



2021/2024

A CLOSING REVIEW

RESPECTED EDUCATION DIALOGUE
INTEGRITY COMMUNITY VALUES
COOPERATION DISTINCTIVENESS
COMMON GOOD UNDERSTANDING
NEIGHBOURLINESS FAITH ACTION
BELONGING TACKLING PREJUDICE
RESPECTED EDUCATION DIALOGUE
INTEGRITY COMMUNITY VALUES
COOPERATION DISTINCTIVENESS

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THIS REVIEW

This Review reports on the work of the Inter Faith Network for the UK between July 2021 and May 2024. It complements the Trustees’ Annual Reports published as part of the statutory accounts, for the account periods in question, as submitted to the Charity Commission and Companies House.

A MESSAGE FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

This is the final Review of the work of the Inter Faith Network for the UK, covering the period from July 2021 to May 2024.

The Inter Faith Network has worked since its establishment by its member bodies in 1987 to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. In February 2024, an offer of funding by the Government made in July 2023 and vital to the continuation of IFN's work was withdrawn. This is reported on at the end of this Review.

It is a matter of profound regret that IFN's work has ended at this time, when work to promote good inter faith relations grows ever more important.

The months that led up to the Board's decision to close IFN were challenging ones, as IFN sought to carry forward its work and at the same time to secure the funding that had been offered and to seek other sources of funding. This was also at the time of unprecedented impacts on UK inter faith relations following the Hamas terrorist attack on Israel of October 2023, Israeli military response, and the civilian suffering.

In those combined circumstances, the biannual review which would, under normal circumstances, have been published by October 2023 was delayed. The Board has chosen to publish it now, extending the period of its coverage to run from July 2021, when the UK began to emerge from the Covid 19 pandemic, to May when its office doors had closed for the last time and staff contracts had come to an end.

The Review is not a retrospective of IFN's important 37 year contribution to building good inter faith relations in the UK – although perhaps at some future time others may produce such. The main Review text remains written as from the standpoint of an operational organisation, with a final section added to cover the closure including, very importantly, work to ensure that IFN's legacy can be built on to enable its aims to continue.



The Review is a record of a wide range of activities from local inter faith link meetings and Faith Communities Forum discussions to national meetings on key issues such as religious literacy and the development by IFN of Inter Faith Week in ways which have seen thousands taking part in activities to increase inter faith understanding and cooperation and millions made aware of these and of the key messages of Inter Faith Week through social media.

We thank our staff for their committed work across this period and we thank also our fellow Trustees, member bodies and those who supported IFN's work during this period.

We thank also all who have contributed to IFN's work to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK across nearly four decades.

H. J. Barber *Haghela*

**The Revd Canon Hilary Barber and
Mr Narendra Waghela**
Co-Chairs, The Inter Faith Network for the UK

ABOUT THE INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK

The Inter Faith Network for the UK (IFN) was founded in 1987 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 persons of different faiths.”

IFN’s role is unique – linking national faith community representative bodies, local, regional and national inter faith organisations and academic and educational bodies with a focus on inter faith or multi-faith issues. It works with them and with others to deepen inter faith understanding and cooperation as part of working towards its 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.”

The work of IFN, including Inter Faith Week, is wide-ranging, touching the lives of many thousands of people directly and through the organisations and initiatives with which it engages. The reach of its membership and its hundreds of informal links enable it to make a powerful difference to inter faith engagement and integration across the UK through sharing good practice, provision of resources and empowering the type of interaction which promotes understanding and sparks cooperation for the wellbeing of all.

Each of IFN’s member bodies makes its own contribution to inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK, which IFN supports by providing opportunities for sharing good practice and raising awareness of their work. A list of member bodies can be found at the back of this Review and there is more information about them in the member body section of IFN’s website at www.interfaith.org.uk/members.



Working for inter faith cooperation and understanding

Our vision is 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



RESPECT EDUCATION DIALOGUE INTEGRITY COMMUNITY
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FAITH ACTION TACKLING PREJUDICE RESPECT EDUCATION

The Inter Faith Network for the UK

The Inter Faith Network promotes good relations between people of different faiths. It works with its member bodies and others to deepen and extend the inter faith understanding, respect and cooperation that is ever more important in the UK today.

To do so it:

- encourages and supports the growth and development of inter faith initiatives at all levels, from grassroots to national;
- produces practical resources for inter faith engagement and shares good practice;
- works for greater public knowledge and mutual understanding of the teachings, traditions and practices of the different faith communities in Britain;
- provides a forum for national faith community bodies to come together in focused dialogue;
- facilitates engagement between faith communities and Government and public agencies;
- runs a trusted information and advice service;
- leads on national Inter Faith Week; and
- runs special focus programmes highlighting key topics, such as young people’s inter faith engagement.

A list of IFN member bodies can be seen at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/members/list>



“The Inter Faith Network’s work makes a vital contribution to inter faith understanding and cooperation for the common good.” – Canon Hilary Barber and Narendra Waghela, IFN Co-Chairs




“The Inter Faith Network for the UK provides a uniquely important forum in which religious communities and inter faith groups can both meet together and engage with wider society.” – The Most Revd Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury

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Opening pages of IFN leaflet, 2022

This Review covers the period across two of IFN's Strategic Plans: one from April 2019 to March 2023 and one from April 2023 to March 2025.

The Strategic Aims below were pursued for the public benefit throughout the period covered by this report through the activities detailed in it, which include information and advice services, meetings, publications and three Inter Faith Weeks.

IFN STRATEGIC AIMS UNTIL END OF MARCH 2023:

- 1 Raise awareness about and advocate for the importance of inter faith engagement, cooperation and dialogue and be a trusted source of information about this
- 2 Strengthen and increase opportunities for inter faith engagement at every level and widen participation in this
- 3 Continue to develop the Inter Faith Network for the UK's unique linking role and work towards new ways of engaging, including across the nations of the UK
- 4 Work with faith communities and their members towards a society marked by mutual respect and shared commitment to the common good
- 5 Contribute to greater understanding about and between the different faith communities in the UK and to greater knowledge about, and skills for, inter faith engagement
- 6 Ensure that IFN is sustainable, effective, and able to respond quickly to challenges and change

An evaluation project was undertaken (2021–2023) which fed into the development of the 2023–2025 Strategic Plan. More information on that project can be found on page 75.

IFN STRATEGIC AIMS FROM APRIL 2023:

- 1 Contribute to greater understanding about the different faith communities in the UK and to tackling faith-related prejudice
- 2 Work with faith communities towards a society marked by mutual respect and shared commitment to the common good and also solidarity of resistance to hatred and division
- 3 Raise awareness about, and advocate for, the importance of inter faith engagement, cooperation and dialogue and be a trusted source of information about this
- 4 Strengthen and increase opportunities for inter faith engagement at every level; widen participation, engaging all generations; and help develop skills for engagement
- 5 Sustain and develop the Inter Faith Network for the UK's unique linking role and continue to explore and embed new approaches to engagement, including across the nations of the UK
- 6 Ensure that IFN is sustainable, effective, and able to respond quickly to challenges and change

NATIONAL FAITH COMMUNITIES AND PUBLIC LIFE

National Faith Community Representative Bodies in membership of IFN span a wide range of faiths and communities. They share a commitment to working for the wellbeing of wider society and to developing inter faith understanding and cooperation.



Faith Communities Forum meeting, February 2023 at Central Synagogue, London

is an important dimension of the Forum and one which IFN social media coverage of its meetings helps amplify.

The Forum is for exchange of views and information rather than decision making. Members sometimes build on discussions by using the connections to create helpful alliances outwith the meetings, for example to make common cause on tackling climate change.

Between Autumn 2021 and the end of 2022 IFN held meetings of the FCF online. These were held in October and November 2021 and February, May, July and October 2022. The Forum discussed:

- COVID-19 and faith communities
- Faith communities and response to refugees and asylum seekers
- The IICSA report on ‘Child Protection in Religious Organisations and Settings’
- Inter faith engagement of faith communities, with a presentation by the late 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 about the planned Multi Faith Space at the Jain Centre in London

Faith Communities Forum

All such bodies have their own programmes of work and patterns of engagement with other communities, as well as with Government and other agencies. Multi faith engagement is not a substitute for those. At the same time, there is great value in the faith communities discussing collectively, on a regular basis, issues of common concern and exchanging information about their programmes of work. The Faith Communities Forum (FCF) is the IFN framework which provides the opportunity for this form of engagement on inter faith and public life issues.

The modelling of inter faith engagement by senior figures within the national faith community bodies



- 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 Narendra Waghela, IFN’s Co-Chair drawn from the local inter faith constituency, also an officer of Leicester Council of Faiths
 - Levelling Up
 - Inter Faith Week
 - Inter faith engagement of faith communities – including, for example, joint working on climate issues in the run up to COP26
 - Issues of current interest and concern
 - A number of IFN matters
- In February 2023 the first in-person/remote hybrid meeting of the FCF was held since the pandemic. The meeting was kindly hosted by the Central Synagogue in London in its conference space, and there was an opportunity to visit the synagogue after the meeting. Items on the Agenda included:
- ‘Faith and social care’, with a presentation by the Rt Revd James Newcome and Dr Anna Dixon MBE, Co-Chairs of the Archbishops’ Care Commission of the Church of England
 - ‘National faith communities and inter faith / inter religious engagement’, with presentations by Rajnish Kashyap, General Secretary of the Hindu Council (UK) and the Revd Dr Peter Colwell, Deputy General Secretary of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland
 - The Coronation and the ‘Big Help Out’, with a presentation by Fazila Aswat of the Together Coalition
 - A number of IFN Matters
- A further four meetings of the FCF were held online in June, October and December 2023 and in February 2024. On the Agenda for those meetings were:
- Current issues, including the publication of the Colin Bloom Report and faith engagement with legislation on migration
 - ‘National faith communities and inter faith / inter religious engagement, with a presentation by
- Reducing Parental Conflict Programme – engaging with faith communities, with a presentation by an official from the Department for Work and Pensions
 - The Platinum Jubilee and faith communities, with a presentation by an official from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport
 - Faith communities and refugee response
 - Inter faith engagement of faith communities, including plans for marking the Platinum Jubilee of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II
 - Responding to rising cost of living and impacts of poverty in the UK, with some opening reflections from Tracey Prior from The Church of Jesus of Christ of Latter-day Saints about the bases for responding to those in need and working for social justice within the Latter-day Saints’ tradition
 - Religion and media
 - The impacts of recent Government changes
 - The Independent Faith Engagement Review, with a presentation from Government Faith Engagement Adviser Colin Bloom CBE 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

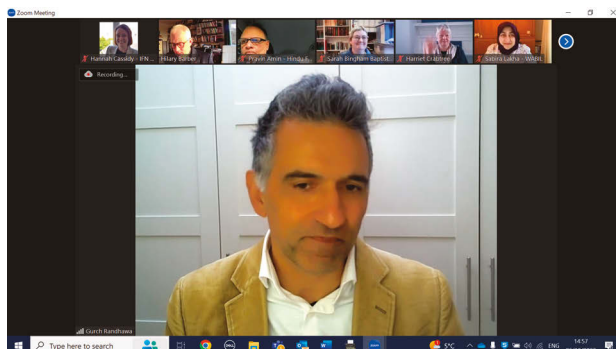


FCF Co-Moderators Rabbi Mordechai Wollenberg and Canon Hilary Barber at FCF meeting at Central Synagogue

Elliot Vanstone of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales

- 'Faith communities campaigning on social issues – parameters and principles for cross-faith campaigning', with a presentation by Colette Bennett, Charities Engagement Manager at the Charity Commission
- An update on hate crime issues and on 'Martyr's Law'
- '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, 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
- 'A National Content Standard for Religious Education in England', with a presentation by Ms Deborah Weston OBE, Executive Research Officer, National Association of Teachers of RE and Trustee, Religious Education Council of England and Wales
- Inter Faith Week
- Other issues of interest and concern
- A number of IFN matters

IFN's financial situation was discussed at several meetings of the FCF, in particular at the meeting in



Prof Gurch Randhawa at December 2022 FCF meeting session on organ donation

April 2023. In February 2024 an additional urgent FCF meeting was also convened to discuss the position.

FCF Moderators

The FCF has ten Moderators: two Co-Moderators, who jointly chair the Forum, and eight Vice-Moderators. Six Moderator places are held by the largest communities: Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, and Sikh. The other places are held in a rotation agreed by the other groups. The Moderators have a particular role in relation to statement-making.

The usual period of office for FCF Moderators is three years. In September 2022, a number of Moderators, including then Co-Moderator Malcolm Deboo, had reached the end of their term and new appointments were made.

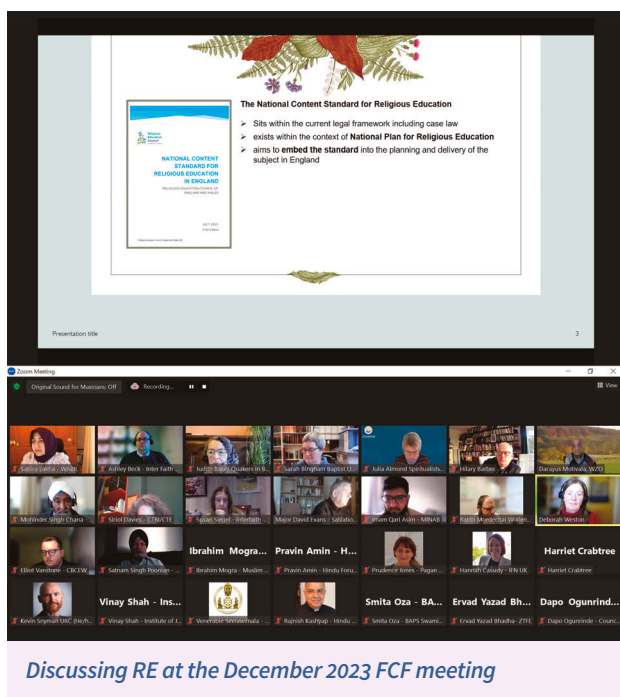
From September 2022 the Co-Moderators were:

The Revd Canon Hilary Barber (Christian)
Rabbi Mordechai Wollenberg (Jewish)

The Vice-Moderators were:

Ms Sabira Lakha (Muslim)
Ms Trupti Patel (Hindu)
Mr Satnam Singh Poonian (Sikh)
Dr Desmond Biddulph CBE (Buddhist)
Minister Julia Almond (Spiritualist)
Mr Neil Pitchford (Pagan)
Ms Tracey Prior (Church of Jesus-Christ of Latter-day Saints)
Dr Riaz Sanatian (Baha'i)

A meeting of the Moderators was held in April 2023. The focus of its discussion was the news received from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and



Communities on 31 March 2023 that it did not plan to provide any further funding to IFN from 1 April 2023 (further detail on page 79).

Independent Faith Engagement Review

As noted in the IFN Biennial Review 2019–2021, in October 2019, Colin Bloom CBE was appointed as Faith Engagement Adviser at the then Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to lead an independent review into how best the UK Government should engage with faith groups in England. The announcement of the review noted that Mr Bloom would be “making 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”. As part of the Review, a call for evidence was issued by Mr Bloom in November 2020. He made a presentation to a meeting of the FCF in December 2020 (see page 9). A number of IFN member bodies responded to the call for evidence.

Some key points from IFN’s Board of Trustees were submitted to the Review in December 2021. In July 2022 Mr Bloom attended another meeting of the FCF to share findings from the Review.

Mr Bloom’s final report was published, after a period of delay, in April 2023. It can be found at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64478b4f529eda00123b0397/The_Bloom_Review.pdf. The report was drawn to the attention of member bodies and also discussed at a subsequent meeting of the FCF, as well as later in a workshop at IFN’s 2023 National Meeting on Educating for Religious Literacy.

STANDING TOGETHER

IFN continued throughout the period to support, including with advice and contacts, communities seeking to find ways to ‘stand together’ at times of particular challenge and difficulty. One of the ways that IFN does this is through facilitating the issue of public statements. During the period:

- In October 2021 a statement was issued by the Co-Chairs (on behalf of the Board of Trustees) and the Moderators of the Faith Communities Forum condemning the killing of Sir David Amess MP. www.interfaith.org.uk/news/statement-following-the-killing-of-sir-david-amess-mp
- In September 2022 the Co-Chairs (on behalf of the Board of Trustees) and the Moderators of the Faith Communities Forum issued a statement on events in Leicester and good relations. www.interfaith.org.uk/news/statement-on-events-in-leicester-and-good-relations
- In February 2023 the Faith Communities Forum issued a statement on ‘Safety and Security of Places of Worship’. www.interfaith.org.uk/news/statement-on-safety-and-security-of-places-of-worship



STATEMENT ON SAFETY AND SECURITY OF PLACES OF WORSHIP

BY THE FAITH COMMUNITIES FORUM OF THE INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK

Terrorist violence directed at places of worship and worshippers has become a recurrent and shocking phenomenon in recent times, with churches, gurdwaras, mandirs, mosques, synagogues and temples around the world targeted. The last two weeks, for example, have seen brutal attacks on clergy and worshippers at churches in Algeciras in Spain and Kankara in Nigeria, a synagogue in Jerusalem and a mosque in Peshawar in Pakistan. At these times, our prayers are with all affected.

These acts of violence are a reminder of the vulnerability of worship places. In the UK, where the Inter Faith Network for the UK's work is focused, there is continued concern for the safety of places of worship. Ongoing steps to increase that, where necessary, are being taken or encouraged, and planned new legislation is relevant to potential threat of terrorist attacks.

As the ODIHR noted last year, “Establishing, maintaining, and accessing places and objects of worship or contemplation are crucial to the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, which applies during conflict and in times of peace.” Hatred targeting places of worship and their worshippers - whether expressed in outright violence or through actions such as graffitiing or other vandalism - is a scourge that cannot be tolerated. There must be freedom for all communities to worship and practise their faith freely and without fear.

In the UK context, we urge continued vigilance where safety of places of worship is concerned and expression of solidarity by those of different faiths and beliefs where there is the threat or actuality of an attack. “An attack on one is an attack on all”.

Places of worship are both vital to their own worshipping communities and many, increasingly, are also hubs for wider community support and meeting. It is our hope that, taking into account the need for appropriate security, places of worship will remain open and be able to be welcoming to the highest degree possible.

Faith Communities Forum of the Inter Faith Network for the UK

3 February 2023

WWW.INTERFAITH.ORG.UK

A special roundtable in March 2023 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. This was hosted at Westminster Abbey by the Dean, the Very Revd Dr David Hoyle KCVO MBE. It was convened by the Faith Sector lead for the Counter Terrorism Business Information Exchange, Jon Reeves MVO, and held in association with the police National Counter Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO), with assistance from the office of the Inter Faith Network for the UK. It was facilitated by IFN's Executive Director at the invitation of the organisers. It built on prior discussion at the Faith Communities Forum of IFN.

Following the Hamas terrorist attack on Israel on 7 October 2023 and subsequent Israel-Hamas war and military action in Gaza there was considerable impact on community relationships in the UK. The Community Security Trust reported sharply raised levels of antisemitic incidents. Tell MAMA reported also a sharp rise in 'Anti-Muslim' incidents (its terminology).

Criticism was levelled at IFN through two Sunday Telegraph (ST) articles of 2/3 December 2023 and 30/31 December 2023 and headlines in its 3 January 2024 edition that suggested IFN ought to have condemned directly the Hamas terror attack on Israel of 7 October 2023.

IFN has a longstanding policy on the making of statements which does not allow direct comment on overseas events www.interfaith.org.uk/news/ifns-policy-on-making-of-statements. This reflects its role as a charity whose purposes concern inter faith relations in the UK, and which must comply with the Charity Commission's guidance on 'political' campaigning¹. Legal advice taken in December to check on this position confirmed the policy's appropriateness. IFN was not in a position to make a statement condemning the 7 October Hamas terror attack on Israel. Nor, subsequently, statements commenting on return of hostages, civilian impact of the Israel/Hamas war, or ceasefire.

This was carefully explained in a [letter from IFN's Co-Chairs to the Editor of the Sunday Telegraph](#). The Sunday Telegraph chose not to publish that letter, nor a further letter from the Co-Chairs of 15 February 2024 restating the position and also addressing other points in subsequent ST articles.

IFN's policy on making of statements does permit comment indirectly on overseas events where there is – or is likely to be – an impact on inter faith relations in the UK. In an urgent situation a joint statement may be made by a subcommittee of the Co-Chairs of the Board and designated Moderators of IFN's Faith Communities Forum (FCF), which brings together national faith community representative bodies in its membership. In the days immediately following the Hamas terrorist attack of 7 October, the Co-Chairs and Moderators considered a draft urgent statement but were unable to agree on issue of one.

As IFN's policy on the making of statements notes, "The absence of a statement on a particular issue does not ... mean that there is a lack of concern about it among the faith communities represented in IFN."

An IFN Circular of 11 October to member bodies (also published on [Facebook](#)), explained that after much reflection, IFN's Co-Chairs and Faith Communities Forum Moderators had decided not to issue a statement; that when IFN's Faith Communities Forum had met on 10 October it had noted that and had also noted that IFN would be working to raise awareness of its guidelines for responding at times of tension.

IFN's Board issued a [statement](#) on 20 October, in National Hate Crime Awareness Week, www.interfaith.org.uk/news/standing-together-against-hate-crime, referring to the UK impacts of the 7 October attack and its aftermath. That concluded with the words:

"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."

¹ Note: Some of IFN's older statements predate the current Charity Commission guidance.

and:

“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.”

In addition to statements, there were regular IFN social media posts and mailings about tackling hate crime, which included ways to report hate crime and drew attention to IFN’s recently updated publication *Looking after one another: The safety and security of our faith communities*. These posts and mailings highlighted the statistics given by the Community Security Trust and Tell MAMA, which showed significant increases in, respectively, the number of reported antisemitic and anti-Muslim hate incidents. There were also phone calls to local inter faith groups to discuss how they were engaging; conversations with relevant national faith community figures; and there was gathering information on inter faith statements, vigils etc at local level and sharing on the IFN website www.interfaith.org.uk/news/inter-faithstatements-vigils-prayer-gatherings; and response to enquiries

from bodies such as workplaces seeking advice on how to handle conversations with/between employees in the context of impacts of the situation.

There was also preparation for and management of Inter Faith Week 2023 (12 to 19 November) to help enable people to use it safely and positively, and a social media campaign to use Inter Faith Week as an opportunity to reach out for a conversation with a friend or colleague of a different background. Although there were a few event cancellations and speaker withdrawals reported, the Week helped provide contexts for engagement by Jews and Muslims and others of a kind that had sharply lessened in many other contexts due to impacts of events in Israel and Gaza.

On 26 February, the Co-Chairs and FCF Moderators issued: www.interfaith.org.uk/news/safety-civility-and-respect-a-statement, voicing their serious concern about the situation at that time “where Jews and Muslims in the UK are continuing to experience high levels of antisemitic and Islamophobic hate incidents and others are also at risk through mistaken identity”, noting “an accompanying sense of vulnerability on the part of members of those communities: worry for the safety of families and concern for places of worship and other faith-based premises” and calling on all to stand in solidarity against hatred and to reach out to support those affected.



SAFETY, CIVILITY AND RESPECT

A STATEMENT BY THE CO-CHAIRS AND FAITH COMMUNITIES FORUM MODERATORS OF THE INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK

The Inter Faith Network for the UK is currently on a path to closure for reasons explained in a statement of 8 February and confirmed in a statement on 22 February.

Notwithstanding that, we have a duty, while IFN remains operational, to voice our serious concern about the current situation where Jews and Muslims in the UK are continuing to experience high levels of antisemitic and Islamophobic hate incidents and others are also at risk through mistaken identity. There is an accompanying sense of vulnerability on the part of members of those communities: worry for the safety of families and concern for places of worship and other faith-based premises.

The recent reports from the Community Security Trust and Tell MAMA make plain the shocking extent of the situation. We urge the reporting of incidents to the Police or through relevant third party organisations such as the Community Security Trust (antisemitic incidents); Tell MAMA (anti-Muslim hate incidents); the Hindu Forum of Britain hate crime reporting programme and Sikh Guard.

We also call on all to stand in solidarity against hatred and to reach out to support those affected. In the words of IFN’s guidance document, *Looking after one another: The safety and security of our faith communities*, “An attack on one is an attack on all”.

There is also continuing impact on relationships between people of different faiths in the UK of events in other parts of the world.

The situation is made yet worse by polarised and poisonous exchanges, fanned by social media posts and some sections of the print and broadcast media. Also by the

dangerous discourse on the part of some within the UK’s political parties as well as by those seeking to prevent them playing their democratically elected role. We note the statement made by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak this weekend about the dangers of polarisation and hatred in politics and hope that this will lead to positive steps being taken.

As IFN’s Board said in a statement of 20 October, “It is also 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.”

We express our strong support for all working in local communities and at national level to de-escalate negative discourse, to tackle hate, to maintain relationships at this challenging time, and to take steps to ensure the safety and well being of those who are currently experiencing a threat to their wellbeing and safety.

A Statement by the Co-Chairs and Faith Communities Forum Moderators of the Inter Faith Network for the UK

26 February 2024

WWW.INTERFAITH.ORG.UK

Other matters of interest and concern

From time to time statements relating to other matters are also issued. During the period the following other messages and statements were issued:

- In October 2021 the Faith Communities Forum issued a response to the publication of the ICCSA Report on Child Protection in Religious Organisations and Settings www.interfaith.org.uk/news/a-response-from-the-faith-communities-forum-of-the-inter-faith-network-for-the-uk-to-the-publication-of-the-iicsa-report-child-protection-in-religious-organisations-and-settings
- In October 2021 the Faith Communities Forum issued a call for safe, humane and dignified treatment of refugees and those seeking asylum. www.interfaith.org.uk/news/a-call-for-safe-humane-and-dignified-treatment-of-refugees-and-those-seeking-asylum
- Also in October 2021 the Co-Chairs (on behalf of the Board of Trustees) and the Moderators of the Faith Communities Forum put out a message of good wishes for COP26 being held in Glasgow. www.interfaith.org.uk/news/message-of-good-wishes-for-cop26
- In September 2022 the Co-Chairs (on behalf of the Board of Trustees) and the Moderators of the Faith Communities Forum put out a message following the death of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. www.interfaith.org.uk/news/a-message-following-the-death-of-her-majesty-queen-elizabeth-ii The Co-Chairs also put out a further message at the time of the National Moment of Reflection. www.interfaith.org.uk/news/a-message-at-the-time-of-the-national-moment-of-reflection-for-her-late-majesty-queen-elizabeth-ii

During the period IFN also carried information in its Newsletter on how faith and inter faith groups in the UK were responding to events, such as the earthquakes in Turkey and Syria and the invasion of Ukraine.

Looking after one another: The safety and security of our faith communities

In 2023 IFN produced an updated edition of its document *Looking after one another: The safety and security of our faith communities*.

The document was published by IFN in partnership with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities; Equality and Human Rights Commission, Home Office; Crown Prosecution Service; National Police Chiefs' Council and National Fire Chiefs Council.

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.



The new edition can be found at www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/looking-after-one-another-the-safety-and-security-of-our-faith-communities-2023.

STATEMENT ON FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF

A Statement from the Faith Communities Forum of the Inter Faith Network for the UK

This week, the UK Government is hosting an International Ministerial Conference on Freedom of Religion or Belief. The focus of the Inter Faith Network for the UK is the United Kingdom. However, we welcome the Ministerial Conference and its delegates in the context of this work. Our vision is 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.

The Inter Faith Network for the UK, the UK inter faith linking body, was established in 1987 and has worked since that time to support and encourage inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. This has contributed in no small measure to the creating of the conditions in which freedom of religion and belief can flourish. That freedom is not simply a matter of laws and conventions which ensure such freedom, vital though those are. Freedom of religion and belief is also about freedom to practise as freely as those laws, and other rights, permit.

Sadly, freedom of religion and belief is sometimes truncated by conditions that constrain their ease of expression. For example, for some communities the threat of hate crime and terrorist attack has meant their places of worship needing to operate with a high security. There is also the threat of physical violence and verbal harassment which are daily fears for some within communities which are identifiable by faith or ethnicity, as hate crime figures consistently show. Freedom might also be understood to be impinged upon where religion and belief are subject to misunderstanding and misrepresentation – with adherents repeatedly obliged to explain, correct and defend.

We recognise the complexity of life in a society where at times some rights are counterbalanced by others: the boundaries of those rights will always be subject to discussion, and, as necessary, adjudication.

Recourse to illegal actions, including violence, where there is disagreement should never be an option. It is vital that citizens have the opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge to navigate life together within a shared society where there will always be differences of view – including of religion and belief. That is part of the warp and weft of a thriving civil society which undergirds and supports mutual respect and shared commitment to the common good.

4 July 2022

- In July 2022, at the time that the UK Government was hosting an International Ministerial Conference on Freedom of Religion or Belief, the Faith Communities Forum issued a statement on Freedom of Religion and Belief.

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

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP FOR THE COMMON GOOD

In March 2022 IFN marked its 35th Anniversary Year with a National Meeting on ‘Working in partnership for the Common Good’.

The meeting was chaired by IFN Co-Chairs the Revd Canon Hilary Barber and Narendra Waghela. Over 120 people attended from nearly 100 different organisations from across IFN’s membership. The meeting 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.

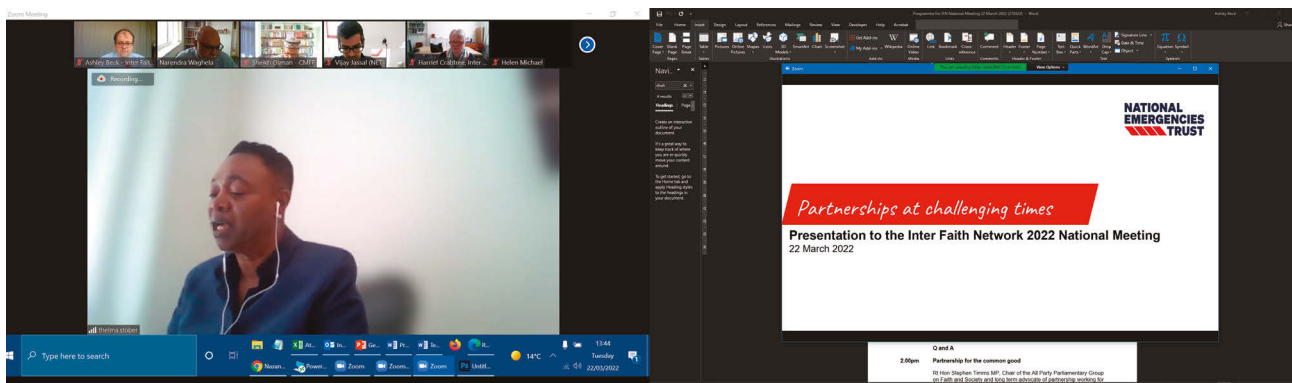
In the plenary session:

- Catherine Davies, Head of Remembrance and Emma Vernalls, Remembrance Officer, Royal British Legion spoke on ‘National organisations and faith communities working together for the common good’, and a response was offered by Nitin Palan MBE of the BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha
- Fadi Itani OBE, Chief Executive Officer, Muslim Charities Forum, spoke on ‘Faith-based charities working with secular agencies’
- 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, spoke on ‘Multi-faith social action for the well being of refugees’



twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1506273743693303812

- Manjit Kaur, educationalist, member of the Coventry Sacred Space Project and Coventry Multi Faith Forum and of Coventry and Warwickshire SACREs, spoke on ‘Partnerships at the heart of local civic life – the Coventry experience’
- 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
- Vijay Jassal, Assistant Director, Policy and Strategic Partnerships, National Emergencies Trust (NET) and Thelma Stober (NET Trustee) spoke on ‘Partnerships at challenging times’
- Rt Hon Sir Stephen Timms OBE MP, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Faith and Society, spoke on ‘Partnership for the common good’ with responses from Rabbi Mordechai Wollenberg,



Thelma Stober, National Emergencies Trust, presenting at 2022 National Meeting

Senior Rabbi of Woodford Forest United Synagogue in London, under the Chief Rabbi's auspices, and Co-Moderator of IFN's Faith Communities Forum and Roz Miller BEM, Director, Islington Faiths Forum

- Closing reflections were offered by Paul Smalley, NASACRE and RE Council for England and Wales and IFN Trustee, Trupti Patel, President, Hindu Forum of Britain and IFN Trustee and Dr Susan Siegel, Trustee, Interfaith Scotland and IFN Trustee

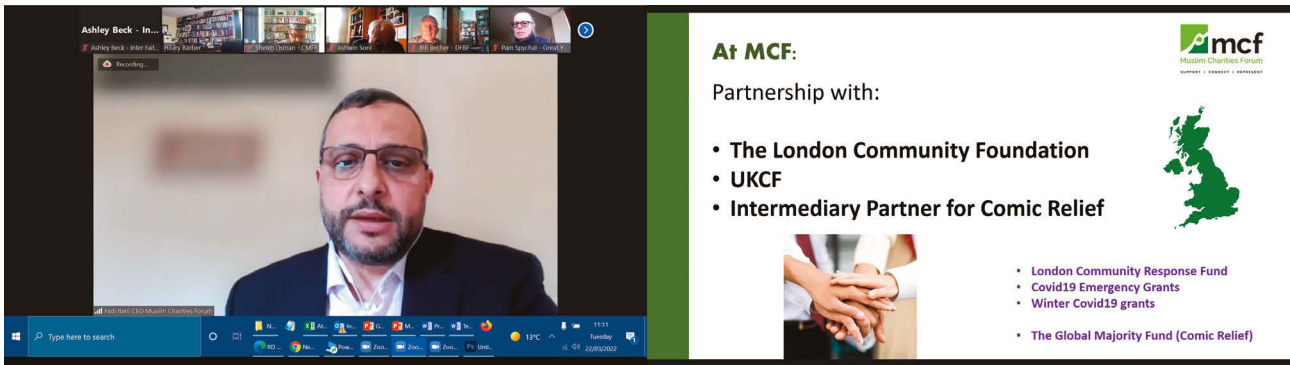
During the day there were workshops on:

- 'COVID-19, coming together at a time of need and the emergence of new networks and partnerships', with presentations by Dr Maureen Sier, Director, Interfaith Scotland, and Yasmin Surti, Trustee, Leicester Council of Faiths
- 'Emergency services and faith communities, developing and deepening community links', with a joint presentation by Nicola Thurston, Lead Officer for Equality and Diversity/Inclusion, National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and Kent Fire and Rescue Service, and Carl Boasman, Director of Community Protection, NFCC and Cleveland Fire Brigade
- 'Employers, staff networks and faith communities – working for religious literacy and good relations', with presentations by Sharon Jandu, Director, Yorkshire Asian Business Association (YABA), and Siobhán Anderson, Programmes Coordinator, Workplace and Community at the Faith & Belief Forum
- 'Faith communities working in partnership with SACREs and schools', with presentations by Libby Jones, Assistant Secretary, Wales Association of SACREs and RE Advisor, St Giles' Centre for Religious Education, Wrexham, and Vinay Shah, Institute of Jainology and member Islington SACRE
- 'Sports initiatives and inter faith engagement – partnerships for learning, empowerment and cohesion', with presentations by Marie Cartwright, Regional Manager North, Sporting Equals, (responsible for the Breaking Boundaries programme) and Philip Simon, Friends Sporting Club Manchester
- 'Faith communities and healthcare – partnerships for health and wellbeing', with presentations by Dr



Peter Rookes, Birmingham Council of Faiths, and Altaf Khazi, Head of Partnerships and Community Engagement, National Health Service Blood and Transplant

- 'Inter Faith Week: a time for forging new connections and partnerships', with presentations by the Most Venerable Bogoda Seelawimala of the London Buddhist Vihara/Sri Lankan Sangha Sabha GB and Rhian Hall of the Cynon Valley Museum
- 'Local authorities and faith groups – dimensions of partnership', with presentations by the Revd Alan Green, Chair, Tower Hamlets Inter Faith Forum, and Emily Fieran-Reed, Strategy and Policy Lead for Engagement, Cohesion and Voluntary and Community Sector, Tower Hamlets Council and Philip Austin, Chair, Bolton Inter Faith Council and Chiman (Dinu) Tailor, Secretary of Bolton Hindu Forum
- 'Partnership working between local inter faith bodies and higher education institutions', with presentations by Dr Rita Stephen of Cornwall Faith Forum with Marta Gensler, and Monna Rizvi, Middlesex University Interfaith Network, and Rumela Kundu, Buddhist member of Barnet Multi Faith Forum
- 'Working in partnership for the safety and security of communities', with a presentation by Nicky of the SAFE programme of the Community Security Trust



Fadi Itani OBE, Muslim Charities Forum presentation to National Meeting 2022

“It was such a good day that I stayed with it until ... I absolutely had to leave. Well done to you and the team and thanks for a very stimulating line up of speakers and participants.”

“Thank you ever so much for having invited us to present at your event. It was inspiring and refreshing to observe the engagement of the participants.”

Videos of the main plenary presentations can be seen at www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/ifn-national-meeting-2022-working-in-partnership-for-the-common-good.



The full report on IFN’s 2022 National Meeting can be found at www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/working-in-partnership-for-the-common-good-report-on-ifns-2022-national-meeting.



twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/15066331615672344585

twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1506243759763333127

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL INTER FAITH ORGANISATIONS

Among IFN’s member bodies are 29 inter faith organisations 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 – and in some cases intercultural – activity.

IFN helps these organisations to increase the impact of their activity through raising the profile of their work; enabling them to share information and good practice through its meetings; and through publications, newsletters and social media.

In January 2022 a virtual meeting was held jointly for both these National and Regional Inter Faith Organisations (NRIFOs) and IFN member bodies in the Educational and Academic Bodies (EABs) category. On the agenda were: 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; Inter Faith Week 2022; and a number of IFN matters.



Participants at September 2022 EAB and NRIFO meeting



Georgina Bye of CCJ speaking at September 2022 EAB and NRIFO meeting



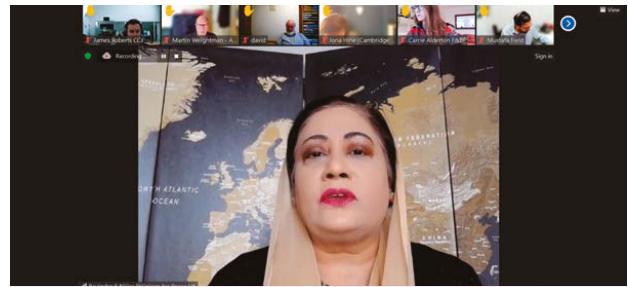
A further joint meeting took place virtually in September 2022. Items on the Agenda included: IFN matters, with an update by IFN Project Director, Ashley Beck; whistle-stop exchange of information on projects, key news, current concerns and interests; difficult dialogues, with introductory reflections 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.

Another joint virtual meeting for the same member categories was held in March 2023. The main Agenda items were: The Coronation, the Big Help Out and 'Faith Walks'; whistle-stop exchange of information on projects, key news, current concerns and interests; and 'Finding and creating spaces for dialogue'. The latter offered a chance to share strategies for opening up and encouraging dialogues of different kinds. It began with a short presentation about the 'Inter Faith Buddies' one-to-one dialogue scheme of IFN and also used by Interfaith Scotland.

These two membership categories met again virtually in January 2024. Items on the Agenda included: Religious literacy, including how bodies had responded to the Colin Bloom report and any key RE developments; Inter faith engagement in the context of impact on UK inter faith relations of overseas events, with a short presentation by Dr Ed Kessler MBE of the Woolf Institute about its relevant work in the context of inter faith relations in the UK since the 7 October 2023 Hamas terrorist attack on Israel and subsequent Israel-Hamas war, including its webinar, 'How to keep talking'; exchange of information on projects, key news, current concerns and interests; and brief updates on key IFN issues, including its funding position.

"Always good to reconnect with allies working to enhance inter-religious encounter and dialogue, and the more so in light of present challenges. Thank you @IFNetUK for your hard work coordinating and curating this space"

Cambridge Inter Faith Programme, twitter.com/CamInterfaith/status/1747667078360748129



Ravinder Kaur Nijjar of Religions for Peace UK speaking at EAB and NRIFO meeting 2024

National Inter Faith Linking Bodies

The Inter Faith Network links in membership in the National and Regional Inter Faith Organisation category the national inter faith linking bodies of the devolved nations: Interfaith Scotland, the Inter-Faith Council for Wales/ Cyngor Rhyngffydd Cymru, and the Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum, each of which appoints a Trustee to IFN's Board.

IFN works closely with these bodies and each year arranges a meeting with them to enable sharing of news and good practice. The annual meetings usually rotate between Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. However, since the pandemic they have been held online.

The June 2022 meeting included updates from the participating bodies and discussion of: Inter Faith Week and Scottish Interfaith Week; 'National inter faith linking bodies and comms'; IFN matters; and matters of current interest and concern, such as 'Faith and inter faith responses on refugee issues in the different nations of the UK', 'Climate change responses post COP26' and 'Tackling hate crime, including reporting'.

A short virtual meeting for these bodies was also convened in August 2023 which offered an opportunity for updates from each of the participating bodies and discussion of Inter Faith Week and Scottish Interfaith Week

Members from the devolved national linking bodies can attend the general meetings for this NRIFO category and also meetings of the FCF; a number of them did so during the period.

Minutes of these meetings can be seen online at www.interfaith.org.uk/about/linking-national-regional-educational-and-academic-bodies

ROYAL COMMEMORATIVE EVENTS

The period covered by this Review saw the Platinum Jubilee of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in June 2022; Her death and funeral and Accession of His Majesty King Charles III in September of that year; and the Coronation of His Majesty The King and Queen Camilla in May 2023.

In the marking of all these historic ceremonial events, the Churches and other faith communities, faith leaders and many inter faith initiatives played a significant role at both national and local level. As at other times of national significance, the Inter Faith Network acted as a hub of information about that and shared and amplified the stories of involvement.

The Platinum Jubilee

From 2-5 June 2022 a long weekend of events took place to mark Her Late Majesty's Platinum Jubilee. Faith and inter faith groups took part in many ways including through the Jubilee Beacons project, the Big Jubilee Lunch and other local celebrations and the tree-planting programme, The Queen's Green Canopy. IFN included information on these in its Circulars and regular IFN Newsletter and contributed to planning discussions. The Co-Chairs contributed a message for the Beacons project.

“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 Revd Canon Hilary Barber and Mr Narendra Waghela, Co-Chairs, Inter Faith Network for the UK

tinyurl.com/y9fur3t8



An example of IFN posts encouraging QGC participation



tinyurl.com/yd9szjju

x.com/IFNetUK/status/1533432183993643009

Inter Faith Network @IFNetUK

Local #interfaith groups participating in civic & religious #PlatinumJubilee celebrations in many areas. Here @YorkInterfaith reps at #Jubilee party for 'local heroes' hosted by @LL_North_Yorks & @CottrellStephen & @York_Minster service. @RoyalFamily @luhc @DCMS @CityofYork #York

YorkInterfaith @YorkInterfaith · Jun 5, 2022

Thanks to Avtar and Dee yesterday for representing York Interfaith at the Garden party at York Minster
Dee said:
"Great day at the Jubilee Garden Party in the Dean's garden in York then onto a special Evensong in the Minster. We were there representing York Interfaith ...
[Show more](#)



An example of IFN posts about faith and inter faith bodies marking the Platinum Jubilee

twitter.com/steveballinger/status/1529919687575883776/photo/1



IFN's Executive Director attending Jubilee inter faith tea event at Eden Girls School Waltham Forest

Inter Faith Network @IFNetUK

Is your #faith or #interfaith organisation planning an event for the #PlatinumJubilee celebrations 5-7 June? @InterfaithScot are holding this special picnic with @UKWFN, which is also for #ThankYouDay.
@Platinum2022 @togethercoalit @luhc
royal.uk/platinum-jubil... @Platinum2022

InterfaithScot @InterfaithScot · Apr 28, 2022

We are hosting an Interfaith Family Picnic with @UKWFN at @Hidden_Gardens on Sunday 5 June (2.30 - 4.30pm) 🍏🍌☀️

The picnic is a celebration for the #QueensJubilee and #ThankYouDay ✨
...
[Show more](#)



Inter Faith Network @IFNetUK

One local #interfaith #PlatinumJubilee picnic today had a unique opening version of the #NationalAnthem #faith #HM70 #police #PlatinumPolicing #music #violin @luhc @ukhomeoffice @DCMS @FaithAndPolice @FTICroydon @RoyalFamily @metpoliceuk @HaqueAbs @yourcroydon @RosemarieMallet

Croydon MPS @MPSCroydon · Jun 3, 2022

Violin in the park by Sergeant James Edwards. Starting the Faiths together picnic off in style.

#PlatinumPolicing
#PlatinumJubilee...
[Show more](#)



10:08 PM · Jun 3, 2022

'Thank You Day' also took place on 5 June, led by the Together Coalition. IFN supported involvement in that by faith groups, as it did in the Big Jubilee Lunch, led by the Eden Project and Jubilee Walks of Faith led by the Fayre Share Foundation, Faiths Forum for London and others.

x.com/IFNetUK/status/151971399881696260

x.com/IFNetUK/status/1532831602971115520

Death of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

On 8 September 2022 Buckingham Palace announced the death of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

IFN's Co-Chairs and FCF Moderators issued a message following the death of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. www.interfaith.org.uk/news/a-message-following-the-death-of-her-majesty-queen-elizabeth-ii IFN's Co-Chairs also issued a message at the time of the National Moment of Reflection for Her Late Majesty. www.interfaith.org.uk/news/a-message-at-the-time-of-the-national-moment-of-reflection-for-her-late-majesty-queen-elizabeth-ii

Many IFN member faith and inter faith bodies issued statements or tributes in response to the death of HM The Queen. IFN highlighted these on its social media pages and drew together a collation www.interfaith.org.uk/news/the-death-of-her-majesty-queen-elizabeth-ii-responses-by-ifn-member-bodies.

IFN's Board of Trustees held a time of silent reflection at its September 2022 meeting, to remember Her late Majesty and honour Her life of service.

Faith leaders, including some IFN Trustees and Moderators, were among guests at the Funeral which took place on 19 September at Westminster Abbey.

Inter Faith Network for the UK
9 September 2022 · 🌐

LOCAL INTER FAITH BODIES' TRIBUTES AND MESSAGES OF CONDOLENCE ON THE DEATH OF HER LATE MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

Below are some of the early tributes and messages of condolence from local inter faith groups around the UK.

We are saddened at the news that our Queen has died. God rest her soul. She showed great respect through her own faith for the different faiths of the world. We pass on our condolences to her family. God save the King.
BARNET MULTI FAITH FORUM <https://bit.ly/3D8EzqR>


The Edinburgh Interfaith Association and its members would like to express our great sadness at the passing of Queen Elizabeth II. Faith was of central importance to the Queen and we appreciate the support she gave throughout our life towards all faith communities. We extend our deepest sympathies and condolences to all members of the Royal Family at this difficult time.
EDINBURGH INTERFAITH ASSOCIATION <https://bit.ly/3RvsQqD>

RIP MAM Thank you for your services to our nation. Oldham Inter Faith Forum
OLDHAM INTER FAITH FORUM <https://bit.ly/3BuzXdu>

Very sad day. A wonderful woman of faith. We can all pray, in our own way, for the whole family, for this country, and people across the world
WORCESTERSHIRE INTER FAITH FORUM <https://bit.ly/3L1W8L4>

Altrincham Interfaith Group send deepest condolences to King Charles and the Royal Family on the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth. We give thanks for her long service, her leadership and her Faith.
ALTRINCHAM INTERFAITH GROUP
<https://bit.ly/3TUEFlu>

We as members of North Kirklees Interfaith are saddened to hear of the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II -we remember her family at this time of great loss & change. We recognise & are thankful for the amazing service of the Queen to communities of faith & the whole country
NORTH KIRKLEES INTERFAITH
<https://bit.ly/3eHqiqU>



👍❤️👍 27 3 comments 10 shares


tinyurl.com/2cp9p737 (Text shortened)

tinyurl.com/3fe95nj

tinyurl.com/3ebyzr5

Inter Faith Network for the UK
18 September 2022 · 🌐

As the National Moment of Reflection approaches, we mourn the death of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and express, on behalf of Inter Faith Network for the UK's Trustees, deep gratitude for Her life of service, inspired by Her faith. We also express their gratitude for the encouragement Her Late Majesty gave to the work of developing inter faith understanding and cooperation between people of different faiths in the UK and the Commonwealth.
Canon Hilary Barber and Narendra Waghela, Co-Chairs




The Royal Family
18 September 2022 · 🌐

Tonight at 20:00 BST, a National Moment of Reflection will be marked with a one-minute silence, providing an opportunity to reflect on the life and legacy of Her Majesty The Queen.

Inter Faith Network for the UK
15 September 2022 · 🌐

IFN's Executive Director very glad to be present at this special service yesterday evening, with addresses from Chief Rabbi Mirvis & Rt Hon Theresa May, joining members of the Jewish community & guests of other faiths. #QueenElizabethII Memorial #faith United Synagogue The Board of Deputies of British Jews



Chief Rabbi Mirvis
14 September 2022 · 🌐

"The ultimate tribute that we can pay to the memory of our Queen is through contributing to a more harmonious world..."

The Chief Rabbi addresses the Jewish community memorial service for Her late Majesty The Queen, hosted by the United Synagogue

👍❤️👍 9

The Coronation

The Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III and Her Majesty Queen Camilla took place on 6 May 2023. There was a weekend of activities to celebrate the occasion with many opportunities for faith communities and inter faith groups to take part. Information about the plans was included in Circulars to member bodies and in the regular IFN Newsletter. There was also a special 'Extra' issue of the Newsletter about the Coronation.

IFN's Co-Chairs attended the Launch of the Coronation Big Lunch, overseen and organised by the Big Lunch team at the Eden Project.

8 May was designated as an extra Bank Holiday and members of the public were invited to take part in The Big Help Out (BHO), which encouraged people to try volunteering for themselves and join the work already being undertaken to support their local areas. This was organised by The Together Coalition (TTC) and a wide range of partners. A presentation about the BHO was made to the Faith Communities Forum meeting in February. The Executive Director and Intern attended its launch in March and also contributed to planning through attending regular meetings of the BHO Faith Activation Group, led by Integra, a group assisting on the faith strand of the BHO. IFN also undertook social media relating to it.

IFN's Board of Trustees sent greetings to The King and Queen on the occasion of their Coronation.

Faith leaders, including some IFN Trustees and Moderators, were among guests at the Funeral which took place on 19 September at Westminster Abbey.



IFN Exec Dir pleased to join Most Ven Seelawimala, venerables, speakers + other guests at #Buddhist blessing service + reception for the #Coronation at @lbvihara. Here, presentation of special gift for HM The King to chief guest, the Master of the Household. @RoyalFamily



GREETINGS ON THE OCCASION OF THE CORONATION OF HIS MAJESTY KING CHARLES III
The Board of @IFNetUK has conveyed greetings to His Majesty King Charles III and Her Majesty Queen Camilla on the occasion of the Coronation, saying:
"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."

@RoyalFamily @luhc @DCMS @OneJainUK @SikhMessenger @UKBahaiOPA @buddhistsociety #Coronation #faith #interfaith



4:28 PM · May 5, 2023 · 1,205 Views



FAITHS AND THE CORONATION
Faith communities and inter faith bodies are marking the #coronation in many different ways. Here, Department for Culture, Media and Sport spotlights how the Balaji Temple, is marking it - planting #trees, participating in a #WalkOfFaith and, today, holding a special fete. Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities The Royal Family/Hindu Council UK HINDU FORUM Britain The Tree Council/The Woodland Trust/Sandwell



This weekend, communities across the UK will be coming together in celebration. In the West Midlands Members of the Balaji Temple will plant seven "trees of hope", each representing different faiths in the UK, as a reminder that King Charles is a defender of all faiths. They will be part of the Hindu temple's #Coronation celebrations, alongside food, dancing and games. Find out more: <https://coronation.gov.uk/.../balaji-temple-coronation.../>

x.com/IFNetUK/status/1659861843177865219

twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1654508326087008258

tinyurl.com/54uah6nh

twitter.com/IFNetUK/status/1654508326087008258

Inter Faith Network for the UK
7 May 2023

FAITHS AND THE CORONATION
#CoronationBigLunch events are in full swing around the UK, with further lunches and picnics taking place tomorrow.

Shown here, details for an #interfaith lunch at the Asian Cultural Centre in Oxford today and a picnic tomorrow in Croydon, United Kingdom, and IFN's Co-Chairs, Canon Hilary Barber and Narendra Waghela, at the launch at Westminster Abbey last month of the #CoronationBigLunch which is a programme of Eden Project Communities

Department for Culture, Media and Sport
Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
The Royal Family
Faiths Together in Croydon
Oxford Foundation
Asian Cultural Centre
Cowley St John Parish, Oxford
Oxford Asian Cultural Association
Cowley Road Methodist Church, Oxford
Halifax Minster
Leicester Council of Faiths




big lunch

Join the Oxford Interfaith Community Lunch
Vegetarian Curry
Cakes & Puddings
Sunday 7th May
12.30pm
Asian Cultural Centre
Manzil Way

CSJ Oxford

Click [HERE](#) to register

12 1 share

tinyurl.com/3fe9f5nj

Inter Faith Network for the UK
4 May 2023

FAITHS AND THE CORONATION

Coronation faith walks will be taking part in a number of areas in the different nations of the UK, eg Cardiff, Edinburgh, Huddersfield, Oldham, London (Barnet and Westminster), and Walsall. They are being organised by local participants with the Fayre Share Foundation.

Westminster City Council
Faiths Forum
Edinburgh Interfaith Association
Black Country Innovate
CI
Interfaith Council for Wales
The Royal Family
Barnet Multi Faith Forum
Fayre Share Fdn
Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities




3 shares

Inter faith engagement of HM The King

HM King Charles has a longstanding commitment to the development of inter faith understanding and cooperation. This was reflected in his invitation to faith leaders to meet with him after the death of The Queen; in aspects of the handing of the Coronation; and in subsequent multi-faith meetings such as those at Lambeth Palace in Inter Faith Week (see page 65) and at Buckingham Palace in December the context of the impact on UK community relations of events in the Middle East.

The Royal Family
@RoyalFamily

Today The King hosted a gathering of UK community and faith leaders at Buckingham Palace. Guests had the opportunity to discuss the challenges their communities face, and the ways in which greater cohesion and fellowship can be fostered among them.

Find out more about His Majesty's work to promote inter-faith dialogue.

royal.uk/the-king-and-f...



6:35 PM · Dec 13, 2023 · 330K Views

The Royal Family
@RoyalFamily

This afternoon, The King joined more than 30 faith leaders @LamPalLib to mark #InterFaithWeek.

His Majesty has worked for many years to promote tolerance and greater understanding between different faiths and communities.

5:57 PM · Nov 16, 2023 · 214K Views

IFN's Co-Chairs and Executive Director attended the Inter Faith Week meeting and the Executive Director also attended the meeting at Buckingham Palace.

x.com/RoyalFamily/status/1735005431796310159

x.com/RoyalFamily/status/1725211595758858407

SUPPORTING LOCAL INTER FAITH ACTIVITY

Grassroots inter faith engagement is vital to the continued development of a harmonious, inclusive and diverse society. Support for local inter faith activity has therefore always been a very important part of the work of IFN.

Local inter faith organisations play a key role in developing understanding and cooperation in their areas. They:

- Contribute, through their activity, to a cohesive and harmonious local community
- Offer a regular opportunity for members of local faith communities to come to know each other and develop relationships of mutual trust
- Enable greater religious literacy through talks, discussions, visits and other activities to deepen understanding of other's faiths and beliefs
- Help tackle prejudice and lessen the likelihood of tensions and discord
- Respond to address tensions if these arise
- Bring people together in solidarity at times of joy or tragedy
- Help people of different faiths engage together with policies and projects for the benefit of their local community
- Work with the local authority, emergency services, SACREs and others to help facilitate and strengthen their engagement with faith communities

There are currently around 215 independent multi faith local inter faith organisations and 7 independent bilateral and trilateral groups in the UK. These are shown on the map on page 29. IFN's website also notes 3 local groups of the Women's Interfaith Network, 16 local groups of Nisa-Nashim and 31 branches of the Council of Christians and Jews. This is a total of 272 known local inter faith initiatives of these various kinds. There are also a number of Faith Leader Groups and a wide range of other types of local inter faith initiatives such as those described in IFN's recent report *Deep Connections: Women's Local Inter Faith Initiatives in the UK*.

You can find your nearest local group at www.interfaith.org.uk/locator.

IFN supports grassroots inter faith activity through an active programme which includes: providing resources such as publications and special focus sections on its website; helping local inter faith enquirers with contacts and advice to strengthen their initiatives; visiting and speaking with groups; enabling local inter faith practitioners to share insights and practical learning through special meetings; highlighting to local authorities the important resource that local inter faith bodies provide; and using Facebook and X (formerly Twitter) to encourage more people to join their local inter faith organisation.

IFN also leads on Inter Faith Week as one of its key programmes (see pages 50-73). Local inter faith initiatives play a key role in the Week, marking it in a wide variety of creative ways. IFN highlights these through its work to support the Week.

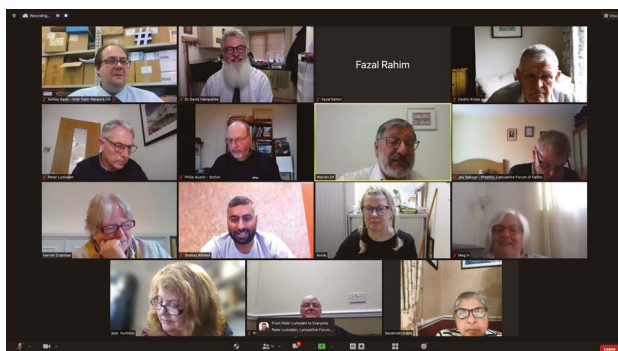
Sharing good practice and meeting together

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 of England.

IFN continued to hold regional link meetings in England for local inter faith groups online during the period².

In September 2021 a meeting was held for local inter faith groups in the North West of England. On the Agenda were: Inter Faith Network news update; Inter faith activity and #COP26, with a presentation by Annie Merry, Director of Faiths4Change; Roundtable sharing of news, information and ideas; and Local inter faith groups and engagement with schools and other education settings, with a presentation by then IFN Assistant Director Dr David Hampshire.

² Interfaith Scotland provides linking opportunities for groups in Scotland



Some participants at NW local inter faith link meeting 2021



Some participants at SW local inter faith link meeting 2022

In 2022 meetings were held for local inter faith groups in the North East (January), East Midlands (February), South West (June) and West Midlands (November).

Items on the Agendas for those meetings included: Roundtable sharing of news, information and ideas; Inter Faith Week; a project looking at women's local inter faith initiatives; the Local Inter Faith Guide; 'Working in partnership for the common good'; Issues of common interest and concern, including tackling and reporting hate crime and working for religious literacy.

In 2023 meetings were held in January for local inter faith groups in the East of England and in February for those in Yorkshire and Humber. The main items on the Agenda were: Roundtable sharing of news, information and ideas (including activities held during Inter Faith Week); and Working together for the common good. The Yorkshire and 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 the Revd Jenny Ramsden of Leeds Diocese.



Revd Jenny Ramsden speaking at Y&H inter faith link meeting 2023

"It enabled me to review what we've been doing – always a good exercise. It also refreshed links with others."

"I am grateful to IFN for taking the initiative to bring us together in the region, without this impetus it would not have happened."

From time to time IFN also holds day events for local inter faith practitioners from across the UK to share their experiences, discuss issues of common interest and concern and for focused learning opportunities. None were held during the period of this Review. One had been planned for October 2023 but was postponed early that month due to UK impacts of the Hamas terrorist attack on Israel.

Supporting local inter faith groups in other ways

Staff visited a number of local inter bodies during the period. Images from visits to Calderdale Interfaith, Nottingham Inter Faith Council, South London Inter Faith Group and Watford Inter Faith Association are shown in the X posts opposite.

IFN also produced a number of resources useful to local inter faith groups. (See page 45.)

tinyurl.com/y4ujxfyr

tinyurl.com/ynjpttc

Inter Faith Network for the UK
19 January 2023 · 🌐

Very good to join Nottingham Inter Faith Council (an Inter Faith Network for the UK member body) at their meeting hosted by the Al Khazra Mosque today. The importance of religious literacy was highlighted by a number of participants and the role of local #interfaith groups in boosting that - also of #SACREs. Friends/guests present included Bishop Patrick McKinney of Catholic Bishops' Conference (England and Wales) and Diocese of Nottingham and Prof Harminder Singh Dua CBE (speaker in photo 2).
My Nottingham





Inter Faith Network for the UK
31 July 2023 · 🌐

IFN's Project Assistant attended this special Watford Interfaith Association Peace Garden celebration earlier this month. While doing so, he interviewed members Yogesh Joshi and Chanda Shome about how they got involved with WIFA and the significance of the garden.
<https://youtu.be/qwJ5CHj1mew>
Cassiobury Park Dean Russell MP



Watford Peace Garden
9 July 2023 · 🌐

10 years of Peace Gardening

tinyurl.com/375z2tfo

tinyurl.com/3na78w7r

Supriya Nagarajan
7 June 2023 · 🌐

Today I had the privilege of being part of a wonderful inter-faith seminar on Women, faith and Leadership. Having recently reflected on Sita- the heroine of Ramayana for the York Festival of Ideas, I used her inspiring journey to deliver my talk. It was fitting from the Faith and Leadership agendas. Thank you Dr Anand for the invite. Halifax Minster The Inter Faith Network for the UK. Such an inspirational morning. Calderdale Interfaith






Inter Faith Network for the UK
28 November 2021 · 🌐

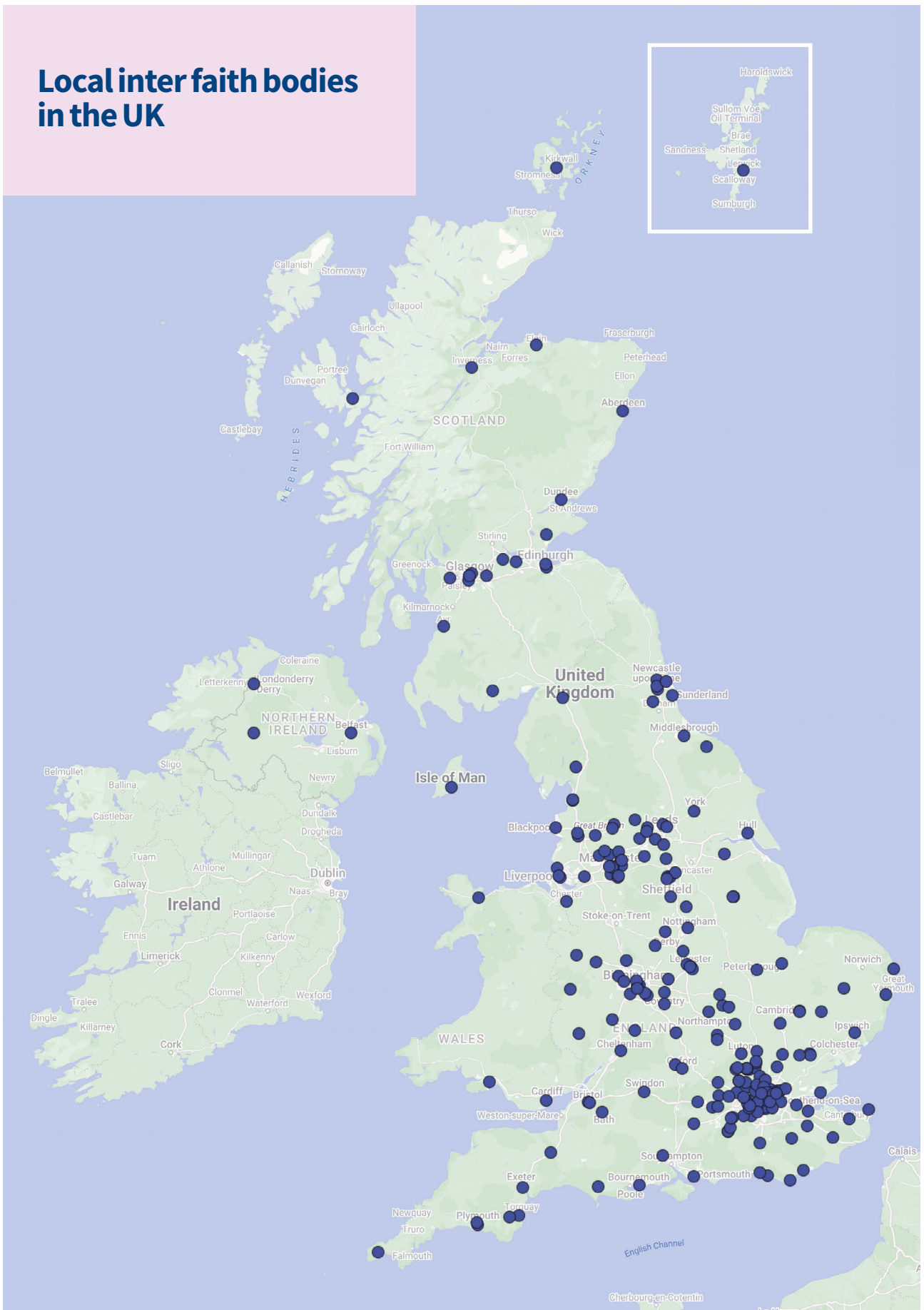
Very good to be with South London Interfaith Group at its 40th Anniversary event today, combined with its annual #Milad and #Advent / #Christmas celebration and lighting of candle of first night of #Hanukkah



14

6 shares

Local inter faith bodies in the UK



Map showing independent multi faith and bi and tri lateral (ie working with two, or three, faiths) local inter faith initiatives in the UK. You can find your nearest local group at www.interfaith.org.uk/locator.

WOMEN'S LOCAL INTER FAITH ENGAGEMENT

In April 2023 IFN published, *Deep connections: Women's inter faith initiatives in the UK*. This report came fifteen years since IFN commissioned from Dr Fatheena Mubarak Iqbal the research that led to her report *Women's Inter Faith Initiatives in the UK: A Survey (IFN 2006)*.

Deep Connections is based on research carried out during a period of four months between mid-October 2021 and mid-February 2022 and, after a gap linked to staff changes and funding challenges in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, subsequent updating research carried out from December 2022 to March 2023 by the IFN office. The initial project lead was then IFN Project Officer Kirsty Healey.

The project began with the sending of a short survey with questions framed to find out about: the current landscape and current activities of women's local inter faith initiatives; examples of good practice; benefits for the women's groups and for the wider local inter faith organisations (where they were part

of those); and challenges and potential drawbacks. This was sent to known local inter faith bodies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Interfaith Scotland was invited to share knowledge and expertise about groups in Scotland and put the project in touch with those.

A linked Roundtable was held by IFN during Inter Faith Week 2021. This was chaired by IFN's Executive Director, with opening words from the Co-Chairs, an introduction to the research project from Ms Healey, reports on contributors' work, wide ranging discussion and closing reflections from IFN Trustee Patricia Stoat. 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, such as the Women's Interfaith Network and Nisa Nashim.

The report highlights examples of the activity of the women's inter faith initiatives and explores benefits and challenges. It also includes a summary of information about each group that was surveyed.



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Deep connections: Women's local inter faith initiatives in the UK





Kirsty Healey, IFN, and Liz Carnelley of Near Neighbours

The report notes 50 such groups in the UK. Some operate in very diverse areas such as the groups in Glasgow, Leeds, Manchester and Wolverhampton; others in areas with more scattered areas of diversity such as Gloucestershire. Some are linked to offshoots of mixed gender local inter faith organisations such as Calderdale Interfaith, Redbridge Faiths Forum in London and Woking People of Faith. A few are connected to a particular faith base, such as ones linked to the Catholic Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle; Community House in Newport; and Christians Aware's Faith Awareness Programme, based in Leicester. 19 of the groups noted are branches of Nisa-Nashim or groups of the Women's Interfaith Network.

Among the reasons groups say they have been established are: making friends with women of different backgrounds; seeking understanding of other faiths and to raise awareness of their own; developing skills and confidence in areas such as public speaking and community leadership; helping develop and deepen bonds between local communities; artistic expression; and joint social action on issues from climate change to mental health and violence against women and girls. Their activities are wide-ranging: from dialogue, education, arts and crafts; activism; and celebrating or marking special times such as International Women's Day; and health and sports activities.

The report includes a 'top tips' section to help readers who would like to start a similar group or develop an existing one. This is also available on the IFN website at www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/top-tips-and-words-of-wisdom-developing-womens-local-inter-faith-initiatives-in-the-uk.

“This research project shows the richness and value of women’s local inter faith initiatives. As the contributors to this report make clear, these initiatives make a significant contribution to inter faith understanding and cooperation, help women’s voices be heard (sometimes in challenging circumstances), and are spaces where deep personal connections are forged which benefit both the women involved and their wider communities.”

IFN’s Executive Director, Harriet Crabtree OBE

CHURCH TIMES

Report reveals significant contribution of women’s interfaith work in the UK

by RACHEL FARMER
05 MAY 2023

A NEW report assessing women’s contributions to interfaith work in the UK says that a range of projects, as well as “helping women’s voices be heard”, contribute to interfaith understanding and co-operation.

The report, *Deep Connections: Women’s local inter faith initiatives in the UK*, is published by the Inter Faith Network for the UK (IFN). It considered 50 different interfaith groups around the country.

The findings come from a research project, begun in 2021, which examined interfaith initiatives led by women and mainly for women. The researchers, who used a survey, round-table online discussions, and interviews, looked at the challenges and benefits of projects.

The report states that the interfaith initiatives are “part of a rich wider tapestry of local women’s inter faith activity”; these include short-term projects and ad hoc events, along with activities in schools, places of worship, and other contexts. Group activities varied from dialogue and education to arts and crafts, well-being-related activities, sport, and activism.

The IFN’s executive director, Harriet Crabtree, said: “This research project shows the richness and value of women’s local inter faith initiatives . . . these initiatives make a significant contribution to inter faith understanding and cooperation, help women’s voices be heard (sometimes in challenging circumstances), and are spaces where deep personal connections are forged which benefit both the women involved and their wider communities.”

The report includes examples of grass-roots projects that have helped to strengthen ties between different groups and added to the well-being and cohesion of local communities. It also includes tips for future initiatives, with the aim of inspiring and encouraging others.

Shared meals were a common feature of many groups, with more than half of those surveyed saying sharing food was a highlight of their activity. Food also featured prominently among the “top tip” shared by groups.

In the top tips section of the report, the Women’s Interfaith Forum in Sheffield states: “Work from the bottom and not the top down. Start with the women and grow the initiatives. Food! Food is essential.”

Other tips came from the Canterbury Women of Faith group, which said that welcome and hospitality at a grass-roots level, and respecting everyone, was essential. A Calderdale group advised: “Organise what you enjoy and are interested in. It will bring joy to others.”

A lack of resources was identified as a significant challenge for projects, as well as the need to develop skills and confidence for women’s leadership. Other challenges included the loss of face-to-face meeting during the Covid pandemic, and, for some, the problem of finding welcoming spaces where women did not experience prejudice or feel constrained.

There were numerous benefits listed by those surveyed, from emotional support, friendship, and greater understanding of others’ beliefs to increased representation of women on interfaith groups, creativity, and sending a message of unity to the wider community.

The report concludes that women’s interfaith projects make a significant contribution to interfaith understanding and co-operation.

It states: “What is striking across all the stories told by the women who have contributed to this project is the quality of deep connection: friendships forged, experiences shared, and a sense of commonality and shared endeavour. This was highlighted in many of the responses which speak of the development of long-term, enduring friendships.”

HELPING LOCAL GROUPS GAIN DIGITAL COMMS SKILLS

The arrival of COVID-19 threw into sharp relief the divide between people who were able to use digital communication and those who were not. There was a rapid scramble to learn how to use platforms like Zoom and Teams and to figure out the best ways to engage in the world of online meetings and events. IFN began assisting member bodies which said that they needed help in this area and that assistance continued in 2021–2023 with a particular focus on local inter faith organisations.



Pat Wilkinson of Solihull Faiths Forum at digital upskilling webinar

Webinar on digital upskilling

In July 2021 IFN held a webinar on digital upskilling for local inter faith groups. This opened with a presentation from IFN Staff member, Ashley Beck, about using Facebook and Twitter. There was also an opportunity for peer-to-peer learning. The video recording is on IFN's website at www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/webinar-for-local-inter-faith-groups-on-digital-upskilling.

Digital sessions

IFN continued to offer one-to-one sessions on Zoom or the phone, principally for local inter faith groups, to have a conversation about their group's use of digital communications and how they might strengthen this. Feedback from the many groups who used these was very positive.

Social media guidance

In February 2023 IFN published on its website guidance material on using social media. This discusses the reasons why inter faith organisations

Inter Faith Network for the UK
13 June 2023 · 🌐

An increasing number of local inter faith organisations are using social media. Here, [Hull and East Riding Interfaith](#) which has recently launched a Facebook page.

The IFN office offers 'digital surgeries' for multi faith local inter faith groups interested to develop their social media skills. Contact ifnet@interfaith.org.uk if you are a local inter faith organisation listed at <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/.../groups/local-inter-faith> which would like to find out more about availability.

Hull and East Riding Interfaith
5 June 2023 · 🌐

Hull and East Riding Interfaith exists to promote good relations between people of different faiths and beliefs in our region. The aims of the organization are to develop mutual respect, understanding and cooperation amongst people of all faiths (and of none) in the Hull and East Riding area of Yorkshire, by

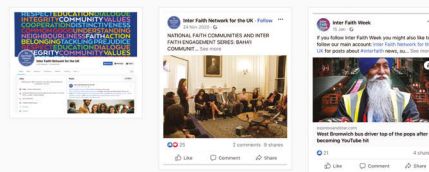
- providing a forum for dialogue between the faith communities and for the exploration of issues relating to them;
- giving leadership with regard to raising common issues with the main public organizations and providing a collective response;
- supporting the work of the local Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (SACREs) in Hull and the East Riding of Yorkshire.

tinyurl.com/3ab4xy2c

4.1 Facebook

- Facebook remains the most popular social media platform in the UK and 45 million Britons have accounts.
- Users on Facebook have a personal profile which they use to add friends, like pages and post written and visual content.
- The site has extended to include pages and groups which allow various forms of interaction. For more information of how to make a page see <https://www.facebook.com/help/104002523024878> and to make a group <https://www.facebook.com/help/16797019931213>.
- Facebook allows users to create organisational homepages and this is particularly useful in regard to local inter faith organisations. All organisational pages require that there be a personal account linked as an administrator.
- Facebook uses tagging to help users identify users who are featured in content, to alert users when they are featured in something and the platform offers a simple guide of how to do this <https://www.facebook.com/help/267689476916031>.
- Facebook, like other social media platforms, makes use of hashtags. Hashtagging acts like a thematic marker to identify suitable content and users are able to create their own hashtags which collates all posts with this hashtag together which provides an easy way to find all information on this topic and helps to formulate a narrative. In illustration, during Inter Faith Week, the IFN encourages the use of the hashtag #InterFaithWeek.
- Using Hashtags is crucial to increase the chance of people engaging with your content, but it is advised that you don't overuse hashtags as this can have a negative impact on your reach. For optimum coverage try and be as specific as possible with your hashtags.

[Back to the top](#)



Example of IFN social media guidance from its website

should consider using social media, which platforms are available to them, how to use them and advice about the practicalities of running social media accounts. The guidance can be found at www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/social-media-guidance.

RELIGIOUS LITERACY AND INTER FAITH UNDERSTANDING

Religious literacy is vital in a diverse society. It helps people to understand better what those of different faiths and beliefs hold most dear and to tackle suspicion, prejudice and hatred. Inter religious literacy is likewise important: having the skills for dialogue and interaction. Through its work with member bodies and through special focus projects, IFN works to increase both kinds of literacy.

Educational and academic body members

IFN's member bodies include a number of educational and academic bodies which, in different ways, work to promote inter faith understanding and cooperation in the UK. Some are specialist academic institutions, or a part of these, researching aspects of inter faith relations; some are educational bodies with a focus on relevant areas, such as Religious Education in schools; and some are multi-faith chaplaincies in UK higher education institutions. IFN helps raise the profile of their work through a number of channels such as website profiles and social media posts.

IFN also contributes to strengthening their work through opportunities to share news and good practice. As noted on pages 20-21, joint meetings for member National and Regional Inter Faith Organisations and Educational and Academic Bodies were held in January and September 2022, March 2023 and January 2024.

Educational resources

IFN often provides assistance to teachers looking for help on inter faith topics. It puts them in touch with RE specialists with knowledge about that and also produces periodic resources such as www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/inter-faith-activity-in-the-uk-a-teacher-resource-for-secondary-pupils.

In Autumn 2021 IFN commissioned a number of videos that can be used in schools' assemblies and as part of collective worship. These videos focus on people who are engaged in inter faith activity, some



of whom do not profess a faith.

Each video is between 3 to 5 minutes long and has been developed to promote reflection on two themes: friendship; and social action. The videos can be used during Inter Faith Week or 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 your community. The videos can be used cross-phase and are suitable for primary and secondary settings.

Some of the videos feature young people themselves and other, older, adults. Together, they reflect people from many faiths/beliefs and parts of the country.

The videos can be found at: www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/school-assemblies-collective-worship.

IFN also continued to promote, during this period, its teacher resources for schools.

INTER FAITH BUDDIES AND RELIGIOUS LITERACY

Inter Faith Buddies is a scheme that was designed by IFN to bring individuals together to engage in dialogue. It is a powerful tool for deepening understanding and religious literacy.

The scheme involves two people of different faiths or of a particular faith and of a non-religious belief:

- keeping in touch on a weekly basis for 3–6 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.

People are invited to explore questions such as:

- How does your faith or non-religious belief shape your daily life?
- What, in your faith or non-religious belief, encourages service to others in society?
- How does your faith or non-religious belief shape your approach to particular issues such as:
 - Social justice
 - The environment
 - Care for others
 - Education

This is an opportunity for sharing and learning, on a one-to-one basis across a limited period of time. The process may, of course, lead to longer term conversations and new forms of practical co-operation.

Inter Faith Buddies: some practical pointers for participants

Getting Started

- Agree your expectations, for example about frequency, medium and duration of contact (you can always agree to change that later), respectful engagement, what you hope to gain from the exchange, etc.
- Set any boundaries of what you are happy to discuss (for example, some might wish not to discuss events in other countries).
- Be realistic about what kinds of questions and responses will work within the format.
- Take a few minutes to go through together Building Good Relations with People of Different Faiths and Beliefs and to agree these or other ground rules that you wish to have.
- Agree that your exchange will be private to you, except what you both agree to share at the end of the process.
- Begin by sharing a little about yourselves and asking a question of each other.
- Bear in mind that there are times when faith festivals may have some impact on people's ability to reply to each other swiftly.

Sharing what you have learned

- Agree together what you might like to share with others about your conversations: what you have learned from these and what points for others might have emerged from them.
- Agree how you will share these thoughts – it may be that you are part of a local inter faith body, for example, and they would like to feature some of your reflections as part of an online discussion or event during, for example, Inter Faith Week.
- If you would like to share on social media that you are taking part, please use the hashtag #InterFaithBuddies and tag @ifnetuk on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

Safeguarding and safety

- Safeguarding is very important. Buddies should be over the age of 18 years and commit to engage in respectful listening and dialogue. They should also respect the privacy and security of other buddies and their families.
- There are many different ways that you could choose to engage, for example, telephone, email, letter, or virtual chats using Zoom, Skype, Messenger, Hangouts, Teams, WhatsApp, Facetime or your other platform of choice. Whichever platform you choose, it is important that people feel safe and keep themselves safe. All major platform providers give safety and security advice and it is worth having a look at that before you begin.
- Do not share your phone number, WhatsApp, address, email, social media profiles etc unless you are both comfortable with doing so.
- Do not share anyone else's phone number (including WhatsApp, WeChat, etc), address, email, social media profiles or any other form of personally identifiable information.

Dialogue tips

For tips on inter faith dialogue, and the different forms it can take, you might like to take a look at IFN's Let's Talk: practical pointers for inter faith dialogue resource, which is freely available online: <https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/lets-talk-practical-pointers-for-inter-faith-dialogue>.

Questions or concerns

If you are participating in a Buddies scheme organised by an organisation – such as your workplace, school, or faith community – you should have been given a contact person who can respond to questions or concerns.

During both Inter Faith Week 2022 and 2023, IFN worked with Humanists UK on an iteration of the scheme that paired members of Humanists UK's Dialogue Network with a buddy of a different faith or belief involved with a local inter faith group. Feedback on the experience was positive, with a number of buddies noting continued engagement beyond the scheme, for example, continuing their discussion or getting involved in local inter faith initiatives.

“Thank you [for introducing] me to the Buddy Process. I had wonderful meetings with a lovely lady from [the] Humanist Group. She learned a lot from me on Hinduism and I about Humanism.”

Webinar on Inter Faith Buddies

A webinar about the Inter Faith Buddies scheme was held by IFN in January 2023. It was facilitated by IFN’s Executive Director and began with some introductory words about the scheme from IFN’s then Project Assistant, Aled Vernon-Rees.

This was followed by presentations on the benefits of using the scheme in local inter faith contexts by Kawther Hashmi of Surrey Faith Links and by three representatives of Cornwall Faith Forum, Dr Rita Stephen, Eve Salthouse and Jeremy Jacobson OBE. The next item was on ‘Religious/non-religious dialogues: Humanist/faith buddy dialogues’, with reflections offered by Yogesh Joshi, Vice-Chair of Watford Interfaith Association and Simon Nightingale of Shrewsbury Inter-Faith Forum and South Shropshire Interfaith Forum.

The webinar ended with Dr Maureen Sier, Director of Interfaith 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.

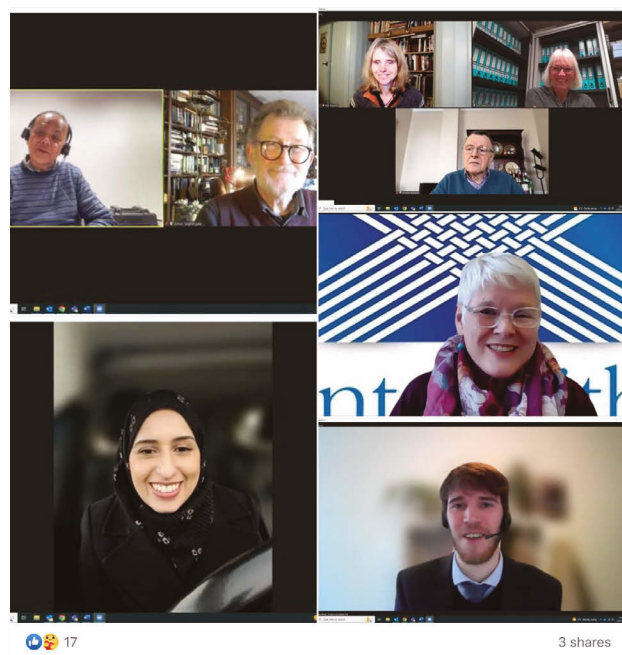
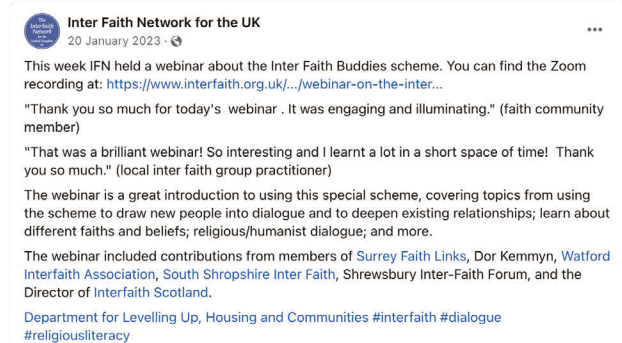
The recording of the webinar can be found on the IFN website at www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/webinar-on-the-inter-faith-buddies-scheme.

Wider use of the scheme

The Inter Faith Buddies scheme has been used by a number of local inter faith groups, such as Brighton and Hove Interfaith Contact Group, Cornwall Faiths Forum and Surrey Faith Links. It has also been used in other contexts such as companies, universities and hospitals.



Surrey and Borders NHS Pastoral and Spiritual Care Chaplaincy talking about the Inter Faith Buddies scheme



MESSAGES FROM FAITH LEADERS ABOUT RELIGIOUS LITERACY

In November 2022, the Inter Faith Network for the UK Faith Communities Forum invited national faith community leaders to share messages about the importance of religious literacy for Inter Faith Week 2022. You can see their messages at: www.interfaithweek.org/news/reflections-from-national-faith-communities-and-their-leaders-2022. This was part of a focus across 2021-2023 on religious literacy.

Archbishop of Canterbury
@JustinWelby · Follow

#InterFaithWeek reminds us of the vital importance of religious literacy. The command of Jesus to love our neighbour requires that we know something of the beliefs of others. Religious literacy can help us live together well across difference.

@ifnetuk @luhc

8:00 AM · Nov 14, 2022

Network of Sikh Orgs
@SikhMessenger · Follow

Interfaith Week message from our Director @luhc #InterFaithWeek



Message for Interfaith week 2022:

"Much of the conflict in the world today is linked to religion and a misunderstanding of the beliefs of others. This is made worse by the continuing inclusion of cultural norms of centuries ago into what passes for religion. Today there is an urgent need to highlight core ethical teachings. We have a long way to go, but it is important that we move in this direction to remove prejudice and misunderstanding. Even a little movement in this direction will show that our different faiths are not barriers between people, but gateways to a greater appreciation and understanding of life."

Lord (Dadasig) Singh
Director Network of Sikh Organisations UK

10:13 AM · Nov 14, 2022

MCB
@MuslimCouncil · Follow

🌟@IFWeek 2022 | 13-20th November

#InterFaithWeek reminds us of the vital importance of religious literacy: knowledge is a powerful antidote to ignorance and prejudice and helps us live well together as part of our diverse society.

@ZaraM01, Secretary-General MCB



"Inter Faith Week reminds us of the vital importance of religious literacy: knowledge is a powerful antidote to ignorance and prejudice and helps us live well together as part of our diverse society."

This year, we observe Inter Faith Week at a time in which people are facing great hardship, the cost-of-living crisis being among many issues impacting people. As such, we continue to reflect on, and be proud of, the immense contribution of faith communities in the face of such challenges. Faith, when in action, continues to provide an anchor of support, a source of hope and compassion for many.

Let us use this opportunity to reaffirm our commitment of service to all those in need, and to strive for a society that withstands hatred and division. I look forward to joining faith communities across the UK in marking this week."

Zara Mohammed, MCB Secretary-General

mcb.org.uk FB/IG: @muslimcounciluk TW: @MuslimCouncil

2:15 PM · Nov 14, 2022

Paul Parker
@RQuaker · Follow

It's #InterFaithWeek. In my work for @BritishQuakers I've learnt so much from other faiths. The faith voice in the public square really matters - faith communities can often be the only people to speak about love in public. Policy, politics, communities all need love! @IFWeek

12:01 PM · Nov 14, 2022

Cardinal Nichols
@CardinalNichols · Follow

Faith in God fashions who we are. It deepens the motivation to serve. It helps us understand that whatever strength & resources we possess are best used when we work together for the common good. Building a just society recognises the inherent dignity of all. #InterFaithWeek



12:37 PM · Nov 14, 2022

HinduCouncilUK
@hindu_counciluk · Follow

In multicultural UK religious literacy is essential. It helps us to accept diversity and understand people in their own terms Without it potential mistrust can grow. RL help us understand ourselves one another and the world we live



11:10 PM · Nov 17, 2022

7 Reply Copy link

Read 1 reply

Board of Deputies of British Jews
@BoardofDeputies · Follow

"This #InterFaithWeek, I hope that representatives of different faith groups in the UK can continue to come together and share information about their beliefs, experiences and the projects they run for the good of all."

– Marie van der Zyl, President
@BoDPres
#interfaith



11:25 AM · Nov 14, 2022

Chief Rabbi Sir Ephraim Mirvis
@chiefrabbi · Follow

Having attended the Abu Dhabi Forum for Peace last week, I am conscious of the potency of people of faith joining together in a spirit of friendship. This #InterFaithWeek let us ensure that we continue to harness the power of interfaith engagement whenever the opportunity arises.



5:06 PM · Nov 15, 2022

The Methodist Church
@MethodistGB · Follow

The Revd Dr Jonathan Hustler, Secretary of the Conference, shares a message during @IFWeek in a celebration of diversity and God's goodness 🙏 #InterFaithWeek

Watch on Twitter



Last month, I was privileged to visit Bethlehem.

9:30 AM · Nov 14, 2022

The Unitarians
@UKUnitarians · Follow

We're celebrating #InterfaithWeek 🥰❤️

This week is an opportunity to learn more about the world's faiths and to increase our religious literacy, which is crucial for a harmonious, respectful and loving society.

Photo: @MillHillChapel

#RadicalCommunity #TheUnitarians @IFWeek



11:55 AM · Nov 16, 2022

5 Reply Copy link

Read more on Twitter

The Church of Jesus Christ in the United Kingdom
@TheChurchNewsUK · Follow

We're celebrating Interfaith Week 2022! Here's a message from Elder Martin Turvey on how interfaith helps us build meaningful connections in our communities. @IFWeek #InterFaithWeek



9:00 AM · Nov 14, 2022

Qari Asim MBE
@QariAsim · Follow

Lack of Religious Literacy often leads to lack of trust and misunderstanding between communities.

#InterfaithWeek celebrates the amazing work people of all faiths & beliefs do, throughout the year, to tackle misinformation and enable a more inclusive society. @IFWeek



5:09 PM · Nov 14, 2022

Jain Network
@Jain_Centre · Follow

Message for Interfaith week from the Jain Network! 🙏🙏
@IFNetUK @IFWeek



10:39 AM · Nov 15, 2022

The Spiritualists' National Union (SNU)
@SpiritualistSNU · Follow

you.tube.be/OVB2kKtJ02o

Interfaith Week 2022
Minister Julia Almond shares a message about Inter Faith Week, the vital contribution of religious literacy and understanding about the different faith communities in the UK.

#interfaithweek #interfaithweek2022



1:23 PM · Nov 14, 2022

Hindu Forum Britain
@hfbritain · Follow

#InterFaithWeek Religious Literacy teaches us to strengthen bond between all communities, people of faith and none, on the principle of peaceful existence @IFNetUK @BoardofDeputies @luhc @JustinWelby @citysikh @NiskamSewa



5:29 PM · Nov 14, 2022 from Hillingdon, London

Rabbi Joseph Dweck
@rabbidweck · Follow

It is Interfaith Faith week
@IFWeek #InterFaithWeek



3:39 PM · Nov 17, 2022

Inter Faith Week
about 10 months ago

"As members of the Inter Faith Network for the UK, TDN is highlighting the importance of religious literacy during Inter Faith Week (13th to 20th November 2022). Phil Ryder, chair of The Druid Network, writes:

"The theme of #InterFaithWeek 2022 is to highlight the vital importance of religious literacy. In our increasingly digital world literacy goes beyond the conventional definition of reading and writing, it encompasses a wide range of communication skills and media platforms. We can use these media to help breakdown the barriers of ignorance and prejudice surrounding our diverse faiths allowing us to come together to recognise the challenges of our modern age and help each other overcome them."

The Druid Network
8,530 followers · 14 November 2022

A message from TDN chair Phil Ryder at the beginning of Interfaith week 2022 #InterFaithWeek

DRUIDNETWORK.ORG
Interfaith Week 2022 - The Druid Network
As members of the Inter Faith Network for the UK, TDN is highlighting...

The Pagan Federation
@paganfederation · Follow

Inter Faith Week 2022
Our President, Sarah Kerr, has recorded a short YouTube message outlining this year's theme – religious literacy:



4:19 PM · Nov 14, 2022

Unitarians Wales
@UndodiaidCymru

#InterFaithWeek reminds us of the vital importance of religious literacy. Knowledge is a powerful antidote to ignorance and prejudice and helps us live well together in our diverse society. @IFWeek @luhc @IFNetUK

Neasden Temple
@NeasdenTemple · Follow

As we celebrate National #InterFaithWeek in the UK, we remember HH #PramukhSwami's timeless message at the @UN Millennium World Peace Summit in New York City in 2000: "Religion is that which fosters mutual love... Flourishing together is the secret of peace." @IFNetUK



1:07 PM · Nov 14, 2022

ztfe1861
Zoroastrian Centre

Zoroastrianism teaches that an individual can only give back positivity and goodness to society by acquiring proper wisdom and knowledge and living rightly in light of that.

This #InterFaithWeek, ZTFE joins other faith communities in the UK in highlighting the vital importance of religious literacy: both for individuals and for our society.

ERVAD YAZAD BHADHA FOR THE ZOROASTRIAN TRUST FUNDS FOR EUROPE (ZTFE)



13:30 November 2022

UK Bahá'í OPA
@UKBahaiOPA · Follow

#InterFaithWeek #ReligiousLiteracy @IFNetUK @IFWeek



1:08 PM · Nov 15, 2022

Baptists Together
@baptistuniongb · Follow

Thousands of people are participating in #InterFaithWeek, which this year is highlighting the importance of religious literacy. There's also been a focus on the climate crisis

Follow @IFNetUK and @IFWeek for a flavour of what's been happening

2:00 PM · Nov 18, 2022

3 Reply Copy link

EDUCATING FOR RELIGIOUS LITERACY

It is widely agreed that religious literacy is important. Why does religious literacy matter? What is it? And how can we educate for it? IFN's 2023 National Meeting 'Educating for religious literacy' was the next step in its series of activities linked to encouraging religious literacy. It offered a chance to reflect on these questions and to hear about a number of examples of different initiatives working to increase religious literacy of children and adults.

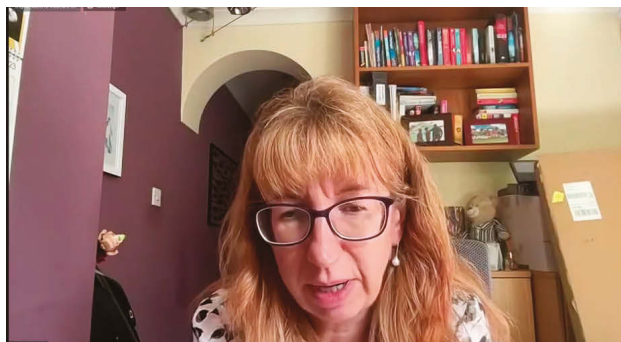
The meeting was held online on 12 July and was chaired by IFN Co-Chairs the Revd Canon Hilary Barber and Narendra Waghela. Over 90 people attended during the day, from 70 different organisations from across IFN's membership.

In the plenary session:

- Dr Kathryn Wright, CEO, Culham St Gabriel's and Board member, Religious Education Council of England and Wales, spoke on 'What do we mean by religious literacy and how does RE in schools contribute to this?'
- Dr Sheila Gewolb, Board member, National Association of SACRES (NASACRE), Jewish representative on Cumbria, Rutland and Torbay SACRES, Deputy for Cardiff United Synagogue and Chair of the Outreach Education Working Group, Board of Deputies of British Jews, spoke on 'Faith communities and RE: contributing to religious literacy through SACREs and through educational programmes'
- Dr Jasjit Singh, Associate Professor, School of Philosophy, Religion and the History of Science (PRHS) at the University of Leeds and Adviser to the Religion Media Centre, spoke on 'Religious literacy in a digital age: media and online content

as routes of transmission and learning' and a response followed from Rajnish Kashyap, General Secretary, Hindu Council UK

- Dr Iona Hine, Communications and Programme Manager, Cambridge Interfaith Programme, University of Cambridge spoke on 'How may special focus programmes in HE help increase religious literacy – the example of Cambridge Interfaith Programme'
- The Revd Gavin Wort, Lead Chaplain, Durham University, Vice-Chair Newcastle Council of Faiths and Chair of County Durham Faith Network spoke on 'Increased religious literacy through opportunities for encounter'
- IFN Trustee Minister David Bruton launched Inter Faith Week 2023 on behalf of the Board of Trustees.
- Professor Adam Dinham, Professor of Faith & Public Policy and Director of the Faiths and Civil Society Unit, Goldsmiths, University of London, Professor of Religion and Belief Literacy, VID University, Oslo, Co-Director of The Religion and Belief Literacy Partnership and author of a number of publications on religious literacy, spoke on 'Working effectively for religious literacy in different sectors across society' and Dr Abdul-Azim Ahmed, Secretary General, Muslim Council of Wales and member of the Inter Faith Council for Wales offered a response
- Closing reflections on the day and the importance of religious literacy were offered by Ashwin Soni, Crawley Inter Faith Network; Tracy Prior, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and IFN Vice-Moderator; and Dr Harriet Crabtree OBE, Inter Faith Network for the UK

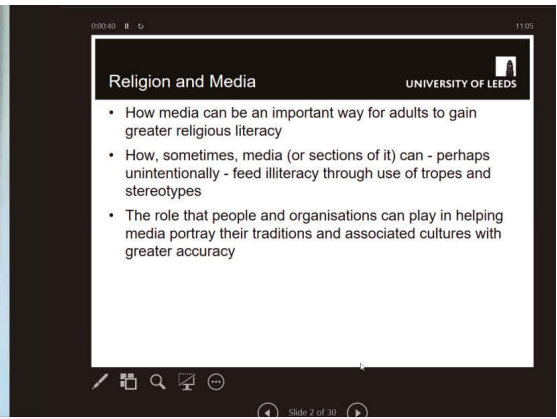


Dr Kathryn Wright, Culham St Gabriels

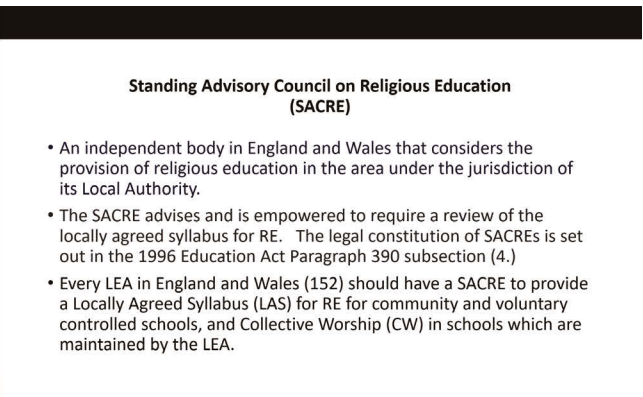
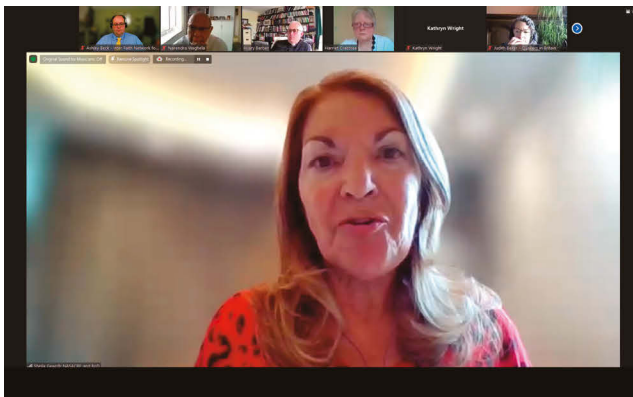
CULHAM ST GABRIEL'S

A shifting paradigm in the classroom...

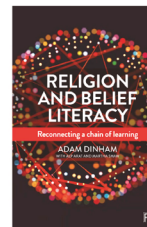
A pedagogical turn: An approach which emphasizes...	A curriculum turn: An approach which takes seriously...
Hermeneutics	Lived, authentic experience
Intellectual humility and dialogue	Diversity of belief and practice
Positionality, personal knowledge and reflexivity	Continuity and Change
Wise (critical) interpretation	Context
Different ways of knowing/disciplinary knowledge	



Prof Jasjit Singh, Leeds University



Sheila Gewolb, NASACRE and Board of Deputies of British Jews

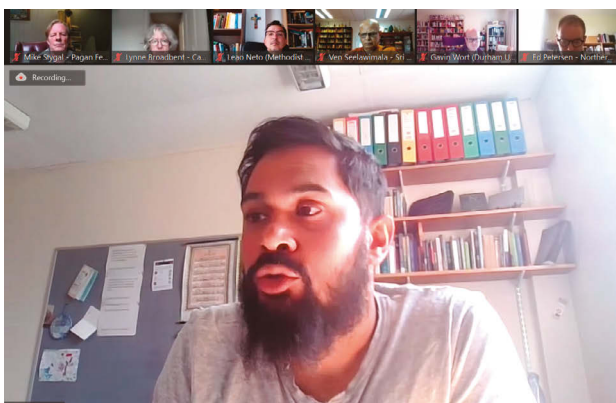


Thesis:

- A broken chain of memory, and a broken chain of learning
- What we know about R&B comes from what we learn and each learning sphere is shaped without reference to the others
- Each sphere determined by what policy in that area is seeking (Islam=security; interfaith=cohesion, and FB&A; Christianity=values and citizenship; Judaism=hate crime and antisemitism)
- Just as public policy is disconnected on other issues, so it is on learning
- And that makes for a muddled public sphere, in institutions from government to culture, and of course in workplaces (eg legal cases)
- Leaving publics struggling to make sense of religion and belief

"Each of these framings has its own inner logic... which variously construct religion and belief as both positive (contributing to society) and negative (a threat to it). However, do these 'logics' line up? Are they sufficiently in touch with each other to, at least, be capable of coherent disagreement?" (Dinham 2020 p2)

Prof Adam Dinham, Goldsmiths, University of London



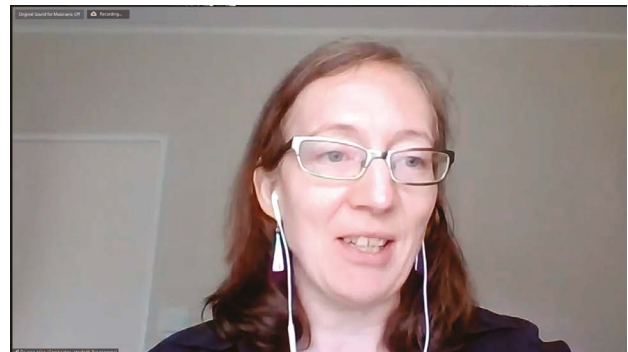
Dr Abdul-Azim Ahmed, Muslim Council of Wales and Inter Faith Council for Wales



Rajnish Kashyap, Hindu Council UK

During the day six workshops were held on different aspects of religious literacy:

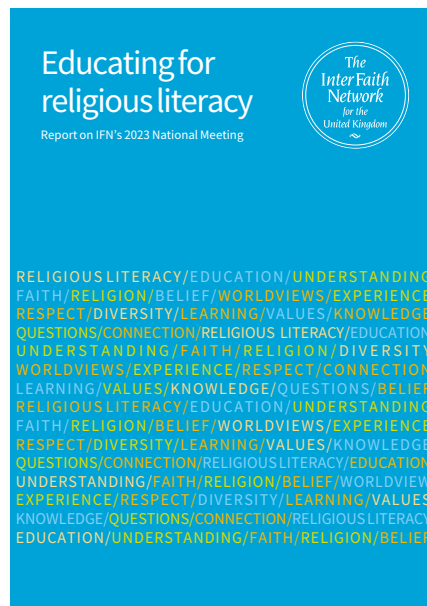
- ‘Local inter faith organisations and working for religious literacy’, with presentations by Rabbi Warren Elf MBE and Margaret Calvert, Co-Chair and Secretary, respectively, Faith Network for Manchester, and Tripti Megeri, Secretary, Bristol Multi-Faith Forum
- ‘Religious literacy in the workplace’, with a presentation by Brad McLaughlin, Faith Friendly Workplaces and lead for multi faith work at Aviva, where he also led the Christian Network
- ‘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, and IFN Trustee, and Es Rosen, Barnet Multi Faith Forum and IFN Trustee
- ‘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)
- ‘Religious literacy and skills for inter faith engagement’, with a presentation from Dr Norman Richardson MBE, Honorary Fellow, Stranmillis University College and Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum



Dr Iona Hine, Cambridge Inter Faith Programme

“The topic was of great interest to our organisation and the presentations were engaging.”

“I found all the presentations at the National Meeting exceptionally productive and useful.”



The full report can be found at www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/educating-for-religious-literacy-report-on-ifns-2023-national-meeting.

Videos of the main plenary presentations can be seen at www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/ifn-national-meeting-2023-educating-for-religious-literacy.

twitter.com/RevdGavinWort/status/1679098203323486208

Gavin Wort
@RevdGavinWort

Great to address @IFNetUK National Meeting today & share some of our interfaith work @durham_uni, including informal engagement between students of different faiths & friendships established through interfaith cafés #ReligiousLiteracyIFN @SamDale84 @_ShaidMahmood @mathewjguest



RAISING AWARENESS AND SHARING GOOD PRACTICE AND INFORMATION

The Inter Faith Network for the UK is a key source of advice and information on inter faith issues in the UK. It provides contact details to assist in connecting enquirers with those who may be best able to help them.

As well as individual members of the public, organisations that IFN assisted during the period included government departments, local authorities, emergency services, voluntary organisations, schools, hospitals, the media and others.

In some cases, IFN staff are involved with projects on a longer-term basis, where this is seen as fitting with IFN's aims and helping to carry these out. For example, this period has seen continued engagement with the Civil Contingencies Secretariat (Community Resilience) of the Cabinet Office; the Civil Society Group; the Covid-19 Inquiry; Equally Ours; the National Police Chiefs' Council; National Counter Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO); the Office for National Statistics; and the Religious Education Council of England and Wales.

Staff visits, attendance and speaking at events are also an important part of keeping people in touch and sharing good practice. Examples during this period include attending and/or speaking at:

- faith festival celebrations, such as the City of London receptions for Chanukah and Diwali and Big Iftar events
- an event in Cardiff to mark the 20th Anniversary of the Inter Faith Council for Wales
- a 40th Anniversary event for South London Inter Faith Group
- a meeting of Nottingham Inter Faith Council
- an Open House event to celebrate the United Reformed Church's 50th anniversary
- a High Tea for The Queen's Platinum Jubilee hosted by the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe at the Zoroastrian Centre
- an event with faith and community leaders at Buckingham Palace convened for conversation by

His Majesty The King

- the launch of the 2022 Scottish Inter Faith Week at the Scottish Storytelling Centre in Edinburgh
- a webinar on 'Women in Religious Scriptures - how can they inspire and empower us today?' organised by Religions for Peace (UK) Women of Faith Network
- an Ahimsa Day event hosted by the Jain All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) and the Institute of Jainology at the House of Commons
- a Together for Humanity Vigil, organised by Barnet Multi Faith Forum and Middlesex University Inter Faith Network
- a Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum online event on 'Faith, belief and action'
- a reception, at the Houses of Parliament, for the Faith Friendly Workplaces initiative, hosted by the APPG for International Freedom of Religion or Belief
- the launch of the British Sikh Report in Parliament
- a meeting of the APPG on British Hindus to launch its Anti-Hindu Hate Report.

Trustees also sometimes attend events. For example, Malcolm Deboo (at the time also a Co-Moderator of the Faith Communities Forum) attended a Royal British Legion Remembrance Glade event; Canon Hilary Barber, the 2023 Festival of Remembrance; and Narendra Waghela a National Peace Symposium at the Baitul Futuh Mosque in London.

ENQUIRIES

This sample of the enquiries to which IFN has responded during the period of this Review gives a flavour of the range of areas in which it helps...

- Does IFN have any inter faith resources that our school can use for assemblies?
- We are re-launching the multi faith chaplaincy at our hospital. How can we let local faith groups know about this?
- Our Police Force is setting up a faith network for staff. Do you have any advice on this?
- Our local authority is starting a new project on multi faith sport for young people. Please could you put us in touch with our local inter faith group?
- Our museum is putting on an exhibition about different faiths. Please could you put us in touch with faith groups?
- Do you have any sample constitutions for setting up a local inter faith group?
- Would you be able to send us some resources for the new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion hub at our prison?
- Can you signpost us to any material to use for a multi faith Remembrance event?
- We are developing a resource pack for faith groups on homelessness. Could you put us in touch with faith groups in our area?
- Can you offer some advice on creating guidelines for use of the new multi faith prayer space on our university campus?
- Can IFN provide a speaker for our radio show on the importance of inter faith dialogue?

E-bulletin / Newsletter

IFN produces a bi-monthly Newsletter (formerly e-bulletin) packed with news about inter faith projects and resources and with updates about key faith and public life developments. It is sent to subscribers



Malcolm Deboo, Co-Moderator of IFN's Faith Communities Forum, with Una Cleminson, National Chairman of the @PoppyLegion at the Dedication of the Remembrance Glade at the National Memorial Arboretum, Staffordshire earlier today.



National Memorial Arboretum

2:43 PM · Sep 14, 2021

and is also available on the IFN website in both PDF and web page formats. Previous issues can be seen at www.interfaith.org.uk/news/newsletter.



Circulars

IFN issued Circulars throughout the period to draw member bodies' attention to a wide range of issues and opportunities. These included: information about faith communities and COVID-19; relevant faith and public life issues, such as the Faith New Deal Pilot Fund, the Independent Faith Engagement Review and the IICSA report 'Child protection in religious organisations and settings'; other issues of interest to faith and inter faith bodies, such as Her late Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee, the Coronation of His Majesty the King and the Big Help Out; and also IFN news and resources. 38 Circulars were sent to member bodies during the 2021–22 operating year, 40 Circulars during the 2022–23 operating year and 17 during the period from July 2023 to May 2024.

Websites

IFN's websites provide information, advice and share good practice. IFN has two websites: www.interfaith.org.uk, which is its main organisational website, and www.interfaithweek.org for its Inter Faith Week programme.

Material on IFN's website relating to faith communities, inter faith bodies and COVID-19, collated by the IFN office, particularly that relating to Government guidance, was updated until it was no longer in use and was then archived.

As noted on Page 34, in Autumn 2021 IFN produced a series of videos for use by schools in Collective Worship on inter faith topics. They can be seen at

www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/school-assemblies-collective-worship.

In May 2022 IFN published 'Faith communities and media coverage: A guidance note'. This short note reflects discussion at IFN Faith Communities Forum meetings across recent years and good practice suggestions received from external bodies. It can be found at www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/faith-communities-and-media-coverage-a-guidance-note

In 2022 IFN added to its website a resource for employers. This was based on material originally created as a guest blog by IFN's Assistant Director for the Employers' Network on Equality and Inclusion during Inter Faith Week 2021. It can be found at www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/workplaces.

FAITH AND BELIEF IN THE WORKPLACE – A NOTE FOR EMPLOYERS

The Inter Faith Network ... has seen a growing interest in faith and belief in the workplace. Here are just a few 'top tips' 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 (eg 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 Sikh and a 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 known traditions such as Baha'i, Jain, Pagan 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.

As noted earlier (see Page 33), in February 2023 IFN published some social media guidance material on its website. The guidance can be found at www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/social-media-guidance.

A number of new web resource pages were also added to the Inter Faith Week website. These include:

- A new page about dialogue, added in October 2023 (www.interfaithweek.org/resources/dialogue)
- A section on multi-faith remembrance (www.interfaithweek.org/resources/remembrance) updated in November 2023

- Updates to the 'activity ideas' and 'handy tips' pages were also added.

Some final work was done on a resource for local inter faith organisations prior to staff finishing their employment at IFN on 15 May 2024. It is anticipated that this will be uploaded shortly after publication of this Annual Review.



This Toolkit was first published in 2015 by Near Neighbours, in partnership with the Inter Faith Network for the UK. This edition was published in September 2021 with minor updates to the text, a refreshed design, and updated links and contact information. Life across 2020-2021 has been shaped in all manner of ways by the COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions on gatherings of all kinds, including for worship. Faith groups and inter faith initiatives have played a vital role throughout the pandemic, helping to identify and respond to community needs. It is hoped that as restrictions lift and it is once again safe to meet – and serve – together, the pointers in this Toolkit will continue to prove helpful.

Cross-faith work can make a positive difference to local communities, whether through social action or dialogue and shared learning. Yet engaging people of different faiths in community projects can seem difficult. Reaching out to someone who may appear very different and wondering how to strike up a conversation can be daunting, let alone coming together in dialogue, or to act on shared issues within your local neighbourhood.

This toolkit aims to help you to reach out and engage with people of different faiths in your local area, to create a successful project that engages people of different religious backgrounds, as well as to develop and deepen cross-faith understanding and relationships along the way. Many projects will naturally bring together a mixture of different perspectives, including non-religious beliefs.

This toolkit contains some **Key Principles** (pg2) to think about: the overarching values that need to be kept in mind when working across faiths. This is followed by some **Practical Steps** (pg5) to consider to make your project a success. Finally, some information on **Promoting Your Activities** (pg12) is included, helping you to share your project and involve more people.



Es Rosen, Barnet Multi Faith Forum and IFN Trustee with local inter faith banner

Other resources

A new IFN leaflet was produced in November 2022. This can be seen at www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/publications.

A new banner about local inter faith organisations was created in November 2023, for the MP drop-in event at Parliament.

New flyers, posters and other branded materials were also produced for Inter Faith Week in each year.



IFN worked with Near Neighbours, to publish in October 2021, an update of the joint publication, *Faiths Working Together Toolkit*. The updated version is available at www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/faiths-working-together-toolkit-2021.

Faith Festivals

IFN’s website provides a list of some 180 faith festivals. This is in association with the Shap Calendar – a calendar with an RE origin, produced for many years for use in schools and other contexts. IFN is grateful to the Shap Calendar Group for permission to reproduce its calendar materials in this form.

IFN’s Faith Communities Forum previously agreed on two festivals from each community on which greetings from those of other faiths and those of no faith would be particularly appreciated. IFN produces a document which includes those festivals and greetings agreed by each community. The festival dates are updated each year and it is available as a pdf on the IFN website at www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/faith-festivals-guidance-on-sending-greetings.

Inter Faith Network @IFNetUK

Today, Christians in the Orthodox Churches will be marking Lazarus Saturday. Further information about festivals at: interfaith.org.uk/resources/reli... with thanks to @shapcalendar



religious festivals - Resources

From interfaith.org.uk

Inter Faith Network @IFNetUK

#HappyDiwali to all celebrating. More about festivals at: interfaith.org.uk/resources/reli... with thanks to @shapcalendar #Diwali #ShubhDeepawali



Happy Diwali: Guide to the festival of light with greetings, wishes and quotes

From metro.co.uk

Inter Faith Network @IFNetUK

Today, Zoroastrians will be marking Khordad Sal, according to the Kadmi calendar. Further information about festivals at: interfaith.org.uk/resources/reli... with thanks to @shapcalendar



religious festivals - Resources

From interfaith.org.uk

10:00 AM · Jul 22, 2022

Inter Faith Network @IFNetUK

Today, Christians in the Western Churches are marking Maundy Thursday. Further information about faith festivals at: interfaith.org.uk/resources/reli... with thanks to @shapcalendar metro.co.uk/2022/04/14/wha... #MaundyThursday

Image: Getty from Metro article



Inter Faith Network @IFNetUK

Samvatsari Greetings to Jains marking Samvatsari/ International Forgiveness Day. Further information about festivals at: interfaith.org.uk/resources/reli... with thanks to @shapcalendar



religious festivals - Resources

From interfaith.org.uk

Inter Faith Network @IFNetUK

A Happy #Vaisakhi / #Baisakhi to the UK's #Sikh community, marking the #KhalsaSajnaDiwas Here, the festival being marked in #Gravesend



Thousands line streets for Vaisakhi festival

From kentonline.co.uk

6:55 PM · Apr 13, 2024 · 334 Views

Inter Faith Network @IFNetUK

Greetings on the Festival of Ridvan to members of the Baha'i Faith, who will be marking the festival from this evening. Further information about festivals at: interfaith.org.uk/resources/reli... with thanks to @shapcalendar



religious festivals - Resources

From interfaith.org.uk

Inter Faith Network @IFNetUK

Happy Vesakha Puja/Wesak/Buddha Day to Buddhists marking this today. Further information about festivals at: interfaith.org.uk/resources/reli... with thanks to @shapcalendar



religious festivals - Resources

From interfaith.org.uk

Inter Faith Network @IFNetUK

Today, the Autumn Equinox (Mabon/Alban Elued/Alban Elfed) is marked by Pagans and Druids. Further information about festivals at: interfaith.org.uk/resources/reli... with thanks to @shapcalendar



religious festivals - Resources

From interfaith.org.uk

Inter Faith Network @IFNetUK

#EidMubarak to Muslims celebrating today and tomorrow. [metro.co.uk/2023/04/21/how.....](https://metro.co.uk/2023/04/21/how...) More details about faith festivals on the IFN website, with thanks to @shapcalendar @MuslimCouncil @MINAB_UK #EidAlFitr2023



How to wish someone a Happy Eid in 11 different languages

From metro.co.uk

Inter Faith Network @IFNetUK

#ShanahTovah to the UK's Jewish community who from this evening will be marking #RoshHashanah. Further information about festivals at: interfaith.org.uk/resources/reli... with thanks to @shapcalendar



Rosh Hashanah 2023: Date, customs and all you need to know

From metro.co.uk

Inter Faith Network @IFNetUK

Happy #HydesvilleDay to Spiritualists marking this today.

10:00 AM · Mar 31, 2024 · 151 Views

SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook, X (formerly Twitter) and Instagram are increasingly important channels for information about faith and inter faith activity and they are also very useful tools for encouraging wider involvement. IFN runs separate Facebook, X, Instagram and LinkedIn accounts for the Inter Faith Network and Inter Faith Week. IFN also has a YouTube account. During this period, IFN continued to use these platforms extensively and also encouraged its member bodies to do so. In 2024, IFN also made limited use of Threads.

Social media mini campaigns during the period included a programme of posts linked to faiths engagement with the environment in the run up to COP26 in 2021.

x.com/IFNetUK/status/1452953262043410436



This week we are highlighting some of the ways that #faith communities are taking action on #ClimateChange in the context of #COP26. Here, @EcoSynagogue, which will be one of the faith-based bodies exhibiting in connection with @COP26 ukcop26.org @BoardofDeputies

12:00 PM · Oct 26, 2021

x.com/IFNetUK/status/1726920080800243896



A number of local authorities in the UK have developed and signed 'faith covenants' with faith groups in their areas, designed to strengthen effective working together. The latest to do so is @WelHatCouncil Find out more about 'faith covenants' at: faithaction.net/working-with-y... one.welhat.gov.uk/news/article/1... @FaithActionNet @stephentimms @LGANews @luhc



From faithaction.net

11:24 AM · May 26, 2023 · 2,245 Views

10:40 AM · Mar 8, 2024 · 331 Views

x.com/IFNetUK/status/1662042125632954374

x.com/IFNetUK/status/1766051482531508624

x.com/IFNetUK/status/172943571787357379



Today is international **#GivingTuesday** "a day to do little things that can make a big difference to others". You could, for example: volunteer your time; donate money or goods; share your skills; campaign for something; or organise a community event. Why not choose today to find and join your local **#interfaith** organisation - or to volunteer your skills - to help them work for understanding and cooperation between people of different faiths on social issues. List of groups at: interfaith.org.uk/involved/groups
givingtuesday.org.uk @GivingTuesdayUK
 Photo: @NIFForum Northampton Interfaith Forum members at recent meeting to talk about knife crime.



x.com/IFNetUK/status/1749702814635377127



#HolocaustMemorialDay is coming up on 27 January, with many events already under way. Check out hmd.org.uk for activities. If you are holding an activity, you may also find it helpful to look at the following guidance: hmd.org.uk/resource/hmd-2... @HMD_UK @luhc



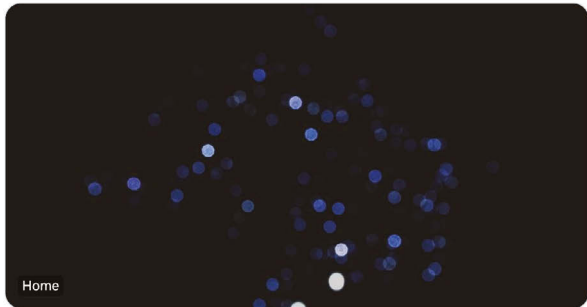
Holocaust Memorial Day Trust | HMD 2024 Guidance for activity organisers in the light o...

From hmd.org.uk

x.com/IFNetUK/status/1724736026038419728



Report all **#hateincidents** **#HateCrime**: online through report-it.org.uk; at a police station; by ringing the police on 101 (non emergency) or 999; or via relevant third party bodies such as @CST_UK (antisemitic incidents) @TellMamaUK (anti-Muslim incidents) and @sikhguard.



Home

From report-it.org.uk



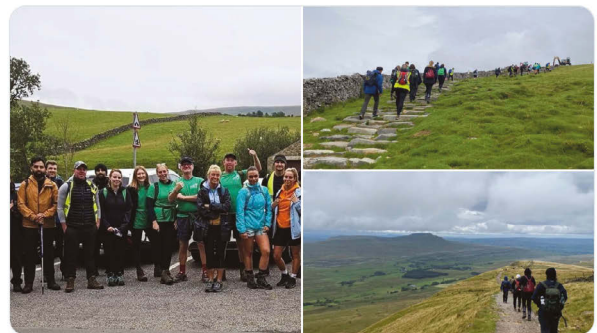
National **#InterFaithWeek** interfaithweek.org 12-19 November. Here, at the 100 days to go mark, some students from @MiddlesexUni share IFW messages. Lots of activity ideas at: interfaithweek.org/resources/ideas Why not plan your own activity for the Week! Photo: Hamna Baloch **#interfaith** **#Respect** **#diversity** **#inclusion** **#Students** **#faith** **#Belief** **#Peace** **#Equality** @luhc @educationgovuk @BOSS_Sikhs @nhsf_uk @fosischannel @UJS_UK @SCM_Britain @nusuk @YoungJains @nmycentre @RfPukiyn



10:04 AM · Aug 5, 2023 · 680 Views



This week we're profiling some of the increasingly popular **#interfaith** **#sports** and physical exercise initiatives. Here, @BBPendle members with Walk and Talk, **#Pendle** East Lancs Neighbourhood Team, and New Ground Together tackling the **#yorkshire3peak** challenge in a walk aimed at bringing people together, building a connection with new people and also building a connection with **#nature**. @sportrectweets @SportingEquals @luhc @DCMS @BelongNetwork **#hiking** **#faith** **#cohesion** Photos @BBPendle from facebook.com/buildingbridge...



x.com/IFWeek/status/1687751357501976576

x.com/IFNetUK/status/172692008080243896

INTER FAITH WEEK

About Inter Faith Week

Inter Faith Week takes place each November. It begins on Remembrance Sunday to encourage the remembering together of the service of soldiers and civilians of different faiths and also to think about peace.

Inter Faith Week has run since 2009, held in partnership the first year between IFN and Government and led by IFN in subsequent years. It drew its inspiration from the very successful Scottish Interfaith Week (SIFW), led by Interfaith Scotland. IFN works closely with the national inter faith linking bodies of Wales and Northern Ireland on plans related to 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, 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

www.interfaithweek.org

The period of this Review covers Inter Faith Week 2021, 2022 and 2023.

Inter Faith Week 2021
14–21 November

An opportunity to:

- Strengthen good inter faith relations at all levels
- Increase awareness of 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

#Interfaithweek
COOPERATE/LEARN/
RESPECT/REFLECT/
APPRECIATE/TALK/
VOLUNTEER/MAKE
FRIENDS/CELEBRATE

www.interfaithweek.org
Follow us on Facebook and Twitter:
facebook.com/IFWeek @IFWeek

Inter Faith Week 2022
13–22 November

An opportunity to:

- Strengthen good inter faith relations at all levels
- Increase awareness of 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

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www.interfaithweek.org
Follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter:
facebook.com/IFWeek @IFWeek

Inter Faith Week 2023
12–19 November

An opportunity to:

- Strengthen good inter faith relations at all levels
- Increase awareness of 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

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VOLUNTEER/MAKE
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www.interfaithweek.org
Follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter:
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Inter Faith Week 12–19 November 2023

Join the thousands of people and organisations who will be taking part in Inter Faith Week this year: faith, belief and inter faith bodies; voluntary organisations; schools; colleges; universities; youth organisations; workplaces; chaplaincies; emergency services; hospitals; local authorities; museums and libraries; sports organisations; businesses; and many others. The Week is ever more important, helping people continue to come together; make new links and friendships; educate against prejudice and hatred; and volunteer together to help others. Lots of great ideas for activities – virtual and in person – at: www.interfaithweek.org/resources/ideas

Inter Faith Week begins each year on Remembrance Sunday, encouraging remembering together of the service of people of different backgrounds.

Visit www.interfaithweek.org for resources and to register and publicise your activity.

Media: It is great to share your activities on social media! Use #IFWeek.

Photo: Please credit the original photographer when you use their photos on social media. The copyright remains with the photographer. Thank you.

88 Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities

The Inter Faith Network

Interfaith Network for England and Wales
100, The Quadrant, London SE1 1JA
020 7463 1000
www.interfaithweek.org

Interfaith Network for Northern Ireland
100, The Quadrant, London SE1 1JA
020 7463 1000
www.interfaithweek.org



Inter Faith Week 2021

The 2021 Week took place from Sunday 14 to Sunday 21 November. Across the Week, over 873 activities are known to have taken place. The 2020 Week had been 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'.

Many thousands of people of different backgrounds and all ages took part, with millions more encountering its positive messages through social media.

A list of activities can be seen at www.interfaithweek.org/resources/list-of-all-2021-inter-faith-week-activities. The report on the 2021 Week can be seen at www.interfaithweek.org/resources/inter-faith-week-2021-a-widening-impact.

As noted on page X, during Inter Faith Week 2021 IFN held a roundtable on women's local inter faith initiatives. This was chaired by IFN's Executive Director, with opening words from the Co-Chairs, an introduction to IFN's research project from Kirsty Healey, reports on contributors' work, wide ranging discussion and closing reflections from IFN Trustee Patricia Stoa. 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, such as the Women's Interfaith Network and Nisa Nashim.



twitter.com/CheshireFireEDI/status/1460925969020108800

twitter.com/BlueCoatCofE/status/14616090154999235333



Students at Blue Coat C of E, Coventry



"Faith Communities support the most vulnerable in our society."

A great insight from Sy, one of our Race Equality First Advice Service Managers. "Faith communities have supported so many people in their local area during the pandemic" he explains. #Interfaithweek #BeKind #faith



twitter.com/REFCardiffVG/status/1461622413985210369



Rochdale Mind with a message for the week

twitter.com/RochdaleMind/status/1460607207863685121

Scottish Interfaith Week is led by Interfaith Scotland and in 2021 was brought forward to the earlier time of Sunday 31 October – Sunday 7 November to coincide with COP26. Its theme was 'Together for our Planet'.

Sir Lindsay Hoyle @CommonsSpeaker

For some of us, faith is a deeply personal part of who we are, yet also bonds us with others nearby and around the world.

This #InterfaithWeek, you can read about what faith and religion mean to our @HouseofCommons colleagues: parliament.uk/business/commo

Roots To PARLIAMENT

"I am proud that here at Parliament we celebrate many different religions and festivals, which is why I am excited to use Inter Faith Week to share our experiences alongside communities across the UK during this nationwide celebration.

Reading through these stories, I am struck by the common desire to help others and contribute to society - a theme I see repeated across all faiths. I hope this exhibition encourages you to take a moment to reflect on your own connection to faith and join others in conversation to learn more about the amazing people who are part of our thriving Parliamentary village."

Sir Lindsay Hoyle, Speaker of the House of Commons

2:19 PM · Nov 15, 2021

twitter.com/CommonsSpeaker/status/1460250990851072007



The Network Rail Multi-Faith Network's Co-Chair with its Inter Faith Week display at King's Cross station



Stratford School Academy



Plymouth Mayor, councillors and faith leaders

INTER FAITH WEEK 2021: A BLOG FROM IFN PROJECT OFFICER KIRSTY HEALEY



MONDAY

Monday began with an Inter Faith Network for the UK Roundtable on Women's Local Inter Faith engagement. It brought together participants from fifteen organisations: some freestanding women's inter faith initiatives and others which are women's groups linked to local inter faith organisations.

The women and men present shared the reasons the women's initiatives had been formed and their views on the importance of women in building good inter faith relations. They also shared details of some of their work: from a 'Weaving Women's Wisdom' rug exhibition in the Houses of Parliament and weekly coffee meetings to launching a Faiths Against Domestic Violence Campaign and much more. The information and views shared were clearly found helpful by participants and will also feed into research I am doing on this area to support IFN's aim to support and encourage good inter faith relations.

The roundtable was an inspiring way to begin the week and left me eager to hear and learn more about the inter faith work being done and celebrated in Inter Faith Week.

TUESDAY

Tuesday saw me on an early train to Bradford on the way to a Near Neighbours 10th Anniversary Celebration Event at the Kala Sangam. The event began with a word of welcome from the Rt Revd Toby Howarth, Bishop of Bradford, Diocese of Leeds, Church of England. He spoke of the community of communities created by Near Neighbours and of the fun, enjoyment, laughter and shared vision that communities had experienced throughout the last 10 years. He also talked about the empowerment of women that Near Neighbours had helped bring about, supporting

women to come forwards as leaders in the community.

Kaneez Khan, Near Neighbours Coordinator for the West Yorkshire Hub, then spoke about the positive changes and opportunities that had come about in communities with which Near Neighbours had worked. Her passion and love for her job and the communities shone through as she spoke about both successes and challenges that the last 10 years had brought.

In celebration of the journey of the last 10 years, Near Neighbours' first ever applicant, Sarah Hilton, spoke about the community garden, a space of peace and beauty, that the first Near Neighbours grant had enabled to come to life. The garden continues to thrive and has been regularly visited throughout the COVID pandemic. She commented that when the garden was first created, benches had been installed 2 metres apart; this by chance had enabled the garden to provide an oasis of green calm and friendship during the COVID pandemic at the time of social distancing.

Poetry from Amria Khatun was performed which spoke to the importance of sisters and communities and working together – the text of the three poems is available here: twitter.com/kaneezkhan31/status/1461833970971250702

Heather Nelson of Black Health Initiative, based in Leeds, spoke about her organisation, which had been the recipient of the National Diversity 2020 award for Community Organisation Award for Race, Religion and Faith. She shared its work researching underlying issues and barriers facing BAME communities which affect decisions and choices in the context of COVID 19. The Black Health Initiative also trains individuals to speak up for themselves and to use their voice.

Over the course of the event, attendees were treated to two musical performances by two young women engaged in Near Neighbours funded projects. Elone Gangal, a volunteer with

Catch, performed a song she had written in Romanian. She spoke about how she wished for, and was working towards, breaking down barriers between the Romanian Gypsy community and others by working with young people. Chante Amour, part of Expressions Show, also sang a song she had written.

Revd Mark Umpleby of North Kirklees InterFaith spoke about the work being done in Batley and the challenges of continuing to build good relations after the killing of the late Jo Cox MP. He shared how an inter faith friendship walk in Batley had inspired local schools to hold their own friendship walk with over 1000 people in attendance. He talked with pride about the inter faith work being done in his community, such as the work being done in twinning mosques and churches and the community iftar. His closing words were centred on how communities were working together to implement change and forge a 'community of communities' and the importance of that.

An Inter Faith Week appeal for women refugees was presented by Revd Jenny Ramsden of the Touchstone Centre, Bradford, who is also the Interfaith Advisor for the C of E Diocese of Leeds. That Saturday, faith communities from Leeds and Bradford would be gathering to pack the donations ready for delivery as part of a project for Mitzvah Day and Inter Faith Week. It was amazing to see the words spoken just moments ago being actualised and lived daily by the people around me.

Closing the event, Revd Liz Carnelley, Near Neighbours' Director of Partnerships, spoke of the desire to connect Near Neighbours communities to others around the country and build links between them. She also spoke about the importance of grassroots organisations' experience in shaping national policy.

A delicious lunch was served and people ate and networked joyously!

The event also afforded me the opportunity for a conversation with Jenny Ramsden and Shamim Akhtar about the important work being done with women at the Touchstone Centre,

which supports local women to use their voices and create meaningful and lasting friendships through a variety of creative activities.

After the event had come to a close, I wandered up the hill to visit Bradford's impressive Cathedral, perched high over Bradford. It was a great coincidence (or not?) that during Inter Faith Week, a photography exhibition from a Muslim photographer (Ms Nudrat Afza) about Bradford's Jewish community and synagogue was being hosted in a Cathedral. On a plaque near the exhibition, it was noted that funds were being raised for the upkeep of the Grade II listed Bradford Synagogue accompanied by a note from Ms Afza saying "This place matters to us all".

The exhibition was called 'Kehillah' (meaning 'congregation' or 'community' in Hebrew) which struck me as incredibly fitting end at the end of the day's events at Kala Sangam.

WEDNESDAY

I attended an online talk and film screening of 'Luminous Journey' to mark the 100th Anniversary of the passing of Abdu'l-Baha, Head of the Baha'i Faith from 1892 to 1921 and eldest son of the Prophet-Founder of the Baha'i Faith. The event was organised by Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, in conjunction with Fermanagh and Omagh Interfaith group. People joined the session from Northern Ireland and from as far away as America and Indonesia. The guest speaker, Carmel Irandoust, ex Secretary General of the Baha'i International Community in the Holy Land, spoke about Abdu'l-Baha, his childhood, family, exile and persecution, his imprisonment and later his release and travels and teaching. A film called 'Luminous Journey: Abdu'l Baha in America, 1912' was shown. This can be seen here. youtube.com/channel/UCx4VjoKUNSYBc1Y7_UAVyQ UK Baha'i Office of Public Affairs

Attending this event was a great learning experience for me. It was so interesting to hear the life story of Abdu'l Baha and to understand the respect and reverence he was, and is, held in by the Baha'is and those he met in his lifetime.

THURSDAY

Thursday evening I attended an online poetry and storytelling workshop with My Heart is in the East (MHiiTE) Project, Birmingham Council of Faiths, The HEAT Collective, The Fence and Az Theatre. MHiiTE is set in the Arab/Jewish/Christian world of 10th Century Cordoba. Inspiration for parts of it were drawn from a fragment of poetry found in the Cairo Genizah, the only known medieval Hebrew love poem written by a woman, the wife of of Dunaš Ibn Labrāt. The poem can be found here: cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-TS-NS-00143-00046/1

The workshop began with a short performance of a poetic segment of the play from two actors, one of whom was Jessica Litwak, the author of the play and the workshop facilitator. The section performed was of an exchange between two poets, a Jewish woman and a Muslim man.

The performance served as inspiration for the guided writing workshop which followed reflecting on inter faith dialogue today and how one can learn from the other. There was a writing prompt of “What does inter faith mean to me?” It was interesting to hear other attendees from different faiths, Baha’i, Jewish, Christian and others, reflections on this question. Words and phrases were collected and served as a shared source of inspiration for the group to draw on in the guided writing time in which each attendee wrote their own poem which was shared with the group.

FRIDAY/SATURDAY/SUNDAY

The Bromley 3 Faiths Group (B3FG) Invitation Weekend saw all members of the B3FG and local Jewish, Muslim and Christian neighbors invited to attend services at the Mosque, Synagogue and Parish Church. I joined online the Al Emaan Centre’s Friday Morning Prayers. Imam Abdullah Hasan recited prayers and gave a sermon speaking on three important factors in Islam; spreading peace, even in every greeting and handshake; looking after the needy through charity; and the importance of prayer. The Al-Emaan Centre is located in an old Methodist Church which closed in 2010 after 190 years before the premises was sold to the Muslim community.

Continuing the B3FG Invitation Weekend, I attended Bromley Reform Synagogue’s Shabbat (Saturday) Morning service which was led by student Rabbi David-Yehuda Stern. Prayers were recited and the Torah was taken out and carried around the Synagogue after which a passage was read from it. Student Rabbi Stern gave a sermon about the passage, which related to fractured relationships between brothers and the healing of such relationships. The congregation and visitors who had joined in person then went to hear Kiddush (blessing over wine) being recited and shared food together.

The last place of worship to host the B3FG invitation weekend was St John the Evangelist Bromley where Vicar Andrew McClellan had invited visitors to the Parish Communion service that Sunday. Prayers and hymns were sung, passages from the Bible were read and Revd McClellan gave a sermon. Communion was then shared by those who wished.

CLOSING REFLECTION

Over the course of the week, the variety of learning experiences I had made me reflect on the impact of Inter Faith Week on individuals and communities. The events had connected people across localities, across the country, and from different faith communities. They had sparked conversations, art and poetry and created shared experiences, highlighting core elements of unity, community, and curiosity.

Inter Faith Week was truly enjoyable and inspiring experience.

A further 2021 IFW blog, from intern Josephine Dumbrell, can be seen at <https://www.interfaithweek.org/news/blog-from-josephine-dumbrell-ifn-intern>

Inter Faith Week 2022

The 2022 Inter Faith Week took place from Sunday 13 to Sunday 20 November. Across the Week, over 966 activities are known to have taken place. A full list of activities can be seen at www.interfaithweek.org/resources/list-of-all-2022-inter-faith-week-activities.

The number of schools taking part increased by 48% and activities organised by HE and FE institutions by 61% on 2022. Further statistics and inspiring accounts from around the UK can be found in the report on the 2022 Week at www.interfaithweek.org/resources/inter-faith-week-2022-strengthening-co-operation-and-understanding.

During the Week IFN held an Inter Faith Week information drop in at the Houses of Parliament for MPs, sponsored by Holly Lynch, MP for Halifax, with opening words from the Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Faith and Society, Rt Hon Sir Stephen Timms OBE.

In 2022 Scottish Interfaith Week also took place from 13 to November. Its theme was ‘Storytelling’, linked to Scotland’s Year of Stories.



Inter Faith Week 2022

COOPERATE/LEARN/TALK/REFLECT/APPRECIATE/
RESPECT/VOLUNTEER/MAKE FRIENDS/CELEBRATE

13-20 November / www.interfaithweek.org

Follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter:
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Inter Faith Week is a programme of the Inter Faith Network for the UK, Mary Sumner House, 24 Tufnell Street, London SW9P 3BP 0207 739 520 | www.interfaith.org.uk | info@interfaith.org.uk
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The work of IFN is supported by faith communities, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities, Young and other donors.

Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities

“Celebrating Inter Faith Week is a fantastic opportunity to reconnect, learn and bring together individuals from diverse religious and spiritual beliefs.”

Head of Patient Experience, Mid Yorks NHS



Strengthening cooperation and understanding
Inter Faith Week 2022

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 The work of the Inter Faith Network for the UK is supported by faith communities, government, business and other donors.



Eden Girls School Waltham Forest Interfaith Breakfast with the Chief Rabbi, Leader of Redbridge Council, other guests and staff

twitter.com/Jas_Athwal/status/1593658375019106311



IFN Co-Chairs with Fiona Bruce MP, the Prime Minister's Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion or Belief



Dudley faith and civic leaders mark the Week

twitter.com/topchurchdudley/status/1592971868726001664

tinyurl.com/ekufjzbx



twitter.com/fermanaghmagh/status/1591778291446419462



twitter.com/tracey_crouch/status/1593574223095758850



twitter.com/hospiceclare/status/1593169888721281024



Burnley FC in the Community and Building Bridges in Burnley tournament

“Inter Faith Week highlights the good work and contributions made by local faith and faith-based groups to our communities and society enabling greater interaction between people of different backgrounds.”

Southampton City Council on LinkedIn

“This Week allows us to recognise the ways our many faiths work together for the common good and the benefit of our community.”

Mayor of King’s Lynn And West Norfolk



Essex Police at Swaminarayan Mandir, Chigwell

“We successfully celebrated Inter-Faith week at Direct Line Group. Our DNA Belief strand members shared a variety of content last week! We had quizzes, myth busting, vodcast and 2 live sessions. The live sessions were ‘Encountering Faiths & Beliefs’ where we heard lived experiences from guests and DLG staff, talking about their faiths & beliefs. It was a great week, and I’m very proud to work with my colleagues to share learnings on such an important subject.”

Direct Line Group Employee

twitter.com/IFWeek/status/1594362598935710464



A number of events today being are being held for both #MD2022 and #InterFaithWeek, making a difference in local communities. Here, a @QGCanopy planting arranged by Hertsmere Forum of Faiths at @WellEndActivity. @scouts @MitzvahDay #trees #interfaith #socialaction #volunteering



Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities and 7 others

FAITH & DOMESTIC ABUSE CONFERENCE IN LEICESTER

DURING INTERFAITH WEEK WE WILL BE HOSTING A FREE CONFERENCE WITH THE AIM TO RAISE AWARENESS AROUND DOMESTIC ABUSE AND FAITH.

SPEAKERS CONFIRMED ARE BELOW WITH MORE TO BE ADDED.

ALL WELCOME. LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED.



COUNCILLOR ASHIEDU JOEL



COUNCILLOR MANJIT KAUR SAINI



COUNCILLOR NITA SOLANKI



MEENA KUMARI- H.O.P.E TRAINING & CONSULTANCY



KARTAR SINGH BRING HEAD OF CHAPLAINCY



SUPERINTENDENT MANJIT ATWAL QJM HEAD OF DELIVERY – VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS (COLLEGE OF POLICING)

More Information

THE DETAILS

SATURDAY 19TH NOVEMBER 2022
10-2PM

BELGRAVE NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE
BOTHLEY STREET, LEICESTER, LE4 6LF

TO REGISTER OR FOR MORE DETAILS PLEASE EMAIL MANJIT.KAURSAINI@LEICESTER.GOV.UK

INTER FAITH WEEK 2022: BLOG FROM IFN INTERN ALED VERNON-REES



In my role as an intern at the Inter Faith Network for the UK, I had the opportunity to contribute to Inter Faith Week 2022 by undertaking various tasks that helped to promote participation and engagement from different organisations and communities. From reaching out to local authorities to researching and adding unregistered activities to the website, to creating social media posts to raise awareness about the Week, my experience as an intern allowed me to play an active role in supporting the Week's promotion of inter faith understanding.

During the Week, I had the opportunity to attend a range of different activities which covered themes such as the environment, mental health and peace. It was a great opportunity to be able to encounter and be involved in inter faith activities.

SUNDAY

I started the Week by attending the launch event for Scottish Interfaith Week. Scottish Interfaith Week was the inspiration for the Inter Faith Network for the UK's Inter Faith Week initiative. It was great to be able to attend their vibrant launch event at the Scottish Storytelling Centre in Edinburgh, on theme for their Week: 'Storytelling' and to meet many of the story tellers.

The event began with an opportunity to view the Faces of Faith photography and storytelling exhibition. It was inspiring to hear the stories from people of a variety of different faith and beliefs backgrounds.

We then sat down to listen to a variety of talks and performances which included readings from Interfaith Scotland's recently published poetry book and musical interludes of traditional Scottish music.

TUESDAY

On Tuesday, The Inter Faith Network for the UK held an Inter Faith Week information 'drop' for MPs and peers at Portcullis House in the Houses of Parliament. This was sponsored by Holly Lynch, MP for Halifax, with opening words from the Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Faith and Society, Sir Stephen Timms OBE.

I had the opportunity to be involved in the planning and organising of the event and on the day, I assisted on set up. It was a privilege to be involved and it was great to see a number of MPs engaging with the IFN's staff and trustees, hearing about the positive inter faith work which happens up and down the country.

WEDNESDAY

On Wednesday I was honoured to have the opportunity to attend the annual Ahimsa Day celebration at Portcullis House, where the Ahimsa award was presented to author Kumarpal Bhai Desai by Baroness Scott of Bybrook OBE, Minister for Faith and Communities. The Ahimsa Day celebration is organised by the Institute of Jainology and sponsored by the Jain All-Party Parliamentary Group. It seeks to "underline the universality of Jainism and publicly identify it with the concept of non-violence".

I listened to talks from members of the Jain APPG, Office for National Statistics and others. Many of the topics discussed related to the aims of Inter Faith Week, such as religious literacy. For example, presenters from the University of Birmingham's Department of Theology and Religion spoke about the launch of its new Jain Studies programme. This sparked a discussion on the importance of religious education in increasing awareness of faith communities in the UK.

THURSDAY

On Thursday I went to the University of Southampton to attend a couple of activities from their week-long programme led by The Parkes Institute. In the afternoon, I attended a

talk on the topic of 'Faith and Mental Health', led by the Muslim Faith Advisor for the University. We also heard from the University of Southampton Wellbeing Team. It was great to hear wide and in-depth discussion about the topic of faith and mental health and the work of the University in this area.

In the evening I attended an inter faith Quaker reflection at the University of Southampton's Faith and Reflection Centre, run by the university's Quaker faith advisors. After a time of silence, which is central to Quaker worship, we spoke in turn about what peace means to us. Then we shared food and discussed the topic of peace and inter faith.

FRIDAY

On Friday I went to Middlesex University in Hendon to see the Eco Show and Tell – Sustainability Fair, an event held in partnership with Middlesex University Inter Faith Network and Barnet Multifaith Forum.

As I walked around the fair I learned about local sustainable initiatives and inter faith networks which are carrying out such activities as: educating young people about nature; producing locally sourced honey; tending to apple orchards; improving recycling and waste collection; and encouraging exercise. I had the chance for a number of interesting conversations about the different ways that faith and sustainability intersect.



Middlesex University Eco Show and Tell Fair



tinyurl.com/4h9ep6sh

SATURDAY

On Saturday morning I joined an inter faith walk in the London Borough of Croydon organised by Faiths Together in Croydon. We began by visiting a new Hindu Temple in Lohana Community Complex where one of its members told us about the establishment of the Temple and the meaning behind the statues in the shrine.

We then walked to Croydon Minster, where we were given a short talk about the history of the building and then the opportunity to have a look around the cathedral and ask questions. Before we left, we came together and listened to a short prayer.

Our next stop was Old Town Mosque, where we heard a talk about the history of the building and the congregation's plans for the future. A representative from the Dialogue Society talked about the story of Noah's Pudding – which is thought to be the oldest dessert in the world – from the unexpected but successful combination of ingredients in which, the Society draws a lesson about the enrichment that diversity brings. I was a bit apprehensive about a dessert with chickpeas in, but I was pleasantly surprised! You can read about the pudding at: <http://www.dialoguesociety.org/publications/community/Noahs-Pudding.pdf>. We were then invited to watch members of Mosque partake in their prayers.

The walk finished at Siri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara. We were invited to the upstairs of the building where a service was being held for

the celebration of Guru Nanak's birthday. We were then welcomed to come and join in langar, which is the free food (and the kitchen from which it comes) which the Sikh community provide to all wishing to come and eat. This tradition of providing free meals goes back to Guru Nanak himself.

At the end of the dinner there were speeches from The Elected Mayor of Croydon, the local MP and from Strengthening Faith Institutions.

SUNDAY

I finished the Week by joining Hertsmere Forum of Faiths' Inter Faith Week and Mitzvah Day tree planting at the Well End Scout Centre in Borehamwood. We planted 30 tree saplings across the site for The Queen's Green Canopy initiative.

CLOSING REFLECTION

The Week gave me a unique opportunity to learn and connect with many people from different faith backgrounds. It was inspiring to see people coming together to share their experiences, learn from one another, and celebrate their differences.

Throughout the Week, I took part in events that helped to promote inter faith dialogue and understanding. The range of these and the diverse communities involved made the Week a fascinating and enriching experience. It was one through which I gained a deeper understanding of the diverse religious traditions in our society and the value of inter faith cooperation.



Prakash Patalia, Institute of Jainology and Paul Smalley, NASACRE



Hindu dancers at All Faiths Network Inter Faith Week event



Summer Intern Alfa Uddin with IFN Executive Director, Dr Harriet Crabtree



IFN Trustee Esmond Rosen with Sarah Owen MP



Inter Faith Week 2023

The 2022 Inter Faith Week took place from Sunday 12 to Sunday 19 November. This was the 15th Inter Faith Week.

Across the Week, more than 1,155 activities are known to have taken place, an increase of 20% on 2022, making it the biggest Week yet! A full list of activities can be seen at [Final_-_IFW_2023_activities_list.pdf](#) (interfaith.org.uk).

Activities 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 and film showings; faith festival events (this year's Week was at the same time as Diwali); poetry readings; food festivals; sports tournaments; events linked to both Inter Faith Week and Mitzvah Day; programmes picking up the Week such as Radio 2's Pause for Thought during the Week; and more.

There was a 6.4% increase in the number of schools taking part, and a 15% increase in the number of school events.

A chart showing types of activities and organisations is overleaf.



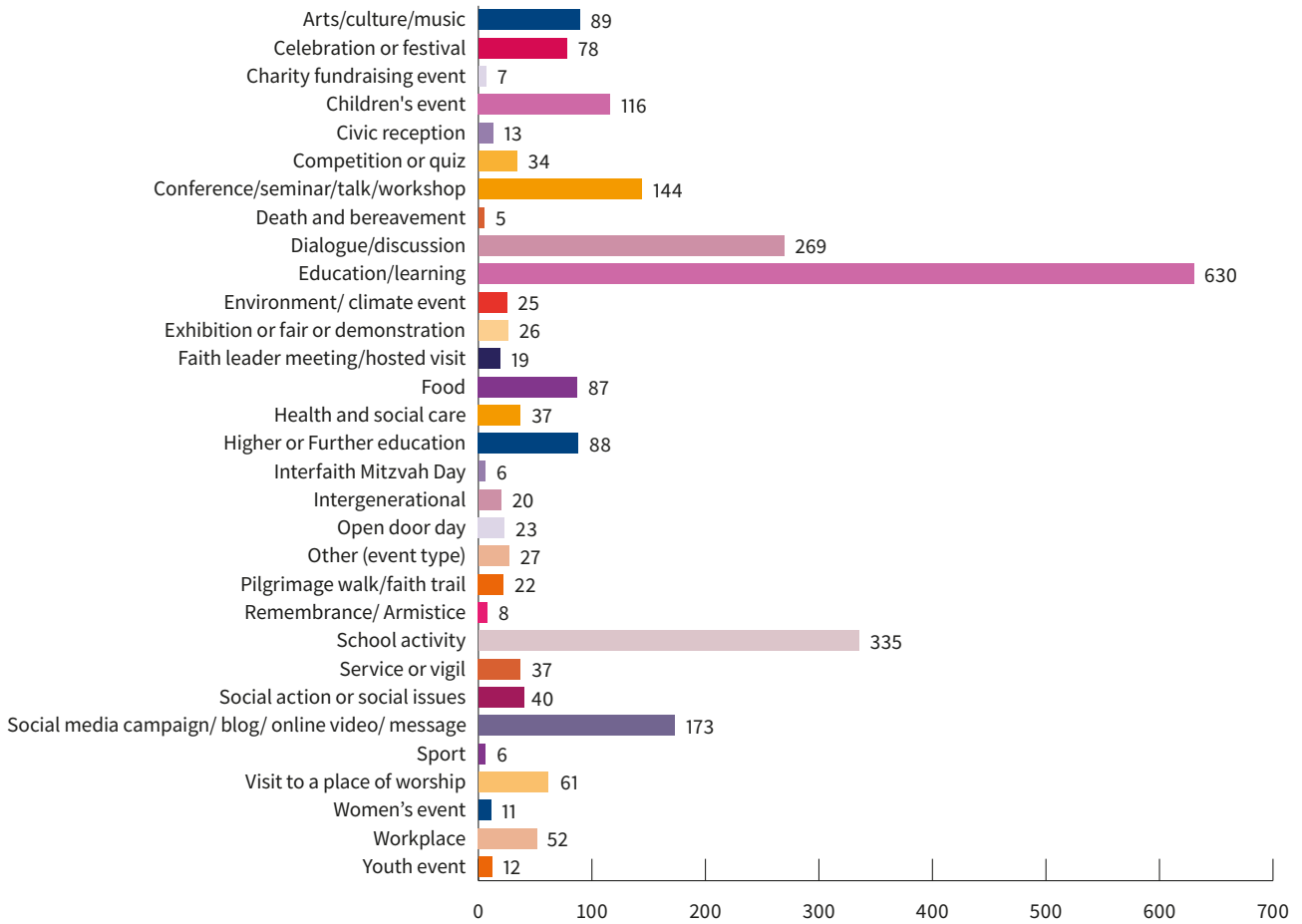
Pupils and faith leaders, Bemrose School Derby Inter Faith Week event



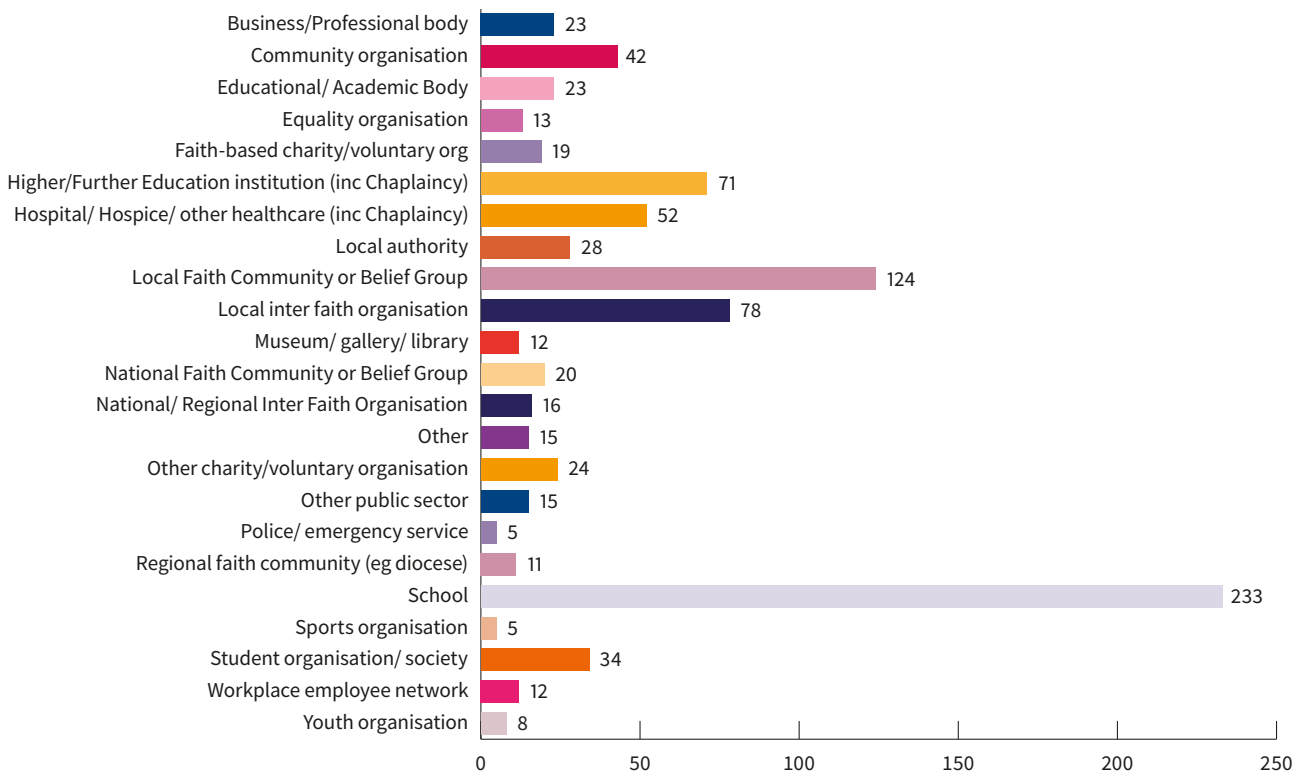
IFN Co-Chairs with Seema Malhotra MP at Inter Faith Week MP drop-in



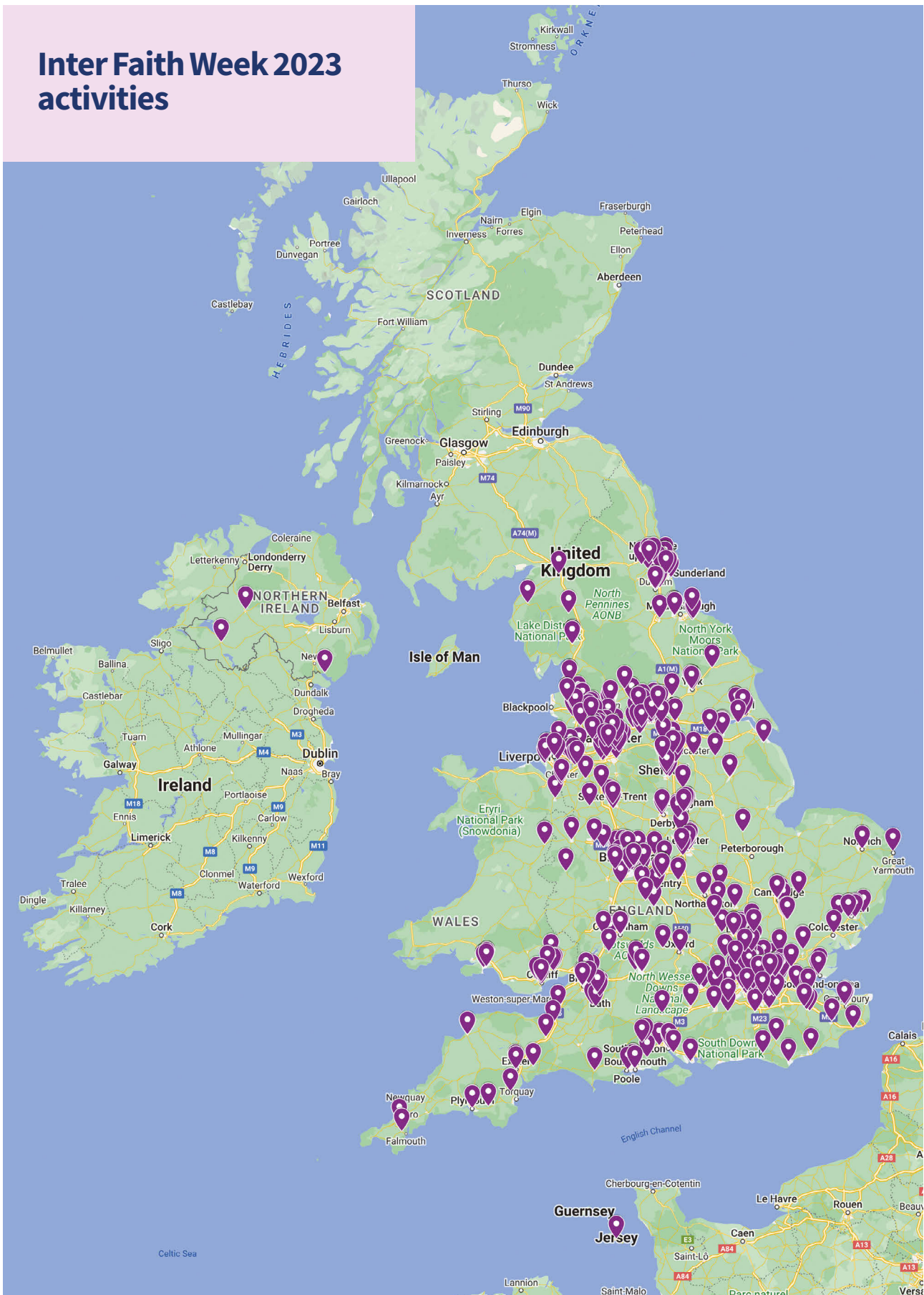
ACTIVITIES BY TYPE 2023



ORGANISATIONS BY TYPE 2023



Inter Faith Week 2023 activities



Activities shown on the map are those where an address was included or where the organiser(s) have a particular location/ area of operation. Activities held entirely online by organisations without a particular area of operation are not included on the map. Inter Faith Mitzvah Day /Inter Faith Week events supplied by Mitzvah Day are included in Week data and reporting but not on the map as coordinates for activities are not made available for security reasons. Over 70 events were hosted as part of Scottish Interfaith Week, led by Interfaith Scotland.

93% of survey respondents thought that their Inter Faith Week activity had helped participants to learn more about different faiths and beliefs and 95% that it had help them to engage with new people/ groups. 91% of respondents said that Inter Faith Week add value to the work that they do. 74.5% said that their organisation had used the Week as an opportunity to do something it had not done before and 96% of those who thought the question applicable to them said that activities they had held for those within their institution (for example, their business, workplace, school or university) were likely to have helped contribute to developing stronger/ more positive relations within it.

Social media impact continued to build, with a 5% increase in the number of impressions of posts about the Week on social media (42million).

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.”

Canon Hilary Barber and Narendra Waghela, Co-Chairs, IFN

HM The King meeting faith leaders in Inter Faith Week

Cardinal Nichols @CardinalNichols

Yesterday faith leaders from different parts of the land gathered to meet King Charles in the Library at Lambeth Palace to mark Inter Faith Week.

Lambeth Palace/Neil Turner



6:14 PM · Nov 17, 2023 · 8,046 Views

Chief Rabbi Sir Ephraim Mirvis @chiefrabbi

Yesterday, I thanked His Majesty The King for promoting peaceful coexistence between faith groups during these exceptionally challenging times, at a special event for faith leaders during Interfaith Week at Lambeth Palace.



2:10 PM · Nov 17, 2023 · 57.7K Views

Archbishop of Canterbury @JustinWelby

It has been a huge honour to welcome His Majesty the King to @lamballib today to meet with faith leaders from across the UK as part of #InterFaithWeek.

These are challenging times for faith communities in the UK, particularly with... [Show more](#)



6:13 PM · Nov 16, 2023 · 36.9K Views

twitter.com/CardinalNichols/status/1725578209448566831

twitter.com/chiefrabbi/status/1725516714064937422

x.com/JustinWelby/status/1725215420452409606

In October 2023 IFN held a short lunchtime Zoom session on planning for Inter Faith Week. This included: an illustrated whistlestop tour by Project Director Ashley Beck of why the Week began, why it is significant and just a few of the ways that organisations have used it to increase inter faith understanding and cooperation; ‘Tips and ideas for activities with impact’ with an opening reflection from Nisar Mayet, Kirklees Council Cohesion Team’s Inter Faith Week lead; ‘Pointers for promoting activities to reach more people’, with a presentation by IFN Project Assistant Leo Taylor; ‘Thinking about the monitoring and evaluation of activities’, with a presentation by Ashley Beck; and a general discussion about planning topics of interest to participants.

During the Week IFN held an Inter Faith Week information drop-in at the Houses of Parliament for MPs, sponsored by Dean Russell, MP for Watford, who also offered some opening words. A number of MPs from different political parties dropped in and spoke with IFN Trustees and staff and also with participants from Watford Interfaith Association, invited by Mr Russell.

Scottish Interfaith Week also took place from 12 to 19 November. Its theme for 2023 was ‘Community’.



IFN is grateful to Paresh Solanki for photography at the 2022 and 2023 Inter Faith Week MP drop-ins



twitter.com/ManorJuniors/status/1727318515281977386

twitter.com/nmycentre/status/1724785893394018510

x.com/StMaryB17/status/1725195971947053360

twitter.com/lseu/status/1727326514985738361

LSE Students' Union
@lseu

LSESU Interfaith Week celebrated diversity and unity!

From an awesome football tournament to a Challah bread-making session by the Jewish Society, we shared traditions and skills.

Kudos to all involved! 🌟



twitter.com/emmanuel_house_/status/1726310218001178928

Emmanuel House Support Centre
@emmanuel_house_

Thank you to Sanatan Community Service, who participated in our Inter Faith Week campaign yesterday!

The group volunteered in the winter shelter by cooking a lovely meal for our beneficiaries 🍀

#Nottingham #SanatanCommunityService



twitter.com/KirkleesCI/status/1726529925778383184

CohesionKirklees
@KirkleesCI

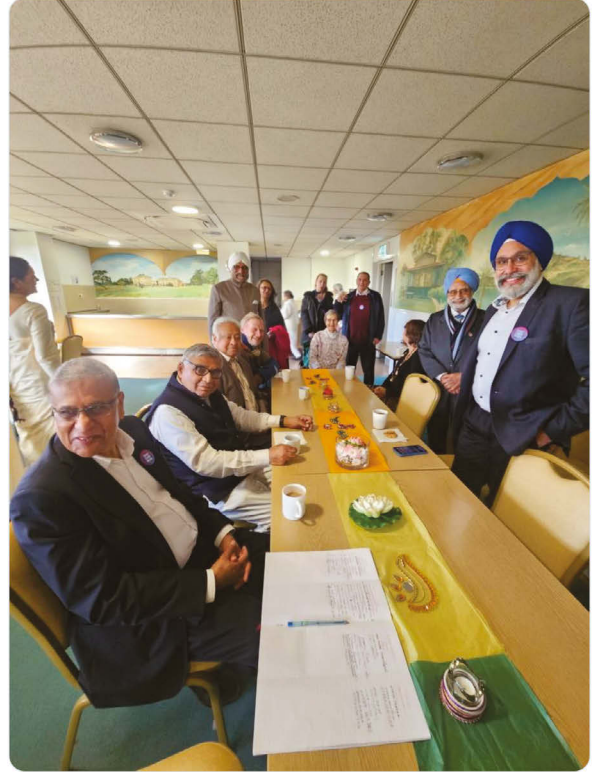
Lady cricketers of all faiths brave the weather to show their cricket skills as part of #IFWeek and have inspired many others to participate in women's cricket #birkby #Huddersfield



twitter.com/IFWeek/status/1724762705251156433

Inter Faith Week
@IFWeek

#InterFaithWeek is a programme of @ifnetuk, whose trustees + staff have the privilege of attending a number of events during the Week. This morning IFN Exec delighted to speak at/meet with gathering of chairs + other officers of London + Watford local #interfaith organisations, convened by @HInterfaith




Faiths Forum for London and 3 others

twitter.com/NW_Interfaith/status/1726007489282343084

GERAINT PERRY
CINEMATIC VIDEO & PHOTO

Inter Faith Week 2023
NORTH WALES INTERFAITH

"We believe we are better together"



North Wales Interfaith 2023 Inter Faith Week event

IFW 2023: BLOG FROM LEO TAYLOR, IFN PROJECT ASSISTANT

SUNDAY



My Week began with an online lecture held by Dr James Holt, Associate Professor of Religious Education at the University of Chester. He spoke about his experience of 'sitting as a Latter-day Saint at the inter faith table'. I enjoyed learning

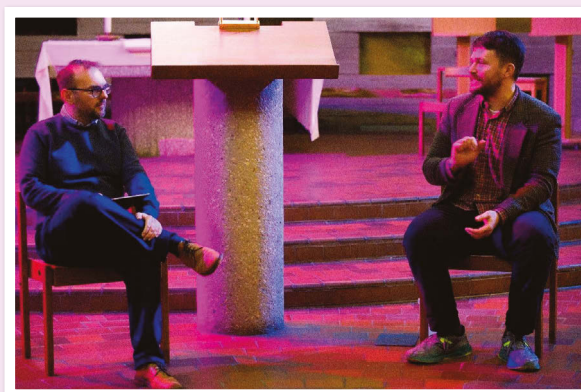
about the core beliefs of the Church of the Latter-day Saints and hearing about Dr Holt's personal inter faith journey and his reflections for the basis on which the community engages in inter faith relations.

TUESDAY

On the Tuesday, IFN colleagues and I provided support for a special Inter Faith Week drop-in session for MPs at Portcullis House, hosted by Dean Russell MP for Watford with the Inter Faith Network. This event provided members of the House with the opportunity to learn more about the Week and show their support for local inter faith activity. I helped with planning and set up and it was great to have the chance to talk with MPs and members of Watford Interfaith Association about the significance of local inter faith activity in the UK (which was highlighted at the drop-in). It was very positive to hear about the strong commitment to good inter faith relations in the constituencies of MPs who attended.

WEDNESDAY

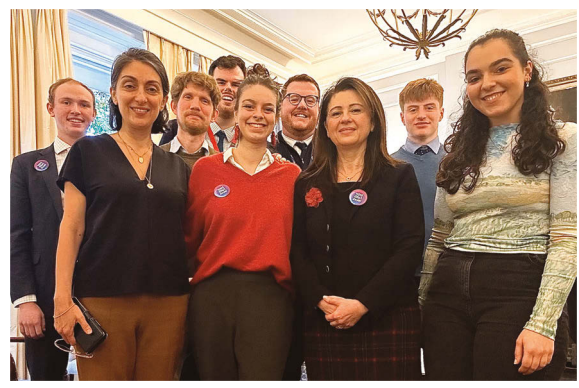
My first event of the day was at Westminster Cathedral, where its Interfaith Group was discussing the last chapter of Pope Francis's "Fratelli Tutti" and the message of caring for one's neighbour. They spoke of how that is a common theme in many religious traditions and is particularly applicable to current events going on in the world and shared stories from their own religious traditions which demonstrated that message.



Following that, I headed down to the University of Sussex to listen to American humanist and activist Chris Stedman. He shared his story of seeking common ground with the religious as an atheist and discussed with the University's Lead Chaplain James Croft what theists and nontheists can gain from being in dialogue; the differences between the inter faith movements in the United States and United Kingdom; and how people of different faiths and those of non-religious beliefs can work together to improve the world we all share. One of the three aims of Inter Faith Week is to increase understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs and that event was very much about that. I was struck by the fact that there were so many present who weren't religious, but recognised the significant role that religion has and continues to play in the world through its positive dialogue. The lecture was organised by the University of Sussex Chaplaincy, in conjunction with the National Multifaith Youth Centre and Brighton Interfaith Contact Group.

THURSDAY

Thursday morning involved a trip to the National Baha'i Centre in Kensington. The session consisted of reflection on passages from Baha'i texts on 'humanity's passage to maturity'. Reflections included how maturity is not just about age, but also involves responding to negative experiences in the right sort of way, a process which takes time and spiritual guidance. The discussion then led to a broader conversation on environmentalism and the important role that religions are playing in

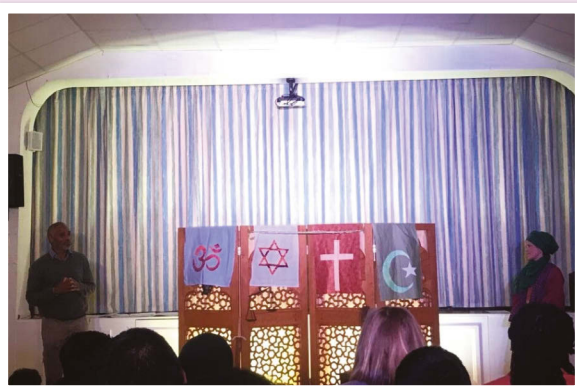


responding to climate change. Most of the participants were under 30 and it was very encouraging to hear other young people talking so eloquently about their faith and social issues.

FRIDAY

I began the day by making the journey to the Faculty of Divinity at the University of Cambridge for a workshop on attitudes to water in different religious traditions. There was discussion of responses from interviews and focus groups with individuals from the Jewish and Muslim traditions. It was fascinating to hear about the themes of water conservation and sustainability in both the Quran and the Torah. We also heard about the significance of ablution in Islam and also dry ablution - ablution using dust when water is not available.

In the evening I attended a multi faith storytelling performance on wisdom drawn from many faith traditions, organised by Luton Council of Faiths and Grassroots Luton and performed by the Khayaal Theatre Company. After the performance, the audience of all ages and faiths, agreed that the value of kindness, generosity, patience, courage and perseverance were common in all the stories told from the Christian, Hindu, Jewish, and Muslim



backgrounds. Speaking with members of Luton Council of Faiths, I was interested and encouraged to hear about the inter faith programmes that were happening throughout the year and not just during Inter Faith Week. There was a surplus of excellent samosas which I was urged to take home – a very nice end to an evening!

SATURDAY

Inter Faith Week activities continued into the Weekend and on the Saturday, I drove to Halesowen to an event at Baitul Ghafoor Mosque in Halesowen. As a keen supporter of Norwich City FC and of sport generally, I was excited to watch their inter faith football tournament which had teams of different faiths. I was touched by the good-natured spirit of the games and impressed by the quality of the football. After the game, I shared some food



with the participants; was given a tour of the mosque and - inspired by my trip to Cambridge - spoke with the Imam about the practice of dry ablution.

SUNDAY

Faith trails, pilgrimages and open door days are always a popular feature of the Week and as such it would have been remiss for me not to have attended one. So, at 7am on the final day of Inter Faith Week, I set off for Bristol to take part in the city's Diverse Doors Open Day. We travelled by minibus to places of worship across Bristol: the Greek Orthodox Church of St Peter & St Paul, Bristol, Bristol and West Progressive Synagogue, the Hindu Temple (Bristol), Siri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara, Easton Jamia Majid and the Amitabha Buddhist Centre. At every stop, we were given a tour of the place of



worship and a talk about the religion in question from a member of that faith. Each leg of the route provided an opportunity to speak with other participants about their faiths and about the places of worship that we had visited.

I returned to London at 8 o'clock on Sunday evening, having had the chance to attend nine different events. In between attending those, I managed the Inter Faith Week Instagram account and added to the Inter Faith Week website the many activities that continued to flood in during the Week. It was wonderful to read about and see images and videos of the range of inter faith activities being held by schools, universities, workplaces, faith communities and other types of organisations.

Thank you to everyone involved for making it such a great Week!

Photos: Chris Stedman and James Croft in discussion during Inter Faith Week event, photo by National Multi Faith Youth Centre; Participants at UK Baha'i OPA 'Passage to Maturity' event; Multi-faith storytelling in Luton, photo by IFN ; Participants at Bhaitul Gafoor Mosque's Inter Faith Week football tournament; and pilgrims stop at Bristol and West Progressive Synagogue during Bristol Diverse Doors Open Day, photo by Tripti Megeri. Photos from bodies listed except where noted.

IFW 2023: BLOG FROM SHALVA LOUISA HADARI, IFN INTERN



Louisa has been taking part in IFN's internship programme during a pre-university gap year. She is hoping to go on to study education and to contribute to public policy in the areas of both faith and education. Here, she reflects on her experience of Inter Faith Week.

“My experiences during Inter Faith Week have been an exciting blend of events, travel and conversations.

Inter Faith Week is a programme of the Inter Faith Network for the UK and Autumn interns have a special focus on that. One of my jobs in the weeks leading up to Inter Faith Week and during, and after, the Week was to put up on the Inter Faith Week website details for activities taking place across the country, so as to create a centralised hub of information. Some were registered by activity holders in advance, but many more were shortly to come. By Tuesday morning, events were coming in thick and fast. Schools, hospitals, museums, workplaces and local groups across the country were running a fascinating range of events and it was heartening to see so many photos of the vibrant

activities taking place. Children beamed in photos as they held up Inter Faith Week mugs, posters, plaster models of faith buildings and other interesting projects. Residents in care homes, hospices and hospitals planted bulbs and locals ran inter faith walks in cities across the UK.

For my first event of the week, I headed over to Portcullis House to help with an MP ‘drop in’ – hosted by Dean Russell (MP) with the Inter Faith Network. This was a chance for MPs from across the House to learn more about Inter Faith Week, ask questions and have conversations with IFN staff and Trustees and some local inter faith group members about the importance of inter faith initiatives on a local and national level. It was good to see the number of MPs who turned up at the drop-in and the conversations taking place. The brightly coloured piles of IFW leaflets, IFN publications, badges and pens quickly disappeared as MPs scooped them up on their way to the door – and as more MPs arrived to take their place. I enjoyed chatting with two members of Watford Interfaith Association who spoke enthusiastically about their local Peace Garden and promised me a warm welcome should I ever wish to visit. The event was over before we knew it and we headed back to the office to prepare for the rest of a busy week of inter faith events.

By Wednesday, I was glad to take a break from my computer and get on a train to Nottingham. Nottingham Trent University was holding an event titled ‘Faith Across the Generations’. I was one of the first to arrive. As the event began, I





realised I was lucky to have secured a seat, because the lecture theatre ended up packed as students, staff and locals crowded into the room to hear different perspectives on faith. The structure of the event was simple: two representatives from each faith (from two different generations) answered questions about their faith, the role of faith in their life, and the way their perspective on faith had changed during the course of their life. We heard from speakers from the Baha'i, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, and Sikh faiths. I was given a chance to contribute and it was great to take part.

After the event we were given the opportunity to chat with the speakers and other attendees. I had some fascinating conversations about religious garments, language, scriptures and teaching children the language of their faith. I was impressed at the number of students who were involved in organising the event and hopeful about the potential for involving young people in more inter faith events and dialogues. I left the event inspired by the number of people who had taken time out of their busy days to take the opportunity of learning more about another faith and talking to people of all faiths.

My last event of the week was a Practical Conservation event at Walthamstow Wetlands organised by the London Wildlife Trust. I joined other young people passionate about preserving natural spaces – especially in an urban context. We were given a tour of the gardens, including the accessible pool the Trust was in the middle of building, and we then made birdboxes in pairs. I left the event tired but happy, having contributed a well-made birdbox to help birds at the Wetlands!

My experiences of Inter Faith Week have been very positive. In preparing for the Week and gathering in reports after it, I have learned about many aspects of organising a major national programme such as this and had the chance to develop new skills.

During the Week, I have taken part in valuable conversations and witnessed many more. I have been impressed by the care taken by many of those who organised events and I have been encouraged by the number of people who have chosen to enter rooms with people of other faiths, and the individuals who have brought sensitivity, intelligence, and openness to events across the country. It has been a challenging time for many faith communities – a time when some have been more hesitant than usual about entering inter faith spaces. However, looking back on all the events I have attended, my overwhelming feeling as we emerge from the Week is a feeling of hope.

Photos: Participants at Nottingham Trent University's 'Faith Across the Generations' discussion, photo by Nottingham Trent University Chaplaincy; Shalva Louisa Hadari at 'Faith Across Generations' discussion, photo by Nottingham Trent University; and making bird boxes at Walthamstow Wetlands conservation event, photo by Lora Todorova.

x.com/Gecreeves/status/1725892034689380406

George Reeves
@Gecreeves

St Andrew's school in Levenshulme has been doing lots for [#InterFaithWeek](#), including a visit to the Jain Centre and talks from the Imam from Madina Mosque



twitter.com/canonmaggie/status/1725578513602732275

Maggie McLean
@canonmaggie

As [#InterFaithWeek](#) draws to a close I was able to join Rabbi Elesheva and Tracy-Ann Oberman @TracyAnnO - starring as Shylock @YorkTheatre for a pre performance event hosted by York Jewish Community @EnglishHeritage Clifford Tower York.



Birmingham Council of Faiths stop at Birmingham Buddhist Maha Vihara during an inter faith bike trail. Photo – Nishkam Centre

Bradford Hindu Council
@bh_council

The First Bus Faith Trail launched during Interfaith Week.

In a ground-breaking initiative, Adiba Rashid (Partnership and Engagement Officer) P.C James Elliot, Deepak Sharma and P.C Dharmesh Mistry, introduced the First-ever Bus Faith Trail being introduced during Interfaith





twitter.com/bh_council/status/1725263883516936428

Alastair Newman
@ajmnewma

Excited to be hosting this event next week with @Simanja and @charliebelllive. [#interfaith](#) [#LGBTQ](#) [#inclusivechurch](#)


Spotlight on Social Justice: Faith & Sexuality
An Interfaith Event

Join us for a discussion on faith, sexuality and identity with guest speakers Rabbi Adrian Schell (Wimbledon Synagogue) and Rev Dr Charlie Bell (St John the Divine, Kennington).

Tuesday 21st November, 7pm
St Matthew's Church,
Durham Road, SW20

Tickets: free/£5/£10
Wine & nibbles



SCAN ME

<https://faithsexuality.eventbrite.co.uk>

twitter.com/ajmnewma/status/172516551967732019

Charlie Bell 🇬🇧

THE UK AND THE WIDER WORLD

Some of IFN’s member bodies, such as UK branches of international inter faith organisations, have a particular focus on inter faith activity and cross-faith work globally. These include the International Association for Religious Freedom (British Chapter), the International Interfaith Centre, Religions for Peace (UK) and the World Congress of Faiths.

The focus of IFN’s own work is the UK. However, IFN’s work – and inter faith work in the UK more generally – is of interest to governments, researchers, students, faith communities and inter faith practitioners in other countries. Many make contact as part of exploring good practice around the world. During the period of this Review there was discussion and sharing of good practice with enquirers from Canada, Europe, India, Singapore and the United States.

Each year, IFN flags up World Interfaith Harmony Week which has taken place since 2010.

https://tinyurl.com/38748ekt



x.com/IFNetUK/status/1622544913421201410



EVALUATION AND APPRECIATION

Evaluation

During the period IFN undertook an Evaluation Project, which was composed of three different smaller projects. Information on each of these is below.

Demonstrating the value that IFN adds to the work of types of bodies such as non-member bodies, statutory agencies and civil society

Nick Wilkie of the Centre for Charity Effectiveness at Bayes Business School, City, University of London undertook this part of the project and presented his report to a meeting of the Board of Trustees in February 2022. The report drew on interviews with people linked to a range of different types of body that have made use of IFN's services. It was used in a number of fundraising contexts.

Looking at IFN's methods of evaluating outcomes and impact and suggesting ways to strengthen and develop these methods further

Jim Clifford OBE of Sonnet Impact & Advisory, undertook this part of the project and presented his report to a meeting of the Board of Trustees in April 2022.

Mr Clifford was also commissioned to assist Trustees in developing a Theory of Change. Work on that was in the final stages when attention had to be turned swiftly to emergency fundraising in the context of uncertainty of renewed Government funding. The project was not completed as a result.

Analysing how different aspects of IFN's work, including Inter Faith Week, are valued by its member bodies

A questionnaire was sent to member bodies about this in October 2022. Results were analysed and collated internally.

The outcomes from these fed into the development of the Strategic Plan 2023–2025.

Appreciation

In the context of the threat to IFN's Government funding in 2023 and then again in 2024, hundreds of letters and emails were written by member bodies and others to Ministers and MPs and questions were raised in the Houses of Parliament. Many contained detailed descriptions of why they appreciated IFN's work and found it so important.

All underlined the importance of IFN's work and highlighted particular aspects of that that writers thought of importance. Just a few of the comments are shared, with permission, below:

“Faith community bodies such as NBO have witnessed the invaluable work of IFN over the last thirty years. It plays a crucial role in bringing together communities and individuals with different faiths and beliefs; an essential contribution towards cohesion within the diverse communities we all aspire to.”

Network of Buddhist Organisations UK

“The Inter Faith Network's experience, track record, knowledge base and reach are extensive, and it is seen as a trusted resource by faith bodies as well as local authorities, charities and other organisations that work with faith communities or seek to develop strong interfaith relations.”

Board of Deputies of British Jews

“IFN is an irreplaceable well of knowledge and expertise on interfaith relations in the UK. Without the encouragement and enthusiasm, hard work and skills of the IFN team the very successful Inter Faith Week would not be the national celebration of faith that it is, in so many different ways: in prisons and schools, as well as churches, mosques, gurudwaras and town halls.”

Nottingham Inter Faith Council

“The IFN take on many roles in the field of interfaith relations. They bring together Inter Faith organisations across the country and we have found this to be of immense importance, without which we would be operating in a vacuum. The introduction of National Inter Faith Week provided a new incentive to action across the country and has continued to prompt events which enhance community spirit.

“The IFN are active in providing events to promote discussions with other practitioners and have developed an outstandingly useful library of publications, relevant to the field. They are available to provide help and information to enhance our work in promoting discussions between people of different faiths, leading to greater understanding, tolerance and respect in the community.”

Hertfordshire Inter Faith Forum

“In Oldham, as in other parts of the country, work that was carried out, in previous years, to bring communities of different faiths together was damaged by the experience of Covid-19. People retreated, for a while, into their own homes and then, on re-emerging, have focussed more, perhaps understandably, on their own communities. We are having to rebuild relationships that went into abeyance for several years. We cannot afford to presume that such relationships will reform naturally as society continues to gain distance from the pandemic. This situation, I have no doubt, will be similar in many areas of the country. It’s all the more necessary that the support given to the many interfaith groups across the country by the Inter-Faith Network is strong.

Throughout the twenty years of our existence as an Interfaith Forum, we have received valuable support from the Inter-Faith Network and have been called upon, by them, to share our learning with others, both nationally and internationally. It is this co-ordinating work and the sharing of good practice that enables all our work to develop and become even more effective.”

Oldham Inter Faith Forum

“Our members, who represent a cross-section of their local communities - elected members, educationalists and faith representatives - are of the opinion that the work of IFN is vital for the future stability of our multi-diverse society. Working with aspects of community cohesion, the IFN does excellent work in promoting good relations between persons of all faiths and worldviews.”

National Association of SACRES

“Collectively the diverse range of churches represented in CTBI – including Anglican, Catholics, Orthodox, Free Churches and Pentecostals – have gained huge benefit from the work of IFN over many years, having been instrumental in launching the Network more than 30 years also.

The benefits of IFN, as we see them are:

- 1. Opportunities for relationship building during challenging and difficult times when there is a need to stand in solidarity with each other in times of emergency. This has included challenges arising from terrorism or when places of worship have been targeted by extremists and also responses to COVID.**
- 2. A place where relationships can lead to the developing of bilateral relationships, particularly with Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh communities.**
- 3. The support of Inter Faith Week has been hugely beneficial at the local level.**
- 4. Enabling the voice of a wide range of different faiths to participate in public life such as responding to Government consultations on forthcoming policy initiatives.”**

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland

“The Salvation Army, along with many other churches and faith groups, values the work of IFN immensely. IFN helps strengthen positive relations between people of different faiths by promoting mutual respect and co-operation. In so doing, it makes a significant contribution towards social cohesion, which is much needed in our diverse society. Of particular value is IFN’s annual Inter Faith Week, which sees hundreds of events taking place across the country that build trust between people, raise awareness of others’ beliefs and practices, and increase mutual understanding.”

The Salvation Army

As a champion of the University’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy, who has had the privilege of seeing first-hand the transformative impact of Inter Faith Network UK and its collaborations with local interfaith networks such as Middlesex University Inter Faith Network (MDX IFN), I believe that the importance of this organization cannot be overstated.

Inter Faith Network UK provides a vital platform for promoting dialogue, understanding, and cooperation between people of different faiths and beliefs. In particular, its support for Interfaith Week is invaluable in bringing people from diverse communities together to celebrate their differences, explore their commonalities, and promote mutual respect and understanding. Likewise, local networks such as MDX IFN provide an essential space for staff, students, and community members to engage in open and respectful dialogue about issues of faith and belief.”

Middlesex University Interfaith Network

“TDN, as an organisation from the UKs fastest growing religious grouping identified by the last two census, namely the pagan community, has found that IFN has proven to be inclusive in its dealings with the smaller faith communities and has even appointed pagan and Druid members at senior levels for over four years now, the first such appointments in UK history.

The diversity of faith groupings within IFN is a very good model of how interfaith relations can be approached and maintained. In our increasingly polarised society, work such as that done by IFN is becoming increasingly more important in our combined efforts to combat the rise of extremism. IFN shows both a model and a proven track record in demonstrating how engaging with many diverse opinions can help counter those views.”

The Druid Network UK

“We have seen first-hand the positive impact that the Interfaith Network has had in promoting dialogue and understanding between people of different faiths. Their work has been instrumental in breaking down barriers and fostering greater cohesion within our society. At a time when we are seeing a rise in religious intolerance and hate crimes, it is more important than ever that we support initiatives that bring people of different faiths together. The Interfaith Network has been a beacon of hope in this regard, and we believe that its work is essential in creating a more harmonious and inclusive society.”

The Hindu Council UK

“Quakers in Britain have been part of the Inter Faith Network for several decades. In our experience, IFN has promoted community harmony through improving inter faith relationships at a local level. Nationally, it has fostered better relations between different faith groups, and between those groups and the government. Our representative on the IFN has found that it plays an essential role in providing a forum for dialogue between faiths.” Quakers in Britain

Quakers in Britain

“Bath Inter Faith Group is a member of the national Inter Faith Network (IFN), which is an invaluable source of advice and support to a small voluntary organisation such as our own, and has helped us to coordinate our work with similar bodies around the country.”

Bath Inter Faith Group

“At the Cambridge Interfaith Programme, the UK Inter Faith Network has been and is an intensely valuable and valued ally. The Network provides a critically important mechanism for sustaining and broadening the reach of our work, while keeping us informed of others’ activity in this domain. It brings together practitioners, faith groups, educational associations, and a diverse array of inter-faith bodies, alongside institutions of academic inquiry like our own.

This meeting point provides unparalleled opportunities for impactful knowledge exchange, allowing us and organisations like us to listen and respond to present needs and partner effectively with new and established actors in the field. The involvement of representative bodies from different faith communities also gives the Network excellent potential to advance inquiry in the domain of intra-faith understanding (a domain in which our researchers are already very much active).”

Cambridge Interfaith Programme [Cambridge University]

“... [W]e are supported and inspired by the work of the InterFaith Network, UK, which we are part of. The IFN is a source of advice and provides an invaluable network of contacts. It has become the repository of a huge amount of tacit knowledge and experience about interfaith work, and it is the national voice for all those committed to interfaith activities. Now more than ever, such bodies need to be supported.”

Northampton Inter Faith Forum

CLOSURE OF THE INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK

On 7 February 2024, the Board of the Inter Faith Network for the UK announced, with great regret, that it had taken an in principle decision to move towards closure of the organisation.

The background to this decision was withdrawal of an offer of Government funding of £155,000, seven months after that was made, combined with IFN's inability, despite significant effort, to fundraise to cover that unanticipated gap. This followed a prior gap of three months in funding towards IFN's work from Government from April to June 2023 and great challenges faced as a result of that.

Funding of IFN

In its early years IFN was mainly funded through pump-priming core grants from charitable trusts. As inter faith issues moved up the public agenda, trusts and others increasingly suggested that Government should be providing some of the funding for IFN's work and it became harder to gain trust funding. From 2001, IFN therefore sought, and received, grant funding from Government. Since that time, funding from Government, under successive administrations, towards IFN's work programme (for different grant duration periods and of varying levels) has been a vital component of funding, alongside other kinds of support such as donations from individuals, trusts, faith communities and other bodies and membership fees.

Announcement of discontinuation of support towards IFN's work in April 2023

On 31 March 2023 IFN received a letter from an official at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) saying that further funding would not be given, from April 2023, to IFN. Many letters were sent from a wide range of organisations and individuals to Ministers and MPs

about the importance of IFN's work and, in response, a number of MPs and peers took action, through such routes as Written Questions, contact with DLUHC, or through direct approach to the Secretary of State.

The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust made a special emergency grant to give IFN's work a possibility of survival and some generous grants from individuals, were made including towards a match funded appeal.

In May 2023 a Serious Incident Report was submitted to the Charity Commission about the funding position. Updates to that were submitted throughout the period that followed.

Offer of funding from Government towards work July 2023-March 2024

On 7 July 2023 a letter was received from DLUHC saying that, following a review by Ministers of funded programmes across the Communities and Integration portfolio, funding was now being offered to IFN. The funding offered was in the form of access to 2022/23 underspend plus some new funding. It was for use from July 2023 to March 2024. It was subject to a Grant Funding Agreement (GFA) and other conditions.

Extended delay on a Grant Funding Agreement

As of the end of December 2023, a Grant Funding Agreement had still not been provided despite communications from the Department saying that it was being progressed. The funds could not therefore be accessed.

In December 2023 a second Serious Incident Report was submitted to the Charity Commission about negative media coverage of IFN's position. Updates were also submitted to that during the period that followed.

As the Autumn progressed and no GFA had materialised despite careful correspondence by IFN with the Department and provision of all requested material, a number of MPs and peers, including the Rt Hon Sir Stephen Timms OBE, the Rt Hon Theresa Villiers and Lord Singh of Wimbledon CBE tried repeatedly to meet with the Secretary of State to assist in resolving whatever might be the obstacle to receipt of a GFA.

Government support for IFN was the subject of an Adjournment Debate in the House of Commons requested by Holly Lynch MP on 10 January 2024. The Hansard record of the debate can be found [here](#).

IFN's Board continued to operate, with careful oversight of IFN's finances, taking into account advice from its legal and financial advisers, on the basis of the reasonable expectation that a GFA would be agreed and the offered funding (vital to the planned and budgeted for work) made available, subject to the terms outlined in the letter of offer.

On 19 January, IFN received a letter from the Secretary of State noting that he was 'minded' to withdraw the offered new funding, because it had been brought to his attention that IFN had a Trustee who is a member of the Muslim Council of Britain, and that this posed a reputational risk to Government. This letter, or its near full content, was leaked almost immediately to the Sunday Telegraph and shortly thereafter to some others. A statement issued on behalf of the Board of IFN on 24 January addressed the situation, including through a link to points from a letter from IFN's Co-Chairs of 22 January which responded in detail to the points in the Secretary of State's letter. That statement can be seen at 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 and reproduced on page X, together with the list of points linked to in it: www.interfaith.org.uk/about/key-points-drawn-on-in-letter-of-22-january-2024-from-ifn-co-chairs-to-secretary-of-state

On 29 January, the Department let IFN know that the 2022-23 underspend of £45,020 could be accessed. There remained no new indication of whether the fresh funding toward work from July 2023 to March 2024 would be forthcoming.

On 7 February, the Board of Trustees took, with great regret, an in principle decision to move towards closure of the organisation – unless by 22 February funding offered by the Government on 7 July 2023 for work from July 2023 to March 2024, subject to conditions, was made available or funds at an equivalent level were received from other quarters. The News Release about the decision can be found at www.interfaith.org.uk/news/inter-faith-network-for-the-uk-imminent-closure and is reproduced on page 85.

On 21 February the Co-Chairs received a letter from the Secretary of State confirming his decision to withdraw the offer of funding.

On 22 February the Board confirmed its decision to close IFN. The News Release about this final decision on closure can be found at www.interfaith.org.uk/news/news-release-inter-faith-network-for-the-uk-board-announces-closure-of-charity-due-to-withdrawal-of-government-funding and is reproduced on pages 86-87.

Some attempts to secure funding continued until the last possible point and the Board is grateful to those who started and worked on a special petition on change.org and on seeking additional funders. A donation was received to assist in ensuring solvent closure of IFN, in the event that the Board took a decision to close it, and this was accepted with gratitude by the Board.

On 15 May, the Co-Chairs sent the Secretary of State a letter, in terms discussed by the Board, which noted that IFN's outward facing work had now stopped, and it was working toward closure. It reiterated points from their earlier letters, and noted that in their view the decision to withdraw funding from IFN was ill-founded.

Preparation for closure

The necessary legal steps toward solvent closure were put in train, such as settling of any liabilities; termination of contracts; planning for destruction of data where required by Data Protection regulations; notification of key contacts, including donors; closure of IFN's office; and other such steps. Redundancy notices had already been issued on the basis that they could be extended (subject to the agreement of staff) if funds were found for IFN to

continue. The last day of the employment of remaining staff members was 15 May.

IFN's office premises at Mary Sumner House, Tufton Street in London closed on 30 April. Care was taken to dispose of items appropriately, including letting member bodies know what remaining hard copy publications were available for cost of postage.

In preparing for closure, the Board of Trustees looked, with input from members and others, at whether and how particular strands of IFN's work, including Inter Faith Week, might 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 current challenging environment. Following a message from the Co-Chairs to member bodies inviting reflections, discussions were held, by membership category, with those which had offered input.

An *ad hoc* group of IFN member inter faith bodies and NASACRE will be taking Inter Faith Week forward. The Faith & Belief Forum is acting as the data holder for this on behalf of the group and the IFW website was transferred to United Religions Initiative UK on 20 May. Remaining Inter Faith Week materials such as badges were passed on to Council of Christians and Jews for the use of the *ad hoc* group.

Local inter faith organisations will have a private Facebook group, administered in the first instance by two group representatives who participated in the local inter faith group discussion facilitated by IFN on 19 April. The group is for those involved with local inter faith organisations in the UK to network and share information, advice and good practice. It can be found at www.facebook.com/groups/localinterfaithlinkuk.

National and regional inter faith organisations and educational and academic organisations have had contact details shared, by permission with them, and the hope is that they will continue to maintain contact to strengthen their work for inter faith understanding and cooperation.

The national inter faith linking bodies of Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales plan to continue to meet.

National faith community bodies had discussion at the Faith Communities Forum on 15 February about

what linking might look like after IFN closed. There is a possibility that one of the national bodies may be calling a meeting for further discussion after IFN closes.

All IFN's publications are available on the IFN website and it is planned that they – and the website itself – will be there in archive form for the next three years. Copyright has been switched across to Creative Commons to enable publications easily to be used and cited by people, with a few restrictions. They are also welcome to host these on their own websites if they wish.

Appropriate steps are being taken to delete, at the necessary points, data held and preserve key resources and documents.

Exchange with Government over IFN funding and closure

The main documents linked to in this section are reproduced overleaf for ease of reference.

Letters to and from IFN's Co-Chairs and Secretary of State Rt Hon Michael Gove MP are not included, although in the case of his letter to IFN of 19 January, this was leaked and appeared on social media. Key points are clear from the materials reproduced.

Posts from individuals and organisations expressing their views about the funding decisions of April 2023 and February 2024 are also not reproduced. Those can be seen on X and Facebook.

24 JANUARY 2024 STATEMENT ON A LETTER RECEIVED BY IFN'S CO-CHAIRS FROM SECRETARY OF STATE, LEVELLING UP, HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES, RT HON MICHAEL GOVE MP

The Inter Faith Network for the UK www.interfaith.org.uk is the UK's inter faith linking body. It has worked since 1987 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's vision is 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”. As part of that, it has always had a strong focus on shared values as a basis for working together for the benefit of wider society.

IFN works with its member bodies and many others to promote good inter faith relations and cooperation at every level, to highlight the importance of this work, and to ensure that the importance of religious identity and of good inter faith relations is understood in wider society. Through its major Inter Faith Week programme, it also promotes dialogue between those of religious and non-religious beliefs.

IFN's member bodies include: national faith community representative bodies from the Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and other smaller but significant faith communities of the UK; national and regional inter faith organisations; local inter faith bodies; and educational and academic bodies with an interest in multi faith and inter faith issues. A list of these can be seen at www.interfaith.org.uk/members/list and details of its multi faith Board of Trustees can be found at www.interfaith.org.uk/about/people.

IFN's work is of great importance in our increasingly diverse UK. It is funded from a number of sources such as Government, trusts, faith communities and individual donors. Government funding has been made available towards its work since 2001 and is a vital part of what enables that work, including National Inter Faith Week, to take place.

On 31 March 2023, officials at the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) wrote to IFN to let it know that funding would not be offered from 1 April 2023 onwards. IFN encouraged its member bodies, past donors and other supporters to make representations to the Department – including through their own MPs. A significant number did so. A number of MPs and peers put down written questions or raised them. An emergency grant from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and a small number of significant donations from individuals kept IFN solvent and able to operate.

On 7 July 2023, IFN received a letter from DLUHC saying that, following a review by ministers of funded programmes across the Department's Communities and Integration portfolio, IFN was being offered up to £155,000 of new funding as well as access to a £45,000 underspend on its 2022-23 grant, for use in the period July 2023 – March 2024. This offer was subject to IFN's submitting a suitable application, Work Plan and Budget, and various due diligence and other checks.

IFN submitted all requested information, including some requested by the Department as late as October. From October to December, in answer to enquiries from IFN, officials continued to refer to the Grant Funding Agreement (GFA) process continuing to be progressed. On 10 January this year, with a GFA still not received, and IFN in an increasingly difficult position financially, an Adjournment Debate on Government Support for the Inter Faith Network took place. It was secured and led by Holly Lynch MP. Parliamentary Under-Secretary Simon Hoare MP responded for DLUHC. Inter Faith Network for the UK – Hansard – UK Parliament Mr Hoare made a number of points, including that IFN’s work ‘is understood and the importance of that work is very clear’, and said an announcement would be made ‘in short order’.

Across the period from late November to early January, IFN received requests for comment from a Sunday Telegraph journalist on unattributed ‘concerns’ within DLUHC about IFN. This resulted in articles published on 2 and 30 December and 13 January, levelling criticisms at IFN on a number of fronts to which IFN provided a clear response. The Sunday Telegraph chose not to publish a letter from IFN’s Co-Chairs’ to it covering, again, all the points. This can be seen at www.interfaith.org.uk/news/responses.

On the afternoon of Friday 19 January, IFN’s Co-Chairs wrote to the Secretary of State expressing their concern at the position on the Grant Funding Agreement for the funding offered on 7 July 2023 for the period July 2023 to March 2024, which had still not been received. A couple of hours after their letter had been sent to the Department, a letter to them from Mr Gove was received saying that he was ‘minded’ to withdraw the offer of fresh funding (for July 2023 to March 2024) because IFN has a Trustee who is a member of the Muslim Council of Britain and that this posed a reputational risk to Government. Shortly thereafter, the Sunday Telegraph was in touch with detailed questions that made clear that the journalist had received a copy of the Secretary of State’s letter at almost the same time as it had been sent to IFN’s Co-Chairs.

IFN’s Board met to discuss the position on 22 January. Following that meeting, the Co-Chairs wrote to the Secretary of State. Key points drawn on in that letter can be seen at www.interfaith.org.uk/about/key-points-drawn-on-in-letter-of-22-january-2024-from-ifn-co-chairs-to-secretary-of-state. These address membership of IFN by the Muslim Council of Britain and the role, appointment and election of IFN’s Trustees. IFN’s Board did not seek resignation of the Trustee concerned. It affirmed his role as a valued colleague.

In its inter faith work, IFN has a strong commitment to upholding democratic values.

Should the Government or other credible sources demonstrate that any member body has broken the law or carried out actions which would bring reputational damage to IFN, it would take necessary action. However, it has not been provided with such evidence.

IFN’s Board continues to engage with officials and the Board will be meeting again in the near future to consider, based on the position reached with the Government, whether IFN’s continuation is possible or whether it will be required to close.

*Issued on behalf of the Board of IFN
24 January 2024*

KEY POINTS FROM A LETTER OF 22 JANUARY 2024 FROM IFN'S CO-CHAIRS TO SECRETARY OF STATE

- Mr Hassan Joudi was appointed as an IFN Trustee. Mr Joudi's role as an IFN Trustee from 12 July 2023 is in the public domain through IFN's website and also the Charity Commission and Companies House websites. Trustees appointed at IFN's 12 July 2023 AGM have been listed on its website since 13 July 2023. Mr Joudi's past role as one of the Muslim Council of Britain's Assistant Secretary Generals is also publicly known.
- The 22 Trustees provided for in the relevant IFN Bye-Law (www.interfaith.org.uk/about/governance) are elected or appointed – depending on category of membership – to IFN's Board by the member bodies of the Inter Faith Network. IFN's Board's role does not include selecting or endorsing individual nominees for appointment or election put forward from within its categories of membership.
- Due diligence checks are made when Trustees are elected or appointed. However, a link to an IFN member body could not disqualify an individual from serving.
- No different approach has been taken in the case of a Trustee nominated by the Muslim Council of Britain (note that they are not a representative of that body – Trustees serve in their own right).
- IFN has never been informed by DLUHC (the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) that any fresh Government funding offered would be conditional on IFN's not having a Trustee with a link to the Muslim Council of Britain, nor that it would be conditional on the MCB (or any other organisation) not being in membership of IFN. IFN has also never been advised by the Department to seek to expel MCB from membership on grounds such as the Government's position of non-engagement with MCB.
- IFN does not endorse the views of any of its member bodies, nor can any one member body, or indeed Trustee, exert improper influence over the organisation. IFN's purpose is to promote understanding about different faiths and strengthen good inter faith relations. That is the basis on which it has always sought and been granted Government funding, and that is what it has always achieved.
- There have never been questions from the Department or its predecessors about whether it seeks to achieve that, nor complaints about its grant usage reporting.
- 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). As noted in previous correspondence with DLUHC, IFN has sought guidance from both Government and the Charity Commission on this general point. It also sought legal advice.
- 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.

- By engaging with IFN, which happens to have the MCB in membership and to have an MCB member appointed to its board, the Government is not engaging with the MCB. No one member of IFN's Board of Trustees – currently 20-strong – of numerous faiths can determine IFN policy and actions. There is no more Government engagement with MCB because of that membership than there is by it with the MCB because, for example, MCB's Deputy General Secretary is a member of the Crown Prosecution Service London Scrutiny and Involvement Panel and the Police Islington Advisory Group. Among the more than 60 members of the National Council of the MCB, it is inevitable that there are individuals who sit on boards of schools, mosques and charities that are in receipt of Government funding. It is also inevitable that the Government will be providing direct funding to many of the MCB's 500+ members. None of that engages the Government with the MCB itself.

NEWS RELEASE 8 FEBRUARY 2024 – INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK 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

NEWS RELEASE 22 FEBRUARY 2024 – INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK BOARD ANNOUNCES CLOSURE OF CHARITY DUE TO WITHDRAWAL OF GOVERNMENT FUNDING

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 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*

AGMS, TRUSTEES AND MEMBERSHIP

The 2022 AGM was held on 5 July and the 2023 AGM on 15 July. The usual business was transacted, including appointment of Trustees, receipt of accounts and agreement of membership applications and confirmation of membership following the provisional membership period required under the Membership Admission Policy.

At both AGMs, while the Trustees had been able to affirm in the relevant Statutory Accounts for the preceding calendar years that IFN was a 'going concern', the challenging financial situation of IFN was again drawn to the attention of members. At the time of the 2023 AGM it was believed that Government funding would be forthcoming. That was not to be the case.

Despite financial challenges and the lingering impact of Covid in 2021-22, the reports to the AGM in both years recorded a strong programme of work, including further growing impact of Inter Faith Week, putting IFN's aims into action for the public benefit.

The International Ministerial Conference on Freedom of Religion and Belief had got under way in London on the morning of the 2022 AGM and there were many fringe events around the UK linked to that in which IFN members were involved. A statement had been released the previous day by the Co-Chairs and Moderators on behalf of the Faith Communities Forum on Freedom of Religion or Belief (see page 16). The final session of the AGM opened with a presentation from Professor Paul Weller who spoke about IFN's work across the decades with a particular reference to how it had helped foster the conditions for freedom of religion and belief in the UK.

TRUSTEES

2022-23

On 31 December 2021 the Rt Revd Jonathan Clark stood down as an IFN Co-Chair, ahead of his imminent retirement as Bishop of Croydon. At its meeting that month, the Board of Trustees offered its warm thanks for Bishop Clark's work with IFN across the last two years and good wishes for his future.

The Board sought expressions of interest for a Co-Chair from the National Faith Community Representative Bodies category and a Nomination Panel considered expressions received. Following the Panel's recommendation, the Revd Canon Hilary Barber was co-opted as a Trustee and the Board appointed him to serve as Interim Co-Chair from 1 January 2022 until the 2022 AGM. Canon Barber was then elected as Co-Chair at the 2022 AGM.

The following Trustees retired at the 2022 AGM: Mr Keith Bishop; Ms Edit McCathie; Ms Trupti Patel; and Ms Marie van der Zyl. Mr Bishop had played an active role on the Finance and General Purposes Subcommittee across a number of years. Ms van der Zyl had offered very valuable support on a number of fronts across her two terms as a Trustee. Ms McCathie and Mrs Patel had contributed to the Working Group on Diversity and also to other *ad hoc* sub groups. All retiring Trustees were warmly thanked for their contribution to IFN.

At the 2022 AGM the following were elected for the first time to serve as ordinary members of the Board for 2022-23: Ms Sass (Sarah) Adams, Ms Amanda Bowman, Minister David Bruton, Mr Prakash Patalia and Mr Umesh Chander Sharma.

Mr Mustafa Field OBE was co-opted in September 2022 and served until the July 2023 AGM.

In December 2022 Ms Sass Adams stood down from the Board and Mr Mike Stygal was co-opted to the seat in January 2023.

Board of Trustees 2022-23

Co-Chairs

The Revd Canon Hilary Barber
Mr Narendra Waghela

Honorary Treasurer

Vacant

Ms Sass (Sarah) Adams
Ms Jay Anderson
Mrs Josephine Backus
Ms Amanda Bowman
Minister David Bruton
Mr Mohinder Singh Chana

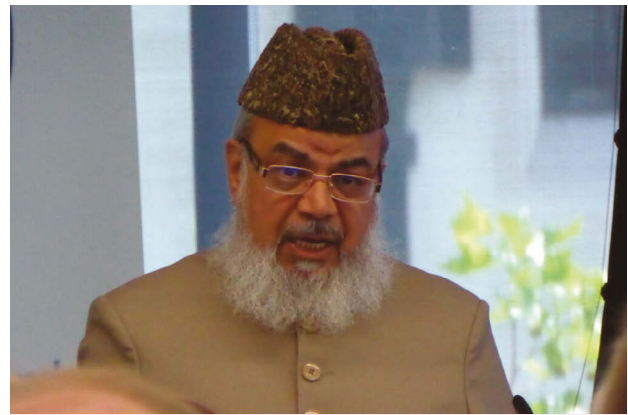
Mr Malcolm Deboo
 Ms Sabira Lakha
 Ms Kate McColgan
 Mr Prakash Patalia
 Mr Ed Petersen
 Mr Esmond Rosen
 Mr Umesh Chander Sharma
 Dr Susan Siegel
 Mr Paul Smalley
 Ms Patricia Stoa
 Professor Paul Weller

IFN was very saddened by the deaths from illness of two of its current Trustees and one of its former Trustees in 2022: Leonie Lewis MBE, Maulana M Shahid Raza OBE and Dr Natubhai Shah MBE. All were widely known and respected both within their own communities for their community work, as well as within the inter faith world. Leonie Lewis had served as an IFN Trustee since 2020. She was also a Trustee of IFN member body Faiths Forum for London as well as playing a key role in other bodies such as the Jewish Volunteering Network. Maulana Raza was, over many years a leading figure in the Muslim community and key contributor to the development of good inter faith relations, including as an Officer and Trustee of the Inter Faith Network for the UK. Dr Shah had been involved in IFN's work since its earliest days, serving at various points as an honorary officer, and was a pioneer of inter faith work in, and on behalf of, the Jain community.

2023-24

The following Trustees retired at the 2023 AGM: Mr Mustafa Field OBE; Miss Sabira Lakha; and Professor Paul Weller. Mr Field had served as a Trustee since being co-opted during the previous operating year; Miss Lakha, in addition to her contribution to the Board's work, had served as Chair of the FGPS for the last few years; and Professor Weller had served as a Trustee and FGPS member since 2020, although having had an association with IFN that went back across nearly three decades. All retiring Trustees were warmly thanked for their contribution to IFN.

At the 2023 AGM the following were elected for the first time to serve as ordinary members of the Board for 2023-24: Mr Hassan Joudi; and Mr Martin Weightman.



Maulana M Shahid Raza OBE



Dr Natubhai Shah MBE



Leonie Lewis MBE

IFN's Bye-law on Nomination and Appointment of Trustees notes at paragraph 3.1 that "It is an aspiration that the Board shall have equal representation of men and women. Where there are fewer than eight Trustees of any one gender, the Board shall propose measures for increasing representation at the next following election." Following the 2023 AGM, there were 6 women and 14 men on the Board. The AGM noted that the Board had agreed that there should be strong encouragement to member bodies making

nominations to vacant seats for the 2024–25 Board to consider suitable female nominees to put forward.

Board of Trustees 2023–24

Co-Chairs

The Revd Canon Hilary Barber
Mr Narendra Waghela

Honorary Treasurer

Vacant

Ms Jay Anderson
Mrs Josephine Backus
Ms Amanda Bowman
Minister David Bruton
Mr Mohinder Singh Chana
The Revd Dr Peter Colwell
Mr Malcolm Deboo
Mr Hassan Joudi
Ms Kate McColgan
Mr Prakash Patalia
Mr Ed Petersen
Mr Esmond Rosen
Mr Umesh Chander Sharma JP
Dr Susan Siegel
Mr Paul Smalley
Ms Patricia Stoit

Mr Mike Stygal
Mr Martin Weightman

MEMBERSHIP

2022–2023

The 2022 AGM accepted into provisional membership the following organisations:

Educational and Academic Bodies

Durham University Chaplaincy Network

Local inter faith organisations

Woking People of Faith

The 2022 AGM noted that the following organisations were withdrawn from IFN membership: Faith Links (Bournemouth and Poole), which had ceased to operate; the Islamic Cultural Centre UK; and Rochdale Multi-Faith Partnership. It also noted that Kettering Interfaith Forum was deemed to have resigned from membership due to non-payment of fees.

The AGM agreed that there be no change in membership fee levels in 2023 for any category of membership.



Some of IFN's Trustees at one of its 'virtual' meetings in Autumn 2023

2023–2024

The 2023 AGM accepted into provisional membership the following organisations:

National Faith Community Representative Bodies

World Zoroastrian Organisation

National and Regional Inter Faith Organisations

Faith for the Climate

Local Inter Faith Organisations

Bracknell Forest Interfaith Forum

Richmond Inter Faith Forum

It also noted the admission to provisional membership of Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Interfaith (Local Inter Faith Organisations category) as a successor body to Faith Links Bournemouth and Poole.

The AGM affirmed the membership of the following organisations, which had come into provisional membership in 2020 and 2021: The ASHA Foundation, City, University of London Chaplaincy, Middlesex University Inter Faith Network and University of Salford Faith Centre (Educational and Academic Bodies); Nisa-Nashim and United Religions Initiative (UK) (National and Regional Inter Faith Organisations); and Bath Interfaith Group, Maidstone Inter Faith Network, Muslim Jewish Forum of Greater Manchester, Plymouth Council of Faiths, Reading Interfaith Group and Slough Faith Partnership (Local Inter Faith Organisations).

The 2023 AGM noted the withdrawals from membership of: the Council of Dharmic Faiths, Horsham Interfaith Forum and Stratford on Avon Interfaith Forum, both of which had ceased to operate; and Abrahamic Reunion (England), the UK work of which had ceased for the time being. It also noted that Waltham Forest Faith Communities Forum was deemed to have resigned from membership due to non-payment of fees.

The AGM noted the following name changes: Preston Faith Forum to Building Bridges Preston; and The Salvation Army, United Kingdom Territory with the Republic of Ireland to The Salvation Army United Kingdom and Ireland Territory.

The AGM agreed that there be no change in membership fee levels in 2024 for any category of membership.

[Note: The Board decided not to invoice for 2024 fees until the outcome of engagement with DLUHC over funding was known. As its funding offer was withdrawn and closure was unavoidable, invoices for membership fees were not issued.]

THE IFN TEAM

Staff across the period

Mr Ashley Beck, Inter Faith Development Officer until October 2021, then Project Director
 Mrs Hannah Cassidy, PA/Senior Administrator p/t [0.9 FTE]
 Dr Harriet Crabtree OBE, Executive Director
 Dr David Hampshire, Assistant Director p/t [0.8 FTE] (to November 2021)
 Mrs Keetha Singam, Bookkeeper p/t [0.3 FTE] (to August 2021)
 Mr Sampath Pillai, Bookkeeper p/t [0.3 FTE] (October 2021 to January 2023)
 Mx Corin Peacock, Intern (August to September 2021)
 Miss Kirsty Healey, Project Officer (October 2021 to March 2022)
 Miss Josephine Dumbrell, Intern (October 2021 to August 2022)
 Ms Grace Stewart, Intern (July 2022 to August 2022)
 Miss Alfa Uddin, Intern (July 2022 to September 2022)
 Mr Aled Vernon-Rees, Intern (September 2022 to December 2022) and Project Assistant (December 2022 to March 2023)
 Ms Tatiana Spencer, Administrative Officer (October 2022 to March 2023)
 Mr Leo Taylor, Intern (January 2023 to May 2023) and Project Assistant (May 2023 to April 2024)

IFN also had assistance for some periods from staff through employment agencies, including Ms Jeevan Kaur Sanghera (from February to April 2023), Ms Serena Lander (from February to March 2023) and Mr John Nirmalanayagam Nicholas, as Finance Assistant, from January 2023 to April 2024.

Volunteers

IFN is grateful to the following for their contribution:

Ms Tallulah Tufton (from November 2021 to March 2022)
 Ms Katie Veitch (from November 2021 to March 2022)
 Ms Rosie Corner (from January 2022 to April 2022)
 Mr Leo Taylor (from November 2022 to January 2023)
 Ms Hamna Baloch (from July to August 2023)



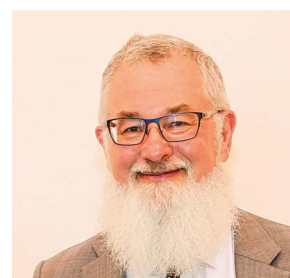
Ashley Beck



Hannah Cassidy



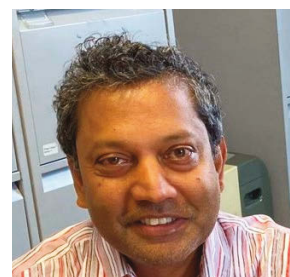
Harriet Crabtree



Dr David Hampshire



Mr John Nirmalanayagam Nicholas



Mr Sampath Pillai

Images of other past team members can be seen in throughout the review.

ADVISERS AND SUPPLIERS

IFN is grateful for assistance offered during the period covered by the Review by IFN's solicitors Bates Wells; Lees Buckley & Co, Myers Clark and Nicola Anderson (accounting and audit); Optimity, Infoworks and MID (IT and webhosting), and Tattersall Hammarling and Silk (design and print); and the Mothers' Union/Mary Sumner House for premise licence and service, including staff assistance at time of closure.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES 2021

	<i>Restricted</i>	<i>Unrestricted</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Total</i>
	£	£	2021	2020
	£	£	£	£
Income and endowments from:				
Donations and Legacies	25,570	369,666	395,236	372,331
Charitable Activities	—	160	160	32
Investment Income	—	1	1	14
Total income	25,570	369,827	395,397	465,674
Expenditure on:				
Raising Funds	(2,115)	(33,088)	(35,203)	(36,158)
Charitable Activities				
Information, Advice and Comms	(12,695)	(73,892)	(86,587)	(95,588)
Meetings and Events	(5,405)	(81,853)	(87,258)	(101,999)
Publications and Research	(25,686)	(46,888)	(72,574)	(46,068)
Increasing Awareness & Engagement	(18,213)	(79,969)	(98,182)	(89,063)
Total expenditure	(64,114)	(315,690)	(379,804)	(368,876)
Net income (expenditure)/				
Net surplus (deficit) for the year	(38,544)	54,137	15,593	3,501
Reconciliation of funds:				
Funds at beginning of the year	38,544	103,923	142,467	138,966
Funds at the end of the year		158,060	158,060	142,467

All the charitable company's operations are classed as continuing.

All the charitable company's recognised gains and losses are shown above.

The movement on reserves is shown above.

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2021

	2021		2020	
	£	£	£	£
Tangible Fixed Assets		4,205		4,711
Current Assets				
Debtors and prepayments	14,204		15,416	
Cash at bank	155,693		146,537	
	169,897		161,953	
Creditors: amounts due within one year	(16,042)		(24,197)	
Net Current Assets		131,899		137,756
Net Assets		138,966		142,467
Funds				
Restricted Funds		-		38,544
Unrestricted Funds		158,060		103,923
Total Funds		158,060		142,467

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime. They were approved by the Board of Trustees on 12 April 2022 and signed on its behalf by the Revd Canon Hilary Barber, Co-Chair.

Note: The full Accounts and Trustees' Annual Report for 2021 can be accessed on the Charity Commission website.

Note: IFN received support on a fiscal year calendar from DLUHC and some funds carried forward related to work due in the first Quarter of 2022.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES 2022

	<i>Restricted</i>	<i>Unrestricted</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Total</i>
			<i>2022</i>	<i>2021</i>
	£	£	£	£
Income and endowments from:				
Donations and Legacies	112,196	230,785	342,981	395,236
Charitable Activities	—	87	87	160
Investment Income	—	183	183	1
Total income	112,196	231,055	343,251	395,397
Expenditure on:				
Raising Funds	(3,686)	(54,376)	(58,062)	(35,203)
Charitable Activities				
Information, Advice and Comms	(3,686)	(54,555)	(58,241)	(86,587)
Meetings and Events	(39,521)	(67,497)	(107,018)	(87,258)
Publications and Research	(11,703)	(65,229)	(76,932)	(72,574)
Increasing Awareness & Engagement	(6,840)	(83,318)	(90,158)	(98,182)
Total expenditure	(65,436)	(324,975)	(390,411)	(379,804)
Net income (expenditure)/				
Net surplus (deficit) for the year	46,760	(93,920)	(47,160)	(15,593)
Reconciliation of funds:				
Funds at beginning of the year	-	158,060	158,060	142,467
Funds at the end of the year	46,760	64,140	110,900	158,060

All the charitable company's operations are classed as continuing.

All the charitable company's recognised gains and losses are shown above.

The movement on reserves is shown above.

BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2021

	2022		2021	
	£	£	£	£
Tangible Fixed Assets		2,783		4,205
Current Assets				
Debtors and prepayments	6,893		14,204	
Cash at bank	122,042		155,693	
	128,935		169,897	
Creditors: amounts due within one year	(20,818)		(16,042)	
Net Current Assets		108,117		153,855
Net Assets		110,900		158,060
Funds				
Restricted Funds		46,760		-
Unrestricted Funds		64,140		158,060
Total Funds		110,900		158,060

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime. They were approved by the Board of Trustees on 26 June 2023 and signed on its behalf by Narendra Waghela, Co-Chair.

Note: The full Accounts and Trustees' Annual Report for 2022 can be accessed on the Charity Commission website.

Note: IFN received support on a fiscal year calendar from DLUHC and some funds carried forward related to work due in the first Quarter of 2023

IFN is producing extended accounts for the period from 1 January 2023 to 30 June 2024. They are currently being audited and will be available on the Charity Commission and Companies House websites in due course.

SUPPORTERS IN 2021, 2022 AND 2023

During the period covered by this Review the Inter Faith Network for the UK's programme of building good relations between the different faith communities in the UK was funded through support from faith communities, Government, trusts and individuals supportive of its work, as well as through the subscription fees of member bodies.

The Trustees of IFN thank most warmly all those who have given financial support during the period and also those who have given the gifts of time, skills, and other in-kind support.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

The Inter Faith Network received support towards its work in 2021–22 and 2022–23 from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government / Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. No new funding was received towards its work in 2023–24 from Government (see page X).

TRUSTS, FOUNDATIONS AND COMPANIES

CB and HH Taylor 1984 Trust
Inlight Trust
Marsh Christian Trust
Rest-Harrow Trust
Sir James Roll Charitable Trust
The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust
Souter Charitable Trust
Westminster Foundation
Mr and Mrs V Wineman Charitable Trust

FAITH COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

Archbishops' Council of the Church of England
Institute of Jainology
Jamiat-e-Ulama Britain (Association of Muslim Scholars)
Pagan Federation
Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
Spiritualists' National Union
Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe

OTHER DONORS

Other organisational donors
Altrincham Interfaith Group
Barnet Multi-Faith Forum
Brownlow Integrated College
Burton Inter Faith Group
Calderdale Interfaith Council

Dacorum Interfaith Network
Highgate Inter Faith Group
Hounslow Friends of Faith
International Interfaith Centre
Loughborough Council of Faiths
Medway Inter Faith Action Forum
Newmarket Inter-Faith Forum
Peterborough Inter-Faith Council
Rugby Inter Faith Forum
The Woolf Institute
Welwyn Hatfield Inter Faith Group
Wisbech Interfaith Forum
World Congress of Faiths

INDIVIDUAL DONORS

Gilbert Altbach
The Rt Revd Richard Atkinson OBE
Josephine Backus
Lorna Barbour
Sarah Bateau
Roger Paul Bartlett
Sheila Batchelor
Bruce Bebington
Ashley Beck
Valerie Bello
Michael Berkson
Rajinder Singh Bhasin
The Revd Dr Marcus Braybrooke
Hannah Brock Womack
Josh Cass
E Clark
The Rt Revd Jonathan Clark
Dr Harriet Crabtree
David Currie
Rose Drew
Josephine Dumbrell
Patricia Earle
Caroline Elliker
Janice Every
Sean Finlay
Mehru Fitter MBE
The Rt Revd Colin Fletcher OBE
Professor Brian Gates MBE
Anthony Gimpel
The Revd Peter B Godfrey
Dr David Hampshire
Julia Hargreaves
Nora Hassan

Andrew S Hatton
Rosalind Henderson
Sofi Hersher
William Hopkinson
Jane Hurd
Stephen Innes
Anne Isaac
Avril Gloria Johnson
John Keast OBE
Dr Dermot Killingley
Abeda Laher
Major (rtd) Rashid Laher
Hon Barnabas Leith OBE
Heather Lister
Frans Lohman
Gavin Mallon
Richard Martin
Dr A J McCaffry
Rabbi Maurice Michaels
Prof Tariq Modood
Neville Nagler OBE
Deepak Naik MBE
Carolyn Neogi
Ishrut Nusrally
Katherine Owen
Brian Pearce OBE
Stephen Petter
Mark Petty
Simon Phillips
Catherine Platt
Rosalind Preston OBE
Dr Norman Richardson MBE
Henny Rolan
Aubrey Rose CBE
Penelope Rowe
Clare Salters
Peter Sampson
Andrew Sarle
Heather Savini
Dr Susan Siegel
Bhupinder Singh
David Smith
Rabbi Dr Norman Solomon
Jane Strange
The Revd Richard Tetlow
Ruth Tetlow
Sally Thompson (in memoriam for the late Rt Revd
Jim Thompson)
Kevin Tingay
Rosemary Turner
Narendra Waghela

Christine Margaret Walker-Kelley
Marna Watson
Suzanne Watts
Professor Paul Weller
David E Wilkes
Brenda Wolfe
John Woodhouse
Peter Wycherley
Sarosh Zaiwalla

As well as those who have given but prefer to remain anonymous.

Note: Where IFN member bodies are listed above, this indicates that they kindly made a donation towards IFN's work in addition to their membership fee.

MEMBER BODIES OF THE INTER FAITH NETWORK FOR THE UK 2023–24

FAITH COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE BODIES

Baha'i Community of the UK
 BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha
 Board of Deputies of British Jews
 Buddhist Society
 Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
 Churches Together in Britain and Ireland
 Churches Together in England
 Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales
 Council of African and Afro-Caribbean Churches (UK)
 Druid Network
 General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches
 Hindu Council (UK)
 Hindu Forum of Britain
 Inter Faith Working Group of the Baptist Union of Great Britain
 Institute of Jainology
 Jain Network
 Jamiat-e-Ulama Britain (Association of Muslim Scholars)
 Methodist Church in Britain
 Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board
 Muslim Council of Britain
 Network of Buddhist Organisations (UK)
 Network of Sikh Organisations (UK)
 Pagan Federation
 Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations
 Salvation Army United Kingdom and Ireland Territory
 Spiritualists' National Union
 Sri Lankan Sangha Sabha of GB
 United Reformed Church in the UK
 Vishva Hindu Parishad (UK)
 World Ahlul-Bayt Islamic League
 World Zoroastrian Organisation
 Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe

EDUCATIONAL AND ACADEMIC BODIES

ASHA Foundation
 Cambridge Inter-Faith Programme
 City, University of London Chaplaincy
 Durham University Chaplaincy Network
 Faculty of Humanities and Performing Arts at the University of Wales Trinity St David
 Islamic Foundation

Middlesex University Inter Faith Network
 National Association of SACREs
 OneSpirit Interfaith Foundation
 Religious Education Council of England and Wales
 Sion Centre for Dialogue and Encounter
 University of Lincoln Multi-Faith Chaplaincy
 University of Salford Faith Centre
 Wales Association of SACREs
 Woolf Institute

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL INTER FAITH ORGANISATIONS

Northern Ireland Inter-Faith Forum
 Interfaith Scotland
 Inter-faith Council for Wales/Cyngor Rhyngffydd Cymru
 Faiths Forum for London
 North East Regional Faiths Network
 South East England Faith Forum
 All Faiths Network UK
 Children of Abraham (Imams and Rabbis Council of the United Kingdom)
 Christian Muslim Forum
 Christians Aware Interfaith Programme
 Council of Christians and Jews
 East of England Faiths Agency
 Faith and Belief Forum
 Faith for the Climate
 Interfaith Alliance UK
 International Association for Religious Freedom (British Chapter)
 International Interfaith Centre
 Khalili Foundation
 London Boroughs Faiths Network
 Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Derby
 Nisa-Nashim
 Religions for Peace (UK)
 Scriptural Reasoning
 St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace
 St Philip's Centre for Study and Engagement in a Multi Faith Society
 United Religions Initiative (UK)
 Westminster Interfaith
 Women's Interfaith Network
 World Congress of Faiths

LOCAL INTER FAITH GROUPS

Altrincham Inter Faith Group
 Barking and Dagenham Faith Forum
 Barnet Multi Faith Forum
 Bath Interfaith Group
 Bedford Council of Faiths
 Birmingham Council of Faiths
 Blackpool Faith Forum
 Bolton Interfaith Council
 Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Interfaith
 Bracknell Forest Interfaith Forum
 Bradford Concord Interfaith Society
 Brent Multi-Faith Forum
 Brighton and Hove Inter-Faith Contact Group
 Bristol Inter Faith Group
 Bristol Multi-Faith Forum
 Building Bridges in Burnley
 Building Bridges Preston
 Calderdale Interfaith Council
 Cambridge Inter-Faith Group
 Canterbury and District Inter Faith Action
 Cheltenham Inter Faith
 Cleveland and Tees Valley Inter Faith Group
 Cornwall Faiths Forum
 Coventry Multi-Faith Forum
 Crawley Interfaith Network
 Faiths Together in Croydon
 Cumbria Interfaith Forum
 Devon Faith and Belief Forum
 Elmbridge Multi-Faith Forum
 Exeter Faith and Belief Group
 Gateshead Interfaith Forum
 Greater Yarmouth Inter Faith and Belief Network
 Harrow Interfaith
 Hastings and Rother Interfaith Forum
 Hertsmere Forum of Faiths
 Hillingdon Inter Faith Network
 Hounslow Friends of Faith
 Hull and East Riding Interfaith
 Inter Faith Isle of Man
 Islington Faiths Forum
 Keighley Interfaith Group
 Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames Inter-Faith Forum
 Faiths Together in Lambeth
 Lancashire Forum of Faiths
 Leeds Concord Interfaith Fellowship
 Leeds Faiths Forum
 Leicester Council of Faiths
 Interfaith Forum for Leicestershire
 Loughborough Council of Faiths
 Luton Council of Faiths
 Maidstone Inter Faith Network
 Faith Network for Manchester
 Mansfield Interfaith Group
 Medway Inter Faith Action Forum
 Interfaith MK (Milton Keynes)
 Milton Keynes Council of Faiths
 Muslim Jewish Forum of Greater Manchester
 Newcastle Council of Faiths
 North Herts Faith Forum
 North Kent Interfaith
 North Kirklees Inter Faith
 Northampton Inter Faith Forum
 Norwich InterFaith Link
 Nottingham Inter Faith Council
 Oldham Inter Faith Forum
 Building Bridges Pendle - Interfaith Community Project
 Peterborough Inter-Faith Council
 Plymouth Centre for Faiths and Cultural Diversity
 Plymouth Council of Faiths
 Reading Interfaith Group
 Redbridge Faith Forum
 Richmond Inter-Faith Forum
 Rugby Inter Faith Forum
 Salford Interfaith Network
 Sheffield Inter Faith
 Slough Faith Partnership
 Solihull Faiths Forum
 South London Inter Faith Group
 South Shropshire Interfaith Forum
 Southampton Council of Faiths
 Southwark Multi Faith Forum
 Stafford and District Friends of Faith
 Swindon Inter Faith Group
 Faiths United (Tameside)
 Torbay Faith and Belief Forum
 Tower Hamlets Inter Faith Forum
 Wakefield Interfaith Network
 Warwick District Faiths Forum
 Watford Inter Faith Association
 Wellingborough Inter Faith Group
 Welwyn Hatfield Interfaith Group
 Westminster Faith Exchange
 William Campbell-Taylor (City of London Interfaith)
 Windsor and Maidenhead Community Forum
 Wisbech Interfaith Forum
 Interfaith Wolverhampton
 Woking People of Faith
 Worcestershire Inter-Faith Forum
 York Interfaith Group

As after July 2023 AGM



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**RESPECTED EDUCATION DIALOGUE
INTEGRITY COMMUNITY VALUES
COOPERATION DISTINCTIVENESS
COMMON GOOD UNDERSTANDING
NEIGHBOURLINESS FAITH ACTION
BELONGING TACKLING PREJUDICE
RESPECTED EDUCATION DIALOGUE
INTEGRITY COMMUNITY VALUES
COOPERATION DISTINCTIVENESS**