 4 July, subject to further scientific advice.

On 15 May, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Robert Jenrick, said that "Faith leaders and government have agreed to develop a plan to enable the phased and safe reopening of places of worship when the evidence shows it is the right time to do so". He announced that the Government was setting up a task force to look at how to safely reopen places of worship. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-taskforce-developing-plan-to-reopen-places-of-worship> The press release explains that Faith Action has been funded "to consult and engage with different community groups and places of worship up and down the country to ensure their views are represented at the Taskforce's meetings". The Taskforce has so far met twice, on 15 and 20 May, chaired by Faith Minister, Lord Stephen Greenhalgh. On 23 May, Sikh member, Jasvir Singh, stood down from the Task Force. No replacement has as yet been announced.

On 12 May the Northern Ireland Executive set out its plan for relaxing restrictions. <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-recovery-plan> Opening of places of worship for private prayer and permission for drive-in church services has already been agreed. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-52711301>

The Welsh Government's roadmap for easing the lockdown in Wales includes three phases for the re-opening of places of worship: Red - Opening of places of worship for private

prayer under physical distancing; Amber - Limit services and size of congregations linked to ability to ensure physical distancing; and Green - All places open with full range of services, alongside physical distancing. <https://gov.wales/unlocking-our-society-and-economy-wales-roadmap-published>

The Faith Communities Forum of the Welsh Government met on 29 April. At the meeting, members expressed concern about possible phased lifting of COVID-19 restrictions on places of worship. The Welsh Government has subsequently invited each constituent member of the Forum to nominate a representative to a 'task and finish group' with a view to preparing a protocol for the Welsh Government and the Faith Communities Forum to consider at the meeting of the latter on 3 June.

On 21 May the Scottish Government published a route map for changing the current restrictions. In Phase 2 places of worship would be able to open for private prayer with physical distancing and hygiene safeguards. In Phase 3 Places of worship would be open to extended groups subject to physical distancing and hygiene safeguards. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-framework-decision-making-scotlands-route-map-through-out-crisis/>

The Scottish Government has been keeping in touch with faith communities on a fortnightly basis since the COVID-19 epidemic began, through meetings arranged by its Cohesive Communities, Connected Communities Unit. These meetings are also attended by Interfaith Scotland. On the present agenda is reopening places of worship following the publication of the Scottish Government's route map last week.

Online worship and rites

National and local faith groups began early on providing online support and in some cases livestreaming services. For example, the BAPS Swaminarayan Mandir in Neasden has been livestreaming darshan of its murtis each morning and the arti ceremony each evening, and the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales has provided a page with details of where people can access masses that are being livestreamed by priests and bishops. <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/home/our-work/health-social-care/coronavirus-guidelines/live-catholic-mass-online/>

Devotional resources and links have also been made available through such routes as the Sikh Press Association <https://twitter.com/SikhPA/status/1242189774389207040> and the Pagan Federation Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/paganfederation/>.

Particular rites have also been livestreamed, for example Borehamwood and Elstree Synagogue livestreamed a bar mitzvah ceremony for the first time. <https://www.thejc.com/community/community-news/first-united-synagogue-online->

[barmitzvah-attracts-a-worldwide-audience-1.498311](#) Funerals are also, in some cases, among those rites also being live streamed, given limitations on the number of people who can safely gather and the need to enforce social distancing.

A number of communities have recently had major festivals or times of special observance: Easter, Passover, Vaisakhi, Ridvan, Ramadan and Eid. This has prompted extensive and creative use of social media and online resources such as online seders. The Archbishop of Canterbury recorded a service on his iPad from his kitchen to mark Easter Sunday. <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/news/archbishop-canterbury-will-call-resurrection-our-common-life-easter-sunday> For Vaisakhi in the West Midlands the Mayor encouraged a virtual Vaisakhi with people sharing images of their celebrations on social media using the hashtag #VirtualVaisakhiWM <https://www.wmca.org.uk/news/mayor-joining-virtual-vaisakhi-celebrations-on-social-media/> The Muslim Council of Britain produced guidelines for marking Ramadan https://mcb.org.uk/general/ramadan2020_guidance/ as did the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board and many iftars have been taking place virtually. There was also guidance for the forthcoming Eid celebrations as Muslims get ready to mark Eid in lockdown, see for example https://twitter.com/MINAB_UK/status/1263490912862208000/photo/1.

The BBC announced in April a range of programmes covering, and providing support to, faith communities in the context of COVID-19, saying that “With public worship curtailed as social distancing measures have been introduced, the BBC is providing a wide range of different faith groups the opportunity to reflect, worship and mark key religious festivals during these challenging times.” The offerings have included online worship, programmes related to major faith festivals such as Passover, Easter, Vaisaki, Ridwan and Eid and also, in May, a series of reflections from Hindu presenters. The call to prayer was broadcast during Ramadan in the early morning on BBC local radio in a number of areas. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/latestnews/2020/religion-coronavirus>

Faith communities and their local members and faith-based organisations have also been making available online prayer and learning groups and teaching and entertainment for young people. See for example, the Network of Buddhist Organisations. <https://www.facebook.com/NBOpages/photos/a.650895638303079/2999351226790830/>

Funerals and bereavement

Public Health England issued the following advice on funerals: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-a-funeral-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-a-funeral-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic> – this guidance was issued on 31 March, with a revised version following on 19 April.

On 9 April the Government clarified the position on cemeteries and burial grounds, now listed as an 'exception' and therefore able to remain open. The latest guidance, updated on 13 May, is at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close/further-businesses-and-premises-to-close-guidance>.

Following concerns about the inability of families to attend funerals, MHCLG Minister of State Simon Clarke MP wrote on 17 April to local authorities in England <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-sets-out-plans-to-ensure-bereaved-families-can-attend-funerals-during-pandemic>. The MHCLG guidance, last updated on 14 May, is at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-local-death-management>.

The following advice, targeted more at health and funeral professionals, updated 15 May, is relevant to handling of care of the deceased. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-care-of-the-deceased/guidance-for-care-of-the-deceased-with-suspected-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19>

IFN's website has a page containing guidance from faith communities and faith community organisations on funeral rites and practices in light of the Coronavirus pandemic. <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/covid-19-funerals>

Spiritual/pastoral support to members

Spiritual and pastoral provision is challenging in a context where face to face visiting is very limited under the social distancing rules. Faith community bodies have been seeking to support their members with guidance. See for example, https://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/570443/Coronavirus_advice_for.aspx and a series being held by Unitarians at the end of May: <https://www.unitarian.org.uk/ministry-in-a-time-of-pandemic>

Voluntary action to aid those in need

COVID-19 has prompted many volunteering initiatives. These range from major schemes such as volunteering for the NHS through to area based Mutual Aid groups.

Faith has inspired a flowering of acts of practical kindness. Just a few examples are below. Many more can be seen highlighted through post and tweets on the Facebook and Twitter accounts of IFN and others.

BBC's Ross Kemp's Volunteer Army programme recently highlighted the efforts of Sikhs at Sri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara Southall in London which has been providing over 3,000 meals a day to those in need. Neasden Temple in London has provided special meals to

thank soldiers for their work at COVID-19 testing units

<https://twitter.com/bktimes/status/1263099285198868481> as well as to NHS workers and others. In Liverpool, the Liverpool Region Mosques Network and St Andrews Food Bank came together with local MPs and the Rector of Liverpool to deliver food across the north of the city. Faith communities have come together to support the Felix Project with emergency food operations <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/coronavirus-help-the-hungry-campaign-food-muslim-sikh-christian-hindu-a9483326.html>

A churches' initiative www.yourneighbour.org has been set up to provide callers with pastoral support and links to a church nearby "who can help with a friendly phone call, shopping, prescriptions, and advice." The Oshwal Association of the UK of the Jain community, in collaboration with others, has been providing free meals and or snacks to 'frontline heroes' serving hot meals to housebound elderly and vulnerable people. A broad range of Hindu and other bodies are involved in Sewa Day's wide-ranging programme of support. In some cases faith organisations are uniting across their community to support it and the wider public, for example the coalition of Muslim bodies through a national solidarity campaign organised by the Muslim Charities Forum <https://www.launchgood.com/project/national-solidarity-campaign-covid19#!/> of which the Muslim Council of Britain and MINAB are a part.

Sikhs in Scotland have been delivering food to night shelters and other locations <https://twitter.com/sikhsinscotland/status/1262102260865282048>. The Welsh Latter-day Saints partnered with local organisations and volunteers to purchase, assemble and deliver 8,000 hygiene kits to 35 locations across South Wales <https://www.facebook.com/ifnetuk/posts/3082824995101388>. In Northern Ireland, L'Arche, with assistance from local churches, is supporting Root Soup which is preparing and delivering 240 home-cooked meals to older higher-risk people in South-East Belfast area each week <https://lovebelfast.co.uk/power-ni-support-gets-to-the-root-of-local-communities/>.

There have also been faith community linked initiatives such as those of Mitzvah Day which has inspired many groups to get involved including through such initiatives such as an online cooking event with Maureen Lipman <https://www.facebook.com/Mitzvahdayuk/posts/10158493316898829> and a JW3 Jewish community hub initiative with local partner organisations, hostels, homeless shelters and Camden Council, <https://www.jw3.org.uk/help-us-now>.

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COVID-19 and inter faith organisations

A number of groups are using online postings and such programmes as Zoom, Teams and Blue Jeans to keep existing programmes going. For example, Building Bridges Pendle is

posting weekly live cooking demonstrations of dishes as part of ‘Marhaba Munching Mondays’ for viewers to watch, learn and cook at home.

Some groups have been exploring online dialogues and meetings. For example, Faith Network 4 Manchester is running a series of online inter faith dialogue sessions <https://www.facebook.com/FN4Man/photos/a.580259045329671/2999828166706068/>. The first of these explored ways to cope with COVID-19 and the closure of faith buildings.

Websites are a particularly important resource at this time, alongside social media, emails and WhatsApp. For example, Cornwall Faith Forum’s website carries a message from its Chair and numerous helpful links and a list of faith leaders. <https://dorkemmyn.org.uk/covid19/>

National and regional inter faith organisations and programmes have been taking forward a number of COVID-19 related initiatives. For example, in May the Council of Christians and Jews has been holding a series of ‘Pilgrimages’ during which its Presidents are visiting key workers at their places of work and expressing Jewish and Christian prayerful solidarity. <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=602107133724592>
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=276570903732612>

The Faith and Belief Forum has been running a special online series of ‘Quarantine Questions with some conversation starters and discussion tools from its Linking and Workshops programmes. <https://faithbeliefforum.org/programme/quarantine-questions/> and the Women’s Interfaith Network has been working with Faiths Forum for London and Strengthening Faith Institutions on a social media campaign to highlight the issue of domestic abuse among faith communities and signpost support.

Local inter faith organisations are playing their part in the sharing of information about COVID-19 and also helping members and local faith groups to explore aspects of this – from social distancing to holding funerals.

A number of local inter faith bodies have been helping those in need through acts of kindness. For example, volunteers from Bristol Multi-Faith Forum have been helping those who were stranded and homeless due to Coronavirus. They are also offering community support for the distressed and the marginalised.

Some local inter faith organisations have drawn together leaders from local faith communities to share messages and prayers. For example, Leeds Faith Forum held an ‘Interfaith Messages and Prayers of Hope’ session on 26 April YouTube with faith and inter faith leaders. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=luO5RK_eYDM&feature=youtu.be

Other local inter faith organisations have been sharing prayers and readings online as part of sustaining connection and providing spiritual support. For example, Watford Inter Faith

Association (www.wifa.org.uk) has a weekly online joint prayer for all who want to join and share their favourite prayers. Each morning since the middle of March a small group in Northern Ireland has been meeting at 9am for a time of online inter faith sharing lasting about 20 to 30 minutes. Over the weeks, a group of up to 16 people – varying from day to day – has met via Zoom to share readings from different faiths and beliefs – with sources ranging from the scriptures of the major faiths, through spiritual writings and even the occasional song (further information from the Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum).

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COVID-19 and other types of initiative

In April, a number of faith leaders made a statement of reflection responding to the COVID-19 crisis. <http://faithsforum.com/faiths-leaders-produce-a-statement-of-reflection-during-the-covid-crisis/>. This was an initiative of a temporary coalition of faith leaders and representatives responding to the pandemic, chaired by Maurice Ostro OBE of the Fayre Share Foundation, with the name ‘Faiths United’. IFN staff contribute on an *ad hoc* basis to the discussions.

The initiative was set up in late March to discuss how faith communities have been coping with the pandemic and to drive joint responses. It is serviced by Faiths Forum for London. More information can be found at <http://faithsforum.com/faithsunited/>. This includes a list of its members and examples of its work, such as a Clap for Carers video and setting up a new youth network <https://twitter.com/FaithsUnitedYN> (FUYN) the aims of which are bringing together young people from different faiths and none with common goals and passions to make a real difference“.

<https://www.facebook.com/pg/FaithsUnitedYN/about/>

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COVID-19 and charities

Many faith and inter faith organisations are registered charities. Information and advice that may be useful to charities and other voluntary organisations at this time can be found on IFN’s website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/covid-19-and-charities>.

Challenges for charities at this time

Charities and other kinds of voluntary organisations are strongly committed to helping the vulnerable at this time of COVID-19 in all ways that they are able and they work year round to help the public in multiple ways. At the present time, a significant number of them –

including faith based and inter faith charities – are seriously affected by the impacts of the pandemic.

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (of which IFN is a member), which has led the sector in campaigning for Government support for charities during the current crisis, has estimated that the income lost by UK charities during the first 3 months of the COVID-19 crisis will be £4.3bn. A number of faith based bodies have taken part in this campaign.

Package of Government support for charities

In April the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP, announced a package of Government funding for front line charities across the UK totalling £750m. Further information on this, and other examples of financial support during the crisis are in the [Funding section](#) below.

Scottish programme

Interfaith Scotland has been hosting regular on-line meetings for faith communities, local interfaith groups, and university chaplains as well as hosting regular public dialogues on topics of more general interest.

The Scottish Government has provided £29,000 to Interfaith Scotland to distribute small grants to help faith communities and local interfaith groups respond to COVID-19 at the grassroots level. To date over 40 local faith groups and inter faith bodies have accessed grants of up to £500. The projects funded include food and medicine distribution, translating government messages into BME languages, funding on-line platforms for keeping in touch with the lonely and isolated and preparing and distributing appropriate PPE.

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INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK NEWS

Inter Faith Week 2020

This year's Inter Faith Week takes place from Sunday 8 to Sunday 15 November. Last year was the biggest Week to date, with an amazing array of different activities and organisations holding these.

The aims of Inter Faith Week are to:

- Strengthen good inter faith relations at all levels
- Increase awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, celebrating and building on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society
- Increase understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs

The Week begins each year on Remembrance Sunday to enable people of different backgrounds to remember together the service of soldiers and civilians of all faiths and beliefs and to reflect on peace.

Below are some pointers and ideas which are provided in a context where the nature of the impact of COVID-19 in the Autumn cannot yet be known.

If you plan a physical gathering, ensure that it is held in a way which reflects the Government's COVID-19 guidance at the time (this may vary depending on the particular nation in the UK). Plan for any physical gathering with a 'virtual' fall back version of the event through use of technology such as Zoom and social media.

If you are thinking about an online opportunity for learning, mixing or helping your community to come together there are a number of things you might do, for example:

- Work with a selection of local places of worship to create online tours of these and assemble them into a faith trail that people can take part in online
- Hold a 'virtual' civic reception for local faith leaders and perhaps record a joint Inter Faith Week message about the importance of good inter faith relations in your area
- Hold an art or photo competition which can be judged online if necessary
- Create a calendar for 2021 with pictures taken of inter faith events, places of worship in your area or artwork from different communities
- Create an online quiz about the world's religions and hold the quiz online during the Week
- Create a blog or oral history project about the history of faith communities in your area, when inter faith activity began and how it has developed

- Interview members of local faith communities and non-religious belief groups about the idea of ‘service’ in their tradition and how their beliefs inspire them and their colleagues to work to help the wider community
- Hold an online ‘bake-in’ or ‘cook-in’ where people of different faiths share their recipes and show the finished item!
- If you are a member of a local inter faith group, across the coming months work with members to produce a short history of your group (if you don’t already have one!) with some reflections about why it’s work is so important and publish it during Inter Faith Week
- Set up an ‘inter faith buddy’ system where two people of different faiths are partnered and keep in touch across the months up to Inter Faith Week and share their reflections online during the Week (more details available if you would like to try this idea)
- If there are people still needing to self-isolate or be ‘shielded’ during Inter Faith Week, consider a safe way that you might encourage an inter faith team to volunteer and deliver a special ‘Inter Faith Week’ lunch with samples of foods from some of the different faith communities in the area
- Create an on-line ‘faith fair’ for your workplace or Student Union with information about different faiths and beliefs and opportunities to engage in online chats.
- Develop a new website or update your website – or the faith or inter faith section of it – and launch that in Inter Faith Week
- Create an exhibition about different faiths with display panels about each faith group in your area that could be exhibited in an open air space such as at your local rail/ bus station
- Host a webinar or other educational activity for the public
- Create an online exhibition of some of the artefacts in your museum linked to particular faiths, perhaps with talks from people of those faiths

These are just a few ideas. If you have more, we would love to hear! For further information, contact the Inter Faith Week team, interfaithweek@interfaith.org.uk.

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Meetings of Faith Communities Forum

Virtual meetings of IFN’s Faith Communities Forum were held on 30 March and 30 April focusing on faith communities and COVID-19. The first of these looked at how faith communities are responding, with a particular focus on: places of worship; burial and cremation; and financial and management matters. It also considered: guidance; providing online worship, pastoral and educational resources; providing pastoral and practical support to members; the ‘digital gap’; and encouraging voluntary action to aid those in need. The second meeting looked at a number of the same issues relating to COVID-19, as well as funerals, chaplaincy, financial impacts, ethical principles and

decisions on care and the issue of the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on people from BAME backgrounds.

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Meetings for National Inter Faith Organisations and Educational and Academic Bodies

Among IFN's member bodies are inter faith organisations and programmes whose work is carried out at UK or national level or which, while regionally focused, are used by people across the country. They are important resources for people who want to get involved in inter faith activity. A number of these work primarily with particular religious traditions; others work with people of any religion or belief. Some of the organisations have a particular focus for their work, such as peace or education. To find out more about the work of these organisations, visit <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/members/list>.

A joint meeting for these bodies was held on 2 March. On the agenda were: Responding to the climate concerns, with presentations by the Revd Adam Dickens, the Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby and Ms Atmica Reddy, a post graduate student at Derby University, and Jamie Cresswell, Chair, Religions for Peace (UK); round table updates on member bodies' current inter faith work; issues of current interest and concern; and teaching and Learning about inter faith activity in the secondary phase.


A virtual meeting was held for National and Regional Inter Faith Organisations on 27 April to share news of how they are responding to COVID-19 and to discuss any particular COVID-19 related issues of interest and concern.

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IFN meetings for local inter faith practitioners

IFN holds meetings for local inter faith groups to share news and good practice and learn from each other's work to strengthen their own and benefit their local areas. Some are for groups from across the UK. Others are for groups within a particular region or a county. Meetings took place as planned in Maidstone, in late February, for local inter faith bodies in Kent, and in early March in Preston for groups in the North West of England. A meeting for groups from across the UK in Reading due for late March had to be cancelled due to the increased impact of COVID-19.

At both meetings there was sharing of news from each of the groups represented, and discussion of topical issues of interest and concern. There were also Agenda Items on Inter Faith Week, and on experiences and views of places of worship 'open door' days. At the Kent meeting, there was a presentation by Kent County Council on its involvement in Inter



Faith Week and at the North West meeting, there were opening reflections from Preston Faith Forum about its Inter Faith Week activity. The Preston meeting was kindly hosted by the Oasis Faith and Spirituality Centre at the University of Central Lancashire.

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

IFN Annual Review and National Meeting report

Since the last issue of the e-bulletin the latest Inter Faith Network for the UK Annual Review has been published: <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/annual-reviews>. It records a year of extensive activity on many fronts to which members contributed. Key themes in the year were grassroots local inter faith activity; deepening of understanding and cooperation at many levels; solidarity in the face of terrorism, extremism and hate crime; broadening of inter faith engagement, for example through the biggest Inter Faith Week to date; religious literacy; and sharing of good practice.

The report on IFN's 2019 National Meeting on 'The changing face of local inter faith dialogue and cooperation' has been added to IFN's website.

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/the-changing-face-of-local-inter-faith-dialogue-and-cooperation-report-on-ifn-national-meeting-2019>

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ONS statistics on religious identities in England and Wales

In 2017, the Office for National Statistics' (ONS's) Centre for Equalities and Inclusion began an audit of equalities data to identify the sources of data available to understand the experiences of people in the UK across the nine protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010. The audit aimed to highlight where gaps exist in the quality and coverage of equalities statistics and was a starting point to take forward work with others to prioritise and fill the gaps.

Coming out of this work, the ONS has published five documents which present the statistics that are currently available to describe the experiences of people of different religious identities in England and Wales. They aim to take stock of what statistics currently exist and to describe plans to address the gaps in what we know. The topics covered are:

- Exploring religion in England and Wales
- Religion and health in England and Wales
- Religion and crime in England and Wales
- Religion and participation in England and Wales
- Religion, education and work in England and Wales

The publications are available at

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/exploringreligioninenglandandwales>.

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Faith Action follow on report on loneliness

In July last year, FaithAction published a report on faith and loneliness, *Right Up Your Street*, highlighting the breadth of faith-based provision in tackling loneliness. Since then it has been researching the involvement of faith groups in social prescribing connector schemes, and in March it launched a follow-on report, *Extending Our Reach in Tackling Loneliness: How social prescribing can achieve its aim by involving faith-based provision*. The report can be found at <https://www.faithaction.net/news/2020/03/12/new-report-from-faithaction-extending-our-reach-in-tackling-loneliness/>.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS, AND NOMINATIONS

NATRE Spirited Arts competition

The National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE)'s annual Spirited Arts competition is still open for entries until 31 July. This year's theme is 'Art in Heaven'. A number of RE teachers are using the competition for home learning. To enable schools and pupils to still take part, NATRE is accepting entries sent in by teachers or individual entries sent by pupils/parents from home. For full details of the competition, and a webinar to inspire teachers and pupils, visit <https://www.natre.org.uk/about-natre/projects/spirited-arts/spirited-arts-2020/>.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

COVID-19 funding

In April the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP, announced a package of Government funding for front line charities across the UK totalling £750m. This figure is made up of:

- £360m allocated by different Government departments to charities working in areas under the purview of their department;
- £370m for smaller charities, including a grant to the National Lottery Community Fund (which will then distribute it); and
- A minimum of £20m which the Government pledged to contribute as part of matching pound-for-pound donations to the National Emergencies Trust which were generated through the BBC's Big Night In fundraiser on 23 April.

Funding from this overall package is being allocated to the devolved nations using the Barnett formula (<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7386/>). Further information about the funding is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/chancellor-sets-out-extra-750-million-coronavirus-funding-for-frontline-charities>.

The National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF) programme for smaller charities opened on 22 May. Grants will allow organisations to meet service costs, where they are experiencing increased demand and/or short-term income disruption. Grants will also allow organisations to refocus services to address more immediate beneficiary needs in light of COVID-19.

<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/news/press-releases/2020-05-20/statement-about-the-coronavirus-community-support-fund>

The link for applying for up to £10,000 is

<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/covid-19-funding-under-10k> and for over £10,000 is

<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/covid-19-funding-over-10k>.

The Government funding is being distributed by the NLCF, alongside Lottery funding. The information notes that “If you're a group that's looking for government funding, because you can't accept funding from The National Lottery, please tell us in your application.”

The Department for Food and Rural Affairs has set up a Food Charities Grant Fund, which may be useful to faith and inter faith organisations running food banks. Grants of up to £100,000 are available. Charities may apply as a group in order to meet the criteria.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-apply-for-the-food-charities-grant-fund>

The Charities Aid Foundation has collated a helpful list of organisations which are supporting charities and voluntary groups at this time. <https://www.cafonline.org/covid-19-support/help-for-charities#tab1>

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Near Neighbours small grants programme

The Near Neighbours programme of the Church Urban Fund of the Church of England has been re-funded by Government for 2020-21. As part of this, it runs a small grants programme which is currently offering small grants of between £250 and £5,000 as seed funding for local groups and organisations working in a number of areas of England to bring together neighbours, and to develop relationships across diverse faiths and ethnicities to improve their communities. To be eligible, projects should meet the

following criteria: bringing people together, working locally, working sustainably, committing to diversity, and improving the community.

For information on the eligible areas and to be updated when the next round of funding opens, visit <https://www.near-neighbours.org.uk/small-grants>.

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FCC Community Action Fund

The FCC Communities Foundation is offering grants between £2,000 and £100,000 for projects which involve the provision, maintenance or improvement of public amenities including community spaces in places of worship, which are registered charities. Projects must be based within 10 miles of an eligible FCC Environment waste facility. The current round closes on 3 June. The next round then opens on 17 June. For more information, visit <https://fcccommunitiesfoundation.org.uk/funds/fcc-community-action-fund>.

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Windrush Compensation Scheme

The Windrush Compensation Scheme is open to those who settled in the UK from a Commonwealth country before 1973, and in certain circumstances their children and grandchildren. Claim forms can be downloaded and guidance on completing the application can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/windrush-compensation-scheme>. Claimants can also request a form to be sent by post by calling the helpline on 0800 678 1925 or via email WindrushCompensationScheme@homeoffice.gov.uk where they can also request a call back if they are overseas.

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Faith in Community Scotland

Faith in Community Scotland is an anti-poverty charity founded in 2005. They support individuals and faith groups in Scotland's poorest neighbourhoods to achieve the difference that they are capable of. They do this through training, resources and funding which helps to build people's skill and to increase their confidence. It has a small grants programme which has distributed over £1 million over the past ten years to urban and rural faith groups tackling poverty. For more information about eligibility and how to apply for a grant, including the next application deadline date, email andrew@faithincommunity.scot.

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Veolia Environmental Trust community funding

The Veolia Environmental Trust is now accepting applications for projects that will start between 23 June and 22 September. Not-for-profit organisations can apply for funding for environmental or community-based projects that are located within five miles of an operating Veolia site in England. The closing date for Stage 1 Application Forms has been extended to 4 June. For more information, visit <https://www.veoliatrust.org/funding/>.

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Funding websites

Funding Central <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk>, supported by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, is a free website for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises in England. It provides access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, together with tools and resources to develop sustainable income strategies. Similar websites for funding in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at Funding Scotland - <http://www.fundingscotland.com/> - Wales Council for Voluntary Action - <http://www.wcva.org.uk/funding/search> - and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland - <https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

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Website and Facebook grants

The Transform Foundation offers funding to charities to help with new website builds. Grants of £18,000 are available. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. For further information and to apply, visit <https://www.transformfoundation.org.uk/funded-website-programme>.

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Subsidised fundraising workshops

The Foundation for Social Improvement offers subsidised training programmes for small charities across the UK. The courses cover a wide range of subjects from event planning to leadership. Many of the courses focus on fundraising and sustainability skills in particular. Further information and dates for upcoming courses in March and April can be found at <http://www.thefsi.org/services/training>.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Sewa Day will now be taking place 4 times a year – Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter. Future dates are yet to be announced. These are days of faith-based social action led by the Hindu community. <http://www.sewaday.org/> <https://www.facebook.com/sewaday/>

The Big Lunch will take place on 6-7 June but this year will be virtual.

<https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/thebiglunchhomepage>

Refugee Week is due to take place from 15 to 21 June. Refugee Week is a nationwide programme of arts, cultural and educational events that celebrate the contribution of refugees to the UK, and encourages a better understanding between communities.

<https://refugeeweek.org.uk/>

VisitMyMosque Day is due to take place on Sunday 21 June. It is a national campaign facilitated by the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) that encourages mosques across the UK to hold an open day to welcome in their neighbours from all faiths and none. The MCB is currently re-evaluating its plans for this year's campaign. www.visitmysmosque.org

The Great Get Together, inspired by the late Jo Cox MP, is taking place from 19 to 21 June. <https://www.greatgettogether.org/>

Srebrenica Memorial Day takes place each year Saturday 11 July. This year's theme is 'Every Action Matters'. <http://www.srebrenica.org.uk/> It is organised by Remembering Srebrenica. It has recently launched some new resources for marking of the week by faith communities: <http://www.srebrenica.org.uk/resources/faith-resources/>

National Hate Crime Awareness Week takes place from Saturday 10 October to Saturday 17 October. <https://nationalhcaw.uk/>

One World Week is due to take place from Sunday 18 to Sunday 25 October. Its theme this year is 'It's our world: Let's make it better'. www.oneworldweek.org

Inter Faith Week will be from Sunday 8 to Sunday 15 November. www.interfaithweek.org

Scottish Interfaith Week will be from Sunday 8 to Sunday 15 November. Scottish Interfaith Week is led by Interfaith Scotland. www.scottishinterfaithweek.org

Mitzvah Day will be on Sunday 15 November. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Jewish community where people give their time to make a difference to the community around them. Many events and projects held for the day have an inter faith focus. www.mitzvahday.org.uk/

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DIARY DATES

In light of COVID-19 many events have had to be cancelled or postponed. Some events are now taking place online and a few examples are listed below. Events are also listed on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/events>.

The **Council of Christians and Jews (Birmingham)** will be holding its next meeting online on Tuesday 26 May. This will be the first of two meetings focusing on Abraham. Rabbi Margaret Jacobi will be speaking. The meeting will be held at 7.30pm. To find out more, visit <http://www.ccj.org.uk/branches/birmingham/>.

The **Muslim Jewish Muslim Forum Greater Manchester**, in partnership with the **Faith Network for Manchester** and others, is holding a dialogue event on Sunday 31 May. The topic will be 'Has the COVID-19 crisis strengthened or weakened people's faith?'. It is being held at 4.30pm on Zoom. Visit www.muslimjewish.org.uk prior to the event to register and participate.

Tower Hamlets Inter Faith Forum is holding a meeting on Monday 1 June on 'Faith, Community & Coronavirus'. Speakers will include the Revd Alan Green, Chair of THIF, Mayor John Biggs, Tower Hamlets Council, and PC Rich Poolman, Metropolitan Police. The meeting is being held online from 2pm to 4pm. For further information, and to register, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/tower-hamlets-inter-faith-forum-faith-communities-and-coronavirus-tickets-103912880222?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch>.

Herefordshire Interfaith Group is holding a meeting on Tuesday 9 June. This will be the first of a series of online meetings, following a similar format to its spiritual days, including meditations, songs, poems, prayers and reflections with contributions on a variety of themes. It will be held from 11am to 12.15pm. To register an interest, email hello@herefordshireinterfaith.org.uk, or telephone Mike on 01981 500764.

The **St Philip's Centre in Leicester**, is holding an event on Tuesday 16 June on 'Sikhs and Christians in the Media'. How do Sikhs and Christians use the media? What's narrow-cast? What's broadcast? What about print, social media, TV, Radio and more? How has Covid-19 changed the media landscape? Dr Jasjit Singh and Liz Hudson will discuss these issues and more. The event will be held online at 3pm. To book a place, email onlinetraining@stphilipscentre.co.uk.

St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace is launching a new online series, in collaboration with The Future is Beautiful, titled 'Listening to each other, Listening to Earth' to explore climate justice. The launch event will be on Wednesday 17 June from 6.30pm to 8.30pm, with speakers Amisha Ghadiali and Muslim spiritual ecologist Rabiah Abdullah. To register, visit https://stethelburgas.org/event/listening-to-each-other-listening-to-earth-launch-event-with-rabiah-abdullah-and-amisha-ghadiali/?mc_cid=d48ae2d1a4&mc_eid=91aaa813ea.

More information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org.uk

IFN also carries news and information at www.twitter.com/IFNetUK
www.facebook.com/IFNetUK and, about Inter Faith Week, at <https://twitter.com/IFweek>
and www.facebook.com/IFWeek.

You can sign up to IFN mailings at any time by using the form on IFN's website at:
www.interfaith.org.uk/news/gdpr or let us know that you would like to unsubscribe by
using the links at the bottom of the cover email.

Submissions for next issue

If you have items about projects or future events which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **19 June** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer: Information in this e-bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

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Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH
www.interfaith.org.uk www.facebook.com/IFNetUK www.twitter.com/IFNetUK

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IFN e-bulletin

August 2020

Welcome to the e-bulletin of the Inter Faith Network for the UK www.interfaith.org.uk
It is published every two months and it highlights primarily new developments, projects and future events. You can read by scrolling through or you can go directly to an individual section or item by clicking on the 'Read more' link in the Sections and Contents lists below.

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

UK/national response to COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

UK Government information on COVID-19 is at: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
The NHS guidance can be found at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>.

Advice is available on the following websites in the devolved nations:

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus>

<https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus>

<https://gov.wales/coronavirus>

<https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/>

Each of the four governments has been following its own roadmap for easing lockdown restrictions:

UK Government (England): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/our-plan-to-rebuild-the-uk-governments-covid-19-recovery-strategy>

Northern Ireland: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-recovery-plan>

Scotland: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-framework-decision-making-scotlands-route-map-through-out-crisis/>

Wales: <https://gov.wales/leading-wales-out-coronavirus-pandemic>

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Places of worship and festivals

England

Places of worship were permitted to reopen for individual prayer from 13 June. On 23 June, the Prime Minister announced the further easing of lockdown restrictions from 4 July. Places of worship are now able to reopen for prayer and services, including weddings with a maximum of 30 people, all subject to social distancing rules. Guidance for the safe use of places of worship, last updated on 4 August, is at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-from-4-july/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-from-4-july>

On 27 July, shortly before Eid Al-Adha, the Government issued a checklist for special religious services and gatherings: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic-from-4-july/special-religious-services-and-gatherings-covid-19-checklist>. This guidance, further updated on 4

August, provides “key principles that should help us all make decisions that ensure we can all take part in special religious services and gatherings safely.”

On 31 July the Prime Minister announced that on 8 August the use of face coverings would become compulsory in places of worship.

For communities with Sunday Schools, Madrassas, Yeshivas, or other faith-based out-of-school settings, the following link, last updated on 10 July, may also be helpful:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-measures-for-holiday-or-after-school-clubs-and-other-out-of-school-settings-for-children-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/protective-measures-for-out-of-school-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

The Government’s Places of Worship Taskforce has continued to meet.

Faith Action has been running re-opening focus groups for Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh groups. It has also run one for women of any faith and a combined group for Baha’i, Jain and Zoroastrian groups.

Northern Ireland

Places of worship have been open for private prayer in Northern Ireland since 19 May and for services since 29 June.

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-regulations-guidance-family-and-community#toc-4>

Scotland

In Scotland places of worship were able to open for individual prayer or contemplation from 22 June. Since 15 July they have been able to open for communal prayer, congregational service and contemplation with limited attendance numbers and physical distancing. Guidance for the safe use of places of worship, last updated on 8 August, is at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-phase-3-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship/>.

Wales

In Wales places of worship have been able to reopen for private prayer since 23 June. <https://gov.wales/guidance-reopening-places-worship-coronavirus-html> Reopening for additional uses, including services of limited size, is expected under the Amber phase of the Welsh Government’s roadmap.

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Funerals and weddings

The current position on the holding of funerals and weddings during the pandemic is set out below.

Funerals

UK Government links

The latest UK Government guidance for managing a funeral during the coronavirus pandemic is at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-a-funeral-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/covid-19-guidance-for-managing-a-funeral-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic> This was last updated on 11 August.

Advice relevant to handling of care of the deceased, updated 31 July:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-care-of-the-deceased/guidance-for-care-of-the-deceased-with-suspected-or-confirmed-coronavirus-covid-19>

NHS bereavement advice and support, reviewed on 10 August and reviewed weekly:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/bereavement-advice-and-support/>

Northern Ireland

The current guidance on holding funerals in Northern Ireland during the pandemic is at

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-regulations-guidance-family-and-community#toc-5>.

Scotland

Guidance on holding funerals during the pandemic in Scotland, last updated on 15 July, is

at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-funeral-services/pages/pre-funeral-arrangements/>.

Wales

The current guidance on holding funerals in Wales during the pandemic is at

<https://gov.wales/guidance-local-authorities-funerals-covid-19>. Last updated 17 June.

Weddings

England

Guidance on weddings and civil partnerships in England was last updated on 4 August:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-small-marriages-and-civil-partnerships/covid-19-guidance-for-small-marriages-and-civil-partnerships>.

Northern Ireland

Current guidance on marriage and registration in Northern Ireland can be found at:

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/births-deaths-marriages-and-civil-partnerships/marriage-and-registration>.

Scotland

Guidance on wedding ceremonies and civil partnership registrations in Scotland was last updated on 4 August: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-small-marriages-and-civil-partnership-registrations/>.

Wales

Current guidance on marriage and civil partnership ceremonies in Wales, last updated 6 August, can be found at: <https://gov.wales/guidance-members-public-marriage-and-civil-partnership-ceremonies-coronavirus-html>.

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Temporary lockdowns

Some areas have experienced renewed restrictions due to rise in the numbers of cases of COVID-19. These have included Aberdeen, Leicester, Greater Manchester, Blackburn with Darwen, Burnley, Hyndburn, Pendleton, Rossendale, Bradford, Kirklees, Calderdale and Preston. This affected Eid, Rakshabhandan and Janmashtami celebrations in a number of areas.

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The impact of COVID-19 on BAME communities

People of many backgrounds have died with COVID-19. There is, however, a higher death rate among those of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds – as there is within the Jewish community. There is significant overlap between BAME groups and particular faith communities and sections of those and some are seeing a sharply increased rate of deaths.

On 19 June the Office for National Statistics (ONS) released data on ‘deaths involving the coronavirus (COVID-19) by religious group’ in England and Wales.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/articles/coronaviruscovid19relateddeathsbyreligiousgroupenglandandwales/2marchto15may2020>

The ONS summary notes that: “The highest age-standardised mortality rates (ASMRs) of deaths involving COVID-19 were in the Muslim religious group with 198.9 deaths per 100,000 males and 98.2 deaths per 100,000 females; people who identified as Jewish, Hindu or Sikh also showed higher mortality rates than other groups.” And that “When taking account of region, population density, socio-demographic and household characteristics, and ethnic background, those who identified as Jewish at the time of the 2011 Census showed an increased risk of a death involving COVID-19 compared with the Christian population; Jewish males were at twice the risk of Christian males, with the

difference in females being 1.2 times greater risk (additional data and analyses are required to understand this excess risk).”

England

On 2 June the Government published the report of Public Health England, ‘COVID-19: review of disparities in risks and outcomes’. The review looked at different factors including: age and sex; where people live; deprivation; ethnicity; people’s occupation; and care home residence. As part of the work towards this, a wide pattern of stakeholder outreach took place, led by Professor Kevin Fenton. The report, when published, did not draw on material from that.

On 16 June the Government published ‘A summary of stakeholder insights into factors affecting the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) on black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities’ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-understanding-the-impact-on-bame-communities/> These factors included medical and social factors including racism and social and economic equalities. Published with it was a letter from the Chief Executive of PHE setting out the seven recommendations from the report. This report contains extensive reference to the important role of faith within BAME communities, noting that “Faith communities played a vital role in engaging with communities and were a trusted source of information, leadership and engagement and needed to be better engaged in future efforts to build community resilience and prepare communities for the immediate and long-term challenges of COVID-19.”

It was announced at the end of July that UK scientists were to receive millions of pounds of Government funding for a raft of studies to learn why people from an ethnic minority background are at greater risk from COVID-19. Six projects will analyse data on social circumstances, health and day-to-day activities, as well as investigating genetic risk factors. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-53565655> The funding bodies are UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) <https://www.ukri.org/news/multimillion-investment-to-investigate-covid-19-and-ethnicity/>

Scotland

On 9 June First Minister of Scotland, Ms Nicola Sturgeon, announced that she was “establishing a new expert reference group, made up of academics and other advisers. That group will consider the evidence on Covid-19 in Scotland – including the data provided by NHS Scotland, National Records of Scotland and Public Health Scotland – to assess the impact of the virus on minority ethnic communities.” <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-update-first-ministers-speech-09-june-2020/>

Wales

In Wales an article was published on 22 June summarising findings of an advisory group that had been set up in May to examine the issue. <https://gov.wales/wales-bame-covid-19-health-advisory-group-takes-cross-government-approach> <https://gov.wales/coronavirus-covid-19-and-black-asian-and-minority-ethnic-bame-population-wales>.

Labour Party Inquiry

On 24 April the Labour Party announced that it would be holding an enquiry, led by Baroness Lawrence. Some 'hearings' arranged by Liam Byrne MP and others took place in June in Birmingham <https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/hear-pain-covid19-families-share-18399115> These will feed into the enquiry.

EHRC Inquiry

On 5 June the Equality and Human Rights Commission announced an inquiry into the impact of COVID-19 on ethnic minorities.

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-work/news/inquiry-impact-coronavirus-ethnic-minorities>

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COVID-19 and faith communities

One of the key roles of the Inter Faith Network for the UK is sharing information and good practice. Since the crisis began IFN has held monthly meetings of its Faith Communities Forum with a COVID-19 focus (see [below](#)) and been regularly sharing faith and inter faith responses on social media and sending regular updates by email to its member bodies.

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/social-media>

It has also created a special section on its website about faith and inter faith responses.

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/covid-19>.

Most faith communities have issued guidance for their communities and are updating this on a regular basis. IFN has been collating a list of these on its website at

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/faith-communities-and-coronavirus>.

Examples in regard to festivals include guidance from the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board and the Muslim Council of Britain about Eid and from the Hindu Council UK for devotees marking Janmashtami.

Spiritual/pastoral support

Since the start of COVID-19, chaplains have played a very important part in response within hospitals. This has been flagged up by members and profiled in a number of IFN social media posts, including

<https://www.facebook.com/553910267992886/posts/3024588844258337/>,

<https://www.facebook.com/553910267992886/posts/3025663064150915/> and <https://www.facebook.com/553910267992886/posts/3077490262301528/>.

It was also the subject of a special input to the Faith Communities Forum meeting in July by the Chair of the Network for Pastoral, Spiritual and Religious Care in Health, the Revd Mark Burleigh.

Assistance to those in need

Faith-based initiatives have continued to play a very important part in supporting those in need as well as providing assistance and moral support to NHS and other key workers. These have included provision of food and personal protective equipment, visits, and special ‘thank you’ videos. Many examples of these can be seen at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/covid-19-acts-of-kindness-and-service>.

Examples of just a few are also listed below.

Volunteers created The Sikh Foodbank in Scotland in late March to aid shielding and struggling households from all backgrounds. By August it had served up 80,000 meals to vulnerable people and is continuing to provide food for those in need, including those affected by job loss. <https://www.thenational.scot/news/18639209.sikh-foodbank-continue-operating-80-000-lockdown-meals/>

St Mark’s Church in Caia Park in Wrexham, close to the location of recent coronavirus mobile testing units, has issued more than 600 CE approved face shields for anyone in need of PPE. <https://www.leaderlive.co.uk/news/18630480.covid-19-wrexham-church-distributes-ppe-amid-spike-cases/>

Ashton-Under-Lyne's Hindu temple has helped its local community during the Coronavirus pandemic with a range of charitable acts, helping out at Tameside Hospital, Ashton Police Station and Dukinfield Ambulance service, providing food and supplies alongside letters of appreciation. <https://www.questmedianetwork.co.uk/news/tameside-reporter/ashton-temple-steps-forward-for-the-community/>

An inter faith social action group run out of Kol Chai Reform Synagogue in London collectively sewed around 50 sets of scrubs, as well as other types of PPE such as arm protectors. <https://www.thejc.com/sew-far-so-good-as-north-london-ppe-team-fill-an-nhs-need-1.500669>

SewaDay has carried out a wide programme of volunteering across the UK. For example, SewaDay NorthWest has transported supplies to a number of food banks in Greater Manchester.

Access to food during COVID-19

On 22 July the British Red Cross published a report on ‘Access to food in emergencies: learning from Covid-19’ <https://www.redcross.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/we-speak-up-for-change/access-to-food-in-emergencies>. BAME communities are mentioned in the report in the context of higher vulnerability and of need. Faith-based volunteering

initiatives have been very prominent during the pandemic – including Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and other initiatives where there is overlap between faith and BAME communities - providing support to others.

The report makes particular mention of the issue of appropriateness of food package contents for people of different religions and beliefs, noting that “The British Red Cross believes that emergency food provision should be personalised. It should meet dietary and medical requirements, considering factors like religious beliefs, allergies, eating abilities or availability of cooking equipment” and “Food should be a central part of any humanitarian emergency response. Every person should have access to food that meets their dietary requirements and personal circumstances no matter who they are or where they live in an emergency.”

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Hope and inspiration

There have been a number of multi faith videos released to reflect solidarity and inspire hope at this time of Covid19. Examples of some recent ones include these ones from Barnet Multi Faith Forum, Brighton and Hove Contact Group, Interfaith Glasgow, , Interfaith Council for Wales and Lewisham Interfaith Forum.

<http://barnetmultifaithforum.org/togetherbarnet-for-our-community/>

<https://interfaithcontactgroup.com/>

<https://twitter.com/InterfaithGlasg/status/1277915673189126144?s=20>

<https://www.facebook.com/interfaithcouncilforwales/videos/268792637665479/>

<https://lewisham.gov.uk/articles/news/lewisham-interfaith-forum-comes-together-virtually-to-share-a-message-of-solidarity>

Some organisations such as Edinburgh Interfaith Association, with its Interfaith Insights series, have produced regular videos. <https://www.edinburghinterfaith.com/>

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The impact of COVID-19 on charities

Many faith and inter faith organisations are registered charities. Information and advice that may be useful to charities and other voluntary organisations at this time can be found on IFN’s website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/covid-19-and-charities>.

COVID-19 has also had an impact on the resources of places of worship and faith-based charities. The previous issue of IFN’s e-bulletin drew to the #Nevermoreneeded campaign which had been initiated by NCVO and others.

The hit on income from less bookings from space renters; drop in some cases in charitable donations due to people not attending regular worship and festivals; loss in a few cases

from tourist income; and other COVID related complications continue to have an impact. This BBC story from 26 July highlights the high impact on Westminster Abbey <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-53538741> and notes that the Association of English Cathedrals, which represents Westminster Abbey and the Church of England's 42 cathedrals has warned job cuts will hit churches around the country when the government's job retention scheme ends in October. It also notes that many places of worship around the country are struggling financially. It cites Singh Sabha London East, which typically received about £80,000 a month in donations from attendees and has lost 90% of its monthly income (nonetheless providing more than 4,000 meals to NHS staff and other key workers).

The #NeverMoreNeeded campaign is asking the Government to: “ recognise that existing measures do not do enough to enable charities to continue to deliver essential services that have never been more needed ... ; ensure the distribution of funding available is speedy and efficient, and that equality and human rights are designed in from the outset, so that we meet everyone’s needs and that decision making is transparent; [and] make necessary regulatory changes to existing schemes to make them fit for purpose for charities and voluntary organisations.” It is also asking “Ministers and officials to work with the charity and voluntary sector to address the medium and long-term scale of the financial challenge ahead, and to ensure that the critical support charities provide will continue to be able to meet need and make a vital contribution to rebuilding our society.” Further information is at <https://nmn.org.uk/>.

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#BlackLivesMatter

Thousands have protested in the USA in the wake of the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis on 25 May as well as in response to other deaths and acts of brutality and to racism today and across recent centuries. The UK has also seen a number of such protests.

Following its meeting on 9 June IFN’s Board of Trustees offered the following reflections: <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/blacklivesmatter-reflections-from-the-board-of-ifn-at-its-meeting-on-9-june-2020>.

Many faith and inter faith bodies have been responding. For example, the Board of Deputies of British Jews has established a Commission on Racial Inclusivity in the Jewish Community <https://www.bod.org.uk/board-of-deputies-to-launch-commission-on-racial-inclusivity-in-the-jewish-community/> and the Church of England has established a Racism Action Commission <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/news/new-task-force-ensure-action-over-racism-church-england> Responses from a number of IFN member bodies can be seen at: <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/ifn-member-responses-to-killing-of-george-floyd-subsequent-events-and-racial-injustice>. Faith leaders

have also come together in a number of areas of the UK to stand in solidarity, for example in St Albans <https://www.hertsad.co.uk/news/black-lives-matter-st-albans-faith-leaders-1-6740257> and Basingstoke <https://www.basingstokegazette.co.uk/news/18506834.black-lives-matter-religious-leaders-unite-call-change-basingstoke/>.

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Windrush Cross-Government Working Group

A Windrush Cross-Government Working Group was launched in June by the Home Secretary Priti Patel. It is co-chaired by Bishop Derek Webley and the Home Secretary and met for the first time on 25 June. The Working Group is not holding a new inquiry, but is, rather, an implementation group especially for the recommendations made in the Wendy Williams Windrush Lessons Learned Review (published March 2020). <https://www.voice-online.co.uk/windrush/2020/06/22/windrush-cross-government-working-group-launched/>

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Hate crime, extremism and conspiracy theories

Hate crime

Lockdown has not seen the disappearance of hate crime. Incidents include a swastika burnt onto a golf course in Blackpool; graffitiing of streets in Brighton <https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/18633898.hove-anti-islam-graffiti-bahman-khorsandian-curfew/>, a recent incident in Leeds <https://www.leeds-live.co.uk/news/leeds-news/jewish-woman-describes-life-racism-18737963> and anti Muslim hate mail received recently by MPs in Manchester <https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/mp-wakes-up-very-offensive-18734435>.

The Community Security Trust reported in its January to June 2020 report 789 Antisemitic incidents across the UK during that period, the third highest total that CST has recorded in the January to June period of any year.

<https://cst.org.uk/data/file/c/5/Incidents%20Report%20Jan-Jun%202020-1.1596720071.pdf>

A study by Newcastle and Northumbria universities has found that more than 80% of Muslim people in the North East have experienced racism and three-quarters think it's getting worse. The Bahr Academy in Newcastle has been broken into twice this year and ransacked with racist graffiti daubed on the walls. <https://www.itv.com/news/tyne-tees/2020-07-22/you-dont-belong-here-islamophobia-concerns-as-report-finds-racism-experienced-by-80-of-muslims-in-the-north-east>

Online attacks are also a feature of the current hate landscape. For example, on 29 June a Women's Interfaith Network Zoom meeting on Faith and COVID was hacked by racists and

participants subjected to racist abuse and video clips with racist emblems and violence. https://twitter.com/Win_Interfaith/status/1280080358558650368/photo/1

In the first half of 2020, CST received ten reports of educational or religious online events hijacked with Antisemitic content.

In July the artist known as Wiley published a number of Antisemitic tweets on Twitter. A delay in these being taken down led to a 48 hour boycott with the hashtag #NoSafeSpaceForJewHate by the Chief Rabbi and others. The social network eventually banned Wiley for violating its "hateful conduct" policy - a day after Facebook and Instagram had deleted the music star's accounts for "repeated violations" of their rules. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-53581771>

In Scotland, the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill was introduced the Scottish Government on 23 April. It seeks to: update existing laws; bring most of these into one bill; and add to the groups currently specifically protected by hate crime laws. A copy of the Bill and the accompanying documents can be found at <https://www.gov.scot/policies/crime-prevention-and-reduction/hate-crime/> and <https://beta.parliament.scot/bills/hate-crime-and-public-order-scotland-bill>.

In May 2020 the Scottish Parliament Justice Committee launched a call for views on the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill. This closed on 24 July. <https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/115038.aspx> There has been much public debate over the extent to which the proposed Act would constrain freedom of speech. The following blog seeks to address what the Government views as some misperceptions: <https://blogs.gov.scot/justice-safety/2020/06/15/the-hate-crime-and-public-order-scotland-bill/>.

Extremism and conspiracy theories

In July, the Commission on Countering Extremism published a report looking at the way in which extremists have sought to exploit the current pandemic. Along with highlighting harmful conspiracy theories, the report refers to how extremists have been spreading disinformation and fake news about minority groups which has been used by sympathisers to incite hatred and violence.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/report-looking-at-how-hateful-extremists-have-been-exploiting-the-current-pandemic>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-how-hateful-extremists-are-exploiting-the-pandemic>

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Terrorism

On 20 June three people were murdered and three seriously injured in a knife attack by a man in Reading. This was subsequently classified as a terrorist related attack. The motives of the individual, who appears to have had mental health problems, remains unclear. The following day a statement was issued on behalf of the Board and Moderators of the Faith Communities Forum. <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/statement-following-terrorist-attack-in-reading>

A police appeal to the public early in the lockdown, to take part in the Action Counters Terrorism (ACT) e-Learning course while working at home, has resulted in nearly 70,000 signing up to be 'CT Citizens'. Overall half a million participants have signed up since the course was launched two years ago. ACT Awareness can be found at <https://ct.highfieldelearning.com/>.

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VJ Day 75th anniversary Commemorations

The 75th anniversary of VJ Day (Victory over Japan) will be held on 15 August, commemorating the end of the Second World War.

The Royal British Legion notes: "Remembrance honours those who serve to defend our democratic freedoms and way of life. We unite across faiths, cultures and backgrounds to remember the service and sacrifice of the Armed Forces community from Britain and the Commonwealth."

More information on how to get involved in marking the anniversary can be found at <https://ve-vjday75.gov.uk/vjday/> and <https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-involved/remembrance/remembrance-events/vj-day-75>.

The Royal British Legion has created a digital map of the Commonwealth African and Asian nations from WW2, together with Nepal, that were part of the war effort in the Asia-Pacific. The map allows members of the public to leave their Remembrance messages next to one of the countries. It can be found at <https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/get-involved/remembrance/remembrance-events/vj-day/vj-day-map>.

IFN's Inter Faith Week website includes a resource that highlights the contributions of people of different faiths and beliefs in conflicts and the importance of multi faith remembrance. <https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/remembrance>

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UK Freedom of Religion and Belief Forum

In July it was announced that a new UK Freedom of Religion and Belief (FoRB) Forum will be launched in September. The setting up of the Forum was one of the recommendations in the report on the review carried out by the Bishop of Truro, the Rt Revd Philip Mounstephen, on Foreign and Commonwealth Office support for persecuted Christians, published last year.

The Forum, which is still gathering representation from civil-society organisations, NGOs, academic organisations, and the Government, will be responsible for raising awareness of religion-based restrictions, intolerance, and discrimination around the world; inform UK policy-making on FoRB and make recommendations for action; and be in liaison with the Prime Minister's Special Envoy on FoRB and the All-Party Parliamentary Group on FoRB. <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2020/10-july/news/uk/bishop-of-truro-to-chair-new-freedom-of-religion-and-belief-forum>

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Climate change conference postponed

Recent issues of IFN's e-bulletin have carried information about the work of faith communities and the environment.

The COP26 UN climate change conference set to take place in Glasgow in November, with which a number of UK faith communities were involved, has been postponed due to COVID-19. Dates for a rescheduled conference in 2021, hosted in Glasgow by the UK in partnership with Italy, will be set out in due course. <https://unfccc.int/news/cop26-postponed>

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INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK NEWS

Inter Faith Week 2020

This year's Inter Faith Week www.interfaithweek.org takes place in England, Northern Ireland and Wales from Sunday 8 to Sunday 15 November. Its aims of Inter Faith Week are to:

- Strengthen good inter faith relations at all levels
- Increase awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, celebrating and building on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society
- Increase understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs

The Week begins each year on Remembrance Sunday to enable people of different backgrounds to remember together the service of soldiers and civilians of all faiths and beliefs and to reflect on peace. A dedicated page about this can be found at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/remembrance>.

IFN leads on the Week, in consultation with the Inter Faith Council for Wales and Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum in relation to the Week in their respective nations, and provides a dedicated website at: www.interfaithweek.org Scottish Interfaith Week takes place at the same time and Interfaith Scotland leads on that: <http://scottishinterfaithweek.org/>

This year, because of COVID-19, Inter Faith Week will be predominantly virtual.

Here are just a few ideas for Inter Faith Week activities in that context:

- Work with a selection of local places of worship to create online tours of these and assemble them into a faith trail that people can take part in online
- Hold a 'virtual' civic reception for local faith leaders and perhaps record a joint Inter Faith Week message about the importance of good inter faith relations in your area
- Hold an art or photo competition which can be judged online if necessary
- Create a calendar for 2021 with pictures taken of inter faith events, places of worship in your area or artwork from different communities
- Create an online quiz about the world's religions and hold the quiz online during the Week
- Create a blog or oral history project about the history of faith communities in your area, when inter faith activity began and how it has developed
- Interview, for a video or as part of virtual meeting, members or colleagues of different faith and non-religious belief backgrounds about the idea of 'service' in their tradition and how their beliefs inspire them and their colleagues to work to help the wider community
- Hold an online 'bake-in' or 'cook-in' where people of different faiths share their recipes and show the finished item!
- If you are a member of a local inter faith group, across the coming months work with members to produce a short history of your group (if you don't already have one!) with some reflections about why it's work is so important and publish it during Inter Faith Week
- Set up an 'Inter Faith Week Buddy' experience where two people, each of a different faith or non-religious belief keep in touch across September and October and share during Inter Faith Week some of what they have gained from this
- If there are people still needing to self-isolate or be 'shielded' during Inter Faith Week, consider a safe way that you might encourage an inter faith team to volunteer and deliver a special 'Inter Faith Week' lunch with samples of foods from some of the different faith communities in the area
- Create an on-line 'faith fair' for your workplace or Student Union with information about different faiths and beliefs and opportunities to engage in online chats.

- Develop a new website or update your website – or the faith or inter faith section of it – and launch that in Inter Faith Week
- Create an exhibition about different faiths with display panels about each faith group in your area that could be exhibited in an open air space such as at your local rail/ bus station
- Host a webinar or other educational activity for the public
- Create an online exhibition of some of the artefacts in your museum linked to particular faiths, perhaps with talks from people of those faiths

There are more ideas at www.interfaithweek.org and further detail about the ‘Inter Faith Week buddies’ scheme can be obtained from the IFN office.

On 29 July, IFN hosted a webinar for local, regional and national inter faith organisations focussed on preparing for Inter Faith Week 2020. This included a range of presentations and covered topics including widening involvement in the Week, using social media to add impact, practical pointers for holding activities at a time of COVID-19, planning virtual pilgrimages/ faith walks, thinking through virtual vs physical activities, and creating video messages. A recording of the webinar can be seen at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/webinars>.

Across August and September, IFN will be making a number of further announcements about Inter Faith Week. Follow Inter Faith Week on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram or sign up to the mailing list to keep in touch with news and ideas! If you would like to receive mailings about Inter Faith Week, you can subscribe at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/news/mailling-list-sign-up>.

For further information, contact the Inter Faith Week team at interfaithweek@interfaith.org.uk.

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Meetings of IFN Faith Communities Forum

Meetings of IFN’s Faith Communities Forum were held on 27 May, 25 June and 28 July. This greater than usual frequency was to enable faith communities to address a number of aspects of COVID-19.

On 27 May the re-opening of places of worship and the impact of COVID-19 on BAME communities was discussed. On 25 June, the agenda included items on: hate crime and terrorism; COVID-19 and faith communities; the3million campaign and faith communities, with a presentation by Ms Ilse Mogensen, Head of Advocacy for the3million campaign; and faith and BAME communities, with opening reflections from Bishop Dr Joe Aldred of Churches Together in England.

The 28 July session included updates on COVID-19 and faith communities, including health and spiritual care, with a presentation by the Revd Mark Burleigh, Chair of the Network for Pastoral, Spiritual and Religious Care in Health. There was also an Agenda Item on Faith communities, climate change and the environment with a presentation by Rabbi David Mason about Green Shabbat, Eco Synagogue and the importance of faith communities' role in working for the wellbeing of the environment.

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Meeting for Educational and Academic Bodies

A virtual meeting was held for IFN member Educational and Academic Bodies on 23 June to share news of how they are responding to COVID-19 and to discuss any particular COVID-19 related issues of interest and concern.

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IFN meetings for local inter faith practitioners

IFN holds meetings for local inter faith groups to share news and good practice and learn from each other's work to strengthen their own and benefit their local areas. Some are for groups from across the UK. Others are for groups within a particular region or a county.

Virtual link meetings for local inter faith organisations in the East Midlands region of England and the North East region of England were held on 29 June and 27 July, respectively, facilitated by IFN's Assistant Director. Each began with a short overview of IFN and its work relating to COVID-19 from the Executive Director and then included sharing of news or programmes and projects being run by each group, including opportunities and challenges, and plans and ideas for marking Inter Faith Week.

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IFN Local Inter Faith Webinar on 'Getting Together at a Time of COVID-19'

On 19 June IFN held a webinar, marking the Great Get Together, entitled 'Getting Together at a Time of COVID-19'. This was facilitated by IFN's Development Officer, Ashley Beck.

It included opening reflections from Jay Anderson, IFN Trustee from the local inter faith category (Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship and Leeds Faiths Forum), about the Great Get Together and four presentations: 'Using digital technology to bring people together for dialogue and consultation and to widen and strengthen our work' by Himanshu Jain, Chair, Barking and Dagenham Faith Forum; 'Taking your local inter faith programme digital and responding to current needs' by Shabaz Ahmed, Community Development Officer, Building Bridges Pendle; 'Sharing prayers, poems and readings at this time of COVID-19' by the Revd Anthea Ballam, Co-chair, Brighton and Hove Interfaith Contact Group; and 'Using virtual meetings for the regular getting together of local inter faith

bodies' by Avtar Singh Matharu, Chair, York Interfaith Group. There were closing reflections from two of IFN's Trustees from the local inter faith membership category: Es Rosen (Barnet Multi Faith Forum) and Patricia Stoa (Nottingham Inter Faith Council).

You can watch the recording of the webinar at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/getting-together-at-a-time-of-covid-19>.

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

Campus Leadership Programme

Applications are now open for the 2020-21 Campus Leadership Programme of the Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ). CCJ is recruiting Student Leaders to create inter faith projects which meet the needs of their universities. Through the programme students develop the leadership skills needed to be inter faith leaders at their universities and beyond. This year the programme will begin remotely with online inter faith training in September. For more information on the programme and how to apply, contact Campus Leadership Manager Katharine Crew at Katharine.Crew@ccj.org.uk.

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Spiritual ecology and climate justice podcasts

The St Ethelburga's Centre has launched a new series of podcasts, in collaboration with The Future Is Beautiful, which "reaches for the place where spiritual ecology and climate justice meet. It explores the integration of spirituality with grounded action through the lives and leadership of people of colour." The first episode is with black-latinx transdisciplinary artist, educator, and designer Brontë Velez and the second is with Rabiah Abdullah, traditional herbalist, activist and community healer.

<https://stethelburgas.org/watch-listen-read/>

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Faiths United

As noted in IFN's last e-bulletin a temporary coalition of faith leaders and representatives responding to the pandemic, chaired by Maurice Ostro OBE of the Fayre Share Foundation, with the name 'Faiths United' was formed (<http://faithsforum.com/faiths-united/>). An IFN staff member continues to contribute on an ad hoc basis to the discussions.

During the period of the easing of the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, Faiths United has continued to explore issues that are affecting communities with inputs from the National Bereavement Service, Teach First, United for Global Mental Health, and the National Police Chiefs' Council as well as an input from Leicester about how local lockdowns work.

It is also exploring the role that faith communities can play in responding to the pandemic, such as the Test and Trace programme.

A Faiths United Youth Network (<http://faithsforum.com/faiths-united-youth-network/>) has been running a programme called JOY, linking an elderly member of one faith community with a young member of another faith community to help initiate interfaith and inter-generational dialogue, working on issues around Black Lives Matter as well as running a Wednesday webinar series. It is holding a competition called Connected Communities, see [below](#) for details.

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York Interfaith Group quilt

York Interfaith Group is hoping to create an ‘inter faith inter-lockdown quilt’. The idea is to create a piece of inter faith history in York. Each faith group will be creating patches to be included within the quilt. For further information, contact Dee Boyle at deeboyle.york@gn.apc.org.

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Hounslow Friends of Faith 20th anniversary

This year marks the 20th anniversary of Hounslow Friends of Faith (HFoF). The planned anniversary event will not be taking place due to COVID-19. Instead the group will be holding an event 12 November when the 20th anniversary will be marked by the launch of a history of HFOF and, hopefully, an HFOF 2021 calendar. The Interfaith Knitting Group are preparing a special knitted banner for the occasion which will show the symbols of all major faiths. For more information, contact info@hounslowfriendsoffait.org.

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

Report on Cohesive Societies: Faith and Belief

In July a report entitled ‘Cohesive Societies: Faith and Belief’ was published. It explores the role of faith and nonreligious belief in cohesive societies. It charts social cohesion policy in the UK as it relates to faith and belief, and examines the practical impact of the faith and belief sector on communities through a series of case studies. This report was externally commissioned by the Faith and Belief Forum (FBF) and the British Academy, and authored by Dr Madeleine Pennington, Head of Research at Theos. The report makes a contribution to the Academy’s Cohesive Societies programme which asks how societies sustain cohesiveness in the face of rapid political, social, economic and technological change. It “explores the different ways in which faith and belief interacts with societal cohesion” and has a particular emphasis on how faith organisations interact with communities.”

<https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/publications/cohesive-societies-faith-and-belief/>

In response to the report, FBF is planning a series of roundtables. Further information from: Jessica Hazrati jessica@faithbeliefforum.org.

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Dialogue between Christians and Jews on issues relating to Israel Palestine

In July the Council of Christians and Jews launched a new resource called 'Listening and Learning: Dialogue between Christians and Jews on issues relating to Israel Palestine', in partnership with the Methodist Church. This can be downloaded from <http://www.ccj.org.uk/resources/listening-learning-dialogue-between-christians-and-jews-on-issues-relating-to-israel-palestine/>. For more information, contact cjrelations@ccj.org.uk.

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Engaging Locally toolkit

In July Faith Action and YourNeighbour.org published 'Engaging Locally'. This is a toolkit designed to help church leaders engage with their local authorities in service of their local communities. It offers practical advice to churches to enable them to strengthen their relationships with their local councils, with case studies of where churches are working well locally – often in partnership with charity partners. The contents of the toolkit may have some applicability to other faith communities' partnership work.

<https://www.faihtaction.net/news/2020/07/15/engaging-locally-new-toolkit-for-church-leaders-plus-complete-our-new-survey/?highlight=toolkit>

FaithAction provides the secretariat for the Faith and Society All Party Parliamentary Group which developed a 'faith covenant' which can be adopted by faith groups and local authorities in cities across the UK. Local authorities and faith communities work out a local version of the commitments, according to the priorities and needs of that locality.

<https://www.faihtandsociety.org/covenant/>

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Training Courses – Interfaith Scotland

Interfaith Scotland is running three online training courses during August and September: 13 August 'Interpreting culture – improving cross-cultural communication'; 9 September 'Working with people from diverse religions & beliefs'; and 29 September '3 mottos to guide our approach to equality, diversity & inclusion'.

There is a fee to attend each course. For more information on each course and to book,

visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/interfaith-scotland-16811469249>. Any enquiries can be sent to Jamie at jamie@interfaithscotland.org.

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‘Beyond Dialogue’

Integrity UK in partnership with Faiths Forum for London has developed a programme, ‘Beyond Dialogue’, that seeks to bridge divides, reduce hate and strengthen relations between communities aimed at Londoners. As part of Beyond Dialogue, Integrity UK will provide two training sessions to community leaders on the trends, tactics and key players within far-right extremism. Zoom sessions will run from September.

What will the training cover?

- Broaden the participants’ understanding on the far-right, including on hate speech, Islamophobia, and Antisemitism
- Build the capacity of participants by sharing practice on how faith communities can collectively work together on community activism
- Discuss wider social context drivers such as integration, deprivation and inequality
- Discuss the role of the internet and social media companies around hate speech

Further information is available at <http://faithsforum.com/beyond-dialogue-programme/>.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS, AND NOMINATIONS

Westminster Faith Exchange – Art and Poetry Competition

The theme for this year’s Art and Poetry Competition held by Westminster Faith Exchange is ‘Covid-19, Lockdown and my Faith’. The competition is open to all children and young people of all faiths in Westminster. It is free to enter and there are prizes to be won. The closing date for entries is 21 August. For more information, including the entry form, visit <https://www.westminster.gov.uk/faith-exchange>.

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Connected Communities competition

Faiths United and its Youth Network, have launched a new competition with a number of partners, for the summer holidays. The competition, called ‘Connected Communities’, is aimed at young people aged 7 to 18. They are asking young people to use their imagination, and a range of media to answer the question ‘How has the COVID-19 crisis brought your community together?’ Entrants can respond to the question through either a written piece, a photo, or a video. The closing date for entries is 28 August. Further details can be found at <https://faithsunited.co.uk/competition>.

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Wilson Hinkes Peace Award

Nominations are now sought for the 2020 Wilson Hinkes Peace Award. The Award is part of the Week of Prayer for World Peace (WPWP), which encourages people of all faiths to pray for peace. It recognises significant contributions by individuals, organisations or projects in furthering peace, justice and reconciliation at local levels. Focused on recognising grassroots initiatives, the Award enables otherwise untold stories to be told and honoured and seeks to inspire others to work for peace.

<https://www.anglicanpeacemaker.org.uk/peace-award-nominations-wanted/>

The Award carries a value of £500. Nominations can come from any individual or group. Submissions in the form of a letter describing the nominee's contribution to peace and justice issues should be sent to the WPWP Committee members: Sue Gale at billandsuegale@blueyonder.co.uk and Sue Claydon at chair@anglicanpeacemaker.org.uk.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

Inter Faith Network for the UK - Volunteers

The Inter Faith Network for the UK is seeking volunteers to help with various projects. At present opportunities are for remote working only. To express an interest in volunteering, please complete the application form at

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/volunteering>.

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Council of Christians and Jews - Director

The Council of Christians and Jews is seeking a new Director who will “combine deep understanding of Christian-Jewish relations with the skills and qualities to lead a dynamic team”. The successful candidate will also have proven experience in fundraising and strategy. Applications from the Jewish community would be especially welcome.

Applicants should contact Elizabeth Harris-Sawczenko at director@ccj.org.uk for an informal conversation and job description. Applications should be sent by email to the Chair of Trustees, Bishop Michael Ipgrave, at recruitment@ccj.org.uk by 17 August. Interviews will take place during September.

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Faith and Belief Forum – Programmes Coordinator, West Midlands

The Faith and Belief Forum is seeking a Programmes Coordinator to lead the project management of its programmes across the West Midlands. The Coordinator will be responsible for both project and stakeholder management of the Community Dialogue project in Walsall and also have the opportunity to oversee the Education programmes in the region with support from the team.

This is a 6-month opportunity. The deadline to apply is 9am on 24 August. Interviews will take place on 28 August via Zoom. The role is to begin as soon as possible. For more information, including the application form, visit

<https://faithbeliefforum.org/career/programmes-coordinator-west-midlands> .

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

COVID-19 funding

The Charities Aid Foundation has collated a helpful list of organisations which are supporting charities and voluntary groups at this time. This was last updated on 31 July. <https://www.cafonline.org/covid-19-support/help-for-charities#tab1>

In April the Government committed funding to be distributed through the National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF) to allow organisations to meet service costs, where they are experiencing increased demand and/or short-term income disruption due to COVID-19. The Government funding is being distributed by the NLCF, alongside Lottery funding. The information notes that “If you're a group that's looking for government funding, because you can't accept funding from The National Lottery, please tell us in your application.” The closing date for applications is 17 August. The links for funding under £10,000 and over £10,000 are below.

<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/covid-19-funding-under-10k>

<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/covid-19-funding-over-10k>.

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BAME Infrastructure Fund

The UK Community Foundation (UKCF) has made a new infrastructure fund available for organisations to help BAME-led organisations to apply for National Emergencies Trust grants through their local Community Foundations. An initial £250,000 has been allocated for this purpose, with more funds anticipated on a rolling basis. UKCF is seeking applications from BAME-led infrastructure organisations to access the new fund. Grants between £5,000 –£20,000 over a maximum of three months are available.

<https://www.ukcommunityfoundations.org/news-article/bame-infra-fund>

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FCC Community Action Fund

The FCC Communities Foundation is offering grants between £2,000 and £100,000 for projects which involve the provision, maintenance or improvement of public amenities including community spaces in places of worship, which are registered charities. Projects must be based within 10 miles of an eligible FCC Environment waste facility. The current round closes on 2 September. The next round then opens on 16 September. For more information, visit <https://fcccommunitiesfoundation.org.uk/funds/fcc-community-action-fund>.

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Windrush Compensation Scheme

The Windrush Compensation Scheme is open to those who settled in the UK from a Commonwealth country before 1973, and in certain circumstances their children and grandchildren. Claim forms can be downloaded and guidance on completing the application can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/windrush-compensation-scheme>. Claimants can also request a form to be sent by post by calling the helpline on 0800 678 1925 or via email WindrushCompensationScheme@homeoffice.gov.uk where they can also request a call back if they are overseas.

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Faith in Community Scotland

Faith in Community Scotland is an anti-poverty charity founded in 2005. They support individuals and faith groups in Scotland's poorest neighbourhoods to achieve the difference that they are capable of. They do this through training, resources and funding which helps to build people's skill and to increase their confidence. It has a small grants programme which has distributed over £1 million over the past ten years to urban and rural faith groups tackling poverty. For more information about eligibility and how to apply for a grant, including the next application deadline date, email andrew@faithincommunity.scot.

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Veolia Environmental Trust community funding

The Veolia Environmental Trust is now accepting applications for projects that will start between 11 January and 22 March. Not-for-profit organisations can apply for funding for environmental or community-based projects that are located within five miles of an operating Veolia site in England. The closing date for Stage 1 Application Forms is 3 September. For more information, visit <https://www.veoliatrust.org/funding/>.

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Funding websites

Funding Central <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk>, supported by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, is a free website for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises in England. It provides access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, together with tools and resources to develop sustainable income strategies. Similar websites for funding in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at Funding Scotland - <http://www.fundingscotland.com/> - Wales Council for Voluntary Action - <http://www.wcva.org.uk/funding/search> - and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland - <https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

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Website and Facebook grants

The Transform Foundation offers funding to charities to help with new website builds. Grants of £18,000 are available. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. For further information and to apply, visit <https://www.transformfoundation.org.uk/funded-website-programme>.

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Subsidised fundraising workshops

The Foundation for Social Improvement offers subsidised training programmes for small charities across the UK. The courses cover a wide range of subjects from event planning to leadership. Many of the courses focus on fundraising and sustainability skills in particular. Further information and dates for upcoming courses, now being held online, can be found at <http://www.thefsi.org/services/training>.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

National Hate Crime Awareness Week takes place from Saturday 10 October to Saturday 17 October. <https://nationalhcaw.uk/>

One World Week is due to take place from Sunday 18 to Sunday 25 October. Its theme this year is 'It's our world: Let's make it better'. www.oneworldweek.org

Inter Faith Week will be from Sunday 8 to Sunday 15 November. www.interfaithweek.org

Scottish Interfaith Week will be from Sunday 8 to Sunday 15 November. Scottish Interfaith Week is led by Interfaith Scotland. www.scottishinterfaithweek.org

Mitzvah Day will be on Sunday 15 November. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Jewish community where people give their time to make a difference to the community around them. Many events and projects held for the day have an inter faith focus. www.mitzvahday.org.uk/

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**SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK
TO INCREASE INTER FAITH UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION**

Earlier this year an Appeal was launched <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/donate> to support and strengthen IFN's work for inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. Thank you so much to those who have already kindly contributed through this or through a different route. If you have not, but appreciate this e-bulletin and the work of IFN and would like to do so, that would be most welcome.

Gifts at all levels are much valued and make a real difference. You can donate directly at www.interfaith.org.uk/donate which includes credit card and PayPal options.

Donations can also be made by sending a cheque payable to 'The Inter Faith Network' to: The Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH.

Thank you!

REMEMBERING A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND

If you would like to make a gift in memory of a loved one, please get in touch by emailing remember@interfaith.org.uk or call us on 0207 730 0410.

A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

By leaving a gift in your will to the Inter Faith Network for the UK, you can leave a living inheritance to help deepen and strengthen inter faith understanding and cooperation in this country – for now and for the future. If you are thinking about making a will, the best thing to do is to get in touch with a professional will writer, such as a solicitor or advocate; they can help to ensure it is legally correct and that your wishes are met. If you have already made a will, you can still make an addition or amendment in the form of a codicil. If you would like to pledge a gift, please provide our name and address, along with our registered charity number 1068934.

Please get in touch with us if you have any queries.
You can call us on 0207 730 0410 or contact us at remember@interfaith.org.uk

DIARY DATES

In light of COVID-19 many events have had to be cancelled or postponed. Some events are now taking place online. A few examples of forthcoming events are listed below. Events are also listed on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/events>.

Challenge Poverty Week is holding a 'Faiths Groups Get Involved' meeting on Thursday 13 August. Challenge Poverty Week will take place from 5 to 11 October and the meeting is being held specifically for faith groups to learn more and plan activities. It will be taking place from 10am to 11.30am on Zoom. To register, visit <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZMucOyopz4sE9Fdgol8sTwpm6Ne83-HgYJW>.

Interfaith Wolverhampton is holding an online 'bring and share' meeting on Tuesday 18 August. This will take place at 12.30pm using Zoom. For more information, contact admin@ifwton.org.uk.

Edinburgh Interfaith Association, Edinburgh Co-Existence Initiative and Interfaith Scotland are collaborating on a youth event to be held on Tuesday 18 August at 1 pm. For further information, contact info@eifa.org.uk.

Norwich InterFaith Link will be holding its next meeting online on Tuesday 18 August. Cynthia Capey will share her experiences of organising the Suffolk Interfaith group and invite questions and discussion about its aims and successes. She is also the Interfaith Adviser for the East of England Faith Agency and the Faith and Spirituality Network in Suffolk. The meeting will be held at 7.30pm via Zoom. For joining details, contact David Griffith via <http://www.norwichinterfaith.co.uk/contact.php>.

The Muslim Jewish Forum of Greater Manchester will be holding its annual picnic at 1pm on Sunday 6 September. Participants are invited to bring their own food and drink and folding chairs and to observe social distancing. Cllr Eamonn O'Brien hopes to attend. It will be held in St Mary's Park, St Mary's Road, Prestwich (next to the car park and the tennis courts). There is no need to book in advance. For further information, contact mail@muslimjewish.org.uk.

Brighton and Hove Inter Faith Contact Group is holding a new series of 'Fostering Friendship' meetings online from September. The first meeting takes place on Wednesday 16 September from 5pm to 6pm. The meetings will provide an opportunity to learn about a range of faiths from the local 'grassroots'. For more information, contact info@interfaithcontactgroup.com.

The **St Philip's Centre** is holding its AGM online at 6pm on Wednesday 16 September. The Revd Mark Burleigh and Mr Kartar Singh Bring will be speaking about their experience in hospital chaplaincy during the COVID-19 pandemic. This will be followed by the formal

AGM business at 6.45 pm. It is being held on Zoom. For joining instructions, email admin@stphilipscentre.co.uk.

St Ethelburga's is holding a workshop for people of colour on Wednesday 16 September entitled 'Remembering our stories of roots and fruits'. This workshop, with Serayna Keya Solanki, is "an online gathering for black people and people of colour who are in need of space to remember, share and root themselves in generational resilience". It is being held online from 6.30pm to 8.30pm. For more information contact Justine Huxley at justine.huxley@stethelburgas.org or visit <https://stethelburgas.org/event/remembering-our-stories-of-roots-and-fruits-a-workshop-for-people-of-colour-2>.

More information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org.uk

IFN also carries news and information at www.twitter.com/IFNetUK www.facebook.com/IFNetUK and, about Inter Faith Week, at <https://twitter.com/IFweek> and www.facebook.com/IFWeek.

You can sign up to IFN mailings at any time by using the form on IFN's website at: www.interfaith.org.uk/news/gdpr or let us know that you would like to unsubscribe by using the links at the bottom of the cover email.

Submissions for next issue

If you have items about projects or future events which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **18 September** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer: Information in this e-bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH
www.interfaith.org.uk www.facebook.com/IFNetUK www.twitter.com/IFNetUK

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IFN e-bulletin

November 2020

Welcome to the e-bulletin of the Inter Faith Network for the UK www.interfaith.org.uk
It is published every two months and it highlights primarily new developments, projects and future events. You can read by scrolling through or you can go directly to an individual section or item by clicking on the 'Read more' link in the Sections and Contents lists below.

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

UK/national response to COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

UK Government information on COVID-19 is at: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

The NHS guidance can be found at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>.

Advice is available on the following websites in the devolved nations:

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus>

<https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus>

<https://gov.wales/coronavirus>
<https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/>

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Current COVID-19 rules - Places of worship, weddings and funerals

England

On 12 October the UK Government introduced a new three tier system of local COVID Alert Levels for England: Medium, High and Very High which took effect from 14 October.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-announces-new-local-covid-alert-levels> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-covid-alert-levels-what-you-need-to-know>

However, on 31 October the UK Government announced that new national restrictions would be in place across the whole of England from 5 November, for at least 4

weeks. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/new-national-restrictions-from-5-november#weddings-civil-partnerships-religious-services-and-funerals>

In a statement in the House of Lords, Faith Minister Lord Greenhalgh said:

“...[We] have come to a critical point in the fight against Covid-19. The R rate is above one across England, and the ONS estimates that an average of one in 100 people has the virus. To protect the NHS and get the R rate below one, we must limit our interaction with others. Therefore, with great regret, while places of worship will remain open for individual prayer, communal worship cannot take place at this time.”

The main guidance on safe use of places of worship is expected to be updated today (6 November). <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic-from-4-july>

The rules on weddings, civil partnerships, religious services and funerals are as follows:

- Funerals can be attended by a maximum of 30 people, and it is advised that only close friends and family attend. Linked ceremonial events such as stone settings and ash scatterings can also continue with up to 15 people in attendance. Anyone working is not included. Social distancing should be maintained between people who do not live together or share a support bubble.
- Weddings, civil partnership ceremonies will not be permitted to take place except in exceptional circumstances.
- Places of Worship will be closed, unless they are being used for:
 - Funerals
 - To broadcast acts of worship
 - Individual prayer
 - Formal childcare or where part of a school
 - Essential voluntary and public services, such as blood donation or food banks
 - Other exempted activities such as some support groups

A number of faith community leaders have written to the Prime Minister with concerns about the prevention of communal worship:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/03/faith-leaders-challenge-england-lockdown-ban-on-communal-worship-coronavirus> .

Scotland

On 23 October the Scottish Government announced the introduction of five protection levels, which came into effect on 2 November.

Level 0:

- Places of worship - open, restricted to 50 people
- Weddings/civil partnerships – 50 person limit
- Funerals – 50 person limit
- Wakes and receptions permitted - 50 person limit

Levels 1, 2 and 3:

- Places of worship – open, restricted to 50 people
- Weddings/civil partnerships – 20 person limit
- Funerals – 20 person limit
- Wakes and receptions permitted - 20 person limit

Level 4:

- Places of worship – open, restricted to 20 people
- Weddings/civil partnerships – 15 person limit
- Funerals – 20 person limit
- Wakes permitted - 20 person limit
- No receptions

The Scottish Government's guidance for the safe use of places of worship, last updated on 8 October, is at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-phase-3-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship/pages/capacity/>.

Wales

A two week national lockdown began in Wales on 23 October. Places of worship are not allowed to open to the public, other than for wedding or civil partnership ceremonies or funerals, where people can attend at the invitation of the organiser. Guidance is at <https://gov.wales/guidance-funerals-covid-19> . Ministers may access the place of worship to broadcast (without a congregation) an act of worship or funeral, whether over the

internet or as part of a radio or television broadcast. <https://gov.wales/coronavirus-circuit-break-frequently-asked-questions#section-53267>

A new set of rules will apply in Wales from 9 November. <https://gov.wales/new-national-covid-measures-for-wales-first-minister-says-people-not-rules-are-key-to-our-response>
Under these, places of worship will be able to reopen and resume services.

Northern Ireland

New restrictions for the whole of Northern Ireland came into force on 16 October for four weeks. <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-regulations-guidance-what-restrictions-mean-you>

Places of worship can remain open. Religious activities can continue to take place in line with relevant guidance. There is no restriction on numbers attending religious activities, but a limit of 15 otherwise applies in places of worship (25 for weddings and funerals).

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The impact of COVID-19 on BAME communities

On 22 October the Government published the first quarterly report on progress to address the findings of Public Health England's (PHE) review into disparities in the risks and outcomes of COVID-19. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/quarterly-report-on-progress-to-address-covid-19-health-inequalities> This report summarises the work undertaken by the Minister for Equalities and government departments on COVID-19 disparities. The PHE review set out some of what was known at the time about COVID-19 and ethnicity. As there is a significant overlap between some ethnic groups and faith communities, IFN assisted PHE England on the stakeholder input process and this Review was highlighted at the time by IFN and a focus of discussion by its Faith Communities Forum. The Race Disparity Unit has been working collaboratively across government and with the Office for National Statistics, and is liaising with universities and researchers to build an evidence base and to get a better understanding of what is driving these disparities.

On 27 October the report was published of the Labour Party review, led by Baroness Doreen Lawrence, into the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities. <https://www.lawrencereview.co.uk/>

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COVID-19 and faith communities

One of the key roles of the Inter Faith Network for the UK is sharing information and good practice. Since the crisis began IFN has held monthly meetings of its Faith Communities

Forum and been regularly sharing faith and inter faith responses on social media and sending regular updates by email to its member bodies.

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/social-media>

It has also created a special section on its website about faith and inter faith responses.

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/covid-19>.

Festivals

The coming two months include a number of festivals and days of observance of different faith communities including Diwali and Bandi Chhor Diwas; the Martyrdom Of Guru Tegh Bahadur; Advent Sunday; the Birthday of Guru Nanak; Bodhi Day; Hanukah; the Winter Solstice/Yule; Christmas; and Zaratost no Diso.

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/religious-festivals>

The UK Government guidance on marking religious festivals during the pandemic is at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic-from-4-july/special-religious-services-and-gatherings-covid-19-checklist>. The new lockdown in England will affect more significantly than the previous restriction level the marking of those which fall from now until 2 December.

Faith communities continue to explore new ways to celebrate online and many local authorities, museums and other institutions are adding to this with online celebrations, specially themed programmes and exhibitions. For example, the city of Leicester's celebrations <https://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/news/leicester-news/citys-diwali-day-celebrations-go-4622137>, the fourth annual West Midlands Combined Authority and Indian Consulate, Birmingham Diwali celebration <https://www.wmca.org.uk/news/west-midlands-diwali-celebrations-go-online-this-year/>, an online celebration in Northampton, where residents are being invited to make their own lights to join in <https://www.northamptonchron.co.uk/whats-on/things-to-do/northampton-residents-encouraged-make-their-own-lights-display-virtual-diwali-festival-3015197>, digital Diwali in Edinburgh, <https://www.whatsoninedinburgh.co.uk/event/091912-digital-diwali-2020/>, 'Diwali online' at the National Maritime Museum <https://www.rmg.co.uk/see-do/exhibitions-events/diwali-festival-of-light>, and the University of Durham's Diwali Festival <https://www.dur.ac.uk/attractions/explorefromhome/festivals/faith/diwali/>.

Assistance to those in need

The National Emergency Trust (NET) has been raising and distributing funds to grassroots organisations during the pandemic. Details are at <https://nationalemergenciestrust.org.uk/coronavirus/>. NET is in the process of developing case studies of how funding is being used and is planning to share some of these as part of Inter Faith Week.

IFN's Assistant Director was invited to give a presentation to NET's Equity Security Group in October about the responses faith communities and inter faith bodies have made to the crisis.

Faith-based volunteering continues to be a vital resource for many in need at this time. Although shielding is not required during the new lockdown in England or under current restrictions in other nations, a number of initiatives are continuing to provide food to those in need – including through food banks and support of those.

For example, Darlington Gurdwara has been donating its large supply of foods and ingredients to Food For Thought Darlington, a volunteer run initiative which salvages food destined for the skip in order to provide hot meals for those in need across the community. <https://www.thenorthernecho.co.uk/news/18776726.darlington-sikh-gurdwara-donates-food-supplies-vulnerable-people> Telford and Wrekin Interfaith Council has been delivering food parcels, 70% of which have been delivered to members of the BAME community. The Council has also partnered with the Borough Council to provide breakfast to families whose children were in receipt of free school meals. <https://www.shropshirestar.com/news/local-hubs/telford/2020/09/15/telford-faith-councils-work-to-help-communities-during-lockdown> The BAPS mandir in Neasden, has been supporting its local community in Brent distributing food to those in need in partnership with Brent Youth People Thrive and Kilburn (Brent) COVID-19 Mutual Aid.

Government/faith community engagement

There continues to be a pattern of meetings by Government with individual faith communities in England (including recent faith community roundtables and a task force meeting) and with cross-faith groupings in Scotland and Wales.

There is also extensive engagement by local authorities with local faith groups and inter faith structures, for example the Essex Strategic Coordination Group (SCG) led by Essex Council established a Faith and Communities Working Group and Tower Hamlets Inter Faith Forum and the London Borough of Tower Hamlets held a joint workshop on what to do in an outbreak. <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/tower-hamlets-faith-and-covid-19-series-what-to-do-in-an-outbreak-tickets-117016801403>

The West Midlands Combined Authority is working with faith communities to create a new faith strategic partnership group which will work together and with the WMCA to respond to urgent challenges, including Covid-19 and its consequences. <https://www.wmca.org.uk/news/call-to-join-new-strategic-faith-partnership/>

Research projects

There are a number of academic projects exploring responses to the pandemic by communities and faith based organisations. For example, the University of Wolverhampton, Birmingham Voluntary Sector Council and Coventry University are working on behalf of the West Midlands Combined Authority to understand / capture the range of responses from the social economy sector including voluntary and community organisations, faith groups, mutual aid groups, neighbourhood groups and the social enterprises.

Financial impacts

Faith communities and inter faith organisations are among the many charity and voluntary organisations which continue to be impacted financially by the pandemic.

According to data collected as part of a new research project, *Respond, Recover, Reset: The Voluntary Sector and Covid-19*, led by Nottingham Trent University, the National Council for Voluntary Organisations and Sheffield Hallam University, the devastating financial impact of coronavirus has left nearly 40 per cent of charities and community groups in a worsening financial situation. <https://www.thirdsector.co.uk/covid-19-crisis-force-one-10-charities-close-within-year-research-warns/management/article/1698282> The difficulties are highlighted in a recent blog relating to the national lockdown in England by Karl Wilding, Chief Executive of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO). <https://blogs.ncvo.org.uk/2020/11/04/the-impact-of-a-second-lockdown/> The NCVO has a number of resources and guidance relating to the potential impacts of coronavirus on the operations of charities and voluntary organisations. <https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/coronavirus/contingency-planning-and-financial-implications>

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Remembrance Sunday

Around 10,000 people usually gather at the Cenotaph in London each year for the National Service of Remembrance and the two minute silence at 11am. This year, for the first time in history, the event will be closed to members of the public in line with the latest medical and scientific advice. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/public-asked-not-to-gather-at-the-cenotaph-for-remembrance-sunday-due-to-coronavirus>

Remembrance Sunday events will still be able to go ahead across the UK, but in line with restrictions in each of the nations. Updated guidance on this for England is now at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-preparations-for-remembrance-sunday/local-authority-preparations-for-remembrance-sunday>.

Information on holding Remembrance events in Scotland is at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-remembrance-2020/>. Information on holding Remembrance events in Wales is at <https://gov.wales/coronavirus-firebreak-frequently-asked-questions#section-53846>. Remembrance events are among the exemptions for gatherings in the highest tier areas of Northern Ireland. https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2020/1105/pdfs/uksi_20201105_en.pdf (Exception 14)

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EHRC report of Investigation into Antisemitism in the Labour Party

On 29 October the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) published the report of its investigation into Antisemitism in the Labour Party, which it began in May 2019. The EHRC says that the investigation “identified serious failings in the Labour Party leadership in addressing antisemitism and an inadequate process for handling antisemitism complaints. The Party is responsible for three breaches of the Equality Act (2010) relating to: political interference in antisemitism complaints; failure to provide adequate training to those handling antisemitism complaints; and harassment.”

The EHRC has said that, “despite some recent improvements, the Labour Party must do more if it is going to regain the trust of the Jewish community, the public and many of its members”. It has set out “clear, fair and achievable recommendations to help the Party make positive changes to its policies, processes and culture”.

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-work/news/investigation-antisemitism-labour-party-finds-unlawful-acts-discrimination-and>

The Labour Party has until 10 December to draft an action plan to implement the recommendations, which is legally enforceable by the court if not fulfilled.

The full report and recommendations can be found at

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/investigation-antisemitism-labour-party>.

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Terrorism

On 30 October a statement was issued on behalf of the Board and Moderators of the Faith Communities Forum, in the wake of recent terrorist attacks, including on 29 October at the Notre-Dame Basilica in Nice in France. <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/statement-following-recent-terrorist-attacks>

A police appeal to the public early in the lockdown, to take part in the Action Counters Terrorism (ACT) e-Learning course while working at home, has resulted in nearly 70,000 signing up to be ‘CT Citizens’. Overall half a million participants have signed up since the

course was launched two years ago. ACT Awareness can be found at <https://ct.highfieldelearning.com/>.

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Faith communities and safeguarding

Safeguarding in faith-based organisations during the COVID-19 crisis

In September the Social Care Institute for Excellence updated its guidance on 'Safeguarding in faith-based organisations during the COVID-19 crisis'.

<https://www.scie.org.uk/care-providers/coronavirus-covid-19/safeguarding/faith-based-organisations>

Safeguarding in out of school settings

On 21 October the Department for Education published guidance on keeping children safe in out of school settings which has relevance to faith communities.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/keeping-children-safe-in-out-of-school-settings>

The current rules on out of school settings, during the national lockdown in England, are at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/education-and-childcare-settings-new-national-restrictions-from-5-november-2020#ooss>.

IICSA inquiry

The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) is currently carrying out an investigation into child protection in religious organisations and settings. The investigation is thematic and has been reviewing the current child protection policies, practices and procedures in religious institutions that have a significant presence in England and Wales. Religions with a significant presence in England and Wales including "non conformist Christian denominations, the Jehovah's Witnesses, Baptists, Methodists, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism, Hinduism and Buddhism". Religious settings such as mosques, synagogues, churches and temples are in scope. Places of faith tuition such as Muslim madrassahs and Christian Sunday schools and places where children and young people gather in connection with their religious beliefs, including youth groups and camps have also been investigated by the Inquiry. The last one-week public hearing took place from 10 to 14 August. A report on the investigations is currently under preparation.

<https://www.iicsa.org.uk/investigation/child-protection-religious-organisations-and-settings>

On 6 October IICSA published a report on its investigation into child sexual abuse in the Anglican Church. The report, based on the Inquiry's public hearings held during July 2019, contains eight recommendations, directed to both the Church of England and the Church

in Wales, including a recommendation that the Church in England and Wales funds mandatory support for victims and survivors that takes into account their lifetime needs. <https://www.iicsa.org.uk/news/inquiry-report-finds-anglican-church-failed-protect-children-sexual-abuse> <https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/overview/iicsa>

IICSA is also currently concluding an investigation into the extent of any institutional failures to protect children from sexual abuse within the Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales. The report on that has been announced as due for publication on 10 November.

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Kruger report - *Levelling up our communities*

In June, the Prime Minister asked Mr Danny Kruger MP for “proposals to sustain the community spirit seen during the lockdown”. A report was developed by Mr Kruger across the summer, following a request by him for submissions. IFN’s Co-Chairs made, on behalf of its Board, a short, informational, submission based on relevant past discussions within IFN.

The report, *Levelling up our communities: proposals for a new social covenant*, was published on 24 September and can be found at <https://www.dannykruger.org.uk/communities-report>. As described by Mr Kruger, it “sets out a vision for a more local, more human, less bureaucratic, less centralised society in which people are supported and empowered to play an active role in their neighbourhoods.”

One section (pages 35-6) is given over to ‘A new deal with faith communities’. This includes the author’s views (a) on how faith groups can/should contribute to society; and (b) on faith communities and tolerance/intolerance. It also makes a recommendation that “the Government should invite the country’s faith leaders to make a grand offer of help on behalf of their communities, in exchange for a reciprocal commitment from the state.”

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Faith communities to receive funding to support the homeless

In October Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick announced a package of support for those who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. This includes £2 million for faith and community groups to help them provide secure accommodation for rough sleepers. Further information is at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/rough-sleepers-to-be-helped-to-keep-safe-this-winter>.

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Hate crime

England and Wales Hate Crime figures for 2019/20

On 13 October the Home Office released statistics about hate crime offences in 2019/20 recorded by the police in England and Wales and estimated by the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW).

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/925968/hate-crime-1920-hosb2920.pdf The total number of offences recorded by police increased overall year on year. There was a decline between March and May, when the UK was under a coronavirus lockdown but then an increase in June (up 34% to 6,697) and July (up about 17% to 6,677).

According to the release, “Religiously motivated hate crimes fell by five per cent, from 7,203 to 6,822, the first fall in these offences since 2012/13, when there was a one per cent fall”. Pages 10 to 12 of the release covers what are termed in the release ‘Religious Hate Crimes’. Where the perceived religion of the victim was recorded, half (50%) of religious hate crime offences in the year covered were targeted against Muslims (3,089 offences). The next most commonly targeted group were Jewish people, who were targeted in 19 per cent of religious hate crimes (1,205 offences). These proportions were similar to the previous year.

A concern that has in the past been raised by the Hindu, Jain and Sikh communities has been about how hate crimes are categorised when there is ‘mistaken identity’. Pages 10-11 of the report explain the current system, in operation since April 2016, whereby the Home Office collects information from the police on the perceived religion of victims of hate crime.

Law Commission and reform of hate crime laws

The Law Commission is making proposals to reform hate crime laws to remove the disparity in the way hate crime laws treat each protected characteristic – race, religion, sexual orientation, disability and transgender identity. The proposals are outlined in the consultation paper published on 23 September. The consultation closes on 24 December. <https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/reforms-to-hate-crime-laws-to-make-them-fairer-and-to-protect-women-for-the-first-time/>

Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill

A new Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill was introduced to the Scottish Parliament in April. <https://beta.parliament.scot/bills/hate-crime-and-public-order-scotland-bill> Stage 1 is due to be completed by 18 December. The Scottish government announced on 23 September that it would change the bill in a bid to ease some of the

concerns about its impact on freedom of speech. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-53580326>

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INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK NEWS

Inter Faith Week 2020

This year's Inter Faith Week www.interfaithweek.org takes place in England, Northern Ireland and Wales from Sunday 8 to Sunday 15 November. The aims of the Week are to:

- Strengthen good inter faith relations at all levels
- Increase awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, celebrating and building on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society
- Increase understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs

IFN's Co-Chairs Rt Revd Jonathan Clark and Narendra Waghela said:

“Inter Faith Week is a time when the spotlight is on the tremendous contribution that faith communities make to society and on work for inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. Work to build connections between people of different faiths and beliefs is enormously important, and at this time of COVID-19 finding new ways to make connections is vital.

We are delighted that hundreds of organisations will again be taking part: from faith communities and inter faith initiatives, to schools, colleges, universities, hospitals, hospices, national and local government, housing organisations, workplaces, the police and other emergency services, chaplaincies, museums and libraries, and many others.”

The Week begins each year on Remembrance Sunday to enable people of different backgrounds to remember together the service of soldiers and civilians of all faiths and beliefs and to reflect on peace. A dedicated page about this can be found at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/remembrance>.

This year, in the context of COVID-19, the majority of activities will be online and their organisers are taking advantage of this to broaden involvement yet further. There are also some socially distanced activities planned, in keeping with local and national restrictions, such as tree and bulb plantings, as well as activities taking place in schools, hospitals and other settings that remain open (the position differs in England, Northern and Ireland and Wales). The Inter Faith Network for the UK will be holding a round table virtual discussion about youth inter faith engagement on the first working day of the week. Details of activities can be found at www.interfaithweek.org/list and, once the Week begins, lists of all activities taking place on a particular day can be found at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/events/day>.

Event organisers holding activities which are not online are reminded to follow with care the relevant guidelines for their nation.

A press release about the Week issued on 2 November is at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/news/press-release-inter-faith-week-2020-begins-this-sunday-8-november> and an accompanying taster of events can be seen at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/news/a-taster-of-activities-being-held-for-inter-faith-week-2020-8-15-november>.

To keep updated on what is happening during Inter Faith Week, please search for the hashtag #InterFaithWeek and follow the Inter Faith Week accounts on social media:

- www.facebook.com/ifweek
- www.twitter.com/ifweek
- www.instagram.com/ifweek

You can also subscribe to the Inter Faith Week mailing list at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/news/mailling-list-sign-up> to ensure you receive updates and press releases about the Week directly.

IFN leads on the Week, in consultation with the Inter Faith Council for Wales and Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum in relation to the Week in their respective nations, and provides a dedicated website at: www.interfaithweek.org Scottish Interfaith Week takes place at the same time and Interfaith Scotland leads on that: <http://scottishinterfaithweek.org/>

Scottish Inter Faith Week, which has been led by Interfaith Scotland since 2004, takes place on the same dates. Its theme this year is 'Connecting'. More information about the Week in Scotland, and activities taking place, can be found at <http://scottishinterfaithweek.org/> or by searching the hashtags #SIFW2020 and #keeponconnecting. The social media channels are <https://www.facebook.com/FollowSIFW>, <https://twitter.com/SIFWEvents> and <https://www.instagram.com/sifwevents/>.

For further information about Inter Faith Week, contact the Inter Faith Week team at ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

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Meeting of IFN Faith Communities Forum

A meeting of IFN's Faith Communities Forum was held on 21 October. The agenda included items on: COVID-19 matters (Places of worship, Financial impact on places of worship and faith institutions, Government/faith community engagement, Response to

needs during the pandemic); the Kruger report: *Levelling up our communities: proposals for a new social covenant*; Safeguarding at a time of COVID, with a presentation by a Senior Practice Development Manager of the Social Care Institute for Excellence; Hate Crime; Other current issues of interest or concern to faith communities; and Inter Faith Week.

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IFN meetings for local inter faith groups

IFN holds meetings for local inter faith groups to share news and good practice and learn from each other's work to strengthen their own and benefit their local areas. Some are for groups from across the UK. Others are for groups within a particular region or a county.

The most recent link meeting, which was for local inter faith organisations in the West Midlands region, was held virtually on 22 October. It began with a short overview of IFN and its work relating to COVID-19 from the Executive Director and then included sharing of news or programmes and projects being run by each group, including opportunities and challenges, and plans and ideas for marking Inter Faith Week.

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

Faith for the Climate capacity-building work with smaller faith communities

For the next phase of a capacity-building project funded by Religions For Peace (UK), Faith for the Climate (FFTC) will be working with the newly-formed Hindu Climate Action (HCA). HCA has developed Facebook and Instagram accounts, is welcoming sign-ups to its mailing list, and is working on a website which will host resources for Hindu organisations and the wider community. EcoSikh UK is also seeking new contacts to sign up to its monthly newsletter. FFTC's Muslim partner, the Bahu Trust, has met with the chair of the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board (MINAB), to discuss engaging mosques, imams and young Muslims in climate action. The Network of Buddhist Organisation's Eco-Dharma project has been hosting monthly workshops in conjunction with the Jamyang Buddhist Centre Leeds. <https://www.faithfortheclimate.org.uk/>

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Little Squares of Hope

The 'Little Squares of Hope: Shelter from Storm' project, is an initiative which was launched by The Council of Christians and Jews in commemoration of Sukkot, the Jewish festival marking the 40-year post exodus period of displacement. In partnership with the Jewish Museum, the project is creatively exploring the contemporary significance of shelter through art, which has been created by refugee and faith communities across the UK. <https://jewishmuseum.org.uk/little-squares-of-hope/>

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Foundation Stones national memorial

Foundation Stones is inviting people to paint a stone to contribute to a memorial for the six million Jewish men, women and children murdered in the Holocaust and all other victims of Nazi persecution. Foundation Stones builds on the Jewish tradition of laying small stones on graves and those painting a stone are making a commitment to remember the past and to build a future free from all forms of hatred. Stones can also be dedicated to victims of subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur. Every stone painted will become part of the new UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre in London when it is built.

Inter faith groups wishing to get involved can email foundationstones@big-ideas.org to be sent a free resource. For more information, visit <https://www.big-ideas.org>.

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Study of new relationships between local authorities and faith groups

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Faith and Society has commissioned the Faiths and Civil Society Unit at Goldsmiths, University of London, to conduct a study to explore the extent and nature of new relationships between local authorities and faith groups. It will also investigate how and why these relationships have come about, how they have worked in practice, and what their implications might be for local authorities, communities, and faith groups themselves. For more information, contact FaithAction, which acts as Secretariat to the APPG on Faith and Society, at assistant@faithaction.net.

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Roundtable discussions on Cohesive Societies: Faith and Belief

The Faith & Belief Forum is hosting a series of roundtable discussions in November and December on the findings of *Cohesive Societies: Faith and Belief* by Madeline Pennington. The report is available at <https://faithbeliefforum.org/report>. The discussions will bring together practitioners, local authorities, and faith and belief groups to explore the impact of the faith and belief sector on social cohesion at a local level.

For further information on this event and the later roundtables, email Jessica Hazrati at jessica@faithbeliefforum.org.

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Worldviews in Religious Education

Theos, the Christian based think tank, with Canterbury Christchurch University, has published a report by Professor Trevor Cooling, with Dr Bob Bowie and Dr Farid Panjwani, on Worldviews in Religious Education, exploring and developing the recommendation by the Commission on Religious Education (CoRE – <https://www.commissiononre.org.uk/>) that RE in England’s schools should include an exploration of worldviews as well as religion. The report can be found at <https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/research/2020/10/21/worldviews-in-religious-education>.

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

Skills for Dialogue lesson plans

The Faith & Belief Forum has launched a suite of lesson plans with accompanying films, presentations and worksheets for KS3 on ‘Skills for Dialogue’. Further information, including the lesson plans, can be found at <https://faithbeliefforum.org/resources/school-ks3-lesson-plans/>.

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Report on Minority communities in the time of Covid and Protest

A report by the Hope Not Hate Charitable Trust on ‘Minority communities in the time of Covid and Protest: A Study of BAME Opinion’ explores the diversity of opinion within Britain’s ethnic minority communities at the present time. The survey, conducted by HOPE not hate Charitable Trust and the Joseph Rowntree Trust looked at opinion on a range of social and personal issues from Black Lives Matter protests, debates over statues and historical racism, the effects of Covid-19, views on policing, intercommunity relations, identity and more. The report can be downloaded at <https://www.hopenothate.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/BAME-report-2020-08-v3-00000003.pdf>.

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Hate crime and security training and workshops

A number of organisations run training and workshops relating to hate crime and security, such as Strengthening Faith Institutions and the Community Security Trust. The latter’s ‘Safe’ project will be running a number of workshops during Inter Faith Week. Links to these can be found on the Inter Faith Week website: www.interfaithweek.org

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Bridging the Great Divide: the Jewish-Muslim Encounter

Bookings are now open for the Woolf Institute's online course on 'Bridging the Great Divide: the Jewish-Muslim Encounter'. This 15-week course, will explore the history, culture and theology of Muslims and Jews, reflecting both on similarities and differences as well as discussing the major challenges. It runs from 11 January to 25 April and there is a fee to attend, with bursaries available. The deadline for applications is 13 December. For more information, visit <https://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/study/online-courses/bridging-the-great-divide-the-jewish-muslim-encounter>.

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Community reconciliation training for emerging faith leaders

St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace is facilitating a 6 month community reconciliation training course (from February to July 2021) for 20 emerging faith leaders. The course, called Journey of Hope, is being run in partnership with faith based peace & reconciliation centers in the UK & Ireland. Its aim is to "equip faith leaders to creatively and courageously respond to issues of crisis and conflict in their communities, cultivating a more relational and resilient society". Paid and bursary places are available. The deadline for applications is 31 December. For more information and to register an interest, visit www.reconcilerstogether.co.uk.

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MPA in Faith-Based Leadership

Applications are open for the Masters in Public Administration in Faith-Based Leadership at the University of Birmingham. It is understood that there is some Government funding available to partly cover tuition fees for the December 2020 entry only. For more information, visit <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/postgraduate/courses/taught/thr/mpa-faith-based-leadership.aspx>.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS, AND NOMINATIONS

Greater Manchester essay competition

The Muslim Jewish Forum of Greater Manchester is holding an essay competition to honour the memory of Abdol Hossein Sardari, an Iranian diplomat who risked his career by disobeying orders to save the lives of many Jews during the Holocaust. The essay must tackle the question: "What makes people become perpetrators or rescuers in a conflict or genocide?" The competition is open to children aged 7 to 11 in Greater Manchester. The prize is £100 plus the choice of one of a selection of special experiences: spend an

afternoon with a Member of Parliament; spend an afternoon with a world-famous novelist; or receive a personal a tour of a Town Hall in Greater Manchester with an elected Councillor. The deadline for entries is 15 December. For full details, visit <https://www.muslimjewish.org.uk/Past-events/Sardari-essay-competition-2020.html>.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

Inter Faith Network for the UK - Volunteers

The Inter Faith Network for the UK currently has some opportunities for online volunteers who would like to offer 4-8 hours a week to help on different aspects of IFN's work to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. To express an interest in volunteering, please complete the application form at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/volunteering>.

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Inter Faith Network for the UK - Internships

From time to time IFN has paid internships and 'mini internships' which give a chance for learning new skills and contributing to inter faith understanding and cooperation. These are listed at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/jobs>.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

COVID-19 funding

The Charities Aid Foundation has collated a helpful list of organisations which are supporting charities and voluntary groups at this time. <https://www.cafonline.org/covid-19-support/help-for-charities#tab1>

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Interfaith Scotland grants for places of worship

Interfaith Scotland is offering funds of up to £500 to places of worship that are struggling to meet the safety requirements of re-opening their buildings and safely holding services (within the Government Guidelines). With discretion, the funds can also be used to assist in keeping open places that have managed their initial outlay with regard to safely reopening their place of worship but are now struggling to keep up the measures required to stay open. The funding criteria for areas of support is primarily so that religious buildings can re-open safely and stay open during this critical stage in the pandemic and

that places of worship remain connected to those that are still too vulnerable to come to places of worship. For more information, email frances@interfaithscotland.org.

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Near Neighbours small grants programme

The Near Neighbours small grants programme is funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and administered by the Church Urban Fund. It is currently offering small grants of between £250 and £3,000 as seed funding for local groups and organisations working in a number of areas of England to bring together neighbours, and to develop relationships across diverse faiths and ethnicities to improve their communities. To be eligible, projects should meet the following criteria: bringing people together, working locally, working sustainably, committing to diversity, and improving the community.

This year there are two application forms: a simpler form for ‘micro grants’ up to £1,000 and another for projects between £1,000 and £3,000. For more information, visit <https://www.near-neighbours.org.uk/small-grants>.

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FCC Community Action Fund

The FCC Communities Foundation is offering grants between £2,000 and £100,000 for projects which involve the provision, maintenance or improvement of public amenities including community spaces in places of worship, which are registered charities. Projects must be based within 10 miles of an eligible FCC Environment waste facility. The current round closes on 2 December. For more information, visit

<https://fcccommunitiesfoundation.org.uk/funds/fcc-community-action-fund>.

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Windrush Compensation Scheme

The Windrush Compensation Scheme is open to those who settled in the UK from a Commonwealth country before 1973, and in certain circumstances their children and grandchildren. Claim forms can be downloaded and guidance on completing the application can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/windrush-compensation-scheme>. Claimants can also request a form to be sent by post by calling the helpline on 0800 678 1925 or via email WindrushCompensationScheme@homeoffice.gov.uk where they can also request a call back if they are overseas.

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Faith in Community Scotland

Faith in Community Scotland is an anti-poverty charity founded in 2005. They support individuals and faith groups in Scotland's poorest neighbourhoods to achieve the difference that they are capable of. They do this through training, resources and funding which helps to build people's skill and to increase their confidence. It has a small grants programme which has distributed over £1 million over the past ten years to urban and rural faith groups tackling poverty. For more information about eligibility and how to apply for a grant, including the next application deadline date, email andrew@faithincommunity.scot.

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Veolia Environmental Trust community funding

The Veolia Environmental Trust is now accepting applications for projects that will start between 22 March and 23 June. Not-for-profit organisations can apply for funding for environmental or community-based projects that are located within five miles of an operating Veolia site in England. The closing date for Stage 1 Application Forms is 3 December. For more information, visit <https://www.veoliatrust.org/funding/>.

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Funding websites

Funding Central <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk>, supported by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, is a free website for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises in England. It provides access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, together with tools and resources to develop sustainable income strategies. Similar websites for funding in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at Funding Scotland - <http://www.fundingscotland.com/> - Wales Council for Voluntary Action - <http://www.wcva.org.uk/funding/search> - and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland - <https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

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Subsidised fundraising workshops

The Foundation for Social Improvement offers subsidised training programmes for small charities across the UK. The courses cover a wide range of subjects from event planning to leadership. Many of the courses focus on fundraising and sustainability skills in particular. Further information and dates for upcoming courses, now being held online, can be found at <http://www.thefsi.org/services/training>.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Inter Faith Week will be from Sunday 8 to Sunday 15 November. www.interfaithweek.org

Scottish Interfaith Week will be from Sunday 8 to Sunday 15 November. Scottish Interfaith Week is led by Interfaith Scotland. Its theme is 'Connecting'.
www.scottishinterfaithweek.org

Mitzvah Day will be on Sunday 15 November. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Jewish community where people give their time to make a difference to the community around them. Many events and projects held for the day have an inter faith focus. www.mitzvahday.org.uk/

Holocaust Memorial Day takes place on 27 January. Its theme in 2021 is 'Be the Light in the Darkness'. Holocaust Memorial Day is the day for everyone to remember the millions of people murdered in the Holocaust, under Nazi Persecution, and in the genocides which followed in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur. It honours the survivors of these regimes and challenges everyone to use the lessons of their experience to inform their lives today. www.hmd.org.uk/

World Interfaith Harmony Week takes place from 1 to 7 February. It is a UN recognised Week which was proposed to the UN General Assembly by HM King Abdullah of Jordan. The first UN World Interfaith Harmony Week took place in February 2011.
<http://worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com>

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SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK TO INCREASE INTER FAITH UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION

Earlier this year an Appeal was launched <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/donate> to support and strengthen IFN's work for inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. Thank you so much to those who have already kindly contributed through this or through a different route. If you have not, but appreciate this e-bulletin and the work of IFN and would like to do so, that would be most welcome.

Gifts at all levels are much valued and make a real difference. You can donate directly at www.interfaith.org.uk/donate which includes credit card and PayPal options.

Donations can also be made by sending a cheque payable to 'The Inter Faith Network' to: The Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH.

Thank you!

REMEMBERING A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND

If you would like to make a gift in memory of a loved one, please get in touch by emailing remember@interfaith.org.uk or call us on 0207 730 0410.

A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

By leaving a gift in your will to the Inter Faith Network for the UK, you can leave a living inheritance to help deepen and strengthen inter faith understanding and cooperation in this country – for now and for the future. If you are thinking about making a will, the best thing to do is to get in touch with a professional will writer, such as a solicitor or advocate; they can help to ensure it is legally correct and that your wishes are met. If you have already made a will, you can still make an addition or amendment in the form of a codicil. If you would like to pledge a gift, please provide our name and address, along with our registered charity number 1068934.

Please get in touch with us if you have any queries.

You can call us on 0207 730 0410 or contact us at remember@interfaith.org.uk

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DIARY DATES

In light of COVID-19 many events have had to be cancelled or postponed. Some events are instead taking place online. A few examples of forthcoming events are listed below. Events are also listed on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/events>.

Inter Faith Week 8 to 15 November

Inter Faith Week event listings can be found at www.interfaithweek.org.

South East England Faiths Forum is holding its AGM on Monday 16 November. This will be held at 1.30pm using Zoom. For more information, contact Kawther.Hashmi@cofeguildford.org.uk.

The **Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham Commission on Interreligious Dialogue** is holding a series of virtual meetings promoting dialogue, listening and sharing among people of different faiths in the West Midlands. The series is called 'Dare to Hope' and will be looking at 'What gives hope to people of faith & how do they cope with the challenges of the covid-19 crisis?' The next meetings are being held on Thursday 12, Thursday 19 and Thursday 26 November from 7.30pm to 8.45pm. To register, email interreligdialogue@rcaob.org.uk.

Faiths Forum for London and **Faiths United Youth Network** are holding a webinar on Thursday 19 November about the plight of the Uyghur Muslims and what UK citizens can do to help. For more information and to register, visit https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_c7EOotVcTZCBw7CJkOLxsQ.

Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship is holding the first in a series of meetings on Holy Places on Monday 23 November. This will be on 'Holy Places in Paganism', with an illustrated presentation by Jay Anderson. It is being held at 7.30pm on Zoom. For more information, contact chair@concord-leeds.org.uk.

Maidstone Inter-Faith Network is holding its AGM on Monday 30 November. It is being held by Zoom at 7.30pm. For more information, visit www.mifn.org.uk.

Council of Christians and Jews and **Churches Together in Britain and Ireland** are holding an event on Thursday 3 December on 'Race and Jewish-Christian relations'. Richard Reddie from CTBI speaking on what he learned on the CCJ Yad Vashem study tour and how it could be fruitfully applied to remembering the transatlantic slave trade. Historian Robert Bieber from CCJ Southwest London and Dittons will consider the significance of Black British history in Jewish perspective. Discussion leaders will include Dionne Gravesande, Senior Ecumenical Relations Manager for Christian Aid; Revd Canon Dr Rosemarie Mallet, Archdeacon of Croydon; and others. To register, email cjrelations@ccj.org.uk.

InterFaith Wolverhampton is holding its AGM online on Thursday 10 December. This meeting will hear of the work of InterFaith over the last year, receive the financial statements and trustees report as well as conducting elections. It will take place on Zoom at 7pm. For further information, contact admin@ifwton.org.uk.

More information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org.uk

IFN also carries news and information at www.twitter.com/IFNetUK and, about Inter Faith Week, at <https://twitter.com/IFweek> and www.facebook.com/IFWeek.

You can sign up to IFN mailings at any time by using the form on IFN's website at: www.interfaith.org.uk/news/gdpr or let us know that you would like to unsubscribe by using the links at the bottom of the cover email.

Submissions for next issue

If you have items about projects or future events which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk **by 1 December** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer: Information in this e-bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH
www.interfaith.org.uk www.facebook.com/IFNetUK www.twitter.com/IFNetUK

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IFN e-bulletin

December 2020

Welcome to the e-bulletin of the Inter Faith Network for the UK www.interfaith.org.uk
It is published every two months and it highlights primarily new developments, projects and future events. You can read by scrolling through or you can go directly to an individual section or item by clicking on the 'Read more' link in the Sections and Contents lists below.

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

UK/national response to COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

UK Government information on COVID-19 is at: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
The NHS guidance can be found at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>.

Advice is available on the following websites in the devolved nations:

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus>

<https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus>

<https://gov.wales/coronavirus>

<https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/>

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COVID-19 – faith community and inter faith responses

Faith communities continue to play a tremendously important role in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, both in relation to the wellbeing of their members but also to wider society: adapting their worship, pastoral and community engagement as necessary for safety and contributing through provision of advice and guidance to development of UK, national and local responses to the pandemic. <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/covid-19>

From the beginning of the pandemic, there have been many initiatives to reach out to help those in need. Some of these can be seen at: <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/covid-19-acts-of-kindness-and-service>. Just a few recently highlighted by IFN on social media are the Khidmat Centres in Bradford delivering Christmas lunch to elderly Christian neighbours <https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1339125052210601985>; Midland Langar Seva Society helping communities in Corby and Kettering <https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1338830930975338499>; and Sewa Day, with West Bridgford Helpers at West Bridgford Methodist Church providing seasonal cheer to those in need <https://twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1338764015317684227> and BAPS volunteers delivering provisions to a local Leicester Foodbank <https://www.facebook.com/ifnetuk/posts/3685951591455389>. Faith groups are also helping in many other kinds of ways.

Inter Faith Week, on which there is a report [below](#), saw a wide range of COVID- related dialogues and practical projects. These can be seen at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/events/calendar/covid/>.

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COVID-19 restrictions during Christmas and forthcoming period

Restrictions

Across the UK Christmas bubble arrangements have now been limited to one day only. A brief update on restrictions in each nation is below.

A rapid rise in cases of Coronavirus led to announcement on 18 December of tougher restrictions in England. A large number of areas moved on 20 December into higher tiers, including a new Tier 4. The full list of the tiers can be seen at <https://www.gov.uk/find-coronavirus-local-restrictions> and guidance on Christmas bubbling at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/making-a-christmas-bubble-with-friends-and-family/making-a-christmas-bubble-with-friends-and-family>.

The Scottish Government announced on 19 December that mainland Scotland will go into Tier 4 lockdown from 26 December. Information on the Tier levels is at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-protection-levels/> and on Christmas bubbling at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-festive-period/>.

The Welsh Government announced on 19 December that Tier 4 restrictions would be in place across Wales from 20 December. <https://gov.wales/written-statement-alert-level-four-restrictions> Information on Christmas bubbling is at <https://gov.wales/making-christmas-bubble-friends-and-family>.

Northern Ireland begins a 6 week lock down on 26 December. <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-regulations-guidance-what-restrictions-mean-you> Information on Christmas bubbling is at <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-regulations-guidance-restrictions-christmas>.

Places of worship

Places of worship may remain open for communal worship in all tiers in England <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-restriction-tiers-what-you-need-to-know>; in Wales under Tier 4 <https://gov.wales/alert-level-4-frequently-asked-questions#section-58346>; and in Northern Ireland after it enters lockdown <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-regulations-guidance-what-restrictions-mean-you>. In Scotland communal worship may continue but indoor and outdoor acts of worship will be limited to a maximum of 20 people. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-protection-levels/pages/protection-level-4/>

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Vaccines and faith communities

A number of vaccines have now been authorised for COVID-19 and vaccinations began earlier this month in the UK with the Pfizer. The order in which people will be offered the vaccine is based on advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI). <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/priority-groups-for-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-advice-from-the-jcvi-2-december-2020/priority-groups-for-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-advice-from-the-jcvi-2-december-2020>

Law and Religion UK notes that the start of COVID-19 vaccination has brought into focus the ethical issues associated with the production of the vaccine. It provides a summary of the position of a number of faith organisations and a recent analysis of the evidence by FactCheckNI.

<https://lawandreligionuk.com/2020/12/16/vaccines-and-religion/#more-62378>

The Royal College of Nursing includes places of worship among spaces that may be used for vaccination [Immunisation services and large-scale vaccination delivery during COVID-19 | Public Health | Royal College of Nursing \(rcn.org.uk\)](#)

An example of guidance from one faith community can be seen at [COVID 19 Churches as vaccination centres v1.0.pdf \(churchofengland.org\)](#) and <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/dec/12/church-of-england-gives-space-for-covid-vaccination-and-testing-for-up-to-a-year>.

Mitigating inequalities is one of the considerations being taken into account in deciding on priority groups for vaccination. The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation notes that “Good vaccine coverage in BAME groups will be the most important factor within a vaccine programme in reducing inequalities for this group”.

A new poll from the Royal Society of Public Health showed 57% of respondents from Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds (199 respondents) were likely to accept a COVID-19 vaccine, compared to 79% of White respondents. Confidence was lowest among respondents of Asian ethnicity, of whom 55% were likely to say yes.

<https://www.rsph.org.uk/about-us/news/new-poll-finds-bame-groups-less-likely-to-want-covid-vaccine.html>

Religious leaders are among those being enlisted by the NHS to encourage vaccinations and testing. Bradford Royal Infirmary, for example, is working with religious leaders to encourage people in the community to have vaccinations

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/nov/29/nhs-enlist-sensible-celebrities-coronavirus-vaccine-take-up>

Elsewhere, faith groups in Wolverhampton including Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara, local leaders from the Catholic Church and Church of England, local Muslim faith leaders, and Oasis of Love International Church, came together to support a

testing pilot at the gurdwara

<https://vimeo.com/lskproductions/review/489389286/56ed8d4076>.

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Exiting the EU and faith communities

On 31 January this year the UK formally left the EU. The transition period for the withdrawal ends on 31 December.

IFN's note on 'Exiting the EU – the important role of faith communities at a time of transition' <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/leaving-the-eu-the-important-role-of-faith-communities-at-a-time-of-transition> contains material about faith communities' vital work to unite communities, promote good relations and tackle hatred. This has continuing relevance at this time, as the UK approaches the final stages of engagement over a trade deal. The information relating to practicalities of EU exit should be sourced from the most up to date information at www.gov.uk/transition.

When free movement ends on 31 December religious communities that have relied on members from the European Union to fill temporary posts will be affected.

[Tier 5 Temporary Worker casework guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/544444/tier-5-temporary-worker-casework-guidance)

<https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2020/4-december/news/uk/religious-communities-should-prepare-for-brexit-says-lawyer>

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2021 Census

The 2021 Census in March will be carried out primarily online. The Office for National Statistics (ONS), which carries out the Census in England and Wales, is keen to encourage as many community groups as possible, including faith communities, to share information about the importance of the Census and the different ways that this can be completed.

Regional contacts at the ONS have been contacting some local inter faith organisations about this. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/takingpartinandsupportingthecensus>

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Hate Crime

In late November West Mercia Police launched a hate crime investigation after a Sikh boy was attacked on the way home from a Telford school by other pupils.

Government figures show that 117 hate crimes were recorded against Sikhs in 2017-18 compared to 202 in 2019-20. <https://news.sky.com/story/anti-sikh-hate-crimes-reported-across-britain-rise-by-70-in-two-years-12151620>

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**THE INTER FAITH NETWORK
COME TOGETHER APPEAL**
www.interfaith.org.uk/appeal

Dear readers,

We write to you at the end of an extraordinary year. Here, and around the world, the pandemic has changed all our lives – making it both harder and yet even more vital to come together.

Coronavirus has been a challenge to which faith communities have risen with enormous energy and commitment – including reaching out to help many in need. People of different faiths have volunteered side by side in a number of areas.

The Inter Faith Network has played a key part in supporting and encouraging faith-based initiatives sharing good practice, and enabling grassroots inter faith interaction to develop strongly online, adapting to continue to build positive relationships and foster cooperation for the common good. It has also continued to enable national faith community bodies to come together through its Faith Communities Forum discuss how they are responding to COVID but also to so many other issues which continue to be of interest and concern, from hate crime to establishing new dialogues.

Please help us take forward and strengthen our vital work for inter faith understanding and cooperation with a donation.

We thank you for considering this Appeal and for such kind support as you are able to give. It will be used with care to make a real difference.

Best wishes, Bishop Jonathan Clark and Narendra Waghela
Co-Chairs, Inter Faith Network for the UK

Donations can be made at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/appeal> (by card or PayPal); by sending a cheque to: the Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH; or by BACS - CAF Bank Ltd; Sort Code: 40-52-40; Acc No: 00019472

INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK NEWS

Inter Faith Week 2020

Inter Faith Week took place from Sunday 8 to Sunday 15 November. Despite the challenges of COVID, well over 600 events took place; the social media reach was significantly higher; the number and breadth of types of organisation messaging about the Week increased; digital forms of engagement enabled wider participation; and schools continued to embrace the Week with enthusiasm and creativity. Some towns and cities such as Birmingham, Kendal, Kirklees, Preston, Swansea, Swindon and York saw wide-ranging programmes of activities throughout the week.

In-person activities took place in schools, colleges, universities, hospitals, hospices and other settings that remained open during lockdown/ tiered restrictions. The Week was, however, as anticipated, a predominantly virtual one.

Inter Faith Week messages from faith leaders and Government

Following discussion by the Faith Communities' Forum, faith community leaders/ bodies were invited to put out messages and reflections linked to the Week. A significant number of IFN member faith community body leaders did so, as did the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Chief Rabbi and the leaders of the Reform, and Masorti movements of Judaism which further strengthened the Week's online reach and contributed to the positive online 'buzz'. The reflections/ messages can be seen at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/news/reflections-from-faith-communities>.

Messages of support were issued from the UK Government's Faith Minister; the Deputy Minister in the Welsh Government; the Mayors of London and the West Midlands; as well as numerous MPs, other mayors and councillors. The First Minister of Scotland released a special video message for Scottish Interfaith Week.

IFN youth inter faith roundtable

IFN's main role in Inter Faith Week is supporting activities of others. It also this year held a by invitation Zoom meeting on 9 November for a number of youth inter faith initiatives to talk about their work and discuss the significance of youth inter faith engagement for the future of the UK. The focus of this significant discussion was on activities involving, and in some cases run by, young people in approximately the 16-25 age range.

Inter Faith Week Buddies

IFN also instigated an 'Inter Faith Week Buddies' scheme. This involved two people of different faiths or of a particular faith and of a non-religious belief keeping in touch on a

regular basis in the weeks leading up to Inter Faith Week; choosing or developing questions on which to share their thoughts and experiences; and during Inter Faith Week, sharing online or at a socially distanced event, in an agreed way, some reflections on what they had gained from this. A number of organisations took this up, such as Cornwall Faith Forum which said in its latest newsletter: "Everyone said that they learned a lot and really appreciated the rare opportunity to ask personal questions in a safe environment." <https://dorkemmyrn.org.uk/feedback-from-interfaith-week-2020/>

Feedback on the Week

A feedback survey was sent to event organisers, and put on the website and social media. An interesting fact emerging from responses so far is the high number of respondents who have indicated that they are likely to incorporate an online element into future activities (eg through live streaming in-person events) due to their positive experience this year.

If you held an Inter Faith Week activity, and have not yet responded but would like to, the survey remains live at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/events/about/give-feedback-on-2020>.

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Meeting of IFN Faith Communities Forum

A meeting of IFN's Faith Communities Forum was held on 2 December. The agenda included items on: COVID-19 matters (Current restrictions, Places of worship and communal worship and 'Building back'); Inter Faith Week; Government engagement with faith communities, with a presentation by Colin Bloom, the UK Government's Faith Engagement Adviser at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government; and other current issues of interest or concern to faith communities, including hate crime.

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Webinar on Using Zoom Effectively

On 15 December IFN held a webinar for local inter faith organisations on Using Zoom Effectively. This drew on the experience of some involved with local groups who have been using Zoom this year to keep connected, including during Inter Faith Week. Contributors included: Ashley Beck, Inter Faith Development Officer, IFN; Patricia Findlay, Chair, and Madhav Regmi, member, of Aberdeen Inter Faith Group; Cllr Afrasiab Anwar MBE, Chair, Building Bridges in Burnley; and David Vane, Secretary, Southampton Council of Faiths. There were also reflections from Jay Anderson and Esmond Rosen, IFN Trustees from the local inter faith organisations membership category. Speakers discussed a number of topics, including: Key features of Zoom and frequently asked questions; Using Zoom for open/ public activities; and Using Zoom for organisational outreach and meetings.

IFN is also making available during December and January a number of digital ‘surgery’ slots for local inter faith groups. These are 20 minutes slots for IFN member local inter faith groups to ring and have a conversation about their group’s use of digital communications and how they strengthen this. There are also some spaces available for other local inter faith groups; there is no charge for non-members, however a donation is welcome.

Any local inter faith group interested in booking a slot can email Ashley Beck via ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

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IFN link meetings for local inter faith groups

IFN holds meetings for local inter faith groups to share news and good practice and learn from each other’s work to strengthen their own and benefit their local areas. Some are for groups from across the UK. Others are for groups within a particular region or a county.

The most recent link meeting, which was for local inter faith organisations in the East of England region, was held virtually on 27 November. It began with a short overview of IFN and its work relating to COVID-19 from IFN’s Executive Director and then included discussion of Inter Faith Week and sharing of news or programmes and projects being run by each group, including opportunities and challenges.

The next regional link meeting planned is for Greater London in January. Earlier this year links took place for groups in Preston (for the North West area of England) and Maidstone (for Kent). Since then IFN has held virtual link meetings for local groups in England in the East; East Midlands; North East; South West; and West Midlands.

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National Faith Community Representative Body profiles

During November and December IFN ran a Facebook series highlighting the inter faith activity of its member National Faith Community Representative Bodies with a short profile post and photograph about each. A link to each post has been tweeted. These can be seen at www.facebook.com/ifnetuk and www.twitter.com/ifnetuk. The series highlights the inter faith engagement of these bodies and also the breadth of IFN’s membership in this category.

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

Faith leaders' statement on Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

On 22 January the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons enters into international law. The Joint Public Issues Team of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Church of Scotland, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church is working towards marking the occasion, by involving inter faith leaders in Great Britain in a joint statement, and by producing a short video which includes all the faith leaders reading the statement, for sharing on social media and by their own communications teams as appropriate.

Videos are being collected by 24 December and the joint statement will be signed by 4 January. For more information, contact Roo Stewart at roo.stewart@urc.org.uk or on 020 7916 8632.

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Flickers of Hope

This Advent and Chanukah the Council of Christians and Jews has been running a new project called 'Flickers of Hope' which seeks "to use craft and art to raise awareness of social injustice, and in turn catalyse change". It is inviting people to create their own hanging flame decoration, and include a key call to action, for example on climate change or food poverty. Participants are invited to hang up their flames and post photos of them on social media with the hashtag #FlickersOfHope. For further information, or for a Flickers of Hope workshop guide, email esther.sills@ccj.org.uk.

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Festivals of Light - Newcastle

Each year Newcastle Council of Faiths (NCF) helps to support a Festivals of Light event. This year it will be taking place differently but will still be bringing some light to 80 families and over 150 children who are either asylum seekers, refugees or destitute families. NCF will be delivering to each family a gift of chocolates, a goodie bag containing arts and crafts, including cards from the major faiths depicting their festival of lights and a selection box for each child. A sponsor is paying for take away food for each family and the Bahr Academy has offered to make the food for the families. For more information, contact Lesley Hillary at l.hillary@newcastle.anglican.org.

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The Great Winter Get Together

The Great Winter Get Together began on 14 December and ends on 18 January. It aims to build connections during what is already a lonely time of year for many. There is a

different theme during each of the five weeks, suggesting different ways to connect: Say thanks, Reach out, Show you care, Understand loneliness and Help out. For more information, visit https://www.greatgettogether.org/winter_get_together.

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Faith and Belief Forum new community project

The Faith and Belief Forum is launching a new community project in two regions – Barking & Dagenham, and Birmingham. The project, funded by the MHCLG Faith, Race and Hate Crime Grants Scheme, will pair up local faith-based organisations for friendship-building and dialogue through a series of interactive, facilitated online events in early 2021.

<https://faithbeliefforum.org/get-involved-in-new-community-project-in-barking-dagenham-and-birmingham> It would be pleased to hear from people who are part of a faith or community group in either region. For more information, contact christiana.amao@faithbeliefforum.org about Barking and Dagenham and anna.lockley-scott@faithbeliefforum.org about Birmingham.

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Building Bridges Pendle poetry competition song

Earlier this year Building Bridges Pendle ran a poetry competition on the theme of 'Living in Hope'. People were invited to write and express their feelings, emotions and experiences during the covid-19 pandemic and national lockdowns. The aim was to produce material which most people can relate and connect to and be used as a message of hope. The winning poem, Human Touch, by Hilary Walker has now been turned into a song. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HDEKA8I-z8o>

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

2021 Faith Festivals greetings guidance

On IFN's website is a guidance document, developed with IFN's Faith Communities Forum, setting out two festivals on which different faith communities have indicated that they would most appreciate receiving greetings from those of other faiths and none. It includes appropriate greetings. The 2021 document is now available at

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/faith-festivals-guidance-on-sending-greetings>.

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An Inclusive Christmas

The Christian Muslim Forum (CMF) has produced a short booklet, An Inclusive Christmas, celebrating the way Christians and Muslims come together at this time of year and how

traditions associated with the Christian festival have been adapted by other faith communities. CMF hopes that this will inspire inter faith encounters and encourage deeper dialogue between Christians and Muslims during the festive season. The booklet can be found online at <http://www.christianmuslimforum.org/articles/an-inclusive-christmas/>.

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Woolf Institute Report on Diversity Study for England and Wales

In November the Woolf Institute published its study of personal attitudes to religious, ethnic and national diversity in England and Wales, 'How we Get Along: The Diversity Study for England Wales 2020'. The study addresses questions such as:

- What is the state of relations between people from different backgrounds in the UK today?
- How comfortable are we with the increased diversity and pace of change and what are the regional differences?
- What is the role of friendship and the workplace in shaping attitudes to diversity?
- What do attitudes towards marriage tell us about our views of our neighbours?
- What can and should the UK Government be doing to manage diversity effectively?

The full report and executive summary can be found at <https://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/research/projects/diversity>. For more information, or to request a printed copy of the executive summary, contact Claire Curran at cc640@cam.ac.uk.

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Keeping the Faith: Partnerships between Faith Groups and Local Authorities During and Beyond the Pandemic

The November issue of IFN's e-bulletin noted that The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Faith and Society had commissioned the Faiths and Civil Society Unit at Goldsmiths, University of London, to conduct a study to explore the extent and nature of new relationships between local authorities and faith groups. As well as exploring the extent and nature of new relationships between councils and faith groups, the study examined how and why these relationships came about, how they worked in practice, and their implications for local authorities, communities, and faith groups themselves. The report on *Keeping the Faith: Partnerships between Faith Groups and Local Authorities During and Beyond the Pandemic* is now available at https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5aa7ae58266c07fe6b48eb76/t/5fab1475ae8b92bcf64f30c/1605091658307/APPG_CovidReport_Full_V4.pdf.

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Preventing radicalisation – new ACT Early website

Counter Terrorism Policing (CTP) has launched a new website - actearly.uk - to encourage friends and family to act early, share concerns and seek help if they are worried that someone they care about is being radicalised.

The increase in time spent online due to Covid19, and a rise in hateful extremism, is creating an environment in which young and vulnerable people are at a greater risk of being targeted and groomed by people who wish to do harm.

The ACT Early website includes case studies, signs to spot, FAQs and details of where to get help, including a new, confidential advice line staffed by specialists at CTP.

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Webinars for faith charities

The Charity Commission's Faith Outreach team is running a series of webinars for faith charities on trustee duties, safeguarding and financial management (all in a faith charities context) from January to March. For more information, and to register, visit www.bookwhen.com/fcot.

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Journey of Hope leadership programme

The Journey of Hope is a collaboration between ten of the UK's peace and reconciliation centres, who have teamed up to co-host "an immersive six-month faith leadership programme to transform communities".

The programme welcomes applicants who:

- Have a passion to take action for a more just and peaceful world
- Hold a formal or informal leadership role within their faith community, or a calling to do so
- Can sustainably root their activism in the vision/values of their faith community
- Have some experience of peacebuilding & reconciliation or community activism in any form

The application deadline is 31 December. For more information, visit <https://www.reconcilerstogether.co.uk/>.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS, AND NOMINATIONS

Greater Manchester essay competition – deadline extended

The Muslim Jewish Forum of Greater Manchester has extended the deadline for its essay competition to 4 January. As noted, in the last issue of the e-bulletin, the essay must tackle the question: “What makes people become perpetrators or rescuers in a conflict or genocide?” The competition is open to children aged 7 to 11 in Greater Manchester. For full details, visit <https://www.muslimjewish.org.uk/Past-events/Sardari-essay-competition-2020.html>.

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Research project on ritual innovation during COVID-19

Manchester Metropolitan University is working on a research project called 'Social Distance, Digital Congregation' (or BRIC-19). This is looking at ritual innovation during the COVID-19 pandemic - exploring how British religious communities have adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions it has imposed. To take the survey, visit <https://bric19.mmu.ac.uk/take-the-survey/>. The project web site can be found at <https://bric19.mmu.ac.uk/>. For more information, email bric-19@mmu.ac.uk.

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Places of Worship energy research

Bishop Grosseteste University is among those researching ways to assist places of worship to become more energy-efficient and address climate change more broadly. As part of this process the researchers would like to know about the features of different places of worship and how they are used. They are keen to hear from as many faith communities as possible. For more information, contact Dr Mark Charlesworth at mark.charlesworth@bishopg.ac.uk.

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Religion & Collections

Religion & Collections is a new group which has been set up dedicated to the care and interpretation of religious collections – in museums, places of worship, faith organisations, schools and elsewhere. <https://religioncollections.wordpress.com/religion-collections-group/>

It is keen to reflect as many different faith voices as possible and would like to hear from anyone who has been involved in a project regarding the care or presentation of religious material culture. For more information, visit <https://religioncollections.wordpress.com/>.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

Inter Faith Network for the UK - Internship

IFN is currently advertising for an Internship from 14 January to 31 March. This Internship offers a chance to develop new skills and gain valuable experience in the field of inter faith relations. It has a special focus on youth inter faith engagement in HE and FE settings, which continues to grow in scale every year.

IFN Interns are paid at the London Living Wage. For more information, and to download the Job Description and Application Form, visit <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/jobs>. The closing date for applications is 11am on 4 January.

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Faith for the Climate – Movement builder

Faith for the Climate is seeking a Movement Builder “to develop and support increased climate action within faith traditions across England, working towards the COP 26 conference in November 2021 and beyond”. The role is 3 days per week and begins in February. The closing date for applications is 5 January. For more information, visit <https://faithfortheclimate.org.uk/recruitment>.

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Faith & Belief Forum – Senior Leadership Team roles

The Faith & Belief Forum is seeking to appoint three roles to its senior leadership team: Head of Programmes, Head of Operations, Head of Engagement and Income Generation. Further information, including the January deadline dates for each role, is at <https://faithbeliefforum.org/career/appointing-a-new-senior-leadership-team/>.

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Inter Faith Network for the UK - Volunteers

The Inter Faith Network for the UK currently has some opportunities for online volunteers who would like to offer 4-8 hours a week to help on different aspects of IFN’s work to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. To express an interest in volunteering, please complete the application form at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/volunteering>.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

COVID-19 funding

The Charities Aid Foundation has collated a list of organisations which are supporting charities and voluntary groups at this time. <https://www.cafonline.org/covid-19-support/help-for-charities#tab1>

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Interfaith Scotland grants for places of worship

Interfaith Scotland is offering funds of up to £500 to places of worship that are struggling to meet the safety requirements of re-opening their buildings and safely holding services (within the Government Guidelines). With discretion, the funds can also be used to assist in keeping open places that have managed their initial outlay with regard to safely reopening their place of worship but are now struggling to keep up the measures required to stay open. The funding criteria for areas of support is primarily so that religious buildings can re-open safely and stay open during this critical stage in the pandemic and that places of worship remain connected to those that are still too vulnerable to come to places of worship. For more information, email frances@interfaithscotland.org.

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Thriving Communities Fund

The Thriving Communities Fund supports local voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCSFE) organisations that work in a range of sectors, including arts and culture, libraries, museums and heritage. Successful applicants must bring together place-based partnerships to improve and increase social prescribing community activities – especially for those people most impacted by COVID-19 and health inequalities. Grants of between £25,000 and £50,000 are available. The application deadline is 8 January. For more information, visit <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/thriving-communities-fund#section-1>.

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FCC Community Action Fund

The FCC Communities Foundation is offering grants between £2,000 and £100,000 for projects which involve the provision, maintenance or improvement of public amenities including community spaces in places of worship, which are registered charities. Projects must be based within 10 miles of an eligible FCC Environment waste facility. The current round closes on 3 March. For more information, visit <https://fcccommunitiesfoundation.org.uk/funds/fcc-community-action-fund>.

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Windrush Compensation Scheme

The Windrush Compensation Scheme is open to those who settled in the UK from a Commonwealth country before 1973, and in certain circumstances their children and grandchildren. Claim forms can be downloaded and guidance on completing the application can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/windrush-compensation-scheme>. Claimants can also request a form to be sent by post by calling the helpline on 0800 678 1925 or via email WindrushCompensationScheme@homeoffice.gov.uk where they can also request a call back if they are overseas.

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Faith in Community Scotland

Faith in Community Scotland is an anti-poverty charity founded in 2005. They support individuals and faith groups in Scotland's poorest neighbourhoods to achieve the difference that they are capable of. They do this through training, resources and funding which helps to build people's skill and to increase their confidence. It has a small grants programme which has distributed over £1 million over the past ten years to urban and rural faith groups tackling poverty. For more information about eligibility and how to apply for a grant, including the next application deadline date, email andrew@faithincommunity.scot.

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Funding websites

Funding Central <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk>, supported by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, is a free website for charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises in England. It provides access to thousands of funding and finance opportunities, together with tools and resources to develop sustainable income strategies. Similar websites for funding in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at Funding Scotland - <http://www.fundingscotland.com/> - Wales Council for Voluntary Action - <http://www.wcva.org.uk/funding/search> - and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland - <https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

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Subsidised fundraising workshops

The Foundation for Social Improvement offers subsidised training programmes for small charities across the UK. The courses cover a wide range of subjects from event planning to leadership. Many of the courses focus on fundraising and sustainability skills in particular. Further information and dates for upcoming courses, now being held online, can be found at <http://www.thefsi.org/services/training>.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Holocaust Memorial Day takes place on 27 January. Its theme in 2021 is 'Be the Light in the Darkness'. Holocaust Memorial Day is the day for everyone to remember the millions of people murdered in the Holocaust, under Nazi Persecution, and in the genocides which followed in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur. It honours the survivors of these regimes and challenges everyone to use the lessons of their experience to inform their lives today. www.hmd.org.uk/

World Interfaith Harmony Week takes place from 1 to 7 February. It is a UN recognised Week which was proposed to the UN General Assembly by HM King Abdullah of Jordan. The first UN World Interfaith Harmony Week took place in February 2011. <http://worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com>

Sadaqa Day will take place on Sunday 21 March. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Muslim community. mysadaqaday.org

The Big Lunch is held in the first weekend of June. Across the years millions of people from different faith backgrounds have joined together to take part through street parties, BBQs, iftars and picnics. <https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/the-big-lunch-faqs>

Refugee Week will take place from 14-20 June. Refugee Week is a nationwide programme of arts, cultural and educational events that celebrate the contribution of refugees to the UK, and encourages a better understanding between communities. The theme for the 2021 Week is 'We cannot walk alone'. <https://refugeeweek.org.uk/>

SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK TO INCREASE INTER FAITH UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION

Earlier this year an Appeal was launched <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/donate> to support and strengthen IFN's work for inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. Thank you so much to those who have already kindly contributed through this or through a different route. If you have not, but appreciate this e-bulletin and the work of IFN and would like to do so, that would be most welcome.

Gifts at all levels are much valued and make a real difference. You can donate directly at www.interfaith.org.uk/donate which includes credit card and PayPal options. Donations can also be made by sending a cheque payable to 'The Inter Faith Network' to: The Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH.

Thank you!

REMEMBERING A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND

If you would like to make a gift in memory of a loved one, please get in touch by emailing remember@interfaith.org.uk or call us on 0207 730 0410.

A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

By leaving a gift in your will to the Inter Faith Network for the UK, you can leave a living inheritance to help deepen and strengthen inter faith understanding and cooperation in this country – for now and for the future. If you are thinking about making a will, the best thing to do is to get in touch with a professional will writer, such as a solicitor or advocate; they can help to ensure it is legally correct and that your wishes are met. If you have already made a will, you can still make an addition or amendment in the form of a codicil. If you would like to pledge a gift, please provide our name and address, along with our registered charity number 1068934.

Please get in touch with us if you have any queries.

You can call us on 0207 730 0410 or contact us at remember@interfaith.org.uk

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DIARY DATES

In light of COVID-19 many events have had to be cancelled or postponed. Some events are instead taking place online. A few examples of forthcoming events are listed below. Events are also listed on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/events>.

The St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace is holding the next Zoom reflection in its faith leadership series on Tuesday 22 December. This will be with Jasmin O'Hara from the World Wide Tribe on the Christmas story told through the stories of refugees. It is entitled 'God's epic journey: the refugee Christ'. It is being held online from 4pm to 5pm. For more information, visit <https://stethelburgas.org/event/gods-epic-journey-the-refugee-christ/>.

FaithAction is holding a series of focus groups in January “to learn about the issues and concerns around the pandemic specific to each faith”. For dates and further information, visit <https://www.faithaction.net/campaigns/faith-covid-response/involved/>.

The **Christian Muslim Forum** is collaborating with **The Dean and Chapter of Westminster** and **Gingko**, alongside **Embrace the Middle East**, on an event on Tuesday 5 January entitled 'Christmas and the Qur'an'. Participants can join the dialogue at 3:30pm in person at St Margaret's Church, Westminster Abbey or online. To attend in person, register at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/a-dialogue-on-christmas-and-the-quran-tickets-132394382161>. To register for the live stream, email gingko@gingkolibrary.com.

Faiths Together in Lambeth and MFHA are running a 2 day Adult Mental Health First Aid Training course on Thursday 7 and Friday 8 January. It will be held from 8.45am to 5.30pm each day at St Martins Scout Hut, 16-28 High Trees, Tulse Hill, London SW2 3PU. To request a place, email ftil@hotmail.co.uk and for more information, contact Phil on 07956 441911.

Central Scotland Interfaith Group is hosting its monthly 'Soul Space' on zoom on Sunday 10 January at 5pm. The theme for the evening is 'Closeness'. Participants are welcome to bring something to share with the group such as a poem, prayer, story or piece of music. To attend, contact Andrew Sarle at csi@irenic.org.uk.

Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship is holding its next meeting on Monday 11 January. This will be on the topic of 'Black Lives Matter'. The presenters will be David Randolph-Horn and Adam Aslam. It is being held online at 7.30pm. For more information, contact chair@concord-leeds.org.uk.

Inform's next online seminar will take place on Thursday 14 January, on the topic 'Becoming religious: How and why beliefs and practices are transmitted'. The seminar will explore "the motivations of minority religions and spiritual seekers to transmit and learn, and the processes they employ". It is being held online from 5.30pm to 7.30pm. Participants can register to attend by making a donation through the Inform website, at <https://inform.ac/seminars> or by emailing inform@kcl.ac.uk to book a place.

Woking Action for Peace, Friends of the Earth, Surrey Faith Links, Woking LA21, Woking Quakers and Woking People of Faith are holding the next Woking Debate on 'Are we giving children the help they need?' on Saturday 16 January. The event will take place online from 11am to 12.30pm. For more information, visit <http://www.wokingdebates.com>. For joining details, contact Keith Scott at ketihscc_2000@yahoo.com or on 01483 824980.

Crawley Interfaith Network is holding its next event on Thursday 21 January. The topic will be 'How we worshipped and managed during lock down'. This will be led by Najma Osman. It is being held online at 7.30pm. For more information, contact Iyad Daoud at iyadhdaoud@yahoo.co.uk.

Strengthening Faith Institutions has partnered with **Civil Society Consulting** CIC on 'Steps to Sustainability' (S2S) – a joint initiative that will outreach to 60 BAME faith social action leaders in England. As part of this, they are working with local communities to support the marketing needs of community interest companies, faith organisations and grassroots groups to deliver Social Media Training. The next free session takes place on Wednesday 27 January from 11am to 1pm. For more information or to book, email Emma Crabtree emma@civilsocietyconsulting.co.uk.

South London Inter Faith Group is holding its next meeting on Thursday 28 January. This will be on the theme of 'Bereavement and funerals'. It is being held online from 1pm to 2pm. For more information, contact secretary@southlondoninterfaith.org.uk.

The National Association of RE Teachers (NATRE) will be holding its Strictly RE Conference online across the weekend of 30 and 31 January. In addition there will also be a series of evening seminars leading up to the conference. For details of the online Conference and seminars, visit <https://www.natre.org.uk/courses-events/strictlyRE-2021/>.

More information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org.uk

IFN also carries news and information at www.twitter.com/IFNetUK www.facebook.com/IFNetUK and, about Inter Faith Week, at <https://twitter.com/IFweek> and www.facebook.com/IFWeek.

You can sign up to IFN mailings at any time by using the form on IFN's website at: www.interfaith.org.uk/news/gdpr or let us know that you would like to unsubscribe by using the links at the bottom of the cover email.

Submissions for next issue

If you have items about projects or future events which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk **by 18 February** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer: Information in this e-bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH
www.interfaith.org.uk www.facebook.com/IFNetUK www.twitter.com/IFNetUK

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IFN e-bulletin

March/April 2021

Welcome to the e-bulletin of the Inter Faith Network for the UK www.interfaith.org.uk
It is published every two months and it highlights primarily new developments, projects and future events. You can read by scrolling through or you can go directly to an individual section or item by clicking on the 'Read more' link in the Sections and Contents lists below.

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E-BULLETIN SURVEY

With this issue comes a special survey about the e-bulletin.

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/IFNE-bulletin2021/>

We would be very grateful if you could take a few minutes to complete this. *Thank you!*

FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

UK/national information and advice on COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

UK Government information on COVID-19 is at: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

The NHS guidance can be found at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>.

Advice is available on the following websites in the devolved nations:

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus>

<https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus>

<https://gov.wales/coronavirus>

<https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/>

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Faith Communities and COVID-19

Across the period since the last issue, faith communities have continued to respond to the pandemic. A statement by the IFN Co-Chairs and Moderators of IFN's Faith Communities Forum on 'Faith communities and COVID-19: responding together at a time of need' can be found on IFN's website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/faith-communities-and-covid-responding-together-at-a-time-of-need-a-statement>.

In February Stephen Timms MP led a debate on the response of faith groups to the COVID-19 pandemic. The full debate can be seen on parliamentlive.tv and the transcript is available on [Hansard](#). Although restrictions are currently easing, there remains much community need for support and a wide range of volunteer initiatives inspired by values of service and compassion continue to play a very important role. See, for example Sewa Day's Help a Neighbour Project

<https://www.expressandstar.com/news/health/coronavirus-covid19/2021/03/17/charitys-year-of-front-line-action/> and one local United Reformed Church's community service project to distribute surplus food

<https://www.facebook.com/TheUnitedReformedChurch/photos/a.623611750991900/4062>

[092183810489](https://www.ifn.org.uk/092183810489). IFN has been sharing many examples on its website and through social media.

The UK and devolved governments have continued to engage with faith leaders and faith groups over relevant policies and guidance, as reflected in the item immediately below. The Inter Faith Network for the UK's National Meeting on 23 March took as its focus 'Faith Communities and COVID-19: Learning from the journey', with presentations and participation from a wide range of faith communities and types of organisation. A short report is [below](#).

Faith organisations across the UK participated in the national Day of Reflection on 23 March, led by Marie Curie, remembering those who have died with COVID-19, and the bereaved, and encouraging reaching out and moving forward in hope. Just before the minute's silence being held for that, at IFN's National Meeting a statement from the Co-Chairs and Faith Communities Forum was read.

At this meeting of Inter Faith Network member bodies today, we join with all those around the UK holding a minute's silence at the noon hour to remember the lives of those who have died with COVID-19.

Faith communities have experienced the loss and illness of many among their number. Some have experienced an especially heavy impact because their members are drawn in part or entirely from groups disproportionately affected by COVID-related illness and death.

We hold particularly in our prayers at this time the families, friends and colleagues of all who have died, their sorrow of loss deepened by isolation and, for many, inability to observe traditional rites of mourning. We hold also in our prayers those who continue to provide physical and spiritual support for the dying and the bereaved.

As well as remembering those who have died, we give thanks for all that has been done, by so many, to support those whose lives have been affected by the pandemic.

Let us, as we pause to remember, also commit to moving forward in hope and with commitment to working for a reopening of society that reflects the values of mutual concern, support and compassion demonstrated during this last year.

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COVID-19 and safe use of places of worship

Faith Festivals

A number of their key faith festivals and times of observance are marked by Christians, Hindus, Jains, Jews, Muslims and Sikhs from late March to mid-April.

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/religious-festivals> There has been renewed focus on safe celebration of festivals, with the UK Government updating its guidance on this for places of worship in England. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic-from-4-july/celebrating-religious-festivals-during-coronavirus-covid-19> This year, again, the festivals will be celebrated in a very different way from usual. There will be distanced in person services combined with virtual ones, and events happening place mainly on line.

England

On 22 February the Prime Minister announced the ‘COVID-19 Response - Spring 2021’ which set out a roadmap for exiting the current lockdown for England. It contains a number of provisional dates for easing of restrictions. Places of Worship have been able to remain open for communal worship through the most recent restrictions.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-spring-2021>

Guidance for Places of Worship was updated on 26 March.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic-from-4-july/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-from-2-december> This enabled singing by officiants to take place in cathedrals from 28 March and singing outside places of worship from that date, 1 day before the easing of general restrictions.

Scotland

On 23 February the First Minister of Scotland announced an updated Strategic Framework for easing the restrictions in Scotland. The Scottish Government subsequently confirmed that places of worship would be reopening from 26 March with people living in all parts of Scotland able to attend in gatherings of up to 50, where there was space for the required physical distancing. <https://www.gov.scot/news/places-of-worship-in-level-4-can-reopen-from-friday/>

Wales

Guidance for places of worship in Wales, last updated on 5 March, is at <https://gov.wales/guidance-reopening-places-worship-coronavirus>. Places of worship have remained able to open.

Northern Ireland

The current regulations in Northern Ireland are due to be reviewed on 15 April. Places of worship have remained able to open. <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-regulations-guidance-what-restrictions-mean-you>

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Faith communities and vaccination

Vaccination programmes are currently being rolled out across all four nations in the UK. The same priority list of people to receive the vaccine, recommended by the UK's independent Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation, is being followed by all four nations in the UK.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/covid-19-vaccination-programme>

<https://www.gov.scot/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination/>

<https://gov.wales/getting-your-covid-19-vaccine>

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/covid-19-vaccination-programme-northern-ireland>

Faith communities across the UK continue to support the vaccine rollout in different ways. They have been helping to tackle vaccine hesitancy through arranging for concerns to be addressed and misinformation corrected. Many places of worship and associated buildings from large buildings such as cathedrals to community premises, such as the Jain Centre in Manchester, are being used as vaccination centres. A number of places of worship have also been the location for pop up clinics, such as a pop up clinic at the Al Manaar Mosque in London. <https://www.mylondon.news/news/west-london-news/west-london-mosques-pop-up-20267252> Local inter faith bodies have also been assisting with participation of places of worship, for example Wolverhampton Interfaith in relation to the city's Guru Tegh Bahadur Gurdwara and Shree Krishna Mandir.

In England, the UK Government has funded a major programme of work under the 'community champions' heading, allocating over £23 million funding to 60 councils and voluntary groups to expand work to support those most at risk from COVID-19 and boost vaccine take up. Two charities, Strengthening Faith Institutions and Near Neighbours, have been funded to support councils in working with grassroots organisations and community leaders, to ensure that communities understand how the pandemic is being tackled and feel empowered to take action to keep themselves safe.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/community-champions-to-give-covid-19-vaccine-advice-and-boost-take-up>

Near Neighbours has produced some short videos in several community languages to help people understand public health advice around the vaccine and promote the vaccination programme. Videos are available in Arabic, Bengali, English, Farsi, French, Gujarati, Hindi, Kurdish, Mandarin, Pashto, Polish, Punjabi, Romanian, Somali, and Urdu. The videos are

free to use and can be downloaded at <https://www.near-neighbours.org.uk/covid-videos>. Near Neighbours is happy to assist groups or organisations to adapt the message for their specific needs. They can be contacted at hello@nearneighbours.org.uk.

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Report on COVID-19 disparities

On 26 February, Minister for Equalities, Kemi Badenoch MP, published the second quarterly report to the Prime Minister and Health Secretary on progress to understand and tackle COVID-19 disparities experienced by individuals from an ethnic minority background. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/second-quarterly-report-on-progress-to-address-covid-19-health-inequalities/second-quarterly-report-on-progress-to-address-covid-19-health-inequalities>

The Minister's first report on COVID-19 disparities was published in October. This concluded that a range of socioeconomic and geographical factors coupled with pre-existing health conditions were contributing to the higher infection and mortality rates for ethnic minority groups, with a part of the excess risk remaining unexplained for some groups. This second report looks at those causes in more detail and sets out some of the work undertaken to fill the gaps in understanding and to mitigate the risks of COVID-19 infection. It sets out the progress made under the terms of reference and in implementing the recommendations from the first report.

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Financial impact of COVID-19

As noted in previous issues of this e-bulletin, in addition to affecting so many other sectors, the pandemic has affected significantly the resources of faith groups and faith-based charities. In February a group of charities launched an open letter from their CEOs to ask the Prime Minister to consider a special package of support. The open letter, which can be signed by any voluntary organisation, can be found at <https://nmn.org.uk/rightnow-campaign-open-letter/>.

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2021 Census

The 2021 Census took place in England, Wales and Northern Ireland on Sunday 21 March. This was, for the first time, carried out primarily online. The Office for National Statistics (ONS), which carries out the Census in England and Wales, was keen to encourage as many community groups as possible, including faith communities, to share information about the importance of the Census and the different ways that this can be completed, and a representative of ONS attended a meeting of IFN's Faith Communities Forum in February

to speak about this. Due to the pandemic, Scotland has chosen to defer its Census until next year.

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Protest over incident at Batley Grammar School

Following complaints, a teacher was suspended by Batley Grammar School pending investigation into an incident on 22 March where the teacher was reported to have shown to pupils in an RE lesson a cartoon of the Prophet Muhammad. Protests took place outside the school. Apologies were offered by the school and by the teacher (who is currently under police protection). A number of statements were issued, including by the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board and the local inter faith body, North Kirklees Interfaith.

Batley Multi Academy Trust announced on 31 March that an independent panel was being appointed to carry out an investigation with any outcomes expected by the end of May. The investigation would review how "the materials [which caused offence] were used" and "would make recommendations in relation to the Religious Studies curriculum".

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leeds-56587709>

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Allegations relating to personnel at two universities

Police are investigating alleged anti-Hindu comments directed at Oxford University Student Union's first Indian woman president, who was forced to stand down in a racism row. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/03/29/police-investigate-alleged-anti-hindu-comments-aimed-oxford/>

An investigation has been launched by the University of Bristol over comments made by one of its professors.. The All-Party Parliamentary Group Against Anti-Semitism (APPG) had accused Prof Miller of "inciting hatred against Jewish students". The university said it recognised the "deep concern"; a campaign backing the professor said it was an attack on "academic freedom". <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-bristol-56428737>

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Report on racial and ethnic disparities in the UK

On 31 March the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities published its report into racial and ethnic disparities in the UK. The report looks at 4 key areas: education and training; employment, fairness at work and enterprise; crime and policing; and health. The Commission examined "the intersection of some of the most pertinent causes holding back equality of opportunity, namely: ethnicity; socio-economic background; geography;

and culture and degree of integration”. It “found that most of the disparities we examined, which some attribute to racial discrimination, often do not have their origins in racism.”

The Commission has put forward 24 recommendations, to forward 4 overarching aims:

- to build trust between different communities and the institutions that serve them
- to promote greater fairness to improve opportunities and outcomes for individuals and communities
- to create agency so individuals can take greater control of the decisions that impact their lives
- to achieve genuine inclusivity to ensure all groups feel a part of UK society

The full report and recommendations can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-report-of-the-commission-on-race-and-ethnic-disparities>.

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Safeguarding and religious leaders

The definition of a person in a ‘position of trust’ under English criminal law is set to be expanded to improve child protection by including religious leaders and sports coaches. The Police, Crime, Sentencing, and Courts Bill introduced in Parliament in early March, would make it illegal for both religious leaders and sports coaches to engage in sexual activity with 16 and 17 year-olds. (The age of consent for sexual activity in the UK is 16; this rises to 18, however, where one person in a position of trust is involved.) The Bill when it is enacted will amend Section 21 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003. This amendment — to include clergy under the definition of people in a position of trust — was recommended by the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse in its interim report on abuse in the Anglican Church. Victims and survivors of abuse and campaigners have also called for this change. <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2021/12-march/news/uk/crime-bill-includes-religious-leaders-under-position-of-trust>

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Faith communities and COP26

The 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) is scheduled to take place in Glasgow from 1-12 November. <https://ukcop26.org/> It will bring parties together to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Together with the Environmental Issues Network of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, Faith for the Climate convenes a COP Faith Task Group to enable diverse faith groups to contribute meaningfully to climate action before, during and after COP26. Its

priorities are: Transformation; Advocacy; and Hospitality.

<https://www.faithfortheclimate.org.uk/Our-work>

Individual faith communities have been working towards COP26, for example Quakers in Britain: <https://www.quaker.org.uk/events/journey-to-cop26-un-climate-talks> Inter faith response is also under way. Interfaith Scotland, whose offices are based in Glasgow, has a programme of work under way leading up to COP26 and has been holding a number of linked events. <https://interfaithscotland.org/climate-action-resources> Preparatory events are also under way on an inter faith basis in other nations. For example, Faiths4Change is leading a Merseyside inter faith response to the climate emergency with the Liverpool City Region Faith Leaders Network, the Diocese of Liverpool and Wirral Council's Cool climate change strategy, with a special 'Journey to COP26 - Merseyside Interfaith Month' from 21 March to 21 April (more under Projects [below](#)).

In the framework of the British presidency, in partnership with Italy, of the United Nations Conference on Climate Change COP26, the Embassies of the United Kingdom and Italy to the Holy See, together with the Holy See, will be convening a meeting of religious leaders and scientists in Rome in autumn 2021 to build momentum for COP26. The aims of the meeting will be for faith leaders to: “articulate our common duty to address climate change; encourage national governments to raise their ambition regarding their National Determined Contributions to reach the Paris Agreement goals; and show how the faiths are leading the way by greening their own operations at central and local level and making new commitments encourage the faithful to take action to slow global temperature rises.” <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/faith-and-science-towards-cop26> #Faiths4COP26 In preparation for this event, the British and Italian Embassies, together with the Holy See, are convening a series of virtual meetings, the first of which has just taken place at Wilton Park. <https://www.wiltonpark.org.uk/event/faith-and-science-towards-cop26-wp1888v/>

Faiths Forum for London, in collaboration with The Royal Parks, More than Bugs, Faith for the Climate and Faiths United Youth Network is running a new initiative called 'Where Nature Meets Faith'. This will include a series of webinars and guided walks taking place throughout May and June which will explore the intersections between religious teachings and nature. It will also include a photography competition. <https://linktr.ee/WNMF>

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Hate crime

The Scottish Government on 11 March passed the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill. It says that it will “modernise, consolidate and extend existing hate crime law ensuring it is fit for the 21st Century and that “Through its passing, ‘stirring up’ of hatred offences will now apply to additional characteristics listed in the Bill: age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, transgender identity and variations in sex characteristics. These new protections will add to the long-standing stirring up racial hatred offences,

which have been in place since 1986 and have been retained in largely the same form within the Bill.” <https://www.gov.scot/news/hate-crime-bill-passed/>

The Community Security Trust’s Antisemitic Incidents Report 2020, published on 11 February, shows that last year CST recorded 1,668 antisemitic incidents across the UK. This is an 8% fall from the 1,813 incidents recorded in 2019 but is still the third-highest number of incidents CST has ever recorded in a calendar year.

TellMAMA continues to report on verbal and physical attacks on Muslims.

<https://tellmamauk.org/category/news/> Other communities, too, continue to experience incidents treated by the police as hate crimes, for example a Swastika daubed on boundary wall of the Siri Guru Nanak Darbar in Gravesend.

<https://www.kentonline.co.uk/gravesend/news/swastika-daubed-on-sikh-gurdwara-243573/>

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Extremism

In February Lead Commissioner for the Commission for Countering Extremism, Sara Khan, and Sir Mark Rowley, published their findings from their legal review examining the adequacy of existing legislation in relation to ‘hateful extremism’. The report, Operating with Impunity - Hateful extremism: The need for a legal framework, puts forward a new working definition for ‘hateful extremism’. It describes how many hateful extremists are able to operate lawfully due to a lack of legislation designed to capture the specific activity of ‘hateful extremism’. It also includes a number of recommendations. The report can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/commission-for-countering-extremism-publishes-legal-review>.

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Home Office consultation on Protect Duty

The Home Office is seeking views on how the Protect Duty can make the public safer at publicly accessible locations. This consultation considers how legislation might be used to enhance the protection of publicly accessible locations, including across the UK from terrorist attacks and ensure organisational preparedness. A publicly accessible location is defined as any place to which the public or any section of the public has access, on payment or otherwise, as of right or by virtue of express or implied permission. This includes places of worship.

The consultation closes on 2 July. The Home Office is seeking views from across the United Kingdom, “since national security is a reserved matter, however it is recognised that developing an effective process and support to implement such legislation would draw on

delivery mechanisms and responsibilities within the Devolved Administrations”. Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/protect-duty>.

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INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK NEWS

IFN’s National Meeting – Faith Communities and Covid-19: Learning from the journey

IFN held its annual National Meeting on 23 March on the theme of ‘Faith Communities and COVID-19 – Learning from the Journey’. During the day, the multi faith gathering of nearly 120 people from national faith community bodies and local and national inter faith organisations and other bodies heard about the remarkable faith community response to need in the community during the pandemic.

The meeting, which was chaired by the Inter Faith Network’s Co-Chairs, the Rt Revd Jonathan Clark and Narendra Waghela, explored a wide range of issues. These included how places of worship have coped with periods of closure and with social distancing; health care chaplaincy and the handling of funerals and bereavement; and responding to loneliness and domestic abuse during the pandemic. It heard from faith communities with high BAME membership responding to the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on them and about initiatives to address vaccine hesitancy.

The gathering also considered how digital communication is being used for inter faith dialogue and cooperation and the future possibilities of that; how faith communities, local authorities and other statutory agencies have been working in partnership; how schools have adapted during the pandemic and a new IFN teacher resource to help 11-14 year olds learn about inter faith activity, with examples from inter faith responses to the pandemic; the financial impact of the pandemic on faith community organisations; capturing the pandemic experience through research; and solidarity and statements.

A short report with speakers and organisations can be found here:

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/ifns-2021-national-meeting-faith-communities-and-covid19-learning-from-the-journey>.

The day coincided with a national Day of Reflection led by Marie Curie. At midday, the meeting joined with people across the UK in the minute’s silence to remember those who had died with COVID-19 and those bereaved. Before the minute’s silence a statement by the IFN Co-Chairs and Moderators of IFN’s Faith Communities Forum was read (see text of statement [above](#)).

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Learning about inter faith activity: A new IFN Teacher Resource for 11-14 year old pupils

IFN has published a new online Teacher Resource to help secondary schools plan learning for their pupils about inter faith activity and develop skills for dialogue. This is available to download at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/inter-faith-activity-in-the-uk-a-teacher-resource-for-secondary-pupils>. It has been produced for teachers of pupils aged 11 – 14 (Key Stage 3).

The resource has a teacher introduction and five units. They are:

- Unit 1: Introducing Inter Faith Activity in the UK;
- Unit 2: Let's Talk – inter faith dialogue;
- Unit 3: Faith communities, service and solidarity;
- Unit 4: Faith communities in service for the wellbeing of others; and
- Unit 5: Making a difference in the world – inter faith responses to the climate crisis.

Given the complexity of curriculum requirements across the UK this resources has been shaped in the context of English curriculum requirements. It has, however, benefited from the input of the national inter faith linking bodies of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and may be more widely useful. The resource is intended to help pupils learn about the variety of inter faith activity in the UK, using examples from across different communities and types of organisation. The resource can be adapted for the education requirements in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The resource follows on from IFN's resource of a similar kind for primary school pupils, which can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/learning-about-inter-faith-activity-a-primary-resource>.

The resource is free to download and may also be of interest to anyone interested to learn about inter faith activity in the UK.

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New IFN youth inter faith website resource

IFN has been carrying out a project which includes gathering and signposting resources for youth inter faith activity, including in Further Education and Higher Education contexts. A new website section is at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/activity/youth-inter-faith-engagement>.

The new website section includes information on what inter faith activity is, why it is important, and different ways that young people can get involved. It is planned that this section will continue to grow and be developed over time.

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IFN Faith Communities Forum

A meeting of IFN's Faith Communities Forum was held on 18 February. The agenda included items on: COVID-19 matters (Vaccination programme, Faith communities and Communications during the pandemic and Community assistance work); Freedom of expression in relation to religion or belief, with reflections from Lord Singh of Wimbledon, Director of the Network of Sikh Organisations (UK); the 2021 Census, with a presentation by Pete Benton, Director of Population and Public Policy Operations at the Office for National Statistics; inter faith engagement of faith communities; and other current issues of interest or concern to faith communities.

This followed an additional special session at the end of January on social media. This explored some of the possibilities - and also pitfalls - of using social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook and also such issues as: whether/when/how to respond to tackle prejudiced and hateful posts; social media as a context for organisational inter faith engagement and how that messaging may sit with more traditional forms of communication; what may be the pros and cons of CEOs or other personnel having separate accounts to that of their organisation; and how social media is being used during the COVID19 pandemic, for example to aid the process of tackling disinformation about vaccines and to highlight and encourage faith community volunteering initiatives. The session included a practically focused overview presentation from IFN's Inter Faith Development Officer, Ashley Beck, and peer to peer learning - with inputs from Hassan Joudi, Deputy Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain, Rajnish Kashyap, General Secretary of Hindu Council UK, and Paul Parker, Recording Clerk (CEO) of Quakers in Britain as well as from others through roundtable discussion.

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IFN link meetings for local inter faith groups

IFN holds meetings for local inter faith groups to share news and good practice and learn from each other's work to strengthen their own and benefit their local areas. Some are for groups from across the UK. Others are for groups within a particular region or a county. They provide an opportunity for sharing of news or programmes and projects being run by each group, including opportunities and challenges.

The most recent link meeting, which was for local inter faith organisations in Greater London, was held on 19 January. It included a special item on 'London resources for local inter faith bodies' with presentations by Mustafa Field, Director of Faiths Forum for London, and Steve Miller, Convener of the London Boroughs Faiths Network. The link followed similar links held by IFN for the North West of England; Kent; the North East;

South West and West Midlands. Further such meetings are due to be held in the coming months.

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IFN meeting for National and Regional Inter Faith Organisations and Educational and Academic Bodies

On 26 January IFN held a category meeting for member National and Regional Inter Faith Organisations and Educational and Academic Bodies. There was discussion about how inter faith and educational and academic bodies help support HMD and other key memorial days and weeks such as Remembering Srebrenica, with a presentation by the Revd Nathan Eddy, Interim Director of the Council of Christians and Jews, about the importance of engagement with Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) and one from Ashley Beck of IFN about Inter Faith Week. This was followed by round table sharing of news, information and current concerns, including responding to COVID-19 and discussion of emerging issues of shared interest and concern and Inter Faith Network matters, including the planned youth and school resources (see [below](#)).

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Inter Faith Week

Inter Faith Week 2020 was a Week with high involvement and many new participants, partnerships and activities. In the context of the restrictions due to COVID-19 it also provided a very positive opportunity to reach out, connect, learn and make new contacts. This year Inter Faith Week takes places from 14-22 November. A number of organisations are already planning events. You can find out more about the Week at www.interfaithweek.org. It is a great time for organisations to highlight their work with faith communities or to grow that. Likewise it is a great opportunity to encourage learning about people's faiths and beliefs within the workplace or in contexts such as sport. For schools, it is a valuable time to do special focus RE projects

Inter Faith Week does not have an annual theme. However, event organisers may like to know that the week before will see COP26 (the UN Climate Change Conference), so some may be interested to pick up in some way on its focus of the climate and issues of sustainability.

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

COP26: Merseyside Interfaith Month

With the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Faith Leaders Network, the Diocese of Liverpool and Wirral Council's Cool climate change strategy, Faiths4Change is leading a Merseyside

Interfaith Month from 21 March to 21 April. In the year that the UK will host the G7 summit in July and the critical COP26 climate change conference in November, the campaign is focused on a shared 'Journey to COP26'. The aims of the month are to: 1. Encourage faith-led environmental action; 2. Give tools and support to those who are already active; and 3. Connect conversations, across the region and across faiths.

During the month, they are: inviting faith communities to pledge to take 3 simple actions; offering training on carbon literacy and Hope For The Future training on how to engage MPs; and offering networking opportunities. They are also sharing local actions, ideas and inspiration online and through shared conversations. <https://www.faiths4change.org.uk/journey-to-cop26.html>

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Religious literacy videos and podcasts

A number of local inter faith groups and others are using videos and podcasts to promote inter faith understanding and religious literacy. Lancashire Forum of Faiths, for example, has created a series of special interview videos with members of the faiths in question giving insight into these <https://www.facebook.com/LancsFaiths/>, and Walsall For All has created a Faith to Faith podcast series <https://anchor.fm/faith-meeting-faith> which aims to promote people of all faiths living in Walsall by offering listeners a chance to sit back and hear someone else's story.

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St Philip's Centre intergenerational linking project

The St Philip's Centre has received a grant from The Dunhill Medical Trust to deliver an Intergenerational Linking project in Leicester. This project is part of 'Care Home Friends and Neighbours: Intergenerational Linking' – a national initiative from My Home Life England and The Linking Network, linking young people from schools and youth organisations with older people living in care homes across England. Leicester is unique in its diversity and this Leicester Intergenerational Linking Project hopes to build cross-generational connections between and within communities, challenge stereotypes and repair divisions exposed and exaggerated by COVID-19.

<https://www.stphilipscentre.co.uk/node/43>

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Faith and Belief Forum projects in Barking and Birmingham

A government-funded dialogue project run by the Faith & Belief Forum (F&BF) has connected people from different communities online at a time when social distancing has left many feeling isolated. Supported by a grant from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, the Building Closer Communities project has brought

together people of different faiths and beliefs in Birmingham and the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham. Through the dialogue project, many communities that live alongside each other without many opportunities to interact have had authentic conversations and got to know each other for the first time. The project, delivered by F&BF in partnership with The Feast between November 2020 and March 2021, has enabled people to meet, share and explore issues related to faith, belief, and culture through interactive online sessions. More information can be found at

<https://faithbeliefforum.org/dialogue-project-builds-trust-between-faith-and-belief-communities-during-lockdown/>.

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Loving Earth Project

The Loving Earth Project, run in partnership with Quaker Arts Network and Woodbrooke, is a community craft project to celebrate people, places, and things that are loved but which are threatened by growing environmental and climate breakdown. The Loving Earth Project aims to help a wide range of people engage with the challenges of living more sustainably, through arts and crafts, and encourages craft groups, faith groups, community groups, and any interested individuals to get involved. More information, including on free online workshops to get started, can be found at <https://lovingearth-project.uk>.

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

Modest Fashion in UK Women's Working Life

The report of the Modest Fashion in UK Women's Working Life project of the University of Arts London and Coventry University has now been published. This report discusses the findings of a study on how religiously-related modest fashion and associated behaviours impact on women's working lives – regardless of their own religious or secular background or beliefs. It also contains recommendations aimed at the fashion industry and employers. The report is available at <https://www.arts.ac.uk/research/current-research-and-projects/curation-and-culture/modest-fashion-in-uk-womens-working-life2>.

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CCJ - Virtual Tour of Places of Worship

Council of Christians and Jews Student Leaders at the University of Oxford have created a Virtual Tour of places of worship. This tour invites you to see inside religious buildings around the country and discover some of the religious artefacts inside. The Student Leaders are grateful to the following places for virtually opening their doors: Lincoln Central Mosque and Cultural Centre, Wiltshire Methodist Church, Oxford Jewish

Congregation, BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir, and Manchester Gurdwara. The tour can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Y2J50lXl2c&t=80s>.

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University Chaplaincy during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Theos has recently published a report on *Relationships, Presence and Hope: University Chaplaincy during the COVID-19 Pandemic*. Chaplains and faith advisors have been on the frontline of the pandemic. This report captures the experience of higher education chaplaincy during the pandemic, drawing on interviews with 16 chaplains from universities across the UK. It explores the unique contributions of chaplains during this time, the challenges they have faced, and what lessons can be learned by chaplains and employers. The report is available at

<https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/research/2021/02/12/relationships-presence-and-hope-university-chaplaincy-during-the-covid19-pandemic>.

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Dealing with Grief video series

The Naz Legacy Foundation has launched a Dealing with Grief video series, which explores the impact Covid-19 has had on faith communities across England and aims to inform, educate and support people who are grieving. Throughout the series, they speak to different faith leaders and families on how the pandemic has impacted on the way they grieve. The series can be found on the Naz Legacy Foundation YouTube channel at

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLqff_sbdKcLzwtXLySLI0kwJRuQBMYc2.

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Connected Communities: Churches Responding to Prejudice Against Jews and Judaism

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland and the Council of Christians and Jews have produced a resource, *Connected Communities: Churches Responding to Prejudice Against Jews and Judaism*, for Christians to learn more about Jewish-Christian dialogue, antisemitism, and anti-Judaism. The intent is “to grow appreciation for the connections that have linked Christians and Jews for the last two thousand years, to equip local churches to engage in Jewish-Christian dialogue, and to cultivate esteem for Judaism in Irish and British churches.” The resource can be downloaded at

<https://ctbi.org.uk/responding-to-prejudice-against-jews/>.

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Interreligious Insight

The World Congress of Faiths (WCF), an IFN member body, publishes a twice-yearly journal, *Interreligious Insight*. This brings together articles from inter faith thinkers and practitioners around the world and is used as a resource by academics and many others. Contributions to the WCF's annual Younghusband Lecture are reproduced (most recently, examining attitudes to science within Hinduism, Christianity and Islam); and there is a book review section, an editorial from WCF Director, Revd Canon Dr Alan Race, and a poetry section. Annual subscription rates range from £10 to £100 depending on whether the access is online or printed and whether membership of WCF is included. For more information, and to subscribe, visit the WCF website at www.worldfaiths.org.

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Guide to Working Together at the Local Level

The Faith and Belief Forum has launched a new resource, which is a Guide to Working Together at the Local Level. The guide is to improve and to increase partnerships between local authorities and local faith or belief groups. It offers practical advice on how local authorities may better engage, celebrate and collaborate with local faith or belief groups; and how local faith or belief groups and other local groups may better contribute to local decision making and to more connected and cohesive local communities. <https://faithbeliefforum.org/resources/guide-working-together-local-level/>

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The Feast Guidelines for Dialogue

The Feast has been releasing a series of videos of its Guidelines for Dialogue in action to show how they are used and interpreted by young people.

<https://twitter.com/the FeastProject> The Guidelines for Dialogue can be found at <https://the Feast.org.uk/resources#guidelines>.

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Faith & Belief Forum ParliaMentors programme

The Faith & Belief Forum's ParliaMentors programme enables teams of university students of different faiths and non-religious beliefs to collaborate to create social change while being mentored by an MP. The programme is fully funded and supported throughout the academic year. Applications are welcomed from students who identify with a faith or belief (religious or not) and aspire to become political or community leaders. Applications are now open to anyone who will be a current student in the 2021/22 academic year at one of nine listed universities in England. The deadline is 5 April. For more information, and to apply, visit <https://faithbeliefforum.org/programme/parliamentors/>.

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IFN Digital surgery slots for local inter faith groups

IFN is continuing to make available during April and May a number of free digital ‘surgery’ slots for local inter faith groups. These are 20 minutes slots for IFN member local inter faith groups to ring and have a conversation about their group’s use of digital communications and how they strengthen this. There are also some spaces available for other local inter faith groups; there is no charge for non-members, however a donation is welcome.

Any local inter faith group interested in booking a slot can email Ashley Beck via ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

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Near Neighbours – Diverting2Digital

The Near Neighbours programme of the Church Urban Fund is offering a pair of free workshops on ‘Diverting2Digital’ to help groups to make the move online and harness the platforms and tools available. The Introductory Workshop is designed for individuals with little experience online. The Advanced Workshop is aimed at organisations that use online tools and services but who feel they could be upskilled or use these more effectively to grow their audience. For more information, visit <https://www.near-neighbours.org.uk/diverting2digital>.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS, AND NOMINATIONS

Calls for information

Status Now 4 All

The Status Now Network is a coalition of over 100 organisations and community action groups which are campaigning for “Status Now 4 All undocumented migrants and migrants in the legal process.” They are seeking to make contact with faith leaders who may know people who are undocumented, seeking asylum, or otherwise without settled status. They are inviting organisations to sign their campaign letter which can be found at <https://statusnow4all.org/about-status-now/>.

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Competitions

Maidstone Photographic Art Competition

Maidstone Inter-Faith Network is organising a photographic art competition. The competition is open to anyone aged 18 years or over and the theme is 'Spring or Renewal'. Entries can be submitted until 12 April. More details are on the MIFN website at www.mifn.org.uk.

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Nominations

Honours Nominations for New Year 2022

Each year a number of people receive Honours for services to inter faith work or community cohesion.

The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) says that it is keen to recognise individuals who have contributed to building integrated communities and notes that nominees can come from all levels; being in a junior role is not a barrier to a nomination. All nominations must be made on an official citation form and nominees should not be informed that they have been nominated. The deadline for nominations is 15 April. For more information, email honours@communities.gsi.gov.uk.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

Inter Faith Network for the UK - Volunteers

The Inter Faith Network for the UK currently has some opportunities for online volunteers who would like to offer 4-8 hours a week to help on different aspects of IFN's work to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. To express an interest in volunteering, please complete the application form at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/volunteering/>.

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St Ethelburga's Centre – Various roles

The St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace is currently advertising for a Communications Project Assistant (paid internship), as well as a number of volunteering roles - Programme impact coordinator, Video and stories internship and Communications and design internship. Further information on all these posts is at <https://stethelburgas.org/get-involved/vacancies-and-volunteering/>.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

COVID-19 funding

The Charities Aid Foundation has collated a list of organisations which are supporting charities and voluntary groups at this time. <https://www.cafonline.org/covid-19-support/help-for-charities#tab1>

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Interfaith Scotland grants for places of worship

Interfaith Scotland is offering, through Government support, funds of up to £500 to places of worship that are struggling to meet the safety requirements of re-opening their buildings and safely holding services (within the Government Guidelines). With discretion, the funds can also be used to assist in keeping open places that have managed their initial outlay with regard to safely reopening their place of worship but are now struggling to keep up the measures required to stay open. The funding criteria for areas of support is primarily so that religious buildings can re-open safely and stay open during this critical stage in the pandemic and that places of worship remain connected to those that are still too vulnerable to come to places of worship. For more information, email frances@interfaithscotland.org.

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Windrush Compensation Scheme

The Windrush Compensation Scheme is open to those who settled in the UK from a Commonwealth country before 1973, and in certain circumstances their children and grandchildren. Claim forms can be downloaded and guidance on completing the application can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/windrush-compensation-scheme>. Claimants can also request a form to be sent by post by calling the helpline on 0800 678 1925 or via email WindrushCompensationScheme@homeoffice.gov.uk where they can also request a call back if they are overseas.

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Faith in Community Scotland – A Wee Boost

Faith in Community Scotland is an anti-poverty charity founded in 2005. They support individuals and faith groups in Scotland's poorest neighbourhoods to achieve the difference that they are capable of. They do this through training, resources and funding which helps to build people's skill and to increase their confidence. They are currently running 'A Wee Boost' grant scheme with small grants of up to £300 to local faith groups

and related community anchor organisations. For more information, visit <https://www.faithincommunity.scot/aweeboost>.

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Listed Places of Worship grant scheme

The Listed Places of Worship (LPW) Grant Scheme gives grants that cover the VAT incurred in making repairs to listed buildings in use as places of worship. The scheme covers repairs to the fabric of the building, along with associated professional fees, plus repairs to turret clocks, pews, bells and pipe organs. The Grant Scheme is run by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and administered by Topmark. For more information, visit <http://www.lpwscheme.org.uk/>.

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FCC Community Action Fund

The FCC Communities Foundation is offering grants between £2,000 and £100,000 for projects which involve the provision, maintenance or improvement of public amenities including community spaces in places of worship, which are registered charities. Projects must be based within 10 miles of an eligible FCC Environment waste facility. The next round closes on 21 June. For more information, visit <https://fcccommunitiesfoundation.org.uk/funds/fcc-community-action-fund>.

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Funding websites

Funding Central <http://www.fundingcentral.org.uk> has announced that it will be closing on 31 March. Information about this and alternative sources of information, can be found at https://www.fundingcentral.org.uk/page.aspx?SP=FAQs_Changes.

Similar websites for funding in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at Funding Scotland - <http://www.fundingscotland.com/> - Wales Council for Voluntary Action - <http://www.wcva.org.uk/funding/search> - and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland - <https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

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Subsidised fundraising workshops

The Foundation for Social Improvement offers subsidised training programmes for small charities across the UK. The courses cover a wide range of subjects from event planning to leadership. Many of the courses focus on fundraising and sustainability skills in particular. Further information and dates for upcoming courses, now being held online, can be found at <http://www.thefsi.org/services/training>.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

The Big Lunch will take place from 5-6 June. Across the years millions of people from different backgrounds have joined together to take part through street parties, BBQs, iftars and picnics. <https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/the-big-lunch-faqs> This year's Big Lunch will also kick off a Month of Community, offering a feast of opportunities to share friendship and fun, and make positive local connections where you live.

Refugee Week will take place from Monday 14 to Sunday 20 June. Refugee Week is a nationwide programme of arts, cultural and educational events that celebrate the contribution of refugees to the UK, and encourages a better understanding between communities. The theme for the 2021 Week is 'We cannot walk alone'.
<https://refugeeweek.org.uk/>

The Great Get Together, inspired by the late Jo Cox MP, is taking place from Friday 18 to Sunday 20 June. <https://www.greatgettogether.org/>

Srebrenica Memorial Day takes place each year on 11 July. This year's theme is 'Rebuilding Lives'. It is organised by Remembering Srebrenica.
<http://www.srebrenica.org.uk/>

National Hate Crime Awareness Week takes place from Saturday 9 October to Saturday 16 October. <https://nationalhcaw.uk/>

One World Week will take place from Sunday 17 to Sunday 24 October.
www.oneworldweek.org

Scottish Interfaith Week Scottish Interfaith Week is led by Interfaith Scotland. Dates for this year's Week are due to be announced shortly. www.scottishinterfaithweek.org

Inter Faith Week, in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, will take place from Sunday 14 to Sunday 21 November. www.interfaithweek.org

Mitzvah Day will take place on Sunday 21 November. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Jewish community where people give their time to make a difference to the community around them. Many events and projects held for the day have an inter faith focus. www.mitzvahday.org.uk/

Sewa Day is a day of faith-based social action led by the Hindu community. It normally takes place on 4 dates across the year. Due to COVID there are currently no fixed days; rather, 'every day is Sewa day' and volunteers are helping people continually as they are able. <https://sewaday.org/>

VisitMyMosque Day is a national campaign facilitated by the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) that encourages mosques across the UK to hold an open day to welcome in their neighbours from all faiths and none. Details on this year's date are yet to be announced. <https://www.visitmymosque.org/>

**SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK
TO INCREASE INTER FAITH UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION**

Earlier this year an Appeal was launched <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/donate> to support and strengthen IFN's work for inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. Thank you so much to those who have already kindly contributed through this or through a different route. If you have not, but appreciate this e-bulletin and the work of IFN and would like to do so, that would be most welcome.

Gifts at all levels are much valued and make a real difference. You can donate directly at www.interfaith.org.uk/donate which includes credit card and PayPal options. Donations can also be made by sending a cheque payable to 'The Inter Faith Network' to: The Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH.

Thank you!

REMEMBERING A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND

If you would like to make a gift in memory of a loved one, please get in touch by emailing remember@interfaith.org.uk or call us on 0207 730 0410.

A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

By leaving a gift in your will to the Inter Faith Network for the UK, you can leave a living inheritance to help deepen and strengthen inter faith understanding and cooperation in this country – for now and for the future. If you are thinking about making a will, the best thing to do is to get in touch with a professional will writer, such as a solicitor or advocate; they can help to ensure it is legally correct and that your wishes are met. If you have already made a will, you can still make an addition or amendment in the form of a codicil. If you would like to pledge a gift, please provide our name and address, along with our registered charity number 1068934.

Please get in touch with us if you have any queries.
You can call us on 0207 730 0410 or contact us at remember@interfaith.org.uk

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DIARY DATES

In light of COVID-19 many events have had to be cancelled or postponed. Some events are instead taking place online. A few examples of forthcoming events are listed below. Events are also listed on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/events>.

York Interfaith Group is holding its next meeting on Tuesday 6 April. Dr Hooshmand Badee, an academic economist, will be speaking on 'The role of Faith in solving Economic problems'. The meeting begins at 7.30pm. For more information, email yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com.

Havering Interfaith Forum is holding its next meeting on Tuesday 6 April. This will begin at 6pm with the AGM and will be followed by talks and discussion on 'Faith and Hate Crime Through the Ages'. For more information, email haveringinterfaithforum@gmail.com.

The **St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace** is holding an event on Wednesday 7 April entitled 'Outside the Echo Chamber: Reimagining Britain in a Changing World – Reconciliation and the role of outsiders'. This will be considering 'What is the role of outsiders when seeking reconciliation to conflict?'. The speaker will be career diplomat, Sir Richard Stagg, on his experience of working in Afghanistan and Bulgaria during times of conflict. It takes place from 10.30am to 11.30am. For more information, and to register, visit https://stethelburgas.org/event/otec-sirrichardstagg/?mc_cid=cfedd5382f&mc_eid=91aaa813ea.

The **Inter-faith Council for Wales** is holding an event on Thursday 8 April to celebrate 3 April festivals: Passover, Easter and Vaisakhi. The event is being held from 7pm to 8.15pm. For more information, and to register, email post@cytun.cymru.

Interfaith MK is holding its next meeting on Thursday 8 April on 'Women of Faith – and I'. Christa Rennie and Joan Harris will be co-hosting the meeting that will be exploring women's contributions in faith traditions. The meeting begins at 7.30pm. For more information, contact interfaithmk@gmail.com.

Nisa-Nashim Jewish-Muslim Women's Network is holding an event on Thursday 8 April entitled 'Fasting and Culture: Ramadan'. Salma Hamid, co-chair of the Nisa-Nashim West Midlands group, will demonstrate a delicious recipe, and Kalsoom Bashir, Muslim Chaplain and safeguarding officer at Avon and Somerset police, will talk through the role of fasting during Ramadan. The event will be held from 8pm to 9.15pm. For more information, and to register, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/ramadan-fasting-and-culture-tickets-148639842771>.

As part of the call from Quakers in Britain to 'Join together remotely and share our belief in the sacredness of all life, ahead of the UN climate talks, COP26' (<https://quaker.org.uk/events/journey-to-cop26-un-climate-talks>), **Cornwall Faith Forum** are hoping to walk on Saturday 10 April from Kenwyn, Truro, to the Dor Kemmyn Peace

Field at Penmount. They will be meeting at 10.30 am at Kenwyn Church, Truro and will be adhering to Covid restrictions. Participants are invited to register by contacting Rita Stephen at dorkemmyrn.rita@btinternet.com or on 07775 937485 or by emailing cornwall.faithforum@truro.anglican.org.

Near Neighbours, in partnership with **Faiths Together in Lambeth**, is hosting a series of online inter faith dialogue sessions called Connected Conversations. The next one is being held on Tuesday 13 April at 11am. For more information, email ftil@hotmail.co.uk.

Council of Christians and Jews (Leeds Branch) will be holding its next meeting on Wednesday 14 April. The Revd George Lane and Alan Benstock will be speaking on 'Looking for God....No, just the car park - the work of the Airport Chaplains'. The meeting begins at 8pm. For more information, email cj.leedsmeetings@hotmail.co.uk.

Faith for the Climate is holding a public webinar on Thursday 15 April on 'Making COP26 count as UK faith groups'. This webinar presents actions that can be taken this year to make a difference. It is open to all, and will be particularly useful for community faith leaders and individuals who have environmental/sustainability portfolios with their congregations or faith-based organisations. It is being held at 2pm. For more information, and to register, visit https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_mFiyjJwUS6Kaw0pljGppzw.

Woking Action for Peace, Friends of the Earth, Surrey Faith Links, Woking LA21, Woking Quakers and **Woking People of Faith** are holding the next Woking Debate on Saturday 17 April. The topic is 'What value is arms and military expenditure to the UK?'. The event will take place online from 11am to 12.30pm. For more information, visit www.wokingdebates.com. For joining details, contact Keith Scott at ketihscc_2000@yahoo.com or on 01483 824980.

York Interfaith Group will be joining a virtual inter faith tour on Sunday 18 April. Called 'Sea to Sea', the virtual tour will be a visual trek across northern Israel from the Mediterranean sea to the sea of Galilee. It is being held from 7pm to 9pm. For more information, and to book, visit <https://www.sinaileeds.uk/calendar/sea-to-sea-virtual-experience-2>.

Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship is holding its next meeting on Monday 19 April. The topic will be 'Holy Places in Judaism' with presentations by Hilary Curwen and Hannah Bloom. The meeting begins at 7.30pm. For more information, visit www.concord-leeds.org.uk.

Woking People of Faith is planning an Interfaith Football Tournament for Saturday 22 May. For more information, contact administrator@wpof.org.uk.

More information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org.uk

IFN also carries news and information at www.twitter.com/IFNetUK
www.facebook.com/IFNetUK and, about Inter Faith Week, at <https://twitter.com/IFweek>
and www.facebook.com/IFWeek.

You can sign up to IFN mailings at any time by using the form on IFN's website at:
www.interfaith.org.uk/news/gdpr or let us know that you would like to unsubscribe by
using the links at the bottom of the cover email.

Submissions for next issue

If you have items about projects or future events which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk **by 12 May** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer: Information in this e-bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH
www.interfaith.org.uk www.facebook.com/IFNetUK www.twitter.com/IFNetUK

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IFN e-bulletin

June 2021

Welcome to the e-bulletin of the Inter Faith Network for the UK www.interfaith.org.uk. It is published every two months and it highlights primarily new developments, projects and future events. You can read by scrolling through or you can go directly to an individual section or item by clicking on links in the list below.

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

COVID-19 and faith community response to local needs

Faith communities have continued to respond to the needs of their congregations and wider society during the pandemic, contributing to the development of relevant policy and guidance; keeping places of worship as Covid-secure as possible; and providing resources

and guidance. They have also continued, with many volunteers inspired by the teachings of their faith, to provide a lifeline to many hit by food poverty, homelessness, debt and other problems exacerbated by the pandemic. Examples of different dimensions of the faith and inter faith response can be seen at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/covid-19>, including recent 'acts of kindness' - from churches in Wrexham distributing gardening tools and seeds to enable people to grow their own fruit and vegetables to Ipswich Buddhist Centre helping the Suffolk Baby Hub find much needed baby food and supplies.

The Queen's Birthday Honours List included recognition for a number of 'Covid heroes', including some linked to faith and inter faith initiatives, for example Chair of the Muslim Charities Forum, Fadi Itani OBE. There has also been honouring of contributors through routes such as: the 'Points of Light' awards, where recent recipients have included Neil Shonchhatra, who has been donating thousands of meals and items of food to frontline NHS workers and nursing homes throughout the pandemic, sourcing food donations from local businesses and cooking up meals at Slough Temple. Some counties, such as Northamptonshire, and local authorities, such as Fareham and Wokingham, have been running their own schemes.

You can watch at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/videos-from-ifn-2021-national-meeting-faith-communities-and-covid-19-learning-from-the-journey> presentations about some of the amazing responses from faith volunteers, including from the Salvation Army, the Sikh Foodbank and Nottingham Sewa Day.

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Faith communities and vaccination

Vaccination programmes continue to be rolled out across the UK. Faith communities are continuing to support the rollout in different ways, with places of worship being used as vaccination centres and faith communities and inter faith groups holding events and discussions to provide information about the vaccines. Examples can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/covid-19-and-vaccination>. The urgency of this has increased again with the rise in cases of the highly transmissible Delta variant.

The UK Government has launched a social media campaign to tackle false vaccine information, which includes messages from faith leaders. <https://dcmsblog.uk/check-before-you-share-toolkit/> These posts include simple tips on how to critically analyse sources, spot false information and help stop its spread, checking before you share, signposting to the NHS as the best source of information. Faith leaders in a number of areas have also made their own videos, for example Rabbi Daniel Walker from Heaton Park Hebrew Congregation in Salford. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gvXTiM5ftVI> A new study from King's College London and Bristol University finds that there has now been an increase in confidence in the vaccine in many groups but this is not consistent

across all groups. <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/policy-institute/assets/covid-19-vaccine-take-up-and-trust.pdf>

Use of vaccination ‘passports’ or ‘certification’ has for some while been under discussion as part of considering how to reopen society. Concerns have been expressed by some about the civil liberty and equality implications of vaccine passports. MPs on the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee took the view that such passports would ‘disproportionately discriminate’ based on race, religion, age and socio-economic background and that Covid passports would be discriminatory and the idea should be scrapped. <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/327/public-administration-and-constitutional-affairs-committee/news/155788/no-justification-for-covid-passports-say-committee/> The Government is continuing to consider their use for large events. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-57450600>

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COVID-19 and safe use of places of worship

England

On 14 June the Prime Minister gave a statement on coronavirus and confirmed a four-week delay to step four of the UK Government’s roadmap for England until 19 July due to concerns caused by the Delta variant and to allow for more people to receive their second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine before further easing of restrictions takes place.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-statement-at-coronavirus-press-conference-14-june-2021>

There will, however, be a change from 21 June in numbers allowed to attend weddings, receptions, and commemorative events including wakes. The number of people able to attend such events will now be determined by the number that can be safely accommodated in the venue with social distancing in place.

There has been no change announced to the guidance on use of places of worship (last updated 24 May). <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic-from-4-july/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-from-2-december>

Scotland

The Scottish Government guidance on the use of places of worship was updated on 11 June. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-phase-3-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship/> The number of people who can attend weddings, funerals and post-ceremony events is dependent on the Tier Level of the location.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-funeral-services/> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-tourism-and-hospitality-sector-guidance/pages/wedding-receptions-and-funeral-wakes/>

Wales

The Welsh Government guidance on the use of places of worship was updated on 14 May. <https://gov.wales/guidance-reopening-places-worship-coronavirus> The limit on numbers for weddings and funerals, in venues that are allowed to be open, is determined by the size of the venue and is dependent on whether it is a ‘regulated’ event organised by a business or not. <https://gov.wales/restrictions-7-june-2021-frequently-asked-questions#section-67279>

Northern Ireland

The Northern Ireland Executive guidance on the use of places of worship is at <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-places-worship>. The number permitted to attend funerals, weddings and civil partnerships and post ceremony gatherings is to be informed by a risk assessment for the venue and, if being held in a private dwelling, must comply with the domestic setting regulations. <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-regulations-guidance-what-restrictions-mean-you>

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Building back from COVID-19

Faith Action recently published a blog on findings from its Faith Covid focus groups across the last year. <https://www.faithaction.net/blog/2021/06/10/one-year-on-findings-from-our-faith-covid-focus-groups/> It held a briefing event for faith communities on 16 June, where members of the places of worship taskforce and public health officials will present some thoughts on how best to move forward through the final phase of the roadmap, followed by an opportunity for Q&A and discussion.

Over the last months, the Good Faith Partnership has been working with faith leaders and community organisers to analyse the immense work that faith communities have undertaken to support communities during the pandemic. The report on their work was launched virtually on 17 June by the Rt Revd Sarah Mullally, Bishop of London, Danny Kruger, MP for Devizes, and Baron Stephen Greenhalgh, the Minister of State, Housing, Communities and Local Government. The report highlights the social impact of faith communities in their assistance to vulnerable communities during the pandemic, explores the current state of collaboration between faith communities and government, and makes recommendations on how the government can aid and accelerate the positive impact of faith communities on society going forward. <https://goodfaith.org.uk/case-studies/stepping-up-and-stepping-out-towards-a-future-social-covenant-between-faith-communities-and-government-in-covid-19-recovery-and-beyond>

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Thank You Day – 4 July

‘Thank You Day’ is a UK-wide initiative, taking place on Sunday 4 July, inviting people to get together to say thank you to one another, to family members, key workers, good neighbours and volunteers. <https://thankyouday.org.uk/> There is a guide with possible activities for faith organisations that can be downloaded at <https://thankyouday.org.uk/create-your-own/>.

Thank You Day has a particular link to the pandemic and how people have responded. It is managed by the Together Initiative. <https://together.org.uk/> It is supported by the Inter Faith Network.

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Faith communities, climate change and the environment

COP26

COP26 will take place (Covid-19 restrictions permitting) in Glasgow from 1-12 November. Make COP Count, an informal group of representatives from different faith communities working together on advocacy, hospitality and action ahead of COP26, has been carrying out a number of campaigns. The group is co-ordinated through Faith for the Climate. <https://makecopcount.org/>

Ahead of the G7 meeting, an inter faith event was livestreamed from Truro Cathedral <https://www.trurocathedral.org.uk/whats-on/cafod-g7-interfaith-event-building-a-better-world-after-the-pandemic-thu-10-jun-2021-07-00-pm>, arranged by CAFOD (Catholic Agency for Overseas Development) with others. Its focus was on putting a message across to the leaders about a global and green recovery from the pandemic crisis that leaves no one behind. Also, a number of figures from faith communities called on the UK government to use its Presidency of the G7 and of UN climate talks (COP26) to drive progress on addressing the climate crisis. <https://faithfortheclimate.org.uk/newsitem/Faith-groups-call-for-G7-Summit-to-use-power-wisely-1277>

Interfaith Scotland has made this year a year of Climate Action and is hosting a monthly series of Facebook Live panel discussions with keynote speakers from different faiths discussing various aspects of the climate crisis from a multi-faith perspective. It has also produced a briefing for faith communities about getting involved, <https://interfaithscotland.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Briefing-for-Faith-Communities-and-Actions-for-COP26-updated-24-May-21.pdf>, as well as other resources, <https://interfaithscotland.org/climate-action-resources>. With Interfaith Glasgow it held an event in May, ‘How faith communities can engage with COP26’, the video of which can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ewkd8K9GXTo>.

Faith for the Climate and Faiths Together in Lambeth are jointly hosting a series of 5 workshops between 25 June and 6 July in and around London Climate Action Week for faith communities to get ready for COP26. They will include ‘Relationship building’, ‘Skills sessions’ and ‘Reflection and Next Steps. www.faithfortheclimate.org.uk/events

From 18-26 September Climate Fringe Week will be taking place. It is for Scotland-based individuals, groups or organisations, celebrating and supporting the work that is already happening across the Scottish Climate Movement, whilst also giving people new to climate campaigning and action an easy way to get involved. More about that can be found on the Climate Fringe website which provides a platform for all of civil society to share events and connect around Climate Change and COP26. <https://climatefringe.org/week/>

Faith community initiatives and climate change

A number of faith community initiatives such as the Bahu Trust, Christian Climate Action, Eco Dharma Network, IFEES/EcoIslam, EcoSikh, EcoSynagogue and Hindu Climate Action have produced resources to engage and equip faith communities for action on climate change. <https://faithfortheclimate.org.uk/Faith-Resources>

The Queen’s Green Canopy

Faith leaders have recently come together in a video to share what trees mean to them and their faiths and to encourage everyone to plant a tree for the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee next year. <https://queensgreencanopy.org/>
<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/queen-katherine-grainger-justin-welby-prince-of-wales-people-b935675.html>

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Hate crime and overseas event impacts

On 20 May IFN’s Co-Chairs and Faith Communities Forum Moderators issued a statement on ‘Responding to inter faith impacts of overseas events.’

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/statement-from-ifn-co-chairs-and-fcf-moderators-responding-to-inter-faith-impacts-of-overseas-events>

“There are times when political and other events overseas have a significant and distressing impact on communities here in the UK and on relationships between them. Recent events in Israel and Gaza have seen significant impacts in the UK: antisemitic incidents, such as the megaphone abuse from a car driving through an area of North London last weekend; a car ramming of a pro-Palestinian march in Nottingham, many of those marching in which were Muslims; bullying by children in some schools; some reports of worsened campus relations; and increased abusive social media posts. These kinds of experience can bring vulnerability and fear – particularly if they come in the context of long term experiences of prejudice or tensions.

At such times, the right of people to express their strongly held views is recognised, as is its importance. At the same time, we call for expression of views in peaceful and respectful ways; for increased dialogue and practical actions such as fundraising to help those affected; for support for children and others particularly vulnerable to swirling and sometimes frightening currents of argument and accusation; and for holding fast to long established relationships of trust that have been built across many years.”

A statement from the IFN Co-Chairs and the Moderators of IFN's Faith Communities Forum

This followed an earlier brief message from the Co-Chairs of IFN which referred back to earlier relevant statements. IFN, under its statement making policy, does not comment on overseas events except in the context of likely impact on inter faith relations in the UK. This is not out of lack of commitment or concern; it reflects a position agreed early in IFN's existence and reaffirmed regularly since. On this particular occasion, there was significant concern about the impact on relationships in the UK and the statement reflects this.

A number of inter faith organisations with an international dimension to their focus or policies that allow direct comment on international issues either made statements or highlighted relevant resources, for example local inter faith bodies in the London Borough of Barnet, Blackburn, Leicester and Woking and organisations such as Solutions Not Sides. There were also events such as a listening event arranged by FODIP; a rally for peace of Muslim and Jewish women arranged by Nisa Nashim, <https://www.hamhigh.co.uk/news/nisa-nashim-women-rally-in-hampstead-8002004>, and a prayer meeting arranged by Interfaith Scotland.

During the period in question, antisemitic incidents were reported as increasing 500%. Robert Jenrick, Communities Secretary, denounced a series of attacks that took place over the weekend of 15 to 16 May as “racist and extremely serious crimes” and told the Commons that “No-one could fail to be appalled by the disgraceful scenes of antisemitic abuse being directed at members of the Jewish community in the past week.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/anti-semitic-comments-uk-robert-jenrick-b1848890.html> Analysis by the Community Service Trust (CST), which campaigns against and monitors antisemitism in Britain, found that there had been 116 incidents between 8 and 18 May. Of these, almost all involved language, imagery or behaviour that linked them to the conflict in Israel and Gaza. 34 were online and 82 offline, most of which involved verbal abuse directed at Jewish people. <https://inews.co.uk/news/anti-semitic-hate-crimes-in-britain-rise-500-during-10-days-of-israel-palestine-tensions-1009374>

More generally, hate incidents, as well as prejudice and discrimination linked to religious identity continues to be an issue of significant concern in the UK to many communities. In response to a written question from Narendra Vishnu MP, about what steps the Government is taking to tackle Hinduphobia in the UK, Minister Luke Hall responded: “The Government is committed to tackling hatred against people of all faiths, including the

Hindu community. The Hate Crime Action Plan (2016) and Refresh (2018) set out our plans to tackle hatred directed at anyone for their race, religion, sexuality, disability or gender identity, which includes raising awareness of hate crime and encouraging reporting. We are now looking at ways to renew our strategy and will be engaging with a wide range of stakeholders from religious communities.”

<https://www.theyworkforyou.com/wrans/?id=2021-06-07.11691.h>

A report by an independent inquiry into Islamophobia in the UK’s Conservative party has found institutional failings in how it handled complaints of anti-Muslim prejudice.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/conservative-party-racism-inquiry-islamophobia-b1853354.html>

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Places of worship and security

Places of Worship Security Scheme – England and Wales

The Places of Worship Protective Security Scheme was a key commitment of the Government’s 2016-2020 Hate Crime Action Plan. It enables places of worship to install measures such as protective alarms, security lighting and access controls.

The sixth round of the Places of Worship Protective Security Funding Scheme is now open for applications. The Home Office will cover 100% of the costs for up to 3 security measures worth a maximum total of £56,000. The scheme is open to places of worship and associated faith community centres (defined as a community centre run by a place of worship or near a place of worship that is faith based, and where regular worship takes place) across England and Wales.

The closing date is 2 July. Further details including how to apply are at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/places-of-worship-security-funding-scheme>.

Scottish Hate Crime Security Fund

Individual places of worship and religious organisational bodies in Scotland, can apply for funding through the Scottish Government and Police Scotland's new Hate Crime Security Fund, to help combat hate crime against places of worship. Applications are welcomed from individual places of worship of all faiths which can demonstrate their vulnerability to hate crime - whether or not a crime has been committed or reported to the police. Grants of up to £20,000 are available to cover part or all of proposed security measures and improvements. The closing date is 21 July. Further details including how to apply are at <https://www.impactfundingpartners.com/open-applications/hate-crime-security-fund>.

Security at publicly accessible locations, including places of worship

The Home Office is seeking views on how the Protect Duty can make the public safer at publicly accessible locations. This consultation is about how legislation might be used to

enhance the protection of publicly accessible locations across the UK from terrorist attacks and to ensure organisational preparedness.

A publicly accessible location is defined in the consultation as any place to which the public or any section of the public has access, on payment or otherwise, as of right or by virtue of express or implied permission. This includes places of worship and there are a series of proposed new requirements which would apply to places of worship accommodating 100+ people. Concerns have been expressed that the proposed legislation could bring a time and cost burden and also disproportionately affect faith organisations which depend heavily on volunteers. <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2021/21-may/news/uk/archdeacon-of-london-warns-of-unintended-consequences-of-terrorism-legislation>
<https://www.eauk.org/what-we-do/public-policy/could-you-respond-to-government-consultations/what-the-proposed-protect-duty-might-mean-for-churches>

The consultation closes on 2 July. The Home Office is seeking views from across the United Kingdom, “since national security is a reserved matter, however it is recognised that developing an effective process and support to implement such legislation would draw on delivery mechanisms and responsibilities within the Devolved Administrations”. Further information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/protect-duty>.

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REPORT HATE CRIME AND WORK TOGETHER TO HELP TACKLE IT

Report hate incidents online through True Vision or via 3rd parties eg Community Security Trust (CST), Tell Mama UK and Stop Hate UK; at a police station; or by ringing the police on 101 (non-emergency) or 999.

<https://gov.uk/report-hate-crime>
<https://www.scotland.police.uk/contact-us/report-hate-crime-and-third-party-reporting/>
<https://reporthate.victimsupport.org.uk/hate-crime/>
<https://www.psnipolice.uk/crime/hate-crime/reporting-a-hate-crime/>

See also IFN's document, in partnership with a number of agencies: *Looking after one another: the safety and security of our faith communities* which includes contact details and lots of practical pointers for working together to counter hate crime, <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/looking-after-one-another-the-safety-and-security-of-our-faith-communities-2017>.

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Anniversary of murder of George Floyd

25 May marked the one year anniversary of the murder of George Floyd by a police officer in Minneapolis. Churches Together in Britain and Ireland initiated a service to mark the event. This included senior church leaders and local Christians and was held at the New Testament Church of God in Brixton, South London. The service remembered the “tragic death of Mr Floyd, as well as challenging churches and communities in Britain and Ireland to stand up for justice and against racism, ignorance and hatred”.

<https://ctbi.org.uk/service-marks-anniversary-of-george-floyd-killing/>

Churches Together in England organised ‘#CandleofJustice: A moment of action’, which invited people to “light a candle, pray for racial justice and commit to taking personal and institutional action to tackle racial injustice in our society and our churches.”

https://cte.org.uk/Articles/610414/Home/News/Latest_news/Candle_of_Justice.aspx

Faith communities are continuing their ongoing work for racial justice. For example the Muslim Council of Britain’s project ‘Proudly Muslim and Black’,

<https://mcb.org.uk/project/proudly-muslim-and-black/>; the Board of Deputies of British Jews’ Commission on Racial Inclusivity, <https://www.bod.org.uk/bod-news/board-of-deputies-publishes-landmark-report-on-racial-inclusivity-in-the-jewish-community/> and the Black Jewish Lives series of the Lyons Learning Project and Jewish Renaissance, <https://www.jewishrenaissance.org.uk/events/jewish-black-lives-matter>.

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Religions education in schools

Welsh Government consultation on religious education

The Welsh Government has published a consultation on religious education in Wales and proposed statutory guidance. <https://gov.wales/guidance-design-and-delivery-mandatory-religion-values-and-ethics-rve> The consultation ends on 16 July.

OFSTED religious education subject review

Ofsted published on 12 May a review of religious education in England. This was the second in a series of reviews into different subjects across the curriculum. It draws on Ofsted’s Education Inspection Framework and other religious education literature to identify what it believes contributes to high-quality RE curriculum, assessment, pedagogy and systems in schools where it inspects RE.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ofsted-publishes-research-review-on-religious-education> Ofsted will be publishing a report in spring 2022 that will focus on the quality of RE curriculums taught in schools.

RE Council for England and Wales – Religion and Worldviews

The RE Council for England and Wales has continued its work on Religion and Worldviews and has published a conversation piece by Dr Kathryn Wright, the Chair of its Education Committee. <https://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/news/religion-and-worldviews-a-conversation/>

Collective Worship in schools in England

In April the Times Educational Supplement published an article on responses from the Schools Minister Nick Gibb MP to a written question about collective worship in schools from Sir John Hayes MP. The minister emphasised the importance of collective worship and that it is a legal requirement. <https://www.tes.com/news/schools-may-be-investigated-over-daily-collective-worship-duty>

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Update on incident at Batley Grammar School

The April issue of IFN’s e-bulletin included information about an incident at Batley Grammar School, whereby a teacher was suspended pending investigation into an incident on 22 March relating to use in an RE lesson of a cartoon of the Prophet Muhammad. It was reported on 27 May that an independent investigation into the incident had concluded that the teaching staff involved in the RE lesson did not intend to cause offence with the image. The school said it would offer more guidance and training for staff. North Kirklees Interfaith issued a statement following the conclusion of the investigation. <https://www.facebook.com/NKInterFaith/posts/195281242448814>

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Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill

On 12 May the Government published the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill. The planned legislation is aimed at protecting the principle of freedom of speech by strengthening existing freedom of speech protections and addressing gaps within the current framework. It will also introduce clear consequences for any breach of the freedom of speech duties.

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INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK NEWS

The Faith Communities Forum

IFN’s Faith Communities Forum brings together national faith community bodies in IFN membership for discussion of issues of common concern.

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/about/faith-communities-forum> On the agenda for its meeting on 26 April were: Faiths, the environment and COP26; COVID-19 and faith

communities including vaccination roll out, vaccination passports and other COVID-19 related matters; Report of the Commission on Race and Ethnic disparities; Other current issues of interest or concern to faith communities; Inter faith engagement of faith communities; and IFN Matters. The first item featured a short opening reflection from Minister David Bruton on the basis in the Spiritualist tradition for addressing climate change, and a presentation by Dr Shanon Shah, Director of Faith for the Climate, on planning for the UN Conference on Climate Change (COP26) this November.

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IFN link meetings for local inter faith groups in Yorkshire and the Humber and South East England

IFN holds meetings for local inter faith groups to share news and good practice and learn from each other's work to strengthen their own and benefit their local areas. Some are for groups from across the UK. Others are for groups within a particular region or a county. They provide an opportunity for sharing of news or programmes and projects being run by each group, including opportunities and challenges. Minutes of previous link meetings can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/about/local-inter-faith-linking>.

The most recent meetings were held on 20 May for local inter faith organisations in Yorkshire and the Humber and on 14 June for local inter faith organisations in South East England.

On the Agenda for the Yorkshire and Humber meeting were: Round table sharing of news, information and ideas (including reflections on how COVID-19 has been shaping activity, COP26 and climate change discussions and activities, and Inter faith Week plans); Support, encouragement and learning from communities, with a presentation by Near Neighbours Coordinator Kaneez Khan; Local inter faith bodies and engagement with schools and other education settings, with a presentation by IFN Assistant Director Dr David Hampshire; and Local inter faith online and digital presence and activity.

On the Agenda for the South East of England meeting were: South East England Faiths Forum, with a talk by its Chair, Kawther Hashmi; Roundtable sharing of news, information and ideas (including impacts of COVID-19, Refugee Week, the lead up to COP26 and Inter Faith Week); Local inter faith bodies and engagement with schools and other education settings, with a presentation by IFN's Assistant Director Dr David Hampshire; and Local inter faith online and digital presence and activity.

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IFN UK meeting with inter faith linking bodies of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

Each year IFN convenes a meeting for IFN with the inter faith linking bodies in the devolved nations – Interfaith Scotland, the Inter Faith Council for Wales/Cyngor Rhyngffydd Cymru

and the Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum. The most recent meeting took place on 10 June. On the Agenda were: Updates on the work of each of the four bodies; COP26 and inter faith engagement; National inter faith linking work post EU exit and in the context of perspectives on independence and union; Inter Faith Week and Scottish Interfaith Week; and IFN Matters.

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Inter Faith Week 14-21 November

17 June marks 150 days to go until Inter Faith Week. The aims of Inter Faith Week are to:

- Strengthen good inter faith relations at all levels;
- Increase awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, celebrating and building on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society; and
- Increase understanding between different people of religious and non-religious beliefs

This year Inter Faith Week www.interfaithweek.org takes place from Sunday 14 to Sunday 21 November. It's a Week for everyone – young and old and of different faiths and beliefs, including non-religious beliefs. Activities benefit those who take part; they also send a strong message that good inter faith relations matter and that there is appreciation of people's faiths and beliefs and how those inspire them to contribute to the community and live well together.

The Week is timed to begin each year on Remembrance Sunday to enable people of different backgrounds to remember together the service of soldiers and civilians of all faiths and beliefs and to reflect on peace.

<https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/remembrance>

Lots of ideas for Inter Faith Week activity can be found at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/ideas> and you can also check out last year's events for inspiration <https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/list-of-all-2020-inter-faith-week-activities>. If you have additional ideas, we would love to hear them! The flyer and poster for the Week can be downloaded at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/publicity-and-branding> and social media resources at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/social-media>.

Follow the Week at @ifweek on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. The Week's hashtag is #InterFaithWeek.

For further information, contact the Inter Faith Week team at interfaithweek@interfaith.org.uk.

Scottish Inter Faith Week

Scottish Interfaith Week is led by Interfaith Scotland and has this year been brought forward to the earlier time of Sunday 31 October – Sunday 7 November to coincide with COP26. <https://scottishinterfaithweek.org/> Its theme this year is Together for our Planet. Follow it on Twitter and Facebook at <https://twitter.com/SIFWEvents> and <https://www.facebook.com/FollowSIFW>.

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IFN COME TOGETHER APPEAL

The Inter Faith Network works for inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK.

Please help us grow this vital work by making a donation at: <https://interfaith.org.uk/appeal> (inc Paypal option).

Donations are used with care to make a real difference. Thank you.

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS AND DEVELOPMENTS

Council of Christians and Jews Inclusion and Diversity project

In May the Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ) began a new Inclusion and Diversity project. This aims to “twin Black majority Christian congregations and synagogues in towns and cities across the country, set up an oversight group for the project, and host one national event”. There is financial support from CCJ available which twinned pairs of synagogues and churches can use to publicise and host events. For more information, visit <https://ccj.org.uk/InclusionandDiversityProject>.

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Woolf Institute Living in Harmony project

The Woolf Institute Living in Harmony project focuses on the cultural and social implications of musical and social encounters between Jewish, Muslim, and Christian neighbours in the Middle East and Britain. The programme is funded by the KC Shasha Charitable Foundation and Dangoor Education. For 2021-22 the project will include tailored workshops for schools, university societies and youth clubs which explain how multiculturalism and music created a sense of communal belonging in the past and may

continue to create a sense of commonality among various faith and non-faith communities in Britain today. For more information, contact Flora Moffie at fm547@cam.ac.uk.

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Inter faith sport

As lock down eases in many places inter faith activity and sporting activity are again coming together.

Woking People of Faith's annual Interfaith Football Tournament took place on 22 May at Winston Churchill School. Six teams took part from a variety of faith backgrounds with the aim of promoting community, religious harmony and mutual understanding, both on and off the field. <https://wpof.org.uk/event/upcoming/2021/05/22/interfaith-football-tournament/>

In September the Cricket World Cup will be doing a tour of Kirklees, with an inter faith event planned for Huddersfield's St Peter's Parish Church on 12 September. Details to be released closer to the event. <https://globalcontactcentre.co.uk/huddersfield-icc-cricket-world-cup-tour-2021/>

If you are organising or holding an inter faith sporting event over the summer please let the IFN Office know by emailing david.hampshire@interfaith.org.uk. We would also be interested to hear if you are planning sporting events for Inter Faith Week 2021.

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Luton Council of Faiths receives Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

Luton Council of Faiths, a group of volunteers based in Luton in the county of Bedfordshire is one of this year's recipients of the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service (QAVS). It has received it for "Building peace and reconciliation across Luton's diverse communities." LCF's Chair, Zafar Khan, said "We are extremely delighted to receive this award recognising the hard work of our volunteers, young and old from different faiths and cultures supporting our work over the years especially in schools where children participate in our numerous events culminating in our Annual Peace Walk event. This recognition is also timely as Luton Council of Faiths celebrates its 25th Anniversary."

Luton Council of Faiths follows in the footsteps of Wolverhampton Interfaith and Islington Faiths Forum.

The QAVS aims to recognise outstanding work by volunteer groups to benefit their local communities. It was created in 2002 to celebrate The Queen's Golden Jubilee. Recipients are announced each year on 2nd June, the anniversary of The Queen's Coronation. If you are interested to nominate your own local inter faith organisation for its work you can find details on how to do so at <https://qavs.dcms.gov.uk/>.

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Pride month

June is 'Pride' month. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/pride-month-2021-founded-history-b1859815.html>

The Faith and Belief Forum has been working with and advocating for LGBTQ+ people of faith for a number of years. Its LGBTQ+ Interfaith Network is a space for LGBTQ+ people from different faiths, beliefs and backgrounds, to come together in a friendly environment. Inter faith activities and methods are used to explore personal stories of faith and belief, learn from each other's traditions, and build solidarity and community. It works in collaboration with a range of single faith and regional LGBTQ+ organisations. It recently held an event on Celebrating LGBTQ+ Interfaith Connections. FBF also runs training for organisations to offer better support to LGBTQ+ people of faith in their communities. <https://faithbelieforum.org/programme/lgbtfaith/>

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Welcome Directory for prison leavers

The Welcome Directory is a multi-faith organisation which maintains a directory of registered faith communities which have declared their commitment to welcoming prison leavers and providing them with appropriate support beyond the gates. This directory is used by prison chaplains, probation workers and prison leavers themselves, to identify welcoming communities upon release from prison. The organisation also offers a three-session course to allow faith groups to explore what it means to welcome people leaving prison into their community. <https://www.welcomedirectory.org.uk>

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

Resources

Learning about inter faith activity: An IFN Teacher Resource for 11-14 year old pupils

IFN's Teacher Resource to help secondary school pupils learn about inter faith activity and develop skills for dialogue is available to download at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/inter-faith-activity-in-the-uk-a-teacher-resource-for-secondary-pupils>. It has been produced for teachers of pupils aged 11 – 14 (Key Stage 3).

IFN's earlier primary Teacher Resource can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/learning-about-inter-faith-activity-a-primary-resource>.

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IFN youth inter faith website resource

IFN's youth inter faith website resource can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/activity/youth-inter-faith-engagement>. This contains information on what inter faith activity is, why it is important, and different ways that young people can get involved. It is planned that this section will continue to grow and be developed over time.

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Inter Faith Buddies

Inter Faith Buddies is a scheme designed by IFN to bring individuals together to engage in dialogue.

- The scheme involves two people of different faiths or beliefs: keeping in touch on a weekly basis for 6 weeks;
- choosing or developing questions on which to share their thoughts and experiences; and
- if they wish, sharing at an in-person or online event, in an agreed way, some reflections on what they have gained from the experience.

It is an opportunity for sharing and learning, on a one-to-one basis across a limited period of time, about what is important to us, in the context of our wider community. The process may, of course, lead to longer term conversations and new forms of practical co-operation. *Interested in taking up the idea within your organisation?*

If you are an organisation interested in taking up the Inter Faith Buddies idea, visit <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/inter-faith-buddies> for more information and practical pointers.

Interfaith Scotland has also been running inter faith buddy sessions – the next of which are taking place during the Great Get Together weekend (18-20 June).

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Videos of IFN National Meeting presentations on faith and COVID-19

The March/April issue of IFN's e-bulletin gave a short overview of IFN's National Meeting on 23 March on the theme of 'Faith Communities and COVID-19 – Learning from the Journey'. <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/ifns-2021-national-meeting-faith-communities-and->

[covid19-learning-from-the-journey](https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/ifn-national-meeting-2021) Videos of speaker presentations can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/ifn-national-meeting-2021>.

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IFN Digital surgery slots for local inter faith groups

IFN is continuing to make available during June and July a number of free 20 minute digital ‘surgery’ slots for IFN member local inter faith groups to ring and have a conversation about their group’s use of digital communications and how they strengthen this. There are also some spaces available for other local inter faith groups; there is no charge for non-members, however a donation is welcome. Any local inter faith group interested in booking a slot can email Ashley Beck via ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

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Cambridge Inter Faith Programme event videos

The Cambridge Inter Faith Programme has made available recordings of a Cambridge Festival 2021 panel and three talks for the CIP Research Seminar in Inter-religious Relations. These can be found at <https://www.interfaith.cam.ac.uk/news/new-cip-videos-research-seminar-inter-religious-relations-and-cambridge-festival-panel>.

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Encountering Faiths & Beliefs for KS2 and KS3

The Faith & Belief Forum’s workshop on Encountering Faiths & Beliefs for KS2 and KS3 is now available as an online resource for schools. This resource provides a range of short films of trained speakers, sharing personal stories of their lived experience of faith or belief. For more information, visit <https://faithbeliefforum.org/resources/encountering-faiths-beliefs/>.

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Asian Fire Service toolkit

The new Asian Fire Service Association toolkit on Workplace Religion and Belief is now on the AFSA website at <http://109.169.46.147/FileStorage/Documents/184/AFSA%202021%20Workforce%20Religion%20and%20Belief%20Toolkit%20Publication.pdf>.

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Study/Training

Charity Commission Faith Outreach webinar

The Faith Outreach Team of the Charity Commission for England and Wales is delivering its next webinar on 30 June on 'Financial management in a faith charity context'. For further information, and to book, visit <https://bookwhen.com/fcot#focus=ev-suz0-20210615120000>.

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SCIE Safeguarding webinars

The Social Care Institute for Excellence is holding two webinars as part of its Safeguarding Training Fund:

- 23 June - 'Exploring the safeguarding culture within faith-based organisations' <https://www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding/faith-groups/webinar20210623>
- 14 July - 'Understanding the role of the designated lead for safeguarding in faith-based organisations' <https://www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding/faith-groups/webinar20210714>

On each link is some further information about each webinar and details about booking.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS, AND NOMINATIONS

Calls for information

Experience of bereavement during COVID-19

The National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) is conducting research on people's experience of bereavement during the Covid-19 pandemic. This will explore how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected bereavement, funeral practices, mental health support and responses to public health messaging. They would like to interview 30 bereaved people from a variety of social, cultural, and religious backgrounds, with a second, follow-up interview taking place six months later.

Participants will be offered a £15 voucher for each interview to thank them for their participation. To learn more about the study or to find out about taking part in this confidential research interview, visit <https://natcen.ac.uk/taking-part/studies-in-field/impact-of-covid-19-on-bereavement-and-grief/covid-19-support-study/>.

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‘Respond, recover, reset’ survey

‘Respond, recover, reset’ is a project examining the impact of COVID-19 on voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations. The study is run by Nottingham Trent University in collaboration with the National Council for Voluntary Organisations and Sheffield Hallam University, and funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. They are keen to hear from faith communities. The latest round of the survey is open until 28 June. <http://cpwop.org.uk/what-we-do/projects-and-publications/covid-19-vcse-organisation-responses/>

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Nominations

London Faith & Belief Community Awards

Nominations are now open for the 5th London Faith & Belief Community Awards. The Awards celebrate the work of London’s faith and belief communities by bringing together local heroes and shining a light on their work. Each year there are 40 awards of £500 to enhance the work of these projects. There are several categories, including ‘Interfaith relations’, ‘Community resourcefulness in response to Covid-19’, ‘Inspiring youth’ and ‘Promoting women’. More information can be found at <https://faithbeliefforum.org/programme/london-faith-belief-community-awards/nomination-information/>. Nominations close on 19 July.

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Naz Legacy Foundation inter faith celebration

On 2 September, the Naz Legacy Foundation, in partnership with Historic Royal Palaces, is hosting an inter faith celebration at the Tower of London. They want to celebrate unsung heroes from faith communities, such as those who have supported food banks, assisted those shielding or helped alleviate, and are inviting nominations for individuals. Nominations close on 23 July. <https://www.nazlegacy.org/nominate-your-covid-19-hero/>

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

Inter Faith Network

Fixed term Project Officer post

IFN expects to advertise shortly, subject to funding, an 8 month Project Officer post. Keep an eye out for details at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/jobs>.

Summer internship

IFN is offering a Summer Internship from mid-July to mid-September. This is an opportunity to work on Inter Faith Week (www.interfaithweek.org) and also to assist on, and learn about, some other areas of IFN's work such as local inter faith support. A great opportunity to learn about inter faith relations and to develop new skills. Due to COVID-19, this internship is likely to be mainly or wholly virtual. IFN is a Living Wage Employer and the role is paid at the London Living Wage. For more information, contact ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

Honorary Treasurer

IFN is currently seeking to appoint a person to the post of Honorary Treasurer. The work of IFN is overseen by a board of Trustees. All IFN Trustees hold their posts on a voluntary basis. The gift of Trustees' time and skill is vital to the wellbeing of the organisation's work and is greatly valued. Among the Trustees are 2 Co-Chairs and 1 Honorary Treasurer. The Role Description and Expression of Interest form can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/volunteering>. The closing date is 8 July.

Volunteers

The Inter Faith Network for the UK currently has 2 opportunities for online volunteers who would like to offer 4-8 hours a week to help on different aspects of IFN's work to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. To express an interest in volunteering, please complete the application form at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/volunteering>.

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St Ethelburga's Centre – Volunteer roles

Volunteer Impact Coordinator

The St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace is currently advertising for a volunteer Programme impact coordinator.

Volunteer internships

St Ethelburga's is currently offering three volunteer internships - Video and stories, Communications and design, and Film and audio.

<https://stethelburgas.org/get-involved/vacancies-and-volunteering/>

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Faith & Belief Forum – Programmes Manager and Workshop volunteers

Programmes Manager, Education and Impact

FBF is seeking to recruit an organised and motivated self-starter to lead its Education and Learning Team. The role is 4 days/30 hours per week. The closing date is 6 July.

<https://faithbeliefforum.org/career/programmes-manager-education-impact/>

Workshop volunteers

The Faith & Belief Forum (FBF) is starting to prepare for its Encountering Faiths and Beliefs workshops again. These will initially be held online. FBF is particularly looking for volunteers from the West Midlands. To find out more about the programme, and to apply, visit <https://faithbeliefforum.org/about/careers/volunteer-speaker-programme/>.

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Home for Good - Volunteers

The Passage is a London based organisation which works to provide resources which encourage, inspire and challenge homeless people to transform their lives. It is a Vincentian organisation, taking its values and ethos from the teachings and example of St Vincent De Paul, a Christian and social reformer. Home for Good is The Passage's resettlement support scheme. They are currently seeking volunteers from a diverse range of faith backgrounds to support people in their local area who are settling in to their new accommodation after experiencing homelessness. Roles are available for 1 to 2 hours per week or fortnight with flexible timings. A commitment of 6 months is required. For more information, visit <https://passage.org.uk/volunteering/home-for-good-community-volunteer/> or email jason.smith@passage.org.uk.

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St Philip's Centre – Chair of Trustees

The St Philip's Centre in Leicester is seeking to appoint a new Chair of Trustees. The closing date for applications is 12 July. <https://jobs.theguardian.com/job/7310782/chair-of-trustees/>

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Funding websites

My Funding Central is a new database of grant funding and social investment sources. This service is available to organisations with an annual income below £1m and is free for organisations under £30k. <https://www.myfundingcentral.co.uk/> Similar websites for funding in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at Funding Scotland - <https://funding.scot/> - Wales Council for Voluntary Action - <http://www.wcva.org.uk/funding/search> - and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland - <https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

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COVID-19 related funding

The Charities Aid Foundation has collated a list of organisations which are supporting charities and voluntary groups at this time. <https://www.cafonline.org/covid-19-support/help-for-charities#tab1>

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Listed Places of Worship grant scheme

The Listed Places of Worship (LPW) Grant Scheme gives grants that cover the VAT incurred in making repairs to listed buildings in use as places of worship. The scheme covers repairs to the fabric of the building, along with associated professional fees, plus repairs to turret clocks, pews, bells and pipe organs. The Grant Scheme is run by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and administered by Topmark.

<http://www.lpwscheme.org.uk/>

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FCC Community Action Fund

The FCC Communities Foundation is offering grants between £2,000 and £100,000 for projects which involve the provision, maintenance or improvement of public amenities including community spaces in places of worship, which are registered charities. Projects must be based within 10 miles of an eligible FCC Environment waste facility. The current round closes on 1 September. <https://fcccommunitiesfoundation.org.uk/funds/fcc-community-action-fund>

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Subsidised fundraising workshops

The Foundation for Social Improvement offers subsidised training programmes for small charities across the UK. The courses cover a wide range of subjects from event planning to leadership. Many of the courses focus on fundraising and sustainability skills in particular. Further information and dates for upcoming courses, now being held online, can be found at <http://www.thefsi.org/services/training>.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

Refugee Week is taking place from Monday 14 to Sunday 20 June. Refugee Week is a nationwide programme of arts, cultural and educational events that celebrate the contribution of refugees to the UK, and encourages a better understanding between communities. The theme for the 2021 Week is 'We cannot walk alone'.

<https://refugeeweek.org.uk/>

The Great Get Together, inspired by the late Jo Cox MP, is taking place from Friday 18 to Sunday 20 June. It is designed to bring people together to celebrate what they have in common. <https://www.greatgettogether.org/>

‘Thank You Day’, is a UK-wide initiative on Sunday 4 July inviting people to get together to say thank you to one another, to family members, key workers, good neighbours and volunteers. <https://thankyouday.org.uk/> It has a particular link to the pandemic and how people have responded. It is managed by the Together Initiative.

Srebrenica Memorial Day takes place each year on 11 July. This year’s theme is ‘Rebuilding Lives’. It is organised by Remembering Srebrenica.

<http://www.srebrenica.org.uk/>

National Hate Crime Awareness Week takes place from Saturday 9 October to Saturday 16 October. <https://nationalhcaw.uk/>

One World Week will take place from Sunday 17 to Sunday 24 October.

www.oneworldweek.org

Scottish Interfaith Week will be held from Sunday 31 October to Sunday 7 November. Scottish Interfaith Week is led by Interfaith Scotland. The theme for this year’s week is ‘Together for our Planet’. www.scottishinterfaithweek.org

Inter Faith Week, in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, will take place from Sunday 14 to Sunday 21 November. www.interfaithweek.org

Mitzvah Day will take place on Sunday 21 November. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Jewish community where people give their time to make a difference to the community around them. Many events and projects held for the day have an inter faith focus. www.mitzvahday.org.uk/

Sewa Day is a day of faith-based social action led by the Hindu community. It normally takes place on 4 dates across the year. Due to COVID there are currently no fixed days; rather, ‘every day is Sewa day’ and volunteers are helping people continually as they are able. <https://sewaday.org/>

VisitMyMosque Day is a national campaign facilitated by the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) that encourages mosques across the UK to hold an open day to welcome in their neighbours from all faiths and none. Details on this year’s date are yet to be announced. <https://www.visitmymosque.org/>

**SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK’S WORK
TO INCREASE INTER FAITH UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION**

The Inter Faith Network for the UK works for inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. Please help us grow this vital work by making a donation at:

<https://interfaith.org.uk/donate> (including Paypal option).

Donations are used with care to make a real difference.

Donations can also be made by sending a cheque payable to ‘The Inter Faith Network’ to: The Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH.

Thank you!

MAKE A GIFT TO SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK IN REMEMBRANCE OF A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND OR THROUGH A LEGACY

If you would like to make a gift in memory of a loved one, please get in touch by emailing remember@interfaith.org.uk or call us on 0207 730 0410.

By leaving a gift in your will to the Inter Faith Network for the UK, you can leave a living inheritance to help deepen and strengthen inter faith understanding and cooperation in this country – for now and for the future. If you are thinking about making a will, the best thing to do is to get in touch with a professional will writer, such as a solicitor or advocate; they can help to ensure it is legally correct and that your wishes are met. If you have already made a will, you can still make an addition or amendment in the form of a codicil. If you would like to pledge a gift, please provide our name and address, along with our registered charity number 1068934.

Please get in touch with us if you have any queries.
You can call us on 0207 730 0410 or contact us at remember@interfaith.org.uk

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DIARY DATES

A few examples of forthcoming events are listed below. In light of COVID-19 most events continue to take place online. Those listed are all virtual, except where noted. Events are also listed on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/events>.

Woking People of Faith is continuing its 'Faith in Action: A Conversation with ...' on Thursday 17 June. The conversation will be with Kayte Cable, Co-Founder and Programme Manager of the Big Leaf Foundation. It is being held at 7pm. For more information, email administrator@wpof.org.uk.

St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace is holding an event to mark World Refugee Day on Friday 18 June. The event will be focusing on Brazil and Venezuela, two countries on either side of one of the largest displacement crises in the world. Exploring themes of belonging and culture, of relationships and community, the speakers will shine a light on what it means to be welcomed or to be a welcomer. The event is being held from 6.30pm to 8pm. For more information contact Jo Winslow Slater at jowinsloe@stethelburgas.org.

Welwyn Hatfield Inter Faith Group is holding its next meeting on Monday 21 June. The topic will be 'What happens after Death?' and the speakers will be Tap Bali (Hindu); Fr

Tony Thomas (Catholic); Amin Khan (Muslim); and Marc Pepperell (Christian Science). It begins at 8pm. For more information, email theresa.whifg@gmail.com.

Elmbridge Multi Faith Forum is holding its AGM on Tuesday 22 June. This will include a talk by Suzanne Akram, Executive Director, Surrey Minority Ethnic Forum (SMEF) on 'The History and Growth of SMEF'. It begins at 7.30pm. For more information, email KawtherH@smef.org.uk.

Interfaith Scotland and **Faith in Older People** are holding the final seminar in their Mental Health series on Tuesday 22 June. It is being held from 4.30pm to 6pm. The panel will consist of Rita Docherty (Baha'i), Nicola Maule (Buddhist) and Robin Downie (Christian). The focus will be on mental health challenges from different faiths perspectives. To register, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/mental-health-older-people-and-faith-communities-tickets-141862128445>.

South London Interfaith Group is holding its next lunchtime meeting on Thursday 24 June. The topic will be 'The Joyful Environmentalist' and the speaker will be Isabel Losada. It begins at 1pm. For more information, email secretary@southlondoninterfaith.org.uk.

Crawley Interfaith Network is holding its next event on Thursday 24 June. The topic will be 'Baha'i community management of the pandemic' and the speaker will be Simon Ward. For more information, email iyadhdaoud@yahoo.co.uk.

Herefordshire Interfaith Group is holding its next meeting on Thursday 24 June. The theme will be 'Full Moon Reflections'. It is an occasion to come together to share wisdom from spiritual traditions through meditation, chant, poetry and inspiring readings with contributions from several members of the group. It is being held from 7pm to 8.40pm. For more information, email hello@herefordshireinterfaith.org.uk.

The **Council of Christians and Jews** and **St Ethelburga's Centre** holding a conference on Thursday 24 June on 'Transforming Intolerance'. This will be a day of talks, workshops and poetry to find new ways to build inclusive faith and inter faith spaces on campus. The keynote speakers will be Rev Rachel Mann and Rabbi Elli Tikvah Sarah. For more information, and to register, visit <https://ccj.org.uk/Transforming-Intolerance>.

Faiths Forum for London, in partnership with **Faiths United Youth Network**, is running a webinar series as part of its 'Listen Up' Campaign, to raise awareness of Freedom of Religion or Belief violations around the world. The next webinar is on Thursday 24 June at 7pm on 'The Current Status of the Freedom of Religion or Belief Around the World: Challenges and Moving Forward'. For more information and to register, visit https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Y7OJ6b5tSVi66-dAHzi8xA.

Faith for the Climate and **Faiths Together in Lambeth** are jointly hosting a series of 5 workshops in and around London Climate Action Week for faith communities to get ready for COP26. The workshops are being held at 5.30pm on 25 June, 28 June, 30 June, 1 July and 6 July. They will include 'Relationship building', 'Skills sessions' and 'Reflection and Next Steps. For registration and more information, visit www.faithfortheclimate.org.uk/events.

The St Philip's Centre in Leicester is holding its AGM on Tuesday 29 June at 5.30pm. For more information, contact admin@stphilipscentre.co.uk.

Edinburgh Interfaith Association is holding an event on Wednesday 30 June to celebrate LGBTQIA+ people of faith, and contributions to communities and society at large. It is being held from 7pm to 8pm. For more information, and to book, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/pride-2021-interfaith-solidarity-tickets-158597016947>.

On Tuesday 6 July a conference is being held on "Worlds of Faith: Sculpture and Faith at St Paul's Cathedral, c.1796-1916". This is the first conference of the UKRI-funded research project between the **Department of History of Art at the University of York and St Paul's Cathedral**. The conference will be object-focused, on individual monuments or small, related groups of monuments, with presentations by key scholars in the field as well as clergy. The papers will be organised into three panels: Empires of Faith: Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism, and Buddhism; Sculpting the Bible; and The Victorian Church. Full details and booking can be found at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/worlds-of-faith-sculpture-and-faith-at-st-pauls-cathedral-c1796-1916-tickets-151220497579>.

Hounslow Friends of Faith is holding its AGM on Wednesday 7 July. Following the meeting business, there will be a talk by Mr Malcolm Deboo, President of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe. The meeting begins at 7pm. For more information, contact info@hounslowfriendsoffaith.org.

The **Centre for Interfaith Engagement at the Institute for Leadership and Community Development** is holding a lecture on Monday 19 July on the Practicalities of Dialogue. This will be a practical session, led by Canon Dr Andrew Smith, on the practicalities and realities of dialogue, giving students a good grounding in the principle and practices that ensure dialogue is run effectively and constructively. It will form the introduction and basis for future dialogue sessions. It is being held from 11am to 12.30pm. To register, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/practicalities-of-dialogue-hosted-by-canon-dr-andrew-smith-tickets-159499319759>.

Fife Interfaith Group is holding its next event on Wednesday 21 July. This will include a talk by Christians Against Poverty. For more information, contact fifeinterfaith@live.co.uk.

More information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: www.interfaithwales.org.uk

IFN also carries news and information at www.twitter.com/IFNetUK
www.facebook.com/IFNetUK and, about Inter Faith Week, at <https://twitter.com/IFweek>
and www.facebook.com/IFWeek.

You can sign up to IFN mailings at any time by using the form on IFN's website at:
www.interfaith.org.uk/news/gdpr or let us know that you would like to unsubscribe by
using the links at the bottom of the cover email.

Submissions for next issue

If you have items about projects or future events which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk

by 22 July with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer: Information in this e-bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH
www.interfaith.org.uk www.facebook.com/IFNetUK www.twitter.com/IFNetUK

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IFN e-bulletin

August 2021

Welcome to the e-bulletin of the Inter Faith Network for the UK www.interfaith.org.uk. It is published every two months and it highlights primarily new developments, projects and future events. You can read by scrolling through or you can go directly to an individual section or item by clicking on links in the list below.

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

COVID-19 and faith communities

Volunteers from across all faith communities have continued to respond to the needs of their congregations and wider society during the pandemic. This report by the Multi Faith Centre at the University of Derby, for example, reflects on Derby faith communities' contributions during the pandemic. <https://multifaithcentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Derby-Keeping-the-Faith.pdf>

Faith communities in a number of areas continue to play an important role in the vaccination roll-out, either by hosting vaccination clinics - such as the Glasgow Central Mosque <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-57887850> or, in Crawley, West Sussex, where a medical centre partnered with the Gurjar Hindu Union to relocate their vaccination service to its Hindu Temple,

<https://www.crawleyobserver.co.uk/health/coronavirus/hindu-temple-in-crawley-is-set-to-host-a-quiet-vaccination-session-this-weekend-3284880>, or by addressing vaccine concerns - such as through this film by NHS Salford Clinical Commissioning Group with Alchemy Arts featuring the Revd Charles Kwaku-Odoi of Faith Network for Manchester <https://www.facebook.com/SalfordCCG/videos/866548567402251>.

Faith communities are also involved in organising ways to remember all those who have died with COVID-19. For example, Colchester Council is organising a 'festival of remembrance' to honour COVID19 victims. "Working with faith and community groups, the idea is to set a format for the event that others can follow in their own areas such as village halls or places of worship." <https://www.gazette-news.co.uk/news/19478095.colchester-council-organise-covid-festival-remembrance/> Worcester Cathedral is hosting The Leaves of the Trees, an installation of 5,000 steel 'Hope' leaves, as a 'reflective memorial to the effects of the pandemic'. <https://www.worcestercathedral.co.uk/whats-on/the-leaves-of-the-trees>

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COVID-19 and safe use of places of worship

England

On 19 July England moved to Step 4 of the 'roadmap'. There are no longer legal requirements for physical social distancing or the wearing of face masks in indoor spaces. However, the UK Government has emphasised that COVID-19 remains a serious health risk and that it is important to remain cautious to help protect one another.

Updated guidance on the safe use of places of worship is at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship>. There are no longer legal limits on the number of people who can attend weddings, funerals and other life events or the receptions that follow. All restrictions on chanting and singing have also been removed.

Scotland

On 9 August Scotland moved beyond Level 0. The legal requirements for physical distancing and limits on gatherings have been removed. Some protective measures remain in place such as the use of face coverings indoors.

Updated guidance on the safe use of places of worship is at <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-phase-3-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship/>. There are no restrictions remaining on how many people may attend significant life or milestone events. Singing, chanting and/or the playing of instruments is permitted.

Wales

On 7 August Wales moved to alert level 0. The legal requirements for physical distancing and limits on gatherings have been removed. Some protective measures remain in place such as the use of face coverings indoors.

Guidance for all businesses and organisations, including places of worship is at <https://gov.wales/alert-level-0-guidance-employers-businesses-and-organisations>. There are no longer legal limits on the number of people who can attend weddings, funerals and other life events or the receptions that follow.

Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland the number of people attending places of worship for life ceremonies, and post-ceremony receptions, continues to be determined by the venue on a risk assessed basis.

Guidance on the use of places of worship is at <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-places-worship>. Since 26 July the legal requirement for social distancing indoors has been reduced to 1m. The legal requirement to wear a face covering in a place of worship, during an act of worship, has been removed, however it is still strongly advised. Where singing or chanting is deemed to be essential to an act of worship, this should be at a low volume and it is strongly advised that face coverings are worn.

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New site in Wales for scattering Sikh and Hindu ashes

On 31 July a new site was officially opened in Cardiff, where Sikhs and Hindus can scatter the ashes of their loved ones. The Antim Sanskar Group Wales has been working with Cardiff Council for a number of years to identify a suitable location where cremated remains can be dispersed into a flowing water course. The platform, at Llandaff Rowing Club, was officially opened at a ceremony attended by First Minister Mark Drakeford and members of Cardiff Council. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-57988853>
<https://www.theweek.in/wire-updates/international/2021/08/02/fes54-uk-ashes-site.html>

The site joins a number of others in the UK, such as on the River Soar in Leicester <https://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-community/births-marriages-and-deaths/funerals-burials-and-cremations/cremations/scattering-of-ashes/> and the Newark slipway near the Port Glasgow in the authority of Inverclyde <https://scattering-ashes.co.uk/places/scattering-ashes-location-for-sikh-and-hindus-in-glasgow-scotland/>.

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Statement on Inter faith relations and election campaigning

The Batley and Spen By-election saw a number of incidents of aggressive campaigning, including material which saw a British Freedom Party member co-opting the image of a local church in her leaflet to identify her far right message with Christianity.

On 25 June, the Inter Faith Network for the UK's Co-Chairs and Faith Communities Forum Moderators issued the following statement on 'Inter faith relations and election campaigning'.

“We affirm the right of people to express, within the law, their strongly held views, including during election campaigning. However, it is vital in our diverse and democratic society that views are expressed in a peaceful and respectful way and also that care is taken that observations on situations locally, nationally or abroad do not reflect or play into antisemitism, Islamophobia or hatred of other communities.

During election campaigns, symbols and images of different faith communities are sometimes co-opted and manipulated by organisations and/or public figures to justify or promote divisive political agendas. A recent example of this is a campaign leaflet for a far-right candidate for election in Batley and Spen, with a crude collage of the candidate against the background of a local church and with a large image of a cross. Slanted and inaccurate portrayals of religious and cultural history often accompany such misuse of imagery.

At such times, solidarity of response from faith communities and inter faith initiatives is crucial: nurturing existing good relationships between different communities and seeking to safeguard those; speaking out against politics of division which set communities against each other; rebutting misappropriation of our respective faith communities' symbols, traditions and history; reporting any hate incidents; and encouraging informed dialogue and respectful expression of views at all times.

This statement can be found on IFN's website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/statement-from-ifn-co-chairs-and-fcf-moderators-inter-faith-relations-and-election-campaigning>.

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Hate crime

Home Office data released in July shows that a total of 61,851 racially and religiously aggravated offences were recorded in 2020, a 7% increase on 2019. The analysis was compiled by the PA news agency from data published by the Home Office.

<https://news.sky.com/story/racially-and-religiously-motivated-hate-crime-hit-a-new-high-in-2020-home-office-statistics-reveal-12356632>

CST's Antisemitic Incidents Report January-June 2021, published on 5 August, shows 1,308 anti-Jewish hate incidents nationwide recorded by CST in the first half of this year.

<https://cst.org.uk/news/blog/2021/08/05/antisemitic-incidents-report-january-june-2021>

This is a 49% increase on incidents recorded in the first six months of 2020, and is the highest total CST has ever recorded in the first half of any year. The number for this 6 months is higher than every full-year incident total prior to 2016 since CST began recording antisemitic incidents in 1984.

Tell Mama's recent reports on Islamophobic incidents include graffiti in Northumberland.

<https://tellmamauk.org/northumbria-police-investigating-islam-is-evil-and-funds-terror-graffiti/>

A report on the Public Inquiry into Islamophobia in Scotland by the Cross-Party Group on Tackling Islamophobia, published by Newcastle University, speaks of increasing verbal and physical assaults on Muslims. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-57641242>

As well as antisemitic and Islamophobic incidents, other communities continue to express concerns about incidents. In a response of 10 June from Minister for Regional Growth and Local Government Luke Hall to a Written Question from Navendu Mishra MP about tackling Hinduphobia, the Minister referred to “the refreshing by the Government of its hate crime strategy.”

An Early Day Motion was tabled on 23 June which condemned racism faced by British Indians and made reference to “research by the 1928 Institute which revealed that 80 per cent of British Indians have faced prejudice because of their Indian identity, with Hinduphobia the most prevalent”. <https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/58678/rise-of-antiindian-racism>

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Rise in RE entries reflected in A level results

A level results were published on 10 August. The RE Council for England and Wales reports that the number of Religious Studies A-level exam entries in England and Wales has increased 6.1 percent year on year. The subject outperformed other A-level subjects as a whole, which increased by 5.1 percent, with a greater increase than most other humanities subjects. It says that this year's increase, and the long-term trend in entries, “suggest that candidates continue to recognise the value of RS A-level for Higher Education entry, graduate employment, and as an essential life skill”.

<https://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/news/religious-studies-at-a-level-in-2021/>

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Religious dress and symbols

The Court of Justice of the European Union (ECJ) last month ruled that employers can limit workplace expression of religious, political, or philosophical beliefs where there is “a genuine need” to “present a neutral image towards customers or to prevent social disputes.” This was in response to two cases brought by German employees who had been suspended from their jobs for wearing a hijab. UK courts are not now bound by decisions of the ECJ (although under the EU Withdrawal Act 2018 UK courts and tribunals may ‘have regard’ to ECJ judgements ‘so far as it is relevant to any matter before the court or tribunal’).

A Sikh visitor to a fair in North Wales was handcuffed because he was carrying a kirpan. <https://www.itv.com/news/wales/2021-08-05/sikh-father-handcuffed-at-funfair-for-carrying-legal-religious-blade-in-public> Kirpans are permissible for Sikhs to carry under the relevant provision of the Criminal Justice Act 1988.

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/33/section/139/2007-04-06>

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REPORT HATE CRIME AND WORK TOGETHER TO HELP TACKLE IT

Report hate incidents online through True Vision or via 3rd parties eg Community Security Trust (CST), Tell Mama UK and Stop Hate UK; at a police station; or by ringing the police on 101 (non-emergency) or 999.

<https://gov.uk/report-hate-crime>

<https://www.scotland.police.uk/contact-us/report-hate-crime-and-third-party-reporting/>

<https://reporthate.victimsupport.org.uk/hate-crime/>

<https://www.psnl.police.uk/crime/hate-crime/reporting-a-hate-crime/>

See also *Looking after one another: the safety and security of our faith communities* (IFN and partners) which contains practical pointers for working together to counter hate crime.

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/looking-after-one-another-the-safety-and-security-of-our-faith-communities-2017>

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Protect Duty and places of worship

The last issue of the e-bulletin noted that the Home Office was seeking views on how the Protect Duty can make the public safer at publicly accessible locations, including places of worship. The consultation closed on 2 July.

On 27 July Kevin Foster, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department, provided a written answer to a question about how places of worship would be affected by the Protect Duty. In the course of this he said that “The Government is mindful places of worship differ significantly in the nature of their function and operation from other locations potentially within the scope of the Protect Duty proposals. This is balanced against the threat posed by terrorism, and a need to ensure there are effective security measures at public places, regardless of their nature. The Government will be carefully considering the issues raised within the consultation and our engagement events, including those discussed with representatives of different faith communities, before considering next steps.” One of the contexts where faith communities’ input was given was IFN’s Faith Communities Forum (see [below](#)).

<https://www.theyworkforyou.com/wrans/?id=2021-07-19.35592.h>

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APPG on Safeguarding in Faith Communities

A new APPG on Safeguarding in Faith Communities was established in July. This is a successor to an older APPG on Safeguarding in Faith Settings. The aims of the group are “to increase awareness of issues relating to safeguarding within faith settings and to provide an opportunity for faith communities to inform safeguarding discourse, share best practise and work together to create safer places.” The Co-Chairs are Janet Daby MP and Lord Bishop Viv Faull. Thirtyone:eight, an independent safeguarding charity, provides the secretariat. For more information, visit <https://thirtyoneeight.org/about-us/all-party-parliamentary-group/>.

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National Resilience Strategy call for evidence

On 13 July the Cabinet Office published a call for evidence for the National Resilience Strategy. <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/national-resilience-strategy-call-for-evidence> The call for evidence closes on 27 September.

This Call for Evidence “seeks public views to inform the development of a new National Resilience Strategy that will outline an ambitious new vision for our national resilience. It seeks to understand current perceptions of risk and resilience, gather evidence on where improvements could be made, and gauge the UK’s appetite for change. Views are welcome from anyone with an interest in the subject.”

The Call for Evidence asks questions around six themes: Risk and Resilience; Responsibilities and Accountability; Partnerships; Community; Investment; and Resilience in an Interconnected World. Also included in the Call for Evidence are specific questions on the Civil Contingencies Act. This Act provides a legislative framework for emergency

management and response in the UK. Evidence gathered in this section will help to inform the scheduled review of the Act which is due to be completed by March 2022.

Within the Call for Evidence document it notes that strengthening the Government's partnerships may include "collaborating with voluntary, charity, faith groups and business sectors to make best use of their capability, capacity and networks, to respond to the localised effect of risk" and also that all references to 'community' include faith groups and faith networks.

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Windrush monument consultation

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is commissioning a permanent national Monument to the Windrush Generation at London Waterloo station "to recognise how they have enriched our nation's history. The Monument will be a permanent tribute to a generation of arrivals from the Caribbean to this country – from the arrival of MV Empire Windrush in 1948 and in the decades that followed. It is expected to be unveiled on Windrush Day 22 June 2022."

A consultation has been opened on the four shortlisted designs, all by artists of Caribbean descent. The final artist design will be chosen in September by the Windrush Commemoration Committee, chaired by Baroness Floella Benjamin DBE, and announced in October during Black History Month. On 20 July the Windrush Commemoration Committee came together to talk about the monument. A recording of the event can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BoaNtiUoPJo>.

For more information, and to share your views, visit <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/windrush-monument-share-your-views>.

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Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre

Planning permission was granted by the Government on 29 July to build the country's first national Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre in Victoria Tower Gardens, next to Parliament. The Memorial will be the national focal point to honour the 6 million Jewish men, women and children who were murdered in the Holocaust, and other victims of Nazi persecution, including the Roma, gay and disabled people. The co-located Learning Centre will also focus on subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/planning-permission-granted-for-new-uk-holocaust-memorial>

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Faith communities, climate change and the environment

The 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) is scheduled to take place in Glasgow from 1-12 November. <https://ukcop26.org/> It will bring parties together to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Together with the Environmental Issues Network of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, Faith for the Climate convenes a COP Faith Task Group called 'Make COP Count' to enable diverse faith groups to contribute meaningfully to climate action before, during and after COP26. Its priorities are: Transformation; Advocacy; and Hospitality.

<https://makecopcount.org/> <https://www.faithfortheclimate.org.uk/Our-work> Among the activities it is supporting are:

- Climate Sunday – An initiative led by CTBI, which encourages the holding of a climate-focused worship service any time before COP26, and which will culminate in a Nations Climate Sunday service on 5 September. A number of Churches have created downloadable resources for this initiative.
- Rise to the Moment – A relay pilgrimage from St Ives to Glasgow, organised by the Young Christian Climate Network. This is a relay rather than a full pilgrimage because of the restrictions on gathering in person. The relay enables people to take part in different ways. It is taking place through August, September and October.

Interfaith Scotland is continuing its 'Year of Climate Action'. It provides the secretariat for the Religious Leaders Forum of Scotland. The Forum produced a Statement of Commitment from the faith leaders of Scotland. <https://interfaithscotland.org/climate-action-resources> As noted [below](#), to coincide with COP26, this year's Scottish Inter Faith Week will begin on 31 October.

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Borders and Immigration Bill

On 6 July the UK Government introduced its Borders and Immigration Bill. This completed its second reading on 20 July. The provisions will make knowingly arriving in the UK without permission a criminal offence and will give Border Force officers the powers to turn back migrant boats attempting to cross the Channel from France and use "reasonable force, if necessary". They mean that, for the first time, the way an individual arrives in the UK - legally or illegally - will have a bearing on whether their asylum application is accepted. <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9275/> <https://news.sky.com/story/mps-back-new-immigration-bill-which-makes-arriving-in-uk-without-permission-a-criminal-offence-12359884>

Responses to the Bill have included a number from faith communities, for example from the Free Churches <http://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/responding-to-the-governments-proposals-for-asylum-reform/> and the Board of Deputies of British Jews, Renee Cassin, JCORE and World Jewish Relief <https://www.bod.org.uk/bod-news/jewish-organisations-release-joint-statement-in-response-to-nationality-and-borders-bill/>.

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INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK NEWS

The Faith Communities Forum

The Inter Faith Network for the UK's Faith Communities Forum brings together national faith community bodies in IFN membership for regular discussion of issues of common concern. <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/about/faith-communities-forum>

On 21 June a special session of the FCF was held with Home Office officials to give input on the Protect Duty consultation and its likely considerable implications in terms of security responsibilities for churches, gurdwaras, mandirs, mosques, synagogues, temples and other places of worship accommodating 100 or more people. There was also a presentation by officials on the Places of Worship Security Scheme (England and Wales).

The FCF met again on 6 July. It discussed a range of COVID-19 matters, including faith community engagement with the vaccination roll-out. There was discussion of calendars of religious festivals, with a presentation by Paul Hopkins, Senior Editor and Co-Chair of the widely used Shap Calendar of Religious Festivals. James Jones, Complaints Executive, Advertising Standards Authority, introduced the Advertising Standards Authority's recent call for evidence about racial and ethnic stereotyping in advertising and the role of the ASA in responding to complaints.

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IFN webinar on digital upskilling

On 27 July IFN held a webinar for member local inter faith groups on 'digital upskilling'. This opened with a presentation from IFN's Inter Faith Development Officer, Ashley Beck, about using Facebook and Twitter. There was also an opportunity for peer-to-peer learning. This session will be available on the IFN website shortly.

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IFN AGM

IFN held its 2021 AGM on 15 July. This was held as a 'hybrid' AGM, at NCVO and virtually. The meeting welcomed into membership a number of new bodies: Bath Interfaith Group, Maidstone Inter Faith Network, Reading Interfaith Group, Nisa-Nashim, Middlesex

University Inter Faith Network and University of Salford Faith Centre. It elected Narendra Waghela as Co-Chair from membership categories other than national faith community representative bodies, welcomed new Trustee Dr Susan Siegel from Interfaith Scotland and offered warm thanks to Trustees standing down.

Special thanks were given to Rabbi Maurice Michaels who stood down at the AGM both as a Trustee and Honorary Treasurer, coming to the end of his term, having served IFN with great distinction in a number of capacities for many years.

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Inter Faith Week 14-21 November

This year Inter Faith Week www.interfaithweek.org takes place from Sunday 14 to Sunday 21 November. 6 August marked 100 days to go until the Week. The aims of Inter Faith Week, which is led by IFN, are to:

- Strengthen good inter faith relations at all levels
- Increase awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, celebrating and building on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society
- Increase understanding between different people of religious and non-religious beliefs

The Week is timed to begin each year on Remembrance Sunday to enable people of different backgrounds to remember together the service of soldiers and civilians of all faiths and beliefs and to reflect on peace.

<https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/remembrance>

Inter Faith Week is about highlighting the contribution of faith groups to society; spotlighting inter faith cooperation and understanding; and encouraging dialogue between those of religious and non-religious beliefs. It's a fantastic platform to share, learn and build relationships with neighbours, colleagues and service users of different backgrounds, and to come together in service for the common good.

If you've not yet started planning, August is a great month to start to think creatively about activities that can benefit from being part of the Week and can bring something special to the Week!

What might you do? Perhaps a learning activity, a multi faith Remembrance event, inter faith sports match, an inter faith art, poetry or photography competition; a jointly crafted special quilt or banner; a video message from faith leaders and/or particular figures in your organisation; a special dialogue; a quiz or speed-faithing event? Or maybe be a special environment/climate change focused event linked to #COP26 (which will have just taken place); an 'Inter Faith Buddies' scheme; social media video clips of interviews with

chaplains of different faiths; an inter faith ‘bake off’; an inter faith pilgrimage/peace walk; a physical or virtual tour of some local places of worship; a video about your organisation’s inter faith activity; a learning session about beliefs and practices of a particular faith; or a classroom session or week-long series exploring how people of different faiths and beliefs live, learn and work in Britain today? There are so many possibilities: those are just a few!

You’ll find lots of activity ideas at: <https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/ideas>.

Scottish Inter Faith Week

Scottish Interfaith Week is led by Interfaith Scotland and has this year been brought forward to the earlier time of Sunday 31 October – Sunday 7 November to coincide with COP26. <https://scottishinterfaithweek.org/> Its theme this year is Together for our Planet. Follow it on Twitter and Facebook at <https://twitter.com/SIFWEvents> and <https://www.facebook.com/FollowSIFW>.

SIFW has recently launched a SIFW digital toolkit.

<https://scottishinterfaithweek.org/download-your-free-digital-toolkit-for-sifw2021>

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IFN COME TOGETHER APPEAL

The Inter Faith Network works for inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK.

Please help us grow this vital work by making a donation at <https://interfaith.org.uk/appeal> or by Paypal at <https://www.paypal.com/biz/fund?id=96WTW2PGERGWL>.

Donations are used with care to make a real difference. Thank you.

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS AND DEVELOPMENTS

Coventry City of Culture ‘Faith’ project

Coventry, one of the most religiously diverse cities in the UK, is to host 24 hours of art, theatre, music, food and debate aimed at exploring belief and promoting the connections between faiths. The Royal Shakespeare Company and Coventry City of Culture have teamed up to produce ‘Faith’, 24 hours of free live events in September.

<https://www.coventrytelegraph.net/news/coventry-news/major-24-hour-faith-event-21223057>

Places of worship and faith centres throughout the city will open their doors to visitors, offering sacred music, prayer, quiet reflection and tea. Specially commissioned dramatic promenade pieces have been written by Chinonyerem Odimba and Chris O’Connell. The 24-hour event will culminate in a ceremony of lights, with 500 candles lit at dusk in the city centre. Erica Whyman, Deputy Artistic Director of the RSC, is also keen to attract people of no faith to the celebration. For more information, visit <https://coventry2021.co.uk/what-s-on/faith/>.

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Council of Christians and Jews ‘For Hope and Healing’ project

The Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ) is running a project called ‘For Hope and Healing’. Participants are invited to explore this theme through artwork. The goal is to collate the artwork and display the submissions in a digital exhibition. The deadline for entries is 31 August. For more information, email avigail.simmonds-rosten@ccj.org.uk.

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Near Neighbours Network

The Near Neighbours Network is a new opportunity for individuals and organisations to connect with other likeminded people and groups beyond the 11 Near Neighbours areas in England. Near Neighbours notes: “We remain committed to creating strong and cohesive communities at local level, but we also want to create a wider national network where all the groups and individuals involved with Near Neighbours can share good practice and expertise and build new partnerships. The Network will also enable our hubs and partners to offer knowledge and training, online events, and downloadable resources, to a wider audience.”

For more information, and to sign up, visit <https://www.near-neighbours.org.uk/network-joining-page>.

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Cambridge Inter Faith Programme podcast

Cambridge Inter Faith Programme (CIP) has launched a new podcast on 'Religion and Global Challenges'. This explores “how religious narratives and ideas, practices and experiences inform some of the most crucial challenges facing our world today.” The podcast is part of CIP's Religion and Global Challenges Initiative. For further information, visit <https://www.interfaith.cam.ac.uk/news/new-cip-podcast-religion-and-global-challenges>.

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Meet Slough's diverse community

Slough Faith Partnership is partnering with #OneSlough to bring faith and belief members and the wider community together, giving them the opportunity to learn about the cultures and religions that make up Slough. During August and September members of the public are invited to lunchtime sessions to meet members of a particular faith, listen, ask questions and engage in discussion. For more details, visit

<https://www.facebook.com/Slough-Faith-Partnership-139714316133566/> or email emel@art-beyond-belief.com.

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Brighton inter faith art exhibition

Fabrica, a contemporary art gallery in Brighton, is showing an art exhibition this summer that integrates materials and iconography of different religious communities. Constructed from redundant Christian church pews it consciously draws on the visual language of Islamic architecture to create a new kind of contemplative space, one that looks for 'common cultural and spiritual ground' in our diverse society." Brighton and Hove Inter Faith Contact Group has interviewed the artist, Wolfgang Weileder, about the exhibition, which is called 'Kiosk'. For more information, visit <https://www.fabrica.org.uk/kiosk>.

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Inter Faith Buddies

Inter Faith Buddies is a scheme designed by IFN to bring individuals together to engage in dialogue.

- The scheme involves two people of different faiths or beliefs: keeping in touch on a weekly basis for 6 weeks;
- choosing or developing questions on which to share their thoughts and experiences; and
- if they wish, sharing at an in-person or online event, in an agreed way, some reflections on what they have gained from the experience.

It is an opportunity for sharing and learning, on a one-to-one basis across a limited period of time, about what is important to us, in the context of our wider community. The process may, of course, lead to longer term conversations and new forms of practical co-operation.

Interested in taking up the idea within your organisation?

If you are an organisation interested in taking up the Inter Faith Buddies idea, visit <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/inter-faith-buddies> for more information and practical pointers.

Interfaith Scotland also hosts opportunities for ‘buddying’. A recent example was an inter faith buddies event held in June as part of the Great Get Together.

<https://interfaithscotland.org/news/events-2021>

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

Resources

LSE Report on ‘Interfaith Beyond the Pandemic’

On 21 July the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) released a report entitled ‘Interfaith Beyond the Pandemic: from London Communities to Global Identities’. The report can be found at <https://www.lse.ac.uk/News/Latest-news-from-LSE/2021/g-July-21/Growing-divide-between-young-and-old-in-interfaith-sector-New-report>.

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Charity Commission guidance on ‘Managing faith charities’

On 28 July the Charity Commission for England and Wales published its updated guidance on ‘Managing faith charities as trustees’. This is the Commission’s “core guidance for religious charities whose main focus is religious worship and related activities.” The guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/faith-based-charities>. The Commission has scheduled a joint webinar with Strengthening Faith Institutions to present the updated faith guidance on 19 August. For further information, and to register, visit https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_9WKESyPSRBWAmiHUGYIPmg.

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Shap Calendar of Religious Festivals

The Shap Calendar of Religious Festivals for 2021-22 is available to order from <http://www.shapcalendar.org.uk/>. The e-calendar provides: 3 A4 calendar sheets and a booklet giving a brief description of each religious festival in 12 of the world’s faiths and traditions, from Baha’i to Zoroastrian, including Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Pagan festivals. A hard copy wallchart is also available.

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Climate change resources

A number of faith communities have produced resources on responding to climate change. Many of these have been collated by Faith for the Climate at <https://www.faithfortheclimate.org.uk/Faith-Resources>.

Interfaith Scotland has also produced a number of resources on climate action, which can be found at <https://interfaithscotland.org/climate-action-resources>.

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The Charity Commission and faith charities

The Charity Commission is the regulator of charities in England and Wales. It also maintains the Charity Register (<https://www.gov.uk/find-charity-information>). Its purpose is to ensure that charities can thrive and inspire trust so that people can improve lives and strengthen society.

Almost all charities with an income of over £5,000 must register with the Charity Commission. Being a registered charity has advantages, such as: tax benefits, such as Gift Aid; opportunities to apply for grant funding; support and guidance to help you run your organisation more effectively; and increased public confidence in your organisation.

The Commission's Faith Charities Outreach Team works with faith charities, such as churches, gurdwaras, mosques, synagogues and temples. They provide free support to trustees - also known as committee members or directors - of faith organisations that are required to register as a charity. To arrange a meeting, discuss registration or find out what support they can offer, email faithoutreach@charitycommission.gov.uk.

The Commission's website <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/charity-commission> has more information about their work.

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Religion Media Centre

The Religion Media Centre was launched in December 2017 and has since then been working as a resource for journalists, aiming to encourage the highest quality coverage of religious issues in the media. It also offers training to journalists in the coverage of religion, and media training for religious organisations to better understand the media and the way it works. A new monthly podcast is due to start in the autumn.

The RMC produces fact sheets, daily and weekly news bulletins and regular zoom press briefings on religion and belief topics and also holds two annual events - a public lecture and a festival celebrating and challenging the coverage of religion and belief. Its content is regularly featured in the main UK news outlets.

The Centre is keen to collaborate with academic, media and religious organisations that wish to be a part of the work. It has previously featured publications and projects from Cambridge University, SOAS, The Woolf Institute and others. To learn more, and to support, or be a part its work, visit <http://religionmediacentre.org.uk/>.

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Study/Training

IFN Digital surgery slots for local inter faith groups

IFN is continuing to make available during August a number of free half hour digital ‘surgery’ slots for local inter faith groups to have a conversation about their group’s use of digital communications and how they might strengthen this. Any local inter faith group interested in booking a slot can email Ashley Beck at ashley.beck@interfaith.org.uk.

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SAFE Webinar Programme

The Community Security Trust is delivering a series of free webinars on Security Advice for Everyone (SAFE). These “will be of interest to any member of a community that feels vulnerable to hate crime and violent extremism. This will include people who regularly attend a place of worship, and in particular community leaders, managers of places of worship and people who wish to become involved in making their community and place of worship as safe as possible.”

Topics include: Event security for your community, Past terror attacks – lessons learned, Organising security, Conflict management, Online security, Basic security and Hate crime and your community. For more information, and to register, visit <https://cst.org.uk/about-cst/safe-security-advice-for-everyone>.

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Webinars for faith charities

The Charity Commission provides webinars for faith charities on good governance topics, such as Trustee Duties, Financial Management and Safeguarding. To receive details of future webinars, email faithoutreach@charitycommission.gov.uk.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS, AND NOMINATIONS

Nominations

Honours nominations

Each year a number of people receive Honours for services to inter faith work or community cohesion. The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is looking for nominations for people who work or volunteer in a number of areas which include ‘Faith, integration and communities’. All nominations must be made on an

official citation form and nominees should not be informed that they have been nominated. The form can be found at [MHCLG Birthday 2022 Honours nomination form](#). The deadline for nominations is 1 September. For more information, email honours@communities.gsi.gov.uk.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

Inter Faith Network for the UK

Honorary Treasurer

IFN invites expressions of interest in the post of Honorary Treasurer. The work of IFN is overseen by a board of Trustees. All IFN Trustees hold their posts on a voluntary basis. The gift of Trustees' time and skill is vital to the wellbeing of the organisation's work and is greatly valued. Among the Trustees are 2 Co-Chairs and 1 Honorary Treasurer. For the role description and expression of interest form, contact ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

Finance/administration and project roles

IFN expects shortly to advertise two fixed term finance/admin (part-time) and project support (full-time) roles. If those or other potential roles at IFN are of interest, visit <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/jobs> to check on vacancies.

Volunteers

The Inter Faith Network for the UK currently has 2 opportunities for online volunteers who would like to offer 4-8 hours a week to help on different aspects of IFN's work to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. To express an interest in volunteering, please complete the application form at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/volunteering>.

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Faith and Belief Forum – Office volunteer

The Faith & Belief Forum is looking for an organised and motivated volunteer, to help make a difference by providing remote administrative support to its Education and Learning team. The deadline for applications is 5 September. For more information, visit <https://faithbelieforum.org/programme/office-volunteering>.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Near Neighbours small grants programme

The Near Neighbours small grants programme is funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and administered by the Church Urban Fund. It is currently offering small grants of between £250 and £3,000 as seed funding for local groups and organisations working in a number of areas of England to bring together neighbours, and to develop relationships across diverse faiths and ethnicities to improve their communities.

To be eligible, projects should meet the following criteria: Bring together people of two or more different faiths and/or ethnicities, to build friendships and develop relationships of trust; Work locally; Work sustainably; Work to improve the community; and involve a diverse group of people in planning and implementation. For more information, visit <https://www.near-neighbours.org.uk/small-grants>.

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Funding websites

My Funding Central is a new database of grant funding and social investment sources. This service is available to organisations with an annual income below £1m and is free for organisations under £30k. <https://www.myfundingcentral.co.uk/> Similar websites for funding in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at Funding Scotland - <https://funding.scot/> - Wales Council for Voluntary Action - <http://www.wcva.org.uk/funding/search> - and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland - <https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

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COVID-19 related funding

The Charities Aid Foundation has collated a list of organisations which are supporting charities and voluntary groups at this time. <https://www.cafonline.org/covid-19-support/help-for-charities#tab1>

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Listed Places of Worship grant scheme

The Listed Places of Worship (LPW) Grant Scheme gives grants that cover the VAT incurred in making repairs to listed buildings in use as places of worship. The scheme covers repairs to the fabric of the building, along with associated professional fees, plus repairs to turret clocks, pews, bells and pipe organs. The Grant Scheme is run by the Department for

Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and administered by Topmark.
<http://www.lpwscheme.org.uk/>

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FCC Community Action Fund

The FCC Communities Foundation is offering grants between £2,000 and £100,000 for projects which involve the provision, maintenance or improvement of public amenities including community spaces in places of worship, which are registered charities. Projects must be based within 10 miles of an eligible FCC Environment waste facility. The current round closes on 1 September. <https://fcccommunitiesfoundation.org.uk/funds/fcc-community-action-fund>

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Subsidised fundraising workshops

The Foundation for Social Improvement offers subsidised training programmes for small charities across the UK. The courses cover a wide range of subjects from event planning to leadership. Many of the courses focus on fundraising and sustainability skills in particular. Further information and dates for upcoming courses, now being held online, can be found at <http://www.thefsi.org/services/training>.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

National Hate Crime Awareness Week takes place from Saturday 9 October to Saturday 16 October. <https://nationalhcaw.uk/>

One World Week will take place from Sunday 17 to Sunday 24 October.
www.oneworldweek.org

Scottish Interfaith Week will this year be held from Sunday 31 October to Sunday 7 November. Scottish Interfaith Week is led by Interfaith Scotland. The theme for this year's week is 'Together for our Planet'. www.scottishinterfaithweek.org

Inter Faith Week, in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, will take place from Sunday 14 to Sunday 21 November. www.interfaithweek.org

Mitzvah Day will take place on Sunday 21 November. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Jewish community where people give their time to make a difference to the community around them. Many events and projects held for the day have an inter faith focus. www.mitzvahday.org.uk/

Sewa Day is a day of faith-based social action led by the Hindu community. It normally takes place on 4 dates across the year. Due to COVID there are currently no fixed days; rather, 'every day is Sewa day' and volunteers are helping people continually as they are able. <https://sewaday.org/>

**SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK
TO INCREASE INTER FAITH UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION**

The Inter Faith Network for the UK works for inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. Please help us grow this vital work by making a donation at: <https://interfaith.org.uk/donate> (including Paypal option).

Donations are used with care to make a real difference.

Donations can also be made by sending a cheque payable to 'The Inter Faith Network' to: The Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH.

Thank you!

**MAKE A GIFT TO SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK IN REMEMBRANCE OF
A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND OR THROUGH A LEGACY**

If you would like to make a gift in memory of a loved one, please get in touch by emailing remember@interfaith.org.uk or call us on 0207 730 0410.

By leaving a gift in your will to the Inter Faith Network for the UK, you can leave a living inheritance to help deepen and strengthen inter faith understanding and cooperation in this country – for now and for the future. If you are thinking about making a will, the best thing to do is to get in touch with a professional will writer, such as a solicitor or advocate; they can help to ensure it is legally correct and that your wishes are met. If you have already made a will, you can still make an addition or amendment in the form of a codicil. If you would like to pledge a gift, please provide our name and address, along with our registered charity number 1068934.

Please get in touch with us if you have any queries.
You can call us on 0207 730 0410 or contact us at remember@interfaith.org.uk

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DIARY DATES

A few examples of forthcoming events are listed below. Although COVID-19 restrictions have largely been lifted at this time, most events continue to take place online. Those listed are all virtual, except where noted. Events are also listed on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/events>.

Welwyn Hatfield Inter Faith Group is holding its next meeting on Monday 16 August. This will be a virtual tour of Welwyn Garden City Synagogue. For more information, email theresa.whifg@gmail.com.

Havering Interfaith Forum will be holding at a Multicultural Cricket Match & Picnic on Sunday 22 August at 2pm. It will be held at Ardleigh Green Cricket Club, Central Park, Romford. For further details, contact haveringinterfaithforum@gmail.com.

Bedford Council of Faiths is holding its next meeting on Tuesday 7 September. Luke Lerner from St Paul's Church in Bedford will be speaking on 'Journey from action to organising, working collaboratively for the common good'. It is uncertain at this stage whether people will be able to attend in person. It is hoped that the option of attending via Zoom will also be possible. For more information, email bedfordcounciloffaiths@gmail.com.

Interfaith MK is holding an Open-Air Multifaith Service on Thursday 9 September. This will be held at 6.30pm at The Amphitheatre in Campbell Park, Milton Keynes MK9 3FT. Interfaith MK is inviting representatives of the religions of Milton Keynes to each present a five minute act of Worship, Spiritual Practice or Devotion representative of their community. For more information, contact David Rennie interfaithmk@gmail.com.

Herefordshire InterFaith Group is holding its next event on Sunday 19 September. This will be a celebration to mark the UN International Day of Peace, with a multicultural programme including music and readings from different faiths and cultures and a candle lighting ceremony. It is being held from 3pm to 4.15pm at Madley Church, HR2 7DJ. For more information, visit <https://herefordshireinterfaith.org.uk/events/international-day-of-peace-celebration-2021/>.

Interfaith Wolverhampton is holding its next 'Bring and Share Lunch' online on Tuesday 17 August. Mr Fateh Patel from the Gujarati Association will talk about his faith and work. It is being held from 1pm to 2pm via Zoom. For more information, contact admin@ifwton.org.uk.

Interfaith Scotland is holding its annual networking seminar for local inter faith groups on Thursday 19 August. This is an opportunity for members of local interfaith groups in Scotland to come together and share good practice. The seminar is being held from 10.30am to 2.30pm. For more information, contact admin@interfaithscotland.org.

The **Faith & Belief Forum** and **Maccabi GB** are organising and Interfaith Fun Run on Monday 30 August. This family-friendly event is being held at the Stone X Stadium in Barnet. For those who cannot attend in person, there will be online activities. For more information, visit <https://www.interfaithrun.org/>.

Elmbridge Multi Faith Forum is holding its next event on Tuesday 21 September. EMF has been organising a series of events looking at variations among different faiths. Earlier in the year there have been two events looking at Buddhism and Sikhism. This will be the third such event in the year and will be on 'My Hinduism: Differences among Hindus'. It is being held at 7.30pm. For more information, contact KawtherH@smef.org.uk.

Woking People of Faith is holding an event on Tuesday 21 September to mark International Peace Day and this year's theme of 'Climate Action for Peace'. They have asked children to produce a poster or poem in answer to the question: 'What is causing climate change and what can people of faith do to help solve it?' and are working with RHS Wisley Gardens to mark the event. The event will be from 6.30pm until 7.15pm. Winners of the competition will be announced and there will be a short talk from RHS Wisley Gardens. For more information please visit www.wpof.org.uk or email administrator@wpof.org.uk.

More information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: <https://www.interfaithcouncilwales.cymru/>

IFN also carries news and information at www.twitter.com/IFNetUK www.facebook.com/IFNetUK and, about Inter Faith Week, at <https://twitter.com/IFweek> and www.facebook.com/IFWeek.

You can sign up to IFN mailings at any time by using the form on IFN's website at: www.interfaith.org.uk/news/gdpr or let us know that you would like to unsubscribe by using the links at the bottom of the cover email.

Submissions for next issue

If you have items about inter faith projects or future events which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **20 September** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer: Information in this e-bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH
www.interfaith.org.uk www.facebook.com/IFNetUK www.twitter.com/IFNetUK

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IFN e-bulletin

December 2021

Welcome to the e-bulletin of the Inter Faith Network for the UK www.interfaith.org.uk. It is published every two months and it highlights primarily new developments, projects and future events. You can read by scrolling through or you can go directly to an individual section or item by clicking on links in the list below.

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A message from the Co-Chairs of the Inter Faith Network for the UK

The Inter Faith Network works in many different ways to support the development of greater inter faith understanding and cooperation.

Across this year IFN has worked with faith communities, inter faith bodies, Government and many others to help support and strengthen response to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. IFN has also continued, despite the pressures of the pandemic, to provide information, resources and advice to help many different kinds of organisations from faith organisations to schools and workplaces to build religious literacy and work for good relations into their ongoing work. Through the Inter Faith Week programme (on which IFN leads) thousands of people, young and old and of many backgrounds have directly encountered IFN's messages of the vital importance of inter faith awareness and solidarity.

As 2021 draws to a close, we encourage you to consider a donation to support IFN's vital work.

You can make a donation at www.interfaith.org.uk/donate, by PayPal Donate with [PayPal Giving Fund](#) or by sending a cheque to: the Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH.

Thank you very much for your support.

Best wishes,
Bishop Jonathan Clark and Narendra Waghela, IFN Co-Chairs

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

COVID-19 and faith communities

October and November saw return to more regular patterns of in person meetings and events on the part of faith communities. In the Midlands, for example, thousands of Sikhs joined worldwide celebrations to mark the 552nd birthday Guru Nanak [Thousands of Sikhs turn up for annual religious event despite snow | ITV News Central](#) and in London, hundreds attended the Church of England's Synod. In Scotland, many from different faith groups came together to advocate together on behalf of climate change ahead of and at COP26 (although the main vigil for the latter was held outdoors).

The subsequent emergence in late November and rapid spread of the Omicron variant of the virus, and continued spread of the Delta variant, have led the UK Government and governments in the devolved nations to reintroduce some measures to reduce the spread of the virus. Places of worship remain open in all UK nations. However, face masks must now be worn in them all.

There has been a strong push to increase the numbers of people receiving boosters and also to encourage take up on the first and second vaccinations. UK Communities Minister Kemi Badenoch MP hosted a special webinar for faith leaders on 17 December with inputs from key NHS practitioners. On 19 December, the UK Government announced an additional £22.5 million in funding and an army of vaccine ambassadors have been deployed to encourage vaccine uptake in the run up to Christmas and the new year. Pop up clinics in places of worship will be among the kinds of activity supported.

Faith communities have been continuing to play an active part in the vaccine roll out. For example the Hindu Council UK and South Asian Health Alliance with input from the NHS and others held an online vaccine awareness event https://twitter.com/hindu_counciluk/status/1463450539585413121. Programmes such as Community Champions are also assisting. Faith leaders in some areas, such as Watford, have been issuing renewed calls for people to come forward for vaccination. <https://www.facebook.com/WatfordInterfaithAssociation/posts/4905345706155307> The Watford message includes within it the following wording which is central to many such calls at this time: *“Leaders from across all the major faiths in Watford are asking people of every faith and denomination to come forward and support this huge national effort. Vaccines are our best defence against Omicron – we therefore urge faith communities, and everyone, to book yourselves in today and join the national fight against this virus. If you have yet to get your first or second dose it is never too late, as the vaccines will reduce your risk of hospitalisation and death. So please play your part and encourage others in your community to be vaccinated with the booster.”*

Organisations such as FaithAction and Strengthening Faith Institutions are also playing a role.

The use of places of worship for clinics and pop-ups is affording unusual and welcome opportunities for inter faith learning and engagement. For example in the present week a local doctor from Bristol tweets about her vaccination at the Bristol Hindu temple <https://twitter.com/DrLizJenkinson/status/1470754571773485064> and an Infantry Officer about his visit to the local mosques for a booster, saying “ Unexpected 'cultural' day out as the eldest was intrigued with the beautifully decorative interior, and mosque staff happily chatted away with her”. https://twitter.com/Viking_Dave85/status/1473016935591911441

UK Government information on COVID-19 is at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-coronavirus-restrictions-what-you-can-and-cannot-do>.

The NHS guidance can be found at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>.

Advice is available on the following websites in the devolved nations:

<https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus>

<https://gov.wales/coronavirus>

<https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/>

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus>

Guidance for the use of places of worship can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-phase-3-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship/>

<https://gov.wales/alert-level-0-guidance-employers-businesses-and-organisations>

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-places-worship>

Within each of the nations, different faith communities are also working to provide their own guidance based on the official guidance and looking at particular practical dimensions of that. See, for example, <https://www.cytun.co.uk/hafan/en/covid-19-briefing-paper/> from CYTUN/Churches Together in Wales.

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UK Government Minister with responsibility for faith engagement

Kemi Badenoch MP has been given, as part of her Ministerial brief at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in the UK Government, responsibility for faith engagement as part of integrated communities. She is also Minister for Equalities.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/people/kemi-badenoch>

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Refugees and asylum seekers

On 11 October, IFN's Faith Communities Forum issued the statement at:

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/a-call-for-safe-humane-and-dignified-treatment-of-refugees-and-those-seeking-asylum> It includes a specific concern about a recently adopted 'push back' of boats policy within the framework of a wider statement concluding with a call for

"Drawing on the common values at the heart of our different and distinct faith traditions we call for safe, humane and dignified treatment of refugees and those seeking asylum."

Nationality and Borders Bill

The Nationality and Borders Bill passed its third reading in the House of Commons on 8 December. It next moves to its second reading in the House of Lords on 5 January.
[House of Lords: Nationality and Borders Bill \[HL\] \(parliament.uk\)](#)

The three objectives of the Bill are described by the Government as:

1. To make the system fairer and more effective so that we can better protect and support those in genuine need of asylum.
2. To deter illegal entry into the UK breaking the business model of criminal trafficking networks and saving lives.
3. To remove from the UK those with no right to be here.

[Nationality and Borders Bill: factsheet - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

There have been concerns raised about aspects of the Bill, including by faith communities, particularly in relation to criminalisation of arriving without permission and also about a provision which would give the Government to the right, in certain circumstances, to remove a UK citizen's citizenship without informing them.

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Sir David Amess MP

On 15 October, Sir David Amess, MP for Southend West, was killed in an attack during a constituency surgery he was holding at Belfairs Methodist Church in Leigh-on-Sea. The suspect was detained under the Terrorist Act.

Many tributes were offered to Sir David, including from faith communities in his constituency, such as local mosques, with whom he had had very positive relations. On 18 October a statement was issued on behalf of the Board and the Moderators of the Faith Communities Forum of IFN. This can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/statement-following-the-killing-of-sir-david-amess-mp>. It includes within it the following:

“Like the murder five years ago of Jo Cox MP, the knife attack on Steven Timms MP, and the attack on Nigel Jones MP in which local councillor Andrew Pennington, who had come to his aid, was killed, this latest murderous stabbing throws into sharp relief the vulnerability of those who serve as our elected representatives.

Causes and motives differ. In some cases, attackers seek to justify their acts through perverse distortions of religious teachings, such as in the case of Islamist extremists (despite the repeated rejection of their views by members of the community in question), or of political doctrine, in the case of far right extremists.

We must stand firm against hatred and division and in support of safe, free and open engagement of people in a democratic society.”

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Faith communities, climate change and the environment

COP26 (the United Nations climate talks, also known as the Conference of Parties or COP), took place in Glasgow from 31 October to 12 November. The COP saw the culmination of a long period of preparation and activity by faith community organisations, as well as individuals motivated by their faith. This included advocacy initiatives, including ‘pilgrimages’, such as that of the Young Christian Climate Network and ‘Camino to COP’.

The inter faith charity Faith for the Climate played a linking/encouraging role in relation to COP26, with support from the Environmental Issues Network of CTBI and active involvement from Aid NGOs such as Christian Aid, CAFOD, Tear Fund and Islamic Relief; and engagement from faith-based initiatives such as the Bhumi Project, Bahu Trust, Eco Synagogue, Eco Church, Eco Sikh and Hindu Climate Action. A Glasgow Multi-Faith Declaration was signed by a number of leaders of different faiths from across the UK <https://interfaithscotland.org/glasgow-multi-faith-declaration-for-cop26> and an open letter was delivered to Downing Street by a number of faith leaders <https://cafod.org.uk/News/Campaigning-news/COP26-faith-Number-10-hand-in>.

A number of other faith-based and inter faith bodies ran active campaigns in the time leading up to COP26, such as Muslim Charities Forum and the Wirral-based charity Faiths4Change. Joint statements were issued by a number of faith bodies, for example by bishops from the Church of Wales <https://www.churchinwales.org.uk/en/news-and-events/bishops-call-for-bold-action-on-climate-crisis/>; Muslim organisations from across the UK and Ireland <https://www.ifees.org.uk/cop26statement/>; and Druids <https://theorderoftheoak.wordpress.com/2021/08/30/open-letter-to-cop26-leaders/>.

At COP26, a range of faith-based and inter faith activities took place and Scottish Interfaith Week was moved forward to coincide with COP26, running from 31 October to 7 November on the theme of ‘Together for Our Planet’. On 31 October, Interfaith Scotland and Interfaith Glasgow, with the Scottish Religious Leaders Forum, led a prayer and meditation vigil at George Square in Glasgow, the official livestream of which can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q9wDl36mJms>.

On 2 November, representatives of faith movements from around the world gathered at St George’s Tron Church to present their demands for climate justice. Faith events were also organised to mark the Global Day of Action for Climate Justice on 6 November, including ‘faith and belief blocs’ at marches in London and Glasgow.

Faith groups also led workshops and held vigils and community events. Several faith-based organisations also ran exhibition stands in the Green Zone of COP26 and there were many other vigils, dialogue opportunities, workshops and volunteering opportunities. For example, Soka Gakkai International UK, with the Centre for Applied Buddhism, led a ‘Sowing Seeds of Hope’ event, which ran throughout COP26 from 1 to 7 November as part of the Climate Fringe in Glasgow, with talks and activities themed on climate justice and the launch of a ‘Seeds of Hope and Action’ exhibition with Earth Charter International. Some activities took place within the Blue Zone, however there was no formal space for faith groups at the summit.

Many activities for Inter Faith Week in England, Northern Ireland and Wales, which ran from 14 to 21 November, were also centred on faith responses to climate change <https://www.interfaithweek.org/events/calendar/environment-climate-event>.

Building on the momentum created by COP26, faith and inter faith/multi faith groups have begun to build campaigns, and to make plans and commitments.

The Climate Coalition, which includes a number of faith organisations, has created an ‘Email Your MP’ campaign and the ‘The Proof is in the Pudding’ campaign, encouraging people to make sure that the UK government fulfils the promises made at COP26. The details of these campaigns, including information on how to get involved, can be found at <https://www.theclimatecoalition.org/take-action>.

A number of communities have produced new resources linked to COP26 (see [below](#)).

A number of UK faith organisations have signed up to be participants in the ‘Faith Plans’ programme of FaithInvest which was launched in October to coincide with COP26. This will involve developing plans for practical faith-based environmental action. <https://www.faithplans.org/>

The details provided in this bulletin are not exhaustive, and faith and inter faith responses continue to develop. Details of major Christian faith events and latest responses to COP26, and sources of background information and links to some of the organisations which reported from the conference, can be found in this Churches Together in Britain and Ireland report <https://ctbi.org.uk/un-climate-change-conference-cop26/>.

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The Queen’s Green Canopy

The June issue of IFN’s e-bulletin noted that faith leaders had come together in a video to share what trees mean to them and their faiths and to encourage everyone to plant a tree for the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee next year. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/queen-katherine-grainger-justin-welby-prince-of-wales-people-b935675.html>

If you are a faith group or an inter faith organisation, why not get involved and plant a tree or trees? Tree planting is under way from now until March and will then start again in October 2022, through to the end of the Jubilee year (reflecting the time when trees are best planted).

The Woodland Trust is a partner of the QGC. Across 2021 and 2022 they have over three million saplings in tree packs, available on a first come first served basis. Information on how to apply for the free saplings is available through the Woodland Trust website <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/schools-and-communities/>. In Northern Ireland, free tree packs are available through the QGC partner The Conservation Volunteers. <https://queensgreencanopy.org/get-involved/communities-and-groups/>.

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Hate crime

In October, the UK Government published the 2020-21 hate crime figures for England and Wales. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2020-to-2021/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2020-to-2021> The report notes that religious hate crimes fell by 18 per cent (to 5,627 offences), down from 6,856 in the previous year; this was the second successive fall in religious hate crimes since a peak of 7,202 offences in year ending March 2019.

Scotland's report on the same period had been published earlier in the year. <https://www.copfs.gov.uk/media-site-news-from-copfs/1957-hate-crime-in-scotland-2020-21> That reported 573 charges with a religious aggravation reported in 2020-21, 14% fewer than in 2019-20. Northern Ireland data for the same period, together with a subsequent quarterly update can be seen at [Hate Motivation Statistics \(psni.police.uk\)](https://www.psnipolice.uk/hate-motivation-statistics).

On 7 December the Law Commission published the Final Report of its review of hate crime laws in England and Wales. The full report, and a summary of the report and its recommendations, are available for download at <https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/hate-crime/>.

During the time since the last issue, there have been a number of high profile hate incidents. These have included antisemitic incidents, for example targeting Jews on a bus on Oxford street at the start of Chanukkah. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/jewish-teens-oxford-street-hanukkah-bus-harassment-london-b969433.html> Among recently reported hate incidents targeting Muslims was one about two teenage girls being assaulted by four unknown women who tried to remove the girls' traditional Muslim dress and hijab. [Muslim girls assaulted by group of women who tried to yank their hijabs off \(tellmamauk.org\)](https://www.tellmamauk.org/muslim-girls-assaulted-by-group-of-women-who-tried-to-yank-their-hijabs-off) Islamophobia

Awareness month in November saw a number of events looking at hate incidents (as well as prejudice) linked to Muslim identity.

It is not just the Jewish and Muslim communities where religiously related incidents have been reported. For example, the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) has launched an investigation after an officer was accused, in a complaint against the West Midlands Police, of forcibly removing the religious head covering of a Sikh man while he was in custody. [Police apology amid claim Sikh headwear was forcibly removed - BBC News](#)

Information on reporting hate crimes can be found below.

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REPORT HATE CRIME AND WORK TOGETHER TO HELP TACKLE IT

Report hate incidents online through True Vision or via 3rd parties eg Community Security Trust (CST), Tell Mama UK and Stop Hate UK; at a police station; or by ringing the police on 101 (non-emergency) or 999.

<https://gov.uk/report-hate-crime>

<https://www.scotland.police.uk/contact-us/report-hate-crime-and-third-party-reporting/>

<https://reporhate.victimsupport.org.uk/hate-crime/>

<https://www.psni.police.uk/crime/hate-crime/reporting-a-hate-crime/>

See also *Looking after one another: the safety and security of our faith communities* (IFN and partners) which contains practical pointers for working together to counter hate crime.

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/looking-after-one-another-the-safety-and-security-of-our-faith-communities-2017>

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Social Media, prejudice and hatred

Recent publications

In December, the Community Security Trust published a Woolf Institute study with CST and Antisemitism Policy Trust which speaks of 495,000 antisemitic tweets being shared in the UK each year, with around 100 to 1,350 such tweets shared every day.

<https://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/research/projects/antisemitism-online> In November the

Community Security Trust published a report on antisemitic discourse:

<https://cst.org.uk/research/cst-publications>.

On 30 November, the Muslim Council of Britain's Centre for Media Monitoring published [British Media's Coverage of Muslims & Islam \(2018-2020\)](#). The report analysed 48,000+ online articles and 5,500+ broadcast clips. It describes 60% of online media articles and 47% of television clips as associating Muslims and/or Islam with negative aspects or behaviour.

Online Safety Bill

The Online Safety Bill (formerly the Online Harms Bill), to establish a new regulatory framework to tackle harmful content online, is due to be put to Parliament for approval in 2022. Information on the work of the Joint Committee that has been appointed to consider the draft Bill can be found at <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/534/draft-online-safety-bill-joint-committee/publications/>.

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Consultation on proposals to reform the Human Rights Act

On 14 December, the report of the Independent Human Rights Act Review Panel was published. This can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/independent-human-rights-act-review> Government's response, also published on 14 December, sets out its proposals to revise the Human Rights Act 1998 and replace it with a 'Bill of Rights'. Government's proposals are accompanied by a public consultation which will run until 8 March. Both can be found at <https://consult.justice.gov.uk/human-rights/human-rights-act-reform/>.

Government's proposals are extensive, and would affect a significant amount of the Act, if implemented, including changes to the principle of proportionality which would alter the ways that domestic judges balance qualified and limited rights from the European Convention on Human Rights (to which the UK is still a party).

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Assisted Dying Bill

The Assisted Dying Bill seeks to enable adults who are terminally ill to be provided at their request with specified assistance to end their own life. Members of the Lords debated the main principles and purpose of the Assisted Dying Bill during its Second Reading on 22 October. <https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2021/october-2021/lords-debates-assisted-dying-bill-at-second-reading/>

The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Chief Rabbi and the Archbishop of Westminster issued a joint press release opposing the Bill. <https://www.churchofengland.org/media-and-news/press-releases/faith-leaders-warn-risk-vulnerable-posed-assisted-dying-bill> Dignity in Dying, which supports the Bill, is supported by a number of faith leaders, including

Reform Rabbi Jonathan Romain, the former Archbishop of Canterbury Lord Carey, and former Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

The Religion Media Centre has put together some information on views within different faith traditions at <https://religionmediacentre.org.uk/factsheets/factsheet-assisted-suicide/>.

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BBC religious programming

The BBC has announced that Aleem Maqbool has been appointed as the BBC's new Religion Editor. He will take up the role in Spring 2022.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/2021/bbc-news-aleem-maqbool-religion-editor/>

In November the BBC held a webinar showcasing faith programming across the BBC's networks in 2021 and previewing highlights for Christmas and the new year. Highlights covered from 2021 included the addition of a new 'Faith and Hope' area on the BBC iPlayer, as well as programmes such as the 'Being' series reflecting on how family milestones are marked by different faiths, 'My First Festivals', featuring children celebrating festivals such as Rosh Hashanah and 'My Diwali Stories', which showed how Hindus, Jains and Sikhs celebrate Diwali in different ways. New RE materials are set to be released on BBC Bitesize and BBC Asian Network is due to release new content for Vaisakhi and for Ramadan including a 6 part series covering Ramadan's meaning for individuals.

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INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK NEWS

Inter Faith Week

Inter Faith Week 2021

This year Inter Faith Week www.interfaithweek.org took place from Sunday 14 to Sunday 21 November. Across the Week, over 740 activities are known to have taken place, and details of further events continue to come in. Many thousands of people of different backgrounds and all ages took part, with millions more encountering its positive messages through social media. The 2020 Week was almost entirely online due to the impact of COVID-19. Inter Faith Week 2021 saw many activities once again taking place in person, with others online or 'hybrid'.

Bishop Jonathan Clark and Narendra Waghela, Co-Chairs of the Inter Faith Network for the UK, which leads on the Week, said:

"This has been a fantastic Week. It has been inspiring to see such a wide range of activities, including local places of worship open days, faith leader meetings and inter

faith events, an amazing range of school activities and events held by local authorities, sports organisations, chaplaincies, cultural institutions such as museums and libraries, universities and colleges, police and fire services, the Armed Forces, the NHS, hospices, media, voluntary groups, businesses, and many others.

[It] has been a Week which has encouraged and sparked conversations, projects and partnerships which will further strengthen good inter faith relations and social cooperation for the common good between those of different faiths and beliefs.”

Read more about the week at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/news/press-release-IFW-2021-thousands-take-part>. A full list of activities can be seen at www.interfaithweek.org/list.

If you held an activity for the Week, congratulations and thank you for making the week such a success! Please do take 10 minutes to give feedback through the Inter Faith Week survey at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/events/about/give-your-feedback>.

Next year's Inter Faith Week will run **from 13-20 November**. Why not start planning now for an activity – it's never too early! You will find lots of activity ideas in the resources section of the Inter Faith Week website. www.interfaith.org.uk

Scottish Inter Faith Week

Scottish Interfaith Week is led by Interfaith Scotland and was this year brought forward to the earlier time of Sunday 31 October – Sunday 7 November to coincide with COP26. <https://scottishinterfaithweek.org/> Its theme this year was Together for our Planet.

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IFN Faith Communities Forum

The Inter Faith Network for the UK Faith Communities Forum (FCF) brings together national faith community bodies in IFN membership for regular discussion of issues of common concern. <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/about/faith-communities-forum>

The FCF met on 5 October. On the Agenda were: COVID-19 and faith communities; Faith communities and response to refugees and asylum seekers, IICSA report on 'Child Protection in Religious Organisations and Settings'; Inter faith engagement of faith communities – including joint working on climate issues in the run up to COP26 - and issues of current interest and concern; Inter Faith Week; and a number of IFN matters. It also met on 29 November when Agenda Items included: COVID-19 and faith communities; Levelling Up; Inter Faith Week; Inter faith engagement of faith communities and issues of current interest; and a number of IFN matters including an Evaluation Project and IFN's new Co-Chair from the National Faith Community Representative Bodies.

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New IFN Co-Chair

It was announced on 10 December by the Board of the Inter Faith Network for the UK that from 1 January the Revd Canon Hilary Barber will be taking up the role of Co-Chair, following the standing down of the Rt Revd Jonathan Clark at the end of the year, ahead of the latter's retirement as Bishop of Croydon. At its December meeting, the Board offered its warm thanks to Bishop Clark for his work with IFN across the last two years and its good wishes for his future.

Canon Barber will be Co-Chair from IFN's National Faith Community Representative Bodies category of membership. He joins Narendra Waghela, who is Co-Chair from IFN's local inter faith organisation and other categories membership. Canon Barber will also become *ex officio* a Co-Moderator of the IFN Faith Communities Forum.

Canon Barber said: *"The work of the Inter Faith Network of the UK is of enormous importance. I am delighted to have been appointed. I will do everything I can, with God's help, to enable the Inter Faith Network to thrive and flourish so that it can continue to be a vital resource for the development of inter faith cooperation and understanding in the UK."*

Canon Barber is the Vicar of Halifax Minster in Calderdale, West Yorkshire. Prior to that, he worked in the Diocese of Manchester. He is involved in both national and local inter faith engagement. He has a particular interest in the area of faith and the public square and practical cooperation of faiths for the benefit of local communities and society and in tackling division within society.

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IFN E-bulletin

Thank you to those who have completed the survey about IFN's e-bulletin. We shall be drawing on responses in our development of the e-bulletin early next year.

We apologise that there was no October issue and have included in the present issue some material that would have been included in that. The next issue is due to be published in February. If you have items about inter faith projects or future events which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk by **24 January** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line.

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS AND DEVELOPMENTS

CCJ Inclusion and Diversity programme

At the end of October the Council of Christians and Jews launched its new Inclusion and Diversity Programme. CCJ was established to fight ‘religious and racial prejudice’, especially antisemitism, and to ‘promote religious and racial harmony’. The project is intended to help CCJ work towards these founding goals in three ways: establishing a small twinning scheme between synagogues and Black majority congregations in at least three cities in the UK; organising one national event at the end of the project; and establishing a project oversight group. To learn more, email Theo Shaw at theophilia.shaw@ccj.org.uk.

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Local inter faith anniversaries

This year South London Inter Faith group celebrates 40 years since its founding. The highlight of the celebrations was an event on 28 November in Streatham. As a part of the anniversary events SLIFG will also be planting trees in Tooting, Merton and Streatham, revamping its website and making its archives and resources more accessible. For more information, email chair@southlondoninterfaith.org.uk.

This year marks the Birmingham Faith Leaders' Group's 20th Anniversary, having been formed in the immediate aftermath of 9/11. The occasion was marked by the Group's Annual Peace Service in September, in the presence of the Deputy Lieutenant of the West Midlands and the Lord Mayor of Birmingham, which was followed by a reception at Singers Hill Synagogue. The culmination of the event was the premiere of a new specially commissioned film about the Group and its 20 years. The film can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m0fv1s40PEI&t=976s>.

Other local bodies recently marking anniversaries include Swindon Interfaith. It reached its 30th year in 2020. Due to Covid restrictions, it could not hold a proper celebration last year, so decided to host it in 2021 instead. The event was an opportunity to celebrate and reflect on its successes over the last 30 years as well as looking forward to the future.

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Near Neighbours Network

As noted in the August issue, the Near Neighbours Network is a new opportunity for individuals and organisations to connect with other likeminded people and groups beyond the 11 Near Neighbours areas in England. Near Neighbours notes: “We remain committed to creating strong and cohesive communities at local level, but we also want to create a wider national network where all the groups and individuals involved with Near

Neighbours can share good practice and expertise and build new partnerships. The Network will also enable our hubs and partners to offer knowledge and training, online events, and downloadable resources, to a wider audience.” For more information, and to sign up, visit <https://www.near-neighbours.org.uk/network-joining-page>.

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Reaching out to our neighbours

Luton Gurdwara Soup Kitchen

There are many projects which regularly offer a helping hand to others or assist when needed. For example, a weekly soup kitchen was launched during Inter Faith Week by Luton Gurdwara. <https://twitter.com/PamtengoRadio/status/1462503298582429707>

Sewa

Many groups step up their collections at times such as Christmas and other festivals or hold specially focused drives for food and gifts. In this video clip, Nicola Richards MP for West Bromwich East talks about helping Sewa Day wrap presents and why she would be joining them again shortly to do so.

<https://twitter.com/Nicola4WBE/status/1471114412941783048>

Interfaith Glasgow Weekend Club

Glasgow is home to more asylum seekers than anywhere else in the UK. Often newcomers arrive with little or no money, poor English, and suffering the effects of trauma. Many individuals and families find themselves extremely isolated, especially at the weekends when refugee services tend not to operate. Glasgow Interfaith’s Weekend Club tackles this isolation and aids integration by working with a team of volunteers from diverse faith and belief communities to organise free monthly events for newcomers, usually in collaboration with other organisations and often hosted in partnership with faith communities. This Christmas it has raised donations to be able to give over 100 ‘New Scots’ children and young people in Glasgow wrapped presents. These were delivered by volunteers. <https://twitter.com/InterfaithGlasg/status/1471059961128046600>

Winter Shelters

A number of winter shelters, such as OneRoof Leicester, which normally operate with the assistance of faith communities, are closed due to Covid impacts.

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/dec/14/call-for-action-to-prevent-deaths-as-uk-homeless-shelters-shut-their-doors>

A new scheme and fund for England, to protect and vaccinate rough sleepers, was announced on 20 December by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/push-to-protect-and-vaccinate-rough-sleepers-with-28-million-government-funding-boost>

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New Telford and Wrekin Inter Faith Community Hub

Telford and Wrekin Interfaith Council has opened an Interfaith Community Hub on the main high street in Wellington, Shropshire. The new base will be used to provide emergency food parcels and to give the homeless hot meals. An inter faith youth club will be able to meet there. There will be a prayer and reflection room

<https://www.shropshirestar.com/news/local-hubs/telford/wellington/2021/10/12/interfaith-council-opens-new-community-base-in-wellington/>

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Northamptonshire Police Interfaith Association

Northamptonshire Police has recently launched a new inter faith association, bringing together people of different faiths among officers and staff as well as members of the community. <https://www.northants.police.uk/news/northants/news/news/2021/october-21/northamptonshire-police-launches-first-interfaith-association/>

Information about dialogues in the workplace can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/dialogues-in-the-workplace>.

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

Resources

IFN Videos for assemblies and collective worship

During Inter Faith Week, IFN launched a number of videos that can be used in schools' assemblies and as part of collective worship.

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/school-assemblies-collective-worship>.

The videos focus on real people who are engaged in inter faith activity, some of whom do not profess a faith. Some of the videos feature young people and others more mature adults. Each video is between 3 to 5 minutes long and has been developed to promote reflection on two themes: Friendship and Social action. These videos were created for Inter Faith Week but can be used at any time of the year to enable pupils to reflect on what it means to be a friend and what it means to do good in one's community.

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Faith Communities and COVID-19: Learning from the Journey

Earlier this year, IFN's National Meeting took as its theme 'Faith Communities and Covid-19: Learning from the Journey'. The report on the day is at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/faith-communities-and-covid-19-learning-from-the-journey-report-on-ifn-national-meeting-2021>.

The meeting explored a wide range of issues. These included how places of worship had coped with periods of closure and with social distancing; health care chaplaincy and the handling of funerals and bereavement; and responding to loneliness and domestic abuse during the pandemic. It heard from faith communities with high BAME membership responding to the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on them and about initiatives to address vaccine hesitancy. The gathering also considered how digital communication has been being used for inter faith dialogue and cooperation and the future possibilities of that; how faith communities, local authorities and other statutory agencies have been working in partnership; how schools have adapted during the pandemic and a new IFN teacher resource to help 11-14 year olds learn about inter faith activity, with examples from inter faith responses to the pandemic; the financial impact of the pandemic on faith community organisations; how the pandemic experience is being captured through research; and the practicalities of standing in solidarity and issuing statements.

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Inter Faith Buddies

Inter Faith Buddies is a scheme designed by IFN to bring individuals together to engage in dialogue.

- The scheme involves two people of different faiths or beliefs: keeping in touch on a weekly basis for 6 weeks;
- choosing or developing questions on which to share their thoughts and experiences; and
- if they wish, sharing at an in-person or online event, in an agreed way, some reflections on what they have gained from the experience.

It is an opportunity for sharing and learning, on a one-to-one basis across a limited period of time, about what is important to us, in the context of our wider community. The process may, of course, lead to longer term conversations and new forms of practical co-operation.

Interested in taking up the idea within your organisation?

If you are an organisation interested in taking up the Inter Faith Buddies idea, visit <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/inter-faith-buddies> for more information and practical pointers.

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Faiths Working Together toolkit

Near Neighbours, which has recently celebrated its 10th anniversary, has updated the Faiths Working Together toolkit produced in partnership with the Inter Faith Network for the UK. The toolkit includes practical pointers for making contact and for planning and publicising initiatives, as well as advice on key principles to consider, such as the importance of looking for shared values and experiences while working well with difference. It can be downloaded at [Faiths Working Together toolkit](#).

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Measures of Success toolkit

During Inter Faith Week the Woolf Institute launched a practical toolkit designed to help inter faith organisations measure their impact at a grassroots level. This is part of a two-year research project entitled *Measures of Success: Evaluating the Impact of Interfaith Dialogue*. The toolkit can be downloaded at <https://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/research/projects/toolkit>. To accompany the toolkit, the Woolf Institute is making available a set of resources for inter faith groups to measure impact. This includes a consent form template, baseline and end-line survey templates and a database template.

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Visit My Mosque resource for RE Teachers

A new resource to support Religious Education Teachers in organising school visits to places of worship such as mosques has been launched by the Muslim Council of Britain, supported by Culham St Gabriel's Trust. The resources are part of the #VisitMyMosque campaign and can be downloaded at www.visitmymosque.org/for-re-teachers.

They include: Teachers Introduction; Guide to Organising a School Visit to a Mosque and Template Activity Sheets; List of Mosques Offering School Tours; Bespoke '360 degree virtual mosque tours' for a diverse range of 6 mosques in the UK, plus Teacher's Guide; and Recorded video tours of a diverse range of further 6 mosques in the UK, plus Teacher's Guide. For further information, ideas or suggestions, email visitmymosque@mcb.org.uk.

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Climate resources and guides

Some faith groups and faith-based organisations have launched climate resources and guides. This includes the Muslim Council for Britain's guide to eco-mosques <https://mcb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/MCB-Eco-Booklet-12.11.21.pdf>, Hindu Forum of Britain's guidance for Diwali and places of worship, as well as the launch of the

Hindu Environmental Task Force <http://www.hfb.org.uk/training-on-environmental-management-plan.html>, and Quakers' guide to 'Taking Action for Climate Justice' <https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/taking-action-for-climate-justice-2021>.

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New Religion and Belief Policy Network

In December Goldsmiths, University of London, launched a new Religion and Belief Policy Network, a research-based initiative led by Goldsmiths, with support from the Arts and Humanities Research Council. Goldsmiths has worked closely with policy leaders in health, social care, education and community work to coproduce resources to support better policy making in relation to religion and belief. The Network website contains resources, audio, details of online events and a database searchable by keywords, sectors and settings. Further information is available at <https://religionandbeliefpolicynetwork.org/>.

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Wales Faith & Citizenship conference report

The Onyx Foundation in Wales has recently published, 'Faith & Citizenship', a record of its 2019 inter faith conference 'From our Shared Values to our Shared Citizenship'. To receive a pdf copy, email info@onyxlinkfoundation.org.

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Guidance on recruiting Black and Asian charity trustees

Action for Trustee Racial Diversity has published 'From Here to Diversity', guidance specifically designed to support boards with recruiting Black and Asian charity trustees. The guide is intended to be helpful to organisations looking to implement the 2020 iteration of the Charity Governance Code (<https://www.charitygovernancecode.org/en/front-page>) which includes an enhanced diversity principle. The guide, which has been supported by the Co-op Foundation, explores: overcoming the barriers to a more racially diverse board; reaching and engaging diverse networks; best practice in Black and Asian trustee recruitment; and inclusion and succession. The guide can be downloaded at <https://atrd.group/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/From-Here-to-Diversity-A-Practical-Guide-on-How-to-Recruit-Black-and-Asian-Charity-Trustees.pdf>. Hard copies can be purchased through the Directory of Social Change.

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Study/Training

IFN ‘Digital surgery’ slots for local inter faith organisations

IFN is continuing to make available free half hour digital ‘surgery’ slots for local inter faith organisations to have a conversation about their group’s use of digital communications and how they might strengthen this. Any local inter faith group interested in booking a slot can email IFN’s Project Director, Ashley Beck, at ashley.beck@interfaith.org.uk.

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Sharing Perspectives inter faith study tour

Sharing Perspectives is an inter faith study tour, supported by the Woolf Institute and the Christian Muslim Forum. Jews, Christians and Muslims live, journey and study together as an inter faith community hosted by St George’s College, Jerusalem. Over nine days, from 21 February – 1 March 2022, the group will encounter the land and its people in the past and present, exploring historical, geographical, religious and political complexities. Participants will visit sites sacred to each tradition, learn from one another, and explore each other’s holy scriptures. For more information, visit

<https://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/whats-on/news/sharing-perspectives-an-interfaith-study-tour>.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS, AND NOMINATIONS

Calls for Information

Women’s Local Inter Faith Initiatives – A call for information

As part of IFN’s work to support and encourage local inter faith engagement, IFN is carrying out a short, practically focused, research project on women’s local inter faith initiatives. Linked to this, it held a special by invitation round table during Inter Faith Week. This was chaired by IFN’s Executive Director, with opening words from the Co-Chairs, an introduction to the research project from its Project Officer, reports on contributors’ work, wide ranging discussion and closing reflections from Patricia Stoa of Nottingham Inter Faith Council. Contributors included both participants from a range of local women’s inter faith initiatives and from national women’s inter faith bodies with local groups: Women’s Interfaith Network and Nisa Nashim.

During October and November it contacted local inter faith organisations to gather information and reflections.

If you have any information about this topic that you think would be helpful, Project Officer Kirsty Healey would be very pleased to hear from you by 20 January.

Kirsty.healey@interfaith.org.uk.

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IFN Local Inter Faith Guide

The IFN office is working on a new edition of *The Local Inter Faith Guide*. This is a guide for those starting or developing the work of local inter faith bodies. The new edition will respond to the changing environment for local inter faith activity – including the changes brought by increased digital communication, particularly since the time of the pandemic. What remains the same, however, is the key role of the guide in sharing information and good practice on all sorts of topics, from running successful programmes and working in partnership with bodies such as local authorities, to naming a new local inter faith organisation, creating a logo, working out governance matters, women’s local inter faith initiatives and involving young people.

The guide will include a range of information and signposts for further learning and development in support of local inter faith organisations. It will also, again, include real examples from local inter faith organisations – that is an important way both to celebrate the work of organisations and also to provide ‘doable’ examples from which other organisations can learn.

If your local inter faith organisation in the last four years (2018-21) has:

- held an activity or run a project that your think was worthwhile and successful and might be of interest to other LIFOs;
- tackled effectively a particular issue such as governance change, fundraising, or getting more young people involved; and/or
- worked closely with statutory agencies such as the local authority or the police, eg on Covid response or tackling hate crime

Kirsty would be very pleased to hear from you by 14 January. Please send your contribution (up to 250 words) to kirsty.healey@interfaith.org.uk.

Data which you provide may be drawn upon by IFN for use in development of the third edition of its Local Inter Faith Guide. Data may also be used for the wider purposes of IFN's work of promoting good inter faith relations in the UK. Answers you have given may be quoted, and may be attributed to your organisation, except where you ask that it not be so. Any contact details which you provide will not be passed to third parties without your permission.

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Bereavement – A call for information

Millions of people across the UK faced bereavement in 2020, with hundreds of thousands more bereaved than in previous years as a result of Covid-19. Across England and Wales, 614,000 people died during 2020 and 2021, leaving an estimated three million people facing bereavement. This is 75,000 more deaths than the average across the previous five years – with an estimated additional 375,000 left bereaved.

(<https://bereavementcommission.org.uk/about-us/>) As well as more people facing bereavement, the pandemic has had a profound impact on how those affected have experienced their loss.

Many people have been unable to see family and friends and have had limited access to formal support after their loved one died. Feeling alone in their grief due to lockdown or having to shield or self-isolate had had a devastating impact. The lack of face-to-face contact from primary care and community-based services, and bereavement support services, has been difficult.

Working in partnership with a number of UK charities, and with researchers leading an academic study on the issue, a UK Commission on Bereavement through and beyond Covid-19 has been established to explore these issues and make recommendations to better support bereaved people.

To help inform its ongoing work, the Commission would like to hear from individuals affected by bereavement, or professionals or organisations working to support people suffering from bereavement. The findings from this call for evidence will be fed into the Commission's report, due early next year, which they hope will include recommendations across government.

The Commission is particularly requesting evidence from faith groups. If you have experiences or reflections you would like to share, visit <https://bereavementcommission.org.uk/taking-part/> to find out more.

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Survey on media representation

REFLECT is a UK not-for-profit influencer talent management agency specialising in the management of diverse and inclusive influencers. It is currently working on a 'white paper' on the representation of minority and diverse groups in the media and is seeking views through a survey, which can be found at <https://www.research.net/r/55WJ9QH>.

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Nominations

Barnet Faith & Belief Awards

Barnet Multi Faith Forum with the Faith & Belief Forum is establishing the first Barnet Faith & Belief Awards. These will celebrate outstanding contributions of faith and belief groups, through social action or community engagement, that have a positive impact on Barnet and improves the lives of residents and communities in Barnet. The closing date for nominations is 10 January. For more information, and to submit a nomination, visit <http://barnetmultifaithforum.org/barnet-faith-belief-awards-2022/>.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

Inter Faith Network for the UK

Honorary Treasurer

IFN invites expressions of interest in the post of Honorary Treasurer. The work of IFN is overseen by a board of Trustees. All IFN Trustees hold their posts on a voluntary basis. The gift of Trustees' time and skill is vital to the wellbeing of the organisation's work and is greatly valued. Among the Trustees are 2 Co-Chairs and 1 Honorary Treasurer. For the role description and expression of interest form, contact ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

Volunteers

The Inter Faith Network for the UK currently has an opportunity for online volunteers with good desk research and writing skills who would like to offer 4-8 hours a week to help on different aspects of IFN's work to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. To express an interest in volunteering, please complete the application form at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/volunteering>.

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Board of Deputies – Interfaith Projects Assistant

The Board of Deputies of British Jews is seeking to recruit an Interfaith Projects Assistant. This is a part time role, which will be responsible for encouraging and supporting local inter faith meetings, visits to places of worship, and other events/activities aimed at relationship-building between Jewish communities and different faith and belief groups at the local levels. The post holder will also assist with the Board of Deputies' inter faith work on inter faith relations at the national level. The closing date is 4 January. For further information, visit <https://www.bod.org.uk/careers/>.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Funding websites

My Funding Central is a database of grant funding and social investment sources. This service is available to organisations with an annual income below £1m and is free for organisations under £30k. <https://www.myfundingcentral.co.uk/> Similar websites for funding in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at Funding Scotland - <https://funding.scot/>, Wales Council for Voluntary Action - <http://www.wcva.cymru./funding> and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland - <https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

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COVID-19 related funding

The Charities Aid Foundation has collated a list of organisations which are supporting charities and voluntary groups at this time. <https://www.cafonline.org/covid-19-support/help-for-charities#tab1>

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Listed Places of Worship grant scheme

The Listed Places of Worship (LPW) Grant Scheme gives grants that cover the VAT incurred in making repairs to listed buildings in use as places of worship. The scheme covers repairs to the fabric of the building, along with associated professional fees, plus repairs to turret clocks, pews, bells and pipe organs. The Grant Scheme is run by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and administered by Topmark. <http://www.lpwscheme.org.uk/>

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FCC Community Action Fund

The FCC Communities Foundation is offering grants between £2,000 and £100,000 for projects which involve the provision, maintenance or improvement of public amenities including community spaces in places of worship, which are registered charities. Projects must be based within 10 miles of an eligible FCC Environment waste facility. The current round closes on 2 March. <https://fcccommunitiesfoundation.org.uk/funds/fcc-community-action-fund>

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Subsidised fundraising workshops

The Foundation for Social Improvement offers subsidised training programmes for small charities across the UK. The courses cover a wide range of subjects from event planning to leadership. Many of the courses focus on fundraising and sustainability skills in particular. Further information and dates for upcoming courses, now being held online, can be found at <http://www.thefsi.org/services/training>.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS

The Great Winter Get Together will be from 17 to 30 January. This is a project of the Jo Cox Foundation. <https://www.greatgettogether.org/>

Holocaust Memorial Day takes place on 27 January. Its theme in 2022 is ‘One Day’. Holocaust Memorial Day is the day for everyone to remember the millions of people murdered in the Holocaust, under Nazi Persecution, and in the genocides which followed in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur. It honours the survivors of these regimes and challenges everyone to use the lessons of their experience to inform their lives today. www.hmd.org.uk/

World Interfaith Harmony Week takes place from 1 to 7 February. It is a UN recognised Week which was proposed to the UN General Assembly by HM King Abdullah of Jordan. The first UN World Interfaith Harmony Week took place in February 2011. <http://worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com>

Sewa Day is a day of faith-based social action led by the Hindu community. It normally takes place on 4 dates across the year. Due to COVID there are currently no fixed days; rather, ‘every day is Sewa day’ and volunteers are helping people continually as they are able. <https://sewaday.org/>

SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK’S WORK TO INCREASE INTER FAITH UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION

The Inter Faith Network for the UK works for inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. Please help us grow this vital work by making a donation at: <https://interfaith.org.uk/donate> (including Paypal option). Donations can also be made by sending a cheque payable to ‘The Inter Faith Network’ to: The Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH.

Donations are used with care to make a real difference.

Thank you!

MAKE A GIFT TO SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK IN REMEMBRANCE OF A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND OR THROUGH A LEGACY

If you would like to make a gift in memory of a loved one, please get in touch by emailing remember@interfaith.org.uk or call us on 0207 730 0410.

By leaving a gift in your will to the Inter Faith Network for the UK, you can leave a living inheritance to help deepen and strengthen inter faith understanding and cooperation in this country – for now and for the future. If you are thinking about making a will, the best thing to do is to get in touch with a professional will writer, such as a solicitor or advocate; they can help to ensure it is legally correct and that your wishes are met. If you have already made a will, you can still make an addition or amendment in the form of a codicil. If you would like to pledge a gift, please provide our name and address, along with our registered charity number 1068934.

Please get in touch with us if you have any queries.

You can call us on 0207 730 0410 or contact us at remember@interfaith.org.uk.

Remember a Charity has produced a helpful resource called 'Making a Will - your complete guide'. This can be found at <https://www.rememberacharity.org.uk/making-a-will/>.

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DIARY DATES

A few examples of forthcoming events are listed below. Those listed are all virtual, except where noted. Events are also listed on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/events>.

Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship is holding an event on Tuesday 11 January on 'Attitudes Towards Wealth in Christianity and Hinduism'. This will be presented by John Summerwill and Sam Ghosh. The event begins at 7.30pm. For more information, email chair@concord-leeds.org.uk.

York Interfaith Group is holding its next meeting on Tuesday 11 January. Dee Boyle and others will be speaking about how their personal faith has developed or changed over the course of their lives so far. The meeting begins at 7.30pm. For more information, email yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com.

Woking Action for Peace, Churches Together in Woking, Surrey Faith Links, Woking Environment Action, Woking People of Faith, Woking Soroptimists and Woking Quakers are holding the next Woking Debate on Saturday 15 January. The topic is 'What is gender? Does it need to affect how we relate to each other?'. The event will take place

from 11am to 12.30pm at Christ Church, Jubilee Square, Woking GU21 6YG. For more information, visit www.wokingdebates.com.

Elmbridge Multi Faith Forum is holding its next event on Wednesday 9 February. The topic will be ‘My Judaism, differences among Jews’ and the meeting will be held at the North West Surrey Synagogue, 7.00pm (refreshments) for 7.30pm start. For more information, contact Kawther Hashmi at KawtherH@smef.org.uk.

The **St Ethelburga’s Centre for Reconciliation and Peace** is holding a 4-day retreat at its Centre in London from Thursday 10 to Sunday 13 February. This will “combine a fearless look at the reality of climate migration, with lessons being learnt from innovative projects engaging migrant communities. Using reflective practices and group work we will explore the bridges between individual and community resilience.” For more information, and to book, visit https://stethelburgas.org/event/home-an-immersive-retreat-exploring-climate-change-migration-and-community-resilience/?mc_cid=2e6b2c400b&mc_eid=91aaa813ea.

More information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: <https://www.interfaithcouncilwales.cymru/>

IFN also carries news and information at www.twitter.com/IFNetUK www.facebook.com/IFNetUK and, about Inter Faith Week, at <https://twitter.com/IFweek> and www.facebook.com/IFWeek.

You can sign up to IFN mailings at any time by using the form on IFN’s website at: www.interfaith.org.uk/news/gdpr or let us know that you would like to unsubscribe by using the links at the bottom of the cover email.

Submissions for next issue

If you have items about inter faith projects or future events which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk **by 24 January** with ‘e-bulletin’ in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer: Information in this e-bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens London SW1W 0DH
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IFN e-bulletin

February 2022

Welcome to the e-bulletin of the Inter Faith Network for the UK www.interfaith.org.uk. It is published every two months and it highlights primarily new developments, projects and future events. You can read by scrolling through or you can go directly to an individual section or item by clicking on links in the list below.

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A message from the Co-Chairs of the Inter Faith Network for the UK

The Inter Faith Network works in many different ways to support the development of greater inter faith understanding and cooperation. These include:

- Advancing awareness of the different faith communities in the UK, including distinctive features and common ground
- Promoting mutual respect, understanding and cooperation
- Providing a trusted source of information on faith and inter faith issues
- Enabling discussion and common action rooted in shared values
- Encouraging inter faith initiatives at all levels
- Raising the profile of existing inter faith work
- Sharing good practice and producing resources to help inspire and strengthen inter faith initiatives

We encourage you to consider a donation to support IFN's vital work.

You can make a donation at www.interfaith.org.uk/donate, by PayPal Donate with [PayPal Giving Fund](#) or by sending a cheque to: the Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH.

Thank you very much for your support.

Best wishes,
Canon Hilary Barber and Narendra Waghela, IFN Co-Chairs

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

COVID-19 regulation updates

There have recently been updates to legal requirements relating to COVID-19 in all four nations of the UK.

England

On 21 February the UK Government published its plan for 'Living with COVID-19' in England. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-living-with-covid-19> This includes, from 24 February, an end to most remaining legal

requirements. Some requirements for employers relating to risk assessments remain in place until 1 April.

Scotland

It was announced on 22 February that Scotland's COVID passport scheme will end on 28 February, with the legal requirement to wear face masks being lifted on 21 March.

<https://www.gov.scot/news/living-safely-with-covid/>

Wales

The latest changes in Wales come into effect on 28 February, with face coverings being required in fewer settings. <https://gov.wales/coronavirus>

Northern Ireland

All remaining legal requirements were removed in Northern Ireland from 15 February.

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-how-stay-safe-and-help-prevent-spread>

UK Government information on COVID-19 is at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-coronavirus-restrictions-what-you-can-and-cannot-do>.

The NHS guidance can be found at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>.

Advice is available on the following websites in the devolved nations:

<https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus>

<https://gov.wales/coronavirus>

<https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/>

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus>

Guidance for the use of places of worship can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-phase-3-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship/>

<https://gov.wales/places-worship-and-funerals-potential-reasonable-measures-action-card-alert-level-0-html>

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-places-worship>

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Faith communities and COVID-19

Faith communities are continuing to put their weight behind the vaccination programme. Many places of worship have been hosting pop-up vaccination clinics, including a church in Stockport, a mosque in Southampton and a Sikh temple in Swindon.

<https://www.dailyecho.co.uk/news/19921514.pop-up-vaccine-clinic-hosted-taqwah-mosque-southampton/>

<https://twitter.com/NHSStockportCCG/status/1493918397167505409>

<https://www.swindonadvertiser.co.uk/news/19949777.swindon-sikh-temple-second-place-worship-region-hold-vaccine-pop-up-clinic/>

As the pandemic restrictions ease, the need for COVID-19 linked forms of charitable support has lessened but organisations such as Sewa Day continue to carry out their activities and in some areas, the last couple of years have inspired special acts of gratitude. For example in Northampton a chip shop owner teamed up with volunteers from the Sikh Community Centre and Youth Club to donate meals from his shop to people in shelters and sleeping rough on the streets of the town centre.

<https://www.northamptonchron.co.uk/business/chip-shop-owner-spreads-the-love-on-valentines-day-by-donating-food-to-homeless-3567011>

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Ukraine – inter faith vigils and gatherings

National faith communities have responded in a range of ways to the recent invasion of Ukraine by Russia and its impacts, including those seeking asylum as a result of the conflict.

A number of faith and inter faith organisations have held vigils and taken part in other actions. For example in Rochdale, a Ukrainian Catholic church served as locus for multi faith participation. https://twitter.com/mfp_rochdale/status/1497615969492955138 In Sunderland, the Sunderland Inter Faith Forum hosted a multi faith gathering, ‘A prayer for Ukraine’ at Sunderland Minister. <https://www.itv.com/news/tyne-tees/2022-02-28/a-prayer-for-ukraine-residents-of-all-faiths-gather-at-sunderland-vigil> There have also been statements such as from Faith Network for Manchester

<https://www.facebook.com/FN4Man/posts/5004002799621918>

and Watford Interfaith Association

<https://www.facebook.com/WatfordInterfaithAssociation/videos/236463101943335/>

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Hate crime

There have been a number of recent hate crimes which have been treated as religiously motivated. These include an attack on two Jewish bakers in North London the night before Holocaust Memorial Day <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/crime/stamford-hill-bakers-anti-semitic-attack-shomrim-b979041.html> and an attack on a Muslim women near a subway station in Glasgow <https://news.stv.tv/west-central/gang-of-youths- racially-abused-muslim-woman-near-subway-station>.

Security has been increased at a Hindu temple in Swindon, following a series of break-ins, during the most recent of which ornamental deities and decorations were damaged.

<https://www.swindonadvertiser.co.uk/news/19879852.council-criticises-burglars-targeting-hindu-temple-search-new-place-worship-continues/>

In February the Community Security Trust (CST) published its report on Antisemitic Incidents in 2021. CST recorded 2,255 antisemitic incidents in the UK in 2021, the highest total ever reported to CST in a single calendar year. This is an increase of 34% from the 1,684 incidents recorded by CST in 2020. The report notes that “this record figure is due to the volume of anti-Jewish reactions to the escalation of conflict in Israel and Palestine last year.” Of the incidents reported, 552 were online, including 16 instances of ‘Zoombombing’. <https://cst.org.uk/research/cst-publications>

Information on reporting hate crimes can be found below.

REPORT HATE CRIME AND WORK TOGETHER TO HELP TACKLE IT

Report hate incidents online through True Vision or via 3rd parties eg Community Security Trust (CST), Tell Mama UK and Stop Hate UK; at a police station; or by ringing the police on 101 (non-emergency) or 999.

<https://gov.uk/report-hate-crime>

<https://www.scotland.police.uk/contact-us/report-hate-crime-and-third-party-reporting/>

<https://reporhate.victimsupport.org.uk/hate-crime/>

<https://www.psnipolice.uk/crime/hate-crime/reporting-a-hate-crime/>

See also *Looking after one another: the safety and security of our faith communities* (IFN and partners) which contains practical pointers for working together to counter hate crime.

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/looking-after-one-another-the-safety-and-security-of-our-faith-communities-2017>

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Government response to Protect Duty consultation

On 10 January, the Government published its response to its consultation on the Protect Duty. 2755 individuals or organisations responded. 34% of the responses received were from Places of Worship. The consultation response noted that “When considering specific types of venues, there was a strong response to the consultation from Places of Worship. They, amongst voluntary and smaller organisations, sought exemption due to concerns over financial implications, the burden to operations and in some cases, rural locations.”

The full response can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/protect-duty/outcome/government-response-document>.

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Levelling Up

On 2 February the UK Government published its Levelling Up White Paper. This can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-the-united-kingdom>. There is no dedicated reference to the role of faith communities in this.

The UK Government also published on 2 February a response to Danny Kruger MP's Report: 'Levelling Up Our Communities: Proposals for a New Social Covenant'. This can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-response-to-danny-kruger-mps-report-levelling-up-our-communities-proposals-for-a-new-social-covenant/government-response-to-danny-kruger-mps-report-levelling-up-our-communities-proposals-for-a-new-social-covenant>. This includes the following response to Danny Kruger's recommendation that there be a new deal with faith communities, by which government supports a greater role for faith groups in meeting social challenges:

“The government recognises the significant contribution of faith groups and the increase in scale and innovation of their work during the pandemic and beyond. On 9 September 2021, the government announced the Faith New Deal Pilot Fund. Funding is available through a competitive grant programme for faith groups working on community projects in collaboration with local agencies and philanthropy. The fund aims to strengthen engagement between faith groups, national and local government through supporting faith-based initiatives addressing social issues. The fund will serve as a statement of intent to work constructively with faith groups and its delivery will inform a 'Faith Compact' to encourage national and local government to look for opportunities to partner with faith groups. Innovation is a key criterion for applications and each applicant will need to demonstrate they are innovative within their partnerships, new projects and/or expansion to pre-existing projects. The pilot will help determine how the future plans for the Faith New Deal will evolve. In addition, Colin Bloom, the independent Faith Engagement Adviser, has been appointed to lead a review into how the government should engage with faith groups in England. We look forward to seeing his recommendations on how we can further enhance government engagement with our faith groups.”

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Consultation on proposals to reform the Human Rights Act

The last issue of the e-bulletin noted that on 14 December, the report of the Independent Human Rights Act Review Panel was published. This can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/independent-human-rights-act-review>. The Government's

response, also published on 14 December, sets out its proposals to revise the Human Rights Act 1998 and replace it with a 'Bill of Rights'.

The Government's proposals are accompanied by a public consultation which ends on 8 March. Both can be found at <https://consult.justice.gov.uk/human-rights/human-rights-act-reform/>.

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EHRC Response to reports of Islamophobia in the Conservative Party

On 24 January it was announced that the Prime Minister had ordered a Cabinet Office inquiry into allegations made by Conservative MP Nus Ghani that she was discriminated against due to her religion.

On 27 January an EHRC spokesperson said: "Discrimination against public office holders is unacceptable and any suggestions of it should be tackled swiftly. Following the concerning reports about Nusrat Ghani MP, we have today written to the Cabinet Office and the Conservative Party seeking further information. As the regulator for equality and human rights, we take allegations of Islamophobia in any organisation extremely seriously. We are monitoring the Conservative Party's implementation of Professor Swaran Singh's independent investigation and will not hesitate to use our powers if our standards are not met. This is consistent with our approach to investigating any association where we would consider how they address concerns through independent reports and action plans, before taking further action."

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-work/news/response-reports-islamophobia-conservative-party>

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Freedom of Religion or Belief Ministerial Conference

On 5 and 6 July the UK Government will be hosting a Ministerial Conference on Freedom of Religion or Belief. The conference aims to boost global efforts to tackle persecution and "drive collective action in promoting respect between different religious and non-religious communities around the world so that everyone, everywhere can practise their own religion or belief freely". <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-to-host-international-conference-to-promote-freedom-of-religion-or-belief-next-summer-in-london>

Planning for the Conference is led by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). Fiona Bruce MP is the Prime Minister's Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) and as such is supported by a special team within the FCDO. The Special Envoy: brings together UK efforts to promote religious tolerance abroad, and works on how the UK government can protect and promote this fundamental freedom internationally; works with the members of the International Religious Freedom or Belief

Alliance (<https://www.state.gov/international-religious-freedom-or-belief-alliance>) to raise awareness of cases of particular concern, advocating for the rights of people worldwide who are discriminated against or persecuted for their faith or belief; and supports implementing the Bishop of Truro's recommendations on FCDO support for persecuted Christians around the world. Ms Bruce is also Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on International Freedom of Religion and Belief, and last November launched a campaign called End the Persecution.

In preparation for the Ministerial Conference, members of the APPG for International FoRB and Fiona Bruce MP's Parliamentary Team are speaking at a number of venues. <https://endthepersécution.uk/endthepersécution-uk-presentations/> There will be a range of 100 events in and around the Ministerial, forming an 'FoRB Fringe "that hopes to capture the need for all young people to advocate for FoRB and ending persecution". The APPG is promoting a FoRB Fringe linked to the Ministerial and encouraging involvement around the UK. An online form for those interested to apply to host an event is at <https://endthepersécution.uk/forb-fringe/>.

The #Endthepersécution campaign is also running a scheme for Youth Ambassadors for International Freedom of Religion or Belief and an essay competition. <https://endthepersécution.uk/youth-ambassadors/>

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Northern Ireland Assembly consultation on Fair Employment Bill

In January the Northern Ireland Assembly Committee began its examination of the Fair Employment (School Teachers) Bill, and has launched a public consultation to ask people across Northern Ireland for their views. The Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 outlaws discrimination on the grounds of religious belief and political opinion in a number of areas including employment. Article 71 of the Order exempts school teachers from the legislation. The reason for this is to enable certain schools to maintain a religious ethos. The Bill aims to remove the exemption for school teachers from the Order. The consultation closes on 7 March. Further information is at <https://consult.nia-yourassembly.org.uk/committee-for-the-executive-office/fair-employment-school-teachers-bill/>.

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Religion, Values and Ethics guidance for Wales

In January Education Wales published the statutory Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) guidance for Wales. RVE is being included in the New Curriculum for Wales, which is being implemented from September 2022. The guidance can be found at <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/summary-of-legislation/#religion,-values-and-ethics>.

The Welsh Government is working in partnership with the Wales Association of SACREs to create a suite of national online Professional Learning resources to support practitioners in the use of the curriculum guidance.

<https://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/news/teachers-to-support-the-development-of-re-resources-for-rve-in-wales>

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Nationality and Borders Bill

The Nationality and Borders Bill is currently going through the Report Stage in the House of Lords. <https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3023>

1,000+ faith leaders have signed a letter, organised by the Joint Public Issues Team (a partnership between the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Methodist Church, and the United Reformed Church) asking for concerns about the bill to be addressed.

<https://www.jointpublicissues.org.uk/more-than-1000-faith-leaders-horrified-by-the-nationality-borders-bill-and-urge-the-pm-to-rethink/>.

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Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill returned to the House of Commons, following a rejection of some aspects of it by the House of Lords. (The majority of the Bill applies to England and Wales, though some provisions apply to Scotland and Northern Ireland.) A factsheet setting out the proposed aims of the Bill can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/police-crime-sentencing-and-courts-bill-2021-factsheets/police-crime-sentencing-and-courts-bill-2021-overarching-factsheet>.

A range of national and local faith leaders signed a joint letter to MPs, organised by the Religious Society of Friends, ahead of the Bill returning to the Commons, expressing concerns about the impact that Part 3 of the Bill would have on nonviolent protest, including prayer vigils, public acts of worship, community events and street preaching; and about the impact that Part 4 of the Bill would have on Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities and their way of life. <https://www.quaker.org.uk/news-and-events/news/faith-and-belief-leaders-urge-mps-to-approve-changes-to-policing-bill>

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Sewa Charities Forum

In January City Sikhs and Hindu Council UK began development of a new Sewa Charities Forum. The inaugural session explored what it means to be Sikh or Hindu and work or volunteer in the not-for-profit sector, the challenges faced by Sikh and Hindu professionals

and volunteers in non-faith settings, funding biases, complying with regulatory requirements and the current challenges of working in the charitable sector, including safeguarding and mental well-being.

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HM The Queen's Platinum Jubilee

A special 4-day weekend of events to mark Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee will take place from Thursday 2 to Sunday 5 June. More information can be found at <https://www.royal.uk/platinum-jubilee-central-weekend>.

The Co-Chairs of IFN, following consultation with the Board, sent a message on its behalf of greetings to HM The Queen at the time of the 70th Anniversary of the Accession on 6 February. This includes reference to Her Majesty's exemplification of the value of service – a value common to all faiths. It also includes reference to her valued support for the development of inter faith understanding and cooperation.

There are a number of other ways for individuals and communities to take part. Some of these are set out below.

Words of support were offered by the Co-Chairs for the **Jubilee Beacons project**, which will see 1,500 beacons lit throughout the UK (<https://www.queensjubileebeacons.com/>): *“On behalf of the Trustees of the Inter Faith Network for the UK we are delighted to offer our warm support for The Platinum Jubilee Beacons programme which forms part of the official celebrations of 70 years since the accession of Her Majesty The Queen. Service is a key value in all faith traditions and faith communities throughout the UK come together in many contexts in a spirit of friendship to serve others. The lighting of community beacons as part of the marking of the Platinum Jubilee celebrations provides an opportunity for people of all faith backgrounds to join together in that same spirit in thanks for Her Majesty's own service to this country and the Commonwealth.”*

The **Queen's Green Canopy** is encouraging the planting of trees to mark the Jubilee. (<https://queensgreencanopy.org/>) The planting season for trees runs to the end of March. A further planting period will run from October to December. Trees for Cities plans to deliver inter faith Queen's Green Canopy projects in UK cities such as London, Birmingham, Bradford, Sheffield, Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast. <https://queensgreencanopy.org/about-us/our-partners/trees-for-cities/> February/March is a prime tree-planting time. The Office of the Chief Rabbi and the United Synagogue (US) have launched 'Dorot' (Hebrew for 'generations') - seven separate projects with the lead campaign one by the US to have one tree planted for each of its 37,000 members. <https://www.jewishnews.co.uk/game-changing-environmental-initiative->

[launched-by-chief-rabbi-us-for-tu-bshevat](#) A planting took place in February at Lambeth Palace by the Archbishop of Canterbury, with the Bishop of Norwich.
<https://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/news/archbishop-plants-tree-lambeth-palace-part-queens-green-canopy> Other national faith organisations such as the Buddhist Society have also got involved and are encouraging their members to take part.
<https://www.thebuddhistsociety.org/page/society-news-1>

Other activities include the **Big Jubilee Lunch** on the Sunday where people are encouraged to take part through street parties or picnics, tea and cake or garden barbeques (<https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/the-big-jubilee-lunch>).

The official Government website for the Platinum Jubilee, with information on how to get involved is at <https://platinumjubilee.gov.uk/get-involved-with-the-platinum-jubilee/>.

There is some Lottery Funding available, for grants of up to £10,000. Further information can be found at <https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/national-lottery-awards-for-all-england>. Applications for funding for Jubilee projects should be received no later than 31 March.

Last July a ‘Thank You Day’ was held, led by the Together Coalition. This is being held again. It is a UK-wide initiative inviting people to get together to say thank you to one another, to family members, key workers, good neighbours and volunteers. It has a particular link to the pandemic and how people have responded. This year the Together Coalition announced that the TYD will be held again and, given the Platinum Jubilee, in collaboration with the Big Jubilee Lunch on Sunday 5 June. It will encourage people to say thank you to Her Majesty The Queen as well as to one another.
<https://thankyouday.org.uk/>

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INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK NEWS

IFN Faith Communities Forum

The Inter Faith Network for the UK Faith Communities Forum (FCF) brings together national faith community bodies in IFN membership for regular discussion of issues of common concern. <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/about/faith-communities-forum>

The FCF met on 15 February. On the Agenda were: COVID-19 and faith communities; Inter faith engagement of faith communities, with a presentation by Dr Natubhai Shah MBE of the Jain Network about how Jain values of care for the wellbeing of all and its principle of ‘Anekantavada’ (multiplicity of viewpoints) underpin its inter faith engagement and the planned Multi Faith Space at the Jain Centre that will shortly be opening in London;

Reducing Parental Conflict Programme – engaging with faith communities, with a presentation by an official from the Department for Work and Pensions; Issues of current interest and concern; The Platinum Jubilee and faith communities, with a presentation by an official from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport; and a number of IFN matters.

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Meeting for member National and Regional Inter Faith Organisations and Educational and Academic bodies

A joint meeting for IFN member National and Regional Inter Faith Organisations and Educational and Academic Bodies was held on 24 January. Items on the Agenda included: COP26 and the climate change agenda; Exchange of information on projects, key news, current concerns and interests; Training for those working in the field of inter faith understanding and cooperation; the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee celebrations and Inter Faith Week 2022; and a number of IFN matters.

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IFN link meetings for local inter faith groups in the East Midlands and the North East

IFN holds meetings for local inter faith groups to share news and good practice and learn from each other’s work to strengthen their own and benefit their local areas. Some are for groups from across the UK. Others are for groups within a particular region or a county. They provide an opportunity for sharing of news or programmes and projects being run by each group, including opportunities and challenges. Minutes of previous link meetings can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/about/local-inter-faith-linking>.

The most recent meetings were held on 20 January for local inter faith organisations in the North East and on 8 February for local inter faith organisations in the East Midlands. The following items were on the Agenda for both meetings: Round table sharing of news, information and ideas; News from IFN including Inter Faith Week, a project looking at women’s local inter faith initiatives and the *Local Inter Faith Guide*. The North East meeting also had a special agenda item on ‘Working in partnership for the common good’.

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Inter Faith Week

Inter Faith Week 2022

Inter Faith Week 2022 in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, will be held from Sunday 13 to Sunday 20 November. There are lots of ideas on how to take part at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/>.

It's never too early to start planning for Inter Faith Week! It is a great opportunity to highlight the contribution of faith groups to society, and to encourage understanding, cooperation and dialogue between those of different religious and non-religious beliefs.

Resources such as the Inter Faith Week Toolkit, lists of activity ideas, and guidance on activity arranging can be found on the Inter Faith Week website: <https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources>. Reports of previous years, as well as full lists of past activities, can be found here: <https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/reports>.

Or why not try the Inter Faith Buddies scheme this year? Inter Faith Buddies is an Inter Faith Network for the UK scheme designed to bring individuals together to engage in dialogue, and can be used year-round or to mark Inter Faith Week. If you are interested in taking up this initiative, visit <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/inter-faith-buddies> for more information and practical pointers.

Scottish Inter Faith Week 2022

Scottish Interfaith Week is led by Interfaith Scotland and will this year be held from Sunday 13 to Sunday 20 November. <https://scottishinterfaithweek.org/> 2022 has been designated Scotland's Year of Stories and the theme for Scottish Inter Faith Week will be linked to this.

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IFN office arrangements

IFN will be moving from its present office premises at the end of April. It is currently exploring options for future office arrangements.

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS AND DEVELOPMENTS

Research project on older people in faith communities

Interfaith Scotland has commissioned a new piece of Scotland-wide research about the roles that older people play both within their faith community and in the wider community. This research will look deeply at how older people are perceived in the faith communities they are part of; what activities they are involved in; and the impacts these result in. The research will be carried out by Faith in Older People and Simon Jaquet Consultancy Services. For further information on the project, email Simon Jaquet at simon@simonjaquet.com.

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Surrey Interfaith Forum

A new Surrey Interfaith Forum, inaugurated in the Autumn, held its first meeting in January. The new Forum was formed to harness and build on the work carried out during the pandemic with faith leaders and partners to support the communities of Surrey. The first meeting focused on faith and climate change, with presentations from Katie Sargent of Surrey Greener Future Group and Peter Harwood of the Guildford Diocesan Net Zero Working Group. More information about the new Forum can be found at <https://surreyfaithlinks.org.uk/surrey-interfaith-forum/> and <https://www.local.gov.uk/case-studies/surrey-interfaith-forum>.

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Faith Full Fridays

Edinburgh Interfaith Association has launched a series of programmes called 'Faith Full Fridays', featuring conversations with faith leaders as well as mindfulness exercises. These are being posted on the final Friday of each month on the EIFA YouTube channel. The first episode can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VqaDMvesBbg>.

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Forgiveness and future-building project

The Woolf Institute (which focuses its work on Jews, Christians and Muslims) is beginning a new project on forgiveness and future-building. The project will focus on three societies post-conflict which have significant variation in terms of their political and religious backgrounds: Bosnia, Northern Ireland and South Sudan. Its goal is to provide materials for constructive practical application for policymakers and 'mid-level' religious and community leaders. Through collaboration with researchers from Norway and US the project will develop FORCAST (FORgiveness and Conflict Analysis Simulation Tool). This system will utilise a multi-agent AI system designed for studying the escalation and de-escalation of inter-group conflict, particularly where complex religious and ethnic identities are involved. This AI system will allow policymakers to experiment on different policy outcomes before they are implemented in the real world. For more information, visit <https://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/research/projects/forgiveness-and-future-building>.

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Warwickshire Cricket Multifaith Charter

Warwickshire County Cricket Club has worked with local faith groups to devise a Multifaith Charter which defines how the Club will welcome and serve the multi-cultural communities of Birmingham, the West Midlands and Warwickshire when visiting, playing or working at Edgbaston Stadium, the Indoor Cricket Centre or Portland Road.

<https://edgbaston.com/news/warwickshire-launch-first-multifaith-charter-through-new-edi-programme/>

The Charter was launched on 16 February as part of Warwickshire’s Edgbaston for Everyone initiative and is “a tangible commitment to making sure that the Club understands the needs of different faiths and creates a safe, welcoming environment for players, staff and visitors, ensuring Edgbaston can be supportive in helping people practice their faith”. The Charter can be found at <https://assets.edgbaston.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Our-Multifaith-Charter-2022.pdf>.

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Wrexham multi-faith community forum

A new multi-faith community forum has been launched in Wrexham. North Wales Police led on the community engagement initiative and hosted the first meeting of the forum. <https://www.leaderlive.co.uk/news/19925361.wrexham-sergeant-hosts-forum-community-faith-leaders/> Anyone with connections to local faith groups within Wrexham and who wishes to attend future meetings can email david.smith4@northwales.police.uk.

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Sharing Faith through Food

The Touchstone Centre in Bradford is running a project called ‘Food Stories – Sharing Faith through Food’ which brings together women from different faiths and cultures to share stories, cook collectively and share what they have made together.

<https://faithfulfood863021319.wordpress.com/>

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Southend City status multi faith gathering

In October last year, Sir David Amess MP was murdered. A few weeks later, it was announced that Her Majesty The Queen has accorded Southend-on-Sea city status – something for which he had worked energetically for many years. A number of special events are being held linked to that. One with special resonance, given Sir David’s faith and good relations with different faith groups in Southend was a multi-faith event in February. Called Unite in Light, it was a celebration of hope and light for Southend’s City year. People gathered from Southend’s diverse faith communities at the Maritime Room, Cliffs Pavilion, to share their hopes for the City of Southend and explore what light symbolises in their faith. The event was supported by Southend.City, Citizens Essex and Southend-on-Sea Borough Council.

<https://www.southend.gov.uk/news/article/2498/unite-in-light-brings-southend-s-diverse-faith-groups-together>

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

Resources

Inter Faith Buddies

Inter Faith Buddies is a scheme designed by IFN to bring individuals together to engage in dialogue.

- The scheme involves two people of different faiths or beliefs keeping in touch on a weekly basis for 6 weeks;
- choosing or developing questions on which to share their thoughts and experiences; and
- if they wish, sharing at an in-person or online event, in an agreed way, some reflections on what they have gained from the experience.

It is an opportunity for sharing and learning, on a one-to-one basis across a limited period of time, about what is important to us, in the context of our wider community. The process may, of course, lead to longer term conversations and new forms of practical co-operation.

This video clip from Surrey Faith Links gives a flavour of the experience:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wHgNwAQsJyk>.

Interested in taking up the idea within your organisation?

If you are an organisation interested in taking up the Inter Faith Buddies idea, visit <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/inter-faith-buddies> for more information and practical pointers.

Interfaith Scotland has used the scheme in a number of contexts, for example

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hzmbmtn175s>.

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Resilience, Trauma and Pastoral Recovery: A briefing for faith communities

FaithAction, in partnership with the Guild of Health and St Raphael, has launched a report on 'Resilience, Trauma, and Pastoral Recovery: A briefing for faith communities'. This is based on research about the impact of the pandemic on church leaders. Further information and the full report can be found at <https://www.faithaction.net/blog/covid-19/2022/02/09/resilience-trauma-and-pastoral-recovery-why-we-commissioned-this-paper/>.

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Podcast - In Pursuit of Understanding: Religion

A new podcast has been released, created by Fortune Hill, called 'In Pursuit of Understanding: Religion'. The podcast "aims to help our community better understand the differences and the similarities between people from a broad variety of backgrounds and ways of life. In season one we're understanding religion: we discover more, hearing about the day-to-day customs and practices and how these impact the working life." The Most Venerable Bogoda Seelawimala of the Sri Lankan Sangha Sabha of GB and Lord Singh of Wimbledon of the Network of Sikh Organisations are among those interviewed. Episodes can be found at <https://anchor.fm/fortune-hill/episodes/Ep-1-Sikhism---Lord-Indarjit-Singh-CBE-e1ckksm>.

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The Licoricia Project

A sculpture by Ian Rank-Broadley was recently unveiled of Licoricia: a thirteenth century Jewish woman who lived in Winchester. Many faith leaders attended the unveiling and Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis spoke at the event. A project has been established the aims of which will include promoting tolerance and the value of diversity in the community and educating people about England's and Winchester's important but little-known medieval Jewish Community. Lesson plans about Licoricia have been developed with Hampshire County Council. <https://licoricia.org/> <https://licoricia.org/2022/02/22/the-spectator-on-licoricia/>

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Study/Training

IFN 'Digital surgery' slots for local inter faith organisations

IFN is continuing to make available free half hour digital 'surgery' slots for local inter faith organisations who would like a chance to talk about how their group might strengthen their use of digital communications. Any local inter faith group interested in booking a slot can email IFN Project Director, Ashley Beck, at ashley.beck@interfaith.org.uk.

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RfP UK Leadership Training Programme for Young People

Religions for Peace UK's Interfaith Youth Network (RfP UKIYN) is launching a new 'Leadership Training Programme for Young People of Faith and None'. This has been designed to provide "a free and immersive educational experience for young people aged 18-25". It consists of 10 training sessions, which will run in-person (and live online) from London. The deadline for applications is 20 March. For further information, including how

to apply, contact Eda Molla Chosein, RfP UK's Interfaith Youth Network Coordinator at youth.coordinator@rfpuk.org.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS, AND NOMINATIONS

Nominations

Honours nominations

Each year a number of people receive Honours for services to inter faith work or community cohesion.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) is looking for nominations for people who work or volunteer in a number of areas. They are particularly keen to recognise individuals who have contributed to building integrated communities. All nominations must be made on an official citation form and nominees should not be informed that they have been nominated. The deadline for the next round of nominations is 4 April. For more information, email honours@communities.gsi.gov.uk.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

Inter Faith Network for the UK

Honorary Treasurer

IFN invites expressions of interest in the post of Honorary Treasurer. The work of IFN is overseen by a board of Trustees. All IFN Trustees hold their posts on a voluntary basis. The gift of Trustees' time and skill is vital to the wellbeing of the organisation's work and is greatly valued. Among the Trustees are 2 Co-Chairs and 1 Honorary Treasurer. The closing date for expressions of interest is 23 March. For the role description and expression of interest form, contact ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

Volunteers

The Inter Faith Network for the UK currently has an opportunity for online volunteers with good desk research and writing skills who would like to offer 4-8 hours a week to help on different aspects of IFN's work to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. To express an interest in volunteering, please complete the application form at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/volunteering>.

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Council of Christians and Jews – Operations Manager

The Council of Christians and Jews is seeking to appoint an Operations Manager. The Operations Manager will act as first point of contact for members and the general public, and assist the CCJ Director (or Co-Directors) as they shape the future of the charity together with the Trustees. This role is full-time, but could be scaled back to 4 days/week if appropriate. The role is based at CCJ's Westminster office and is not compatible with home-working. To apply, send a CV and a covering letter of no more than one side of A4 to CCJ Operations Manager Rob Wadsworth on cjrelations@ccj.org.uk by noon on Monday 14 March. Interviews will be scheduled in the following week.

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Religions for Peace (UK) – Women's Project Coordinator

Religions for Peace (UK) Women of Faith Network is seeking a Women's Project Coordinator to deliver a series of small and medium size projects related to the training and empowerment of women of faith, religious literacy, and religion's role in responding to the climate emergency. The Project Coordinator will be responsible for all aspects of project implementation and management, including monitoring and evaluation and reporting. They will also provide support for the UK Women of Faith network. It is envisioned that the role and responsibilities will develop over time as the organisation grows. This is a part-time, freelance role. The deadline for applications is 10 April. For further information, visit <https://www.charityjob.co.uk/jobs/view/807545?tsId=8>.

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University of Cambridge - Research Associate Inter faith relations

The Faculty of Divinity at the University of Cambridge is seeking to appoint a new Research Associate in the field of inter faith relations for one year from 1 April 2022 or as soon as possible thereafter. The successful candidate will be a Research Associate to Professor Esra Özyürek, Academic Director of Cambridge Interfaith Programme. The appointee will be expected to help write grant applications that broadly relate to the field of inter faith relations. The successful candidate will also have time to develop and pursue their own research. The deadline for application is midnight on 28 February. For further information, visit <https://www.interfaith.cam.ac.uk/news/vacancy-research-associate-interfaith-relations-12-months-april-2022>.

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Good Faith Foundation – Chair of Trustees and Treasurer

The Good Faith Foundation promotes social inclusion for the public benefit, by preventing people from becoming socially excluded and assisting them to integrate into society. It is

currently seeking to recruit a Chair of Trustees and a Treasurer. More information on the roles and responsibilities can be found at <https://goodfaith.org.uk/careers>. To apply, send a CV and cover letter to foundation@goodfaith.org.uk. The deadline for applications is 9 March.

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Edinburgh Interfaith Association – Interns

Edinburgh Interfaith Association are seeking volunteer student interns. Opportunities include research, community engagement and media. The deadline for applications is 10 March. For more information, see <https://www.facebook.com/EIFA.page/posts/4946797225379226>.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Help to shape a new pilot grants service

The Grants Applicant Programme (GAP) is being delivered by the Government Grants Management Function in the Cabinet Office. This aims to make applying for and finding government grants simpler, faster and fairer. <https://grantscommunity.blog.gov.uk/2021/12/08/government-grants-a-simpler-faster-and-fairer-way/> Anyone interested in helping to co-create a new, pilot grants service with government, can get involved by signing up [here](#). Over the next year they will be co-creating, testing and developing a Find a Grant and Apply for a Grant service. It will be available on gov.uk during March.

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Lottery Funding for Platinum Jubilee projects

There is some Lottery Funding available, for grants of up to £10,000, for Platinum Jubilee projects. Applications should be received no later than 31 March. Further information can be found at <https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/national-lottery-awards-for-all-england>.

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Funding websites

My Funding Central is a database of grant funding and social investment sources. This service is available to organisations with an annual income below £1m and is free for organisations under £30k. <https://www.myfundingcentral.co.uk/> Similar websites for funding in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at Funding Scotland - <https://funding.scot/>, Wales Council for Voluntary Action -

<http://www.wcva.cymru/funding> and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland - <https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

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COVID-19 related funding

The Charities Aid Foundation has collated a list of organisations which are supporting charities and voluntary groups at this time. <https://www.cafonline.org/covid-19-support/help-for-charities#tab1>

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Listed Places of Worship grant scheme

The Listed Places of Worship (LPW) Grant Scheme gives grants that cover the VAT incurred in making repairs to listed buildings in use as places of worship. The scheme covers repairs to the fabric of the building, along with associated professional fees, plus repairs to turret clocks, pews, bells and pipe organs. The Grant Scheme is run by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and administered by Topmark. The Government has recently confirmed that funding through the scheme will be available until March 2025. <http://www.lpwscheme.org.uk/>

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FCC Community Action Fund

The FCC Communities Foundation is offering grants between £2,000 and £100,000 for projects which involve the provision, maintenance or improvement of public amenities including community spaces in places of worship, which are registered charities. Projects must be based within 10 miles of an eligible FCC Environment waste facility. The current round closes on 2 March. The following round closes on 8 June.

<https://fcccommunitiesfoundation.org.uk/funds/fcc-community-action-fund>

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Subsidised fundraising workshops

The Foundation for Social Improvement offers subsidised training programmes for small charities across the UK. The courses cover a wide range of subjects from event planning to leadership. Many of the courses focus on fundraising and sustainability skills in particular. Further information and dates for upcoming courses, now being held online, can be found at <http://www.thefsi.org/services/training>.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS/MONTHS

Fairtrade Fortnight runs from Monday 21 February to Sunday 6 March. Many places of worship take part. <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/get-involved/current-campaigns/fairtrade-fortnight/>

International Women's Day falls on 8 March. Its theme this year is 'Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow'. Many faith and inter faith bodies mark the day. <https://www.internationalwomensday.com/> See Diary Dates for some inter faith events taking place in the UK.

Great British Spring Clean Keep Britain Tidy runs an annual Great British Spring Clean campaign, which this year runs from Friday 25 March to Sunday 10 April. Every year lots of faith and inter faith groups take part. For more information, visit <https://www.keepbritaintidy.org/get-involved/support-our-campaigns/great-british-spring-clean>.

The Big Lunch this year is an official part of HM The Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations from Thursday 2 to Sunday 5 June. Across the years millions of people from different backgrounds have joined together to take part through street parties, BBQs, iftars and picnics. <https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/get-involved>

Refugee Week will take place from Monday 20 to Sunday 26 June. Refugee Week is a nationwide programme of arts, cultural and educational events that celebrate the contribution of refugees to the UK, and encourages a better understanding between communities. The theme for the 2022 Week is 'Healing'. <https://refugeeweek.org.uk/>

The Great Get Together, inspired by the late Jo Cox MP, is taking place from Friday 24 to Sunday 26 June. <https://www.greatgettogether.org/>

Srebrenica Memorial Day takes place each year on 11 July. This year's theme is 'Combatting Denial: Challenging Hatred'. It is organised by Remembering Srebrenica. <http://www.srebrenica.org.uk/>

National Hate Crime Awareness Week takes place from Saturday 8 October to Saturday 15 October. <https://nationalhcaw.uk/>

One World Week will take place from Sunday 23 to Sunday 30 October. www.oneworldweek.org

Scottish Interfaith Week Scottish Interfaith Week is led by Interfaith Scotland. It will be held from Sunday 13 to Sunday 20 November. www.scottishinterfaithweek.org

Inter Faith Week, in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, will take place from Sunday 13 to Sunday 20 November. www.interfaithweek.org

Mitzvah Day will take place on Sunday 20 November. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Jewish community where people give their time to make a difference to the community around them. Many events and projects held for the day have an inter faith focus. www.mitzvahday.org.uk/

Sewa Day is a day of faith-based social action led by the Hindu community. It normally takes place on 4 dates across the year. Due to COVID there are currently no fixed days; rather, 'every day is Sewa day' and volunteers are helping people continually as they are able. <https://sewaday.org/>

VisitMyMosque Day is a national campaign facilitated by the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) that encourages mosques across the UK to hold an open day to welcome in their neighbours from all faiths and none. <https://www.visitmosque.org/>

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DIARY DATES

A few examples of forthcoming events are listed below. Those listed are all virtual, except where noted. Events are also listed on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/events>.

Hull and East Riding Interfaith is holding its next meeting on Tuesday 1 March. The theme will be 'Spirituality and the Pandemic'. It will begin at 7pm. For more information, email mapliener@pliener.karoo.co.uk.

Faiths Together in Lambeth is holding its next meeting with Lambeth Police Commander, Chief Superintendent Colin Wingrove, on Tuesday 1 March. This will be held from 2.30pm to 4pm. For more information, contact ftil@hotmail.co.uk.

York Interfaith Group is holding its next meeting on Tuesday 1 March. The theme will be 'Women in Faith' and Canon Maggie McLean from York Minster, Sarah Hubbard from York Liberal Jewish Synagogue, and Amina Surve from York Mosque will speak about their experience as women in the community life and worship of their particular faith. The meeting begins at 7.30pm. For more information, email yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com.

Community Cohesion North Wales, Chaplains Connecting Communities, Glendwr Chaplaincy and **Wrexham Council** are holding an event on Friday 4 March. 'Finding Agreement: An Interfaith Cultural Evening' will be held from 6.30pm to 8pm at the Wrexham Islamic Centre, Wrexham, 6 Grosvenor Road, LL1 1DN. <https://www.facebook.com/events/476761774025049/> For further information, email gareth.hall@wrexham.gov.uk.

Birmingham Conversations/Church of England Diocese of Birmingham is holding a conference on Monday 7 March at the Shree Geeta Bhawan Mandir in Heathfield Road, Handsworth, Birmingham B19 1HL on 'The One Life or Many?'. Speakers of different faiths will help participants reflect on how our beliefs on whether we have one life or many affect our ideas on life, death and how we treat one another. For further information, and to register, visit <http://www.dio.org.uk/OneLifeOrMany>.

Redbridge Faith Forum is holding its next Women's Interfaith Workshop at 1pm on Wednesday 9 March. The topic will be 'Celebrating Our Grandmothers'. This will include celebrating memories of participants' grandmothers, exploring roles and relationships of grandmothers in different cultures and faiths, 'food your grandmothers used to make, how your grandmothers have influenced your beliefs, life skills learnt from your grandmothers & advice given, phrases you associate with your grandmothers and what you remember your grandmothers most for'. For more information, visit <https://redbridgefaithforum.org/womens-interfaith-workshop-Wednesday-9-march-at-1-pm/>.

The **Women's Interfaith Network** is holding on Thursday 10 March from 4pm to 5pm an International Women's Day Member's Coffee and Catch Up. For questions or to find out more about membership or how to become a member, please email: tara@wominet.org.uk

Religions for Peace UK Women of Faith Network in partnership with **Edinburgh Interfaith Association** is holding an event on Thursday 10 March for International Women's Day. The speakers will be Debora Kayembe, first black female Rector of Edinburgh University, Lama Zangmo, Tibetan Buddhist Nun and Head Teacher of Kagyu Samye Dzong and Olivia Marks-Goldman, Chief Executive of the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust. It is being held from 6pm to 7.30pm. To register, visit https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_TDqFu0d3RkO1BsXd56Y3Ow.

Woking Action for Peace, Churches Together in Woking, Surrey Faith Links, Woking Environment Action, Woking People of Faith, Woking Soroptimists and Woking Quakers are holding the next Woking Debate on Saturday 12 March. The topic is 'Disunited kingdom: How much longer will the UK hold together?'. The event will take place from 11am to 12.30pm. For more information, including whether this will be in person or online, visit www.wokingdebates.com.

Touchstone Centre Bradford and Methodist Women in Britain are holding an online conference from 10am to 1pm on Saturday 12 March on 'Interfaith perspectives on the environment'. There will be women speakers from EcoSynagogue, EcoSikh, JPIT, The Green Deen Tribe and Hindu Climate Action. The conference is part of Whose Bag is it Anyway which aims to encourage faith-based learning around environmental issues and climate change; empowering women to lead the change. For further information and to

register, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/interfaith-perspectives-on-the-environment-tickets-256870425357>.

Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship is holding an event on Tuesday 15 March on 'Holy Places in Buddhism'. This will be presented by David Midgley. It is being held at 7.30pm at the Jamyang Buddhist Centre, Ingram Road, Leeds LS11 9RQ and also on Zoom. For more information, email chair@concord-leeds.org.uk.

The Zemel Choir is holding an Interfaith Song Festival for London from Sunday 20 to Sunday 27 March. On Sunday 20 March it will be holding an afternoon of workshops from 1pm to 5pm on: Gospel Singing, Contemporary Song for Jewish Worship, Vedic Chanting and Kirtan. Each workshop lasts for 50 minutes. Participants will take part in all four workshops over the course of the afternoon. The workshops will be followed by an open Evensong. Participants in the workshops should come to St-Martin-in-the-Fields from 12.30pm for registration and to find their workshop group. For more information, visit <https://www.zemelchoir.org>.

Strengthening Faith Institutions is running Designated Safeguarding Lead training for Faith Centres on Monday 21 March. It begins at 7pm. For more information, and to register, visit https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_EDzNTnTLRsygxAfcv3DpGA.

Herefordshire InterFaith Group is holding a 'Springtime evening' on Tuesday 22 March. Participants are invited to offer a meditation, poem, chant or piece of prose on the theme of light, renewal and looking forward, either self-written or from a meaningful source. For more information, contact Lama Choesang at choesang@the-hermit-online.co.uk, copying in Mike at hello@herefordshireinterfaith.org.uk.

The Muslim Jewish Forum of Greater Manchester is holding its next event on Sunday 27 March. This will be a 'pub quiz without a pub!' It is being held from 7.30pm at Swinton Masonic Hall, Hospital Road, Pendlebury M27 4EY. Light refreshments will be served. For more information, and to book, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/muslim-jewish-forum-quiz-tickets-272869599317>.

Woking People of Faith will be holding its annual Interfaith Football Tournament on Saturday 21 May. Book your six-a-side team now by emailing treasurer@wpof.org.uk. The tournament will be held from 9am to 4pm at the Winston Churchill Sports Centre, Hermitage Road, St John's, GU21 8TL. There will be medals for all players as well as a trophy for the winning team. Lunch will be served. More details to follow.

More information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: <https://www.interfaithcouncilwales.cymru/>

IFN also carries news and information at www.twitter.com/IFNetUK
www.facebook.com/IFNetUK and, about Inter Faith Week, at <https://twitter.com/IFweek>
and www.facebook.com/IFWeek.

**SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK
TO INCREASE INTER FAITH UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION**

The Inter Faith Network for the UK works for inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. Please help us grow this vital work by making a donation at: <https://interfaith.org.uk/donate> (including Paypal option). Donations can also be made by sending a cheque payable to 'The Inter Faith Network' to: The Inter Faith Network for the UK, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH.

Donations are used with care to make a real difference.

Thank you!

**MAKE A GIFT TO SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK IN REMEMBRANCE OF
A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND OR THROUGH A LEGACY**

If you would like to make a gift in memory of a loved one, please get in touch by emailing remember@interfaith.org.uk or call us on 0207 730 0410.

By leaving a gift in your will to the Inter Faith Network for the UK, you can leave a living inheritance to help deepen and strengthen inter faith understanding and cooperation in this country – for now and for the future. If you are thinking about making a will, the best thing to do is to get in touch with a professional will writer, such as a solicitor or advocate; they can help to ensure it is legally correct and that your wishes are met. If you have already made a will, you can still make an addition or amendment in the form of a codicil. If you would like to pledge a gift, please provide our name and address, along with our registered charity number 1068934.

Please get in touch with us if you have any queries.

You can call us on 0207 730 0410 or contact us at remember@interfaith.org.uk.

Remember a Charity has produced a helpful resource called 'Making a Will - your complete guide'. This can be found at <https://www.rememberacharity.org.uk/making-a-will/>.

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You can sign up to IFN mailings at any time by using the form on IFN's website at: www.interfaith.org.uk/news/gdpr or let us know that you would like to unsubscribe by emailing ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

Submissions for next issue

If you have items about inter faith projects or future events which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk **by 22 April** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer: Information in this e-bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

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IFN e-bulletin

May 2022

Welcome to the e-bulletin of the Inter Faith Network for the UK www.interfaith.org.uk. It is usually published every two months and highlights primarily new developments, projects and future events. You can read by scrolling through or you can go directly to an individual section or item by clicking on links in the list below.

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IFN E-bulletin Survey

We would be very grateful if you could take a few minutes to complete this year's e-bulletin survey. Your responses will help us to continue to shape the e-bulletin and our wider communications into valued resources for inter faith practitioners at all levels.

https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/e-bulletin_2022/

Thank you!

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SUPPORTING IFN'S WORK FOR INTER FAITH UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION: A MESSAGE FROM ITS CO-CHAIRS

The Inter Faith Network for the UK has worked since 1987 to fulfil its charitable aims, “to advance public knowledge and mutual understanding of the teachings, traditions and practices of the different faith communities in Britain including an awareness both of their distinctive features and their common ground and to promote good relations between people of different faiths in this country”.

IFN works for inter faith understanding and cooperation by:

- Encouraging inter faith initiatives at all levels
- Providing a trusted source of information on faith and inter faith issues
- Enabling discussion and common action rooted in shared values, including through the IFN Faith Communities Forum
- Sharing good practice and producing resources to help inspire and strengthen inter faith initiatives
- Carrying out projects and programmes such as on youth inter faith interaction and exploring women’s local inter faith initiatives
- Encouraging religious literacy and good relations work in contexts from schools, to workplaces and statutory agencies
- Leading on Inter Faith Week – a special programme which is helping ever more organisations and individuals develop links of friendship and cooperation and deepen religious literacy

If you are in a position to do so, please do consider a donation at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/donate> to help IFN’s vital work to continue and grow so that we can help support people of different backgrounds, and also institutions in pursuit of IFN’s vision of: a society where there is understanding of the diversity and richness of the faith communities in the UK and the contribution that they make; and where we live and work together with mutual respect and shared commitment to the common good.

Thank you.

The Revd Canon Hilary Barber and Mr Narendra Waghela

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

COVID-19 guidance

Across the UK, rules requiring people to wear masks in indoor spaces like shops and restaurants have come to an end although guidance remains in place for some settings.

General UK Government information on COVID-19 is at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-coronavirus-restrictions-what-you-can-and-cannot-do>. The NHS guidance can be found at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>.

General guidance for Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales is at:

<https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus>

<https://gov.wales/coronavirus>

<https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/>

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/coronavirus-covid-19>

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/covid-19-coronavirus>

The current position on wearing face coverings in each of the four nations can be found at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/explainers-52530518>.

Guidance for places of worship in England was withdrawn by the UK Government on 29 March. The guidance on safe use of places of worship in Scotland has now been archived. There is no longer any guidance specific to places of worship in Wales or Northern Ireland.

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Coming back together

More faith festivals of different faith communities fell close together in April and early May than has occurred in many years: Rama Navami, Songkran, Vaisakhi, Mahavir Jayanti, Holy Week and Easter, Passover, Hanuman Jayanti, Ridvan, Adar Mah Parab, Beltane/May Day, and Eid-ul-Fitr. The lifting of most COVID restrictions (see above) was in time for the Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Pagan, Sikh and Zoroastrians communities to be able to come together to celebrate their respective festivals during this time and for many sizeable gatherings such as Easter services, community iftars and celebration of Eid; and Vaisakhi parades.

More information about faith festivals can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/religious-festivals>, with thanks to the Shap Calendar Group.

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Ukraine – faith community support

National faith communities continue to respond to the impacts of the invasion of Ukraine by Russia. The last issue of the e-bulletin covered the first period of this, with examples of services and vigils. Some have been held subsequently, such as this service at Winchester Cathedral <https://www.englishcathedrals.co.uk/latest-news/peace-vigils-for-ukraine/>; this vigil in Haringey <https://twitter.com/haringeycouncil/status/1500871457890516998>; a national vigil arranged by the Inter Faith Council for Wales <https://twitter.com/CymruInterfaith/status/1498339486987603968>; an online multi faith prayer event by Interfaith Scotland <https://www.facebook.com/interfaithscotland/photos/gm.980697132847642/4791406384300252>; and these prayers for peace with faith leaders from across Kirklees <https://twitter.com/NKInterFaith/status/1512152920866840582>.

The principal focus has been on raising support for the needs of those in Ukraine and assisting refugees. A few examples are below. A collation of Churches' responses and helpful resources can be seen at <https://ctbi.org.uk/church-response-to-russian-invasion-of-ukraine/>. Faith-based humanitarian agencies, such as Christian Aid and CAFOD, have been raising funds and in some cases offering support on the ground, including through cooperative efforts such as that involving Caritas and Khalsa Aid <https://www.khalsaaid.org/news/khalsa-aid-international-response-to-the-ukraine-crisis-2022>. Initiatives such as Muslim Hands have also been assisting on the ground <https://muslimhands.org.uk/latest/2022/03/muslim-hands-supports-ukraine-refugees-bbc-interview>.

Volunteers from a number of communities sprang into action after the invasion to raise funding and supplies for those in need. For example, the BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha supported relief efforts from a base in Poland <https://www.baps.org/News/2022/BAPS-Responds-to-Ukrainian-Humanitarian-Crisis-20940.aspx>. Closer to home, many collections were taken up and there were special fundraisers such as a match between the University of Leeds Jewish football team, Hapoel Hyde Park and students from the Birmingham JSoc <https://www.thejc.com/news/news/gareth-southgate-sends-support-to-jewish-students-fundraising-for-ukraine-7uBXTCyAqwr4rgb1ta5COA>.

Government guidance for those wishing to sponsor Ukrainian refugees, last updated on 29 April, can be seen at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homes-for-ukraine-scheme-frequently-asked-questions#full-publication-update-history>. Faith communities have been helping in a number of ways to assist Ukrainian refugees coming to the UK. For example, the Church in Wales held a webinar outlining practical ways for churches to assist refugees coming to the UK <https://www.churchinwales.org.uk/en/news-and-events/webinar-outlines-ways-to-help-refugees/>; the Jewish Leadership Council and Board of Deputies of British Jews established the Jewish Community Refugee Task Force in March to help the Jewish community respond to the refugee crisis caused by the invasion; Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees has set out practical advice for faith groups to respond <https://www.sfar.org.uk/7-things-you-can-do-to-respond-to-the-situation-in-ukraine/>; and the Network of Buddhist Organisations (UK) has set out advice for Buddhists wishing to help Ukrainian refugees <https://www.nbo.org.uk/advice-for-uk-buddhists-wishing-to-help-ukrainian-refugees/>.

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HM The Queen's Platinum Jubilee

A special 4-day weekend of events to mark the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty The Queen will take place from Thursday 2 to Sunday 5 June. More information can be found at <https://www.royal.uk/platinum-jubilee-central-weekend> and information on how to get involved can be found at <https://platinumjubilee.gov.uk/get-involved-with-the-platinum-jubilee/>. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has published a toolkit for the Platinum Jubilee, including activities, music and decorations to help people with their celebrations in June. This can be found at <https://platinumjubilee.gov.uk/toolkit>.

The Queen's Birthday Parade (**Trooping the Colour**) will be held on Thursday 2 June starting at 11am.

For the **Jubilee Beacons project** the principal Beacon will be lit at special ceremony at Buckingham Palace at 9pm on Thursday 2 June. Thousands of community beacons will also be lit by communities, charities and different groups throughout the regions of the UK, Channel Islands, Isle of Man and UK Overseas Territories and 54 beacons will be lit in capital cities of the Commonwealth. <https://www.queensjubileebeacons.com>

The morning of Friday 3 June sees a **Thanksgiving Service** at St Paul's Cathedral in London, preceded by a peal of bells from Great Paul, the largest church bell in the UK.

On the evening of Saturday 4 June there will be a **Platinum Party at the Palace**. This will be a special live event that will bring together some of the world's biggest entertainers and will be broadcast live on the BBC. During the bank holiday weekend, the BBC is offering local communities a special one-off TV Licence dispensation. This will allow those arranging community events in venues across the UK, where TV is not usually watched, to screen the live programmes throughout the weekend without needing to purchase a licence.

On Sunday 5 June, the **Big Jubilee Lunch** will take place where people are encouraged to take part through street parties or picnics, tea and cake or garden barbeques (<https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/the-big-jubilee-lunch>). While not part of the Platinum Jubilee Central Weekend programme, Thank You Day will be taking place on 5 June and is encouraging people to say thank you to Her Majesty The Queen as well as to one another. <https://thankyouday.org.uk/> It has linked in with the Big Jubilee Lunch and is also encouraging other activities.

From 2.30pm to 5pm on Sunday, a **Grand Jubilee Pageant** will also be taking place along the Mall and surrounding streets. The Platinum Jubilee Pageant has commissioned artists and communities from around the country and Commonwealth including military personnel, performers, key workers and volunteers from across the UK, to come together to tell the story of The Queen's 70-year reign and changing society.

The **Queen's Green Canopy** programme continues through to the end of 2022. It is encouraging the planting of trees to mark the Jubilee. (<https://queensgreencanopy.org/>) The next planting season is from October to December.

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Faith communities, asylum seekers and refugees

As well as their work in supporting refugees from Ukraine, faith communities continue to work individually and together on matters relating to asylum seekers and refugees from many other places around the world such as Afghanistan and Syria.

As noted in previous issues of the e-bulletin, in the context of concern for wellbeing of those seeking sanctuary, a number of faith leaders and faith organisations expressed opposition to aspects of the now Nationality and Borders Act (enacted 28 April). Concerns continue to be expressed by some, for example <https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/news/latest-news/all-news/statement-on-the-nationality-and-borders-act-2022/>.

There has likewise been disquiet expressed by some faith leaders and faith organisations about the impact on those seeking sanctuary in the UK of the Government's agreement with Rwanda which was announced by the Home Secretary on 14 April. The Government does not agree with the criticisms levelled at the Act and Rwanda agreement. It has, however, ahead of a legal challenge, put aside plans to turn back people crossing the English Channel – a separate issue on which many faith groups had campaigned. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-61224309>

The Great Get Together, which takes place from 24 to 26 June has as its theme this year 'Welcome'. It has again partnered with Refugee Week to run a Great Walk Together across that weekend. They are encouraging community walks all over the UK in "a UK-wide celebration of the power walking has to bring people together", celebrating the Great Get Together's #MoreInCommon message, its 2022 'Welcome' theme, and Refugee Week 2022's theme of 'healing'. For more information, visit <https://www.greatgettogether.org/2022> and <https://refugeeweek.org.uk/simple-acts/walk-together-2/>. Refugee Week also has a number of resources for faith communities, which can be found at <https://refugeeweek.org.uk/monthlymeet-refugee-week-in-your-faith-community/>.

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Hate crime

There have been a number of recent incidents which have been treated as religiously or racially motivated hate crimes, such as the forcible removal of a turban from a Sikh schoolboy in Leicester <https://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/news/leicester-news/teens-arrested-after-after-sikh-6847539> and an attack on worshippers outside a mosque in East Ham in London <https://www.londonworld.com/news/crime/muslim-worshippers-injured-after-attack-outside-mosque-in-east-ham-during-ramadan-3662464>.

In March the Crown Prosecution Service agreed the following shared definition with police for racially and religiously aggravated crime: "Any incident/crime which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's race or religion or perceived race or religion." <https://www.cps.gov.uk/publication/public-statement-prosecuting-racist-and-religious-hate-crime>

Information on reporting hate crimes can be found below.

REPORT HATE CRIME AND WORK TOGETHER TO HELP TACKLE IT

Report hate incidents online through True Vision or via 3rd parties eg Community Security Trust (CST), Tell Mama UK and Stop Hate UK; at a police station; or by ringing the police on 101 (non-emergency) or 999.

<https://gov.uk/report-hate-crime>

<https://www.scotland.police.uk/contact-us/report-hate-crime-and-third-party-reporting/>
<https://reporhate.victimsupport.org.uk/hate-crime/>

<https://www.psni.police.uk/crime/hate-crime/reporting-a-hate-crime/>

See also *Looking after one another: the safety and security of our faith communities* (IFN and partners) which contains practical pointers for working together to counter hate crime.

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/looking-after-one-another-the-safety-and-security-of-our-faith-communities-2017>

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Freedom of Religion or Belief Ministerial Conference

As noted in the February issue of the e-bulletin, on 5 and 6 July the UK Government will be hosting a Ministerial Conference on Freedom of Religion or Belief. The conference, known as ‘The Ministerial’, aims to boost global efforts to tackle persecution and “drive collective action in promoting respect between different religious and non-religious communities around the world so that everyone, everywhere can practise their own religion or belief freely”.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-to-host-international-conference-to-promote-freedom-of-religion-or-belief-next-summer-in-london> Planning for the Conference is led by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). Fiona Bruce MP is the Prime Minister’s Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB) and as such is supported by a special team within the FCDO. Ms Bruce is also the Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on International Freedom of Religion or Belief (APPG). There will be a range of 100 events in and around the Ministerial, forming an ‘FoRB Fringe’. The APPG is encouraging involvement around the UK. A form for those interested to apply to host an event is at <https://endthepersécution.uk/forb-fringe/>.

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Proposed changes under the Treasure Act 1996

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, all finders of gold and silver objects, and groups of coins from the same finds, over 300 years old, have a legal obligation to report such items as treasure under the Treasure Act 1996. Treasure belongs to the Crown, unless a prior interest is established. During the passage of the Treasure Act 1996, the UK Government undertook, in the House of Lords, to introduce a statutory instrument to exempt finds that came under the Church of England's legal system, to remove any confusion for finders. The Government's intention is to proceed with the introduction of the exemption in 2022.

As part of this process, the DCMS has undertaken to consult with other faith groups, so that any questions or concerns may be raised. The Government believes that any treasure finds related to other faiths are sufficiently protected through the Treasure Act 1996. No other religious denomination is subject to a legally enforceable system which would protect important archaeological, historic or cultural objects. The purpose of the Church of England exemption is "simply to remove confusion and potential conflict where finds could potentially be subject to two legal processes already in existence". Any questions or concerns about this proposal, can be sent to contact treasure@dcms.gov.uk. The deadline for responses is 17 May.

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New safeguarding principles for LGBT+ people in faith communities

UK faith leaders were among those agreeing to a new set of safeguarding principles to protect LGBT+ people in faith communities, at a conference of the Global Interfaith Commission on LGBT+ Lives held in London in March. The Commission is co-chaired by the Revd Paul Bayes, former Bishop of Liverpool.

<https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2022/25-march/news/uk/new-principles-set-out-the-duty-of-care-to-the-lgbtplus-faithful>

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Northern Ireland Fair Employment (School Teachers) Bill

A Bill ending a religious exemption to anti-discrimination law in the recruitment of teachers passed its final stage in the Northern Ireland Assembly in March. The Fair Employment (School Teachers)

Bill attracted cross-party support and was passed without the need for a vote.

<https://www.nasuwt.org.uk/article-listing/nasuwt-welcomes-fair-employment-bill.html>

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Report on RE roundtable

An RE Policy Unit Parliamentary roundtable, ‘Religious Education: Underfunded and Undervalued’ chaired by Father of the House Sir Peter Bottomley MP, brought together pupils, parents and leading speakers in the area of religious education and interested parliamentarians to discuss the continued value that RE brings to children and young people across England. A report on the discussion, which took place on 1 March, can be seen at:

<https://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/REPU-March-Roundtable-Report-final.pdf>.

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Inter Faith Week

Inter Faith Week 2022

Inter Faith Week 2022 in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, will be held from Sunday 13 to Sunday 20 November. Its aims are to:

- Strengthen good inter faith relations at all levels;
- Increase awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, in particular celebrating and building on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society;
- Increase understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs increasing inter faith understanding and cooperation, and promoting more engaged and connected communities.

In 2021, 830 activities are known to have taken place during Inter Faith Week. Thousands of people of all ages took part directly and millions encountered the Week’s messages through social media.

Why not join the thousands who will be taking part this year? It’s a great opportunity to highlight the contribution of faith groups to society, and to encourage understanding, cooperation and dialogue between those of different faiths and also between those of religious and non-religious beliefs.

There are lots of ideas on how to take part at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/> as well as guidance on activity arranging and social media assets (eg logo and message boards). You might, for example, be interested to try the Inter Faith Buddies scheme. This helps bring individuals together to talk about their beliefs and issues of shared interest. It can be used year-round and works very well in the Inter Faith Week context. See <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/inter-faith-buddies> for more information and practical pointers. A video of three local inter faith practitioners talking about their Buddies experience can be seen at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wHgNwAQsJyk> and another example, from Interfaith Scotland, here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hzmbmtn175s>

Scottish Inter Faith Week 2022

Scottish Interfaith Week is led by Interfaith Scotland and will this year be held from Sunday 13 to Sunday 20 November. <https://scottishinterfaithweek.org/> 2022 has been designated Scotland's Year of Stories and the theme for Scottish Inter Faith Week will be linked to this.

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INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK NEWS

2019-2021 Biennial Review

IFN has published a special Biennial Review of its work, '2019/2021: A Review of the work of the Inter Faith Network for the UK through a time of COVID'. It begins with a message from the Trustees in which they reflect on the extraordinary nature of that period and the many ways that IFN and its member bodies have stepped up to the challenges that COVID has brought. It is packed with stories and images of the period. The Review can be downloaded from <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/static/a-review-of-the-work-of-the-inter-faith-network-for-the-uk-through-a-time-of-covid>.

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IFN National Meeting

IFN held its National Meeting on 22 March. This was IFN's 35th Anniversary Year National Meeting and was chaired by IFN Co-Chairs the Revd Canon Hilary Barber and Narendra Waghela. The theme for the meeting was 'Working in partnership for the Common Good'. It provided an opportunity to explore how faith organisations and inter faith bodies are working for the common good in partnership with other types of body such as local authorities; emergency services; universities, FE colleges and schools; healthcare organisations; companies; and sports organisations.

In the morning session there were presentations on: 'National organisations and faith communities working together for the common good', by Catherine Davies, Head of Remembrance and Emma Vernalls, Remembrance Officer, Royal British Legion and a response from Nitin Palan of BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha; 'Faith-based charities working with secular agencies', by Fadi Itani OBE, Chief Executive Officer, Muslim Charities Forum; 'Multi-faith social action for the well being of refugees', by Grace Buckley, Scottish Faiths Action Together on Refugees (SFAR), Secretary, Archdiocese of Glasgow Justice and Peace Commission and member of the Scottish Bishops' national Justice and Peace Commission; and 'Partnerships at the heart of local civic life – the Coventry experience', by Manjit Kaur, educationalist, member of the Coventry Sacred Space Project and Coventry Multi Faith Forum and of Coventry and Warwickshire SACREs. At the end of the morning session IFN's Executive Director, Dr Harriet Crabtree OBE, offered a short remembrance of Dr Natubhai Shah MBE, IFN Trustee, who had died earlier that month.

In the afternoon session there were presentations on: 'Partnerships at challenging times' by Vijay Jassal, Assistant Director, Policy & Strategic Partnerships, National Emergencies Trust (NET) and Thelma Stober (NET Trustee); 'Partnership for the common good' by Rt Hon Stephen Timms MP, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Faith and Society, with responses from Rabbi Mordechai Wollenberg, Senior Rabbi of Woodford Forest United Synagogue in London, under the Chief Rabbi's auspices, and Vice-Moderator of IFN Faith Communities Forum and Roz Miller BEM, Director, Islington Faiths Forum. At the end of the afternoon there were closing reflections from Paul Smalley, NASACRE and RE Council for England and Wales, Trupti Patel, President, Hindu Forum of Britain and IFN Trustee and Susan Siegel, Trustee, Interfaith Scotland and IFN Trustee.

During the day there were workshops on: COVID-19, coming together at a time of need and the emergence of new networks and partnerships; Emergency services and faith communities, developing and deepening community links; Employers, staff networks and faith communities – working for religious literacy and good relations; Faith communities working in partnership with SACREs and schools; Sports initiatives and inter faith engagement – partnerships for learning, empowerment and cohesion; Faith communities and healthcare – partnerships for health and wellbeing; Inter Faith Week: a time for forging new connections and partnerships; Local authorities and faith groups – dimensions of partnership; Partnership working between local inter faith bodies and higher education institutions; and Working in partnership for the safety and security of communities.

Videos of the main plenary presentations can be seen at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/ifn-national-meeting-2022-working-in-partnership-for-the-common-good>. The meeting report is under preparation.

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Dr Natubhai Shah and Leonie Lewis

The e-bulletin does not carry obituaries. However, in this issue, we note with sadness the recent deaths from illness of two trustees: Dr Natubhai Shah MBE and Leonie Lewis MBE. Both were widely known and respected both within their own communities (Jain and Jewish) for their community work, as well as within the inter faith world. Words from IFN about them can be seen at <https://www.facebook.com/ifnetuk/posts/314735770803187> and https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=5092046557512545&id=553910267992886. IFN's Executive Director, Harriet Crabtree, attended their funerals on behalf of the Board. Leonie Lewis had served as an IFN Trustee since 2020. She was also a Trustee of IFN member body Faiths Forum for London. Dr Shah had been involved in IFN's work since its earliest days, serving at various points as an honorary officer. He died shortly before IFN's National Meeting and a remembrance of him was offered at that.

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IFN office arrangements

The IFN office moved at the end of April to Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufton Street, London SW1P 3RB. The phone number and email address remain the same.

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS AND DEVELOPMENTS

London Interfaith Fun Run

The Faith and Belief Forum and Maccabi GB have recently launched the London Interfaith Fun Run which will take place in Barnet on Monday 29 August. They are calling on charities to participate in this event which can be used as a fundraising and profile-raising platform. Participating charities will: be able to recruit unlimited runners/walkers who will fundraise for their charity; have a stall in the Charity Fair; and contribute to other programming on the day including performances,

delivering family activities, interactive dialogue sessions, and more. For more information, visit <https://faithbeliefforum.org/event/london-interfaith-fun-run-22> or email Jessica@faithbeliefforum.org.

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Interfaith poetry anthology

Interfaith Scotland is working together with the Scottish Poetry Library to create a book of poems on the theme of 'The Gift'. The poems will be written by people from different faith and belief backgrounds, writing about what inspired them and helped bring them through the pandemic. The deadline for submissions is 14 June. More details can be found at <https://standrews.anglican.org/uncategorized/opportunity-to-submit-a-poem-for-interfaith-poetry-anthology/>.

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Faith trails and walks

It is that time of year when faith walks and trails begin again. This weekend, for example, saw a Diverse Open Doors Day trail in Bristol organised by the Bristol Multi-Faith Forum which took in a Buddhist monastery, a Greek Orthodox Church, a Black Christian Church, a Muslim Mosque, a Sikh Gurdwara, a Jewish Synagogue, a Hindu Temple, and a Bahai Centre. There was a Spirituality and Mental Health theme and also a link to the Platinum Jubilee. Participants started with langar at the gurdwara.

Next month sees the inaugural East Finchley Faith and Peace Walk, bringing communities together to celebrate the rich history, open spaces and diverse faiths in East Finchley in London. It is being organised by the Barnet Multi Faith Forum and Middlesex University Interfaith Network. The day will be divided into regular stops so you can stay with the walk as long as you can to hear about the work of the venues, enjoy light refreshments and use facilities. Details under Diary Dates.

Find out more about organising faith walks and trails at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/inter-faith-walks-pilgrimages-and-faith-trails>. and open door days at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/open-door-days>. A number of these, such as the Watford Inter Faith Association Interfaith Pilgrimage, take place during Inter Faith Week. If your area does not yet have an annual faith communities' open-door day or faith trail, why not consider arranging one for Inter Faith Week 2022 (13 to 20 November)?

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

Resources

Inter Faith Buddies

Inter Faith Buddies is a scheme designed by IFN to bring individuals together to engage in dialogue.

- The scheme involves two people of different faiths or beliefs keeping in touch on a weekly basis for 6 weeks;
- choosing or developing questions on which to share their thoughts and experiences; and
- if they wish, sharing at an in-person or online event, in an agreed way, some reflections on what they have gained from the experience.

It is an opportunity for sharing and learning, on a one-to-one basis across a limited period of time, about what is important to us, in the context of our wider community. The process may, of course, lead to longer term conversations and new forms of practical co-operation.

This video clip from Surrey Faith Links gives a flavour of the experience:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wHgNwAQsJyk>.

Interested in taking up the idea within your organisation?

If you are an organisation interested in taking up the Inter Faith Buddies idea, visit <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/inter-faith-buddies> for more information and practical pointers.

Interfaith Scotland has used the scheme in a number of contexts, for example

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hzmbmtn175s>.

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Interfaith Inspiration videos

Interfaith Scotland has produced a series of videos featuring stories of people's faith or belief journey and what inspired them to get involved in inter faith engagement. These can be seen on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XXayqHrHCAE>.

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Study/Training

IFN 'Digital surgery' slots for local inter faith organisations

IFN is continuing to make available free half hour digital 'surgery' slots for local inter faith organisations who would like a chance to talk about how their group might strengthen their use of digital communications. Any local inter faith group interested in booking a slot can email IFN Project Director, Ashley Beck, at ashley.beck@interfaith.org.uk.

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Woolf Institute Summer School

Applications are open for the Woolf Institute Summer School. This aims to "increase tolerance and interdependence through the design of a curriculum and a learning environment conducive to academic study and fostering understanding of the diversity of beliefs, attitudes and perspectives" and the curriculum will include an interdisciplinary approach to the study of interreligious and interfaith relations. For more information, visit <https://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/study/summer-schools>.

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CCJ Campus Leadership Programme

Applications are now open for the Council of Christians and Jews' 2022-23 Campus Leadership programme. This programme is open to students who are keen to explore other religions and to take a stand against intolerance. Initial training will take place from 6 to 8 September. For more information, email campusleadership@ccj.org.uk or visit <https://ccj.org.uk/campus-leadership>. The closing date for applications is 1 July.

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Cambridge Interfaith Programme Summer School

Applications are now open for the Cambridge Interfaith Programme 2022 Academic Summer School. The Summer School will run from 4 July to 15 July, with online timetabled sessions supplemented by unscheduled activities for participants to complete independently. There is a

bursary scheme available. For more information, visit

<https://www.interfaith.cam.ac.uk/news/academic-summer-school-now-open-applications>.

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CST Safe Webinars on security for places of worship and faith communities

The Community Security Trust Safe programme is offering a series of webinars on many aspects of security, intended for places of worship and faith communities. For more information, visit <https://cst.org.uk/about-cst/safe-security-advice-for-everyone>.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS, AND NOMINATIONS

Calls for information

DHSC Call for Evidence on Vitamin D

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has launched a call for evidence on vitamin D. This seeks views on how to improve the vitamin D status of the population in England, in line with existing recommendations, as well as addressing associated health disparities and improving health outcomes through maximising the benefits of vitamin D. There is a specific need to get views from ethnic minorities and those who cover themselves outdoors for cultural or religious reasons.

DHSC welcome views on: how guidance or campaigns can be tailored in order to better reach these groups and to take account of religious and cultural diversity; and how health and care professionals, community leaders and faith leaders can work alongside these groups to raise awareness and deliver messages in culturally appropriate ways, and examples of innovative and/or good practice. The call for evidence closes on 15 May. For more information, visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/vitamin-d-call-for-evidence/vitamin-d-call-for-evidence>.

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Research into contribution of faith groups during the pandemic

Spurgeon's College, a theological college for Baptist ministers and church leaders, has initiated a campaign to record the valuable contribution of faith groups during the COVID-19 pandemic. <https://www.inspiremagazine.org.uk/stories/view?articleid=3515> The results will be submitted to the British Library as an official record. The research form can be completed at <https://faithincommunity.org.uk/faithincommunity-record/>.

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Competitions

NATRE Spirited Arts competition

The National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE)'s annual Spirited Arts competition is open for entries until 31 July. This year NATRE is partnering with the Jo Cox Foundation and the theme is 'We have far more in common with each other than that which divides us.' For full details of the competition, visit <https://www.natre.org.uk/about-natre/projects/spirited-arts/spirited-arts-2022>.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

Inter Faith Network for the UK - Volunteers

The Inter Faith Network for the UK currently has an opportunity for online volunteers with good desk research and writing skills who would like to offer 4-8 hours a week to help on different aspects of IFN's work to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. To express an interest in volunteering, please complete the application form at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/volunteering>.

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Faith & Belief Forum – HR & Operations Manager

The Faith & Belief Forum is seeking to appoint an HR and Operations Manager. The closing date for applications is 16 May. For further information, visit <https://faithbeliefforum.org/career/hr-operations-manager/>.

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Council of Christians and Jews - Campus Leadership Programme Manager

The Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ) is seeking a Campus Leadership Programme Manager for its campus inter faith dialogue programme. For the 2022-23 academic year, CCJ is collaborating with St Peter's House, which hosts chaplaincy for the Manchester student community. The new Programme Manager will be based in Manchester and will lead the nationwide Campus Leadership Programme as well as work closely with faith-based student groups in Manchester. The closing date for applications is 23 May. Interviews will be held on 13 June 2022 in Manchester. For more information, email campusleadership@ccj.org.uk.

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St Ethelburga's Centre – Volunteering opportunities

The St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace has a number of opportunities for volunteers and interns to support them in their work. For further information, visit

<https://stethelburgas.org/get-involved/vacancies-and-volunteering/>.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

New UK Government Find a Grant pilot

The UK Government's new Find a Grant pilot was released on 12 April. This is part of the Grants Applicant Programme (GAP), being delivered by the Government Grants Management Function in the Cabinet Office and aims to make applying for and finding government grants simpler, faster and fairer. <https://grantscommunity.blog.gov.uk/2022/04/12/the-first-gov-uk-release-of-the-find-a-grant-pilot-is-now-open-for-everyone/>

The pilot phase includes 23 grant schemes and can be found at <https://www.find-government-grants.service.gov.uk/>.

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Funding websites

My Funding Central is a database of grant funding and social investment sources. This service is available to organisations with an annual income below £1m and is free for organisations under £30k. <https://www.myfundingcentral.co.uk/> Similar websites for funding in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at Funding Scotland - <https://funding.scot/>, Wales Council for Voluntary Action - <http://www.wcva.cymru./funding> and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland - <https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

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Listed Places of Worship grant scheme

The Listed Places of Worship (LPW) Grant Scheme gives grants that cover the VAT incurred in making repairs to listed buildings in use as places of worship. The scheme covers repairs to the fabric of the building, along with associated professional fees, plus repairs to turret clocks, pews, bells and pipe organs. The Grant Scheme is run by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and administered by Topmark. The Government has recently confirmed that funding through the scheme will be available until March 2025. <http://www.lpwscheme.org.uk/>

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FCC Community Action Fund

The FCC Communities Foundation is offering grants between £2,000 and £100,000 for projects which involve the provision, maintenance or improvement of public amenities including community spaces in places of worship, which are registered charities. Projects must be based within 10 miles of an eligible FCC Environment waste facility. The current round closes on 8 June. <https://fcccommunitiesfoundation.org.uk/funds/fcc-community-action-fund>

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Subsidised fundraising workshops

The Foundation for Social Improvement offers subsidised training programmes for small charities across the UK. The courses cover a wide range of subjects from event planning to leadership. Many of the courses focus on fundraising and sustainability skills in particular. Further information and dates for upcoming courses, now being held online, can be found at <http://www.thefsi.org/services/training>.

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS/MONTHS

The Big Lunch this year is an official part of HM The Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations from Thursday 2 to Sunday 5 June. Across the years millions of people from different backgrounds have joined together to take part through street parties, BBQs, iftars and picnics. <https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/get-involved> It is on 5 June.

Thank You Day takes place on Sunday 5 June. It is a UK-wide initiative inviting people to get together to say thank you to one another, to family members, key workers, good neighbours and volunteers. It has a particular link to the pandemic and how people have responded. This year it will encourage people to say thank you to Her Majesty The Queen as well as to one another. <https://thankyouday.org.uk/>

Refugee Week will take place from Monday 20 to Sunday 26 June. Refugee Week is a nationwide programme of arts, cultural and educational events that celebrate the contribution of refugees to

the UK, and encourages a better understanding between communities. The theme for the 2022 Week is 'Healing'. <https://refugeeweek.org.uk/>

The Great Get Together, inspired by the late Jo Cox MP, is taking place from Friday 24 to Sunday 26 June. <https://www.greatgettogether.org/>

Srebrenica Memorial Day takes place each year on 11 July. This year's theme is 'Combatting Denial: Challenging Hatred'. It is organised by Remembering Srebrenica. <http://www.srebrenica.org.uk/>

National Hate Crime Awareness Week takes place from Saturday 8 October to Saturday 15 October. <https://nationalhcaw.uk/>

One World Week will take place from Sunday 23 to Sunday 30 October. www.oneworldweek.org

Inter Faith Week, in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, will take place from Sunday 13 to Sunday 20 November. www.interfaithweek.org See [above](#).

Scottish Interfaith Week Scottish Interfaith Week is led by Interfaith Scotland. It will be held from Sunday 13 to Sunday 20 November. www.scottishinterfaithweek.org

Mitzvah Day will take place on Sunday 20 November. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Jewish community where people give their time to make a difference to the community around them. Many events and projects held for the day have an inter faith focus. www.mitzvahday.org.uk/

Sewa Day is a day of faith-based social action led by the Hindu community. It normally takes place on 4 dates across the year. Due to COVID there are currently no fixed days; rather, 'every day is Sewa day' and volunteers are helping people continually as they are able. <https://sewaday.org/>

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DIARY DATES

A few examples of forthcoming events are listed below. Those listed are all virtual, except where noted. Events are also listed on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/events>.

The **University of Birmingham Multi Faith Chaplaincy** is holding an event on Tuesday 10 May on the topic of ‘Jewish-Christian Relations in Post-War Britain: Legacies of suspicion and the challenges of interfaith’. It will be held from 6pm to 7.30pm in St Francis Hall at the University. For more information, contact Alex Ferranti at a.ferranti@bham.ac.uk.

Elmbridge Multi Faith Forum is holding its next event on Tuesday 10 May. The theme will be ‘My Islam, differences among Muslims’. It will be held at 7pm for a 7.30pm start at the East Molesey Islamic and Cultural Centre, 94 Road Walton Road, East Molesey KT8 0DL. Speakers included will be a Sunni, Shia and Sufi. There will be an opportunity to ask questions, all welcome. For more information, and to register, contact Kawther Hashmi at KawtherH@smef.org.uk or on 07827 974792.

Halifax Minster, Calderdale Interfaith and other partners are holding a Celebration of Wellbeing and Mental Health on Wednesday 11 May. The keynote speakers will be Jim McManus, Director of Public Health Hertfordshire, and Jonny Richardson Glenn, CEO of Healthy Minds Calderdale. It is being held from 10am to 2.30pm at Halifax Minster, Church Street, Halifax HX1 1QL. To register, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/a-celebration-of-wellbeing-and-mental-health-tickets-311209655457>.

Shirley House Interfaith Centre is holding its next event on Wednesday 11 May. The topic will be ‘Faith and Belief in Buddhism’ and the speaker will be Mike Fitter. It begins at 7.30pm and is being held at Shirley House, 31 Psalter Lane S11 8YL. It is also hoped to offer a Zoom option. For more information, email shirleyhouseinterfaith@gmail.com or call 0114 267 8289.

The **Great Get Together** and **Refugee Week** are holding a webinar on Wednesday 11 May at 2pm for anyone thinking of organising a walk as part of the Great Walk Together in June. For further information and to book, <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-great-plan-together-great-walk-together-support-tickets-315266810517>.

Nisa-Nashim Jewish Muslim Women’s Network is holding its annual conference on Sunday 15 May. The theme will be ‘Navigating Crisis’. The speakers will be former MP Ruth Smeeth, Nusrat

Ghani MP and Tamara Finkelstein, Permanent Secretary at DEFRA. It is being held from 10am to 1pm. For more information and to register, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/nisa-nashim-online-annual-conference-tickets-318714873767>.

The **Religion Media Centre** will be holding its annual Religion Media Festival on Monday 16 May on the theme of 'Exploring Belief'. The programme of confirmed speakers can be found at <https://religionmediacentre.org.uk/events/exploring-belief-the-2022-religion-media-festival/>. The festival will be held from 10.30am to 4pm at the JW3 Centre in London. To book, visit <https://www.jw3.org.uk/whats-on/exploring-belief-religion-and-media-2022>.

The **Council of Christians and Jews (South East London branch)** is holding its next meeting on Tuesday 17 May. This will be on 'Isaiah – the historical personality'. Rabbi Larry Becker will be leading the discussion. It is being held at 8pm, with refreshments from 7.45pm, at St Stephen's Church, College Road, London SE21 7HN. For further details, email stephenweil6@gmail.com.

Woking People of Faith will be holding its annual Interfaith Football Tournament on Saturday 21 May. Book your six-a-side team now by emailing treasurer@wpof.org.uk. The tournament will be held from 9am to 4pm at the Winston Churchill Sports Centre, Hermitage Road, St John's, GU21 8TL. There will be medals for all players as well as a trophy for the winning team. Lunch will be served. More details to follow.

Woking Action for Peace, Churches Together in Woking, Surrey Faith Links, Woking Environment Action, Woking People of Faith, Woking Seroptimists and **Woking Quakers** are holding the next Woking Debate on Saturday 21 May. This will be a play by Journeymen Theatre about immigration called 'The Bundle'. The event will take place from 11am to 12.30pm at Christ Church, Jubilee Square, Woking GU21 6YG. For more information, visit www.wokingdebates.com.

Welwyn Hatfield Interfaith is holding its next meeting on Monday 23 May. The theme will be 'Sacred Numbers' and will be looking at the numbers that are important in shaping the rhythm and pattern of life to those of the Jewish, Christian and Bahai faiths. It is being held from 7.30pm to 9pm at the Focolare Centre, 69 Parkway, Welwyn Garden City, AL8 6JG. For more information, email theresa.whifg@gmail.com.

Interfaith Wolverhampton and **City of Sanctuary Wolverhampton** are holding a fundraising film event on Tuesday 24 May. They will be screening 'The Shape of Water' at 6pm at the Lighthouse Cinema, The Chubb Building, Fryer Street, Wolverhampton. Refreshments will be provided from 5pm. For tickets, email admin@ifwton.org.uk or call 07853 251929.

Calderdale Interfaith is holding a women-only event on Tuesday 24 May. This will be on 'Sharing Mary – Bible and Quran side by side' and will be led by Madeleine Russell. It is being held at 1.30pm at the Halifax Opportunities Trust, Hanson Lane Enterprise Centre, Halifax HX1 5PG. To book, contact Perveen on 07776 107362.

The St Philip's Centre is running a series of Hindu-Christian Conversations. These each take place on Thursdays from 12pm to 2pm at St Philip's Church, Leicester LE2 1HN. The next one is being held on Thursday 26 May on the theme of 'Royalty and faith'. Vegetarian food will be available. To book, email courses@stphilipscentre.co.uk or telephone 07707 640885.

Woking People of Faith is holding an event on Thursday 26 May. This will be on the theme of 'Faith in Harmony'. It will include musicians from different faiths and cultures and a meal. It is being held from 7pm at the Parkview Community Centre, Blackmore Crescent, Sheerwater, GU21 5NZ. To book, email administrator@wpof.org.uk.

Windsor and Maidenhead Community Forum is holding its next Women's Group Meeting on Monday 30 May. The theme will be 'Faith and Food'. It is being held from 7.30pm to 9pm at Cookham Rise Methodist Church, Lower Road, Cookham, SL6 9HJ. For further details, email sally514@btinternet.com.

Newcastle Council of Faiths is holding an Afternoon Tea to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee on the afternoon of Thursday 2 June. This will be held from 4pm to 6pm at Newcastle Reform Synagogue, The Croft, off Kenton Lane, Gosforth, NE3 4RF. For more information, and to book, email l.hillary@newcastle.anglican.org.

Interfaith Scotland and **Religions for Peace UK Women of Faith Network** are hosting an Interfaith Family Picnic on Sunday 5 June. This will be an Intergenerational Celebration of Service and Gratitude for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and Thank You Day. Participants are invited to bring their own picnic. It is being held from 2.30pm to 4.30pm at the Hidden Gardens, 25A Albert Drive, Glasgow G41 2PE. For more information, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/interfaith-family-picnic-tickets-318867099077?aff=ebdsoporgprofile>.

The **St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace** is holding its next 'Listen to the World' open mic night on Tuesday 7 June. This evening of live music will feature Afghan performer Elaha Soroor and will mark Refugee Week and its theme of 'Healing'. The floor will also be open for open mic spots. Free tickets for refugees and asylum seekers. It is being held from 6.30pm to 8.30pm in

person at the Centre in London and also online. For more information, contact Jo Winsloe Slater at jowinsloe@stethelburgas.org.

Bedfordshire's Police and Crime Commissioner, Festus Akinbusoye, is holding a Multi-Faith Networking Event on Tuesday 14 June. Faith groups from across Bedfordshire are invited to attend. It will be held from 6pm to 8pm at Venue 360, The Riverside Suite, 20 Gipsy Lane, Luton LU1 3JH. For more information, and to register, visit <https://www.bedfordshire.pcc.police.uk/bedfordshires-multi-faith-networking-event-2022/>.

The St Philip's Centre in Leicester is holding its AGM on Wednesday 22 June. This will include a talk on 'Learning to Live Well Together' by The Rt Revd Saju Muthalalay, Bishop of Loughborough. It will be held from 5.30pm to 7.00pm at St Philip's Church, Evington Road, Leicester LE2 1HN. Light refreshments will be provided. To book, email admin@stphilipscentre.co.uk.

Barnet Multi Faith Forum and **Middlesex University Inter Faith Network** have jointly organised the first East Finchley Faith and Peace Walk on Saturday 25 June. It will begin at 10.30am at Cherry Tree Woods. For more information, and to register, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/east-finchley-faith-and-peace-walk-registration-271331328307>.

Guildford and Godalming Interfaith Forum is holding its next event on Tuesday 19 July. This will be on the theme of 'Appreciating interfaith friendships'. It will begin at 6pm and will be held by the river. For more information, email bernard.jones10@btinternet.com.

More information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: <https://www.interfaithcouncilwales.cymru/>

IFN also carries news and information at www.twitter.com/IFNetUK www.facebook.com/IFNetUK and, about Inter Faith Week, at <https://twitter.com/IFweek> and www.facebook.com/IFWeek.

SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK

TO INCREASE INTER FAITH UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION

The Inter Faith Network for the UK works for inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. Please help us grow this vital work by making a donation at: <https://interfaith.org.uk/donate> (including Paypal option). Donations can also be made by sending a cheque payable to 'The Inter Faith Network' to: The Inter Faith Network for the UK, Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufton Street, London, SW1P 3RB.

Donations are used with care to make a real difference.

Thank you!

MAKE A GIFT TO SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK IN REMEMBRANCE OF A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND OR THROUGH A LEGACY

If you would like to make a gift in memory of a loved one, please get in touch by emailing remember@interfaith.org.uk or call us on 0207 730 0410.

By leaving a gift in your will to the Inter Faith Network for the UK, you can leave a living inheritance to help deepen and strengthen inter faith understanding and cooperation in this country – for now and for the future. If you are thinking about making a will, the best thing to do is to get in touch with a professional will writer, such as a solicitor or advocate; they can help to ensure it is legally correct and that your wishes are met. If you have already made a will, you can still make an addition or amendment in the form of a codicil. If you would like to pledge a gift, please provide our name and address, along with our registered charity number 1068934.

Please get in touch with us if you have any queries.

You can call us on 0207 730 0410 or contact us at remember@interfaith.org.uk.

Remember a Charity has produced a helpful resource called 'Making a Will - your complete guide'. This can be found at <https://www.rememberacharity.org.uk/making-a-will/>.

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You can sign up to IFN mailings at any time by using the form on IFN's website at: www.interfaith.org.uk/news/gdpr or let us know that you would like to unsubscribe by emailing ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

Submissions for next issue

If you have items about inter faith projects or future events which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk **by 30 June** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

Disclaimer: Information in this e-bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion

The Inter Faith Network for the UK, Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufton Street, London, SW1P 3RB

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IFN e-bulletin

July/August 2022

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

Recent Government changes

On 7 July, Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced his pending resignation. He is expected to remain as Prime Minister until a new party leader is elected. Following the departure of a number of Ministers, Parliamentary Private Secretaries and Trade Envoys, the Prime Minister commenced appointment to resulting vacancies.

The Rt Hon Greg Clark has been appointed to the role of Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (LUHC). Minister of State Paul Scully MP now carries the brief for 'Faith community engagement', 'Integration, anti-extremism, and religious hatred policy', 'Holocaust Memorial' and 'Hate crime strategy and anti-Muslim hatred', among other responsibilities. <https://www.gov.uk/government/ministers>

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International Ministerial Conference on Freedom of Religion or Belief

On 5 and 6 July, the UK Government hosted an International Ministerial Conference on Freedom of Religion or Belief. The conference brought together governments, parliamentarians, faith and belief representatives, and civil society to urge increased global action on freedom of religion or belief for everyone. Among those present were many faith leaders and others from the UK.

The conference also brought together members of the International Religious Freedom or Belief Alliance (IRFBA). The [UK Prime Minister's Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief, Fiona Bruce MP](#) is chairing the IRFBA during 2022.

A 'Fringe' programme of civil society events was coordinated by the UK Freedom of Religion or Belief Forum. Events took place in a number of areas, including the cities of Birmingham, London and Manchester. A number of the fringe events were held on an inter faith basis, such as the Freedom of Religion and Belief Welsh Interfaith Conference 2022 <https://www.wcia.org.uk/wcia-news/freedom-of-religion-and-belief-welsh-interfaith-conference-2022/>.

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IFN Faith Communities Forum Statement on Freedom of Religion or Belief

On the eve of the International Ministerial Conference on Religion or Belief (see [above](#)), the IFN Faith Communities Forum issued the following statement: <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/statement-on-freedom-of-religion-and-belief-from-the-faith-communities-forum-of-the-inter-faith-network-for-the-uk>.

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COVID-19

UK COVID-19 Inquiry

The UK COVID-19 Inquiry got under way on 21 July. Its purpose is to examine the UK's response to and impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, and learn lessons for the future. The Inquiry is Chaired by Baroness Heather Hallett, a former Court of Appeal judge.

The final Terms of Reference for the UK COVID-19 Inquiry were published on 28 June. In examining the COVID-19 response and the impact of the pandemic in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, it will look at “the closure and reopening of the hospitality, retail, sport and leisure, and travel and tourism sectors, places of worship, and cultural institutions”.

Further information is at <https://covid19.public-inquiry.uk/>.

Updating of guidance

COVID numbers have recently increased again.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/condition sanddiseases/articles/coronaviruscovid19latestinsights/infections> In this context, guidance for places of worship remains important. An example of updated guidance, from the Church of England, can be seen at <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance>.

Faith communities and vaccination

The drive to increase take-up of first and subsequent vaccine doses continues, with further boosters recommended for the Autumn for a number of categories.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/jcvi-provides-interim-advice-on-an-autumn-covid-19-booster-programme>

Faith communities are continuing to play a role in this, for example through providing locations for pop up or mobile clinics, for example Guru Nanak Gurdwara, Luton

<https://www.bedfordshirelive.co.uk/news/bedfordshire-news/fascinating-stories-behind-13-bedfords-5018524> and Glasgow Central Mosque

<https://www.glasgowworld.com/health/covid-booster-jab-drop-in-centres-glasgow-where-to-get-third-vaccine-near-me-without-booking-an-appointment-3509073>

Remembering those lost and affirming all who have worked to help others

Remembrance and affirmation events continue to be held for those lost to COVID-19 and the work of those to help others. For example,

<https://www.london.anglican.org/articles/service-pays-tribute-to-efforts-of-haringey-faith-groups-in-vaccine-roll-out/>.

Covid conspiracies and antisemitism

On 19 July the Community Security Trust published a new report exploring the antisemitism that is present inside the Covid conspiracy movement. <https://cst.org.uk/>
<https://www.jewishnews.co.uk/shock-report-reveals-full-extent-of-antisemitism-in-covid-conspiracy-groups/>

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Hot weather guidance

During July, the UK has experienced unusually hot weather across a number of days and there is the prospect of further such days in August. The UK Government issued advice <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/heatwave-plan-for-england/beat-the-heat-staying-safe-in-hot-weather> as did the governments of the devolved nations:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/heatwave-plan-for-england/beat-the-heat-staying-safe-in-hot-weather>

<https://www.gov.scot/news/amber-warning-for-extreme-heat-extended/>
<https://gov.wales/public-urged-take-precautions-temperatures-rise-wales>
[https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/hot-weather-advice.](https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/hot-weather-advice)

The Salvation Army assisted Emergency Services during the heatwave <https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/news/salvation-army-supports-emergency-services-during-heatwave> and in a number of areas faith groups made cool spaces in their worship places available for people to come in away from the heat, for example <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2022/22-july/news/uk/churches-offer-cool-sanctuary-in-heatwave-britain>. In London, places of worship are among those venues listed as 'cool spaces' to be used for respite in hot weather. <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/environment/climate-change/climate-adaptation/cool-spaces>

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Climate Change

Scottish faith communities and COP26

Earlier this month Scottish faith communities sent a letter to COP26 President Alok Sharma calling on him to demonstrate what the Presidency has been doing to honour the Glasgow Pact commitments. The Glasgow Pact includes commitments from 197 nations to build resilience to climate change, curb greenhouse gas emissions and provide finance for both. Religious leaders and faith organisations are concerned that world developments have diverted attention from COP26 commitments and have signed a letter requesting a meeting with Sharma to discuss progress.

The letter was developed by the COP26 Interfaith Working Group and signed by faith leaders and organisations across Scotland. The COP26 Interfaith Working Group is made up of representatives from Scottish faith groups and organisations working on climate issues. The group is chaired by Interfaith Scotland with Interfaith Glasgow acting as Secretariat. <https://interfaithglasgow.org/cop27-open-letter/>

Faith communities and environmental issues

Faith communities continue to engage on environmental issues both together, through routes such as Faith for the Climate and individually through programmes such those highlighted on the FFTC website as well as through:

- Projects such as Eco Church and Eco Synagogue;
- Training opportunities such as the Hindu Forum of Britain's Training Programme on Climate Change Awareness and Environmental Assessment & Management for Temple & Samaj Buildings, funded by the National Lottery Community Fund <https://eamcc.hfb-charity.org.uk>; and the Bahu Trust's training for Imams <https://bahustrust.org.uk/training/imams>;
- Partnerships such as Eco Sikh's work, including Tree Planting of the Oneness Grove – an inclusive forest space, marking the first of a series of collaborations between it and Forestry England [Tree Planting with Eco Sikhs & Forestry England – youtube](#);
- Tree planting by other faith groups such as The Druid Network which have been planting in dedicated groves <https://treesforlife.org.uk/groves/86224/> and by inter faith organisations such as Interfaith Scotland.

Thursday 22 September is 'Loss and Damage Action Day', a global moment to stand in solidarity with those living with the worst impacts of climate breakdown, and to call on wealthy countries and big polluters to pay up for this loss and damage they continue, knowingly, to cause. Faith for the Climate is calling on faith groups around the UK to join in prayer, meditation, reflection and action to mark the day.

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Law Commission report on reform of weddings law

On 19 July the Law Commission of England and Wales published its recommendations to reform weddings law, proposing a fairer system that gives couples more choice over where and how their wedding takes place. The project sought to provide recommendations for a reformed law of weddings that allows for greater choice, based on the following principles: Certainty and simplicity; Fairness and equality; Protecting the state's interest; Respecting individuals' wishes and beliefs; and Removing any unnecessary regulation. One of the recommendations in the report is that couples will be able to have a wedding ceremony that reflects their values and beliefs, by: having a religious ceremony in a venue other than a place of worship and without having to incorporate prescribed words into the ceremony; having a religious ceremony led by an interfaith minister that contains aspects of each of the couple's beliefs; having some religious elements, such as hymns and prayers, incorporated into their civil ceremony, as long as the ceremony remains identifiably civil. The full report can be found at <https://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/weddings/>.

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Teaching of RE and Integrated Education in Northern Ireland

On 5 July a High Court judge ruled that the exclusively Christian-focused religious education taught at primary schools in Northern Ireland is unlawful and breaches human rights. The case was brought by a father and daughter in Belfast. Mr Justice Colton said the "unlawfulness identified requires a reconsideration of the core curriculum" in how it sets out the teaching of religious education (RE) and the provision of collective worship. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-62053430>

On 6 July the UK Government announced a £1.9 million funding packages to support schools wishing to transform to integrated status. The funding will go to the Integrated Education Fund (IEF) and the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE), which work to enable a greater number of children from different community backgrounds to be educated together. Roisin Marshall, the chief executive officer of the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education, said: "The Council for Integrated Education empowers school communities to deliberately and intentionally attract children, young people and the adults, who identify as coming from both sides of our divided society as well as those from other religions and cultural backgrounds." <https://www.itv.com/news/utv/2022-07-06/19m-funding-boost-to-help-schools-transform-to-integrated-status>

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Study on Faith and Charity

A study on 'Faith and Charity', commissioned by UK NGO Human Appeal, was published in June. Research was conducted to explore why people donate to charities and how their

relationship with charitable organisations has changed in recent years. The study showed that more than half of all respondents had knowingly supported a faith-based organisation in the last two years. It also found that two fifths of those who consider themselves religious would be more likely to support an organisation if it was rooted in their own faith, while a further one-in-five would support a charity active beyond their own stated faith. The report can be found at <https://humanappeal.org.uk/about-us/publications>.

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Inter Faith Week

Inter Faith Week takes place this year from Sunday 13 to Sunday 20 November. The aims of Inter Faith Week, which is led by IFN, are to:

- Strengthen good inter faith relations at all levels
- Increase awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, celebrating and building on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society
- Increase understanding between different people of religious and non-religious beliefs

The Week is timed to begin each year on Remembrance Sunday to enable people of different backgrounds to remember together the service of soldiers and civilians of all faiths and beliefs and to reflect on peace.

<https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/remembrance>

Inter Faith Week is about highlighting the contribution of faith groups to society; spotlighting inter faith cooperation and understanding; and encouraging dialogue between those of religious and non-religious beliefs. It's a fantastic platform to share, learn and build relationships with neighbours, colleagues and service users of different backgrounds, and to come together in service for the common good.

If you've not yet started planning, August is a great month to start to think creatively about activities that can bring something special to the Week!

What might you do? Perhaps an inter faith sports match; an inter faith art, poetry or photography competition; a quiz or speed-faithing event; an '[Inter Faith Week Buddies](#)' scheme; an inter faith pilgrimage or peace walk; a learning activity about different faiths; an inter faith volunteering or social action opportunity; a tour of local places of worship; a social media series about the faith or beliefs of different members of your organisations; a dialogue or panel about issues like climate change or refugees; or an exhibition or stall about the different faiths in your community? There are so many possibilities – those are just a few!

Activity ideas for many different types of organisations can be found at:

<https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/ideas>.

In preparation for the 2022 Week, IFN has been engaging in outreach to university chaplaincies, faith centres and student faith societies. Groups like LSE Faith Centre, University of Bath Chaplaincy and University of Durham faith societies have provided reflections on their experiences of Inter Faith Week and how IFN can improve on the Week

going forward. This is part of a wider effort by IFN to increase the involvement of young people in Inter Faith Week. If you represent a university chaplaincy, faith centre or student faith or inter faith society and would be interested in a conversation about Inter Faith Week with the IFN team, please do get in touch at ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

Some basic information about Inter Faith Week that can be drawn off of for your own bulletin or newsletter can be found at: <https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/copy-for-newsletters-inter-faith-week-2022>.

Scottish Interfaith Week

Scottish Interfaith Week <https://scottishinterfaithweek.org/> is led by Interfaith Scotland and will also take place from Sunday 13 to Sunday 20 November. Its theme this year is 'Storytelling', to coincide with Scotland's Year of Stories.

Follow it on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

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INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK NEWS

E-bulletin survey responses

IFN is very grateful to all those who took the time to complete the e-bulletin feedback survey circulated with the previous issue, as well as to those who completed the 2021 survey. Your feedback is helping us to continue to develop the e-bulletin, both in the short term and over the longer term.

In total, 77 people responded. The faith and public life updates; IFN news; and inter faith projects, programmes and developments were appreciated by nearly all. Resources and study/training was more highly valued in 2021 than 2022. The section 'calls for information, competitions and nominations' in its current form was not found useful by most respondents in either year.

In both years there was also particular enthusiasm for the longer think pieces that are occasionally included on specific topics (such as the environment or homelessness). These have not been included in the e-bulletin over the last 12 months, but are being reintroduced with the current issue with a short feature on summer relaxation – inter faith style! (see [below](#)).

The ways that people interact with the e-bulletin were fairly evenly split between those who read all/most of it and those who jump the sections or articles of interest. There was also a close to even split between those who download the PDF and those who read the web version, although the latter is now edging ahead. IFN is committed to retaining the PDF version across the coming year, but will also be working to ensure that both versions are available before the e-bulletin is circulated (previously, the web version was usually added shortly after the PDF was sent out). Since last year, a growing proportion of readers access the e-bulletin via their phone/tablet (a jump from 15% of respondents to 45%). This may be linked to the growth in use of the web version, which resizes and reflows depending on the device used to access it.

Overall, responses show that the e-bulletin is a valued resource. In both years, over 70% of respondents said that the frequency of the e-bulletin (bi-monthly) was about right, and the

majority of respondents thought the e-bulletin contained about the right amount of information (60% in 2021 and 71% in 2022). 72% of respondents in each year thought that the e-bulletin helped them to carry out their work (a number of respondents were individuals reading for personal interest rather than work-related reasons).

Several respondents noted that the e-bulletin could be difficult to read. From this present issue, the text size and colour has been adjusted within the PDF version in ways which we hope make this a bit easier on the eye. However, please do get in touch with us if this does not prove to be the case! Where the web version is concerned, we would like to highlight that the website as a whole is equipped with a high contrast layout which also increases the default size of text on every page. To turn this on, navigate to the bottom of any page on the IFN website and select the 'High-contrast layout' option. You can also increase the text size within your browser.

Several respondents also said that the name 'e-bulletin' felt passé, given that digital communications are now more or less the default. We will be moving this Autumn to a new name for the e-bulletin.

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IFN AGM

IFN held its 2021 AGM, virtually on 5 July. The meeting welcomed into membership two new bodies: Durham University Chaplaincy Network and Woking People of Faith. It also elected the Revd Canon Hilary Barber as Co-Chair from the National Faith Community Representative Bodies category, welcomed five new Trustees and offered warm thanks to Trustees standing down.

After the main business of the AGM there was an opportunity, in IFN's 35th year, for member bodies to reflect on what is important about its work and what that might look like in the coming years. There was an opening presentation from IFN Trustee Professor Paul Weller on Freedom of Religion and Belief and the Inter Faith Network for the UK. This was followed by short discussions in breakout groups and then reflections from: Ms Charanjit AjitSingh, Hounslow Friends of Faith, International Interfaith Centre and World Congress of Faiths; Ms Linda Rudge, Chair of the National Association of SACREs; Mr Hassan Joudi, Deputy Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain and IFN Faith Communities Forum Moderator; and Dr Susan Siegel, Trustee of Interfaith Scotland and IFN Trustee.

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IFN Faith Communities Forum

IFN's Faith Communities Forum brings together national faith community bodies in IFN membership for discussion of issues of common concern.

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/about/faith-communities-forum> At its most recent meeting on 14 July the Agenda included: the impacts of recent Government changes; the Independent Faith Engagement Review, with a presentation from Government Faith Engagement Adviser Colin Bloom who led on this; Security of Places of Worship - the resource of NaCTSO, with a presentation from the Head of Business Engagement at the National Counter Terrorism Security Office; Inter faith engagement of faith communities; Issues of interest and concern; and a number of IFN matters.

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IFN Meeting with inter faith linking bodies of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

Each year IFN convenes a meeting for IFN with the inter faith linking bodies in the devolved nations – Interfaith Scotland, the Inter Faith Council for Wales/Cyngor Rhyngffydd Cymru and the Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum. The most recent meeting took place on 13 June. On the Agenda were: Updates on the work of each of the four bodies; Current Issues of particular interest and concern; Inter Faith Week and Scottish Interfaith Week; National inter faith linking bodies and comms; and IFN Matters.

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IFN link meeting for local inter faith groups in the South West

IFN holds meetings for local inter faith groups to share news and good practice and learn from each other's work to strengthen their own and benefit their local areas. Some are for groups from across the UK. Others are for groups within a particular region or a county. They provide an opportunity for sharing of news or programmes and projects being run by each group, including opportunities and challenges. Minutes of previous link meetings can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/about/local-inter-faith-linking>.

The most recent meeting was held on 27 June for local inter faith organisations in South West of England. On the Agenda were: Round table sharing of news, information and ideas (including plans for Inter faith Week); and Discussion of issues of common interest and concern, including particular issues that emerged in the earlier discussion and tackling and reporting hate crime.

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

Summer relaxation - inter faith style!

Summer is a time when members of local faith communities often come together to relax and enjoy picnics, sports, and other social events.

The Platinum Jubilee and Thank You Day

The lunch and picnic season got rolling with the Platinum Jubilee celebrations for HM The Queen in early June, including the Big Jubilee Lunch and with Thank You Day (which fell on the Sunday of the long Jubilee weekend).

The Platinum Jubilee provided a perfect opportunity for people of different faiths to come together and celebrate with food and fun activities. Several local inter faith bodies, such as Faiths Together in Croydon and Newcastle Council of Faiths, held special Jubilee picnics and teas. An inter faith street party was held at the Britwell Community Centre in Slough, with encouragement from Thank You Day.

<https://www.sloughexpress.co.uk/gallery/britwell/177605/residents-to-gather-for-interfaith-platinum-jubilee-street-party-in-slough.html>;

<https://insidecroydon.com/2022/05/11/faiths-together-jubilee-summer-picnic-park-hill-rec-jun-3/> and

<https://www.facebook.com/ncldiocese/photos/a.152695548175429/4802435253201412/>

National examples included two picnics held by Religions for Peace UK (RfP) Women of Faith Network, one in partnership with Interfaith Scotland and Interfaith Glasgow, the other with RfP UK Interfaith Youth Network. <https://www.facebook.com/UKWFN/posts/pfb>

This year, the Big Lunch, organised by the Eden Project, was the Big Jubilee Lunch. <https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/the-big-jubilee-lunch> A number of places of worship invited local communities to share a meal together. A shared meal at Westminster Abbey was the culmination of a special Jubilee Walk of Faith where members of different faiths visited different places of worship along the way.

<https://westminsterjusticeandpeace.org/2022/06/01/the-jubilee-walk-of-faith-3rd-june-morning/>

The Great Get Together

The Great Get Together, organised by the Jo Cox Foundation, at the end of June also provided a chance to come together and celebrate what unites them. In London, the Women's Interfaith Network hosted a summer boat trip on the Thames, inviting their members and friends to enjoy the sunshine and celebrate their friendships across faiths.

<https://wominet.org.uk/2022/07/13/news-win-summer-boat-trip-photo-gallery/>

Picnics

Local inter faith organisations like Reading Interfaith Forum; the Muslim Jewish Forum of Greater Manchester; Guildford and Godalming InterFaith Forum and Sheffield Interfaith have all recently hosted inter faith picnics, inviting members of the community to bring and share food and have informal conversations together.

<https://www.facebook.com/rifg.uk/posts/pfbid02>

<https://www.facebook.com/muslimjewish/posts/pfbid>

<https://www.facebook.com/GuildfordGodalmingInterFaithForum/posts/p>

Gardens

At this time of year, the inter faith and peace gardens that some inter faith groups have created afford relaxing spaces for many happenings. One example is a small Peace Garden in Luton created by Luton Council of Faiths with Edible High Town, Grassroots and Near Neighbours: “a small urban pocket park in the middle of High Town, Luton. It lies within the central High Town Conservation Area and next to a nationally listed Methodist Church, while tucked away from the nearby high street. There is a lawned area, large enough for an audience to sit in, and the garden is fenced and gated, with step-free access. A small mound provides a natural stage and amphitheatre feel. Large trees give dappled shade on a sunny day or protection from light drizzle.” It was the place, in July, for a special story telling event for children held by Edible High Town. <http://grassrootsluton.org.uk/news-events> And, “Inspired by the beautiful work Watford Interfaith Association have done building the gorgeous Peace Garden in Cassiobury Park, this summer”

<http://www.wifa.org.uk/the-watford-peace-garden/>, Watford's Dial Up hosted a poetry and spoken word open mic get together there this month.

<https://allevents.in/northwood/poetry-in-cassiobury-park-peace-garden/200022762098707>

Sports

In June, linked to the Great Get Together, young people at Kumon Y'all, a charity based in Yorkshire, hosted an inter faith game of Boccia, with different faith communities coming together to relax and have fun.

https://twitter.com/great_together/status/1550450307309703170

The Blackburn Diocese and Lancashire Council for Mosques hosted their bi-annual inter faith cricket match, which provided an opportunity to share food and fun and build lasting friendships across the different faiths.

<https://www.lancashiretelegraph.co.uk/news/20234229.blackburn-diocese-lancs-council-mosques-play-annual-cricket-match/> Havering Interfaith Forum will be holding its annual Cricket Match in August.

'Street Cricket' was launched by Cricket Wales in Cardiff and Newport in June and aims to inspire regular participation from 16-24 year olds in disadvantaged communities, while a weekly inter faith indoor cricket league has been established for Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims. <https://nwswire.com/glamorgan-cricket-is-breaking-records-on-and-off-the-pitch/>

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Visit My Mosque

Visit My Mosque (VMM) is a national programme facilitated by the Muslim Council of Britain. This year it takes place on Saturday 3 and Sunday 4 September and its theme will be 'Welcome In'. The VMM website notes that "Visit My Mosque Day is a national day where mosques across the UK time their open days to be on the same day of the year". The VMM website also notes that "Interfaith work is very important and many Muslim communities are very active in interfaith work" and refers to their visits to their local churches and synagogues and other places of worship, forming relationships with their congregations and maintaining those relationships throughout the year. For more information, visit <https://visitmysmosque.org/>.

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Prayers for the Planet and for COP27

Interfaith Scotland is partnering with the Interfaith Liaison Committee to the UNFCCC to encourage a Global Prayer Campaign - 'Prayers for the Planet and for COP27'. This is an initiative of Bishop Philip Huggins (Australia) and Ms Satwat Tanseem (New Zealand) and reflects the prayer vigil hosted in George Square, Glasgow by Interfaith Scotland and Interfaith Glasgow on the first day of COP26. If you or your community would like to host a one-off or regular 'Prayers for the Planet and for COP27'. To download the Prayer for the Planet pack, visit <https://interfaithscotland.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Prayers-for-the-Planet.pdf> or, for more information, email admin@interfaithscotland.org.

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The Great Get Together

The Great Get Together is an initiative inspired by the late Jo Cox designed to bring people together to celebrate what they have in common. Faith and inter faith groups were among

the many organisations taking part in the Great Get Together this year, with over 400 events taking place across the UK at the end of June. Examples of events that took place can be seen on the [Great Get Together Map](#).

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20th Anniversary of Building Bridges in Burnley

Building Bridges in Burnley, which was set up in the aftermath of the disturbances in 2001, has been celebrating its 20th anniversary. The celebrations have included a special service, afternoon tea, a 'peace in our time' event, a fun day and picnic, and a celebration at Daneshouse Football Club. <https://www.burnleyexpress.net/news/people/landmark-anniversary-celebrations-for-organisation-set-up-to-bring-communities-together-in-burnley-in-aftermath-of-2001-disturbances-3723818>

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Inter faith cricket in Blackburn

The Church of England Diocese of Blackburn and Lancashire Council of Mosques recently came together for their regular cricket match. Now held bi-annually, the cricket match has become a regular feature in the area and a positive way to build relationships between communities. <https://www.lancashiretelegraph.co.uk/news/20234229.blackburn-diocese-lancs-council-mosques-play-annual-cricket-match/>

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Rebuilding Watford's Peace Arch

Members of Watford InterFaith Association have come together to rebuild the Watford Peace Arch, which had been attacked by vandals. Watford Mayor Peter Taylor and MP Dean Russell attended the opening of the new arch.

<https://www.watfordobserver.co.uk/news/20228490.watfords-peace-arch-unveiled>

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Tower Hamlets Faith Health Action Partnership

Tower Hamlets Inter Faith Forum is working with FaithAction to run a project to look at how faith settings support the health needs of their communities. Funded by Tower Hamlets Public Health, working with East London Mosque and supported by Tower Hamlets Inter Faith Forum, FaithAction is supporting seven local faith settings and faith based organisations to deliver vital health focused projects to the local community.

<https://www.faihntowerhamlets.org/>

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Havering Interfaith Toy Collection

Havering Interfaith Forum has organised an Interfaith New Toy Collection for disadvantaged children in Havering during July. It is working in conjunction with Havering Social Services to collect toys for distribution to vulnerable, disadvantaged children in Havering. For more information, contact haveringinterfaithforum@gmail.com.

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Inter faith picnics

This time of year sees many inter faith initiatives holding special picnics. This month, for example, they have been held by the Muslim-Jewish Forum in Greater Manchester, Reading Inter Faith Group, Canterbury and District Inter Faith Action, and Guildford & Godalming Interfaith Forum.

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

Jewish-Christian Glossary

A new Jewish-Christian Glossary has been created by the Church of Scotland and the Jewish community. Ministers and rabbis worked together to define some of the key terms used in both religions to allow users to learn more about their own and each other's religion by discovering key similarities and differences between the faiths.

<https://churchofscotland.org.uk/news-and-events/news/2022/articles/new-glossary-important-step-for-jewish-christian-relations-in-scotland>

Background to the process and reflections from some of the participants can be found (with a sample from the Glossary) in the opening sections of the draft that was released for the Assembly.

https://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/94361/christian-jewish-glossary_abridged_v2.pdf

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NaCTSO Protect UK website and app

The National Counter Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO) has worked with security service partners to produce evidence-based guidance that is tested and assured and provides the single place of public messaging when it comes to counter-terrorism advice on how to prepare for the unlikely event of a terrorist attack. The guidance comes from a number of research sources.

The main website where the guidance can be found is called Protect UK.

<https://www.protectuk.police.uk/>

As well as guidance, the website also includes free e-learning packages, available to enable any individual to become more informed about the threat from terrorism and actions they can take to deal with those threats.

There is also a Protect UK app which can be accessed via Apple or Android. The app is designed for those who have more of a public facing interaction. It includes quick-time actions, for example guidance on who to contact if you find a suspicious item; and also how to find a local counter-terrorism security adviser.

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Welcome Directory for prison leavers

The Welcome Directory is a multi-faith organisation, working to help faith communities to become places where people who leave prison find acceptance. The Directory notes that

“Unfortunately, only approximately 20% of prison leavers with faith feel able to connect with new faith communities upon release, primarily due to fear of rejection. We maintain a directory of registered faith communities who are committed to welcoming and appropriately supporting prison leavers with faith. The directory is used by prison chaplains, probation workers and prison leavers themselves, to help them forge connections with welcoming communities upon release.” To find out more on how to be involved, visit <https://www.welcomedirectory.org.uk/> or get in touch via admin@welcomedirectory.org.uk.

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IFN ‘Digital surgery’ slots for local inter faith organisations

IFN is continuing to make available free half hour digital ‘surgery’ slots for local inter faith organisations who would like a chance to talk about how their group might strengthen their use of digital communications. Any local inter faith group interested in booking a slot can email IFN Project Director, Ashley Beck, at ashley.beck@interfaith.org.uk.

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Cross-Cultural Communication Training

Interfaith Scotland is holding an online training session on the morning of Thursday 11 August on ‘Interpreting Culture – Improving Cross-Cultural Communication’.

The training is intended for anyone whose work (or life) brings them into contact with people from a range of cultural backgrounds - whether service users, customers or colleagues. It may be particularly helpful to people who live in Scotland, but have another cultural background and to those who work with refugees and other migrants. There is a cost to attend. For more information, and to book, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/interpreting-culture-improving-cross-cultural-communication-tickets-290762286827?aff=ebdsoporgprofile>.

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NHS Cadets Project

NHS Cadets is a new scheme created by St John Ambulance in partnership with the NHS, providing opportunities to explore skills, knowledge and volunteering roles within healthcare. It is aimed at young people aged 14 to 18 who are from communities currently under-represented within the NHS and St John Ambulance. The programme offers health awareness sessions, courses to develop leadership and communication skills and an experience volunteering within the NHS. It is a free programme, consisting of weekly, 2-hour sessions on one evening. Cadets will be supported throughout their volunteering journey by our NHS Cadets Team. The initiative is seeking young people who might not have previously considered volunteering in healthcare. This includes refugees or asylum seekers and young people from ethnic minority communities.

New groups are opening in September 2022, with the aim that by 2023 10,000 young people will have enrolled. For more information, visit <https://www.sja.org.uk/get-involved/young-people/nhs-cadets/nhs-cadets-join/>.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS AND NOMINATIONS

Honours nominations

Each year a number of people receive Honours for services to inter faith work or community cohesion. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) is looking for nominations for people who work or volunteer in a number of areas which include 'Faith, integration and communities'. All nominations must be made on an official citation form and nominees should not be informed that they have been nominated. The form can be found at [DLUHC Birthday 2023 Honours nomination form](#). The deadline for nominations is 1 September. For more information, email honours@communities.gsi.gov.uk.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

The Inter Faith Network for the UK - Volunteers

The Inter Faith Network for the UK currently has an opportunity for online volunteers with good desk research and writing skills who would like to offer 4-8 hours a week to help on different aspects of IFN's work to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. To express an interest in volunteering, please complete the application form at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/volunteering>.

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St Philip's Centre – Volunteer faith practitioners

The St Philip's Centre in Leicester is seeking volunteer faith practitioners to build up its team of those who host, facilitate or teach schoolchildren. For further information, contact Riaz Ravat (Deputy Director) at riaz.ravat@stphilipscentre.co.uk. (All roles are subject to a DBS check at the appropriate level.)

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Places of Worship Protective Security Funding Scheme

The deadline for applications to the Places of Worship Protective Security Funding Scheme has been extended to 28 July. Places of worship and associated faith community centres in England and Wales can apply for funding for a range of security measures to help tackle the threat of hate crime. This could include the installation of measures such as, but not limited to, CCTV cameras, security alarm systems and perimeter fencing to improve security protection at their site and help worshippers feel more safe. (The Jewish community receives funding through a separate scheme.)

Further details of the funding scheme and how to apply are at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/places-of-worship-security-funding-scheme>.

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UK Government Find a Grant pilot

The UK Government's Find a Grant pilot is part of the Grants Applicant Programme (GAP), being delivered by the Government Grants Management Function in the Cabinet Office and aims to make [applying for and finding government grants simpler, faster and fairer](#).

<https://grantscommunity.blog.gov.uk/2022/04/12/the-first-gov-uk-release-of-the-find-a-grant-pilot-is-now-open-for-everyone/>

The pilot phase includes 23 grant schemes and can be found at <https://www.find-government-grants.service.gov.uk/>.

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Funding websites

My Funding Central is a database of grant funding and social investment sources. This service is available to organisations with an annual income below £1m and is free for organisations under £30k. <https://www.myfundingcentral.co.uk/> Similar websites for funding in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at Funding Scotland -

<https://funding.scot/>, Wales Council for Voluntary Action -

<http://www.wcva.cymru/funding> and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland -

<https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

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Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme

The Listed Places of Worship (LPW) Grant Scheme gives grants that cover the VAT incurred in making repairs to listed buildings in use as places of worship. The scheme covers repairs to the fabric of the building, along with associated professional fees, plus repairs to turret clocks, pews, bells and pipe organs. The Grant Scheme is run by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and administered by Topmark. The Government has recently confirmed that funding through the scheme will be available until March 2025.

<http://www.lpwscheme.org.uk/>

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FCC Community Action Fund

The FCC Communities Foundation is offering grants between £2,000 and £100,000 for projects which involve the provision, maintenance or improvement of public amenities including community spaces in places of worship, which are registered charities. Projects must be based within 10 miles of an eligible FCC Environment waste facility. The current round closes on 7 September. <https://fcccommunitiesfoundation.org.uk/funds/fcc-community-action-fund>

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS/MONTHS

Visit My Mosque will be taking place on Saturday 3 and Sunday 4 September. This year's theme will be 'Welcome In'. <https://visitmymosque.org/>

Great Big Green Week takes place from Saturday 24 September to Sunday 2 October. An opportunity for faith and inter faith groups to take part in events to tackle climate change and protect nature. <https://greatbiggreenweek.com/>

National Hate Crime Awareness Week takes place from Saturday 8 October to Saturday 15 October. <https://nationalhcaw.uk/>

Week of Prayer for World Peace takes place from Sunday 16 to Sunday 23 October. <https://weekofprayerforworldpeace.co.uk/>

One World Week will take place from Sunday 23 to Sunday 30 October. www.oneworldweek.org

Inter Faith Week, in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, will take place from Sunday 13 to Sunday 20 November. www.interfaithweek.org See [above](#).

Scottish Interfaith Week Scottish Interfaith Week is led by Interfaith Scotland. It will be held from Sunday 13 to Sunday 20 November. www.scottishinterfaithweek.org

Mitzvah Day will take place on Sunday 20 November. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Jewish community where people give their time to make a difference to the community around them. Many events and projects held for the day have an inter faith focus. www.mitzvahday.org.uk/

Sewa Day is a day of faith-based social action led by the Hindu community. It normally takes place on 4 dates across the year. Due to COVID there are currently no fixed days; rather, 'every day is Sewa day' and volunteers are helping people continually as they are able. <https://www.facebook.com/sewaday/>

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DIARY DATES

A few examples of forthcoming events are listed below. Those listed are all virtual, except where noted. Events are also listed on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/events>.

Crawley Interfaith Network is holding its next meeting on Thursday 28 July. The topic will be 'My faith's key beliefs and principles' and the speakers will be from the Brahma Kumari, Ismaili and Zoroastrian communities. It is being held at 7.30pm. For more information, email ashel@hotmail.co.uk or telephone 07833 252551.

Brighton and Hove Inter Faith Contact Group is holding its next monthly prayer hour on Thursday 28 July at 7pm. The theme will be 'Home'. Attendees will have the chance to share readings, reflections and silence. To attend, email chair@interfaithcontactgroup.com.

York Interfaith Group is holding its next meeting on Tuesday 2 August. This will be a 'bring and share' vegetarian supper from 7pm to 9pm at the Unitarian Chapel, St

Savioursgate. Participants are invited to bring a small amount of food to put on the sharing table if they are able to do so but this is not essential. York Interfaith Group will provide drinks for the supper. The evening will include some short talks about Unitarians, the chapel and their work in the past and thoughts about the future. For further information, email yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com.

Hastings and Rother Interfaith Forum is holding its next event on Sunday 7 August. This will be a 'Garden Full of Cultural Delights' and will be held from 1pm in St Leonard's Gardens, Maze Hill. The event will include food, live performances, children's activities and stalls. For more information, visit <https://hastingsandrotherinterfaith.com/>.

Havering Interfaith Forum will be holding its annual Cricket Match on Sunday 7 August at 2pm. For more information, contact the Forum's Secretary at haveringinterfaithforum@gmail.com.

On the first Sunday of every month churches and other faith communities are coming together to hold an inter faith prayer vigil outside the barrier to the Derwentside Immigration Removal Centre, to pray for the women who are detained there and to stand in solidarity with them. The next two vigils will take place at 3pm on Sunday 7 August and Sunday 4 September. For more information, visit <https://diocesehn.org.uk/whats-on/event/interfaith-prayer-vigil-9/>.

Glasgow Women of Faith and Community is hosting a Summer Garden Party on Friday 12 August. Food and drink will be provided, with participants invited to bring their own food too if they would like to. It is being held from 12pm at Holyrood Gardens, behind St Mary's Cathedral. For more information, contact womenoffaith@hotmail.co.uk.

Hounslow Friends of Faith is holding its annual Interfaith Walk of Peace and Friendship on Saturday 13 August. This will begin at 11.15am and will include visits to Christian, Hindu, Jain and Muslim places of worship. For further details, visit <https://m.facebook.com/Hounslow-Friends-of-Faith-724712751039387/>.

Faiths Together in Lambeth and **MFHA** are running a 2 day Adult Mental Health First Aid Training course on Monday 22 and Tuesday 23 August. It will be held from 9.15am to 5.30pm each day at the Caribbean Hindu Cultural Society, 16 Ostade Road, Brixton Hill, London SW2 2BB. To request a place, email ftil@hotmail.co.uk and for more information, contact Maureen on 07968 672 878.

The **London Interfaith Fun Run**, organised by the Faith & Belief Forum and Maccabi GB, will take place in Barnet on Monday 29 August. For more information, visit <https://faithbeliefforum.org/event/london-interfaith-fun-run-22> or email Jessica@faithbeliefforum.org.

The **St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace** is holding an event on Friday 9 September on 'Personal resilience in turbulent times'. Author, former politician and now Anglican minister Jonathan Aitken will be speaking about cultivating personal resilience for times of adversity and change. It will be held from 1.30pm to 2.30pm. For more information contact Clare Martin on clare@stethelburgas.org.

The **Religion Media Centre** is holding its annual lecture on Tuesday 20 September. The topic will be 'Considering the future of religion in Britain' and the speaker will be Professor Linda Woodhead, F.D. Maurice Chair in Moral and Social Theology, King's College London and co-founder of the Westminster Faith Debates. The lecture is being held at 6.45pm at St

Bride's Church, Fleet Street, London EC4Y 8AU. For more information, and to book, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/considering-the-future-of-religion-in-britain-tickets-389596683167>.

Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship is holding its next meeting on Tuesday 27 September. The theme will be 'Understanding Faith-Based Chaplaincy & Counselling'. The panel will include: Ansa Ahmed (Hope Bereavement Services), Jay Anderson (Pagan chaplain), Mark Clayton (Martin House Hospice), and Satwant Kaur Rait (Sikh NHS Chaplain). It is being held at 7.30pm at Mill Hill Chapel, City Square, Leeds. For more information, email chair@concord-leeds.org.uk.

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More information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: <https://www.interfaithcouncilwales.cymru/>

IFN also carries news and information at www.twitter.com/IFNetUK, www.facebook.com/IFNetUK and, about Inter Faith Week, at <https://twitter.com/IFweek> and www.facebook.com/IFWeek.

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You can sign up to IFN mailings at any time by using the form on IFN's website at: www.interfaith.org.uk/news/gdpr or let us know that you would like to unsubscribe by emailing ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK TO INCREASE INTER FAITH UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION

The Inter Faith Network for the UK works for inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. Please help us grow this vital work by making a donation at: <https://interfaith.org.uk/donate> (including Paypal option).

Donations can also be made by sending a cheque payable to 'The Inter Faith Network' to: The Inter Faith Network for the UK, Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufton Street, London, SW1P 3RB.

Donations are used with care to make a real difference.

Thank you!

MAKE A GIFT TO SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK IN REMEMBRANCE OF A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND OR THROUGH A LEGACY

If you would like to make a gift in memory of a loved one, please get in touch by emailing remember@interfaith.org.uk or call us on 0207 730 0410.

By leaving a gift in your will to the Inter Faith Network for the UK, you can leave a living inheritance to help deepen and strengthen inter faith understanding and cooperation in this country – for now and for the future. If you are thinking about making a will, the best thing to do is to get in touch with a professional will writer, such as a solicitor or advocate; they can help to ensure it is legally correct and that your wishes are met. If you have already made a will, you can still make an addition or amendment in the form of a codicil. If you would like to pledge a gift, please provide our name and address, along with our registered charity number 1068934.

Please get in touch with us if you have any queries.

You can call us on 0207 730 0410 or contact us at remember@interfaith.org.uk.

Remember a Charity has produced a helpful resource called 'Making a Will - your complete guide'. This can be found at <https://www.rememberacharity.org.uk/making-a-will/>.

Submissions for next issue

If you have items about inter faith projects or future events which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk **by 5 September** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

If your organisation distributes a programme, newsletter or e-bulletin, please add ifnet@interfaith.org.uk to your mailing list.

Disclaimer: Information in this e-bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

The Inter Faith Network for the UK, Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufton Street, London, SW1P 3RB
www.interfaith.org.uk www.facebook.com/IFNetUK www.twitter.com/IFNetUK

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IFN e-bulletin

September/October 2022

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

New Prime Minister and ministerial appointments

On 5 September it was announced that The Rt Hon Liz Truss had won the election to become Leader of the Conservative Party. She therefore became the new Prime Minister of the UK.

The Rt Hon Simon Clarke MP was subsequently appointed as Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/people/simon-clarke>

Baroness Scott of Bybrook has recently been appointed as Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at DLUHC. Her brief includes communities and

faith. <https://www.gov.uk/government/people/baroness-scott-of-bybrook>

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Cost of living pressures and faith communities

Warm Welcome initiative

The Good Faith Foundation has launched a Warm Welcome initiative. <https://www.warmwelcome.uk/> Its mission is to support organisations to open their doors and provide a warm welcome for those struggling to heat their homes this winter. Places of worship and faith centres are among those who can register to become a warm welcome space at <https://www.warmwelcome.uk/get-started/signup>.

Government support

Information on support available can be found on the UK Government website at <https://helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk/> and on the following sites for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland:

<https://costofliving.campaign.gov.scot/>

<https://gov.wales/get-help-cost-living>

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/benefits-and-financial-support/low-income>.

Letter to the Prime Minister

A number of faith and secular charity leaders wrote a letter in September calling on the Prime Minister to prioritise support for the poorest in their cost of living announcements.

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/about-us/news/latest-news/all-news/presidency-joins-call-for-more-support-for-people-on-the-lowest-incomes/>.

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Responding to the death of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

At 6.30pm on 8 September Buckingham Palace announced the death of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Many IFN member faith and inter faith bodies issued statements or tributes in response to Her Majesty's death. IFN highlighted these on its Twitter and Facebook pages and they have also been collated at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/the-death-of-her-majesty->

[queen-elizabeth-ii-responses-by-ifn-member-bodies](#). IFN's Co-Chairs and FCF Moderators issued the following message:

It is with profound sadness that we learn of the death of Her Majesty the Queen.

We express our deep gratitude for her life of service, inspired by her faith.

We convey our deepest sympathies to the Royal Family on their loss.

*The Co-Chairs and Faith Communities Forum Moderators of the Inter Faith Network
for the UK 8 September 2022*

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/a-message-following-the-death-of-her-majesty-queen-elizabeth-ii>.

Faith and inter faith groups were involved in the period of mourning following Her Majesty's death, from taking part in and organising memorial services to providing chaplaincy support to those in the queue to see the lying in state. There were memorial services in a number of cities such as Leeds and Portsmouth.

The official religious services for Her Majesty's death and burial at Westminster Abbey and St George's Windsor were held in line with her Christian faith and her role as Head of the Church of England. A number of leaders of other faiths were invited to attend the state funeral at Westminster Abbey.

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Proclamation of Accession of His Majesty King Charles III and meeting with faith leaders

The proclamation of the Accession of His Majesty King Charles III was a strongly multi faith occasion in many areas.

The King's Accession visits also brought opportunities for meeting with faith leaders, for example to the Service of Prayer and Reflection for the Life of The Queen at Llandaff Cathedral and linked tour of Cardiff.

In the week after his Accession to the throne King Charles III held a reception at Buckingham Palace for over 30 faith leaders from around the UK. In his speech to them, he said: "I have always thought of Britain as a 'community of communities'. That has led me to understand that the sovereign has an additional duty – less formally recognised but to be no less diligently discharged. It is the duty to protect the diversity of our country, including by protecting the space for faith itself and its practice through the religions, cultures, traditions and beliefs to which our hearts and minds direct us as individuals. This diversity is not just enshrined in the laws of our country, it is enjoined by my own faith."

<https://www.royal.uk/kings-remarks-faith-leaders>

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Inter faith meeting of Scottish faith leaders

Leaders from Scotland's Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh communities, and some others, travelled to Iona on a three day pilgrimage. Their arrival coincided with the day of the funeral of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and they

gathered that evening in Iona Abbey to pray for the Royal family and those who were grieving around the world.

The pilgrimage marked the 20th anniversary of The Scottish Religious Leaders' Forum and included reflection on inter faith relations in Scotland and ways to champion inclusivity and diversity across the nation. It also included a service of commitment.

Children at a local primary school had the chance to meet the religious leaders and ask them questions about their faiths.

<https://www.obantimes.co.uk/2022/09/23/scottish-religious-leaders-make-pilgrimage-to-iona-on-historic-day>
<https://bit.ly/3fUFBgz>

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Events in Leicester and Birmingham and good relations

During September there were a number of disturbances in Leicester, notably what the BBC reported as disorder which broke out on 17 September amid tensions involving parts of the Hindu and Muslim communities and some others.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leicestershire-63038691>
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leicestershire-63135170>

There was also a demonstration at the Durga Bhawan Temple in Smethwick.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-birmingham-62982948>

Leicester Council of Faiths participated in a unity event on 20 September organised by the Hindu and Muslim communities at the Jame Mosque in Leicester

<https://tinyurl.com/LCoF200922> and jointly organised a Vigil Service on 2 October

<https://tinyurl.com/LCoF021022>. The Birmingham Faith leaders' group issued a statement on 20 September as did faith leaders in Smethwick <https://tinyurl.com/BFL200922>

<https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/black-country/faith-leaders-unite-friendship-dust-25074652> Unity statements were also issued in some other areas such as the London

Borough of Redbridge. https://twitter.com/Jas_Athwal/status/1572969158484140032

There were also meetings in a number of other areas such as Preston.

<https://www.blogpreston.co.uk/2022/09/hindu-and-muslim-faith-representatives-meet-in-preston-in-peace-and-solidarity/>

There have been a number of reports that social media contributed to the disturbances. Both Leicestershire Police and West Midlands Police have asked the public to only share information which is known to be true and to be mindful of 'fake news'.

<https://twitter.com/leicspolice/status/1576513699157876736>
<https://www.expressandstar.com/news/crime/2022/09/23/police-issue-fake-news-warning-after-untrue-claims-made-in-wake-of-smethwick-disorder/>

The Mayor of Leicester, Sir Peter Soulsby, announced an independent inquiry into the disturbances. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/sep/22/leicester-mayor-announces-independent-inquiry-into-city-violence>

On 18 September the Co-Chairs and Moderators of the Faith Communities Forum of IFN issued the following statement:

We note with concern the disturbances in Leicester this weekend. Police have been responding to incidents and faith leaders, the Leicester Council of Faiths, the local authority and others have been working alongside them to tackle tensions, address misunderstandings and misinformation, and to restore and strengthen the good relations for which the City is more widely known.

Nationality has been a focus of some of the disturbances, as it was of disturbances earlier this month after an India Pakistan cricket match. However, media coverage reflects the fact that there are dimensions of the present and prior disturbances and tensions in Leicester which are - or have become - linked by some to Hindu and Muslim communities and that there are related concerns about safety on the streets of individuals of those faiths and of their places of worship. Although the situation primarily affects Leicester, there has been some evidence, for example in the pattern of arrests, of participation of individuals from other areas and concern about potentially wider impacts.

We affirm the vital efforts of all those working in Leicester and in other areas of the UK to tackle tensions where these arise, and to develop greater understanding and stronger inter faith and inter community relations and we call for the necessary resources to be made available to support this work.

*A statement by the Co-Chairs and Moderators of the Faith Communities Forum
of the Inter Faith Network for the UK 18 September 2022*

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COVID-19

Faith communities and vaccination

The number of COVID cases has risen sharply in recent weeks.

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-concerning-increases-in-hospitalisations-with-250-rise-in-the-south-west-12713712> Vaccination take up has been dropping and faith

communities' continue to encourage people to come forward for that. For example, at the Diwali in Trafalgar Square event COVID-19 booster doses were available.

https://twitter.com/hindu_counciluk/status/1577546478200954880

COVID-19 commemoration

The UK Commission on Covid Commemoration was established in the summer to secure a broad consensus from across the whole of the United Kingdom on how to “commemorate the COVID-19 pandemic and mark this distinctive period in our history at a national and community level”. The Commission held its second meeting in September and is expected to report to the Prime Minister by the end of March

2023. <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-commission-on-covid-commemoration>

Stakeholder meetings are taking place across the UK during October. The Commission is also keen for organisations and members of the public to complete the local Covid Commemoration survey which can be found at

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/UKCovidCommemorationActivity/>.

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Commission on Bereavement report

The UK Commission on Bereavement recently published its report, *'Bereavement is everyone's business'*. This follows consultation and research with a wide range of stakeholders, including faith groups. The report includes 8 'principles for change' and a number of detailed recommendations. There are references to faith throughout the report, including in relation to the support offered by faith groups and the need for sensitivity in relation to religious and cultural practices. The main summary and full report can be downloaded at <https://bereavementcommission.org.uk/ukcb-findings/>.

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Hate crime

Figures announced this month for England and Wales show that in the year ending March 2022, there were 155,841 hate crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales, a 26% increase compared with the previous year. This was the biggest percentage increase in hate crimes since the year ending March 2017, when there was a 29% rise.

Religious hate crimes increased by 37% (to 8,730 offences), up from 6,383 in the previous year; this was the highest number of religious hate crimes recorded since the time series began in year ending March 2012. This increase follows two years where the number of these offences had fallen.

Of the religious hate crimes recorded, information on the targeted religion was provided in 8,307 of the offences (95%). In some cases, more than one perceived religion had been tagged on one offence (for example, a piece of graffiti may have targeted more than one religion). 42% of the religious hate crime offences (3,459 offences) were targeted against Muslims. Jewish people were targeted in 23% of religious hate crimes (1,919 offences). 8% of offences were targeted against Christians (701 offences), 4% against Sikhs (301); and 2% against Hindus (161).

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2021-to-2022/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2021-to-2022>

The Scottish Government has committed to developing a new Hate Crime Strategy, for publication later in 2022 which will set out its key priorities for tackling hatred and prejudice in Scotland and support implementation of the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021. It has convened the Ministerial-led Hate Crime Strategic Partnership Group (SPG), chaired by the Minister for Equalities and Older people, Christina McKelvie MSP. Interfaith Scotland is one of a number of networks represented on the SPG. In September, it organised an event in partnership with CEMVO Scotland and MEND to gather information on the lived experiences of hate crime among Muslims in Scotland.

<https://www.gov.scot/groups/the-hate-crime-strategic-partnership-group/>

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GCSE and A Level Religious Studies

The number of students in England and Wales taking a GCSE course in Religious Studies has risen to 253,225, an increase of 0.6 per cent from last year. The increase was largely driven by a rise in students taking the short course in England, up 16.5% from 15,672 to

18,257. In Wales, amid an overall 5% drop in pupils taking GCSEs, the number of entries to RS courses fell by 11%.

The Religious Education Council of England and Wales and the National Association of Teachers of RE are calling for more government money to bolster the subject in schools. <https://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/?news=take-action-on-re-say-leading-politicians-as-more-students-take-the-subject-at-gcse>

The number of students taking an A level in Religious Studies in England and Wales has fallen by 447, a 2.7% decrease on last year. The decline follows a 20 year period when Religious Studies had one of the fastest growth rates for A levels in the humanities. The National Association of Teachers of RE and the Religious Education Council of England and Wales have warned that growth is under threat from a five year funding gap. <https://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/?news=a-level-religious-studies-results-prompt-call-for-government-support>

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Inter Faith Week 13-20 November

Inter Faith Week takes place this year from Sunday 13 to Sunday 20 November. It is led by the Inter Faith Network for the UK but has its own dedicated website www.interfaithweek.org and social media accounts. You can follow it at: <https://www.facebook.com/ifweek/>, <https://twitter.com/IFWeek>, <https://uk.linkedin.com/showcase/ifweek> and [https://www.instagram.com/IFWeek/!](https://www.instagram.com/IFWeek/)

The story of Inter Faith Week

The Inter Faith Network for the UK launched Inter Faith Week in 2009, in partnership for the first year with Government. The Week's aims were crafted with the assistance of its Faith Communities Forum. They are:

- Strengthen good inter faith relations at all levels
- Increase awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, in particular celebrating and building on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society
- Increase understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs

The week took its inspiration from Scottish Interfaith Week, about which you can find out more at <https://scottishinterfaithweek.org/>.

Why a special Week?

Special 'days' and 'weeks' have a particular usefulness in highlighting issues and providing a platform for people to make their year-round work better known and to get more people involved. The Week is a fantastic platform to share, learn and build relationships with neighbours, colleagues and service users of different backgrounds, and to come together in service for the common good.

Inter Faith Week takes place in England, Northern Ireland and Wales in November. In recent years, it has been timed to begin on Remembrance Sunday to support and encourage remembering together of the service of men and women of many different backgrounds from the UK and from the countries that became the Commonwealth and to reflect on peace. There are some special resources about that at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/remembrance>.

A growing impact

Last year saw a growth in overall Week participation of 20% and big rises in participation by some types of bodies, for example schools went up by 143% since 2019 and the number of hospitals and hospices by 225%. A treasure trove of accounts of how different types of organisations used the Week in 2021 can be found in IFN's special report: *Inter Faith Week 2021: A Widening Impact*. It has sections on faith communities; local and national inter faith organisations; schools; universities and FE colleges; youth organisations; local authorities; police, fire and ambulance services; hospitals and hospices; workplaces; museums, libraries and other cultural institutions; and sports organisations. It also picks up contributions from a range of other types of bodies such as equality bodies and institutions such as the House of Commons (a special exhibition arranged by the Speaker).

Taking part in this year's Week

There is still plenty of time to arrange an activity. You can find ideas for activities at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/events/about>. There is a 'Quick Plan Activities' section with activities for those who want to mark Inter Faith Week but don't have a lot of time to prepare, for example: coming together with friends or colleagues of other faiths to walk together, watch a film together, or bake a special Inter Faith Week cake!

<https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/quick-plan-activities> You might also be interested by the Inter Faith Buddies scheme where two people of different faiths or of a particular faith and of a non-religious belief come together for sharing and learning, on a one-to-one basis across a limited period of time.

<https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/inter-faith-week-buddies>

Registering an activity

If you arrange an activity, please do take a few minutes to register it at www.interfaithweek.org/submit and put yourself on the map! You can list it even if it is not a public event. If you submit your activity on the website, you will also be eligible to receive a free registration pack which contains a poster, flyers, a social media message card, and stickers.

You can also download the Week logo in various formats from <https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/branding>.

Message cards and support messages

You can also download a message card at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/branded-ifw-message-boards> and share your own message on social media as the Week approaches.

Scottish Interfaith Week

Scottish Interfaith Week <https://scottishinterfaithweek.org/> is led by Interfaith Scotland and will also take place from Sunday 13 to Sunday 20 November. Its theme this year is 'Storytelling', to coincide with Scotland's Year of Stories. Follow it on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

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INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK NEWS

Maulana M Shahid Raza OBE

IFN was very sorry to hear of the death of Maulana M Shahid Raza OBE in early September: wise and warm-hearted, a key figure in the development of the Inter Faith Network's work - as an Honorary Officer and as a Trustee of many years - and of good inter faith relations more generally and a key figure in the British Muslim community. His funeral took place in Leicester on 7 September. <https://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/news/leicester-news/tributes-internationally-respected-imam-shahid-7550127>

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New name for IFN's e-bulletin

It was noted in the last issue of the e-bulletin, that we would be moving to a new name for the e-bulletin this Autumn. The next issue will come out under the new name.

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IFN Meeting with National and Regional Inter Faith Organisations and Educational and Academic Bodies

A joint meeting for IFN member National and Regional Inter Faith Organisations and Educational and Academic Bodies took place in September. Items on the Agenda included: IFN update / matters, with an update by IFN Project Director, Ashley Beck; Whistle-stop exchange of information on projects, key news, current concerns and interests; Difficult dialogues, with brief introductory reflections from Georgina Bye, Co-Director of the Council of Christians and Jews and Indy Nottage, Executive Officer of the RE Council of England and Wales, followed by discussion of approaches to handling of potentially difficult or sensitive dialogues and Inter Faith Week.

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Working in Partnership for the Common Good: Report on IFN's 2022 National Meeting

IFN has published 'Working in Partnership for the Common Good: Report on IFN's 2022 National Meeting exploring partnership working by faith groups and other types of bodies, rooted in shared values'. This can be found at

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/working-in-partnership-for-the-common-good-report-on-ifns-2022-national-meeting>.

The focus of the Meeting was faith groups and other types of bodies working together for the common good drawing on values held in common such as service and justice. It was a chance to hear about and engage with a wide range of examples from different types of organisations working with faith organisations and inter faith bodies for the common good. It also offered an opportunity to reflect on principles that can underpin effective partnership working as well as some of the challenges that can be experienced when developing partnerships. Videos of plenary contributors can also be seen on IFN's website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/ifn-national-meeting-2022-working-in-partnership-for-the-common-good>.

The report was published in early September to mark #FaithInPartnership Week.

<https://www.faithaction.net/working-with-you/faith-in-partnership/>

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

Barnet SACRE Interfaith Choir

Barnet Standing Advisory Council on RE (SACRE) has set up an Interfaith Children's Choir. Its first concert was held at Hendon Town Hall in the summer.

The aims of the Choir are to:

- show members of the choir that they can be proud of and loyal to their own cherished traditions while being respectful to adherents of other faiths who have their own paths to follow
- show members of the choir that they can work together in a spirit of cooperation to perform music that can be enjoyed by everyone
- demonstrate to other schools that religiously minded children are normal, talented youngsters who enjoy life and their religious lifestyles
- perform at civic events and to other audiences as caring, community minded individuals who wish to contribute to wider society

There are currently 60 children involved from Christian, Hindu and Jewish schools and they would be pleased to hear from local Muslim and Sikh pupils, as well as pupils from other faiths, who would like to be involved. For more information, email barnet.sacre.i.c@gmail.com.

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Week of Prayer for World Peace

The Week of Prayer for World Peace began in 1974 as an inter faith activity when there were few such activities nationally. Each October a week is identified. This year the dates are from 16 to 23 October. The original 'Call to Pray for World Peace' was signed by a number of faith leaders. The guiding principle of the Week is 'The peace of the world must be prayed for by the faiths of the world'. One of the signatories of the original letter was George Macleod, founder of the Iona Community, who said, "Where people are praying for peace the cause of peace is strengthened by their very act of prayer, for they are themselves becoming immersed in the spirit of peace".

Each year a prayer resource is produced to reflect the theme of prayers for the week. This year the theme is 'Continuing Wars and their consequences'. For further information and to receive copies of the resources, email wpwp2021@yahoo.com.

For further information about the Week, visit www.weekofprayerforworldpeace.co.uk.

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Queen's Green Canopy initiative extended

Following the death of Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, The Queen's Green Canopy initiative (QGC) will be extended to the end of March 2023 to give people the opportunity to plant trees in memoriam to honour Her Majesty. His Majesty King Charles III is patron of QGC, which is a Commonwealth-wide initiative created to mark the Platinum Jubilee. www.queensgreencanopy.org.

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Multi faith blessing of new hospital premises

The multifaith nature of spiritual provision at hospitals was reflected in a special coming together by faith leaders from across the Liverpool city region to bless the new Royal Liverpool University Hospital, as staff began the move into the building before welcoming patients. Representatives from the Church of England, Greek Orthodox, Islamic, Jewish, Roman Catholic and Sikh communities read prayers of blessing at the service, which was led by the hospital's chaplaincy.

<https://www.liverpoolworld.uk/news/faith-leaders-bless-new-royal-liverpool-hospital-as-move-in-starts-3861094>

Hospitals around the UK continue to deepen and extend their links with local faith communities, as do hospices. This was very evident in the 2021 Inter Faith Week which saw a growth in participation by these of 79% for that, as well as for boosting religious literacy internally.

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

Resources

Keeping the Faith report

In September the APPG on Faith and Society launched a new report, '*Keeping the Faith 2.0: Embedding a new normal for partnership working in postpandemic Britain*'. The research—led by Professor Chris Baker of Goldsmiths, University of London—covered the extent to which COVID-19 has changed the nature of partnership working between faith groups and local authorities, highlighting hallmarks of good partnership working. The report can be downloaded at <https://www.faithandsociety.org>.

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FaithAction publications

During #FaithInPartnership Week in September, FaithAction published two reports. These can both be downloaded at <https://www.faithaction.net/working-with-you/faith-in-partnership/>.

The Faith Covenant, developed by the APPG for Faith and Society, is designed to facilitate partnership and understanding between faith communities and local authorities. It is a set of principles for joint working to which both parties can mutually agree. '*The Faith Covenant: What, Why, How*' is a primer for anyone (whether in a local authority, or a faith organisation) interested in the Faith Covenant. It contains case studies, top tips, core principles and first steps on the journey to signing.

In 2021 FaithAction was commissioned by NHS England to research and report on the role played by faith-based organisations during the pandemic, and how this might be built upon as Integrated Care Systems develop strategies for engagement. '*First In, Last Out*'

looks specifically at how faith groups supported and partnered with NHS services during the pandemic, and what this means for the future of health and care partnerships.

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Anthology of WCF Younghusband Lectures

The World Congress of Faiths has published an anthology of WCF Journal pieces and Younghusband Lectures dating from most decades since WCF's foundation in 1936: '*Unutterable Joy: an anthology of writings from the World Congress of Faiths towards interreligious dialogue and understanding*'. For further details, including how to purchase a copy, contact admin@worldfaiths.org.

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Modest dress at work as lived religion

Following the completion last year of the project on 'Modest Fashion in UK Women's Working Life', Kristin Aune, Reina Lewis and Lina Molokotos-Liederman have now published an article on 'Modest dress at work as lived religion: women's dress in religious work contexts in Saudi Arabia and the UK', in *Sociology of Religion*.

This article explores how women in religious workplaces respond to organisational norms of, and requirements for, modest dress and behaviour, both implicit and explicit. It compares two case studies: women working for faith-based organizations in the UK, and women working for secular organisations who travel for work to Saudi Arabia. The article examines how women adapt to forms of modest dress, how they navigate dress regulation, and how they negotiate habitus and authenticity. Further information is available at <https://academic.oup.com/socrel/advance-article-abstract/doi/10.1093/socrel/srac020/6644947>.

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Promoting the Exploration of Religion and Worldviews in Schools

Resources created through the project on 'Promoting the Exploration of Religion and Worldviews in Schools' have now been launched. The project aims "to educate people outside the classroom about the importance of teaching Religion and Worldviews inside the classroom". It was taken forward by the Faith & Belief Forum, Inform and The Open University, with funding from Culham St Gabriel's.

Resource packs for Parents, Community members and Teachers and subject leads can be downloaded from the FBF website at <https://faithbeliefforum.org/resources/religion-and-worldviews-in-schools/>.

An OpenLearn course on 'An education in Religion and Worldviews' is also now available. This explores "how the teaching and scholarly community is working to ensure this curriculum remains relevant for the twenty-first century. It is aimed at parents, faith and community group members and all others who might be interested in the purpose and content of religious education in schools". Further information is at <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/history-the-arts/an-education-religion-and-worldviews>.

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Big Ideas for RE website

A new web-based curriculum for Religious Education, *Big Ideas for RE*, has been launched. It is designed to meet the needs of all young people, including the growing number of those professing 'no-religion'. It provides a complete guide for those developing the RE curriculum for schools, with exemplar units of learning for pupils at different ages: 5-7, 7-11, 11-14 and 14-18, illustrating how the *Big Ideas* approach could work in practice. 18 units are already published, with others nearing completion. The website also includes training for teachers, agreed syllabus conferences and others on writing units of learning based on *Big Ideas*. Further information is available at <https://bigideasforre.org>.

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NWG Network

The NWG Network is a charitable organisation formed as a UK network of practitioners who disseminate its information through their services, to professionals working on the issue of child exploitation (CE) and trafficking within the UK. <https://nwgnetwork.org/> The NWG team is made up of specialists who proactively engage with Local Safeguarding Children's Boards (LSCB's) and their partner agencies, media, researchers and policy writers on child sexual exploitation, training, prevention work, disruption, prosecution and therapeutic care for victims and survivors. They do this by sharing effective practice, developing according to need, and actively seeking effective practice from other countries tackling exploitation and trafficking within the UK.

The NWG Network notes that faith-based groups play a vital role in the lives of many children, young people, and adults. A Faith Lead role has been established at NWG to raise awareness and knowledge among faith leaders and to bring them together to help to prevent child sexual abuse and exploitation within all faith communities. NWG is keen to connect with those faith-based organisations on what currently they are doing in their area and to share good practice to support one another. The Faith Lead, Pav Kaur, can be contacted at pav@nwgnetwork.org.

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Study/Training

IFN 'Digital surgery' slots for local inter faith organisations

IFN is continuing to make available free half hour digital 'surgery' slots for local inter faith organisations who would like a chance to talk about how their group might strengthen their use of digital communications. Any local inter faith group interested in booking a slot can email IFN Project Director, Ashley Beck, at ashley.beck@interfaith.org.uk.

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SAFE programme security events

The SAFE programme (Security Advice for Everyone) shares the Community Security Trust's (CST's) security knowledge with groups outside the Jewish community that are vulnerable to violence, extremism or hate crime. As well as continuing its series of webinars, it has now returned to holding some in-person events on an 'Introduction to

Community Security'. To arrange a security talk for your local faith communities, contact nicky@safe.cst.org.uk.

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St Ethelburga's training and workshops

The St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace in London hosts and offers events, training and workshops based on the themes of peace, community inclusion, reconciliation and ecological awareness and community action. Forthcoming events include 'Sense making in a post truth world' on 10 October. For more information, including cost and timings, visit <https://stethelburgas.org/events/>.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS AND NOMINATIONS

Calls for information

Anthology of multiple identity reflections

Dr Daniella Shaw of Birkbeck, University of London, is compiling "an anthology for publication of personal stories/reflections from people about the intersections of queerness/LGBT+ identity and faith/belief/community identity. It will be individual perspectives from the minds of ordinary people in the UK, who live their lives as queer/LGBT+ people who identify with a faith/belief". Dr Shaw notes that "A diversity of voices at the intersections of multiple identities is vital to this collection". For further information, and to express an interest in contributing, email hello@daniellashaw.co.uk.

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Recording faith stories from the pandemic

Spurgeon's College has launched the #FaithInCommunity campaign to reflect on and record the contributions of the faith community during the COVID-19 crisis. The campaign seeks to collate these contributions which will be submitted to the British Library as an official record – creating a piece of history for future generations. The campaign forms an exciting opportunity for the faith community to come together to document the valuable contributions made during the crisis for future generations to remember and reflect on. For more information, visit <https://faithincommunity.org.uk/>.

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Competitions

York Interfaith Group logo design competition

York Interfaith Group, in partnership with the City of York SACRE, is launching a competition to design a logo for York Interfaith Group. The Group currently uses a stock image of a tree of faiths symbolising many faiths as the fruit in its branches. It is keen to have a logo that is unique to York and reflects what inter faith is in the city of York. Entries are welcomed from pupils of all abilities and any school type but only 10 entries per school can be accepted. There will be winners for each Key Stage and also an overall winner. The

judging will take place just before Inter Faith Week begins in November and the winner will be announced at a service at the close of Inter Faith Week on Sunday 20 November. The deadline for entries is 4 November. For more information on how to enter, email sacre@york.gov.uk.

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Woolf Institute William Kessler Essay competition

The Woolf Institute is inviting UK undergraduate and graduate students to submit an essay for this year's William Kessler Essay competition, addressing one of the following topics:

- Interfaith Encounters on Campus and in Academia
- Secular Societies, Religious Followers; Opportunities? Challenges?
- Modern Identities – the Intersection between Race, Faith and Gender
- Lessons from the Past: How Interfaith Work can Benefit from Historical Research

The winner will receive a cash prize and the top three entries will be published on the Woolf Institute website. The deadline for submissions is 4 November. For more information, visit <https://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/whats-on/events/william-kessler-essay-prize-competition-2022>.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

Inter Faith Network for the UK – Administrative Officer

IFN has a vacancy for a part time Administrative Officer from 31 October 2022 to 31 March 2023. (The role may be extended, subject to funding.) The role is for 17.5 hours per week and is envisaged as a hybrid working role, partly working remotely and partly working from the IFN office in Westminster, London.

IFN is seeking to appoint a suitably experienced individual with a strong commitment to IFN's aims, who likes working in a small and highly dedicated team and wants to help contribute to building good inter faith relations in the UK. The full role description and application form can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/jobs>. The deadline for applications is 5pm on 13 October. Any enquiries can be sent to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

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Inter Faith Network for the UK – two forthcoming roles

IFN will shortly be advertising for a Senior Project Officer (full time) and a Grants Officer (part time). Information will be available at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/jobs>.

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Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby – Faith Community Development Workers

The Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby is seeking to recruit Faith Community Development Workers. These are full time roles. The successful candidates will play a key part in developing partnerships and engagement activity, building sustainable relationships with faith communities across Derby. They will support the development of inclusive faith networks and infrastructure, using a community development approach. The deadline for applications is 16 October. For further information, visit <https://multifaithcentre.org/news/2022/job-vacancy-faith-community-development-worker>.

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Redbridge Faith Forum – Project Development Officer

Redbridge Faith Forum is seeking to recruit a Project Development Officer. The role is part time (14 hours per week). Further information can be found at <https://redbridgefaithforum.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Revised-Job-description-Sept-2022-.pdf>.

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FaithAction – Project and Policy Assistant

FaithAction is seeking to recruit a Project and Policy Assistant. The successful candidate will be offering practical support to the administrative team in the day-to-day running of the organisation, assisting with local and national events, whilst also connecting the practical delivery with research and policy influencing. This is a part time role (22.5 hours per week). The closing date is 14 October. Further information can be found at <https://www.faithaction.net/vacancies/>.

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The Inter Faith Network for the UK - Volunteers

The Inter Faith Network for the UK currently has an opportunity for online volunteers with good desk research and writing skills who would like to offer 4-8 hours a week to help on different aspects of IFN's work to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. To express an interest in volunteering, please complete the application form at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/volunteering>.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

UK Government Find a Grant pilot

The UK Government's Find a Grant pilot is part of the Grants Applicant Programme (GAP), being delivered by the Government Grants Management Function in the Cabinet Office and aims to make applying for and finding government grants simpler, faster and fairer. <https://grantscommunity.blog.gov.uk/2022/04/12/the-first-gov-uk-release-of-the-find-a-grant-pilot-is-now-open-for-everyone/>

The pilot phase includes 23 grant schemes and can be found at <https://www.find-government-grants.service.gov.uk/>.

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Empowering local communities

The ASDA Foundation's 'Empowering local communities' grant scheme provides £500-£1,500 to community organisations which are delivering "projects and activities which are important to a community which benefit local people". The deadline for applications is 11 November. <https://www.asdafoundation.org/how-to-apply>

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Funding websites

My Funding Central is a database of grant funding and social investment sources. This service is available to organisations with an annual income below £1m and is free for organisations under £30k. <https://www.myfundingcentral.co.uk/> Similar websites for funding in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at Funding Scotland - <https://funding.scot/>, Wales Council for Voluntary Action - <http://www.wcva.cymru./funding> and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland - <https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

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Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme

The Listed Places of Worship (LPW) Grant Scheme gives grants that cover the VAT incurred in making repairs to listed buildings in use as places of worship. The scheme covers repairs to the fabric of the building, along with associated professional fees. The Government has confirmed that funding through the scheme will be available until March 2025. The Grant Scheme is run by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and its administration has, since July, been run by East Midland Business (EMB). It is understood that, in response to user feedback, by the end of the year improved websites will be in place with the ability to submit digital application forms and track application progress, while also continuing to provide postal options as now. <http://www.lpwscheme.org.uk/>

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FCC Community Action Fund

The FCC Communities Foundation is offering grants between £2,000 and £100,000 for projects which involve the provision, maintenance or improvement of public amenities including community spaces in places of worship, which are registered charities. Projects must be based within 10 miles of an eligible FCC Environment waste facility. The current round closes on 7 December. <https://fcccommunitiesfoundation.org.uk/funds/fcc-community-action-fund>

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS/MONTHS

Black History Month in the UK is October. <https://www.blackhistorymonth.org.uk/>

National Hate Crime Awareness Week takes place from Saturday 8 October to Saturday 15 October. <https://nationalhcaw.uk/>

Sewa Day will take place on 16 October. Activities will also happen through the week running up to it. The aim of Sewa Day is to provide people a chance give back to the local community through volunteering and make a difference. <https://bit.ly/3eoVw6d>

Week of Prayer for World Peace takes place from Sunday 16 to Sunday 23 October. <https://weekofprayerforworldpeace.co.uk/>

One World Week will take place from Sunday 23 to Sunday 30 October. www.oneworldweek.org

Islamophobia Awareness Week will take place from 1 to 30 November.

Inter Faith Week, in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, will take place from Sunday 13 to Sunday 20 November. www.interfaithweek.org See [above](#).

Scottish Interfaith Week Scottish Interfaith Week is led by Interfaith Scotland. It will be held from Sunday 13 to Sunday 20 November. www.scottishinterfaithweek.org

Mitzvah Day will take place on Sunday 20 November. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Jewish community where people give their time to make a difference to the community around them. Many events and projects held for the day have an inter faith focus. www.mitzvahday.org.uk/

Holocaust Memorial Day takes place on 27 January. Its theme in 2023 is ‘Ordinary People’. Holocaust Memorial Day is the day for everyone to remember the millions of people murdered in the Holocaust, under Nazi Persecution, and in the genocides which followed in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur. It honours the survivors of these regimes and challenges everyone to use the lessons of their experience to inform their lives today. <https://www.hmd.org.uk/>

World Interfaith Harmony Week takes place from 1 to 7 February. It is a UN recognised Week which was proposed to the UN General Assembly by HM King Abdullah of Jordan. The first UN World Interfaith Harmony Week took place in February 2011. <https://worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com/>

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DIARY DATES

A few examples of forthcoming events are listed below. Those listed are all virtual, except where noted. Events are also listed on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/events>.

INTER FAITH WEEK AND SCOTTISH INTERFAITH WEEK - 13 TO 20 NOVEMBER

The listings below do not include events being held for Inter Faith Week or Scottish Interfaith Week. Those can be seen at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/events/about> and <https://scottishinterfaithweek.org/>.

If you are holding an activity for either Week, please submit details to <https://www.interfaithweek.org/events/submit> or <https://scottishinterfaithweek.org/submit-an-event>.

The **Community Security Trust**, the **Mayor of London's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC)** and **Faiths Forum for London** are holding a webinar at 8pm on Thursday 13 October on 'Women's Safety'. For more information, and to register, visit <https://tinyurl.com/3b7ebpsm>.

Interfaith Scotland is holding its Annual Interfaith Lecture and AGM at 6.30pm on Thursday 13 October. The Lecture will be delivered by Michael Haines whose brother David was murdered by ISIS. Michael founded Global Acts of Unity and will speak about how his campaign helps something positive come out of a senseless and barbaric act. This will be followed by the AGM. The event is being held at the Interfaith Scotland Dialogue Centre, Springburn, Glasgow. For more information, email admin@interfaithscotland.org.

The Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby is holding two events on Thursday 13 October. Its AGM is being held from 6.30pm to 7.30pm at the Multi Faith Centre, Kedleston Road, Derby DE22 1GB. To register, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/multi-faith-centre-annual-general-meeting-tickets-415864932207>. This will be followed the same evening by an event from 7.30pm to 10pm to mark Black History Month entitled 'Assessing the legacy of James H. Cone'. To register, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/black-history-month-2022-assessing-the-legacy-of-james-h-cone-tickets-427858565487>.

Windsor and Maidenhead Community Forum's women's group is holding its next meeting on Monday 17 October. The guest speaker will be Anita Sawal of the Thames Valley Hospice. It is being held from 7.30pm to 9pm at Maidenhead Synagogue, Grenfell Lodge, Ray Park Road, Maidenhead SL6 8QX. For more information, email sally514@btinternet.com.

Reading Women's Interfaith Discussion Group is holding its next meeting on Monday 17 October. This is being held from 7.30pm to 9pm. For more information, contact revd.judith@readingminster.org.uk.

Torbay Faith and Belief Forum is hosting a talk on Friday 21 October on 'Humanism, Belief and Non-Belief in Torbay' by Humanist speaker Dr Kevin Dixon. This is being held from 7.30pm to 9pm at Paignton SNU Spiritualist Centre, Manor Corner, Manor Road, Preston, Paignton, Devon TQ3 2JB. For further information, visit https://devonfaiths.org.uk/event/humanism-belief-and-non-belief-in-torbay/?instance_id=222.

Faith and Belief Dundee and Tayside is organising an interfaith pilgrimage to places of worship in Dundee on Saturday 22 October. This will run from 12pm to 4pm. For more information, email cvarjavandi@gmail.com.

Building Bridges Pendle is hosting on Sunday 22 October, as part of Black History Month, a talk and conversation on 'Multiculturalism and Community Cohesion in East Lancashire'

Author Mike Makin-Waite will be talking about his book 'On Burnley Road.' This is being held at 1.30pm at Market Square, Nelson, BB9 7PU For further details, email Nelson.library@lancashire.gov.uk or visit https://events.lancashire.gov.uk/search/event_details.asp?eventid=12880&q&area=Pendle&venue=Nelson&daterange.

Mothers Against Violence UK is holding its next multicultural event on Sunday 23 October to bring together communities to fight antisemitism and racial hatred. A number of speakers from different religions will talk about their cultures and ways of life. There will be a free buffet, music, dancing and a children's group performing. It is being held at 3.30pm at Hulme Hall, 2 Jarvis Road, Hulme M15 5FS. For more information, visit <https://www.mavuk.org/event-details/multicultural-event>.

Central Scotland Interfaith will be holding its next 'Soul Space' on Sunday 23 October. The theme will be 'Shape'. Attendees can bring poems, prose, short videos, pictures etc that have inspired them. It begins at 6.30pm. For more information, email csi@irenic.org.uk.

Nisa-Nashim Jewish Muslim Women's Network, Finchley Progressive Synagogue and the Persian Advice Bureau, in partnership with **Barnet Refugee Welcome Board and Finchley Reform Synagogue**, are holding their next Ladies Coffee and Dance Morning on Thursday 27 October. This will be held from 10.30am to 12.30pm. For more information, contact Anna at info@nisanashim.com.

Northampton Inter-Faith Forum is holding its AGM on Thursday 27 October. It is being held at 7pm at the Northampton Hebrew Congregation, 95-97 Overstone Road, Northampton NN1 3JW. There will be a tour of the Synagogue before the AGM, conducted by the President of the Jewish community, Mr Michael Necus, which will be from 6:30pm to 7.00pm. After the AGM, refreshments will be served at approximately 7.45pm to 8pm. Booking by 17 October is essential for security reasons. For more information, email kamalpreetkaur2510@gmail.com.

Bedford Council of Faiths is holding its next meeting on Tuesday 1 November. Laura Church, Chief Executive of Bedford Borough Council and principal policy adviser to the elected Mayor of Bedford, will be speaking about the Cost-of-Living Crisis. The talk will be followed by a short business meeting. For further information, email bedfordcounciloffaiths@gmail.com.

Brighton and Hove Interfaith Contact Group will be holding its Annual Interfaith Service on Sunday 6 November. This year the service is dedicated to the theme of visitors — asylum seekers, refugees and friends and the title of the service is 'Welcoming Friends'. It is being held at 3pm at Saint Peter's Roman Catholic Church in Portland Road, Hove BN3 5GD at 3pm. For more information, visit <https://www.facebook.com/interfaithcontactgroup/>.

The Muslim Jewish Forum of Greater Manchester will be holding its next 'Loose Lawyers' event on Thursday 3 November. There will be 2 Jewish and 2 Muslim lawyers on the Panel. They will be considering the question 'Does English matrimonial law betray Muslim and Jewish women?'. It will be held at a venue in Manchester, beginning at 8pm. For further information, visit https://www.muslimjewish.org.uk/Future_events.html.

More information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: <https://www.interfaithcouncilwales.cymru/>

IFN also carries news and information at www.twitter.com/IFNetUK and www.facebook.com/IFNetUK and, about Inter Faith Week, at <https://twitter.com/IFweek> and www.facebook.com/IFWeek.

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You can sign up to IFN mailings at any time by using the form on IFN's website at: www.interfaith.org.uk/news/gdpr or let us know that you would like to unsubscribe by emailing ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK TO INCREASE INTER FAITH UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION

The Inter Faith Network for the UK works for inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. Please help us grow this vital work by making a donation at: <https://interfaith.org.uk/donate> (including Paypal option).

Donations can also be made by sending a cheque payable to 'The Inter Faith Network' to: The Inter Faith Network for the UK, Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufton Street, London, SW1P 3RB.

Donations are used with care to make a real difference.

Thank you!

MAKE A GIFT TO SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK IN REMEMBRANCE OF A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND OR THROUGH A LEGACY

If you would like to make a gift in memory of a loved one, please get in touch by emailing remember@interfaith.org.uk or call us on 0207 730 0410.

By leaving a gift in your will to the Inter Faith Network for the UK, you can leave a living inheritance to help deepen and strengthen inter faith understanding and cooperation in this country – for now and for the future. If you are thinking about making a will, the best thing to do is to get in touch with a professional will writer, such as a solicitor or advocate; they can help to ensure it is legally correct and that your wishes are met. If you have already made a will, you can still make an addition or amendment in the form of a codicil. If you would like to pledge a gift, please provide our name and address, along with our registered charity number 1068934.

Please get in touch with us if you have any queries.

You can call us on 0207 730 0410 or contact us at remember@interfaith.org.uk.

Remember a Charity has produced a helpful resource called 'Making a Will - your complete guide'. This can be found at <https://www.rememberacharity.org.uk/making-a-will/>.

Submissions for next issue

If you have items about inter faith projects or future events which you would like considered for inclusion in the next e-bulletin please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk **by 24 November** with 'e-bulletin' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

If your organisation distributes a programme, newsletter or e-bulletin, please add ifnet@interfaith.org.uk to your mailing list.

Disclaimer: Information in this e-bulletin has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this e-bulletin does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

The Inter Faith Network for the UK, Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufton Street, London, SW1P 3RB
www.interfaith.org.uk www.facebook.com/IFNetUK www.twitter.com/IFNetUK

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Inter Faith Network Newsletter

December 2022

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

2021 Census data on religion

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has published the Ethnic group, national identity, language, and religion topic summary from the 2021 Census in England and Wales. The ONS reports that the main points are as follows:

- The religion question is voluntary; 94.0% (56.0 million) of usual residents answered the question in 2021, an increase from 92.9% (52.1 million) in 2011.
- For the first time in a census of England and Wales, less than half of the population (46.2%, 27.5 million people) described themselves as “Christian”, a 13.1 percentage point decrease from 59.3% (33.3 million) in 2011; despite this decrease, “Christian” remained the most common response to the religion question.
- “No religion” was the second most common response, increasing by 12.0 percentage points to 37.2% (22.2 million) from 25.2% (14.1 million) in 2011.
- There were increases in the number of people who described themselves as “Muslim” (3.9 million, 6.5% in 2021, up from 2.7 million, 4.9% in 2011) and “Hindu” (1.0 million, 1.7% in 2021, up from 818,000, 1.5% in 2011).
- Wales had a greater decrease in people reporting their religion as “Christian” (14.0 percentage point decrease, from 57.6% in 2011 to 43.6% in 2021) and increase in “No religion” (14.5 percentage point increase, from 32.1% in 2011 to 46.5% in 2021) compared with England and Wales overall.
- London remains the most religiously diverse region of England in 2021, with over a quarter (25.3%) of all usual residents reporting a religion other than “Christian”; the North East and South West are the least religiously diverse regions, with 4.2% and 3.2%, respectively, selecting a religion other than “Christian”.

Responses to the figures came from a number of faith community bodies, for example <https://cte.org.uk/churches-respond-to-census-results/> and <https://mcb.org.uk/2021-census-as-uk-population-grows-so-do-british-muslim-communities/>. The Board of Deputies of British Jews commented both on the value of the statistics and the fact that the community could see itself as undercounted. <https://bod.org.uk/bod-news/board-of-deputies-reacts-to-national-census-figures-on-number-of-jews-in-england-and-wales/> The separate material on ethnicity, within which category the ONS had decided not to include ‘Sikh’ as an ethnic category, prompted renewed calls from some within the Sikh community to revisit that decision.

Local faith leaders have also responded to the figures, for example in Peterborough <https://www.peterboroughtoday.co.uk/news/people/peterborough-faith-leaders-react-as-one-third-of-city-say-they-are-not-religious-3939528> and in Birmingham <https://twitter.com/FaithLeadersGrp/status/1598345417904865288>.

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Places of worship and the Protect Duty

On 19 December, the Home Secretary set out the foundational policy for the Protect Duty in Parliament, from now on to be known as Martyn’s Law. Martyn Hett was one of the victims of the Manchester Arena bombing in 2017. The aim of the Bill is to make public accessible locations, including places of worship, safer. This follows last year’s Protect Duty consultation which asked what measures might be taken to protect the public from attacks, as well as how to make sure staff are trained to respond appropriately.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/martyns-law-to-ensure-stronger-protections-against-terrorism-in-public-places>

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities notes that “There will be a tiered approach which will be linked to the activity that takes place at a location, and its capacity, with proportionality a key consideration. All places of worship will be placed within the standard tier of the Duty regardless of their capacity, except a small cohort across all faiths that charge tourists for entry and/or hire out the site for large commercial events.” And “Duty holders in public buildings within the standard tier will be required to undertake simple yet effective activities to improve protective security and preparedness.”

Further details on what the foundational policy means for places of worship can be found at <https://homeofficemedia.blog.gov.uk/2022/12/19/martyns-law-factsheet/>.

The Government will introduce the Protect Duty when parliamentary time allows. For further information, or to express a wish to take part in stakeholder engagement events run by the Home Office in the new year, email ProtectDuty@homeoffice.gov.uk.

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Faith communities responding to the cost of living crisis

With inflation rising to over 10%, costs of many basic provisions and rent and mortgages rising and energy prices particularly so, the cost of living has become very difficult for many, even with available forms of support. In this context, faith communities are working to offer what assistance they can. They are doing so individually but also tackling the issues together. For example, as reported in the Bradford Argus and Telegraph, over 50 community leaders there met earlier this month at a roundtable organised by Strengthening Faith Institutions to discuss what they can do to support the most vulnerable amid the cost of living crisis. They spoke about “ways places of worship can be used to support the needs of local communities, with suggestions on how food and essential items can be delivered to families in poverty, and on how churches, mosques and temples can be used as safe spaces where people can keep warm to avoid having to pay high energy bills”. <https://www.thetelegraphandargus.co.uk/news/23160314.faith-leaders-bradford-speak-cost-living-crisis/>

Creating places of warm welcome

Places of worship and faith centres across the UK have opened their doors as warm spaces for those who are struggling to heat their homes.

Many of these are doing so through the Warm Welcome initiative. The campaign was started by the ChurchWorks Commission and it is operating with a number of Christian, Muslim and other partners, such as the Royal Voluntary Association and the Together Coalition. A list of all warm spaces registered so far can be found at <https://www.warmwelcome.uk>. The mission of the initiative is to support organisations to open their doors and provide a warm welcome.

Others are contributing through/also through local authorities schemes where there are networks of ‘warm spaces’ or ‘warm hubs’. See, for example, the example of <https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/21602/Register-to-become-a-Warm-Space-in-Gateshead>, where churches are among the warm spaces and similarly Swansea, <https://www.swansea.gov.uk/SwanseaSpacesPR> with its list of warm spaces/hubs. London also has an extensive network of these, including many places of worship and

centres of different faiths such as the Jain Oshwal Shakti Centre and Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha, the Riverside Church and Al Madina Mosque in Barking, and Leyton and Wanstead Synagogue. Glasgow also has different faith communities participating with participation from a number of churches of different denominations and the Sikh Gurdwara in Pollokshields.

Providing food and other essentials

A number of places of worship run local food banks or collect for a local food bank. For example, the St Neots Foodbank is a collaborative action between ten St Neots churches working under the auspices of the Trussell Trust, a national Foodbank network. Some also provide hot meals for those in need. A Sky News report highlighted that the cost of living crisis has brought an increasing number of non-Sikhs through the doors of gurdwaras for the free langar. <https://news.sky.com/story/cost-of-living-sikh-community-is-serving-up-hot-meals-to-more-people-than-ever-12713552> The news report notes that many Sikh organisations have also ramped up their efforts by distributing food on the streets, to cater for those who need it most.

Other programmes such as Mitzvah Day and Sewa Day have also been working to gather and distribute essentials. Mitzvah Day runs an extensive food bank support programme. <https://mitzvahday.org.uk/project/foodbank-aid-north-london-network/> Sewa Day is active in many areas of the country. In Nottingham it has worked for the third year with Communities Working Together to run a 'shoebox appeal', where presents of hats, scarves, food, gifts and toys, books and toiletries to adults and children who might otherwise not get presents. <https://westbridgfordwire.com/pictures-shoebox-appeal-organisers-blown-away-by-the-generosity-of-the-rushcliffe-community/> Sufra NW London provides a Foodbank but also a wide range of services and community-based activities to empower individuals and families to overcome impoverishment and social isolation.

These are just a few examples of the ways in which faith and faith-linked initiatives have been responding to some of the cost of living impacts. Faith communities and their national and regional structures engage with these and on other social needs and social justice issues through ongoing programmes.

Support for individuals

Information on support available can be found on the UK Government website at <https://helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk/> and on the following sites for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland:

<https://costofliving.campaign.gov.scot/>

<https://gov.wales/get-help-cost-living>

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/benefits-and-financial-support/low-income>

Support for charities and voluntary organisations

The Charities Aid Foundation has launched a [Cost-of-Living Resource Hub](#), in collaboration with a number of partner organisations. This includes practical guidance and tools to help charities navigate the current challenging times. CAF has also launched a £3m [Keystone Fund](#) offering unrestricted grants to charities with income under £1m who are addressing social justice or working towards social equity, to help cover core costs, strengthen capacity and build resilience.

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations has appealed for the government to ensure voluntary organisations get continued support from the Energy Bill Relief Scheme beyond March 2023, outlining the risks for communities if the current support package stops. <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/news-and-insights/news-index/call-for-continuing-energy-bill-support-for-voluntary-organisations/#/>

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COVID-19 commemoration

The last issue of the e-bulletin noted that a UK Commission on Covid Commemoration had been established to secure a broad consensus from across the whole of the United Kingdom on how to “commemorate the COVID-19 pandemic and mark this distinctive period in our history at a national and community level”. The Commission held its fourth meeting at the end of November and is expecting to report to the Prime Minister by the end of March 2023. <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-commission-on-covid-commemoration>

A public consultation ran until 5 December and the Commission is still keen for organisations and members of the public to complete the local Covid Commemoration survey which can be found at <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/UKCovidCommemorationActivity/>.

The UK Covid-19 Public Inquiry (<https://covid19.public-inquiry.uk/>), the independent public inquiry set up to examine the UK's response to and impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and learn lessons for the future, is also exploring ways in which the scale of the hardship and loss experienced during the pandemic can be commemorated as part of its proceedings. A number of national faith community bodies in membership of the Inter Faith Network participated in a roundtable on 13 December, where this was one of the items addressed, with more engagement planned for the new year.

Christmas sees ‘Together at Christmas’ carol services happening at a number of churches around the UK which, like that recorded on 15 December at Westminster Abbey, hosted by HRH the Princess of Wales, celebrate ‘local heroes’, including those who went above and beyond during the Covid pandemic. <https://www.royal.uk/together-at-christmas-service-2022> The Westminster Abbey service was described as “combining traditional and modern elements to encompass people of all faiths and none”.

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Royal visits to new Sikh gurdwara and to Jewish cultural centre

Earlier this month His Majesty King Charles III visited the newly built Guru Nanak Gurdwara in Luton, which he officially opened. The event was attended by many members of the Sikh community, civic leaders, representatives of other faiths and of Luton Council of Faiths and others. The King met volunteers, including those who provide langar and run a weekly Luton Sikh Soup Kitchen outside Luton’s Town Hall. <https://www.lutontoday.co.uk/news/people/king-charles-visit-to-lutons-new-guru-nanak-gurdwara-brought-towns-faiths-together-3944233>

The King also visited the JW3 Jewish Cultural Centre in London for an annual Chanukah party, where he danced with Holocaust survivors. This was part of a tour of JW3, in the

course of which he also met with a group of girls packing Christmas packages for asylum seekers, stopped by a hair and beauty course for Orthodox students and was shown the kitchen where volunteers and refugees were preparing food packages for the needy. <https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/lifestyle/king-charles-hanukkah-jewish-community-b2246823.html> <https://www.timesofisrael.com/king-charles-dances-hora-with-holocaust-survivors-at-london-jewish-community-center/>

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Hate crime and antisemitism

The most recently published figures from the Home Office (October) showed that for the year to March 2022, religious hate crimes increased by 37 per cent (to 8,730 offences), up from 6,383 in the previous year; this was the highest number of religious hate crimes recorded since the time series began in year ending March 2012.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2021-to-2022/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2021-to-2022>

Examples of disturbing incidents in the last two months include those in Bridgnorth in Shropshire <https://www.shropshirestar.com/news/crime/2022/11/11/appalling-anti-semitic-graffiti-found-in-town-condemned/> and at Heatons Muslims Community Trust in Stockport <https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/support-mosque-police-probe-hate-25729472>.

A criminal prosecution against a street preacher arrested for an alleged 'hate crime' in which the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) argued that parts of the Bible are 'abusive' and 'no longer appropriate in modern society' has been dropped. However, as reported in *The Times*, it has now led to a warning from a religious freedom expert that the CPS is unilaterally trying to extend the law. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/street-preacher-was-charged-with-hate-crime-for-quoting-bible-at-lesbians-xbrhgr25r> Also dropped by the CPS have been charges against two men suspected of shouting anti-Semitic abuse in the convoy which drove through Finchley Road in North London in March 2021. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-11444671/Fury-prosecutors-DROP-charges-convoy-screaming-F-Jews.html>

While the majority of religious related hate crime targets Jews and Muslims, members of other communities are also targeted. Early in 2022, a body called Sikhguard was created to encourage the reporting of hate crime by members of the Sikh community throughout the United Kingdom. The National Sikh Police Association UK has initiated the project in conjunction with True Vision and other community-based organisations concerned about under-reporting and the need to make the authorities aware of the true extent of anti-Sikh hate. <https://sikhguard.org>

Information on reporting hate crimes and incidents can be found below.

REPORT HATE CRIMES AND INCIDENTS AND WORK TOGETHER TO HELP TACKLE THEM

Report hate crimes and incidents online through True Vision or via 3rd parties eg Community Security Trust (CST), Tell Mama UK; Sikhguard and Stop Hate UK; at a police station; or by ringing the police on 101 (non-emergency) or 999.

<https://gov.uk/report-hate-crime>

<https://www.scotland.police.uk/contact-us/report-hate-crime-and-third-party-reporting/>
<https://reporhate.victimsupport.org.uk/hate-crime/>

<https://www.psni.police.uk/crime/hate-crime/reporting-a-hate-crime/>

See also *Looking after one another: the safety and security of our faith communities* (IFN and partners) which contains practical pointers for working together to counter hate crime.

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/looking-after-one-another-the-safety-and-security-of-our-faith-communities-2017>

The Bishop's Disciplinary Tribunal for the Anglican diocese of Winchester has ruled that the conduct of the Revd Dr Stephen Sizer was unbecoming to the office and work of a clerk in Holy Orders. It concluded that he had "engaged in anti-Semitic activity" when, in January 2015, he posted an article that was "virulently anti-Semitic" on Facebook. Dr Sizer said that he accepted the conclusions and criticisms of his conduct and apologised unreservedly for the hurt and offence caused.

<https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2022/9-december/news/uk/tribunal-finds-the-revd-dr-stephen-sizer-guilty-of-conduct-unbecoming-and-anti-semitic-activity>

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Commission on the Integration of Refugees

At the end of November, a new Commission on the Integration of Refugees was launched. Convened by the founder President of the Woolf Institute, Dr Ed Kessler, this independent Commission aims to:

- Improve the refugee and asylum system, for a society where everyone, including refugees, feels welcome and integrated;
- Bring together opposing views and diverse experiences from across the UK – from refugees and local communities, faith and community leaders, security forces and healthcare professionals; and
- Work to overcome differences to find common ground to fix the broken system with practical solutions.

The Commission is chaired by Lord Alex Carlile, the Commission and is composed of 23 commissioners from across civil society, the public sector, politics, faith communities and academia. The Commission's first publication, produced in collaboration with the Good Faith Partnership, is a review of asylum reform initiatives between 1997 and 2022. Further information is available at <https://refugeeintegrationuk.com/about/>.

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UK Government Resilience Framework

The UK Government Resilience Framework was published in December (replacing the 'National Resilience Strategy'). The Framework is "a risk-agnostic plan to strengthen the systems, structures, and capabilities which underpin the UK's resilience to all risks, including those which are yet to emerge". The Framework is built around three core principles:

- A shared understanding of the risks we face is foundational: it must underpin everything that we do to prepare for and recover from crises;

- Prevention rather than cure wherever possible: resilience-building spans the whole risk cycle so we must focus effort across the cycle, particularly before crises happen;
- Resilience is a ‘whole of society’ endeavour, so we must be more transparent and empower everyone to make a contribution.

Faith groups are included within the communities referenced in the Framework and it acknowledges that “National, regional, local and grassroots VCS and faith-based organisations have been at the forefront of the response to emergencies”. The Framework can be downloaded at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-to-strengthen-national-resilience>.

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RE Council campaign

The Religious Education Council of England and Wales has launched a campaign to ensure that “all children in all schools receive a high-quality education in RE/an education in religion and worldviews taught by well-qualified and trained teachers”. The key messages of the campaign are: RE is vital for life in the modern world; RE is valued by the voting public; Too many children are not receiving RE; A national standard is needed; Recruitment of secondary trainees is Insufficient; and Too many primary teachers have no RE training.

<https://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/?news=re-and-politics-your-voice-counts>

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Police recruitment campaign and faith communities

The UK Government plans to recruit an additional 20,000 frontline officers in England and Wales by March 2023. The Police are keen for the service to represent the communities that it serves and are looking for talented people from all backgrounds, ages, ethnicities and faiths. They are seeking the support of communities to promote a career in policing by:

- Signposting to the website [Why join the Police? | Join The Police \(joiningthepolice.co.uk\)](https://www.joiningthepolice.co.uk) as a place to find out more information on a career in policing and see which forces are currently open for recruitment;
- Highlighting the police network support organisations, such as the Jewish Police Association, the National Association of Muslim Police, the National Sikh Police Association and the Police Pagan Association [Police officer support organisations | Join The Police \(joiningthepolice.co.uk\)](#); and
- Amplifying police recruitment content on social media, that addresses the barriers around faith, such as: [Feeling supported](#), [career progression](#), [policing is a rewarding career](#), [being a voice for others](#).

For further information, or any enquiries, contact the Police Recruitment campaign team at the Home Office at joiningthepolice@homeoffice.gov.uk.

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Religion in the workplace

The importance of employees' faith and belief in the employment context has been receiving increased focus. For example, in November and December business psychology consultancy Pearn Kandola published two reports, *Religion at Work: Experiences of Christian employees* and *Religion at Work: Experiences of Hindu Employees* (both by Binna Kandola). <https://pearnkandola.com/research/>

The author commented that "Many Hindus do not feel that they are able to express their faith openly. This is significant and demonstrates that organisations still have progress to make in creating truly inclusive cultures" <https://www.businessleader.co.uk/religion-work-why-hindu-employees-religious-holiday-requests-denied/> and that "Many Christians are in fact facing similar issues as those of other minority religions. As our research revealed, they are not exempt from negative experiences at work, such as those involving discrimination and stereotyping." <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2022/23-december/news/uk/some-religious-employees-subjected-to-ridicule-and-stereotyping-survey-finds>

Some resources relating to religion in the workplace can be found [below](#).

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INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK NEWS

Inter Faith Week 13-20 November

This year Inter Faith Week www.interfaithweek.org took place from Sunday 13 to Sunday 20 November. Across the Week, over 800 activities are known to have taken place, and details of further events continue to come in. Thousands of people took part in the Week and its positive messages has also reached millions through social media.

Canon Hilary Barber and Narendra Waghela, Co-Chairs of the Inter Faith Network for the UK, which supports the Week in England, Northern Ireland and Wales, hailed it an 'inspiring success' and said "*The Week's growth reflects increasing awareness of the vital importance of people of different faiths and beliefs living together well, finding ways to engage on issues where there may be divergence of views and building on shared values to work for the common good.*"

Read more about the week at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/news/news>. A full list of activities can be seen on the website here: <https://www.interfaithweek.org/events/calendar>.

Inter Faith Week messages from faith leaders

Inter Faith Network for the UK's Faith Communities Forum invited national faith community leaders to share messages about the importance of religious literacy. You can see their messages at: <https://www.interfaithweek.org/news/reflections-from-national-faith-communities-and-their-leaders-2022>.

Feedback on the Week

If you held an activity for the Week, thank you for making the week such a success! If you have not already responded to the feedback survey, we would be very grateful if you could spare some time to share any thoughts or reflections that you may have on your experience of the Week. The link to the survey can be found here:

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/IFW2022>.

Scottish Inter Faith Week

Scottish Interfaith Week is led by Interfaith Scotland and took place from 13-20 November. More information about this can be found at www.scottishinterfaithweek.org. This year's theme was 'Storytelling', linked to Scotland's Year of Stories.

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IFN's e-bulletin renamed 'newsletter'

Following on from the responses to this year's e-bulletin survey, it was noted in a previous issue that we would be moving to a new name for the e-bulletin. 'E-bulletin' was found by some respondents to sound outdated and, while the overall length of content was found helpful by the majority of respondents, the material is more detailed than is commonly the case with bulletin contents. It has therefore been renamed 'newsletter'.

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Meeting of IFN Faith Communities Forum

A meeting of the IFN Faith Communities Forum took place in October. Items on the Agenda included: Shared reflections on events of recent months; IFN Strategic Plan development; Three-yearly review of FCF Terms of Reference; FCF Moderator appointments; Local inter faith organisations – their role and engagement with them by faith communities, with reflections offered by Es Rosen, President, Barnet Multi Faith Forum, and Fayyaz Suleman, Chair, Leicester Council of Faiths and also Mr Narendra Waghela, IFN's Co-Chair drawn from the local inter faith constituency and also an officer of Leicester Council of Faiths; Inter Faith Week; Inter faith engagement of faith communities; and Other issues of interest and concern.

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IFN link meeting for local inter faith groups in the West Midlands

IFN holds meetings for local inter faith groups to share news and good practice and learn from each other's work to strengthen their own and benefit their local areas. Some are for groups from across the UK. Others are for groups within a particular region or a county. They provide an opportunity for sharing of news or programmes and projects being run by each group, including opportunities and challenges. Minutes of previous link meetings can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/about/local-inter-faith-linking>.

The most recent meeting was held on 23 November for local inter faith organisations in the West Midlands. On the Agenda were: Round table sharing of news, information and ideas (including activities held Inter Faith Week); and Discussion of issues of common interest

and concern, including particular issues that emerged in the earlier discussion as well as tackling and reporting hate crime and working for religious literacy.

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IFN leaflet and ‘code’

One of IFN’s most widely used publications is its short guidelines: *Building Good Relations with People of Different Faiths and Beliefs*.

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/building-good-relations-with-people-of-different-faiths-and-beliefs> The principles were adopted by its members in 1993 and have been so by new members since that time. The ‘code’ has been used and drawn on by groups around the world.

A new leaflet about IFN and its work can be found at

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/inter-faith-network-leaflet>.

Hard copies of both documents are also available from the IFN office.

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Support to member inter faith organisations on using social media and on websites

IFN is offering member local, regional and national inter faith organisations one to one sessions on Zoom or the phone to talk through questions about whether/how to use Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, as well as about running and maintaining websites. You can explore any questions - if we don't know the answer we will try and point you to someone who might! These 30-45 minutes sessions are run by IFN's Project Director Ashley Beck and individually tailored. If you would like to book one of the remaining available sessions in January or February, you can email him at Ashley.beck@interfaith.org.uk by 12 January.

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

Faith and football

Linked to the BBC’s World Cup coverage, BBC Morning Live ran a special feature on Building Bridges in Burnley’s inter faith football tournament. They brought children of different faith backgrounds from Barden Primary School, St John's School CE Cliviger, and Daneshouse FC to take part in an inter faith football tournament at the the Leisure Box Brierfield. Those who took part were given free tickets to go with their families to see Burnley Football Club play at Turf Moor. The feature can be found at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m001g5zv/morning-live-series-4-16122022> 8 minutes in. It includes interviews with the Chair of BBB and parents and pupils.

The Inter Faith Tournament was linked to Inter Faith Week which also saw members of the Berks & Bucks FA visit Singh Sabha Slough FC to meet its youth team, composed of individuals from predominantly Sikh, Muslim, Hindu and Christian backgrounds. This highlighted how sport has the ability to break down barriers and foster inter faith understanding. The club’s main ground is owned by Singh Sabha Gurdwara, the local Sikh temple. Having access to these community facilities is what gave the club the starting

point it needed to begin providing accessible football in the local area. <https://www.berks-bucksfa.com/news/2022/dec/08/breaking-barriers-singh-sabha-slough> In Sunderland, a match was held between two teams of Sunderland Samba FC players and friends to celebrate their commitment to bringing people together and to encourage learning and understanding. <https://sunderlandsamba.com/>

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Christian Jewish initiative

Lambeth Palace and the Board of Deputies of British Jews are working on a joint initiative involving leaders of Jewish Representative Councils and other local Jewish leaders from the south of the UK together with interfaith advisers from the Church of England who are part of the Church of England's Presence and Engagement Network. The aim is to think about how they can enrich their work locally and create new relationships between communities working together. The first event took place at the end of November and a second day of engagement will take place with northern communities in 2023. Both groups will be brought back together for a final meeting at the end of the first year.

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Faith communities and domestic abuse and violence against women and girls

During the Covid-19 pandemic there was a steep increase in the number of calls to Refuge, the UK's largest domestic abuse charity. In response to this crisis, [Faiths Forum for London \(FFL\)](#) and [Women's Interfaith Network](#) created a multi faith domestic abuse awareness campaign called Faiths Against Domestic Abuse (FADA). Since then the FADA campaign has held a number of online webinars and workshops with speakers including Nicole Jacobs, the Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales. Partners on the campaign have included Jewish Women's Aid, The Sharan Project, The Faith and Belief Forum and Near Neighbours. The first FADA Week was held in 2020 and the most recent FADA Awareness Week took place from 28 November to 2 December.

<https://twitter.com/faithsagainstda>

There is also a Faith and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Coalition which is a partnership of organisations lead by the Safety Across Faith and Ethnic (SAFE) Communities project at Standing Together Against Domestic Abuse. It wishes to highlight the critical role that faith communities and religious groups play in addressing VAWG as they are often the first point of contact or help seeking for those suffering abuse. More about its work can be found at <https://www.faithandvawg.org/h>

There are also other charities working on abuse which are not faith-specific such as Karma Nirvana which works with victims and survivors of Honour Based Abuse or facing forced marriage. <https://karmanirvana.org.uk>

The Religions for Peace (UK) Women of Faith Network <https://www.facebook.com/UKWFN> has recently taken part in the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence linked to the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. It posted on social media, hosted events and presented a new video series "Visible Advocacy – Interfaith Male Allies in our Midst" which can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/@RfPUKWFN>.

During Inter Faith Week, a conference on Faith and Domestic Abuse, arranged by the Hope Consultancy, was held in Leicester. <https://www.interfaithweek.org/events/faith-and-domestic-abuse-conference-in-leicester-5413>

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The Great Winter Get Together

The Great Winter Get Together, organised by the Jo Cox Foundation, takes place from 16 to 29 January. The theme will be 'Places for Connection'.

<https://www.greatgettogether.org/winter>

The [Organiser Pack](#) includes: inspiration and ideas, social media templates and the 'keys to unlocking connection at events'. Events don't have to be organised from scratch. If you are already involved with an event that different people come along to, you could give it a Great Winter Get Together theme for January by including activities that get people chatting with each other. For further information, email hello@greatgettogether.org.

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Faith in Mental Health

The Woolf Institute is currently undertaking a research project on 'Faith in Mental Health'. This is a two-year blended research and public education project to study mental health from an interfaith perspective with a twin focus on:

1. The development of public educational materials on faith, interfaith and mental health;
2. The study of policy-related issues concerning mental health and British Muslim communities.

For further information, visit <https://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/research/projects/mental-health-project>.

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Multi faith youth initiatives

Earlier this year the Faith & Belief Forum (F&BF) set up a Youth Council, a group of young leaders from a variety of faith and belief backgrounds, which is consulted on key decisions at F&BF. <https://faithbeliefforum.org/meet-the-fbf-youth-council> The Council will be holding an Interfaith Summit in February.

A new National Multifaith Youth Centre has also been launched, which is designed to bring together university students across all faiths and beliefs. This is working, with partner organisations, to create a network of faith and belief based university society representatives and multi faith champions. <https://www.nmycentre.org/>

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Tower Hamlets Faith Health Action Partnership

FaithAction is running a project to look at how faith settings support the health needs of their communities. Funded by Tower Hamlets Public Health, working with East London Mosque and supported by Tower Hamlets Inter Faith Forum, it is supporting eight local

faith settings and faith based organisations to deliver health focused projects to the local community.

It is working with a number of local groups to deliver health focused activities to their local communities and is funding Cycle Sisters, Christ Apostolic Church, Shahporan Masjid and Islamic Centre Trust, Globe Community Project, Dorset Community Association, Newark Youth London, East London Mosque and Wapping Noorani Masjid and Cultural Centre. These groups will be offering a range of health based projects, including activities for young people, healthy eating guidance, fitness sessions and blood pressure checks.

For more information, visit <https://fhap.faithaction.net/> or email jenny.hadgraft@faithaction.net.

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London Health Inequalities Action Group report and recommendations

In October, the Health Inequalities Action Group (HIAG) published its report, 'On Faith, Place and Health: Harnessing the Power of Faith Groups to Tackle London's Health Inequalities'. HIAG is a multi-faith initiative led by the Bishop of London, the Rt Revd and Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally, to explore London's health inequalities and how faith groups can and do contribute to the health of their communities. The report includes a number of recommendations such as supporting the development and integration of an Interfaith Health Council with national health structures to represent faith communities. More information can be found at <https://bishopoflondon.org/news/bishop-of-londons-health-inequalities-action-group-publishes-14-recommendations-to-tackle-health-inequalities/>.

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Faith Covenant renewals

The Faith Covenant, developed by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Faith and Society, is a joint commitment between faith communities and local authorities to a set of principles that guide engagement, aiming to remove some of the mistrust that exists and to promote open, practical working on all levels. <https://www.faithandsociety.org/> The Covenant has now been signed by 24 local authorities. During, and either side of, Inter Faith Week, Faith Covenants were renewed or signed in Barnet, Brighton, Birmingham, Calderdale and Southampton.

The APPG hosts a Faith Covenant Forum which brings all the Covenant holders together (both local authority representatives and faith leaders) and also provides a space for prospective Covenant areas to hear about what the Covenant looks like in action. For more information, email info@faithaction.net.

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

Resources

Faith festivals and greetings

In the UK today a range of festivals are celebrated by different faith communities. A number of faith festival calendars are produced each year. One of the most widely used is

the Shap Calendar of Religious Festivals (<http://www.shapcalendar.org.uk/>). This comes with a booklet explaining each festival. Their calendar of dates is used, with their permission, on IFN's website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/religious-festivals>.

At <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/faith-festivals-guidance-on-sending-greetings> is the 2023 list of festivals and greetings that has been produced with the IFN's Faith Communities Forum, which brings together National Faith Community Representative Bodies in IFN membership. Each faith community has many different festivals but has chosen two festivals on which greetings from those of other faiths and none would be particularly appreciated.

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Resources on religion in the workplace

Guidance on religion and belief in the workplace has been produced by equality organisations and bodies such as the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion. <https://www.enei.org.uk/category/employer-guides/>

There are also a wide range of consultancies, such as the Faith & Belief Forum (<https://faithbeliefforum.org/programme/faith-inclusion-training-and-consultancy-for-workplaces>) that support employers in this area, underlining the value of religious diversity in the workplace (for example, <https://www.inclusiveemployers.co.uk/blog/the-benefits-of-religious-diversity-in-the-workplace/>) and creating a religiously inclusive workplace <http://www.personneltoday.com/hr/religious-inclusion/>) as well as advising on relevant law and good practice. On the latter area, there is relevant guidance produced both by the EHRC <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/religion-or-belief-discrimination> and ACAS <https://www.acas.org.uk/acas-guide-to-religion-or-belief-discrimination>.

Some guidance points from the Inter Faith Network for the UK are at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/employers>.

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Faith and inter faith resources for Holocaust Memorial Day

Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) takes place on 27 January each year. HMD is the day for everyone to remember the millions of people murdered in the Holocaust, under Nazi Persecution, and in the genocides which followed in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur. It honours the survivors of these regimes and challenges everyone to use the lessons of their experience to inform their lives today. Next year's theme is 'Ordinary people'.

The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust has produced a guide for faith and inter faith groups on marking HMD. This can be found at <https://www.hmd.org.uk/resource/your-faith-interfaith-group-and-holocaust-memorial-day/>.

The Council of Christians and Jews has published its HMD Resource for 2023 which reflects the theme of 'Ordinary people'. The resource contains reflections on the importance of marking HMD as people of faith. It also includes practical advice for churches on how to

commemorate the Holocaust in churches, prayers for HMD, all genocides, and Christian-Jewish relations. It can be found at <https://ccj.org.uk/resources/holocaust-education>.

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Bar Standards Board Religion and Belief Toolkit

Following on from the launch of its Equality Strategy earlier in the year, the Bar Standards Board (BSB) has this month published a Religion and Belief toolkit for barristers and legal professionals. The toolkit has been developed by the BSB's Religion and Belief Taskforce. The taskforce "aims to support and advise the BSB on how best to raise the awareness of differing religions and beliefs amongst the profession, to address the lack of inclusive action and discussion of religions and belief, to encourage a more inclusive environment, and help to eliminate any religion or belief related discrimination at the Bar."

The Toolkit can be found at <https://www.barstandardsboard.org.uk/about-us/equality-and-diversity/religion-and-belief-taskforce.html>.

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Inter faith poetry book

Interfaith Scotland has worked with the Scottish Poetry Library to create an anthology of 40 poems written by poets of all faiths and beliefs. The poets share insights into what gave them support and inspiration during the pandemic, such as nature, faith and culture. More information can be found at <https://interfaithscotland.org/interfaith-scotland-launches-poetry-book>.

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Bradford Hospitals app

Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust has launched a new Spiritual, Pastoral and Religious Care (SPaRC) app. The app, launched during Inter Faith Week, is designed for both staff and patients and offers self-help resources, support and guidance on six beliefs and information on the SPaRC team. More information can be found at <https://sparc.bradfordhospitals.nhs.uk/>.

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Study/Training

St Ethelburga's training and workshops

The St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace in London hosts and offers events, training and workshops based on the themes of peace, community inclusion, reconciliation and ecological awareness and community action. Forthcoming events include 'Conflict coaching' on 13 January and 6 February. For more information, including cost and timings, visit <https://stethelburgas.org/events/>.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

Inter Faith Network for the UK – Internship (paid)

IFN is offering a full time, 10 week fixed term Internship from 23 January to 31 March, paid at the London Living Wage. This a great opportunity to contribute to building good inter faith relations and to develop skills and gain increased knowledge of inter faith activity in the UK. The internship will include the chance to work on a number of IFN’s programme areas, including local inter faith support and national Inter Faith Week. The full role description and official application form can be found on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/jobs>. Any queries can be sent to Hannah Cassidy at ifnet@interfaith.org.uk. The closing date for receipt of application forms is 5pm on 6 January.

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The Inter Faith Network for the UK - Volunteers

The Inter Faith Network for the UK currently has an opportunity for online volunteers with good desk research and writing skills who would like to offer 4-8 hours a week to help on different aspects of IFN’s work to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. To express an interest in volunteering, please complete the application form at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/volunteering>.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

UK Government Find a Grant pilot

The UK Government’s Find a Grant pilot is part of the Grants Applicant Programme (GAP), being delivered by the Government Grants Management Function in the Cabinet Office and aims to make applying for and finding government grants simpler, faster and fairer. <https://grantscommunity.blog.gov.uk/2022/04/12/the-first-gov-uk-release-of-the-find-a-grant-pilot-is-now-open-for-everyone/>

The pilot phase includes 23 grant schemes and can be found at <https://www.find-government-grants.service.gov.uk/>.

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Funding websites

My Funding Central is a database of grant funding and social investment sources. This service is available to organisations with an annual income below £1m and is free for organisations under £30k. <https://www.myfundingcentral.co.uk/> Similar websites for funding in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at Funding Scotland - <https://funding.scot/>, Wales Council for Voluntary Action - <http://www.wcva.cymru/funding> and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland - <https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

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Prince of Wales's Charitable Fund grant scheme

The Prince of Wales's Charitable Fund considers small grant applications from UK registered non-profit organisations supporting grassroots projects in diverse and deprived communities in the UK (and Commonwealth and internationally). The small grants programme awards single or multi-year grants to a maximum value of £5,000 and £15,000 respectively. The average single award is £2,000. It also considers awarding multi-year small grants to UK registered non-profit organisations. <https://www.pwcf.org.uk/how-apply-grant>

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Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme

The Listed Places of Worship (LPW) Grant Scheme gives grants that cover the VAT incurred in making repairs to listed buildings in use as places of worship. The scheme covers repairs to the fabric of the building, along with associated professional fees. The Grant Scheme is run by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and its administration has, since July, been run by East Midland Business. In response to user feedback, it is now possible to submit digital application forms, as well as using postal options.

<http://www.lpwscheme.org.uk/>

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FCC Community Action Fund

The FCC Communities Foundation is offering grants between £2,000 and £100,000 for projects which involve the provision, maintenance or improvement of public amenities including community spaces in places of worship, which are registered charities. Projects must be based within 10 miles of an eligible FCC Environment waste facility. The next round opens on 21 December and closes on 8 March.

<https://fcccommunitiesfoundation.org.uk/funds/fcc-community-action-fund>

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS/MONTHS

The Great Winter Get Together will be from 17 to 30 January. This is a project of the Jo Cox Foundation. <https://www.greatgettogether.org/>

Holocaust Memorial Day takes place on 27 January. Its theme in 2023 is 'Ordinary People'. Holocaust Memorial Day is the day for everyone to remember the millions of people murdered in the Holocaust, under Nazi Persecution, and in the genocides which followed in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur. It honours the survivors of these regimes and challenges everyone to use the lessons of their experience to inform their lives today. <https://www.hmd.org.uk/>

World Interfaith Harmony Week takes place from 1 to 7 February. It is a UN recognised Week which was proposed to the UN General Assembly by HM King Abdullah of Jordan. The first UN World Interfaith Harmony Week took place in February 2011. <https://worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com/>

Fairtrade Fortnight runs from Monday 21 February to Sunday 6 March. Many places of worship take part. <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/get-involved/current-campaigns/fairtrade-fortnight/>

International Women's Day falls on 8 March. Its theme this year is 'Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow'. Many faith and inter faith bodies mark the day. <https://www.internationalwomensday.com/> See Diary Dates for some inter faith events taking place in the UK.

Great British Spring Clean [Keep Britain Tidy](https://www.keepbritaintidy.org) runs an annual Great British Spring Clean campaign, which this year runs from Friday 25 March to Sunday 10 April. Every year lots of faith and inter faith groups take part. For more information, visit <https://www.keepbritaintidy.org/get-involved/support-our-campaigns/great-british-spring-clean>.

The Big Lunch this year is an official part of HM The Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations from Thursday 2 to Sunday 5 June. Across the years millions of people from different backgrounds have joined together to take part through street parties, BBQs, iftars and picnics. <https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/get-involved>

Refugee Week will take place from Monday 20 to Sunday 26 June. Refugee Week is a nationwide programme of arts, cultural and educational events that celebrate the contribution of refugees to the UK, and encourages a better understanding between communities. The theme for the 2022 Week is 'Healing'. <https://refugeeweek.org.uk/>

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DIARY DATES

A few examples of forthcoming events are listed below. Those listed are all virtual, except where noted. Events are also listed on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/events>.

Norwich InterFaith Link will be holding its next event on Tuesday 20 December. This will focus on Human Rights, with discussion led by NIFL Chair, David Griffith, and a guest refugee. It begins at 7.30pm. For more information, contact NIFL through <https://norwichinterfaithlink.wordpress.com/contact-us/contact-us/>.

Interfaith Wolverhampton is holding its next virtual Bring and Share Lunchtime meeting on Tuesday 20 December. There will not be a speaker this time but participants are invited to have something short in mind to share about Christmas or some other celebration which is important to them. It is being held from 1pm to 2pm. For more information, email admin@ifwton.org.uk.

Nisa-Nashim Jewish Muslim Women's network and **JW3** are hosting an inter faith Chanukah celebration on Wednesday 21 December. Members of all faiths are invited to share in a special communal Chanukah candle-lighting followed by a festive meal. It is being held at 6.30pm in the JW3 building at 341-351 Finchley Road, London, NW3 6ET. For more information, and to book, visit <https://www.jw3.org.uk/whats-on/interfaith-chanukah-celebration-nisa-nashim#>.

The **Bournemouth Branch of the Council of Christians and Jews** is holding a Celebration of Chanukah on Thursday 22 December. The event will including candle lighting and

traditional food. Rabbi Maurice Michaels will host the celebration and tell the story of Judith, followed by a talk about the Maccabees from a Catholic perspective from Father Andrew Wagstaff, who is a member of the Congregation of the Oratory and Catholic Chaplain to Bournemouth University and Arts University. The event will begin at 7.30pm and is being held at Bournemouth Reform Synagogue, 53 Christchurch Road, BH1 3PA. For further information, email ccjbaw@gmail.com.

The **Muslim Jewish Forum of Greater Manchester** is holding its annual Kosher Meal on Sunday 15 January. It will be held at 6.30pm for 7pm in the Upstairs room above Celia's Kitchen Takeaway, 7 King's Rd, Prestwich, Manchester M25 0LE. Participants must book in advance. For more information, visit https://www.muslimjewish.org.uk/Future_events.html.

Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship is holding its next meeting on Monday 16 January. The theme will be 'Concepts of the Divine in Paganism' and the presenter will be Jay Anderson. It is being held at 7.30pm at All Hallows Church, 24 Regent Terrace, Burley, Leeds. For more information, email chair@concord-leeds.org.uk.

The Inter Faith Network for the UK will be holding a webinar on Tuesday 17 January about the Inter Faith Buddies scheme. This is designed to bring individuals together to learn more about how each other's faith and beliefs shape their lives and perspectives on issues of common interest. To be sent more information when this available, email ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

More information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: <https://www.interfaithcouncilwales.cymru/>

IFN also carries news and information at www.twitter.com/IFNetUK www.facebook.com/IFNetUK and, about Inter Faith Week, at <https://twitter.com/IFweek> and www.facebook.com/IFWeek.

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You can sign up to IFN mailings at any time by using the form on IFN's website at: www.interfaith.org.uk/news/gdpr or let us know that you would like to unsubscribe by emailing ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

**SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK
TO INCREASE INTER FAITH UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION**

The Inter Faith Network for the UK works for inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. Please help us grow this vital work by making a donation at:

<https://interfaith.org.uk/donate> (including Paypal option).

Donations can also be made by sending a cheque payable to 'The Inter Faith Network' to: The Inter Faith Network for the UK, Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufton Street, London, SW1P 3RB.

Donations are used with care to make a real difference.

Thank you!

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**MAKE A GIFT TO SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK IN REMEMBRANCE
OF A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND OR THROUGH A LEGACY**

If you would like to make a gift in memory of a loved one, please get in touch by emailing remember@interfaith.org.uk or call us on 0207 730 0410.

By leaving a gift in your will to the Inter Faith Network for the UK, you can leave a living inheritance to help deepen and strengthen inter faith understanding and cooperation in this country – for now and for the future. If you are thinking about making a will, the best thing to do is to get in touch with a professional will writer, such as a solicitor or advocate; they can help to ensure it is legally correct and that your wishes are met. If you have already made a will, you can still make an addition or amendment in the form of a codicil. If you would like to pledge a gift, please provide our name and address, along with our registered charity number 1068934.

Please get in touch with us if you have any queries.

You can call us on 0207 730 0410 or contact us at remember@interfaith.org.uk.

Remember a Charity has produced a helpful resource called 'Making a Will - your complete guide'. This can be found at <https://www.rememberacharity.org.uk/making-a-will/>.

Submissions for next issue

If you have items about inter faith projects or future events which you would like considered for inclusion in the next newsletter please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk **by 23 January** with 'newsletter' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

If your organisation distributes a programme, newsletter or e-bulletin, please add ifnet@interfaith.org.uk to your mailing list.

Disclaimer: Information in this newsletter has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this newsletter does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

The Inter Faith Network for the UK, Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufton Street, London, SW1P 3RB
www.interfaith.org.uk www.facebook.com/IFNetUK www.twitter.com/IFNetUK

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Inter Faith Network Newsletter

March/April 2023

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IFN Newsletter Survey

We would be very grateful if you could take a few minutes to complete this year's newsletter survey. Your responses will help us to continue to shape the newsletter and our wider communications into valued resources for inter faith practitioners at all levels.

https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/IFN_newsletter_2023/

Thank you!

FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

Illegal migration bill

On 7 March the UK Government introduced the Illegal Migration Bill to the House of Commons. <https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3429>

This would make asylum claims inadmissible from those who travel to the UK on small boats and under it a home secretary would be required to remove “as soon as reasonably practicable”, to Rwanda or a ‘safe third country’ those anyone who arriving in that way. Those coming this way would also be prevented from ever claiming asylum in the UK.

The opening notes to the Bill include: “Secretary Suella Braverman has made the following statement under section 19(1)(b) of the Human Rights Act 1998: I am unable to make a statement that, in my view, the provisions of the Illegal Migration Bill are compatible with the Convention rights, but the Government nevertheless wishes the House to proceed with the Bill.”

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/mar/08/what-are-the-legal-obstacles-faced-by-the-uks-migration-bill-suella-braverman>

Responses of concern have come from a number of faith communities, eg Churches <https://ctbi.org.uk/churches-voice-opposition-to-illegal-migration-bill/>; <https://jpit.uk/response-to-illegal-migration-bill>; Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees <https://twitter.com/WithRefugees/status/1633139798515785730> and the Board of Deputies of British Jews <https://mobile.twitter.com/BoardofDeputies/status/1633488546710405121>.

In October 2021 the Faith Communities Forum of the Inter Faith Network for the UK issued a call, “drawing on the common values at the heart of our different and distinct faith traditions” for safe, humane and dignified treatment of refugees and those seeking asylum. <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/a-call-for-safe-humane-and-dignified-treatment-of-refugees-and-those-seeking-asylum>

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Safety and Security of Places of Worship

At its meeting on 2 February the IFN Faith Communities Forum agreed a statement on the Safety and Security of Places of Worship. This can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/statement-on-safety-and-security-of-places-of-worship>.

The December issue of the newsletter noted that the Home Secretary had set out the foundational policy for the Protect Duty in Parliament (from now on to be known as Martyn’s Law). The aim of the Bill is to make publicly accessible locations, including places of worship, safer. For further information, or to express a wish to take part in stakeholder engagement events run by the Home Office, email ProtectDuty@homeoffice.gov.uk.

The Home Office is holding a dedicated webinar for faith communities, about Martyn’s Law, on 9 March. The registration link is <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/martyns-law-webinar-for-places-of-worship-tickets-519101836567>.

A special roundtable was hosted at Westminster Abbey on 6 March which brought together representatives of a number of faith community representative bodies with places of worship 800+ in capacity (those most likely to have more far reaching requirements under Martyr's Law) to explore aspects of linking and sharing good practice on security of places of worship in the context of counter-terrorism. The roundtable was convened by the Faith Sector lead for the Counter Terrorism Business Information Exchange and held in association with the police National Counter Terrorism Security Office, with assistance from the office of the Inter Faith Network for the UK.

Information on NaCTSO resources can be found [here](#).

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Damage to Qur'an and Home Secretary article

Four pupils from a secondary school in West Yorkshire were suspended last month after a copy of the Qur'an was damaged. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-leeds-64757799> The Police declared this a non-crime hate incident as there was no criminal intent.

The Home Secretary has subsequently said that the Home Office will work with the Department for Education to issue new guidance to outline children's protection from punishment over actions perceived to be blasphemous.

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/suella-braverman-we-do-not-have-blasphemy-laws-in-great-britain-9ps9lj8r5>

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Antisemitism and Islamophobia and political parties and groups

Investigation into antisemitism in the Labour Party

In October 2020, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) served the Labour Party with an unlawful act notice, after its investigation into antisemitism found the Party responsible for unlawful acts of harassment and discrimination. As a result, the Labour Party was obliged to produce an action plan to prevent continuation or reoccurrence of those unlawful acts, which was legally enforceable by the court if not fulfilled. The action plan concluded on 31 January. The EHRC confirmed on 15 February that it is content with the actions taken and has now concluded its work with the Labour Party.

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-work/news/equality-watchdog-concludes-monitoring-labour-party-action-plan>

Response to reports of Islamophobia in the Conservative Party

In January the Cabinet Office announced that it would conduct an inquiry into the allegations made by Nusrat Ghani MP that she was discriminated against due to her religion. The EHRC has written to the Cabinet Office and the Conservative Party seeking further information. <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-work/news/response-reports-islamophobia-conservative-party>

New Issues Group

The body Hope Note Hate has expressed concerns that a group of members of the House of Lords that meets as the New Issues Group may have been collaborating with far-right activists. Baroness Cox, a member of the New Issues Group denied has denied that it is

anti-Muslim, saying that it is a meeting of people who support the aims of her private member's bill, first introduced in 2011, which aims to protect Muslim women in Britain from sharia law. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/feb/25/house-of-lords-worked-with-far-right>

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Prevent Review report

Prevent is one of the four 'pillars' of CONTEST, the Government's counter-terrorism strategy.

On 8 February the UK Government published the report by William Shawcross CVO on his Independent Review of Prevent, and its own response to it. These can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-review-of-prevents-report-and-government-response>.

The Independent Review took place during 2021 and 2022. Its Terms of Reference can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/independent-review-of-prevent>.

The Shawcross Report makes 34 recommendations and the Government's response commits to implementing these.

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COVID-19 Public Inquiry

As noted in the last issue of the IFN Newsletter, the UK Covid-19 Public Inquiry <https://covid19.public-inquiry.uk/> (the independent public inquiry set up to examine the UK's response to and impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and learn lessons for the future) has now begun its work, and a number of national faith community bodies in membership of IFN participated in an Inquiry roundtable in December. Further engagement with faith communities is planned.

As part of the Inquiry's listening exercise, members of the public can share their experiences at <https://covid19.public-inquiry.uk/share-your-experience/>. To keep up to date with Inquiry news and progress, key dates and updates on the listening exercise, you can sign up to the Inquiry newsletter at <https://covid19.public-inquiry.uk/newsletter/>.

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Faith groups respond in the UK to earthquake in Turkey and Syria

Faith groups and local inter faith groups in the UK responded to the in Turkey and Syria on 6 February through fundraising efforts; through holding vigils, such as those in Peterborough and Watford <https://www.peterborough.gov.uk/news/city-to-come-together-as-mark-of-respect-following-earthquake-in-turkey-and-syria> https://twitter.com/farzana_chaudry/status/1627326251332513794; or issuing statements encouraging support, such as this one issued by Leicester Council of Faiths <https://www.facebook.com/CouncilofFaiths/posts/pfbid02jU1dZctqYLYVkHzHpzjsBqrm7jZkfdecMVQDKVoH7tpFbvAAxhDykj36hkVsCZ3u7l>.

UK Faith-based aid agencies have worked, alongside others, to help provide support to all those affected by the earthquake in Turkey and Syria. These include CAFOD <https://cafod.org.uk/news/emergencies-news/turkey-syria-earthquake-how-your->

[support-is-helping](#), Islamic Relief <https://islamic-relief.org/news/islamic-relief-responds-as-two-devastating-earthquakes-hit-syria-and-turkiye/>, Khalsa Aid https://twitter.com/Khalsa_Aid/status/1630257726893744131 and World Jewish Relief <https://www.worldjewishrelief.org/ways-to-donate/appeals/1443-turkeysyria-earthquake-appeal>.

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Marking the one year anniversary of war in Ukraine

An 'Ecumenical and Inter-Faith Prayer Service for Peace in Ukraine' took place at the Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral in London on 24 February to mark the one year anniversary of the invasion of Ukraine. This was attended by a number of leaders and politicians, including Faith Minister, Baroness Scott of Bybrook. <https://cte.org.uk/in-prayer-and-solidarity-with-ukraine/>

A UK-wide minute's silence was held on the same day.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-minutes-silence-one-year-war-anniversary-b2288833.html>

A number of inter faith groups in the UK held vigils to mark the anniversary. These include Brighton and Hove Interfaith Contact Group <https://interfaithcontactgroup.com/> and the Multi Faith Centre at the University of Derby, in partnership with Derby Cathedral <https://multifaithcentre.org/events/sunday-prayer-vigil>.

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Special Feature - Faith communities and the Coronation Weekend 6 to 8 May

The Royal Household and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport have released further details of the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III and Her Majesty The Queen Consort. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronation-weekend-celebrations-that-will-bring-communities-together-announced> There will be a weekend of activities to celebrate this historic occasion and many opportunities for faith communities to take part. <https://www.royal.uk/coronation-weekend-plans-announced>

The Coronation will take place on the morning of Saturday 6 May at Westminster Abbey in London.

On Sunday 7 May the Coronation Big Lunch will take place, overseen and organised by the Big Lunch team at the Eden Project. Neighbours and communities across the UK are being invited to join together in streets, gardens, parks and community spaces to boost community spirit, reduce loneliness and support charities and good causes. Free downloadable resources will be made available online at <https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/the-big-lunch> to help people and communities start their Coronation Big Lunch planning.

On 7 May there will also be a special Coronation Concert staged and broadcast live at Windsor Castle, with several thousand pairs of tickets to be made available via public ballot.

Monday 8 May has been designated as an extra Bank Holiday and members of the public will be invited to take part in The Big Help Out, which will encourage people to try volunteering for themselves and join the work already being undertaken to support their

local areas. This is being organised by The Together Coalition and a wide range of partners such as The Scouts, the Royal Voluntary Service and faith groups from across the UK. It aims to highlight the positive impact volunteering has on communities across the nation and to create a lasting volunteering legacy from the Coronation Weekend. Charities can sign up to take part at <https://thebighelpout.org.uk/>.

The Coronation ceremony is performed by the archbishop of Canterbury, the most senior cleric in the Church of England, of which the monarch is supreme governor. A note exploring the role and history of coronation in the UK, published this month, can be found at: <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-9412/CBP-9412.pdf>.

Coronation Champions

In honour of the service to the country of His Majesty The King and Her Majesty The Queen Consort, the Royal Voluntary Service (RVS) has launched the Coronation Champions Awards for volunteers, an official Coronation project, linked to the Big Help Out.

The RVS is encouraging individuals, charities and organisations to submit nominations for volunteers aged 14 and over from all backgrounds and communities across the UK, who have been giving their time to a variety of causes, formally and/or informally, within the last five years. A total of 500 volunteers will be chosen as Coronation Champions and will receive a specially designed, official Coronation Champions pin and a signed certificate from The Queen Consort. There is also a 'Young Coronation Champions' category for those aged 14 to 18. All Coronation Champions will be offered the opportunity to attend an official Coronation celebration such as the Windsor Castle Coronation Concert or a Coronation Garden Party.

The deadline for nominations is 2 April. More information is at <https://www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk/volunteering/coronation-champions-awards/>.

National Lottery funding for the Coronation

Funding of up to £10,000 is available for events and activities for the Coronation through the National Lottery 'Awards for All' programme. Community groups are asked to note that it can take up to 12 weeks from the point of application submission to receiving funding if successful. Funding criteria and terms and conditions are at <https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/under10k>.

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INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK NEWS

Webinar on IFN Inter Faith Buddies scheme

A webinar about the Inter Faith Buddies scheme took place on 17 January. It was facilitated by the Executive Director and began with some introductory words about the scheme from IFN's Project Assistant, Mr Aled Vernon-Rees. This was followed by presentations on the benefits of using the scheme in local inter faith contexts by Ms Kawther Hashmi of Surrey Faith Links and by three representatives of Cornwall Faith Forum, Dr Rita Stephen, Ms Eve Salthouse and Mr Jeremy Jacobson OBE. The next item was on 'Religious/non-religious dialogues: Humanist/faith buddy dialogues', with reflections offered by Mr Yogesh Joshi, Vice-Chair of Watford Interfaith Association and Mr

Simon Nightingale of Shrewsbury Inter-Faith Forum and South Shropshire Interfaith Forum. The webinar ended with Dr Maureen Sier, Director of Inter Faith Scotland, speaking about how IfS has developed the scheme, including for World Inter Faith Harmony Week, and reflecting on the potential for its wider use.

The recording of the webinar can be found on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/webinar-on-the-inter-faith-buddies-scheme>.

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Meeting of IFN Faith Communities Forum

A meeting of the IFN Faith Communities Forum took place in February. Items on the Agenda included: Faith and social care, with a presentation by the Rt Revd James Newcome, Co-Chair of the Archbishops' Care Commission of the Church of England; National faith communities and inter faith / inter religious engagement, with presentations by Mr Rajnish Kashyap, General Secretary of the Hindu Council (UK) and Mr Peter Colwell, Deputy General Secretary of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland; The Coronation and the 'Big Help Out', with a presentation by Ms Fazila Aswat of the Together coalition; and a number of IFN Matters.

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IFN link meetings for local inter faith groups

IFN holds meetings for local inter faith groups to share news and good practice and learn from each other's work to strengthen their own and benefit their local areas. Some are for groups from across the UK. Others are for groups within a particular region or a county. They provide an opportunity for sharing of news or programmes and projects being run by each group, including opportunities and challenges. Minutes of previous link meetings can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/about/local-inter-faith-linking>.

The most recent meetings were held on 30 January and 23 February for local inter faith organisations in the East of England and in Yorkshire & Humber. The main items on the Agenda were: Round table sharing of news, information and ideas (including activities held during Inter Faith Week); and Working together for the common good. The Yorkshire & Humber meeting also included a presentation from Dr Javed Bashir of the Bradford Volunteering Interfaith Partnership programme and Revd Nathan Javed of Grace Baptist Mission Bradford, a contribution from the Revd Andy Williams, Director for Inter Faith Relations at the Blackley Centre in Elland and input from Revd Jenny Ramsden of Leeds Diocese and Religions for Peace UK Women of Faith Network.

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Feedback on 2022 Inter Faith Week

Inter Faith Week www.interfaithweek.org took place from Sunday 13 to Sunday 20 November. As noted in the last issue of the newsletter, a full list of activities can be seen at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/events/calendar>. Work on the report on the Week is underway.

If you held an activity for the Week, and have not already responded to the feedback survey, we would be very grateful if you could spare some time to share by 15 March any

thoughts or reflections that you may have on your experience of the Week. The link to the survey can be found here: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/IFW2022>.

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Support to member inter faith organisations on using social media and on websites

IFN continues to offer member local, regional and national inter faith organisations one to one sessions on Zoom or the phone to talk through questions about whether/how to use Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, as well as about running and maintaining websites. You can explore any questions - if we don't know the answer we will try and point you to someone who might. There are some places available for non-member local inter faith groups.

These 30-45 minutes sessions are run by IFN's Project Director Ashley Beck and individually tailored. If you would like to book one of the remaining available sessions in March, you can email him at Ashley.beck@interfaith.org.uk.

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

Church Mosque twinning

The Christian Muslim Forum has been growing its Church-Mosque twinning network with new partnerships being fostered in Birmingham in the West Midlands and in Luton, Bedfordshire. Twinning is a great way to learn about Christian or Muslim neighbours and to build strong bonds of friendship between church and mosque leaders.

<https://tinyurl.com/CMFtwinning>

Any churches or mosques interested in exploring connections in local communities, can email info@christianmuslimforum.org for further details.

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Inter faith tree planting

Faiths Forum for London is “engaging in a Mayor of London-backed 12-month tree planting programme which aims to plant 75 trees across multiple sites in London, enabling Londoners to benefit from a greater, healthier environment whilst engaging with local faith communities.”

The events will focus on inter faith engagement, empowering religious communities through relationship building and creating attractive public places. The Mayor of London has provided funding to enable 15 separate tree planting events, with the trees being provided free of charge. FFL is dedicating the planting of these trees to its former Trustee, Leonie Lewis who died last year (also a former IFN Trustee), and will also be raising funds to plant 25 more trees in her honour.

To find out more about hosting a tree-planting event, email stewart@faithsforum.com.

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Multi faith choir 20th anniversary

In March, multi faith community choir Sounds International will be celebrating its twentieth anniversary. The choir, based in Netherlee in Scotland, has so far raised over £80,000 for charities and local causes such as Mary's Meals, Barnardo's and Mission Voices. <https://www.glasgowtimes.co.uk/news/scottish-news/23256770.netherlee-community-choir-celebrates-20-years/>

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Faith Matters project on the history of Ugandan Asians

A significant number of members of some of the UK's faith communities have Ugandan Asian descent.

Faith Matters is inviting people of Ugandan Asian descent to become involved in its oral history project 'From East to West: The History of Ugandan Asians'.

<https://www.ugandanasians.com>

Faith Matters has already begun to upload interviews conducted by its volunteers which can be found at <https://www.ugandanasians.com/interviews-page>. It is also continuing to look to work with Ugandan Asians who experienced the 1972 expulsion directly, to be interviewed and share their lived experience.

For more information, email max.russel@faith-matters.org.

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York Interfaith Group local radio

Members of York Interfaith Group (YIG) are now contributing a daily 'Thought for the day' slot on Jorvik Radio. The project began with an interview on 3 February with Vice-Chair Dee Boyle who spoke about the history of YIG, who is involved, and where it meets. This emphasised its commitment to tolerance and respect of differences as well as the celebration of all that unites those of faith and non-religious beliefs. The contributions have become an opportunity for more people in York to hear about YIG and its work. They can be heard on the 'Love in the Morning' show at <https://listenagain.jorvikradio.com/>.

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Lincoln Spring Faith Festival

The Lincoln Spring Faith Festival, organised by The Centre for Reconciliation, University of Lincoln Multi-Faith Chaplaincy, Lincolnshire Faith Council, Students Union and Lincoln BIG, will be held from 13 to 16 March. This year's theme will be 'Hope and Resilience in turbulent times'. <https://chaplaincy.lincoln.ac.uk/spring-faith-festival/>

Over the four days there will be: a faith exhibition, in the Waterside shopping centre, demonstrating different faiths; a Faith Trail across Lincoln; a trip to the Holocaust Centre in Nottingham; a Faith Awareness Day in Leicester (including visiting the new Sikh statue, lunch at the Gurdwara, a Hindu Temple, Jain Temple and the Brahma Kumari Centre); and a festival day with a programme of speakers, workshops and prayers.

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Inter faith history trail in Willesden and Brondesbury Park

A trail describing the history of Jewish and inter faith communities in Willesden and Brondesbury Park is going to be created after receiving funding from the Mayor of London's Commission for Diversity in the Public Realm.

<https://www.london.gov.uk/media-centre/mayors-press-release/Statue-for-Ella-Adoo-Kissi-Debrah-and-memorial-for-Rolan-Adams-among-28-new-community-projects-funded-by-the-Mayor>

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Near Neighbours and women's activities

Near Neighbours, a programme administered by Church Urban Fund, the Church of England's social action charity, has been supporting a wide range of local projects involving or for women of different faiths. They highlighted this for International Women's Day on 8 March on their [Facebook page](#).

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Multi faith prayer spaces in sports venues

Multi faith prayer spaces in sports venues are becoming more common. Regal Food Products Group Plc has opened a new multi-faith prayer room at Valley Parade in partnership with Bradford City AFC. The hope is to create an inclusive space that will provide a room for reflection and prayer for those attending on match days and also encourage those in the community with an interest in football to attend.

<https://www.asianstandard.co.uk/regal-foods-open-multi-faith-prayer-room-in-partnership-with-bradford-city-afc>

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

Resources

IFN Social media guidance resource

IFN has added to its website a new section on using social media. This can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/social-media-guidance>.

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REPORT HATE CRIMES AND INCIDENTS AND WORK TOGETHER TO HELP TACKLE THEM

Report hate crimes and incidents online through True Vision or via 3rd parties eg Community Security Trust (CST), Tell Mama UK; Sikhguard and Stop Hate UK; at a police station; or by ringing the police on 101 (non-emergency) or 999.

<https://gov.uk/report-hate-crime>

<https://www.scotland.police.uk/contact-us/report-hate-crime-and-third-party-reporting/>
<https://reporhate.victimsupport.org.uk/hate-crime/>

<https://www.psni.police.uk/crime/hate-crime/reporting-a-hate-crime/>

See also *Looking after one another: the safety and security of our faith communities* (IFN and partners) which contains practical pointers for working together to counter hate crime. <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/looking-after-one-another-the-safety-and-security-of-our-faith-communities-2017>

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NaCTSO resources for places of worship

The police National Counter Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO) recommends that places of worship use the ProtectUK counter terrorism information sharing online platform to find out more on how to 'protect and prepare' against malicious acts and to access training and up to date news and messaging on threats and risks.

The main website where the guidance can be found is called Protect UK. <https://www.protectuk.police.uk/> The website also includes free e-learning packages, available to enable any individual to become more informed about the threat from terrorism and actions they can take to deal with those threats.

There is also a Protect UK app which can be accessed via Apple or Android. The app is designed for those who have more of a public facing interaction. It includes quick-time actions, for example guidance on who to contact if you find a suspicious item; and also how to find a local counter-terrorism security adviser.

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Study/Training

Strengthening Faith Institutions training

Strengthening Faith Institutions is continuing to offer a number of training courses for places of worship and faith centres. These include 'Basic Safeguarding for Children and Young Adults' held on the first Wednesday of every month (https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_BlenJAekTM6gS5283XxOzw) 'Introduction to the lead roles in safeguarding, health & safety, fire safety and first aid for faith centres' on the third Wednesday of every month (https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_OrriBI0ZRLKbQsZGI2WpZg) and 'Basic Health & Safety, Fire Safety and Fire Marshal courses for faith centres' on the fourth Wednesday of every month (https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_GDJBj-zuRHWNrIjd4UKNUQ).

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS AND NOMINATIONS

Calls for information

Commission on the Integration of Refugees – Call for evidence

The Commission on the Integration of Refugees is convened by the Woolf Institute in Cambridge which explores the relationship between religion and society. It is independent and describes itself as undertaking a holistic review of the UK refugee and asylum system, with an aim to improving the integration of refugees. The Chair of the Commission is Lord

Alex Carlile, the Vice-Chair is Rt Revd Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani and the Convenor is Dr Edward Kessler.

The Commission has released a Call for Evidence, which will remain open until 31 March. It is keen to hear from as broad a range of views as possible, especially from faith communities. Evidence can be submitted, as an individual or an organisation, by completing the form on the website at <https://refugeeintegrationuk.com/call-for-evidence/>. You can also complete this pdf form: https://refugeeintegrationuk.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/CIR_Call_for_Evidence.pdf and return it to the Commission at contact@refugeeintegrationuk.com.

Any questions about the Commission or the Call for Evidence, can be directed to Chris Cooper-Davies, Head of the Commission Secretariat at cc961@cam.ac.uk.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

The Inter Faith Network for the UK - Volunteers

The Inter Faith Network for the UK currently has an opportunity for online volunteers with good desk research and writing skills who would like to offer 4-8 hours a week to help on different aspects of IFN's work to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. To express an interest in volunteering, please complete the application form at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/volunteering>.

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Faith & Belief Forum - Programmes Coordinator

The Faith & Belief Forum is currently seeking a Programmes Coordinator, Communities. The successful candidate will lead on community projects and engagement events in London, including the delivery of The London Interfaith Fun Run, London Faith & Belief Community Awards, and local community awards. The role is full-time, partly working from home and partly working from the F&BF office in London. The deadline is a rolling one. Further information can be found at <https://faithbeliefforum.org/career/programmes-coordinator-communities/>.

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Brent Multi Faith Forum – Office Administrator

Brent Multi-Faith Forum is currently seeking an Office Administrator. The successful candidate will work remotely for one day per week and will be responsible for managing the administrative tasks of the forum. The closing date for applications is 17 March. For more information, visit <https://brentmultifaithforum.substack.com/p/february-2023-newsletter>.

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Council of Christians and Jews – Trustees

The Council of Christians and Jews is currently seeking Trustees to join its Trustee Board and an Honorary Secretary (Jewish). For more information about the process for

application and to download the Trustee Recruitment pack visit <https://ccj.org.uk/about/trustees>.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

UK Government Find a Grant programme

The UK Government's Find a Grant programme currently includes 53 grant schemes and can be found at <https://www.find-government-grants.service.gov.uk/>.

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Funding websites

My Funding Central is a database of grant funding and social investment sources. This service is available to organisations with an annual income below £1m and is free for organisations under £30k. <https://www.myfundingcentral.co.uk/> Similar websites for funding in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at Funding Scotland - <https://funding.scot/>, Wales Council for Voluntary Action - <http://www.wcva.cymru./funding> and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland - <https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

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Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme

The Listed Places of Worship (LPW) Grant Scheme gives grants that cover the VAT incurred in making repairs to listed buildings in use as places of worship. The scheme covers repairs to the fabric of the building, along with associated professional fees. The Grant Scheme is run by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and its administration has, since July, been run by East Midland Business. In response to user feedback, it is now possible to submit digital application forms, as well as using postal options. <http://www.lpwscheme.org.uk/>

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FCC Community Action Fund

The FCC Communities Foundation is offering grants between £2,000 and £100,000 for projects which involve the provision, maintenance or improvement of public amenities including community spaces in places of worship, which are registered charities. Projects must be based within 10 miles of an eligible FCC Environment waste facility. The next round opens on 22 March. <https://fcccommunitiesfoundation.org.uk/funds/fcc-community-action-fund>

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS/MONTHS

Fairtrade Fortnight runs until Sunday 12 March. Many places of worship take part. <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/get-involved/current-campaigns/fairtrade-fortnight/>

International Women's Day is on 8 March. Its theme this year is '#EmbraceEquity'. Many faith and inter faith bodies mark the day. <https://www.internationalwomensday.com/> See Diary Dates for some inter faith events taking place in the UK.

The Coronation Big Lunch is an official part of the Coronation Weekend from 6 to 8 May. Across the years millions of people from different backgrounds have joined together to take part in the Big Lunch through street parties, BBQs, iftars and picnics. Participants can also hold their Big Lunch anytime in June, throughout the Month of Community. <https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/the-big-lunch>

Refugee Week will take place from Monday 19 to Sunday 25 June. Refugee Week is a nationwide programme of arts, cultural and educational events that celebrate the contribution of refugees to the UK, and encourages a better understanding between communities. The theme for the 2023 Week is 'Compassion'. <https://refugeeweek.org.uk/> 2023 marks its 25th year.

The Great Get Together, inspired by the late Jo Cox MP, is taking place from Friday 23 to Monday 26 June. <https://www.greatgettogether.org/>

Srebrenica Memorial Day takes place each year on 11 July. This year's theme is 'Together We Are One'. It is organised by Remembering Srebrenica. <http://www.srebrenica.org.uk/>

National Hate Crime Awareness Week takes place from Saturday 14 October to Saturday 21 October. <https://nationalhcaw.uk/>

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DIARY DATES

A few examples of forthcoming events are listed below. Those listed are all virtual, except where noted. Events are also listed on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/events>.

Redbridge Faith Forum is holding a women's inter faith workshop on Thursday 9 March for International Women's Day. The theme will be 'Exploring Faith and Mental Health'. It is being held from 1.15pm to 3.15pm at VHP Ilford Hindu Centre, 55 Albert Road, Ilford IG1 1HJ. For more information, email faith.forum@redbridge.gov.uk.

Council of Christians and Jews South East London branch is holding its next meeting on Tuesday 14 March. The theme will be 'Is there a role today for Christianity and/or Judaism in setting standards for British public service?' and the speakers will be Daniel Greenberg, Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards and Helen Hayes MP Dulwich and West Norwood. It will be held at 8.00 pm, with refreshments from 7.45pm, at St Stephen's Church, College Road, Dulwich SE21 7HN. Attendees are asked to pre-register by emailing stephenweil6@gmail.com.

The **St Philip's Centre in Leicester** is holding the next in its series of 'Abrahamic Conversations' on Tuesday 14 March. The theme will be 'Fasting' and the speakers will be Uri Gordon, Rabiha Hannan and the Revd Dr Tom Wilson. It is being held from 7pm to 8.30pm at the St Philip's Centre, 2a Stoughton Drive North, Leicester LE5 5UB. For more information, email admin@stphilipscentre.co.uk.

Interfaith Glasgow, in partnership with the **Scottish Ahlul Bayt Society** and **Cathcart Old Parish Church**, is holding a scriptural reasoning event for Christians, Jews and Muslims on Tuesday 14 March. The topic will be 'Fasting'. It is being held from 6pm to 8.30pm at Cathcart Old Parish Church, 119 Carmunnock Road Glasgow G44 5UW. For more information, and to register, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/scriptural-reasoning-fasting-tickets-541019532987>.

Hull and East Riding Interfaith will be holding its next meeting on Tuesday 14 March. The topic will be 'The nature of, and language used, to describe the Divine' and the speakers will be from the following faiths: Islam, Orthodox Judaism, Humanism and Roman Catholicism. The meeting is being held from 5.30pm to 7pm at the Guildhall in Kingston upon Hull. There will be refreshments from 5pm. It will also be possible to join the meeting remotely. For more information, email mapliener@pliener.karoo.co.uk.

Shirley House Interfaith Centre is holding an 'Any Questions' event on Wednesday 15 March. Is there something you want to know about a particular faith or belief? Or to hear different faiths' ideas about an issue? A diverse panel will try to answer questions submitted in advance. It is being held at 7:30 pm at Shirley House Interfaith Centre, 31 Psalter Lane, Sheffield, S11 8YL and it will also be possible to join via Zoom. For more information, ring 0114 258 8932 or email shirleyhouseinterfaith@gmail.com.

Telford and Wrekin Interfaith Council is organising this year's Love Telford event on Saturday 18 March. It is being held from 12pm to 4pm in Southwater. The event will include cultural music and performances, sports and arts activities, acrobats, crafts and more. For further information, email hello@interfaithtelford.org or visit <https://newsroom.telford.gov.uk/News/Details/16674>.

Barnet Multi Faith Forum and **Middlesex University Inter Faith Network** are holding an event on Monday 20 March to celebrate the Sikh Festival of Vaisakhi. This will be a screening of the film Bend it like Beckham followed by a panel discussion. Cllr. The panel will include Caroline Stock, International Politics & Law, Alumna Milijana Bodroza, Dr James Charlton, the Revd Julie Gittos, Rabbi Jeff Berger and Anna Hussain from Nisa-Nashim. It is being held from 4pm to 7pm at Middlesex University and online. For more information and to register, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/bend-it-like-beckham-faith-discussion-and-live-film-screening-on-campus-tickets-522644593047>.

The St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace is holding Nowruz Celebrations on Tuesday 21 March. Nowruz is celebrated as the beginning of the new year by more than 300 million people all around the world and has been celebrated for over 3,000 years in the Balkans, the Black Sea area, the Caucasus, Central Asia, the Middle East. The St Ethelburga's Centre invites people to join them as they celebrate Nowruz with live music, traditional sweets and decorations. The event is being held from 6.30pm to 9pm at the Centre in London. For more information contact Jo Winsloe Slater jo.winsloe@stethelburgas.org.

Crawley Interfaith Network is holding its next meeting on Wednesday 22 March. The theme will be 'Spotlight on Sikhism'. After the talk, there will be time for questions & answers, discussion and light refreshment. It is being held at 7.30pm in person at Crawley Sikh Gurdwara, Ifield Green, Crawley RH11 0NU. For more information, email ashel@hotmail.co.uk.

Norwich InterFaith Link will be holding its next meeting on Thursday 23 March. The theme will be 'The Appeal of Jewish traditions'. The speakers will be Melina and

Dennis D'Costa who have a Sephardic lineage from India. It is being held at 7pm. For more information, contact NIFL through <https://norwichinterfaithlink.wordpress.com/contact-us/contact-us/>.

The **Muslim Jewish Forum of Greater Manchester** will be holding an Interfaith Iftar on Sunday 26 March. Speakers will include: Cllr Heather Fletcher — MJF Co-Chair (Master of Ceremonies); Mr Sajjad Amin — President, Khizra Mosque; Mrs Diane Hawkins JP LLB — The Lord-Lieutenant of Greater Manchester; Mr Afzal Khan CBE — MP for Manchester Gorton; Rabbi Robyn Ashworth-Steen — Principal Rabbi, Manchester Reform Synagogue. It will be held in the evening at Khizra Mosque & Community Centre, 425 Cheetham Hill Road, Manchester, M8 0PF. Booking by 19 March is essential. For more information, visit https://www.muslimjewish.org.uk/Future_events.html.

St George's Hospital Charity and the **Naz Legacy Foundation** are holding an Interfaith Iftar on Tuesday 28 March. The evening is being held to raise funds for the Time for a Change Appeal, aiming to transform Children's Services at St George's Hospital in South London. Guests are invited attend to share food, to share stories and to share thanks with their local community. It is being held from 6.30pm to 9pm at the Royal Mahal Banqueting Suite in Tooting. Tickets are free, with a suggested donation for food and drink provided. For more information, and to book, visit <https://www.stgeorghospitalcharity.org.uk/get-involved/events/special-events/iftar>.

Windsor and Maidenhead Community Forum's Women's Group is holding its next meeting on Monday 27 March. They will be exploring the role of women in religious learning in Sikhism. The meeting is being held from 7.30pm to 9pm at The Maidenhead Gurdwara, Rutland Road, Maidenhead SL6 4HZ. For more information, email samuelsberks@aol.com.

Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship will be holding its next meeting on Thursday 27 April. The theme will be 'Christian perspectives on freedom and enslavement' and the speaker will be Dr Stanley Pearson. It is being held at 7.30pm at the Roscoe Methodist Church, 132 Chapeltown Rd, Leeds LS7 4EE. For more information, email chair@concord-leeds.org.uk.

Windsor and Maidenhead Community Forum is holding its next dialogue event on Thursday 27 April. The Topic will be 'What is the role of faith in creating a more peaceful world?' It is being held at 8.30pm at Maidenhead Synagogue, Grenfell Lodge, Ray Park Road, Maidenhead SL6 8QX. For more information, email samuelsberks@aol.com.

More information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: <https://www.interfaithcouncilwales.cymru/>

IFN also carries news and information at www.twitter.com/IFNetUK, www.facebook.com/IFNetUK and, about Inter Faith Week, at <https://twitter.com/IFweek> and www.facebook.com/IFWeek.

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You can sign up to IFN mailings at any time by using the form on IFN's website at: www.interfaith.org.uk/news/gdpr or let us know that you would like to unsubscribe by emailing ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

**SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK
TO INCREASE INTER FAITH UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION**

The Inter Faith Network for the UK works for inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. Please help us grow this vital work by making a donation at: <https://interfaith.org.uk/donate> (including Paypal option).

Donations can also be made by sending a cheque payable to 'The Inter Faith Network' to: The Inter Faith Network for the UK, Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufton Street, London, SW1P 3RB.

Donations are used with care to make a real difference.

Thank you!

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**MAKE A GIFT TO SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK IN REMEMBRANCE
OF A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND OR THROUGH A LEGACY**

If you would like to make a gift in memory of a loved one, please get in touch by emailing remember@interfaith.org.uk or call us on 0207 730 0410.

By leaving a gift in your will to the Inter Faith Network for the UK, you can leave a living inheritance to help deepen and strengthen inter faith understanding and cooperation in this country – for now and for the future. If you are thinking about making a will, the best thing to do is to get in touch with a professional will writer, such as a solicitor or advocate; they can help to ensure it is legally correct and that your wishes are met. If you have already made a will, you can still make an addition or amendment in the form of a codicil. If you would like to pledge a gift, please provide our name and address, along with our registered charity number 1068934.

Please get in touch with us if you have any queries.

You can call us on 0207 730 0410 or contact us at remember@interfaith.org.uk.

Remember a Charity has produced a helpful resource called 'Making a Will - your complete guide'. This can be found at <https://www.rememberacharity.org.uk/making-a-will/>.

Submissions for next issue

If you have items about inter faith projects or future events which you would like considered for inclusion in the next newsletter please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk **by 28 April** with 'newsletter' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

If your organisation distributes a programme, newsletter or e-bulletin, please add ifnet@interfaith.org.uk to your mailing list.

Disclaimer: Information in this newsletter has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this newsletter does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

The Inter Faith Network for the UK, Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufton Street, London, SW1P 3RB
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Inter Faith Network Newsletter

May 2023 – Special issue

Contents

This edition is a short 'Coronation Extra'. The usual newsletter will be published in due course.

FAITH COMMUNITIES AND THE CORONATION

The Coronation and the events forming the Coronation Weekend will see involvement of faith communities in many ways.

The Coronation

The Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III and Her Majesty Queen Camilla will take place on the morning of Saturday 6 May at Westminster Abbey.

Although a Christian service, a number of faith leaders and representatives will be involved. The Church of England website notes that "This represents the multi-faith nature of our society and the importance of inclusion of other faiths whilst respecting the integrities of the different traditions."

Faith leaders and representatives from the Baha'i, Buddhist, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Sikh, Sunni and Shia Muslim, and Zoroastrian communities will be part of the procession into Westminster Abbey.

During the service The King will be presented with four items of regalia by peers from Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh communities.

At the end of the final outward procession, The King will receive the following greeting from leaders and representatives from Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh communities: "Your Majesty, as neighbours in faith, we acknowledge the value of public service.

We unite with people of all faiths and beliefs in thanksgiving, and in service with you for the common good."

The Coronation liturgy can be found at <https://www.churchofengland.org/coronation/liturgy>.

Contributing to a Churches Together in England website feature, IFN Co-Chairs Revd Canon Hilary Barber and Narendra Waghela said:

“The Coronation of HM King Charles III is centred on a Christian service. The Coronation will also see, for the first time, members of other faiths playing an active role in events. These two dimensions reflect the long history of the monarchy and traditions of coronation; the Christian beliefs and role of HM The King; and also His commitment to the continued development of the harmonious coexistence of people of different faiths, beliefs and cultures in the UK and in the Commonwealth. It will be a powerful symbolic expression of how a person’s deep rootedness in one tradition – for HM The King, the Christian faith – can give rise to, and be manifested in, respectful and positive engagement with people of other faiths and beliefs.”

The Board of IFN has conveyed, through its Co-Chairs, greetings to His Majesty King Charles III and Her Majesty Queen Camilla on the occasion of the Coronation, saying to HM The King:

“We express our gratitude for your highlighting of the important role that the diverse cultures, traditions and beliefs of the faith communities play in the life of the UK and the Commonwealth and the active role that you take in fostering this.

The Inter Faith Network links national faith community representative bodies, national, regional and local inter faith organisations and educational and academic bodies with an inter faith focus. It has worked with them since 1987 for inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. Your longstanding commitment to positive engagement between people of different faiths has been a continual encouragement to us.

We pray for blessings on your Majesty and HM The Queen throughout your reign.”

Bells at Llandaff Cathedral will ring to celebrate the Coronation for almost two hours before the ceremony at Westminster Abbey. On Sunday, a Coronation Civic Service will take place at St David’s Cathedral, which will be filmed by BBC Wales.

A special Service of Dedication and Thanksgiving will be held at St Giles’ Cathedral in Edinburgh later this year when The King will be presented with the Honours of Scotland.

A cross-community Service of Thanksgiving was held at St Patrick’s Church of Ireland Cathedral in Armagh on 2 May.

There have been many local services with prayers and readings from different faiths, such a county-wide countywide Coronation Service at All Saints’ Church in Northampton on 30th April. <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064860183994>

Coronation Big Lunch

On Sunday 7 May the Coronation Big Lunch will take place, overseen and organised by the Big Lunch team at the Eden Project. Neighbours and communities across the UK are being invited to join together in streets, gardens, parks and community spaces to boost community spirit, reduce loneliness and support charities and good causes. Further information is at <https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/the-big-lunch>.

Local faith and inter faith groups around the UK will be taking part. Faiths Together in Croydon, for example, will be holding a Coronation Big Picnic

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/FaitsTogetherInCroydon/posts/3407172289532253/>, Birmingham Central Mosque will be holding a Coronation event <https://twitter.com/5Pillarsuk/status/1652615185843081216> and faith communities will be gathering in Oxford for a Big Lunch <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/coronation-big-lunch-oxford-interfaith-community-lunch-tickets-601584093217>.

Some gatherings have taken place ahead of the Coronation Weekend. These include a pre-Coronation tea for faith leaders at Bhaktivedanta Manor in Hertfordshire <https://www.krishnatemple.com/coronation-interfaith-lieutenant/>

A map of events taking place across the UK can be found at <https://coronation.gov.uk/events/>.

Coronation Concert

On 7 May there will also be a special Coronation Concert staged and broadcast live at Windsor Castle.

The Big Help Out

Monday 8 May has been designated as an extra Bank Holiday will see the launch of the Big Help Out. This is a project which aims to encourage people to try volunteering for themselves and join the work being undertaken to support their local areas.

Volunteering opportunities are being made available through an app which can be downloaded from <https://thebighelpout.org.uk/join-in/>. Organisations who are seeking volunteers to support their work, can register their events at <https://thebighelpout.org.uk/organise-an-event/>. Some examples from faith communities include a beach clean-up led by the Archbishop of Wales, a litter pick led by Bradford Cathedral in collaboration with Don't Mess With Bradford and Bradford city council, the provision of hundreds of hot meals for the homeless in London led by Central Gurdwara London and a gardening project and mural led by the Northern Ireland Interfaith Forum. <https://www.easterneye.biz/faith-communities-in-uk-unite-to-support-the-big-help-out/>

Faith leaders have been encouraging faith communities to get involved in the Big Help Out. Last month a number of faith leaders volunteered at The Passage Charity in London to highlight the importance of faith communities as sources of volunteering. <https://www.facebook.com/ifnetuk/posts/pfbid0d2snEhY1wYEXCqYSruc5SgMrDgiotrusmWvhybUgfeFV6Reucb4QHojMz3aGt9CdI> A number signed a letter which was published on 30 April in the Times and a number of local papers. <https://www.times-series.co.uk/news/national/23490861.faith-leaders-unite-encourage-communities-volunteer-coronation-weekend/>

Coronation Faith Walks

Coronation faith walks will be taking part in a number of areas around the UK. They are being organised by local participants with the Fayre Share Foundation. These include, for example, walks organised in Barnet <https://barnetmultifaithforum.org/event/walk-of-faith-coronation-weekend/>, Cardiff <https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=558462703097158&set=a.310384661238298>, Walsall <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/coronation-walk-of-faith-walsall-tickets-620776086987> and Westminster <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/coronation-walk-of-faith-tickets-630118490367?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>.

SUPPORT THE WORK OF THE INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK

Match funding offered for new Appeal

The importance of inter faith dialogue and cooperation is a theme which has recently been gaining prominence on many fronts, as is religious literacy.

The Inter Faith Network is the UK's inter faith linking body, working since 1987 to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation and contribute to a society where there is understanding of the diversity and richness of the faith communities in the UK and the contribution that they make; and where we live and work together with mutual respect and shared commitment to the common good.

Please do consider a donation to a new Appeal launched by IFN's Board to support its vital work and enable this to continue at a time of significant financial challenges.

Match funding has been made available for all donations received up the first £15,000.

You can donate at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/donate> or directly by PayPal at www.paypal.me/ifnetuk. Thank you.

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The Inter Faith Network for the UK, Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufton Street, London, SW1P 3RB
www.interfaith.org.uk www.facebook.com/IFNetUK www.twitter.com/IFNetUK

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Inter Faith Network Newsletter

July / August 2023

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

Places of Worship security funding schemes

The Home Office has announced that in 2023 and 2024, it will be continuing to provide protective security measures to places of worship in England and Wales under two schemes: Places of Worship Protective Security Funding Scheme; and Protective Security for Mosques Scheme. (The Jewish community receives funding for schools, synagogues and other community sites through a separate scheme called the Jewish Community Protective Security Grant.)

The schemes provide funding for places of worship and associated faith community centres that are vulnerable to hate crime. Places of worship can apply for physical protective security measures, such as CCTV, secure fencing, and intruder alarms. Applicants to the Protective Security for Mosques Scheme are also able to apply for security guarding services. The deadline for applications is 15 August 2023. Further information is at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/places-of-worship-security-funding-scheme>.

References to the security funding schemes are included in the UK Government's updated counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST, which was published on 18 July <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counter-terrorism-strategy-contest-2023>

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Faith engagement with legislation on migration

The Illegal Migration Act 2023 passed into law on 20 July.

When this was introduced as a Bill in March, responses of concern were made by some faith community bodies, with the Archbishop of Canterbury proposing two amendments to the Bill as it entered Committee Stage. These were not accepted. At the start of World Refugee Week in June, 14 faith leaders came together in a film voicing their concerns. This can be found on the Churches Together in Britain and Ireland website at <https://ctbi.org.uk/refugee-week-faith-leaders-show-support-for-refugees/>.

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SACREs and Humanists

A High Court decision in May, relating to a case in which the Chair of a local Humanist organisation in Kent was refused a place on the local Standard Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE), clarified that local authorities cannot exclude Humanist representatives from their SACREs.

<https://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Admin/2023/1261.html> In July, it was reported that Kent County Council would not appeal the decision.

<https://humanists.uk/2023/07/20/no-appeal-in-landmark-high-court-win-for-humanism-in-re/>

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Multi faith households

Almost 300,000 households across England and Wales have people of different religions living alongside each other, according to analysis of Census data collected and published for the first time.

The proportion is as high as 1 in 20 in some areas of London. The highest figures in England outside London are Slough, Hertsmere and Oxford (both 3.8 per cent). The highest in Wales is Cardiff (1.8 per cent) and Newport (1 per cent).

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/religion-census-england-wales-b2382668.html>

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Faith Friendly Workplaces

A 'Faith Friendly Workplaces' initiative was launched in May last year by the Thames Water multi-faith group. It grew out of a perception that within company Diversity & Inclusion frameworks, faith networks were often badly supported or missing completely, and HR managers felt faith was something that was too complicated and that groups had difficulty defining objectives. Around 20 companies have connected in with this. The Multifaith Centre at the University of Derby is supporting this initiative. In July, a linked summit on faith in the workplace was held at Number 10 Downing Street, where employers spoke with the Prime Minister's advisers about encouraging faith friendly policies. It was announced at that event that a national summit on Faith-and-Belief@Work will be held on 20 November in London. <https://religionmediacentre.org.uk/news/faith-friendly-policies-improve-workplaces-companies-tell-no-10/>

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Faiths and climate change

Faith communities continue to engage with the issue of tackling climate change. At national level this has seen such recent actions as the Church of England announcing divestment from fossil fuels. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jun/22/c-of-e-divests-of-fossil-fuels-as-oil-and-gas-firms-ditch-climate-pledges> as well as joining in cross-faith advocacy and initiatives such as those led by Faith for the Climate <https://faithfortheclimate.org.uk/advocacy/> and the Climate Justice Coalition.

Faith communities are also working to reduce the carbon footprint and improve the environmental sustainability of their buildings. A recent feature by Islamic Relief, for example, highlights its Greening our Mosques project <https://www.islamic-relief.org.uk/greening-our-mosques-leading-by-example/>

Regional and local religious leaders have also been taking forward this agenda – sometimes beyond their areas. The Mayor of Greater Manchester and Christian, Sikh, Jewish, Hindu, and Muslim leaders from the region met the Pope to pledge a commitment to tackle climate change. The group, led by the Bishop of Salford and the Dean of Manchester, had a private audience with Pope Francis at The Vatican. They discussed the work that was already going on in Greater Manchester and committed to take further action. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cyjplllpv7ko>

<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/bishop-arnold-presents-interfaith-environment-pledge-to-pope-francis/>

Inter Faith Week 2023

#InterFaithWeek will take place across England, Northern Ireland and Wales from Sunday 12 to Sunday 19 November. This will be the 15th Inter Faith Week.

Each year, the Week makes a significant contribution to inter faith understanding, harmony and cooperation. Thousands take part directly in Inter Faith Week activities, and millions encounter the Week's positive messages through social media.

The three Aims of Inter Faith Week are to:

- Strengthen good inter faith relations at all levels
- Increase awareness of the different and distinct faith communities in the UK, celebrating and building on the contribution which their members make to their neighbourhoods and to wider society
- Increase understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs

The Week begins on Remembrance Sunday to encourage the remembering together of service of soldiers and civilians of different faiths and beliefs from Britain and the Commonwealth and to reflect on peace. You can find a special resource about that at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/remembrance>.

The Inter Faith Week website www.interfaithweek.org has lots of activity ideas (see the Resources section), with examples drawn from the many successful activities held for the Week to date by faith and belief bodies; local inter faith organisations; community and voluntary organisations; workplaces and staff networks; local authorities; emergency services; SACREs; schools, colleges, universities and youth organisations; chaplaincies; sports organisations; libraries; museums and art galleries; hospitals and hospices; and many others. The website is managed by the Inter Faith Network for the UK which leads on Inter Faith Week, in consultation with the national inter faith linking bodies of Northern Ireland and Wales regarding activities in their nations.

The flyer for the Week can be downloaded from <https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/flyer>. For printed copies, contact interfaithweek@interfaith.org.uk. Social media assets, such as the Week logo, can be downloaded from <https://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/publicity-and-branding>, where you can also order the colourful and popular Inter Faith Week badges (bulk rates available).

Scottish Interfaith Week, which was the inspiration for Inter Faith Week, will also be held from Sunday 12 to Sunday 19 November. Running since 2004, it is led by Interfaith Scotland. It is designed to provide an opportunity for inter faith groups, faith communities, schools, organisations and local communities across the country to celebrate Scotland's religious diversity by planning events that bring people together to promote dialogue, understanding and co-operation between Scotland's diverse religious communities and cultures. Scottish Interfaith Week takes a different theme each year. This year it is 'Community'. www.scottishinterfaithweek.org

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INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK NEWS

IFN funding

In early July, IFN received notification from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities that, following a review by ministers of funded programmes across the Communities and Integration portfolio, funding was being offered towards IFN's work for the period from July 2023 to March 2024. This followed a three month period of absence of Government funding and uncertainty about the future of IFN's work after a notification from Government at the end of March that funding would not continue from April. During that period, many organisations and individuals wrote to the Ministers and their MPs about the importance of the work of the Inter Faith Network for the UK and some contributed to an ongoing urgent Appeal. The Board of IFN is very grateful to all who have assisted – and continue to assist – towards sustaining IFN's important work to support the development and deepening of inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK.

Like many other charities, IFN faces steep challenges in resourcing its work. If you are a newsletter reader who sees the significance of IFN's contribution to the continued development of a harmonious, diverse UK marked by inter faith understanding and cooperation, please do consider a donation to support IFN's work.

SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK TO INCREASE INTER FAITH UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION

The Inter Faith Network for the UK works for inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. Please help us sustain and develop this vital work by making a donation at: <https://interfaith.org.uk/donate>, or directly via PayPal at www.paypal.me/ifnetuk or by [BACS](#)/ Standing Order to: CAF Bank Ltd, Sort Code: 40-52-40, Account Number: 00019472.

Donations can also be made by sending a cheque payable to 'The Inter Faith Network' to: The Inter Faith Network for the UK, Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufton Street, London, SW1P 3RB.

At the moment, donations are being matched and so have double the value.

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IFN National Meeting on 'Educating for Religious Literacy'

IFN's 2023 National Meeting took place on 12 July on the theme of 'Educating for Religious Literacy'. Presentations included: 'What do we mean by religious literacy & how does RE in schools contribute to this?', Dr Kathryn Wright, CEO, Culham St Gabriel's Trust; 'Faith communities & RE: contributing to religious literacy through SACREs and through educational programmes', Dr Sheila Gewolb, National Association of SACRES and The Board of Deputies of British Jews; 'Religious literacy in a digital age: media & online content as routes of transmission and learning', Dr Jasjit Singh, Assoc Prof University of

Leeds and Adviser to Religion Media Centre , with response from Rajnish Kashyap, General Secretary, Hindu Council UK; ‘How may special focus programmes in HE help increase religious literacy – the example of Cambridge Interfaith Programme’, Dr Iona Hine, Communications and Programme Manager, Cambridge-Interfaith Programme, University of Cambridge; ‘Increased religious literacy through opportunities for encounter’, the Revd Gavin Wort, Lead Chaplain, Durham University, Vice-Chair Newcastle Council of Faiths and Chair of County Durham Faith Network; ‘Working effectively for religious literacy in different sectors across society’ by Professor Adam Dinham, Goldsmiths, University of London, with response from Dr Abdul-Azim Ahmed, Secretary General, Muslim Council of Wales and Inter Faith Council for Wales; closing reflections from Ashwin Soni, Crawley Inter Faith Network; Tracy Prior, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; and Dr Harriet Crabtree Executive Director, Inter Faith Network for the UK.

There were also workshops on different aspects of religious literacy: ‘Local inter faith organisations and working for religious literacy’, Rabbi Warren Elf and Margaret Calvert, Faith Network for Manchester, and Tripti Megeri, Bristol Multi-Faith Forum; ‘Religious literacy in the workplace’, with a presentation by Brad McLaughlin, lead for multi faith work at Aviva and Faith Friendly Workplaces; ‘Religious literacy and government’, with opening reflections from Mike Stygal, Inter Faith Officer, Pagan Federation; ‘Inter Faith Week as a platform for encouraging religious literacy’, with presentations from Jay Anderson, Leeds Faiths Forum and Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship, IFN Trustee, Es Rosen, Barnet Multi Faith Forum and Dr Peter Rookes, Birmingham Council of Faiths; ‘Media (including social media) and religious literacy’, with opening reflections from Dr Maureen Sier, Director, Interfaith Scotland and member, Scottish Advisory Committee on Religion and Ethics (BBC Scotland); and ‘Religious literacy and skills for inter faith engagement’, with a presentation from Dr Norman Richardson, Honorary Fellow, Stranmillis University College and Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum.

A report on the day, and videos of plenary presentations, will both be made available in due course.

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Meeting of IFN Faith Communities Forum

A meeting of the IFN Faith Communities Forum took place in June. The meeting focused on discussion of current issues including the publication of the Colin Bloom Report and faith engagement with legislation on migration. There was also discussion of issues of interest and concern, inter faith engagement of faith communities and a number of IFN matters, such as funding, the National Meeting and Inter Faith Week.

Information about the Faith Communities Forum can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/about/faith-communities-forum>.

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Looking after one another: The safety and security of our faith communities

IFN has recently updated the resource section of its document *Looking after one another: The safety and security of our faith communities*. This document was originally created in consultation with the Crown Prosecution Service; the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities; the Equality and Human Rights Commission; the Home Office;

the National Fire Chiefs' Council; and the National Police Chiefs' Council, and the new version likewise.

The document is an important resource for faith and inter faith organisations and for all those working for the safety of communities and their members. It can be downloaded at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/looking-after-one-another-the-safety-and-security-of-our-faith-communities-2023>.

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Inter faith award for IFN Executive Director

On 27 June IFN's Executive Director, Dr Harriet Crabtree, was presented – together with the Rt Revd and Rt Hon Lord Chartres and Sir Stephen Timms – with the Sternberg Interfaith Gold Medallion. The award, presented by Michael Sternberg, recognises "those who have endeavoured to make an exceptional contribution to the improvement of understanding between the faiths in the United Kingdom, and across the world". Dr Crabtree commented that the award reflects the importance of the work of the Inter Faith Network for the UK, for which she has served as Executive Director since 2007.

<https://twitter.com/SSternbergCF/status/1673789967112232961>

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

CCJ Campus Leadership programme

Applications are now open for the Council of Christians and Jews Campus Leadership Programme 2023-24. The programme appoints and supports student leaders to create student-led inter faith initiatives which meet the needs of their universities. It is open to students of all faiths and beliefs at any university in the UK. For more information, email campusleadership@ccj.org.uk.

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Religions for Peace EcoPeace Café

Religions for Peace UK Interfaith Youth Network has launched a new EcoPeace Café project. The programme aims to encourage young people to take on learning through active engagement with pressing issues, from the environment and social justice, to the relationship between climate change and human conflict. Sessions are being held throughout August. For more information, email Cinde Lee at chair@rfpuk.org.

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Bishop Auckland and St Mungo's museums

A Faith Museum in Bishop Auckland will open in October. It will explore "the ways in which faith has shaped lives and communities across Britain through rarely seen objects, national treasures, personal testimonies and contemporary commissions." The Faith Museum is described as having been created in collaboration with inter faith leaders, academic specialists, and local communities and will feature more than 250 objects from 50 institutions and private collections across England, Scotland, and Wales as well as the

museum's own collection. It is part of the wider restoration and redevelopment of The Auckland Project, which has been made possible with a £12.4m grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund. <https://www.prolificnorth.co.uk/news/bishop-aucklands-faith-museum-announces-opening-date/>

Glasgow's St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art, established in 1993, was threatened with closure after the pandemic due to funding cuts and loss of income. However, it was saved last year after a campaign. It continues its work to promote understanding and respect between people of different faiths and those of none through its exhibits about the world's religions and through events, from family-friendly activities to talks about culture and religion in Scotland today. It also now has what is described as the first Zen garden in Britain.

<https://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/museums/venues/st-mungo-museum-of-religious-life-and-art>

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Brighton inter faith group appointed as Mayor's chaplain

Brighton's new Mayor, Cllr Jackie O'Quinn, has appointed the Brighton and Hove Interfaith Contact Group to serve as her Chaplain. Commenting on her decision, the Mayor said: *"Ours is a diverse community of many faiths. It seems only logical to use the IFCG, who are so well regarded for their work, to bring me closer to our city's people, and address the people of Brighton and Hove with representatives from their own communities and other groups that know and work with them so diligently and successfully."* This is not the first time that a Mayor has chosen the IFCG to serve as Chaplain. From 2020 to 2022 then Mayor, Cllr Alan Robins, did so, both during and after the pandemic.

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Dagenham faith leaders network

FaithAction is working with London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Council to create a network of faith leaders collectively responding to the cost-of-living crisis locally. Initial priorities are to form relationships, signpost and cross-refer to services, and distribute a small hardship fund. Faith leaders based in the borough who wish to join the group (or know someone who might) are invited to contact: andrew.welsby@faithaction.net

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Welcoming asylum seekers and refugees in Scotland

Aberdeen Interfaith has been holding 'You Me and a Cup of Tea' events across the north-east of Scotland, designed to allow members of the local community, refugees and asylum seekers to meet each other. The most recent one was held in July for the Moray community. <https://www.northern-scot.co.uk/news/organisers-blown-over-by-success-of-elgin-refugee-and-asyl-319274/>

Interfaith Glasgow has recently been fundraising to keep in operation its Weekend Club for refugees which has, since 2015, been working to provide an interfaith response to the social isolation of refugees. They recently released a new video about this: [New Weekend Club Video! - Interfaith Glasgow](#)

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Local inter faith anniversaries

Anniversaries are a time when local inter faith groups celebrate their achievements and look to the future. Altrincham Interfaith Group (AIG) recently marked its 20th Anniversary with celebrations that included a Grand Anniversary Tea party. This began with a welcome from its Chair and a greeting from the Mayor of Trafford and prayers from founding members of the group, and also included addresses from a founding member about how the group began and from its Vice-Chair about the future of AIG. More details about the event and information about AIG's work can be found at <https://www.altrincham-interfaith.org.uk/>.

Watford Interfaith Association (WIFA) recently celebrated the 10th anniversary of work on the Peace Garden at Cassiobury Park. Read more about the Peace Garden at the Anniversary event at: <http://wifa.org.uk/peacegarden.html> IFN's Project Assistant was present and a short video interview by him with two of WIFA's longstanding members can be seen at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qwJSCHj1mew&feature=youtu.be>

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South Asian Heritage Month

South Asian Heritage Month - 18 July to 17 August - while not a faith or inter faith linked month - includes contributions on religion and belief such as events on religion and culture in the workplace. <https://twitter.com/SandeepSaib/status/1679799205122961408>

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

Resources

Deep connections: Women's local inter faith initiatives in the UK

Earlier this year IFN published *Deep connections: Women's local inter faith initiatives in the UK*.

This illustrated report, based on research by IFN, looks at a wide range of women's local inter faith initiatives. Drawing on information supplied by these groups and from other sources, it highlights examples of their activity and explores benefits and challenges and demonstrates their considerable significance. The report includes a 'top tips' section to help readers who would like to start a similar group or develop an existing one. They are equally applicable, in many cases, to local inter faith activity more generally.

The report can be downloaded at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/deep-connections-womens-local-inter-faith-initiatives-in-the-uk>. A small number of hard copies are available to not for profit organisations for the cost of postage and packing (£4.50). Enquire to: ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

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Windrush 75th Anniversary toolkit

This year marks 75 years since the arrival of HMT Empire Windrush at Tilbury Docks in 1948. A national service to mark this took place on 23 June at Southwark Cathedral and many other events took place around the UK. The Windrush 75 Network hopes to broaden public recognition of the contribution of the original Windrush Pioneers, as well as increasing public understanding of the history of race and migration to Britain across the decades. It has produced a toolkit offering “evidenced advice on communicating about the 75th anniversary of the Windrush and the types of events that will most appeal to different audiences”. This can be found at: <https://www.windrush75.org/about>.

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Virtues of Faith research report

The Good Faith Partnership, in collaboration with the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues at the University of Birmingham, has been undertaking a research project on the role of virtues in the life of the UK’s religious communities, surveying over 3,000 people in the UK of various faith and belief backgrounds. The report on the research, launched on 6 July, can be found at <https://goodfaith.org.uk/case-studies/virtues-of-faith>.

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Creating Brave Spaces resource

Interfaith Glasgow and the West Scotland Branch of the Council of Christians and Jews have partnered on a new resource called ‘Creating Brave Spaces: Learnings from a Jewish-Christian Dialogue on Antisemitism’. This is the result of an experimental series delivered by the two bodies entitled, ‘Understanding Antisemitism: Difficult Questions in Jewish Christian Dialogue’. A dozen Christian and Jewish participants came together over two and a half years to explore the nature of antisemitism and how it relates to criticism of the state of Israel, and then worked together to compile their collective learning. The resource includes reflections from participants and facilitators on the various methods used, a sample dialogue plan, and a case study and appendices featuring the learnings of the group. For more information, email info@interfaithglasgow.org.

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Remembering Srebrenica faith and inter faith resources

This year Remembering Srebrenica put together a number of faith and inter faith resources for groups to use for commemorations during July. These resources, which can be drawn on for future years, can be found at <https://srebrenica.org.uk/resources/faith-resources> and [Remembering Srebrenica – Faith Resources – Interfaith](#).

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Report on faith groups and social prescribing

In June, FaithAction published a report on faith community involvement in ‘social prescribing’ schemes. The report is based on its work with 25 faith and community

organisations involved with social prescribing schemes. It concludes that faith groups can help reach communities that can benefit most and should be better represented in social prescribing initiatives. Further information, and the full report, can be found at <https://www.faithaction.net/our-resources/inclusive-social-prescribing/>.

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REPORT HATE CRIMES AND INCIDENTS AND WORK TOGETHER TO HELP TACKLE THEM

Report hate crimes and incidents online through True Vision or via 3rd parties eg Community Security Trust (CST), Tell Mama UK; Sikhguard and Stop Hate UK; at a police station; or by ringing the police on 101 (non-emergency) or 999.

<https://gov.uk/report-hate-crime>

<https://www.scotland.police.uk/contact-us/report-hate-crime-and-third-party-reporting/>
<https://reporhate.victimsupport.org.uk/hate-crime/>

<https://www.psni.police.uk/hatecrime>

<https://www.psni.police.uk/crime/hate-crime/reporting-a-hate-crime/>

See also [Looking after one another: the safety and security of our faith communities - Resources - The Inter Faith Network \(IFN\)](#)

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Study/Training

Faith Guiding Course

The Faith Encounter programme is running a Faith Guiding Course during the Autumn to assist people in becoming 'Faith Guides' who are trained to lead educational visits to their place of worship. The course is delivered by a team of faith tutors and guest speakers with opportunities for interaction. Each session will cover three components: learning about your own faith; learning about other faiths and inter faith relations; and acquiring guiding skills to present your own faith. The deadline for applications is 4 September. For more information, email faithencounterprogramme@gmail.com.

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Faith in Black Lives Matter workshops

Faith Network for Manchester and the One Spirit Interfaith Foundation are taking registrations for a November online 4-session series of workshops on Black Lives Matter. The course fee will be donated to Windrush Defenders. For more information, visit <https://www.interfaithfoundation.org/black-lives-matter-workshop>.

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Strengthening Faith Institutions training courses

Strengthening Faith Institutions runs free training on a number of topics for places of worship and faith centres. Courses range from safeguarding to security and fundraising. For more information, visit <https://www.sfitogether.org/training/>.

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CST SAFE programme security webinars

The SAFE Programme of the Jewish Community Security Trust delivers free security advice on Community Security, Hate Crime, Online Security, Women's Safety and more. Details of its upcoming webinars and how to book can be found at [SAFE webinar Zoom hub](#).

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS AND NOMINATIONS

Calls for information

Every Story Matters and the UK Covid-19 Inquiry

The UK Covid-19 Inquiry is “the independent public inquiry set up to examine the UK’s response to and impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, and learn lessons for the future”. In order to fully understand the impact of the pandemic on the UK population, the Inquiry is inviting the public to share their experiences of the pandemic through ‘Every Story Matters’. This will “inform the Inquiry’s work by gathering pandemic experiences which can be brought together and represent the whole of the UK, including those seldom heard. The output of Every Story Matters will be a unique, comprehensive account of the UK population’s experiences of the pandemic, to be submitted to the Inquiry’s legal process as evidence.” The Inquiry is keen to hear from people of all faiths and backgrounds.

Further information, including on how to share your experience, is at <https://covid19.public-inquiry.uk/every-story-matters/>.

The [Scottish COVID-19 Inquiry](#) is also gathering people’s experiences. Stories from Scotland can be shared with the UK Inquiry, the Scottish Inquiry, or both.

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Research into challenges and potential in relationships between statutory and religious organisations

The University of Kent is leading a collaboration of universities and other organisations, which are researching Abuse in Religious Contexts. The study, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, focuses on the relationship between the statutory and faith sectors in the safeguarding context.

Through this research they aim to: understand the perceptions and experiences of safeguarding professionals in statutory bodies and those with safeguarding responsibilities in religious organisations when working with each other; and explore to what extent do professionals supporting survivors of abuse in religious settings understand distinctive aspects of working in this context, and how might better collaboration be promoted between safeguarding officers working for statutory agencies and those with whom they liaise in religious organisations. A questionnaire has been developed which will be open until 30 July on [Exploring the Experiences of Working](#)

[Relationships Between Statutory Safeguarding Professionals and Those with Safeguarding Responsibilities Within Faith Communities \(onlinesurveys.ac.uk\)](https://onlinesurveys.ac.uk).

Further information from: research@thirtyoneeight.org or M.Lafferty@chester.ac.uk.

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Nominations

Honours nominations

Each year a number of people receive Honours for services to inter faith work or community cohesion. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) is particularly keen to recognise those who have contributed to building integrated communities. All nominations must be made on an official citation form and nominees should not be informed that they have been nominated. The deadline for nominations is 14 September. For more information, email honours@levellingup.gov.uk.

DLUHC is holding an Honours Citation Workshop on 8 August. To register, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/dluhc-honour-citation-workshop-tickets-670788485417>.

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London Faith & Belief Community Awards

Nominations are now open for the London Faith & Belief Community Awards which “celebrate the vital work of London’s faith and belief communities by bringing together local heroes and shining a light on their inspirational work, demonstrating how Londoners from all faiths and beliefs can work together for a fairer and more inclusive city”. There are 40 awards of £500. The nomination categories include ‘Interfaith Relations’. The awards ceremony will be in central London on 21 November. The deadline for nominations is 30 August. For more information, visit <https://faithbeliefforum.org/programme/london-faith-belief-community-awards>.

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Waltham Forest Faith & Belief Awards

Nominations are now open for the inaugural Waltham Forest Faith & Belief Awards which will take place on 28 September, held in partnership with Waltham Forest Borough Council, Waltham Forest Faith Communities Forum, and The Faith & Belief Forum. The Awards will recognise the outstanding efforts of local community projects and voluntary initiatives that have made a significant impact on the lives of residents. Across nine categories, the awards celebrate the exceptional work undertaken by these groups in fostering community cohesion and promoting positive change. Nominations will close on 6 August. For more information, visit <https://faithbeliefforum.org/programme/waltham-forest-faith-belief-awards/>. (Note: Those nominated for the Waltham Forest Awards, will also automatically be nominated for the Faith & Belief Forum’s London-wide awards, [London Faith & Belief Community Awards](#).)

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

The Inter Faith Network for the UK

Internship

IFN will shortly be advertising for a full time, paid Internship with a focus on Inter Faith Week. Information will be available at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/jobs>.

Honorary Treasurer

IFN invites expressions of interest in the post of Honorary Treasurer. The work of IFN is overseen by a board of Trustees. All IFN Trustees hold their posts on a voluntary basis. The gift of Trustees' time and skill is vital to the wellbeing of the organisation's work and is greatly valued. Among the Trustees are 2 Co-Chairs and 1 Honorary Treasurer. For the role description and expression of interest form, contact ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

Volunteers

The Inter Faith Network for the UK currently has an opportunity for online volunteers with good desk research and writing skills who would like to offer 4-8 hours a week to help on different aspects of IFN's work to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. To express an interest in volunteering, please complete the application form at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/volunteering>.

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St Ethelburga's Centre - Venue Hire Coordinator

The St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace is currently seeking a Venue Hire Coordinator [VHC Job Description](#). For more information, visit <https://stethelburgas.org/get-involved/vacancies-and-volunteering/> or email tarot@stethelburgas.org.

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Women's Interfaith Network – PR and Marketing Consultant and Interns

The Women's Interfaith Network (WIN) is currently looking for a freelance PR and Marketing Consultant to assist WIN in building up to its PR and marketing goals. This is a paid position.

WIN is also seeking volunteer interns to work across a number of different and varied roles including event organisation, meeting local groups and research and development. Travel and lunch expenses will be reimbursed.

For more information, email info@wominet.org.uk.

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Religions for Peace (UK) – Trustees and Admin Assistant to the Chair

Religions for Peace (UK) is seeking an Honorary Secretary <https://www.charityjob.co.uk/volunteer-jobs/religions-for-peace-uk/honorary-secretary/898939>, an Honorary Treasurer <https://www.charityjob.co.uk/volunteer->

[jobs/religions-for-peace-uk/honorary-treasurer/898928](https://www.rfpuk.org/jobs/religions-for-peace-uk/honorary-treasurer/898928), and an Admin Assistant to the Chair (for more information about the latter, email chair@rfpuk.org).

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Faith & Belief Forum – LGBT+Faith project volunteers

The Faith & Belief Forum is currently seeking volunteers for its LGBT+Faith project. The role is to develop its online Facebook LGBT+ interfaith community through research and content creation. Volunteers will also assist with the design, setup, and administration of a new series of events. For more information, visit <https://faithbelieforum.org/programme/office-volunteering>.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

UK Government Find a Grant programme

The UK Government’s Find a Grant programme currently includes 53 grant schemes and can be found at <https://www.find-government-grants.service.gov.uk/>.

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Community Organisations Cost of Living Fund

The UK Government’s Community Organisations Cost of Living Fund, administered via the National Lottery Community Fund, is now open. This funding is for organisations that support people and communities under severe pressure because of the increased cost of living. Organisations can apply for between £10,000 and £75,000. To apply, the organisation must already run critical services, such as providing food and emergency supplies, emergency shelters or warm spaces. The deadline for applications is 16 October. <https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/community-organisations-cost-of-living-fund>.

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Funding websites

My Funding Central is a database of grant funding and social investment sources. This service is available to organisations with an annual income below £1m and is free for organisations under £30k. <https://www.myfundingcentral.co.uk/> Similar websites for funding in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at Funding Scotland - <https://funding.scot/>, Wales Council for Voluntary Action - <https://wcva.cymru/funding/> and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland - <https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

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The Prince of Wales’s Charitable Fund

The Prince of Wales’s Charitable Fund has a small grants programme for UK registered non-profit organisations supporting grassroots projects in diverse and deprived communities. Among its funding themes are ‘social inclusion’, which is described as including “Community and art projects that aim to relieve poverty, loneliness and other

social issues or support the welfare of the elderly, veterans and interfaith cohesion.” The next round of applications will open on 1 August. <https://www.pwcf.org.uk/apply-grant>

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Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme

The Listed Places of Worship (LPW) Grant Scheme gives grants that cover the VAT incurred in making repairs to listed buildings in use as places of worship. The scheme covers repairs to the fabric of the building, along with associated professional fees. The Grant Scheme is run by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. Applicants can now complete and submit their application to the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme directly online via the website. <http://www.listed-places-of-worship-grant.dcms.gov.uk>

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FCC Community Action Fund

The FCC Communities Foundation is offering grants between £2,000 and £100,000 for projects which involve the provision, maintenance or improvement of public amenities including community spaces in places of worship, which are registered charities. Projects must be based within 10 miles of an eligible FCC Environment waste facility. The current round closes on 6 September. <https://fcccommunitiesfoundation.org.uk/funds/fcc-community-action-fund>

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS/MONTHS

Faith in Partnership Week, led by FaithAction, will be held from 11 to 15 September. Further information will be available at <https://www.faithaction.net/working-with-you/faith-in-partnership/>.

Visit My Mosque, an initiative of the Muslim Council of Britain, will be taking place on Saturday 23 and Sunday 24 September. This year’s theme will be ‘Faith, Food and Friends’. <https://visitmymosque.org/>

National Hate Crime Awareness Week takes place from Saturday 14 October to Saturday 21 October. <https://nationalhcaw.uk/>

Week of Prayer for World Peace takes place from Sunday 15 to Sunday 22 October. This year’s theme is ‘Praying with hope in a troubled world’. <https://weekofprayerforworldpeace.co.uk/>

Inter Faith Week, in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, will take place from Sunday 12 to Sunday 19 November. www.interfaithweek.org

Scottish Interfaith Week will be held from Sunday 12 to Sunday 19 November. It is led by Interfaith Scotland. This year’s theme will be ‘Community’. www.scottishinterfaithweek.org

Mitzvah Day will take place on Sunday 19 November. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Jewish community where people give their time to make a

difference to the community around them. Many events and projects held for the day have an inter faith focus. www.mitzvahday.org.uk/

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DIARY DATES

A few examples of forthcoming events are listed below. Events are also listed on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/events>.

Crawley Interfaith Network is holding its next 'Spotlight' event on Thursday 3 August. The theme will be 'Spotlight on The Friary Church'. After the talk, there will be time for questions & answers, discussion and light refreshment. It is being held at 7.30pm in person at The Friary Church of Saint Francis and Saint Anthony, Friary Way, Crawley RH10 1HR. For more information, visit <https://www.crawleyinter-faith.com/crawley-inter-faith-network-activities/>.

Interfaith Scotland is organising an Interfaith Retreat to Holy Isle, off the coast of Arran, from Thursday 3 August to Sunday 6 August. The retreat is open to people of all faiths and none who are interested in finding out about the lived experience of people of different faiths, philosophies and spiritual practices. There will be opportunities to try out some creative expressions of spirituality such as walking meditation, art, singing together and a reflective walk to the cave of St Molaise and the Tibetan Buddhist deities carved into the rocks. For more information, email aparna@interfaithscotland.org.

Northampton Inter Faith Forum is holding an Interfaith Picnic on Sunday 6 August. It is being held from 2pm at Abington Park (between the bandstand and the memorial tree). Participants are invited to bring their own food and drink and blankets. All are welcome. For more information, email contact@niff.org.uk.

Glasgow Women of Faith and Community is holding its Summer Picnic on Monday 7 August. It is being held from 11am onwards at Holyrood Pleasure Gardens, Holyrood Crescent, Glasgow West End, G20 6NQ. Hot food, savoury and sweet, and cold drinks will be provided. Please bring your own hot drink (if you'd like one) and optionally anything you'd like to share with the group. To register to attend, email womenoffaith@hotmail.co.uk.

York Interfaith Group is holding an inter faith picnic on Tuesday 8 August. This will be held from 7pm to 9pm at the Bar Convent, Blossom Street, York. This will be an informal 'bring and share' picnic, of vegetarian food so that everyone can feel free to eat what is offered without concern for faith-regulations. Tea, coffee and cold drinks will be provided. For more information, email yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com.

Footsteps (Faiths for a Low Carbon Future) is holding an Interfaith Walk and Visit to Highbury Park on Sunday 20 August. It is from 2pm to 4pm at Highbury Park, Shutlock Lane, Birmingham B13 8QG, meeting at the car park. It is being held with Friends of the Park who will guide participants through the conservation features of the park, concluding with a visit to the local Orchard Project. Register at: <https://footstepsbcf.org.uk/events/interfaith-walk-visit/>

The London Interfaith Fun Run, organised by the **Faith & Belief Forum** and **Maccabi GB**, will take place in LB Barnet on Sunday 3 September at the StoneX Stadium, Greenlands Lane, London NW4 1RL. For more information, visit interfaithrun.org.

Interfaith Wolverhampton is holding its AGM on Tuesday 12 September. It will be held from 7pm to 8.30pm at St Bartholomew's Church, Penn, Wolverhampton WV4 5JB. Refreshments will be provided from 8pm. For more information, email admin@ifwton.org.uk.

IFN also carries news and information about IFN on , [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Twitter](#) and, about Inter Faith Week, on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#).

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You can sign up to IFN mailings at any time by using the form on IFN's website at: www.interfaith.org.uk/news/gdpr or let us know that you would like to unsubscribe by emailing ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

**SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK
TO INCREASE INTER FAITH UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION**

The Inter Faith Network for the UK works for inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. Please help us sustain and develop this vital work by making a donation at: <https://interfaith.org.uk/donate>, or directly via PayPal at www.paypal.me/ifnetuk or by [BACS](#)/ Standing Order to: CAF Bank Ltd, Sort Code: 40-52-40, Account Number: 00019472.

Donations can also be made by sending a cheque payable to 'The Inter Faith Network' to: The Inter Faith Network for the UK, Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufton Street, London, SW1P 3RB.

Donations are used with care to make a real difference.

Thank you!

MAKE A GIFT TO SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK IN REMEMBRANCE OF A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND OR THROUGH A LEGACY

If you would like to make a gift in memory of a loved one, please get in touch by emailing remember@interfaith.org.uk or call us on 0207 730 0410.

By leaving a gift in your will to the Inter Faith Network for the UK, you can leave a living inheritance to help deepen and strengthen inter faith understanding and cooperation in this country – for now and for the future. If you are thinking about making a will, the best thing to do is to get in touch with a professional will writer, such as a solicitor or advocate; they can help to ensure it is legally correct and that your wishes are met. If you have already made a will, you can still make an addition or amendment in the form of a codicil. If you would like to pledge a gift, please provide our name and address, along with our registered charity number 1068934.

Please get in touch with us if you have any queries.

You can call us on 0207 730 0410 or contact us at remember@interfaith.org.uk.

Remember a Charity has produced a helpful resource called 'Making a Will - your complete guide'. This can be found at <https://www.rememberacharity.org.uk/making-a-will/>.

Submissions for next issue

If you have items about inter faith projects or future events which you would like considered for inclusion in the next newsletter please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk **by 18 September** with 'Newsletter' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

If your organisation distributes a programme, newsletter or e-bulletin, please add ifnet@interfaith.org.uk to your mailing list.

Disclaimer: Information in this newsletter has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this newsletter does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

The Inter Faith Network for the UK, Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufton Street, London, SW1P 3RB

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Inter Faith Network Newsletter

September/October 2023

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

UK Commission on Covid Commemoration report

The UK Commission on Covid Commemoration's final report on how the Covid pandemic should be remembered across the UK was published on 18 September. The Commission has made 10 recommendations to the Government on how to make sure the events of the pandemic and the experiences that people went through are not forgotten. The Commission's recommendations include preserving existing memorials, including the National Covid Memorial Wall in central London, holding a national day of reflection every year and identifying green spaces across the UK to serve as Covid memorial spaces. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport will now work with other government departments and the Devolved Administrations to consider the recommendations and respond in due course. The full report can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-uk-commission-on-covid-commemorations-final-report>.

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A Level and GCSE Religious Studies and teacher recruitment

The Religious Education Council of England and Wales (REC) has reported that 15,438 Religious Studies A level entries were recorded in England and Wales this year, a decline of 4.5 percent from 2022. However, between 2003 and 2022, A level Religious Studies has been one of the fastest growing subjects at A level, with an increase of 39 percent in the number of entries to the subject. <https://religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/2023/08/fall-in-a-level-rs-entries-sees-calls-for-action-for-specialist-teacher-recruitment/>

The REC also notes that the number of students in England and Wales taking a GCSE course in Religious Studies has remained stable at 253,906, up by a margin of 0.3% from last year. <https://religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/2023/08/religious-studies-remains-a-popular-gcse-despite-specialist-teacher-recruitment-challenge/>

The REC warns that a shortage in specialist teachers means some schools, particularly in the Midlands and North East, are now struggling to offer the subject at A level. The latest UCAS data showed that applicants to train to teach the subject have fallen by a third.

A group of cross-party peers, MPs, and religious educators wrote to Secretary of State Rt Hon Gillian Keegan MP, calling on the Government to address the crisis in teaching and recruitment of Religious Education teachers, including underfunding and a need for the introduction of training bursaries.

<https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2023/22-september/news/uk/cross-party-group-deplores-lack-of-government-funding-for-religious-education>
[Letter-to-Secretary-of-State-for-Education-Religious Education.pdf \(natre.org.uk\)](#)

On 12 September, a House of Commons Education Select Committee Inquiry into teacher recruitment, retention and training heard evidence from the National Association of Teachers of RE (NATRE) about a number of subjects that had repeatedly missed their Department for Education recruitment targets, of which Religious Education was the only one without financial incentives to encourage recruitment into training.

<https://committees.parliament.uk/event/19264/formal-meeting-oral-evidence-session/NATRE-Speak-at-Oral-Education-Select-committee-hearing-on-Recruitment-and-retention>

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Edinburgh Council Education Committee religious representatives' voting rights removed

Councillors have voted to remove voting rights from unelected religious representatives from the Church of Scotland, the Roman Catholic Church and Edinburgh Interfaith Association who sit on Edinburgh Council's Education Committee. The voting powers dated back to 1918 when control of Catholic schools was handed over to the state from the church and different faith groups had expressed a strong desire to see them retained.

<https://www.edinburghlive.co.uk/news/edinburgh-news/edinburgh-council-strip-voting-rights-27628921>

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National Content Standard for RE in England published

The Religious Education Council of England and Wales published, in September, a National Content Standard. This provides clarification and a benchmark for 'excellence in religion and worldviews/religious education (RE) in England'. It is a non-statutory benchmark for syllabus providers and other bodies to evaluate their work. It provides a standard by which different RE curricula, content, pedagogy, and provision can be benchmarked.

The document has been developed around extracts from a draft resource released in May 2022 which has been the focus of subsequent consultation and scrutiny. The final version of the resource will form a handbook for curriculum developers in the subject and is due for completion in Spring 2024. The RE Council has partnered with a range of contributors in the national RE sector in this project.

<https://religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/resource/national-content-standard-1st-edition-2023/>

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Hate crime

SikhGuard, a national platform designed to encourage members of the Sikh community to report incidents of hate crime was given a formal launch in Nottingham in August at an event organised by Nottinghamshire Police in Siri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara Sikh Temple. SikhGuard (sikhguard.org) aims to make it easier for people from within the community who have experienced abuse to come forward and report it to the police.

<https://www.nottinghamshire.police.uk/news/nottinghamshire/news/news/2023/august/force-leads-awareness-launch-of-national-platform-tackling-anti-sikh-hate/>

CST report on Antisemitic incidents

In August the Community Security Trust published its report on Antisemitic Incidents from January to June 2023. [Antisemitic Incidents Report January-June 2023](#)

It shows 803 instances of anti-Jewish hate recorded across the UK in the first six months of this year. This is a 2% decrease from the 823 incidents reported in the first half of 2022. 26% of the incidents were of abuse online - an increase of 37% from the online incidents recorded in the first half of 2022.

Tell Mama report on Anti-Muslim Hate

Tell Mama have published a report on case numbers and classifications of anti-Muslim hate cases covering a decade from 2012-2022, in the course of which there has been a doubling of verified and confirmed anti-Muslim hate cases reported to Tell MAMA. The report looks at the nature of these and factors linked with them.

<https://tellmamauk.org/a-decade-of-anti-muslim-hate/>

Nazi flags posted near mosque in Dunmurry

In August three Nazi flags bearing swastikas were placed outside the Iqraa Mosque in the Ashley Park area of Dunmurry, Northern Ireland.

<https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/prayer-service-hears-condemnation-of-nazi-flags-outside-mosque-in-west-belfast/a277109863.html>

Local response included a community rally. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-66627909> The Muslim Council of Britain issued a statement noting that this was not an isolated incident and urged the UK Government to take action.

<https://mcb.org.uk/mcb-condemns-nazi-activity-in-northern-ireland-calls-for-uk-government-intervention/>

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REPORT HATE CRIMES AND INCIDENTS AND WORK TOGETHER TO HELP TACKLE THEM

Report hate crimes and incidents online through True Vision or via 3rd parties eg Community Security Trust (CST); Tell Mama UK; Sikhguard; and Stop Hate UK; at a police station; or by ringing the police on 101 (non-emergency) or 999.

<https://gov.uk/report-hate-crime>

<https://www.scotland.police.uk/contact-us/report-hate-crime-and-third-party-reporting/>

<https://reporthate.victimsupport.org.uk/hate-crime/>

<https://www.psni.police.uk/crime/hate-crime/reporting-a-hate-crime/>

See also *Looking after one another: the safety and security of our faith communities* (IFN and partners) which contains practical pointers for working together to counter hate crime.

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/looking-after-one-another-the-safety-and-security-of-our-faith-communities-2023>

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Leicester unrest

A year on from disturbances in Leicester, three panellists have been appointed by Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) Rt Hon Michael Gove MP to sit on an independent review chaired by Lord Ian Austin, Dr Samir Shah CBE, Professor Hilary Pilkington and Dr Shaaz Mahboob. Speaking on the appointments, Lord Austin said: "Leicester has a proud history of diversity, tolerance and community cohesion which makes what happened last year all the more troubling. We want to listen to people in Leicester to understand last year's events, what can be learned from them and how communities in the city can work together to prevent problems in future."

A DLUHC spokesperson said that the panel would look to establish the facts of the unrest and analyse its causes, with a view to making “practical recommendations” on how to avoid such events in future. It is expected to report next year.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/elizabeth-ii-india-michael-gove-pakistan-lord-b2413414.html>

SOAS University of London Director Professor Adam Habib is supporting a separate independent public inquiry and related research into “violence between members of South Asian communities that took place in the East Midlands city of Leicester in September 2022”. It is chaired by Juan E. Méndez.

<https://www.soas.ac.uk/about/news/soas-support-independent-commission-inquiry-leicester-violence>

Meanwhile, an incident during the Ganesh festival, adjacent to a Hindu temple on Belgrave Road in Leicester, reported at <https://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/news/leicester-news/police-accused-disproportionate-response-man-8777174> prompted Leicester Council of Faiths to issue a statement:

<https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=720441606794831&set=a.474839344688393>

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Updated guidance for safeguarding in out-of-school settings

The Department for Education has just published its updated guidance for safeguarding in out-of-school settings, which includes supplementary religious settings. The guidance for providers can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-out-of-school-settings-code-of-practice> and the guidance for parents and carers at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-on-safeguarding-children-in-out-of-school-settings>.

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Charity Commission social media guidance for charities

The Charity Commission for England and Wales has published new social media guidance for charities. The guidance “makes clear that social media can be a highly effective way for a charity to engage its audiences and communicate about its work but that there are risks involved, which trustees should plan for. The new guidance is clear that charities using social media should have a social media policy in place and should ensure the policy is followed. This is standard practice in many charities and across other sectors and industries, and can help an organisation avoid problems and address issues swiftly if they occur.” The guidance aims to help trustees understand their risks, how their legal duties apply, and what to consider if issues arise.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/regulator-publishes-new-guidance-on-charities-social-media-use>

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Special Feature – Faith friendly workplaces

There has been increasing interest in how to develop ‘faith friendly’ workplaces. This has been developing over a number of years. For example, both the Equality and Human Rights Commission and ACAS have produced guidance with this purpose.

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/religion-or-belief-workplace>
<https://www.acas.org.uk/acas-guide-to-religion-or-belief-discrimination>

Many networks and working groups have been emerging across the last year, such as a Faith and Belief Network at Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust and the Religion and Belief Working Groups launched at the Atomic Weapons Establishment. New single faith networks are also emerging. Most recently, a new trade union faith and belief network was launched at the TUC Congress in Liverpool in September. Its purpose is to encourage dialogue between unions, faith organisations and community groups and it aims to explore common ground on the dignity of labour and trade union rights, and in-work poverty.

The growing number of initiatives reflects an increasing awareness by organisations and their employees of the significance of religion and belief – both in terms of staff wellbeing and good workplace relations but also because religious diversity can strengthen organisations, including their understanding of clients’ needs.

As well as new networks emerging, many companies are seeking to strengthen their work in the area of religion and belief. CBREUK, for example launched, during Inter Faith Week last year, 'Holding Faith', described as its first ever practical guide to faith, religion and belief in the workplace, noting that it hoped that “the guidance sparks meaningful conversations and helps break down barriers when it comes to supporting colleagues of faith”. <https://tinyurl.com/yh3dk9t8>

As noted in the last issue of the Newsletter, a new initiative, ‘Faith Friendly Workplaces’ has been formed which is drawing together staff workplace networks from companies around the UK. This emerged from the organisation ‘Transform’ and is being supported with research by the Multi Faith Centre at the University of Derby. A meeting about faith in the workplace was held at 10 Downing Street in July where employers talked with the Prime Minister’s Advisers about encouraging faith-friendly policies and there are plans for a summit in the coming year.

Inter Faith Week offers a great opportunity for companies and staff to explore religion and belief issues and to start, develop and deepen initiatives.

For the 2021 Week, the Inter Faith Network provided a special Inter Faith Blog for the Employers’ Network for Equality and Inclusion on this. <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/workplaces> Here are just a few ‘top tips’ from the Blog for employers and employees based on our work in this area.

Consider how your company/workplace is responding to faith and belief issues

- What faith and inter faith networks are operating in our company or workplace? Would it be helpful to support new networks into being?
- How are we encouraging religion and belief literacy in the workplace?
- Is our corporate climate one that is ‘faith and belief friendly’, where people feel comfortable to bring that aspect of their identity to work?
- Workplace provision – How are we responding to needs for example appropriate catering options, prayer/mediation space, and pastoral/spiritual support?
- Are we recruiting in a way which encourages diversity in the applicant base?
- How strong is the religion and belief dimension of our equalities policy and implementation?

- How may our company/workplace benefit from its diverse workforce, including those of different faiths and beliefs?

Encourage and enable people to bring the faith and belief dimension of their lives to work

People work best when they feel that they can bring their whole selves to the work place. Where people feel that they are welcomed and that inclusion of faith or belief is apparent, it can have a positive impact on a person's wellbeing and approach to work and colleagues.

Create/encourage staff networks to develop inter faith understanding and good relations within the workforce

Faith and belief are not always fully understood. Developing networks can help increase religious literacy and foster stronger relationships and good relations in the workplace. You could:

- Encourage single faith based staff networks (e.g. Hindu, Muslim or Christian network)
- Support the setting up of a multi faith staff network

Remember to allow people to self-define and to explain faith or non-religious belief from their own perspective: people practise their faith in a range of ways.

Hold special events to increase understanding and build good inter faith relations

You could:

- Run a webinar for/with your offices around the country on religion and belief issues and the importance of good relations
- Use a platform such as Coffee Roulette or a programme like the Inter Faith Network's 'Inter Faith Buddies' to encourage one to one conversations
- Enable or support particular dialogues, such one between a Muslim and Jewish network, on issues of common interest
- set up occasional online talks – for example about particular topics like faith festivals such as Easter, Wesak or Vaisakhi, or highlighting some of the perhaps less well know traditions such as Baha'i, Pagan, Jain or Zoroastrian faiths
- Hold a discussion about the ways in which religious literacy and dialogue might contribute to and strengthen the realisation of your corporate values.

And don't forget to schedule events in a faith aware way! Check out a multi faith calendar such as the Shap calendar to ensure that events don't clash with particular festivals and talk with your staff of different faiths about questions of timing.

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Inter Faith Week

This year Inter Faith Week will take place across England, Northern Ireland and Wales from Sunday 12 to Sunday 19 November. This will be the 15th Inter Faith Week.

Events and activities

Now is a great time to begin planning an activity for the Week! There are lots of activity ideas and resources to help you run an event at [Resources - Inter Faith Week](#). Another

great resource is '[Strengthening Cooperation and Understanding: Inter Faith Week 2022](#)'. This is packed with examples and pictures of how the Week was marked by faith and inter faith organisations, local authorities, emergency services, universities, colleges, schools, hospitals and hospices, sports bodies, museums, libraries, and many others.

A Zoom 'tips and planning session' will take place on 4 October (further information under [Diary Dates](#)).

Please let us know about your events and activities

IFN maintains an interactive map and calendar listings which will show events happening by town/city across the country. This adds to the buzz of the Week and helps media and others find out what's going on.

If you arrange an activity, please do take a few minutes to tell us about it at www.interfaithweek.org/register. If you register your activity on the website, you can request a free Inter Faith Week registration pack (subject to availability).

The Inter Faith Week logo, flyer, poster, and other branding materials can be downloaded at <http://www.interfaithweek.org/resources/publicity-and-branding>.

Social media

Follow Inter Faith Week on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn:

<https://www.facebook.com/ifweek/>

<https://twitter.com/IFWeek>

<https://www.instagram.com/IFWeek/>

<https://uk.linkedin.com/showcase/ifweek/>

Scottish Interfaith Week

Scottish Interfaith Week will also be held from Sunday 12 to Sunday 19 November.

Running since 2004, it is led by Interfaith Scotland. It has a different theme each year. This year it is 'Community'. www.scottishinterfaithweek.org

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INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK NEWS

Please support the Inter Faith Network's work to increase inter faith understanding and cooperation

Like many other charities, IFN faces steep challenges in resourcing its work.

If you see the significance of IFN's contribution to the continued development of a harmonious, diverse UK marked by inter faith understanding and cooperation, please do consider a donation to support IFN's work. Contributions at all levels are gratefully received and are used with care to make a real difference.

You can:

- Make a donation by credit card or PayPal at: <https://interfaith.org.uk/donate>
- Donate directly via PayPal at www.paypal.me/ifnetuk
- Donate by BACS to: CAF Bank Ltd, Sort Code: 40-52-40, Account Number: 00019472

- Donate by cheque, payable to 'The Inter Faith Network', to The Inter Faith Network for the UK, Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufton Street, London, SW1P 3RB.
- Hold a fundraiser for the work of the Inter Faith Network

AT THE MOMENT, DONATIONS ARE BEING MATCHED AND SO HAVE DOUBLE THE VALUE.

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Meeting of IFN and inter faith linking bodies in the devolved nations

In August IFN held a meeting with the inter faith linking bodies in the devolved nations. The meeting was an opportunity for Interfaith Scotland, the Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum and the Inter Faith Council for Wales to share news and good practice and also to discuss Inter Faith Week and Scottish Interfaith Week.

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Day event for local inter faith practitioners

IFN will be holding an online day event for local inter faith organisations from across the UK on 26 October. The event will provide a chance to discuss work and particular issues of interest and concern. Further information has been sent to local inter faith organisations.

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

Inter Faith Council for Wales 20th Anniversary

The Inter Faith Council for Wales will be marking its 20th Anniversary this year with a concert by the Interfaith Choir of Wales on 23 November. Rehearsals are taking place each week during the Autumn. All are welcome. More information is at <https://www.facebook.com/interfaithcouncilforwales/>.

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Interfaith Scotland monthly 'Interfaith Interactions'

Interfaith Scotland is running a new monthly online series, "Interfaith Interactions". It describes this as an opportunity for people of various faith and belief backgrounds to come together to discuss specific topics each time. This month's theme, for a discussion on 16 October, is 'Prayer', linked to the Week of Prayer for World Peace which runs from 15-21 October.

<https://www.facebook.com/interfaithscotland/posts/pfbid0npy49FTf4dcpXyeupMa1WJx9Qd26XKKNctzr6BjZ1XjyW3wL2e4LQpsW7NMo9rrFl>

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Multi faith tree planting

With the autumn tree-planting period just ahead, a number of multi faith tree plantings are in prospect.

On a visit to Salisbury, HRH Sophie, the Duchess of Edinburgh took part, with Salisbury's first Muslim Mayor, in a tree dedication, unveiling a plaque symbolising unity among multi-

faith communities. The tree (a magnolia) will be planted in Queen Elizabeth Gardens later in the Autumn. <https://www.newvalleynews.co.uk/news/duchess-spends-day-locally/>

Inter Faith Week, 12-19 November, will see a number of other tree plantings. For example, Southend Faith and Belief Network and Wellbeing at Garon Park are inviting Network members, and faith leaders or community leads, to unite together and mark Inter Faith Week by planting a tree and looking after the planet.

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Westminster Interfaith 40th Anniversary

An event was held on 5 September to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Westminster Interfaith (WI). IFN's Executive Director was among those who spoke at the event. The event included the launch of a new edition of 'Transcendence', originally written by Brother Daniel Faivre SG as well as tributes to his work and the work of his colleagues at WI. Westminster Interfaith "exists to live out the Church's call to promote dialogue, respect and collaboration between Catholics and the followers of other religious traditions in the Diocese of Westminster". <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/47958>

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West Midlands Combined Authority Faith Covenant signing

West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) has become the latest authority to sign up to the Faith Covenant. Signed by Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands and WMCA chair, the covenant commits the WMCA to "working even more collaboratively and consistently with diverse faith communities to deliver a better connected, more prosperous, fairer, greener, and healthier region." The signing took place in September at an event at Walsall College where the leaders of Sandwell and Walsall councils also added their names, with Dudley committing to doing so. Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Solihull and Coventry have already signed the covenant. <https://www.wmca.org.uk/news/mayor-signs-wmca-up-to-faith-covenant/>

The Faith Covenant, set up by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Faith and Society, "a joint commitment between faith communities and local authorities to a set of principles that guide engagement, aiming to remove some of the mistrust that exists and to promote open, practical working on all levels." <https://www.faihandsociety.org/covenant/>

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Building Bridges in Burnley and Burnley Football Club

Burnley Football Club and Burnley FC in the Community have announced Building Bridges Burnley as an Official Charity Partner for the 2023/24 season. The charity partnership aims to enhance awareness and increase understanding of different faith groups within the town. During the season the charity partnership will deliver a programme of events including a Community Iftar, Multi-Faith Football Tournament, Carol Concert and more. <https://burnleyfccommunity.org/building-bridges-burnley-are-clarets-new-charity-partner/>

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Stockport Multifaith Network relaunch

Stockport Multifaith Network has been relaunched with an inaugural roundtable event with Stockport Council on 22 September. The event recognised the contribution of faith groups to supporting residents and in particular its role in combatting food poverty across the borough, with many faith groups taking responsibility for providing food to their communities and other vulnerable people in Stockport.

<https://www.stockport.gov.uk/news/faith-leaders-tackling-cost-of-living-head-on>

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Religion Media Centre Creating Connections series

The Religion Media Centre is organising its second series of Creating Connections events, where “local journalists meet religious groups, exploring new stories, breaking down misunderstanding, and showcasing expertise”. The first event in the series was held in Bradford in September. Events will be taking place across October and November in Coventry, Newcastle, Liverpool, Bristol and Norwich. To find out more and sign up to attend, visit <https://religionmediacentre.org.uk/creating-connections/>.

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Faith festivals

National and local inter faith bodies often highlight festivals through meetings, social media posts and other online features. For example, Lancashire Forum of Faiths made a series of videos with interviews with people of different faiths on their main festivals.

<https://www.youtube.com/@interfaithlancashire4399>

The Women’s Interfaith Network (WIN) is currently running a regular blog series where members and friends of WIN are invited to prepare a ‘festival diary’, exploring the history and significance of specific rituals or outlining the routine of religious celebrations, as a window into the lived experience of people of different faiths. The latest blog is from a Jain member of their Gants Hill group and explores the Jain festival of Paryushana or Das Lakshana and its roots in Jain philosophy and

ethics. <https://wominet.org.uk/2023/09/07/blog-festival-diary-paryushana-das-lakshana-by-jiwan-jain/>

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

Resources

Deep Connections: Women’s local inter faith initiatives in the UK

Hard copies are now available of *Deep Connections: Women’s local inter faith initiatives in the UK*, launched by IFN earlier this year. For more information, email

ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

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UKWFN Toolkit on Gender Equality

Religions for Peace UK Women of Faith Network has launched ‘Gender Equality Empowerment For All A Dialogue to Action Toolkit’. The toolkit gives the context for

UKWFN's projects, shares its experiences of delivering the projects, its methodology, and gives further scope for development. UKWFN's aim is to see the toolkit being used "by faith, interfaith, secular communities/groups, and educational/ governmental sectors to challenge the inequalities that exist in our communities and society". The toolkit can be downloaded at <https://www.rfpuk.org/resources/202306TOOLKIT.pdf>. For information about UKWFN projects, visit www.linktr.ee/rfp_UKWFN.

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CALLS FOR INFORMATION, COMPETITIONS AND NOMINATIONS

Calls for information

ONS Consultation on population and migration statistics

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) is running a public consultation on plans for its transformation of population and migration statistics in England and Wales. <https://consultations.ons.gov.uk/ons/futureofpopulationandmigrationstatistics> These statistics cover a wide range of areas, including household characteristics, employment, health, religion and international migration. The consultation document "explains the ONS's proposals to create a sustainable system for producing essential, up-to-date statistics about the population. To do this, the system would primarily use administrative data such as tax or benefit data, complemented by survey data and a wider range of data sources. This could replace the current reliance on the census every ten years. This consultation is seeking views on how these proposals meet the needs of users of ONS statistics compared to a system based on a census." The consultation closes on 26 October. For help or further information about the consultation, email 2023consultation@ons.gov.uk.

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Consultations on the Burial and Cremation (Scotland) Act

The Scottish Government has launched four consultations on regulations to be made under the Burial and Cremation (Scotland) Act 2016. The consultations are on alkaline hydrolysis, burials, inspection of the funeral sector, and the licensing of funeral directors. While comments are welcome on all four consultations, respondents can choose to answer any number. All four consultations are available at <https://consult.gov.scot/burial-cremation/consultation-collection/> and are open until 17 November. Enquiries can be sent to BurialAndCremation@gov.scot.

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Scottish Government Consultation on RSHP education in schools

The Scottish Government is consulting on the RSHP (Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood) education to be delivered in schools. There are five new sections in the draft revised guidance, including one on faith and belief. The consultation details are at <https://consult.gov.scot/learning-directorate/teaching-guidance-for-relationships-sexual-health/> and the consultation closes on 23 November. Enquiries can be sent to personalandsocialeducation@gov.scot.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

The Inter Faith Network for the UK – Honorary Treasurer

The Inter Faith Network for the UK is currently seeking a new Honorary Treasurer. This is an important role which helps IFN take forward its work effectively. While the Honorary Treasurer is not required to lead on fundraising, some support on that front will be an important aspect of their role. For more information, visit <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/volunteering>.

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The Inter Faith Network for the UK - Volunteers

The Inter Faith Network for the UK currently has an opportunity for online volunteers with good desk research and writing skills who would like to offer 4-8 hours a week to help on different aspects of IFN's work to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. To express an interest in volunteering, please complete the application form at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/volunteering>.

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Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby – Marketing and Events Manager

The Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby is seeking to recruit a part time Marketing and Events Manager. The purpose of the role is to increase the profile of the Multi Faith Centre, through varied digital communication channels, as well as event planning and management. The role will also entail providing office administration support, such as being the first point of contact for general enquiries. The deadline for applications is 5 October. For more information, including how to apply, visit <https://multifaithcentre.org/news/job-vacancy-marketing-administration-executive>.

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St Ethelburga's Centre - Volunteers

The St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace currently has a number of volunteer roles available, from internships to event helper and translators. More information is at <https://stethelburgas.org/get-involved/vacancies-and-volunteering/>.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Community Organisations Cost of Living Fund

The UK Government's Community Organisations Cost of Living Fund, administered via the National Lottery Community Fund, is now open. This funding is for organisations that support people and communities under severe pressure because of the increased cost of living. Organisations can apply for between £10,000 and £75,000. To apply, the organisation must already run critical services, such as providing food and emergency supplies, emergency shelters or warm spaces. The deadline for applications is 16 October.

<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/community-organisationscost-of-living-fund>

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The Prince of Wales's Charitable Fund

The Prince of Wales's Charitable Fund has a small grants programme for UK registered non-profit organisations supporting grassroots projects in diverse and deprived communities. Among its funding themes are 'social inclusion', which is described as including "Community and art projects that aim to relieve poverty, loneliness and other social issues or support the welfare of the elderly, veterans and interfaith cohesion." The next round of applications opened on 1 August. <https://www.pwcf.org.uk/apply-grant>

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UK Government Find a Grant programme

The UK Government's Find a Grant programme currently includes 53 grant schemes and can be found at <https://www.find-government-grants.service.gov.uk/>.

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Funding websites

My Funding Central is a database of grant funding and social investment sources. This service is available to organisations with an annual income below £1m and is free for organisations under £30k. <https://www.myfundingcentral.co.uk/> Similar websites for funding in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at Funding Scotland - <https://funding.scot/>, Wales Council for Voluntary Action - <http://www.wcva.cymru./funding> and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland - <https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

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FCC Community Action Fund

The FCC Communities Foundation is offering grants between £2,000 and £100,000 for projects which involve the provision, maintenance or improvement of public amenities including community spaces in places of worship, which are registered charities. Projects must be based within 10 miles of an eligible FCC Environment waste facility. The next round closes on 6 December. <https://fcccommunitiesfoundation.org.uk/funds/fcc-community-action-fund>

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS/MONTHS

National Hate Crime Awareness Week takes place from Saturday 14 October to Saturday 21 October. <https://nationalhcaw.uk/>

Week of Prayer for World Peace takes place from Sunday 15 to Sunday 22 October. This year's theme is 'Praying with hope in a troubled world'. <https://weekofprayerforworldpeace.co.uk/>

Islamophobia Awareness Month takes place each year during November. Its theme this year is #muslimstories. <https://www.islamophobia-awareness.org/>

Inter Faith Week, in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, will take place from Sunday 12 to Sunday 19 November. www.interfaithweek.org

Scottish Interfaith Week will be held from Sunday 12 to Sunday 19 November. It is led by Interfaith Scotland. This year's theme will be 'Community'.
www.scottishinterfaithweek.org

Mitzvah Day will take place on Sunday 19 November. It is an annual day of faith-based social action led by the Jewish community. Many events and projects held for the day have an inter faith focus. Its theme this year is 'Repairing the World'. www.mitzvahday.org.uk/

Holocaust Memorial Day takes place on 27 January. Its theme in 2024 is 'Fragility of Freedom'. <https://www.hmd.org.uk/>

World Interfaith Harmony Week takes place from 1 to 7 February. It is a UN recognised Week which was proposed to the UN General Assembly by HM King Abdullah of Jordan. <https://worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com/>

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DIARY DATES

A few examples of forthcoming events are listed below. They are virtual, except where noted.

In addition, the listing below, IFN carries inter faith activity listings on its website: www.interfaith.org.uk.

York Interfaith Group is holding its next meeting on Tuesday 3 October. The topic will be 'Sacred Books (part two) - Insights from the Jewish, Christian and Muslim faiths'. The speakers will be Rabbi Elisheva Salamo (Jewish), Canon Christopher Collingwood (Christian) and Roderic Vassie (Muslim). It is being held from 7.00pm to 8.45pm at the City of York Council, West Offices, Station Rise, York YO1 6GA. For more information, email yorkinterfaithgroup@gmail.com.

The Inter Faith Network for the UK is holding a short lunchtime Zoom session on Wednesday 4 October on preparing for Inter Faith Week, with: Tips and ideas for people thinking about possible activities to hold; Pointers for promoting activities to reach more people; Thinking about monitoring and evaluation of activities; and a Q and A session with the Inter Faith Week team at IFN. It is being held from 12.30pm to 1.30pm. To attend, register [here](#) by midday on 3 October.

Council of Christians and Jews (South East branch) is organising a visit to Ightham Mote in Kent on Wednesday 4 October. The theme for the visit will be 'Searching for and Concealing Religious Identity: remarkable stories of search and concealment in an English country house during times of enormous change'. Amanda-Jane Doran, Collections and House Manager at Ightham Mote, will be speaking about her unexpected findings, while preparing the Exhibition 'Country Houses, Jewish Homes'. For booking and further information, email stephenweil6@gmail.com.

The **Multi Faith Centre at the University of Derby** is holding a talk on Wednesday 4 October by Jeff Halper, an Israeli anthropologist, the Director of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions and a founding member of the One Democratic State Campaign. The topic for his talk will be 'One Democratic State In Palestine/Israel: Is it time To Get Political?'. It is being held from 7pm to 9pm at the Multi Faith Centre, University of Derby, Kedleston Road, Derby DE22 1GB. For more information, and to book, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/one-democratic-state-in-palestineisrael-is-it-time-to-get-political-tickets-705184123697>.

Bedford Council of Faiths is holding its next meeting on Wednesday 4 October. The theme will be 'Organ Donation' and the speaker will be Tarsem Paul. It is being held at 7.30pm at The Chapel Room, Priory Methodist Church, 63 Newnham Avenue, Bedford, MK41 9Q3. A Zoom link will be provided nearer the date of the meeting for those unable to attend the face-to-face session. For more information, email bedfordcounciloffaiths@gmail.com.

Interfaith MK is holding its next meeting on Thursday 5 October. This will be a roundtable open discussion on 'Life after Life'. Participants are invited to "prepare an interesting description (5 mins max) of their views on life after life, also commonly described as life after death". It is being held from 7.30pm to 9pm at Whaddon Way Church, Beaverbrook Court, Bletchley, MK3 7JS. For more information, email interfaithmk@gmail.com.

Interfaith Scotland is holding its Annual Interfaith Lecture on Wednesday 11 October. The Lecture will be delivered by Zara Mohammed, Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Britain, on the theme of 'Leadership for Peaceful Co-Existence'. It is being held from 6pm to 8.30pm at the Interfaith Scotland Dialogue Centre, 110 Flemington Street Glasgow G21 4BF. For more information, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/interfaith-scotlands-annual-interfaith-lecture-agm-2023-tickets-698885193427>.

The **St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace** is holding an informal lunchtime gathering on Wednesday 11 October to mark the Feast of St Ethelburga. This will be a community celebration, informal meet-up with mulled juice and seasonal nibbles. It is being held from 12pm to 2pm at the St Ethelburga's Centre in London. For more information, visit <https://stethelburgas.org/event/st-ethelburgas-feast-day-4/>.

Calderdale Interfaith is holding its General Open Meeting & Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 11 October. It is being held at 7pm at Hamza Mosque, Eagle Street, Todmorden, OL14 5HQ. For more information, email Calderdaleinterfaith@gmail.com.

The **Multi Faith Centre at the University of Derby** is holding its AGM on Thursday 12 October. It is being held from 4.30pm to 5.30pm at the Multi Faith Centre, University of Derby, Kedleston Road, Derby DE22 1GB. For more information, and to book, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/multi-faith-centre-annual-general-meeting-tickets-705206540747>.

Essex Faith Covenant is holding a conference on Wednesday 18 October on 'Belief and Blue Lights: Working Together to Demolish Hate Crime and Build Resilience'. The programme will include senior officers from each of the emergency services as keynote speakers. It is being held from 9am to 3.30pm at Chelmsford Cathedral. For more information, and to book, visit <https://www.essexfuture.org.uk/boards-networks/essex-faith-covenant/belief-and-blue-lights-conference/>.

Council of Christians and Jews (Manchester branch) is holding an event on Thursday 19 October on 'Jewish-Christian Relations since the Second World War: A Miracle in our

Lifetime?'. The speakers will be Sister Teresa Brittain NDS, the Revd Canon Steve Williams and David Arnold. It is being held at 7.30pm. To register, visit <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZU5f-2ppz8jG9Qzn-PKoK5juetQepJXttQ9>.

Faith for the Climate will be collaborating with **St John's Church in Waterloo**, London for UK Black History Month in October and Inter Faith Week (12-19 Nov) on Exploring Spirit "interfaith season of arts, film, reflection, talks, worship, prayer and meditation which will bring together nature, the climate crisis and the spiritual journey". Details of events, which are being held between 19 October and 20 November, are at <https://faithfortheclimate.org.uk/events/exploring-spirit-uk-black-history-month-and-interfaith-week/>.

Redbridge Faith Forum is holding its Annual Walk of Peace on Sunday 22 October. This is a gentle stroll through central Ilford, visiting different faith venues, that brings together people from many diverse faith communities in Redbridge in a spirit of fellowship and harmony. The theme for this year's walk is 'Faith – Finding peace within'. It begins at 12.50pm at the Holocaust Memorial Garden, Valentines Park, Ilford and ends at 4pm at Karamsar Gurdwara, 400 High Road, Ilford. Participants can join/leave at any point. Refreshments will be served at some faith venues but please bring your own refillable water bottle. For more information, email faith.forum@redbridge.gov.uk.

Southwark Multi Faith Forum is organising an Interfaith Walk on Sunday 22 October. The event will start at 12.30pm at Qing Liang Buddhist Association 111 Consort Road SE15 3RU. There will then be a walk to Peckham Islamic Centre Choumert Road Se15 4PD and then to Copleston Church and community centre, Copleston Road, where there will be food and refreshments. To register, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/southwark-interfaith-walk-2023-tickets-723448302347>.

The **World Congress of Faiths** is holding its annual Youngusband Lecture on Wednesday 25 October. The Revd Dr Stephen Albert, Director of the World Interfaith Network and creator of Interfaith Awareness Week, will be speaking from California on 'Beyond the Golden Rule'. It is being held at 6pm. For more information, and to register, email admin@worldfaiths.org.

More information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: <https://www.interfaithcouncilwales.cymru/>

IFN also carries news and information at www.twitter.com/IFNetUK www.facebook.com/IFNetUK and, about Inter Faith Week, at <https://twitter.com/IFweek> and www.facebook.com/IFWeek.

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You can sign up to IFN mailings at any time by using the form on IFN's website at: www.interfaith.org.uk/news/gdpr or let us know that you would like to unsubscribe by emailing ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

**SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK
TO INCREASE INTER FAITH UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION**

The Inter Faith Network for the UK works for inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. Please help us grow this vital work by making a donation at: <https://interfaith.org.uk/donate> (including PayPal option).

Donations can also be made by sending a cheque payable to 'The Inter Faith Network' to: The Inter Faith Network for the UK, Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufton Street, London, SW1P 3RB.

Donations are used with care to make a real difference.

Thank you!

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**MAKE A GIFT TO SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK IN REMEMBRANCE
OF A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND OR THROUGH A LEGACY**

If you would like to make a gift in memory of a loved one, please get in touch by emailing remember@interfaith.org.uk or call us on 0207 730 0410.

By leaving a gift in your will to the Inter Faith Network for the UK, you can leave a living inheritance to help deepen and strengthen inter faith understanding and cooperation in this country – for now and for the future. If you are thinking about making a will, the best thing to do is to get in touch with a professional will writer, such as a solicitor or advocate; they can help to ensure it is legally correct and that your wishes are met. If you have already made a will, you can still make an addition or amendment in the form of a codicil. If you would like to pledge a gift, please provide our name and address, along with our registered charity number 1068934.

Please get in touch with us if you have any queries.

You can call us on 0207 730 0410 or contact us at remember@interfaith.org.uk.

Remember a Charity has produced a helpful resource called 'Making a Will - your complete guide'. This can be found at <https://www.rememberacharity.org.uk/making-a-will/>.

Submissions for next issue

If you have items about inter faith projects or future events which you would like considered for inclusion in the next newsletter please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk **by 10 November** with 'newsletter' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

If your organisation distributes a programme, newsletter or e-bulletin, please add ifnet@interfaith.org.uk to your mailing list.

Disclaimer: Information in this newsletter has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this newsletter does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

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Inter Faith Network Newsletter

November/December 2023

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FAITH AND PUBLIC LIFE UPDATES

Inter faith relations in the UK following the Hamas terrorist attack on Israel and subsequent Israel-Hamas war

Following the Hamas terrorist attack on Israel on 7 October and subsequent Israel-Hamas war there have been raised levels of hate crime and impact on inter faith relations in the UK.

Hate crime and security concerns

Levels of reported antisemitic and Islamophobic incidents rose sharply from 7 October.

The CST (Community Security Trust) reported on 13 December the highest ever total of antisemitic incidents (2,093) reported to it across a sixty-eight-day period from 7 October – a 534% increase on the same period last year -

<https://cst.org.uk/news/blog/2023/12/13/antisemitic-incidents-13-december-update> and Tell MAMA reported on 14 December that it had recorded 1,350 anti-Muslim cases between 7 October and 6 December, by contrast to 177 cases during the same period in 2022 (a 663% increase) - <https://tellmama.org/tell-mama-saw-more-than-a-seven-fold-increase-in-anti-muslim-cases-since-october-7/>.

Publicly reported incidents targeting Jews and Muslims have ranged from defacement of posters, antisemitic placards, hateful graffitiing in places such as schools, attacks on premises such as restaurants and physical attacks and threats of attack. There has also been a virulent swirl of verbal attacks and misinformation on social media.

IFN's Board addressed this increase in hate crime in the UK as part of a statement on standing together against hate crime, <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/standing-together-against-hate-crime>, which includes the following:

As well as responding through reporting hate incidents and raised security, it is vital that we stand together and respond in solidarity where people would seek to divide through inflammatory rhetoric or intimidation.

Views on situations and actions in the UK and internationally may differ (indeed may differ profoundly, with people deeply affected by events); what cannot and must not waiver is our commitment as people of different faiths in the UK to maintaining a safe environment for our lives together and to sustaining and continuing to develop relationships of trust and respect.”

As at all times, IFN encourages people to stand up to hate and stand with those who are at risk and feeling vulnerable to hate crime. Information on reporting hate crimes is [below](#). Faith and inter faith groups have a very important part to play in responding to hate crime and community tensions. This is reflected in IFN's guidance, *Looking after one another: the safety and security of our faith communities*

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/looking-after-one-another-the-safety-and-security-of-our-faith-communities-2023>.

The Jewish festival of Chanukah has recently taken place and the safety of public Chanukah menorahs has been a focus of concern. In the case of one local authority, the London Borough of Havering, display of a chanukiah outside the city hall was initially 'paused' due to security concerns in the light of increased hate crimes with the council

citing "escalating tensions from the conflict in the Middle East". The decision was later reversed. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-67601261> Elsewhere in London, two public Chanukah menorahs were vandalised. <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/two-menorahs-attacked-prompting-met-investigation/ar-AA1lvYmO>

In November, the London Borough of Hounslow Council postponed, at short notice, a planned hosting of the Board of Deputies of British Jews' Jewish Living Experience exhibition saying "... due to the current situation in Gaza and associated increase in reported hate crimes, there is significant heightened risk to personal safety across London and consideration of this had to take precedence."

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/hounslow-council-cancel-jewish-living-experience-exhibition-safety-gaza-israel-london-b1125529.html>

<https://www.thejc.com/news/outrage-over-councils-cancellation-of-jewish-life-exhibition-lt55xwlo>

On 26 November, a march against antisemitism, organised by the Campaign Against Antisemitism, took place in London. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-67537351>

REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO HATE INCIDENTS

Report hate crimes and incidents online through True Vision or via 3rd parties eg Community Security Trust (CST); Tell MAMA; Sikhguard; and Stop Hate UK; at a police station; or by ringing the police on 101 (non-emergency) or 999.

<https://gov.uk/report-hate-crime>

<https://www.scotland.police.uk/contact-us/report-hate-crime-and-third-party-reporting/>
<https://reportheate.victimsupport.org.uk/hate-crime/>

<https://www.psnipolice.uk/crime/hate-crime/reporting-a-hate-crime/>

See also *Looking after one another: the safety and security of our faith communities* (IFN and partners) which contains practical pointers for working together to counter hate crime.

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/looking-after-one-another-the-safety-and-security-of-our-faith-communities-2023>

Community and inter faith impact and response

There has been an impact on inter faith relations and community relations, both in terms of inter faith engagement by local and national faith communities and within different sectors such as workplaces, schools, FE colleges and universities.

<https://www.cipd.org.uk/views-and-insights/thought-leadership/insight/support-workforce-israel-gaza/>

<https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2023/10/19/israel-hamas-conflict-advice-schools-ministers/>

<https://solutionsnotsides.co.uk/learning-resources>

<https://feweek.co.uk/how-colleges-can-foster-safe-engagement-with-the-israel-palestine-conflict/>

Across the UK, many efforts have been being made to retain important links and connections. IFN's website carries examples of a number of local and national inter faith vigils and statements <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/inter-faith-statements-vigils-prayer-gatherings> for example:

- Prayers for peace events, such as those in York <https://www.yorkpress.co.uk/news/23881998.york-interfaith-group-hold-event-israel-hamas-conflict/> and in Derby <https://multifaithcentre.org/events/city-wide-prayer-for-peace>.
- Local vigils, such as one in Blackburn <https://theshuttle.org.uk/peace-vigil-for-israel-and-palestine/> and at a national level, such as one organised by Together for Humanity, held opposite Downing Street on 3 December <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/vigil-london-archbishop-of-canterbury-b2457728.html>.
- Statements by faith leaders such as those from the Birmingham Faith Leaders Group <https://twitter.com/BishopAnneH/status/1714771225224827192>; faith leaders in Bradford https://twitter.com/toby_howarth/status/1712063234331619381/photo/1; the Muslim Jewish Forum of Greater Manchester <https://www.muslimjewish.org.uk/Past-events/Gaza-statement-2023-10-11.html>; Oxfordshire faith leaders <https://www.oxford.anglican.org/violence-and-hatred-can-never-be-the-solution.php>; and Scottish faith leaders <https://www.gov.scot/news/leaders-reaffirm-inter-faith-solidarity-in-scotland/>.

There have also been discussions between local faith leaders, such as at a meeting of Jewish and Muslim leaders at the Abdullah Quilliam Mosque in Liverpool. <https://liverpoolexpress.co.uk/liverpool-faith-leaders-to-strengthen-understanding/>

There have been a number of events held to explore how to remain in dialogue and building on commonalities, as well as inter faith responses focusing directly on events in Israel and Gaza, such as the Woolf Institute's 'How to keep on talking' webinar <https://www.woolf.cam.ac.uk/blog/how-to-keep-talking-the-woolf-institute-addresses-interfaith-relations-in-light-of-the-latest-misery-in-israel-gaza>, workplace dialogues such as one held by Barts Health Interfaith and Belief Network, and podcasts such as <https://leedssanctuary.org.uk/2023/12/04/the-leeds-sanctuary-podcast-justice-international-conflict-and-local-communities/> with local Muslim and Jewish contributors.

Inter Faith Week, last month, provided a number of contexts for engagement by Jews, Muslims and others of a kind that has lessened in many other contexts since 7 October. Some, such as the Chair of Northampton InterFaith Forum, which held activities to mark the Week, commented on the message of solidarity sent by coming together at this time. <https://www.northamptonchron.co.uk/whats-on/things-to-do/interfaith-debate-and-discussion-about-justice-4421574>

Note: There have also been many actions taken by the Jewish and Muslim communities relating to the Hamas Terrorist attack; the Israel Hamas war; hostages; and the deaths of civilians. These have ranged from vigils for hostages taken from Israel to marches to advocate for ceasefire; and materials produced to support pupils of that faith community in schools or give guidance on legal parameters for protests. IFN's focus is UK inter faith relations and so the focus of the report above is on the UK. Even on that basis, this piece cannot be comprehensive of all developments and readers are referred to other publications for more in depth coverage.

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Inter faith engagement of The King

One of the events that took place in Inter Faith Week was a reception hosted by the Archbishop of Canterbury for His Majesty King Charles, at Lambeth Palace Library. The King spoke with a number of faith leaders and community representatives about their experiences at the present time. IFN's Co-Chairs and Executive Director were honoured to be present. Reports on that reception can be seen at <https://www.royal.uk/news-and-activity/2023-11-18/the-king-marks-inter-faith-week-with-faith-leaders-at-lambeth-palace> and <https://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/news/news-and-statements/archbishop-canterbury-welcomes-king-and-uk-faith-leaders-lambeth-palace>. The visit was described by the Archbishop of Canterbury as a 'wonderful encouragement to remain united in partnership and friendship – as many people of faith are doing across the country' in the context of 'challenging times for faith communities in the UK, particularly with the ongoing war in the Middle East'.

The King met again with a different range of faith leaders and community representatives at a specially convened discussion at Buckingham Palace on 13 December about inter faith relations. The backdrop of many of the contributions was the impact of current events on those. You can read more about that at [The Royal Family Facebook 13 December](#) and <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/andrew-smith-charles-israel-hamas-buckingham-palace-b2463469.html>. IFN's Executive Director highlighted, during the discussion, the importance of conversations at local level, such as those within local inter faith bodies and bilateral groups; education for religious literacy (including RE); opportunities for learning and dialogue - including about difficult issues; and faith community cooperation on social issues.

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Scottish Government Hate Crime Delivery Plan

In Scotland, the law currently recognises hate crime based on prejudice towards the following groups: Disability, Race, Religion, Sexual orientation and Transgender identity. In November the Scottish Government published its Hate Crime Strategy Delivery Plan. This sets out the activity that the Scottish Government and partners will undertake between 2023 and 2026 to support delivery of the commitments within the Hate Crime Strategy for Scotland that was published earlier this year.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/hate-crime-strategy-delivery-plan/>

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Faith community 'warm spaces'

Places of worship and faith centres across the UK have again opened their doors as warm spaces for those who are struggling to heat their homes. Many of these are doing so through the Warm Welcome initiative, an initiative of the Good Faith Partnership. A list of all warm spaces registered can be found at <https://www.warmwelcome.uk>. The mission of the initiative is to support organisations to open their doors and provide a warm welcome. Information on setting up and registering a warm space can be found at <https://www.warmwelcome.uk/spaces>.

In November, the UK Health Security Agency published [Warm spaces in England: an evidence review and toolkit for local organisations](#). This provides a framework for organisations seeking to develop or evaluate a warm space for their local population during the winter. The toolkit also includes case studies sharing examples of best and promising practice as well as signposting to resources to support organisations in developing their warm space offer.

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Faith groups and food for those in need

A number of places of worship run local food banks or provide free meals, for example the Sikh Soup Kitchen in Birmingham <https://www.facebook.com/thesikhsoupkitchen/> or collect for a local food bank such as this recent Diwali donation to a local foodbank <https://london.ctvnews.ca/let-s-celebrate-diwali-with-the-community-london-food-bank-receives-significant-donation-1.6656445>.

The Trussell Trust works with the support of many churches in the UK <https://www.trusselltrust.org/get-involved/church-support> and the Church in Wales has a Food and Fuel Project <https://www.churchinwales.org.uk/en/about-us/our-campaigns/food-fuel/>. Other programmes such as Mitzvah Day work with different foodbanks, such as Foodbank Aid in North London. <https://mitzvahday.org.uk/project/foodbank-aid-north-london-network/>

In some areas, faith communities run homelessness projects, such as this one set up by Merton Faith in Action which provides hot food, showers and a night shelter <http://www.mertonfaithinaction.org/> and this one run in the Manchester region by Muslim Charity <https://muslimcharity.org.uk/project/uk-homeless-project/>.

Some local inter faith groups, such as Faiths Together in Croydon, have received food donations via local schools and other groups to pass on to families in need. <https://twitter.com/WhitgiftSchool1/status/1736794258634363157>

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2023 Equality and Human Rights Monitor

In November the Equality and Human Rights Commission published The Equality and Human Rights Monitor 2023. This charts how Britain is performing on equality and human rights. It is split into chapters for the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010, including one on religion or belief. Its key findings for the sector, in the order presented in its summary, are:

- Outcomes for Muslims in Britain have improved in higher education attainment, employment, reduced economic inactivity and median hourly income. However, these are still poorer outcomes than for most other religious groups. Adult and child poverty and severe material deprivation remains high among Muslims.
- In Britain, educational and employment outcomes for Hindus have improved. Hindus are the most likely group to have a degree level qualification and, along with Jewish people, to have higher hourly earnings.
- Overall prevalence of religious hate crime in England and Wales has not changed, while other types of hate crime have fallen in the long term. Sudden increases in

racial or religiously motivated offences have been seen around major political or terrorist trigger events, including the EU referendum, July 2017 terrorist attacks and the Black Lives Matter protests and counter-protests in summer 2020.

- There has been significant emerging case law clarifying the scope of protections for beliefs and expression of beliefs, and the extent to which provision of services can and cannot be restricted on the basis of religion and belief.

The full report can be found at <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/our-work/equality-and-human-rights-monitor/equality-and-human-rights-monitor-2023>.

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Faith communities and elections

The Prime Minister has said that the next General Election will be held in 2024. Ahead of that, a number of bye-elections are being held.

Earlier this month the Charity Commission and Electoral Commission chairs shared advice for charities, including faith-based charities, engaging in public debate.

<https://charitycommission.blog.gov.uk/2023/12/01/charity-commission-and-electoral-commission-chairs-share-advice-for-charities-engaging-in-public-debate/> This notes that charities also need to know about the new [Non-Party Campaigner Code](#) which came into effect on 1 December. This notes that electoral law requires charities to register as non-party campaigners if they spend over a certain amount on regulated campaign activities in the 12 months leading up to the next election.

Campaigning undertaken by charities must align with their charitable purposes and further them. The guidance for charities on campaigning and political activity produced by the Charity Commission for England and Wales sets out a framework when considering any campaign for a charity. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/speaking-out-guidance-on-campaigning-and-political-activity-by-charities-cc9> The Commission also has additional guidance on campaigning and political activity at the time of elections and referendums. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/speaking-out-guidance-on-campaigning-and-political-activity-by-charities-cc9/charities-elections-and-referendums>

Similar guidance for charities in Northern Ireland is at <https://www.charitycommissionni.org.uk/charity-essentials/charities-and-politics/> and in Scotland at https://www.oscr.org.uk/media/2899/v14_faqs-charities-and-campaigning-on-political-issues.pdf.

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Faith community support for asylum seekers and refugees

Faith groups help asylum seekers and refugees through many routes from community sponsorship, to provision of essentials and, in some instances, engagement with Government over relevant policies. In a recent example of the latter, leaders from faith and belief institutions across London asked the Home Office to re-examine a recent change in practice which has meant that, since August, refugees are having much less notice that their asylum support will end than the stated policy of 28 days.

<https://www.london.anglican.org/articles/faith-leaders-call-on-home-office-to-re-examine-seven-day-evictions-practice/>

There are a number of agencies and initiatives in this field – some of which in the UK, such as Scottish Action for Refugees, City of Sanctuary and Citizens UK, have a direct link to faith communities or significant involvement from faith organisations. Such initiatives often see faith communities working side by side in inter faith response.

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Payments for bereaved parents who have been supported by local faith groups

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is looking to share information with bereaved parents who lost their partner between 9 April 2001 and 8 February 2023 and may be eligible for a backdated government payment even if they no longer have dependent children. The DWP has worked with several national bereavement support charities but think they may be missing bereaved parents who could have turned to their local community religious/faith-based groups for support.

In February the Government extended eligibility for Bereavement Support Payment (BSP) and Widowed Parent's Allowance (WPA) to cohabiting parents with dependent children. These payments can be backdated to 30 August 2018. These benefits were previously only available to bereaved parents who were married or in a civil partnership. DWP opened a 12-month window for cohabiting parents to backdate their claims. The deadline for backdating claims is 8 February 2024.

Further information is at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/reminder-for-bereaved-parents-to-check-eligibility-for-financial-support>.

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Review of RE in Northern Ireland recommended

The final report of the Independent Review of Education in Northern Ireland was published earlier this month. The Panel undertaking the Review concluded that there are a number of areas which need particular consideration at pace by the Curriculum Taskforce in the short term and the Curriculum Council in the longer term. These include Religious Education. It notes that: "It may be that the outcome of litigation ongoing at the time of the publication of our Report may make the drawing up of a new religious education syllabus an immediate necessity. However, we consider that the increasing diversity of Northern Irish society makes it highly desirable that a review be undertaken in the near future, regardless of the legal processes."

<https://www.independentreviewofeducation.org.uk/key-documents/investing-better-future>

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Scottish People's Panel key findings

In November Research findings from the Scottish Government's 'People's Panel' on community resilience were published. The 'People's Panel for Wellbeing: 2022 and beyond' was set up with the aim to enable members of the public to provide up-to-date and relevant views, opinions, experiences, and ideas on the wellbeing of people in Scotland. This panel specifically focused on the COVID-19 recovery period, whilst also addressing other significant issues such as the cost-of-living crisis and community resilience. The 'key findings' from the research note that many saw the value of local communities. They were recognised as a source of information through speaking to

neighbours, attending community cafes and local faith groups.

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/peoples-panel-community-resilience/pages/2/>

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Religious representatives' voting rights removed in Scotland

It was noted in the last issue of the Newsletter that Councillors had voted to remove voting rights from unelected religious representatives who sit on Edinburgh Council's Education Committee. East Lothian Council has this month voted to do the same. The decision followed a consultation in October in which 84% of respondents said religious representatives should not retain their vote.

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Special feature - Inter Faith Week

This year Inter Faith Week took place across England, Northern Ireland and Wales from Sunday 12 to Sunday 19 November. This was the 15th Inter Faith Week.

Across the Week, more than 1,000 activities are known to have taken place, making it the biggest Week yet! And we are still hearing about more activities and events each day. Thousands of people took part in the Week and its positive messages has also reached millions through social media.

Canon Hilary Barber and Narendra Waghela, Co-Chairs of the Inter Faith Network for the UK, which leads on the Week in England, Northern Ireland and Wales, said:

“Inter Faith Week has become an increasingly important fixture in the public calendar. Across the last week, hundreds of activities have taken place which have helped to highlight and encourage understanding about different faiths and beliefs; strengthen good inter faith relations and social cooperation for the common good.”

With concern about tensions and a rise in antisemitic and anti-Muslim hate incidents in the UK, very welcome was the conversation of HM The King with faith leaders and community representatives at an Inter Faith Week reception for him hosted by the Archbishop of Canterbury. A number of those who held activities to mark the Week have commented on the particular importance of coming together at this time.”

You can read more about the Week in the press release [here](#). A full list of activities can be seen on the website [here](#).

Inter Faith Week messages from faith leaders

Many faith leaders issued messages for the Week [here](#).

Feedback on the Week

If you held an activity for the Week, thank you for making the week such a success! If you have not already responded to the feedback survey, we would be very grateful if you could spare some time to share any thoughts or reflections that you may have on your experience of the Week. Your responses help us to evaluate and accurately report on the Week, and to continue to develop it in the future. They also help IFN's broader work to support good inter faith relations in the UK. The link to the survey can be found at <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/IFW2023/>.

Scottish Inter Faith Week

Scottish Interfaith Week is led by Interfaith Scotland and also took place from 12 to 19 November. More information about this can be found at www.scottishinterfaithweek.org. This year's theme was 'Community'.

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INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK NEWS

Will you give a gift to help deepen inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK?

This is a time of year when many people are thinking about charitable giving to causes they support. If you are doing so, may we encourage you to consider a gift to support the work of the Inter Faith Network for the UK to increase inter faith understanding and cooperation for the common good? Donations can be made at www.interfaith.org.uk/donate.

Donations at all levels are used with care to make a real difference.

- Donate directly via PayPal at www.paypal.me/ifnetuk
- Donate by BACS to: CAF Bank Ltd, Sort Code: 40-52-40, Account Number: 00019472
- Donate by cheque, payable to 'The Inter Faith Network', to The Inter Faith Network for the UK, Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufton Street, London, SW1P 3RB.

AT THE MOMENT, DONATIONS ARE BEING MATCHED AND SO HAVE DOUBLE THE VALUE

Thank you.

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Meeting of IFN Faith Communities Forum

A meeting of the IFN Faith Communities Forum was held on 6 December. On the Agenda were: 'Community relations in the UK and responding together to hate crime in context of recent Israel / Hamas / Gaza impacts'; 'Faith communities and organ donation and transplant', with a presentation by Professor Gurch Randhawa DL, Professor of Diversity in Public Health, Director of the Institute for Health Research (IHR) at the University of Bedfordshire and Director of the IHR's Organ Donation and Transplant Research Centre; Inter faith engagement of faith communities, (including Inter Faith Week and updates on faith communities' inter faith projects/meetings); 'A National Content Standard for Religious Education in England', with a presentation by Ms Deborah Weston OBE, Executive Research Officer, National Association for Teachers of RE and Trustee, Religious Education Council for England and Wales; and IFN matters, including IFN's funding position and long term sustainability.

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INTER FAITH PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND DEVELOPMENTS

Oxfordshire faith leaders initiative

The Bishop of Oxford and Imam Monawar Hussain hosted faith and community leaders from across Oxfordshire at a gathering in October. The new group has been meeting regularly since then to give a collective voice in promoting understanding, peace, and strong community relations across the area. <https://www.oxford.anglican.org/violence-and-hatred-can-never-be-the-solution.php>

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Stockton Interfaith Forum

A new local inter faith initiative has been set up in Stockton. The Interfaith Forum, set up by the Amal Project, Catalyst Stockton and others, held its first meeting in November which was attended by faith leaders and community groups.

<https://www.catalyststockton.org/event/stockton-on-tees-interfaith-forum/>

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West Midlands Faith Alliance violence prevention strategy

During Inter Faith Week, the West Midlands Faith Alliance, launched a three-year strategy to understand and prevent violence. It is the first regional network of its kind in the UK. At the launch event at the Nishkam Centre in Birmingham, the Alliance said its plan was to “make tangible and positive differences to the lives of young people and communities in the West Midlands and to contribute towards an overall reduction in violence across the region”. The strategy can be found at <https://westmidlands-vrp.org/faith-and-communities/faith-alliance>.

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London Violence Reduction Unit Multi Faith Network

The London Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) has set up a new Multi Faith Network. The Network, which is working with faith leaders and faith organisations across London on how faith communities can work in partnership with the VRU and others across the city in supporting young people affected by violence, was launched during Inter Faith Week.

https://www.linkedin.com/posts/london-s-violence-reduction-unit_interfaithweek-activity-7131299465138728960-iF-0

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Welwyn Hatfield Faith Covenant

A number of local authorities in the UK have developed and signed 'faith covenants' with faith groups in their areas. The latest to do so is Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council.

<https://one.welhat.gov.uk/news/article/135/welwyn-hatfield-borough-council-adopts-faith-covenant> Faith Covenants were established in 2014 by the All Party Parliamentary

Group on Faith and Society to facilitate partnership working between local authorities and faith groups. The Covenants are used as a tool to develop activity around uniting

communities to better serve their residents. More information is at <https://www.faithaction.net/working-with-you/appg-on-faith-and-society/>.

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Councils marking religious festivals

A number of local authorities in the UK, such as Leeds City Council, have programmes to mark a range of religious and community festivals by lighting up buildings. Norwich City is an example of a Council which has recently begun a programme to do so. It began by displaying a Menorah on its City Hall to mark Chanukah and Council officers are exploring how the council should mark Eid and Diwali, amongst other festivals.

https://www.norwich.gov.uk/news/article/684/city_of_tolerance_and_diversity_to_mark_a_wider_range_of_festivities

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Leicester Council of Faiths Cancer and Faith project

Leicester Council of Faiths, in partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support, has launched a new Cancer and Faith project. <https://www.lcof.org.uk/our-work/> During 2024 it will be running listening events for faith communities and creating Cancer and Faith support networks. During the project they will be engaging, with and listening to faith communities, learning more about the barriers they face in respect of cancer, and feeding back to Macmillan Cancer Support to enable them to develop their provision for faith communities. As part of this it has launched a Cancer & Faith WhatsApp group.

<https://twitter.com/counciloffaiths/status/1736707632612659633>

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St Ethelburga's Lifelines project

St Ethelburga's has begun a new Lifelines project. 20 leaders from a diversity of faiths and backgrounds have been taught the skills to lead a volunteer group from their own community to plant hedgerows and woodland on a UK farm. Throughout the winter months, these leaders will be joined by group leaders trained last year. In total 30 different groups will plant another 20,000 trees by March 2024.

<https://stethelburgas.org/projects/lifelines/>

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Interfaith Retreat to Holy Isle

Interfaith Scotland will be hosting a retreat to Holy Isle off the island of Arran, in May. It is open to people of all faiths and none who are interested in finding out about the lived experience of people of different faiths, philosophies and spiritual practices. There will be opportunities to try out some creative expressions of spirituality such as walking meditation, art, singing together and a reflective walk to the cave of St Molaise and the Tibetan Buddhist deities carved into the rocks. For more information, visit

<https://www.holyisle.org/courses/other/view/interfaith-retreat>.

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RESOURCES AND STUDY/TRAINING

Resources

Religious festivals

IFN includes religious festival dates on its website by kind permission of the Shap Calendar Group. The dates for 2024 have been made available by Shap and are now on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/religious-festivals>.

In March 2017 the IFN Faith Communities Forum agreed a document setting out two festivals from each community on which greetings from those of other faiths and none would be particularly appreciated. The document includes greetings agreed by each community. The latest version with the 2024 dates for the chosen festivals has been cleared with FCF members and is also now on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/faith-festivals-guidance-on-sending-greetings>.

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HMD Get Involved guides

Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) takes place on 27 January each year. It is a “time for everyone to remember the millions of people murdered in the Holocaust, under Nazi Persecution and in the genocides which followed in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur”. The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust has produced a number of guides for getting taking part in HMD. The guide for faith and inter faith groups can be found at <https://www.hmd.org.uk/resource/your-faith-interfaith-group-and-holocaust-memorial-day>.

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Training

Home Office faith security training

The Home Office has announced the launch of piloting for the Faith Security Training project. This is a new course developed by the Home Office, in consultation with experts from security and policing partners, that will be a free learning resource for faith communities, with the aim of raising awareness of security risks and how to respond to them. The Home Office has been piloting face-to-face delivery sessions with members of faith communities, particularly people in positions of leadership or responsibility for security at places of worship, to provide feedback on the content and delivery. For more information, email FaithSecurityBooking@cdsds.uk.

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JOBS, INTERNSHIPS AND VOLUNTEERING

The Inter Faith Network for the UK - Volunteers

The Inter Faith Network for the UK currently has an opportunity for online volunteers with good desk research and writing skills who would like to offer 4-8 hours a week to help on different aspects of IFN’s work to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation in

the UK. To express an interest in volunteering, please complete the application form at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/vacancies/volunteering>.

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Faith & Belief Forum - Volunteers

The Faith & Belief Forum has opportunities for volunteers from different backgrounds to take part in its 'Encountering Faiths and Beliefs' workshops for schools. More information is at <https://faithbeliefforum.org/about/careers/volunteer-speaker-programme/>.

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St Ethelburga's Centre - Volunteers

The St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace currently has a number of volunteer roles available, from fundraising and communications internships garden volunteers. More information is at <https://stethelburgas.org/get-involved/vacancies-and-volunteering/>.

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FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

King Charles III Charitable Fund

The King Charles III Charitable Fund has a small grants programme for UK registered non-profit organisations supporting grassroots projects in diverse and deprived communities. The next round of applications opens in January. <https://www.kccf.org.uk/grantmaking/>

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UK Government Find a Grant programme

The UK Government's Find a Grant programme currently includes 53 grant schemes and can be found at <https://www.find-government-grants.service.gov.uk/>.

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Funding websites

My Funding Central is a database of grant funding and social investment sources. This service is free for organisations where annual turnover is under £30k.

<https://www.myfundingcentral.co.uk/> Websites providing information on funding opportunities in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can be found at

Funding Scotland - <https://funding.scot/>,

Funding Wales - <https://funding.cymru/> and Grant Tracker for Northern Ireland -

<https://www.grant-tracker.org/>.

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FCC Community Action Fund

The FCC Communities Foundation is offering grants between £2,000 and £100,000 for projects which involve the provision, maintenance or improvement of public amenities

including community spaces in places of worship, which are registered charities. Projects must be based within 10 miles of an eligible FCC Environment waste facility. The next round closes on 28 February. <https://fcccommunitiesfoundation.org.uk/funds/fcc-community-action-fund>

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SPECIAL WEEKS/DAYS/MONTHS

The Great Winter Get Together will be from 12 to 15 January. This is a project of the Jo Cox Foundation. <https://www.greatgettogether.org/winter>.

Holocaust Memorial Day takes place on 27 January. Its theme in 2024 is 'Fragility of Freedom'. <https://www.hmd.org.uk/>

World Interfaith Harmony Week takes place from 1 to 7 February. It is a UN recognised Week which was proposed to the UN General Assembly by HM King Abdullah of Jordan. <https://worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com/>

International Women's Day falls on 8 March. The theme for 2024 is #InspireInclusion. Many faith and inter faith bodies mark the day. <https://www.internationalwomensday.com/>

Great British Spring Clean [Keep Britain Tidy](#) runs an annual Great British Spring Clean campaign, which in 2024 will run from Friday 15 March to Sunday 31 March. Every year lots of faith and inter faith groups take part. <https://www.keepbritaintidy.org/get-involved/support-our-campaigns/great-british-spring-clean>

The Big Lunch will be taking place from 1 to 2 June. Across the years millions of people from different backgrounds have joined together to take part through street parties, BBQs, iftars and picnics. <https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/get-involved>

Refugee Week will take place from Monday 17 to Sunday 23 June. Refugee Week is a nationwide programme of arts, cultural and educational events that celebrate the contribution of refugees to the UK, and encourages a better understanding between communities. The theme for the 2024 Week is 'Our Home'. <https://refugeeweek.org.uk/>

Fairtrade Fortnight will be moving to September next year as part of its year-long 30th anniversary celebrations. It will be held from Monday 9 to Sunday 22 September. Many places of worship take part each year. <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/get-involved/current-campaigns/fairtrade-fortnight/>

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DIARY DATES

A few examples of forthcoming events are listed below. They are virtual, except where noted.

In addition to the examples below, IFN carries inter faith activity listings on its website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/involved/events>.

Bedford Council of Faiths is holding an online gathering to say prayers for peace, as part of the Solstice Peace Project, at 7.30pm on Friday 22 December. Participants are invited to

share a short prayer, poem or thoughts for world peace, if they so wish when asked by the moderator. Participants are also invited to place a candle in their window on December 22nd. For more information, email bedfordcounciloffaiths@gmail.com.

Council of Christians and Jews Manchester branch is holding its next event on Monday 5 February. The topic will be 'Jewish Christian relations since the Second World War: A miracle in our lifetime?' and the speakers will be Sister Teresa Brittain NDS, Revd Canon Steve Williams and David Arnold MBE. It is being held at 7.30pm. To register, visit <https://bit.ly/JewishChristianManchester>.

Hillingdon Interfaith Community will be holding an event on Monday 10 January. This will be an Interfaith Leaders' Visit to the Mayor's Parlour with a tour of the Council Assembly Room. It is being held from 2pm to 3.30pm. Spaces are limited. To book, email hillingdoninterfaithcommunity@gmail.com.

Northamptonshire Inter Faith Forum is holding a Health and Wellbeing Workshop on Saturday 13 January. There will be yoga and meditation, reiki crystal healing, a sound bath, refreshments and much more. It is being held from 11am to 3pm at SCCYC Waterside, 35-37 St James Mill Road, Northampton NN5 5JW. For more information, email pukhelen4@gmail.com.

The **Muslim Jewish Forum of Greater Manchester** is holding its annual Kosher Meal on Sunday 14 January. It will be held at 6.30pm for 7pm at Celia's Kitchen, 7 King's Rd, Prestwich, Manchester M25 0LE. Participants must book in advance. For more information, visit https://www.muslimjewish.org.uk/Future_events.html.

Interfaith Scotland is co-hosting the Annual Holocaust Memorial Day Concert, in partnership with the **Royal Conservatoire of Scotland** and **Glasgow City Council** on Wednesday 24 January. The concert will feature young performers from the Royal Conservatoire, Glasgow schools and special guest performers from Turin. It is being held at 6pm at the Royal Conservatoire in Glasgow. For more information and to book, visit <https://www.rcs.ac.uk/box-office/performance/book/435606/>.

The **SAFE programme** (Security Advice for Everyone) is a programme of the **Community Security Trust**. SAFE shares CST's security knowledge with groups outside the Jewish community that are vulnerable to violence, extremism or hate crime. Information about its upcoming free webinars can be found [here](#). Its next webinar on basic security is at 2pm on Wednesday 17 January and on hate crime is at 2pm on Thursday 25 January.

Interfaith Scotland is holding the next in its series of Interfaith Interactions on Tuesday 6 February. The theme of Pilgrimage will be explored by Dr Dorothea Christiana, Sunna Kaleem and Nicola Maule. It is being held from 7pm to 8.30pm. For more information, and to register, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/interfaith-interactions-pilgrimage-tickets-726146693307>.

Camden Interfaith Network is holding its next meeting on Wednesday 7 February. The meeting will be exploring the theme of children and young people and the role of faith organisations in engaging youth interfaith. It is being held at 5.30pm at Hampstead Synagogue, 1 Dennington Park Road, NW6 1AX. For more information, email faith@camden.gov.uk.

The **Faith & Belief Forum** and **LSE Faith Centre** are hosting the 2024 Youth Interfaith Summit on Thursday 8 February. The key topics will be: Climate, Intersectionality, and

Faith Identity; Communication and Climate Change; Youth Influence on Climate Policy; Legacies of Colonialism, Land, and Faith. It is being held from 6pm to 9pm at LSE Centre Building (CBG), Houghton Street London WC2A 2AE. For more information and to register, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/youth-interfaith-summit-2024-faith-and-climate-for-a-sustainable-future-tickets-773019541257>.

More information on events and projects in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales:

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum: www.niinterfaithforum.org

Interfaith Scotland: www.interfaithscotland.org

Inter-faith Council for Wales: <https://www.interfaithcouncilwales.cymru/>

IFN also carries news and information at www.twitter.com/IFNetUK www.facebook.com/IFNetUK and, about Inter Faith Week, at <https://twitter.com/IFweek> and www.facebook.com/IFWeek.

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You can sign up to IFN mailings at any time by using the form on IFN's website at: www.interfaith.org.uk/news/gdpr or let us know that you would like to unsubscribe by emailing ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

**SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK
TO INCREASE INTER FAITH UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION**

The Inter Faith Network for the UK works for inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. Please help us grow this vital work by making a donation at: <https://interfaith.org.uk/donate> (including PayPal option).

Donations can also be made by sending a cheque payable to 'The Inter Faith Network' to: The Inter Faith Network for the UK, Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufton Street, London, SW1P 3RB.

Donations are used with care to make a real difference.

Thank you!

MAKE A GIFT TO SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK IN REMEMBRANCE OF A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND OR THROUGH A LEGACY

If you would like to make a gift in memory of a loved one, please get in touch by emailing remember@interfaith.org.uk or call us on 0207 730 0410.

By leaving a gift in your will to the Inter Faith Network for the UK, you can leave a living inheritance to help deepen and strengthen inter faith understanding and cooperation in this country – for now and for the future. If you are thinking about making a will, the best thing to do is to get in touch with a professional will writer, such as a solicitor or advocate; they can help to ensure it is legally correct and that your wishes are met. If you have already made a will, you can still make an addition or amendment in the form of a codicil. If you would like to pledge a gift, please provide our name and address, along with our registered charity number 1068934.

Please get in touch with us if you have any queries.

You can call us on 0207 730 0410 or contact us at remember@interfaith.org.uk.

Remember a Charity has produced a helpful resource called 'Making a Will - your complete guide'. This can be found at <https://www.rememberacharity.org.uk/making-a-will/>.

Submissions for next issue

If you have items about inter faith projects or future events which you would like considered for inclusion in the next newsletter please email these to ifnet@interfaith.org.uk **by 24 January** with 'newsletter' in the subject line. Submissions may be edited for length or style.

If your organisation distributes a programme, newsletter or e-bulletin, please add ifnet@interfaith.org.uk to your mailing list.

Disclaimer: Information in this newsletter has been sourced and compiled with care. IFN does not take responsibility for accuracy of information supplied by external organisations and inclusion of items within this newsletter does not imply endorsement or validation by IFN of the events, publications or the bodies which have produced these.

The Inter Faith Network for the UK, Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufton Street, London, SW1P 3RB
www.interfaith.org.uk www.facebook.com/IFNetUK www.twitter.com/IFNetUK

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Inter Faith Network Newsletter

January 2024 – Extra

Contents

This edition is an 'Extra'. The usual newsletter will be published in due course.

STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF BOARD OF IFN ON LETTER FROM SECRETARY OF STATE RT HON MICHAEL GOVE ON FUNDING FOR THE INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK

On Friday 19 January IFN received a letter from the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, saying that he is 'minded' to withdraw the offer of fresh funding (for July 2023 to March 2024) that was made to IFN on 7 July 2023 because IFN has a Trustee who is a member of the Muslim Council of Britain and that this posed a reputational risk to Government. IFN was given until 26 January to respond.

A statement about this was issued, on behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Inter Faith Network for the UK, on 24 January. The statement includes the points from IFN's Co-Chairs' response to the Secretary of State. It can be found at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/statement-on-a-letter-received-by-ifns-co-chairs-from-secretary-of-state-levelling-up-housing-and-communities-rt-hon-michael-gove-mp>.

This potential non granting of the funds offered, subject to conditions, in July last year puts IFN's work and its very existence in jeopardy.

SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK TO INCREASE INTER FAITH UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION IN THE UK

The Inter Faith Network for the UK works for inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK.

Please help us continue this vital work by making a donation today at: <https://interfaith.org.uk/donate> (with debit/credit card, PayPal and BACS options).

Donations can also be made by cheque payable to 'The Inter Faith Network' and sent to: The Inter Faith Network for the UK, Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufton Street, London, SW1P 3RB.

Warm thanks for helping make a difference in this way.



Inter Faith Network Newsletter

February 2024 – Extra

Contents

This edition is an ‘Extra’ issued on 8 February 2024. The usual newsletter will be published in due course.

Items

Inter Faith Network for the UK likely imminent closure [Read more](#)

Is action still possible to save the Inter Faith Network and its work? [Read more](#)

INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK LIKELY IMMINENT CLOSURE

On 7 February, the Board of the Inter Faith Network for the UK took, with great regret, an in principle decision to move towards closure of the organisation.

That will be confirmed, on 22 February and greater detail provided subsequently – unless by that time the funding offered by the Government on 7 July 2023 for work from July 2023 to March 2024, subject to conditions, is made available or funds at an equivalent level are received from other quarters.

The background to this decision can be seen in a statement issued by IFN’s Board on 24 January, following a letter of 19 January from Secretary of State Rt Hon Michael Gove MP saying that he was ‘minded to withdraw’ the funding offered in July 2023. The Board’s statement can be seen [here](#), and key points made by its Co-Chairs in response to Mr Gove’s concerns about IFN having a Trustee who is a member of the Muslim Council of Britain can be seen [here](#).

Continued uncertainty regarding Government funding to the Inter Faith Network has had a hugely damaging effect on the charity. Continuing to operate without the £155,000 offered over six months ago has not proven possible, despite other fundraising efforts and IFN’s widely acknowledged importance as a trusted and effective UK-wide body working to deepen understanding about and between different faiths and inter faith cooperation and to share information and good practice.

The Board is grateful to all the many individuals and organisations who have written to MPs and Ministers, started or signed petitions, made donations, and in other ways shown deep and often humbling support to IFN across the last year. It is also grateful to those parliamentarians who, on a cross-party basis, have offered support across this period – as

well as across the period April to June 2023 where no funding was given following a 31 March letter from DLUHC saying that there would be no funding from 1 April.

In preparing for IFN's likely closure, the Board will be looking across the coming weeks, with input from members and others, at whether and how particular strands of IFN's work, including Inter Faith Week, may be taken forward for the future, as part of ensuring that positive inter faith relations in the UK can continue to be promoted effectively, particularly in the challenging environment we collectively face.

8 February 2024

A copy of the above was also issued as a press release and can be seen, with its 'editors' notes', on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/inter-faith-network-for-the-uk-imminent-closure>

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IS ACTION STILL POSSIBLE TO SAVE THE INTER FAITH NETWORK AND ITS WORK?

There are two weeks until the Board meets on 22 February to make a final decision on closure. As the press release explains, that decision rests on whether funding has been secured. There is still time to raise your voice about this.

Writing to MPs and the Secretary of State

A number of individuals and organisations have been writing to their local MPs to ask that they raise urgently with the Secretary of State, Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, the matter of IFN's funding. Some are also writing to the Secretary of State directly asking him to release the funding offered last July.

You can find contact details for your MP at

<https://members.parliament.uk/members/Commons> Details for the Secretary of State are: The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, South West Quadrant, 2nd Floor, Fry Building, 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DF and Ministerial.Correspondence@levellingup.gov.uk

Public statements, open letters and social media posts

Some organisations have chosen to make public statements about the position IFN finds itself in, or to post open letters on Facebook or X (formerly Twitter) to the Secretary of State and others with influence.

Many individuals and organisations have been posting on X, Facebook, LinkedIn and elsewhere about their shock and concern about the Secretary of State's decision and/or noting their support for IFN. If you are doing this, it can be particularly helpful to note the ways in which IFN has added value to your or your organisation's inter faith work. You could also choose to tag the Secretary of State and/ or his Department.

Some organisations and individuals have also let IFN know that they will be contacting the press, either to send them copies of statements/ open letters, or to try and place opinion pieces about the value and importance of IFN and its work. It is also possible that, as the news of IFN's position becomes more widely known, some member bodies may be

approached by journalists for comment directly. If you intend to engage with the press and would like IFN to check the accuracy of any material ahead of this, please contact the IFN office by emailing ifnet@interfaith.org.uk.

Online petitions

One local inter faith practitioner has set up a petition on the Change.org website. You can view and sign the petition at <https://www.change.org/p/urge-michael-gove-to-maintain-funding-for-the-interfaith-network-in-the-uk>

Thank you for any action that you may choose to take.

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SUPPORT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK'S WORK TO INCREASE INTER FAITH UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION IN THE UK

The Inter Faith Network for the UK works for inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. As of 8 February, its closure looks imminent, for the reasons explained in this newsletter.

If you would like to enable IFN to close its work in ways which strengthen the likelihood of its legacy being one which feeds helpfully into new channels for inter faith engagement in the UK, please do make a donation today at: <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/donate> (with debit/credit card, PayPal and BACS options).

If Government funding does come through in time to save the work of the Inter Faith Network, or if other major funding is instead secured by 22 February, your gift would be used to continue IFN's work.

Donations can also be made by cheque payable to 'The Inter Faith Network' and sent to: The Inter Faith Network for the UK, Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufton Street, London, SW1P 3RB.

Thank you for helping make a difference in this way.

The Inter Faith Network for the UK
Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufton Street, London SW1P 3RB
Tel: +44 (0)20 7730 0410
Email: ifnet@interfaith.org.uk Web: www.interfaith.org.uk
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Inter Faith Network Newsletter

23 February 2024 – Extra

Contents

This edition is an ‘Extra’ issued on 23 February 2024. It includes a press release issued yesterday on behalf of IFN’s Board. It also includes links to some media coverage about IFN’s closure.

INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK BOARD ANNOUNCES CLOSURE OF CHARITY DUE TO WITHDRAWAL OF GOVERNMENT FUNDING – 22 FEBRUARY 2024

The Board of Trustees of the Inter Faith Network for the UK met today. It has, with much regret, agreed that the charity will close.

This is linked to withdrawal by Government of funding for July 2023-March 2024 offered in July 2023, subject to conditions. In a letter to IFN’s Co-Chairs from Secretary of State Rt Hon Michael Gove MP of 21 February, it was confirmed that the offer of funding was being withdrawn. This was for reasons foreshadowed in an earlier letter from him to them of 19 January, to which they had responded in detail (see statement of 24 January <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/statement-on-a-letter-received-by-ifns-co-chairs-from-secretary-of-state-levelling-up-housing-and-communities-rt-hon-michael-gove-mp>).

Mr Gove’s letter of 21 February notes that: “The Government has had a policy of non-engagement with the MCB since 2009. Whilst I recognise that the MCB was already a member of the Inter Faith Network when the previous offer of funding was made, I find their membership regrettable and it is deeply concerning that an MCB member could be appointed into your core governance structure. This increases the proximity between government funding and an organisation (the MCB) with which the Government has a long-standing policy of non-engagement. This is even more important in the case of funding for a prominent and nationally active organisation such as the IFN, which would carry too great a risk of compromising the credibility and effectiveness of that policy.”

The Board has sought with energy to diversify IFN’s funding base. However, the kind of work done by infrastructure and backbone bodies - such as linking, sharing good practice and fostering dialogue - is not eye-catching and easy to fund and does need some financial support from Government. IFN’s Board was glad to receive from Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in July 2023 the offer of £155,000 fresh funding for the period July 2023 – March 2024 (approximately 50% of its budget this year). It is deeply disappointed that despite IFN having stood ready throughout the process to have dialogue with the Government, no opportunity was offered for that and that – over seven months after the offer of funding (subject to conditions) – withdrawal of funding appears necessary to Mr Gove for the reasons that he outlines.

As IFN's Co-Chairs had earlier explained to Mr Gove in a response of 22 January to his letter of 19 January, "It is fully understood that Government can choose not to engage with bodies for reasons that it is not required to make public. However, it would be difficult for a charity to do so where a body has not been proscribed, had legal action taken against it or unless there were to be a clear issue of reputational damage (not always, of course, a straightforward matter to judge)."

IFN's Co-Chairs also commented that: "It is not easy to see how IFN's purpose (the value of which it has always been believed the Government appreciates) could be achieved by sowing division - and division would certainly be sown if there was an attempt to expel from membership, without its having been proscribed, found guilty of illegal actions or in some way acted so as to bring reputational damage to IFN, an organisation that has among its members (and therefore represents) over 500 national, regional and local Muslim organisations, mosques, charities and schools. Although the Government can choose not to engage with it, that is not a sensible option open to the IFN if it is to achieve the purposes for which the Government funds it in the first place."

The background to IFN's engagement with the Department over this matter of funding can be seen via links on the homepage of the IFN website at www.interfaith.org.uk.

The matter has been repeatedly raised by Parliamentarians, including through an Adjournment Debate on 10 January and an Urgent Question from Rt Hon Sir Stephen Timms MP on 22 February, with cross-party contributions about the importance of IFN's work. There have also been letters to MPs and Ministers from across the UK, as well as articles and statements by national faith community bodies, local inter faith groups and others, and a petition set up by a local inter faith practitioner.

Neither the careful and considered response of IFN's Board, nor the widespread support and concern at the potential loss of the Inter Faith Network for the UK have led Mr Gove to reconsider his position.

Therefore, the organisation is now on the path to closure and IFN Trustees and staff will be working to bring the organisation's work to a close and to preserve its legacy in ways that enable others to build strongly on that in the future.

Statement on behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Inter Faith Network for the UK

22 February 2024

A copy of the above was also issued as a press release and can be seen, with its 'editors' notes', on the IFN website at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/news-release-inter-faith-network-for-the-uk-board-announces-closure-of-charity-due-to-withdrawal-of-government-funding>.

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MEDIA COVERAGE

News about IFN's likely closure, and then the confirmation of this, has attracted a broad spread of media coverage since IFN's News Release of 8 February. This includes:

National media

BBC - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-68365887>

BBC – Coverage of Parliament - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m001x2th/house-of-commons-inter-faith-network-urgent-question> (video of Rt Hon Sir Stephen Timms MP raising an urgent question in the House of Commons yesterday morning and contributions of MPs)

The Evening Standard - <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/government-muslim-council-of-britain-stephen-timms-theresa-villiers-michael-gove-b1141000.html>

The Guardian - <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/feb/16/inter-faith-network-headed-for-closure-as-gove-minded-to-withdraw-funding>

The Independent - <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/government-muslim-council-of-britain-stephen-timms-theresa-villiers-michael-gove-b2500919.html>

The Times - <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/anti-muslim-hatred-in-uk-has-tripled-since-hamas-attacks-fp689kcxv> (part of a longer item on religious news)

A number of the articles above are based on an AP (Associated Press) piece that was also re-used by many local and regional newspapers.

Faith sector media

The Baptist Times - https://baptist.org.uk/Articles/683225/The_Inter_Faith.aspx

Church Times - <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2024/16-february/news/uk/closure-looms-for-interfaith-charity-because-of-government-concerns-over-muslim-trustee>

Ekklesia - <https://www.ekklesia.co.uk/2024/02/17/19186/>

The Friend - <https://thefriend.org/article/inter-faith-network-faces-imminent-closure>

Independent Catholic News - <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/49197>

Jewish News - <https://www.jewishnews.co.uk/government-criticised-after-shutting-down-main-forum-for-jewish-muslim-dialogue/>

Premier Christian News - <https://premierchristian.news/us/news/article/interfaith-network-leaders-lament-closure-as-govt-pull-funding-over-islam-council-issue>

Religion Media Centre - held a press briefing on IFN's potential closure last Thursday. There is a summary report at <https://religionmediacentre.org.uk/news/the-devastating-outrageous-impending-closure-of-the-inter-faith-network/> and the video of the briefing can be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=whmG4ojSKqg&feature=youtu.be>.

Theos Think Tank - <https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/comment/2024/02/09/from-test-acts-to-relational-tests-on-the-imminent-and-avoidable-closure-of-the-inter-faith-network>

Charity/ Third Sector media

Directory of Social Change - <https://www.dsc.org.uk/content/the-sector-should-be-deeply-worried-by-the-governments-actions-in-forcing-the-closure-of-a-charity/>

Civil Society News - <https://www.civilsociety.co.uk/news/concerns-raised-as-government-withdraws-charity-funding-over-trustee-s-links.html>

Civil Society News - <https://www.civilsociety.co.uk/voices/hassan-joudi-ifn-having-to-close-over-my-appointment-should-concern-charities.html> - Personal reflection from IFN Trustee Hassan Joudi

Civil Society News - <https://www.civilsociety.co.uk/news/charity-plans-to-close-as-government-withholds-funding-over-trustee-concerns.html>

Third Sector Magazine - <https://www.thirdsector.co.uk/governments-withdrawal-funds-interfaith-charity-sets-terrible-precedent-sector-leaders-warn/governance/article/1862539>

Third Sector Magazine - <https://www.thirdsector.co.uk/interfaith-charity-prepares-close-six-month-delay-government-funding/governance/article/1861144>

The Inter Faith Network for the UK
Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufton Street, London SW1P 3RB
Tel: +44 (0)20 7730 0410
Email: ifnet@interfaith.org.uk Web: www.interfaith.org.uk
www.facebook.com/IFNetUK www.twitter.com/IFNetUK
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